



Newsletter

Hunter Bird Observers Club
Affiliated with Bird Observation and Conservation Australia

Issue 3/12
 June - July 2012

Website: www.hboc.org.au

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



On the way back to port on a pelagic birding trip to the continental shelf off Port Stephens recently, we had numerous birds follow our boat. One of the most 'eager' of these was this beautiful Buller's Albatross *Thalassarche bulleri* which made a few approaches to the stern of the boat as we motored along. I was fortunate enough to capture this image front-on, with the horizon parallel to the bird. Buller's Albatross were seldom recorded off the NSW coast perhaps 20 years ago but are now regularly recorded off Wollongong and Sydney, though this was our first record off Port Stephens. The species is listed as threatened under Commonwealth legislation.

Mick Roderick

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President's Column

As I write this particular President's Column I am in a state of excitement due mainly to the fact that we are seeing the "return" of Regent Honeyeaters to the Lower Hunter, and in good numbers. It's probably no secret that I am quite passionate about the conservation of this species, regarding it as an "emblem" for the conservation of a whole suite of woodland birds, about which I am equally as passionate. It is heartening to see 20 to 30 Regents in local areas and probably as many as 70 to 80 in the Lower Hunter. Such numbers are rarely recorded throughout the range of the species these days and this is the largest concentration in one area that has been recorded since Dean Ingwersen took over as Recovery Coordinator in 2009. We are indeed very privileged to have some very significant woodlands in the Hunter Region and having the highest counts of some of the most endangered woodland birds in Australia is something we should not take for granted.

Whilst seeing these birds isn't an immediate cause for celebrating as "great news", to me it is nonetheless very encouraging.

It does make me think of "good news stories" though, and I have to say I regard the salvage of the Gould's Petrel population (predominantly) on Cabbage Tree Island as one of the shining examples of just what can be achieved with targeted intervention. The champion of that effort, Nick Carlile, spoke at the May Club meeting about the recent surveys for breeding seabirds on the Broughton Island group. During those surveys a small number of Gould's Petrels was actually found nesting at Broughton Island, which to my mind definitely qualifies as "good news".

One key element of Nick's talk was the success of pest control on Broughton in recent years to the extent that the island is now rabbit and rat free. This is a remarkable achievement and opens up all kinds of opportunities for displaced native fauna to recolonise the island(s). To this end it has been suggested that HBOC consider helping out (or even taking the lead) in monitoring bird populations on Broughton Island. I think this is a fantastic opportunity for our Club. Broughton Island is unique in being one of the largest island National Parks in NSW and the only place in the state where you can camp next to an active seabird breeding colony (thanks to the recent installation of camping platforms).

Nick spoke of a vision of taking people out to one of the outer reaches of Broughton on dusk to witness Gould's Petrels coming back to their nests (not possible on Cabbage Tree). What a fantastic concept! Just like woodland birds, I am also passionate about seabirds and to think that one day it may be possible to be present when a petrel returns to its breeding island (let alone Gould's Petrels) so close to home is a truly stirring thought. And what an opportunity for us, as the birding club that has Broughton within its area of interest, to embrace such visions.

The breeding islands off Port Stephens are a significant and unique feature that HBOC has right on its doorstep. Just as we shouldn't take our productive woodlands for granted, I believe we shouldn't take these islands for granted either. I feel strongly that the Club has an incredible opportunity to complement the recent conservation successes on Broughton Island by getting involved and experiencing this amazing and important island.

Mick Roderick

Breeding Seabirds of Broughton Islands

Nick Carlile presented a terrific talk about breeding seabirds on the Broughton Islands at the May Clubnight. Some points are summarised below.

Broughton Island (132ha) and Little Broughton (27ha) are the main islands in the Broughton Island group, which also includes Looking Glass Isle (4ha), North Rock (2.4ha), Gandja-baa (1.0ha) and Inner Rock (0.9ha). Broughton has the highest density of stone tool scatters in the Hunter Region. It would have been connected to the mainland 8,000 years ago before the latest sea-level rise.

The natural environment of Broughton Island has been altered by the introduction of rabbits in 1906 along with a Research Station which was established between 1906 and 1908. Rats were introduced in the

1930s. Between 1900 and 1972, Broughton Island was regularly burnt by fishers, who lived in huts at Providence Beach between 1918 and 1939. Fishing huts have been present in Esmeralda Cove since 1918 to the present. Eradication of rats and rabbits took place in August 2009 - rabbits were largely eradicated by the calicivirus while saturation aerial baiting with the active ingredient brodifacoum was conducted in August 2009. Camping platforms were opened in 2012 in shearwater colonies behind Poverty Beach, near Esmeralda Cove.

After two years of checking, NPWS is certain that Broughton Islands are now rat and rabbit free.

Seabird surveys of the Broughton Group were conducted in 1910-1911 and approximately every decade from 1947 to 1977; then not until 1998 - 1999 and again in 2009 - 2011.

Breeding Seabirds of Broughton Islands cont.

Survey results for the 2009 - 2011 period:

Wedge-tailed Shearwater 90,000 pairs (up from 22,000 pairs in the 1970s)

Short-tailed Shearwater 700 pairs (down from 2,900 pairs) (Is it a real decline?)

Little Penguin approx 70 pairs

White-faced Storm-Petrel 215 pairs (down from 1500 pairs in 1970s and thousands in the 1930s when rats were introduced)

Gould's Petrel approx 15 pairs (may be increased by enhancing habitat below Pinkertop on Broughton Island with artificial nest sites)

Silver Gull approx 100 pairs (similar to 1970s)

Crested Tern 30 pairs (similar to 1970s)

Loss of Sooty Shearwater seems real for this island group - but it may not have been detected due to short survey times.

Broughton and Little Broughton Islands provide important habitat for colonies of shearwaters which like to burrow into deep soils. Looking Glass Isle has very shallow soils and therefore has potential for re-colonisation by White-faced Storm-Petrel because deeper burrowing species such as shearwaters will not find suitable habitat there.

Removal of rabbits and rats will allow re-establishment of native flora and fauna - it will be exciting to see what the future holds for the birds of Broughton Islands.

Trip Report - Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve Camp

Easter 7-10 April 2012

How good it is to pack up our camping gear and go on another HBOC Easter bird camp! The splendid sunny days added to the pleasure. The most scenic route to Munghorn has the most gravel and a treacherously windy road if you take it at speed. Despite advice from others I did take that route; others took the bitumen to Cassilis; smart move.

As usual, Hunter Bird Observers Club members arrived in dribs and drabs; the first night we had 9 members, then numbers grew to 39 and we also had a group of bird banders at the camp site. Rowley had his camp set up like a mansion with huge awning, tables and lights. He kindly offered his campsite as a communal area, which was much appreciated.

Honeyeater Flat is a lovely campsite used regularly by HBOC over the years, with the added bonus of a National Parks toilet, so no arduous digging and, it seems, less flies. As long as you know the combination to the lock at the gate and no-one has happily locked it, you can get in and out to Moolarben Road to the north, the Picnic Area and Springs to the south and the ridge to the east - all very good birding areas in walking distance. Old Cooyal, a small village 8km to the south, has a pub, a shower, meals and accommodation but not the ambience of a camp site.

