



# Newsletter

Hunter Bird Observers Club

*Affiliated with BirdLife Australia*

Issue No. 3/14 June 2014

- 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



A Black-necked Stork pair at Hexham Swamp performing a spectacular "Up-down" display before chasing away the interloper - in this case a young female - Rod Warnock

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## President's Column

I've just been on the phone to a lady that lives in Sydney and is part of a birdwatching group of friends that are coming up to Newcastle for the weekend. Initially, she'd found our website and had been looking at the various birding route brochures. When I spoke to her she was full of praise for the way that HBOC provides so much information for visiting birders. After a quick chat with me and birding routes in the glove box they're set for a great weekend's birding!

But her good impression of HBOC was eclipsed by the great impression HBOC made on a delegate from the BirdLife Australia Photography Group, who was sent on a mission from Melbourne to scope out a suitable venue for their biennial conference. These conferences are usually attended by about 100 people and run for about 4 days (including bird-photographing time of course). The group is considering the Hunter for their next conference early in 2015. Recently, the delegate

was here for a few days visiting the area, talking to club members and attending our May club meeting. He was very impressed with the region as a possible venue and HBOC as a well-organised and generous club. HBOC would play a key role if the event were to be held here. Other "contenders" for the location of the conference include Broome and Cairns – ha! Such lightweights!

Their committee will make a decision soon (it's a bit like the showdown for the next Olympics or Soccer World Cup), but whichever location they choose, we can be satisfied in knowing that the Hunter Region and our club have left a great mark on visitors that look for the best regions in the country to meet once every couple of years.

Happy birding all.

**Mick Roderick**

## New Members

**The Club extends a warm welcome to:**

David Atkinson of Aberglasslyn

Kathy Haydon of Teralba

Emily Mowat of Newcastle

Helena and Garth Powell of Avoca Beach

Scott and Austin Driffield of Tenambit

Andrew McIntyre and Cathy Rich of Lambton

Jenny Musika of East Seaham

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

## Activity Report

### Glenrock and Redhead

3 June 2014

A bright sunny day that followed periods of rain saw 24 keen birdwatchers gather in the Yuelarbah Track car park at Glenrock State Conservation Area (Kahibah). Wetness of the ground and the water level in the creeks forced a change of our planned route but the morning which started slowly actually delivered some very impressive sightings. Despite the changes to the original plan, the day was very successful with a total of 72 species observed and a further 2 species heard.

The early part of the walk along Yuelarbah Track only revealed Bell Miners. Then a Chestnut Teal plus Australian King-Parrots were seen from the bridge. Just before the second bridge, a nice surprise, a Rose Robin followed by a Golden Whistler. Then onward to Leichhardt's Lookout where we looked down on an almost empty Glenrock Lagoon. The sandbank at the beach end of the lagoon had collapsed two days prior and almost drained the lagoon. Before turning our attention to the birds, we saw whales spouting out to sea. The lookout also revealed Topknot Pigeons, Spangled Drongo, Australasian Gannets, White-bellied

Sea-Eagle, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and various cormorants. From the lookout we ascended to the Yuelarbah Management Trail where, after seeing a few small species, we saw Regent Bowerbirds and, almost hidden in dense foliage, a White-headed Pigeon. Just as a move was made to start heading back for morning tea Nev McNaughton rang Alan Stuart to say that he was looking at a Powerful Owl not far from the car park. Everyone immediately headed for the owl which conveniently waited for us to have great close views and to take many, many photos. Nev had noticed Pied Currawongs making a commotion and found them harassing the owl.

The group then drove to Liles Oval at Redhead for morning tea. We then walked south on the nearby Fernleigh Track and later down to the end of Cowlshaw Street. We saw 35 species and heard 1 other species. Notable species were: New Holland Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater, House Sparrow, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Swamp Harrier and Australian Hobby. A very productive and enjoyable day.

**Rob McDonell**

## Activity Reports cont.

### Borah TSR near Barraba

Easter Camp 17 – 22 April 2014

Barraba (north-west of Tamworth) – Borah Travelling Stock Route (TSR) – around 350km from Newcastle – recent rains – green paddocks and water flowing in the creek – potential for great birding. Our last camp there was in April 2010.

These are some of the reasons why 38 people (an HBOC camping record) travelled so far to be part of a great Easter camp – most using Lorna’s detailed directions. Some travelled further – Leone’s daughter, Lynne and her son, “Little” Tim and his girlfriend came from Queensland and Jim’s daughter, her husband and their t young, very enthusiastic daughters, came from the UK via the Central Coast.

Many arrived on the Thursday afternoon and by Friday arvo, the crowded site looked more like a Camping Expo than a rustic camp – with a wide range of vans/tents and chairs (especially the imposing Mercedes chairs).

The dominant bird was definitely the Brown Treecreeper with its “pink, pink, pink” call. But I think everyone would agree that the **Bird of the Camp** was the very accessible Turquoise Parrot. It seems everyone got good views of this beautiful, colourful bird – generally in full sunlight – feeding on berries in low shrubs.



Turquoise Parrot at Borah TSR - Anthony Gooden

Our weather was very kind. Cold overnight (around 2-5°C) then hot (up to 27°C) during the day.

At one of our campfire happy hours, there was vibrant discussion on what constitutes “within walking distance” for recording purposes. Subsequently, we had great viewings of birds at the entrance to the Tarpoly Reserve near the main road – unfortunately, well outside “normal walking distance”. We had Plum-headed Finches (25), Double-bars, Diamond Firetails, Hooded Robin, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike and a close encounter with a Turquoise Parrot as well as Red-winged Parrots, a Striated Pardalote, a Dusky Woodswallow and other birds. Ann decided to do an atlas report for that area.



Happy hour gathering at the Easter Camp - Jim Smart

We saw 95 birds for the whole camp. Disappointing? I don’t think so. Amongst them, beside many views of the Turquoise Parrots (estimated around 6 to 10 in the area), we had Red-winged Parrots, Red-rumped Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, King Parrots; Diamond Firetails, Double-barred and Red-browed Finches. There were great views in the camp area of Speckled Warblers and an Azure Kingfisher as well as Spotted Pardalotes, White-throated Treecreepers, Noisy Friarbirds, one juvenile Little Friarbird and four Black-Fronted Dotterels hanging around the edges of the creek under the camp area.

Other notable sightings were over 100 White-winged Choughs feasting in the dug-up fields and a loud early morning wake-up visit by 50 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos which sounded like 100s. We also had Apostlebirds and Grey-crowned Babblers.

There wasn’t much blossom and much of the undergrowth around the camp had been eaten by stock, so some of our usual birds were missing. We only had a few honeyeaters – White-plumed, Blue-faced, Spiny-cheeked and Striped Honeyeaters, and Hooded and Eastern Yellow Robins.

There were also many Common Bronzewing, Peaceful Doves and Crested Pigeons. We only had 3 raptors – Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Hobby and Nankeen Kestrel.

Many of our sightings were on the Ploughed Paddock. Also, on one visit, on one small part of the track near the camp we had Superb Fairy-wrens, Speckled Warblers, Golden Whistlers, Diamond Firetail, Double-barred Finch, Red-browed Finch and Brown Treecreeper – all foraging together. Too easy.

On the Monday night, there were still 13 adults and 2 youngsters. On Tuesday night, there were 2 brave souls. Another wonderful, successful HBOC camp.

**Anthony Gooden**

## Activity Reports cont.

### Tocal Field Days

Friday to Sunday 2 - 4 May 2014

An opportunity to participate in the Tocal Field Days in May 2014 was accepted by HBOC and Alan Stuart undertook the considerable organisation involved in developing an appropriate display and gathering volunteers to man it. With the help of Rob Kyte's excellent graphic design skills, Alan produced six posters. Two posters focussed on ways of improving a property for birds: one described 10 good things to do when managing land and was based on the BirdLife Australia publication *Birds on Farms*; the other poster described how watercourses and dams are best designed and managed for wildlife and was based on a book called *What Makes a Good Farm for Wildlife*. Leaflets were prepared to accompany each poster.

