



Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia



Records Appraisal Committee 2018 Report

Compiled by Mick Roderick

September 2019

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Below is a list of cases assessed by the Hunter Bird Observers Club Records Appraisal Committee (RAC) in 2018 (or in some cases, early 2019). A summary of each case is provided, along with selected photographs. A summary for the Hunter Region assessed by BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee (BARC) or the NSW Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee (ORAC) in 2018 is also provided. This report has been compiled by Mick Roderick. Front Cover Image: Ground Parrot, Minimbah 18th March 2018 (Case #507; Brian McCauley)

List of Accepted Cases

503	Grey Noddy	Nobbys Breakwall	11 th January 2018
504	Red-chested Button-quail	Tempus Two Winery, Pokolbin	13 th January 2018
506	Ground Parrot	Crowdy Bay National Park	4 th March 2018
507	Ground Parrot	Minimbah Nature Reserve, Nahiab	15 th March 2018
508	White-tailed Tropicbird Thornton	22 nd March 2018	
509	Pacific Gull	Nobbys Beach	4 th June 2018
510	Pacific Gull	Seven Mile Beach, Booti Booti NP	16 th June 2018
511	Superb Fruit-Dove	Booti Hill Lakeside Walking Track	10 th May 2016
512	Ground Parrot	Cape Hawke	28 th March 2002
513	Ground Cuckoo-shrike	Lake Glenbawn	27 th September 2018
514	Black Honeyeater	Singleton Heights	6 th October 2018
515	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo (ssp. <i>lucidus</i>)	Abermain + Walka Water Works	6 th Oct 2018
516	Kelp Gull	Stockton Sandspit	13 th October 2018
517	Wandering Tattler	Green Point (Lake Macquarie)	10 th October 2018
518	Australian Little Bittern Ash Island	1 st November 2018	
519	Crimson Chat	Durridgere SCA	4 th November 2018
520	Pacific Gull	Farquhar Inlet	4 th November 2018
521	Kelp Gull	Newcastle Ocean Baths	20 th November 2018
522	Red-backed Kingfisher	Martindale	10 th November 2018
523	Little Button-quail	Glendonbrook	14 th December 2018
524	Apostlebird	Timor Caves Reserve	28 th July 2018
525	South Island Pied Oystercatcher	Stockton Beach	7th December 2018

Case Summaries

Case 503: A **Grey Noddy** *Procelsterna albivitta* was photographed standing on rocks at the end of Nobbys Breakwall on 11th January 2018. Subsequent attempts to relocate the bird (albeit several days after the initial sighting) were unsuccessful. **Gillian Carter**

Case 504: A **Red-chested Button-quail** *Turnix pyrrhothorax* was collected dead from a swimming pool at Tempus Two Winery, Pokolbin on 13th January 2018. **Alwyn Simple**

Case 506: This case involved two reports of a **Ground Parrot** *Pezoporus wallicus* from Crowdy Bay National Park and was (at the time) the first evidence of the existence of Ground Parrots in the Hunter Region for over 60 years. Initially a bird was flushed at dawn on the 4th March 2018 (unable to be seen again), whilst the second report was of a bird heard calling at a nearby site on the 10th March 2018. It is unknown if this was the same or different bird. **Alex Berryman, Michael Kearns and Liam Murphy**

Case 507: This case also involved reports of **Ground Parrots** *Pezoporus wallicus* just west of Minimbah Nature Reserve, approximately 60km south of the Crowdy Bay site mentioned above. Birds were seen on at least two mornings (15th and 18th March 2018) feeding on fallen seed on bush tracks just west of the reserve. It is still unclear whether or not more than one bird was involved. Photographs were obtained of a bird on the 18th March, being the only known Ground Parrot photos from the Hunter Region. **Nick Thompson, Brian McCauley and Mick Roderick**

Case 508: This case referred to an injured **White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus* taken into care at Medowie on 22nd March 2018. The bird was later released at sea. This came at a time of severe weather and when several other White-tailed Tropicbirds were taken into care in Sydney and the mid-north coast. **Joy Nicholls**

Case 509: This case related to a juvenile **Pacific Gull** *Larus pacificus* that was first seen at Nobbys Beach, 4th June 2018. The bird was subsequently seen by many observers on both sides of Newcastle Harbour, with several reports (and photographs) of two birds. **Archie Brennan**

Case 510: This case also concerned a juvenile **Pacific Gull** *Larus pacificus*, this time at Seven Mile Beach (Booti Booti National Park) 16th June 2018. **Neil and Barbara Ryan per Barry Ralley**

