



Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc
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Bignet Report, September 2019

Hunter Bird Observers Club has two objectives:

- To encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat
- To encourage bird observing as a leisure-time activity

Between March and September, 2019, these objectives were furthered through:

Conservation Efforts

- We have been successful in assisting the Shortland Waters Golf Club obtain a grant to eradicate Water Hyacinth from a former wetland reserve that is now owned by the golf club.
- We are also waging several campaigns against overdevelopment that impinges on important bird habitat throughout Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. These campaigns are time-consuming and sometimes frustrating and we thank our conservation sub-committee for their efforts.
- The club is participating in a Bird Life Australia trial of artificial roosts for seabirds within the Hunter Estuary. It is still early days but the trials look promising.

Monitoring and Data Surveys.

- Expeditions to Broughton Island off Port Stephens continued monitoring and banding of terrestrial birds; this project is in its eighth year and is done in collaboration with the local National Parks and Wildlife Service office.
- We celebrated 20 years of monthly surveys of Hunter Estuary waterbirds at Shortland Waters Golf Club in May.
- Our other regular field studies projects also continued in 2019 - the Port Stephens waterbirds survey, beach surveys of Worimi Conservation Lands, Rufous Scrub-bird surveys in the Gloucester Tops.
- Following our Birddata workshop in 2017, an increasing number of club members are reporting their sightings in Birddata and using their Birddata survey summaries to communicate with other club members. Most of this communication occurs through our Google group, *hunterbirding*, with up to 11 surveys or sightings reported each day, especially at weekends. HBOC now has 3 shared sites on Birddata (in addition to all the Shorebirds 2020 sites).
- In late 2019 we will publish our 2018 Annual Bird Report, the 26th edition of our ABR. For that Report we receive a complete set of data for the Hunter Region from the BLA Atlas project database. From this data we have been able to generate distribution maps for most species and accurate timelines for migratory species. Thanks especially to Dan Williams, Alan Stuart and others, our Annual Bird Report is a high-quality document that is a valuable reference for our members.
- We are preparing the 13th edition of our annual journal, *Whistler*, and now publish individual articles on our web site as soon as they have been peer-reviewed and accepted for publication.
- Club members have also participated in Australasian Bittern surveys and Latham Snipe surveys.

Activities

Since last report the club has organised twelve outings, both weekend and mid-week, and three camps with another one scheduled for October at Munghorn Gap.

Education, Media and Promotion.

HBOC continued to raise awareness of birds and the importance of their contribution throughout the whole Hunter Region. Some highlights were:

- Participation in Tocal Field Day which hosts a large number of visitors and we have some interesting conversations about birds.
- Participation in NAIDOC Week celebrations at Maitland Park.
- HBOC members continue to contribute to the promotion of birds in the local media with interviews with ABC local radio, and community radio, the Newcastle Herald and a regular column in the Maitland Mercury, as well as speaking to local community groups throughout our region.
- The club produced 2 more birding route brochures on the Cessnock woodlands, a Cessnock East Bird Route and a Cessnock West Bird Route, thanks to Mick Roderick, Alan Stuart and Rob Kyte who does the design and layout of our brochures. We have so far produced 14 Birding Routes that are all available to the general public on our web site. We have also distributed relevant brochures to local tourist information centres.
- Our Field Studies Officer, Alan Stuart, presented a paper at the Australasian Ornithological Conference on the work he and his team are doing monitoring the distribution and behaviour of the Rufous Scrub-bird in Barrington Tops in the Hunter Region.

Organisational Matters

HBOC has continued to monitor and where possible gradually improve its operating procedures for the benefit of all members. At present we are formalising our sub-committee structures to allow for more effective decision-making.

For more detailed information refer to the club's web site at www.hboc.org.au

Membership stood at 328 as of August, 2019

Robert Stewart

President, Hunter Bird Observers Club.