



Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER

Issue 6/05

December 2005-January 2006

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Conservation Officer

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Wilma Barden
Sue Hamonet
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**MERRY XMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL MEMBERS**

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*

HBOC welcomes the following new members;

Maggie Hristov of Wallsend
Ray & Sue McLean of Raymond Terrace

HBOC Annual Membership for 2006 remains at \$25 Family or Single and \$3 for Juniors. **Fees are due – check out the back page.**

NEWSLETTER DATES for 2006

Edition	Copy Deadline
February/March	29 January
April/May	2 April
June/July	4 June
August/September	30 July
October/November	1 October
December 2006/January 2007	3 December

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy was launched last month by the Department of Planning. Unfortunately it lacks any consideration of biodiversity conservation – this will be dealt with next year when the Department of Environment and Conservation finally presents its recommendations. It is disappointing to see a glossy strategy that ignores the need to plan for green conservation zones to enhance the future liveability of the Lower Hunter.

Threats to bird habitat continue to claim our attention

- Hardie Holdings' proposals for residential development on the shores of Ellalong Lagoon and on saltmarsh on Cromarty Sands near Taylors Beach;
- A proposed open cut coal mine at Awaba is likely to impact adversely on Masked Owl breeding habitat;
- Macquarie Marshes need adequate water for the health of the vegetation and to trigger and maintain bird breeding events.

The Committee is monitoring these issues and writing letters as required. Further information on the campaign to save the Macquarie Marshes is available from Tom Widdup, National Parks Association of NSW, ph 02 9299 0000 or email: westmanager@npansw.org.au.

Removal of mangroves on Ash Island to enhance shorebird feeding habitat is progressing well, and is expected to be completed by mid-December. Ash Island is the western part of Kooragang Island. This club project is being funded by an Envirofund grant from the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage. Suitable foraging areas on Swan Pond and Wader Pond, on either side of Wagtail Way, and on Milhams Pond, have been expanded significantly by the removal of encroaching mangroves. Clear lines-of-sight to potential predators have been opened up by this activity, and hopefully will help to attract shorebirds to these areas. Four Pacific Golden Plovers, 12 Common Greenshanks and a number of Black-winged Stilts were observed in the newly cleared part of Wader Pond during the last wader survey.

The recent Twitchathon was highly successful, with two Main Race teams smashing the previous record of 221 species observed in 24 hours. The Whacked-out Woodswallows from Dubbo recorded 229 species while the Hunter Home Brewers recorded 227 species, narrowly missing out on first place. The Hunter Thickheads tied with the Black-necked Stalkers (from the North Coast) for third place with 201 species, all found within the Hunter Valley, and the Dodgy Drongos (another Hunter team) came fifth with 196 species.

The Hunter's Champagne Race team, Lesticum Phoradae, came first with 147 species. The Twitchathon is lots of fun, giving participants the drive to hone their birdwatching skills while raising much-needed funds for Birds Australia's conservation and education projects.

Sincere thanks to all the sponsors, who helped the Hunter teams raise over fifteen hundred dollars, which will contribute to educational facilities at Birds Australia's Gluepot Reserve.

ABC Radio National recently aired a very well edited half hour documentary featuring interviews with the Hunter Thickheads and the Home Brewers participating in the Twitchathon. If you didn't manage to hear it on air, you can listen on-line at the ABC website! Select 'Street Stories' on Radio National. <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/history/streets/>

NSW National Parks Service are organising a White Ibis count in NSW on Sunday 11 December. They want people to survey and report on White Ibis numbers, nesting sites, locations, any colour banding, etc. It can be done anywhere in NSW and for any length of time that you have to spare. There is a survey form available online at http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/ibis_survey

And a final thought for Christmas – how about a subscription to Birds Australia for someone close to you?

Happy Birding, Liz Crawford

CLUB ACTIVITIES

CLUB NIGHT 12 October 2005.

This was an excellent night at the Lovett Gallery, Newcastle Regional Library around the theme of John Gould the famous English Ornithologist.

As an entr  more than 65 members listened enthralled as Mike Fidler updated his project to save, and study the Gouldian Finch at Mornington in the Kimberleys.

The AWC Wildlife Fund has performed 20 years of research and still has no conclusive reason for the species decline. Certainly land use changes have had an effect as in the different fire regimes and the introduction of cattle. At Mornington patch firing as been used leading to more habitat diversity (versus monoculture) and cattle have been fenced out of important areas,

The Gouldian Finch goes backwards in periods of austerity and at different times than the locally abundant Long-tailed Finch

Mike mentioned research on mate choice in the Gouldian Finch - with an obvious influence on breeding success in the wild. They have studied whether each of the three head colours breed preferentially with their own type; whether one colour does better than the others and whether this varies seasonally.

All in all it was a very professional presentation from a committed and knowledgeable member.

There followed a short talk by Ross Zimmermann of Newcastle Regional Library on Library bird resources including the volumes by Gould. In 1947 the library was given 40 volumes of John Gould's work - an almost complete collection including books on the birds of Asia and Europe. These precious books are accessible by appointment with a member of staff as your constant companion and white gloves to be worn.

The Main course however was a talk by Jill Albrecht on the Goulds in the Hunter. It was essentially a repeat of a talk first given by Glenn and Jillian in 1988 which followed their publication of a Monograph on the subject in 1986.

In 1839-1840 John and Elizabeth Gould spent two years in Australia collecting and drawing all the flora, fauna and especially birds of Australia.

The Monograph and the talk were based on Elizabeth's diaries and John Gould's notes and writing. The enterprise was a commercial one and John Gould issued a prospectus and collected subscriptions in advance to finance his travels.

They stayed for extended periods at the Upper Hunter property of Yanendie (which still exists) and travelled widely in the region.

Jillian made it clear that Elizabeth was a very respected nature artist at the time and John Gould gave her full credit for her work. He also acknowledged the assistance of two local aboriginal men who accompanied him and provided local knowledge and skills.

In Newcastle, they had a camp on Mosquito Island (now part of Kooragang Island) where the Regent Bowerbirds were an abundant pest in orchards.

As was the practice at the time, John Gould collected by shooting and his wife referred to him jokingly as "a great enemy of the feathered tribe"

Nevertheless he was a committed conservationist (as we would now say) regretting the destruction of Platypus habitat by settlers in the Maitland area.