Three posters related to HBOC and birdwatching; two publicised the Club and the social side of birdwatching; the third poster publicised the birding route brochures that are available on HBOC's website.

The final poster featured Noisy Miners with the prominent heading: "Noisy Miner - friend or foe?" It included two smaller images of a Noisy Miner and a Common Myna with the heading "Which is the greater pest?" This poster aimed to stimulate conversation and involve passers-by in a community survey about Noisy Miners, particularly the impact they have on small bush birds - it certainly worked! Many people completed a survey form about Noisy Miners and started conversations with HBOC members attending the display.

Excellent A3 photos of birds also attracted attention but the best drawcard was the sounds of bird calls emanating from inside the small marquee housing HBOC's display - quite a few children dragged their parents in, wanting to know what bird was making that noise!

Many membership forms were handed out and people manning the display had lots of interesting conversations about birds with Tocal participants - we certainly raised the profile of HBOC with an interesting and informative display. Thanks to Alan and Rob for their preparatory work, to Lorna for setting up the bird calls and to all those who helped set up and man the display. The birds will benefit from HBOC's efforts to raise awareness in the general community about rehabilitating suitable habitat, especially on farms.

#### Liz Crawford



HBOC's display at Tocal Field Days - and lots of bird talk happening



### Tocal Agricultural College

Tuesday 6 May 2014

It was a sunny Autumn day as 15 HBOC members set out to birdwatch at Tocal Agricultural College. The first pond we came to gave us great sightings of about ten Pink-eared Ducks and six Australasian Shovelers. There were also good numbers of Grey and Chestnut Teal, Hardheads, Pacific Black Ducks and Eurasian Coots. A couple of Black-fronted Dotterels and Black-winged Stilts fed in the muddy edges and Tree Martins (and a single Fairy Martin) skimmed over the water. Australasian Pipits hopped around in the grass nearby.

Bush birds were harder to spot as we walked along the creek towards the train line. Flocks of Yellow-faced

Honeyeaters and Silvereyes moved through overhead and a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo was heard. Some lucky people saw both a male and a female Regent Bowerbird in the 400-year-old Moreton Bay Fig, while others were admiring the pigs, the breed of which hasn't changed in 100 years.

While we were having lunch, three Wedge-tailed Eagles soared above and a Nankeen Kestrel hovered in the distance. In all, 60 species were sighted on the day. Thanks to Ray McLean, who organised this outing and to the staff from Tocal College for allowing us to birdwatch on their property.

#### Margaret Stewart

## Rufous Scrub-bird Monitoring

### HBOC's Rufous Scrub-bird monitoring used to support listing under the EPBC Act

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act* Scientific Committee has released a draft assessment for the Rufous Scrub-bird. The results of HBOC work at Gloucester Tops have provided valuable evidence in support of the case for listing the species under the Federal Act. Our 22-page paper describing the first three years of work, about to be published in the June issue of *Australian Field Ornithology*, is cited on four occasions. That HBOC is seen as the go-to group on this species is further highlighted by the invitation to contribute to the update of the species' account in a recent update of the *Action Plan for Australian Birds* and contribute to an international assessment by a UK-based organisation evaluating species considered to be on the "The Edge" of extinction and warranting research investment.

The key to the recognition of our work is two-fold. Firstly, conducting the field work in a systematic manner built around sound experimental design and good logistic organisation. Secondly, rapid evaluation and publication of the work in a peer-reviewed journal. All this required a team effort which drew on the many-faceted talents of the HBOC membership. Once again

Alan Stuart's organisational skills were called upon to structure the field work campaigns which were built around camps at Sharpes Creek.

All who have taken part in this study should feel deep satisfaction that they have made such a valuable contribution to enhancing the knowledge of this most elusive species. Conditions on the Gloucester Tops can be very demanding and many involved were of advancing years; in a couple of cases replacement joints received, and passed with flying colours, the ultimate field trial.

Hopefully the nomination will be accepted and the Rufous Scrub-bird will have protection at the Federal level as well as the existing state level.

Anyone wishing to view the preliminary assessment can use the following link: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/nominations/comment/rufous-scrub-bird>

### Mike Newman

Editor's Note: Mike Newman will give a presentation on *Rufous Scrub-bird monitoring* at the BirdLife Southern NSW Seminar to be held at Sydney Olympic Park on Saturday 26 July 2014 - see program and registration details below.

## Future Activity - BirdLife Southern NSW Seminar

### "Protecting Our Birds: Research & Important Bird Areas"

**When:** Saturday 26 July 2014, 9am to 4pm

**Where:** Building 22 Newington Armory, 1 Jamieson Street, Sydney Olympic Park

**Cost:** \$25 Students \$20

**Registration:** email Pixie [southernnsw@birdlife.org.au](mailto:southernnsw@birdlife.org.au)

#### Program

**Registration: 8.30am - 9.00am**

#### Morning Sessions: 9.00am - 1.00pm

**Guy Dutson** *Why monitor Important Bird Areas; and a review of the Australian IBA program*

**Julie Kirkwood** *Monitoring and conservation of Australian IBAs – working with BirdLife branches*

#### Morning Tea 10.30am -11.00am (provided)

**Graham Pyke** *Masked Lapwings in suburbia: Rescue and Research*

**Richard Major** *Declining bird populations inside salt marsh nature reserves*

**Mike Newman** *Addressing the challenges facing amateur groups monitoring IBAs*

**Lunch 1.00pm -1.45pm** (Not provided - bring your own lunch)

#### Afternoon sessions 1.45pm - 4.00pm

**Mike Newman** *Rufous Scrub-bird *Atrichornis rufescens* monitoring at the extremities of the species' range in New South Wales (2010–2012)*

**Rod Kavanagh** *Mudgee-Wollar IBA: a case study*

**Carol Proberts** *Monitoring honeyeaters at a migration bottleneck - The Greater Blue Mountains IBA*

**Alan Stuart** *IBA monitoring in the Hunter Region – a horses for courses approach*

**Forum with all speakers.**

## Hunter Striated Pardalote Subspecies Identification

In the April 2014 HBOC Newsletter (page 10), Peter Alexander described his research project on Striated Pardalotes and asked members to try to identify Striated Pardalotes to subspecies level and report their sightings to [petealexander@bigpond.com](mailto:petealexander@bigpond.com). At the April Club Night, Dan Williams illustrated the differences between the subspecies and played their calls. A summary of the identification features to look for is provided opposite by Mick Roderick and an image depicting the differences is provided below by Dan Williams.

- Striped crown + red wing spot + narrow white wing-stripe = *ornatus* = our 'common local bird'
- Striped crown + yellow wing spot + narrow white wing-stripe = *striatus* = migrant from Tassie.
- Striped crown + red wing spot + broad white wing-stripe = *substriatus* = 'western bird'
- Black crown = *melanocephalus* = 'northern bird'

### Rule Number 1 – go straight for the wingbar!



One of the 'regulars'



One of the 'range limits'



Eastern S.P.  
*P. s. ornatus*

Yellow-tipped P.  
*P. s. striatus*

Western S.P.  
*P. s. substriatus*

Black-headed P.  
*P. s. melanocephalus*

'Standard'  
Song

High-pitched  
song

Short 3<sup>rd</sup> note  
Song

Long 1<sup>st</sup> note  
Song

## Stockton Sandspit

Although most migratory shorebirds have moved north for the breeding season, there are still some over-wintering migratory shorebirds and hundreds of non-migratory shorebirds to enjoy. The best viewing times are from about three hours before to about three hours after the Sydney high-tide time. During this time, the birds are roosting over the high-tide period while their foraging areas on mudflats and sandflats are covered by the tide.



