

NEWSLETTER

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

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

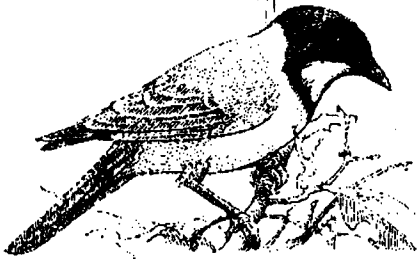
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President: Liz Crawford

Secretary: Tom Clarke

Newsletter Editor: Peter Phillips



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*

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

Next Newsletter Deadline is 5 December 2004

Newsletter contact details.

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Hunter Bird Observers Club is please to welcome the following new members and hopes that they enjoy all that the Club offers:

Michael Foate of Cardiff

Greg and Alexandra Waldron of Tighes Hill

Monica O'Wheel of Carrington

June Ferndale of Shortland

David & Chris Eastham of Dudley

Phil Straw of Rockdale and

Peggy Svoboda of Nelson Bay (couple of familiar names there!)

Membership Fees

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

Main Creek Atlas Day- 31st, August from Grant Brosie

The purpose of this day was to survey sites along Main Creek Rd and the Chichester State Forest. Our first stop was to private property where we managed to see / hear Wonga Pigeon, Varied Sittella, Variegated Fairy-wren and lots of other small passerines.

Frying Pan Creek was next with the highlights being a large flock of Satin Bowerbird, Large-billed Scrubwren, Azure Kingfisher, and a single Pale-yellow Robin.

Then we traveled to Jerusalem Creek seeing Aust. King Parrot, Yellow-throated Scrubwren and Crested Shrike-tit on route. At Jerusalem we heard another Pale-yellow Robin and saw the highlight of the day, four Glossy Black-cockatoo. Excellent views of a very special bird.

The day finished with a total of 70 species.

HUNTER REGION BOTANIC GARDENS - Midweek Outing – 7 September from Margaret Stewart

On 7th September 19 people, including some visitors from the Central Coast, enjoyed a very pleasant bird watching jaunt around the Botanic Gardens. The gardens were in full bloom for Spring, with many callistemons, acacias and other native plants in flower. In all we saw some 45 birds, with our favourites being a large flock of variegated wrens, several very visible whipbirds, 2 female rose robins and golden whistlers.

Nick, Robert and Grant spent some time determined to see a brown gerygone after hearing them calling for some time. They finally succeeded! The most common bird there was the noisy miner, but we did not see some other common birds such as the magpie lark.

After the morning's walk, some of us had lunch together in the café at the gardens to celebrate the 80th birthday of one of our leaders, Keith Woods.

Watagan Mountains / Boarding House Dam Atlas Day 25th-September

from Grant Brosie

Six members met at Boarding House Dam on a glorious Saturday afternoon with the hope of seeing the elusive Sooty Owl. With hours till dark with at least a few well known sites in the Watagans.

Our first stop was to Gap Creek where we managed a fairly good list. Honeyeaters were abundant especially Scarlet. White-naped and Lewin's were also present. Other birds seen including a brilliant male Satin Bowerbird, Variegated Fairy-wren, King Parrot, and both Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Brown Cuckoo-dove were heard calling.

Next it was Monkey Face Lookout with the highlight being two Wedge-tailed Eagles flying very low over the canopy. Scarlet Honeyeater and Fan-tailed Cuckoo were heard again as they were at our final stop, Boarding House Dam.

Here we went for a stroll through the very pleasant rainforest walk and recorded Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo (11), Bassian Thrush, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone and heard many Lyrebirds.

As nightfall arrived we set up the equipment and waited for complete darkness, which never arrived due to an almost full moon. We started playing the Aust. Owllet-nightjar call first, which at least two birds replied to but they were distant and we soon gave up. After playing the Sooty Owl call a few times a large bird flew straight across in front of us not to be seen again. Damn. After quite a while of playing calls and doing serious damage to our necks trying to see movement in the canopy, we decided to call it a night.

No Sooty Owl this time, although on the drive out Nick Livanos and I did flush a Southern Boobook off the road. All up a very enjoyable day.