In 1865 he lamented that the Flocks of Parakeets were no more and called for the protected of Australian birds before they became extinct.

It is an unfortunate fact that for some species of Kangaroo- now extinct- his are the only illustrations.

Jillian gave much fascinating detail of their collection, drawing and production methods plus the people they met and their impressions of local bird life. The Gould Prints are now worth large amounts of money although some of the less colourful are still within the reach of the ordinary person.

The large (?record?) crowd gave Jillian Albrecht a warm ovation at the end of her talk and then as a special treat we were able to adjourn to view the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition being held in the Gallery.

Congratulations to the organisers.

THE DARING MID-WEEKERS **A BIRD CAMP – SEPT 2005**

By Anthony Gooden

Late last year, Robert and Margaret Stewart had the (brilliant) idea that the mid week bird group should spread its wings and go on a camp. They had visited the area and thought it would be productive and fun.

So, on Monday 19 Sept, 23 excited birdos gathered at the Diamond Waters Caravan Park (at Laurieton south of Port Macquarie) for three days of concentrated bird watching.

We arrived, we saw some birds and then we went home. [NOTE: Sue, Ed and Charlie are not to read past this sentence. You'll be disappointed!!]

A few couples had arrived early for the weekend and had pretty bad weather. We settled into our well-appointed cabins and it cleared up for the official start.

As it turned out, we could have stayed in the caravan park for most of the time. There was much diversity in the park and, as it backs onto water, water birds added to our lists. I think one person had 50 species by the first arvo.

We had the usual culprits – noisy miners, magpies, peewees (magpie larks), kookaburras, crested pigeons and welcome swallows. There were olive-backed orioles, lewins honeyeaters, red and little wattlebirds and we could hear whip birds in the next property. The park owners showed us a nest in the next property and wanted to know if it was an endangered species as the owners are going to cut down the large gum to build a house. It was a pair of whistling kites – not endangered unfortunately but a wonderful sight for us as they continually gathered materials and returned to the nest, occasionally having a bit of a smooch. Hopefully, the owners will at least wait til nesting is over??

We also had a tawny frogmouth sitting patiently on its nest, a pair of sacred kingfishers at least inspecting a termite nest, fig birds, variegated fairy wrens, rufous whistlers, scarlet honeyeaters, brown gerygones & yellow thornbills. Near the water, we had a very friendly white-faced heron, eastern curlews, silver gulls, pelicans, masked lapwings feeding in the mud & gull-billed terns.

There were pied, little pied, black and little black cormorants sitting on various oyster bed poles.

In the arvo, we convoyed to the Kattang Nature Reserve. It was a bit windy but I think our highlight was good views of three Glossy Black Cockatoos – two adults and a screeching young. [note – good views doesn't mean that anyone got a decent photo?]. We did also see yellow-tailed black cockatoos, white-cheeked honeyeaters, and bar-shouldered doves, black swans, wood ducks and a black shouldered kite.

That evening, we commandeered the barbeque and picnic area for a combined happy hour and BBQ (mid-weekers don't do campfires). It was a howling success so much so that our proposed visit to a club for dinner the next evening was cancelled and bought more food for another BBQ. The butterscotch schnapps seemed to go down well.

On Tuesday morning, around the camp, I saw a female satin bowerbird constructing a nest in a swamp mahogany. I wasn't aware they had nests in trees. We also saw the whip birds and some crested terns. Of course, we checked out the whistling kites.

We then travelled to Indian Head rest area within Crowdy Bay National Park for some exciting bird experiences.

We were welcomed by 3 glossy black cockatoos – maybe the same ones from yesterday? – little wattle birds, noisy friar birds at a nest, olive backed orioles, fig birds [Bev's famous "my blue-faced a fig"], variegated and superb fairy wrens, golden whistlers – male and female singing to each other, black faced monarch, spangled drongo, sacred kingfisher, male satin bower birds, grey shrike thrush, leaden flycatcher, red browed finches & white checked honeyeaters.

When we weren't being blown off the cliff face, we had tremendous "above" views of a brahminy kite, a roosting white-bellied sea eagle and a juvenile whistling kite. Out to sea, there were a few Australian gannets and (thanks to Garth), we could (just) see a couple of whales sending their spray into the air.

While we were having lunch, we were visited by a HUGE lace monitor – it really was big and the birds were worried. Later, one had climbed a tree and forced a possum out of its nest.

Field outing to Carrington, Port Stephens 23rd October 2005 by Tom Clarke

A few of us went into Northhaven and it was really too windy for decent watching but we did get close views of an osprey as it floated over us in the strong winds.

Later in the arvo, we all went to the lookout on North Brother mountain – quite cold and very windy – not many birds but we saw some wonderful huge, old trees (John S's brush box or something else trees) and big strangler figs as well as a tolerant Red-necked wallaby. And the views were wide-ranging and spectacular.

At night, another successful BBQ with a little more happy in the happy hour!! It was a beaut bird call with approx. 105 birds for the trip – pretty good, eh?

On the Wed after brecky and packing up, one last stroll around the camp. A pair of grey shrike thrushes serenaded us and we had a darter, pied oystercatchers and a whimbrel on the water. Naturally, we had one last look at our threatened whistling kites busily working away in their nest.

Down to the Yacht Club reserve, where there has been much regeneration work. It was quiet at first but then we had a sea eagle, brahminy kite and a whistling kite, pied cormorants and a pair of white-faced herons, scaly breasted lorikeets and eastern rosellas, scarlet, yellow-faced and white-cheeked honeyeaters and a beautiful azure kingfisher.

Then a wonderful "nature" moment – a great egret and a largish stingray fishing and eating together. As the bird moved along, the stingray followed. Obviously, they were helping each other.

Finally, we moved to the Henry Kendall Reserve for a walk before lunch and the trip home. There were wood ducks, golden whistlers, brown gerygones, crested shrike tits (m and f), spangled drongo red-browed finches and Pam saw a striated heron. Then there was Robert's tawny log mouth – still, striated and knotty!! We also watched whistling kites wheeling overhead.

One last bird count and that was it. We had a great camp and there are possibly others to come. A great area for birding and a terrific bunch of people. Thanks again to Robert and Margaret.

