

The History of
Birding NSW

1970 - 2020



Anne van Roekel



Supplementary Newsletter

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ABN: 72 008 283 208

PO Box Q277 QVB Post Shop
Sydney NSW 1230

Email: info@birdingnsw.org.au

Website: www.birdingnsw.org.au

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Anne van Roekel

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Patron: Alan Morris AM

Office Bearers:

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Club Objective

“To Encourage birdwatching as a leisure activity and to promote the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat.”

Further information about the club is available on their website.

About the Author

Anne van Roekel joined the NSW Field Ornithologists Club, (NSWFOC) as it was then known, in 1988. From 1994 - 2002 she was on the Committee as Minutes Secretary, during which time she wrote the History of the NSW FOC 1970-2000 at the request of the then President Stuart Fairbairn. This was published as Volume 32 No. 2 of *Australian Birds* (the Journal of the NSWFOC) in 2000. Anne re-joined the committee in 2017 as Membership Secretary. Tom Karplus (the current President) suggested that she write a further segment of the club's history up to 2020 as part of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the club

Cover Pictures

Front: The Azure Kingfisher has been the Club's logo since 1970. The copy on the front cover is of the painting by Nicholas Day donated to the Club by Stuart Fairbairn in 1996.

Back: The Club banner designed and produced by Camila de Gregorio and Chris Macaluso for the Club's 50th birthday celebration.

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The History of Birding NSW 1970 - 2020

“The centre of Sydney ornithology 50 years ago was the Ornithological Section of the Royal Zoological Society that met (...) jointly with the New South Wales Section of the Royal Australasian Ornithologist’s Union.”

(Alan Keast, Australian Zoologist, Vol 30 (1), 1995, p.26).

Writing about these associations in the late ‘30s and early ‘40s Keast paints a vivid picture of an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed group of people. Their main activity was the monthly meeting, which combined both business matters and the general meeting. Correspondence and general business were attended to, there would be a lecture on some matter ornithological, with the highlight being the discussion and observations session at the end of the meeting. Reading Keast’s article one is struck by how different birding was back then. There was a level of excitement, a feeling of being in the vanguard of learning and discovery, with the emphasis on the contribution of the individual amateur ornithologist. First time ever photographs of birds by such photographers as Norman Chaffer would be shown, evoking great admiration and interest. Many species were little known and diagnostic features were still being determined. Outings were infrequent, but when held, would produce first sightings for a majority of participants.

By the ‘60s, the meetings were still a combined meeting of the two groups, which for ease of presentation shall be referred to as the RZS Ornithological Section and the NSW RAOU. It was a slightly uneasy amalgamation, as the only officer bearers were the Chairman and Secretary of the RZS Ornithological Section who were of course members of the RZS and only members of the RZS had voting rights. There was an attendance book, ruled in columns to indicate RZS or RAOU membership, which those at the meetings signed in the appropriate column, although this did not appear to be used to ensure that only RZS members voted. Whatever the politics, the combination had provided a most successful forum for Sydney’s very active, knowledgeable and enthusiastic band of ornithologists. The meetings continued to be well-attended (up to 90 attendees) and still followed the same format, but there were winds of change about.

The Move to a New Club

The Beginning of Change

The combined RZS Ornithological Section and NSW RAOU held few field trips as a group, although of course individual birders and small groups of friends were very active field observers. However, people new to birding needed help both in field identification and in locating good birding spots, and a push for organised field trips developed. There was also some dissatisfaction with the constraints exerted by the parent bodies, both the RZS and especially the RAOU Head Office having a quite restrictive influence over the possible activities of their respective sub-branches. Several of the more active birders began discussing the idea of a separate and independent organisation that might organise more frequent field days and publish a birding periodical. But “one problem was the shortage or total absence of funds” (Peter Roberts, pers. com., February, 1999).

In 1966 a happy confluence occurred. Peter Roberts was an active member of both the NSW Gould League of Birdlovers (as the Gould League was then known) and Chair of the RZS Ornithological Section. At the meeting of the NSW Gould League of Birdlovers on 20 April 1966, Peter Roberts raised the possibility of the League providing funds for “the forming of a Senior Division of the Gould League, this Senior Division to be run on similar lines to the Bird Observers Club of Victoria.”

After some discussion a motion to donate \$200 for “the purpose of forming a senior division” (ibid.) was carried and the Gould League Bird Watchers was on its way. The very next evening, 21 April 1966, the minutes of the monthly meeting of the RZS Ornithological Section and NSW RAOU state “Mr P Roberts advised that a Senior Branch of the Gould League had been established (whose) main activities were to organize field days (up to nine per year being envisaged) and the publishing of a bi-monthly magazine.”

The new Gould League Birdwatchers began activities immediately, the first issue of the new periodical, named BIRDS, being published in July and the first outing held on 17 July 1966 to Centennial Park and the Malabar sewage outfall. BIRDS was referred to as the Journal, although its function and content were more similar to the Newsletter as of 2020. Each issue contained reports of recent field trips and notices of upcoming ones. Issues in Volume 1 included reports of the RZS Ornithological Section-RAOU meeting, but this practice was not continued on a regular basis. The bulk of each issue consisted of “observations and short articles of local and current interest” as requested by the Editor in the very first editorial. The influence of the Photographic Advisor can be seen in some of the early issues which frequently carried photographs, often Norman Chaffer’s own prints. The Art Adviser’s (Ern Hoskin) skill can be seen in the kingfisher on the masthead.

