

NEWSLETTER

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

P.O. Box 24, New Lambton, N.S.W. 2305

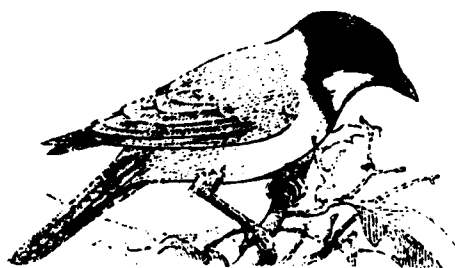
Telephone: (02) 4958 5942

<http://users.hunterlink.net.au/hboc/home.htm>

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.*
-



...1999 TWITCHATHON...



The 1999 Twitchathon will take place on **Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 October**. For the benefit of new members, the Twitchathon is a Twitching race organised with the aim of raising funds for bird research in NSW, by seeing as many species as possible in the 24 hour period. This year the objective is to raise as much as possible for **Albatross** research.

There are two Twitchathon Races. The **Main Race** is for those who, above all else, are aiming to win. They will have to have over 180 species for the day if they are to stand a chance. Why not consider sponsoring the HBOC Main Race team, the **Hunter Thickheads**? Your contribution will aid Albatross research and will be tax deductible.

The alternative is the **Champagne Race**: a fun affair run at your own pace. Last year there were 22 Champagne Race teams in NSW, and Birds Australia is hoping to exceed this number this year. If you're interested in being a participant contact **Ann Lindsey** on 4951 2008.

There are prizes for the most species seen for both the Main and Champagne Races, a second prize in the Main Race and a prize for the most funds raised in NSW. These are:

Most species seen, Main Race

Second prize, Main Race

Most species seen, Champagne

Most funds raised, either Race

\$100 book vouchers for each team member.

A night's catered accommodation at Barren Grounds.

Champagne, of course!

Copy of the latest volume of HANZAB.

1999 BA Twitchathon contacts: Colin Kandan-Smith 9 Sacoya Avenue, BELLA VISTA NSW 2153 ph: 02 9620 8757 h, 02 9763 1844 w, fax: 02 9764 4886 email: ckandan-smith@bicentpkhbay.nsw.gov.au, or Peter West, 72c Excelsior Avenue, CASTLE HILL NSW 2154 ph 02 9634 3883 h, 0411 149 291 m, email: thebradybunch@one.net.au.

President's Column

I'd like to begin by thanking all those people who helped in some way with the Club's stall at the SGAP Wildflower Weekend (held at SWC over August 28/29). Although the crowds overall were down on previous years, we still had a steady stream of visitors to our stall. Invariably, people wanted to discuss the birds they see in their garden or around their neighbourhood, either just to share the news or to get some help with an identification. My conclusion was that birds bring pleasure to lots of people, not just to the relative few of us who actually join a bird club.

One poster that we had on display showed the true size and location of the proposed airport on Kooragang Island. This generated lots of comments, with many people indicating that they hadn't realised how extensive/unsuitable it would be. Thanks very much to Liz and Chris Herbert for preparing the poster.

Rowley Smith attended the recent BIGNet (Bird Interests Group Network) meeting in Wollongong, representing HBOC. Conservation issues seemed to comprise the bulk of the agenda, sadly. The 6-monthly BIGNet meetings are an opportunity for bird clubs around NSW to share issues and experiences. For example, we raised our concerns about the proposed developments at Colliery Dam, and as a result some other clubs will write to Cessnock City Council reinforcing HBOC's stated position.

Some good news from the meeting is that a protocol for electronic data exchange between organisations has at last been signed.

Although HBOC does not have an electronic data base (*we'd like to, though - any volunteers to help set it up?*), we submit our records to organisations that do and we fully support the interchange of data where this has the potential to advance the cause of bird conservation.

If you haven't checked out the Club's Website in recent times, I suggest that you take another look at it. Adrian Ryan has re-vamped it and it is looking good. The information is up to date, including the arrangements for our coming activities and some new links to other sites. As part of the re-vamping, the address has been changed - it's now:

<http://users.hunterlink.net.au/hboc/home.htm>

In late October, the Committee will be finalising the program of activities for next year. We are very keen to find some new places to go for outings and camps and we would love to have your suggestions. Please let me, or any other Committee member, know of any ideas you have - a favourite place you go to, a property you have contacts for, a potential campsite somewhere (even one outside of the Hunter Region). The 1998 Bird Report has now been issued. We will be distributing copies (free to all members) at club nights and outings over the next couple of months. Please try to remember to collect your copy - it will save us some postage costs if you do.

Happy birding

Alan Stuart

*Articles for our newsletter
are always welcomed.*

*Closing date for next issue:
30 November 1999 Mail to: Pat Carlton,
29 Wallaroo Rd, East Seaham 2324
Ph/fax: 02 4988 6026
Email: carlton@dragon.net.au*

NEW MEMBERS

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

*Colin Scouler, Glenbrook
Peter Ekert, East Maitland
Michael Roderick, Islington*

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

The Atlas of Australian Birds - An Update

The Birds Australia Atlas has been running for one year and it is time to see how we are progressing with our efforts in the Hunter Region. We recently received a summary of the results to 30 June 1999, allowing a comparison with the results of the previous RAOU Atlas which ran over the five years 1977 to 1981. Generally our progress this time is comparable to that of the previous Atlas, as discussed below.

