



# Newsletter

Hunter Bird Observers Club

Issue No. 3/17 June 2017

*Affiliated with BirdLife Australia*

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

*This stunning male Hooded Robin is unfortunately one of the many woodland bird species in decline throughout the region. Photo taken by Marg Clarke at Giants Creek on 10 June 2017.*



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Please send Newsletter articles direct to the Editor,  
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## President's Column

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### Have you got the right bird?

Bird identification can be difficult, to say the least. Challenging groups come to mind, notably the shorebirds and the seabirds. However, there are some difficult groups closer to home.

I recently struck what appeared to be a straight-forward identification problem on an ID forum. The bird was an eclipse male Variegated Fairy-wren, yet comparative photo evidence was given by another contributor with a photo of an eclipse male Superb Fairy-wren that had been ID'd as a Variegated. Discussion proceeded, yet the establishment of the true identity of this second bird was difficult to get the producer to accept, as the bird had been identified as Variegated by a 'higher authority'.

So where can we go in times such as these? To what standard can we turn? There are the quick rules (and you will have heard some of them no doubt) – this bird does not occur here, that bird does; a field guide says this, Joe Blow said that. All these can often be valid points *most* of the time, yet birds have a confounding habit of occasionally breaking the rule boundaries that we set for them.

What then is the best authority to go to for the bird before us? It is the bird itself! Now that seems a little simplistic, but nevertheless it's true. We can go to all manner of authorities and evidences to avoid doing the research for ourselves, but in the end the only reliable source is the bird. With the fairy-wrens, the terns, the albatrosses, the prions etc., one eventually gets tired of being in the dark groping at shortcut rules. But in the end, those types of ID solutions will eventually, if not more often, bring us unstuck.

It's true that an ID solution may not be forthcoming on your first encounter with a bird, but take notes or a photograph if you can, and then start your research. Compare closely related species, find out the reliable distinguishing features and then test them for yourself. If someone tells you the ID, ask them why and then test it. Build a knowledge bank about a species so you can be confident in your appraisals, then the birds will have no trouble revealing their identity to you.

Happy birding.

**Allan Richardson**

## New Members

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### The Club extends a warm welcome to:

Nigel, Belinda, Zoe & Malea Archer of Thornton  
Christopher & Kathleen Barnes of Nelson Bay  
Jennifer Carrigan of Eleebana  
Gary Croker of Belmont North  
Benjamin Ellis of Tighes Hill

Mark Fiddler of Merewether  
Laura & Jason Matheson of Hamilton  
Michael Paver of Coal Point  
Robyn & Nick Garner of Kobenhavn N  
Sally & Tom McMurchy of Earlwood

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

## Health and Safety Awareness for Activities

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

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

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

## Hunter Wetlands National Park – TSRF 06

### Hunter Wetlands National Park – remove and exclude invasive mangroves from saltmarsh and shorebird habitat – TSRF 06

That heading looks like a mouthful (and it is) but it is the title of a Federally funded grant secured by Hunter Bird Observers Club just recently. Funding of \$20,000 has been obtained as part of the Threatened Species Recovery Fund to restore coastal saltmarsh and (therefore) shorebird habitat in the Hunter Estuary. These works will augment other on-going projects in the estuary (Milham Pond, Swan Pond, Stockton Sandspit etc.) that HBOC manage each year.

This new project will focus on four less accessible sites (need a boat to get there) that provide, or have the potential to provide, additional roosting and/or feeding opportunities for shorebirds. Two beaches on Smith Island are currently utilised by a handful of Common Greenshanks, but a roost cleared of mangroves should provide for quality alternate roosting for several species. A large saltmarsh area behind the beaches is already utilised by wading birds (herons, ibis etc.) as a feeding ground (lots of small crabs) but has the very real potential to provide night-time roosting opportunities for shorebirds. Similarly, these conditions exist at a smaller scale on Sandy Island.

The little beach in Fullerton Cove that has supported shorebirds for such a long time, has become invaded by mangroves over recent years, and the presence of these plants are reducing its suitability as a roost. Also, the area of open mud flats behind the Dykes are diminishing from mangrove encroachment. This is where some shorebirds feed just prior to the roost, and treatment of mangroves is planned for both Dyke Pond #4 and (in part) #3.

