



NEWSLETTER

Issue 1/10 February 2010 - March 2010

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
Lorna Mee

Life Members
Sue Hamonet
Alan Stuart

Newsletter Editor
Liz Crawford
chrisliz@tpg.com.au
02 4959 3663
Next copy deadline
27 March 2010

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

Birds Australia Southern NSW & ACT 2010 AGM and Symposium

“Birds and the Hunter”

**will be held at Hunter Valley Grammar
School, Ashtonfield on 20 March 2010**

**followed by an outing to Walka Water-
works on 21 March 2010**

**Organised by Birds Australia in
conjunction with the
Hunter Bird Observers Club**

**In addition to some local and interstate
speakers, there are display opportuni-
ties for photographs and poster papers
on birds and their habitat. Please con-
tact Alan Stuart on 4952 8569 or email
almarosa@bigpond.com**

President's Column

As the birding year of 2009, with its record number of sightings passes, I look forward with enthusiasm to 2010 as a year full of birding success for all members and a year of consolidation and achievement for the Club. The "Hunter Big Year" has started auspiciously for many of the ardent bird watchers and I wish them all great spotting as they aim for difficult targets. It also promises to be an equally exciting and big year for the Club as its program of diverse activities is implemented.

One such activity is the Birds Australia Southern NSW & ACT (BASNA) Symposium and Annual General Meeting which will be hosted by HBOC and will take place on 20th/21st March 2010. The symposium, "Birds and the Hunter" gives HBOC the opportunity to showcase not only the birds of the Hunter Region, but also the work being done by HBOC and others to further the conservation of birds. Details of the program and how to register are to be found elsewhere in the Newsletter and members are encouraged to register early and support this important event.

Excitement was clearly evident when Colin Goodenough gave the news, ever so quietly, that he and Rachel had become proud parents. Congratulations to Colin and Rachel on the birth of their daughter Olivia Lucy in December 2009. May you both enjoy the wonderful rewards of parenthood. Congratulations also to Liz and Chris Herbert who became grandparents with the birth of their grandson Delaney in January 2010. It seems that the population of (potential) birdwatchers is becoming self sustaining.

Several items, from the 2009 Annual Report, are noted below:

There is a trend to better utilise computer-based technologies, e.g. Newsletter publication and distribution; Club Night presentations; information sharing through the developing web-site, e-mail service and Hunter Birding email group; digital photography; record keeping; data management and mapping. Although some may see the phasing out of older technology such as slides, overhead projectors and even snail mail as regrettable, there are benefits such as ease of access, quality and efficiency.

HBOC has actively engaged in cooperative relationships with many other organisations. This is a desirable situation which broadens HBOC's area of influence for the benefit of Hunter Region birds. HBOC's area of influence is also expanded through members' dedication to field studies and the increasing ability of the Club to make the knowledge gained more accessible and useable through its various publications. This work is an investment in the future of birds in the Hunter Region. The benefits may be hard to measure and may not be readily apparent in the short term, but in the long term, the publication of objective knowledge

which potentially influences conservation decisions, is a goal worthy of pursuit.

Arguably there is an implied emphasis in the Annual Report on areas dealing with the conservation aims of the Club and this is perhaps a necessary reflection of the environmental pressures characteristic of the times in which we live. However, HBOC has another aim which relates to bird watching as a worthwhile leisure activity and it is imperative that a balance between the two aspects of HBOC endeavour is preserved. The challenge, therefore, not only for the Committee, but also for each member, is to find ways of balancing, or integrating both leisure and conservation into their bird watching experience.

Several members of the Management Committee have foreshadowed that they will not be available for re-election when positions are declared vacant at the 2010 Annual General Meeting and it is appropriate that their contributions are acknowledged in this column.

Tom Clarke: HBOC owes a debt of gratitude to Tom for his exemplary service as Honorary Secretary for 14 years. The Club pays tribute to his thoroughness, diligence and dedication to his secretarial role in serving the members of HBOC. Although not available for re-election as Secretary, Tom has indicated his availability as a Committee Member and Club Night Coordinator and will continue to drive the important habitat rehabilitation projects that promote the conservation of Hunter Region birds in a significantly practical manner. Thank you Tom!

Rowley Smith: Rowley has indicated that it is time for a change and is not seeking re-election as Honorary Treasurer. Rowley has overseen the financial affairs of HBOC for more than ten years and through discipline and acumen has seen HBOC develop a sound financial position. Rowley has also been Membership Officer, keeping track of the subscription status and the comings and goings of members through his comprehensive membership lists and reports. On behalf of members, I wish to thank Rowley for his administrative services to HBOC over the past decade.

Ann Lindsey: Ann is not available for re-election to the Management Committee in 2010. As a Past President and stalwart of the Committee for many years, her vast experience, drive and obvious passion for birds will not be lost as she intends to expend her considerable energies in other areas of HBOC activity. Thank you! Ann has been nominated for Life Membership of HBOC in recognition of her contributions to HBOC and the conservation of birds.

President's Column cont.

Liz Crawford: Liz has foreshadowed her preference for contributing to the HBOC Committee as a club member rather than as an elected Committee member in 2010 and will focus her efforts on her role as Editor of the HBOC Newsletter. This is indeed fortunate for HBOC as Liz's experience, dedication and multi-faceted skills are all-important inputs to HBOC management and organisation. Thank you!

Robert McDonald: Robert will not be available for the Committee in 2010 as he is now employed doing conservation project work at *Willie Retreat* in the Macquarie Marshes near Warren NSW. HBOC wishes to thank Robert for his contributions as Librarian and Committee Member and for his tireless work and input to the rehabilitation of habitat so necessary for the future of Hunter Estuary Shorebirds. I wish Robert every success in his new position. Thank you!

Additionally HBOC is indeed fortunate to have so many other supportive and cooperative members who work willingly for the Club. Appreciation is expressed to each of these members, who through their time, effort, expertise and goodwill ensured that, in 2009, HBOC continued to move toward the achievement of its aims.

Good Birding. Keep on Looking!