Listed below are the numbers of records and species recorded for the Newcastle area.

| | Old Atlas 1977-81 | New Atlas Aug98-Jun99 |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Observations | 18495 | 4203 |
| Record Sheets | 572 | 208 |
| Observations/Sheet | 32 | 20 |
| Species Breeding | 132 | 84 |

These figures suggest that we are collecting observations at a similar rate to the Old Atlas, but there is a need to speed things up because we will only be collecting records for four years this time as opposed to five in the first Atlas.

The number of species recorded as present and breeding increases with the number of observations, or the amount of effort we put into our bird watching. So we need to put time in with our binoculars if we are going to match 328 species recorded for the Old Atlas in the Newcastle area. Indeed, we are most fortunate to live in this area because, as quoted in Michael Morcombe's "The Great Australian Birdfinder", the Old Atlas demonstrated that Newcastle was one of the most species-rich areas in Australia. That should be encouraging to our Twitchathon team; nearly 320 species within 30 km. Why do they travel so far?

Listed next are the three most frequently recorded species in the two Atlases.

Old Atlas

1. Australian Magpie (69%)
2. Magpie-Lark (59%)
3. Willie Wagtail (53%)

New Atlas

- Australian Magpie (44%)
- Grey Fantail (42%)
- Australian Raven (41%)

The Australian Magpie is coming out to be the most commonly recorded species in both Atlases, but in the New Atlas it is recorded on a lower percentage of the Record Sheets. This is because we are collecting our information differently this time. The change has been to collecting much of our information over shorter periods of time and over smaller areas. This change has been made to increase the conservation value of your records by knowing exactly where and in what habitat endangered species live, and to improve our knowledge of the timing of bird movements and breeding. The decrease in the number of species on each record sheet and the reporting rates of species (% of record sheets on which a species is recorded) in the New Atlas was expected.

Interestingly the second most recorded bird in the New Atlas was the Grey Fantail, which is a less conspicuous and noisy bird than the other five species most recorded above. Does this suggest that the Grey Fantail has increased during the last five years?

Unfortunately changing the way we collect the records this time makes this a difficult question to answer. However, more detailed comparison of the reporting rates (the size of those circles in the Old Atlas maps) at which Grey Fantails are recorded in the two Atlases lends some support for an increase in Grey Fantails, relative to other bush bird species, between the two Atlases. It also suggests a decrease in Jacky Winters in some areas over the same period, which was a perception expressed by Alan Morris in a talk to our club several years ago.

The breeding season is getting into full swing and there are some great opportunities to add to the number of species breeding locally, as indicated next.

Newcastle Block - Breeding Records

| | Old Atlas | New Atlas |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Number of species breeding | 132 | 84 |
| Number of breeding records of individual species | | |
| - Darter | 0 | 1 |
| - Intermediate Egret | 0 | 4 |
| - Wandering Whistling-Duck | 0 | 1 |
| - Brush Cuckoo | 4 | 0 |
| - Laughing Kookaburra | 8 | 0 |
| - White-browed Scrubwren | 7 | 0 |

It should be fairly easy to turn up breeding records of the Kookaburra and the White-browed Scrubwren. Perhaps more interesting are the three species of breeding waterbirds, which were not recorded in the first atlas. Is this a real change or have we become sensitised to

bird assets that were already breeding in our midst by the establishment of the Wetlands Centre? One way or another it probably warrants a vote of thanks to Max Maddock for recognising the importance of the Shortland Wetlands.

Hopefully this will encourage lots of Atlas activity this spring. For those of you who are prepared to travel a bit the map on the next page shows where our recording has been during the first year of the Atlas. Please help fill in some of the gaps and help improve our knowledge of our birds and their conservation needs.

Mike Newman

Atlas Addendum

One of the things of value which should be available from the Atlas work is information on bird species, and particularly changes, in areas recently re-vegetated.

Accordingly, at the beginning of the Atlas activity, contact was made with a number of local Landcare groups and information on the Atlas and its survey methods made available to them by means of their newsletter and through personal contact. The hope was that, knowing the location and history of re-vegetated areas, they would be able to conduct bird surveys and submit the results to us. This has not happened and, with hindsight, this is hardly surprising. Landcare groups normally have a pretty full agenda and although they generally displayed considerable interest, bird surveys are very secondary to their main interest, which is the re-

vegetation itself. Also, many of them considered that they lacked the expertise to do reliable bird surveys.

It therefore appears that, if we are to get this very interesting information, we should consciously direct some of our Atlassing effort to recently re-vegetated areas. Areas planted five or more years ago should by now be starting to show some changes in bird populations. Areas planted more recently can be surveyed for base-line data for comparison with future surveys. Landcare groups are cooperative and generally happy to direct you to areas where they have been at work. Note, however, that some of these areas may be on private property and permission may be needed for entry. Contact names and numbers for Landcare groups in your area are available from *Ross Carlton* on 4988 6026.

