

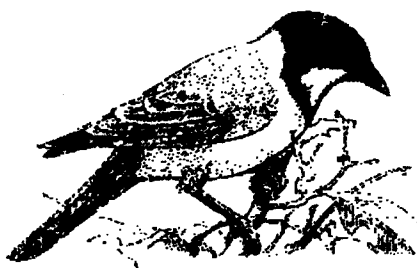
NEWSLETTER

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

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<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*
-

Twitchathon Prize Presentations

Steve Roderick and Lucas Grenadier (two members of the Hunter Home Brewers Team) with Alan Morris.

On our last "Chrissy" Club Night, Alan Morris, representing Frances Czwalinna, the coordinator of the Twitchathon for Birds Australia, presented three prizes. Two went to the Hunter Home Brewers Team, for coming second in the Main Race and also for spotting the rarest bird – the Little Curlew. The other prize went to the Letsticumforadae Team who came first in the Champagne Race, with 134 birds ticked.

Di Johnson

President's Column

Welcome to everyone for 2002. I hope you've had some enjoyable birding experiences already this year and that there's many more of them to come. HBOC has already had a successful camp at Appletree Flat, near Jerrys Plains, over the Australia Day weekend and an outing to Glenrock Recreation Area, so the year augurs very well.

Some members have been asking what's happened about their copy of the 2000 Bird Report. I apologise that I have had some delays in finalising the distribution of these – usually it's all done by Christmas but I'm behind schedule and about ¼ of you are still waiting. It's coming to you soon if you don't already have it.

Weeders wanted! Once per week at Stockton Sandspit. In the past 12-18 months, we've been campaigning that significant further rehabilitation is required at Stockton Sandspit – in particular to pull out all the young mangroves that are making serious inroads, cut down a stand of mature mangroves, and also remove various weeds including the juncus (spiky reed) that grows all along the edges of the lagoon. Last year the Club applied for a Coastcare grant to do all of this work, and we are waiting keenly to find out how the application fares. In the meantime though, all the relevant authorities have now given approval to remove the young mangroves and weeds. And the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project people have organised for a Green Corps group to spend 1 day/week at the Sandspit doing just that. If you are able to join in and do some good things for waders by restoring some of their habitat, your help would be much appreciated. Call me or e-mail me to find out more details.

Most of you will be aware about the difficulties that many clubs and businesses are having with rapidly escalating insurance costs. HBOC has become caught up in this too. Our Public Liability policy is due for ~~removal~~ in mid-February and our initial finding was that

our insurance company was not even interested in covering us any more! Since this bad news, Tom Clarke has managed to find another company that will provide us with an insurance policy, at about 50% higher price than we paid last year. In the circumstances, this is an outcome that we breathe a sigh of relief over. We must have Public Liability insurance in order to meet the requirements for remaining an incorporated organisation.

I'm sure that the problems about insurance costs will be one of the topics at the Bird Interests Group Network (BIGNet) meeting in early March. All clubs are being faced with rising insurance costs. The BIGNet meeting is in Cowra, which will also give attendees the chance to inspect the woodlands rehabilitation work that is happening there. The money raised by the teams competing in the 2001 Twitchathon was for a component of the Cowra woodlands project.

Coming up in February is the Annual General Meeting – many of you will receive this newsletter after the event. 2001 was another strong year for HBOC – lots of events (>50 organised activities in the 2001 program), many positive outcomes to do with conservation, a record membership number (213), and also a much raised profile about our Club and our important causes. Let's hope that all the success flows on into 2002.

Happy birding

Alan Stuart

almarosa@bigpond.com

Articles for our newsletter are always welcomed.

Closing date for next issue: 31 March 2002

Please send your contributions to:

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East Seaham 2324

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Email: pcarlton@optusnet.com.au

The Brewers Bounce Back!

It was on again. For the Hunter Home Brewers, a year is long time to wait for the Birds Australia Twitchathon, especially seeing The Thickheads levelled the Hunter v Hunter tally last year at 1-1!

Raising money in the form of sponsorship is the aim of the Twitchathon, but once this is organised, The Brewers are driven by two other teams, The Hunter Thickheads (the local derby) and The CCCs (our well-known arch rivals).

The last two years have seen us confine our 'runs' to the Hunter Valley, resulting in mid 170 scores. As with other teams we knew that to have a real possibility of cracking the magical 200, we would have to travel further west.

Months of planning, reconnaissance runs and, of course, The Brewers pre-twitchathon bbq resulted in our starting point in, well, let's just say, the Gunnedah area. The exact location (due to sabotage and other devious acts) can't be revealed; only a Brewer has these details – oh, and don't ask, we're well versed in the art of non-communication.

