

# NEWSLETTER

## Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

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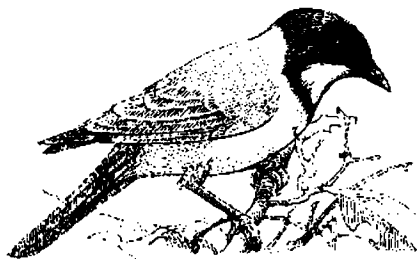
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President: Liz Crawford

Secretary: Tom Clarke

Newsletter Editor: Peter Phillips



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*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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### IN THIS EDITION:

- Presidents Column
- Bouquets for Wader Counters
- News from The Ongoing Atlas
- Field Outings and Club Night Reports.
- Observations
- Coming Events
- Birdwatching in Vietnam & Cambodia  
- and lots of interesting little bits

Newsletter articles are always welcome, however, contributors should try to confine themselves to 1000 words or less.

Next Newsletter Deadline is 1 August 2004

Newsletter contact details.

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### Membership Fees

HBOC Annual Membership fees are \$22 Family or Single and \$3 for Juniors. Fees for 2004 are due now.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN.

This year's Bird Australia Members Day and AGM were held at Newcastle University on 29 May, giving Hunter Bird Observers Club an opportunity to raise awareness of the issues affecting waders in the Hunter Estuary and to highlight the diversity of bird species in our region.

Peggy Svoboda, manager of the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project, gave the keynote address, describing the changes that have taken place to natural areas in the Hunter Estuary and the challenges of rehabilitation.

Liz Crawford talked about the status of waders in the Estuary, both past and present illustrating the decline in numbers of migratory waders since the 1970s.

Eastern Curlews are still present in internationally significant numbers in the Hunter Estuary with a maximum count of 763 in the last 5 years

Red-necked Avocets are also present in internationally significant numbers, with a maximum count of 5000 in the past 12 months.

Five other species of migratory waders are present in nationally significant numbers ( Bar tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Golden Plover).

Detailed monitoring confirms the ongoing importance of Kooragang Dykes and Stockton Sandspit as roost sites for these birds.

Chris Herbert talked about the rehabilitation of Stockton Sandspit, and the remarkable response of the waders to the removal; of fringing mangroves which had blocked their line of sight to the estuary and blocked their view of potential aerial predators. Red-necked Avocets, Eastern Curlew, godwits and smaller sandpipers have all flocked to the Sandspit since its rehabilitation.

Aimee Hutchinson talked about the Birds Australia study of waders on Ash Island, which showed the importance of shallow wetlands in saltmarsh.

Phil Hansboro talked about the wide variety and abundance of pelagic birds seen from the Swansea pelagic trips. Because of these observations, the status of many species previously considered rare for the Hunter Region has been changed. Phil illustrated his talk with magic photos of seabirds in flight.

Other speakers included Judy Harrington from the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, who illustrated the transformation of industrial wastelands into parks and wetlands; and Holly Parsons who described radio-tracking Superb Fairy Wrens in urban areas. Three speakers from Birds Australia – Mike Weston, Jim Downey and Peter Higgins – respectively talked about the Status of Australian Birds Report, the projects being undertaken by Birds Australia and the production of the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. (HANZAB)

*(After the symposium and AGM, Chris Herbert and Allan Morris of Birds Australia were interviewed on Radio Nation. A link to this excellent interview is <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/science/earth/stories/1116623.htm> )*

Early in June, the Green Diversity Corridor will be displayed at Parliament House in Sydney with HBOC drawing attention to the value of diverse habitats for birds. The Corridor concept is supported by the Coalition of Green Groups - of which HBOC is a member. The display seeks to raise awareness of the environmental attributes of the Hunter Estuary, in contrast to the usual push for industrial development of the area. As the Club's contribution to the displays at Parliament House, Chris Herbert has prepared a poster depicting the importance of the Green Corridor as it relates to Lower Hunter birdlife.

Meanwhile, happy birding. Liz Crawford

## Progress of The Ongoing Atlas

By Ann Lindsey

The Ongoing Atlas is alive and well and it is encouraging to see that lots of surveys are still being submitted. Atlassing is an exciting, useful way of keeping track of bird populations especially in view of the apparently endless threats to habitat. It is important to maintain momentum, so please keep Atlassing and sending in the forms. All surveys are important and will provide useful data.

### Atlas data and the Painted Snipe Project

When the Painted Snipe Project began in 2001, one of the first and most important tasks was to create a database containing all records. The Birds Australia Atlas Project was the obvious port of call, as it contains data on a national scale from three periods.

The Historical Atlas was put together during the First Atlas period and contains over 112,000 surveys collected since 1629 until the start of the First Atlas in 1977. These data have been derived from a variety of sources such as published literature, observers' notebooks and museum specimens.