HBOC LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

The following books and tapes have recently been added to the Club Library:

"Kingfishers and Kookaburras", by D. Hollands

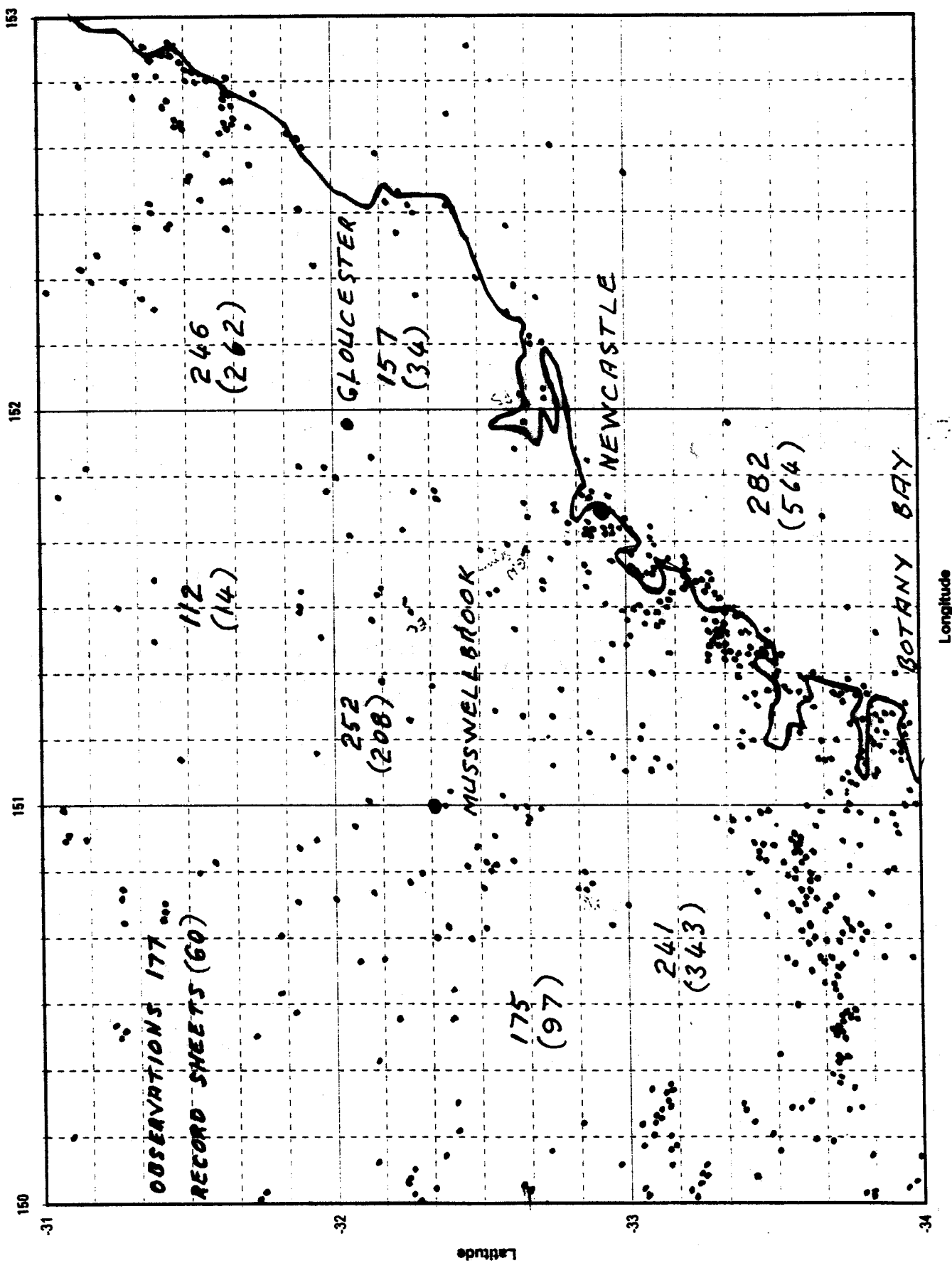
"NSW Field Habitat Guide" (NSWBA)

"Wader Surveys", by Richard Kingsford

Tape - Bird calls of the Hunter Region Tape 3, Fred Van Gessel

Tape - Birds of North East Queensland, Fred Van Gessel

Location of Atlas surveys to June 1999



BOOK REVIEW -

Kingfishers & Kookaburras

Jewels of the Australian Bush

By David Hollands

After reading David Hollands' previous book *"Birds of the Night"*, I had high expectations of a jolly good read. This book did not disappoint in any way. It is excellent. David vividly describes his encounters with these spectacular avian hunters as he attempts to photograph them. He inspires you to get out and observe all he describes.

Of the 90 kingfisher species in the world Australia is well endowed with ten. They are grouped into five genera: *Alcedo* (Little and Azure), *Dacelo* (Laughing and Blue-winged Kookaburras), *Todiramphus* (Forest, Red-backed, Sacred and Collared), *Syma* (Yellow-billed) and *Tanyptera* (Buff-breasted Paradise). All are included in this 132 page, A4-sized book.

The photographs are stunning. All the minute plumage details and vivid colours are captured and the normally too-fast-for-the-eye action is frozen as a kingfisher dives into and out of the water or flies to and from the nest. Only a couple of photos are over-exposed, with a corresponding lack of colour saturation. When the difficulties of obtaining these shots are entertainingly explained, one appreciates the exceptional quality he has managed to attain.

The text is a delightful combination of personal anecdotes and detailed observations. Avid readers of avian literature should encourage such a writer. Immediately after finishing reading about one species you are eager to find out what he's got to say about the next. It's fascinating to find out that several Kingfisher species may initiate nest building in termites' nests by flying beak-first at the mound, at great speed, without breaking their necks! Also, some tropical species have something in common with mound-incubating mallee fowl. They apparently have no need to incubate their eggs in the warm termite mounds, at least during the day.

An informative field guide is provided at the end of the book.

As a reviewer I'm supposed to be critical but I have to admit to failure. I really can't fault this marvellous book except to suggest that the title is too long by one word! The word Kookaburra is redundant as it *is* a Kingfisher (well, I had to criticise something!).