It should be noted that these areas will not be completely cleared of mangroves, as our licence (PN14/333) from Department of Primary Industries only allows for the removal of seedlings and saplings up to a certain size.

Ground works have already started (with contractors making it look easy) over the saltmarsh of Smith Island. The majority of the contractor works is planned to be completed by early-August, with a couple of days up our

sleeves for either later in the year, or even sometime early next year. Shorebird monitoring and vegetation monitoring is carried out by HBOC volunteer effort and will be an on-going exercise to gauge the success of the project.



*Contractors moving quickly across the work area. A more open saltmarsh will better suit night-time roosting of shorebirds*

Another facet of this project is the engagement of Intrepid Landcare in the various activities. Intrepid Landcare has been created to attract the 16 to 30-year-old age bracket (a very under-represented demographic in Landcare), and incorporates Landcare-type work with fun and adventure-orientated activities. This project admirably suited these aspects. Already, there has been an Intrepid Landcare event where a kayak adventure preceded a session of site works on Smith Island, plus an introduction to shorebirds, shorebird issues and roosting behaviours. A second event is planned for July and was “booked out” without any pre-advertising.



*Young people discovering how much fun it is to be up close with the environment*

## HBOC Bird of the Month

By the time the funding is all spent (we have until June 2018) a total of about 35 ha of potential habitat will have been freed of mangroves. The measures of project success will be expressed in terms of improvement of saltmarsh health (proved by monitoring the vegetation) and improved usage of the potential roosts by shorebirds. The ultimate goal is realising the actual

usage of these areas by the critically endangered Eastern Curlew and/or Curlew Sandpiper. Monitoring over high tides (both day and night) for roosting behaviours, as well as day-time feeding, will properly determine this.

Tom Clarke

## HBOC Bird of the Month

The “Bird of the Month” is a regular feature on the HBOC Facebook Page. If you’re already on Facebook and not following the Club’s official page, then why not?!

### April – Eastern Yellow Robin

The Eastern Yellow Robin is a fairly common bird for us (and a breeding resident). Here’s one in a very characteristic pose i.e. in side-on position on a tree trunk, looking intently for prey below. They take insects in the air but very often they go to ground to catch worms, snails etc. They can be a very confiding bird; if you stand quietly you can often have marvellous views of them up close and watch them hunt. Males and females look alike, juveniles are a rich brown colour with streaking. Their nest is a beautiful construction involving strips of bark and lichen, stitched together using spider web.