**Spring Has Sprung At Spring Dam
Field outing to Yango Creek, Laguna
19th September 2004**

from Tom Clarke

It is always an exciting time to be birdwatching as we record a change in the season and witness different behaviours amongst our passerine pals. With lots of great things happening locally it was difficult to think that birding could be any better elsewhere in the valley. Two hours drive from Wallsend gets you west of Wollombi and into a terrific little steep-sided valley through which flows Yango Creek. The creek runs almost directly north and as it bends this way and that, little sections of the valley become exposed to, or protected from, the northern sun.

At "Spring Dam" this feature is very obvious and within less than half a kilometre the transition from dry exposed country to wet forest provides a marvellous diversity.

A small group of enthusiastic HBOCers enjoyed all the delights of Yango Creek on a warm, sunny and wonderfully pedestrian paced outing at the Bond property in September. Everything was just laid on from the welcome committee at the gate (Jacky Winter, Rainbow Bee-eater, Fan-tailed Cuckoo), the car-park attendants (fairy-wrens, gerygones, pardalotes, scrub wrens, thornbills, you name it), the house staff (babblers, lyrebirds) and boundary riders (thrush, Bowerbird, honeyeaters etc).

Honestly, we spent the entire day within 400 metres of the cars (just suited me down to the ground) and managed to identify a whopping 62 species.

Some special moments need to be described for those unfortunates that missed out of course so please forgive me if the following reads like a boast but as I write I find that I'm still a little excited about it all.

A dawdle south of the car park we encountered a bit of a hot spot that produced the bulk of the passerine count and it was here that we

discovered a Striated Thornbill nest. The most concealed construction that you're likely to find hanging in the outer foliage of a gum tree and about 2.5m above the ground. I had followed a single bird into the tree, wanting to get a better look through binoculars, when suddenly from that place two birds flew out in different directions. The world's record speed multiplying attempt for birds? No, two adults adding the finishing touches to an amazing bit of craft-work that will hopefully house a couple of offspring soon.

Out near a small dam surrounded by bracken a tribe of Superb Fairy-wren hopped and darted in active pursuit of small insects in company with an adult Shining Bronze-Cuckoo. I have seen these cuckoos on the ground before and never came to any conclusion until this moment when the thought that perhaps the mimicking of the fairy-wren movements was a deliberate act. Two possible scenarios come to mind; the bird is getting information regarding the location of a possible nest or is creating a positive distraction while its mate is laying eggs in it. In any case, the action provided plenty of entertainment at the time and wondrous contemplation since for this birdbrain.

Not far from that spot (nothing was ever far) an alert birdwatcher discovered a prize sighting. A single Brown Treecreeper (creeping up a tree, so how about that!) apparently lost from all its mates but brave enough to suffer the press of observer types long enough for all to see.

Meanwhile, there are Gang-gang Cockatoo flying overhead, a Bassian Thrush lurking in the gloom of the wet forest and a male Satin Bowerbird making the strangest, most awful call that was ever produced. This invisible bird called most of the morning an unfamiliar, single, harsh and far carrying "(h)arch". At one stage it was supposed that it may be a frog making the sound but we eventually did set eyes on it and we were able to identify the culprit. At that moment it also broke into the more familiar downward buzzing trill that is often produced and put the matter beyond doubt.

We were not so fortunate with an invisible Peaceful Dove that called and teased all day without being found but at least that call was well known by all of us and presented no problems with identity.

I did make mention of lyrebirds about the house so I better add that for at least two lucky birdwatchers, the day was made a complete success when they witnessed a male Superb Lyrebird displaying for a female. I'll leave it at that because I don't wish to upset you any more than I have to in relating the quality birdwatching that is available at Yango Creek.

The Twitchathon draws nigh

As this Newsletter goes to press the curtain raiser to the Birds Australia Twitchathon is taking place across the land. Latham's Snipe versus Howards End with the Abbotts Booby waiting in the wings. Or perhaps the Green Rosella from Tasmania will feature in the finish

Whoever you decide to give your tick to on October 9, remember that the main ticking event is on October 30 & 31 and involves you giving your money to the contestants rather than the contestants giving your money back to you.