The First Atlas period collected data made up of over 89,000 surveys between 1977 and 1981, while the New and Ongoing Atlases contain over 310,000 surveys collected since 1998. The Historical Atlas comprises 317 records of Painted Snipe, dating back to the first recorded occurrence in the Upper Hunter Valley from 1837.

The First Atlas contains 132 records, while the New Atlas has 125 records. The information was checked and plotted on maps. Comparing the data collected from 1998 with the earlier data shows a paucity of records from the former stronghold in the Murray-Darling Basin, particularly the Riverina, and indicates that the species may be getting rarer. Further analysis of the timing of the sightings reveals that very little is known about their winter distribution.

All the data collected have been vital in revealing just how rare and seldom observed Painted Snipe are. The listing of the Painted Snipe in 2002 under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act as Vulnerable was due in no small part to our knowledge of the species derived from the Atlas databases.

*(Abbreviated information from "Volunteer", Newsletter of the Threatened Bird Network and Atlas of Australian Birds March, 2004).*

New atlasers are always welcome. Please contact Grant Brosie 4933 4725 over the coming months.

### AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM EXHIBITION

#### Special Viewing of "John Gould Inc"

The Australian Museum is holding a free viewing of its new exhibition *John Gould Inc.* for member of bird organisations including HBOC. The exhibition celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of John Gould (1804-1881) and explores the scientific, artistic and commercial activities of the legendary "bird man". *John Gould Inc* also reveals the role of specimen collectors and artists employed by Gould to make the almost 3,000 hand-coloured plates published in more than 40 folio volumes.

Members of the exhibition tea, Samantha Fenton, Leone Lemmer, Matthew Stephens Laina De Winne and the Museum's ornithologist, Walter Boles, will be on hand to answer visitor's questions.

The special viewing is on Wednesday 30 June 6pm to 8pm, Australian Museum, 6, College Street, Sydney (via William Street entrance)

RSVP ( for the special viewing) to Matthew Stephens on 02 9320 6185. For information about the exhibition contact Matthew or visit the *John Gould Inc* website at <http://amonline.net.au/exhibitions/gould/>

## **BOUQUETS FOR WADER COUNTERS**

**By Chris Herbert**

After five continuous years of monthly wader monitoring in the Hunter Estuary we are now seeing the benefits. HBOC is now recognized as an authority on the status of migratory waders in this area. We are being invited to attend and give presentations at various management meetings and conferences.

For instance - HBOC with other green groups, was recently invited by the Federal member for the Hunter, Sharon Grierson, to brief the Shadow Minister for the Environment, Kelvin Thompson, on the "Green Corridor" concept. At this meeting Ann Lindsey was delighted that she could provide accurate data and answer all the questions that Kelvin wanted answers for (it later turned out that Kelvin is an avid birdwatcher with over 500 spp on his list!).

HBOC now plays an integral part in habitat restoration in conjunction with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project.

All those club members who have taken part and continue to monitor waders each month on our regular counts should be heartily congratulated for their dedicated efforts. Well over 50 club members have gained valuable expertise at wader identification and counting techniques.

It is great to see that the most regular people have developed an ownership of the areas that they count and look forward to the arrival of survey day each month. Everyone understands the value of the effort they put into this activity and of course enjoys each survey morning.

We now have some of the most detailed and continuous wader records along the NSW coast and it is vitally important to keep on collecting this data to support future planning. One Honours and two PhD students are now studying various aspects of wader use in the estuary. These studies and rehabilitation work by NPWS and KWRP have, to some extent, been prompted by HBOC's activities.

## **NEW MEMBERS**

The Hunter Bird Observers Club welcomes the following people as new members. We know you will enjoy your time with us and look forward to seeing you often at Club Nights and on Outings. See you at New Members Day?

Micky Just of Islington  
Krystyna Kostiw of Wangi Wangi  
Bryan Havenhand of Newcastle  
Jennifer Spencer of North Sydney  
Helen and David Litchfield of Jewells

At last count there were 252 members of the Club of which 72.6% were financial. If you are one of the 27.4% who have not yet found your cheque book, please make Rowley a very happy Treasurer by paying.

### **Bird Flu Update**

Wild birds so far don't seem to be responsible for spreading bird flu through east Asia. That's the conclusion of Japanese authorities, who have found bird flu in dead crows close to two chicken farms near Kyoto at which flu has broken out recently. They say the crows died of the disease too soon to have spread it. "once a crow contracts flu, it dies quickly" a ministry officials told journalists.

Several governments in east Asia had claimed that wild birds were to blame for spreading the bird flu that has been ravaging the region. This could have led to pressure for culling wild birds, but evidence has not backed up the idea. The virus has not been found in ducks which normally carry bird flu but also die quickly of the strain causing Asia's outbreak.