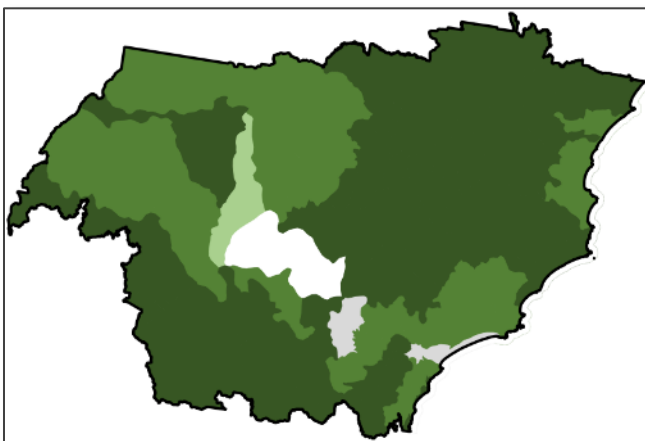
Eastern Yellow Robin by Steve Merrett

### May – Lewin’s Honeyeater

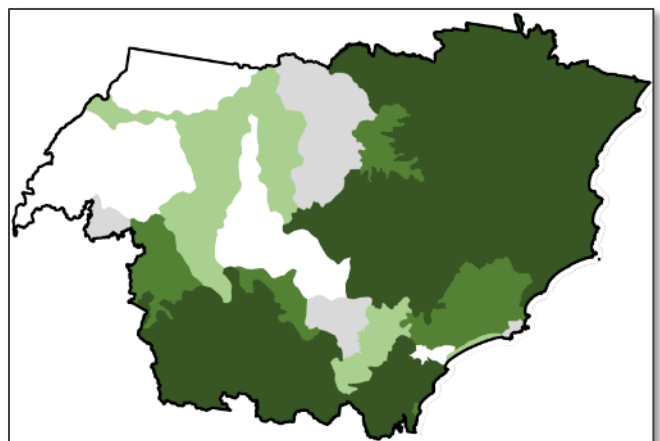
The Lewin’s Honeyeater is a very common resident for us and with a widespread distribution too. Pairs and small parties of them are in all of our woodlands, especially the wetter ones. They are always very active, also quite bold, and they are just about impossible to overlook! On top of that, their characteristic call gives them away. It resembles a machine gun staccato and they call often. They also regularly make a loud scolding call that again is quite characteristic for them.



Lewin’s Honeyeater by Steve Merrett



HBOC Eastern Yellow Robin Distribution Map



HBOC Lewin’s Honeyeater Distribution Map

## Club Activity Reports

### Easter Camp to Durrigere SCA

14 to 17 April 2017

We couldn't have asked for better weather conditions - mostly sunny with blue skies and a light breeze. We had a record number of happy campers, totalling some 47 people, which included 10 children (the future of our club), plus two day-trippers. The "Easter Parrot" also managed to make an appearance to distribute some eggs around the camp.

Robert had the perfect fix for the cold nights, with a raging fire each night – fuelled by a plentiful supply of old fence posts. Robert and Rowley also spent a lot of time cleaning up old fencing wire, glass, bits of tin and debris to make the camp site cleaner and safer for the children.



*Some of the Club's newest members reveling in camp life*

Common birds around the campsite included Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Jacky Winter, Diamond Firetail, White-eared Honeyeater and Speckled Warbler. Only some 50 metres from the campsite we also had a pair of Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, whilst some more intrepid birders found Spotted Quail-thrush and Scarlet Robin. We were hoping for Black-eared Cuckoo and Diamond Dove, but unfortunately, neither put in an appearance.

The main genus of birds were Honeyeaters – feeding and squabbling on Mistletoe flower. Some trees were being patrolled by Red Wattlebirds, claiming ownership of the Mistletoe and trying to prevent Brown-headed, Scarlet, White-plumed, Yellow-faced and Black-chinned Honeyeaters from having their share of the spoils. Some great stands of a particular Banksia species were inhabited by New Holland Honeyeaters and White-Browed Babblers.

In addition to the Heathwrens, Robin and Quail-thrush previously mentioned, other special birds of the camp included Plum-headed Finch and a few Glossy Black-cockatoo that flew over the camp. Some people also went to Durrigere Road and found Southern Whiteface and Singing Honeyeater. I thought I even had a Spotless Crake flee across the road at the causeway filled with water.



*Black-chinned Honeyeater – young and old*

At night, we had a rarity for the Hunter – a Barking Owl calling each night. Australian Owlet-Nightjar, Southern Boobook and Dingoes were also calling. There were lots of Wombat holes and a couple of Lace Monitors prowling around the campsite.

I had a great weekend – thank you all for your company.

**Lorna Mee**

### Woko National Park

23 April 2017

Why do we do it?? Up at 4.30 am to go birding at Woop Woop, sorry Woko.

Eventually, eight hardy birdos had a pleasant, sometimes exciting day – but overall, fairly quiet.

Judy and Lena stayed near Gloucester Tops and meandered over to Woko. Some (Tom, Anthony and Rob) came through heavy fog on the morning. But the pleasant surprise was that Sue Hamonet and Kay Imrie had camped overnight in a borrowed campervan – with apparently hilarious results. It was great to see them both. John also camped.

## Club Activity Reports

In the absence of our leader (due to car difficulties), we did several of the walks, with morning tea and lunch in-between. Some of the highlights were a Wompoo Fruit-Dove (calling constantly), hundreds of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters (with the occasional White-naped Honeyeater) stopping in a particular tree to catch up and have a morning bath; Superb Fairy-wrens on the ground – running through long grass and under leaves to get wet and then preen; and a pair of spectacular Azure Kingfishers – chasing each other, calling and displaying (either courting or two males in territorial discussions – none of us knew). It was a wonderful exhibition and happened right in front of us.



