

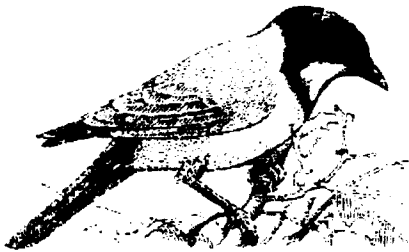
NEWSLETTER

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

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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.*
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Club Outings: "A View to a Myall"

The 2001 HBOC June long-weekend camp was held at 'Myall View', off the Lakes Way between Buladelah and Bungwahl. Owned by the McNeice family, 'Myall View' is largely a wooded property that contains predominantly Open Forest as well as tracts of Sub-tropical Rainforest. The gullies on the property contain some old-growth stands of 50-60 metre Flooded Gums and Brush Boxes, the latter of which is usually seen as a pruned suburban street-tree. The camp was attended by 30-odd HBOC birders (*about 30 members that is, not 30 'odd birders'*). Apart from a substantial half-hour drenching on the Saturday, the HBOC got exactly what they ordered from the Weather Bureau - fine, mild winter days and clear, crisp nights.

The birding was never frantic around the camp, although the mornings did see some good birds making appearances, such as Rose Robins, Striated Thornbills, White-naped Honeyeaters and groups of Varied Sittellas. Musk Lorikeets were also heard around the campsite. King Parrots and Mistletoebirds occasionally flew overhead, whilst Yellow-faced Honeyeaters were constant companions. Around dusk and dawn each day, Tawny Frogmouths were also heard 'ooming away'.

Those who ventured into the Rainforest and wet gullies were rewarded with species such as Large-billed Scrubwrens, Satin Bowerbirds, Wonga Pigeons and Brown Gerygones. Yellow-throated Scrubwrens were often the norm rather than the exception, even far from their preferred Rainforest environs. Other less oft-spotted birds included Topknot Pigeons and Regent Bowerbirds, the latter of which particularly pleased Michael McNeice, who had not seen Regents on his property before. Also seen in this area were Crested Bazas (hedging my bets), a pair of which Michael informed us nest nearby. Those who looked closely at the dams around the deer farm across the road were rewarded also, with occasional good views of Mallard (Geoffry).

Meanwhile, back at the camp... conjecture was raging as to what Corvids were being heard around the shop. Groups of Australian Ravens were omnipresent around the deer farm across the road, whilst the unmistakable nasal 'uk' of the Torresian Crow was regularly heard from around the campsite. Mutterings about Forest Ravens were heard, and whilst no direct observations confirmed the presence of this species, it was likely that we were camped in an area that contained three species of Corvid, which is definitely something not to be sneezed at

Controversy was never far away around the campfires as well. There are no written laws about what birds can be added to a list for a certain area. However, it was considered by some that counting the Swans eight kilometres away, floating on the Myall Lakes (visible from vantage points on the property's hills with pairs of 10x binoculars and very steady hands) was pushing it a little. The only way of settling the issue was to split the lists - one for birds on the property and the other for birds on and around the lake, at Violet Hill. The Violet Hill list included some birds not on the property list, such as Southern Emu-Wrens and obviously a number of waterbirds. Tom managed to count 2000 Chestnut Teals flying over the lake before nodding off.

An expedition was made late on Sunday afternoon to The Grandis, which depending on what part of the State you come from, is said to be the tallest tree in New South Wales. The party arrived a little late in the day for birding, but the party had come prepared - with a selection of wines, cheeses and home-brew. A pair of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos entering a hollow high up in a tall Flooded Gum was an excellent complement to the fine-fare, although the pair of Ravens nesting almost at the very top of The Grandis merely added fuel to the Corvid fire. The home-brew provided the catalyst to try and call in some night birds, with particular attention to the Powerful, Masked and Sooty Owls, each known from Wallingat State Forest / National Park, just to the north. A mixture of dodgey equipment and a desire to be beside a campfire contributed to the lack of success of these attempts. However, there was to be a reward of sorts for these efforts later back at the camp.

At about 4am on the following morning, a distant 'hoo-hoo' was heard by many sleepless campers - a Powerful Owl was around. The comfort of warm beds left most satisfied to have identified the Owl by call, although two people did rise, one to check his field-guide in the white station-wagon to confirm the range and unlikelihood of a Rufous Owl, the other left his fire-side bed to track the bird down. By this time there was a pair calling to each other, which carried on for about 90 minutes. Using a combination of triangulation methods and sheer good fortune, one of the Owls was found by the punter... perched in a horizontal branch of a tree on the edge of a clearing on the neighbouring property. He informs me that he was extremely relieved that other campers had heard the bird and that he wouldn't be accused of 'crying Owl'. A group search for the Owl in the same tree during daylight hours failed to find the bird roosting.

