



# Hunter Bird Observers Club

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 6/04

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Newsletter articles welcome –  
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## Committee

**President:** Liz Crawford  
**Vice-president:** Alan Stuart  
**Secretary:** Tom Clarke  
**Treasurer:** Rowley Smith

### **Committee Members:**

Paul Baird  
Grant Brosie  
Anthony Gooden  
Ann Lindsey  
Jim Smart

### **Conservation Officer**

Jenny Powers

### **Life Members**

Sue Hamonet  
Ed Hamonet  
Wilma Barden

### *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*

The Hunter Bird Observers Club is pleased to welcome the following new members:

Danielle & Michael Phillips  
George & Clarice Alexander  
Trudy & John Cheshire  
Leanne Maffesoni  
Ruth & Paul Kelly  
Valda Barton  
Julie Luff  
Sue Rostas

And a Correction.... Last edition we welcomed Michael Foate of Cardiff. Sorry about that – it should have been *Michelle* Foate. Whoops!

HBOC Annual Membership fees are \$25 Family or Single, and \$3 for Juniors.

## **President's Column**

Over the last couple of months, the Hunter Bird Observers Club has been active on many fronts, from sheer fun to serious surveying, from raising funds to writing submissions. The fun started with the Twitchathon on 29/30 October – Hunter Home Brewers (Steve Roderick, Mick Roderick, Lucas Grenadier and Craig Anderson) won the Main Race with an amazing 220 species while Lesticcum Phoradae (Jenny Powers, Jenny Helman, Liz Huxtable, Liz and Nick Livanos) won the Champagne Race with 156 species – all other HBOC teams did well too, and the Dodgy Drongos (Grant Brosie and Robert McDonald) are improving so fast the Brewers will have to be on guard next year! Significant funds were raised by all the teams, contributing to tree-planting projects in the Capertee Valley for Regent Honeyeater habitat.

President's Column continued

HBOC conducted beach nesting bird surveys over 16/17 October as part of the state-wide census of birds nesting on beaches. Neil Fraser found no beach-nesting birds on any of the ocean beaches between Port Stephens and the northern end of Stockton Bight. Jack Adams searched Nine Mile Beach between Blacksmiths and Redhead and found 4 Pied Oystercatchers and 4 Masked Lapwings, but no nests. Liz and Chris Herbert, Robert McDonald, John and Leila McAdam searched Stockton Bight and found 9 Pied Oystercatchers and two oystercatcher nests, and 9 Red-capped Plovers. The nests were 300 to 400 metres inland, well away from the 4WD traffic coursing along the beach and behind the foredune. But when the young hatch and follow their parents to the shoreline to forage, they will be extremely vulnerable until they can fly out of the paths of vehicles.

Regular HBOC surveys of Tank Paddock have turned up yet another species – the Buff-banded Rail – bringing the running total to 146 species!

HBOC Members continue to conduct regular surveys at Morpeth (former wastewater treatment works) and Walka Waterworks. Recently, 6 members agreed to survey 5x1 ha sites on private property in the Seaham area over 4 years of a land rehabilitation project sponsored by Hunter Water Corporation and the Catchment Management Authority. These surveys are monitoring the response of birds to existing and rehabilitated habitats.

National Parks and Wildlife Service has engaged Ekerlogic Consulting Services to conduct wader surveys in the Hunter Estuary, focusing particularly on rehabilitated roost sites at Stockton Sandspit, Sandy Island and Smiths Island. Surveys will be conducted over three consecutive days each month until April and will complement our monthly surveys.

The Conservation Committee has been active too, writing letters in response to the Regional Land Management Corporation's call for expressions of interest in developing land parcels on Kooragang Island and the former Austeel site at Tomago. HBOC submitted a strong plea for conservation of the former Austeel site and Ash Island wetlands, as well as emphasizing yet again the importance of maintaining the ecological integrity of the Hunter Estuary.

Earlier this year, Newcastle City Council engaged consultants, Parsons Brinckerhoff and WBM Oceanics Australia, to compile a Hunter Estuary Management Study and develop an Estuary Management Plan. Recently, community consultation workshops were held in Maitland, Raymond Terrace and Newcastle, to give interested people an opportunity to raise issues that need to be addressed in the Plan. Several HBOC members attended the meetings, advocating conservation and rehabilitation of bird habitat in the estuary. We are currently preparing a written submission to emphasise our concerns. The consultants aim to develop a Plan of Management for the Hunter Estuary by the end of 2005.

Newcastle University's research into birds and bird use of the Hunter Estuary continues, with a project studying viruses carried by birds, and another honours project using radio-tracking to monitor migratory waders' movements and activities. The first honours project targeted 15 1<sup>st</sup> year godwits that were over-wintering in the Hunter Estuary during 2004. Alan Richardson tracked the birds' activities and documented their roosting and foraging areas in detail. He will give a presentation to the Club at our February meeting next year. Michelle Foate is currently tracking a second group of godwits over the summer months to see what differences there are in behaviour during this period. Cannon-netting is used to catch the birds so that tiny transmitters can be glued to the feathers on their backs. Cannon-netting is a difficult procedure which requires trained experts. The first day of cannon-netting in May 2004 caught 42 birds, all of which were measured, banded and released unharmed. The second day of cannon-netting in November 2004 did not go quite so smoothly. Some of the adverse events on that day have resulted in a thorough review of the procedures and a

determination to research alternative methods of capture, such as walk-in traps, which would be less stressful for the birds. These projects are conducted under strict guidelines approved by the University's Ethics Committee and are run by University staff.

In regard to the migratory waders' flyway, the Saemangeum mud flats in Korea – prime habitat for migratory waders - are once again under threat. This time there are plans for a large golf complex. Further information is available on [www.birdskorea.org](http://www.birdskorea.org)

Back in our own estuary, the Kooragang Wetlands Rehabilitation Project has gained permission from Fisheries to remove mangroves from Swan Pond, Wader Pond and Milhams Pond on Ash Island, to enhance these habitats for waders. We are currently investigating using our Envirofund grant to accomplish this task.

HBOC has been active in the general community as well, setting up a display at The Wetlands Centre to help celebrate Catchment Day on 24 October. Alan Stuart, Neil Fraser, Liz and Chris Herbert encouraged budding young birdwatchers to identify Magpie Geese (the big black and white ones) and Magpie-larks (the small black and white ones). Feeding activity of nesting Magpie-larks delighted many, especially when viewed through the telescope.

Recently, Anthony Gooden attended Eraring Community Forum, run by Eraring Power Station, as a representative of the local birdwatching community. He was treated to a tour of a marine worm farm, which uses the inlet and outlet water from the power station to nurture worms for the bait market. It is refreshing to see large industries acknowledging their environmental impact and addressing environmental issues in a positive manner.