*Azure Kingfisher by Rob Palazzi*

There were lots of little birds – Brown Gerygones, Yellow Thornbills, Buff-rumped Thornbills, Large-billed Scrubwrens, Red-browed Finches and Superb and Variegated Fairy-wrens. There were many Lewin's Honeyeaters, Crimson Rosellas and a group of six King Parrots – and, because they stood out in the forest canopy, several heavily blossoming Plumwood trees.



*Fruiting tree by Rob Palazzi*

Only one raptor for the list – a Wedge-tailed Eagle – although we saw Brown Falcons and Nankeen Kestrels on the way into the park.

A long day but satisfying (around 47 birds in total) and a reminder of how lucky we are in the Hunter to have such beautiful, diverse habitats.

That must be why we do it!!

## Anthony Gooden

### Tocal

#### 2 May 2017

The mid-week birders had a great day at Tocal, with beautiful sunny weather. There was fresh water in Tyeli Lagoon after drying out over summer, and the water birds were prolific. There were several Pink-eared Ducks and Australasian Shovelers present, along with all the common species of ducks in large numbers, moorhens, egrets and stilts. One eagle-eyed observer found Red-kneed Dotterels in the wet grassy centre of the lagoon and there were also Black-fronted Dotterels on the drier verges.

Along Webbers Creek we had good views of Shining Bronze-Cuckoos and a large flock of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters headed northwards above us. We were delighted to see a Black Bittern, which was flushed from the creek and (like the one that some of us saw on the Boys Walk at Cooranbong in February) flew away in one direction and then returned and did a flypast.

Around the Homestead we saw Brown Gerygones and Yellow, Brown and Yellow-rumped Thornbills. We had morning tea and did the bird count of 70 species, with the waft of flying foxes on the autumn breeze!

Some of the group continued to Green Wattle Creek to search for Speckled Warblers, but had no luck. Instead we had good views of Varied Sittellas, Yellow-tufted and Fuscous Honeyeaters, Striated Pardalote, Red-browed Finch and Variegated Fairy-wren.

## Dinah Stehr

### Minimbah Sand Plains

#### 21 May 2017

Minimbah Sand Plains are about 15 minutes' drive east of Nahiab. We recorded 40 species for the day with honeyeaters dominating the proceedings. There were stacks of White-cheeked Honeyeaters just about everywhere that we went and lots too of Little Wattlebirds, Noisy Friarbirds, Scarlet Honeyeaters, plus various other honeyeater species in lesser numbers. Although there was plenty of Swamp Mahogany in

## Club Activity Reports

blossom there were no signs of Swift Parrot, nor was there any evidence of migration happening. For example, we had just a handful of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters today and no Silvereyes.

We had Peaceful Doves at a couple of our stops, as groups of two birds and four birds, many Red-browed Finches including several juvenile birds, and also found Double-barred Finches at a couple of spots. There was a solitary Dusky Woodswallow, which we saw twice at the same place about an hour apart and we had Shining Bronze-Cuckoos at two locations.

The highlight for today was King Quail, at a spot near an expanse of large open wet heath. Initially Marg Clarke and I were a bit ahead of the others and flushed a group of three birds, at least one being a male. They dropped into the heath 20-30 m away and that was the end of that episode.

Our group walked another few hundred metres along the road, heading towards the Wallamba River, then turned back. We were back at the King Quail spot maybe 30 minutes after our first time there. This time we flushed two birds from almost exactly the same spot. Most people had only brief glimpses but a few lucky ones had great views of the male in flight. We moved on to do some birding at other spots for the next hour or so. Then on our way back out, some of us stopped at the spot again and this time we confirmed two male King Quail albeit that our views weren't long ones.

It's a very interesting area that almost never is visited by birders – nor by anyone else I reckon. There was no rubbish to be seen and no weeds – an almost pristine piece of bush (and quite a large piece at that!). Many thanks to Lucas Grenadier for organising what was a very interesting day for us, to an area that none of us except Lucas had ventured before.