I've just checked my diaries and can confirm that the last time I went birdwatching at Carrington was over eleven years ago. There are still some very vivid images in my mind from that day so it was with expectant excitement that I drove up the highway again. As I recall, it was Carrington that I saw my first ever, Pacific Baza (three in fact) and most likely the last time I saw three Southern Emu-wrens at one time as well. On this field outing, I am sad to relate, neither species was sighted.

But you should have been there just the same because then you would have enjoyed a wonderful morning of relaxed birding. The hardest part of the exercise was the walk from Carrington to Tahlee and return. Dead flat and with birds at arm's length on both sides we hardly raised a sweat as we dawdled along, admiring what was on offer. The morning was not always entirely stress free; there was great discussion over the identity of a bronze-cuckoo type found in a tree top that threatened to upset the calm until the realisation dawned that both Shining and Horsfields were in fact present. So everyone was happy.

Some birds were busy with breeding efforts; like the Spotted Pardalote that had burrowed into the side of the road and the pair of Eastern Spinebill building a nest in a casaurina. So good to watch this activity at such close range with birds hardly perturbed by admiring onlookers. Our Brown Thornbill friends, on the other hand, seemed to be on their way to Tahlee as well and were never too far away amongst the vegetation. Our gaze was not just at passerines; an early morning low tide gave us an opportunity to search for shorebirds out on the mud flats. Not exactly a raging big mob was found but at least some quality views of Bar-tailed Godwit, Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattler and Pied Oystercatcher made up for sheer lack of numbers.

The walk to Tahlee (must be at least 1km) was totally justified with the sighting of a pair of nesting Osprey and Chestnut Teal with dependent young along the creek. On the more leisurely scale, I need to boast about some "armchair" birding at morning tea that produced Blue-faced Honeyeater and Satin Bowerbird. This moment of bliss was, of course, all very well planned by the outing's leader. Thanks to Di and Lorna for sharing the day and being great company.

Atlas Outing, Gloucester Tops, 3rd September, 2005 by Nick Livanos

The weather looked promising as Grant Brosie, Colin Goodenough, Robert McDonald and I set out on a cool and sunny morning. Though we didn't stop, we saw quite a few birds on the way, including Jacky Winters, Dusky Woodswallows and, most common of all, Laughing Kookaburras, which seemed to be everywhere.

We had no trouble negotiating the six (or was it seven – no matter, we'll count them on the way out we said) fords prior to our first stop, the picnic area at the beginning of the ascent to the tops. Here we saw 23 species, including several Superb Lyrebirds, Eastern Yellow Robin, the three local Scrubwrens (White-browed, Yellow-throated and Large-billed), Brown Thornbills, Brown Gerygones and large numbers of Red-browed Finches. A Rose Robin was heard but not seen.

We continued up the road, stopping at various likely-looking spots, and were rewarded with close views of Red-browed Treecreepers, as well as this time seeing a Rose Robin, and flushing some Wonga Pigeons.

Our next major stop was at Kerripit Road, where we spent several hours. At first, the weather was unexpectedly warm, though later this did change to more like what we had expected, making us glad we had brought a few extra layers of clothing. Here we had good views of some gorgeous Flame Robins, as well as Crescent Honeyeaters and Crimson Rosellas.

The highlight (for two of us, anyway) was a couple of brief sightings of a Rufous Scrub-bird. In the area around 'the hut', Grant and I spent a lot of time getting tantalisingly close (within a metre or two) to two separate calling birds only to have the birds somehow getting past us without making the slightest sound, and then resuming calling, though Robert was lucky enough to see one of them. These birds have a reputation for being difficult to see, and it is well-earned, the most striking thing to me being their ability to move from practically underfoot with barely a rustle – and it was very 'rustly' habitat, for us anyway.

We then continued along the track in the direction of Careys Peak, and about 400 metres further on, heard another Scrub-bird calling on our left, so we thought we'd give it a final try.

Robert had a spell while Grant, Colin and I headed off in an attempt to see this bird which now sounded very close by. As we left the track, Colin paused to consult his 'field guide' (the world's heaviest, I'm sure – it required its own backpack and an IV drip for Colin's sustenance in order to be able to carry it around!), then asked us something to the effect of 'Does a Rufous Scrub-bird look like....?', and proceeded to describe the bird.

We both said yes, upon which he casually said to us 'Oh well, this is it here then'. Although I was only 10 metres away and was next to Colin in about 2 seconds, do you think I could see it? Suffice it to say that Grant and I followed its call down the hill, and over a gully, as it moved frustratingly further and further away, without success. Good enough for Colin, but not for us. In all, we saw 27 species in this area, but apart from a few 'hot' spots it was generally fairly quiet.

By this time, the weather had changed to cold and overcast, with intermittent misty rain. We therefore decided that rather than staying to cover our other planned survey locations, we should head down from the Tops, in case the conditions deteriorated further. By the time we reached the Sharpes Creek turnoff (one of our planned stops) however, the weather had not worsened too much, so we did a survey there. There was quite a lot of activity, with 19 species seen, the only new ones being Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo and our only Brush Turkey of the day, which surprised us by being way up high in the treetops.

By now it wasn't looking too good weatherwise, and as we didn't have a 4WD, we thought it prudent to call it a day and headed home. Not surprisingly, we forgot to count the fords on the way out, so I guess we'll have to do it next time – and maybe finally see a Scrub-bird.

**ATLASSING DAY MYALL LAKES
NATIONAL PARK 12 November 2005**

by **ANN LINDSEY**

Perfect weather and the excellent company of Robert McDonald, Grant Brosie and Jude Westphal made the atlassing day at Myall Lakes a great pleasure for me.

We started off at Booneri Camp on the Johnsons Hill track with several pairs of Variegated Fairy-wrens and Leaden Flycatchers. The Olive-backed Orioles, Mistletoebirds and White-throated Gerygones trilled away non-stop all morning and a Channel-billed Cuckoo and Cicadabird added their less melodious calls from time to time.

About four Southern Emu-wrens peered out of the death so that we could see their long tails and the beautiful blue breast of the male bird. Little Wattlebirds were common and White-naped, Brown-headed, Yellow-faced, White-cheeked and Scarlet Honeyeaters flew around in the tops of the trees. About twenty-one Needle-tails were seen once high in the sky. Just as we were returning to morning tea Jude cleverly spotted a Tawny Frogmouth doing its dead limb trick.