Paul Baird

Hexham Swamp Rehabilitation Update

Planning for the reinstatement of tidal flows to Hexham Swamp began as early as 1987 when it was acknowledged that fish and prawn stocks in the Hunter River had decreased to an alarming degree. Tidal gates installed at Ironbark Creek in the 1970s were not designed to prevent inundation during major flood events but rather were to inhibit tidal flows in order to create grassland for the cattle industry. The hitherto rich estuarine habitat dried out accordingly but wherever cattle were excluded, as in the Nature Reserve, the Common Reed, *Phragmites australis*, overtook all other vegetation. As a result, numbers of bird species and numbers of birds declined. The Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority worked with the NSW Planning Department over many long years to open the tidal gates. In December 2008 the first stage in the process was completed and one tidal gate was opened. Although salt water flowed into the Ironbark Creek system, the amount was not sufficient to extend over the banks of the creek and as a result, there was almost no change in the vegetation. In December 2009 two more gates were opened. It was quite a sight to see the salt water rushing through and into the creek. With three gates opened, it is expected that 334 hectares of land will receive tidal flow and no doubt the pattern of vegetation will change dramatically. We look forward to more birds on Hexham Swamp in future years.

Ann Lindsey



Opening the tidal gates on Ironbark Creek in December 2009. Photo: Ann Lindsey

Trip Reports

McGregor and Jesmond Parks

Mid-week outing 1 December 2009

A slight delay to the day's activity was caused by Keith and Max waiting at the top of Sygna Close whilst the rest of the group were at the bottom end. Bless my soul, you'd think they would have known better!

Although overcast and slightly damp and drizzly the outing at George McGregor Park went well and quite a few species were observed, but not the Powerful Owl that everyone was keen to see.

After morning tea the group moved to Jesmond Park, on the other side of John Hunter Hospital. Overall 44 species were seen and 4 heard. Included in the sightings were the Spotted Dove, Peaceful Dove, Sacred Kingfisher, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Cicadabird, Golden Whistler, Leaden Flycatcher, Eastern Yellow Robin and Red-browed Finch.

Twenty-three members were present and some of these later went along to the Shortland Waters Golf Club for a meal and some Christmas cheer. It was enjoyed by all.

Keith and Margaret Woods

January Long Weekend Camp at "Oaklands", Merriwa

23-26 January 2010

Ten people enjoyed a very leisurely camp on "Oaklands" near Merriwa. We had a lovely campsite near the Merriwa Creek which had a series of water holes along it, not deep enough to swim in but lovely for the birds and enjoyable for shady birding.

As expected, conditions were very hot, registering 40° on arrival, requiring survey for the shadiest or the coolest perceived camp site. The owner of the property made us very welcome and enjoyed "happy hour" with us on Sunday evening.

Birding was only possible early in the day and late into the afternoon, except for those hardy birdwatchers who walked at least 10km towards Coolah Tops National Park!

Most people enjoyed birding around the camp, along the creek and along the road towards the National Park. Great sightings of Cicadabird, which are usually heard but not seen; and large numbers of Superb Fairywrens, Crimson Rosellas and King Parrots were the predominant birds.

On Monday a drive to the National Park on a very degraded road yielded some surprises: e.g. Red-capped Robin and Red-browed Treecreeper.

On the weekend we recorded 70 bird species. Some important atlassing was conducted, led very ably by Alan Stuart. The class photographers were out with their lenses capturing the next best image. For those who attended thanks for your company and I hope for you it was a rewarding weekend of birding and photography.

Lorna Mee



Bob Rech enjoying photography at *Oaklands* on Australia Day - photo Lorna Mee



White-winged Chough - photo Bob Rech

What's in a Name?

For the first 4 to 5 years of its life, this Newsletter was called the Novocastrian Warbler. It seems like a good idea to have a more interesting name than "Newsletter" so the Committee is looking for suggestions from you! You will be aware that our logo is the Golden Whistler and our occasional publication is called 'The Whistler'. What could the Newsletter be called? Please email your suggestions to Liz Crawford on: chrisliz@tpg.com.au

Trip Reports

Newcastle Foreshore

Midweek Outing 2 February 2010

Midweek outings take place on the first Tuesday of each month, visiting areas within reasonable proximity to Newcastle. February's outing around the Nobbys area was a celebratory one to commemorate 15 years of successful birding. A suitably decorated cake was provided by Margaret, and Keith and Max explained how the group started. The longevity of the group outings was attributed to a common interest in bird observing combined with a pleasant social atmosphere.

Tuesday was a sunny day with a moderate offshore breeze and while on this occasion our species list at 29 was fewer than usual, 19 members enjoyed the venue, walking on the breakwall and around the baths, and looking out on seabirds flying close inshore. The highlight of these was an Arctic Jaeger but there were also plenty of Shearwaters to puzzle over. On Stony Point by the breakwall there had been 50 Common Terns but by the time we walked that way the rocks were water-covered and the terns had moved to the buoys so were not so easily seen. Crested Terns, which are habitually in the area, are down to about 30, one third being young. There were plenty of Silver Gulls, some Australian Pelicans, Great Cormorants, Little Black Cormorants and two Little Pied Cormorants.

Another highlight was a group of 22 Sooty Oystercatchers roosting behind the Ocean Baths. These later took off, flew by us and continued on towards Stockton. In the afternoon they were reported on the Kooragang Dykes. With the Sooty Oystercatchers were 13 Ruddy Turnstones, migratory waders which return from breeding in Siberia in mid-October and leave again in early May. Neither group was easily counted as they blend in so well with the rockshelf but everyone had reasonable views.

There is a resident Eastern Whipbird in the vegetation near Horseshoe Beach which is rarely seen but Diane persevered and almost managed a photograph, but a passing dog disturbed the bird. Other birds around the park were Red Wattlebird, Common Starling, Noisy Miner, Common Myna, Silvereye, Crested Pigeon, Ravens, Masked Lapwing and Rock Dove.