The Powerful Owl was one of the final additions to the 'Myall View' list of 74 species, which wasn't too far short of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club Easter list. Many thanks go to the McNeices for inviting us to 'Myall View' and to experience quality birding a wonderful area.

Jacqueline Winter

P.S. - Somebody asked me if it was a co-incidence that the main proponents of the Forest Ravens were Hunter Thickheads?

President's Column

In the last Newsletter, I mentioned that we were intending to apply for a Coastcare Grant, in order to get some more rehabilitation work underway at Stockton Sandspit. Well, we made the deadline and got the application in on time. We've asked for \$11,000, mostly for the costs involved in contracting somebody to remove the large stand of mangroves on the northern side of the lagoon. It will be a few months before we learn whether or not we have been successful with the application. In the meantime though, we have received approval-in-principle from NSW Fisheries to remove the mangroves. This is a major breakthrough as previously such approvals have been quite hard to get.

We had great cooperation from the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project in putting the application together, and it has also received support from National Parks & Wildlife Service.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a flyer about an important symposium *Birds for the Future* to be held in Sydney (at Taronga Park Zoo) on October 6. HBOC has been involved in the organising of this event although of course most of the work has been done by people based in Sydney. It promises to be a really interesting day. With access to the Zoo includes, and an exclusive Free-Flight Bird Show afterwards, I'd urge you to consider going along to it. And the funds raised go to a good cause - conservation of bird habitat.

One of the feature speakers at the symposium is Iolo Williams, from BBC TV. We're not yet familiar here with the TV series that he makes about birds. I've watched a copy of one of his shows and it was excellent - interesting material plus he is a charming and entertaining interviewer. This makes even more exciting the news that Iolo and a BBC crew will be making a documentary while he is out here. This will include about 3 days of filming in the Newcastle area, on the twin themes of waders and wetlands. We've submitted a list of suggestions for what they might film and are now waiting for the response back. The probable dates for this are October 2-4, and

we'll be looking for volunteers to be involved in some of the activities. If you might be able to help out for some of the time, please contact me.

The cake we had for the HBOC 25th Anniversary in May had a couple of extra outings (staying in Di Johnson's freezer in between times). The June wader surveyors made further inroads into it, and then it was finally polished off at the June club night. We certainly had our money's worth from it!

Finally a reminder that if you have an e-mail address and would like to receive notifications about interesting or unusual birds that turn up, then contact me at the address below and I'll add you to the distribution list. And some of you that had one.net addresses need to let me know your new ones when you get them!

Happy birding

Alan Stuart

almarosa@hunterlink.net.au



Foundation President Fred van Gessel cuts the 25th anniversary cake under the watchful eye of Alan Stuart

Atlas Countdown

The Birds Australia Atlas Project finishes its third year in December 2001. So far 183,000 surveys have been done in 92,000 different locations throughout Australia and there are over three million records of 760 different species. This has been a tremendous effort by volunteers who have given their time, energy and money so generously. However, it means that we have only five months to finish our surveys and make sure that the whole of the Hunter region has been sampled. Most 10 minute grids have had some surveys completed, the top one being, not surprisingly, the Newcastle area with 492. Some of the more difficult areas to access have had only one or two surveys and there are about ten 10 minute grids which have had no surveys as of June 2001. These are areas which are furthest away or are of difficult access so that extra time and dedication are needed. The biggest gap is west and north of Merriwa and east of Muswellbrook. The references below are for the south western corner of the 10 minute grid. The first batch refers to the Muswellbrook area and the second batch to the Merriwa area.

151	20	31	40
151	10	31	50
151	20	31	50
151	30	31	50
and			
150	00	32	10
150	00	32	00
150	10	32	10
150	10	32	00
150	20	31	50
149	50	32	00

Our aim should be to make sure that these areas have as many surveys completed as possible before Christmas.

Breeding

Last year we had many interesting and valuable breeding records and I am hoping that, as the last breeding season before the end of this project is very nearly upon us, you will continue to watch and look for birds showing

breeding behaviour. Just to remind you - for the purposes of the Atlas, species are considered to be breeding if:

1. a nest with contents is found (eggs, young or brooding bird) but be careful not to disturb them
2. a bird is seen to make repeated visits to a nest or hollow carrying food. (courtship rituals and carrying nest material are not sufficient evidence for breeding)
3. newly fledged young are seen with a parent in the vicinity of the nest or, if water birds, they are non -flying young.