Yes folks, form your own team or support the cause by donating to someone else's. This year the Regent Honeyeaters of Capertee get the ultimate benefit. You, on the other hand, get a tax deduction if you contribute more than \$2 which means, depending on your tax rate, that you will force the Federal Government to contribute a third to a half of the money to a cause of your choice – and that's a core promise.

Bird watchers are quiet peaceful cooperative intelligent and sensitive souls but once a year, in a sort of May Day debauch, the world is turned upside down and red raw competition erupts

In the blue corner I expect will be the Home Brewers and the Thickheads representing in their names the beginning and end of a tiring and emotional day. The grizzled and experienced Thickheads (eyebrows suitably trimmed) still promising after all these years are pitted against the rough but ready Home Brewers – hearts in the right place but hair all over the shop. A classic contrast but let us not be distracted from their main task - which is to Whack Out the Woodswallows!

Yes indeed, the treasonous pair plus the token female are likely to contest again. Last year they had to score a record to beat our guys – will they run out of luck or do the Gods that protect Regents Honeyeaters have a soft spot for David Geering.

For a good time and the best display of competitive preening in the bird world you should come to the BBQ at the Wetland Centre in the afternoon of 31 October. where the early results will become known.

In the meantime, if you want to form a team contact Frances Czawillina the Coordinator at secretarybird@bigpond.com If you want to sponsor a local team they will, no doubt, be at Club Night or Tom Clarke (4951 3872) may be able to put you in touch.

Rufous Scrub Bird Surveys

Allan Stuart reports that Peter Ekert is organising rufous scrub bird surveys during October- December. It may be an opportunity to see this elusive species. Alan can put you in touch – almarosa@bigpond.com or phone 4952 8569

Decline in Migratory Shorebirds locally and globally-can we help?

From Phil Straw
NSW Wader Study Group

The majority of shorebirds of known population trend are in decline all round the world – a matter of international conservation concern. Of populations with known trends, 48% are declining, in contrast to just 16% which are increasing: thus three times as many populations are in decline as are increasing. The reasons for these declines are diverse and poorly understood.

There are enormous human population pressures in East Asia and Australasia, a region which contains over a third of the world's human population as well as some of the world's fastest growing economies. This has major direct consequences for the shorebirds of this region: over 80% of wetlands in east and south-east Asia are classified as threatened, with over half under serious threat.

Asia is also the region holding the highest number of shorebird populations, and the highest proportion for which we lack information on numbers and trends of populations. Asia and Oceania between them hold 32 Globally Threatened species, which is 58% if the entire world's Globally Threatened shorebird species.

Of the 12 globally threatened species in the East Asian – Australasian flyway, one is possibly extinct, six are in active decline and the status of the remaining five is unknown. None are recovering their status. The development of non-binding international mechanisms for conservation and monitoring is a welcome step forward, although there are huge challenges to secure the conservation of wetland of global significance to shorebirds so as the reverse the current negative trends in shorebird populations.

Although some of the biggest threats to migratory shorebird populations lie within East Asia loss of habitat and disturbance of feeding habitat and roost sites are of major concern in

Australia, especially south eastern Australia. The loss of habitat, and the threats of further losses, on coastal New South Wales is higher than in any other state as a whole. Although some of the key sites for migratory shorebirds have been identified these are not protected, despite the fact that some of these include Ramsar listed wetlands.

The loss of wetlands, including shorebird habitat, has been the result of incremental landfilling and development. This continues at an alarming rate. It is common for development applications to be lodged with local councils with little or no regard for shorebird feeding habitat or roost sites. As councils must take into consideration available published information it is the intention of the NSW Wader Study Group to map every one of the coastal estuaries that provide habitat for migratory, as well as beaches occupied by threatened species of shorebirds (including the Little Tern). This information will be made available as a publication to the Department of Environmental Conservation and all local governments.

This summer (2004/2005) a combined force of bird groups, National Parks Service of DEC and many individuals throughout New South Wales will be conducting two major surveys requiring all the help we can get from anyone interested in birds and their conservation. There are two distinct projects, though there will inevitably be some overlap for some species.