Case 511: This case related to a pair of **Superb Fruit-Doves** *Ptilinopus superbus* seen and photographed along the Booti Hill Lakeside Walking Track (Booti Booti National Park), 10th May 2016. The photo provided by the observer clearly showed the male bird, with the female having flown off before the photos were taken. **Corinne Carpenter**

Case 512: This was yet another case involving a claim of a **Ground Parrot** *Pezoporus wallicus*, this bird at Cape Hawke, 28th March 2002. The report was noticed long after the event inside an eBird checklist, but with lengthy notes to support the identification. Notwithstanding the veracity of these notes and due to the significance of the report, the observer was contacted and provided a very detailed submission which was unanimously accepted by the committee, thus becoming the first accepted record of Ground Parrots in the Hunter Region in modern times. **Graham Langley**

Case 513: This case concerned a **Ground Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina maxima*, heard and then seen/photographed flying west over the eastern edge of Lake Glenbawn 27th September 2018. This is the first confirmed record of this species in this part of the Region. **Mick Roderick**

Case 514: This case refers to a male **Black Honeyeater** *Sugomel niger* found in a semi-suburban setting in Singleton Heights, 6th October 2018. The bird was feeding in planted street trees and was present for several days, with subsequent observers locating the bird after the initial sighting. **Michael Akrill**

Case 515: This case concerned the uncommon but possibly overlooked nominate subspecies of **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx lucidus lucidus*, seen and photographed at Abermain, 6th October 2018. This is the subspecies of Shining Bronze-Cuckoo that breeds in New Zealand that migrates to islands in the Pacific Ocean, with some birds returning via the Australian east coast (particularly Queensland). Remarkably, a second *lucidus* bird was photographed at Walka Water Works on the same day. Together, these form the first confirmed records of this subspecies for the Hunter Region. **Mick Roderick and Kris Mills/Dick Jenkin**

Case 516: This case referred to an immature **Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicanus* photographed at Stockton Sandspit 13th October 2018. The committee took care to rule out possible vagrant Larus gulls in accepting the record. **Ray Burton**

Case 517: This case deals with the well-known **Wandering Tattler** *Tringa incana* that frequented Green Point (Lake Macquarie) for at least two weeks after being found on 10th October 2018 (last sighting ~27th October). The habitat where the bird was found was rather atypical for the species, being well inside the lake, and it was likely that the bird was on passage. **Gary Tong and Jim Stone**

Case 518: An **Australian Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus dubius* was discovered by frog researchers in an artificial wetland created for Green and Golden Bell Frogs on Ash Island, 1st November 2018. The bird was filmed and footage shared on social media. Despite subsequent searches the bird was not relocated. **Chad Beranek**

Case 519: A male **Crimson Chat** *Epthianura tricolor* was found associating with a flock of White-browed and Masked Woodswallows feeding on the ground at the campground at Durrigere State Conservation Area on 4th November 2018. Excellent photographs were obtained. This was the first report of this species in the Hunter Region since the influx of birds during spring 2017. **Michael Kearns**

Case 520: This case concerns an adult **Pacific Gull** *Larus pacificus* that was found loafing with Silver Gulls and Crested Terns at Farquhar Inlet, 4th November 2018. Although no photographs were obtained the description provided to the committee left no doubt as to the bird's identity. **Peter West and Sue Proust**

Case 521: This case referred to a large immature Larus gull identified as a **Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicanus* during a seawatch at Newcastle Ocean Baths, 20th November 2018. As with Case 520, no photographs were taken, but the observer provided a very detailed description of the bird, confirming it as a first or second year Kelp Gull. **Simon Gorta**

Case 522: A **Red-backed Kingfisher** *Todiramphus pyrrhopygius* was photographed on powerlines along Horseshoe Road in the Martindale Valley on 10th November 2018. This was the first report of this species in the Hunter Region since the influx of birds that occurred during spring 2017. **David and Graeme Catt**

Case 523: A deceased **Little Button-quail** *Turnix velox* was found on a property at Glendonbrook on the 14th December 2018. Excellent photographs of the bird in the hand aided an easy identification of the bird. The cause of death was unknown. **Per Ian Benson**