What do we do after December?

Moves are afoot to allocate money which would allow us to continue atlassing in the long term and I am wondering how people would feel about making an annual financial contribution to that end. Anyway, more of that in the future as there are no definite plans for the moment.

Atlas Book

What does seem certain, however, is that a book of the Atlas results will be published. It will be called *The New Atlas of Australian Birds* and a pre-publication offer of \$69.95 + \$7.00 postage is available now. You can send your money to the Birding Shop, 415 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East, 3123 or contact me for further details.

Enjoy your atlassing for the remainder of the year and happy birdwatching!

*Ann Lindsey, 37 Long Crescent, Shortland,
2307 Phone: 4951 2008*



Swift Parrots May Survey 2001 Results

Victoria

The May 2001 survey resulted in a record total of 1646 Swift Parrots being recorded from Victoria. The region containing the largest number was the Rushworth area with 637 records. The North-East, St Arnaud and Maryborough/Dunolly regions all had over 280 Swift Parrots recorded and the Bendigo region had 147 records. No records were received from the Southern Victoria and Gippsland regions for this survey. The major food sources were nectar and lerps on Grey Box, Red Ironbark and Yellow Gum. Swift Parrots were also recorded before the May survey in the Rushworth, Bendigo and Maryborough/Dunolly regions.

NSW

The May 2001 survey resulted in 163 Swift Parrots being recorded from NSW. The region containing the largest number was the South Coast with 107 records. Swift Parrots were also recorded from Boorowa (Gunnary TSR) (50) and Tarcutta (Mates Gully TSR) (2) in the south Western Slopes, and from the Capertee Valley (4) in the Central West Slopes. No records were received from any other regions of NSW for this survey. On the south coast the major food sources was Spotted gum nectar and insects amongst the bark of the Borad-leaved Ironbark. On the western slopes the major food source was lerps on White Box, Yellow Box and apple Box. There was a Swift Parrot recorded on the South Coast prior to the May survey and there have also been individual records from the North Coast (to be confirmed) and Sydney since the survey.

Queensland/South Australia

No records have been received for Queensland this year, however the flowering is only just about to start.

Table 1 No of Swift Parrots recorded during May 2001 survey

Record sites	Total Swift Parrots
Victoria	
Maryborough/Dunolly	285
North-East	295
Bendigo	147
Rushworth	637
St Arnaud	284
Southern Victoria	-
Gippsland	-
Victoria total	1646
NSW	
Central West Slopes	4
SW Slopes	52
South Coast	107
Central Coast	-
North Coast	-
Northern Tablelands	-
NW Slopes	-
Central Tablelands	-
NSW Total	161
Queensland/SA	-
Mainland Australia	1807

Regent Honeyeater results May 2001

The coverage was, as usual, good and a record number of Swift Parrots were seen but...where were the Regents? Is this a recurring theme?

A total of 77 Regent Honeyeaters were reported on the national Search Days, of which 31 were birds that we didn't already know the whereabouts of beforehand. We know there are plenty more Regents out there, but where? It is just possible that we need to get smarter about where we look, particularly in NSW where there should be birds to be found. Finding the small number that still exist in Victoria will always be a problem. If you have any ideas about where to search in August, or want guidance about new areas to look in, please get in touch with David Geering, freecall 1800 621 056.

Location	No	Observer
Chiltern	26	E. Collins
Glen Alice Rd, Capertee Valley	25	T. Hyde
Glen Davis Rd, Capertee Valley	3	D. Geering
Glen Davis Rd, Capertee Valley	1	D. Geering
Burraborang Valley	26	D. Andrew
Tuckland State Forest, nr Dunedoo	4	L. Heywood
Bermagui	2	B. Black

Some Interesting Sightings at Woodville

Every now and again one is fortunate to see some new type bird species or bird behaviour. June 9 was a special day with no less than three unusual observations.

Red browed Finches with white plumage

While making my monthly Atlas surveys at Green Wattle Creek, Woodville, I saw a flock of about 12 Red-browed Finches, two of which had extensive white in their plumage. Both of these birds had brilliant white tail foreheads, rather like the white patch of a male Scarlet Robin. They also had broad white tail shafts and white rumps with a small red patch at the base of the tail. The underparts were white and the rest of the plumage much less green than in the normal birds in the flock. The white plumaged birds behaved as typical members of the flock and one was called up to almost touching distance. It is interesting to speculate whether these birds are partially albino, hybrids or aviary escapees. One suggestion is that they are natural hybrids with Double-barred Finches, which are also present in the area.