Market Swamp and Newcastle Wetlands will be affected when the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) installs two more rail lines in the section between Sandgate Railway station and Kooragang Coal Loader. As compensation for impacts on the swamp, ARTC is proposing to install a bird observatory at Market Swamp and undertake planting of species suitable for bird habitat. HBOC is being consulted on placement of the bird observatory and advice on suitable plant species. We will be seeking improved habitat for Latham's Snipe, which have a long history of association with this site.

All these items, and more, are discussed at Committee Meetings! Members are always welcome to attend Committee Meetings, which are held on the first Wednesday of each month, except January, at Garden Suburbs Public School, starting at 7 pm.

On the financial front, the Committee has decided to raise the annual membership fee to \$25 and camp fees to \$2 in order to remain solvent! Increased costs for public liability insurance and publishing have contributed to the need to raise fees.

If you get a chance this summer, nip down to Stockton Sandspit at high tide for a look at the birds. The Sandspit will be part of the Coastcare Summer Festival, with an outing scheduled for 14 January 2005.

Happy birding!

Liz Crawford

## **Karen and Steven get the tick.**

### **Wedding Announcement**

Steven Roderick and Karen Pearson were wed over the October long weekend.

HBOC members do not often marry during their membership. They seem to arrive already pair bonded for life or to remain determined and sometimes misogynist singletons. This event shows one of the many benefits of having younger members – they can surprise you with their optimism and enthusiasm.

The actual ceremony took place at the Hunter Botanic Gardens in the Lord Howe Island area. The Woodhen was not seen but vows were exchanged against a background of Satin Bowerbird calling and with the sun breaking through.

We have no reports of the bird list for this outing but the bride was apparently radiant and the bridegroom was Steve

The reception took place at Noahs on the Beach and HBOC was well represented amongst guests. Among those present were President Liz Crawford and her consort Chris Herbert, Alan and Margaret Stuart and Phil Rankin and his fiancée, Cindy. (this is becoming a trend)

Rumours of Oystercatchers visible on the beach from the reception room cannot be confirmed because Steve and Karen were blocking the view.

The happy couple adjourned to New Zealand for what was described as a honeymoon but no doubt birdwatching was also involved. They then returned in time for Steve to join the Brewers in their victory. Good planning, a break and a fresh wind beneath his wings may have made all the difference.

Congratulations to you both and good luck in your attempt to build a champion junior twitchathon team.

### **SOME NOTES ON BIRD BEHAVIOUR**

(compiled by Sue Hamonet)

#### Blue-faced Honeyeater

At Glen Oak 3/10/04 a single bird became entangled in the net over a citrus tree. Observer in attempting to extricate the victim was harassed by three others of the species who had gathered in a tree above, one bird crashed into the side of his head. Entangled bird was eventually released and was seen three days later – minus lost tail feathers (Max Maddocks)

#### Peregrine Falcon.

At Lamb's Valley was seen to take a Common Myna. A second Peregrine shared in the consumption of the Myna. (Charlotte Brock)

#### Australian King Parrot

From a property in the Allyn Valley comes a report of an unusually coloured King Parrot. The bird was one of three young with parents in early October. While two of the juveniles showed normal juvenile plumage, the third appeared to be a young male with the usual red chest, orange/red beak, brilliant green wing and tail feathers and glossy green body. The odd thing was the bright yellow colouring of the flight, shoulder and tail feathers (Colleen Gillin)

#### Sulphur –crested Cockatoo

A single bird observed regularly in the Redhead area during October/November show pale pink uppertail and undertail.

In future, we intend to publish short notes on bird behaviour when sufficient material comes to hand. This may be your chance to break into published work by sharing a special experience or observation with other Club members.

## **Club Night Report November 10 2004**

**By Peter Phillips**

After a long absence I was gratified to find that Club Nights are still as well attended as I remember and full of interesting stuff. One favourite item is the sightings section where members report interesting birds and bird behaviour. This is often the spot where your questions and musings can be aired and perhaps answered.

The November meeting each year features the results of the Birds Australia Twitchathon – we did very well – and the associated reports of great birds from the various teams. This can become quite amusing as the usual birdwatchers ethic of sharing information conflicts with the twitchathon teams' need to keep their exact route secret. Hence such precise locations as “near Gunnedah” or “on the road during the night.”

Our guest speaker was Martin Heffron who entertained and informed with an illustrated talk on the birds of Majorca (Mallorca). Isn't it interesting how the technology moves on – we have come a long way from an upside down slide night – now Powerpoint presentations are common and this one came with bird calls.

Martin described a trip he took in May – June recently catching a few hours for birdwatching in a family holiday. There is a fascinating range of habitats and birds for such a tourist infested island – the pommy party animals flock together leaving most of the island to quieter folk.

The image that impressed me was of staying in comfortable family accommodation among olive groves with hoopoes in the orchards, nightingales singing all day and stone curlews and scopes owl calling all night.

The most interesting species mentioned was Elanores Falcon named after a member of 14<sup>th</sup> century Sardinian royalty who enacted the first written legislation to protect Birds of Prey.

Some birds described were similar to what would be found elsewhere in Europe but the islands location on the migration route to Africa led to some surprises – such as Flamingoes and Black Vultures.

All in all an enjoyable and well-prepared talk. Wonderful to be back in the slightly crazy world of birdwatchers.

### **Field Outing: Harrington: 20/ 21 November 2004 - Peter Phillips**

On a weekend much disrupted by rain six intrepid HBOC members drove to Harrington on Saturday afternoon and stayed overnight in the Caravan Park next to the Rainforest walk. We were joined next morning by Bob Lansdown of the local Manning Valley Birdwatchers.

Our appetites had been whetted by reports from Phil Hansboro and others of rare delights. On the first night we drew a blank on the first of these when we failed to come across a Grass Owl in teeming rain – proving some truth in the legend of owlish wisdom.

On Sunday the rainforest walk was productive – and not only of mosquitoes. We all got superb views of Rose crowned Fruit Doves and tantalising glimpses of Varied Trillers. A couple of early starters saw Brahminy Kite and Southern Emu Wrens. There were cuckoos about and a range of rainforest birds including large numbers of Figbirds. 61 Species at this location.

Our next destination was Crowdy Head National Park in search of Spectacled Monarch at the limit of their range. We found at least three with some possibility of breeding behaviour. A bold and attractive specimen sat long enough for Chris Herbert to photograph. At the same spot Brown Thornbill feeding a Fantailed Cuckoo was an interesting feature.

After the others went home Robert MacDonald and I doubled back to the Rainforest Walk where he saw his Barred Cuckoo Strike and I heard the elusive Lewins Rail – but alas, no sighting.

