

# 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: Tom Clarke

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.*
- 

### NEWHAVEN STATION

#### **Your opportunity to protect this outstanding wilderness**

There are not many occasions when an individual can make a profound difference to the protection of Australia's natural heritage. But here is one such opportunity.

Newhaven Station is a real jewel in Australia's heartland. It is a property of 2626 km<sup>2</sup> (five times the area of Gluepot Reserve), and lies 360 km north-west of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, on the eastern edge of the Gibson desert. Take a look at the photos in the enclosed 'mailer' (for those who receive this newsletter by mail) and you will see what a beautiful and diverse wilderness it is. Birds Australia members and supporters (that includes us, HBOC) now have the opportunity to purchase and protect this area for all its threatened wildlife, rare plants and stunning landscapes. A contribution from each of us will ensure that this place stays safe for now and for all time.

By contributing to the purchase you will be doing something of incalculable value for the threatened wildlife of a unique and beautiful piece of country. You will also be supporting the development of a vital research area that will help us understand the processes and problems of this country's arid-zone.

Please give as generously as you can. Two years ago, members of HBOC responded magnificently to a similar call to purchase Gluepot Station in South Australia. That effort and the great result it produced was inspirational and gave Birds Australia the strong message that this type of action is positively supported by birdwatchers all over Australia.

*Tom Clarke*

*Note:* Further info from Kate Fitzherbert, BA National Office, 415 Riversdale Rd, Hawthorn East, Vic 3123, 03 9882 2662, [k.fitzherbert@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:k.fitzherbert@birdsaustralia.com.au)

## President's Column

Around 6-8 weeks ago, some good news was announced about Gould's Petrel. Some of you perhaps heard the news at the time, which was that Gould's Petrel is no longer considered to be an endangered species in NSW (although it is still listed as vulnerable). The good work that has been done by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service over the past several years has been paying off. Nick Carlisle from NPWS has spoken at a couple of our meetings over this time, and explained to us how they have been culling predators and ferals, installing artificial nest boxes, removing problem vegetation and so on. It's pleasing that this work has apparently been successful.

Gould's Petrel is of special interest to we local birdos, in that the only breeding sites in the world are in the Hunter region – on Cabbage Tree Island and nowadays also on nearby Boondelbah Island. The fact is though that most HBOC members have never seen a live bird (but Nick Carlisle once brought along a stuffed one to show us). Maybe that will change now that the numbers are increasing. Also, we have started talking with NPWS about how HBOC members could become involved in the monitoring programs during the breeding season. Let's hope that something can come from these discussions.

The news about Regent Honeyeater is not so cheerful, as David Geering explained to us at our last club night in a most interesting talk. Only the Capertee Valley colony could possibly be described as viable, with dwindling numbers of the Chiltern Valley (Vic.) birds and only a few hundred birds in the only other remaining colony, centred around the New England area. The news from Capertee was happier, with major tree planting programs now underway in the right areas and some reasonable breeding success rates being found. The frustrating thing is the scant knowledge of what the birds do outside of the

breeding season. There is very little information about what areas they go to, what habitats they use, what they feed on. It makes it difficult to plan a rescue program, doesn't it!

This is why we have been strongly encouraging HBOC members to be involved in the special weekend surveys that David Geering organises (the surveys are also for Swift Parrot). The more eyes and ears there are involved, the greater will be the chance of solving this mystery. The next survey will be held over the weekend August 5/6 – please put it into your diary.

Another opportunity that you have for doing something positive for birds is to support the present appeal by Birds Australia. They have an option to buy Newhaven Station in the N.T. and are trying to raise \$1M to do so and to be able to pay for its ongoing upkeep. Just as their first purchase, Gluepot Station in S.A., was an important area for several threatened bird species, so too is Newhaven. Most exciting of all is the news that two Night Parrots have been seen there. For more details, see the brochure that HBOC is distributing. Please support this fundraising effort by Birds Australia.

Many of you have an e-mail address these days, but not all of you have let us know what it is. Earlier this year, when there were a few rare birds around, e-mail turned out to be a very convenient way to spread the news around more widely. If you have access to e-mail, I'd like to encourage you to let me know your address (e.g. by sending me an e-mail – my address is below). Then I'll add you to the list that we are now generating, and the next time there's an interesting bird in our area, you will have a better chance of finding out about it before it has moved on to somewhere else.