Direct transmission between chicken farms is a much more likely route. Andre Farrar of the UK's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds adds that the pattern of transmission so far does not match the migration routes of any wild birds.

*Originally published in New Scientist No 2438  
13 March 2004 p14-15.*

**Black-necked Storks – a talk by Greg Clancy to HBOC, Clubnight: April 2004**

Previously referred to as Jabiru, Black-necked Storks are the only Stork in Australia. The name "Jabiru" belongs to a South American bird that is a different species to our Stork. Black-necked Storks range from India through South-east Asia to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Australia. Birds in NSW are at the extreme southern limit of their range.

Greg Clancy is currently studying the behaviour, breeding and feeding ecology of Black-necked Storks in NSW, for a PhD through the University of New England. Little is known about the general biology of this beautiful black and white bird, which stands about 1.4 metres high on bright red legs. Greg is keen to locate nest sites so that he can observe the birds' behaviour in detail. After twelve months' work, Greg has found that the Storks eat eels, bass, frogs, insects, tortoises, and other birds.

Unlike previous researchers, who concluded that the Storks were declining in NSW, Greg thinks they are maintaining a viable presence, and indeed inhabit home ranges of approximately 10 kilometres radius. Although large, the birds are cryptic in the swampy environments where they like to forage, and often spend a lot of time loafing on their haunches, completely invisible to the casual observer. They also sometimes feed at night, when most birdwatchers are asleep!

Nests are simple platforms composed of sticks, often on top of foliage in trees adjacent to swamps. They are surprisingly well camouflaged and are best detected by watching the flight patterns of adult birds.

Greg has managed to place coloured bands on the upper legs of two nestlings and is hoping that observers will report on the whereabouts of these birds in the future. Juvenile Black-necked Storks have brown necks and dull legs and, if circling high up on thermals, appear to have white bullseyes in their black and white wings.

With two more years of study to go, Greg is keen to follow up any observations. Please complete the proforma provided in the newsletter and send details of any sightings to Greg.

**THE WETLAND CENTRE PROGRAM**

The Wetland Centre continues to offer a range of activities and events suitable for all ages. Dip Netting and Canoeing are year round activities and CaffJacana offers delicious meals in a peaceful setting. Admission is just \$5 per adult, \$2.50 for children, \$3 concession and \$9 for a family.

In the forthcoming School holidays there are fully supervised children's activities for \$15 per child (while you go birdwatching.)

Wetland Wiggles  
(children 5-9 years)

Join our leader for games, arts and crafts dip netting and adventure walks.

Tuesdays and Wednesdays July 6,7,13,14

Wet & Wild  
(children 10-15 years)

Experience this fun canoeing adventure  
9am – 1pm Thursdays July 8, 15.

Arts Alive  
(children all ages)  
9.am – 1pm Fridays July 9, 16.

Bookings are essential for this program. or more information and bookings call 02 4951 6466.

**MAKING YOUR HOUSE BIRD SAFE**

Let your windows get a bit dirty so they are not so reflective

Place pot plants in front of your external window surface

Hang mobiles, wind chimes or solid shapes such as raptor silhouettes in front of windows

Position attractants such as bird baths and bird attracting plants within half a metre of windows so that when birds leave they have not built up enough momentum to injure themselves

Place shade cloth around chain link fences such as tennis courts

Hang strips of material such as ribbons along link fences

*The Murrumbidgee Naturalist March 2004*

## **Field Outing: Munmorah SRA- 18<sup>th</sup> April**

**By Grant Brosie**

I always enjoy visiting a new birding area. It's even better if that area produces a new bird for my slowly building life list.

Nine keen birders gathered in the crisp morning air at the northern entrance to the Munmorah SRA. Our leaders were Don and Val Moon : their mission, to find Nick Livanos and I a Tawny-crowned Honeyeater. Did they succeed? Definitely.

Our second stop for the morning brought us to a beautiful patch of coastal heath which was literally alive with honeyeaters. 100's of Yellow-faced everywhere with New Holland in lesser numbers. Little Wattlebirds were busy chasing everything in sight, spinebills were feeding on the flowering ground covers, a few White-cheeks were spotted and the highlight of the day five Tawny-crowns calling their heads off. What a wonderful sight it was to watch them perched on top some dead branches through the scope in the morning sunlight. If only every tick could be this easy.

Honeyeaters weren't the only good birds to be seen at this spot. A male Southern Emu-wren made a brief appearance, three Sooty Oystercatchers were feeding on the rocks below the cliff, and the surprise of the day were the three Double-barred Finches feeding just metres in front of us on the track. Not exactly a coastal heath species we thought.

We made a few more stops which whilst they didn't produce that many birds were still very enjoyable, especially the small patch of rainforest. Who would of thought the vegetation would change so much in such a small area.

