



# Newsletter

Hunter Bird Observers Club

*Affiliated with BirdLife Australia*

Issue No. 3/13 June 2013

**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

## The Spoon-billed Sandpiper is facing imminent extinction

### BUT - the operation to save it is underway

The Spoon-billed Sandpiper is hurtling towards extinction. Fewer than 100 pairs remain in the wild, together weighing less than a single Mute Swan. Without urgent action, it could be lost forever.

In a bold step, we have made two expeditions to Far East Russia to start a conservation breeding programme for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. Now, a small flock is under specialist care in a purpose-built aviary at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's (WWT's) headquarters in Slimbridge, Gloucestershire. This flock is a precious insurance policy – a last resort in case the species becomes extinct in the wild – and has bought time to tackle the multitude of threats facing the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. (continued page 2)



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## President's Column

The end of autumn and the end of an 'Indian Summer' really – what a beautiful last couple of months of autumn we've had! Winter looms and already we've been seeing some of the birds that this season brings – Swift Parrots are once again arriving in the Cessnock woodlands, Double-banded Plovers are lining Stockton Beach and Rose Robins are flitting about in the lowland forests. The changing of the whistling guard has happened in the lowlands as well, with the summer sounds of Rufous Whistlers exchanged for those of Golden Whistlers that have moved in from the mountains.

Watching the change of seasons has always been something that I have loved about being a birder. Being in-tune with birdlife really gives you a deeper insight into how the seasons change; not on the calendar on the wall, but out there on the ground!

It is not always immediately obvious though. Sometimes it is not so much the arrival or movement of birds as it is about the birds that are not 'there' anymore. This is much more difficult to keep track of. For example it has only just dawned on me that I haven't been seeing or hearing

White-breasted Woodswallows over my house for the past few days. It has been about a week now and I would normally at least hear them every day so I am assuming that they have departed for warmer climes. They are interesting as they are often one of the last to leave and first to arrive back in spring. Curiosity got the better of me and I have just consulted the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB) on the topic of White-breasted Woodswallow movements and it is actually a very complex subject.

The thing is, there aren't people out there studying departure times for birds (well, if anyone is, it certainly wouldn't be all species in every area) so we rely on observations that we, as birdwatchers, make to inform texts such as HANZAB. I encourage people to record and report things like this – we all make significant contributions to bird knowledge by doing small things like that.

Happy winter birding.

**Mick Roderick**

## Spoon-billed Sandpiper facing extinction (continued from page 1)

Chief among them are illegal hunting, which is killing the young birds before they are old enough to breed, and the reclamation of coastal mudflats, which they depend on to rest and refuel on their long migration.

Conservationists working with villagers in Myanmar and Bangladesh have already started to ease the pressure of hunting. At an international level, pressure is mounting to protect the remaining coastal wetlands on which the Spoon-billed Sandpiper rests and eats during its 8,000km migration.

The hope is that the problems that the Spoon-billed Sandpiper faces can be solved. Then the conservation breeding programme will be producing eggs that can be hatched and released back into an environment that is far safer for this unique and charismatic bird.



Another aspect of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper recovery program is called "Head Start". This program involves finding Spoon-billed Sandpiper nests early in the breeding season so that eggs can be taken from the nests and artificially incubated under controlled conditions to ensure hatching success (July). The birds are released into the wild shortly after fledging (August). This technique improves breeding success significantly.

Although the Spoon-billed Sandpiper does not reach Australia, it uses the same breeding grounds and stopover sites as several other species that do migrate to Australia. The threats faced by this small bird are the same as those faced by many other species in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway. Thus through good science, focused management, and dedicated people on the ground, a difference can be made to not only saving a species but also to assisting a wide group of migratory shorebirds and waterbirds.

The July Club Night will feature a video on *Saving the Spoon-billed Sandpiper* - the true story of a small team going to the extremes to take on the biggest challenge of their lives . . . to save a species from extinction.

They deserve our support.

Let's make this a fund-raising night at the movies to assist this terrific effort.

## Meeting Highlights - What to do with an injured bird

Notes from the April Club Night presentation by veterinarian Dr Mark Simpson

Many of us have been in a situation when we see a sick or injured bird, and are not sure what we should do, or if we should do anything. Our ability to assist injured wildlife is often complicated by situation and circumstance, but armed with the right knowledge, and access to the relevant resources, you can feel more confident that you can help.

There are several reasons why you might be required to assist an injured or diseased bird. The most common reasons a person would need to catch a wild bird are for humane reasons. A bird may be in pain or suffering, and require veterinary attention in order to alleviate this suffering. Some birds may be captured and assessed for the purpose of disease control or research programs. And in unusual or significant circumstances, it may be important for authorities and wildlife groups to assess birds that are deceased; this may be for infectious disease control, surveillance or research.

### *What is the right thing to do if you find an injured bird?*

Firstly, don't panic! Your stress will only contribute to the bird's stress, so stay calm. If you do find a bird that is sick or injured it is advised that you contact your local Wildlife Rescue group before you approach the bird. Depending on resources, they may be able to come and collect the bird themselves, or they will give you advice based on the situation you describe.

A good resource is the 'Birds in Backyards' website. This website provides information on injured birds, as well as a list of contact details for wildlife organizations. Go to: <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>.

Birds are very good at hiding illness, so when we see a sick bird, it is usually very sick. This is known

as the preservation reflex. Sick birds are much more susceptible to the effects of stress and handling, so it is important that you take steps to minimise stress during their capture.

Towels and gloves are useful, especially when handling larger birds. When holding a bird you must have a firm but gentle grip. Holding a bird with a loose grip will make it struggle more, and is likely to make the capture more stressful. For small birds, use one hand and hold the bird so its head is between your index and middle fingers. The rest of your hand will wrap about the body. For medium-sized birds, use two hands – one over each wing. Large birds like raptors and owls have large beaks and sharp claws, so avoid handling birds of this size if possible. Keep note of their location and movement, contact your local Wildlife Rescue group and wait for an experienced bird handler to arrive.

Once you have a good grip on the bird, wrap it in a towel (think of the birdie-burrito) and place the bird and towel into a secure, well ventilated box. Once the bird is secured it is important that it remain quiet and dark inside the box while you seek appropriate treatment or assistance. Do not attempt to feed the bird or give it water during this time.

Only people with the appropriate wildlife carer's licence are legally allowed to look after and rehabilitate wild birds, so the next step is to take the bird to either a carer or a vet. A vet will not (generally) charge you to bring in wildlife.

A good contact for wildlife enthusiasts in the Hunter Region is the Native Animal Trust Fund, they can give you information on local resources and carers. Visit their website: <http://www.hunterwildlife.org.au>

**Mark Simpson**

## Australia Post celebrates pardalotes



This is the fourth stamp issue in the Australian Birds series, released on 11 May 2013. The name 'pardalote' derives from the Greek word *pardalotos* meaning 'spotted like a leopard', as small whitish spots are common to the family.

Pardalotes are mainly insectivorous, gleaning insects from leaves and branches. They also eat lerps, the sugary exudate of psyllids (sap-sucking insects), and other sugary exudates from leaves. Pairs share in nest building, egg incubation and rearing the young.



## ARNOTT'S PARROT: ANOTHER ENDANGERED SPECIES?

A short report on Arnott's Parrot (HBOC January 2013 Newsletter, p.5) looked for the most likely parrot species in the Arnott's Biscuit Company logo. The Arnott's website dates their TM bird as 1886, and claims it was based on a sketch of a 'Mexican parrot'. Mark and I concur it wasn't an Australian species, contrary to popular sentiment. Our internet search for the original species and its habitat looked at Mexican and South American parrots. We locked on to the Genus *Macaw*, in which Wikipedia claims there are over 900 extant and extinct species. The sub-group *Ara* seemed most promising.