At Bombah Point ferry we added cormorants, Darter, Pelicans, Dusky Moorhen, Swans, Masked Lapwing and the odd duck, not a Radjah! The roar of speedboats spoilt beautiful Mungo Brush, but we did the rainforest walk and saw Yellow Robins feeding young, Large-billed Scrubwrens, Brown Thornbills, Catbird and Golden Whistlers.

After lunch two Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos screeched through the palms and a Rufous Fantail was finally seen. We left the Park with White-bellied Sea-Eagle flying up the beach. Robert took us to Karuah Wetlands on the way home where six Royal Spoonbills were full breeding plumage and Nankeen Night Herons some with breeding plumes were startled out of the trees. Brown Honeyeaters were taking a late bath as we left for Newcastle.

We did six atlas surveys and saw or heard 96 species.

Pain In The Neck Birdwatching

**Field outing to White Rock Camp, Upper Allyn –
20th November 2005 by Tom Clarke**

Ever since that disastrous long weekend camp a couple of years ago, I have been keen to visit White Rock Camp in more peaceful times. Mostly to eradicate those awful memories of humans behaving badly but also to enjoy some campsite birdwatching without the constant suffocating din.

Well that's exactly how it was last month on the HBOC outing to Upper Allyn and, apart from all those bird calls, the silence was deafening! What a brilliant dawn chorus wakes you from your slumber with Eastern Yellow Robin trying to outshine those **Black-faced Monarchs**. That's after the "Noisy" Pitta has got you out of the sleeping bag and with half-opened eyes you fail to catch even a glimpse of the blighter.

So with all and sundry making their morning announcements and a hurried breakfast under your belt its time to enact Plan B. Plan B is where you and your mate grab fold up chairs and walk up the track to that other breakfast spot, the huge fig tree. Since the previous day's unsuccessful effort to study all the comings and goings at the top of the fig we had been suffering from 'birdwatchers neck'. Now this alternative method to sit in lean-back chairs has got to be the answer.

All the fruit eating types in the forest do the rounds of several figs but this particular tree is close to camp and level ground is made to order for armchair birdwatching. Who knows how many Satin Bowerbirds feed here but Regent Bowerbird turns up from time to time as well as Green Catbird. Really good views of White-headed Pigeon are rewards for patient observers but the most impressive sights are those of Wompoo Fruit-dove. I just love that striking combination of purple and yellow amongst the green.

Pleased to report then, that Plan B worked a treat until we realized that the leeches found us "sitting" targets

A walk through Peach Tree Rainforest Walk is an absolute must for birdwatchers where Russet-tailed Thrush hide, until the last moment as you approach. Flushed thrush show their field marks well so it is probably a good thing for identification at least that they fly off. What a pity we seem to miss observing them living out their lives most of the time.

Another gem trying desperately to blend into the background was a nesting Spectacled Monarch. The nest appears as a deep conical shape of green materials supported in a thin fork at about 2m above the ground. The poor bird sitting on the nest is contorted by the small angle of the cone and finishes up with both bill and tail pointing up hill with all but the head hidden within the nest.

As it turned out all seven participants at the outing chose to camp for at least one night over the weekend. I hope this wasn't because people feel the trip up to White Rock Camp is too far for a day out; it is less than 2 hours drive from Wallsend and only another ten minutes over the hill from Barrington House. A brilliant place to watch birds but please avoid long weekends and, according to the forest ranger, schoolies week.

Protect Our Green Corridors

The Green Corridor Coalition has progressed a long way since its inception. Hunter Bird Observers Club is just one of fifty supporting organisations that make up the coalition of groups pressing for the protection of "our green corridor" from Stockton Bight to the Watagan Mountains.

As strategies for the future development of the lower hunter are made public it is timely to press the point that the environment needs to feature strongly in these plans. To show the State Government how much our green corridors mean to us the Green Corridor Coalition has decided to get as many people as possible signing postcards that will be presented to the Premier.

"We want to see the ecological connections (the flows of plant and animal life, water and nutrients) protected."

"We call on our Premier to protect the Lower Hunter Green Corridors in the National Park system and to prepare an integrated management plan to manage the area into the future."

Please take time to sign a postcard and send it off to either, The Wilderness Society, 90 Hunter Street, Newcastle NSW 2300 or hand in at any HBOC function..

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY (1)

Steve Paton of Birds Australia advises that the summer survey for Painted Snipe is on the 14th and 15th January 2006.

More information on this from Ann Lindsey on polytelis@hunterlink.net.au who will probably be coordinating the HBOC response however feel free to go to likely spots on these days and look for the birds – reporting to Ann later.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY (2)

The 'Minitwitch'

There are those who participate in the annual Twitchathon – a 24 hour birdwatching event run by Birds Australia in which several HBOC members actively compete each year.

But little known (until now) is the concept of the Minitwitch – a 5hr birdwatching event run by a few of the more committed (Morrisset anybody? -ed) twitch-types in the HBOC. The rules are simple .. in fact they are identical to the 24 hour event – only difference is that it runs from 8am to 1pm on the given day (oh, and the finish line is different) Teams can go wherever and however they like (apart from aircraft!) and record as many different bird species as they can in the allotted timeframe. Teams finish for lunch and refreshments at the Newcastle Queens Wharf Brewery at 1pm.

Most importantly it's a purely fun thing—and it's a really great way of getting out and finding birds in the Hunter and testing your Twitchathon skills. You'll be surprised how many birds can be found in the Hunter in only 5 hours. At this stage, the next 'Minitwitch' has been earmarked for Sunday the 22nd of January... so come along, grab some friends and have some twitchin' fun!

For more info contact Mick Roderick
fred_barney_72@yahoo.com or 0432 356 590

BIRD NOTES

Learning the Hard Way

It appears that, like us, birds are able to learn from their mistakes.

We had a community of grey crowned babblers at our place, whose numbers fluctuated between 7 and 10. Then gradually, over a few years, the colony dwindled until only two remained.