Curlew Sandpiper in foreground, Red-necked Avocet in background, on sandflat beside Stockton Sandspit, 25 May 2014 - Chris Herbert

## Trials of Photography - Oystercatchers at Soldiers Point NSW



Pied Oystercatchers at Soldiers Point 2 May 2014 - Rod Warnock

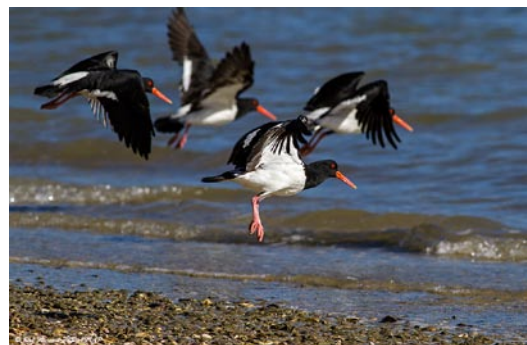
I have been tempted to do a trip to Soldiers Point for a while as earlier, thanks to Trevor Murray, I got a group of images of Beach Stone-curlews plus a range of other species. I was scheduled to pick up our daughter Megan from Williamtown Airport mid-afternoon so I decided to explore Soldiers Point at high tide in search of both Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. A quick call to Trevor who said that a flock of 20-30 Pied and also a few Sooty Oystercatchers roost on rocks at 'the spot'.

High tide was at midday, not ideal for imagery, but great to test out the possibility of the spot when tide times and time of day were kinder to photography. The spot is exposed and I didn't want to flush the birds and get nothing. Thick casuarina trees provided a possibility of getting closer ... sounds simple ... not so as thorny creepers prevented a direct approach so I crawled about 15 metres to a spot where clear views of mostly backlit subjects were taken and I decided to crawl further north for side-lighting. The above looks simple ... not so ... think ... 81 year old ... 97 kg, yeah corpulent (but thinning slightly) ... artificial knees ... wriggling stealthily commando-like ... the birds were mostly asleep ... but still the light was useless ... I would have to move further north and started slowly ... given the above limits it is always slowly!!!

Suddenly the birds were awake and calling then burst into flight and were gone to alight 400 m to the north !! I was wondering if it had been me that put the birds to flight, when a sleek, leggy, healthy sort of water dog ... labrador size, burst into the clearing followed by a black-tracksuit-clad blonde female who passed me within three metres without seeing me. Me wondering what to do ... after a couple of minutes I decided to cough rather than have to phone the police that someone had dropped dead with fright. Explained what I was doing and that the dog had set the birds in flight. She sez: "What those shags?" Me: "Nah, Pied Oystercatchers". Anyway the second disaster struck when the birds returned as she was leaving and took fright a second time!!! They landed on the beach in clear view but too far away. Suddenly a voice

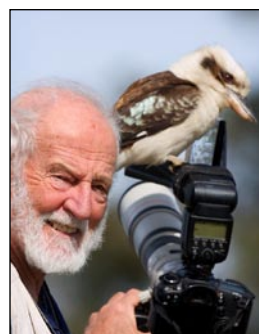
sez: "What are you taking?". It was Rob McNeil; he had been sitting in the scrub taking images of a bird of prey and had come to investigate. Then another disturbance and the birds flew to our spot but must have picked us up and turned away as they were about to land. They landed on a jetty ... it seemed all was lost. A fisherman moved out on the jetty and the birds again landed on the beach. My car was parked in a carpark that allows access to a picnic ground and the beach. I decided to abandon the spot and told Rob that I would go to my car and try to get some images by crawling over the shallow grassed sandbank at the beach. It seemed unlikely that images would result but at least if the birds again flew they would likely go to where I had left Rob. Again in clear view without any cover I did the commando crawl again ... the birds were still sleeping ... some flat on the sand, some on one leg etc ... I was getting images and gradually improving my position when the birds seemed to become a little restless. I glanced over my shoulder and here was another lady, aged about 25 yrs, who also had a dog AND an iPad and was taking images! She smiled .... I then glanced to my left and there was Rob who had migrated with his 500mm lens as there had been no sign that the birds would fly back to the original rocky perch... Later other people and dogs put the birds to flight - see the image below as evidence .. Oh! and Megan's plane was late!!

### Rod Warnock



The last glimpse as the Pied Oystercatchers took flight across the bay and out of sight - Rod Warnock

Editor's Note: It is great to read about photographers trying to get close to birds without disturbing them - below are proof shots of Rod's crawling ability and the confidence he generates in his avian subjects!



Rod Warnock and Kookaburra by Trevor Murray. Rod Warnock flat out at Stockton Sandspit by Rob McNeil

## Featured Birdwatching Site - Allyn River

The Allyn River area is located 2 hours north of Newcastle at the end of the Allyn River Road via Gresford. Arguably one of the best locations in the Hunter for rainforest birds, Allyn River is situated within the Chichester State Forest and offers a great day out with plenty of picnic areas, camping spots, walking tracks and swimming holes.

An early morning, mid-week excursion during spring or summer will give you the best chance of spotting a wide range of species. The area is very popular with campers from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning and becomes very noisy and overcrowded. During winter it gets quite cold and all the migrants have left for warmer climates.

Two spots that I've always enjoyed birding are the White Rock camping area (32° 07' 31"S 151° 28' 04"E) and the Peach Tree picnic area (32° 07' 43"S 151° 28' 25"E).

There are several large fig trees along the over-grown track that leads off northwest from beside White Rock camping area and when these are in fruit the place is alive with Satin and Regent Bowerbird, Green Catbird, Topknot, White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-dove and Wompoo Fruit-dove. Three species of scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Brown Gerygone, Rose and Yellow Robins, Crested Shrike-tit and Lewin's Honeyeater feed on the forest verges and on the forest floor you might get lucky and spot both species of thrush, Bassian and Russet-tailed and Superb Lyrebird.

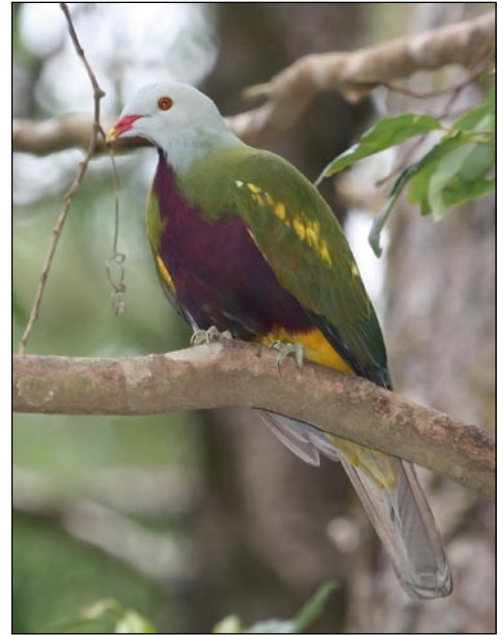
During the warmer months the air is filled with the calls of Noisy Pitta, Spectacled and Black-faced Monarch and several species of cuckoo. Unfortunately leeches, ticks and mozzies are also common during this period but with a few precautions these nasties can be largely avoided.

The ridge line above Allyn River on Lagoon Pinch Forest Road (the road towards the former Barrington guest house) can also be very rewarding with species like Red-browed Treecreeper, Paradise Riflebird, Wonga Pigeon, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo and Grey Goshawk sometimes being seen. The habitat becomes quite dry with the rising altitude and is home to Leaden Flycatcher, Cicadabird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Bell Miner and other species not generally known to live in the wetter rainforest below.

At night Allyn River is home to a wide range of mammals such as possums, pademelons and quoll that are quite easily spotlighted along the road. If you're really lucky you might see the resident pairs of Southern Boobook, Sooty Owl, Masked Owl (mainly on the verges) and Australian Owlet-nightjar. Powerful Owl and White-throated Nightjar probably also exist here but I've never recorded them.