Our last stop before lunch was to another area of heath similar to before. Lots more honeyeaters including Little Wattlebird feeding a dependant young, and a Bar-shouldered Dove which flushed from the dense undergrowth.

A good day was had by all with a good list of 'quality' birds being seen.

Definitely a place to revisit.

### **CORVIDS**

#### **Rivalling Primates in their ability to deceive**

Two scientists at the Konrad Lorenz Research Station in Grunau Austria wanted to study how ravens ( *Corvus coirax*) learn about finding food from each other

They trained four adolescent captive-bred ravens to take the lids off small containers to get at cubes of cheese inside. The researchers then put the cheese in containers of a certain colour while leaving containers of another colour empty.

The birds –two male and two female – were then left to figure out which contained the food,

One raven, a subordinate male named Hugin was particularly adept. In the first 18 days her was first to find the treat-filled containers 82% of the time. However, as soon as he found it, the other male Munin, came over, chased him away and snatched whatever food remained.

But Hugin came up with a way to deceive his rival. After finding a container with food and being approached by Munin, he set off to a bunch of empty containers and hung about prying lids off empties, until, inevitably, Munin came over for a look. At this point Hugin raced back to the correctly coloured containers and gobbled up what he could find. This is the first case of a bird actively misleading a member of its own species say the researchers.

Full article in New Scientist No 2444 24 April 2004p 19. This summary from Queensland Ornithological Society Newsletter Volume 35 Number 5 p16.

## **Gloucester Tops Atlas Day- 22<sup>nd</sup>, May**

**By Grant Brosie**

This was my first atlas day as leader and I don't think it could have been more successful. Not only were there plenty of good birds seen but everyone got a tick or two. Even the drive up produced some good sightings with White-headed Pigeon, White-necked Heron, Torresian Crow and Azure Kingfisher being seen.

As we started our ascent up the mountain we saw Large-billed and Yellow-throated Scrubwren, three Wonga Pigeon and quite a few Eastern Yellow Robins.

Our first planned stop was the well-known Kerripit Rd site. One of our first sightings were a couple of Crescent Honeyeaters calling loudly from the thick vegetation. Further along, heaps of Brown and Striated Thornbills, White-throated Treecreeper, White-browed Scrubwren and Eastern Spinebill were observed in a mixed feeding flock. Brown Cuckoo-doves were also present.

After morning tea we went to Gloucester Falls which was very quiet (the birds of course not the falls), but we did get more Crescents, as well as Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo and Variegated Fairy-wren.

Having missed Rufous Scrub-bird and other sought after species we decided to go back to Kerripit Rd and we were glad we did. As we were eating lunch several Red-browed Treecreepers moved through allowing us excellent views.

Then after hearing a different call we went on a wild goose chase through the scrub until we pinned it down to a small thicket. We stood there for ages while it called and rustled around until it went quiet. It had gone, how it got past us we don't know. Probably a scrub-bird but we'll never know.

By this time it was getting late so we decided to call it quits. We were making our way back when a stocky bird flew up into a banksia next to the car.

A male Olive Whistler (tick).

The scene that followed was comical to say the least. The bird flew into a large thicket, which saw Robert McDonald and I pushing our way through, with Nick Livanos staying on the outside just in case it flushed. Unfortunately it got away but not before Rob and I got very good close views, bad luck Nick.

Our last good bird for the day were five Bassian Thrush feeding on a patch of lawn. 54+ species were seen for the day with everyone getting a tick. Can't wait for the Wybong atlas day in June.

## **OTHER PROGRAM NEWS IN BRIEF**

March 20 Atlassing at Tomaree.  
Lots of Varied Sittella.

March 21. Kooragang Island. 12 members  
Highlights: Osprey and Golden Plover.

April 6 Midweek to Tarro/Woodberry. 22 birdos.  
Great day with 100s of Ibis, plenty of breeding Darter and displaying Pied Cormorant at NWR.

Easter Camp Borah TSR  
36 campers, 108 species including Regent Honeyeater, Diamond Firetail, Turquoise Parrot

Anzac Day weekend Apple Tree Flat  
25 campers plus 5 day trippers seeing 94 species

## New Publication by HBOC

Recently, the Committee decided to investigate whether HBOC could start producing a journal focussed on documenting the birdlife of the Hunter Region. A sub-committee was formed to consider the options in detail. The result is that we are going to do it!

Later this year we will publish issue #1 of the new journal. It has the working title of "Hunter Region Birdlife" but we would like to find a snappier name for it (see below). Liz Huxtable has very generously volunteered to be the editor. Our target will be a production of ~100 pages containing a combination of detailed articles about some aspect of the Hunter's avifauna (for example, annotated bird lists for some particular area) and "snippets" which could be anything from a paragraph to a page or so in length and which describe some interesting behavioural observation or such like.