We were thrilled therefore, when this year they hatched two chicks. The birds too were clearly excited and made a great song and dance about it. They are always noisy birds but they were now noisier than ever. Pat and I tried to tell them to keep quiet about it but they wouldn't listen. When they left the nest, the youngsters were pretty much ignored by the adults, who simply went about their normal feeding routine, turning over leaves and twigs with their beaks. The chicks, with their short stubby tails, were left to hop along behind, out in the open, calling continuously.

Two days after they left the nest, we found one of the chicks dead in the grass. There was no obvious injury and I have no idea how it died but it had certainly been very vulnerable to any sort of predator. However, this tragedy was followed by a dramatic change in the bird's behaviour. The adults were much quieter and the remaining youngster was secreted in a dense scrub, where it remained for about a week while the parents brought it food.

Only when its tail had grown and it was able to fly well and feed itself did it emerge again to forage with the adults.

It's just a pity that they had to learn the hard way.

Black-Tailed Yellow Cockatoo

Stories have emerged from Canberra recently of a mutant cockatoo. The bird is pale yellow in colour with black spots and two black tail feathers. In all other respects it is like a normal YTBC, with which it associates.

RECENT RESEARCH

Low Calcium eggs show their spots

From the New Scientist 17 September 2005
(Summary from Birds Queensland Newsletter)

The speckles on birds eggshells not only make good camouflage, they could also stop them breaking under their mothers' weight.

A UK study of eggs laid by great tits (*Parus major*) has concluded that the spots and speckles have a mechanical role, strengthening the eggshell at its weakest points, and so compensating for a shortage of calcium in the mothers' diet.

"For a hundred years, people assumed speckling was for camouflage" says Andrew Gosler of the University of Oxford, whose team analysed patterning and composition of around 90 eggshells. They found that the spottiest eggs came from areas where soils were most deficient in calcium, such as clays. The intensity of pigmentation was highest in the thinnest regions of shell, suggesting it was compensating for lack of calcium.

Gosler doesn't deny that some birds have clearly evolved eggshell patterns to provide camouflage, especially shorebirds that lay their eggs directly on exposed beaches. But, he argues that his team's study, published in *Ecology Letters*, applies to small songbirds and other species whose eggs don't need to be camouflaged because they are hidden from sight.

He hopes to test his theory directly by feeding birds set amounts of calcium and counting egg spots.

BOOK REVIEW

Next edition, I intend to review the book **The Big Twitch** by Sean Dooley. Suffice it to say at this time that it's a great read revealing the spills and thrills of year-long twitching for a record with the humour of a talented Australian writer.

Birds are notoriously hard to buy presents for so get your favourite birders companion to buy you this book for Xmas – or indulge yourself. Available, as they say, at all good bookshops.

TO TWITCH, OR NOT TO TWITCH:
THAT IS THE QUESTION:
WHETHER 'TIS NOBLER IN THE MIND
TO SCAN THE WINGS OF SPARROWS AND
OUTPOURING BIRDSONG,
OR TO TAKE SIGHT AGAINST A MOB OF WADERS
AND BY 'SCOPING, TICK THEM?

TO DIP: TO TICK: NO MORE; AND BY THE EVENING
TO SAY WE END THE TWITCHING AND THOUSAND
NATURAL FLOCKS THE TEAM IS THERE FOR, 'TIS AN
ENDING DEVOUTLY TO BE WISHED.
TO COUNT, TO GLOAT; TO SLEEP: PERCHANCE TO
WIN: AY, THERE'S THE RUB....

Yes, Folks it's that time again, the twitchers have returned with their booty of tall tales and sponsorship. Space constraints are such that the Hunter Home Brewers story must wait till next edition, but for now a taste of their style and two other sagas read on.....

The Hunter Home Brewers 2005 Story – “The Finch Factor”

Well, another Twitchathon has come and gone, and the local teams have once again done themselves proud. The Hunter produced 3 out of the top 5 teams, with the now-infamous Hunter Home Brewers coming home runners-up in their title-defence bout with archrivals, the Whacked Out Woodswallows. The Brewers were chivalrous in defeat, having actually broken the previous record by 5 species, only to be outdone by the Woodswallows by just 2 birds.

The Brewer's story this year is well-balanced mix of good oil, solid birding, little sleep, nice brewing, a dash of heartache, and...plenty of finches. But the editor informs me that there simply isn't enough space for my account of Brewer's 2005 twitch-tale...alas we have decided to carry it over until the next Newsletter...and besides, we don't want to be 'Twitchathonned out' for this edition!

Jacqueline Winter

(Team Members: Mike and Steve Roderick, Lucas Grenadier and Craig Anderson)

FABULOUS TWITCH FOR HUNTER THICKHEADS by Ann Lindsey

We ended our twenty-four hour race in pouring rain at The Hunter Wetlands Centre with 201 species to our credit but lacking the five needed to beat our best ever score of 205 a couple of years ago. As we walked along the soaking wet grassy tracks we noticed other dripping twitchers, some in raincoats and some in T-shirts, their heads down, silently concentrating, not talking, hoping for a new bird to pop up. Our “dead certain” Wandering Whistling-Duck did not appear. Alas and alack!

These final minutes were in stark contrast to our magic start out west in the bright sun where our first bird was Regent Honeyeater with two large chicks in the nest, closely followed by Painted Honeyeater another high-profile bird of the Hunter. Olive-backed Oriole, Rufous Songlark, Noisy Friarbird, Scarlet, Striped and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Brush and Pallid Cuckoos followed in quick succession.

Back along the track we twitched our next best bird, the White-backed Swallow, flying over the open field and Rainbow Bee-eaters hawked from dead trees. The next stop produced Restless Flycatcher, White-winged Triller and fabulously coloured Dollarbirds, one soaking up the sun with its wings outspread along the branch much to Liz's delight. Wedge-tailed Eagle, Hobby and Kestrel flew into view. On the irrigated fields Little Raven appeared on cue.

Nightfall found us spotlight in hand at a sewerage treatment works - which yielded absolutely nothing! Another less than memorable dinner at a roadhouse and quickly down to the forest – no Barn Owl! Along the road a jolly Tawny Frogmouth saved us the trouble of looking for it next day. We were in bed by 11.30pm straining our ears for night birds but we must have fallen asleep before they called.