Around the camp, species were few but those western birds are great to revisit: Gang-gang Cockatoo gave us a fly-over salute for three mornings; Jacky Winter perched and pounced; and large numbers of Buff-rumped Thornbill tinkled away their merry tune.

For the patient birders a wait on the ridge was rewarded by sightings of NSW's only endemic, Rockwarbler;

a lovely location if you were willing to do the climb, as the birds (mostly honeyeaters) were bathing and drinking in pools at the top of the waterfall and were seen at eye level.



Musk Lorikeets at Moolarben Road - Lorna Mee

On the first day Moolarben Road produced Brown Treecreepers, a cacophony of Noisy Friarbirds, Little Lorikeets and Musk Lorikeets, Diamond Firetails in small numbers, and a bonus was a flush of Painted Honeyeaters. Superb Lyrebirds were heard at the campsite, at Moolarben Road and at the Picnic Area, noted for their mimicking of the western birds compared with the usual rainforest bird calls we hear. Rose Robin and Red-capped Robin were scarce, Eastern Yellow Robin in its usual abundance. Alas the Turquoise Parrots were missing and were not reported for the entire weekend. Australian King-Parrots, Crimson Rosellas,

Trip Report - Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve Camp cont.

Galahs, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos and Sulfur-crested Cockatoos were recorded. But the bird of the camp for me was the Regent Honeyeater.

Eula McKane first saw one on Sunday morning, then we all scoured the hills of flowering trees for a sighting of the bird. In the evening, as we settled in for happy hour, the bird banders sent a convoy to inform us of a flock of Regent Honeyeaters. We quickly piled into cars and drove to Moolarben Road. As the shadows deepened and the day ended we saw first one Regent Honeyeater, then two, then four, and when these birds left, there were three more feeding in a Yellow Box, hanging over the road, with fairly insignificant flowering. During the afternoon we had had a thunderstorm and a big shower of rain. The next morning another survey of the tree revealed one Regent Honeyeater and very little else; when it flew no more Regent Honeyeaters were seen.

We had calls each night from the Owlet-nightjar, the Southern Boobook and the Doof-Doof music of the Powerful Owl; we were all too lazy to get out with our spotlights to see the night birds. A few microbats flew over the camp each evening.

Bird banders invited us to observe and witness the process of mist netting, banding and recording. Some sites were surveyed for the Mudgee-Wollar Important Bird Area. A busy time for some; a relaxed time for others; and some very good bonhomie over the camp fire. The Easter Bunny did his usual stunt on Sunday morning and Anthony helped us enjoy some roasted marshmallows in the evenings. All up we had 96 species, some brilliant days of excellent autumnal weather and warmish evenings. Thank you all who attended, allowing us to spend a very enjoyable Easter.

Lorna Mee



Di Johnson, Sue Hamonet, Kay Imrie and Eula McKane at Munghorn



Brown Thornbill above and Striated Thornbill left - Lorna Mee

Trip Report - Green Point

Tuesday 1 May 2012

We were very lucky with the weather. It was a beautiful, calm, sunny 19 degree day and Lake Macquarie was as smooth as.

Eighteen people arrived at the Belmont entrance (including some long-distance travellers from Cooranbong) and we had some beautiful sightings. A Sea-Eagle sat up on a dead tree trunk and we had clear, eye-level views of two Spotted Pardalotes – a first for some people. As well, we had at least 15 Laughing Kookaburras, plenty of honeyeaters – Lewins, White-naped and Yellow-faced and Noisy Friarbirds and Red Wattlebirds. There were plenty of little birds like Brown Thornbills, White-browed Scrubwrens, Variegated Fairy-wrens and Silvereyes. Also, lots of chatty Rainbow Lorikeets and a few Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, a couple of Australian King-Parrots but, unfortunately, no Musk Lorikeets.

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We had some water birds – Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, a Crested Tern, Pelicans and Chestnut Teal and Wood Ducks.

After a pleasant morning tea under the fig tree looking out over the lake, we moved to the Valentine entry. This was a bit quieter but our smaller group, having ventured into the depths of the reserve (we were NOT lost), had good views of Golden Whistlers, Scarlet Honeyeaters and an immature Fan-tailed Cuckoo feeding on berries.

We wandered back for a leisurely lunch on the grass having seen and heard 51 birds. There was talk about how lucky we are that this substantial forest area wasn't developed for wall-to-wall housing.

Anthony Gooden

Trip Report - Blackbutt Reserve

20 May 2012

REGENT HONEYEATER, SWIFT PARROT,
PACIFIC BAZA none of which were spotted
on our field trip to Blackbutt Reserve.

The five of us who attended (Rob, Rowley, Joy, John and Helen) had a thoroughly enjoyable walk with fine weather and a slight breeze. Once all signed in (which took no more than a minute) we set off from the Mahogany Drive carpark and said goodbye, in no uncertain terms, to an extremely boisterous family of Noisy Miners.

Passing an open area of bush we could hear the distinctive call of the Red Wattlebird and on approaching Lily Pond we noticed an active mixed group of birds including Red-browed Finch, White-browed Scrubwren, Eastern Spinebill and Lewin's Honeyeater.

Strolling on toward Bowerbird Creek we paused on the path close to Ridgeway Road to observe a group

of honeyeaters high up in the canopy. John's eagle eye picked out Scarlet Honeyeaters amongst Lewin's and Yellow-faced. We spent a while here, some in horizontal position, looking up and getting fantastic views of the Scarlets (a first for Rob).

Onwards toward Bowerbird Creek and just 10m off the track Helen picked up a White-throated Treecreeper spiralling up the craggy bark of a tree in search of food. We all watched and marvelled at the agility and industry of this beautiful bird.

We had great views of most birds seen and other notable species were Brown Gerygone, Spotted Pardalote, Satin Bowerbird, Grey Fantail and of course . . . Golden Whistler (male and female/immature).

An average of 5.8 birds each were seen which sounds better than the total of only 29 birds. Surprisingly low considering the weather was fine. I guess all the birds were out looking for Regent Honeyeaters like everyone else!

Rob Kyte

Future Activities - New Members Day 22 July 2012

Each year the Club welcomes New Members with a bird walk and barbecue at the Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland. "Old" Members are encouraged to come along and meet New Members, enjoy the birds and share the barbecue. The usual entry fee for the Wetlands

Centre will be waived for New Members.

For catering purposes, **please contact** Paul Baird on 4938 5039 or email pbaird@mail-safe.org before Wednesday 18 July 2012.

Future Activities - October Camp at Yengo National Park

29 September - 1 October 2012

The HBOC committee is investigating holding a camp in Yengo National Park for the October long weekend, 2012. Yengo National Park has a homestead and a small cottage as well as a campsite, all beyond a locked gate. The homestead will accommodate 10 people and the cottage will accommodate 5 people; both are accessible by two-wheel drive vehicle. The campsite is about 3 km beyond the homestead and 4WD is recommended for camping access.

It is possible to book the homestead exactly 3 months to the day of the dates it is required, but no sooner. Cost for the homestead is \$200 per day; if we fill the homestead this will cost each individual \$20 per day depending on the mix. The homestead has:

- Two queen-size double beds in separate bedrooms;
- One bunk (2 beds) plus two king-size single beds in the same room; and
- One sofa bed for 2 in the lounge room.