It isn’t recorded who organised the first few field trips, although the fact they did occur is attested to by the Field Excursion Reports which appeared each issue in BIRDS. Peter Roberts is noted as “Field Day Organiser” from Vol 1 No 5, with George Dibley joining him as Assistant in January 1968 and assuming the role a year later in January 1969. Outings in the early days visited areas such as the Royal National Park, Ku-ring-gai Chase and Long Reef, areas still visited in current outings. Other areas visited such as Warwick Farm and the Koala Sanctuary at Pennant Hills have become so urbanised that they are lost as birding sites. The number of species recorded at these early outings often wasn’t particularly high, totals in the forties being common. However, the species seen could be quite spectacular, as, for example, the Jacana on a nest with four young at Longneck Lagoon on 27 January 1967, on which day a Jabiru was also found at Pitt Town Lagoon. The number of participants fluctuated similarly, sometimes as low as 13 and sometimes in the seventies, with the usual number being between thirty and forty.

It is not very clear, either from the written or remembered record, what exactly the relationships were between the new club and the three organisations to which it was connected. The editorial in the first issue of BIRDS explains the formation of the club as a response to the perceived need for the new Gould League Birdwatchers of NSW so that activities for adults interested in aspects of bird study could be offered, the existing League being entirely focused on bird study for children. However, the meeting records indicate that, while, this need may have encouraged the Gould League in its altruism, the initiative for the formation for the new club came from the bird groups. In the Minutes of the Ordinary Meetings of the NSW Gould League of Bird Lovers held in the Mitchell Library, there are only two further mentions of the ‘Gould League Birdwatchers’ Club’. On 17 August 1966, the treasurer’s report shows a \$200 donation to this group and the Annual report of 1966 mentions that “This Association is now well under way and have to date produced four editions of their journal BIRDS.” It appears that having launched it, the Gould League was happy to let the club go its own way.

The relationship with the RZS Ornithological Section and the NSW RAOU is much less clear-cut. That first editorial in BIRDS assured members that they were invited “by the Royal Zoological Society of NSW to attend meetings of its Ornithological Section to hear illustrated lectures by Australia’s leading ornithologists”. So members of the Gould League Birdwatchers Club attended the monthly meetings as visitors. The venue for these meetings changed in January 1967 to the Hallstrom Theatre at the Australian Museum, but, apart from that, it seems they continued unchanged, except that they now included information about the field days which were organised by the Gould League Bird Watchers’ Club. The degree of confusion is evidenced by the RZS Ornithological Section minutes of the meeting of 18 January 1968 which records a motion submitted by Mr Hindwood “that the price of BIRDS be set at 10 cents” which was “unanimously carried”, presumably voted for by all present, whether members of the RZS Ornithological Section, the NSW RAOU, or the Gould League group, (whose name never seemed to be quite defined), or any combination thereof.

Transformation to the FOC

This state of affairs was abruptly reconfigured in June 1969 by the announcement from the Head Office of the RAOU that the state branches were to cease existence. The minutes of the monthly meeting on 19 June 1969 reflect this change, with the heading referring only to the RZS Ornithological Section and a slightly patronising statement that “of course, RAOU members are still invited to attend”.

The Gould League Bird Watchers responded by organising a general meeting to be held at Oatley Park, in conjunction with a field day at Yeramba Reserve on Sunday 21 June. A “Notice to members” about this meeting, which was to be ‘for the election of office bearers and formation of future policy’ appeared in Vol.4 No. 4, 1 April 1970 of BIRDS. At this meeting Lola Smith, Secretary of the Gould League Birdwatchers, distributed a letter addressed to every member [containing a] notification of a change of name to be NSW Field Ornithologists, and a proposed Constitution on which members will be asked to vote” (minutes of RZS Ornithological Section meeting, 21 May 1970).

“The party then drove to Oatley Park for lunch and discussion ensued for the rest of the afternoon on the formation and re-naming of the Club.” (Noella Kirkwood, BIRDS, Vol 5 No.2.) From all reports the major issue under discussion was the name of the club. The new constitution, calling for a President and Vice-President amongst other articles, was passed with virtually no contentious points, but the name for the new club was hotly debated amongst the 53 members present for a considerable time. There was a feeling the title Gould League Birdwatchers associated the club with children. The complete lack of connection between the Gould League itself and this group added pressure for a new name. The proposed name was NSW Field Ornithologists, but many members felt this was pretentious or otherwise unacceptable. Eventually Vincent Serventy proposed Bird Observers’ Club of NSW which was carried “by a substantial majority” according to one source and “a very close vote” according to another!

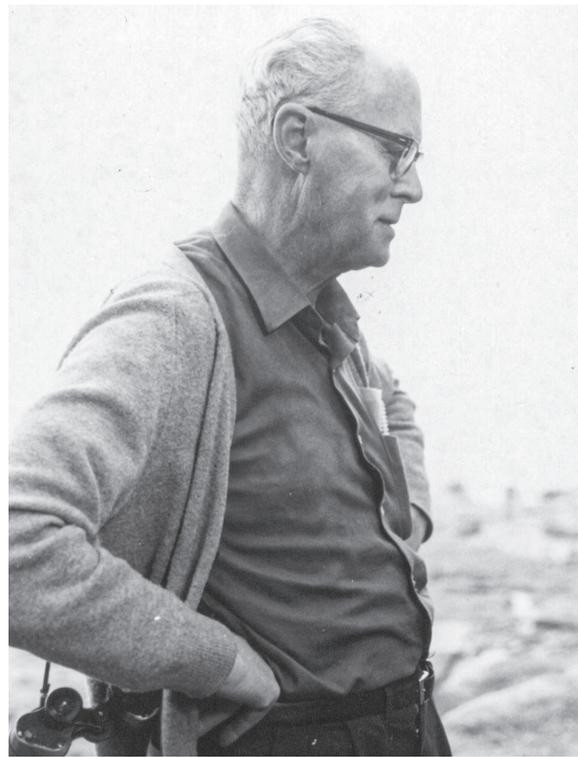
Further consideration by senior members of this club coupled with a letter from Roy Wheeler of the Bird Observers’ Club asking that the club reconsider the name led to the calling of a Special General Meeting on 21 July 1970. Twenty-seven members attended this meeting which saw again the argument over the term ‘ornithologist’. To some it indicated “serious study of birds” (H Battam) and “a name of importance” (J Disney), while to others it was “pretentious” (O Florin) and “Bird Observers Club described what most of us do” (Mr Burlace). (These quotes are taken from the Report of a Special Meeting in Hallstrom Theatre, held in the Club archives) The argument to carry most weight with the members present seems to have been the pressure from the existing Bird Observers’ Club to choose a different name, and in the end the meeting voted in favour of NSW Field Ornithologists and a further motion added ‘Club’ to the title.

