

BIRDING NSW'S KEY BIODIVERSITY AREA SURVEY AROUND GRENFELL

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Birding NSW's 11th bird survey around Grenfell took place on Saturday March 25, 2017. Grenfell is within the South West Slopes Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). This huge KBA extends from Orange to Wagga Wagga and east to Canberra so we only survey in a small area of it. The target species in this KBA are Superb Parrots, Swift Parrots, Painted Honeyeaters and Diamond Firetails. Although the area is now a KBA and therefore other taxa (mammals, reptiles, amphibians etc) are potentially of concern in the KBA, we continue to concentrate just on birds. As well as the target species defined on the basis of their global conservation status, we record bird species listed as vulnerable under current NSW legislation. Our surveys began in 2011. The September 2016 survey was cancelled because of floods.

Thirty six people took part in the surveys including nine new surveyors and six surveyors from Grenfell and Young. This is the largest number of surveyors we have had. Everyone came to dinner on Friday night at the Railway Hotel – not a problem for Carol, the cook, who produced a roast dinner for us. We increased the number of survey groups to eight and we surveyed on 31 sites including two new sites. I would like to thank Allan Richards, Ted Nixon, Jill Molan, Richard Webber, Graham Fry, Russell Beardmore and Paul Johnstone for leading groups; I led the eighth group. Superb Parrots were seen on five survey sites (three on private properties) and incidentally in four other places over the weekend; the maximum number seen at any place was 19 birds. Two Diamond Firetails were seen on one survey site in Bimbi State Forest. Once again we did not see the other two target species. Of other threatened species, two Brown Treecreepers were seen in Warraderry State Forest, five Turquoise Parrots were seen in Weddin State Forest, two Speckled Warblers were seen in Weddin State Forest (not on a survey site) and Grey-crowned Babblers were seen in nine places; the maximum number on any place was 15 birds. We did not see any Hooded Robins on this survey. Other interesting species were an Australian Hobby, a Brown Goshawk, two Swamp Harriers, a White-bellied Cuckooshrike, a Southern Whiteface, two Painted Buttonquails, Australian Ringnecks, Blue Bonnets and Rainbow Bee-eaters. For surveyors in the forests, Red-capped Robins were common being seen in seven sites with the maximum number seen on any site being seven. Outside of the survey, people saw Plumed Whistling Ducks and Pink-eared Ducks at the sewage ponds.

Once again we were blessed with good weather for the barbecue on Saturday night at "Rosemont", the home of Mikla and Wayne. This provided an opportunity for Allan to present Mikla with a picture of her favourite bird, a Spotted Harrier, painted by Norma Ikin. This gift is a present from all of us to thank Mikla for all her hard work in supporting and promoting the bird surveys around Grenfell. Tom provided two chocolate cakes to celebrate three birthdays including Mikla's. On Sunday morning we met at Company Dam for a walk in fine weather around the tracks. I recorded 38 species including six Varied Sittellas, two Crested Shrike-tits and two Speckled Warblers.

During this survey weekend we recorded 64 species with 61 species seen on survey sites. Since commencing the Grenfell surveys in 2011, we have seen 134 bird species on survey sites with several other species seen on non-survey sites during the survey weekends.

Survey Date	24/09/2011	12/05/2012	3/11/2012	20/04/2013	12/10/2013	29/03/2014	27/09/2014	28/03/2015	26/09/2015	19/03/2016	25/03/2017
Cum. species count	67	79	91	100	106	112	117	125	131	133	134
New species count	67	12	12	9	6	6	5	8	6	2	1
Total # species	67	60	71	54	67	66	73	70	78	64	61
Total # sightings	819	608	1014	477	733	1325	860	1430	1013	1101	971

Below are shown the bird species with bird numbers seen during the survey on Saturday March 25, 2017. This table does not include birds seen outside survey periods or at other places during the weekend. The only new bird species seen on a survey site was a White-bellied Cuckooshrike. My thanks go to Michael Edwards, who has provided the data included in the two tables.

Species	Number of birds seen	Number of sites at which seen	Species	Number of birds seen	Number of sites at which seen
Apostlebird	119	15	Rainbow Bee-eater	14	2
Australian Hobby	1	1	Rainbow Lorikeet	8	2
Australian Magpie	45	19	Red Wattlebird	2	2
Australian Raven	10	9	Red-capped Robin	19	7
Australian Ringneck	4	2	Red-rumped Parrot	22	6
Australian Wood Duck	6	3	Restless Flycatcher	3	3
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	6	5	Rufous Whistler	8	5
Blue Bonnet	2	1	Southern Whiteface	1	1
Brown Goshawk	1	1	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	7	2
Brown Treecreeper	2	1	Striated Pardalote	3	1
Common Bronzewing	10	6	Striped Honeyeater	9	4
Crested Pigeon	28	11	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	1	1
Diamond Firetail	2	1	Superb Fairy-wren	11	3
Eastern Rosella	76	20	Superb Parrot	36	5
Eastern Yellow Robin	6	3	Tree Martin	3	2
Galah	35	12	Turquoise Parrot	5	1
Grey Butcherbird	13	9	Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	1
Grey Fantail	15	7	Weebill	1	1
Grey Shrike-thrush	2	2	Welcome Swallow	5	2
Grey-crowned Babbler	42	6	Western Gerygone	2	2
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	1	1	White-bellied Cuckooshrike	1	1
Jacky Winter	2	1	White-browed Babbler	9	2
Laughing Kookaburra	8	4	White-eared Honeyeater	12	5
Little Raven	2	2	White-plumed Honeyeater	45	6
Magpie-Lark	16	10	White-throated treecreeper	3	3
Noisy Miner	115	18	White-winged Chough	73	7
Pacific Black Duck	2	1	Willie Wagtail	19	10
Painted Button-quail	2	1	Yellow Thornbill	32	10
Peaceful Dove	4	3	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	6	2

Pied Butcherbird	14	10	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	12	3
Pied Currawong	7	5			
Total # Species seen	61		Total # birds seen	971	
** Species seen for the first time this survey italicised					

The next survey will be held on the weekend of September 15-17, 2017. We hope that our existing volunteers and new volunteers will take part in the next survey. Everyone is encouraged to book accommodation as soon as possible as there are always events in Grenfell in Spring. Please contact Allan Richards (activities@birdingsw.org.au) or me (emhodson@exemail.com.au) if you are not already on our contact list and would like details of the next survey.



Jill Molan, Sally Forsstrom, Jenny Hetherington, Viv Schell surveying on "Ochre Arch": Photograph by Philip Diprose, owner of "Ochre Arch"



Coleen Southall and Ted Nixon surveying in Warraderry State Forest: Photograph by Camila Di Gregorio



Allan Richards presenting the picture painted by Norma Ikin to Mikla Lewis: Photograph by Camila Di Gregorio



Superb Parrot: Photograph by Camila Di Gregorio



Buff-rumped Thornbill: Photograph by Geoff Ball



Grey-crowned Babblers: Photograph by Geoff Ball