As luck would have it, a Red-fronted Macaw (*Ara rubrogenys*) was brought to the Mt Sugarloaf Veterinary Hospital for attention last December. We then began discussing the evidence for and against this being the 'TM bird'. But what got even more attention was the future of this species. The Red-fronted Macaw is a popular pet in the USA and South America, and legendary in animated movies and cartoons. Despite all this, it is in danger of extinction – the same fate as its neighbourhood 'cousin' the Glaucous Macaw, 50 years ago. Wikipedia's website elaborates why they're at risk, and what is being done by Bolivian and other international projects ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-fronted\\_Macaw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-fronted_Macaw)).

This species is endemic to a small area on the east Andean slope of south-central Bolivia. Its original natural habitat is dry forest, but this has been degraded to thorn and cactus scrub by centuries (if not millennia) of human activity. It is locally common but declining, with the population variously estimated at 1,000 - 4,000 individuals - approximating 670 - 2,700 mature individuals. Like the *Glaucous Macaw* did, many Red-fronted Macaws have nesting sites in cliffs. A small population breed in palms or cactus, but these sites are insecure and raided, due to a continued illegal trade. They can also be affected by pesticides on crops where they forage - mostly during the non-breeding season. Many were once trapped, or shot as crop pests! Most of the Bolivian parrot trade is domestic but more valuable threatened species like this Macaw end up in Peru or further afield. Maybe Arnott's parrot had this fortune.

The Red-fronted (or -froned) Macaw is considered Critically Endangered in Bolivia. Its capture, transport and export are prohibited, but not effectively enforced. Posters urging the protection of macaws and their habitat were issued in 1992 and were well received in the region. Long-term conservation projects include: working with farming communities to protect a breeding cliff with active nests; setting up an ecotourism lodge (2006) with proceeds going to local communities; and

a planned protection area at this site (2007). Other initiatives are: to continue surveying and monitoring; to fence off key patches of gallery forest to limit cattle-grazing and permit vegetation to regenerate; to enforce trade laws and organise awareness campaigns; and to identify suitable sites for protected areas throughout the species' range.

Projects and networks are also well-established *ex situ* (outside Bolivia), to complement Bolivia's own projects, increase awareness of the species and its natural environment, and provide genetic reservoirs and information about nutrition and reproduction. Such efforts are also being applied to management of Australia's rare and endangered species (eg. Echo Parakeet, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, and Palm Cockatoo). For example, see [www.birdlife.net](http://www.birdlife.net), and [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora](#).

For more detail on international projects for the protection of Red-fronted Macaws, see: <http://www.rzss.org.uk/conservation-programmes/projects/past-projects/red-fronted-macaw-project>

**Mark Simpson & Grahame Feletti**



Red-fronted Macaw - Priam Psittaculture Centre

## Activity Reports

### Ash Island and Stockton Sandspit

Sunday 17 March 2013

Twelve eager birders gathered at the meeting spot on Ash Island for the anticipated water and shorebird adventure. We weren't disappointed. A White-bellied Sea-Eagle flew close overhead while we waited and put up flocks of Australian White Ibis, Little Black Cormorants, egrets and others. Other raptors seen during the morning were Whistling Kite, Black-shouldered Kite and Swamp Harriers.



We proceeded straight to Swan Pond which has never looked better. First sight was a pair of Black Swans and two Common Greenshanks on the right of Wagtail Way. On the left the variety and number of birds was virtually uncountable although Ann certainly made valiant efforts with 32 species. Her estimates: over 3000 birds present on the eastern side including 1560 Chestnut and 1050 Grey Teal, 84 Australian Pelicans and a few Australian Shoveler. Other birds included White-fronted Chat, Golden-headed Cisticola and Australasian Pipit.

We were about to car-creep along to find the expected Black-fronted Dotterels and perhaps Yellow Wagtails when we had a distraction. Ann's car had a flat tyre and the key to the spare had to be fetched from home! Rowley to the rescue. The rest of the group moved on to Stockton Sandspit where Ann and Rowley joined us after the tyre had been changed.

By the time we arrived at Stockton the southerly wind had become quite strong and the estuary was wind-swept and murky. This did not upset our viewing as all the birds were beginning to roost for the high tide. A large estimated number of 70 Pacific Plovers were up on the bank on our arrival but a family running freely around the area put these to flight and the birds didn't return. However, we were able to compare Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Red Knots, Eastern Curlews, Curlew Sandpipers and the smaller Red-necked Stints and Red-capped Plovers. Very useful for the new members who were present. A good tern presence as well with Caspian, Gull-billed and Little Terns in good numbers. A total of 24 species at the Sandspit. A very rewarding outing, thanks Ann.

**Judi Thomas**

### Galgabba Point

Tuesday 7 April, 2013

Twenty-plus Midweekers gathered at Swansea on a typical autumn morning to do the walk to Galgabba Point. The Galgabba Landcare Group is very active and we find the walk improved each time we visit. Walking is easy, perhaps 45 minutes return for normal people but 2 hours at birdwatchers' pace. The early track passes through delightful flora for plant people, opening out as it reaches Galgabba Creek, near the Point on Lake Macquarie. We can recommend it to birdy or native-plant-loving folk.

On this occasion swamp mahogany blossom was attracting the honeyeaters: Lewin's, Yellow-faced, White-naped and Scarlet Honeyeaters; Little Wattlebird; and Eastern Spinebill. Also Brown Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, White-browed Scrubwren and Variegated Fairy-wren were all present in numbers. Later we passed through a Bell Miner colony which had established itself there a few years ago. Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet were plentiful.

Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck and Little Pied Cormorant added to our tally of fifty species for the walk. We spent so long at it that some of us went home after a very late morning tea, but the really keen ones went on the Coon Island viewing platform for more punishment.

**Max Blanch**

### Mt Sugarloaf– Mulbring – Mt Vincent

Sunday 21 April 2013

April's Sunday outing turned out to be a beautiful sunny day. Only six members and two visitors turned out, possibly due to several other events falling on the same day. We started at Mt Sugarloaf with two short walks of which the biggest surprise was a flyover by three Channel-billed Cuckoos which were supposed to have all migrated north. (In fact many migratory birds that usually depart by early April were still present well into May; among them Common Koels, Dollarbirds and Black-faced Monarchs.) Birds were mostly in small numbers of common species. Lewins, White-naped and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters were seen, along with large numbers of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters.

After morning tea we moved on to John Browns Lagoon which was teeming with waterbirds: ducks (including one Musk Duck), swans, coots, darters, and cormorants. Large numbers of Straw-necked Ibis were everywhere. Tree Martins were around their usual tree with small hollow nesting branches. Our next stop in the centre of Mulbring produced Red-rumped Parrots, Blue-faced



## Activity Reports cont.

Honeyeaters, large numbers of Crested Pigeons and several babbler's nests within minutes of stepping out of the car.

The most productive bird spotting happened at our last stop at the washed-out bridge between Mulbring and Mt Vincent townships. A plethora of small birds were recorded in the creek crossing, a wonderful safe habitat for them. The short walk from the creek to the church, set among leafy gardens, then open pasture with a wetland behind the church, turned up Bar-shouldered Dove, White-necked and White-faced Herons, Australian Wood Ducks, Black Swans and a wide variety of other species.

It was a lovely relaxed day with a steady supply of bird species and that perfect autumn weather.

