



Newsletter

Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

Issue No. 3/18 June 2018

The Club aims: To encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat, and To encourage bird observing as a leisure-time activity.



© Marion Anstis

*Great Crested Grebes. Two adults caring for three young. Walka Waterworks.
Photo from Marion Anstis (see description p3)*

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President's Column June 2018

Being a member of a committee is not everyone's cup of tea but it does look after some of those inevitable tasks that are necessary to allow us all to enjoy our hobby or, in some cases, obsession. So this month I will outline some of those things the committee has been dealing with recently without forgetting the contribution of so many other club members.

Recently we have developed procedures in two areas that affect the club, Child Safety and Call Playback. HBOC's approach to children attending club activities over many years has been exemplary but as we all know times are changing and it is wise to have sensible procedures in place. The full policy is available on HBOC Web site. Children are always welcome to attend our meetings and outings but they must always be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.

Generally HBOC follows the Bird Life Australia policy with the addition of this provision relating to HBOC outings:

'During HBOC outings, call playback shall only be used under the direction of the designated outing leader. It shall not be used if the target species is known or suspected may be breeding. For any given target bird, call playback shall not be used more than three times in any fifteen-minute period. Acceptable applications of call playback during HBOC outings are for confirming the species identity and for educating outing attendees'

Please don't make the task of our outing leaders difficult by putting them in the position of having to take anyone to task for overusing call playback to the annoyance of the birds and fellow attendees.

The committee also organises the program of activities, including both outings and camps. Currently we are planning New Members Day on Sunday 17 June. New members will receive an invitation to this event but all members are welcome to attend to share your knowledge and experience with our new members. Our activities also include many successful community events, including our prize-winning stall at Tocal Field Day and an equally successful session given by Michelle Keith at the recent Maitland Youth Forum.

We also tackle conservation issues on members' behalf and we have had some good news on that front recently with the abandonment of T4 coal loader and the clearing of water hyacinth from the former Newcastle Wetlands Reserve.

None of this is to imply that the committee alone handles all these issues. Many club members contribute by taking part in surveys, staffing stalls at community events, leading outings or writing articles for our various publications. Simon Griffith, our speaker at May club night, said he found HBOC the most successful bird club he has spoken to and asked me why I thought this was the case. My answer was that we have such a variety of activities and so many members involved in these activities and that we have a wide age range in our club from 7 to over 70. You might think of other reasons why this is such a successful club.

Happy Birding!

Robert Stewart

A Warm Welcome to New Members: We hope to see you at club meetings and outings.

Matthew Doherty - Merewether
Sharon Taylor & Kate Laurie - Hawks Nest

Faith Jones - Stockton
Greta Peterson - Metford

Health and Safety Awareness for Activities

When attending field outings, ensure you are wearing appropriate clothing, including wet weather gear in inclement weather, and suitable footwear. It is advisable to bring a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and to carry water. Please sign the attendance register at field outings and also at meetings. If you leave an outing early, please let the leader know before you go. Participants attend at their own risk and should refrain from any behaviour that might put themselves or others at risk. That includes assessing whether they have the level of fitness required for the advertised outing. If in doubt, contact the leader beforehand.

Collared Sparrowhawk record 300km flight

A Collared Sparrowhawk banded in Newcastle and released at Waratah on 29th July 2017 was seen being attacked by Magpies and driven into a fence at Sussex Inlet near Jervis Bay on the 19th May 2018. It was rescued and taken into care but unfortunately had broken a leg and several talons and needed to be euthanased. The flight distance of over 300 kms is a record for this species.

Joy Nicholls

Great Crested Grebe: Breeding success at Walka Water Works

Following Margaret Clarke's news that the Great Crested Grebes were nesting at Walka Waterworks in early March, I first visited the two sites there that she told me about where a female was on a nest on 16th March. I observed both nests, female (presumably) in situ, and left.

I went again on 21st, 27th, 29th March and 1st April. Following the heavy rain received after my first visit, the nest on the railway track side was inundated and no grebes in the area had any chicks. The nest on the opposite side corner near the dam wall, however, had a female on it up until 1st April, prevailing through the heavy rain and some very hot days.