Judi Thomas

Latham's Snipe Count

13 December 2009

Interest in Latham's Snipe at Pambalong was sparked in 1997 by Michael Todd, who was studying their behaviour and feeding ecology, so that suitable snipe habitat could be created at Sydney Olympic Park. A comprehensive report on these birds was subsequently published (Todd 1999). During his study, Mick estimated that there were around 500 Latham's Snipe at Pambalong. However, it was impossible for Mick to count the birds on his own, so members of HBOC were invited to participate in an organized count in December 1997.

Pambalong Nature Reserve contains a large swamp that is the western extension of Hexham Swamp. Pambalong swamp has been partially dammed by construction of the Sydney-Newcastle Freeway, and usually holds water. However, in 1997, the southern part of the swamp had dried out significantly, exposing large areas of mud that was perfect foraging ground for Latham's Snipe.

The survey involves a number of intrepid people walking through the wetland to flush snipe from north to south across an old railway line that bisects the wetland. Counters are positioned along the railway line to note any birds that fly south over the railway line. When the beaters reach the railway line, they regroup at its eastern end and then proceed through the southern half of the wetland, moving from east to west and then northwards to flush snipe back towards the counters on the railway line. The final total is a combination of birds flushed across the railway line and those noted by the beaters as flying away from the railway line.

In 1997, 475 Latham's Snipe were counted. In 1998, 230 were counted, then 115 in 1999, and 66 in 2000. Counts continued to decline in subsequent years. 18 Latham's Snipe were counted at Pambalong in 2008 and 18 again in 2009. The low counts in recent years may be partly due to local conditions at the wetland, which has had reasonably high water levels and very little exposed muddy margins for foraging snipe. However, changes to the Flyway population may also be influencing local counts.

Thanks to the twenty-seven HBOC members who surveyed a total of 14 locations, including Pambalong swamp, on 13 December 2009. An additional 52 snipe were recorded at the other locations.

Liz Crawford

Helmeted Honeyeater

Recently on a trip to Melbourne to visit our son, David, and his family, Caryl and I decided to twitch – if we could find the location - the captive-raised Helmeted Honeyeater at their release site. The Helmeted Honeyeater happens to be endangered and is also Victoria's bird emblem. The birds are in fact a subspecies of the Yellow-tufted Honeyeater.

We knew that the release site was in part of the Bunyip State Forest. Luckily the horrendous 2009 fires which burnt through much of the forest did not reach the release site. The birds to be relocated are raised at Healesville Sanctuary and Taronga Park. After transport from Healesville or Taronga, Helmeted Honeyeaters are housed in cages to acclimatise for some time before being released into the bush. After release they feed at 5 feeding stations. A Ranger has to come out to the forest twice a week to restock the stations.

At last, after several false trails we located the cages and feeding stations hidden about 500 metres from the road. We were lucky to come across a Victorian National Parks Ranger who happened to be on site mixing the Helmeted Honeyeaters' food. The Ranger was quite surprised to see us come down the track and asked what we were up to.

"We're looking for the Helmeted Honeyeater".
"Oh! Do you mean the Helmeted Moneyeater?"

He expressed his concern at the costs involved with the release programme and if, in the long run, or as part of the 'big picture', the whole project was worth the time, money and effort. His opinions made us stop and think!

However, success for us – in the area we twitched five of the beautiful 'Moneyeaters'.

Paddy Lightfoot

Background information from

http://www.zoo.org.au/News/Honeyeaters_Safe

"The bushfire in the Bunyip State Park during the 2009 Victorian bushfires has spared the critically endangered Helmeted Honeyeater which survives in just two small wild populations east of Melbourne ... The vulnerability of Helmeted Honeyeaters to catastrophic events and the importance of the captive population have never been more evident than during this summer when ALL three Victorian populations (Yellingbo, Tonimbuk and the captive group at Healesville Sanctuary) were under immediate threat from wildfire. The small numbers of Helmeted Honeyeaters and limited distribution make it vulnerable to a catastrophic event. Wildfire and dieback of eucalypts remain the most potentially destructive threat and could wipe out the entire wild population."

Hunter Big Year – One Month Down

A "Big Year" in birding terms is a calendar year in which you set yourself the challenge of seeing as many birds as possible. Sean Dooley's "Big Twitch" is a good example of a Big Year. The concept is not new – it even has a Wikipedia entry http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_year – but it is something that I'm not aware of having happened within the Hunter Region before.

Our region is the perfect setting for a Big Year, so Dan Williams and I have taken on the challenge in 2010. Our goal is to see well over 300 species this year. We will be including birds seen on pelagic trips so hopefully the weather will be kind to us and allow us to get out into the "deeper" parts of the Hunter Region. The weather certainly hasn't been kind to us so far, however. The rains that set in during late December have caused an exodus by many species such as Red-necked Avocets, Pink-eared Ducks and, it seems, Red-kneed Dotterels. Alas the Black-tailed Native-hens appear to have left us as well.

Despite this, we've had a reasonably good start to the year. As I write this, I have 254 species under my belt (with 251 seen during January). Dan is not far behind me – we are trying to go birding together as often as we can but this isn't always possible. With 11 months to go you might be thinking "it's only 46 species to 300 – that's easy!" Unfortunately it doesn't work like that – we're actually going to need to work quite hard to get to 300 and beyond that we're going to be relying on "unusual" birds being uncovered or turning up.

So far we've had some great sightings; a few are listed below.

- Fork-tailed Swift at Crowdy Bay and Adamstown Heights
- Lesser Sand Plover at Stockton Sandspit
- Powerful Owl at Blackbutt Reserve
- Black Falcon at Martindale
- Red-backed Fairy-wren and Lewin's Rail at Barrington
- Square-tailed Kite at East Maitland and Cessnock
- Black-eared Cuckoo and White-backed Swallow in Goulburn River NP
- Southern Whiteface and Glossy Black-Cockatoo near Ulan
- Satin Flycatcher, Logrunner and Flame Robin at Gloucester Tops
- Black-necked Stork at Hexham Swamp
- Spotted Harrier, Southern Emu-wren and Little Raven at Cobark
- Noisy Pitta, Pale-yellow Robin and Russet-tailed Thrush at Copeland

- Sooty Tern on Nobby's Breakwall
- Brahminy Kite at Hexham

Of course, we didn't discover all of these birds by ourselves. In fact, the Big Year concept appears to have caught on, with a few other HBOC members pitting themselves against the calendar (most notably a "pair of Drongoes"!)). This has had the effect of there being many more pairs of peeled eyes out and about, hoovering the Hunter for all manner of birds.