All financial Club members will receive a free copy of issue #1, and we will encourage your feedback about it so that we can decide on the approach for the subsequent issues.

Below is a statement of the Editorial Philosophy for this new endeavour by the Club. We hope you will find it an interesting and stimulating addition to your reading list. Also, that you will submit material for it – the intention is that Hunter Region Birdlife\* will be the way that your knowledge can be captured for all time. In the years to come, the journal will be a reference point to what things were like for us now.

If you have an article or snippet in mind for the inaugural issue, please contact Liz Huxtable as soon as possible. Her phone number is 4954 2570 and her e-mail address is [chaz.liz@hunterlink.net.au](mailto:chaz.liz@hunterlink.net.au)

### Editorial Philosophy for Hunter Region Birdlife\*

Hunter Region Birdlife\* is a journal dedicated to the Hunter Region. It provides an opportunity to record studies which are of regional rather than national or international significance. It aims to compile in one place information on the

ornithology of the Hunter Region for the benefit of people with a deep interest in the birds of the area. The Journal provides an essential resource for those involved in the conservation and management of the diverse birdlife of the region.

The Journal accepts a wide range of material including the analysis of the results of bird monitoring studies and annotated species lists of comprehensive studies of important bird areas and habitats. In addition it encourages short notes on unusual bird behaviour. Manuscripts are subject to peer review. The Editorial team reserves the right to either reject manuscripts or direct them to a more appropriate journal.

Hunter Region Birdlife\* is published by the Hunter Bird Observers Club (HBOC) on a regular basis determined by the availability of material rather than at a fixed frequency.

By publishing Hunter Region Birdlife\*, HBOC provides feedback on the outcomes of projects in which its members participate. It also aims to increase its members' curiosity in what birds do and encourage them to place on record their unique observations and insights through this journal.

### **Alan Stuart & Mike Newman for Publications Sub-committee**

(\*new name wanted)

#### **Help Wanted**

We welcome suggestions for a name for the new journal. One that has already been put forward is *The Whistler*, this being a name that links with the club's logo plus it sounds good. But there might be a better idea! Please submit suggestions to Alan or Mike before the end of July. There will be a small prize if your suggestion gets up.

We also need help to design the front cover for the journal. Some of you have no doubt have talents (either amateur or professional) in the field of graphic design. We would love to hear from you and work with you on this. There might or might not be a prize for this one – but think of the glory (lasting into perpetuity).



## **Birdwatching in Cambodia and Vietnam**

*by Lorna Mee*

Vietnam is a land of water and paddy fields and except for a few little egrets and raptors very few birds were sighted, except for a few small birds in Cuc Phuong National Park. However the Peking Duck is alive and well in the ponds and fields of Vietnam.

Cambodia is a different story. After arriving in Siem Reap we visited the extensive ruins and temples such as Angkor Wat built in the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century. Most of these ruins have moats around them with grebes and egrets swimming in them.

We then travelled to the Tonle Sap Lake. This is a huge freshwater lake, which quadruples in size after the spring thaw. When the Mekong River floods, this causes its tributary the Tonle Sap River to flow back upstream depositing silt and nutrients into the lake. The nutrients provide food for fish, which in turn provides food for water birds and the fishing villages, which dot the shores of the lake.

We travelled by motorboat across the northern tip of the lake to a bird sanctuary. Although Cambodia is very, very poor they still manage to have conservation programs, many of which are funded by overseas concerns. In the lake there is extensive commercial fishing. For some village fishermen this is their only source of food and income. Many villages "float" on the lake.

A very knowledgeable guide was employed for the day and we managed to see 23 different species of birds: Whiskered tern, milky stork, open billed stork, blue swamp hen, barn swallow, cattle egret, lesser adjutant stork, greater adjutant, painted stork, bee eater, greater cormorant, oriental dark, java pond heron, glossy ibis, Brahminy kite, brown headed gull, pied kingfisher, spot billed pelican, little cormorant, grey heron, spangled drongo, common kingfisher, sparrow tailed drongo, white crested, greater racket thrush but no Sarus crane.

On our way up the river by speedboat to Battambang we spotted many white egrets, java

pond herons, lots of barn swallows, and a few pied and blue kingfishers. In other parts of the country we saw Indian mynas, palm swifts and asian fairy blue bird and spotted doves. We also visited Bokor National Park where we saw a hornbill, coucal, raptors and mynas and we often heard the koel and the leaf warbler.

Near Sihanoukville we visited Ream National Park and took a boat trip up the Sap Prektouk river before we went for a walk to the beach. Along the river we saw more lesser adjutants, lots of greater egrets, Brahminy kites, little heron, common sandpipers on the beach, 20 caspian tern on a small sandbar. On the return trip the tide was down and on the mudflats there were waders, more lesser adjutants and monkeys. I may have seen the yellow wagtail but it was not a positive sighting.