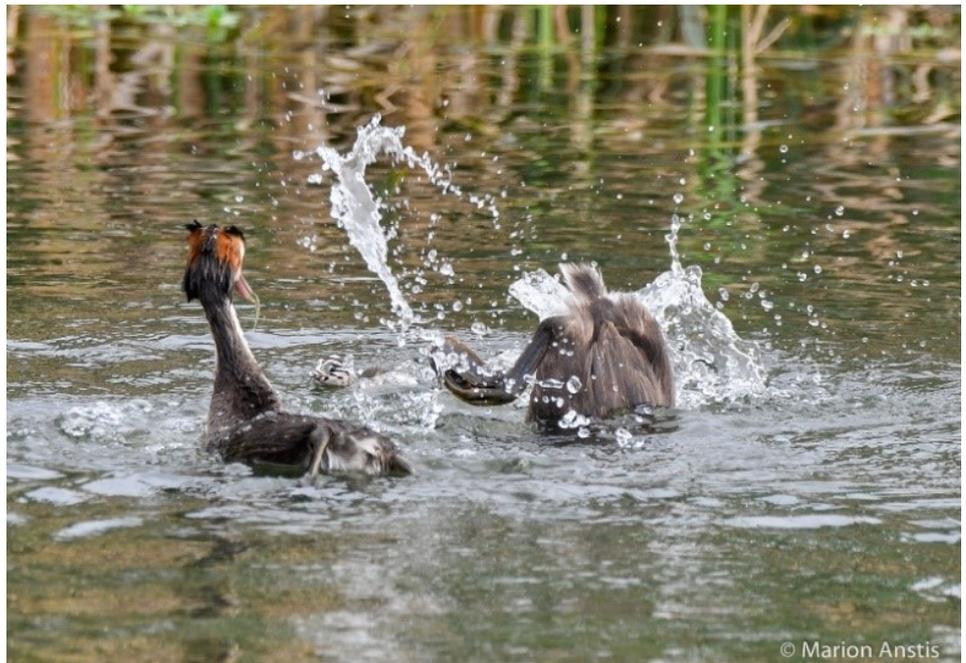
I next visited on 4 April with Derek Collins, and the parents had three chicks on Mum's back, presumably 1-2 days hatched. (*photo p1*) We photographed the chicks and parents feeding them and I noticed one slightly larger chick was always jumping in the water more than the other smaller two, even trying to copy its father and trying to dive. Consequently it was often first to get the fish on offer. But I noticed the father was also trying hard to feed one of the smaller chicks when it got in the water, although it didn't seem to want to open its mouth, despite much encouragement.

Meanwhile the dominant chick was fast heading over towards the potential meal, although the father kept trying to get the little one to eat it. And at other times I saw him choose a different chick to feed from one that had previously eaten. Sometimes Mum offloaded the chicks deliberately by standing up in the water and flapping her wings. Then both parents went on the hunt for fish to feed the chicks.

We again visited on the 6th April, and there were only two chicks, which from my photos appeared to be the two smaller chicks.

On one of my visits before I had seen a Swamp Harrier around, so I guess it may have taken the chick. I am hoping the other two make it, but haven't been able to get back there since.

**Photos and text
by Marion Anstis**



Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot Surveys May 2018 – Lots of Swifties but no Regents...



Swift Parrot feeding on Lerp at Button-Quail Junction, HEZ 19th May 2018 (Mick Roderick)

The biannual Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot Surveys were held across the (mainland) range of these two species on and around the weekend of 19/20th May 2018. The full results of Swift Parrot counts are still being finalised, but the full results of Regent Honeyeater counts took no time at all to finalise; because there wasn't a single wild bird seen, anywhere. In fact, no Regent Honeyeaters have been reported anywhere in NSW since the end of January. Four ex-captive birds were seen in and around Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park in NE Victoria on the survey weekend – all released last year or in 2015. The lack of Regent Honeyeaters isn't cause for immediate concern because there are no blossom events anywhere to have attracted birds to places where observers may have seen them. They must be somewhere though(!) and evidence suggests they did have a reasonably good breeding season in 2017. It will be interesting to see if any birds are sighted anywhere before the 2018 breeding season!

The Hunter Valley has again featured amongst the most significant sites for Swift Parrots however, with up to 200 birds accountable during the May survey period. In fact, well over 200 Swift Parrots were counted at various sites in the month of May, as summarised by the maximum counts below.

- Werakata State Conservation Area, Pelton – 100
- Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ) [Button-Quail Junction] – 50
- Ellalong Lagoon – 30
- Werakata National Park, Kitchener – 20
- Nulkaba – 8
- Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ) [North West Easement] – 5
- Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ) [The Jumps] – 5
- + small numbers (<5 birds) on the Singleton Training Area, near Bow Wow Gorge and in HEZ (at The Puddles)

Of all the above sites, the only ones where Swifties have been found feeding on blossom are Ellalong Lagoon and the Singleton Training Area, where birds have been observed feeding on flowering Spotted Gum trees. The remainder have been seen feeding on lerp, branchlets and other foliage-borne food sources.