As mad and keen as we are, we decided to head up to Gunnedah on Friday, to settle into the western bird mode. We arrived at Spot X after lunch, and did some birding, as you would expect! Scouting around until 4:00 pm we decided to do a 'dummy run' in the area until dark. Our exact 'twitchy' run as planned came in with 81 species. This had to be improved and would be, as we now knew where to spend more time the following day. Friday night was spent drinking Home Brew (was there any doubt!) with much discussion of our assault, plus many games of 'sloppy' (cards). We wondered what other teams were doing?

The day finally arrived and the adrenalin was pumping. Anticipation of the 4:00 pm start was extremely high, but we were careful not to peak too early. Much of the day was spent birding around Gunnedah, a few more games of 'sloppy', some last minute checks of key birding sites, energy food devoured and of course thinking whether the Thickheads were quivering in their boots! 3:00 pm rocked up with The Brewers waiting to release a year of pent-up energy.

Finally it was nearly time (thank goodness!). At 3:55 pm we all took our respective positions, with eyes glued on key birds. The biggest 'dip' for us was a Southern Whiteface, as we were watching one bird from 3:30 pm, and at 3:59 pm and 45 secs. it flew into a tree never to be seen again! - dipping!!

It was 4:00 pm - the race was on. The Brewers were ticking and twitching, like only a Brewer can. The birds fell fast. First bird was a Jacky Winter, evading all attempts to guess the first bird in the Hunter Home Brewers bird tab – it's very serious! Lucas came in closest with Willie at No. 8. Such species as Little Friarbird, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Apostlebird and Rufous Songlark all fell immediately. We moved on 300m to our 'Red-capped Robin' hotspot and ticked on arrival; a Speckled Warbler also queued up. Another 300m down the road - another stop - Singing Honeyeaters, Zebra Finches, Dusky Woodswallows and Restless Flycatchers all fell - "39 birds so far boys, let's up it shall we."

Our next stop was a local dam. On the way the birds kept coming, Brown Falcon, Yellow-billed Spoonie and Little Corella. "Go back, Go back!" I yelled, "there look!, Rainbow Bee-eaters. Hang on - Plum-headed finches!", nice ticking, Brewers. The 'Jacky' was alive with enthusiasm, "Look there, Blue Bonnets!" Two critical birds in 30m, nice to have under the belt.

Arriving at the dam, cormorants fell, as did Weebill and Inland Thornbill, while overhead drifted a White-browed Woodswallow.

We moved to another area and it gave us the same dose of bird action. White-plumed Honeyeaters were abundant. "Hang on, listen, yep, tick it up!, Peaceful Dove calling." G.S.T., Dollarbirds and Brown Quails were posted, while an Azure Kingfisher whistled past at warp speed. Walking the banks of the creek brought about the downfall of Common Blackbird, Rufous Night Heron and White-backed Swallow, while above another woodswallow flew, this time a Masked!. Before we left Reddies, Diamonds and Double-bars all climbed aboard.

We were now faced with the drive to Telegraphy S.F., to our 'Brewers only' rainforest destination. The Breeza Plain produced all we hoped, Barn Owls and Tawnys.

We arrived at Telegraphy S.F. at around 12:30 am, got to our campsite and threw out some Sooty Owl calls (via our own whistles of course) - but alas no response. The guys set up the tents while I braved the darkness of the pit toilets at 1:00 am. "A falling bomb! There it is!" I yelled, from the dark confines of the amenities. Still half dressed, I ran out to be confronted by Mick and Lucas waiting for confirmation. The owl called 3 more times and was made a Brewer bird.

Our last tick for the night came about ten minutes after we hit the sack. A Boobook starting

his call and from the tents came the Brewers' call in return. "Tick it up!" There was much rejoicing.

We left Saturday behind us with 91 species under the belt. We awoke on Sunday to the dawn chorus that only the rainforest can produce. Four hours' sleep and we were up again, back into the groove. Whipbirds, Gerygones, Whistlers and Thornbills were all calling. Black-faced Monarchs were fluttering, so too were Scrubwrens and Robins. Scarlet Honeyeaters were singing while two Ground Thrushes investigated our tents. Lyrebirds and Brown Cuckoo-doves were also singing their songs.

We spent some quality time absorbing all possible species. A Rufous Fantail was found hanging around the pit toilet - a hot spot it seems. Catbirds were crying, while a Spectacled Monarch showed his face. Other quality birds seen were Noisy Pitta and a Russet-tailed Thrush; found scratching amongst the forest debris.