Birdwatching in the rainforest can be challenging yet rewarding. Learning calls and behaviours makes the process a lot easier and with a bit of patience you should be able to come away from the Allyn River area with a fair sized list. Certainly a great location for a day trip or overnight camp.

**Grant Brosie**



From top: Wompoo Fruit-dove, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Russet-tailed Thrush - Grant Brosie



## Hunter Economic Zone - current status



Regent Honeyeater - Dean Ingwersen

The Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ) industrial subdivision is one of the key conservation issues in the Hunter Region and possibly the most significant issue for threatened and declining woodland birds species. Below is a dot point summary, giving some background, concerns and a concluding comment.

### Importance of Site

- The HEZ is located within the largest remnant of lowland forest / woodland on the floor of the Lower Hunter Valley. Much of it was retained due to it being State Forest, whilst the private lands were owned by mining companies (for many years the Cessnock area has been mined for underground coal and continues to do so, to the west at Austar near Pelton).
- The area holds a remarkable diversity of flora and fauna, including 29 Eucalypt species (about 10% of NSW), 3 of which are new to science. It is home to about 30 threatened species (plant and animal) and ecological communities. Most significantly to HBOC, it is occupied by a range of threatened and declining woodland bird species and has been shown to be probably the most important single site for Swift Parrots and Regent Honeyeaters in the Lower Hunter (supported by a BirdLife Australia study).
- The HEZ has been frequented by Swift Parrots for a higher proportion of seasons than any other Spotted Gum-Ironbark-dominated site in NSW and was called the “most important Spotted Gum site for Swift Parrots on mainland Australia” by the Swift Parrot Recovery Coordinator (Debbie Saunders) back in 2002.
- Moreover, it is a known breeding site for Regent Honeyeaters and was the location where a very important semi-communal breeding event took place in 2007/2008 (when breeding activity wasn't recorded in the Capertee Valley). This breeding

event is currently being documented for publication, and research is showing that perhaps it was more significant than first thought (i.e. that Regent Honeyeaters had been breeding there prior to the discovery of nests). Regent Honeyeaters show a high degree of site fidelity to the HEZ and have been recorded there in 6 out of the past 10 years (including 5 consecutive years between 2005 and 2009). They were present in HEZ for 6 months in 2012 and may have bred there undetected.

- Some additional information about Regent Honeyeaters in HEZ, including some very useful maps for context, can be found at <http://www.friendsoftumblebee.org/regent-honeyeater-national-park/>

### Development Scenario - Recent Developments

- Approximately 870ha of bushland in HEZ was rezoned for industrial purposes in March 2002 after very minimal ecological investigations were made (comprising less than 2 weeks fieldwork across more than 1000ha of bushland). Since the rezoning, a sequence of complex planning approvals, environmental planning instruments and other investigations has occurred at the site, with little development activity as a result.
- The HEZ was the subject of a NSW Parliamentary Upper House Inquiry in 2004. It also went into receivership in 2010 and was purchased by new owners in 2012.
- Only since the rezoning was made, has the ecological significance of the site been realised. It is unfortunate, but the vast majority of records of Swift Parrots and Regent Honeyeaters only came to light after the rezoning had been made.
- In May 2007 (only months before the first detected Regent Honeyeater breeding event) the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Water Resources signed off on an ‘approval’ to develop the HEZ-owned portion of the rezoned land. This approval also allowed for the removal of up to 90% of mature trees on the site.
- In 2009, 129ha of land on the HEZ-owned portion of HEZ (known as ‘Precinct 1’) was granted concept approval by the NSW Department of Planning, as well as some supporting infrastructure such as vehicle accesses and bypasses. This was despite a consultant's report that indicated that it would have a significant impact upon Regent Honeyeaters. This

## Hunter Economic Zone - current status cont.

approval is due to lapse at the end of April and to date no development activity has resulted from it (nor have required offsets been provided).

- A residents group is taking Cessnock Council to court over the approval of a Development Application where councillors voted against the advice of their staff ecologist, who recommended that a Species Impact Statement be prepared. <http://www.cessnockadvertiser.com.au/story/2052971/residents-group-takes-council-to-court/>
- At around the same time that the above court case was filed in the Land and Environment Court an announcement was made that an ammonium nitrate storage facility would be constructed at HEZ, situated immediately adjacent to some of the 2007 Regent Honeyeater nest sites.

### HBOC Position

HBOC is opposed to clearing of this significant habitat for Regent Honeyeaters, Swift Parrots and other threatened woodland birds. HBOC maintains that the loss of this site cannot be offset because it is unique, being a large remnant on the floor of the Hunter Valley, is a functioning ecosystem shown to house numerous threatened species, and is vitally important for nationally endangered Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater. HBOC supports the campaign by the residents group ('Friends of Tumblebee') proposing that the area be secured for conservation.

### Mick Roderick

#### Recent Newspaper reports can be found at:

<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/2321587/endangered-bird-could-block-coalfields-workshop/>

<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/2327141/opinion-the-case-for-saving-regent-honeyeaters/>

## Macquarie Island officially declared pest-free



Slopes of Macquarie Island denuded by rabbits and subject to landslip - 2007 - Chris Herbert

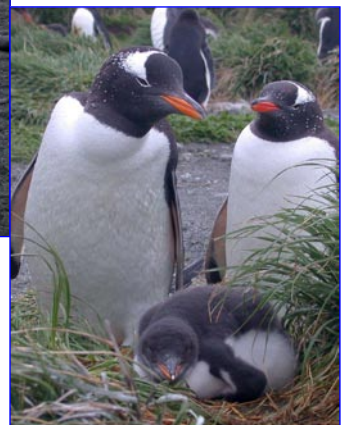
The Hon, Greg Hunt MP, Minister for the Environment announced on 7 April 2014 that the Macquarie Island Pest Eradication Programme has been completed—and after two years of extensive monitoring the island can now officially be declared pest free.

The island is the largest and most remote location where the total eradication of three invasive species has been successfully completed; ship rat, rabbit and house mouse. This success is due to the hard work and dedication of scientists, ecologists, hunters and trainers and their remarkable detector dogs. Tonight the dogs have arrived home in Hobart signalling the completion of their task.

Before the programme started the Macquarie Island World Heritage Area was in severe danger. Ship rats were attacking and killing the chicks and eggs of endangered seabirds. Rabbits had destroyed the breeding grounds

of nesting seabirds, including albatrosses, petrels and prions, and the pests had caused extensive erosion and destabilisation of the island's mountain slopes. A landslip at Lusitania Bay resulted in the deaths of over 100 King Penguins. The decline of the island's vegetation was an immediate threat to nine seabird species that used the area for breeding. It was estimated the island's rabbit population exceeded 100 000.

The Australian and Tasmanian governments have invested more than \$24 million to ensure one of the world's most fascinating places, and its inhabitants, is preserved. After extensive planning and research, aerial baiting for the pests began in winter 2010. In 2011, to prevent seabird deaths from the consumption of poisoned rabbit carcasses, people were sent to the island to find and remove carcasses before they were eaten by the scavenging seabirds.



King Penguins and nesting Gentoo Penguins at Macquarie Island - Chris Herbert

## Macquarie Island officially declared pest-free cont.

Teams of skilled hunters and specially trained detector dogs eliminated the remaining rabbits. The dogs were trained to locate rabbits but not to harm native animals. Three specially trained rodent detector dogs were sent to the island in March 2013. Since August 2011 six dog handlers, four hunters plus two rodent hunters and a team leader have covered more than 90,000 km on foot looking for signs of rabbits, rats and mice.

There have been no confirmed sightings of ship rats or house mice since July 2011 and no confirmed sightings of rabbits since December 2011.

The programme has resulted in a dramatic recovery of the island's flora and fauna. Plant species that were at considerable risk of extinction and those which give Macquarie Island its distinctive character such as tussock grass, Macquarie cabbage and silver-leaf daisy are all showing a remarkable recovery.

