

NEWSLETTER

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

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President: Alan Stuart

Secretary: Peter Phillips

Newsletter Editor: Pat Carlton

The aims of the club are:

- To encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat
- To encourage bird observing as a leisure time activity.

Eastern Curlews on Track Again

The joint Queensland Wader Study Group/Wild Bird Society of Japan Eastern Curlew project is now in its third year. Thirteen satellite transmitters were deployed during February – five at Moreton Bay, Queensland, and eight at Westernport, Victoria – the latter by the Victorian Wader Study Group on behalf of the QWSG. All transmitters were placed on large female birds that were already well into breeding plumage and fattening up prior to departure on northward migration in early March.

Each deployed transmitter sends a signal via satellite every two days giving the position of the bird. It is hoped to determine migration routes, stopover sites, length of each migratory stage, duration of stopovers, as well as the ultimate destinations of the breeding grounds. In 1998 one bird from Moreton Bay reached a stopover site in Tokyo Bay by mid March and had reached Vladivostok in Russia by 31 March.

Moreton Bay birds

More of the Eastern Curlew have been on the move in the March 21-27 period. Alphonse, from Moreton Bay, has flown

5,500kms non-stop to the central Philippines in 4 1/2 days, average ground speed just over 50 kph. Wendy and Sally, from Moreton Bay, have flown 2800kms non-stop to the Digoel Estuary in South East Irian Jaya. They averaged at least 50 kph. (At the time of writing) Min has remained in Townsville and Sheryl hasn't yet left Moreton Bay.

Westernport Bay birds

Gloria and Jenny have flown non-stop 3500kms to the same part of Irian Jaya as the Moreton Bay birds – the Digoel Estuary. This must be a very important stopover area, at least for Eastern Curlew. Gloria averaged nearly 60 kph and Jenny averaged over 80 kph on the first day, helped by a strong SW wind.

In contrast, Doris has backtracked from near Fraser Island, Queensland, to the northern NSW coast. And Julie has returned from the same area all the way back to Westernport!

(At the time of writing) Brenda, Rosemary and Emmie haven't yet left Westernport. Astrid hasn't been heard of since 25 February and must be presumed dead (either the transmitter or the bird).

Clive Minton (VWSG) and Peter Driscoll (QWSG)
(Source: *The Tattler* No. 19, April 1999)

President's Column

I'm sure that all readers know about the Shortland Wetlands Centre, and visit there occasionally. It's a wonderful place that has some very interesting birds that are regularly there. It also seems to get some interesting "drop-ins" as well – examples from recent years include Little Bittern, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Yellow Wagtail and Forest Kingfisher.

Not all of you will be aware that SWC is struggling financially. These days, funds by way of grants and major donations are hard to come by. They need to be able to maintain the Centre, and the lack of funds is a problem.

What can we do to help? There are some simple things – for example, join SWC if you're not already a member, and encourage others to join, take friends and visitors there, volunteer to help out sometimes in the grounds or in the office or shop.

It's worth some effort to help keep SWC viable, and I encourage you to do what you can.

Our wader surveys of Kooragang and Ash Islands are starting to show some interesting results even though we've only been going for four months. It's working well that we have groups covering both locations simultaneously, as some of the birds do move around. There's always room for more participants – come along if you can. The surveys usually are on the weekend after our club night meeting (but check the program page of your newsletter to be sure).

Do you keep lists of the birds you've seen? Birdwatching and bird lists often seem to go hand in hand, so you probably do - the birds that have been in your garden, the ones you saw on your last holiday, and so on.

Some people keep life lists. I've never been interested in this (it would be a short list in any case) but I know that some Club members do keep such a list. I've occasionally wondered who has seen the most number of bird species in Australia, and what the total number would be. When I first began to be seriously interested in birds, there was a "600 Club" to which some people aspired to belong, and I imagined that the greatest life list tallies were around this number.

To my surprise, I recently found out that I was a long way off in my estimate. Mike Carter from Victoria has seen 760 species, and five other have counts above 720. Admittedly, these counts include the Australian territories (such as Macquarie Island) but they're impressive numbers just the same, and reflect dedicated efforts (and quite a bit of skill).

Can any of you come close to these counts? Or even to be eligible for the 600 Club if it still existed? Let me know your tallies. If there's enough response, then in a future newsletter I'll publish HBOC's Hall of Fame.