For more information on the Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot surveys, visit <http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/woodland-birds-for-biodiversity>

Mick Roderick

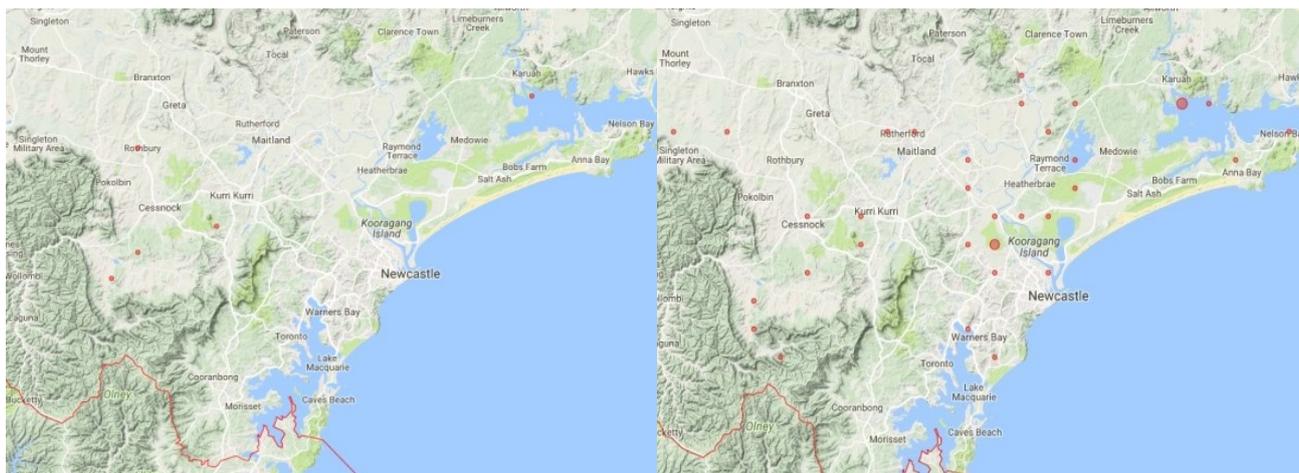
Another Musk Lorikeet Influx in Early 2018

Have you noticed an influx of Musk Lorikeets in the Lower Hunter region in summer/autumn 2018? I know I certainly have, commencing with a flock of 12 'Muskies' flying over my house in Shortland on the 15th Feb 2018. Prior to that (I can't recall the date) I'd heard some around Paxton and it twigged with me that I hadn't heard Muskies in the Lower Hunter for a while.

I wasn't imagining things and over the course of the following few months (up until around early May) there were numerous reports of Musk Lorikeets on Hunterbirding and on NSW/SE Qld Birdlines. Many of these reports were accompanied by reports of Little Lorikeets in the same places (and there were Littles in Shortland for a few months as well and I saw flocks flying over Kind Edward Park one day). At the time of writing (3rd June) I am having several observers from Port Stephens telling me that they are currently seeing lots of Muskies in their area. After a small lull during May I am also starting to see Muskies again in the western suburbs of Newcastle. It is likely that the flocks of Muskies that have arrived in the Lower Hunter are very mobile, seeking out blossom in suburban areas.

The two maps below show comparisons between Musk Lorikeet records in Birddata between the periods 1st February 2017 to 1st June 2017 (left), compared with 1st February 2018 until the 1st June 2018 (right).

This is interesting because for much of May/June 2017 there were plenty of Spotted Gum trees flowering in the Cessnock forests, but still Musk Lorikeets weren't abundant. My personal observations of Musk Lorikeets is that although they will readily feed on blossoming trees in 'natural' (forested) areas, they have a definite penchant for flowering trees in suburban and rural areas (I think there might be some resident flocks in the Upper Hunter). Influxes of Muskies to the Lower Hunter is not anything new and we had a similar situation occur between May and November in 2016 (see the 2016 Annual Bird Report). It is just very difficult to know exactly what drives these influxes. With so many Little Lorikeets joining in on the summer/autumn influx it could be related to a lack of blossom further inland, where both species probably prefer to be? Something for us to look more closely at in the future perhaps.



Mick Roderick

Hooded Robin at Medhurst Bridge



Hooded Robin, George Gillam

Between April 7th and April 11th some HBOC club members visited Medhurst Bridge while travelling to and from Sandy Hollow, for a Tomaree Bird Watchers camp.

Medhurst Bridge is a popular destination for HBOC members and some good sightings are possible there. It is the bridge on Turnerman's Road, Martindale, south of the Martindale School

The whole area was extremely dry including the nearby Goulburn

River which had no water in the section around Denman. There was one small waterhole under Medhurst Bridge so it was possible to wait there while birds lined up for their turn at the water. This included the Hooded Robin allowing close viewing. Other sightings were a Plum-headed Finch, Diamond Firetails, and Zebra Finches.

Volunteer Activities

Estuary Festival LLS Family Fun Day 15th April



HBOC held a successful stall at the Estuary Festival held at the Schoolmasters House on Ash Island on 15 April, organised by Local Land Services and celebrating life within the estuary and the broader catchment.

Besides our usual display of bird photos and brochures, our most popular activity

with the children was 'find a bird' - using the club's new binoculars to find 'birds' which had been placed among the vegetation, and then identifying them. The birds for this activity were actually large painted cutouts of 8 species of shorebirds made by Bob Seal. The children spot the different species and match them to labelled illustrations we held on the stall. They were very quick to spot the Red Knot and the Red-necked Stint and some even managed to find every species.