The cottage, which we can book for \$50 per day, has 2 bunks (4 beds) plus a king single.

The Ranger said that the homestead is booked usually within minutes of the opening for bookings for the long weekend. I wish to receive an indication of how many people would or could be interested in accommodation in the homestead.

Could you please email me at:

lornamee33@gmail.com

before **Monday 25 June** with a fairly secure positive response if you require accommodation in the homestead. No response is necessary if you intend to camp. Ideally, a deposit would be good prior to the time of booking which will be on 29 June 2012. At least 5 people have already indicated an interest in using the accommodation. The more takers the cheaper it is for each person.

Lorna Mee

Featured Birdwatching Site - The Watagans

Location

The Watagan Mountains occur in the southeast of the Hunter Region. They lie west of Lake Macquarie and the driving distance to Watagan access roads is about 30 minutes from the Jesmond area. The Watagans contain a significant network of forest roads that are relatively well maintained and trails for the more adventurous drivers and bushwalkers.

If the Sugarloaf Range is included, the Watagan Mountains represent the northeastern extremity of the Sydney Basin sandstone country and are roughly bordered by the Western Lake Macquarie hinterland to their east, the valley floor of the Lower Hunter Valley (Quorrobolong/Ellalong/Paxton area) and Wollombi Road to the north, the Great North Road to the West and George Downs Drive and the Yarramalong Valley to the south.

Access

There are a number of key access roads into the Watagans from the Hunter Region, including:

- Heaton Road from Quorrobolong and Mt Faulk Road from Freemans Drive in the north;
- Watagan Road from Martinsville through Wishing Well Forest via Cooranbong; and
- Prickly Ridge Road from Mandalong west of Morisset.

If you're accessing from the Central Coast area you can begin from:

- Watagan Forest Drive from Jilliby Road off Hue Hue Road in Jilliby;
- Brush Creek Road from Yarramalong Valley Road west of Wyong; or
- Walkers Ridge Road from the other end of Brush Creek Road where it enters George Downs Drive between Kulnura and Bucketty.

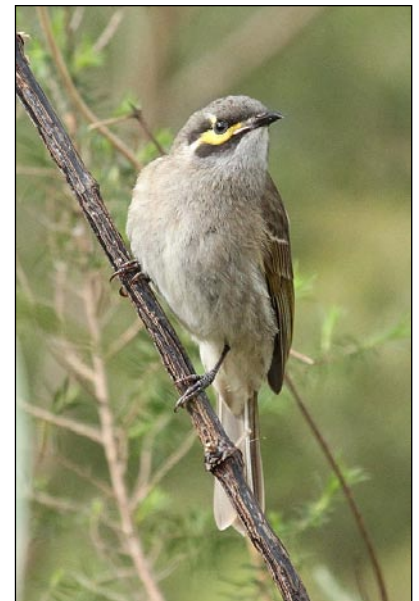
A search on Google maps (or some direction from someone in the know) will get you on the right path as it lists all of these key access roads.

Habitats

The Watagans contain a variety of habitats for birds, from dry ridge-top forests and tall Blackbutt and Spotted Gum dominated slopes, to tall wet forests in the sheltered gullies.

Despite the moderate diversity of habitats present, there are a number of key constraints on habitat development within the Watagans, including its limited elevation (around 400m) and its lack of extensive plateau country. These constraints prevent the development of sub-alpine vegetation forms and stifle the maintenance of permanent streams or swampy habitats that are a feature in the Mount Royal Range to the north of the Hunter Valley and the Blue Mountains further south. Therefore more sub-alpine occurring bird species such as the Olive Whistler, Crescent Honeyeater, Rufous Scrub-bird and Flame Robins are not residents in the Watagans' forests. Nevertheless some montane frequenting birds such as the Red-browed Treecreeper and Superb Lyrebird are regular in the Watagans where suitable habitat occurs.

Despite the relatively low elevation of the Watagans, a number of wet habitat birds move out of them to lowland habitats during the cooler months; such species include whistlers, Rose Robin, Pied Currawong and Bassian Thrush. Other species move in and out of the Watagans in response to seasonal foraging opportunities, such as the presence of blossom and fruiting trees; such species include black-cockatoos, Gang-Gang Cockatoo, Topknot and White-headed Pigeons, lorikeets, some honeyeaters and fruit-eating parrots like the Australian King-Parrot.



Yellow-faced Honeyeater (right) and Golden Whistler (below) are usually encountered in the Watagans - Allan Richardson



Featured Birdwatching Site - The Watagans cont.

The limited development of their wet forests and the location of the Watagans, to the south of the significant gap in the ranges that the Hunter Valley represents, also preclude the occurrence of some wet forest bird species that are present in the more significant rainforest habitats in the ranges to the north. Such species as Paradise Riflebird, Pale-yellow Robin, Wompoo Pigeon and the smaller fruit-doves are not generally recorded here. Emerald Doves and Spectacled Monarchs are rarely encountered (perhaps due to a lack of survey effort), but other wet forest regulars further north, such as the Green Catbird, Regent Bowerbird, Topknot Pigeon, Black-faced Monarch, Logrunner, Bassian Thrush and to a lesser extent Noisy Pitta, occur in more extensive stands of wet forest for at least part of their seasonal cycles.

Other Watagan Birds

The location of the Watagan's vegetation communities at the northern extremity of the Sydney Basin sandstones and the large area they represent is key to Watagan bird diversity. The extent and quality of such forests provide an abundance of foraging and shelter habitats for threatened forest owl species, including Powerful, Sooty and Masked Owls. There have been reports of Barking Owls toward the south of the Watagans, however this species is not a resident, but the smaller Southern Boobook is common here.



Tiny jewels in the forests - Variegated Fairy-wren, Large-billed Scrubwren and Eastern Yellow Robin - Allan Richardson

The secluded nature of some of the Watagan cliff-lines provide eyrie locations for Peregrine Falcons; Wedge-tailed Eagles are often encountered above.

While Rose Robins are a regular warm season breeder in the wet gullies of the Watagans the other local red-breasted robins are not common. I know of no records for Flame Robins, which prefer the Barrington Tops plateau (and perhaps the Coricudgy area) in our region. I've seen Scarlet Robins on the Wild Flower Walk near The Pines where the dry open forest is suited to this species. It's likely that Scarlet Robins take up residence in the summer months on dry ridge tops where logging practices have not encouraged dense regrowth in the understorey.

While Leaden Flycatchers are regular Satin Flycatchers are harder to come by, but I have recorded them in the Watagans on one occasion and encountered a single female Satin Flycatcher in autumn in a lowland context at Cooranbong, which was likely a Watagan bird dispersing after the breeding season.



Rockwarbler in the Watagans - Allan Richardson

The ridge-lines of the Watagans are often characterised by cliff-line habitats and these are frequented by Rockwarblers. There has been at least one report of Pilotbirds in the Watagans, but for unknown reasons this species is not known to reside here, although it occurs this far north to the west in Wollemi NP. Nevertheless similar species such as the three local scrub-wren species are plentiful. Dry grassy ridges in the Watagans are also home to Spotted Quail-thrush and the forest roads often have Wonga Pigeons foraging along them.