Project 1 – Beach Nesting Bird Survey

The NSW Wader Study Group in association with most bird groups in NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Bird Interest Group Network (BIGnet) and many individuals will be conducting the next Beach Nesting Bird Survey along the entire coast of NSW over the weekend of 16/17 October 2004. This survey has been conducted every second year since 1994.

Two hundred volunteers needed!

A survey will be carried out over the weekend of 16/17 October 2004 and covers every beach in NSW. This biennial count was initiated in 1994 as an extension of the national Hooded Plover Survey. The main objective is to count Hooded Plovers, Beach Stone-curlew, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, Little Terns and Red-capped Plovers and record any nesting activities. However as part of a day at the beach volunteers are encouraged to record other birds of interest including birds of prey and any beach washed birds. What better way to add to the pleasure of walking along a beach of your choice by helping to protect our coast nesting birds?

Project 2 – Adopt an estuary

The second survey is longer term and covers all species of shorebirds (waders) at all of the NSW estuaries. Ideally we are looking for small teams to adopt an estuary or group of estuaries (some estuaries are very small and will have relatively few birds) and count the shorebirds there at least each quarter, monthly if possible, for one year. However one-off counts are useful at any time.

Every participant in either of the surveys will be issued with a kit including a map/maps of the area chosen, simple instructions of how to record the information, suggestions of what to look for, contact details of regional and state coordinators and where to send your completed data sheets.

Information from both surveys will be plotted onto maps and used for conservation and management plans, showing where the threats are, areas that need protecting and lots more information for land managers and conservation agencies.

If you are interested in taking part in either of these surveys and learning about shorebirds please contact the state coordinator: Phil Straw, NSW Wader Study Group, P.O. Box 2006, Rockdale Delivery Centre, NSW 2216. 02 9597 7765 or email: wadersnsw@optusnet.com.au who will put you in touch with your nearest regional coordinator and arrange for your beach or estuary survey kit to be sent to you.

Aust. Scientist in rare bird rescue bid

Source. Birding NSW Newsletter August 2004 Issue 204 (author Penny Drake Brockman)

The Caribbean island state of Bermuda has asked an Australian scientist to help rescue a rare bird, the Bermuda Petrel. Thought extinct for 300 years, 18 breeding pairs were found on a tiny rock islet off Bermuda in the early 1950s. Although no other species of seabird is known to have survived from such small numbers, the petrels have somehow managed to weather cyclones and deadly attacks from much larger birds to reach the present 70 breeding pairs. Australian wildlife specialist Nick Carlile from Illawarra in NSW will translocate chicks to an easier home at nearby Nonsuch Island.

An Australian program has seen a dramatic rise in the numbers of Gould's Petrel which only breeds on Cabbage Tree Island and it is hoped to replicate this success with the Bermuda Petrel. The Gould's Petrel was brought back from the brink of extinction from only 200 breeding pairs to 900 breeding pairs by recent estimates

" We will be replicating a lot of the techniques used successfully in the Australian scheme but also taking into account the unique conditions in Bermuda" Mr Carlile said. Fourteen of 29 Bermuda Petrel chicks expected to hatch this year on the tiny islet will be introduced to Nonsuch Island.

(Nick used to be with NSW NPWS and gave a couple of Club Night talks on the Gould's Petrel program)

JUST FOR FUN

A wake of buzzards
A clattering of Choughs
A convocation of eagles
A charm of finches
A stand of flamingos
A parliament of owls
An unkindness of ravens

SOME TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL RAPTOR WATCHING

Source: Birds Queensland Newsletter Vol 35.
Number 6

There are four things that you need to consider when attempting to identify raptors:

- *Plumage* (colour, wear moult)
- *Morphology* (size shape structure)
- *Activity* (flight, movement)
- *Behaviour* (calls, activity, responses of other birds)

At close quarters, it is possible to discern details of plumage and shading but at a distance definition will be lost and the same bird will appear to be more black and white.

Raptors will appear to be different colours under different lighting conditions. All flying raptors will seem dark against white skies.