Photos by Robert Stewart

On 12 May we gave a talk at Hunter Wetlands Centre to Lake Macquarie Landcare volunteers, discussing our East and West Lake Macquarie birding routes which need updating. We received much good input from the group

Robert and Margaret Stewart

TOTAL FIELD DAYS AWARD FOR HBOC EXHIBIT May 4th to 6th



Photos by Ann Lindsey

Many thanks to Paul Baird for the overall concept and for preparing the HBOC exhibition for Total field days.

Great news! We won the award for best Educational and Informative exhibit at the Total Field Days for 2018. You can imagine our delight when the Principal of Tocal College and Chair of the Tocal Field Days Association, Darren

Bayley announced the award. Heartiest congratulations to Paul, Jim, Lorna and Alan who did the setting up.

This year's Tocal theme was "fish" and so our display featured photographs of fish-eating birds. Some of the Hunter Region's excellent bird photographers contributed images, creating a stunning display. Our poll for favourite fish-eating bird was very popular, the winning bird being Azure Kingfisher followed up by White-Bellied Sea-Eagle and Australian Pelican. We also had a fantastic activity sheet that kids and many adults loved. The display photographs were chosen by Paul and Jim to depict answers to the activity sheet questions.

Future Club Activity: September Mid-week Camp at Old Bar

This camp will be held from Monday morning 17 to Wednesday 19 September at Old Bar. Accommodation is available at Lani's on the Beach (65537274). We plan to visit Saltwater National Park, Cattai Wetlands and Mudbishops Point. For more information ring Robert and Margaret Stewart 4963 2029

HBOC Club Meetings: April Meeting

Once again we had a large roll-up for our meeting. Eula McKane had told us briefly of a birding trip she did last year in Spain, then our guest speakers were Darren and Tahlia Broughton, who run BirdLife Australia's Birds in Backyards TV channel ("BIBY TV" – a YouTube channel devoted to promoting bird awareness and conservation). They explained to us how they film and edit the videos, and showed us some examples of their work. Their talk focussed on the power of YouTube to reach a broad (potentially enormous) audience and how



advocacy can be achieved using it. There is considerable interest from the general public in the BIBY videos, which often have been watched many tens of thousands of times by mainly Australia-based audiences. Videos showing nestlings or chicks have proven very popular, as are any videos that feature an owl.

An easy way to access the BIBY TV channel is from the Birds in Backyards website: <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>. The clip at left is from one of their earlier videos "Big Baby Birds" It shows a Currawong caring for Channel-billed Cuckoo chicks until they were ready to fledge. Worth a look.

May Meeting

The May meeting saw an excellent attendance, entertained (and informed) with the Bird of the Evening from Rowley - the Little Wattlebird - enthusiastically a favourite in his backyard. Very informative talk with illustrations as to the exquisite detail in the feathers (normally one only sees the striated grey (relatively Ho Hum) but Rowley was able to show us the up close and personal version.

We were then treated to a very professional and informative talk by 'our own' Professor Simon Griffith of Macquarie University (he talked to us last April about the House Sparrow and the changes in their occurrence and distribution in Australia).

This time, it was work being carried out 'back of Bourke' involving breeding Zebra Finches and the effect climate change (particularly the advent of heat waves) is having on both the individual birds and their breeding success (or lack of it).



This White-eared HE in 42 deg and even a dip not helping. Taken in Binya SF – Rob Palazzi



This fellow in a good season. Medhurst Bridge Rob Palazzi

Very interesting (and distressing) to hear of the effect of 40 plus degrees on the eggs in nest of these birds, and the consequent wasted effort/energy for the birds if they try to breed under those extreme conditions.

The Prof has obviously been an educator in his career as we were well able to follow and understand all that he showed (lots of graphs and data) - thoroughly appreciated by all. I came away feeling much better informed and also a bit more optimistic that there was still some work being done in the research field (still being funded - we so often hear about cutbacks in resources available to universities and government departments). Hopefully this can provide

useful and persuasive information to help those in charge make good decisions about the future of our wildlife. He has also promised to sic some of his students on us for future talks. Can't wait. **Rob Palazzi**

Club Activity Reports Sunday 18th April at Cooranbong



Wedge-tailed Eagle, Lene Parashou

Sixteen members attended the Sunday outing to the Boys Walk at Cooranbong. Before we wandered along the path beside Dora Creek, a Rose Robin was spotted from the car park. Despite the constant presence of Bell Miners we found a total of 67 species.

We were accompanied by a local birdo, Maurice Ashton, who pointed out nests of Brown Gerygone and Yellow-throated Scrubwren. Other bush birds included Yellow Robin, Grey Shrike-thrush, Red-browed Finch, Silvereye and Eastern Spinebill.