Drongo harassing Brown Goshawk

Carrying on with my survey I was startled by the piercing call of a Pied Butcher-bird coupled with the occasional calls of a Brown Goshawk. On further investigation I found I was right about the Goshawk, but wrong about the Butcher-bird, which was actually a Drongo. A Drongo has been a winter visitor to the wood for each of the last three years. Perhaps the Drongo finds Pied Butcher-bird imitations effective in driving out Goshawks.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo plumage bathing

After lunch we had a short period of exceptionally heavy rainfall. In the middle of this storm my wife spotted a Fan-tailed Cuckoo in a hibiscus shrub outside our window. At first sight it appeared to be struggling as if it had a foot caught in the branches. However, we correctly concluded that it was plumage bathing. This involved spreading and raising its wings as well as fanning its tail. After this performance had gone on for several minutes we opened the door to go out and ensure that it was not trapped in the shrub. The Cuckoo immediately flew off and perched on our water tank.

The following Monday, 11 June, yielded a Hardhead on our small dam all morning, a male Rufous Whistler and six Fairy Martins all in the vicinity of our garden. Altogether a memorable June long weekend.

Mike Newman

Winter in Queensland

What better way to spend the winter than travelling through north Queensland by caravan. We left at the end of May, armed with three 'where to find birds' books borrowed from the club library and the Cockerells' report of their similar trip (see Feb/Mar Newsletter). The books were *The Great Australian Birdfinder*, *Birds of Townsville* and *Where to Find Birds in North East Queensland*. All were useful, especially the last, although it did let us down a couple of times (it was published in 1992 and I guess things change). We virtually followed the Great Divide north, calling at Carnarvon Gorge, the Blackdown Tableland, Charters Towers, Atherton Tableland, Lakefield NP, across to Cooktown and back down the coast to Rockhampton, then inland to home. In the process, we visited 35 national parks and added 13 new birds to our life list.

Queensland contains a number of national parks where, for various reasons (size, sensitivity) there is no provision for camping. The Queensland Parks Service also appears to have a policy of discouraging camping in national parks where it has previously been available. They do this in three ways: by closing the camping area and forcing people to use commercial facilities outside the park (as at Carnarvon Gorge after October 2001), by making access difficult (as at Big Crystal Creek) or by making the camping area uninviting to campers (as at Alligator Creek). We picked up a brochure from the information centre at Ingham which informed us that self-registration camping was available at Big Crystal Creek, only to be confronted on arrival by a locked gate and advice that a key was available at Ingham, 50km away. Often tourist information centre staff complained that they could not get information out of the Parks Service. We found the State Forest camping areas such as Murray Falls, north of Cardwell and Byfield near Rockhampton, to be generally more attractive and inviting. It's to be hoped that the joining of several organisations, including NPWS, under the banner of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area will improve management of this fantastic part of the world. These niggles aside, we stopped at a lot of lovely campsites and many great birding spots.

After nine weeks and over ten thousand kilometres the mind contains a jumble of hundreds of images

so I sat down to sort them into some kind of order. Here is just a selection.

At Mt Moffat, a dozen brown quail and our first pale headed rosellas of the trip amid the zamia palms and weird sandstone formations. (Also a surprising minus two degrees!) Bustards and emus in the Arcadia Valley. At Lake Nuga Nuga, a red capped robin, lots of cisticolas, a two metre black-headed python and hundreds of cormorants fishing in company with pelicans. Nine species of honeyeater among the wonderful gorges of the Carnarvon Range. At Mazeppa NP a flock of red winged parrots that kept pace with us as we walked, while hundreds of brolgas gathered and danced in the adjacent paddocks. At Undara, blue winged kookaburras and a boobook that lives in one of the lava tubes. A great morning birdwatching at Cumberland Dam, 20km west of Georgetown, with a wide range of birds including yellow tinted and yellow honeyeaters. Fairy warblers and northern figbirds at 40-mile Scrub NP. At the Crater, north of Ravenshoe, cat birds and a fern wren in company with a scrub fowl. At Hasties Swamp, just south of Atherton, thousands of plumed whistling ducks were gathered and we watched, spellbound, the arrival of thousands of magpie geese. Bowers shrike-thrush and pied monarch in Wongabel SF, but not the advertised tree kangaroos. An extraordinary concentration of raptors over Bromfield Crater. At Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge there were red necked crane, pacific bazza, black butcher bird, great billed heron, spectacled monarch and lesser sooty owl. At Mt Lewis, the bower of a golden bower bird but,