Size will be difficult to judge in open skies and in the distance due to the absence of reference points. Size illusion will be a problem.

Raptors generally appear to have more rounded wingtips when soaring and more pointed ones when gliding.

Flight and tail feathers are darkest on upper surfaces and outer webs of feathers. Therefore, flight and tail feathers appear darkest on the upper sides.

Some raptors show pale windows or panels on backlit underwings. These are usually present around the bases of the primaries.

Juveniles (first year birds) in fresh plumage usually show pale tips to flight and tail feathers, as well as greater wing coverts, the latter often form narrow pale lines on the wings. These tips are usually worn off within six months.

Immature and adult raptors in late spring to early autumn frequently show signs of moult and wear in wings and tail. Gaps may be evident in wings

and tail, feathers of different length often present in primaries or tail and trailing edges of wings and tail tip may appear ragged.

The secondaries of many raptors are of different lengths in juvenile and older plumages. Juveniles may have either longer (wider wings) or shorter (narrower wings) secondaries than older birds. Tails are usually longer in juveniles.

Rufous underparts in fresh plumage usually fade to buff, cream or white with exposure to sunlight and weather after a few months. The degree of fading is greatest in the tropics. Whistling Kites in the far north may exhibit a "white-tailed" appearance in old worn plumage, a situation that is much less common in southern areas.

Try to get good views of the flight feathers (especially in flight) these are often diagnostic.

Is the bird moulting? Active moult means that is not a juvenile bird. Note the build of the bird, length and robustness of legs. Are the legs feathered or not? Note subjective impressions too – is it a big headed or long-legged bird.

Take notes immediately or make a sketch. Try, in all cases to record behaviour. In flying birds note the attitude of wings, shapes of tail and wingtips, style of flight and, in perched birds, plumage, colour of iris and feet, tail length relative to primary length.

TIP FOR BEGINNERS

It is really useful to have some sort of bird that you can use for size comparison when observing raptors. The Torresian Crow is a suitable size being middle of the size range for Australian raptors (*where no Crows occur the Australian Raven would be suitable – Ed*) You can then say the observed raptor was bigger, smaller or the same size as your standard. The Crow at 50cm is about one and a half times the size of the smallest Raptor – the Kestrel - and half the size of the largest- the Wedge tailed Eagle.

THE WETLAND CENTRE PROGRAM

For October and November 2004

Canoeing Adventures

9.30Am first Sunday of the Month

October 3, November 7

\$25 adults, \$12.50 child, \$70 per family (2+2)

Breakfast with the Birds

7.00AM Sunday November 7

\$20 adults, \$10 child, \$60 per family(2+2)

Spotlight Prowl

October 16, November 20

Check start time when you book BYO Torch

\$10 adults, \$5 child, \$25 per family (2+ 2)

Melbourne Cup Party

Get a group of friends together and reserve a table for fun, laughter and good food to celebrate the cup. Variety of sweeps & prizes. Design a suitable hat for the occasions. BYO Alcohol. \$30 per person (50% deposit required when booking)

Catchment Day

Hosted by Hunter Water

A free family day with lots of activities

Sunday October 24

Frog & Reptile Expo

Come and see why, members of the Society of Frogs & Reptiles are so passionate about these creatures that hop and slither.

Reptile and amphibian displays, guest speakers, variety of stalls and lots of attractions

Sunday November 21

Entry. Adult \$5. Child \$2. Family (2+ 2) \$12

The London Wetland Centre

By Paddy Lightfoot

During June this year Caryl and I visited the London Wetland Centre. We were en route to our son Stephen's wedding in Zurich, Switzerland and our whole trip was wonderful.

To reach the LWC visitors catch the 283 Duck Bus from the London underground station at Hammersmith. A bus leaves the station every eight minutes and the bus route does a loop into the grounds of the Centre – during summer 9.30am to 6pm . To add to the mounting excitement of the visit many of the buses actually have Duck Bus logos.

We were given a tour of the centre by affable Malcolm Whitehead who is the Education and Visitor Services Manager. Malcolm came to LWC in 1999 with a background of zoo management and interpretation skills.