Overhead we spotted White-breasted Woodswallows, Topknot Pigeons, King Parrots and many raptors including Grey Goshawk, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagles, Whistling Kite and Nankeen Kestrel. A Darter, Little Pied Cormorant and Azure Kingfisher were perched beside the creek. There were a few Pacific Black Ducks but no sign of the Black Bittern observed last time.

Many thanks to Lene Parashou and Maurice Ashton for leading this splendid walk.

Dinah Stehr

Tuesday 1st May at Seaham and Green Wattle Creek

Eighteen members met at Seaham Wetland before travelling to Butterwick. The hour we spent at Seaham yielded a great variety of birds, 42 species in all. Water level was normal after record rain and there were small numbers of Ducks, Chestnut and Grey Teal, Hardheads and Pacific Black Ducks, Australasian Grebe and a lone Royal Spoonbill. A Whistling Kite perched above the wetland was harassed by magpies. The bush along the road below the bird hide was alive with Silvereyes, Thornbills, Fantails and Wrens. Blue-faced Honeyeaters were plentiful along with Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, Satin Bowerbirds, and Little Corellas.



Buff-rumped Thornbill. Photo Rob Palazzi. Marg and Peter consulting Bird Guide for identification

At Green Wattle Creek we walked along the perimeter of the Pony Club and heard Pardalotes, Gerygone and Thornbills which were difficult to spot. We had more luck after morning tea, along the Butterwick Fire Trail, observing lots of honeyeaters – Spinebills, Fuscous, Yellow-faced, White-naped, Yellow Tufted and White-plumed. Fan Tailed Cuckoos called conspicuously along with one Shining-bronze Cuckoo. A Buff-rumped Thornbill caused lots of conjecture and at the end of the trail was the highlight – a gloriously coloured male Rose Robin.

Dinah Stehr



Sunday 20th May at Grahamstown Dam and surrounds



It was a brisk, breezy but sunny 9C when 9 people gathered at Finnan Park. There was some blossom so we had Musk, Rainbow and Scaly-Breasted Lorikeets as well as Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoos. On the water, we had Musk ducks, Hardheads, Grebes and a Great Egret.

After a good look around, we then car convoyed (following Ray's bike) to Palmer Rd. Although shaded and cool, it was a good area and quiet except for some main road vehicle noise. We had 2 Black-Shouldered Kites who roosted at the top of a pine for beaut camera shots, a pair of White-Bellied Sea Eagles (who were performing some ritual with transfer of a fish between birds), a Variegated Fairy Wren who glowed in the morning sun, rafts of Hoary-Headed and Australasian Grebes and some honeyeaters – mainly Yellow-Faced - among other birds.

Black-shouldered Kites – Helen McCall



Back to Finnan Park for morning tea and then to the Water Board entry point on Ferrodale Rd – where we had some interesting birds after a quiet start. The tree plantings there have grown significantly since our last visit and it is always good to get into restricted areas. Some of our sightings were a Drongo, Brown Quail, White-Cheeked, Lewins and Yellow-Faced Honeyeaters, Yellow and Brown Thornbills and Mistletoe Birds.

We stayed there for lunch and had 63 birds for the day. Many thanks to Ray for the organisation and to Ray and Rowley for the interesting facts on the dam creation and ongoing water treatment processes.

Anthony Gooden

Tuesday June 5th Cessnock Woodlands Outing



© Peter Weinstock

Gang-gang Cockatoo – Peter Weinstock

Twenty one of us, including three visitors, braved the cold for a visit to Cessnock woodlands.

Our first stop was Rocky Knob, the home of our leader Brian Laut's cousin along Abernethy Street. This is a large property adjoining Werakata National Park. There were quite a few species of honeyeater feeding in the trees at the entrance, but the best sightings of the morning were of two Swift Parrots in trees and another six flying over. The best photographic opportunities were of the Gang Gang Cockatoos, 7 in one spot and 3 in another. Brian felt they were attracted to one species of Eucalypt. Little Lorikeets were also spotted flying over.

After morning tea we walked around Poppethead Park in Kitchener where honeyeaters, especially White-Cheeked were in abundance. The dam yielded quite a few waterbirds, the best of which was a Yellow-billed Spoonbill.

43 species were seen at the first location, 51 at the second.

Our thanks to Brian Laut for leading this outing

Margaret Stewart

Clicker's Corner

In this regular Newsletter section, we profile one of the Club photographers who use their skills to enhance the aims of the Club: as a leisure-time activity; and to study and conserve Australian birds and their habitat. **All photos and this article are by Rob Palazzi** who is the club's Bird Image (Photo) Librarian.

Rob Palazzi

My first encounter with photography was at age ten with an old Brownie Box my mum had. One roll of black and white film and I was hooked, fiddled round with every kind of still picture gadget I could find till I got my first full time job - big splurge then on an Agfa rangefinder.



