

Dharug National Park – 7th May 2016

It was misty, cool, start to the day crossing Wiseman’s Ferry before meeting at Mill Creek Picnic area in Dharug National Park for a trip led by Paul Johnstone. Several people arriving had views of Superb Lyrebird crossing the tracks around Mill Creek.

With everyone assembled, we walked back towards the main camping area. There were good numbers of Noisy Friarbirds, a few Little Wattlebirds and an Olive-backed Oriole. The stars of the show were two male Rose Robins that showed well to all present, and a couple of Scarlet Honeyeaters also put in a brief appearance.

Mid-morning tea was taken at the picnic area, before taking the 1.5km circuit track through the forest. The bower of a Satin Bowerbird was found close to the track. Lunch was taken back at the picnic area and the Sydney Fungal Studies Group, who also had a field trip to the area, had set up there too. They were happy to show people their samples.



Figure 1: Great North Rd, Dharug National Park.

Photograph by Greg McLachlan.

After lunch we drove to the start of the Old Great North Road. This proved to be good for birds and the 3.5km return walk produced excellent views of several good species for the 17 people attending this outing. If you have never been on this old convict built road, it is well worth making the trip.



Figure 2: Rockwarbler Photograph by Paul Johnstone

Rockwarbler, Yellow-tufted and White-eared Honeyeater all showed well, as did a male Spotted Quail Thrush that gave prolonged views feeding in a ditch at the side of the road.

For quite a few of us, one of the most interesting birds of the day was a dark morph White-Bellied Cuckoo Shrike. This was well picked out by Allan Richards. While it superficially resembled Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, the white crescent 'tear drop' behind the eye and white tipped tail were diagnostic.



Figure 3: Spotted Quail-thrush. Photograph by Greg McLachlan

Most people called it a day just before 4pm and went away very happy. Just three hardy souls returned to the Mill Creek Picnic area for a last chance to try and find Glossy Black Cockatoo, which had been seen on a mid-week visit by Paul who was checking out the area prior to the trip.



Figure 4: Glossy Black-Cockatoo.

Photograph by Stephen Hey

After picking out some contact calls and going 'off-track' a bit, a feeding female Glossy Black Cockatoo gave good views in fading light. Realising there were contact calls being returned across the valley, eventually we found three birds.

A total of 47 species were seen in the day, a good number considering the lack of waterbirds and I am sure the day will be remembered by all who attended.

Stephen Hey