Happy birding

Alan Stuart  
[almarosa@hunterlink.net.au](mailto:almarosa@hunterlink.net.au)

**Articles for our newsletter  
are always welcomed.**

**Closing date for next issue:  
31 July 2000**

**Please mail to: Pat Carlton,  
29 Wallaroo Rd, East Seaham 2324  
Ph/fax: 02 4988 6026  
Email: [carlton@dragon.net.au](mailto:carlton@dragon.net.au)**

## HBOC Committee

At the AGM in February the following people were elected to office:

President:	Alan Stuart
Vice President:	Liz Herbert
Hon. Secretary:	Tom Clarke
Hon. Treasurer:	Rowley Smith
Members:	Philip Rankin
	Neil Granter
	Ann Lindsey
	Di Johnson
	Harold Tarrant
	Chris Herbert

The following appointments were also made:

Activities Officer	Liz Herbert
Asst. Activities Off:	Chris Herbert
Conservation Coordinator:	Jenny Powers
Asst. Treasurer:	Lesley Marshall
Librarian (Books):	Pat Pountney
Asst. Book Librarian:	Neil Granter
Librarian (Slides):	John Cockerill
Librarian (A/V):	Peter MacLauchlan
Records Officer:	Sue Hamonet
Atlas Recorder:	Ed Hamonet
Public Officer:	Tom Clarke
Public Relations Officer:	Marion Walker
Publicity Officer:	Peter Phillips
Membership Officer:	Rowley Smith
Suppers:	Di Johnson/ Judith Westphal
Supper Assistants:	Judith Smith/ Peter MacLauchlan
Auditor:	Katrina Thornton
Newsletter Editor:	Pat Carlton
Newsletter Production/ Distribution	Tom Clarke
Garden Bird Coordinator:	Peter MacLauchlan
Annual Bird Report Editor:	Alan Stuart

## Curious Bird Behaviour

Two Little Lorikeets (*Glossopsitta pusilla*) were perching side by side on a leafless branch at the top of a tall eucalypt protruding above the general canopy of tall shrubs in Cessnock State Forest. Suddenly the Bell Miners (*Manorina melanophrys*) sounded their alarm calls and a Brown Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus*) glided over the forest. Abruptly, it folded its wings and plunged into a stoop past the tree containing the lorikeets. As it disappeared from view, we looked back at the lorikeets to see if they'd flown away or not. It took a little while to realise that they were still on the branch, one hanging motionless upside down, disguised as a drooping leaf, the other sitting stock-still, close to the trunk of the tree! They held their positions for a few seconds before suddenly coming back to life and flying frantically away from their exposed position.

Similar peculiar behaviour has been recorded in the Handbook of Australian and New Zealand Birds as follows: "When startled by a raptor while feeding, [Little Lorikeets] usually freeze for a few seconds then take flight, dropping rapidly toward ground then dispersing, flying rapidly and erratically through tree-tops."

During the club's recent outing to Congewai, our host, Warren Rees, described the reactions of Pied Currawongs to a Powerful Owl that has taken up residence on his property, uncomfortably close to a release aviary for rehabilitated possums. (Annette and Warren are members of WIRES and their property is home to many native animals they have personally cared for.) The currawongs were observed to pluck cones and small branches from a casuarina, carry these items to a perch above the Powerful Owl and then let them fall! Their calls are now being interpreted as "bombs away!"

*Liz Herbert*

*More contributions like the one above would be great, and would reduce our reliance on material from other publications (Ed.)*

## Congewoi Field Outing, 20 - 21 May 2000

Despite the cold weather, the chance to see a Powerful Owl enticed four Club members to camp at the Wildlife Wilderness Refuge owned by Annette and Warren Rees at Congewai. After an hour's searching with a spotlight, the owl was located, perched in a tall eucalypt beside a dam. A pellet beneath its perch contained crayfish carapace and antennae. Nice to know it doesn't feed solely on possums! Glossy Black Cockatoos drifted over the camp at dusk and again in the morning. What a treat!

Nine more club members arrived on Sunday to explore the habitat at Congewai which includes open pasture, forest margins, wet and dry sclerophyll forest and freshwater wetlands. Delights included feeding flocks of small forest birds (including Yellow and Brown Thornbills, Golden Whistlers, Varied Sitellas, Grey Shrike-thrush) and resonant calls of Lyrebirds, which are currently perfecting their mating displays. These masterful mimics excelled in imitating currawongs, bowerbirds, kookaburras, cockatoos, wattlebirds and honeyeaters, to name a few.