The rainforest put on a terrific dawn chorus and we happily twitched Yellow and Rose Robins and Golden Whistler from our sleeping bags. The two monarchs, all the possible scrubwrens, the Paradise Riflebird, Brown Cuckoo-dove, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Topknot Pigeon, Rufous Fantail and Crested Shrike-tit all put in an appearance.

Carry On Birding III

We're Getting Better!!!!

From Grant Brosie

As we make our last stop on the rainforest edge Mike was surprised and thoroughly elated by the sight of a Southern Emu-wren clinging to the side of a large stump in a robin-like fashion before it flew far enough for us all to see. According to the rules of the game more than 50% of the team has to see the bird before it can be counted which means three Thickheads have to see the bird. This is sometimes quite difficult and we did indeed miss out on a couple because only two of us saw them.

The rain swept in as we headed down the valley. Nevertheless, Musk and Rainbow Lorikeets were seen from under umbrellas and Channel-billed Cuckoo called from near its mulberry tree. The Great Crested and Hoary-headed Grebes, Musk Duck and White-bellied Sea-Eagle were all at their stations and we roared past.

Despite our gloomy predictions about the unfavourable low tide, the waders were all present and highly visible and we left the Sandspit with our total in the 190's. Off to the beach and narrowly missing marching band congestion we saw Sooty Oystercatcher, Ruddy Turnstone, several terns, shearwaters and the odd gannet. Elated we drove to our next stop, but we dipped on the three birds we were counting on. This was a terrible blow to our high hopes and as the rain poured down we arrived at the Wetlands Centre.

The good thing about the Twitchathon is that it happens every year and the mighty Thickheads will be back! Thanks to a great team, Liz Crawford, Chris Herbert, Mike Newman. And special thanks to our wonderful rivals, the Hunter Home Brewers and those Dodgy Drongos for making our twitch all the more exciting. We won't talk about the Whacked-out Woodswallows.

Many thanks to our good supporters who give us the energy to be this crazy! After all the Twitchathon is about raising funds to support our avian co-dwellers of the earth and we are still taking sponsorship. The money will go to Gluepot Reserve Education unit this year.

The excitement was almost too much to bear sitting anxiously at the Munghorn Gap camping area quietly eating our lunch, contemplating what was to come. The nerves quickly building, hairs raised on the back of the neck, mouth dry.....and we still had 3hrs until start time!

It was a pretty quiet lead up to this year's race, we didn't need to plan our route, we knew exactly what we were doing. We sat at our usual starting point waiting for 3pm and when it finally ticked over Striated Pardalote and Leaden Flycatcher were first on the list, followed by Cicadabird and Brush Cuckoo.

Munghorn is such a reliable place to see many species, as like last year, we saw White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Brown Treecreeper, Diamond Firetail, White-browed Babbler, Trillers, Bee-eaters, three species of cuckoo and all the thornbills. Honeyeaters were exceptionally good this year with Striped, Yellow-tufted, New Hollands, White-naped, Black-chinned and White-plumed, plus Spinebill all being seen. The highlight of the afternoon was seeing a male Turquoise Parrot fly into a hollow, begging was heard and when we looked inside four little heads were seen saying from side to side. Our last bird for this location was a stately Emu walking across the road.

Driving towards Allyn River just before dark we added Speckled Warbler, Black-fronted Dotterel and Clamorous Reed Warbler. A Barn Owl was seen hunting in the Murrumbo Valley and another near Sandy Hollow. Three Tawny Frogmouths were seen between Gresford and the Allyn. Our last night bird was a Boobook calling.

The dawn chorus in the rainforest was amazing. White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-dove, Rufous Fantail, Black-faced and Spectacled Monarch, Green Catbird and Large-billed Scrubwren were all seen/heard. Around the corner Russet-tailed Thrush was seen with Bassian Thrush and Noisy Pitta heard, a Wompoo flew over our heads and Yellow-throated Scrubwren was finally seen. Around Barrington we saw Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo, Grey Goshawk, Brush Turkey and Topknot Pigeon.

We had never recorded Torresian Crow or Scaly-breasted Lorikeet on a Twitchathon but this year we got them both before arriving in Seaham, which added Pink-eared Duck, Grey-crowned Babbler, Blue-faced Honeyeater and Little Corella. Green Wattle Creek was quiet except for the Scarlet Honeyeater and Grey Butcherbird heard calling. This is where the rain started and didn't stop for another 3hrs. It was wetter out of the water than in at Walka Water Works, luckily the Great-crested Grebes and Musk Ducks didn't mind.

After a very quick, worthless trip to Kurri we made our way to Pambalong where we birded in the car seeing Wandering Whistling-duck, Intermediate Egret and heard Little Grassbird and cisticola, and at Lenaghans we recorded Marsh Harrier, Latham's Snipe, Chestnut-breasted Munia and single birds only of Straw-necked Ibis and White-necked Heron.

Ash Island was excellent, Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Stint, Marsh and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, greenshank, Pacific Golden Plover, Hoary-headed Grebe, Bar-shouldered Dove and White-fronted Chat. A lone White-winged Black Tern sat on a post in the middle of one of the ponds. Then came the real highlight, Stockton Sandspit was alive with waders, close views were had of Curlew Sandpiper, Eastern Curlew, one avocet, and both knots. Mangrove Gerygone were calling and a Brown Honeyeater seen. At Fern Bay, Whimbrel, Grey-tailed Tattler and Tereks were easily found, and as we drove slowly along the Stockton foreshore we ticked Double-bar, Striated Heron and cormorants.

The foreshore produced Crested and Common Terns, Ruddy Turnstone, gannet and Wedge-tailed Shearwater. Awabakal had White-checked Honeyeater and Little Wattlebird, and we arrived at our finishing point, the Wetlands Centre with an hour to spare and only adding three new species, Magpie Goose, Azure Kingfisher and Night Heron.

Our final count was 196 species, 12 better than last year. What a race, best one yet, not because of the huge number of species seen but because it was laid back, we weren't rushing and I didn't end up killing Robert at the end of it. Well done to the Whacked Out Woodswallows with their exceptional total, and once again our champagne team proved unbeatable. See you all next October.

BIRD FLU AND WILD BIRDS: Questions Answered.