The new constitution stated the object of the club to be “ To promote the study and conservation of Australian Birds and their habitat.” This was to be accomplished, according to the Constitution, through field outings as practicable, the publication on at least a quarterly basis of a periodical to be named BIRDS, and a regular monthly meeting. Before tracing the development of these activities it is worth pausing to consider the personalities driving the club’s forward impetus.

The Great Birding Personalities of the Mid-century

There were three great figures of the Sydney birding scene, supporters of the club from its inception, who deserve special mention. Alec Chisholm was Patron of the Club from its beginnings as the Gould League Birdwatchers’ Club . He was not able attend meetings regularly, but did contribute items to the newsletter and the journal and “held the club in high esteem” as Arnold McGill writes in Chisholm’s obituary in BIRDS, Issue No. 25. The support of such an eminent ornithological authority was of great value to the fledgling organisation. One of the Club’s legends is of the scattering of Alec Chisholm’s ashes in Royal National Park by Arnold McGill in April 1978, at a very small ceremony at an unmarked spot, to comply with the request of the Director of the NP&WS to avoid publicity. (BIRDS, No 30.)

Keith Hindwood was an “indefatigable field worker” (Keast) and prolific author (as was Alec Chisholm). He kept detailed notes in an amazing card catalogue, which Ern Hoskin took over at the time of Keith’s sudden and untimely death in 1971. “He was a mine of information on birds and he generously shared this knowledge with all who asked for it.” (BIRDS, Vol 6 No 2).



Keith Hindwood at Yeramba Reserve, 21 June 1970



Arnold McGill at Nepean Dam, 1985

Arnold McGill was the third in this trio of great amateur ornithologists of the mid-century who were active in the Club from the start. Arnold's impact on the club was manifold. He served on the committee as Vice-President and then as Patron after the death of Alec Chisholm. Reading through back copies of BIRDS and the Journal, one is struck by the number and range of articles he contributed. His "knowledge of avian systematics and taxonomy was on a world scale", (Alan Rogers, quoted by Ern Hoskin in Arnold's obituary in Newsletter No. 109). Not only did Arnold have this encyclopaedic knowledge on all matters to do with birds, which he shared with the greatest of goodwill, but he was also, in Lola Smith's words, "that wonderfully enthusiastic and warm personality who welcomed and encouraged so many newcomers" (pers. com., May 1999). Many members contacted for their memories of the club spoke of him with obvious respect and affection and the Arnold McGill Lecture held at the December meeting is an ongoing tribute to a legendary figure within the FOC.

The First Committee

The new President was George Dibley, who had first joined the Gould League Birdwatchers' Club committee as Field Day organiser. His wife, Marie, took this position over from George, with a name change to Activities Officer, and continued in this important role for 10 years. She was a very strong supporter of the Club and was awarded a Life membership in 1983. Peter Roberts was instrumental in the inception of the Club and has continued to serve it in many capacities, including as BIRDS Editor, Activities Officer, Vice-President, President and Journal Editor. He was awarded a Life membership in 1993. Outstanding contribution to the club is recognised by bestowal of Life Membership, the Constitution allowing five such memberships at any one time.

The New Club's Activities

"Field Outings As Practicable"

This new committee immediately began enthusiastic promotion of the activities prescribed in the Constitution. The monthly field outings continued as before, with increasing numbers of participants. New types of outings were added as members' needs and interests dictated.

Boat trips became a regular event during Alan Rogers' term as Activities Officer. The first inclusion in the notices for Field Excursions was for Saturday 15 December 1973, advising of a trip leaving from McMahons Point wharf, led by Margaret Cameron, at a cost of \$5. These boat trips became less frequent in the '80s, but returned with a vengeance in the late '90s.

Campouts in one form or another developed as a natural consequence of members' desire to see different habitats and the corresponding new species. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between 'overnight camping' and 'campouts' in describing the club's activities in this area. It appears that a number of field outings in the early days could involve an overnight camp, to Comerong Island in December 1971, for example, which attracted 20 members on Saturday, 17 of whom camped overnight. These do not seem to have been the same concept as the long week-end campouts which feature so prominently in later calendars. The first overnight camp advertised in BIRDS was for 20-21 March 1971 at Munghorn Gap, lead by Alan Morris.



Peter Davie with his 'gunpowder' tea, the Club 'Loo' in the background



Norma Maxwell and Allan Richards on a boat trip, 1988

The practice of planning campouts for long weekends seems to have begun with a campout for the 1973 October holiday weekend at Ingalba Nature Reserve, Temora, with the Canberra ornithologists. The first Easter camping was in 1978 to the Widden Valley. The Easter campouts of the next few years were associated with the RAOU Atlas survey scheme, being held at locations including Moree and Tenterfield. Since then, the Easter campout has capitalised on the extra days available to explore areas further from Sydney such as Round Hill, the Pilliga and Cowra. Trips coinciding with long weekends became more frequent and by 1980 occurred most long weekends of the year, although it wasn't until 1985 with the advent of Allan Richards as Activities Officer that weekend campouts for all long weekends became fixtures in the Club's program.