More drama at the wetland where a sleek fox scared two Black Swans from their nest on the wetland margin and methodically removed their eggs, one at a time. We watched as the fox carefully carried an egg away in its mouth, buried it, returned for a second egg, took it off in a different direction, buried it and returned for a third. The swans were totally defeated, watching helplessly as their nest was rifled repeatedly. Hopefully they'll build a new nest out in the water and give themselves a fighting chance.

We saw a total of 69 species at Congewai and an extra four species on Catchaboy Swamp on the way out of Congewai Valley.

*Liz Herbert*

## HBOC ABR Back Issues

There are still some (but not a lot) of back issues of our annual Bird Reports. If you don't have a complete set or would like to have another, then you need not fret.

Just send your request to:

The Secretary  
HBOC  
PO Box 24  
New Lambton 2305

Complete with cheque (payable to Hunter Bird Observers' Club) for the correct amount.

Cost: back issue copies from 1993, '94, '95, '96 and '97 go for \$5 each plus \$1.50 postage for 1-3 copies and \$2.50 for 4-10 copies.

Early birds will be satisfied.

*Tom Clarke*

## Wildlife Management International - Website

I am very pleased to announce the completion of Wildlife Management International Limited's World Wide Web Site - [www.wmil.co.nz](http://www.wmil.co.nz)

WMIL is a conservation consultancy company based in Wellington, New Zealand, specialising in island restoration, wildlife research, invasive species eradication and conservation management around the world. WMIL has dedicated staff with long backgrounds and excellent experience in the conservation and island restoration fields both in New Zealand and around the world.

We would like to know what you think of the site, how it could be improved and any links that you think would be appropriate. If you know of a site that might be willing to link to us, we would also like to know about it.

Brian D Bell  
Managing Director WMIL  
Email: [wmil@clear.net.nz](mailto:wmil@clear.net.nz)

*Source: Galah 43*

## NSW WOODLAND BIRDS - UPDATE

Judie Peet, Project Coordinator

The end of April 2000 marks off ten months of the Woodland Birds Project, a joint initiative of Birds Australia and the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service. The aim of this project is to raise awareness of the decline of woodland birds, and the continuing loss and degradation of their habitat.

To reach people in the target area of the NSW sheep-wheat belt, we have used a number of different strategies, including:

- Stories in newspapers - local, regional and national, as well as in various journals and newsletters.
- The design and development of our own beautiful poster and information brochure, and the distribution of these throughout the target area and beyond. These posters and brochures proved extremely popular and have been accepted and publicly displayed throughout NSW, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.
- Talks at on-farm field days and other meetings for land managers
- Talks to gatherings of other interest groups, such as birdwatchers and environment groups
- Radio and TV interviews and news spots including a special feature on the Grey-crowned Babbler for Channel 10's *Totally Wild*.

- A three-month long series of weekly radio specials involving listener participation in identifying bird calls
- Personal discussions with people in agencies such as Greening Australia and Landcare.

In April we conducted two extremely successful Woodland Bird Seminars – one in Forbes and one in Gunnedah. Our keynote speaker was Dr Denis Saunders, Acting Chief of the CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology, with other speakers including Dr Barry Traill, Dr Sue Briggs and Associate Professor Hugh Ford. A range of subjects was covered, with a strong focus on the decline of birds and loss of habitat, and practical advice was given to help land managers to protect remaining habitat on their land.

The seminars drew over 200 people, including professional people from agencies as well as members of Landcare groups and land managers, and included birdwatchers, commercial photographers, environmental consultants, horticulturalists, and those folk with a general interest in the agricultural and environmental health of our land.

In every situation I have found the woodland birds message to be well received, with people expressing a deep concern about the welfare of birds and the loss of habitat.

It has been a very satisfying ten months.

Source: *Galah 44*

## Oldest Australian Barwit

Information about a very old Bar-tailed Godwit re-trapped during the 1998 AWSG expedition to north-west Australia has just come to light. It was banded during the first-ever expedition to Broome – on 2 September 1981. It was at least 18¼ years old when recaptured – an Australian record for this species.

Source: *Galah 43*

## Catchy Slogan Comp!

Win yourself eternal glory (and maybe a small prize) by thinking up a good catch-phrase for BA members to identify themselves with.