alas, no bird. At the Palmer River, lemon breasted flycatcher, green pygmy geese and a freshwater croc. At Jowalbinna, near Laura, yellow orioles, black backed butcher birds and silver crowned friar birds. A cassowary crossing the Bloomfield Track and two more near Mission Beach. (Cassowary conservation measures are noticeable in this area - see the poem later in this issue.) Sunbirds flitting in and out of a nest in the Cairns Botanic Gardens. At Eubenangee Swamp (where we wished we had a telescope to help identify the water birds) I searched the creek bank for kingfishers and found instead a saltwater croc. From the size of the splash I'd say he got the bigger surprise. At Henrietta Creek in Palmerston NP, two wonderful experiences: a paradise rifle bird displaying on a stump and standing within two metres of a pair of northern log runners as they filled the forest with their incredible sound. Also boat billed flycatchers, truly spectacular birds. At Murray Falls, 30 species within the camping area, including six honeyeaters (one nesting). On the road to Blencoe Falls, a red tailed black cockatoo swooped over the car and flew just in front of us for a few seconds, completely filling our vision with its huge wings and magnificent fanned tail. At the Ivy Cottage Tearooms, Paluma, macleays honeyeaters pecking crumbs from the table while male and female rifle birds came to the bird feeder. A jabiru soaring on a thermal, near Ayr.

These and many, many more. Such images can't be bought but are there free for the taking. They remain forever.

Ross and Pat Carlton

Too-round robins? Fat chance

The robin is one of nature's most successful dieters. A new study into its feeding habits has revealed that it has a remarkable ability to regulate its fat reserves precisely, in order to stay the same weight all its life.

Dr Rob Thomas, a behavioural ecologist, and his students at the University of Bristol trained wild robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) to collect food from a dish on top of an electronic balance so that they could be weighed automatically each time they fed. It was discovered that, unlike humans who tend to over-indulge when offered excessive amounts of food, robins are able to limit their food intake very precisely to stay the same weight.

Dr Thomas said, "Robins do not simply eat as much as they can to get as fat as possible. Even when food is available to them they are not greedy. Instead they carefully regulate their food intake to avoid starving without having to carry unnecessary weight."

Each adult robin, filmed as it collected food from the dish, weighed between 18 and 24 grams.

Some robins were easily distinguishable from others by, for example, a lump on one side of the head. Others, more difficult to identify, were caught and tagged with various coloured rings before the start of the experiment to help with accurate data collection.

The experiment showed that robins exercise exceptional self-control to avoid over-eating - even

when faced with the tempting prospect of an endless feast of the worms.

Dr Thomas said. "The average weight difference in their body mass between days was only 0.01 grams, which is equivalent to just one or two small worms."

To survive a long cold spell of winter weather, small birds such as robins need to eat a little extra

to put on fat reserves to avoid starving to death. There is an art to eating just the right amount. Eating too much means more energy will be required to fly, making them slower, less agile and more at risk of being caught by next door's cat. Too little and they may starve to death.

Source: *The Telegraph, London, UK*

A Diary of Bird Behaviour

27 August

I saw three Swift Parrots at Whitebridge High School. They initially landed in a large flowering *Angophera costata* and began feeding before they were chased away by a Currawong. In a few minutes they again flew towards the trees but this time were chased away in the opposite direction by three Eastern Rosellas. But they returned to the two trees soon enough, and this time they were undetected, so they resumed feeding.

28 August

This afternoon two Eastern Rosellas flew down into a catonaeaster tree and began to messily eat the

berries. One of them was chattering away as it ate.
6 September

In the morning a Noisy Minder was trying to catch spiders that had made their webs in a shrub in our backyard. It was probably desperate to find food for its babies, as there is a nest in the nearby high school.

At University I saw a Satin Bowerbird foraging for food under fallen leaves. Very close by was an Eastern Yellow Robin, sitting on a low branch waiting for flying insects to be flushed by the Bowerbird's probings.