What strains of virus have been found in migratory birds in the Hunter? Testing by Dr Phil. Hansboro of Newcastle University indicates that viruses detected in migratory birds within the lower Hunter estuary are in a form that are not pathogenic.

What are the risks of migratory birds bringing viral diseases to Australia? The risk of migratory birds bringing the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) to Australia is very low as migratory birds carry viruses that are not of the fatal type (low pathogenicity) and the vast distances involved would eliminate sick birds

What are the risks to local birds?

The risks of local wild birds becoming infected with the HPAI are low due to the reasons outlined above. The highest risks would be from imported live poultry and ducks carrying the disease, however Australian Quarantine and Customs regulations are extremely strict. Therefore this is an unlikely source of HPAI to Australia.

What are the risks of staff, researchers, visitors and volunteers working with migratory and local birds?

The risks to this group of contracting HPAI due to contact with wild birds is very low. Human cases of the virus have been associated with close contact with infected ducks/poultry. There are no documented cases of HPAI being transmitted to humans by wild birds.

What are the risks of cross infection between migratory birds and chickens etc?

There is some level of risk, however the role of wild birds in the spread of pathogenic viruses to poultry and ducks is unclear and unproven. There would need to be a close association with the poultry/ducks and there would need to be wild birds carrying a virus that was capable of mutating into a pathogenic form. In Australia the association of wild birds with commercial poultry and ducks is limited, unlike Asia where there is often a very close association.

If the risks are significant what monitoring programs have been put into place (or proposed) to monitor these risks?

There are a number of monitoring programs coordinated at a National and local level. At a local level Dr Phil Hansboro of Newcastle University is carrying out some monitoring of wild birds within the Hunter estuary.

Which are the lead agencies in relation to Asian flu and its detection, notification, spread and control?

There are a number of lead agencies depending on the particular issue. In the case of a outbreak of the HPAI in poultry and ducks, the Department of Primary Industry (Agriculture) is the lead agency in NSW? The Commonwealth Government and a number of State Government bodies play a role in customs, quarantine, human health and other related matters.

OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHTS OCT/NOV 2005

Aug 9	Osprey	2	Tahlee [Bible College]	D. Cooper
Aug 10	Barn Owl [Road Kill]	1	Fullerton Cove	"
Oct 1	Masked Owl	1	Bobs Farm	"
Oct 1	Black-faced Monarch	1	"	"
Sep 16	Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	Medowie	"
Sep 16	Common Koel	1	"	"
Sep 18	Dollarbird	1	Fern Bay	"
Sep 21	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Pr	Broke [garden]	D.Lamb
Sep 15	Fluttering Shearwater	50+	Off Redhead/Dudley	A. Stuart
Sep 15	Australasian Gannet	4	"	"
Sep 15	New Holland Honeyeater	20+	Awabakal N.R.	"
Sep 15	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	4	"	"
Sep 15	Southern Emu-wren	1	"	"
Sep 13	Rufous Scrub-bird	3	Gloucester Tops {Kerrapit Rd}	"
Sep 27	Spotted Quail-thrush	1	Bow Wow Gorge [Mt Vincent]	P.Fitzsimons
Oct 3	Pacific Baza	1	Mount Vincent	"
Oct 8	Australian King Parrot	1	Bow Wow Gorge	"
Oct 11	Australian King Parrot	1	"	"
Oct 23	Sooty Owl	1	"	"
Oct 3	White-throated Gerygone	2	Mount Vincent	"
Oct 29/30	Painted Honeyeater	2	5km along Widden Valley Rd	Hunter Thickheads
	White-backed Swallow	1	2km along Widden Valley Rd	A.Lindsey/M.Newman
Oct 21 & 29	Regent Honeyeater	<u>Nest +2y</u>	5km along Widden Valley Rd	Hunter Thickheads
Oct 30	Southern Emu-wren	1m	Barrington House	"
Nov 3	Plum-headed Finch		Baerami Creek	A.Lindsey/M.Newman
	Painted Honeyeater	3	5km along Widden Valley Rd	"
Nov 23	Pheasant Coucal	2	Wallsend	P.Ekert
	Southern Boobook	1	"	"
	Blue-faced Honeyeater	3	"	"
Nov 22	Brush Cuckoo	1	Heatherbrae	"
Nov 24	Powerful Owl	1	Weakley's Flat	"
Nov 7	Double-barred Finch	15	Bloomfield	"
	Southern Emu-wren	3	"	"
Corrections	These observations appeared incorrectly under the East Seaham location in the last Newsletter			
Sep 7	Budgerigar	4	Mt. Arthur Mine Site	G.Newling
	Brown Goshawk	3	"	"
	Tree Martin	B	"	"
	Dusky Woodswallow	B	"	"