Eastern Rosella at Blackalls Park

The rest is a typical progression most photographers go through, from spending most of my available cash on film and processing to the advent of DIGITAL. These days, birding has me lugging a Canon outfit round, nearly permanently stuck to my eye.

Whoohoo - now I can take as many pictures as I want - no holds barred. Oh wait, what to do now with the thousands of images rapidly accumulating.

Brings me to the main purpose of this missive. The AFTER of the day's fun. I long ago realised that unless I spent time sorting/deleting then archiving images, I would end up with a messy jumble of who knows what

and where. The first time I went looking in my collection for a specific image, it struck home how essential would be a good cataloguing, storage and retrieval system.

The early digital cameras I had allowed me to start a new Folder each day I took any pictures, and that Folder would have the day's date as its title. The metadata for each image also had the day's date and time taken so I had a really useful start.



Pacific Golden Plover at Stockton Sandspit

'After hours' I made it my task to download these folders to computer, and work through the images, pencil and paper in hand (I use Adobe Bridge to view and decide the fate of each image), to cull the number of images to just the ones I thought were worth keeping (this might be as low as 5% of the day's take). Delete the rejects (knowing at that moment they were all still on the camera card - in case I changed my mind!), then for those few I kept, bulk rename them in that folder, naming them with the date and the sequence number for that lot (eg: 180423 (1), etc) - the dates use the American back to front system so that they can be sorted at any time.

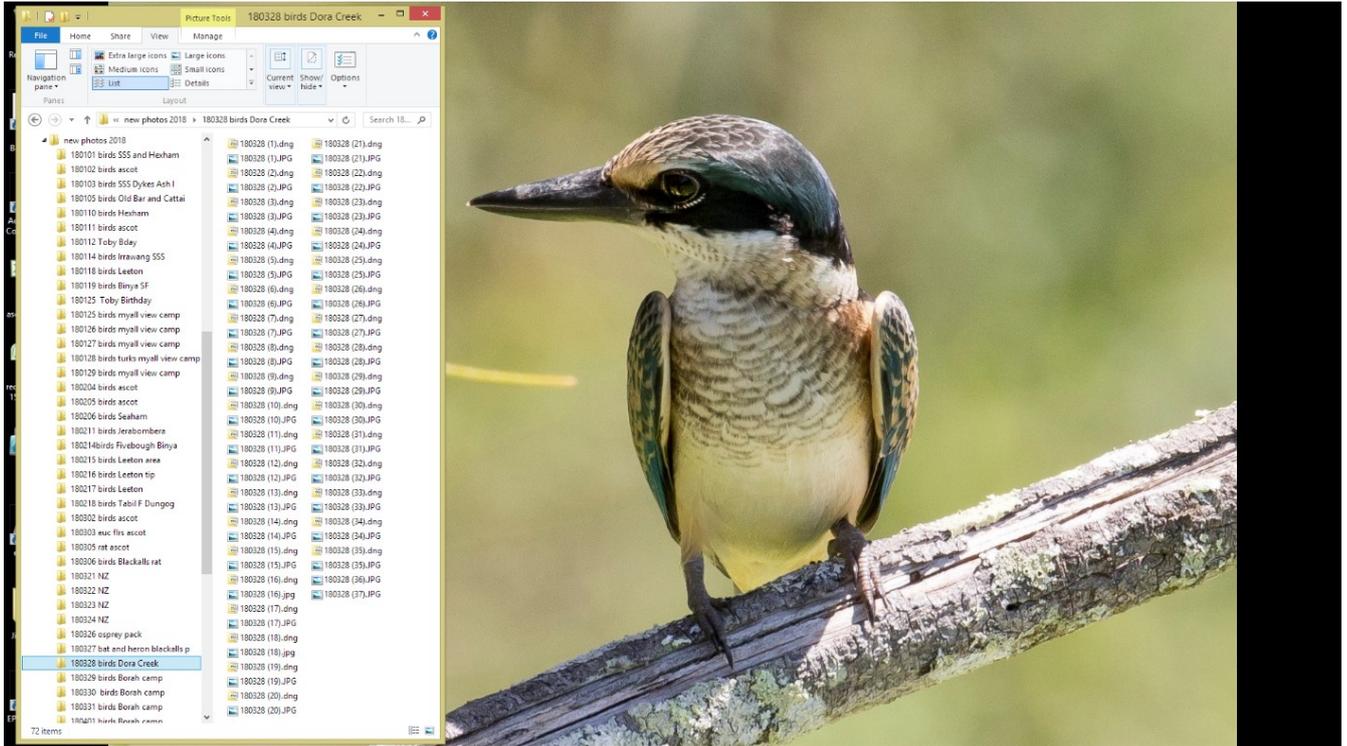
Black-shouldered Kite at Tocal



So far so good - the computer has a main folder called 2018, then whatever subfolders I might choose. I use the dates followed by a place description, and in some a species name if they are important shots.