Driving out we claimed Sacred Kingfisher, Oriole, Leaden Flycatcher and a Torresian Crow calling. Back on the blacktop common species fell by roadside and swamp. Our second rainforest stop was reached and produced such species as Common Bronzewing, Topknots, White-headed Pigeons and Regent Bowerbird.

We were much pleased with our rainforest birds and made for Paterson. Cicadabird and Brush Cuckoo were ticked here. A patch of forest at Woodville was next on the list, which 3 main race teams went to, never overlapping though. It was a great spot Thickheads - thanks!

In this area we saw Grey-crowned Babblers, Long-billed Corellas and Pallid Cuckoos. Time spent here paid off, producing Shrike-tits, White-throated Gerygones, Fuscous Honeyeaters and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike.

Heading for Raymond Terrace via Seaham saw the tally rise with Latham's Snipe added, plus many swamp species. A key bird was obtained at Raymond Terrace in the form of a Mallard, alias Geoff - a Brewers' favourite!

One amazing statistic was last year we had 176 as our best score. It was now 12:30 pm Sunday, Hexham was approaching and we already had 179! Surpassing previous totals with Ash Island, waders, seabirds and The Wetlands ahead of us! Oh Brewers! Tick yourself up!

Arriving at Ash Island, Swamp Harrier, Mangrove Gerygone and Wimbrels were all seen. The Ash Island ponds were next and were to reveal an absolute crippler, which was to take out the rarest bird prize! While scanning the grass/mudflats I noticed a bird, Whimbrel-like,

somewhat smaller, with short downcurved bill. Hmmm.....I racked my brain from all those endless hours reading Pizzey. "Hang on! There's three! Little Curlews!" I yelled. Binos and scopes immediately were fixed upon the birds. Excitement was running through the Brewers' veins. After 45 minutes of studying, field notes and conversation, we were aware we had 3 Little Curlews before us. What a tick! A 5-way life list bird was enjoyed. Strangely, we were hoping for The Thickheads to come along so others could see these birds, but they didn't. Bad luck Thickys - dipping! After 45 minutes of twitching one bird (on a twitchathon - turn it up!) we continued on.

Ash Island, Stockton Spit and the Dykes produced all we wanted, Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers, Bar-tailed Godwits, Curlews, Red-caps, Greenshanks, Tattlers, Red Knots, Stints and a Common Sandpiper.

Newy Baths saw more species added. Common Terns brought up our 200th bird, what a milestone! At this time we couldn't believe we had done so well. How much further could we go! Three species of Shearwaters were seen, as well as Ruddys, but alas, Oystercatchers evade us again!

We rolled into the Wetlands Centre around 4:30 pm, trying to wipe off our grins, as we were sitting on 205. Six more species were seen, including a Spangled Drongo, to bring us to the grand total of 211!

We knew this would be competitive; we waited for the results. The Whacked Out Woodswallows came in with 218, an incredible score!. Of the teams that finished at The Wetlands Centre we finished 2nd and The Thickheads 3rd. We were over the moon with our effort and what we dished up to those poor Thickheads - sorry guys, haha!

We eventually found out the state results. Whacked Out Woodswallows 1st on 218, us Hunter Home Brewers 2nd on 211 and The CCCs 3rd on 200. We couldn't believe how well we had done, coming 2nd overall, putting our rivals, The Thickheads & The CCCs back in their place and equalling the old record!

Many hours of fun and tiredness make up our journeys, along with much needed funds raised for Birds Australia. Well, 211 this year, what next? Next year's trip is already planned, (done on the way to Gunnedah)! Oh dear.

To The Thickheads go our congratulations for another good result within the boundaries of the Hunter, we enjoy the rivalry. 2-1!

Steve. Hunter Home Brewer.

Camp at Appletree Flat January 26-28

It's rare these days that there is a long weekend in conjunction with Australia Day, and so it has been a few years since HBOC last had a January camp. Going from the success of the recent one at Appletree Flat we'll be trying to have them more often.

Appletree Flat is an area just beyond Jerrys Plains, heading towards Martindale. We camped on the property Wongalee which borders the Wollemi National Park and which is where we had a successful winter camp in 2000. There were 15 campers, plus 3 people were day visitors on the Sunday. The weather was balmy and the birds were plentiful – what more could one ask? A total of 96 species were recorded by the group as we scoured the surrounding countryside.

Some species were present in great abundance. 60-80 King Parrot were there, mostly in the trees along the creek, and several hundred Silvereye, feeding on the berries of the introduced African thornbush (which was widespread). Double-barred and Red-browed Finch also were plentiful – the latter including many young birds lacking the red eyebrow and bill. The property owner, Jim

Williamson, considered that the unusually high numbers of King Parrot was an effect of the bushfires that had occurred in the National Park and driven the birds out.