The Blue Petrel is now breeding in a more widespread area on the main island and terns are now able to breed on cobblestone beaches. Grey Petrels have had their most successful breeding season since recording of their populations commenced in 2000.

Most of the dogs are now enjoying a well earned retirement with some continuing to work with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

Macquarie Island is roughly halfway between Tasmania and Antarctica and is recognised as having one of the greatest concentrations of seabirds in the world. The island is renowned for the spectacular beauty of its remote and windswept landscape. Its steep escarpments, lakes, and dramatic changes in vegetation provide an outstanding spectacle of wild, natural beauty and are complemented by vast congregations of wildlife such as penguins and seals.

Macquarie Island was placed on the World Heritage List in 1997. At almost 34 km long and 5.5 km wide, Macquarie Island is the only island in the world composed entirely of oceanic crust and rocks from deep within the earth's structure or mantle. Ten million years ago the rocky outcrops on the north of the island began their journey from 6 km below the earth's surface to the ocean's floor. Macquarie Island was born as the rock and oceanic crust was squeezed upwards in a 2.5 km journey to emerge above the sea surface nearly 700,000 years ago.

A permit system administered by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service allows just 1000 people to visit the island each year. Biosecurity measures for all shipping to the island have been improved in a joint program between the Australian Antarctic Division and the Parks and Wildlife Service.

**Source:** Media Release from Minister of Environment dated 7 April 2014

## Powling Street Wetlands, Port Fairy, Victoria - a Win for Locals

At the end of the Great Ocean Road, in the charming town of Port Fairy, you can meet a population of migratory shorebirds who stick to the Aussie tradition of living by the seaside. This population of Latham's Snipe roost and feed in the Powling Street Wetlands complex from late August to early April each year. Having rested and built up their energy stores, they fly along the East Asian - Australasian Flyway to their breeding grounds in Japan.

Their seaside home at the Powling Street Wetlands complex is a short stroll from Pea Soup Beach where locals from the South Beach Wetlands and Landcare Group have observed overtopping of coastal dunes by ocean waves during high seas.

The Latham's Snipe's home has been threatened by a proposed 32-lot housing subdivision which would destroy three ephemeral wetlands within the wetland complex.

Local residents Don Stewart and Jodie Honan, represented by the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) Victoria, have won their fight in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to have

the Powling Street Wetland complex recognised as significant habitat for the Latham's Snipe. In the VCAT hearing they were also able to provide valuable local knowledge of wave overtopping of the coastal dune.

The VCAT decision approves the development with significant amendments, now including that 9 of the 32 lots are required to be transferred to the local council for annexure to the main part of the wetland. VCAT found that this would achieve three complementary functions:

1. avoiding development in an area that is subject to short-term risks of coastal inundation;
2. providing stormwater retention; and
3. providing habitat to support the Latham's Snipe.

[The decision of VCAT](#) accepted the evidence of ecologist Dr Birgita Hansen and recognised the importance of the entire area of the Powling Street Wetland complex to the Latham's Snipe. VCAT found that the land marked for housing subdivision, and the adjacent council-owned permanent wetland was an area of 'contiguous habitat used by the same group (of birds) that includes multiple feeding and roosting areas.' [at para 85]

This decision is a vindication of the importance of

## Powling Street Wetlands, Port Fairy, Victoria - a Win for Locals cont.

local communities being involved in the decisions that are made about their local environment. Without the tireless efforts of the South Beach Wetlands and Landcare Group monitoring the birds and reporting the bird counts to BirdLife Australia, the importance of this site would never have been recognised. Without the photographs and anecdotal evidence from locals of wave overtopping of the dune, which, coupled with sea-level rise, could bring sea water to flood the site, the experts may not have accurately assessed the coastal inundation risk.

So what does this mean for the birds who like to live beside the Port Fairy seaside? VCAT heard evidence from Dr Hansen that if disturbance exceeds a certain threshold (which is currently un-quantified) birds may eventually abandon the area to move to less preferred

and more marginal habitat.' [Dr Birgita Hansen - Expert Report - p. 4] Only time will tell whether the scaled back development disturbs the Latham's Snipe to the point where they abandon their home.

Source: [Ariane Wilkinson's blog](#) Environmental Defenders Office Victoria  
<http://edovic.org.au/blog/vcat-win-locals>

Ann Lindsey notes:

As long ago as 2008, as Conservation Officer for the Australasian Wader Studies Group, I was involved in objecting to residential development on the Powling Street Wetlands, used regularly over the summer months by up to 400 Latham's Snipe. Persistence by local groups, bird clubs and EDO has finally resulted in part of the wetlands being put aside for Latham's Snipe. Without these protests nothing would have been done.

## Plankton make scents for seabirds

The top predators of the Southern Ocean, far-ranging seabirds, are tied both to the health of the ocean ecosystem and to global climate regulation through a mutual relationship with phytoplankton, according to newly published work from the University of California, Davis. When phytoplankton are eaten by grazing crustaceans called krill, they release a chemical signal that calls in krill-eating birds. At the same time, this chemical signal - dimethyl sulfide, or DMS - forms sulfur compounds in the atmosphere that promote cloud formation and help cool the planet. Seabirds consume the grazers, and fertilize the phytoplankton with iron, which is scarce in the vast Southern Ocean. The work was published 3 March 2014 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

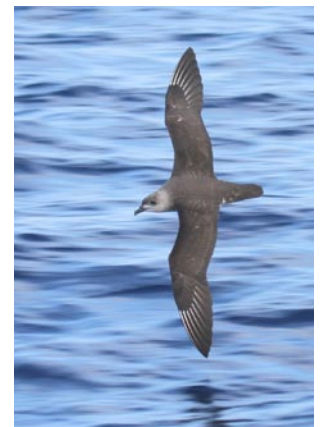
"The data are really striking," said Gabrielle Nevitt, professor of neurobiology, physiology and behaviour at UC Davis and co-author on the paper with graduate student Matthew Savoca. "This suggests that marine top predators are important in climate regulation, although they are mostly left out of climate models".

Nevitt has studied the sense of smell in ocean-going birds for about 25 years, and was the first to demonstrate that marine top predators use climate-regulating chemicals for foraging and navigation over the featureless ocean. DMS is now known to be an important signal for petrels and albatrosses, and the idea has been extended to various species of penguins, seals, sharks, sea turtles, coral reef fishes and possibly baleen whales.

On land, there are several known examples of plants that respond to attack by insects by producing chemicals that attract predators that eat those insects. Nevitt and Savoca propose the same thing happens in the open

ocean: when phytoplankton come under attack by krill, the DMS released as they die attracts predators that eat the krill.

The birds have something else to contribute. The Southern Ocean lacks large land masses, and is relatively poor in iron, which has to be washed out from land by rivers. Krill are rich in iron, but birds can absorb relatively little of it - so the rest is excreted back into the ocean, promoting plankton growth.



Kermadec Petrel - Mick Roderick

"Studying how seabirds use scent cues to forage has shown us a mechanism by which the seabirds themselves contribute to climate regulation. That's not what we expected, but I really think our results will have global significance," Nevitt said.

At the same time, numbers of these birds are declining, with almost half of the species listed as vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered. The newly discovered links between top predators and the base of the ocean food web mean that a decline in seabirds could have a significant effect on marine productivity.

The work was funded by the US National Science Foundation.

Source: [University of California, Davis](#)

<http://esciencenews.com/articles/2014/03/20/plankton.make.scents.seabirds.and.a.cooler.planet>

## Superb Fairy-wrens sing to their chicks before birth

The BirdLab at Flinders University recently discovered that communication occurs before birth, at least in some birds, and that it is crucial for survival.

Our discovery came about by chance. Because nest predation is the major cause of avian mortality, we monitored the inside of Superb Fairy-wren nests 24 hours per day with a microphone and video camera in order to identify nest predators. We successfully observed some nest predation, but more startling was our discovery that the mother wrens sing a previously unknown vocalisation - we called it the incubation call - to their eggs for a few days before they hatch.