Unfortunately for us at the end of the afternoon we lost his company as he rushed away, to watch on TV, England play Portugal in the quarter final of the European Soccer Cup – England lost with outpourings of national grief!

We were visiting on a Thursday which is the Centre's summer late night viewing - closing at 7pm. The very swank licenced restaurant runs a late night barbeque which we stayed on for and then we walked straight onto a waiting bus back to Hammersmith station – what a service!

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust which manages the LWC commenced the project in 1995. Like our own Centre, WWT had liquidity problems and sold off a parcel, 20 acres, of their land for housing and raised eleven million pounds to which corporate sponsors added a cool six million. The site is identical in area to ours – 105 acres in the heart of London. They have not followed our tree planting idea in trying to screen the surrounding urban landscape – in fact they make a feature of being able to see London landmarks from the central three story bird hide – 'The Peacock Tower'. We could see the new Wembley stadium under construction in the distance from the top floor. Malcolm coined the phrase 'echoic' - the blending of past London before the Wetlands and present London with the Wetlands. The town houses built on the LWC land, which they disposed of, make a pleasant backdrop to the ponds. Perhaps our new neighbours, when our block of land is sold, will add to our entry in a similar manner.

The site was originally the Victorian water supply for London, called Thames Water, and was covered by huge cement water reservoirs. One of the development criteria was that no spoil was allowed to be removed from the site and none introduced. This led to ingenuity. For example the tracks were constructed using material from the cement walls of the reservoir. Various mixes of soils found were used to construct different islands which would support different plant species.

One island was simply pebbles for Plovers to nest on. There are thirty different habitats. A large bank was built with nesting hollows to accommodate the local Sand Martin population. A reef was constructed in the deepest pond for fish habitat. Management included a large area of open water left island free for use by the large number of UK diving ducks. Water levels are manipulated with gates.

The tracks are large enough for a small tractor and trailer to be taken to all corners of the site. During construction of the tracks, electrical cables were laid over the entire land surface of the site. Imagine our surprise when we wandered out to The Peacock Tower – about the same height as our Egret Hide – to find a capacious lift to take us up to the top deck.

There we found the staff setting up tables with silver and linen for a corporate breakfast in the bird hide the following morning. Tables and accessories were ferried out on a neat trailer, into the lift and up to the top. What a location for a catered meal. The electrical access has enabled interactive screens to be located on all tracks. This is a mistake according to Malcolm – vandalism and weather being the problems. Cameras such as suggested for Stockton Sandspit have been located in inaccessible spots.

Visitors can sit in comfort, even have a coffee, and watch, on indoor monitors, what is going on out in the remote wetlands. We watched in amazement as a Grey Heron seized and devoured a Dusky Moorhen. The poor Moorhens legs draped and dangling from each side of the Heron's bill. This must have been unusual as the

Visitor Centre staff were clustered around the monitor just as amazed as we were.

The WWT has 110,000 members at 26 pounds (\$A3 per English quid) per year - mind boggling. The LWC staff ranges from 30-40 depending on the season. Interestingly they have an identical number of volunteers to Shortland – 140. The Visitors Centre itself is a huge concern housing classrooms, cinema, staff, a large restaurant, huge shop, art gallery, franchised binocular, camera, telescope business, There is room for business promotions with a convention showroom which can comfortably house a car or two.

As visitors enter the LWC they are greeted by a bronze statue of Sir Peter Scott, who founded WWT in 1948, feeding his beloved swans. Perhaps we could erect a life size effigy of Max Maddock on the Wetlands Centre roundabout? Sleepovers (children's parties) are held with night walks and Big Batty walks involving a talk about bats and then the use of bat detectors – electronic devices which enable the bat species flying around to be identified by their signals - frequencies inaudible to the human ear.

Catering for groups' dipnetting has been well thought out with ponds elevated to waist height so students don't have to hang off board walks. The staff and volunteers have uniforms which I feel is a good idea. Part of the site has a zoo feel – called 'World Wetlands' - with pinioned birds from different locations around the world. The fences and walls are unobtrusive and each section with its pond uses the plants of that part of the world from which the birds featured originate. In the Australian section were Freckled Duck, Black Swans and Magpie Geese. WWT have bred 60-80 Freckled Duck which Malcolm told us is a World's best for breeding outside Australia.