**Alan Stuart**

## Green Point

**6 June 2017**

On a fine but brisk winter's morning, 24 members and two welcome visitors set out to explore Green Point Reserve on the eastern side of Lake Macquarie. At the car park early arrivals were greeted with a fly-by of King Parrots, Kookaburras, Ravens and Rainbow Lorikeets - plus the sight of Noisy Miners and Bell Miners squabbling over the same tree. As we left the car park

some were quick enough to see a Collared Sparrowhawk and a Brown Cuckoo-dove flash past.

Our first stop was the Sea-Eagle Lookout, where the namesake failed to materialise, however three Noisy Friarbirds did put in an appearance. Other honeyeaters encountered during the walk included, Red Wattlebirds, Eastern Spinebills, Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, and the ever-present Lewin's Honeyeater.

The walk to the edge of the rainforest yielded clear views of male and female Golden Whistlers, a pair of Eastern Yellow Robins, the sight and sounds of Brown Gerygones, and sound, but no sightings, of Eastern Whipbirds. A pair of Tawny Frogmouths was a rewarding sighting for some observant observers.

A move down to the waterfront for morning tea was welcomed by a resident Pied Butcherbird and we observed Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, a Great Cormorant, Pelicans, Silver Gulls, Crested Terns, a flock of 15 Wood Ducks and finally a White-bellied Sea-Eagle put in an appearance. After morning tea, a pair of very Spotted Pardalotes was seen near a nesting burrow and sightings of a Grey Shrike Thrush, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and a Superb Fairy-wrens brought the total species count for the area to 52.



*Male (top) and Female (bottom) Spotted Pardalotes by Helen Windon and Rob Palazzi respectively*

## Tocal Field Days

A few members continued on (after a late lunch) to the Belmont end of the Fernleigh Track and then out to the old mine shaft site in Belmont Lagoon. Sightings included Brown, Yellow and Striated Thornbills, a group of seven Bar-shouldered Doves, an Azure Kingfisher and a White-faced heron in what appeared to be breeding plumage.

As the afternoon sun was lowering, the day was finished off by a group of three White-cheeked Honeyeaters – all feeding in the one banksia – providing a photographer's delight of these beautiful birds.

Many thanks to all those who attended, I hope you all had a rewarding day. Also, thanks to Rob Palazzi for providing the photos.



*White-cheeked Honeyeater by Rob Palazzi*

**Gary Tong**

## Tocal Field Days

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### 5 to 7 May 2017

It often seems to rain when the Tocal Field Days are on, but this year we had sensational weather for all three days of it, and so the crowds flocked in. More than 22,000 people attended the event, and it seemed that a solid proportion of them called by our display stall. Sometimes they had a bird ID challenge to throw at us, but as often as not they just wanted to tell us about the birds they had on their property.

It was great fun and for those of us rostered on duty – the time just flew by for our particular session. We had a great set of props too, including a display of posters and A3 photos, a slide show of 80 bird photos (all photographers acknowledged), and lots of give-aways sourced from the Birds in Backyards program. Our poll for people to vote for their favourite bird was very popular (we ran out of voting slips during the final afternoon). The Rainbow Lorikeet was the stand-out winner (see our website for the top 5 birds).

Other props included a large inflatable penguin and a very realistic-sounding Kookaburra. The most popular prop though was the talking electronic parrot. Kids (and lots of adults) just loved it, as it repeated much of what was said to it!



*The HBOC stand pulling in the punters*

I'd like to say a big thank you to my co-organisers Paul, Lorna, Jim and Rob, and to all the volunteers who helped man the display. And it was great that so many other members dropped by for a chat, and sometimes to help out for a while.

**Alan Stuart**



## Birdata Workshop

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### 12 May 2017

We now have 45 local experts in the use of Birdata – the new portal for the BirdLife Australia national Atlas project! To coincide with the May talk at our club night by Andrew Silcocks (the Atlas project manager), we arranged a one-day workshop about Birdata at the Wetlands Centre on Friday 12 May. The workshop was free to all club members, because Birdata is an important resource for HBOC and we are encouraging people to be using it.