After they hatched, the wren siblings in each nest produced the same begging call, and each nest had a begging call that was significantly different from the begging call given in neighbouring nests. The begging call of each family was unique because it was based on a unique element in the newly discovered incubation call of each mother.

To separate genetic effects from the effect of the rearing environment, we swapped clutches of eggs between nests, then recorded the incubation calls of the biological and foster mothers, and the begging calls of the nestlings after they hatched. To our great delight we confirmed that females were teaching the embryos. The call similarity between the foster females and the nestlings was much higher than between the nestlings and their genetic mother.

Why do females teach the nestlings a particular begging call note? Like many birds, Superb Fairy-wrens are parasitised by cuckoos, which lay their eggs in the wren nest. Subsequently the cuckoo nestling ejects the host eggs and nestlings, and deceives the host parents into rearing it.

The cuckoo hatchling can evict host eggs or young hatchlings before they can resist eviction. The parent wrens then invest 2 weeks of their lives to feed the

cuckoo nestling that has killed their family. So it is in their interests to be able to distinguish a cuckoo from their own nestlings. Our recently discovered nest-specific begging calls that have a learned and unique element from the mother's incubation call seems to provide a further refinement in this arms race to give the wrens an edge. Perhaps the mothers are teaching their offspring a unique password just before they hatch so that she can distinguish them from a cuckoo that may be in her nest.

We tested this hypothesis with playback experiments in which a loudspeaker placed under the nest could broadcast a begging call from that nest (the control), a neighbouring nest or a cuckoo nestling. The results were clear-cut. As expected, there was no effect on parental feeding of nestlings when we played a begging call recorded at the nest; the stimulus just added to the collective begging of the nestlings and matched their calls. When the stimulus was a wren begging call from another nest, the parents did not feed their nestlings and flew around the nest, giving alarm calls. The parents' response was exactly the same when a cuckoo begging call was played.

Thus it seems the unique aspect of the wren begging calls at each nest plays a key role in detecting intruders, and thus the females teaching their offspring the password element just before they hatch may have a critical role in the arms race with cuckoos. Our observations and experiments tell us that the function of the begging call password is to expose intruder cuckoo nestlings. Our discovery and experiments have uncovered adult abandonment of offspring that did not learn as embryos.

**Sonia Kleindorfer and Jeremy Robertson**

Source: Adapted from *Australasian Science* **34** (9) November 2013: 27-29, which adapted their article from *Issues* magazine ([www.issuesmagazine.com.au](http://www.issuesmagazine.com.au)).

## News from BirdLife Australia

Last week saw the launch of BirdLife Australia's long-awaited Murray-Darling Basin Conservation Statement. Compiled by Richard Kingsford, Jenny Lau and James O'Connor, this report highlights the issues which have plagued the Murray-Darling Basin, examines the interventions that have rejuvenated the wetlands, and looks to the future management of the river system. A must-read for anyone interested in the environment, it can be downloaded from the BirdLife Australia website.

'Farewell Shorebirds' has come to an end — we've waved goodbye to most of the migratory shorebirds for the winter. Thanks to everyone who took part. If you missed any webcasts, you can view them all online. And, thanks to the

AWSG, we can follow the journey of three migrating Little Curlews — [click here](#) to keep up with their movements.

Here's a special offer from CSIRO Publishing for BirdLife Australia members to purchase [Finding Australian Birds](#) with a **20% discount and free postage** (valid until 30 June). You must order online and enter promotions code 2014-002 at the checkout.

BirdLife Southern NSW is holding '[The Night Parrot — An Evening with John Young](#)' in conjunction with the University of Technology, Sydney, on 23 July 2014

## Trans-Tasman Birding Links - from 2000 onwards

The April 2014 HBOC Newsletter covered birding links developed between Australian and New Zealand birdwatchers up until the year 2000, particularly regarding Project Egret Watch. By Christmas 2004, work required for tagging Cattle Egrets at Shortland and Seaham had become beyond the capacity of the small remaining Project Egret Watch team. Ageing tagging managers, Max and Neville and Marlene Foster, could not cope with the required field and recording work and it was agreed that 2004 would be the last year for tagging. Field work for the Project had been supported by a network of volunteers across Australia and New Zealand (The Wetlander 21 (2) November 2005). No Seaham-tagged birds had been recorded in New Zealand and growth of Cattle Egret nest trees in the Shortland Melaleuca Swamp had increased the height and density of the trees, preventing researchers from getting close enough to catch chicks for tagging. The Wetlander 24 (2) 2009 reported that Cattle Egret numbers had plunged steeply in the early 1990s, followed by a continuing shallow decline to 2008, when Seaham nesting declined to 25 nests and then zero thereafter. There were only 155 nests at Shortland in 2009/10. In June 2009, Neil Fitzgerald from Birding NZ organized Max to join the Cattle Egrets in NZ this winter forum.

The results of Cattle Egrets arriving in NZ indicated low numbers in the North Island. Most of the reports from the forum were of current sightings which lacked information of previous historical counts to indicate rising, falling or stable numbers. However, one September 2009 submission indicated that there were clearly fewer birds than in most years prior to 2001. Year 2009 provided some clues that there might be a decline in Cattle Egret trips across the Tasman Sea from Australia to the South Island. Kathleen Harrison and Sheila Petch recorded maximum counts of Cattle Egrets in the Lake Ellesmere area from 1984-2009, showing substantial peaks of 73 in 1986, 76 in 1991, and 68 in 1997, with a downward trend from 25 down to 10 in 2000-2003, no records 2004 - 2008, and only 4 in 2009, strongly suggestive of a declining migrant population. Unfortunately it has not been feasible to carry out research into this trend.

Apart from Max's research into Cattle Egrets, we visited our NZ family at Silverstream during Christmas 2006, March 2009 and Christmas 2013. During the 2006 visit, NZ birdwatchers Enfys Graham and Rosemary Heather introduced us to the Karori Sanctuary Trust, close to downtown Wellington, an urban eco-restoration project, targeting endangered species. Early on the walk we photographed a Tui feeding on a spindly flax plant. Volunteers put out special food for the native species, such as Kaka, Tui, Bellbird and North Island Robin, but feral Chaffinch and Blackbird took food too. At Pautanananui Bird Sanctuary, we saw the common natives Australasian Shoveler and Pied Stilt.

In 2009 we birded in the South Island. At Stewart Island, Kaka and Tui visited our Treehouse Crib accommodation. Out walking we encountered feral Mallards, native Pied and Black Oystercatchers, shags, Black-backed Gulls, a Fantail and Black-fronted Terns. Ulva Island, off Stewart Island, is one of NZ's special sites set aside for important native bird species. Guided by a ranger, we watched a Weka, two New Zealand Pigeons, Grey Warbler, Shining Cuckoo, Yellow Head and Rifleman. We attracted a South Island Robin, an uncommon endemic, by scratching in the dirt. Other birdwatching places in South Island included Waipapa Point (Snares Crested Penguin), Albatross Sanctuary at Taiaroa Head, Aramoana Conservation Area, Sylvan Lake area



Pied Stilt Pautanananui Bird Sanctuary; rare Black Stilt en route to Mt Cook; Tui calling its ownership of Flax flowers; New Zealand Pigeons (Kereru) on wire near Maddock house in Silverstream; Australasian Shoveler at Pautanananui Bird Sanctuary; Snares Crested Penguin at Waipapa Point - Max Maddock

(Tomtit and Rifleman), Mt Cook (en route endemic Black Stilts feeding with about 60 feral Canada Geese!), Tasman National Park, Awaroa Inlet (100 Variegated Oystercatchers), Pakawau tidal flats (White-faced Herons) and Whanganui Inlet (Kotuku).