Colin Goodenough

OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHTS JUNE/JULY 2001

Apr 23	Long-billed Corella	1	Glen Oak	M.Maddock
20 & 24	White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	"	"
Apr 24	Brown Falcon	1	Newline Rd. Raymond Terrace	"
	Straw-necked Ibis	1,000	"	"
	Black-shouldered Kite	2	"	"
	Black Swan	34	Irrawang Swamp	"
Apr 19	White-throated Nightjar	1	Bayswater Colliery	G.Newling
Apr 5-9	Azure Kingfisher	1	"	"
Apr 11	Black Falcon	1	Aberdeen	"
Apr 12	Spotted Harrier	1	Scone	"
14&21	Square-tailed Kite	1	Green Hills [E.Maitland]	P.McLauchlan
Apr 15	Grey-crowned Babbler	12	Mulbring	R.Walker
May 9	Crimson Rosella	2	Garden Suburb	C. Goodenough
May 13	Crimson Rosella	2	Mt. Sugarloaf	"
May 24	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	7	Hawks Nest Road	M.Maddock
	Australian White Ibis	10	Pindimar foreshore	"
	White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	Seaham Swamp	"
	Straw-necked Ibis	14	Lochinvar	"
May 27	Musk Duck	14	Grahamstown Dam	"
May 29	Black-winged Stilt	5	Raymond Terrace	"
	White-necked Heron	3	Seaham [Newline Rd.]	"
May 13	Barn Owl	1	East Maitland	J.Smart
May 26	Brown Falcon	1	Nelson's Plains	M.Maddock
May 29	White-faced Heron	25	Irrawang Swamp	"
May 18	Australasian Shoveler	4m	Glen Oak	"

May 17	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Irrawang Swamp	
	Ibis [mixed flock]	13,509	Irrawang [night roost]	
	Marsh Harrier	2	Hawks Nest	
May 15	Tawny Grassbird	Several	S.W.C.	A.Lindsey
May 26	Forest Kingfisher	1	"	"
May 5	Pink-eared Duck	1010	Morpeth S.T.W.	"
May 8	Grey Goshawk	2	S.W.C.	"
May 13	Common Starling	1000	Hexham	"
May 11	White-breasted Woodswallow	7	Shortland	"
	Restless Flycatcher	1	"	"
May 13	Scarlet Robin	Pair	Apple Tree Flat	"
May 29	White-necked Heron	5	Parkville	G.Newling
	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	6	"	"
Jun 5	Ibis [White + Straw-necked]	2412	Shortland	"
Jun 6	Double-banded Plover	22	Swan Bay	"
Jun 25	Fairy Martin	4	Bulga	"
	Barn Owl	1	Bulga [Pinegrove Rd]	"
May 15	Clamorous Reed Warbler	2	Shortland	"
May	Double-banded Plover	28	Stockton Beach	R.Baxter
Jun 9	Red-necked Avocet	>800	Stockton Sandspit	M.Roderick
	Pacific Golden Plover	1	"	"
Jun 1	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	2	Grahamstown Dam	"
	Musk Duck	15	"	"
	Australasian Grebe	10	"	"
Jun 2	White-necked Heron	2	Millers Forest	"
	White-necked Heron	1	Raymond Terrace	"
Jun 4	Great Crested Grebe	20	Warka Water Works	R.Walker
	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	1	"	"
	Musk Duck		"	"
	Australasian Bittern	1	"	"
Jun 3	Southern Boobook	1	East Maitland	J.Smart
Jun 7	Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	Telarah	F.Humphreys
Jun 11	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	2	"	"
Jun 11	Olive-backed Oriole	5	Woodberry	R. & J. Smith
	Figbird	5	"	"
	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	1-10	"	"
Jun 13	Brown-headed Honeyeater	3	Morrisset	L.Crawford
Jun 5	Masked Owl	1	"	"
Jun 13	Jacky Winter	1	"	"
Jun 2	White-necked Heron	8	Raymond Terrace [Newline Rd]	M.Maddock
	Black-winged Stilt	30	"	"
	White-faced Heron	7	"	"
	Pacific Black Duck	68	"	"
	Chestnut Teal	5	"	"
	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	5	"	"
	White-necked Heron	1	Newline & East Seaham Rd.	"
Jun 22	Eastern Curlew	1	Coon Island [Swansea]	A.Stuart
	Great Knot	2	"	"
	Caspian Tern	7	"	"
	Little Corella	120	Swansea	"
Jun 23	Australasian Bittern	1	Ash Island	"
	Australasian Shoveler	130	"	"
Jun 17	Australasian Gannet	5	Spoon Rocks [Caves Beach]	"
	New Holland Honeyeater	2	Wallarrah Coastal Walk	"
Jun 4	Ibis [mixed flock]	12529	Irrawang Swamp	M.Maddock
	Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	Glen Oak	"
	Pink-eared Duck	2	Irrawang Swamp	"