Featured Birdwatching Site - The Watagans cont.

Suggested Sites

Apart from the excellent network of forest roads and tracks, the Watagans have a number of camping and picnic areas and walking trails, which make excellent places to go bird watching.

Camping and Picnic Areas

The Basin

The Basin is located in the west of the Watagans and has picnic tables and ample room for camping, although be mindful that it does get busy around long weekends and holidays, as do many of the other camping sites in the Watagans. The Basin's appeal as a birding location is its juxtaposition to both dry and wet forests. There is an excellent walking trail that follows the creek up and then circles back over a rocky hill back to the camp. For those a little more adventurous the walking trail takes in a much longer loop through wet gully vegetation and lower slopes returning on the opposite side of the camp creek. All of the common wet and dry forest mountain birds are present, including a number of less common species, such as Logrunner, Red-browed Treecreeper, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Rose Robin and Superb Lyrebird. Early mornings are going to be your best shot for a number of these species, autumn being the period Lyrebirds and Logrunners are more vocal. The timber is very tall so call is the best way to get onto Red-browed Treecreeper initially.

The Pines

The Pines park has its camping and picnic areas separated. There are a few walking trails associated with The Pines, but some of these have fallen into disrepair. There is a short return walk on the northern side of the picnic area that follows the creek down and is good for a casual bird-watching walk. The wild flower walking trail had not been maintained the last couple of times I visited it, but the dry open forest above the picnic area is characterised by proteaceous plants such as Mountain Devil, Banksias and Waratahs, which are attractive to honeyeaters. As mentioned above the open nature of the ridge-top woodland here is suited to Scarlet Robins and both Gang-Gangs and Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos are often encountered in the surrounding forests.

Also in the vicinity of The Pines is the Abbots Falls Track, which is located to the east of The Pines picnic area. It traverses the upper reaches of a Dora Creek tributary through tall dry forest and wet gully vegetation before climbing up to German Point Road. It was an excellent walk when I last took it, but its state of repair is an unknown quantity at the moment.

Gap Creek Falls

The Gap Creek Falls walking trail carpark has a number of picnic tables around it and there is a camping area, back from and above the carpark. There is also a camping area several hundred metres back before you reach the walking trail car park. This camping area is often utilised by rock climbers to access the lower sections of the Monkey Face cliff-lines and is one of the areas you might target to see Rockwarblers.

The Gap Creek Falls walking trail traverses tall wet sclerophyll forest characterised by a rainforest understorey. Many of the Watagans' wet forest bird species can be found here, including Green Catbird, Red-browed Treecreeper, all three scrubwrens and Bassian Thrush, with Logrunner, Noisy Pitta, Brush Turkey, Topknot Pigeon, Regent Bowerbird, Crested Shrike-tit, Glossy Black-Cockatoo and Superb Lyrebird reported from this area. Part way along the trail the walk has a left-hand option to take walkers down to the base of the falls which is very worthwhile, but should really only be attempted by those who are active and fit, since the track is very steep and rocky in its lower sections. The falls base option can be taken until it begins to get too steep, but if this option is not taken walkers can continue to a section of Gap Creek that occurs above the falls and it is in this section where I've encountered Noisy Pitta, Topknot Pigeon, Regent Bowerbird and Brush Turkey.

Bangalow Road, by which Gap Creek Falls is accessed, also crosses some excellent wet sclerophyll forest habitats that are very worthwhile investigating and many of the above-mentioned species occur here as well.

Other Walks

Boarding House Dam

Boarding House Dam picnic area has an excellent walking trail through wet forest and is characterised by very large Blue Gums. Red-browed Treecreeper, Superb Lyrebird and many other birds occur here and it is one of the most reliable sites for Sooty Owl if you're keen to stay into the evening. There is a report of Spectacled Monarchs further down the creek and an old fire-trail crosses the creek if you can get across without wetting your feet. Camping is not allowed here though.

Wishing Well Forest Walk

The once excellent Wishing Well Forest Walk traverses down through the wet gully below the wishing well, but the last couple of times I've visited, it has been in poor repair with the track very hard to distinguish. Many wet

Featured Birdwatching Site - The Watagans cont.

forest bird species occur here and if you're adventurous and prefer the bush to yourself this may be suitable for you, although a means of navigation apart from your memory would be advisable.

Muir's Lookout Walk

The Muir's Lookout Walk occurs down off Watagan Forest Road along Prickly Ridge Road, which is the main access road from Mandalong. The walk begins in dry forest and descends down into a wet gully forest, which is good for wet country birds. It has been some time since I've visited Muir's Lookout, so the walk may not be maintained at the moment. If conditions are good the wetland where you turn off toward Prickly Ridge Road can be good for waterbirds.

Heaton Lookout

There was once an excellent walk through gullies and across ridges at Heaton Lookout, but its condition is unknown at this time.

Monkey Face Lookout

Named for a stray cow called Monkey Face that regularly wandered up from the Martinsville valley below, the lookout is a good place for a picnic. Views over the Martinsville valley and the Gap Creek catchment may be rewarded with Peregrine Falcons or Wedge-tailed Eagles and the rock faces are the home of Rockwarblers.

Hunter and Macleans Lookouts

These lookouts overlook the eastern end of Quorrobolong with excellent views across the valley. Ridge-top birds are possible here and Peregrine Falcons once maintained an eyrie near Macleans Lookout.

Drives

There are a number of interesting forest roads through the Watagans that traverse good bird-watching habitat,

although a little research on Google maps may be required to find your way to and from them and vehicles with 4WD and a little extra clearance may be required.

Watagan Forest Road - follows the back-bone of the Watagans from Mount Faulk Road and Heaton Park in the north, past Boarding House Dam and The Pines to Jilliby in the south. It is the key distribution road to all of the main routes through and into the Watagans.

Lemon Tree Road - heads south from Prickly Ridge Road traversing along ridges before descending through wet forests to Yambo Forest Road south of Mandalong. You're heading out of the Hunter in this neck of the woods though.

Watagan Creek Road - heads west from Walkers Ridge Road to Laguna on the Great Northern Road and follows the Watagan Creek valley through open country.

Congewai Creek Road - is worthwhile and is accessed from Paxton while Hayes Road from Millfield takes in a nice ridge-top drive to Flat Rock lookout which faces into the Congewai valley.

Walkers Ridge Road - is the main access to The Basin, passing turn-offs to Watagan Creek and Mount Warralong, the Watagans' highest point. Driving past The Basin turn will take you down to George Downs Drive between Bucketty and Kulnura or you can turn east to meander down through mountain slopes to the Yarralong valley.

Finally - drive carefully, keeping left on rises, and be thoughtful about your pull-over locations in regard to safety. Enjoy the Watagans, they are a wonderful resource for the Hunter birder particularly if you're looking for something a little out of town but not too far to make a tiring day of it.