**October Long Weekend Camp at**  
**Wallabadah Rocks**  
**Friday to Monday 1 – 4 October 2004**  
**A first (and last?) camp!?!**

By Anthony Gooden

Where do I start? I was fed up with hearing about the great times that birdos have on long weekend camps and, after much umming and ahing, had finally purchased all the gear (tent, sleeping bag, cooker, mattress, 30 litres of water, toilet paper etc). I thought that October would be a good time to start – not too hot, not too cold, good potential area, experienced group of campers – some who I know, not too far away and the last camp of the year. Have I set the scene?

I'll now go back a step. On the Friday morning, Tom Clarke and I went to Stockton Sandspit (SSS) for our usual perusal. Unfortunately, it poured (probably about an inch) and we were huddled up in the hide (rare usage). Because it was so rough on the beach, there was a wonderful array of birds (approx 8,000) on the full sandspit – lagoon, samphire and saltmarsh and scraped beach area – curlews, godwits, red-capped plovers, sharp-tailed and curlew sandpipers, gull-billed and crested terns, great and red knots, black winged stilts etc etc. The weather should have given me some inkling .. but I was already loaded up so here goes.....

Unlike good campers, I had NO idea where I was going – except towards Scone. I had expended all my energy trying to get my gear together and hadn't thought about maps etc. So, I followed Tom and his son Joe – without any problems.

We left Newcastle in clearing conditions and some sun. The further we drove to Scone, the more the BLACK VORTEX enveloped us. We now know that they had 1 inch overnight and a further 3 inches that afternoon. From the Blandford turnoff to the camp site (about 15 – 20kms) then became a car rally. I couldn't remember whether this was a bird outing or my deep sea car diving weekend!

Poor old Tom, with raincoat on, had to get out at intervals to put up the HBOC signs (for all the others who would later arrive in good conditions and then complain about us complaining about the weather).

After negotiating fast flowing water courses at every gully (in my little city Liberty) with my heart in my mouth, we finally arrived at the camp at 5pm – just before sunset – to be told by the owner to be ready to move as the creek had risen 3 metres in a short time. 4 couples were already there and had set up.

It was pouring, I didn't have any cover to unpack in, we may have had to move so I didn't do anything. At 8pm, I settled down for the first night of my first camp sitting up in the front passenger seat of my car. I ate a small can of cold baked beans with two slices of bread and some water. Brilliant. I was trying to ring a mate to tell him how stupid bird watchers were but I couldn't get a signal. I don't think anyone really got a good night's sleep that night but we had plenty to talk about. [Funnily enough, in one of my many unsleeping moments, I heard a tawny frogmouth – always the birdo?]

That's about it. After that, the weather was sunny during the day and cool overnight (perfect for the campfires we had – thanks Joe and thanks Sally for the yummy marshmallows).

The 4000 acre property belongs to a very pleasant Peter Norville – a local celebrity. He has flown twice around the world in his Cessna among other flying feats and is known as the farmers' weatherman on local radio stations. He has written at least one book. He was attentive to our needs and most welcoming.

Wallabadah Rocks is an awesome structure. Apparently, it is one of the largest monoliths in Australia and it would have been fun to climb it to check out the terrain and get the view but 1) we ran out of time and 2) there were a few unforeseen access problems. The Rock is actually on private property but the access road to the Rock is public.

The terrain was varied. Many steep hills with open grassland and valley copses of gum trees, several dams and fast flowing creeks. We were able to get plenty of exercise in our bird searching (those who didn't drive to watching spots). We competed for space with cattle and sheep – including occasional extremely unwell babies.

Oh yes, birds – silly me. We saw a few – about 110 for the weekend, if I remember correctly and we had a few unusual sightings. At the camp, we had a (noisy) striated pardalote (think it's nest may have suffered in the flooding), superb fairy wrens stealing nesting material, a nesting friar bird, melodious rufous whistlers, crimson rosellas, yellow and brown thornbills and others AND that was without moving anywhere. Unfortunately, even a few common mynas. But it got better.

We had black-fronted dotterels, clamorous reed-warblers, Australasian grebes and various ducks. We had a surfeit of Rainbow Bee-eaters (hullo, Leone) at close quarters – they really are beautiful, intricately patterned birds. We had red-rumped parrots, eastern and crimson rosellas, yellow-tailed black cockatoos. There were many views of leaden flycatchers and I think satin and restless were seen.

There were several sightings of soaring and circling wedgetail eagles generally being harassed by ravens and/or magpies. A couple of flocks of straw-necked ibis flew over during our stay.

I saw a female white-winged triller (Tom says the male is spectacular) and several dusky woodswallows. I sat and watched (and got sunburnt) as a Nankeen kestrel fed various snakes, lizards and mice to a juvenile. I observed the difference between a white-throated warbler/gerygone and a yellow thornbill.

There were plenty of honeyeaters, thornbills, grassbirds, pied and grey butcherbirds, treecreepers and sitellas etc.

There was an extensive bird call each night – I can't remember all the birds and I didn't see them all anyway.

I left at lunchtime on Monday – it was hot and sunny – a total contrast to our arrival on Friday. We had 20 people at the camp. A couple of couples decided to stay on for an extra day and, I hear, they had beautiful weather conditions and happy birding.

Will I go bird camping again after a “disastrous” first camp?. I'm a birdo and saw plenty and enjoyed the company of the more experienced campers. Of course, I will – I'll just have to convince my car that it is safe if Tom says so.

### **Midweek Outing – Mulbring and Old Brush** **5 October 2004**

**Anthony Gooden's** fading recollections.

Well, another new area for this birdo and I have only lived here for 19 years!!

A special thanks to Max B for his tidy organization.

A hardy bunch of 10 people (a bit low) set off from Mulbring Park on a hot and breezy day.

At a house on the edge of the park, we saw a blue-faced honeyeater at a nest (possibly a babbler's nest) and Robert “found” some nesting magpies??. Then, a surreal visit to a friend of a friend's backyard in Mulbring to view a female satin bower bird (at close range) – a good viewing without knowing what lay ahead – and the remains of a bower which had been destroyed by another male the previous night.

Next, after a convoy, we arrived at Old Brush Gallery and Park in Brunkerville. [where are we??] I think Max may have been embarrassed by the \$5 a car entry but it was certainly worth it and the money has been put to good use.

There are different terrains, lots of old growth trees and nesting hollows, we had plenty of good sightings (I think about 45 for the day) and we had a beautiful setting for our morning tea and LUNCH AND afternoon tea – yes, people are getting adventurous.

An initial walk around the open park area found brown and yellow thornbills, scarlet honeyeaters, Lewins honeyeaters and Robert got very excited over a forest kingfisher – for which he is doing an unusual bird report. Other mere birdos saw red-browed finches, choughs, brown pigeons (cuckoo doves), a posing leaden flycatcher, a beautiful black-faced monarch and friar birds. There was one particularly healthy discussion around one bird – eventually named as a female scarlet honeyeater! [This has happened before.]