"Kingfishers & Kookaburras" has recently been purchased for the club library and is available for borrowing. Don't leave the Club meeting without it!

Chris Herbert

Australian Bittern Study

The Port Waratah Coal Service (PWCS) is currently funding a study into local populations of the Australasian Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*) in the Lower Hunter. The Shortlands Wetlands Consultancy has been chosen to undertake the study, which is attempting to assess the status, distribution and habitat attributes for this species in the Lower Hunter region (approximately west to Maitland).

If anyone has any records of the species or is aware of areas of potential habitat, this would be most helpful for our study. The person to see is Michael Roderick (I can best describe myself as the young guy with long hair who sits up the back and always wears flannos!).

There are brief record sheets that can be filled out in no time or even a chat about where you may have seen the bird would be great. Any records outside of the tentative study area would also be of use, especially in quantifying habitat for the species.

Thank you.

Michael Roderick

Rufous Scrub-bird Survey

The NSW NPWS is organising a survey of the Rufous Scrub-Bird for the months October to December. Observations suggest there has been a considerable reduction in the species' range and a decline in numbers. The survey aims to monitor the presence of the Rufous Scrub-bird as a forerunner to establishing a program for its future conservation and management.

The survey will be conducted from Barrington Tops to Border Ranges, in north-east NSW. Volunteers with either high or moderate levels of experience are required. Three teams of 8 are proposed, with volunteers working in pairs. The organising team will provide leaders as well as appropriate training to familiarise participants with the survey methods.

Accommodation will depend on the survey site, but will range from camping in National Parks to caravan parks and service cabins. Petrol and some accommodation costs will be met by the NPWS.

Anyone interested should contact Andrew McIntyre, NPWS NSW, Northern Zone, PO Box 914, Coffs Harbour 2450, telephone 02 6659 8232, email andrew.mcintyre@npsw.nsw.gov.au; or The Threatened Birds Network, 415 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East 3123, telephone 03 9882 2622, email conservation@raou.com.au

NEW BA WEBSITE ADDRESS

The Birds Australia Nest (a.k.a. The Virtual Emu) now has a new and simplified URL:

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au>

The old address still works for the time being but you may wish to begin altering your bookmarks and hyperlinks. Some URLs for specific parts of the site are:

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/atlas>

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/gluepot>

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/shoc>

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/shop>

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/sightings>

Kirrama Wildlife Tours

e-mail: kirrama@znet.net.au

<http://www.gspeak.com.au/kirrama/>

2000 Program out now!

Here are some samples:

Cape York Bird Week

4 & 8 day annual event at Pajinka Wilderness Lodge

4.1. - 14.1. 2000

Special guests: Peter Slater & Gordon Beruldsen

Black Grasswren Tour

Darwin - Kakadu - Katherine - Kununurra - Kimberleys

Fully accommodated / Flight into Mitchell Plateau

4.9. - 15.9. 2000

Iron Range Bird Tour + Tropical Pelagic Tour

All the Cape York endemics plus a 6 day cruise in the coral sea to islands and cays in the Raine Island area.

Cairns - Musgrave - Iron Range - Coral Sea - Cairns

12.10. to 31.10. 2000

For itineraries please contact:

KLAUS & BRENDA UHLENHUT

P.O. Box 1400

INNISFAIL 4860

Far North Queensland

Ph: 07 4065 5181 Fax: 07 4965 5197



Private Charters always welcome

NEW HBOC WEBSITE ADDRESS

<http://users.hunterlink.net.au/hboc/home.htm>

Addressing the plight of woodland birds

Judie Peet

The decline in both number and range of woodland birds has drawn a fair amount of attention from scientists in the last few years. The general community, however, has been slow to recognise the reality of the disappearing birds.

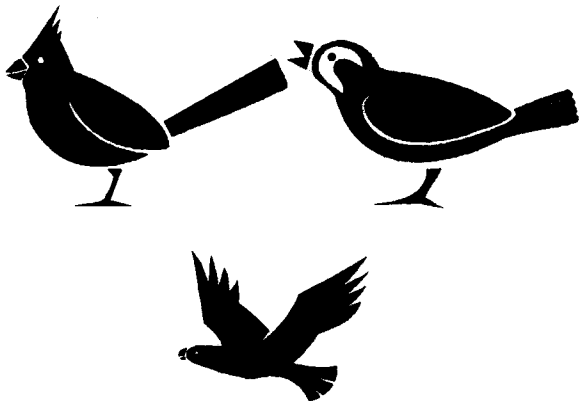
To rectify this, Birds Australia and the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service have developed the Woodland Birds Project, a joint initiative aimed at raising public awareness of the plight of this special group of birds – and suggesting ways in which their decline might be stopped.

As Woodland Birds Project Coordinator, I will be spending two or three days a week for the next year talking to farmers and other people in the sheep-wheat belt of New South Wales, focussing on woodland birds and their habitat. The sheep-wheat belt extends from the Queensland border to Victoria, and links the Great Divide with the drier inland areas of New South Wales. It's great agricultural land, and consequently has been cleared of more than 85% of original woodland cover. What remains is mostly degraded and fragmented.

At least twenty species of woodland dependent birds are seriously at risk throughout this huge area. For me, drawing notice to this sad situation and suggesting ways to rectify it, will be both a privilege and a challenge.

If anyone wants to discuss the project, I can be contacted on 02 6882 2056, or by email: miworld@bigpond.com.