A Club tradition began in 1985 when the first Bert Bolton Easter bus tour was organised. This first trip was to Narran Lakes, led by Norma Maxwell. Subsequent Bert Bolton Easter trips have taken club members to the Deniliquin area and Lake Cargelligo. Other Bert Bolton bus trips were organised to a variety of areas including several memorable trips to Coongie Lakes. The Club has ventured even further afield in planning some overseas trips for its members, including to New Caledonia in '95, Hong Kong in '92 and '94 and Lord Howe Island in '85, '90, '95, '97, and as part of the 50th year of the Club celebrations in 2020.

Beginners Outings were first mooted in 1976. It was envisaged that small groups of six to a possible maximum of 12 would be led through the identification of a limited number of species "to enable those present to have a better understanding of 'field ornithology'". It was suggested that such outings would be limited to four per year. These initial plans entirely underestimated the great success the beginners outings were to be, a success due in no small measure to their leader, Ern Hoskin, who was to lead every Beginners Outing, for the first eight years of their existence. Ern had been a reliable and informed outing leader since the inception of the club, but in these outings designed to help inexperienced birders he found a special niche. His phenomenal ability to imitate birdcalls awoke in many a new birder the realisation that here was a wonderful aid to bird recognition; his patience in explaining the finer, and even not-so-fine, distinguishing features appeared inexhaustible. Ern's contribution to the Club was recognised with a Life membership in 1983 and to ornithology when he received the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1999.

The first of these outings was held in Centennial Park on 17 July 1976. Such was the interest that they rapidly became monthly fixtures and the records indicate that never did that small, select group of six to twelve participants eventuate. In fact a peak attendance of exactly 100 people occurred on a combined beginners/general outing in December 1980 at Long Reef! In the 1990s, the distinction between regular and beginners outings disappeared, and in 1999, the term 'Beginners Outing' was dropped, the Club now running two regular monthly outings.

In 1985 the committee determined to trial a mid-week outing to be held on the last Wednesday of each month. This also proved a most successful venture, becoming another fixture in the outings calendar. Norma Maxwell was the first organiser until 1998, leading many of them herself, as well as a host of other outings and camping trips. She was also committed to her committee secretarial roles, for all of which she was awarded a Life Membership in 2001.

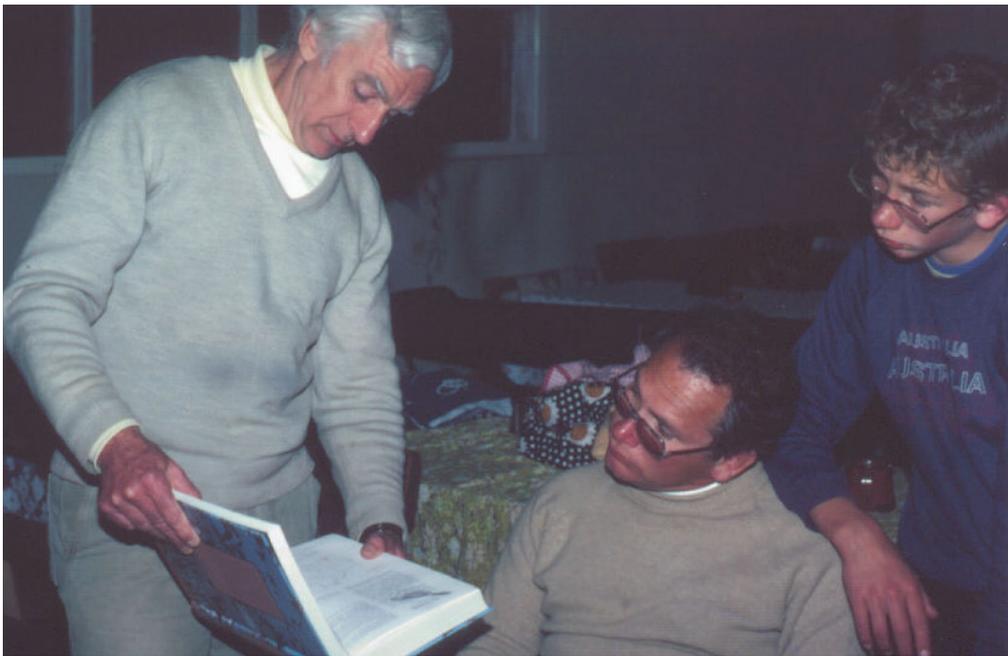
The next addition to the Club's field activities came in June 1989, when a Central Coast sub-branch initiated by Alan Morris began regular monthly outings on the first Saturday of each month. In 1991 Peter West of the Cumberland Bird Observers Club (CBOC) began outings to cater specifically for younger members and the FOC joined CBOC in this endeavour in October 1992. These field trips became known as the Nestlings outings, and occurred about four times per year.

Publications

Publication of a "periodical named BIRDS" was an article in the 1970 Constitution and the previously published magazine of that name continued its publication uninterrupted and unchanged in format under the editorship of Lawrie Courtney Haines. There were some changes in content - reports on the meetings reappeared in several issues, always headed either just MEETINGS or MUSEUM MEETINGS and, more importantly, Conservation Reports began to appear from January 1971.