Happy birding

Alan Stuart

*Articles for our newsletter
are always welcomed.*

*Closing date for next issue:
30 September 1999*

*Mail to: Pat Carlton,
29 Wallaroo Rd, East Seaham 2324
Ph/fax: 02 4988 6026
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NEW MEMBERS

*The Hunter Bird Observers Club extends a very
warm welcome to the following new members:*

*Peter and Marilyn Chegwidan, Mayfield
Peter Jones, Fennell Bay
Richard Baxter, Macquarie Hills
Michael Roderick, Wangi*

*We look forward to meeting you at Club Nights
and Field Outings during the year.*

Vale Ted Jones

It was with profound regret that we learned of the passing of one of the foundation members of Hunter Bird Observers Club, the late Edward (Ted) Jones. With his wife, Rua, he was a regular club stalwart up until their retirement move to "Lake Haven" at Gorokan, when the travelling became an insurmountable obstacle.

During the war years Ted was based at Rathmines on Lake Macquarie, with the RAAF, where he was very much involved in the servicing of the well-known mechanical "bird" - the Catalina flying boat - so it was perhaps a quite natural progression to birds of a different kind on his return to civilian life.

Ted was a most likeable character, and a knowledgeable member of our Club. He is remembered for his pleasant and friendly manner, and his willingness to be of assistance

whenever needed. Nothing ever seemed to be a trouble to Ted. A talented photographer and processor, many of us still have mementos of his candid camera shots at the Annual Dinners, which were a much-enjoyed feature of our early years. He will be remembered too for his ability to acquire and preserve the odd wing of road-killed owls, and present them at club nights for members' admiration and enlightenment. And it was through the efforts of Ted and Rua, and their daughter, that we first gained access to the property "Carlton", near Gunnedah, where several popular and productive club camps have been held.

Our condolences are extended to Rua and the family, and to Ted we say "au revoir" old friend, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to have been associated with you. We wish you "good birding" in the great ornithological hereafter.

E.L. Hamonet

BIBY Project



With the Birds Australia motto being "Conservation through Knowledge" and BIBY's aim being "The Promotion of Urban Bird Diversity through community-based research, education and conservation", it would be hard to find a more all-encompassing project for SNAG (Southern NSW & ACT Group), and therefore Birds Australia, to be developing.

The development of the Project is continuing with progress being made in several areas. You may have already noticed the "finished" logo, as it appears here for the first time. The development of this has been entirely gratis, being a combination of Eric Dorfman's talents and Tig Innovations, a Sydney-based graphic design company.

We have now formalised relations with both the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Australian Museum, which we are delighted

about. Their contribution to the educational and conservation aspects of this project will be significant. We hope to develop a similar relationship with Taronga Zoo. The school program currently under trial continues to be developed with a lot of enthusiasm being shown from the participants.

However, the most immediately accessible and obvious of our recent achievements is a BIBY web page on the SNAG Website (<http://web.one.net.au/~rosella>). This is not only informative about the Project in general but is also the beginning of our educational program. From now on, we will use this site to promote the hows and whys of bird observation as well as promoting the project itself. As the project progresses and results of the research component of the Project become known, we will also use it to actively promote sustainable and appropriate methods of increasing urban bird diversity.

Kate Ravich, Chair, BIBY Steering Committee
(Source: Bird Notes, Qtr. Newsletter of Birds Aust.
SNAG, No. 31: June 1999)

OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHT. JUNE/JULY 1999

Feb	Freckled Duck	3	Ash Island	D.Cooper
	Spotted Crake	5	" "	"
Apr 18	White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	1km north of Craven	L.Herbert
Apr 23	Diamond Firetail	10	Battery Rock, Merriwa	M. Roderick
	Brown Treecreeper	4	" " "	"
Apr 30	Musk Duck	15	Grahamstown Dam	M.Kearns
	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	>50	Bulahdelah	"
Apr 18	White-fronted Chat	2	Stockton Sandspit	R.Baxter
Apr 25	Plumed Whistling Duck	~45	Doughboy Hollow	G.Newling
May22-30	" " "	"	" " "	"
Jun 20	" "	230	" "	"
May 27	White-headed Pigeon	1	Blackalls Park	L. Herbert
May 23	Spotted Quail-thrush	Pair	Kurri Kurri	M.Kearns
May 15	Pacific Black Duck	>500	Hexham Swamp	"
	Chestnut Teal	>600	" "	"
	Peregrine Falcon	1	" "	"
	Fairy Martin	1	" "	"
	Swamp Harrier	2	" "	"
	White-fronted Chat	6	" "	"
	Aust. White Ibis	384	" "	"
May 23	Swamp Harrier	2	Hexham	"
	Tree Martin	1	Kurri Kurri	"
May 12	Australasian Shovelr	12	Ash Island	M.Roderick
May 1	Red-necked Avocet	1	" "	"
May 11	Eastern Reef Egret	1	Burwood Rock Shelf	"
May 26	Straw-necked Ibis	80	Mayfield West	T.Clarke
May 27	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Mayfield East	"
May 26	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Cardiff	J.Westphail
May 27	White-bellied Sea-eagle	3	Belmont South	J.Cockerell
May 30	Pacific Baza	2	Wye Point	D.Moon
	Brown Honeyeater	6	Freeman's Waterhole	"
May 23	Regent Honeyeater	>50	White Box Camp	S.Hamonet
May/June	White-necked Heron	1-2	Williamstown	M.Kearns
May 24	Figbird	>50	Mayfield	"
	White-necked Heron	2	Salt Ash	"
May 17	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	" "	"
May 23	Fuscous Honeyeater	7	Kurri Kurri	"
May 15	Australasian Bittern	1	Ash Island	A.Stuart
	Brahminy Kite	1	" "	"
May 14	Grey Goshawk	1	Bolwarra	H.Tarrant
May 16	Spotted Harrier	1	Pokolbin	"
May 22	Red-capped Robin	2	Vacy	"
May 29	Hooded Robin	2m	Jerry's Plains	"
	Red-capped Robin	1	" "	"
	Striped Honeyeater	1-5	" "	"
May 31	Little Eagle	1	Metford	"
May 29	White-bellied Sea-eagle	2+1im	Colliery Dam, Mulbring	P.Phillips et al
	Comb-crested Jacana	>6	" " "	"
	Gang-gang Cockatoo	3	" " "	"
	Swamp Harrier	1	" " "	"
	Peregrine Falcon	1	" " "	"

May	Grey Shrike-thrush	1	Wamer's Bay	R Baxter
Ma	Sooty Ostracod	1	Catherine Hill Bay	
May 7	Little Penguin	1	Catherine Hill Bay	R Baxter
May 12	Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo	1	Munibung Hill, Carditt	"
May 15	New-Holland Honeyeater	6	Munmorah S.R.A.	"
May 23	Red-kneed Dotterel	8	Kooragan Is., Big Pond	"
	Black-fronted Dotterel	4	" " "	"
	Red-capped Plover	1	" " "	"
May 24	Zebra Finch	1	" " "	"
May 12	Eastern Whipbird	1	Munibung Hill, Cardiff	"
May 29	Regent Bowerbird	1m	Glenrock S.R.A.	"
	Scarlet Honeyeater	2-3	" "	"
	Swamp Harrier	2	Cedar Hill Drive	"
	Rose Robin	1	" " "	"
May 16	Southern Emu-wren	Family	Morisset	P. Durie
May/Jun	Restless Flycatcher	1	Shortland	A. Lindsey
Jun 7	Scarlet Robin	4	Mt. Arthur, Muswellbrook	G. Newling
	Australian Hobby	1	Scone	"
Jun 1	Olive-backed Oriole	7	Wingen Village	"
Jun 2	Powerful Owl	1	Blackbutt Reserve	P. Lightfoot
Jun 3	Australasian Bittern	1	Maitland	J. Smart
Jun 5	Grey Goshawk	1	Wallsend	T. Clarke
Jun 6	Pink-eared Duck	>70	Stockton S.T.W.	J. & K. Imrie
	Southern Boobook	1	Green Point	S. Hamonet
Jun 8	Powerful Owl	Heard	New Lambton	A. Stuart
Jun 4	Peregrine Falcon	1	Bolwarra	H. Tarrant
Jun 1	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	Melville	H. Tarrant
	Australasian Shoveler	1	"	"
	Grey-crowned Babbler	A	Melville - Bolwarra	"
Jun 5	Grey-crowned Babbler	4	Vacy	"
Jun 7	Wandering Whistling Duck	4	University of N'cle	"
Jun 10	Black-necked Stork	2	Glen Oak	M. Maddock
	Rainbow Lorikeet	2	" "	"
	Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	" "	"
Jun 2	Striated Heron	1	Stockton Sandspit	R. Baxter
	Red-necked Avocet	40	Kooragan Is. Big Pond	"
	Gull-billed Tern	3	Stockton Sandspit	"
Jun 29	Australasian Shoveler	9	Bramble Pond S.W.C.	P. Lightfoot
Jun 30	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	" " "	"
Jun 29	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	2	S.W.C.	"
Jun 23	White-headed Pigeon	1	New Lambton Heights	"
Jun 10	Black-necked Stork	2	Seaham	M. Maddock
Jun 26	Regent Bowerbird	1F	Green Point	R. Walker
	Topknot Pigeon	5	" "	"
	White-bellied Sea-eagle	2	" "	"
Jun 30	Comb-crested Jacana	2A+3J	Rathluba Lagoon	S. Roderick
	Australasian Shoveler	>30	" "	"
	Hardhead	>30	" "	"
Jun 27	Red-necked Avocet	>300	Ash Island	P. Rankin
Jun/Jul	Pacific Baza	1	Speers Point	S. Hamonet
Jun/Jul	" "	1	Fishing Point	M. Hamonet
Jul 4	Striated Pardalote	3	S.W.C.	P. Lightfoot
	Nankeen Night Heron	27+im.	"	"
Jul 3	Powerful Owl	1	Blackbutt Reserve	"