**Joy Nicholls**

### From Neath to Ellalong - the longest convoy yet



Above - Record car numbers on the Neath to Ellalong outing.  
Below - Morning tea at Kitchener. - Photos Mick Roderick

**Car-pooling is a good idea, not only to save fuel and get to know your fellow birdwatchers, but also to make the outings easier to manage. Why not phone a friend and minimise the number of cars?**



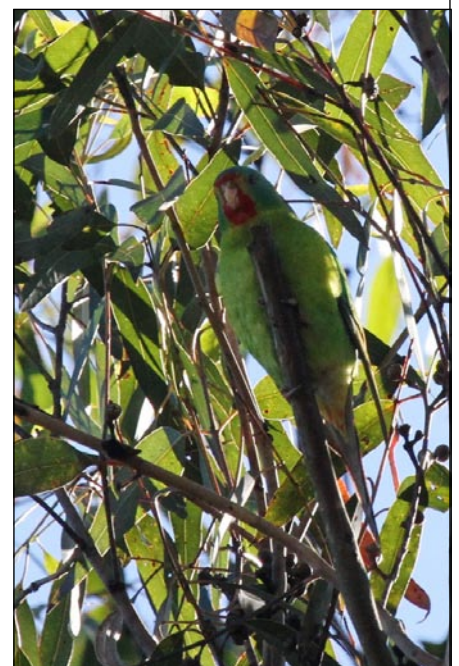
### From Neath to Ellalong

Sunday 19 May 2013

It was just 2 degrees at Neath when 27 members started the Sunday excursion. First stop Kitchener where there was an abundance of honeyeaters and other small birds. A nearby dam proved a mecca for waterbirds at which the first of the day's Yellow-billed Spoonbills, not a common Hunter bird, was seen. A Scarlet Robin was viewed by most of the group also. The activity got us warmed up and by the time we moved on to Kitchener the thermometer had also risen to a more comfortable level. Over morning tea by a large pond we had Double-barred Finch, a Rose Robin, Yellow Thornbills and lots of other small birds, while a curious looking (? hybrid) Black Duck with partially yellow bill and a tail feather curling artistically upwards, limped around the picnic area.

Our next stop at Paxton had us chasing sightings of Swift Parrots which were tantalisingly heard but except for one "swift" flight across the track not well seen. Finally Mick located one perched and most of the group were able to get good views. Here also another endangered species, Little Eagle, flew overhead. Excellent views of the underwing patterns were seen. This however was our only raptor until while eating lunch, looking out over a magnificent view of Ellalong lagoon and bemoaning the lack of raptors, a juvenile White-bellied Sea-Eagle flew over. Soon after, as if to prove a point, a pair of Wedgies circled the sky and other Sea-Eagles were seen in the distance. A seemingly empty Ellalong actually turned up quite a lot of waterbirds through Mick's telescope over the course of lunch.

**Joy Nicholls**



Swift Parrot at Pelton - Mick Roderick

## Activity Reports cont.

### Marine Debris Clean-up in North Arm Hunter River

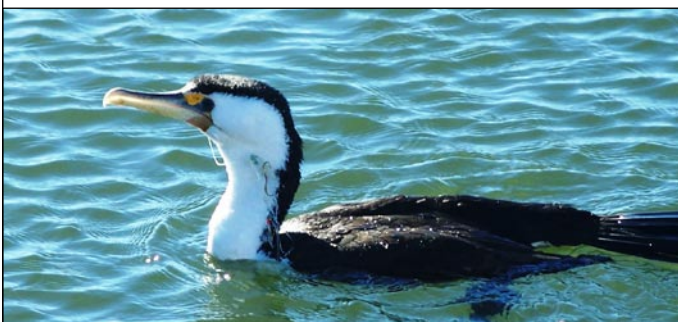
Sunday 19 May 2013

Marine debris is man-made rubbish in the marine environment. Predominantly plastic, marine debris is a global problem, concentrated by ocean currents in particular places such as the northeast Pacific Ocean, and becoming an intrinsic part of the marine food chain. This threatens human food supplies as plastic is known to attract toxic pollutants from sea water, and plastic fragments are ingested by fish. Plastic debris, including discarded fishing line and fishing nets, kills and/or maims wildlife. Over the last few years, 5 out of 35 Pied Oystercatchers in the Hunter Estuary have become entangled in fishing line and subsequently lost their foot or leg. Some survive as one-legged birds but others are not seen again.

In 2012, Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority won a Caring for our Country Grant to tackle Marine Debris in the local area. Project Officer Melinda Anderson became aware of the high cost to birds of discarded fishing line in the Hunter Estuary and organised a Clean-up Day, specifically targeting fishing line snagged on foraging sites in the North Arm. At low tide on Sunday morning, three people from Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council and three members of HBOC joined Melinda to clean-up Kooragang Dykes and oysterbanks in the North Arm that are used by foraging shorebirds. Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project provided their boat so that people could be safely transported to the sites.

We retrieved over 80kg of marine debris including yards of fishing line, hooks, sinkers, lures and more than a dozen tangles that were looping lazily in the water, snagged on oysters, just waiting for an unsuspecting shorebird to walk by. Amazingly, a Pied Cormorant with fishing line caught across its bill, paddled up beside the Dykes to check our progress, inspected the back of the boat and paddled off downstream again, a small lure dangling beside its neck. Hopefully this bird will manage to rid itself of the line.

#### Liz Crawford



Three HBOC members cleaning up the North Arm oysterbanks (above) and three Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council members cleaning up the Kooragang Dykes (below). Photos Melinda Anderson



### Hunter Water land at Grahamstown

Tuesday 4 June 2013

Following extended negotiations, Hunter Water recently held an induction course to allow Hunter Bird Observers Club members to access their land at Grahamstown. Ray McLean undertook this course and led the midweek outing there on 4<sup>th</sup> June. First stop was off Ferrodale Road where the find of the day was three Glossy Black-Cockatoos munching away in a Casuarina. They sat there quietly while all eighteen of us had good views and took numerous photos. Further along several species of honeyeater were sighted : Yellow-faced, Lewin's, Brown-headed and White-naped, along with both species of wattlebird and an Eastern Spinebill zipping around in the Melaleucas.

After morning tea we moved up to the northern side of Grahamstown Lake and walked along the old Pacific Highway till it disappeared into the water. We saw all three species of grebe both here and at Finnan Park where we first met. Another highlight of the day was the number of raptors seen, including six White-bellied Sea-Eagles.

In total 71 species were seen and 6 heard. Our thanks to Ray for organising this outing.

**Margaret Stewart**



## Future Activities

### New Members Day Sunday 16 June 2013

Come along to the Wetlands Centre on Sunday 16 June to meet and welcome New Members. This is a great social opportunity to share birdwatching and a BBQ with fellow enthusiasts. The morning starts at a civilised 9.30am with a walk around the wetlands followed by a BBQ lunch. Everyone is welcome to attend. For catering purposes, and if you would like to provide a salad or slice, please contact Lorna Mee 4987 2913 or Mick Roderick 0421 761237.

**Lorna Mee**

### HBOC Mid-week Camp Gloucester Mon – Wednesday 16-18 Sept 2013

This year's mid-week camp will be in the Gloucester Holiday Park, Denison Street, Gloucester. Please book your own cabin or campsite by phoning 6558 1720 and mention that you are from HBOC for a 10% discount. Check their website for details:  
<http://www.gloucesterholidaypark.com>

We plan to go to Copeland Tops early on Monday morning and Woko National Park on Tuesday morning. There is also some good birding in the camping area and at various sites around town. A brochure called "*Bird Watching in the Gloucester Area*" can be purchased from the Gloucester Information Centre for 50 cents. A town map will also be available. Feel free to do your own thing – some may prefer to go to Gloucester Tops.

On Tuesday we plan to go out for an evening meal at Tamsins on the Roundabout for those interested.

For further information contact Robert and Margaret Stewart (ph 4963 2029) or Judi Thomas (ph 4952 2960).

**Margaret Stewart**

## New Members

**The Club extends a warm welcome to the following new members:**

Simon Gorta of Glebe  
Ken Wells of Charlestown  
Dave & Phoebe White of Blacksmiths

**We hope to meet you at Club meetings and outings.**

### Broughton Island Seabird Surveying Expressions of Interest

Last year HBOC started doing land birds surveys of Broughton Island. We have since been asked to consider also starting surveys of breeding seabirds out there. This would involve two 4-5 day visits during each breeding season. It's a great opportunity but we're not sure if we have enough people to resource the project adequately. The surveyors would need to be reasonably fit as the work would involve night-time expeditions across quite rough terrain and/or over rock platforms and scree slopes, and then groping blindly into shearwater burrows to see what's within. If you are interested in this, please contact me on 0409 978 171 to discuss. It is only going to be possible if there are enough people prepared to make a long-term commitment (over multiple years) to undertaking regular visits to the island.