We also spent two days on Somes Island in Wellington Harbour - another special protected habitat, with Weta (hand-sized insect found at night), Tuataras, Kingfisher, Rifleman, numerous Red-crowned Parakeets and Fantails, a North Island Robin (uncommon endemic), Black-backed Gulls and shags.

In 2013, Max enjoyed studying and photographing the behaviour of native Tuis and NZ Pigeons, and the impacts of Blackbirds, House Sparrows and other feral bird species. Both adult and juvenile Tuis were feeding on nectar from the flowers of Flax Plants, which have been planted extensively. In the Karori Sanctuary we saw Stitchbird, North Island Saddleback, Bellbird, South Island Takahe and Paradise Shelduck and Little Shags nesting in fallen trees. Feral species have also moved into the area: California Quail, Chaffinch, Blackbird and Mallard.

Rosemary Heather and Enfys Graham took us to Pharazyn Reserve, where they were doing monthly counts. The Reserve was originally a protected environmental reserve which recently had its protection withdrawn and is in conflict for use as a waterway. New Zealanders are having similar problems to those we are experiencing.

**Max and Heather Maddock**

# 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 published 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
Australian Hobby	1	22/04/2014	Hexham Swamp	L. Parashou	Club Night
Australian Hobby	1	19/03/2014	Rankin Park	T. Kendall	Club Night
Australian King-Parrot	12	18/04/2014	Blue Gum Hills	D. Williams	Hunterbirding
Australian Wood Duck	2+4dy	20/11/2013	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Beach Stone-curlew	3	14/04/2014	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Beach Stone-curlew	3	15/05/2014	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Beach Stone-curlew	1+1juv	28/05/2014	Mudbishops Point	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Beach Stone-curlew	2+1juv	10/05/2014	Soldiers Point	L. Wooding	Hunterbirding
Black Falcon	2	23/04/2014	Wallalong	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Falocn	1	21/04/2014	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	3	24/04/2014	Newcastle	R. McDonald	Hunterbirding
Black Kite	9	24/04/2014	Weston	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Black-faced Monarch	1 imm	2/04/2014	Ash Island	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Black-necked Stork	1	2/04/2014	Hexham Swamp	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Black-necked Stork	1	23/04/2014	Berry Park	N. Fraser	Hunterbirding
Black-necked Stork	3	21/05/2014	Hexham Swamp	R. Warnock	Hunterbirding
Black-tailed Godwit	89	5/02/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford	Club Night
Black-winged Stilt	280	2/04/2014	Hexham Swamp	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Black-winged Stilt	300	5/02/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford	Club Night
Blue-billed Duck	2	21/05/2014	Walka Water Works	L. Mee	Hunterbirding
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	20/04/2014	Elermore Vale	T. Kendall	Club Night
Blue-faced Honeyeater	4	13/05/2014	Birmingham Gardens	N. McNaughton	Club Night
Brolga	1	5/02/2014	Nabiac	D. Atkinson	Club Night
Brown Goshawk	1	20/03/2014	Rankin Park	T. Kendall	Club Night
Brown Goshawk	1	29/03/2014	New Lambton Heights	T. Kendall	Club Night
Brown-headed Honeyeater	17	24/04/2014	Eagleton	T. Clarke	Hunterbirding
Buff-banded Rail	2	12/05/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Buff-banded Rail	3	18/03/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Buff-banded Rail	3	13/02/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Buff-banded Rail	1+1dy	20/01/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Bush Stone-curlew	2	30/04/2014	Carrington / Tahlee	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Caspian Tern	22	28/05/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	4	5/05/2014	Kerrabee, Bylong Valley Way	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	5+6imm	15/05/2014	Kerrabee, Bylong Valley Way	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	23/04/2014	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Comb-crested Jacana	4	26/04/2014	Cattai Wetlands	A. Carlson	Hunterbirding
Common Bronzewing	3	22/11/2013	Kurri Kurri	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Common Greenshank	10	9/04/2014	Kooragang Dykes	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Common Greenshank	11	16/04/2014	Ash Island	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Common Sandpiper	1	16/04/2014	Kooragang Dykes	L. Crawford	Hunterbirding
Crested Shrike-tit	2	3/04/2014	Millfield	J. Goswell	Hunterbirding
Curlew Sandpiper	20	28/05/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Diamond Firetail	1	7/05/2014	Singleton Training Area	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Double-banded Plover	2	16/04/2014	Deep Pond	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Double-banded Plover	3	9/04/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Double-banded Plover	70	15/04/2014	Stockton Beach	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Double-banded Plover	155	16/05/2014	Stockton Beach	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Dusky Woodswallow	c.30	2/05/2014	Doyles Creek	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Dusky Woodswallow	c.300	5/05/2014	Bylong Valley Way	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Eastern Barn Owl	1	2/05/2014	Warkworth	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Eastern Reef Egret	1	27/03 - 23/04/2014	Stockton Channel	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Eastern Spinebill	1	17/04/2014	King Edward Park	L. Parashou	Club Night
European Goldfinch	1	5/05/2014	Kerrabee	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Flame Robin	1	13/05/2014	Lake Glenbawn	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	1	8/05/2014	Wetlands Centre	R. & M. Stewart	Hunterbirding
Freckled Duck	22	21/05/2014	Morpeth WWTW	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Fuscous Honeyeater	c.4	13/05/2014	Lake Glenbawn	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Galah	22+2dy	22/11/2013	Rathmines	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Gang-gang Cockatoo	2	3/04/2014	Millfield	J. Goswell	Hunterbirding

## Club Night & Hunterbirding Observations cont.

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Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer	Source
Glossy Ibis	19	21/05/2014	Morpeth WWTW	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Grey Goshawk	1	10/02/2014	Toronto Golf Club	L. Crawford	Club Night
Grey-tailed Tattler	5	28/05/2014	Fern Bay	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Grey-tailed Tattler	29	30/04/2014	Swan Bay	L. Wooding	Hunterbirding
Gull-billed Tern	97	28/05/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Hoary-headed Grebe	91	21/05/2014	Walka Water Works	L. Mee	Hunterbirding
Horsfield's Bushlark	c.10	2/05/2014	Yarrawa Deviation Rd	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Little Corella	40+3dy	22/02/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Little Corella	c.100	3/01/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Little Corella	c.115	3/03/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Little Corella	c.200	Feb-Mar 2014	Warners Bay	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Little Corella	c.350	18/04/2014	Aberdeen	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Little Eagle	1	1/02/2014	Richmond Vale	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Little Eagle	1	12/04/2014	Doughboy Hollow	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Little Eagle	1	24/04/2014	Weston	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Little Eagle	1	22/04/2014	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Little Eagle	1	26/05/2014	Weston	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Little Eagle	2	18/04/2014	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Little Lorikeet	32	4/04/2014	Shortland	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Long-billed Corella	52	27/12/2013	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Long-billed Corella	5+1dy	8/04/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Musk Lorikeet	12	20/04/2014	Rankin Park	T. Kendall	Club Night
Musk Lorikeet	25	26/04/2014	Raymond Terrace	A. Carlson	Hunterbirding
Musk Lorikeet	35	14/04/2014	Eleebana		Club Night
Musk Lorikeet	20+	26/04/2014	Blackbutt Reserve	P. & C. Lightfoot	Hunterbirding
Musk Lorikeet	6+	17/04/2014	Rankin Park	T. Kendall	Club Night
Musk Lorikeet	c.25	4/04/2014	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Nankeen Kestrel	1	17/04/2014	King Edward Park	L. Parashou	Club Night
Nankeen Night-Heron	15+	22/04/2014	Hexham Swamp	L. Parashou	Club Night
Noisy Friarbird	50+	4/04/2014	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Noisy Miner	ny	9/01/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Pacific Baza	1	4/05/2014	Rankin Park	T. Kendall	Club Night
Pacific Baza	1	30/03/2014	Rankin Park	T. Kendall	Club Night
Pacific Baza	3	29/03/2014	New Lambton Heights	T. Kendall	Club Night
Pacific Baza	2+ny	21/04/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Pacific Golden Plover	52	9/04/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford	Hunterbirding
Peregrine	1	23/04/2014	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Pheasant Coucal	1	7/04/2014	Teralba	G. Ayre	Hunterbirding
Pied Currawong	158	22/05/2014	Cessnock	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Pink-eared Duck	1	8/05/2014	Wetlands Centre	R. & M. Stewart	Hunterbirding
Pink-eared Duck	445	21/05/2014	Morpeth WWTW	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Pink-eared Duck	10+	6/05/2014	Total	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Pink-eared Duck	c.10	6/05/2014	Hands Lagoon	R. McDonnell	Hunterbirding
Plumed Whistling-Duck	40	11/04/2014	Doughboy Hollow	J. Cockerell	Hunterbirding
Plumed Whistling-Duck	c.200	12/04/2014	Doughboy Hollow	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Plum-headed Finch	2	2/05/2014	Bureen	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Plum-headed Finch	8	15/05/2014	Bylong Valley Way	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Plum-headed Finch	20+	5/05/2014	Bylong Valley Way	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Plum-headed Finch	5+5juv	13/05/2014	Bureen	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Plum-headed Finch	c.12	5/05/2014	Kerrabee	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Powerful Owl	1	19/04/2014	Rankin Park	T. Kendall	Club Night
Powerful Owl	1	24/04/2014	Rankin Park	T. Kendall	Club Night
Powerful Owl	1	16/04/2014	Swansea	J. Adams	Hunterbirding
Powerful Owl	1	15/04/2014	Murrays Beach	T. Lambert	Hunterbirding
Powerful Owl	1	20/05/2014	Floraville	R. & K. Howie	Hunterbirding
Powerful Owl	h	26/03/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Radjah Shelduck	1	5/05/2014	Bulahdelah	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Rainbow Lorikeet	17+1dy	14/05/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Red-necked Avocet	1931	28/05/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Red-necked Stint	42	13/02/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Club Night