The flow-on from this will hopefully result in an increase in our knowledge of birds within the Hunter Region. At the very least there will hopefully be an increase in the amount of data collected and reported to the various databases, in particular the Birds Australia Atlas and the NSW Wildlife Atlas.

Mick Roderick

Glossy Black-Cockatoos at Freemans Waterholes

Six Glossy Black-Cockatoos arrived to feed in the casuarinas at Freemans Waterhole (Jan 23), four adults and two juveniles. While one female GB happily snacked on the tasty seeds, the male seemed to take exception to the hungry teenager – looks like time to get a job, mate. As the battle progressed, mum just kept watching and casually eating. Eventually the hungry teen found his own seeds to eat, much to dad's relief.

Toni Marsh and Peter Struik



White-bellied Sea-Eagles at Homebush Bay

During spring and summer 2009, there was a lot of excitement at the Birds Australia Discovery Centre due to the "Eagle-Cam" surveillance of the White-bellied Sea-Eagle nest in the forest behind the centre. BASNA volunteers conceived the idea of monitoring the nest which has been used for some years by a pair of eagles and procured the necessary equipment with the support and assistance of the Sydney Olympic Park Authority. The camera was installed high in the nest tree in May 2009.

The video feed ran continuously from dawn to dusk and the computer regularly archived 5-minute sections of the video for subsequent examination. A volunteer viewed the archived material and extracted data on the eagles' activities and stored interesting sections for viewing at the Discovery Centre. The birds brought in a variety of live animal feed including fish, Silver Gulls, rodents and, surprisingly, one Flying Fox.

Two eggs hatched and two eaglets were seen. One appeared to be much more robust than the other and the smaller eaglet may have succumbed to its sibling.

The presence of the Eagle-Cam has boosted visitation to the Discovery Centre with nearly 2500 visitors in the 6 months to September 2009. People were coming back on a weekly basis to get an update on how the eagles were going. Short sections of video from Eagle Cam can be viewed on the Birds Australia web site:

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/the-organisation/eaglecam.html>

Notes on observations made with the Eagle-Cam provide interesting reading: *In the first month of nest-renovation, Jon Irvine has recorded at least 184 sticks being brought to the nest. The male has brought 75% of the sticks and at least 40% of his visits to the nest have involved bringing sticks. The female has brought 25% of the sticks and for at least 18% of her visits she was bringing sticks. The female however was responsible for bringing the vast majority of green leaves. Both birds arrange the sticks and leaves, and spend time arranging and renovating. The significance of the green leaves lining the nest is not understood: it is suggested the leaves may be for camouflage, have antiseptic properties or have some social relevance.* (From Birds Australia website).

BASNA is hoping to procure an even better camera and install it so that it will look straight into the eagles' nest for the next breeding event in 2010.

SIGHTINGS WANTED - BANDED OSPREY on NSW COAST



Two of the Osprey young banded in 2009 - photos by Tony Bischoff

The Osprey banding project was introduced on the Mid North Coast of NSW in 2005 by DECC – NSW NPWS. The project was commenced in response to a lack of information regarding dispersal details of fledged young from their natal area. The Mid North Coast Region of NSW supports the most southerly significant breeding population of Ospreys on the eastern coast of Australia; hence the study of a species at the edge of its distribution range may provide critical data for this threatened species.

In all, thirteen birds have been banded on the MNC since 2005, and birdwatchers are vigorously encouraged to report sightings of any banded Osprey to:

Tony Bischoff on 02 6582 5055 (email gcbabbler@optusnet.com.au) or

Andy Marshall at NPWS 02 6588 5505 (email andrew.marshall@environment.nsw.gov.au).

One Osprey banded in 2005 on the Mid North Coast is now one of a breeding pair at a nearby nest – a very exciting recovery.

Observers need to CAREFULLY record the band colours, which leg each band is on, and which colour is on top or bottom. There are three bands on each bird, and with a limited number of colours available, it is critical to record the combination EXACTLY.

Greg Clancy has also banded many more birds on the Far North Coast in a similar way – two of which have already been recorded on the Mid North Coast and one live bird 714km from the place of banding.

Your assistance in helping to monitor Osprey survival and dispersal is greatly appreciated.

Tony Bischoff

45 Hart Street

Lighthouse Beach NSW 2444

10 December 2009

THE BARD WAS A BIRDO



Like most people I spend time each day tapping away at a computer keyboard, but technology has never replaced my love of books, bookstores and libraries. For me, one of life's little pleasures involves roaming the stacks of really good libraries, waiting to see which books call to me from the shelves. That's how I found Lavonia Stockelback's book, *The Birds of Shakespeare*, in which she claims that, "There may be more than six hundred allusions to birds in the works of Shakespeare." I was hooked.

After signing out the book, I headed home, began to read, and to casually scribble down the names of birds as I came across them. A list began to develop. Curiosity prompted me to check for on-line references. The list grew steadily. Heeding the researcher's mantra, "Beware of electronic sources," I returned to the library and spent many lunch hours in the reading-room cross-checking with the written concordances. The list grew longer. Finally I took down my own copy of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, and began a line-by-line search of the plays. At this point I decided to ditch the sonnets. The list was already out of control.

In an attempt to bring order to chaos I developed a spreadsheet to sort the data, but before I could do that I had to confront another problem. My knowledge of birds was largely North American and not up to old-world British references such as Ruddocks (robins), Hernshaws (herons), Estridges (ostriches), Tercels (falcons), Puttocks (kites), Ousels (blackbirds) and the like.

