



Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc
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BIGnet Report September 2018

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 August 2018 these objectives were furthered through:

Conservation Efforts

- Our Threatened Species Recovery Project was successfully completed using a \$20,000 grant from the Threatened Species Recovery Fund and an additional \$1,109 through club night raffles to support this project. Our fundraising raffle this year will support geolocators for shorebirds
- Black-necked Stork are breeding again in the Hunter and all seemed to be going well. We had some bad news when last year's juvenile was picked up in a very poor condition and was taken into care before being banded and released. The club raised \$485 in donations in one night to support the feeding of this bird. Unconfirmed reports indicate it may still be around.
- Our campaign to have an infestation of Water Hyacinth eradicated from the former Newcastle Wetland Reserve has been successful, but the golf club that owns the land is now having financial difficulties so we will have to continue to be vigilant.
- On a positive note the club is a contributing partner in a major Cessnock Biodiversity Education Project and we will be taking part in a Bioblitz in September.

Monitoring and Data Surveys.

- Our monthly surveys of Hunter Estuary waterbirds continued. Next year will mark the 20th year of these surveys.
- The club has formed a relationship with the Martindale Landcare group and is now doing surveys at selected sites on private properties in the Martindale area. An increasing number of members are doing surveys in the region and submitting records to Birddata, which we encourage them to do.
- All our surveys provide valuable data about the Hunter Region and generate income for the club as well as allowing us to provide data to support genuine research.
- Later this year we will be publishing our 2017 Annual Bird Report. This will be our 25th annual bird report and the publication is becoming increasingly sophisticated.
- We will also publish the 12th edition of our annual journal, *The Whistler*. Some of these publications will be on display at this BIGnet meeting, and are all available on our web site.
- Club members have also participated in Australasian Bittern surveys, Latham Snipe surveys, Regent Honeyeater surveys as well as Broughton Island and Port Stephens surveys, and of course the National Twitchathon.
- Club members have also acted as guardians for the various Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in the Hunter, coordinating surveys and performing the Easter Health Check in April.

Activities

Since last report the club has organised twelve outings, both weekend and mid-week, and two camps with another one scheduled for September at Old Bar. We have held six club meetings with an interesting range of speakers.

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;

- We presented displays at Kooragang Estuary Festival and Tocal Field Day where we won the prize for best exhibit.
- Members have spoken to several community groups including Maitland Youth Forum, Wollombi, Congewai and Lake Macquarie Landcare groups and at various venues in Mid-Coast Council LGA
- We gave a talk about the importance of the birds of the Hunter Estuary to an Oil and Chemical Spills Response Team with participants from all over Australia.
- We are trialling a monthly rather than bimonthly newsletter to members.
- We have purchased two telescopes and seven pairs of binoculars for use at community events.
- We are funding the design and erection of bird identification signs at the Hunter Wetlands Centre and assisting for the same at Cattai Wetlands, and we are preparing a set of four portable pop-up banners (featuring woodland birds, rainforest birds, shorebirds and waterbirds respectively) which we will use in public forums.
- 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.

Organisational Matters

HBOC has continued to monitor and where possible gradually improve its operating procedures for the benefit of all members. So far this year we have developed our approach to the use of call playback at club outings and finalised our Working with Children's Policy.

Membership stood at 332 in August, 2018

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

Robert Stewart
President