Source: Galah 38:7



Homebush Bay Bird Monitoring Project

Since 1995, Birds Australia (southern NSW and ACT Group) has been commissioned by the Olympic Co-ordination Authority (OCA) to monitor the terrestrial and wetland bird communities at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games site, Homebush Bay. The aims of the project are to study the impacts of landscape modification and development associated with the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games on the bird populations of Homebush Bay and the Western Sydney region.

Over the past four years, an extensive team of volunteers, led by Phil Straw, has been conducting monthly surveys collecting data on the abundance and diversity of bird species across the Eucalyptus Woodland, Mangrove, Saltmarsh, Wetland and Grassland communities in the area. On the 2nd of July I was appointed the new Project Manager responsible for the co-ordination of the project. The next twelve months sees much of the major landscaping and habitat remediation associated with the Sydney 2000 Olympics near completion.

Field survey recommenced on the 12th September with a team of volunteer observers conducting fortnightly surveys across the 36 study plots. The methods have been adopted from the Birds Australia Atlas of Australian Birds Project. In particular, volunteers search the 2 hectare study plot for a 20-minute period (2ha-Area Search Method) recording the abundance (number) and diversity (composition) of all birds seen and heard. As the warmer weather is just around the corner, it is anticipated that many of the seasonal migratory shorebirds and woodland birds will return to the study area soon.

A BIG THANKYOU must go to those volunteers currently involved with the project and your continued assistance is greatly appreciated. There are still opportunities for volunteers to participate in monthly bird surveys. If you have one day a month to spare, own a pair of binoculars and enjoy the outdoors then please contact the Birds Australia Sydney office. This is a great opportunity to become involved in a unique conservation project. YOUR help is needed!

Peter Ekert

Project Manager - Homebush Bay Bird Monitoring Project. Telephone: 02 94361349
E-mail: peter_ekert@one.net.au

Colongra Wetland

22 August 1999

led by *Diane Rogers*

A convoy of cars worked a cartesian course through the suburban streets of Budgewoi to reach the 4WD tracks leading into Colongra Swamp, located on the western side of Lake Munmorah. The tracks led through open woodland of Scribbly Gum with a heath understorey, dotted with white Ladys Finger orchids. Glimpses of Variegated Fairy-wrens and rare Emu Wrens were caught as they dashed among the blady grass and banksias. Further on, Casuarinas carried Yellow, Brown and Buff-rumped Thornbills. Flowering Swamp Mahogany boasted Spinebills, Grey Fantails, and Silvereyes with Yellow-faced, White-cheeked and Scarlet Honeyeaters. A Fantail Cuckoo called and later a Shining Bronze Cuckoo whistled up an imaginary dog - the migrants are returning.

Subsidence induced by coal mining has caused dieback of a significant number of Paperbarks fringing Lake Munmorah. Their monochrome skeletal remains frame occasional Black Swans and Cormorants and provide

perches for Grey Butcherbirds, Currawongs and Ravens.

Several tracks provide scope for further wanderings among this delightful coastal woodland, but the one we take leads on to the freshwater wetland of Colongra Swamp. Bordered by Paperbarks, the wetland is viewed from small vantage points squeezed between thick vegetation. Long gumboots allow a broader view as one escapes the confines of the scrub. There are delights: a flotilla of Hardheads emerges from behind the reeds; surrounded by water, a huge colony of Pied Cormorants rasp coarsely at one another from their nest sites in an otherwise lifeless tree; an immature Sea Eagle surveys his domain from an elevated perch; a brilliantly coloured Eastern Rosella waits while his mate inspects a nesting hollow in a waterlogged tree; and White-breasted Woodswallows soar effortlessly above the treetops on triangular wings.

Seventeen observers counted 60 species, adding a Brown Goshawk and a Nankeen Kestrel at the start and finish of the walk. Well worth a return visit at any time of the year, but particularly in the spring.

Liz Herbert

Birds bail out Barraba

Some members may remember the HBOC Easter visit to Barraba. An article in Brisbane's *Courier Mail* (undated) tells how national and international interest in the region's abundant birdlife, and especially the Regent

Honeyeater, has brought the region back from the brink of economic disaster.

A steady stream of visitors is now going to the area for the sole purpose of birdwatching, and are bringing in much needed funds. It's great to hear that the efforts of locals like Russ Watts to develop the area's birdwatching potential are reaping such good rewards.

Buying binoculars?

Member Keith Woods suggested that we enquire whether the Australian Consumers Association's magazine *"Choice"* had printed a survey on binoculars. They have, but I was advised that permission to reprint the relevant

article could not be given, for commercial reasons. Those interested, however, may wish to note that the relevant article appeared in the March 1994 issue of *"Choice"*, and a copy can be obtained from ACA's Consumer Information Services, 02 9577 3399.

Regent Honeyeater & Swift Parrot Surveys, 1999

I would like to thank everyone who took part in the Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot surveys in May and August this year. At least twenty-two people covered fourteen different areas, which included Goulburn River National Park, Howes Valley, Widden Valley, Denman, Broke, Wollombi, Scone to Bunnan, Singleton, Ellalong, Mount Vincent, Morisset, Marmong Point, Wyee, and Awabakal Reserve. The Hamonet/Thompson/Alexander party found more than 50 Regents near White Box Camp in Goulburn River National Park in flowering Mugga Ironbark/White Box and Jenny Meynell found 10 there later in the year. Lucky were they since the honeyeaters remained as elusive as ever, as you can see from David Geering's table below which shows all sightings for the year thus far in Queensland, N.S.W. and Victoria.