It was back to the library for Shakespearian glossaries and books on British ornithology to help the business of classification. Finally, my database began to produce organized lists of flightless birds, waterbirds, game-birds, raptors, doves, pigeons, cuckoos, song birds, domestic birds, caged birds, mythical birds, bird snaring, bird shooting, bird eating, bird eggs, bird feathers, bird flight,

bird nests, bird song, and non-specific bird references.

I was into this thing way more deeply than I had anticipated. In an attempt to justify the time spent I crunched the numbers, worked them into a long, boring essay and submitted it to a surprised English professor, who responded with some nice class credits. I'll spare you the essay, but if you're into bird-trivia the following may be of interest.

The top five plays for bird references are: *Romeo and Juliet*, 52; *Titus Andronicus*, 39; *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 38; *Cymbeline*, 37 and *Henry VI*, Part 2, 36. *Richard II*, came last with just 5 mentions. Of the 56 positive species identifications made, the five most used references are: Doves, 46; Eagles, 32; Crows, 28; Owls, 24 and Ravens, 23. It comes as no surprise that these are birds that carry a heavy burden of mythic and traditional allegory.

Very little is known about Shakespeare's life, but there are hints of a youthful penchant for long walks in the countryside. That habit may account for his wide knowledge of flora and fauna. Certainly, the manner in which Shakespeare used bird references suggests he really knew his birds. What distinguishes him from the rest of us "birdos" is the literary skill used to weave that knowledge into his work. The delicacy with which he balanced functional symbolism and poetry is just one aspect of "the bard's" genius.

By the way, Lavonia Stockelbach was correct. There are "more than six-hundred allusions to birds in the works of Shakespeare." By the time I brought this project to a close I had documented 746 references in the plays alone. I leave further research to others. For me it is enough to know that "birdos" can lay claim to a shared interest with perhaps the world's best known literary icon.

Lois Wooding

HBOC Membership Fees for 2010

Membership Fees for 2010 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

Please pay at Club Night or send cheque or money order payable to HBOC: PO Box 24, New Lambton 2305.

Broome or Bust...

After enjoying this Spring birding around the Hunter, we are now heading to the other side. We have been offered the opportunity to be wardens at Broome Bird Observatory (WA) this year, beginning in March. The bird observatory is self funded, creating its income mostly from accommodation and tours, situated in a lovely bush setting on Roebuck Bay, 25 km from Broome town.

The bay is a significant roost for migratory waders and researchers come from many countries to study the birds, their feeding and roosting habits. Bird banding and recording is carried out regularly and volunteers are always welcome to join in and learn about handling, weighing and banding the birds. Just holding a tiny Red-necked stint in your hand is an experience to cherish.

Because of the big tides and huge mudflats on the bay we will have to learn to live by the tides: when the tide is low you can barely see the water from the bay and the birds are feeding far away, but when the tide returns the birds follow the water back into the beach areas, making it easier to see and count them.

Our role as wardens will be to maintain the facilities, including the solar power, generators and vehicles, look after guests and visiting students, conduct tours, collate data and create enough income to keep BBO viable. Camp hosts and Assistant Wardens will help to keep the place running smoothly and we hope to encourage many new birders to visit and join in the activities. (*There is still one Assistant Warden position available if anyone is keen to join us from April to September.*)

While we may be light on experience with all the waders – those Sand Plovers are especially tricky - we have set ourselves the challenge to learn all the birds of Broome by the end of our stint (pardon the pun) at BBO.

If you have never been to Broome before, be sure to drop in to the observatory for a unique bush experience ‘far from the madding crowds’ of Broome tourists. Have a look at the web site for more details:

www.broomebirdobservatory.com

See you in the West sometime!

Toni Marsh and Peter Struik



Left: Banding at Broome Bird Observatory

Right: Pectoral Sandpiper

Photos: Peter Struik and Toni Marsh



Raffle in aid of Broome Bird Observatory

The HBOC Committee has decided to hold a raffle in aid of Broome Bird Observatory, which is run by Birds Australia. For some Broome is the Mecca of birding. Our very own members, Peter Struik and Toni Marsh, have been employed as wardens at the Broome Bird Observatory for 12 months from March 2010. We wish them well.

Raffle tickets will be available at the February and March Club Nights, and the raffle will be drawn at the March Club Night. Prizes are:

- A beautiful T-Shirt painted and donated by Di Hatfield
- A photograph of the elusive Red Goshawk donated by Dick Jenkins
- A painting depicting Fairy-wrens
- A bird quilt wallhanging (if she finishes it) donated by Lorna Mee

Tickets will be \$1 each and I hope you are able to be generous in aid of this great Birds Australia property.

Lorna Mee

Easter Camp at Barraba 2-5 April 2010 and Northern Migration

We are proposing to camp on the Borah Travelling Stock Route over Easter but others may wish to stay in cabin style accommodation, which is available at Oakhampton Homestead and Farmstay, approximately 15 kilometres by road from the Borah TSR.

The Oakhampton accommodation is actually the old shearers' quarters, with 2 bunks in each room. Bed linen is provided and there are shared bathroom and kitchen facilities and common areas. Meals are available if you do not wish to cook for yourself. The cost is \$35 per person per night but may be negotiable for our group, depending on the numbers of people needing this style of accommodation. At this stage, I have booked 5 rooms for 10 HBOC people.

If you are intending to come to the camp and need this style of accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible – **no later than 21 February** - as Easter is a premium time of year and the owner said Oakhampton is booking up quickly. Please contact me on 4988 6579 or email lornamee33@gmail.com

The Oakhampton Homestead and Farmstay website is at: <http://www.oakhampton.biz/>

After the Easter Camp, there will be a northward migration to the Border Ranges National Park, a world heritage listed area, for more bird watching. We will be camping at Sheep Station Creek Camping Area in the National Park. Car entry fee is \$7 and camping charge is \$10 per person per night. There are no showers.