With a bit (lot) of help from seed bins around the place, we saw several Wonga pigeons and King parrots at very close range. There were also bowerbirds hanging around while we supped and a couple of screeching gang-gang cockatoos landed in a gum near us.

In the rainforest area, we saw persistent but secretive whip birds and Nev and I had a wonderful look at a male satin bowerbird. Nev had already seen yellow-throated scrubwrens.

Not to overplay the “drama” but Max had to operate on a large tick on his person (he has survived) and Nev casually flicked away a leech or two from his foot as did Val!!.

A great viewing day and a place I am sure we will return to at some stage. As an aside, there is talk of logging being carried out on adjacent land. Sad.

## Mid Week Outing Ash Island on 02/11/04

By Anthony Gooden

No-one (especially our Leader, Neville McNaughton) was to know that, on Melbourne Cup day, our humble little group would draw 25 people - and a cosmopolitan crew at that.

We had a couple from Wales (very knowledgeable – have been here before), a couple from Kenya (or is that South Africa??) as well as visitors from the Central Coast and Tomaree birdwatching groups. The ever-keen Trevor from Singleton was also there.

Our day started a little overcast and coolish but later became quite hot and humid – adding to the slight discomfort felt by some on our epic walk around the block.

I think we all agreed that it was good to see the benefits of the work being done by volunteers at Ash Island. We only did the rainforest walk and the south arm track but saw (and heard) plenty of interesting birds (but I’m not going to list them, Grant) – hopefully, due in part, to the reinstated environment being nurtured on the island.

We had a long delayed but extra enjoyable morning tea in the Radar hut and did a loop down to Nev’s Nook and back – he has really got that looking lush. We were able to check out around 10 Red-capped plovers on the flats and saw numerous Sharp-tailed sandpipers and masked lapwings and some ducks on Milham Ponds.

On a cultural note, our day included great viewing of a *Littoria fallax* and a beautiful example of a *dendrobium linguiforme*. Ok, that is a dwarf green tree frog and a tree orchid, I think commonly called a tongue or button orchid. The bright green frog was sitting on a reed blade while we looked for and saw several (noisy) clamorous reed warblers.



At the end of the day (unfortunately after everyone else had left), Nev and I had a great view of two Latham Snipe sitting on grass tufts near the hut road, a group of about 25 sharp tailed sandpipers and approx 10 red-kneed dotterells and two pacific black ducks in the pond on the other side of the road. We also watched with amusement as a little egret in breeding plumage danced about in the water stirring up its meal. Oh, and we are fairly certain of a black eared cuckoo viewing. It sat up high in a dead tree singing away for quite a while.

Some other birds seen during the day were a nankeen night heron both perched and in flight, a greenshank, a black-faced monarch, yellow and brown thornbills, a yellow-rumped thornbill, a rufous fantail and the special grey fantail, a male satin bower bird, both male and female rufous whistlers, several tawny grass birds and golden headed cisticolas, or cisticolas (depending on your pronunciation!!), an immature sea-eagle, a whistling kite, a couple of black shouldered kites and a swamp harrier (beautiful colouring in the body).

Thanks to a modest Nev for a great day's nature observing. Once again, we realize what beauty and enjoyment there is so close to our homes.

## **BANDED WADERS**

Alan Stuart reports that following a recent wader banding session there are several species with flags attached to their right leg. The purpose for doing this is to learn more about what areas the birds use and at what times, also whether they use all of the estuary and whether the sometimes leave it (eg go to Port Stephens or wherever) This information is vital for making sure that their habitats are conserved.

Colours of the two flags are orange above green. (and may the IRA forgive you – Ed.)

Species that got flags were Bar-tailed and Black-tailed godwits, Curlew Sandpiper, Red Knot and Red necked Avocet. If you see any birds

with these flags please note the location and time of the sighting and let Alan know. Also whether the bird was feeding or roosting ( NB the flags are tiny and don't impede the birds flying or feeding).

The Bar Tailed Godwits have miniature radio transmitters and their flags have special notching that corresponds to the transmitter frequency. If you are able to see the notchings, please pass this information on as well. Alan is at 4952 8569 or almarosa@bigpond.com

## **Other Program Notes**

### September Club Night.

32 in attendance. Mike Newman spoke on various aspects of the robins of Tasmania. Tom Clarke tested member's skill at bird song recognition.

### Greswick Angus survey.

6 members attended inaugural site inspection 17<sup>th</sup> September. Agreed to continue surveys of 5 x 1 ha sites over 4 years of land rehab project sponsored by Hunter Water and CMA.

### October Club Night .

39 members enthralled by knowledgeable and passionate presentation on dolphins of Port Stephens by Simon Allan. Bird of the Evening was the Musk Lorikeet (Anthony Gooden)

### Catchment Day at the Wetland Centre.

Another well attended promotion. HBOC stall managed by Alan Stuart, Liz Crawford, Chris Herbert and N. Fraser.

## **THE 2004 BIRDS AUSTRALIA TWITCHATHON RESULTS**

### **Main Event**

#### **First with 220 species.**

HBOC's own Hunter Home Brewers. Yes, that's right, the likely lads finally made it to the rostrum. Team members were Steve and Mick Roderick, Craig Anderson and Lucas Grenadier

#### **Second with 218 species**

The Whacked Out Woodswallows  
Led by HBOC graduate David Geering but without the usual presence of the other Hunter identity Mike Todd – a valiant try and we haven't heard the last of this lot

#### **Third with 200 species**

The Central Coast Champions

#### **Fourth with 198,**

The Hunter Thickheads

A particularly meritorious performance as the Thickheads confine themselves to the Hunter Region and are all getting on a bit.

#### **Sixth with 183.**

The Dodgy Drongos

Grant Brosie and Robert MacDonald. Definitely the form team of the future, getting better and better every year

#### **In the Champagne Race the winners were**

HBOC's Lesticum Phoradae with 156 species  
In this event there are competing needs to take on quantities of alcohol throughout the day whilst remaining sober enough for the road rules. They deny baseless rumours that they will be renamed Lesh ticum fora - hey wasnt dat a wash a macallit

Seriously, but, isn't it interesting that all these winning teams do the bulk of their racing in the Hunter and chose to finish at the Wetland Centre Remember to pay up your pledge to your team – or offer them money anyway- its not too late –as it all goes to the good cause of Regent Honeyeater conservation.

And now a report from the trenches.....

### **Carry On Birding II**

## **A tale of highs, lows and triumph The Dodgy Drongo campaign**

### **As reported by Grant Brosie. Head Drongo**

OK, so the title of this story may be a little far fetched, it would suit a Hollywood blockbuster better, but the events leading up to our Twitchathon campaign were not exactly ideal especially for a stressed out team leader still recovering from last year's effort.