News from Wollar tells that right now they are nesting in Casuarina (sp?) in the vicinity of Goulburn River National Park, an

area which is fast becoming a hot spot. There was no sign of them at White Box at the HBOC October Camp and no flowering eucalypts either.

Simon Kennedy's May report on Swift Parrots highlights the importance of our work in the field. You may not feel you are doing very much when you spend all day "honeyeaterless" and "parrotless", but your nil result contributes to the complete picture. For instance, in May 1998, Swift Parrots turned up in droves in central Victoria, attracted by Grey Box and Yellow Gums, and west of Sydney in Mugga Ironbarks. In May 1999, apart from a few stragglers they were virtually absent from these areas. The bulk of the population was in north-east Victoria feasting on Mugga Ironbark. The conclusion could be that both these areas are crucial to their survival, but this is not known unless someone goes out and looks. In the Hunter region we had unconfirmed reports of them at North Arm Cove, but as far as I know, no others.

Ann Lindsey

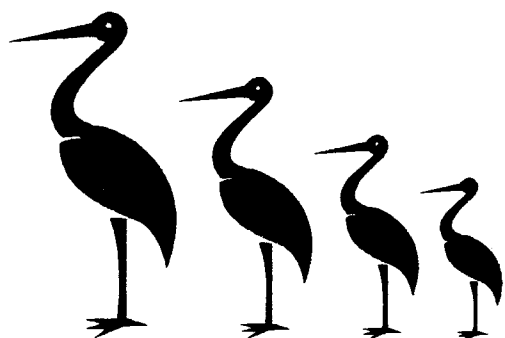
Regent Honeyeater sightings so far in NSW in 1999

| Date | Location | No. | Activity | Observer |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------|--|--|
| to 29-Mar | Wollar | 3 | at bird bath | E.Toombs |
| 2-Feb - 21-Mar | Albury | 10 | drinking at trough | R.Sargeant |
| 11-Feb | Bundarra | 1 | in Mugga Ironbark | S.Debus |
| 20-Feb - 18-Mar | Barraba | 2 | in garden | P.Sankey |
| Apr - Aug | Albury | 7 | in Mugga Ironbark, breeding (August) in street trees | P.Seely |
| 11-Apr | Mudgee | 3 | feeding on lerp | M.Ronan |
| 11-Apr - 23-May | Mudgee | 15 - 25 | feeding on lerp in White Box | M.Ronan |
| 13-Apr | Nandewar Range | 1 | in White Box | D.Waterhouse |
| 01-May | Capertee | 1 | | M.Lord |
| 08-May | Corowa | 1 | in garden | V.Klima |
| 18-May - 4-Jun | Barraba | 1 | in garden | P.Sankey |
| 21-May | Capertee | 1 | in White Box | P.Drake-Brockman |
| from 22-May | Goulburn River NP | 50+ | feeding in White Box and Mugga Ironbark | S.Hamonet, D & F Thompson, P.Alexander |
| from 6-Jun | Burrendong Dam | 3 | in native arboreteum | K.Egan |
| from 30-Jun | Goonoo SF | 2 | feeding on insects, breeding | M.Cameron |
| 08-Jul | Putty | 6+ | flying across road | A.Handy |
| from 8-Aug | Gulgong | 6 | in Mugga Ironbark, breeding | L.Heywood |
| from 14-Aug | Ulan | 2 | in Mugga Ironbark, breeding | L.Heywood |
| from 15-Aug | Wurrumbungles NP | 4 | in Mugga Ironbark, nesting | G & R Steward |
| from 15-Aug | Tuross Head | 1 | feeding in Pittosporum | G.Raynor |

OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHT. AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1999.

| | | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|--------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| May 27 | White-headed Pigeon | 1 | Blackalls Park | L. Herbert |
| Apr 25 | Black-necked Stork | 1 | Raymond Terrace | P. & R. Carlton |
| Jun 20 | Black-necked Stork | 1 | Colliery Dam | H. Tarrant |
| Jun 21 | Yellow-billed Spoonbill | 1 | Hexham/Tarro | " |
| Jun/Jul | White-throated Gerygone | 1 | Medowie | R. Cooper |
| Jun-Aug | Spangled Drongo | 1 | Merewether Heights | P. Gordon/R. Williams |
| Jul | Grey Goshawk | 1 | " " | " " |
| Jul 9 | Richard's Pipit | 3 | Redhead | J. Grebert |
| | Masked Lapwing | 2 | " | " |
| | Brown Quail | 2 | " | " |
| Jul 16 | Black-shouldered Kite | 1 | " | " |
| Jul 10 | White-headed Pigeon | 1 | Charlestown | " |
| Jul 17 | Plumed Whistling Duck | 35 | Doughboy Hollow | G. Newling |
| Jul 20 | Southern Boobook | 1 | Wingen Village | G. Newling |
| | Brahminy Kite | 1 | Hexham Bridge | L. Herbert |
| Jul 25 | Plumed Whistling Duck | 65 | Doughboy Hollow | G. Newling |
| | Fan-tailed Cuckoo | 1 | Woodberry | L. Marshall |
| Jul 25 | Grey Goshawk | 1m | Wallsend | R. Walker |
| Jul 18 | Yellow-billed Spoonbill | 2 | Rosebrook | H. Tarrant |
| Jul 27 | Wandering Whistling Duck | 6 | Newcastle University | " |
| Jul 28 | Pacific Baza | 1 | Cardiff | |
| | Grey Goshawk [white] | 1 | " | |
| Jul 31 | Hooded Robin | ~6 | 10k west Jerrys Plains | " |
| | Turquoise Parrot | 4 | " " " | " |
| | Crested Shrike-tit | | " " " | " |
| Jul/Aug | Topknot Pigeon | >20 | Belmont Sth/Salts Bay | J. Cockerell |
| Jul/Aug | Rufous Whistler | 1 | Islington | M. Roderick |
| Jul/Aug | Glossy Black Cockatoo | 3 | Wyee Point | D. & V. Moon |
| Aug | Scarlet Honeyeater | 12 | Minmi | " |
| Jul 12 | Bush Stone-curlew [calling] | 2 | Karuah | D. Rohweder |
| Jul/Aug | Glossy Black Cockatoo | 2+1imm | Wyee Point | V. & D. Moon |
| | White-winged Chough | 7 | " " | " |
| Aug 11 | Australian King Parrot | 3 | " " | " |
| Aug 5-6 | Wandering Whistling Duck | 17 | Newcastle University | H. Tarrant |
| Aug 7 | Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo | 3 | Toronto West | L. Herbert |
| Aug 11 | White-throated Gerygone | 1 | " " | " |
| | Rose Robin | 1 | " " | " |
| Aug 8 & 11 | Satin Bowerbird | 1f | Merewether Heights | P. Gordon/R. Williams |
| Aug 11 | Brown Cuckoo-dove | 1 | Charlestown | R. Walker |
| Aug 7 | Variegated Wren | 8 | H.R. Botanic Gardens | " |
| | White-fronted Chat | 6 | Ash Island | " |
| Aug 8 | Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo | 10 | S.W.C. | W. Barden |
| Aug 4 | Rufous Whistler | 1m | S.W.C. | " |
| Aug 8 | Rose Robin | 1 | Glenrock S.R.A. | P. Rankin |
| | Grey Goshawk | 1 | " " | " |
| | Regent Bowerbird | 2 | " " | " |
| Aug 11 | Brahminy Kite | 1 | Ash Island | D. Rohweder |
| Aug 10 | White-headed Pigeon | 3 | Toronto | S. Eagles |
| Aug 16 | Paradise Riflebird | 1 | Barrington House | R. Walker |
| Aug 22 | Scarlet Robin | 6 | Morisset Hospital | D. & V. Moon |
| | Channel-billed cuckoo | 8 | S.W.C. | A. Stuart |

| | | | | |
|---------|------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Aug 31 | Shining Bronze-cuckoo | 1 | Woodberry | J. & R. Smith |
| Aug 20 | Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo | 5 | Wyong/Tuggerah | R. Waymark |
| Aug 28 | Red-necked Avocet | ~3000 | Stockton Sandspit | S. Roderick |
| | Gull-billed Tern | 1 | " " | " |
| Aug 22 | Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | 2 | Borehole & Ash Island | " |
| | Pink-eared Duck | 42 | Stockton Borehole | " |
| Aug 15 | Plumed Whistling Duck | ~207 | Doughboy Hollow | " |
| Aug 15 | Dusky Woodswallow | 1 | Hunter Botanic Gardens | H. Tarrant |
| | Hooded Robin | Pr | Vacy | " |
| Aug 28 | Hooded Robin | Pr. | Bulga | M. Newman |
| | Red-capped Robin | 3M. | " | " |
| Aug/Sep | White-winged Chough | 3 | Wyee Point | D. & V. Moon |
| Sep 5 | Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo | 9 | Cedar Hill Swamp | J. & R. Smith |
| Sep 4 | Tawny Grassbird | 1 | Woodville | M. Newman |
| Sep 1 | Rufous Songlark | 1 | 7km SW Denman | S. Roderick |
| Sep 5 | Dusky Woodswallow | 2 | 10k. W. Jerry's Plains | H. Tarrant |
| Sep 6 | Lewin's Honeyeater | 1 | University of Newcastle | " |



ANOTHER LINK TO ALASKA

A wandering tattler banded by us (Tomkovich, Dementiev, & Gill) on 14 July this year at our Lake Clark, Alaska, study site was seen on August 28th by Reggie David at Waiakea Pond in Hilo, Hawaii. Any sighting like this is exciting, but considering it was one of only 13 birds marked this year and one of only 43 marked during the three-year study is pretty remarkable. It remains a large ocean out there with tattlers distributed throughout and

along both shores, but to our knowledge this establishes the first link between a wandering tattler's breeding site and its non-breeding or stopover site following a migration.

So to all of our wader-watching colleagues in the Australasian corner of the Pacific, we encourage you to look at tattler legs.

Please contact us at:

Bob Gill, USGS,
Alaska Biological Science Center, 1011 E.
Tudor, Anchorage, Alaska
email: robert_gill@usgs.gov;
tel. 907-786-3514; fax 907-786-3636
or Pavel Tomkovich, Zoological Museum,
Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia,
Email: tomkovich@l.zoomus.bio.msu.ru

Source: Phil Straw, AWSG

Bird Spotting

by Antechinus

It's not only in the field that birds can be cryptic. Use your birding skills, field guide or dictionary to track them down with the help of the clues below. All correct entries received by **December 1** will be included into a draw for a fabulous prize. Send your solutions to The Secretary, P.O. Box 24, New Lambton 2305.