You know the kind of thing: *I'm for the Birds!*, *I'm with Birds for the Birds!*, *Proud, Passionate and Paid Up!*, *Concerned, Committed and Contributing!*, *Birds Australia – More than just Birdwatching!*

Any ideas? Send them to Hugo Phillipps at the BA National Office, email: [hphillips@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:hphillips@birdsaustralia.com.au)

Source: *Galah 43*

## GREEN TIMES AT GLUEPOT

Alexis Bisgrove & Rob Stogdale

It's all green, green and red; plants are thriving everywhere in the red sandy soil and, all over the Reserve, mallee is bursting into flower. No it isn't spring, just rain; 151 mm since early February has set Gluepot blooming and filled the rainwater tanks. Black-eared Miners, Chestnut-crowned Babblers, White-fronted Honeyeaters and many other species are breeding. The downside is that Gluepot is living up to its name and many tracks have had to be closed for sometimes lengthy periods as they turn into impassable "Glue".

Undaunted visitors have still been arriving and been rewarded with good views of our more notable birds, Black-eared Miners, Red-lored Whistlers, Striated Grasswren, Pied Honeyeaters, Grey-fronted Honeyeaters as

well as many other species. After a number of worried phone calls about access, 30 plus members of the BA VicGroup, reassured by the Rangers that the glue had set, arrived for a great Easter's birding with 80+ species, (including a possible Yellow Wagtail) over the five days.

A huge amount has been accomplished since the Reserve was purchased, with construction of the Research Centre now nearing completion and a visitor centre recently developed in the old shearing shed (pending a hoped-for grant for the establishment of a new one). With the installation of the computer system, work is under way to map and collate a large amount of data on flora and fauna, as well as developing guides to walks, visitor information and a Rangers Manual.

*Source: Galah 44*

## Earth Alive! Biodiversity Month September 2000.

Biodiversity Month provides a national focus to celebrate and promote your local biodiversity, get the media interested in a local event or ongoing biodiversity project, and increase your community's understanding and involvement in biodiversity conservation projects in your region.

There are five simple action themes:

- Create a Habitat Garden
- Help Save Fish Habitat and When Fishing Take Only What You Need
- Save and Create Habitat for Native Birds
- Save and Create Habitat for Frogs
- Care for Your Pets to Conserve Native Animals

In addition to well known Australian celebrities playing a part in the promotional activities, many groups and organisations from around Australia will be organising events aimed at educating and involving anyone willing to learn about our precious biodiversity. In 1999 *Earth Alive! Biodiversity Month* saw over 120 events in schools, botanical gardens, National Parks, local Councils, shopping centres, spring fairs and many, many more.

For more info contact the Community Biodiversity Network. Ph: (02) 9380 7629, email: [earthalive@cbn.org.au](mailto:earthalive@cbn.org.au) or browse 'Earth Alive!' at

<http://www.cbn.org.au/projects/earthalive/2000.html>

*Source: Galah 44*

## Twitchers flock for Tawny Pippit

Excitement came to St Margaret's, a village in Kent, England, last September when a Tawny Pippit was sighted. Twitchers used pagers to alert other enthusiasts to the siting and people swooped on the area, to the amusement of

local villagers. A representative from the Kent Wildlife Trust suggested the bird, which is not a native of Britain, had been blown off course making its way from Europe to winter in Africa.

*Source: The Express, Thursday 16 September 1999*

## Red Necked Stints in Record Numbers

The main wader population monitoring program for the 1999/2000 summer has now been completed by the Victorian Wader Study Group. It appears that 1999 was quite a good breeding season in arctic Siberia for most species of waders which visit Victoria – as measured by the proportion of young birds in

catches. In particular, Red-necked Stints appear to have had a second consecutive good year – an unusual event. This may have contributed to the record count of 23,000 Red-necked Stints in the Nooramunga National Park section of Corner Inlet in mid February (the previous highest total in the last 20 years was 14,000).

*Source: Galah 43*

## Banded Stilts and Silver Gulls - a case for concern

The exceptional mid- February rains in central Australia put sufficient water in Lake Eyre North to trigger a major breeding event for Banded Stilts, Australian Pelicans, Silver Gulls and Caspian Terns. However the breeding success of the Banded Stilts has been limited by massive predation of eggs and chicks at the colony by Silver Gulls. In due course the breeding success of Pelicans and Caspian Terns is also likely to be adversely affected by Silver Gull predation.

On the 1st April it was estimated that there were 9,000 occupied Banded Stilt nests at the colony located about half way along the western side of Hughes Island (which was about 2 km long by 250 metres wide, with the long axis running in a north/south direction). The original colony located on 2/3 March, which had apparently subsequently doubled in size (per local air tour operators), had already been vacated. Furthermore a segment of the new colony had also already been recently vacated.