Next comes an archive to external HDD (or you might use the Cloud storage available these days). So my images are permanently stored away from my day to day working, and I can easily retrieve any image in its original RAW state as long as I have its file name.

Screensaver: Young Sacred Kingfisher at Cattai Wetlands – Rob Palazzi



For me, much pleasure comes from 'processing these images into working jpg images, so I spend a fair bit of time (avoiding the home chores and the TV) working through these RAW images using Photoshop (CS3). Whatever image program you might choose - up to you - I bought PhotoShop back when I was a teacher as an educational expense, and have become so comfortable with it I find it hard to go with anything else

When 'finished' with this processing I have a folder now filled with nice jpgs cropped and coloured just how I want them. The original RAW copies are safely archived and the computer has only the much less space consuming jpgs left on it. Each jpg has the identical file name as it's original, and in future if I want to revisit this image for whatever reason I can go back to archives for it.



Scarlet Robin at Burning Mountain (left) Barn Owl at Windy Station Camp (above) Rob Palazzi

So my computer has lots of jpg folders on it - these can be archived as well so I don't have to redo them all if that dreaded CRASH ever happens.



Little Eagle at Borah Camp

The best of the jpgs end up copied into a Desktop Background folder that enables me to set the Windows background to randomly 'play' them on my screen while I work on whatever. At times my family has to nudge me to 'get on with it' - I get distracted by these wonderful memories parading past in the background, when I should be composing something like this!

Cheers Rob P

Further details I can provide (there are lots of little things I didn't have space for), tutoring if you need, encouragement wherever possible, a shoulder to cry on if that's necessary! Most of all -SORT those images out, sooner rather than.....

Recent Observations : Please report special observations

An important observation was reported this week by **Archie Brennan**, aged 12. An immature **Pacific Gull** he saw on Nobbys Beach prompted debate and sightings: around the harbour mouth, at Ocean Baths, Horseshoe Beach and Stockton, by keen club members. Fantastic effort from such a young budding birder.

Bruce Watts provided the photo below, taken at Stockton.



© Bruce Watts



Bird & Nature Photography Tours

Amazing Destinations!

- *South Africa-Kruger Safari.
- *Darwin, Kakadu, Katherine.
- *Cairns, Daintree, Atherton.
- *Flinders Ranges & Gluepot.
- *Hunter Valley.
- *Riverwood Downs Weekends.

Contact: Dick Jenkin 0407 267207

E: richardnjenkin@bigpond.com

W: www.jenkinphotography.com.au

Hunterbirding is an email group set up by HBOC that is run through the Google Groups. It is a great way to keep in touch with the latest goings-on in Hunter Region birding. Members are able to report sightings, post questions to the group and get involved with group discussions on bird related issues. The home page of the Hunterbirding group is located at <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/hunterbirding> Instructions for joining a Google Group to sign up for Hunterbirding to take part in these discussions and benefit from up-to-date birding news in the region, can be found at <https://support.google.com/groups/answer/1067205?hl=en> and follow the on-site instructions In addition to being a forum for interesting discussions on issues such as bird identification and behaviour it is also a great place to report your observations.

Bird records are obtained by the club through a variety of other means. Others are received through the BA atlas database, club outing sighting sheets, the club night observations forum and direct communications with the record officers. Of particular interest to the club are those records of regional significance, including sightings of the more unusual species, observations of breeding activity, early and late records of migratory birds and significantly large counts. A selection of records of this nature is provided below.