Several Rock Warbler were seen, including at least one bird that was frequently utilising a rocky part of the creek bed not 30m from where we were camped. Also seen were Yellow-tailed and Glossy Black-Cockatoo, many different types of honeyeater although all in low numbers, Zebra Finch in moderate numbers, and five species of pigeon/dove including Emerald Dove (three birds found in a shady gully).

Several night birds were heard – White-throated Nightjar, Owlet-Nightjar, Southern Boobook and Masked Owl. And then on the Sunday night the White-throated Nightjar briefly flew about above us as we sat around the campfire. This was a definite highlight of the camp for me!

Immature birds of many species were present, and mostly these were still being fed by the parents. We also found one active nest of a Rainbow Bee-eater, with the bird regularly disappearing with food into a tidy looking hole in what was actually a very small embankment on the side of the creek.

Alan Stuart

Celebrity Birdwatchers

We don't often know who else in the wider community shares our interest in birds. Here's a few well known people who do or did. Perhaps you know others – let's hear from you if you do:

- Joanna Lumley, star of Absolutely Fabulous and many other TV programs
- Former West Indian fast bowler Joel Garner (could this have been why he was called "Big Bird"?)
- Former US president Jimmy Carter
- Annie Sprinkle, star of some very adult stage shows
- Bill Oddie, one-time star of The Goodies and successful author
- The late comedian Joyce Grenfell
- Sting, erstwhile lead singer of The Police
- Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh

- Kate Pierson, vocalist with New York new wave group the B-52s
- Gus Nossal, eminent Australian medical scientist

Whether the singer/songwriter Van Morrison was a birdo is unknown, but he did mention birdwatching in a song called "Coney Island" on an album "Avalon Sunset" released in 1989. Here are the first four lines:

*Coming down from Downpatrick
Stopping off at St. John's Point
Out all day birdwatching
And the craic was good*

If you have been to Northern Ireland you might recognise the localities. "Craic" by the way is an Irish term that apparently conveys the combined sensations of good conversation, good company, good times etc.

Alan Stuart

The Elusive Latham's Snipe

Beaters, Clappers and Counters were an integral part of the activity, entitled the annual Latham's Snipe Count held at Pambalong Reserve this year. My New Zealand friend wondered if he was going to be part of a musical troupe and a quick decision had to be made that rainy morning as to which group he'd prefer to belong to. As it turned out all those wearing galoshes ended up being the beaters, a most illustrious role as they are directly responsible for flushing these delightful migratory snipe from their habitat.

Unfortunately though the count this year was quite low, with approximately 35 birds. One has to ask where are these elusive summer

migrants? Last year's count was 66, the lowest count in the four years of our surveying at Pambalong. During this year, very small numbers have been seen at "Bush Haven" Seaham, Stockton Borehole Swamp, Irrawang Swamp and Newcastle Wetland Reserve. Are they by-passing this part of the coast, heading for Tasmania? Are they more spread out in the wet areas, unobserved by bird watchers? Or is the low count due to habitat problems in Japan where they breed, or the difficulties faced in their long migration from their breeding grounds. There are so many mysteries associated with these visitors to our area.

The Latham's Snipe Bird Count cannot be underestimated in its value to unravel some of these mysteries.

Di Johnson

At the Maher's property after the Snipe Count

Pelagic Tours

Richard Baxter has booked the usual boat for five pelagic trips for 2002. Numbers on board are limited and the trips will be operated by bookings on a first-in basis. There will be a reserves list. All of the trips, bar one, will cost \$70 (fully catered) and will depart from Swansea at 7 a.m. and head 60-70 km to sea (to the edge of the shelf or just beyond). The boat returns at 4 p.m. There will be one special trip (Oct 12) when the departure will be at 6 a.m. and the cost will be \$80. This trip will go out 90km.

The dates are:

Saturday March 23rd. This will be the first trip from Newcastle at this time of year. From other pelagic trips out of Sydney and Wollongong, this is one of the best months of the year for summer birds.

Saturday July 20th. Our only winter trip of the year.

Saturday September 14th. The second best month of the year for pelagic birds, with the winter birds still around, spring arrivals and early summer birds usually make September a great month.