Case 524: This was an interesting case resulting in a new species for the Hunter Region. A group of **Apostlebirds** *Struthidea cinerea* were observed during an outing of the Tamworth Birdwatchers at the Timor Caves Reserve on 28th July 2018. A group of 17 birds were feeding on the side of a track and eventually flushed and flew out of sight. No photographs were able to be obtained. The submission detailed the sighting, which was corroborated by all 12 observers present. Although there are historical accounts of Apostlebirds in the Hunter Region, the ongoing presence of the species has not been able to be confirmed and this record represents an addition of the species to the Hunter Region bird list. **Joan Dunne, Denise Kane & other members of the Tamworth Birdwatchers**

Case 525: This case refers to a banded **South Island Pied Oystercatcher** *Haematopus finschi* found during a monthly survey of Worimi Conservation Lands (Stockton Beach), 7th December 2018. The bird ("IN") is well-known in the birding community, having been banded at Stockyard Point, Victoria 6th August 2016, with subsequent resightings in northern NSW (Broadwater Beach 31st December 2016), back at Stockyard Point in June 2017, until then being resighted at Clontarf, Brisbane 18th September 2017, returning to Stockyard Point in winter 2018 before the record at Stockton Beach on 7th December 2018. Although this species is on the BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee (BARC) review list, it is not subject to assessment and a HBOC RAC case number was created to capture the observation for Hunter Region records. **Ann Lindsey**

Photographs



Case 503

Grey Noddy, Nobbys
Breakwall 11th
January 2018 (Gillian
Carter)

(Mick Roderick was
gripped)

Case 509

Pacific Gull, Nobbys Beach 6th June
2018 (Bruce Watts)





Case 514

Black
Honeyeater,
Singleton
Heights, 6th Oct
2018

(Michael Akrill)

Case 516

Kelp Gull,
Stockton
Sandspit, 13th
October 2018

(Ray Burton)



Case 517

Wandering Tattler, Green Point (Lake Macquarie), 10th Oct 2018 (Dick Jenkin)



Case 519

Crimson Chat,
Durrigere SCA, 4th
November 2018

(Michael Kearns)



Hunter Region Cases assessed by BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee (BARC) and the NSW Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee (ORAC) in 2018

Two contemporary cases relevant to the Hunter Region were assessed by the BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee (BARC) during 2018; Cook's Petrel off Port Stephens 12th November 2017 and Ringed Plover on Stockton Beach [Worimi Conservation Lands] 25th August 2017. These cases were documented in the HBOC Records Appraisal Committee 2017 Report. With the addition of White-bellied Storm-petrel to the BARC review list during 2018, two old reports from the Hunter Region were assessed (off Newcastle 23rd April 2006 and off Port Stephens 27th March 2010). All of these were accepted by BARC. Note also that during 2018 Cook's Petrel was removed from the BARC review list and added to the NSW ORAC review list.

The following cases were assessed by the NSW Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee (ORAC) during 2018, the first four of which were documented in the HBOC Records Appraisal Committee 2017 Report. Cases 690 and 706 are outlined below. Note that Common Gull-billed Tern was removed from the NSW ORAC review list early in 2019 and will thus be treated as a Category 3 species in the Hunter Region pending review by the HBOC RAC.

679	Little Curlew	Hexham Swamp	29 th September 2017
680	Soft-plumaged Petrel	off Port Stephens	15 th October 2017
684	Mottled Petrel	off Port Stephens	12 th November 2017
685	Little Shearwater	off Port Stephens	12 th November 2017
690	Black-winged Petrel	off Crowdy Head	19 th January 2018
706	Common Gull-billed Tern	Stockton Beach	10 th August 2018

Case 690: A **Black-winged Petrel** *Pterodroma nigripennis* was well seen and photographed on a pelagic trip off Crowdy Head on 19th January 2018. –The high quality photographs and detailed description left no doubt as to the identification of this bird and the committee voted unanimously for acceptance. This is the first confirmed record of Black-winged Petrel since the species was reinstated to the NSW ORAC Review list in January 2018 and is the fourth reported sighting off the NSW coast since 2000. **Mick Roderick**

Case 706: A **Common Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* was seen and photographed on the Worimi Conservation Lands (Stockton Beach), north of Newcastle on 10th August 2018. The description and photographs clearly demonstrated the diagnostic features of Common Gull-billed Tern and the committee accepted the record unanimously. It becomes the 4th record to be confirmed by NSW ORAC since being added to the Review List in January 2018. **Ann Lindsey**



ORAC Case 690

Black-winged
Petrel off Crowdy
Head, 19th
January 2018
(Mick Roderick)

ORAC Case 706

Common Gull-
billed Tern (at
right), Stockton
Beach (Worimi
Conservation
Lands), 10th
August 2018 (Ann
Lindsey)