Allan Richardson

Storm Refugees on Stockton Bight

Two Giant-Petrels were found on Stockton Bight on Monday 28 May 2012. The birds were juveniles that were apparently not strong enough to cope with ocean storms off the NSW coast. Audrey Koosmen, president of the Hunter-based Native Animal Trust Fund Rescue Service, urged anyone who sees a weakened bird on a beach to contact the Rescue Service on 0418628483 as the birds are vulnerable to dogs and are likely to die without care. The two Giant-Petrels were taken into care by the Rescue Service and transported to Taronga Zoo for further rehabilitation. They will eventually be released back to sea. One of the birds had been banded by the British Museum, but the actual banding location is yet to be revealed.



Native Animal Trust Fund carer Trudy Fennell of Edgeworth with a Northern Giant-Petrel, one of two petrels that washed up on Stockton Bight. Photo: Peter Stoop, Newcastle Herald, 30/5/2012

Hexham Swamp Rehabilitation

Hexham Swamp Rehabilitation Project aims to restore estuarine wetlands by re-introducing tidal flow through floodgates on Ironbark Creek. Stage three of the project saw the opening of an additional three floodgates in September 2011, bringing the total number of floodgates opened to six. The final two floodgates will be opened later in 2012. With all eight floodgates open, the area of inundation with tidal water is expected to reach about 650 ha.

Catchment Management Authority (CMA) staff undertake monthly aerial surveys of Hexham Swamp to monitor the extent of tidal inundation and changes in vegetation patterns as the floodgates on Ironbark Creek are opened progressively.

There have been some dramatic changes in the vegetation in Hexham Swamp. What was previously a system dominated by freshwater reeds and pasture grasses has been transformed into a brackish saltwater system supporting a mosaic of vegetation types. Saltmarsh and mangroves are replacing freshwater vegetation, providing valuable habitat for fish, prawns, and waterbirds including migratory waders and the Black-necked Stork. Areas of dense reeds are starting to transform to open water habitats, with spoonbills, ducks and swans recorded in the hundreds over the summer.

Over time the area of estuarine wetland will increase even further and nursery habitat for juvenile king prawns is expected to be restored. Prior to the construction of the floodgates in the early 1970s, Hexham Swamp was a large king prawn nursery with anecdotal reports of visible streams of prawns leaving Ironbark Creek to the Hunter River and travelling to sea.



Extent of saline water increasing in Hexham swamp (top) and view of Ironbark Creek, tributary of the Hunter River (below) - photos by CMA

Further information may be obtained from the Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority website:

<http://www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au>

PWCS Coal Terminal T4

Port Waratah Coal Services (PWCS) proposes to construct a fourth coal loading terminal (known as T4) in the Hunter Estuary. The Environmental Assessment (EA) for this proposed development was placed on public exhibition in February 2012 and an extended period for submissions closed on 7 May 2012. On behalf of HBOC, Ann Lindsey prepared a comprehensive submission objecting to the Coal Loader. Many HBOC members also submitted objections to the proposal. Copies of some of these have been placed on the Club website (hboc.org.au) on the Conservation page.

Although the majority of the Coal Loader will be constructed within the designated industrial area on Kooragang Island, adversely affecting Deep Pond, there are also plans to construct up to eight receipt railway lines adjacent to the existing railway line - in Swan Pond! Last year some 18ha of land adjacent to the railway (and

including about half of Swan Pond) was excised from the Hunter Wetlands National Park and added to the industrial land. HBOC lodged an objection to this action.

PWCS has purchased two offset areas: Ellalong Lagoon (southwest of Cessnock) and the Tomago Buffer Land (on the western side of Fullerton Cove). Ellalong Lagoon, a freshwater wetland, is offered as compensation for the loss of the freshwater habitat in Deep Pond. It is difficult to accept that an existing wetland, with its own suite of important attributes, is offered as compensation for the loss of another wetland with different attributes - for example, Deep Pond is a known drought refuge for inland species because it receives coastal rain when inland areas are drought-affected (sometimes Ellalong Lagoon is drought-affected too). Furthermore, because of its proximity to the Hunter Estuary, Deep Pond is used by migratory shorebirds which do not occur at

PWCS Coal Terminal T4 cont.

Ellalong, so there is no way that Ellalong Lagoon can provide the habitat lost when Deep Pond is obliterated by the proposed T4 Coal Loader.

The Tomago Buffer Land does offer an opportunity to create habitat - mainly because the land has been altered in the past by installation of a ring drain to drain the former wetlands and floodgates to prevent tidal inundation of the land. Plans to develop compensatory habitat on this site are yet to be finalised, but it does offer some hope

that the ongoing decimation of shorebird habitat in the Hunter Estuary will be alleviated - we will watch this with great interest.

However, the proposal to construct rail tracks on Swan Pond must be resisted. Swan Pond, on the eastern side of Wagtail Way, Ash Island, is a perfectly functioning habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl - often hundreds of them - and should be protected, not obliterated by construction of multiple railway lines.

Family Picnic at Swan Pond 1 July 2012

Newcastle's Coal Terminal Action Group is holding a Family Picnic near Swan Pond, Ash Island from 12noon to 4pm on Sunday 1 July 2012 to raise awareness of the area to be affected by the railway lines associated with the proposed PWCS Coal terminal. Guided bird walks will be provided. For further information and directions to the picnic site, see facebook.com/CoalTerminalActionGroup.

Powerful Owl Project - BirdLife Australia

BirdLife Australia's Birds in Backyards program is continuing and expanding its Powerful Owl project based on a pilot program run last year. The project will help us to understand important new information about the status, distribution, site fidelity, breeding success and habitat requirements of these large forest owls in the Sydney region. This information will ultimately inform conservation measures for this threatened species.

The project is again looking for interested members of the public to help us find out more about these birds. Volunteers within the Sydney region are being sought to become Owl Observers and participate in surveys. Owl Observers will check in on a breeding pair of Powerful Owls near them and report back regularly on what is happening at the nest. Owl Observers do not need to monitor at night (although some dusk visits may be needed).

The project is also looking for sightings of Powerful Owls from Kiama to Newcastle and west to the Blue Mountains. To find out more, submit a sighting (please include where, when and anything interesting) or to register as an Owl Observer please visit our website: <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/surveys/Powerful-Owl-Project> or email us directly at: powerfulowl@birdlife.org.au.

David Bain

Powerful Owl Project Officer

BirdLife Activities

Powerful Owls Uncovered — 17 June, 10.30–11.30am

The Discovery Centre, Newington Armory, Jamieson St, Sydney Olympic Park

The Powerful Owl project has produced some interesting results since it started. Join us to discover some of the latest findings about this interesting bird and find out how you can become involved in ensuring this vulnerable species is protected. This is a free talk, but bookings are essential.

To book, or for further information, call 9647 1033 or [email](mailto:powerfulowl@birdlife.org.au) us.

Wildlife Sound Recording — 14–15 July

Saturday 14 July, 10am–4pm at the Discovery Centre

Sunday 15 July, 8am–2pm at Mitchell Park, Maraylya, Western Sydney

Fred Van Gessell will help you learn the art of recording the sounds of nature with a focus on capturing the beautiful birdcalls of Australia's native birds. This 2-day course includes theoretical and practical investigations that teach participants how to select and operate the appropriate equipment for use in the field and also begin recording sounds with confidence.