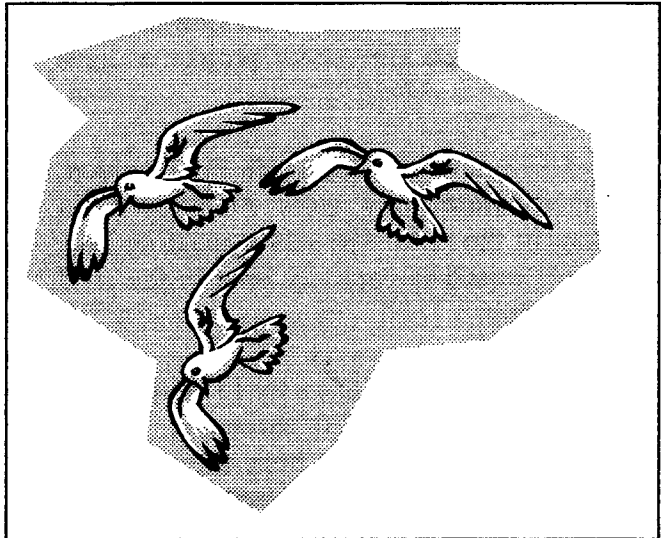
Saturday October 12th.(SPECIAL TRIP). The best month of the year for pelagic birds. This month has by far the highest number of species recorded off NSW and also by far the greatest occurrence of seabird rarities. This trip will leave at 6am and travel 90km offshore in search of rarities.

Saturday November 16th.. The last trip of 2002 and also a good month for pelagic birds.

From personal experience, I can attest that the boat is quite spacious and that the catering is very good. Most birds come very close to the boat and provide tremendous views. The boat is also quite stable and seasickness has not

been a problem for most people (in conjunction with some sort of preventative).

If you would like to put your name down for any of these pelagic trips, please contact Richard Baxter directly by e-mailing him at randrbaxter@yahoo.com



Estuary Tours

Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project will be running three estuary tours on the Lady Joy in February/March.

Likely dates are Tues. Feb 26, Sat. Mar 16 and Sat Mar 30.

Further information from Sue Rostas,
Communications Officer
KOORAGANG WETLAND
REHABILITATION PROJECT
PO Box 292 WALLSEND NSW 2287
Ph. (02) 4955 5785 Fax. (02) 4955 5791

Website

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/kooragang>

News from New Zealand

On the Edge of Extinction

A batch of young black stilts bred in captivity carry hopes for the native bird's survival. Twenty-four young black stilts (kaki) have been released at South Canterbury's Lake Tekapo as part of a joint Dept of Conservation (DoC) and Otago University project to save the bird.

Otago University zoologist, Dr Phil Seddon, said there were only eight pairs of Kaki breeding in the wild. He said evaluating how well birds raised in captivity bred in the wild was important.

"It's been a long struggle to try to bring these birds back from the brink of extinction. We are still some way off, but we hope this mutually beneficial partnership will speed up the day when kaki are restored as a breeding species throughout the rivers and wetlands of New Zealand", Dr Seddon said.

The birds have been fitted with radio transmitters and will be monitored.

"The data will be used to decide the best age, time, sites and methods for future release," Dr Seddon said.

The kaki became endangered through predation and the loss of traditional wetland habitats.

Since 1981 DoC (then the Wildlife Service) has managed the birds.

The birds to be released were raised at a DoC breeding facility in Twizel. They are all three months old and will receive extra food to help with the transition into the wild.

And more - the bad news and the good news.....

Small bird left gift for rarest species (Mrs Bones, legendary black stilt., died aged 12)

Mrs Bones lost her long battle to stay alive last week, but the legendary little bird left a precious legacy.

The 12-year-old black stilt was found dead in her aviary by DoC staff at their black stilt recovery programme in Twizel.

Mrs Bones hatched 68 chicks in her lifetime, an outstanding contribution to the survival of the world's rarest wading bird. Just seven pairs are left in the wild.

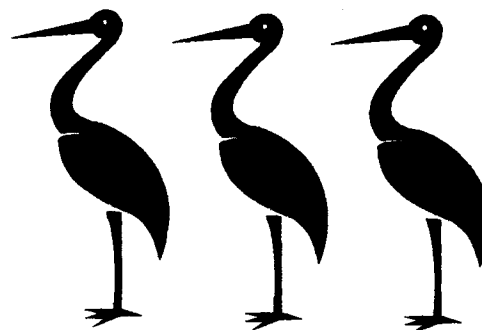
She first made news two years ago when she was involved in an ambitious surgical procedure to repair a badly broken bill.

But her bill finally let her down again, said DoC aviculturist Emily Sancha. "There really wasn't anything we could do this time. The surgery prolonged her life, but the repairs were a temporary solution.

"The operations were definitely worthwhile and we've been incredibly lucky to have her as long as we have."

All 68 of Mrs Bones' offspring have, or soon will be released into the wild as part of DoC's stilt recovery programme.

Brian Derrick, Okaihau, New Zealand



AFGRAB: the saga continues from the last newsletter...