**Alan Stuart**

## BirdLife Australia Activities

### Beyond Birdwatching Saturday 29 June 2013

Why do birds stand on one leg? Why take measurements of birds? *Beyond Birdwatching* aims to answer questions by looking at some of the physiological and behavioural characteristics of selected bird species.

**Time and Place:** 9.00 am – 4.00 pm, BirdLife Australia Discovery Centre, Sydney Olympic Park  
**Price:** BirdLife Members \$69; non-members \$79  
**Bookings essential: phone 02 9647 1033; email [discovery@birdlife.org.au](mailto:discovery@birdlife.org.au)**

### Capertee Tree Planting for Regent Honeyeater Habitat

2013 marks the 20th year of operation of BirdLife Australia's Capertee Valley Regent Honeyeater recovery project, a project which has been dependent for its success on the efforts of our valued volunteers. Why not celebrate the occasion by joining us in the beautiful Capertee Valley at the second tree-planting weekend for 2013 on **August 17-18**. We hope to see as many of you as possible. Assistance is always needed to help in laying out plants the day before the planting, so if anyone is able to come a day early that would be greatly appreciated.

Please email [southernnsw@birdlife.org.au](mailto:southernnsw@birdlife.org.au) or contact Pixie on 0429 464403 or 4376 1001 to register.



# Superb Fairy-wren Part 1

## Great Favourite in South-eastern Australia

The Readers Digest *Complete Book of Australian Birds* (p. 408) introduces the Superb Fairy-wren as “This Jaunty Wren” which “is a great favourite in south-east Australia, not only for the beautiful colouring of the male but because it has adapted well to human intrusion and lives in gardens and parks, where it is easily seen”, a statement I readily endorse. My earliest close contact with the wrens was in 1949 when I was a teacher at Smithton High School in far northwest Tasmania. I had been sent there in 1948 after completing a required two years of University science and was boarding in a large boarding house which catered for more than 40 mobile people from outside the town. Heather Cameron’s family home was a dairy farm named Trelawney at Christmas Hills, 7 miles from Smithton. She had obtained a job in town, boarded at the same boarding house on week days and we became good friends. Her family invited me to spend a weekend at the farm, where I enjoyed my first close encounters with the engaging little birds. Heather had grown up enjoying sitting on a ledge in the sun and watching the wrens in the garden that occasionally came close to pick up crumbs shaken from a table cloth. I spent more weekends at Trelawney, sharing watching the wrens with Heather and becoming more engrossed in their behaviour. I returned to Hobart in 1950 to finish my degree and returned to northwest Tasmania to teach science at Burnie High School. Heather and I were married in 1951 and our joint interest in the Superb Fairy-wren has been maintained since. While living in Burnie (1951-1962), we often found them when exploring parks, gardens and bushland with appropriate habitat for wrens. However our 1963-1974 years overseas provided no opportunities to interact with Superb Fairy-wrens; but we have made up for it since we returned to live Newcastle in 1974.

Not long after we arrived, we grazed our horses on land that is now the Wetlands Centre and I spent considerable time exploring the site over many years. The largely open fields and lagoons were unsuitable for fairy-wrens, but when the land became the Wetlands Centre in 1985, revegetation projects began, eventually producing areas of suitable habitat. I cannot remember any records in the first few years and Wilma Barden’s regular Bird Spotters Spot in the Hunter Wetlands Trust Newsletter 1986-1988 did not mention them. However, the Wetlands Centre Birds of the Wetlands Centre & Adjacent Wetlands (1998, p. 3) listed it for 1997, but no number was given. The R. & M. Stewart (2010, p.4) Monthly Bird Observations count of Hunter Wetlands Centre birds recorded 6 months of more than 20 wrens (maximum

count 29 in November), showing that the Centre is now a favoured spot. Robert and Margaret Stewart (pers. comm.) advised me that in 2012 there were more than 20 wrens in 11 months and the maximum was 41 in September. So far this year they have had 3 out of the 5 months with over 20, and 32 wrens recorded in May 2013.

In 1986 we moved from Newcastle to a 15-hectare property at Glen Oak, between Seaham and Clarence Town. The house was on sloping open high ground overlooking a small farm dam and a large area of flood plain extended to the creek along the eastern boundary of the property. A small area of the creek shore was dotted with small trees and shrubs separating the area from a swamp forest. This combination of habitats certainly satisfied both Superb Fairy-wrens and Red-browed Finches which lived in harmony and nested in the same area. Although we frequently observed individuals and small groups over the years in the creek shore area, my Nature Watch Diary recorded the presence of a large clan of wrens in the swamp forest on 30 May 2006, but no wren records for the high area from the farm dam to the road (which included the house), were entered in the diary from its start in 1996 until 2001, nor in 2004 to 2006. On 11 April 2002 we were very excited to find a number of fairy-wrens working around the dam and their visits continued. We were especially excited on one occasion to observe nest building in the reeds in the dam, but were quite deflated when the attempt was aborted. However, we continued to enjoy their regular presence, which drew 20 diary entries in 2002 and 5 more in 2003, ending on 15 April 2003. They disappeared from our property and had not returned when we moved to Ashtonfield in 2006.



13 May 2010: The first Superb Fairy-wren recorded in our Ashtonfield garden was a non-breeding male.

While we lived in Glen Oak, Heather and I used to regularly take health walks from home to Oakendale Road, (opposite the Glen Oak Hall), and up to its end in the hills and back. We usually saw one or more Superb Fairy-wrens on or in the vegetation beside the road, sometimes with Variegated Fairy-wren as well. Because of my work with the egrets and monitoring other species, I had to spend much time at the Seaham Nature Reserve and frequently encountered both Superb and Variegated Fairy-wrens, crossing the road near the east end of Torrence Street, in the vegetation below the Seaham Swamp Observation Platform or beside the water.

In 2006 we moved to our new home in Ashtonfield, which had virtually no garden and only 5 urbanised native bird species used the site. We immediately set

## Superb Fairy-wren Part 1 cont.



Top to bottom: 18 February 2011: A female clan member loafing on a tomato stake.

18 February 2011: Female clan member watches another female clan member flying in to the side fence.

20 February 2011: A female clan member loafing on Grevillea Superb. Photos - Max Maddock

about developing small, bushland areas of native plant species, which as they matured, began attracting more native bird species. However, the Superb Fairy-wrens were not among them. We soon became aware of their presence in the large area of mixed open woodlands and more dense vegetation opposite our home. A trip planned for a month in New Zealand in early 2009 demanded fitness for a lot of walking, so we walked almost daily around the bushland circuit from mid-2008 to our departure in early January 2009. Throughout

the period, the walks took us through areas, more than half a kilometre from the edge of the woodland, which supported large clans of Superb Fairy-wrens.

On 13 May 2010, I photographed a non-breeding male (identified by the blue in its tail) perched on top of Grevillea Superb beside the driveway, the first record of a Superb Fairy-wren seen on our and nearby properties. We wondered if it was a wanderer from the clans in the bush.

In January 2011 we went to Tasmania to visit some of our earlier stamping grounds. Three nostalgic events on the trip raised fond memories of Superb Fairy-wrens. Eaglehawk Neck Peninsula had been a favourite holiday and weekend destination for us. When we pulled into the Tessellated Pavement car park (which didn't exist in the 1950s), we found a busy clan of wrens foraging for insects in blackberry bushes growing between the car park and the foreshore. In the 1940s Mt Field National Park in the mountains of the Derwent Valley was a favourite day trip by train: a walk to see the waterfall and walk back to the train for the return trip to Hobart. On our trip this time it was a comfortable day return by car and Heather's first visit. There is now an impressive Tourist Centre set in a park and we found numerous shrubs being worked by Superb Fairy-wrens to add to our trip list. Some years before, we had lunched at the Blue Wren Tea Gardens, a short distance from Ulverstone to the west along the Bass Highway. We had been very impressed by the presence of the wrens in the large, park-like native plant garden. On this trip we had a get-together lunch with north-western relatives at the same Tea Gardens. We found a more mature native garden still supporting fairy-wrens.