Jul 4	Grey Goshawk		S.W.C.	
Jul 12	Eastern Reef Egret (white)	8	Swansea	P. Rankin
Jul 7	Varied Stitella	5	Mt. Arthur, Muswellbrook	G Newling
Jul 9	Figbird	3	Singleton	"
	Blue-faced Honeyeater	2	"	"
Jul 11	Wedge-tailed Eagle	2A+2J	Bayswater Colliery	"
Jul 7	White-plumed Honeyeater	1	S.W.C.	A. Lindsey
Jul 10	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	2	Tarro to Hexham	J. & R. Smith
Jul 11	Southern Boobook	1	Woodberry	"
	Figbird	6	"	"

Breeding Season Disaster – A Warning

NSW has just experienced what may be the worst recorded breeding season of Little Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*). While fluctuations in the breeding success for Penguins are normal, scientists at all major Penguin colonies in NSW recorded an almost complete failure in breeding this season.

Mr Lindsay Smith, the vice president of the Southern Ocean Seabird Study Association (SOSA), has been studying the Penguin Colony at Five Island Nature Reserve since 1968 and believes this is the worst season they have had.

"There are about 1500 breeding pairs at the Nature Reserve and not one chick could be found alive. We found small chicks dead in their burrows. All of them appeared to have died from starvation. Some of the larger down-covered chicks were observed wandering about the colonies during the day and were starving to death."

Other breeding colonies which suffered included Bowen Island and Montague Island.

Professor Nick Klomp from the Department of Ecology and Wildlife Management at Charles Sturt University has been studying Penguins at Montague Island since 1992.

We have had one good season with about a 60% breeding success. The other seasons have been below average. This summer however only 6% fledged from the eggs laid. What causes alarm is that such a low rate was experienced at all breeding sites in NSW."

Scientists agree that the problem has been caused by a lack of food in the ocean. What is causing this decline in food however is still unknown.

Professor Klomp is trying to isolate certain variables such as sea surface temperatures, prevailing winds and chlorophyll levels to try and determine changes in patterns which may be affecting food availability. "If the bad breeding continues over the next few years there will be a serious fall in Penguin numbers and we wish to determine the underlying variables causing the food shortage."

Mr Smith believes that the cause of the food problem for Penguins may be more than climatic. "We have noticed at the reserve that while the implications of climatic change from El Nino to La Nina has affected the availability of food, some sea birds such as the Wedge-tailed Shearwater have not been affected at all. One line of thought is that the Penguins may have starved as a consequence of a pilchard virus which destroyed pilchard populations in 1996 and last year."

The undeniable link between the failure in Penguin breeding this season and changes in food availability should be, at the very least, considered as a warning sign and a herald to better understand the implications of changing sea conditions on native sea bird species.