Close to a year has passed since I reported last on the progress with the new and streamlined handbook. This message is to assure birders everywhere that AFGRAB (Abbreviated Field Guide to Real Australian Birds) is moving ahead, principally through BBEP (the Bogus Bird Elimination Project). This is despite reports of new species, which had to be investigated and discounted. (e.g. the "Blue Rock Thrush" - a Qantas marketing hoax). The continued elimination of existing bogus species has been assisted by invaluable contributions of birding ausers. See for example, the posting last year showing that the 'Lewins Rail' is the Bell Miner in bathing plumage.

Against my basic principles, I was compelled to include new entries, as some new species evidently have evolved in Australia over the past 12 months or so. Examples include, the Great Crested Grebe and the Singing Bushlark. Both of the latter appear to be establishing themselves rapidly (two further sightings since my discovery of the species in October 1998). Because such sightings forced me to expand the field guide considerably from its handy 362 entries, I had to seek other ways to render it more manageable. Two new techniques were suggested by the recent and very useful 'abbreviations' debate on Birding Aus.

First, many pages have been saved by elimination of Latin names. I'm all in favour of multiculturalism, but this is ridiculous - and an example of bogus political correctness. All the native speakers died off centuries ago. In any case (a) there are no records of Roman birders ever having come to Australia, and (b) prior to the invasion, Koori people rarely used Latin, even on very formal occasions. So these latinizations are not 'authentic' in any way. Last, note that speaking in italics - like pointing, which it resembles - is known to scare birds away.

Second, the English names for birds should also go. These are far too long, even Emu. Plus, some birds get more than one name - "Australian Spotless Crake" and "immature Dusky Moorhen" for instance. The first letter(s) of the bird's English name would provide more efficient nomenclature. How many people wouldn't instantly recognise E. for example? And think of the 19 letter (86.35%) saving effected with WCH. Some further economy could be achieved - for example 3B instead of BBB (90% saving from the English name - should the existence of that species ever be confirmed).

Quite a few currently separate species could be collapsed into one (e.g. BH - although one of these is probably mythical in any case). As well, some different species would be recognised as subspecies on the basis of this new nomenclature, and also collapsed together (e.g. BH and B2H).

This will create further economies.

True, like other names, abbreviations can sometimes be confusing. Misunderstandings about the Black Breasted Quail account for why this non-existent bird is often reported in suburbia. The solution is stricter regulation. A formal list of the new species names should be drawn up. Offensive outcomes of this process could be changed (e.g. the unintentionally snide PC could be PK). Of course, we could be a bit more liberal informally.

The first time a bird is mentioned, the official abbreviation should be used. After that, however, other abbreviations would be OK, if they are first indicated in parenthesis next to the official abbreviation. For example: 2BD(BD). When the project is complete, we will laugh about times past, when - in a hoarse whisper that scared the guano out of some wretched little sparrow - we hissed 'Look - Large Billed Scrub Wren' instead of 'Look - LBSW(LS)'. More to the point, it will cut about 15 pages from the overall length of the AFGRAB.

I am working on some other proposals, and recently achieved a major breakthrough. Most birders, trying to identify a bird, spend frustrating seconds leafing through pages of birds already seen (sometimes on several occasions!). Meanwhile it has zoomed off into the distance. Or hidden under a rock. AFGRAB will now come with all species' text and illustrations perforated for easy removal upon its observation. This will also assist with the process of removing species subsequently confirmed as extinct or bogus (e.g. Purple Crowned Lorikeet - but that's another story). It will prevent considerable confusion in the field: if the bird in question is not in the book, then either we've seen it before or it doesn't exist. Either way we can forget about it. Finally, it will assist with the twitchers' status hierarchy. One could impress fellow birders, even from a distance, by the instantly recognisable slimness of one's AFGRAB.

As a result of this latest breakthrough, and continued achievements of BBEP, copies of AFGRAB will soon consist only of a front and back cover. In contrast with heavy and cumbersome competitors (e.g. Slater, or those even more awkward bird posters e.g. 'Common Birds of the Victorian Coastline' (try using these on a windy day)) there will be no need to cart AFGRAB off on birding expeditions. After all, in the unlikely event that a new species has to be added to the guide, it would immediately be removed on the grounds that you have now seen it.

PS - I am currently trying for an ARC grant to fund this. Fat chance. They never fund anything really interesting. (I have records to prove this).

(Taken from www-personal.umich.edu/~bbowman/birds/humor/aussie.html. Author: Patrick O'Malley)

The Birds They Are A-Leavin'

For the benefit of those members unfortunately unable to be at the Club Night in December, here's a stirring number performed there by the talented team of Chris and Liz Herbert and Ann Lindsey (to the tune of "The Times They Are a-Changing", with apologies to Bob Dylan!)