It all started on Monday morning when I turned up at my new place of employment and was told I had to work Saturdays. "This is the biggest weekend of the year, you can't do this to me" were the thoughts racing through my head as I then thought of Robert and what he would say. That night I stormed around the house swearing and cursing (what's new you're all thinking) and finally made the decision to ring my soon-to-be-suffering partner. To my delight he took it well - disappointed, but well.

The next day I told one of my work mates the situation and before I knew it I gotten the afternoon off, and then when I mentioned we were starting at Mudgee I got a further half hour off, YAY! Crisis over! So at 11:30am Saturday, Robert and I made the quick trip out to Munghorn Gap where we started our race.

As 3 o'clock ticked over we started with, pardalotes, gerygone and thornbills which fell quick, as did spinebill (sorry champagners) and surprisingly a Brush Cuckoo. Moolarben Rd was excellent producing bee-eater, triller, heaps of Little Lorikeet, Turquoise Parrot, Spotted Quail-thrush, White-browed Babbler, Brown-headed and Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Dusky Woodswallow, Emu, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike and Diamond Firetail.

Speckled Warbler, Wonga Pigeon and Gang-gang Cockatoo were seen and heard at the picnic

area. We left Munghorn very satisfied but the best was still to come.

Last year night birds let us down but this year on the drive to Barrington we had excellent views of 3 Barn Owl, 3 Tawny Frogmouth and heard an Owlet-nightjar. The list was growing.

The next morning we awoke at Allyn River and picked up Rose Robin calling almost immediately. Up the hill we roared (stumbled actually) recording White-headed and Topknot Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-dove, Catbird and Pitta. Bassian Thrush was an added bonus as was the Russet-tailed Thrush seen around the corner. Then it was a quick stop at Barrington House to see Brush Turkey and then we were on our way.

On the trip to Seaham, Sacred Kingfisher, Dollarbird and Channel-billed Cuckoo were added with a bonus bird being a Pheasant Coucal besides the road and at Seaham, Blue-faced and Striped Honeyeaters and Pallid Cuckoo. A quick stop at Green Wattle Creek finally revealed Buff-rumped Thornbill, plus Cicadabird, Scarlet Honeyeater and a Bar-shouldered Dove calling. Long-billed Corellas were at the end of Butterwick Rd, and the usual suspects at Walka Water Works, although next year I'll make sure I have \$3 in the car.

Next stop Lenaghans, where we saw our rarest?? bird, a flock of over a hundred Whiskered Tern. Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo and Wedge-tailed Eagle were seen overhead and Comb-crested Jacana and Plumed Whistling-duck were highlights.

Ash Island was quiet as usual on Twitchathon although cisticola, chat, greenshank, Black-tailed Godwit and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper were around. Stockton Sandspit produced avocet, curlew, Pied Oystercatcher, Tereks and tattlers. It was here we realized we had gone past last years total and we still had 4 hours to go!!

So we made some unplanned stops at Newcastle Baths (Common Tern and Wedge-tailed Shearwater), Awabakal Nature Reserve (Little Wattlebird, New Holland Honeyeater and

Variegated Fairy-wren) and Newcastle Wetlands Reserve (Latham's Snipe and Tawny Grassbird).

Then it was off to our final stop, The Wetlands Centre, with over an hour to spare. We slowly strolled around looking at Nankeen Night Heron, Red-kneed Dotterel, European Goldfinch, White-cheeked and Brown Honeyeater, Wandering Whistling-duck and Little Grassbird and as 4pm grew near other teams flew past us in an unplanned scurry.

With ten minutes to go we sat down and did the final tally, 183 species!!!! 19 more than last year. What an improvement! Of course we didn't win, not even close, but well done to the Brewers anyway and an even bigger well done to the Champagne team who thrashed the opposition.

Well the Dodgy Drongos can't wait until October next year, although Robert, you know the rules, no discussing routes and tactics until next August. Well done everyone and long live the Regent Honeyeater.

## **BIRD WORDS: OSPREY**

The Osprey is the most cosmopolitan of all raptors, found on every continent except Antarctica, and in many island groups.

The name derives from the Anglo-French 'ospriet' from the Medieval Latin 'avius prede' which simply means 'bird of prey'. It became specifically attached to the Osprey through confusion with the coincidentally similar 'osfraie', the Old French name for the bird. 'Osfraie' is derived in turn from the Latin 'ossifraga' meaning 'bone breaker. Ossifraga was a name originally applied to the Lammergeier, an old world vulture which breaks open bones by dropping them from mid-air onto rocks. The Osprey does not share this remarkable habit, nor is it closely related to the Lammergeier. How the epithet 'ossifraga' came to be linked to the Osprey in addition to the Lammergeier remains a mystery.

(from CBOC Newsletter October 2004)

## The Uncles Delight At SSS by Tom Clarke

Since starting the weekly maintenance works at Stockton Sandspit, all the regulars have found the experience personally very rewarding. Shorebirds have used the site to feed and roost (as predicted) but one particular aspect that wasn't initially on the agenda was nesting. Over the course of our first season, the summer of 2003 - 04, we were absolutely delighted as we witnessed a succession of four Red-capped Plover breeding attempts.

Looking back over my notes it was apparent that nest site selection had started in mid-winter (24<sup>th</sup> July) on ground we had cleared of all tall weeds and grass. We celebrated, in sedate and measured manner, on 9<sup>th</sup> September when the first chicks were found. By that time, the third and fourth attempts were well under way with hens sitting on eggs. With birds nesting on the ground it was decided to call off a project of earth works designed to lower a section of the sandspit to promote saltmarsh habitat. That work would have to wait till next year.

The next season arrived too quickly for earthwork types but despite some delays the work was completed and machines were off the site by 6<sup>th</sup> August. Already we had seen nest site inspections by the Red Caps that just managed to hold off till the coast was clear. One week later two nests had been established and birds were sitting on eggs. Unfortunately by the beginning of September, three nests had been predated or abandoned and things weren't so good for our Red Cap mates. However, at the other end of the sandspit, site inspection and courtship behaviour could be seen and by the end of that month two chicks were discovered. We were uncles again!

Breeding continued through October and November, by which time another six nests had been built and eggs laid. Out of that at least three more pairs of chicks made it through to hatching. Of course our skills at observing the various behaviours of the ground nesting birds were improving like mad and as a result we had now

witnessed courtship, site inspection, copulation, nest building and incubation.

What a great day it was on 8<sup>th</sup> October, around 3.30pm when finally the moment of hatching was observed. The hen had sat all day as we speculated on the likely birth date; we just knew it had to be pretty soon. Then the hen stood up and the tiniest ball of fluff staggered out on wobbly pins from underneath. This chick then collided with a stem of re-sprouting ambrosia and was knocked over as it struggled to keep balance. Shortly afterwards a second chick appeared and joined its sibling in gaining its feet. It was an amazing moment and a joy to behold.