Jeremy Cox

(Source: Bird Notes, quarterly newsletter of the Birds Australia Southern NSW and ACT Group, No. 31: June 1999)

The Regent Honeyeater Story – May 1999

The same old suspects showed up again on the May '99 national survey. The sites where Regent Honeyeaters were found are all locations where past experience has suggested Regent Honeyeaters were likely to occur. With the exception of the site at Mount Buckeroo, near Mudgee, Regent Honeyeaters had visited all sites in the past. Even the Mount Buckeroo site was not far from previously occupied sites.

What this does tell us is that Regent Honeyeaters are, to a degree at least, creatures of habit. What it doesn't tell us is where all the other Regent Honeyeaters are lurking. Perhaps we really need a series of intensive surveys of known areas, such as is currently occurring in

Killawarra State Forest in north east Victoria, to "flush out" those birds that are possibly being overlooked. The Mudgee-Wollar-Goulburn River National Park would appear to be a logical candidate for such an intensive survey, particularly in a year when Regent Honeyeaters are known to be in the area.

As can be seen from the table below, the presence of Mugga Ironbark and White Box is a common theme at sites where Regents were located. The exception was Barraba, where a bird was reported in an unidentified eucalypt in a garden. Nevertheless, Mugga Ironbark and White Box are common and widespread in the Barraba district. The good flowering of these tree species might explain their absence, yet again, from the NSW Central Coast.

David Geering

Location	No.	Activity	Observer
Chiltern, Victoria	15	Feeding in Mugga Ironbark	E. Collins & others
Killawarra State Forest, Vic.	4	In Mugga Ironbark	D. Geering
Lurg, Victoria	1	Feeding in Mugga Ironbark	M. Paul
Capertee Valley, NSW	1	In White Box	P. Drake-Brockman & S. Fairbairn
Near Mudgee, NSW	~25	In White Box	M. Ronan
Goulburn River N.P., NSW	>50	In White Box/Mugga Ironbark	S. Hamonet, D&F Thompson, P. Alexander
Barraba, NSW	1	In garden	P. Sankey

Lumping Cockatoos

Some interesting information comes from Gunter and Ingrid Schliebusch of the Alexander Koenig Museum in Bonn, Germany. They have been working on Yellow-crested Cockatoo (also known as Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoo) *Cacatua sulphurea* (found in Indonesia) and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* (Australia and New Guinea) systematics for three years. They have just finished evaluating the results and started to discuss and summarise them.

They found that genetic distances between *Cacatua galerita* and *Cacatua sulphurea* taxa suggest that there are five subspecies within the "*galerita/sulphurea*" complex. These are *fitzroyi*, *triton*, *citrinocristata*, *sulphurea* and *galerita*.

Accepting this would mean that the (currently) two species would be lumped as one. The morphological study confirms the genetic results. Additionally they found that the species originated in New Guinea. They plan to submit papers and articles to *EMU* and *Eclectus* and are now working on an identification key for the "new subspecies".

New morphological descriptions of the subspecies identified by the genetic analysis will make the results useful for recovery breeding projects, which the Indonesian Department of Conservation and BirdLife International are just preparing.

A glum comment from an "ex-twitcher" at the BA National Office was that his world list would decrease by one.

(Source: *Galah* 35:12)

The Diamond Firetail

I have observed the Diamond Firetail on five occasions around the Blue Mountain city of Lithgow. Each time I have seen these birds has been exciting, but the first time was the most memorable. It was Summer '97. Our convoy of cars, which consisted of our car, our aunty and uncle's car and Nan and Pop's car, arrived at my uncle's property at Little Hartley (which is between Lithgow and Mt. Victoria on the Great Western Highway) at around 5 pm in the afternoon. The sun was just starting to sink below the horizon which gave the surrounding areas a golden glow. As we were leaving, I noticed a group of small, white birds take off from the side of the road and land on the adjacent fence and power lines. I told Dad to stop the car, which he did, and I grabbed my binoculars and pointed them towards three of these birds on the powerlines. The first thing I noticed was the white belly and throat with a broad black band across the chest. Immediately I knew what they were - Diamond Firetails, or Diamond Sparrows as I prefer to call them.

I hopped out of the car and waited for Pop to come over. As he came over the hill I flagged him down and in an excited voice said, "Guess what, Pop? Diamonds." His eyes lit up and he started to peer around to try to locate one of his favourite birds. I pointed out the small group on the powerlines. "Oh, wow!"