*Come gather round twitchers wherever you roam
And admit that the birds around you have flown
And accept it that soon they will all be unknown
If the birds to you are worth savin'
Then we'd better start stirring if we're later to win
For the birds it is extinc....tion*

*Come senators, twitchers hear the birds call
The chainsaws are screamin' as the forest trees fall
For it's birds that get hurt if there's nothing but dirt
There are drongos outside that are raging
The bristlebirds and regents are beginning to fall
For the birds it is extinc....tion.*

*Come plovers and waders from far distant lands
In search of worms on our estuarine sands
But weeds and mangroves grow over these lands
The estuaries are rapidly changing
Please be generous if you can't lend your hand
For the birds it is extinc....tion.*

*The line must be drawn or the habitat will go
The swift parrot now will later be slow
And the shining bronze-cuckoo will fade to a glow
The bird world for us is worth saving
But the order of Aves is rapidly fading
For the birds it is extinc....tion.*

OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHT DECEMBER 2001

2001				
Sep 22	White-faced Storm Petrel	>25	Pelagic Trip Off Swansea	A. Stuart
Sep 9	Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	New Lambton	"
Sep 13	Common Koel	1	Broadmeadow	"
Sep 30	Nankeen Kestrel	1	Ash Island	"
Sep 22	Buff-banded Rail	1	"	"
Sep 1	Pale-headed Rosella	1	S.W.C.	"
Sep 30	Common Sandpiper	2	Scotts Point [Ash Island]	"
Sep 9	Striated Pardalote on	2	Gloucester	R. Thompson
Oct 8	White-winged Triller	1	Maitland Park	K. Gibson
	Peregrine Falcon	1	"	"
Oct 1-6	Glossy Black Cockatoo	4	Wyee Point	V. Moon
Oct 28	Tawny Frogmouth	1 ffy	New Lambton	A. Stuart
Nov-Dec	"	2	"	"
Nov-Dec	Satin Bowerbird nest	1	East Seaham	R. Carlton
Nov	Grey Shrike-thrush on	2	Tea Gardens	R. Thompson
Nov 6	Little Corella	12	Ellalong village	J. Meynell
Nov 1	Black-shouldered Kite nest	1	West Waratah	A. Stuart
	Fairy Martin 40 nests		"	"
Nov 30	Tawny Frogmouth	2+2dy	Oyster Cove	M. Blanch
Nov 29	Little Penguin	2	Port Stephen	D. Jenkin
Nov	Satin Bowerbird	1+ 1fy	Bolwarra	H. Tarrant
	Blue-face Honeyeater	2 ffy	"	"
Nov 30	Green Catbird	3	Hilldale [32.30.10/151.37.47]	"
Nov 15	Common Koel	5	"	"
Nov 24	Painted Honeyeater	2	Martindale	"
Nov 24	Black Falcon	1	Jones Reserve Rd. Bureen	"
Dec 2	Stubble Quail	8-12	Flat Rd. Bolwarra	"
Dec 3-5	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	Bolwarra	"
Dec 8	"	2	Melville Ford	"
Dec 11	Banded Lapwing	15	Flat Rd. Bolwarra	"
Dec 12	Square-tailed Kite	1	Thornton	"
Dec	Tawny Frogmouth	4	Newcastle University	"
Dec 2	Spotted Pardalote feeding imm Shining Bronze-cuckoo	2	Widden Valley	"
	Leaden Flycatcher feeding imm Pallid Cuckoo	2	"	"
	Spotted Harrier	1	Yarrawa	"
Dec 10	Musk Lorikeet	9	Dungg	D. Jenkin
Dec 1	Sooty Oystercatcher	11	Newcastle Ocean Baths	M. Blanch
Dec 9	Tawny Frogmouth	1+ 1dy	Wyee Point	V. Moon
Dec	Blue-faced Honeyeater	2+4imm	Elernmore Vale	B. Landenberger
Dec 16	Turquoise Parrot	2	Middle Camp M.L.N.P.	S. Anyon-Smith
	White-winged Triller nesting	1	"	"
	Rose-crowned Fruit Dove	2	Seal Rocks	"
	Regent Bowerbird	10	"	"
	Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	"	"
Dec 1	Painted Honeyeater Nest	2	Martindale	M. Newman
Dec 9	" Nest	2	"	P. Freeman
Dec 1	Singing Bushlark	2	Doyle's Creek	M. Newman
Dec 9	Grey-crowned Babbler ny	4	Black Hill	P. & M. McLauchlan