Across

- 1, 7D Feeding on shores, they scrap core diet when upset (4, 13)
- 3 Possibly pines for its overseas breeding grounds (5)
- 8 Heavyweight to north (3)
- 9 Gone gone gerygone becomes colourful (4)
- 10 The French have the answer (2)
- 12 Waders roost here if sandy - so do some humans if thirsty! (3)
- 14 It holds a thousand for an international money manager (3)
- 16 Birdwatchers may as well do this in the early afternoon! (3)
- 17 What 23A is to *Merops ornatus* (5)
- 20 Travels from the Far East - it's cruel to be with the West (6)
- 22 Often a good place to look for a bird (4)
- 23 Insect that is eaten by an apparent specialist (3)

- 24 Rat turns up to get bitumen (3)
- 25 Where to put the jewellery when going to bed? (8)
- 27, 26D A common species that is poor but rich bred (7, 4)
- 30, 6D Regret gate is broken - fish for dinner (5,5)
- 32 Short alternative (2)
- 34 Dusky Robin? More likely a medical term (2)
- 35 From (2)
- 37 Hard to stay like this if hanging around 12A (5)
- 38 This island keeps getting better - thanks Peggy! (3)
- 39 Brag about boats (5)
- 41 That is a short clue (2)
- 42 Usual response if invited birding (3)
- 43 Sipper and feeder at estuaries (9)

Down

- 1 Pin lace in place to be told twice about this bird (7)
- 2 Takes bad turn and gets a grebe when going with a chick (3)
- 3 Good for building nests - sometimes also found on necks (5)
- 4 Back on - not so (2)
- 5 Not out (2)
- 6 See 30A
- 7 See 1A
- 11 Sounds like you and me could lead to this bird (3)
- 13 Cranes take part of a place to raise a brood (1, 4)
- 15, 26D Is this bird a man o'war? (7, 4)
- 18 Bird identification in the field is sometimes described as this (3)
- 19 Observe 15D, 26D? Where to do so, at least! (3)
- 21 Sounds like one good one would deserve another (4)
- 23 The RAOU traded names for this (2)
- 26 Winged wonder. See also 27A, 15D (4)
- 27 Contemptuous call by this bird (5)
- 28 Camera will not be needed after we take shots to identify these foster parents for young cuckoos. (5)
- 29 Bird seen in the middle of a pair o'binoculars (5)
- 31 Are back this time (3)
- 33 Tree doesn't have the place to find this particular type of warbler (4)
- 36 What a bird would consider a cat to be (3)
- 40 Initially president of HBOC (2)

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 |
|--|--|---|--|
| Sunday 17 October | Weeding Day Stockton Sandspit | 9.00 a.m. Waders roost site | Tom Clarke, 4951 3872 |
| Sunday 24 October | Field Day: Taylors Beach/Bob's Farm | 7.00 a.m. Salt Ash Primary School | Alan Stuart, 4952 8569. Leader: Michael Kearns, 4982 3091 |
| Thursday 28 October | Atlas meeting All welcome | 7.00 p.m. Garden Suburb Primary School | Ann Lindsey, 4951 2008 |
| Saturday 30/Sunday 31 October | TWITCHATHON 1999 | Finish with BBQ, 5pm at Shortlands Wetlands Centre (BYO everything) | Ann Lindsey, 4951 2008 |
| Tuesday 2 November | Midweek Outing: Shortlands Wetlands Centre | 8.00 a.m. Outside main gate | Keith or Margaret Woods, 4963 3070 |
| Wednesday 10 November | Club night | 7.30 p.m. | Speaker: Mike Newman Topic: The endemic species of Tasmania |
| Saturday 13 November | Hunter Wader Surveys: Kooragang Is/Ash Island | Sat: 11.00 a.m. (if poor weather, Sunday may be considered) Various locations as directed | Chris Herbert, 4959 3663 or Alan Stuart, 49528569. Intending participants MUST ring to confirm as weather conditions may alter date. |
| Sunday 21 November | Camp/Field Day: Musicka's Bush Haven, Italia Road, Balickera | 7.00 am. MacDonalds, n. of Raymond Terrace. Accomm. at Bush Haven (contact Jenny Musicka, 4988 6343) or camping, if dry. | Alan Stuart, 4952 8569 |
| Saturday 4 December Sunday 5 December | Camp, The Ruins, Booti Booti NP, Lakes Way. Bird survey Wallangat National Park | 8.30 a.m. Sunday Picnic Ground, 2km along Sugarcreek Rd, north off Lakes Way, about 20kms east of Pacific Hwy, n. of Bulahdelah. | Liz Herbert 4959 3663 Leader: David Turner |
| Tuesday 7 December | Midweek Outing: East Green Point | 8.00 a.m. Parking area, end of Ross St, Belmont | Keith or Margaret Woods, 4963 3070 |
| Wednesday 8 December | Club night | 7.30 p.m. Bring a plate. | Fun Night - BYO bird slides, videos, tall stories etc. and share your fun outings. |
| Saturday 11 December | Hunter Wader Surveys: Kooragang Is/Ash Island | Sat: 10.00a.m. (if poor weather, Sunday may be considered) Various locations as directed | Chris Herbert, 4959 3663 or Alan Stuart, 4952 8569. Intending participants MUST ring to confirm as weather conditions may alter date. |
| Saturday 18 December | Latham's Snipe Count | 7.00 a.m. Cedar Hill Swamp | Ann Lindsey, 4951 2008 As many people as possible needed - wading through mud NOT essential, just stand on embankment and count. |