Cost: Members \$89, non-members \$99

Numbers limited, bookings are essential; [email](mailto:powerfulowl@birdlife.org.au) us or phone (02) 9647 1033

BirdLife Activities cont.

Bird Box Building Workshop — 22 July 10am–12pm **The Discovery Centre, Newington Armory, Jamieson St, Sydney Olympic Park**

The Discovery Centre presents a bird box building workshop. Come along and join a local bird expert and volunteers to learn about birds, bird habitat, and the importance of nest boxes. Learn how to make your own nest box to take home.

Cost: Members \$30, non-members \$40
Bookings are essential; [email](mailto:birdlife@birdlife.org.au) us or phone (02) 9647 1033

Capertee Tree Planting - 18-19 August 2012

Tree planting on 5-6 May 2012 was a great success with the 100,000th tree being planted in this long-term project to rehabilitate Regent Honeyeater habitat in the Capertee Valley.

The next tree planting will be held on 18-19 August 2012. Planting will take place on a Crown Station Road property, in the southern part of Capertee Valley, close to other previously planted sites. Cottage accommodation is available but bookings are required. Further details of the weekend are available from BirdLife Southern NSW, Phone: 02 9647 1033 or email southernnsw@birdlife.org.au

Iain Paterson
Project Manager

New Members

The Club extends a warm welcome to:

Colin and Monica Byrnes of Jesmond
Paul and Jo McRae of Belmont
Jeffrey and Merylyn Pettifer of Lemon Tree Passage
Eric Tan of Maitland

We hope to meet you at Club outings and meetings.

BIGnet 14-15 April 2012

The first meeting of the Bird Interest Groups of NSW for 2012 was held in Cowra and featured a BirdLife Australia seminar on woodland birds. Holistic farming and the importance of habitat linkages across the landscape were highlighted. BIGnet is an important venue for networking, particularly on conservation issues. BirdLife Australia's Conservation Officer, Jenny Lau, led a workshop on conservation issues and confirmed that sending a protest letter is an effective means of helping to sway opinion. Development of a Conservation Officer's Toolkit to help clubs make submissions on conservation issues will be discussed at the next meeting. It was noted that many Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs) are being offered for sale to private landholders. A link regarding TSRs will be placed on BirdLife's website.

Judy Harrington tabled a discussion document from Graeme Hamilton, CEO of BirdLife Australia, about affiliation with BirdLife Australia. HBOC had become affiliated with Bird Observation and Conservation Australia (BOCA) to take advantage of cheap public liability insurance. Now that BOCA has merged with BA, the affiliation relationship needs to be explored and specified. Meanwhile, HBOC has taken out independent insurance, but is keen to become affiliated with BirdLife Australia to promote a stronger voice for birds.

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

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. Well, winter had definitely arrived. Hunterbirding had quietened down as usual and everyone's attention had turned to two things—a pirate captain's speedy companion and a nectar consumer in a position of governance. The local coordination of the first of the annual Regent Honeyeater / Swift Parrot surveys was assisted through the use of hunterbirding for communication. Results from the survey were also shared by those hunterbirders who participated. Thankfully it's a good year for these species in the Hunter this year, particularly the Honeyeater, with as many as 70 birds located in the Lower Hunter already. This is great news for a bird that has seen a dramatic decline in recent years. Other noteworthy discussion included:

- Knowledge exchange on coordinate systems following a report of a Square-tailed Kite with a map grid reference as opposed to lat-long coordinates;
- Discussion on the identification of Corvids by their calls and their distribution in the Hunter;
- The occurrence and movements of Musk Lorikeet in the Region;
- Advice on equipment used for spotlighting species and any impacts that this activity may have on the birds.

In this report I've decided to feature a debate on audio equipment for call playback. This activity is the practice of using recordings of birdsong or calls to attract the attention of real birds in the bush. It is an activity that I had very little exposure to in the UK and I believe one which is not generally used. Here however, it appears to be far more widely undertaken.

The practice of call playback from an ethical perspective was only just touched upon and not discussed in depth on the recent hunterbirding exchanges. It has been discussed in more detail previously though. The concern for some people is that the playing of bird calls is detrimental to the recipients of the targeted calls, as they

abandon the current business they are undertaking to investigate the calls. The foreign calls may be perceived by the individual as a territorial threat, which could be distressing, particularly when breeding.

The counter arguments include the fact that even our very presence when birding will impact on the birds' daily activities and so our enjoyment of birds almost inevitably has some minor impact. The playing of calls and subsequent response is only a relatively short interruption to the birds' intended activities. Also, there will likely be many more natural disturbances during the course of the day that similarly impact on the bird in question. The reality is that the disturbance from call playback that most birds are subjected to will represent an insignificant disturbance. However, particular individuals may be subject to a much more frequent occurrence of call playback and this over exposure should be avoided. Some sound advice for minimising the impact of call playback is that "it should only be done once or twice and certainly not at all if there are any prospects of upsetting territories, breeding etc."

The use of call playback can be particularly useful for exercises such as surveying numbers of Regent Honeyeaters, where "playing a call may elicit a response from a bird that would be otherwise undetectable". The improved knowledge and subsequent conservation of species in serious decline, brought about through more accurate information on their numbers and distribution surely outweighs the minor disturbance of call playback? The threat to species due to loss of habitat represents a far greater concern than any impact the use of call playback might be having.

Now with the ethical musing out of the way, we can turn our attention to what the most effective equipment for call playback is, as was the focus of the hunterbirding debate. There was some discussion as to what was important for the call playback, as to whether "although volume is important, the quality maybe more so". The consensus seems to be that volume is key, as even poor attempts by humans to mimic bird calls often result in a response. For this reason, professional bird surveys tend to use the aid of a megaphone (loud hailer). However, this is not very practical given the size of the device. It may work well when you are in or by your car, but is too cumbersome when bush-bashing.

A few different speaker options were discussed, including the iMainGo2, Moshi Bassburger, x-mini capsule, iPhone and iTalk. The outcome of the hunterbirding posts was that the louder the speaker is, the better it is for call playback (particularly Owls). The volume that the speakers put out is related to their wattage and generally, the higher the wattage, the bigger the speaker.

Hunterbirding

Herein lies the problem. There is a trade-off between volume and size – the speaker must be small enough to be easily carried whilst walking, but loud enough to do the job well. It sounds like the quest is still on to find the “holy grail” of call-playback speakers – a truly small

but powerful (and preferably affordable) speaker. Until then, the birds are free from the disturbance of hoards of birders roaming through the bush blasting out “get off my turf!” calls...

Dan Williams

Coordinates and Atlassing

At the last HBOC Committee meeting, my first, it was suggested that a number of HBOC members are reluctant to submit bird observation records to the BirdLife Australia Atlas, or other atlas data bases, because they do not have a hand-held GPS (Global Positioning System) or do not know how to use one to provide coordinates with their observations. These important observations then go unreported.

Hand-held GPS meters are not expensive and are easy to use. However, there is another free and easy way to get these coordinates, if you have access to a computer with internet connection. The required coordinates can easily be gained from Google Earth, a free download to your computer. Google Earth allows one to view any location on the surface of the globe, including anywhere in Australia, your back yard or your favourite birding spot, and importantly get coordinates for that location.