*A full house at the Wetlands Centre*

In the morning of the workshop, we learnt about the various survey methods available to use, and then went through all the ins and outs of entering data using the portal on a computer, and of entering data using the app version available for smart phones and tablets. This concluded with a field session before lunch, when teams of 3-4 people put theory into practice, by compiling and submitting a bird list.

In the afternoon session, we first went through the basics of extracting one's own data, and then discussed



*"App" training*

the various ways that information from the full Birdata database can be accessed. We concluded with an Open Forum / Troubleshooting session in which lots of niggling questions were able to be answered.

The bird records available through Birdata have been an important resource for HBOC for many years now. We use the information in so many ways, both to learn more about our local birds and for various conservation related purposes. The more data that goes in from local birders (and visitors of course) the more useful the database becomes. So, if you weren't at the workshop, don't hesitate to ask people such as me, Ann Lindsey or Mick Roderick for some pointers – or you should be able to ask any of the other workshop attendees about the basics of getting started.

**Alan Stuart**

## Future Club Activities

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### July Club Meeting

As is now customary, the July Club Meeting will be of the "Xmas in July" format. Tom Clarke will be speaking on *Shorebird Habitat Rehabilitation in the Hunter Estuary*. As with the December meeting, members are encouraged to bring a plate to share for the social at the meeting's conclusion.

There will also be a raffle taking place on the night, that will raise money to be put towards Tom's project. If

anyone would like to donate a prize then please contact Rob Kyte on 0420 821 460 or [robhboc@bigpond.com](mailto:robhboc@bigpond.com)

### Mid-week Camp to Murrurundi

**18 to 20 September 2017**

We will be based at the Murrurundi Caravan Park, which besides powered and un-powered sites has a Bunkhouse, Camp Cabins (with/without en-suite) and en-suite railway carriages.

## Clicker's Corner

Details can be found on the website: [www.murrurundicaravanpark.com.au/pricing](http://www.murrurundicaravanpark.com.au/pricing) and when you book, if you mention HBOC, you will get a 10% discount.

There is also a Motel directly opposite the campground – Motel Valley View Murrurundi <http://valleyviewmotel.com.au/>

## Clicker's Corner

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In this new regular Newsletter section, we will profile one of our many talented photographers, including some background as to their photographic interests and techniques, as well as exhibiting a selection of their captures.

### Dick Jenkin

What I love about bird photography is the challenge of capturing images of birds I have seen so that I always have a permanent record (not just in my mind) of the encounter I have experienced. Once I have the first image in my records, I can always improve on shots that I have, so there is never a lack of challenge. I also find getting an interesting shot of a common bird rewarding. It gets me outdoors and travelling to a wide variety of exciting places.



*Red-capped Plover*

The most important thing to remember when you are photographing birds, is the same as you would go about getting the best views of a bird. Know their behaviour and anticipate when they might fly and which way etc., and back off as needed. You need to gain their confidence and trust. The welfare of the birds must come first and Bird Life Photography has a great section on a suggested Code of Ethics for bird photography.

We expect that most people will arrive on the Sunday night, after a pleasant drive stopping off at various birding spots on the way.

A detailed itinerary will be circulated in August after we have done a second reconnaissance to select which of the great birding spots we will visit.



*Satin Bowerbird*

I always take a shot when I first get to an area to check what the light conditions are so that you can set your camera up ready for when you do have a bird to photograph. I look for where the light is coming from and mostly keep it behind me, or to the side. If you have no other choice but to shoot into the light or up into a cloudy sky, then overexpose by adding more light to your settings, to avoid a silhouette and to get some definition on the bird. You can do this by either increasing ISO, decreasing shutter speed, or opening your aperture (decreasing number). Remember that changing one of these will affect the others. The exposure triangle is a great diagram to help understand this concept.



Common Blackbird

I shoot in manual mode and raw images so that I can control the whole process. I shoot with a Canon 7D Mark 2 and a Canon 5D Mark 4, as each camera has pluses and minuses for certain circumstances. I use a variety of Cannon lens including a fixed 300 mm lens, a 100 – 400 zoom, and when not trying to keep to airline weight restrictions will even get out the 600 mm lens. These lenses will also work with a 1.4 extender.