There must have been at least 20-25 birds, which made the moment even more memorable. I looked into the car to talk to Nan, who was also admiring the finches. I looked up and there was a Diamond sitting on the fence wire on the other side of the car. It was so close. It looked like a picture you would see in a book with the bird looking to one side with the golden sun on the other side. What a memory!

The next morning, Pop and I went back out to Little Hartley. We were not expecting to see them again, but we did. This time there were only two birds, which were feeding on the ground, with a small flock of Yellow-rumped

Thornbills. This was the last time I saw Diamonds at Little Hartley.

Since then, Pop and I have seen pairs of Firetails at Glen Roy, which is south of Lithgow on the Cox's River, Lake Lyell, which is to the west of Lithgow, and most recently at Lake Wallace, which is north west of Lithgow.

The birds that we saw at Glen Roy were feeding young and were totally oblivious of us standing below them. Diamonds seem to be less nervous than other grassfinches, as on all occasions we have been able to get rather close to them.

They also seem to inhabit different types of vegetation, as the birds at Little Hartley and Lake Wallace were in open grassland with a few small trees, whilst the birds at Glen Roy and Lake Lyell were in fairly bushy areas with tall eucalypts and small shrubs in more hilly areas. The only explanation for this is that they move in the winter months into the more protected forest areas in the hills and mountains and then move back down into the open farmlands in the valley. We have never seen Diamonds in the same place twice except for the first time we saw them.

Before we found the Diamond Sparrows, Pop and other aviculturists in Lithgow thought that the Diamonds had disappeared from the region because of the heavy trapping that took place many years ago. Now Pop has changed his mind and knows they are probably one of the most common grassfinches around Lithgow, besides the beautiful Redheads (Red-browed finches) which occur everywhere.

I hope that I can continue to see these wonderful Firetails in the wild. I would one day like to study them in the wild, and also in captivity where they make a terrific aviary bird. Other finches that Pop and I are trying to locate in the Lithgow region are the Zebra, Double-barred, Plum-headed and Beautiful Finches, which have all been seen in the area in the past.

Grant Brosie

The Swift Parrot Story – May 1999

Well, what a remarkable year this has been. The May 1999 survey uncovered 742 Swift Parrots, but the really amazing result was where these parrots were. The distribution of the Swift Parrot on mainland Australia in May 1999 was vastly different to May 1998, and I thank you all for contributing to this year's "photograph".

You may remember the result from May last year. If you do not or you are a new volunteer, last year's May results are in brackets in the Table below. There is a huge difference. In May of 1998, the Maryborough and Dunolly area (central west Victoria), with its flowering Grey Box and Yellow Gums, was alive with Swift Parrots. The Cumberland Plains on the western outskirts of Sydney was also popular with a large number of these birds, as the Mugga Ironbarks flowered abundantly. North-east Victoria was strangely quiet.

Twelve months on, the north east of Victoria had a bumper year. Mugga Ironbark flowering attracted hundreds of Swift Parrots, and old haunts such as Killawarra State Forest were taken up again. Meanwhile, you could hear a pin drop in many of the Maryborough

sites, and a meagre six birds were found. The important conclusion here is that we are finding areas that are crucial for the conservation of the species on the mainland. At certain times, a large percentage of the population is in one of these given areas and not in others. This is why those nil returns are so meaningful.

In other interesting news, a flock of Swift Parrots was reported from Tewantin in Queensland, making it five years in the last six that Swift Parrots have made it to this state. The status of "vagrant" to Queensland will need to be looked at as a result. The Gippsland region of eastern Victoria has supported a number of Swift Parrots. Flowering White Box in the Snowy and Tambo River valleys has resulted in records, and ironbarks are flowering in the Sale-Bairnsdale areas. Yellow Gums in the Stawell area have attracted large numbers of the parrots, and I collected a number of records there recently. A large flock of Swift Parrots were seen at the Holy Camp in the Weddin Mountains National Park, near Grenfell in NSW. Swift Parrots have appeared at Moonee Beach (near Coffs Harbour, Northern NSW) for the second year in a row. Good luck on your August travels, be they half way across your state or in your local patch.