Oct 2	Red-chested Button-quail	2	Widden Valley	A.Stuart
Aug 30	Major Mitchell Cockatoo	1	Buttaba	R.Waymark
Oct 12	Radjah Shelduck	2	Mungo Brush Camping Area	L.Livanos et al
Oct 10	Tawny Frogmouth	2	Tanilba Bay	N.Fraser
Oct 10	Bush Stone-Curlew	2	Lemon Tree Passage	"
Oct 10	Bush Stone-Curlew	2	Fenninghams Island	"
Oct 9	Ruddy Turnstone	20	Catherine Hill Bay rock shelf	J.Powers
Oct 1	Pilotbird	Several	Wollemi NP [Hunter Main Trail]	M.Roderick
	Masked Owl	1	"	"
	White-throated Nightjar	2	"	"
	Grey Currawong	2	"	"
Sep	Red-whiskered Bulbul	Heard	Whitebridge	"
Sep	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	Woodberry	G.Brosie
	Grey-crowned Babbler	4-5	Beresfield	"
	Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	"	"
Sep 7	Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo	1	Ash Island	Name omitted
	Osprey	1	Cockle Creek [Teralba]	"
	Southern Boobook	Heard	Toronto	"
Sep 7&8	Powerful Owl	1heard	Carey Bay	"
Oct 26	White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	Belford	G.Newling
Oct 18	Australian Owlet Nightjar	1+4dy	Oyster Cove	N.McNaughton
Oct	Topknot Pigeon	20	Belmont South	J.Cockerell
Oct	Black Falcon	1	Morpeth Manor	G.Brosie
Oct 3	Dollarbird	1	One Mile Beach	"
Oct	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	2pr+5dy	Wingen	G.Newling
	Crested Pigeon	Pr +2dy	"	"
	Red Wattlebird	Pr + 2dy	"	"
Oct 11	Dollarbird	4	"	"
Oct 15	Rufous Songlark	2	"	"
Oct 1	Black-fronted Dotterel	Pr n1dy+3e	Mt. Arthur Mine Site	"
	Wedge-tailed Eagle	N1dy	"	"
	Peregrine Falcon	Pr	"	"
	Australian Hobby	1	Aberdeen	"
	Willie Wagtail	Pr +nest	Mt. Arthur Mine Site	"
Oct 30	Latham's Snipe	20	Irrawang Swamp	M.Maddock
Nov 24	Latham's Snipe	24	"	"
Nov 17	Great Crested Grebe	20	Grahamstown Dam	"
Oct 24	Great Crested Grebe	230	"	P.Slack [per R.Walker]
Ct 16	Singing Bushlark	2	Goulburn Valley Way	N.Livanos et al
Oct 10	Dusky Woodswallow	3	Taylor's Beach	N.Fraser
Oct 12	Rufous Fantail	Pr	Hunter Valley Gardens	"
Oct 12	Latham's Snipe	1	Bobs Farm	D. & M. Hatfield
Oct 20	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	1 on	Wangi	G.Goodenough
Oct 25	Rainbow Lorikeet	2 + 1dy	Whitebridge	"
Nov 1	Rufous Fantail	Pr	Belmont South	J.Cockerell
Nov 3	Barn Owl	1	H.W.C.	P.Lightfoot

Nov 9	Topknot Pigeon	4	Walka Water Works	L.Mee'
	Grey-crowned Babbler	1 on	Seaham Cemetery	"
Nov 2	Powerful Owl	1 imm	Croudace Bay	M.Roderick
Oct 29	Sooty Owl	1	Telegerry S.F.	Hunter Home Brewers
	Paradise Riflebird	1	"	"
	Masked Owl	1	Nr. Gresford	"
Oct 30	Eastern Reef Egret [dark morph]	1	Newcastle/Nobbys rock shelf	"
Nov 11	Diamond Dove	4	Richmond Vale	C.Goodenough
Oct 24	Red-rumped Parrot	B +dy	Bolwarra	H.Tarrant
	White-winged Triller	2pr on	"	"
Oct 25	Grey-crowned Babbler	6	"	"
Nov 11	Common Blackbird	2male	Bolwarra	"
Oct 30	Common Blackbird	1male	Maitland	"
Oct 30	Black-shouldered Kite	1 juv	Maitland	H.Tarrant
Oct 29	Rufous Songlark	1	Martindale	"
Nov 5	Satin Flycatcher	Pr	Vacy	"
Oct 26	Banded Lapwing	2	Largs/Bolwarra [Flat Rd]	"
Nov	Blue-faced Honeyeater	6+ dy	Bolwarra	"
Oct 13	Singing Bushlark	2	East of Baerami	N.Livanos/G.Brosie
Oct	Southern Boobook	Heard	Morpeth Manor	G.Brosie
Oct 26	Olive-backed Oriole	1 nb	"	"
	Grey-crowned Babbler	1	"	"
Oct 28	Spotted Harrier	1 juv	East Maitland	"
Nov 5	Richard's Pipit	1	Morpeth [garden]	"
Oct 25	Azure Kingfisher	1	Ash Island	Dodgy Drongos
	Musk Lorikeet	3+ 1dy	Green Wattle Creek	"
	Speckled Warbler	2+ 1juv	"	"
	Barn Owl	1	Sandy Hollow	"
	Ruddy Turnstone	8	Newcastle Ocean Baths	"
	Black-tailed Godwit	1	Ash Island	"
	White-winged Black Tern	1	"	"
	Azure Kingfisher	1	H.W.C.	"
	Spectacled Monarch	1	Allyn River	"
	Green Catbird	>10	"	"
	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	>3	Lenaghan's Drive	"
Nov 9	Singing Bushlark	>5	East of Baerami	G.Brosie/N.Livanos
	Brown Songlark	2	"	"
	Pink-eared Duck	>8	Muswellbrook STW	"

COMING EVENTS

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

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS	CONTACT
Saturday 17 th December 2005	Hunter Wader Survey	10 am – various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569
Sunday 1 st January 2006	Stockton Sandspit Volunteer Day	8.00am to noon (1.98m high tide at 10.08am)	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Saturday 14 th January 2006	Hunter Wader Survey	9.15am - various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569
Sunday 15 th January 2006	Field outing Old Brush	Meet 7.30am at the start of Lieberts Lane, Brunkerville	Sue Hamonet 4958 1023
Sunday 5 th February 2006	Stockton Sandspit Volunteer Day	8.00am to noon (low tide at 9.18am)	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Tuesday 7 th February 2006	Mid-week outing Islington/Carrington	7.30am – car park off Tighes Terrace, Tighes Hill	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265
Wednesday 8th February 2006	Clubnight Annual General Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	Guest Speaker
Saturday 11 th February 2006	Hunter Wader Survey	8.15am - various locations as directed	Chris Herbert 4959 3663 Alan Stuart 4952 8569
Sunday 19 th February 2006	Field outing Taylors Beach	Meet 7.30am Pauls Corner, Salt Ash	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Sunday 5 th March 2006	Clean Up Australia Day Stockton Sandspit	9.00am to noon Register at the car park.	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Tuesday 7 th March 2006	Mid-week outing Glenrock Reserve	7.30am – Glenrock SRA car park, Burwood Road.	Garth Cooksey 4954 9620

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 Wednesday 8th February 2006 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.

Election of HBOC Office Bearers for 2006

Nominations are called for the following positions for 2006:

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 3rd February 2006.

If insufficient written nominations are received by that date, 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 8th February 2006 and at any adjournment of that meeting.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

Membership fees are now due for the year 1st January 2006 to 31st December 2006.

Name:

Address:

Phone No.:

Please circle the appropriate category:

Family - \$25

Single - \$25

Junior - \$3

New members who joined after 30th September 2005 will be registered for 2006.

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.