Jun 8	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2	Newline Rd.	..
Jun 11	Black-winged Stilt	120	Leneghans Flat	..
	Australasian Shoveler	10	..	..
Jun	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	2	East Maitland [Mt. Vincent Rd]	..
Jun 8	Providence Petrel	>100	Continental shelf off Swansea	R. Baxter
	Wilson's Storm Petrel	1	..	..
	Black-browed Albatross	1	15km off Swansea	..
Jun 12	Musk Duck	12	Ash Island	R. Baxter
Jun 18	Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	4	Awaba State Forest	..
Jun 24	Grey-crowned Babbler	12	NW Scone. Off Kars Springs Rd	R. Waymark
Jun 15	Grey-crowned Babbler	8	Allandale	P. Durie
Jun 16	Spangled Drongo	1	Hillsborough	R. Walker
Jun 15	White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	Warners Bay	..
Jun 17	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	2	Wakefield	..
Jul 7	Eastern Spinebill	1	Fassifern	..
	New Holland Honeyeater	1	..	..
Jul 1	White-headed Pigeon	1	Charlestown	..
Jul 9	Figbird	10-12	Warners Bay	..
Jul 1	Black-froned Dotterel	2	Coon Island	J. Adams
Jul 2	Shining Bronze-cuckoo	1	Belmont Wetlands	..
	Spangled Drongo	Several	..	..
	White-necked Heron	2	..	..

Twitching time – 27 October 2001

Birds Australia's Twitchathon Kits are now hot off the press and itching to be emailed or posted to all birdlovers and birdwatchers in NSW and the ACT. Participate in the 2001 Twitchathon and do your bit to raise the seeding fund to get the Cowra woodlands project started. We urgently need to get this project going to address the decline of woodland birds.

The Twitchathon is a race for everyone. It can be carried on in your backyard, in Tibooburra whilst on a bird trip, at your favourite birding spot or even on a pelagic trip! All you need do is form a team with at least one other person and find as many species of birds as possible in 24 hours between **4 p.m. Sat. 27 October and 4 p.m. Sun. 28 October**, 2001. You can take it leisurely with proper rest, tea breaks/champagne or you can go all day and all night and sleep some other time! All you need to do is encourage your friends, colleagues, even your dentist, your relatives to sponsor your team for every species seen in the 24 hours and then ... whoops ... the Cowra woodland project will soon be underway!!

Fantastic prizes are to be won:

Main race: 1st prize:

2 nights' cabin accommodation at Dubbo City Caravan Park, with free tickets to **the Western Plains Zoo** and a total petrol allowance of \$50.

Main race: 2nd prize

Weekend accommodation for all members of the team at **Oskar's Cottage**, 1-3 Nangar Street, Glen Davies, 2846. Tel. (02) 6379 7353. www.oskas.lisp.com.au.

Main Race: 3rd prize:

Subscription to "Interpretive Birding Bulletin", a resource for interpreting bird behaviour kindly donated by Interpretive Birding Bulletin of P.O. Box 362, Toowong, Qld. 4066: www.ibirding.com as well as a **Scarlet Honeyeater mug** donated by **Australian Fine China**, P.O. Box 296, Subiaco, WA 6008.

Champagne race:

Champagne, of course! Champagne kindly donated by the Wine Society, 177 Cathedral Street, Woolloomooloo, NSW.

Most funds raised by an individual in NSW/ACT:

Any volume of Vol. 1-7 of the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds (Vol. 6 not available to 2002, Vol. 7 - available sometime thereafter) donated by **SNAG: and The Birding Shop (Birds Australia)**, 415 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East, 3123 Tel: (03) 9813 5488 www.thebirdingshop.com

Special prize to the person who sees or hears the rarest bird!

Two nights bed & breakfast for 2 people at "Chorleywood B & B", 86 Burradoo Road, Burradoo, Tel/Fax: (02) 4861 3617 www.highlandsnsw.com.au/chorleywood

Club/society/group prize: Cheque for \$100 to the club whose members raise the most funds. Encourage your club members to get a team together and/or sponsor your team!

THANK YOU TO ALL PRIZE DONORS. YOUR SUPPORT TO BIRDS AUSTRALIA IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!

Contact me **NOW** for your Twitchathon kit.