A new children's' discovery area is planned - to cost a quarter of a million pounds -featuring innovative ideas such as a waterfall with a track behind the falls so the visiting children can look out through the veil of cascading water.

While on the subject of children, London's Lord Mayor has proposed an annual donation from the City of London to cover the entry fee for children. If this idea is passed by Council then there will be free entry for all kiddies. A further project, funded by the Millennium Fund at 260,000 pound, is a travelling dome featuring wetlands and able to be taken to any location in the UK.

160 bird species have been recorded. Water Voles (Malcolm proudly pointed out their droppings but no actual Voles) have been reintroduced after suffering local extinction – shades of our Magpie Geese success. We were interested to find similar feral bird problems in England to those we experience in Australia. For example there is a growing population of American Ruddy Ducks presumably originating from escapees, which are displacing the English Tufted Duck. We also saw wild populations of Indian Ringneck Parakeets in several parts of England.

Thanks to Chris Prietto who from Australia's TWC lined our guide up for us and thanks to Malcolm for taking time out to show us around.

COMING EVENTS HBOC ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

HUNTER WADER SURVEY

Saturday October 16
9.30am Various locations as directed
Contact Chris Herbert 4959 3663
Alan Stuart 4952 8569 ring to confirm

FIELD OUTING

Sunday October 24
MOUNTAIN MAID GOLD MINE
Meet 8.00am Copeland Common
Contact Tom Clarke 4951 3872

TWITCHATHON

October 30-31 sponsor a team and help the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Project BBQ at the finish from 5.00pm at Wetlands Centre (\$4.50 entry) BYO everything.

MIDWEEK OUTING

Tuesday November 2
Ash Island
Meet Car Park over Ash Island Bridge
Leader Neville McNaughton 4951 1265

CLUB NIGHT

Wednesday November 10. 7.30Pm
The Wetlands Centre
Speaker Martin Heffron
Birds of the Balearic Islands

HUNTER WADER SURVEY

Saturday November 13
9.15am various locations
Contact Chris Herbert 4959 3663
Alan Stuart 4953 8569

ATLASSING

Saturday November 20
EN ROUTE TO HARRINGTON
Meet 8.00am Booral
Leader Ann Lindsey 4951 2008
You must ring to confirm.

FIELD OUTING

Sunday November 21
HARRINGTON
Meet 7.30am Rainforest Walk
next to Caravan Park Harrington
Leader Alan Stuart 4953 8569

LATHAMS SNIPE COUNT

Sunday December 5
PAMBALONG NR
Meet 8.30am Minmi Pub
Leader Liz Crawford 4959 3663

MIDWEEK OUTING

Tuesday December 7
SWANSEA AREA
Meet 7.30am Car Park end of
Lambton Parade Swansea
Leader Judy Matheson 4971 2589

CLUB NIGHT

Wednesday December 8
7.30 PM Wetland Centre
XMAS PARTY
Bring slides, anecdotes videos and plate

OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHTS AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2004