Lorna Mee

Cessnock Biodiversity Conservation Program Community Forum

Tuesday 2 March 2010

9am – 12.30pm

Room AA, Kurri Kurri TAFE Campus
Heddon Street, Kurri Kurri

The Department of Environment Climate Change and Water (DECCW) coordinates a number of threatened species projects within the Cessnock region. Current projects include the threatened ecological communities' restoration project, and recovery programs for the endangered ecological community 'Kurri Sand Swamp Woodland' and the critically endangered North Rothbury *Persoonia pauciflora*. We are currently planning a broader biodiversity conservation program, addressing the conservation needs of multiple threatened species and communities across the region.

We wish to invite representatives from other public authorities, industry, community groups, non government organisations, landholders and interested individuals to come along to our initial community forum and be involved in the development of the program.

The forum will be followed by an optional field trip, visiting three project sites: Lower Hunter Spotted Gum - Ironbark revegetation site at Richmond Vale, proposed Kurri Sand Swamp Woodland restoration site at Stanford Merthyr, and a proposed *Persoonia pauciflora* habitat management demonstration site at North Rothbury.

Please **RSVP by Wednesday 24 February 2010** to:

Tricia Hogbin

Senior Threatened Species Officer (Tue-Thur)

Dept of Environment, Climate Change and Water

PO Box 488G, Newcastle NSW 2300

Phone: (02) 4908 6802 Fax: (02) 4908 6810

Whistler Papers Provide Habitat Management Insights

Papers like the "Birds of Green Wattle Creek" recently published in Volume 3 of The Whistler are attracting the attention of land managers in the Hunter Region. The results of systematic survey work using Birds Australia Atlas techniques are seen as providing a future basis for scientifically based habitat management.

One of the issues facing land managers is the increasing public demand for fuel reduction in habitat near residential areas. Another issue is the modification of understorey vegetation when grazing ceases. There will probably be opportunities for HBOC members to be involved in field work aimed at getting good outcomes for birds concerning complex issues of this type.

As a consequence of the studies at Green Wattle Creek and the initial HBOC Field Studies Days at Columbey National Park (formerly Uffington State Forest), HBOC members have been asked to participate with NPWS in ongoing survey work in Columbey National Park.

Mike Newman

On the Subject of Wildlife Smuggling

In November 2009 I attended the Leeton Bird Fair. There were some excellent speakers but one that really aroused my interest was Vincent Hurley from the Victorian Department of Environment speaking on the "Breeding Biology of Major Mitchell Cockatoos". As most of you are aware these birds are now on the threatened list and demise of a species is often attributed to loss of habitat and suitable breeding sites. There are other, less frequently discussed, causes.

Vincent described a recent prosecution in Victoria of wildlife smugglers. This group were arrested after their return flight to the U.S. was closed off at the airport. Federal police then went in and arrested them. Eggs of Major Mitchell Cockatoos, in specially made vests, were found on their persons. Subsequently these men received prison terms of 18 months plus a \$20,000 fine. At the completion of their sentences they will be deported to the U.S. where they will be re-arrested and given another 18 months and \$20,000 fine. Unfair you might say! A case of double jeopardy?

Well, on arrest these men were found to be working from old maps and black and white photos of nesting sites that dated back to the 70s. So for over 30 years these nesting sites of Major Mitchell and other vulnerable parrots have been systematically poached by this group alone. The modus operandi of these despicable people is to come in and destroy the current eggs in the nest, returning some days later secure in the knowledge that any eggs re-laid in the nests will not be more than a few days old. With an incubation period of several weeks the smugglers are then confident the eggs will not hatch whilst they are on the plane back to the country of sale.

Wildlife smugglers can be of any nationality, age or sex. Reptiles, birds and animals are smuggled both into and out of Australia. Some examples of successful prosecutions have been:

- A man caught smuggling 33 reptiles including green tree pythons, albino pythons, iguanas, frill neck dragons, slider turtles and tree monitors. The reptiles were found in shampoo bottles, speaker boxes and food containers.
- A Japanese man was fined \$24,000 for attempting to post 24 turtles and a lizard out of Australia. The animals were wrapped tightly in socks. 13 of the turtles did not survive. The man had already left Australia when the consignment was discovered but was arrested on his next visit, no doubt intending to repeat his offence.

- One wildlife smuggler received a 3 year sentence for attempting to smuggle eggs of Galahs, Gang Gangs, some parrot mutations and Red-collared Lorikeets. He served 1 year and was then placed on a good behaviour bond.
- Fish are also smuggled; in one case in a cosmetics jar. In another case a woman had specially made plastic bags suspended beneath her skirts.

The maximum sentence for wildlife smuggling in Australia is 10 years and \$110,000. But sentences are routinely far less. The U.S is the only country in the world that has the 'Double Jeopardy' situation for this crime. My personal opinion is that sentencing is too lenient and I am pleased to see some offenders at least, get a double whammy.

You may ask how this would affect us here in the Hunter? We should be aware that not everyone we share bird information with has pure motives for the knowledge. Be very careful giving out the location of breeding sites, particularly of rare birds, to other people no matter how competent or friendly they may sound. Overseas some of our birds and animals fetch huge prices and this of course provides the incentive for this cruel crime.

For those people who own tracts of land with good bird populations question closely anyone who wishes to use your land to band or trap birds or animals. All Bird Banders for example, must hold 2 licences; a Federal and a State licence. Even then they cannot just band wherever they wish. All banding sites must be approved by the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme in Canberra. This can only be done after a proposal for that specific site is submitted. If anyone requests permission to band on private land request to see their licences and the proposal. Even if you see people using traps and nets in a park or public place you have the right to ask to see their licence. If they cannot show their licence, do not argue with them, but contact National Parks and Wildlife or the Police and inform them of the incident. Remember it is an offence to take animals of any type from the wild without a licence to care for that specific animal.

The other main area of notifying bird sightings is of course the internet. Information via this medium is open to all and sundry. Known breeding sites should never be posted on the internet. Our native animals and birds need all the protection we can muster to prevent wildlife smuggling.