## Club Night & Hunterbirding Observations 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 published 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
Red-necked Stint	43	16/05/2014	Stockton Beach	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Red-necked Stint	80	5/02/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Club Night
Red-necked Stint	108	9/04/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Rose Robin	2	24/04/2014	Eagleton	T. Clarke	Hunterbirding
Ruff	1	9/04/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford	Hunterbirding
Sanderling	2	15/04/2014	Stockton Beach	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Sanderling	2	16/05/2014	Stockton Beach	A. Lindsey	Hunterbirding
Scarlet Robin	1	13/05/2014	Scone	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Scarlet Robin	2	7/05/2014	Singleton Training Area	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	820	18/04/2014	Stockton Sandspit	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Southern Boobook	1	14/05/2014	East Maitland	J. Smart	Club Night
Spangled Drongo	1	1/04/2014	Soldiers Point	T. Murray	Hunterbirding
Spangled Drongo	2	11/04/2014	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Spangled Drongo	6	28/05/2014	Saltwater NP	A. Stuart	Hunterbirding
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	1	13/05/2014	Broads Crossing	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	2	8/04/2014	Jerrys Plains	J. Thomas	Hunterbirding
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	3	7/05/2014	Singleton Training Area	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	5	13/05/2014	Bureen	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	11/04/2014	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
Spotted Harrier	1	4/05/2014	Ash Island	P. Hansbro	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	31/03/2014	Kurri Kurri	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	3/04/2014	Carey Bay	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	20/04/2014	Morisset	A. Richardson	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	26/04/2014	Raymond Terrace	A. Carlson	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	1	24/05/2014	Cessnock	N. Livanos	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	2	22/04/2014	Raymond Terrace	L. Mee	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	2	5/05/2014	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	2	10/05/2014	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Square-tailed Kite	2	22/05/2014	Weston	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Striated Heron	1	13/04/2014	Ash Island	R. Kyte	Hunterbirding
Striated Heron	1+1imm	11/05/2014	Throsby Creek	T. Clarke	Hunterbirding
Striated Pardalote	25-30	11/04/2014	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Stubble Quail	h	5/05/2014	Kerrabee	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Swift Parrot	1	7/05/2014	Singleton Training Area	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Swift Parrot	40+	18/05/2014	Rathmines	S. Roderick	Hunterbirding
Tawny Frogmouth	2+1dy	3-10/03/2014	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
Terek Sandpiper	1	14/05/2014	Fern Bay	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
Varied Sittella	5	13/05/2014	Tahlee	R. McLean	Hunterbirding
White-backed Swallow	2	2/05/2014	Martindale	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding
White-backed Swallow	2	15/05/2014	Widden Valley	L. Crawford & C. Herbert	Hunterbirding
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	20/04/2014	Wingen	G. Newling	Hunterbirding
White-headed Pigeon	5+1dy	2/12/2013	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough	Club Night
White-throated Gerygone	1	24/04/2014	Earthcare Park	T. Clarke	Hunterbirding
White-winged Chough	c.40	23/04/2014	Wallalong	N. Fraser	Hunterbirding
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	30+	17/04/2014	King Edward Park	L. Parashou	Club Night
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	c.800	14/04/2014	Singleton	P. Alexander	Hunterbirding
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	1	10/05/2014	East Maitland	G. Brosie	Hunterbirding
Zebra Finch	c.100	13/05/2014	Broads Crossing	M. Roderick	Hunterbirding



Plum-headed Finch at Kerrabee, Bylong Valley Way  
- Chris Herbert

## Club Activities June to August 2014

DATE	EVENT	MEETING PLACE & TIME	CONTACT
Wednesday 11 June	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	<b>Speaker: Harry Battam - Sewage, ocean currents and cuttlefish in NSW coastal waters and their influence on Diomedea albatross demography</b> <b>Bird of the Evening: Eula McKane - Common Hoopoe</b>
Saturday 14 June	Hunter Wader Survey	8.30am Ash Island 9.00 am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 – Ash Island Chris Herbert 0412 722 644 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay Steven Cox 0409 848 390– Tomago
Sunday 15 June	Field Outing: New Members Day	9.30am Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland	Lorna Mee 4987 2913 & Mick Roderick 0421 761 237
Tuesday 17 June	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
<b>JULY 2014</b>			
Tuesday 1 July	Mid-week Outing – Black Hill / Lenaghans	8.00am Cnr Wayaba and Phoenix Streets, Black Hill	Judi Thomas 4952 2960
Wednesday 2 July	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Mick Roderick 0421 761 237 All members welcome
Wednesday 9 July	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre - bring a plate to share	<b>Xmas in July - Fundraiser for Beach-nesting Birds</b> <b>Speaker: Alan Stuart - Birds of the Manning Estuary</b>
Saturday 12 July	Hunter Wader Survey	7.30am Ash Island 8.00am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 – Ash Island Chris Herbert 0412 722 644 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay Steven Cox 0409 848 390– Tomago
Monday 14 July	Port Stephens Waterbirds Survey	Locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 <b>Essential to ring to confirm</b>
Tuesday 15 July	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
Sunday 20 July	Field Outing: Rock Platform Ramble - Horseshoe Beach, Nobbys Breakwall, Newcastle Baths	8.00am Nobbys Beach carpark	Judi Thomas 4952 2960
<b>AUGUST 2014</b>			
Saturday/ Sunday 2/3 August	Swift Parrot & Regent Honeyeater Surveys	Various locations as desired or directed	Steve Roderick 0409 452 921 <b>Please contact for information</b>
Tuesday 5 August	Mid-week Outing - Central Coast Wetlands & South Tacoma	8.00am End of South Tacoma Road, South Tacoma	Val and Don Moon 4359 1670
Wednesday 6 August	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Mick Roderick 0421761237 All members welcome
Wednesday 13 August	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	<b>Speaker: Chris Herbert - Birding the Bahamas</b>