2004

Jun 9	Torresian Crow	~90	Previously incorrectly entered as Walka Water Works. The location is actually Vacy	H.Tarrant
Jun 29	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	3	Teralba [Metromix bushland]	T.Clarke
Jul 5	Spotted Pardalote	2	"	"
Jul 12	White-winged Chough	10	"	"
Jul 13	Wonga Pigeon	Heard calling	"	"
Jul 27	Grey Goshawk	Pair	Newcastle University	"
Aug 3	Little Eagle	1	Teralba	"
Jul 2	Hardhead	96	Grahamstown Dam	M.Maddock
	Eurasian Coot	150	"	"
Jul 24	Australasian Grebe	519	"	"
	Great Crested Grebe	80	"	"
Jul 9	Magpie-lark	40	Phoenix Park	"
Jul 29	Rose Robin	1	Rankin Park [garden]	T. Bagnall
Aug 17	Brown Falcon	1	Ash Island	"
Jul 23	Azure Kingfisher	1	S.W.C. [BHP Pond]	P.Lightfoot
	Brown Cuckoo-dove	1	Ironbark Creek [SWC]	"
Jul 29	Pacific Heron	1	S.W.C. [Reed Marsh]	"
	Eastern Yellow Robin	1	SWC [Rainforest]	"
Jul 19	Brown Goshawk	1	Teralba	T.Clarke
Jul 20	European Goldfinch	4	Kooragang Is. [next to Big Pond]	"
Jul 21	Peregrine Falcon	2	Newcastle University Campus	"
Jul 25	Black-fronted Dotterel	28	Mt. Arthur	G.Newling
	Australasian Shoveler	32	"	"
Aug 9	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	1	Wingen [garden]	"
Aug 8	Hooded Robin	1	Jerrys Plains	H.Tarrant
	Diamond Firetail	1	Medhurst Bridge	"
Aug 4	Square-tailed Kite	1	Newcastle University Campus	"
Aug 11	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	2	Cooks Hill [Nesca Park]	J. & E. Moyse
Aug 1	Musk Lorikeet	6	East Seaham	R.Carlton
	Scarlet Honeyeater	2	"	"
Aug 9	Whistling Kite	2	Fingal Bay	N.Fraser
Aug 9/10	Pacific Baza	2	Kotara High School	J. Adams
Aug 8	Rose Robin	1	Blackbutt Reserve	P.Lightfoot

Aug 12	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	4	"	"
Aug 6	Topknot Pigeon	40	Stockton Sandspit [overhead]	T.Clarke
Aug 2	Little Eagle	1	Teralba	"
Aug 21	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	7	Speers Point [Creek Reserve Rd]	C.Mann
Jul 15	Zebra Finch	>10	Flat Rd., Bolwarra	G.Brosie
Jul 19	Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	East Maitland	"
Jul 20	Square-tailed Kite	1	"	"
Jul 25	Australasian Bittern	1	Tenambit Common	"
	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	11+	"	"
Aug 8	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	>25	Hexham	"
	Grey-crowned Babbler	1	Kurri Kurri	"
Aug 17	Barn Owl	1	Largs	"
Aug 23	European Goldfinch	>5	East Maitland	"
Aug 28	Clamorous Reed Warbler	2	Walka Water Works	"
Aug 29	Baillon's Crake	1	Tenambit Common	"
	Buff-banded Rail	1	"	"
	Clamorous Reed Warbler	1	"	"
Aug 29	Brown Quail	2	Awabakal N.R.	G.Brosie/N.Livanos
	Ruddy Turnstone	1	Newcastle Ocean Baths	"
	White-fronted Tern	1	"	"
	Fluttering Shearwater	1,000's	Off Newcastle Baths to Awabakal	"
Aug 28	Diamond Firetail	~6	Jones Res. Rd.[10k from Jerrys Plains	H.Tarrant
	Spotted Harrier	1	Yarrawa	"
	Black-shouldered Kite	4	Bureen	"
Sep 6	White-winged Chough	On nest	Vacy	"
	Little Raven	1	"	"
Sep 6	White-throated Gerygone	1	Vacy	H.Tarrant
Sep 5	Bar-shouldered Dove	3	Walka Water Works	"
Aug 9	Regent Honeyeater	1	Quorrobolong	M.Roderick
Aug 23	Barn Owl	1	Warabrook	R.McDonald
Sep 1	Barn Owl	1	"	"
Sep 6	Powerful Owl	1	Stockton Sand Dunes	"
Sep 7	Square-tailed Kite	1	Woodberry	"
Sep 5	Latham's Snipe	5	Wood ville	M.Newman
Sep 8	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	Blackbutt Res.[Ridgeway Rd. end]	P.Lightfoot
Sep 7	"	1	East Seaham	R.Carlton
Sep 9	Grass Whistle Duck	~200	Doughboy Hollow	G.Newling
Sep 15	Lesser Sand Plover	1	Stockton Sandspit	A.Lindsey