Back home at Ashtonfield, on 6 January 2011, a blue adult accompanied by 2 females spent some time in our front garden, marking the first of a series of fairy-wren visits which lasted until August. Between 6 January and 5 August, 42 days had one or more wrens present. The females and occasional non-breeding males dominated, ranging from a single bird to a maximum of 10+ on 18 February, with 8 on both 9 January and 22 February as next largest on the list. There were only 6 records of blue adults, 5 single birds and one record of 2 accompanied by 5 females. From 24 June to 5 August only single females were recorded, with a gap of nil records in July. Our back lawn, next-door neighbours' front lawn, our front garden and the nature strip had all been used at some stage during their visits. As well as making still photo records, we also recorded some short movie clips.

Year 2011 proved to be a critical one for our wrens. The species had become firmly established as regular users of our native plant bushland habitat but it became evident that changes had occurred to the way the wrens were performing. Consistent presence of the same birds in our garden and nearby was being recorded instead of variability of visits. Evidence was emerging that a clan



## Superb Fairy-wren Part 1 cont.

had established a territory in the area and that our place was a significant part of it. On 11 September 2011, our daily diary recorded the first wrens to establish a clan on the property when a blue male and a female (both adults) arrived, investigated the Callistemons in the garden bed we have labelled Garden 3 and thereafter were regularly seen working in all areas of the gardens. On 13 September, they were in the bed we labelled Garden 2 and then moved to the next-door lawn. Later in the day we watched the male from inside the sewing room repeatedly attacking his own image in the window. It became obvious that he was the chief of the clan and we gave him the permanent name of Bluey.

On 13 November 2011, Bluey was behaving peculiarly on our next-door neighbour's lawn. A full-zoom pot-shot on my camera, when down-loaded, showed that Bluey was feeding a baby wren. It may not be the best of photos but provides clear evidence of achievement of the first nesting event for the clan. On 15 November, Bluey, the female and two fledglings were seen in the garden and Bluey again fed a fledgling. We didn't know the nest's location, except that it was within the clan territory and that the young had been moved into our garden. On 26 November, Bluey, the female and 2 juveniles were recorded working on the back lawn. The juveniles eventually became working members of the clan.

A number of nesting episodes up until 2013 followed this one. The next article will review them and the problems encountered in a climate of a declining clan population.

**Max Maddock**



Above: 24 October 2011: Clan Chief Bluey loafing in the adjacent neighbour's *Melaleuca quinquenervia* – his first portrait. Below: 13 November 2011: Bluey feeding a chick newly fledged from an unknown nest site in the clan's territory. Photos - Max Maddock



## Ornithological excerpts from the past

I have been reading a wonderful book called the *Wisdom of Birds, An Illustrated History of Ornithology* by Tim Birkhead (2008). Of all ornithologists from Aristotle to the present, Birkhead considers John Ray to be the most influential, as before Ray's books were published in 1678 and 1691, the study of birds had been confused and fragmented.

I came across this 17<sup>th</sup> Century view of the value of birds which I thought I would share with you.

“It cannot be denied that Birds are of great use to us; their flesh according us a good Part of our Food, and that the most delicate too, and their other parts physic, not excepting their very excrements. Their feathers serve to stuff our beds and pillows, yielding us soft and warm lodging, which is no small convenience and comfort to us, especially in these northern parts of the world. Some of them have also been always employed by military men in plumes, to adorn their crests, and render them formidable to their enemies. Their wings and

quills are made use of for writing-pens, and to brush and cleanse our rooms, and their furniture. Besides, by their melodious accents they gratify our ears; by their beautiful shapes and colours, they delight our eyes, being very ornamental to the world, and rendering the country where the hedges and woods are full of them, very pleasant and clearly, which without them would be no less lonely and melancholy. Not to mention the exercise, diversion, and recreation, which some of them give us.”

- from John Ray, M.A. Sometime Fellow of Trinity-College in Cambridge, and now of the Royal Society. *The Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation*, London 1691.

We don't use quills anymore and plumes would not present such a formidable sight in today's warfare, but little else has changed really.

**Ann Lindsey**



## NCIG Proposed Rail Flyover Modification on Kooragang/Ash Island

With approval from the NSW Department of Planning, Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG) constructed a coal terminal on the former site of Big Pond on Kooragang Island. A rail-line loop to service this terminal was constructed across the southern end of Deep Pond. In June 2012, NCIG applied for approval to construct a Rail Flyover to ease congestion on the rail line servicing both the NCIG and Port Waratah Coal Services (PWCS) coal terminals on Kooragang Island. Unfortunately, the proposed rail flyover extended into Swan Pond on Ash Island, and, if approved, would result in the destruction of the eastern margin of Swan Pond. Many submissions were lodged against the proposal and inadequacies in the environmental impact assessment were highlighted. This resulted in a Planning Assessment Commission in Newcastle on 7 May 2013, to provide an opportunity for interested parties to speak directly to the independent commissioners assessing the proposal. Ann Lindsey compiled and presented a submission on behalf of HBOC and Samantha Vine, Conservation Officer for BirdLife Australia, also prepared a submission which was presented by Mike Newman. Both submissions are on HBOC's website on the Conservation page: <http://www.hboc.org.au/index.cfm?menukey=35>

HBOC discussed five points:

1. A significant downturn in coal exports and demand means that the planned increase in coal-handling infrastructure capacity at Newcastle Port is no longer valid, therefore the need for the proposed flyover no longer exists.
2. The cumulative impacts on shorebirds have not been taken into account.
3. Offsets have not been specified and must be functioning prior to destruction of existing habitat.
4. The new location of electrical transmission lines in Swan Pond will harm birds.
5. The resolution and the nature of any conditions set by the Federal Government are an essential precursor to any Determination by the NSW Planning Department or the Planning Assessment Commission.

The submission concluded:

“It is no coincidence that migratory shorebird numbers have decreased by more than 50% in the last 3 decades during a period of incessant encroachment on the estuary by industry. It is time to halt that encroachment in an estuary which is the most important site in NSW for migratory shorebirds.”

BirdLife Australia stated that: “The proposed rail flyover modification will remove an irreplaceable area of important migratory shorebird roosting and foraging habitat within Swan Pond. In fact it could not be worse placed. The area of Swan Pond that will be destroyed has biophysical characteristics found nowhere else within the Hunter Estuary: a shallow shoreline with intermittent mudflats according to tidal conditions particularly favoured by migratory shorebirds and

many species of waterfowl. Swan Pond is **the only brackish wetland of its type remaining on the Ash Island/Kooragang Island complex** and indeed in the lower Hunter Estuary. What makes Swan Pond so unique is that its ecological attributes are governed by the limited tidal transfer which occurs only during the high part of the tidal cycle. As a result, mudflats are exposed for longer periods than at most other areas of the Estuary providing high-quality roosting and tidal foraging habitat. The importance of Swan Pond has been increased by the **progressive destruction** of habitat in other areas of the Hunter Estuary. The foraging habitat at Swan Pond is particularly important immediately prior to migration when the shorebirds must rapidly accumulate fat reserves to fuel long-distance flight. If they do not accumulate this fat, they cannot undertake the thousands of kilometres journey to their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere. The decline of the smaller short-legged shorebird species in the Hunter Estuary during recent decades highlights the extent to which these non-tidal and tidal areas have disappeared.

“The cumulative impact of the destruction of small areas of habitat of a similar nature to Swan Pond is reflected by the alarming decline in the Hunter.

- The Black-tailed Godwit is listed as Vulnerable with visiting numbers now less than 25% of the counts in the 1970s and 1980s.
- The Bar-tailed Godwit, Eastern Curlew & Common Greenshank show a 50% decline in the maximum numbers over the past 13 years.
- In 2011, the Curlew Sandpiper was listed as Endangered due to a 94% decline in maximum annual counts of the New South Wales population between 1982 and 2010.”