To get these coordinates, go onto Google Earth and zoom into the location of the bird that you have observed and wish to record on the database. Move the hand thingy about till it is over the location of the bird observation and on the bottom centre edge of the screen you will see a set of numbers that change as one moves the hand thingy about. These are the coordinates that you are after. To change them into Degrees, Minutes and Seconds, which is what the Atlas uses, look up to the top tool bar, right click on Tools, then right click on Options. On the left hand side of the display is “Show Lat/Long”, choose Degrees, Minutes, Seconds and click OK. Now, wherever you have the hand thingy on Google Earth these are your coordinates for Atlassing. Write them down. For example, a location at the start of the covered walkway to the car park entrance of the Hunter Wetlands Centre, will show on the Google Earth screen

as something like 32°52’35.15”S 151°41’44.96”E (don’t worry about the elevation). These numbers are short for 32 degrees, 52 minutes, 35.15 seconds South by 151 degrees, 41 minutes, 44.96 seconds East. If you don’t understand what they mean don’t worry about it, just make sure you copy them down accurately into your bird atlas data sheets. Obviously, if you are on a birding expedition (the kids think it’s a holiday) in unfamiliar country, you will have to record in your notebook reasonably accurate distances and directions from significant landmarks such as towns or river crossings etc. Later at home you can refer to your notes to zoom into your important bird location on Google Earth to get your coordinates.

Now, for those who are not already Atlassers, with the BirdLife Australia Atlas, it is dead easy to register over the Internet, then enter that important bird data via the computer. Simply ring the BirdLife Australia National Office (03 9347 0757) or send an email to info@birdlife.org.au about becoming an Atlasser, and they will send you an Observer Code, a Username and a Password. Then, when you have that important bird observation in your note book simply go to the Birddata website at <http://birddata.com.au>, log on, follow the prompts and enter your information including your Google Earth coordinates, submit and log off; done, easy peasy. So, good luck, be brave and have a go at it.

In a future newsletter I will write another article on how you can transfer waypoints and tracks from the hand-held GPS device onto Google Earth so that you can see where you walked or where you recorded that important bird.

Greg Little

Club Night Observations March - May 2012

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

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Australasian Bittern	1	11/4/12	Ash Island	G. Feletti/W. Filewood
Australasian Darter	1	2/2/12	Dora Creek	C.&R.Goodenough
Australasian Darter	2+1dy	19/4/12	Dora Creek	C.&R.Goodenough
Australasian Shoveler	9	13/3/12	Muswellbrook STW	M.Roderick

Club Night Observations March - May 2012 cont.

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

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Australasian Shoveler	20+	15/3/12	Morpeth	A.Lindsey
Australasian Shoveler	2	23/3/12	Walka Water Works	G.Brosie
Australian Shelduck	3	21/3/12	Hexham Swamp	G.Brosie
Australian Shelduck	1f	3/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	13/3/12	Warners Bay [stunned]	S.Morris
Bar-tailed Godwit	60-70	21/3/12	Ash Island	G.Brosie
Bar-tailed Godwit	1	3/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Black Falcon	2	26/3/12	Scone [Main St]	G.Newling
Black Falcon	2	28/3/12	Scone [Main St]	G.Newling
Black Swan	78	3/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Black-fronted Dotterel	20+	21/3/12	Ash Island	G.Brosie
Black-necked Stork	2	12/3/12	Hexham Swamp	M.Newman
Black-necked Stork	Pr	15/3/12	Morpeth	A. Lindsey
Black-tailed Godwit	3	3/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Black-tailed Godwit	25	17/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Black-winged Stilt	107	3/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Black-winged Stilt	276	7/5/12	Ash Island	P.Alexander
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	29/3/12	Warners Bay	R.Walker
Buff-banded Rail	1	20/4/12	Dora Creek	C.&R.Goodenough
Buff-banded Rail	1	2/5/12	Dora Creek	C.&R.Goodenough
Bush Stone-curlew	1	27/2&12/3	Dora Creek	C.&R.Goodenough
Chestnut Teal	1109	3/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Common Greenshank	10+	21/3/12	Ash Island	G.Brosie
Crested Shrike-tit	4	22/4/12	Pelton	P.Alexander
Curlew Sandpiper	3	3/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Double-barred Finch	1	12/3/12	Salamander Bay	T.Clarke
Double-barred Finch		21/3/12	Walka Water Works	G.Brosie
Double-barred Finch	15	23/5/12	Wingen [garden]	G.Newling
Eastern Koel	2	24/4/12	Salamander Bay	A.Gooden
Eastern Osprey	1	29/3/12	Speers Point	R.Walker
Emu	3	4/12/12	Ellalong Lagoon	M.Blyth
European Goldfinch	2	21/3/12	Walka Water Works	G.Brosie
Gang-gang Cockatoo	3	15/4/12	Werakata N.P.	S.Roderick
Gang-gang Cockatoo	12	5/5/12	Wollombi	J.Greig
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	20	9/3/12	Myall Lakes	T.Marsh
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	16/3/12	Tenambit [Metford Rd]	G.Brosie
Godwit sp. [albino]	1	11/3/12	Swan Bay	L.Mee
Golden Whistler	2	23/5/12	Wingen [garden]	G.Newling
Grey Goshawk	1	24/1/12	Tighes Hill	T.Clarke
Grey Goshawk	1	20/4/12	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P.Lightfoot
Grey-crowned Babbler	6	13/3/12	Nulkaba	T.Clarke
Grey-crowned Babbler	7	6/5/12	Beresfield	J.Thomas
House Sparrow	60+	14/3/12	Stroud Road	T.Clarke
Little Eagle	1	16/4/12	Cessnock	S.Roderick
Marsh Sandpiper	14	19/2/12	Ash Island [Swan Pond]	T.Clarke
Olive Whistler	1	16/2/12	Barrington Tops N.P.	T.Clarke
Olive Whistler	2	17/2/12	Barrington Tops N.P.	T.Clarke

Club Night Observations March - May 2012 cont.