Dec 5	Arctic Jaeger	1	Marks Point	J.Cockerill
Dec 3	Pied Oystercatcher	11	Stockton Bight	L.Crawford
Dec 2	Spotted Harrier	1	Martindale	"
Dec 2	Pacific Baza	2	Toronto west	"
Dec 7	Pectoral Sandpiper	1	Morpeth STW	A.Lindsey
Dec 10	Brown Thornbill	1	Shortland [garden]	"
Dec 7	Australian King Parrot	2 + 1fy	New Lambton	A.Stuart
Dec 2	Masked Lapwing	33	Scotts Point [Ash Island]	"
	Pacific Golden Plover	48	Ash Island	"
	Ruddy Turnstone	1	"	"
Dec 1	Magnie Goose	4	Cundletown [off old Hwy]	B.Langdown
2002				
Jan	Buff Banded Rail	2 + 2dy	Bush Haven [Italia Rd.]	J.Musicka
	Pacific Baza	2 on	"	"
	White-throated Nightjar	1	"	"

Yuerlabah track - Glenrock

20th January 2002

It was a bright sunny morning (anyone remember them?) when 14 of us gathered at the start of the Yuerlabah track. The cicadas were delighted with the weather and telling us all about it. Despite their noise, some of our number managed to hear a cicada bird that was no doubt feasting on the insects for which it is named. And who could miss the sounds of the sulphur crested cockatoos and whip birds?

As we moved along the track, the bell miners tinkled pleasantly, white browed scrub wrens scuttled in and out of the undergrowth and rufous fantails whizzed past. A sacred kingfisher was more cooperative – perched on a branch in the open so we could admire his colours. Further on we found variegated and superb blue wren, red browed finch and silver eye. Lewin honeyeater, brown gerygone and black faced cuckoo-shrike made use of a patch of rain forest.

After a scramble down the slope, we found some black and pied cormorants at the lagoon. The seabirds were less cooperative staying too far out to allow identification. Besides, it was too warm for most of us, so we headed into the deeper shade of the Yuerlabah track to find a shady spot for morning tea – well earned after the climb up the stairs.

For me the highlight of the day was the chance to compare the female golden and rufous whistler almost in the same tree. The brown streaks on the underbody of the rufous whistler were clear to see. The males, of course, were glorious. And then there was the black faced monarch showing off his rufous belly, black face and grey back and wings. Even though the satin bowerbird remained elusive, we found 41 birds for the morning.

Jenny Powers

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	Activity	Time and Place	Contact
Saturday 16 February	Hunter Wader Survey	11.30 am. Various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569 You must ring to confirm
Sunday 17 February	Pelagic Trip	7.00 am. Nelson Bay	Richard Baxter 4954 0212 Randrbaxter@yahoo.com
Saturday 23 February	Atlassing	To be advised	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008
Sunday 24 February	Barrington House/Allyn River	8.00 am. Parking area for Barrington House	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Sunday 3 March	Stockton Sand Spit	9.00 am Clean-up Australia Day	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Tuesday 5 March	Midweek outing: Point Wolstoncroft	7.30 am End Kanangra Dr, Gwandalan	Diane Rogers 4976 1686
Wednesday 13 March	Club Night	7.30 pm. Shortland Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Phil Hansbro – Birds of the Antarctic Islands
Saturday 16 March	Hunter Wader Survey	10.30 am. Various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569 You must ring to confirm
Saturday 23 March	Atlassing	To be advised	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008
Saturday 23 March	Pelagic Trip	7.00 am. Swansea wharf near RSL Club, Chalmers St, Swansea	Richard Baxter 4954 0212 Randrbaxter@yahoo.com
Sunday 24 March	Kooragang Island	7.00 am. Car park at Stockton Sand Spit	Alan Stuart 4952 8569
Easter – Friday 29 March to Monday 1 April	Widden Valley Camp	Widden Brook (near Table Bay Creek). Our usual camp site is not available. HBOC Camp Fee plus \$5/car/night.	Liz Herbert 4959 3663
Tuesday 2 April	Midweek outing: Morpeth	8.00 am Cnr. Swan St/Bridge, Morpeth	Max Blanch 4961 1655
Wednesday 10 April	Club Night	7.30 pm. Shortland Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Ann Lindsey – Galapagos Islands
Saturday 13 April	Hunter Wader Survey	8.30 am. Various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569 You must ring to confirm
Saturday 20 April	Atlassing	To be advised	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008
Sunday 21 April	Millfield (private property)	8.00 am McDonalds car park, Cessnock	Leader: Alan Stuart 4952 8569 Host: Margaret & John Corcoran
ANZAC Day plus weekend Thursday 25 April – Sunday 28 April	Woko National Park Camp (North of Gloucester)	Any time from 25 April. HBOC Camp Fee plus NPWS fee if collected.	Contact: Tom Clarke 4951 3872