We travelled with a small Cambodian Travel Company called Carpe Diem. They organise small group tours, are into eco-tourism and can organise tours to suit the interests of a group. As our trip was not specifically a birding expedition many opportunities to see birds were missed. Cambodia has a definite wet and dry season similar to the Northern Territory so trips could be organised to suit the weather conditions.

### **Shorebirds of Port Stephens**

The Club has just recently produced a detailed report about the shorebirds of Port Stephens, considering both recent and historical perspectives. This includes the results of the February 2004 comprehensive survey of Port Stephens by HBOC, when over 2000 waders (14 species) were recorded and also nearly 2500 other waterbirds. The results of over 4 years of monthly surveys at Swan Bay are also described, plus records from a large number of other sources. The report clearly shows the importance of Port Stephens for some species of migratory shorebird ( such as Eastern Curlew) and also for some of the Australian resident waders ) for example Pied Oystercatcher) A limited number of copies of the 65 page report have been printed; these are available at a cost of \$20 each by contacting Alan Stuart or Tom Clarke.

## **NATIVE WILDLIFE**

### **To feed or not to Feed?**

*Excerpt from Cry of the Curlew written and published by Tania Schuett. Tania has been a Magnetic Island (Qld) native bird carer since 1980. Excerpt published in The Bird Observer April 2004 edition.*

Feeding wildlife is tempting but should be avoided except in times of drought or flood when there are food shortages. It is better to plant native vegetation which provides a natural food supply and essential shelter, safety and nesting sites. Mulched gardens and compost heaps are also recommended for insect-eating birds which take care of your garden pests in a natural way.

Artificial feeding can be damaging to animal health and may alter natural behaviour. Usually, the food we give does not have the nutritional balance found in the wild. This may cause serious health problems such as obesity, nutritional deficiency diseases, viral or bacterial infections and reduced breeding success.

Most animals occupy their time looking for food so when it is presented to them regularly there is little else for them to do.

If you do choose to feed, **never give bread to any wildlife**. You must provide a balanced diet. Make certain the food is fresh and dishes are always clean. Give only small quantities and feed only once a day. Wildlife fed regularly can become very dependent and it is important not to suddenly stop feeding.

If you are to be away from home, you must arrange for someone else to do the feeding for you, even on Xmas Day.

Safety from humans, pets and feral animals is vital where food and water are provided for wildlife. Wildlife cannot tell the difference between friendly and hostile dogs and cats.

Owners have a responsibility for the actions of their pets which should be kept under control at all times and not allowed to have contact with wildlife.

Insect-eating birds naturally take care of your garden pests. Do not spray insecticides unless they are pyrethrum –based or non-toxic natural sprays, such as water-soap-garlic-chilli combinations. Wildlife which eats sprayed insects, berries flowers etc, suffer horrendously and cannot be saved.

#### **Do not feed crows(ravens) and currawongs.**

Do not encourage these birds by leaving dog and cat food outside. They will hunt and kill all smaller birds in your area. They will breed to large numbers and become a serious nuisance.

Kookaburras, butcherbirds and Spangled Drongos are also known to hunt and kill smaller birds.

Do not feed these unsuitable foods to any wildlife: bread, dairy products, fatty foods and food prepared for humans. These foods will cause incurable nutritional deficiency diseases.

Orphaned and injured wildlife have different nutritional needs, so supplementary diets are not recommended for use by wildlife carers.

Do not feed wildlife at restaurants, snack bars and barbeques. Begging wildlife become a nuisance and are often chased and hurt.

Feeding wildlife is not allowed in some National Parks.

## Coming Events

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

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
Saturday – Monday June 12-14	Camp	White Box Camp Site Goulburn River NP.	Contact Allan Stuart 49528569
Sunday 13 June	Singleton Group Outing	<b>This outing has been cancelled in favour of the camp at White Box.</b>	Diane Lamb 02 6574 5205
Sunday June 20	Wetlands Day Field Outing & New Members BBQ	9.00am The Wetlands Centre Entry fees apply	Contact Alan Stuart 4952 8569
Saturday June 26	Atlassing –Wybong area	6.30am Maitland Train Station car park	Contacts: Nick Livanos 4354 5739 Grant Brosie 4933 4725
Tuesday July 6	Mid week Outing Minmi/Pambalong Lagoon Reserve	8.00am Minmi Cemetery	Leader Charles Mann 4958 1326
Sunday July 11	Singleton Group Outing Lostock Dam.	TBA	Contact Diane Lamb 02 6574 5205
<b>Wednesday July 14</b>	<b>CLUB MEETING</b>	<b>7.30pm The Wetlands Centre</b>	<b>Speaker Phil Hansboro Voyage down the Amazon</b>
Saturday July 17	Hunter Wader Survey	8.30am Various locations as directed.	TBA <b>You must ring to confirm</b>
Sunday July 25	Field Outing Taronga Park Zoo	9.00am Top Car Park	Contact: Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Saturday-Sunday July 31 & August 1	Regent Honeyeater & Swift Parrot Survey	Various locations by arrangement	Coordinator Steve Roderick 49304800
Tuesday August 3	Midweek Outing Toronto Wetlands	8.00am Paddock off Cook St Toronto just before the bridge.	Leader Keith Woods 4963 3070
<b>Wednesday August 11</b>	<b>CLUB MEETING</b>	<b>The Wetland Centre 7.30pm</b>	<b>Guest Speaker TBA</b>
Saturday August 14	Hunter Wader Survey	Various Locations as Directed	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 <b>You must ring to confirm</b>
Sunday August 22	Field Outing Cungewai	8.00am Cessnock MacDonalds car park	Contact: Alan Stuart 4952 8569