Tufted Puffin

If you have an obliging subject and can move around to get a better angle, I look for a clean background and where possible, if the distance I am from the bird and the distance from the bird to the background is favourable, I can create a nice portrait shot with the bird being the focus of attention and the background blurred (Bokeh) and not distracting. I always focus on the eye or head of a bird to get sharp detail in the image. Being at eye level with a bird I find to be the best angle, so get low if you must!

The biggest mistake I find people make with bird photography is not allowing a fast enough shutter speed to help prevent blurry photos from camera shake, birds moving, or boat and seas moving on pelagics. Cars make great hides, but remember to turn the engine off. The

longer the focal length of the lens, the faster the shutter speed needs to be.

Happy photographing.



Red-capped Robin

Two Red-capped Robins are shown in a side-by-side comparison. The one on the left is a solid red, while the one on the right has a blue patch on its breast.

**Bird & Nature Photography Tours**

**Amazing Destinations!**

- \*South Africa-Kruger Safari.**
- \*Darwin, Kakadu, Katherine.**
- \*Cairns, Daintree, Atherton.**
- \*Flinders Ranges & Gluepot.**
- \*Hunter Valley.**
- \*Riverwood Downs Weekends.**

**Contact: Dick Jenkin 0407 267207**

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W: [www.jenkinphotography.com.au](http://www.jenkinphotography.com.au)

# Library Update

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## Recent acquisitions

- The Australian Bird Guide 2107 by Peter Menkhorst and others;
- The Feathered Tribes of Van Diemens Land by Sarah Lloyd. 2015. Signed by the author and donated by Paddy Lightfoot;
- Parrots of the World by Joseph M Forshaw. Published by CSIRO 2011;
- Illustrated Encyclopedia of Birds. Consultant in Chief Dr Christopher M Perrins;
- The Birdman's Wife (about Elizabeth Gould). By Melissa Ashley 2016.

## Ornithological full text journal titles available online

- Emu – to members of Birdlife Australia;
- Corella – all issues, except the last three years, which are only available to members of the Australian Bird Study Association.

The following four titles are available to students and staff at the University of Newcastle

- Sunbird – vol. 1 1970 to date;
- Ibis – from 1996 (there is a cost for earlier issues);
- South Australian Ornithologist – from 2011;
- Australian Field Ornithology – from 2006.

## Recent Observations

Hunterbirding is an email group set up by HBOC that is run through the Yahoo Groups. It is a great way to keep in touch with the latest goings-on in Hunter Region birding. Members are able to report sightings, post questions to the group and get involved with group discussions on bird related issues. If you are interested in joining the group then the easiest way is to send an email to [hunterbirding-subscribe@yahogroups.com.au](mailto:hunterbirding-subscribe@yahogroups.com.au). You can choose either to receive individual emails or a single daily digest. Alternatively, email me at [scythrops@yahoo.com.au](mailto:scythrops@yahoo.com.au) and I'll sort it out for you – what could be easier?! In addition to being a forum for interesting discussions on issues such as bird identification and behaviour it is also a great place to report your observations. Some of the Hunterbirding observation highlights from the last couple of months include:

- A Regent Honeyeater photographed at Martindale on 8 April;
- Seven Freckled Ducks surveyed, along with 210 Australasian Shovelers at Lenaghan on 11 April;
- Three Inland Thornbills photographed at Windy Station on 11 April and again on 3 May (w. 14 Banded Lapwings);
- The Oriental Cuckoo at Ash Island still present until at least 14 April;
- At least two Freckled Ducks surveyed, along with 220 Pink-eared Ducks at Muswellbrook on 20 April;
- Six Swift Parrots reported at Fletcher on 21 April;
- Three Southern Whiteface and three Plum-headed Finch reported at Goulburn River NP on 24 April;
- An Eastern Grass Owl photographed in the Hunter Estuary sometime in late April;
- Four Barking Owls and Singing Honeyeater recorded at Durridgere on 2 May;
- A Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot recorded at Tomalpin Woodlands on 8 May + two Swift Parrots on 22 May;
- Eight Swift Parrots reported at Kitchener on 9 May
- Spotless Crake and Lewin's Rail reported at Hexham Swamp on 10 May and Australasian Bittern on 11 May;
- 20 Swift Parrots photographed at Pelton on 16 May, with 47 birds there on 26 May;
- At least three King Quails flushed from a track at Minimbah Sand Plains on 21 May and five birds on 24 May;
- At least 16 Regent Honeyeaters photographed at Quorrobolong on 24 May; and
- Around 120 Swift Parrots surveyed at Ellalong on 25 May.