Frances Czwalińska

Birds Australia, P.O. Box 1322, Crows Nest, 1585
Tel: (02) 9436 0388. Email: secretarybirds@bigpond.com

The Cassowary

*In the forest deep it loves to roam
And few indeed have seen its home
For a timid thing - and very wary -
Is that flightless bird the cassowary.*

*Now for those who may have
wondered why
It chose to walk and not to fly
Something happened years ago
That only cassowaries know.*

*Perhaps because it overate
It put on too much excess weight.
Its girth, by gradually expanding
Leading to a bad crash landing.*

*And then with pride and passion
spent
Lying there in discontent
It heard perhaps its brother crying
"What's so special about this
flying?"*

*"For was not here", it sought to
reason.*

*"Fruits and berries there in season,
Grasses soft wherein to lay
So why the rush to fly away?"*

*Perhaps they all then took a vote
And in the book of birds they wrote
"Be it enacted now by law
Cassowaries fly no more."*

*And here's another curious thing
Why settle down in Wongaling?
But then again these birds are wise
And knew that they'd found
paradise.*

*So then they all without delay
Did tuck their little wings away
Nor did they ever seek to try
To join the swallows in the sky.*

*And of this rather clever move
God, in time, came to approve
He made their legs grow tall and
strong
That they might softly move
along.*

*Yet still He thought how ordinary
Still looked that poor old cassowary
With sombre shades of brown and
black
And straggly feathers on its back.*

*"This bird", at last He did opine
"Badly needs a new design."
He put his brain into the test
To make it different from the rest.*

*"I know", He said. "A touch of red
and a nice hump on the head."
And then as His excitement grew
Its neck He painted brilliant blue.*

*Which in its own and special way
Is exactly how it looks today.
A bird that's almost legendary
North Queensland's own - the
cassowary.*

Source: Cassowary Information Centre,
Wongaling, Mission Beach

Coming Events

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

Wednesday 8 August	Club Meeting	7.30 pm. Shortland Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Dick Cooper "Birds of the Moree Watercourses"
Saturday 11 August	Pelagic Trip	7.00 am. Swansea wharf near RSL Club, Chalmers St. Swansea	Richard Baxter 4954 0212 randrbaxter@yahoo.com
Saturday 18 August	Hunter Wader Survey	7.30 am. Various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663. Alan Stuart 4952 8569. You must ring to confirm
Sunday 19 August	Wallingat National Park	8.00 am The Shelter Shed, Sugar Creek Road, 5 km north of Bungwahl	Liz Herbert 4959 3663
Saturday & Sunday 1-2 September	Wildflowers at the Wetlands	9.00 am Shortland Wetlands Centre - Volunteers needed	Co-ordinator: Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Saturday 1 / Sunday 2 September	Atlassing (area east of Scone/Murrurundi - Timor. Barr. Ellerston)	Campsite to be advised.	Essential to contact Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 or Liz Herbert 4959 3663
Tuesday 4 September	Mt Sugarloaf / Mt Vincent	8.00 am. Top car park. Mt Sugarloaf	Keith & Margaret Woods 4963 3070 Max Blanch 4961 1655
Saturday 8 Sunday 9 September	BIGnet Meeting	Eurobodalla	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 Rowley Smith 4964 1389
Wednesday 12 September	Club Meeting	7.30 pm. Shortland Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Greg Little "Images of Nature from a Bush Ramble"
Saturday 15 September	Pelagic Trip	7.00 am. Swansea wharf near RSL Club, Chalmers St. Swansea	Richard Baxter 4954 0212 randrbaxter@yahoo.com
Saturday 22 September	Hunter Wader Survey	11.30 am. Various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569 You must ring to confirm
Sunday 23 September	Bulga	8.30 am. Bulga General Store. Bulga.	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008
Saturday - Monday 29 Sept - 1 Oct	Camp at Honeyeater Flat. Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve	Honeyeater Flat. Munghorn Gap NR. 14 km west of Wellar. 35 km northeast of Mudgee	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Tuesday - Thursday 2-11 October	Gould League Bird Study Camp	Kyogle	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008
Tuesday 2 October	Blackbutt (Primary and High School Students Welcome)	8.00 am. Car park, Carnley Avenue	Keith & Margaret Woods 4963 3070 Max Blanch 4961 1655
Saturday 6 October	Birds Australia Symposium: "Birds for the Future"	9.00 am to 5.00 pm Taronga Zoo Theaterette	Tickets from: 9436 0388 C/- Birds Australia Sydney Office. GPO Box 1322. Crows Nest NSW 1585
Wednesday 10 October	Club Meeting	7.30 pm. Shortland Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Nicholas Carlile "The World Petrel Shortage"
Saturday 20 October	Hunter Wader Survey	10.30 am. Various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569 You must ring to confirm
Sunday 21 October	Allworth area. Bucketts Way	7.30 am Raymond Terrace Macdonalds (opp. Swan Pond)	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Saturday & Sunday 27-28 October	Twitchathon Join a team and help raise money for Birds Australia	4.00 pm. For 24 hours.	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 Phil Rankin 4946 0022
Sunday 28 October	Twitchathon BBC - bring your own everything	Shortland Wetlands Centre: 5.00 pm	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008