BirdLife also commented on the Director-General's 2013 Environmental Assessment Report:

“We are particularly concerned that on page 17 of the report the Department states that ‘the assessment undertaken by the proponent has concluded that the impacts on biodiversity would not be significant and the Department accepts this position’.

“BirdLife Australia does not accept this position. Quite simply, the development will result in the destruction of a site of International significance to global biodiversity. “To blindly accept the proponent's position in the absence of expert information is naïve. To continue to accept it despite evidence to the contrary from respected scientists and migratory bird experts, is negligent in the extreme.”

The Planning Assessment Commission is yet to deliver its findings.

**Liz Crawford**

## Tomago Wetlands project receives prestigious award

Twenty years of work culminated in the recent managed opening of the Tomago floodgates by National Parks and Wildlife Service and has resulted in a spectacular restoration of the part of Tomago Wetlands that lies within Hunter Wetlands National Park. This area is adjacent to the western side of Fullerton Cove and was used by shorebirds in the 1970s, prior to being drained for grazing. Now that tidal inundation has been restored, shorebirds and waterbirds are once again foraging and roosting there.

The dedication and hard work of staff from various government agencies to restore tidal connectivity to the Tomago Wetlands on the Hunter River has been recognised with a **Conservation Natural Heritage Award** from the NSW National Trust.

Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project Manager, Peggy Svoboda, was pleased that the restoration picked up the award. 'It's well deserved given the impressive transformation I've seen in the wetlands', Ms Svoboda explained. 'During this month's survey with the Hunter Bird Observers Club one member of the team reminisced about how dry it had been prior to tidal flows being restored. Now gum boots are compulsory at Tomago Wetlands.'

The effort at Tomago Wetlands was initiated in 1993 through the Catchment Management Authority's Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project (KWRP) which brought together State Government natural resource management agencies, councils, industries and community groups and formed a shared vision of ecological restoration.

Funding for the restoration was provided by the Recreational Fishing Trust, the Federal Government's

Caring for our Country Program, Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the Office of Environment & Heritage's Parks and Wildlife Division. Researchers from University of NSW's Water Research Laboratory were also involved. Ongoing monthly bird surveys are conducted by the Hunter Bird Observers Club.



Neville McNaughton, leader of HBOC's monthly Tomago surveys in the obligatory gumboots - photo Ann Lindsey

There are significant areas of the original restoration plan for Tomago Wetlands that lie immediately west of the national park site. These are ear-marked for restoration as biodiversity offsets for industrial development in the estuary. When these are restored, they will greatly add to the valuable work completed to date and continue to help redress loss of key habitat elsewhere in the estuary.

Downloaded and modified from:  
<http://www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au/articles/news>

23 May 2013

## Book Review - Terns

*Terns*, by David Cabot and Ian Nisbet was published by HarperCollins, London this year. Part of the respected New Naturalist series, this is the first book on the natural history of terns to be published since 1934. It covers in detail the five tern species that breed in Britain and Ireland; three of these (Common, Roseate and Arctic Terns) also breed in North America and the other two (Little and Sandwich Terns) have close relatives here. There are also four chapters on terns of the world; single chapters on history, conservation, passage migrants and vagrants; appendices on demography and research; and a bibliography of more than 500 references. It is lavishly illustrated with colour photographs, many of which depict key aspects of behaviour. The paperback version is available on ebay.com.au for \$42.65.

## Autumn Birdsong

Is there any better sound in the Australian bush on a cold, crisp Autumn morning, than the piping of Pied Butcherbirds? Yesterday morning (9 May), there were six: four in adult plumage and two juveniles, in various trees and powerlines around my back yard (at Wingen in the Upper Hunter). What a great concert! I don't think the local little birds shared my enthusiasm!

**Greg Newling**

# Club Night & Hunterbirding Observations

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	Source
Australasian Shoveler	84	17/05/2013	Morpeth WWTW	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Australasian Shoveler	50+	19/05/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Australian Logrunner	2	2/04/2013	Wishing Well, Watagans	A. Richardson	Hunterbirding
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	1	5/04/2013	Lower Myall River	D. Eggins	Hunterbirding
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	6	22/04/2013	Swan Bay	G. Ayre	Hunterbirding
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	32	25/04/2013	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Australian Spotted Crake	3	29/05/2013	Hexham Swamp	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Bassian Thrush	1	2/04/2013	Woodlands Estate	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Beach Stone-curlew	3	3/04/2013	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Beach Stone-curlew	3	30/04/2013	Old Bar	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Beach Stone-curlew	3	1/05/2013	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Beach Stone-curlew	3	8/05/2013	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Beach Stone-curlew	2	20/05/2013	Soldiers Point	J. Smart	Hunterbirding
Black Bittern	1	20/05/2013	Bombah Point	J. Smart	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	1	3/04/2013	Scone	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	1	6/04/2013	Blandford	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	1	7/04/2013	Lenaghans Drive	D. Rushton	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	2	7/04/2013	Maitland Tip	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	1	11/04/2013	Lenaghans Drive	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	1	12/04/2013	Morpeth	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	1	13/04/2013	Lenaghans Drive	P. Freeman	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	1	19/04/2013	Morpeth	M. Newman	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	2	22/04/2013	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	5	9/05/2013	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	2	17/05/2013	Morpeth WWTW	M. Newman	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	2	18/05/2013	Carrington	I. Benson	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	2	20/05/2013	Gosforth	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	1	21/05/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite		2/04/2013	Louth Park	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	2	3/04/2013	Rutherford	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	50+	7/04/2013	Maitland Tip	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	1	9/04/2013	Louth Park	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	23	11/04/2013	Lenaghans Drive	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	40+	11/04/2013	Maitland Tip	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	62	16/04/2013	Morpeth	J. Smart	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	40+	16/04/2013	Maitland Tip	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	1	18/04/2013	Tenambit Common	T. Clarke	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	1	19/04/2013	Duckenfield	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	1	24/04/2013	Fern Bay	C. Anderson	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	200+	25/04/2013	Howes Lagoon	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	2	27/04/2013	Tea Gardens	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	2	29/04/2013	Vineys Creek	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	30	30/04/2013	Lenaghans Drive	J. Cockerell	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	180+	4/05/2013	Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	40+	4/05/2013	Lenaghans Drive	N. Livanos	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	50+	18/05/2013	Louth Park	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	c.20	21/05/2013	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	1	25/05/2013	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	100-150	31/05/2013	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black-browed Albatross	2	20/04/2013	Newcastle Baths	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black-chinned Honeyeater	1	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black-fronted Dotterel	8	11/04/2013	Pambalong N R	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black-fronted Dotterel	12	13/04/2013	Ash Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Black-necked Stork	1	9/04/2013	Louth Park	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black-necked Stork	2	4/05/2013	Lenaghans Drive	N. Livanos	Hunterbirding
Black-necked Stork	2	5/05/2013	2HD Swamp	I. Benson	Hunterbirding
Black-necked Stork	2	14/05/2013	Lenaghans Drive	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Black-tailed Native-hen	1	23/05/2013	Stockton Borehole Lagoon	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Blue-billed Duck	1	19/04/2013	Walka Water Works	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Blue-billed Duck	1	4/05/2013	Walka Water Works	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Blue-faced Honeyeater	3+	28/03/2013	Corlette	C. Rowland	Club Night
Brahminy Kite	2	5/04/2013	Lower Myall River	D. Eggins	Hunterbirding
Brahminy Kite	1ad+1juv	29/04/2013	Myall Lakes NP	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Brahminy Kite	1	5/05/2013	Kooragang	A. Fawcett	Hunterbirding
Brahminy Kite	1	26/05/2013	Redhead	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Brown Goshawk	1	1/04/2013	Mayfield	C. Rowland	Club Night
Brown Treecreeper		10/04/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding



# Club Night & Hunterbirding Observations

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Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer	Source
Brown Treecreeper	5	25/04/2013	Wingen TSR	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Brown Treecreeper	1	19/05/2013	Broke / Bulga	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	2	19/04/2013	Ellerston	T. Faulkner	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.100	21/04/2013	Martindale	K. Thumm	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	40+	23/04/2013	Martindale	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.45	23/04/2013	Sandy Hollow	L. Mee	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.12	25/04/2013	Mount Thorley	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	66	30/04/2013	Martindale	R. & M. Stewart	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.30	2/05/2013	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.20	3/05/2013	Denman	G. O'Connor	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.30	5/05/2013	Cassilis	D. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.11	10/05/2013	Sandy Hollow	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	10	10/05/2013	Merriwa	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	40+	14/05/2013	Sandy Hollow	L. Mee	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.40	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Budgerigar	c.65	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Buff-banded Rail	1	19/04/2013	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough	Club Night
Channel-billed Cuckoo	3	21/04/2013	Sugarloaf	J. Nicholls	Hunterbirding
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	6	19/05/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	8	21/05/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	14/05/2013	Nelson Bay	D. Eggins	Hunterbirding
Comb-crested Jacana	4	30/04/2013	Cattai Wetlands	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Comb-crested Jacana	1	14/05/2013	Lenaghans Drive	J. Cockerell	Hunterbirding
Common Greenshank	5	6/04/2013	Ash Island	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Common Greenshank	7	28/05/2013	Kooragang Dykes	L. Crawford	Hunterbirding
Crested Tern	340	30/04/2013	Old Bar	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Diamond Firetail		23/04/2013	Medhurst Bridge	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Dollarbird	1	28/04/2013	Croudace Bay	G. Ayre	Hunterbirding
Dollarbird	1	29/04/2013	Myall Lakes NP	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Double-banded Plover	48	30/04/2013	Old Bar	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Double-banded Plover	119	28/05/2013	Stockton Beach	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Eastern Barn Owl	1	9/04/2013	Louth Park	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Eastern Barn Owl	1	12/04/2013	Carey Bay	L. Crawford	Hunterbirding
Eastern Barn Owl	1	18/04/2013	Bar Beach	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Eastern Koel	1dy	25/04/2013	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Eastern Koel	1dy	3/05/2013	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Eastern Koel	2dy	7/05/2013	Medowie	D. Rushton	Hunterbirding
Eastern Koel	1 juv.	8/05/2013	Highfields	M. Jackson	Club Night
Eastern Osprey	1	28/03/2013	Corlette	C. Rowland	Club Night
Eastern Osprey	4	5/04/2013	Lower Myall River	D. Eggins	Hunterbirding
Eastern Osprey	1	11/04/2013	Carrington	I. Benson	Hunterbirding
Eastern Osprey	1	13/04/2013	Ash Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Eastern Osprey	1	29/04/2013	Belmont	G. Ayre	Hunterbirding
Eastern Osprey	1	30/04/2013	Hawks Nest	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Eastern Osprey	1	15/05/2013	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Eastern Osprey	1	26/05/2013	Redhead	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Eastern Reef Egret	2+	9/04/2013	Broughton Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Eastern Reef Egret	1	23/04/2013	Catherine Hill Bay	J. Adams	Hunterbirding
Eastern Reef Egret	1	9/05/2013	Merewether	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Eastern Reef Egret	1	9/05/2013	Boat Harbour	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Eastern Reef Egret	1	30/05/2013	Merewether	R. Nicholas	Hunterbirding
Eurasian Coot	c.1000	13/04/2013	Ash Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	2	14/04/2013	Speers Point	S. Hamonet	Club Night
Flame Robin	1	5/05/2013	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	7	22/04/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	15	24/04/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	3	27/04/2013	Hexham Swamp	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	25	3/05/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	18	4/05/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	7	10/05/2013	Tocal Agricultural College	M. Newman	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	4	17/05/2013	Morpeth WWTW	M. Newman	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	47	19/05/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	8	21/05/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	8/05/2013	Grahamstown Dam	R. McLean	Club Night
Glossy Ibis	6	27/04/2013	Hexham Swamp	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding

## Club Night & Hunterbirding Observations cont.

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Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer	Source
Glossy Ibis	3	30/04/2013	Lenaghans Drive	J. Cockerell	Hunterbirding
Glossy Ibis	7	4/05/2013	Lenaghans Drive	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Great Knot	1	28/05/2013	Stockton Beach	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Grey-tailed Tattler	3	5/04/2013	Lower Myall River	D. Eggins	Hunterbirding
Hoary-headed Grebe	c.100	6/04/2013	Ash Island	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Hooded Robin		23/04/2013	Medhurst Bridge	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Lewin's Rail	2+	9/04/2013	Broughton Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Little Black Cormorant	c.25	16/04/2013	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough	Club Night
Little Corella	c.100	19/04/2013	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough	Club Night
Little Eagle	1	21/05/2013	Shortland	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Little Eagle	1	31/05/2013	Muswellbrook	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Little Friarbird	4	23/04/2013	Medhurst Bridge	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Little Penguin	2	22/04/2013	Salamander Bay	D. Eggins	Hunterbirding
Little Tern	80	30/04/2013	Old Bar	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Little Wattlebird	1+1dy	16/04/2013	Redhead	D. Raine	Club Night
Long-billed Corella	14	3/05/2013	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Nankeen Night-Heron	4	27/04/2013	Tea Gardens	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
New Zealand Storm-Petrel	1	14/04/2013	Swansea Pelagic	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Olive Whistler	1	4/05/2013	Barrington Tops	C. Rowland	Club Night
Pacific Baza	3	5/05/2013	Dyrring Road TSR	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Pacific Baza	1	18/05/2013	Rothbury	D. Williams	Hunterbirding
Painted Button-quail	1	19/04/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Paradise Riflebird	1	22/04/2013	Fosterton Tops	D. Jenkin	Hunterbirding
Peregrine Falcon	1	16/04/2013	Speers Point	S. Hamonet	Club Night
Pink-eared Duck	6	12/04/2013	Deep Pond, Kooragang	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Pink-eared Duck	12	21/04/2013	Stockton Borehole Lagoon	L. Crawford	Hunterbirding
Pink-eared Duck	2	28/04/2013	Singleton STW	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Pink-eared Duck	2	14/05/2013	Ash Island	J. Cockerell	Hunterbirding
Pink-eared Duck	63	17/05/2013	Morpeth WWTW	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Plumed Whistling-Duck	200+	28/04/2013	Doughboy Hollow	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Plumed Whistling-Duck	c.500	30/04/2013	Doughboy Hollow	R. & M. Stewart	Hunterbirding
Powerful Owl	1	24/04/2013	Murrays Beach	P. Struick	Hunterbirding
Powerful Owl	1	7/05/2013	Murrays Beach	T. Lambert	Hunterbirding
Radjah Shelduck	1	30/04/2013	Bulahdelah	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Rainbow Lorikeet	6	5/04/2013	Scone	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Red-capped Plover	44	30/04/2013	Old Bar	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Red-kneed Dotterel	4	6/04/2013	Ash Island	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Red-kneed Dotterel	9	11/04/2013	Pambalong Nature Reserve	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Red-kneed Dotterel	3	11/04/2013	Lenaghans Drive	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Red-kneed Dotterel	3	4/05/2013	Louth Park	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Regent Bowerbird	1	8/04/2013	New Lambton Heights	P. & C. Lightfoot	Hunterbirding
Regent Bowerbird	1	23/04/2013	Galgappa Point	J. Adams	Hunterbirding
Regent Bowerbird	2	18/05/2013	Ashtonfield	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Restless Flycatcher	1	5/05/2013	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Restless Flycatcher	1+	6/05/2013	Duns Creek	M. Newman	Hunterbirding
Rose Robin	c.3	11/04/2013	Kitchener	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Rose Robin	2	11/04/2013	Fletcher	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Rose Robin	1	19/04/2013	Walka Water Works	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Rose Robin	2	25/04/2013	Wingen TSR	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Rose Robin	1	18/05/2013	Ashtonfield	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Rose Robin	1	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Rose Robin	5	31/05/2013	Falbrook	A. Richardson	Hunterbirding
Ruddy Turnstone	1	30/05/2013	Newcastle Baths	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Rufous Fantail	1	5/04/2013	Swansea	J. Adams	Club Night
Rufous Scrub-bird	3	14/04/2013	Gloucester Tops	M. Newman	Hunterbirding
Sanderling	3	28/05/2013	Stockton Beach	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	15	13/04/2013	Ash Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	13	15/04/2013	Hexham Swamp	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	c.30	24/04/2013	Tomago Wetlands	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Silver Gull	560	30/04/2013	Old Bar	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Singing Honeyeater	1	5/04/2013	Scone	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Sooty Oystercatcher	3	5/04/2013	Lower Myall River	D. Eggins	Hunterbirding
Sooty Oystercatcher	9	9/04/2013	Broughton Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Sooty Oystercatcher	5	25/04/2013	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Southern Boobook	1	17/04/2013	Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Southern Boobook	2	27/04/2013	Hawks Nest	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Southern Boobook	1	30/04/2013	Newcastle	A. Richardson	Hunterbirding