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Olive-backed Oriole	1	23/5/12	Wingen [garden]	G.Newling
Pacific Baza	2	6/04/12	Mulbring	L.Crawford/ C.Herbert
Pacific Baza	1	15/4/12	Cessnock [town centre]	S.Roderick
Pacific Baza	4	9/5/12	Eleebana [Stobbard Res]	A.Gooden
Peregrine Falcon	1	15/3/12	Morpeth	A.Lindsey
Peregrine Falcon	1	26/3/12	Wingen	G Newling
Pink-eared Duck	2	13/3/12	Muswellbrook STW	M.Roderick
Pink-eared Duck	1	18/3/12	Hunter Wetlands Centre	R. &M. Stewart
Plumed Whistling-Duck	~80	15/3/12	Doughboy Hollow	P.Alexander
Plumed Whistling-Duck	3	22/3/12	Wingen	G.Newling
Plumed Whistling-Duck	~20	7/4/12	Tarro Recreational Res.	J.Thomas
Plumed Whistling-Duck	100+	7/5/12	Doughboy Hollow	P.Alexander
Powerful Owl	1	1/4/12	Eleebana [Stobbard Res]	A.Gooden
Red-browed Finch	3	23/5/12	Wingen [g]	G.Newling
Red-necked Avocet	53	7/5/12	Ash Island	P.Alexander
Red-rumped Parrot	2	18/2/12	Newcastle East	G.Woods
Red-rumped Parrot	8	6/5/12	Tarro Recreational Res.	J.Thomas
Rose Robin	1f	23/5/12	Wingen [garden]	G.Newling
Rufous Fantail	1	9/3/12	Tighes Hill	T.Clarke
Scarlet Robin	Pr	22/4/12	Pelton	P.Alexander
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1	19/2/12	Ash Island [Swan Pond]	T.Clarke
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	2	3/4/12	Ash Island	A.Lindsey
Spangled Drongo	4	20/4/12	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P.Lightfoot
Spotted Harrier	1	7/2/12	Rawdon Vale Rd	K.Peters
Spotted Harrier	1	10/4/12	5km S.of Denman	J.Cockerell
Spotted Quail-thrush	1	15/4/12	Werakata N.P.	S.Roderick
Square-tailed Kite	1	9/03/12	Toronto	L.Crawford/ C.Herbert
Square-tailed Kite	1	18/3/12	Weston	S.Roderick
Square-tailed Kite	1	1/04/12	Carey Bay	L.Crawford/ C.Herbert
Square-tailed Kite	1	12/4/12	Telarah	G. Brosie
Square-tailed Kite	1	17/4/12	Cessnock	S.Roderick
Square-tailed Kite	2	20/4/12	Weston	S.Roderick
Striated Heron	2	21/3/12	Ash Island	G.Brosie
Striped Honeyeater	2	4/5/12	Swansea	J.Adams
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	2	28/04/12	Awabakal N.R.	R.& M. Stewart
Wandering Whistling-Duck	~30	7/4/12	Tarro Recreational Res.	J.Thomas
Wandering Whistling-Duck	4; 1on	20/4/12	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P.Lightfoot
Wandering Whistling-Duck	~120	6/5/12	Tarro Recreational Res.	J.Thomas
Wandering Whistling-Duck	24; 6on	9/5/12	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P.Lightfoot
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	26/1/12	Stockton Sandspit	T.Clarke
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	12/3/12	Myall Lakes	T.Marsh
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	12/3/12	Myall Lakes	T.Marsh
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	15/4/12	Werakata N.P.	S.Roderick
White-breasted Woodswallow	20+	21/3/12	Walka Water Works	G.Brosie
White-throated Gerygone	1	21/3/12	Walka Water Works	G.Brosie
White-throated Gerygone	5	9/5/12	Walka Water Works	L.Mee
White-winged Chough	20	21/3/12	Walka Water Works	G.Brosie
Yellow Wagtail	3	19/2/12	Ash Island [Wagtail Way]	T.Clarke
Yellow Wagtail	1	10/3/12	Ash Island	P.Hansbro
Yellow Wagtail	1	21/3/12	Ash Island	G.Brosie
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	21	24/3/12	Wangi Wangi	H.Windon
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	11	23/5/12	Wingen Village	G.Newling

HUNTER BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB ACTIVITIES FOR JUNE - DECEMBER 2012

Please refer to Newsletters for details of times, meeting places and contacts as events may change

Tuesday Outings	Sunday Outings	Camps	Surveys
5 June - Awabakal Reserve	24 June – Walka Water Works, Maitland	9 - 11 June - Oaklands Road near Coolah Tops	19 June - Tomago Wetlands Survey
			23 June - Hunter Wader Survey
3 July - Hunter Wetlands Centre	22 July - New Members Day, Hunter Wetlands Centre		17 July - Tomago Wetlands Survey
			20 July – Port Stephens Waterbird Survey
			21 July - Hunter Wader Survey
7 August - McGregor Park/Jesmond Park	19 August - Laguna		4-5 August - Regent Honeyeater/Swift Parrot Survey
			18 August - Hunter Wader Survey
			21 August - Tomago Wetlands Survey
4 September - Colongra Wetlands, Budgewoi	23 September - Munmorah SCA	17 - 19 September – Location to be advised	15 September - Hunter Wader Survey
			18 September - Tomago Wetlands Survey
			18 - 20 September - Rufous Scrub-bird Survey (To be confirmed)
2 October - Green Wattle Creek, Butterwick	21 October - Jerusalem Creek	29 Sept - 1 October - Yengo National Park	13 October - Hunter Wader Survey
			16 October - Tomago Wetlands Survey
6 November - Ash Island	25 November - Johnsons Hill Track, Myall Lakes		17 November - Hunter Wader Survey
			20 November - Tomago Wetlands Survey
4 December - Catherine Hill Bay	16 December - Latham's Snipe Survey at Pambalong NR		15 December - Hunter Wader Survey

Activities June - August 2012

DATE	EVENT	MEETING PLACE	CONTACT
Wednesday 13 June	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Mick Roderick – “Hunter Big Year” Bird of the Evening: Paddy Lightfoot
Sunday 17 June	Create shelly sand Stockton Sandspit	9.00am Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
Tuesday 19 June	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 Please ring to confirm
Saturday 23 June	Hunter Wader Survey	10.00am 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 Mick Roderick 0421761237 – Deep Pond Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay
Sunday 24 June	Field Outing: Walka Water Works, Maitland	8.30am at first carpark within Walka Water Works precinct	Paul Baird 4938 5039
Sunday 24 June	Create shelly sand Stockton Sandspit	1.00pm Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
JULY 2012			
Sunday 1 July	Create shelly sand Stockton Sandspit	9.00am Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
Tuesday 3 July	Mid-week Outing – Hunter Wetlands Centre	8.00am Car Park, Wetlands Centre. Entry \$10; \$6.50 conc.	Margaret Stewart 4963 2029
Wednesday 4 July	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	All members welcome
Sunday 8 July	Create shelly sand Stockton Sandspit	9.00am Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
Wednesday 11 July	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Gabe Anderson – Great Eastern Ranges Initiative Bird of the Evening: Jim Smart
Sunday 15 July	Create shelly sand Stockton Sandspit	8.00am Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
Tuesday 17 July	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265
Friday 20 July	Port Stephens Waterbird Survey	circa 7am at various locations	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 Please ring to confirm
Saturday 21 July	Hunter Wader Survey	9.00am Ash Island 9.30am 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 Mick Roderick 0421761237 – Deep Pond Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay
Sunday 22 July	Field Outing: New Members Day including BBQ lunch	9.30am Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland Free entry for New Members	Paul Baird 4938 5039
Sunday 29 July	Create shelly sand Stockton Sandspit	8.00am Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
AUGUST 2012			
Wednesday 1 August	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	All members welcome
Sat/Sunday 4/5 August	Swift Parrot & Regent Honeyeater Surveys	Various locations as desired or directed	Steve Roderick 0409 452 921 Please contact for information
Tuesday 7 August	Midweek Outing - McGregor Park / Jesmond Park	8.00am George McGregor Park, Cambridge Drive (off McCaffrey Drive), Rankin Park	Keith & Margaret Woods 4963 3070
Wednesday 8 August	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Ken Conway – The Hunter Wetlands Centre Bird of the Evening: Pat Pountney