In 1972 Alan Morris became Editor and the first moves towards a more scientific publication were made. A list of contents appeared on the back of each issue, the Index of Australian Bird Names (CSIRO Tech. Mem No.5 1969) was used to ensure consistency of scientific and vernacular names and with the first issue of Volume 8, a separate cover, albeit in the same paper as the content pages, appeared. The articles became less anecdotal and more rigorous, with references and annotations.

These changes culminated in July 1974 with the announcement that the club would now produce a quarterly newsletter so that the Journal could be devoted to the publication of ornithological articles only. The upgraded journal was to be called AUSTRALIAN BIRDS, 'Australian' being added to the name of the previous 'BIRDS' to distinguish it from the RSPB journal BIRDS and to define a geographical area. A new role of Newsletter



Dick Mason and Alan Morris consulting on a campout, 1985

Editor was added to the committee, with Dick Cooper as the first incumbent. As well as the separate quarterly newsletter, an additional newsletter called the Supplement to the Journal was to be distributed with the Journal each quarter, mainly to ensure notice of meetings and outings reached members in time for them to attend. This was a rather cumbersome arrangement, designed to save postage, but doomed to problems if the Journal was not ready for publication on time.

The first issue of AUSTRALIAN BIRDS was numbered Vol 9 No.1 to maintain continuity with the previous periodical and the Newsletter began a simple sequential numbering system still maintained today. Fortunately the supplementary issues were included in this numbering, so that when the inevitable happened (for the first time in June 1976) and the Journal was held up, the supplement could be sent out as an ordinary Newsletter. For several years a Newsletter would be sent as a supplement to the Journal if the two happened to be ready for mailing at the same time, but finally any conjunction between them was abandoned and the pattern of a bi-monthly newsletter was resumed, although it wasn't till Tom Karplus became Editor that regularity was fully established.

AUSTRALIAN BIRDS became an ornithological journal of note as its frequent citations in the Handbook of Australian New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB) volumes indicate. Changes in the pattern of contributions to this journal show better than any other indicator the changing nature of ornithological study in Australia, from largely an amateur pastime to the domain of scientists. Organisations which had the resources to ensure regular production and world-wide distribution attracted the increasingly scientific and professional writers, so reducing the number of quality articles submitted to smaller journals, such as AUSTRALIAN BIRDS. It was with great regret that the FOC committee decided to cease publication of the Journal in 1999.

One complete issue each year of AUSTRALIAN BIRDS was devoted to the Bird Report, an annual compilation of all the more important observations reported in NSW each year. This was independent of the effects of increasing professionalism and globalisation and it was planned to continue its publication. However, it fell to the same fate as its parent journal, the 2004 report being the last one to be published.

The Monthly Meetings

The third platform by which the NSWFOC intended to fulfill its objectives was stated in the Constitution as "regular monthly meetings". This poses a rather interesting conundrum and brings us back to consider the relationship between the new club and the RZS Ornithological Section. When the Gould League Birdwatchers' Club became the NSWFOC, its invitation to attend the RZS Ornithological Section meetings automatically transferred to members of the FOC. All the business of the RZS Ornithological Section was carried out at the meeting, but the last one is dated 19 June 1970. The new FOC committee met separately from the Museum meetings and of course conducted the business of their own club. It appears that RZS Ornithological Section business was subsumed into FOC business, not such an extraordinary proposition when one considers the overlap of office bearers in the two clubs. Dick Mason, Jim Francis and George Dibley are all recorded as RZS officers, including President (Dick and Jim) and Hon Secretary (George), while at the same time holding similar positions on the FOC Committee.

What actually happened between 1970 and 1980 was a slow, almost indiscernible, but complete change in the 'museum meetings' as they were always referred to, from being meetings of the RZS Ornithological Section to regular FOC monthly meetings. This evolution is difficult to trace, as there seem to have been no definitive or decisive points. Conversations with a number of people involved with the running of one or other or

both clubs indicate that there was a gradual and imperceptible change as fewer and fewer people attending the meetings took up membership in the RZS. People used terms such as “It just faded away”, “They were basically the same” and “They (the meetings) just became meetings of the FOC” in trying to explain what happened to the RZS Ornithological Section. Not even the financial records of the groups involved, which could be expected to throw some light by showing who paid the rental of the Hallstrom Theatre, are able to clarify the transition.

Gaining Independence

By the time Alan Rogers became President in 1980 the meetings were clearly FOC- chaired and FOC-organised although it was many years before the RZS officially recognised this fact. Koolewong ceased publication in 1985. Since March 1980 the Chairman of the Ornithological Section was listed as Walter Boles and the Secretary as John Disney. Walter Boles (pers. com., January 2000) recalls having no input into the running of the FOC meetings in this position and it appears that the position may have been maintained in order to keep the Section alive. However, in September 1985 the new Australian Zoologist, which assumed the functions of Koolewong, lists no officers in the Ornithological Section and has instead the statement “(In conjunction with the NSW Field Ornithologists Club)” giving Mrs Norma Maxwell as contact person. This listing is continued until December 1994, after which there is no mention of an Ornithological Section at all. The FOC was finally acknowledged to be standing on its own feet!

In the meantime the FOC had been developing a few traditions of its own. In 1982 the first Christmas party was held in conjunction with the CBOC and the Illawarra Bird Observers Club (IBOC). The first Photographic Competition was held in June 1983 with Bert Bolton presenting first prize and the first survey of members’ interests and ideas went out with Issue 79 in August 1984. The first Twitchathon was held in 1986 as a competition between CBOC and FOC members to raise money for the Robin Bigg memorial and the annual spotlighting outing in Royal National Park was first held in January 1987 and has been held every year since except for 1994, a year of disastrous fires, until 1999.