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

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Australian White Ibis	c.15 nests	Nov-16 to Feb-17	Muddy Lake	C. Goodenough
Great Crested Grebe	12 (dy+nest)	9/05/2017	Walka Water Works	T. Kendall & A. Gooden
Little Corella	2+1dy	4/05/2017	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough
Musk Lorikeet	5	31/03/2017	Hunter Wetlands Centre	D. Rogers
Powerful Owl	2	5/04/2017	Glenrock SCA	C. Goodenough
Red-winged Parrot	4	18/04/2017	Cassilis Caravan Park	T. Kendall & A. Gooden
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	1	4/04/2017	Galgabba Point	J. Adams
Topknot Pigeon	c.50	6-7/04/2017	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough
White-backed Swallow	2	17/04/2017	Summerhill Road, Turril	T. Kendall & A. Gooden
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	31/03/2017	Hunter Wetlands Centre	D. Rogers

## Club Activities June to August 2017

DATE	EVENT	MEETING PLACE & TIME	CONTACT
<b>JUNE 2017</b>			
Sunday 18 June	Field Outing – New Members Day	9.30 am Hunter Wetlands Centre Shortland	Allan Richardson 0459 806 176 Lorna Mee 0499 015 500
Tuesday 20 June	Tomago Wetland Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
Saturday 24 June	Hunter Wader Survey	8.00 am Ash Island 8.30 am Other locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 – Ash Island Dan Williams 0408 023 262 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay Steven Cox 0409 848 390 – Tomago Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 - Hexham
<b>JULY 2017</b>			
Tuesday 4 July	Mid-week Outing – Belmont Lagoon	8.00 am park in area opposite Cold Tea Creek where the toilet is (RHS travelling south)	Judi Thomas 4952 2960
Wednesday 5 July	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Allan Richardson 0459 806 176 All members welcome
<b>Wednesday 12 July</b>	<b>Club Meeting – xmas in July fundraiser</b>	<b>7.00 pm The Wetlands Centre, Shortland – please bring a plate to share</b>	<b>Speaker: Tom Clarke “Shorebird Habitat Rehabilitation in the Hunter Estuary”</b>
Sunday 16 July	Field Outing - Millfield	7.30 am Paxton Hotel	Mick Roderick 0421 761 237
Tuesday 18 July	Tomago Wetland Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
Saturday 22 July	Hunter Wader Survey	6.30 am Ash Island 7.00 am Other locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 – Ash Island Dan Williams 0408 023 262 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay Steven Cox 0409 848 390 – Tomago Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 - Hexham
Monday 24 July	Port Stephens Waterbirds Survey	9.00 am Locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 <b>Essential to ring to confirm</b>
<b>AUGUST 2017</b>			
Tuesday 1 August	Mid-week Outing – Kurri Woodlands	8.00 am meet at McDonalds, Kurri Kurri	Robert & Margaret Stewart 4963 2029 / 0401 283 305
Wednesday 2 August	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Allan Richardson 0459 806 176 All members welcome
Sat – Sun 5 – 6 August	Swift Parrot / Regent Honeyeater Surveys	Various locations as desired or directed	Mick Roderick 0421 761 237 <a href="mailto:mick.roderick@birdlife.org.au">mick.roderick@birdlife.org.au</a> or Steve Roderick 0409 452 921 <b>Please contact for information</b>
<b>Wednesday 9 August</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b>	<b>7.00 pm The Wetlands Centre, Shortland</b>	<b>Speaker: Grahame Feletti “Birds of Belmont Lagoon”</b>