**BLACK-NECKED STORK OBSERVATION PROFORMA**

**DATE:** .....

**LOCATION:** .....  
.....

**LAT/LONG OR GRID REFERENCES (IF KNOWN):**  
.....

**NUMBER OF BIRDS:** .....

**AGE:** (adults are black and white with red legs, immatures with brown markings on white areas and brown legs, juveniles with brown down on head and neck)  
.....  
.....

**SEX:** (adult females have yellow eyes, males dark brown)  
.....

**BEHAVIOUR:** (feeding, standing, squatting)  
.....  
.....

**OTHER DETAILS:** .....

.....

**OBSERVER DETAILS: name:** .....

**address:** .....

**phone:** .....

**email:** .....

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO: GREG CLANCY

PO BOX 63  
COUTTS CROSSING  
Phone: 66493153  
Email: gclancy@tpg.com.au

## OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHTS APR/MAY 2004.

<b>2003</b>				
Dec 10	Grey Goshawk	1+n2y	Mt. Vincent [Wallis Creek]	P.Fitzsimons
<b>2004</b>				
Feb 28	Hooded Robin	1	Martindale [Medhurst Bridge]	H.Tarrant
Feb 17	Latham's Snipe	1	Bedminster Swamp	M.Maddock
	Straw-necked Ibis	60	"	"
	Straw-necked Ibis	1,000+	Irrawang Swamp	"
Feb 12	Australian Brush Turkey	3	Mt. Vincent [Bow Wow Creek]	P.Fitzsimons
Feb 17	Crested Shrike-tit	1	"	"
Feb 26/27	Powerful Owl	1	Carey Bay	L. & C. Herbert
Feb 24	Black-faced Monarch	1imm	"	"
	Australasian Shoveler	8	"	"
Feb 22	Australian Brush Turkey	2	Rankin Park [garden]	K. & J. Imrie
Feb/Mar	Long-billed Corella	Up to 104	Dun's Creek	P.Baird
Mar 20	Black Falcon	2	Ash Island	F.Van Gessel
Mar 7	Great Crested Grebe	<u>On nest</u>	Walka Water Works	G.Brosie
	Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	"	"
Mar 12	Blue-faced Honeyeater	3	East Maitland	"
Mar 18	Litle Lorikeet	15	"	"
Mar 19	Australasian Shoveler	B	Morpeth	"
Mar 27	Double-barred Finch	2	East Maitland	"
Mar 28	Bar-shouldered Dove	2	Pambalong N.R.	"
	Mangrove Gerygone	3	Stockton Sandspit	"
Mar 29	Square-tailed Kite	1	East Maitland	"
Mar 13	Black Kite	1	Tarro	R.McDonald
Apr 9	Blue-faced Honeyeater	2	Lochinvar	"
Mar 7	King Quail	~6	Pinney Beach track	Lynne Fricker
	Darter	2 2dy	Toronto West [Stoney Creek]	P. Durie
Mar 8	Spectacled Monarch	1imm	S.W.C.	A.Richardson
Mar 6	Brown Goshawk	1	Plattsburg	T.Clarke
Mar 7	Double-banded Plover	1imm	Stockton Sandspit	"
Mar 9	Leaden Flycatcher	1	Teralba	"
Mar 3	White-throated Needletail	>20	Wallaroo State Forest	F.Humphreys
Mar 8	Brown Falcon	1	Telarah	"
Mar 23	Yellow Wagtail [ <b>last record?</b> ]	1	Ash Island	A.Ashworth [per A.Morris]
Mar 26	Double-banded Plover	2+1imm	Stockton Sandspit	T.Clarke
Mar 11	Eastern Reef Egret	1	Box Beach [Tomaree N.P.]	"
Mar 13	Australian Hobby	1	Wallsend	"
Mar 25	Brown Quail	6	Wallarah N.R.	"
Mar 12	Southern Emu-wren	5	Galgabba Point	J.Adams
13 & 26	Blue-faced Honeyeater	6-7	Oyster Cove	N.McNaughton
Apr 13	Diamond Firetail	2	Walka Water Works	"
Mar 28	Pale Yellow Robin	4-6	Barrington House	H.Tarrant
Mar 16	Pacific Baza	1	Bolwarra	"
Apr 1	Golden Whistler	1	Stoney Creek	P.Durie
	Red-browed Finch	>30	"	"
	Yellow Thornbill	>40	"	"
Apr 7	White-eared Honeyeater	4-5	Gloucester	"
	Wedge-tailed Eagle	>8	Gloucester	"
Apr 7	Eastern Spinebill	2	Fassifern Rlwy Stn	"
Apr 1	White-headed Pigeon	1	Glenrock S.R.A. [Flaggy Creek]	T.Clarke
Apr 2	Pied Cormorant	21	Stockton Sandspit	"
Apr 3	Sooty Oystercatcher	21	N'cle Ocean Baths	P.Firkin