Measurements of the total areas covered by the colonies, nest densities (up to 10 per square metre) and the area of the colony occupied by nests gave an estimate of 4,500 nests for the original colony and 13,500 nests for the 'new colony' giving a total estimated breeding population of 18,000 pairs.

The recorded daytime predation rate equates to a loss of 1,350 eggs/chicks per day. However during the five day period the colony was under observation it decreased from an estimated 9,000 to 3,000 nests. This is equivalent to around 18,000 eggs/chicks. However over the same period only 322 chicks were seen to successfully depart from the colony (escorted by protective adults) for the relative safety of the open lake.

It therefore appears that most of these 6,000 nests failed due to predation. The combination of unmeasured night-time predation and the under recording of day-time predation meant that the actual predation losses were more than twice the recorded level i.e. around 3,000 eggs/chicks per day.



*Source: Galah 44*

## Record number of signatures against French hunting laws

Earlier this year members of BirdLife groups in Europe joined other environmental groups to raise over 2million signatures protesting against French hunting laws. According to Birdlife International this is the most signatures every collected in favour of a conservation issue. In 1998 France passed a

law allowing the hunting season to open as early as mid-July, when birds are still nesting, and to continue till the end of February. The petition demands that this law be repealed, and that the European Parliament implements the European Union's Birds Directive, designed to protect birds during breeding and migration periods.

*Source: Update, April 2000, BirdLife International*

## ATLASSING MATTERS

### The New Top Ten

Andrew Silcocks

The Atlas is rolling along very nicely at present with forms flooding into the office. There is a close battle going on between the states to submit the most surveys. Victoria had been dominating the ladder until recently with over 20% of the total, their lead is now under threat from NSW who have overtaken Queensland and WA to challenge for the top spot. The current state of play is outlined below. Spare a thought for the ACT Atlassers, who are very active but lose many of their surveys which have been conducted in adjacent NSW, hence their low showing. They are winning the title for the greatest number of surveys per hectare of state.

STATE	Registered Atlassers	Record Form Nos.	Record Form %
ACT	140	1092	1.8
NSW	843	13,082	20.0
NT	107	2,712	4.1
QLD	662	11,281	17.2
SA	539	9,288	14.2
TAS	188	2,394	3.7
VIC	1210	13,573	20.8
WA	567	11,987	18.3
TOTAL	4,256	65,409	100.1

The database now contains over 1.2 million bird records of 739 species. Recent surveys

submitted from Christmas and Cocos Keeling Islands have boosted the species total. All mainland breeding species, apart from the Night Parrot, have been recorded. With several remote expeditions planned for this winter, maybe that one will also be added.

The top ten most commonly reported species for the old Atlas and the new one are:

Atlas 1 (1977 - 81)	No. of Records	Atlas 2 (1998 - now)	No. of Records	Change, Atlas 1 / Atlas 2
Australian Magpie	52,945	Australian Magpie	30,884	0
Willie Wagtail	48,133	Willie Wagtail	25,800	0
<del>Maggie-lark</del>	<del>47,200</del>	<del>Maggie-lark</del>	<del>25,536</del>	<del>0</del>
Welcome Swallow	39,074	Galah	20,657	+2
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	37,775	Welcome Swallow	20,004	-1
Galah	37,359	Laughing Kookaburra	18,085	+2
White-faced Heron	36,173	Grey Fantail	17,794	+6
Laughing Kookaburra	35,150	Grey Shrike-thrush	17,332	+4
Nankeen Kestrel	32,192	Superb Fairy-wren	16,881	+9
Common Starling	31,764	Red Wattlebird	16,698	+23

Of those that have dropped out of the top 10 in this Atlas are: Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike down 6 places, White-faced Heron down 11 and the Nankeen Kestrel down 41 places.

Source: *Galah 44*

### New Atlassers Still Needed

Despite gale force winds and green pastures inhabited mainly by cows, Saturday's atlassers were blown home with 62 species of birds and four 5-kilometre stretches surveyed. It is surprising how many birds live on those green pastures which abounded with Wood and Black Ducks, White and Straw-necked Ibis, Cattle Egrets, Eastern Rosellas and Masked Lapwings. The patches of woodland scattered here and there were alive with small birds: Brown and Striated Thornbills, Golden Whistlers, Brown Gerygones, Variegated and Superb Fairy-wrens, flocking Jacky Winters, Rose Robins, White-naped, Brown-headed,

Fuscous and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. Overhead Wedge-tailed Eagles struggled with the wind and on a sheltered stream an Azure Kingfisher watched for lunch. For me there is no greater satisfaction than to go birdwatching with three or four like-minded people and to know that the results of your outing will in some small measure contribute to the overall knowledge of birds.