Simon Kennedy

Swift Parrots in May 1999: Overview

Location	Hits	Misses	Birds (5/98 in brackets)	Food resources used
New South Wales	7	88	27 (100)	
Central Coast	0	14	0 (90)	
South West Slopes	2	2	4 (0)	White Box, Mugga Ironbark nectar
Central West Slopes	5	39	23 (10)	Red Stringybark leaves, White Box lerp
Northern Tablelands	0	14	0 (0)	
North Coast	0	5	0 (0)	
South Coast	0	11	0 (0)	
North-West Slopes	0	3	0 (0)	
Victoria	29	82	715 (465)	
Bendigo	2	26	15 (85)	None observed
Maryborough-Dunolly	3	21	6 (285)	Grey Box leaves
Rushworth	3	8	25 (78)	Red Ironbark nectar
St. Arnaud	5	6	162 (2)	Red Ironbark & hybrid eucalypt nectar. Yellow Box lerp, Red Stringybark leaves
North-East	16	17	507 (15)	Mugga Ironbark nectar & leaves, Grey Box leaves
Southern Victoria	0	3	0 (0)	
Other areas	0	1	0 (0)	
Queensland	0	2	0 (0)	
TOTAL	36	172	742 (565)	

Coming Events

Please check with the contact person for each outing in case of changed details or suitability of site for the camp or field day

Date	Event	Meeting time/place	Contact
Saturday 14/Sunday 15 August	Hunter Wader Surveys: Kooragang Is/Ash Island	Sat: 10.22 am Sun: 11.05 am Various locations as directed.	Chris Herbert. 4959 3663 <i>Intending participants must ring to confirm</i>
Sunday 22 August	Field Day: Colongra Wetland	8.00 a.m. Opposite Gwandalan turn-off	Contact: Diane Rogers 4976 1686
Saturday 28/Sunday 29 August	Australian Plants Society (SGAP) Wildflowers at the Wetlands	Shortland Wetlands Centre Volunteers required for display stand and/or bird	Recruitment: Peter Phillips 4956 9090
Saturday 28/Sunday 29 August	Hunter Wader Surveys: Kooragang Is/Ash Island	Sat: 9.04 am Sun: 9.45 am Various locations as directed.	Chris Herbert, 4959 3663 <i>Intending participants must ring to confirm</i>
Weekend 3-5 September	Special event: Barren Grounds Bird Observatory		Contact: Liz Herbert, 4949 3663
Tuesday 7 September	Midweek Outing: Swansea/Caves Beach	8.00 am Car Park, end of Ross St, Swansea	Contact: Keith or Margaret Woods, 4963 3070
Wednesday 8 September	Club night	7.30 pm	Speaker: Ann Lindsey Topic: Birds of Uganda
Saturday 11/Sunday 12 September	Hunter Wader Surveys: Kooragang Is/Ash Island	Sat: 9.10 am Sun: 9.47 am Various locations as directed.	Chris Herbert, 4959 3663 <i>Intending participants must ring to confirm</i>
Sunday 19 September	Field Day: Wyong	7.30 am Tuggerah MacDonalds	Contact: Liz Herbert 4959 3663
Saturday 25/Sunday 26 September	Hunter Wader Surveys: Kooragang Is/Ash Island	Sat: 7.56 am Sun: 8.37 am Various locations as directed.	Chris Herbert. 4959 3663 <i>Intending participants must ring to confirm</i>
Saturday 2/Monday 4 October	Weekend Camp: Goulburn River Nat. Park	White Box Camp	Contact: Sue Hamonet 4958 1023
Tuesday 5 October	Midweek Outing: Edgeworth/Holmesville	8.00 am Park, end of Garth St, near Cockle Creek, Edgeworth	Contact: Keith or Margaret Woods, 4963 3070
Saturday 9/Sunday 10 October	Hunter Wader Surveys: Kooragang Is/Ash Island	Sat: 8.04 am Sun: 8.39am Various locations as directed.	Chris Herbert. 4959 3663 <i>Intending participants must ring to confirm</i>
Wednesday 13 October	Club night	7.30 pm	Speaker: Michelle Hall Topic: "Magpie Larks"
Saturday 23/Sunday 24 October	Hunter Wader Surveys: Kooragang Is/Ash Island	Sat: 6.45 am Sun: 7.27 am Various locations as directed.	Chris Herbert. 4959 3663 <i>Intending participants must ring to confirm</i>
Sunday 24 October	Field Day: Taylors Beach/Bobs Farm	7.00 am Salt Ash Primary Sch.	Contact: Michael Kearns 4982 3091
Saturday 30/Sunday 31 October	<i>Twitchathon 1999</i>	Finish with BBQ, 5 pm at Shortlands Wetlands Centre BYO everything.	