The Club was probably helped in establishing its identity by the temporary relocation of its meetings to the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney from July 1981 to April 1982. Also of influence was the development in 1986 of a new Constitution. The impetus for this came from the need to become incorporated so that public liability insurance could be obtained. Writing this new constitution was a very time-consuming labour as it had to conform to requirements of the NSW Corporate Affairs Commission. The committee began work in September 1986, expecting the members to be voting “early in the new year” (BIRDS, Issue No 97) but the Constitution was finally put to the vote at a Special General Meeting on 1 March 1988.

Jim Francis was instrumental during this process, acting as the Club’s legal advisor on both incorporation and the constitution. He was an indefatigable leader of many outings, campouts and trips as well as being Club President for six years and was awarded Life Membership in May 1987. He died in January 2008, just a few months after a well-attended Club celebration for his 90th Birthday at his much-loved Royal National Park.

Conservation

The new Constitution expanded on the objectives of the club, but retained the first one as it was originally stated; “To promote the study and conservation of Australian Birds and their habitat.” There developed three avenues for the club to engage in supporting conservation. One might be called the tactical approach and consisted of writing letters to both State and Federal Members of Parliament, preparing submissions for various commissions, reviews and, in recent years, writing responses to draft plans of management. The Conservation Officer, whose role was created in 1970, was chiefly responsible for this aspect of conservation, supported by the committee, particularly the President. The conservation reports which began their appearance in BIRDS, Vol 5 No1 January 1971 record the club’s efforts in this direction.

The second approach is best considered as the practical way that the club as a whole and members individually might support the concept of conservation. A practical aspect which appealed particularly to those members interested in fieldwork was the survey. Surveys provide data which can be used to argue the impact of inadequate conservation and surveys also provided members with an altruistic opportunity to go birdwatching, their favourite occupation, after all.

Members have been involved in innumerable surveys ranging from the all-encompassing RAOU Australian Bird Atlas begun in 1973, to Hooded Plover counts on east coast beaches, Wader surveys, Nest Record Schemes, et al. The databank created by the twice-yearly Sydney Bird Count from 1978 to 1987 is a prime example of the value of the contribution made by FOC members to the knowledge base of birds of NSW particularly, but extending into neighbouring States. The club’s database of rare and endangered species was also part of this effort to provide evidence on which to base submissions and to give added force to conservation arguments, although its usefulness was usurped by the development of the Bird Atlas database.



The Bathurst Survey group, 2000

The Bathurst Survey

Initiated by Club member, Hugh King, and planned by Dr Andrew Fisher of Charles Sturt University in Bathurst, Club members carried out four bird surveys a year in the Bathurst-Lithgow area between 1998 and 2001. The Club's Secretary Penny Drake-Brockman organised the survey groups and the survey sites and organised the use of Yetholme Community Hall as accommodation for the surveyors. The final data supported both the evidence for the decline of woodland bird populations across southern Australia and the importance of bushland remnants for the survival of those remaining.

This survey also benefited from the third way the Club aided conservation efforts, which was by direct financial donation.

The Club supported a number of projects in this way, including Dick Cooper's The Atlas of the Birds of NSW and the ACT.

Conservation successes to which the club has contributed include the proclamation of Fivebough Swamp as a conservation area, the prevention of construction of a marina at Stockton bridge, and the proclamation of new Ramsar sites.

Assessing Success at the End of the 20th Century

The first recorded membership number was thirty two in the earliest days of the Gould League Birdwatchers' Club. Membership grew rapidly with a peak of over seven hundred in the early 1990s. This resulted in further changes to the committee structure as an ever-increasing workload faced committee members. The Hon. Secretary was divided into four secretarial roles, Hon. Secretary, Associate Secretary, Membership Secretary, and Minutes Secretary, with Membership Records Officer added to help the membership secretary in 1985. The number of committee members increased to 15, with the position of Conservation Officer frequently being shared.

The Club had begun with the objectives of 'field outings as practicable, [estimated to be nine per year], the publication on at least a quarterly basis of a periodical to be named BIRDS, and a regular monthly meeting. The outings were the standout success with over 50 a year, there was a bi-monthly Newsletter and an annual periodical of scientific standing, and a well-attended monthly meeting. As with all voluntary organisations, the reliability, responsibility, integrity and initiative of those involved with its organisation are of paramount importance. The success of the FOC amply attests to these qualities in its committee members and to these could be added enthusiasm and commitment.

The many people to whom the club is indebted for their work in various roles on the committees of the first 30 years are shown in Appendix 1.

The New Millennium

The Club entered the 21st century in a position of strength. It had a wide membership base and was financially secure. A well-organised range of activities, informative publications, and a practical commitment to supporting conservation had successfully implemented the objectives of both its original Constitution and the 1988 revision. But again there were winds of change about, this time stemming mostly from societal changes increasing pressure on the environment and in people's lives and technological changes with their never-ending ramifications.

Club Management

The Committee

As this century progressed there has been a cultural shift in membership of volunteer organisations across Australia. Many clubs formed as interest groups for adults have suffered from declining numbers, some to the point of ceasing to function. There has been a concomitant decrease amongst those remaining members willing to volunteer for committee roles such as secretary and vice-president. The call for volunteers to help with the management of the Club is a litany running through the Newsletter Editorials and President's Reports with increasing urgency over the last 20 Years.

Comparing the committees from the 1990s to those of recent times illustrates the changes in club management roles this century. The number of committee members has fallen from fifteen at its peak to seven in 2020. The four secretarial roles have dwindled to one, that of the Membership Secretary, and the Membership Records Officer position has disappeared. The positions of Observation Officer, Journal Editor, and Vice-President have also lapsed. In a direct move to address the reduction in numbers of committee members, the revised Club Constitution passed in 2017 changed the quorum required for a committee meeting from seven to four. Committee members since 2000 are listed in Appendix 2.