The Birds Australia Atlas Project still has over two years to go and members of the HBOC are making a significant contribution to mapping the birds in the Hunter region. There are still large areas which have had few surveys or none at all. And there are some surprising gaps



in well-populated areas such as around Singleton, Broke, Wollombi and Myall Lakes National Park whilst it is not at all surprising that Yengo, Wollemi and Goulburn River National Parks are virtually virgin territory. It will be a challenge to sufficiently survey those vast wildernesses. But there are roads and nothing is impossible.

Some birds are also proving somewhat difficult to observe. Very few records of Rufous Scrub-bird, Regent Honeyeater, Olive Whistler, Plum-headed Finch, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Noisy Pitta, Paradise Riflebird have come in. The ultimate challenge will no doubt remain the night birds, for who wants to go owl-hunting in the freezing temperatures enjoyed over the past week.

The Atlas Project can be tailored to suit your needs. You can survey your local patch, you

can drive along a straight road in ten-kilometre bites and improve your map-reading skills at the five kilometre mark, you can walk for 500 metres in any direction around a central point or you can set out on a grand adventure and survey the whole of Wollemi National Park. You can set your own time limits – you can atlas for as little as twenty minutes or... until you drop. The latter is not, however, the preferred method. If you especially like a particular area you can keep returning monthly, seasonally, or annually.

The only thing you must do is fill in the pink sheets in the warmth and comfort of your home and send them to the regional organiser at the Club address, P.O. Box 24, New Lambton, 2305.

*Ann Lindsey*

### "The White Eagle"

by Nan McDonald, "Australia Fair", 1974

Evening falls soon in the hills across the river,  
~~Moving dark where the treetops gleamed a moment~~  
before.

Chilling to steel the lazy sweep of the reaches,  
And at last, salt-cold, comes rippling in to our shore,

Where the gulls long since wheeled up and went  
flashing seaward.

With the tide's first ebb deserting the threatened land;  
And the shag no longer sits where the bleaching  
driftwood

Thrusters from the slate-blue mud and damp white sand.

And the shadow climbs, and the clamorous gold-green  
thickens

Grow shrill with a brief unease that falls dulled to rest:  
The thrush drops his gentle head, as in secret listening  
To the freshets of silver locked in his soft great breast.

And the lyre-bird too, that gay and skilful fellow,  
Who set the dawn-fogged dew of the bush alight  
With the opal glow of his soul and his art's rich cunning,  
Can find no song for this other grey of night.

Now far and steeply above us the dusk has swallowed  
The glint of the wiry grass that the boulders strew.  
Echoing no more to the thronged black currawongs'  
calling  
Where the rose-limbed trees twist out to pattern the  
blue.

But the light turns blazing at bay in its last high fortress  
And the walls of yellow sandstone with glory run,  
A crown for the night-gulfed slopes, and a golden  
footstool

For the lord of the rocks and the champion of the sun.

Stainless he rides on the swimming air, and below him  
Roll the vast dim sea and the splendour of the world;  
And the strength of his wing will be gilded, his breast  
still blinding

When the citadel falls with its blackened banners furled.

Tomorrow I too must be dropping down the river  
With the screams of the flickering gulls for my parting  
words,

And in the thick town I shall be often thinking  
Of the great hill darkening here, and my quiet birds.

I shall wish them all a still dusk and safe dreaming,  
But the lift of my heart will follow my shining one  
Where the high bright cliffs rise burning, and he beyond  
them.

All his white beauty warm in the eye of the sun.



## OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHT – APRIL/MAY2000

Jan 5	Comb-crested Jacana	2	Mandalong Swamp	S. Roderick
	Latham's Snipe	1	"	"
Feb 20	Yellow Wagtail	1	Ash Island	T.Langworthy
	Brown Quail	8	"	"
	Pacific Golden Plover	46	"	"
Feb 28	Marsh Sandpiper	20	Ash Island	R.Baxter
	Pacific Golden Plover	>40	"	"
Feb 22	Common Tern	6	Newcastle Harbour	"
Feb 29	Wood Sandpiper	2	Cedar Hill Drive	"
Mar 15	Barn Owl	1	Minmi	"
	"	1	Ash Island	"
Feb 13	Southern Emu-wren	4	Wyee Point	D.Moon
Feb 2	Little Eagle	1	"	"
Feb-Mar	White-winged Chough	7	"	"
Feb 10	Rainbow Bee-eater	15	"	"
Feb 20	"	6	"	"
Mar 14	"	5	"	"
Feb 10	Pacific Baza	1	"	"
Feb 12/13	"	1+1 Juv	"	"
Feb 14	"	1 Juv	"	"
Feb/Mar	Pheasant Coucal	2	"	"
Feb/Mar	Glossy Black Cockatoo	1	"	"
Mar 17-26	Brown Quail	14	"	"
Mar 19 & 28	Wonga Pigeon	1	"	"
Mar 26	Dollarbird [last sighting]	1	"	"
Mar 7-10	White-throated Needletail	~60	Bayswater Colliery	G.Newling
Mar 9	White-throated Gerygone	1	Wingen Village	"
Mar 10	Western Gerygone	1	"	"
Mar 13	Black Kite	1	4km Sth of Wingen	"
Mar 16	Australian Hobby	3	Bayswater Colliery	"
Mar 12	Rainbow Bee-eater	50	Wingen Village	"
Mar 13	Black Falcon	1	Bayswater Colliery	"
Mar 15	Black Falcon	1	"	"
Mar 10	Brahminy Kite	1	Taylor's Beach	D.Jenkin
Mar 18	White-winged Chough	~50	Singleton	"
Mar 20	Australian Magpie	32	Dungog	"
Mar 27	Dollarbird	2	N'cle University	H.Tarrant
Mar 19	Plumed Whistling Duck	36	Cedar Hill Drive	S.Roderick
Mar 27	Glossy Ibis	8	"	"
Mar 29	Australasian Gannet	1 imm	Nobby's Beach	"
Mar 30	Arctic Jaeger	2	Stockton Beach	"
Mar 7-10	Magpie Goose	4-6	Lenaghans Drive, Minmi	A.Lindsey
Mar 12	Yellow Wagtail	1	Swan Pond, Ash Island	"
	Black-necked Stork	2	Creek #4, Ash Island	"
	Brown Quail	6	Ash Island	"

	Australasian Shoveler	6	Swan Pond, Ash Island	"
Mar 16	Caspian Tern	25	Stockton Borehole	G.O'Connor
	Australian Pelican	~300	"	"
Mar 12	Paradise Riflebird	1f	Main Creek, Dungog	Ros Runciman
Mar 22	YTBC [showing white]	~10	Booral	Sue Bilson
Mar 19	Yellow Wagtail	1	Ash Island	G. Brosie
	Caspian Tern	1	"	"
	Black-necked Stork	1	"	"
	Black-fronted Dotterel	>20	"	"
	Common Greenshank	>5	"	"
Mar 2	Arctic Jaeger	1	Nobby's	A. Lindsey
Mid Mar	Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	Big Pond, Kooragang Is	G. Kiem
Mar 26	Bar-tailed Godwit	103	Lemon Tree Passage	M. Kearns
Mar 20	Speckled Warbler	4	Abermain	C. Anderson
Mar 27	Topknot Pigeon	1	Woodberry	L. Marshall
Apr 8	Australian Hobby	1	Mayfield	M. Kearns
Apr 9	Brown Goshawk	1	"	"
	White-winged Black Tern	2	Nobby's Breakwaterq	"
	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	>50	"	"
Apr 10	Red-rumped Parrot	>50	Lemon Tree Passage	"
Apr 6	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	~50	Wangi Wangi	S. Roderick
	White-bellied Sea-eagle	5	"	"
Apr 1	White-throated Gerygone	B	Vacy	H. Tarrant
	White-throated Gerygone	A	Fosterton Loop Rd, Dungog	"
	White-throated Nightjar	1	"	"
	Pale Yellow Robin	1	"	"
Apr 2	White-breasted Woodswallow	1	Cedar Hill Drive	"
Apr 3	Black-faced Monarch	1	N'cle University	"
Apr 4	Restless Flycatcher	1	"	"
Apr 7	Diamond Firetail	3	Yarrawa	H. Tarrant
Apr 9	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2	Melville Ford	"
Apr 11	Musk Duck	2 pr	Walka Water Works	"
	Spangled Drongo	1	Islington	C. Anderson
Apr 10	Grey-tailed Tattler	>26	Lemon Tree Passage	M. Kearns
	Long-billed Corella	34	"	"
Apr 11	Red Wattlebird	22	"	"
Apr 10	Pied Currawong	>60	East Maitland	S. Roderick
	Noisy Friarbird	14	"	"
Apr 1	Black-faced Monarch	1	Shortland	A. Lindsey
Mar/Apr	Spangled Drongo	2	"	"
Apr 10	White-plumed Honeyeater	1	"	"
Apr 8-12	Powerful Owl	1	Ridgeway Rd., New Lambton	P. Lightfoot
Apr 6	Emerald Dove	1	Belmont South	J. Cockerell
Apr 18	Pied Oystercatcher	8	South Little Gibber	J. Musicka
Apr 15	Plumed Whistling Duck	2	Waitui [John's River]	G. O'Connor
Apr 23	Powerful Owl	1	Eleebana	E. Bradbury
Apr	Superb Parrot	1 Juv.	Toronto	L. & J. Hewson
	Little Corella	~150	Toronto [waterfront]	"
Jan-Mar	New Holland Honeyeater	2	Merewether	P. Gordon
Jan-Apr	White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	Merewether Baths	"
Apr 28	Restless Flycatcher	1	Belmont South	J. Cockerell
Apr/May	Spangled Drongo	1	"	"
May 10	Zebra Finch	70	Denman	D. Geering
May 10	Little Corella	2	Denman	D. Geering
May 9	Spangled Drongo	1	Raymond Terrace	J. Smith
May 5	Australian Hobby	1	Cardiff	J. Westphail
May 9	Australian King Parrot	4	Islington Park	M. Roderick
May 6	Double-banded Plover	11	Stockton Beach	"
May 8	Brown Honeyeater	>20	Salt Ash	"
May 9	Rose Robin	1	Newcastle University	H. Tarrant
	Azure Kingfisher	1	"	"
May 10	Grey-crowned Babbler nb		Rutherford	"
Apr-May	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	3	Maitland	"