Apr 3	Ruddy Turnstone	6	N'cle Ocean Baths	P Firkin
Apr 2	Comb-crested Jacana	1	Murray's Run [Murrays Run Rd]	A.Morris
Apr 10	Zebra Finch	5 + ndy	Jerrys Plains	C.Goodenough
	Diamond Firetail	1	10k from Jerrys Plains	H.Tarrant
	Lewin's Honeyeater	1	12k from Jerrys Plains	"
	Black Falcon	1	Bureen [Martindale Rd]	"
	Little Eagle	1	"	"
Apr 3	Diamond Firetail	1	Moonan Flat	"
	Wedge-tailed Eagle	4	Gundy [6km past "Belltrees"]	"
Apr 4	Sooty Oystercatcher	7	Merewether Baths [Rock platform]	A.Hamer
Apr 7	Little Eagle	1	Caves Beach	T.Clarke
	Pied Oystercatcher	6	Swansea Channel	"
Apr 8	Straw-necked Ibis	150	Williamtown	"
Apr 14	Tawny Frogmouth	3	Cardiff	J.Westphail
Apr 12	Grey Goshawk	1	Blackbutt Reserve	P.Lightfoot
Apr	Sooty Oystercatcher	18	Newcastle Ocean Baths	J.Powers
Apr 21	Rose Robin	1	North Singleton	M.Aitkens
	Spangled Drongo	1	"	"
Apr 7	Pied Oystercatcher	2	Swan Bay	"
Apr 21	Grey-crowned Babbler	4	North Singleton	"
	" " "	5	North-east Singleton	"
Apr 14	"	2	Lenaghan's Drive	"
Apr 29	Red-whiskered Bulbul	1	Caves Beach	T.Clarke
	White-bellied Sea-eagle	2	Wallarrah N.P.	"
Apr 30	Bar-tailed Godwit	1	Stockton Sandspit	"
Apr 1-6	Cattle Egret	>100	Doughboy Hollow	R.Waymark
Apr 3	Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	Thompson Creed Rd. [NW Scone]	"
	Grey-crowned Babbler	2	"	"
	Australian King Parrot	1	"	"
Apr 4	Wedge-tailed Eagle	3	"	"
Apr 1-5	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	4	"	"
Apr 29	Wandering Whistling Duck	>40	S.W.C.	R.McDonald
Apr 22	Fork-tailed Swift	1	"	"
	Gang Gang Cockatoo	Pr.	Sawyers Gully	J.Goswell
	Rufous Fantail	1	Cessnock State Forest	"
May	Rose Robin	Pr.	Keinbah	"
May 11	Little Corella	>200	Birmingham Gardens	R.McDonald
May 3	Comb-crested Jacana	1	Ryhope [crematorium]	"
May 12	Australian King Parrot	5	Blackbutt Reserve	C.Goodenough
May 12	Plumed Whistling Duck	>240	Doughboy Hollow	D.Geering
May 1	Pacific Baza	2	Martinsville	M.Fidler
May	Gang Gang Cockatoo	20	"	"
Constant	Glossy Black Cockatoo	2-4	"	"
May	Satin Bowerbird	2	Merewether Heights	K & M. Woods
Apr 15	Sooty Oystercatcher	5	Merewether Baths	"
May 1	Peregrine Falcon	1	Myer Park, Adamstown	T.Clarke
May 4	Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	Teralba	"
May 1	Spangled Drongo	1	Tank Paddock	L.Huxtable
	Rose Robin	4	"	"
May 10	Square-tailed Kite	2	Shortland	W.Barnden
May 5	Gang-gang Cockatoo	2	Wallis Creek	C.Anderson
May 4	Australian Owlet Nightjar	1	Pokolbin State Forest	"
May 8	Spangled Drongo	1	Hunter Botanic Gardens	"