Well of course the job of raising chicks has only just begun and the effort of parent birds in protecting their offspring through to maturity is an enormous challenge. By this time the previously quiet nursery has developed into a rowdy and crowded roosting place, twice a day, for a couple of thousand shorebirds. These intruders are met with tireless scolding by the diminutive parents and it must be a great relief when the tide runs out and they move off again. Of particular threat, it seems, are the Eastern Curlew that like to stand around the saltmarsh margins; the very place the Red caps choose to hide their chicks. The sight of an agitated Red Cap chasing a giant brown monster is entertaining to the observer but I'm sure its life and death stuff for the bird.

By mid November of this current season the sandspit had provided opportunities for ten Red-capped Plover nests, three Masked Lapwing nests and three Black-winged Stilt nests. The stilts breeding efforts were a total surprise to us and despite all three nests ending in abandonment there just may be better days ahead next year.

All nesting has ceased now but there is still a lot of interest following the progress of the chicks. The survivors are fully feathered now but lack the bold head markings so we can still pick them out of the crowd. All survivors are fully independent and parents are having a well deserved rest. There still exists some interaction when offspring get near parents and receive

nothing except a scolding adult indicating that the free feed is over.

### Conflict in the Garden

Max Maddock

Since we moved in to our house on our 15 Hectare property at Glen Oak 18 years ago, we have been able to observe a wide range of conflict behaviours exhibited by the various bird species that have made their home in the area round the house. The area was originally pasture with a few old ironbarks in which we have developed a bush garden of native shrubs and trees with large areas of lawn. The family room, with its floor to ceiling glass, makes an ideal observation area to watch the resident and visiting birds. Typical of such open habitat, the most common residents are the aggressive species Magpie, Pied Butcherbird, Noisy Miner, Magpie Lark and Kookaburra. After initial skirmishes, they have reached an uneasy truce with each other and the less aggressive Satin Bowerbird, Grey-crowned Babbler and Crested Pigeon and vigorously defend the area against intrusion by species such as White-winged Chough and Blue-faced Honeyeater.

A resident pair of Magpies has raised regular families over the years in an ironbark tree next door and forage daily around our house. There are annual ferocious fights between the adults and their offspring when it is time for the youngsters to be driven away to find territories of their own but we have never been subject to personal attack during the nesting season that the species are famous for. However, the birds attempt to drive off any other species that come around to use their foraging areas and are more aggressive to them during the nesting season.

They are particularly aggressive to the clan of White-winged Choughs that are regular visitors. The Choughs create havoc with the garden mulch as they scatter it onto the lawn and driveway while digging with their dagger-like beaks for grubs. The Magpies are resentful of their presence and carry out dive bombing attacks on them. The Choughs round up into a tight defensive circle, heads facing outward, a bit like the circle of wagons in the old Cowboy and Indian movies. They squawk and shuffle

around as the Magpies carry out swoop after swoop for several minutes before finally giving up and letting their quarry get on with the business of distributing mulch. Noisy Miners also join the dive bombing but the Choughs just ignore them.

The pair of Kookaburras that use the ironbarks as a vantage point for spotting worms and lizards, and have nested in termite nests near the house, have not shown aggression to the other species but are often mobbed by the Noisy Miners, which resent them using the same territory. However, we have witnessed a vigorous battle between two Kookaburras. The two were locked tightly together on the ground with beak and claws, rolling over and over for about 20 minutes. A barracking bunch of Noisy Miners, Magpie Larks, Pied Butcherbirds and Satin Bower Birds gathered in a circle around them, like the curious spectators that collect around a street brawl between humans.

The Noisy Miners are particularly resentful of the Blue-faced Honeyeaters which have joined the resident species over the last few years. The Blue-faced have nested each year in the close vicinity and the adult pair and their green-faced juveniles compete with the Miners for the blossoms of the many Callistemons, Grevilleas, Banksias and Kangaroo paws growing around the house and for the insects that frequent the shrubs during the non-flowering season. The Miners mob and harry them and the pursuit around the trees have a curious resemblance to police chases of speeding motorists. Despite the persistence of the Miners, the Blue-faced have continued to hold their own in the territory.

Unlike the Magpies, the Blue-face Honeyeaters have been guilty of attacking us. On one occasion, I was working in the garden under the branch of an ironbark on which there was a collection of sticks resembling a nest – the remains of an old Babbler night roost. A pair of Blue-faced sat above my head and squeaked noisily. One of them began to swoop at me from the branch. The swoops became closer and closer and finally the bird brushed across my back.

Recently there was a more aggressive incident. We were in the family room one day, watching the avian world go by, when a flock of Noisy Miners was fiercely pursuing 4 Blue-faced Honeyeaters. While we watched, one Blue-faced, trying to outwit its pursuers, dived at the netting that covered the lemon tree. The net was to protect the lemons from marauding Sulphur-crested Cockatoos that have a habit of decimating the crop just before it is ready to harvest. The bird became hopelessly entangled in the net and its mates and the Miners gathered on the same nearby ironbark branch with the old nest in it, chattering noisily and peering at the drama below.

While Heather and I spent about 20 minutes trying to untangle the creature, the supporting Blue-faced Honeyeaters began swooping at us. While I was closely engrossed by the task in hand, I felt a sudden thumping blow on the temple. One had crash-dived kamakazi-fashion at great speed on the side of my head, with enough force to make me feel dizzy for a minute or so and tender for about a day afterwards. We continued to flinch as near-miss attacks continued, till at last the bird was finally freed. It took off at great speed, minus a few tail feathers, closely pursued by its mates and the flock of Miners.

A few weeks ago I witnessed a rather unusual bird on bird encounter. A resident pair of Masked Lapwings regularly forage on the lawn and are occasionally upset when a third one intrudes, resulting in the residents uttering their staccato metallic calls while pursuing the interloper clear of the territory. From the family room vantage place recently, an obvious intruder appeared and the local bird reacted by stretching upwards in a stiff pose. The intruder adopted a similar stance and stalked very slowly forwards until the two birds were breast to breast in contact, their heads over each other's shoulder. Then began a stately stilted game of hoppo bumpo. The birds stretched their wings and buffered each other with their breasts, all the while maintaining the stiff upright stance.

Occasionally contact was briefly broken by turning in a tight circle and then continuing the

bout. Eventually, the visitor conceded defeat and departed.

Strangely enough, when most of the species gather together on the lawn close to the family room window, it is the Crested Pigeon that appears to be come out as top dog. There are occasional flashes of aggression displayed by the alpha male Satin Bowerbird towards other bowerbirds and the more aggressive species. The whole kaleidoscope of behaviour makes entertaining and informative bird watching.