Joy Nicholls

Observations from Club Nights November 09 - January 2010

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

| Species | Number* | Date | Location | Observer |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Australian Brush Turkey | 1 | 26/11/2009 | Duns Creek | M. Newman |
| Australian Figbird | many | 16/12/2009 | Newcastle [Terrace St] | J. Thomas |
| Australian King Parrot | 17 | 16/12/2009 | Wingen | G. Newling |
| Australian Magpie | 18 | 16/12/2009 | Aberdeen | G. Newling |
| Azure Kingfisher | 1 | 17/01/2010 | Redhead | D. Raine |
| Banded Lapwing | 2 | 16/11/2009 | Phoenix Park | H. Tarrant |
| Barn Owl | 1 | 06/12/2009 | Ash Island | N. McNaughton |
| Black-fronted Dotterel | Pr nest 2y | Nov/Dec | Paterson | M. Newman |
| Black-necked Stork | 1 | 29/01/2010 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Black-tailed Native-hen | 1 | 04/11/2009 | Hirst Ck [Hexham Swamp] | D. Hirst |
| Brown Honeyeater | 1 | 08/12/2009 | Bolwarra | H. Tarrant |
| Brown Honeyeater | 1 | 17/11/2009 | Maitland | H. Tarrant |
| Brown Quail | 2 | 17/01/2010 | Redhead | D. Raine |
| Buff-banded Rail | 1 | 27/11/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Buff-banded Rail | 2 | 02/01/2010 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Chestnut Teal | 37 | 03/12/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Chestnut Teal | 90 | 05/12/2009 | Hirst Ck [Hexham Swamp] | D. Hirst |
| Chestnut Teal | 22 | 14/12/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Chestnut Teal | 137 | 31/12/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Cicadabird | 1male | 22/11/2009 | Murrays Run | M. Fisher |
| Cockatiel | 1 | 26/11/2009 | Birmingham Gardens | H. Tarrant |
| Common Blackbird | 1 | 03/12/2009 | Scone | G. Newling |
| Common Greenshank | 1 | 14/12/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Common Greenshank | 3 | 31/12/2009 | Hirst Ck [Hexham Swamp] | D. Hirst |
| Dollarbird | ~8 | 21/11/2009 | Kilaben Bay | A. Woollett |
| Eastern Grass Owl | 1 | 06/12/2009 | Ash Island | N. McNaughton |
| Eastern Spinebill | 2 | 08/12/2009 | Teralba | P. Durie |
| Eastern Spinebill | 15+ | 22/11/2009 | Murrays Run | M. Fisher |
| Eastern Yellow Robin | 1 | 04/12/2009 | Fassifern Rly Station | P. Durie |
| Fork-tailed Swift | ~10 | 25/12/2009 | Speers Point | S. Hamonet |
| Gang-gang Cockatoo | 3 | 22/11/2009 | Murrays Run | M. Fisher |
| Grey Goshawk | 1 | 11/11/2009 | Green Wattle Ck | M. Newman |
| Grey Shrike-thrush | Pr nest | 26/11/2009 | Martins Creek | M. Newman |
| Latham's Snipe | 2 | 04/11/2009 | Hexham Swamp | D. Hirst |
| Latham's Snipe | 2 | 15/11/2009 | Hands Lagoon | H. Tarrant |
| Latham's Snipe | 1 | 16/11/2009 | Bolwarra | H. Tarrant |
| Latham's Snipe | 1 | 02/01/2010 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Leaden Flycatcher | 1female | 11/11/2009 | Green Wattle Ck | M. Newman |
| Little Raven | <6 | 29/11/2009 | Lambs Valley [2 sites] | H. Tarrant |
| Musk Lorikeet | 20 | 16/12/2009 | Newcastle [Terrace St] | J. Thomas |
| Pacific Baza | 1 | 05/12/2009 | Duns Ck [Forest Rd] | M. Newman |
| Pacific Black Duck | 220 | 27/11/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Pacific Golden Plover | 3 | 03/12/2009 | Stockton [wreck] | J. Thomas |
| Painted Button-quail | 2 | 11/12/2009 | Duns Creek | M. Newman |
| Painted Honeyeater | 1 | 15/11/2009 | Widden Valley | J. Nicholls |
| Pallid Cuckoo | Pr | 07/12/2009 | Wingen | G. Newling |

Club Night Observations continued

| Species | Number* | Date | Location | Observer |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Rainbow Lorikeet | many | 16/12/2009 | Newcastle [Terrace St] | J. Thomas |
| Red Wattlebird | many | 16/12/2009 | Newcastle [Terrace St] | J. Thomas |
| Red-capped Robin | 1 | 05/12/2009 | Jerrys Plains | G. Drady |
| Red-necked Stint | 2 | 14/12/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Regent Bowerbird | 2 | 26/11/2009 | Duns Creek | M. Newman |
| Restless Flycatcher | Pr on nest | 15/11/2009 | Rylstone | J. Nicholls |
| Rockwarbler | 2 | 04/11/2009 | Widden Valley [2 sites] | M. Newman |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | 140 | 05/12/2009 | Hirst Ck [Hexham Swamp] | D. Hirst |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | 78 | 14/12/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | 143 | 02/01/2010 | Hirst Ck [Hexham Swamp] | D. Hirst |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | 11 | 02/01/2010 | Hirst Ck [Hexham Swamp] | D. Hirst |
| Sooty Oystercatcher | 3Pr prob- ably dy | 03/12/2009 | Broughton Island | R. McLean per J. Thomas |
| Sooty Oystercatcher | 20 | 03/12/2009 | Canoe Pool | J. Thomas |
| Speckled Warbler | 2 | 26/11/2009 | Duns Creek | M. Newman |
| Spotted Harrier | 1 | 04/12/2009 | Mt Arthur mine site | G. Newling |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1 | 23/11/2009 | Testers Hollow | H. Tarrant |
| Straw-necked Ibis | 170 | 16/12/2009 | Muswellbrook | G. Newling |
| Superb Lyrebird | 2Pr | 22/11/2009 | Murrays Run | M. Fisher |
| Tawny Frogmouth | 2+2dy | 01/12/2009 | Coal Point | P. Durie |
| Tawny Frogmouth | Pr+1juv | 30/10/2009 | Hamilton | M. Jackson |
| White-cheeked Honeyeater | >5 | 04/12/2009 | Fassifern Rly Station | P. Durie |
| White-fronted Chat | 12 | 02/01/2010 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| White-throated Needletail | ~40 | 25/12/2009 | Speers Point | S. Hamonet |
| White-throated Needletail | ~100 | 09/01/2010 | Warners Bay | R. Walker |
| White-throated Nightjar | 2, nest, 1egg | 04/12/2009 | Duns Creek | M. Newman |
| White-throated Nightjar | 1 | 11/12/2009 | Duns Creek | M. Newman |
| White-winged Triller | 1 | 29/11/2009 | Bolwarra | H. Tarrant |
| Wompoo Fruit Dove | 1 | 22/09/2009 | Clarence Town | L. Storm |
| Wood Sandpiper | 1 | 29/01/2010 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Wood Sandpiper | 5 | 05/12/2009 | Hirst Ck [Hexham Swamp] | D. Hirst |
| Wood Sandpiper | 2 | 14/12/2009 | Smiths Ck [Hexham] | D. Hirst |
| Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo | 2 | 03/12/2009 | Stockton Sandspit | J. Thomas |
| Zebra Finch | 6-20 | 15/11/2009 | Rosebrook | H. Tarrant |
| Zebra Finch | 20+ | 28/11/2009 | Bolwarra | H. Tarrant |