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Great Crested Grebe	2+2	06/4/18	Walka Waterworks	M. Anstis
Plum-headed Finch	1	10/4/18	Medhurst Bridge	D. Stuart
Hooded Robin	1	11/4/18	Medhurst Bridge	G. Gillam
Grey Goshawk (White Morph)	1	11/4/18	Booral	J. Connors
Freckled Duck	5	11/4/18	Muswellbrook poo pond	M. Roderick
White-winged Choughs	18	11/4/18	Dungog	D. Jenkin
Grey-tailed Tattler	28	13/4/18	Pindimar	J. Connors
Musk Lorikeet	40	14/4/18	Whistler Pde Marylands	M. Roderick
Wedgetail Eagle (Juvenile)	1	15/4/18	Little Swan Bay	L. Wooding
Painted Button-quail	2	17/4/18	Four Mile Ck Ashtonfield	Krishna
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	44	17/4/18	Hawks Nest	L. Wooding
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	60	17/4/18	Adamstown Heights	R. Kyte
Brahminy Kite	2	18/4/18	Swansea	M. McDonald
Swift Parrot	2+8	21/4/18	Blackalls Park	N. Cooper
Beach Stone-curlew	1	21/4/18	Sunset Beach	T. Murray
Australasian Bittern	1	23/4/18	Hexham Swamp	M. Simpson
Australian Gull-billed Tern	100	26/4/18	Stockton Sandspit	R. Burton
Red-kneed Dotterel	98	28/4/18	Stockton Borehole	M. McDonald
Spangled Drongo	1	28/4/18	Merewether	R. Nicholas
Black-necked Stork	2 adult	30/4/18	Hexham Swamp	P. Weinstock
White-headed Pigeon	50	30/4/18	Stroud Rest Area	A. Stuart
Topknot Pigeon	68	2/5/18	Pindimar	J. Connors
Bassian Thrush	1	4/5/19	Green Point	J. Stone
Swift Parrot	25	4/5/18	HEZ	S. Roderick
Tawny-Crowned Honeyeater	4	5/5/18	Minimbah	B. Watts
King Quail	1	5/5/18	Minimbah	B. Watts
Turquoise Parrot	2	5/5/18	HEZ	M. Roderick
Black-chinned Honeyeater	25	5/5/18	HEZ	M. Roderick
Swift Parrot	100	8/5/18	Pelton/Werakata NP	M. Roderick
Freckled Duck	108	9/5/18	Shortland Waters Golf Club	A. Berryman
Silver Gull	1000	17/5/18	Hexham Swamp	P. Weinstock
Swift Parrot	50	19/5/18	HEZ	M. Roderick
Campbell's Albatross	1	20/5/18	Pelagic from Nelson Bay	D. Stuart
White-fronted Tern	1 first ret.	21/5/18	Nobbys	R. Nicholas
Scarlet, Red-capped Robin	1ea	24/5/18	Astills Picnic Area Werakata	R. Burton
Spotted Pardalote	100 est	25/5/18	Kearsley Fire Trail, Kitchener	M. Roderick
Australasian Shoveler	662	28/5/18	Morpeth	G. Brosie
Australasian Bittern	1	3/6/18	Hexham Swamp	N. Hayes
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	3/6/18	Blacksmiths	J. Lawson
Pacific Gull	1	4/6/18	Nobbys Beach	Archie Brennan
Musk Lorikeets	2+	4/6/18	Kotara South	G. Voss
Gang-gang Cockatoos	10	5/6/18	Abernathy	HBOC field outing
Swift Parrots	13	5/6/18	Abernathy	HBOC field outing

Club Activities June to August

Wed 13 th Jun	Club Meeting	7.00pm The Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Milly Formby “Tundra microlight race with shorebirds” Bird of the Evening: update on Fish Fry Flats project (Phil Reid, NCIG)
Sat 16 th Jun	Hunter Wader Survey HT-10.28am, 1.55m	10.00am Ash Island and Tomago 10.30 am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 – Ash Island Dan Williams 0408 023 262 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay Steven Cox 0409 848 390 – Tomago Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 - Hexham
Sun 17 th Jun	Field Outing: New Members Day	9.30am Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland	Lorna Mee 0499 015 500
Tue 19 th Jun	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 Please ring to confirm
Mon 25 th Jun	Create shelly sand - Stockton Sandspit	08:00 Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418411785
JULY 2018			
Tue 3 rd Jul	Mid-week Outing – Earthcare Park, Morpeth	Meet – 8.00am turn off Metford Rd & park near the sporting field	Marg Clarke 0412 616 030
Wed 4 th Jul	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	President, Robert Stewart All members welcome
Fri 6 th – Sun 8 th Jul (B'up 21-23 Jul)	Broughton Island bird banding	Nelson Bay NPWS TBA Fit only, numbers very limited: contact Alan for waiting list	Greg Little 0414 562169 Alan Stuart 0409 978 171
Mon 9 th Jul	Create shelly sand - Stockton Sandspit	8.00 Stockton Sandspit	Tom Clarke 0418411785
Wed 11 th Jul	Club Meeting – Xmas in July Fundraiser	7.00pm The Wetlands Centre: please bring a plate to share	Speaker: Ken Gosbell – Use of Geolocators in Shorebird Research Bird of the Evening: Peter Weinstock
Fri 13 th Jul	Port Stephens Waterbirds Survey	8.30am Locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 Essential to ring to confirm
Sat 14 th Jul	Hunter Wader Survey HT-9.17am, 1.55m	9.00am Ash Island and Tomago 9.30am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 – Ash Island Dan Williams 0408 023 262 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay Steven Cox 0409 848 390 – Tomago Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 - Hexham
15 th Jul	Field Outing - Tahlee	Meet – 7.30am @ The Rock (9km past 2 nd turn to Karuah	Stuart Fleming 0405775047
Tue 17 th Jul	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 Please ring to confirm
AUGUST 2018			
Wed 1 st Aug	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	President – Robert Stewart All members welcome
4 th -5 th Aug	Swift Parrot & Regent Honeyeater Surveys	Various locations as desired or directed	Mick Roderick 0421 761237 mick.roderick@birdlife.org.au Please contact for information
Tue 7 th Aug	Mid-week Outing – Leneghans	Meet – 8.00am Cnr Wayaba & Phoenix Sts, Black Hill	Judi Thomas 4952 2960 or 0428 853 517