### **Mystery Behaviour of Nankeen Night Herons**

From Max Maddock

Since June 2001, I have been regularly monitoring the Nankeen Night Herons using the Casuarina trees of the wetland at Wallbridge Reserve in Raymond Terrace as a day roost. At first I made counts mainly monthly but more recently, mostly weekly. Until this year the general pattern has been one of low numbers or zero November – January, increasing numbers February to July and then a decrease as summer approached. The maximum counts for each of the first three years were 22 (July 2001), 17 (June 2002) and 8 (June 2003), the pattern suggesting a declining population.

I had attributed the low or zero numbers November-January as being due to movement to a nesting colony somewhere (eg. the Wetlands Centre or inland wetlands?). However, the long drought inland has had a major negative impact on inland colonial waterbird nesting. Richard Kingsford (NSWNPWS) told me that there has been no nesting at Macquarie Marshes since 2000.

Bill Johnson (NSW NPWS) related a similar, possibly worse story for the Gwydir, where the "effects of irrigation development are having the same effect on waterbird breeding as in the Macquarie Marshes, but possibly more severe". Jen Southeron, owner of one of the Gwydir private property Ramsar sites, advised me that during the drought most species normally seen were only present in very small numbers and "little breeding of anything". She also reported

that even after the January 2004 rains, there were no signs of breeding and that in March, April and July there were only odd small groups of Night Herons present. Breeding events in the Marshes and the Gwydir usually number in thousands of pairs.

My curiosity was aroused when the pattern at Wallbridge changed markedly during 2004. After a zero count in December 2003 there were 4 in January which dropped to 1 in March and then numbers began to climb again to 7 in June, and 14 in September. In October there was a sudden influx to more than 60 which have remained into early November. One of the birds is a very striped juvenile.

Night Herons have been recorded at the Wetlands Centre during egret breeding seasons and juveniles have been present, often in significant numbers, at the end of the season. However, no nests have been reported in the 23 years the heronry has been in existence, despite some considerable efforts to find them. When the start of the 2004 nesting season was first noticed by Plattsburg Public School on 25 October, there were several Night Herons present.

Paddy Lightfoot and I located 9, on 7 November. Bernice Burgess reported 'at least a dozen' in the Middleton-Paperbark Swamp area on November 8. Ann Lindsey had recently recorded at least 62 departing the Centre at dark for a night's foraging. The question still remains – do they nest at Shortland? They used to nest in company with Great and Intermediate Egrets up till the early 70s at the colony in the mangroves that used to exist where Stockton Bridge now stands at Kooragang. The colony was destroyed during the construction of the bridge.

The movement patterns of Nankeen Night Herons are virtually unknown. Where did they go when they disappeared from Wallbridge at the end of the previous years? Movement to and from the inland cannot be discounted. Is the recent pattern observed at Raymond Terrace in any way related to the inland drought? Does the influx at Wallbridge indicate the start of a breeding event? At the time of my last visit,

there was no sign of nests or nesting behaviours, although some of the herons wore the distinctive head plume. I will be continuing to monitor the colony on a regular basis to try and get some clues on the unusual behaviour and am gathering information from observers in the Murray Darling Basin.

I urge HBOC members to keep their eyes open for the species and to take special notice of numbers and behaviour when visiting the Wetland Centre during this season. I believe that a day roost exists in the Mangroves somewhere on the shores of Fullerton Cove that would be worth investigating. Some have been seen at Seaham over the years but I am not aware of any nesting taking place, although, like Shortland, I have occasionally seen several, including juveniles loafing around the shores of the swamp.

The species is under severe pressure for its survival due mainly to the combination of natural drought and unnatural water management regimes in the wetlands of the Murray-Darling Basin. Breeding episodes, when they occur, usually number in thousands of nests. It is probable that, like most herons, the life span would be about 3-5 years and that 1-2 chicks would normally be fledged per nest during each breeding episode. On that basis there would be thousands of Nankeen Night Herons that have never nested in their life span. Water problems have severely reduced the likelihood of success in breeding when it does occur. Thousands of chicks have failed to be produced each failed or non-existing breeding season to replace the lost adults. It is a recipe for ecological catastrophe.

## ANNUAL BIRD REPORTS ARE OUT

The latest in editor Alan Stuart's marathon effort has hit the newsstand and is yours just because you are a HBOC member

If you can collect at Club Night you will save the Club postage.

**OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHTS OCT/NOV 2004.**

2004				
Sep 19	Common Blackbird	1m	Cessnock	G.Brosie et al
Sep 25	White-backed Swallow	Pr	Jones Reserve Rd.	H.Tarrant
	Rufous Songlark	4	"	"
	Singing Bushlark	1	Yarrawa	"
	Diamond Firetail		"	"
	Red-capped Robin	1	"	"
	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	"	"
	Western Gerygone	1	"	"
Sep 19	Peaceful Dove	1	Vacy	"
Oct 3	Black-faced Monarch	Pr	Hunter Region Botanic Gardens	"
Sep 4 & 8	Australian Brush-turkey	1	Glenrock S.R.A.	C.Goodenough
Aug 13	Australian Brush-turkey	3+ 6imm	Blackbutt Reserve	"
Aug	Musk Lorikeet	Small flock	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
Sep 28	Leaden Flycatcher	Pr.	Teralba	T.Clarke
	Grey Goshawk	1	"	"
Oct 6	Powerful Owl	1	Salamander Bay	"
Oct 15	Lesser Sand Plover	1	Stockton Sandspit	"
	Terek Sandpiper	5	Fern Bay	"
Oct 15	Pacific Baza	1	"	"
Oct 13	Topknot Pigeon	23	Wallsend [F3 turnoff]	G.O'Connor
Oct 6	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	5	New Lambton Heights [garden]	F.Thomson
Sep-Oct	Little Wattlebird	Pr. N+1dy	"	"
Oct 10	Striated Pardalote	1	King Edward Park	M.Blanch
Oct 9-10	Satin Bowerbird	2	The Junction [garden]	"
Oct	Bush Thick-knee	Breeding ?	Salt Ash	NPWS [per N.Fraser]
Oct 12	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	Eleebana	A.Gooden
Oct 10	Ruff [breeding plumage]	1	Ash Island [Millham Pond]	N.McNaughton
Oct 16	Latham's Snipe	31	Irrawang Swamp	M.Maddock
Oct 12	Tawny Frogmouth Nest	Pr +3dy	Maryville	Per R.Walker
Oct 23	Peregrine Falcon	2	Lamb's Valley	C.Brock
	White-throated Needletail	~20	Brandy Hill [Seaham]	T.Ameson
Oct 14	Whiskered Tern	15	Morpeth S.T.W.	A.Lindsey/M.Newman
Oct 16	Rufous Songlark	2	Mt. Arthur Mine site	G.Newling
	Brown Songlark	1	"	"
Oct 13	Barn Owl	2[1 dead]	"	"
	Rufous Songlark	1	Wingen	"
Oct 19	Black-shouldered Kite	6	"	"
Oct 16	Latham's Snipe	31	Irrawang Swamp	M.Maddock
	Royal Spoonbill	16	"	"
Oct 8	Hoary-headed Grebe	60	Grahamstown Dam	"
Oct 27	Darter 4 birds on nests	5	Newcastle Wetlands Reserve	A.Lindsey
Oct 17	Pied Oystercatcher 2 nests	9	Stockton Beach	C&L.Herbert/R.McDonald
	Sanderling 2	2	"	"