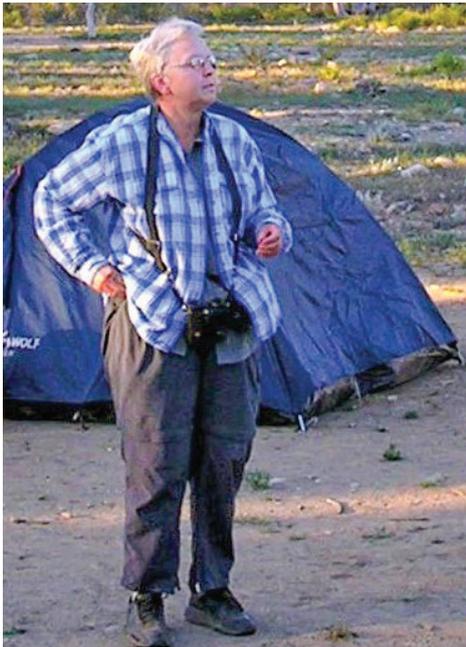
On the other hand, some new roles have become necessary, although not necessarily requiring committee membership. The Club's embrace of digital communication channels has led to the need for a web manager and an email coordinator, and the Birding Bulletin requires an editor and a distributor. The introduction of name tags and kingfisher badges for members has required a person to manage their ordering and dispatch. Fortunately, there have been members willing to take on specific tasks which do not require membership on the committee. Club members volunteering for these essential roles have been invaluable in filling various needs and are listed in Appendix 3.

The readiness of committee members to invest significant time and energy into their work for the Club, often taking on multiple roles outside their designated responsibilities, has helped to ensure the Club continued to run smoothly. In the decade from 2000 to 2010 Barrie Ayres took on the roles of Membership Secretary (2000-2009) and Hon. Treasurer (2002-2010), combining both with Hon. Secretary from 2003 to 2006. In this period, he found time to find the Club meeting venue at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts and new Club insurance as well. In his President's Report (Newsletter, October 2009) in announcing a Life Membership awarded to Barrie at the recent AGM, Tom Karplus wrote 'Barrie is part of the corporate memory of the Club and keeps the committee in line', attributing that to Barrie's military background.

Dick Dallimore is a good example of a committee member willing to turn his hand to a range of tasks. He was membership Records Officer for seven years in the 90s. While Club President from 2003-2008, he also managed the organisation of the meeting venue, including the audio-visual equipment for the



Tom Karplus with Angela Plant, for many years manager of the sales table at Club meetings



Elisabeth Karplus

meetings, and post-meeting tea and coffee arrangements, which he continues to manage in 2020. When the Department of Fair Trading introduced the requirement for not-for-profit incorporated organisations to have a fixed street address at which its Public Officer could be reliably contacted, Dick agreed to fulfil this role and has continued to do so, and he plays a major part in organising the Photographic Competition each year.

Elisabeth Karplus was Club President from 1996 to 2002. Since then, she has been a very active committee member taking on many different roles. She became Birding Bulletin editor in 2011 and the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Project (RHERP) Survey Coordinator from 2014 to 2018, adding the position of Email Coordinator in 2017, as well as managing the organisation and records for the surveys of the South West Slopes KBA. In addition, she is the NSW Coordinator for BirdLife's Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) program, responsible for providing Guardians for all 45 KBAs in NSW and for receiving annual health check reports from each of them.

Ian Bailey carries out the duties of Newsletter Editor and Conservation Officer, both demanding positions. For a few years, the work of Activities Officer was shared with some assistants to alleviate the workload, but Allan Richards now manages this crucial role on his own.

The Advent of Computers

The integration of digital technology into committee members' work practices has been of most significance. The time saved has allowed the current President to manage without a Minutes Secretary and largely without an Hon. Secretary. All Committee documents are now sent and received as email attachments, more efficiently than by Australia Post. Group email is also an effective way to canvas committee feedback on a particular issue arising between committee meetings, even from the far-flung regions of the globe that birdwatching committee members tend to find themselves in at times.

The communication channels with club members that have developed are described in the section on Club publications, but there have been a number of ways in which increased digital use by both members and committee has benefited both the cost and the efficiency of managing the Club. The webpage is now used as the means of distributing documents to members. The Club Constitutional changes which occur from time to time are now disseminated to members by uploading to the Club webpage. Similarly, the minutes of the AGM and the annual financial report do not need paper distribution now they are on the website.



Online banking is timesaving and convenient. The use of direct deposit introduced in 2011, and fully integrated internet banking in 2018, have reduced many of the more onerous aspects of money management.

Membership management has become almost entirely digital. Almost all applications for membership come through the Club webpage by email. Up until 2011, all renewals came by cheques in the mail, but this started to change when the Club introduced direct bank deposits. By 2020 membership renewal became paperless for 82% of members. There is still a small proportion of members without internet access, so the membership system hasn't entirely abandoned Australia Post.



Newsletter Mastheads showing the Club name in 2000 and in 2020

Public Face of BNSW

There are two aspects to increasing the public face of any environmentally focused organisation. The first of these is to promote the public awareness of the organisation itself. The second is to further the aims of the organisation, specifically, in the case of Birding NSW, encouraging the activity of birdwatching, and to promote the study and conservation of Australian birds by various means, as stated in the Revised Constitution of 2017. This second aspect falls under the heading of Conservation, so will be dealt with in that section.

The Club has had two Publicity Officers over the past 20 years, both for approximately three year stints; Charlie Andrews from 2000-2003 and Janine de la Bégassière from 2010-2012. Both initiated significant projects.