### Welcome New Members

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

Peter Gordon, Hamilton; Jenny Helman, Cardiff;  
Ruth Dircks, Dungog, and Joy Nicholls, Kotara Heights.

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

### 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 17 June	Hunter Wader Surveys	8.30 a.m. (if poor weather, Sunday may be considered). Various locations as directed	Chris Herbert, 4959 3663 Alan Stuart, 4952 8569 You must ring to confirm
Saturday 24 June	Atlassing Outing: Tomalpin	8.00 a.m. New Post Office, Kurri Kurri	Ann Lindsey, 4951 2008, Chris & Liz Herbert, 4959 3663, or Mike Newman, 4930 5564. <b>Please ring first.</b>
Sunday 25 June	Field Outing and Wetlands Day	8.00 a.m. Walka Water Works	Leader: Phil Rankin, 4946 0022
Tuesday 4 July	Mid-Week Outing: Brunkerville (private property)	8.00 a.m. Mulbring Park, the Kurri Kurri/Branxton Road, Mulbring	Keith or Margaret Woods 4963 3070
Wednesday 11 July	Club Night Shortlands Wetlands Centre	7.30 p.m.	Speaker: Ian Hutton Topic: Lord Howe Island
Saturday 15 July	Hunter Wader Surveys	7.30 a.m. (if poor weather, Sunday may be considered). Various locations as directed	Chris Herbert, 4959 3663 Alan Stuart, 4952 8569 You must ring to confirm
Saturday 22 July	Atlassing Outing: Myall Lakes Nat. Park	7.30 a.m. Hexham Macdonalds	Ann Lindsey, 4951 2008, Chris & Liz Herbert, 4959 3663, or Mike Newman, 4930 5564. <b>Please ring first.</b>
Sunday 23 July	Field Outing: Bulga	8.30 a.m. Bulga Store/Petrol Station	Ann Lindsey, 4951 2008
Tuesday 1 August	Mid-Week Outing: Redhead/Dudley Bluff	8.00 a.m. Car Park, End of Ocean St, Dudley	Keith or Margaret Woods 4963 3070
Saturday 5 August	Pelagic Trip		Alan Stuart, 4952 8569 <b>This trip is now full.</b>
Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August	Regent Honeyeater/Swift Parrot Survey		Contact: Michael Roderick 4927 6766
Wednesday 9 August	Club Night Shortlands Wetlands Centre	7.30 p.m.	Speaker: Trevor Qusted Topic: Birds of Canada
Sunday 20 August	Field Outing: Dunns Creek	8.30 a.m. Tucker Park, Patterson	Ann Lindsey, 4951 2008
Saturday 26 August	Atlassing Outing: Location T.B.A.	Time and place T.B.A.	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008