OCT 17	Red-capped Plover	9	"	C&L Herbert/R Macdonald
	Gull-billed Tern	18	"	"
	Crested Tern	11	"	"
	White-bellied Sea-eagle	1+1juv	"	"
Oct 29	Common Sandpiper	1	Stockton Sandspit	T.Clarke
	Peregrine Falcon	1	"	"
Oct 16	Diamond Firetail		Moonan Flat	H.Tarrant
Oct 31	Satin Bowerbird	Bower	Greta [River Reserve]	"
Oct 24	Paradise Riflebird	2	Vacy	"
Nov 7	White-winged Triller	3m+2f	Bolwarra [garden]	"
Nov 9	Common Blackbird	2	Maitland [2 locations nr hosp)	"
	Square-tailed Kite	1	Shortland	"
Oct 31	Black-eared Cuckoo	1	Pine Grove Rd.	Hunter Thickheads
	Northern Giant Petrel	3	Newcastle Ocean Baths	"
Oct 14	Black Falcon	1	Ash Island	Lindsey/Newman
Oct 20	White-necked Heron	30+	Lenaghan's Drive	R.McDonald

	Plumed Whistlind Duck	20+	Lenaghan's Drive	"
	Whiskered Tern	50+	"	"
Oct 21	Brown Quail	1	Glen Oak	M.Maddock
Oct 22	Hoary-headed Grebe	30	Grahamstown Dam	"
Oct 20	Plumed Whistling Duck	2	Pambalong N.R.	R.McDonald
	Great Crested Grebe	6	"	
Nov 1	Nankeen Night Heron	60+	Raymond Terrace [Wallbridge Rd]	"
Nov 10	White-bellied Sea-eagle	1imm+1sub ad	Awabakal N.R.	"
	Osprey	2	"	"
Nov 10	Latham's Snipe	73	Irrawang Swamp	A.Lindsey/M.Maddock
Nov 2	White-winged Triller	1	Ash Island	P.Lightfoot
Nov 10	Painted Snipe	Pair	Ash Island	N.McNaughton
	Red-necked Stine	17	"	"
Nov 2	Black-eared Cuckoo	1	"	"
Nov 6	Black-winged Stilt	743	Woodberry	R.McDonald
	Black Swan	527	"	"
	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	5	"	"
Nov 6	Banded Lapwing	4	Woodberry	R.McDonald
Nov 13	Rufous Songlark	1	Stockton Sandspit	N.Livanos/T.Lindsey
Nov 21	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	22	Teralba[Cockle Creek area]	C.Mann
Nov 6/7	Barred Cuckoo-shrike	1	Harrington	P.Hansbro
	Varied Triller	4	"	"
	Rose-crowned Fruit-dove	1	"	"
	Eastern Grass Owl	1	Harrington to Crowdy Head Rd.	"
	White-eared Monarch	1	Figtree Picnic area [Crowdy Head NP]	"
	Greater Sand Plover	1	Mudbishops Point [Manning R.]	"
	Sanderling	20	"	"
	Pacific Golden Plover	50	"	"
	Red-necked Stint	200	"	"

## 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>
22 January 2005	Hunter Wader Survey	7.15am various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569 <b>You must ring to confirm</b>
23 January 2005	Field Outing Belmont Lagoon	7.30am car park opp. Cold Tea Creek	Contact: Tom Clarke 4951 3872
1 February 2005	Midweek Outing Green Point	Meet car park Dilkera Ave Valentine at 7.30am	Anthony Gooden 4946 9110
<b>9 February 2005</b>	<b>Clubnight &amp; AGM</b>	<b>7.30pm Wetland Centre</b>	<b>Speaker: Alan Richardson Tracking Hunter Estuary Godwits</b>
14 February 2005	Atlas outing Lemon Tree Passage	7.30am Salt Ash Service Station near roundabout	Nick Lavanos 4954 5739 <b>You must ring to confirm</b>
20 February 2005	Field Outing Dungog Area	7.00am Raymond Terrace Macdonalds car park	Contact: Tom Clarke 4951 3872
26 February 2005	Hunter Wader Survey	10.30am various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569 <b>You must ring to confirm</b>
1 March 2005	Midweek Outing Taylors Beach	7.30am car park at Taylors beach	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265
6 March 2005	Clean Up Australia	9.00am Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
<b>9 March 2005</b>	<b>Clubnight</b>	<b>7.30pm Wetland Centre</b>	<b>Speaker: Glenn Albrecht Solastalgia – ecosystem and human health in the Hunter</b>
12 March 2005	Hunter Wader Survey	10.30am various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569 <b>You must ring to confirm</b>
20 March 2005	Field Outing Stockton Sandspit/ Ash Island	8.00am Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
25 – 28 March 2005	Easter Camp Gunnedah	Directions to this private property available from Alan Stuart	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 <b>You must ring to confirm</b>

## Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. to be held at the Wetlands Centre, Shortland on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2005 commencing at 7:30pm.

Business of the meeting: Confirmation of minutes of 2004 AGM  
Annual Report Including Financial Report  
Election of Office Bearers (see separate notice)  
Filling of other positions  
General Business

The AGM will be followed by the February Club Night.

Tom Clarke, Public Officer.

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### Election of HBOC Office Bearers for 2005

Nominations are called for the following positions for 2005:

President  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Ordinary Members of the Management Committee. (6 max.)

Nominations shall be made in writing and signed by two members of the Club and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate. Written nominations shall be delivered to the Secretary by 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2005.

If insufficient written nominations are received by 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2004, the candidates nominated shall be deemed to be elected and further nominations shall then be received at the AGM.

Tom Clarke, Public Officer.

### Form Of Appointment Of Proxy

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.  
(Incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984)

I, .....(full name)  
of .....(address)

being a member of the Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

hereby appoint .....(full name of proxy)  
of .....(address)

being a member of that Club, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the Club to be held on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2005 and at any adjournment of that meeting.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

**Membership fees are now due for the year 1st January 2005 to 31st December 2005.**

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....Phone No.:.....

Please circle the appropriate category:      **Family - \$25**                      **Single - \$25**                      **Junior - \$3**

New members who joined after 30<sup>th</sup> September will be registered for 2005.  
Fees may be paid at Club Nights or by mail to the Hon. Treasurer, P.O.Box 24, New Lambton, NSW 2305

*Please return this completed form with your renewal, whether renewing in person or by mail.*