## Club Night & Hunterbirding Observations cont.

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Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer	Source
Southern Emu-wren	1	8/05/2013	Grahamstown Dam	R. McLean	Club Night
Speckled Warbler	2	4/04/2013	Gosforth	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Speckled Warbler	5	25/04/2013	Wingen TSR	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Speckled Warbler	4+	4/05/2013	Gosforth	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Speckled Warbler	5	20/05/2013	Gosforth	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Speckled Warbler	1	31/05/2013	Falbrook	A. Richardson	Hunterbirding
Spectacled Monarch	2	29/05/2013	Harrington Rain Forest	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Spotless Crake	1	24/04/2013	Tenambit Common	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Spotless Crake	1	20/05/2013	Ash Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Spotted Bowerbird	1	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	3/04/2013	Parkville	T. Clarke	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	9/04/2013	Broughton Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	14/04/2013	Broke	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	25/04/2013	Medhurst Bridge	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	28/04/2013	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	29/04/2013	Tea Gardens	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	30/04/2013	Bulahdelah	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	30/04/2013	Lenaghans Drive	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	4/05/2013	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	4/05/2013	Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	18/05/2013	Ashtonfield	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	2	18/05/2013	Louth Park	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	25/05/2013	Singleton	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	31/05/2013	Sandy Hollow	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	31/05/2013	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Spotted Quail-thrush		10/04/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Spotted Quail-thrush	1	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	17/04/2013	Greenhills	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	19/04/2013	Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	7/05/2013	Thornton	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	9/05/2013	Rutherford	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	10/05/2013	Rutherford	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Straw-necked Ibis	c.500	12/04/2013	Millers Forest	I. Benson	Hunterbirding
Straw-necked Ibis	1417	15/04/2013	Hexham Swamp	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Striated Heron	1	23/05/2013	Buttaba	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Striated Pardalote	50+	21/04/2013	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Stubble Quail		2/04/2013	Luskintyre	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Swift Parrot	2	19/04/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Swift Parrot	12	17/05/2013	Pelton	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Swift Parrot	4+	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	several	19/05/2013	Awabakal Nature Reserve	C. Eastham	Hunterbirding
Wandering Whistling-Duck	2+11dy	23/04/2013	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot	Hunterbirding
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	8/05/2013	Grahamstown Dam	R. McLean	Club Night
Weebill	1	4/04/2013	Gosforth	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Weebill	1	29/04/2013	Hawks Nest	S. Gorta	Hunterbirding
Weebill	1	4/05/2013	Gosforth	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
White-backed Swallow	1	19/05/2013	Broke / Bulga	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
White-backed Swallow	1	31/05/2013	Falbrook	A. Richardson	Hunterbirding
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	18/05/2013	Ashtonfield	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	31/05/2013	Hunter Economic Zone	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
White-browed Babbler	4	25/04/2013	Jones Reserve Road	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
White-headed Pigeon	2+1dy	29/04/2013	Ourimbah	E. McKane	Hunterbirding
White-throated Gerygone	1	20/05/2013	Gosforth	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
White-throated Gerygone	1	31/05/2013	Falbrook	A. Richardson	Hunterbirding
White-throated Needletail	30	2/04/2013	Maison Dieu	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Yellow Wagtail sp.	1	6/04/2013	Ash Island	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2	4/04/2013	Anambah	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	15/04/2013	Hexham Swamp	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	4/05/2013	Morpeth Wetlands	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	17/05/2013	Morpeth WWTW	M. Newman	Hunterbirding
Zebra Finch		2/04/2013	Luskintyre	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Zebra Finch	10+	9/04/2013	Louth Park	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Zebra Finch	48	19/04/2013	Gillieston Heights	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Zebra Finch	24+	28/04/2013	Singleton STW	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding



# Club Activities June to August 2013

## JUNE 2013

<b>Wednesday 12 June</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b>	<b>7.30pm The Wetlands Centre</b>	<b>Speaker: Mick Roderick - <i>The western influence on the birds of the Hunter Valley</i></b> <b>Bird of the Evening: Graeme O'Connor</b>
Friday 14 June	Create Shelly Sand at Stockton Sandspit	7:00am at Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
Sunday 16 June	Field Outing: New Members Day	9.30am Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland	Lorna Mee 4987 2913 & Mick Roderick 0421 761237
Tuesday 18 June	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
Friday 21 June	Create Shelly Sand at Stockton Sandspit	8:00am at Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
Saturday 22 June	Hunter Wader Survey	7.00am Ash Island 7.30 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 Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay

## JULY 2013

Tuesday 2 July	Mid-week Outing – Walka Water Works	8.00am Car Park Walka Water Works, Maitland	Margaret and Robert Stewart 4963 2029
Wednesday 3 July	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Mick Roderick 0421 761 237 All members welcome
Friday 5 July	Create Shelly Sand at Stockton Sandspit	9:00am at Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
<b>Wednesday 10 July</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b>	<b>7.30pm The Wetlands Centre</b>	<b>Feature: <i>Saving the Spoon-billed Sandpiper</i></b> <b>Bird of the Evening: Lucas Grenadier</b>
Saturday 13 July	Hunter Wader Survey	10.30am Ash Island 11.00am 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 Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay
Friday 12 July - to be confirmed	Port Stephens Waterbirds Survey	Locations as directed	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 <b>Essential to ring to confirm</b>
Tuesday 16 July	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
Friday 19 July	Create Shelly Sand at Stockton Sandspit	8:00am at Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
Sunday 21 July	Field Outing: Wallaroo State Forest	8.00am Seaham Bird Hide (beside Seaham Swamp)	Robert McDonald 4947 9190

## AUGUST 2013

Friday 2 August	Create Shelly Sand at Stockton Sandspit	8:00am at Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785
Sat/Sunday 3/4 August	Swift Parrot & Regent Honeyeater Surveys	Various locations as desired or directed	Steve Roderick 0409 452 921 <b>Please contact for information</b>
Tuesday 6 August	Mid-week Outing - Kitchener area	8.00am Poppet Head Park, Quorrobolong Road, Kitchener	Margaret and Robert Stewart 4963 2029
Wednesday 7 August	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Mick Roderick 0421761237 All members welcome
Saturday 10 August	Hunter Wader Survey	9.30 am Ash Island 10.00 am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 – Ash Island Chris Herbert 4959 3663 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay
<b>Wednesday 14 August</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b>	<b>7.30pm The Wetlands Centre</b>	<b>Speaker: Richard Major - <i>White-fronted Chat</i></b> <b>Bird of the Evening: Steven Cox</b>
Sunday 18 August	Field Outing to Jerrys Plains	8.00am at Service Station, Jerrys Plains	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 Peter Alexander 6573 2649
Tuesday 20 August	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>