Note*: Pr = pair
dy = dependent young
y = young

Please note: Due to a computer malfunction, not all the observations recorded at November and December Club Nights and from communications to our Records Officer, Sue Hamonet, over the holiday period, have been listed above. Missing records will be listed in the next Newsletter.

HBOC Activities - February to April 2010

| Date | Event | Meeting Place & Time | Contact |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday 10 February | Club Meeting Annual General Meeting | 7.30pm The Wetlands Centre | Speaker: Jack Adams – East Lake Macquarie Shorebirds |
| Friday 12 February | Port Stephens Waterbird Survey | At various locations around Port Stephens, as instructed | Alan Stuart 4952 8569; almarosa@bigpond.com You must phone or email Alan to book a place |
| Saturday 13 February | Hunter Wader Survey | 8.30am Ash Island 9.00am 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 Grant Brosie 4934 7383 - Tomago |
| Tuesday 16 February | Tomago Wetlands Survey | 7.30am Entry to Tomago House | Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 Please ring to confirm |
| Sunday 21 February | Field Outing to Seal Rocks (incl. Seawatch) | 8.00am Bungwahl Store | Mick Roderick 0421 761 237 / 4023 0322 |
| Tuesday 2 March | Mid-week Outing Watagans Area | 7.30am Freemans Waterhole Shell Service Station car park | Leaders: Val and Don Moon 4359 1670 |
| Wednesday 3 March | Management Committee Meeting | 6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School | All members welcome |
| Sunday 7 March 2010 | Clean Up Australia Day Stockton Sandspit and Kooragang Dykes | 9.00am to 1.00pm Sandspit Car Park 9.00am to 1.00pm Kooragang Dykes Boat Ramp | Stockton Sandspit - Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 Kooragang Dykes – Liz Crawford 0412 722 644 |
| Wednesday 10 March | Club Meeting | 7.30pm The Wetlands Centre | Speaker: Peggy Svoboda - Progress on Wetland Habitat Restoration Bird of Evening: TBA |
| Saturday 13 March | Hunter Wader Survey | 7.30am Ash Island 8.00am 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 Grant Brosie 4934 7383 - Tomago |
| Tuesday 16 March | Tomago Wetlands Survey | 7.30am Entry to Tomago House | Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 Please ring to confirm |
| Saturday 20 March | BASNA AGM & Educational Symposium | 10am - 4.30pm Hunter Valley Grammar School, Ashtonfield | Paul Baird 4938 5039 Registration Form attached |
| Sunday 21 March | Field Outing associated with BASNA Symposium | Walka Water Works | Paul Baird 4938 5039 |
| Sunday 21 March | Field Outing to Tahlee/ Carrington | 7.30am Heatherbrae McDonalds car park (near the big roundabout on Pacific Hwy) | Tom Clarke 4951 3872 |

HBOC Activities continued

| Date | Event | Meeting Place & Time | Contact |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EASTER 2 – 5 April 2010 | Camp at Barraba for Easter plus migration to Border Ranges after Easter | Borah TSR or alternative accommodation at Oakhampton; Sheep Stn Creek Camp at Border Ranges NP | Lorna Mee 4988 6579 or email: lornamee33@gmail.com |
| Tuesday 6 April | Mid-week Outing Toronto Wetlands | 8.00am Paddock in Cook St just before the bridge | Leader: Keith and Margaret Woods 4963 3070 |
| Wednesday 7 April | Management Committee Meeting | 6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School | All members welcome |
| Friday 9 April (also 16 th & 23 rd) | Saltmarsh restoration (mangrove removal) | Milham Pond, Ash Island from 7.00am | Tom Clarke 0418411785 |
| Sunday 11 April | Hunter Seawatch | 2.00 pm Fort Drive, Nobbys | Mick Roderick 0421 761 237 |
| Sunday 11 April | Volunteer day at SSS - ambrosia sweeps on Golden Plover Point | Stockton Sandspit 10.00am | Tom Clarke 0418411785 |
| Wednesday 14 April | Club Meeting | 7.30pm The Wetlands Centre | Speaker: Peter Phillips – The Great Princess Parrot Adventure Bird of Evening: TBA |

New Members

The Club extends a warm welcome to new Members:

Brian and Lesley Laut of Nulkaba
Shawn Capararo and family of Lorn

We hope to meet you at Club outings and meetings.



Juvenile Rufous Whistler at Oaklands on Australia Day. With dragonfly on left - photo Bob Rech; searching on right - photo Lorna Mee