Charlie put the first Birding NSW webpage on the Internet at the beginning of 2001, with the address, www.ozemail.com.au-nswbirds, and set up the initial Club email address. In 2004 he constructed a new webpage with the address www.birdingsw.org.au, continuing to manage it until 2008. His enthusiasm and expertise for these developments were very timely for the Club.



Norma Ikin and Robyn Price staffing the Club's stall at the Australian Bird Fair, 2015

In 2010 a website subcommittee of Rae Lister, Janine de la Bégassière, Peter Diegutis and Adrian Nieuwenhuizen worked with a professional designer, Ricki Coughlan, to produce a new website, the committee allocating money for the design of this initiative. The 2004 web address was retained, but sweeping changes created an integrated structure covering all aspects of the Club's organisation and activities. Michael Edwards became the Club Website Coordinator in 2014 and has continued in that position. As well as managing the links and posting new and amended information on the web he is responsible for notifying members when the bi-monthly Newsletter is available for access. He also organises the images for the Photo Competition for the judges and the Meeting showing.

Janine de la Bégassière's most lasting project was a brochure of birds of the Sydney area, the production of which she managed from its planning stage through to its distribution, including organising funding. This initiative neatly encompassed both putting the name of Birding NSW before the public and educating the public about birds in their area. The Club has been working on republishing this brochure in 2020, but has been hampered by Covid-19 restrictions.

As avenues for publicity broadened with the new technologies, the Club name of the New South Wales Field Ornithologists Club became a more troublesome handicap. Shortened to NSWFOC, it had meaning only to those already familiar with it. Many members were reluctant to abandon the historical associations with the old name, but eventually a compromise was achieved. At the AGM in September 2001 a Special Resolution was passed 'That the name of the New South Wales Field Ornithologists Club Incorporated shall henceforth be: Birding NSW - New South Wales Field Ornithologists Club Incorporated. The Club letterhead was changed so that Birding NSW became more prominent, with New South Wales Field Ornithologists Club in smaller font. It wasn't until 2018 that a motion was passed to simplify the Club name finally to Birding NSW inc.

While the Club name was evolving, its logo also underwent some modification. The Azure Kingfisher had been the Club logo since the second issue of its newsletter in 1966. It went through various metamorphoses until December 1996 when Stuart Fairbairn gave the Club the copyright to the painting by Nicholas Day to be used as the logo, in the hope it would introduce more colour into the Club publications. He would be very pleased to see it on the masthead of the current issues of the Newsletter with the addition of the words 'birding nsw' in red, introduced in August 2012.

The club has endeavoured to present a public face whenever opportunity appears, for example, at the Australian Bird Fairs at Sydney Olympic Park in 2015 and 2017. The experience for the Club in 2015 was positive, but the weather was so bad in 2017 that the attendance was very poor. Another avenue the Club has used for publicity are Club Banners. These are used at any public event where the Club is present. In June 2006 a new Club banner was introduced, it being replaced by another version in February 2009. In 2018, Camila de Gregorio and Chris Macaluso were commissioned to produce a Club banner to celebrate the Club's 50th Birthday in 2020. This was used to good effect at the Club stall at the Science Week day in Centennial Park in 2019.

Birding NSW in the bigger birding picture

The 21st century has seen a steady increase in the threat to biodiversity through climate change, regressive government environmental policies and increasing population impact. The need to counter this threat has resulted in the bringing together of bird clubs to provide a bigger voice, and to increase the efficiency of mounting campaigns. This has happened on a number of fronts.

For bird clubs in NSW its most important manifestation has been the development of the Bird Interest Group Network (BIGnet). This is a loose association of all bird clubs in the state, forming a forum for information sharing, discussion, and action on a number of relevant issues, especially conservation. The Committee of Birding NSW has been an active participant in BIGnet since its inception. We look at its impact further in the section on Conservation.

In 2003 the Club committee mooted the possibility of forming an affiliation with the Bird Observers Club of Australia, (BOCA), one of Australia's largest bird clubs. BOCA offered the possibility of a loose affiliation which would preserve the Club's independence, but offered the benefits of strength in numbers in pursuing conservation matters and, especially for Birding NSW, insurance cover under BOCA's policy. The affiliation was announced in December 2003 and continued until 2011, when amalgamation of BOCA and Birds Australia (BA) took place, resulting in one large nationwide birding voice called BirdLife Australia (BLA). Birding NSW has continued as a self-contained and independent club.

A New Patron

The Club was without a Patron from 1988, when Arnold McGill died, until 2020. In 2020, Alan Morris AM, a figure of considerable significance to birding, not only within the Club, but for many other organisations and people as well, became the third Club Patron. Alan was a founding member of the Club and was on the Committee from 1971 until 2018, contributing his organisational skills and prodigious birding knowledge in a wide range of roles, especially in the management and content of club publications. He is probably best known to newer Club members as author of Unusual Reports.

The Central Coast Group

Probably Alan's most wide-reaching contribution to the Club was the formation in 1995 of the Central Coast branch of the Field Ornithologists Club, as it was then known. He had moved to the Central Coast in 1988 to take up the NPWS District Manager position there. As a Club outing leader, he arranged for occasional outings to be scheduled in that neighbourhood. Alan knew a number of birders in the area, and the outings became popular with them and also with Sydney-siders who lived on the North Shore in Sydney. The demand for regular monthly outings grew and so the Central Coast Branch, NSW Field Ornithologists Club was begun.

The first meeting was held on 21 December 1995 at Tuggerah Progress Hall. Attendees at this meeting who are still active members included Alan and Anne Morris, Margaret and Kaye Pointer, John McLennan, and John and Carole Carpenter. A committee was formed, but Alan remained chief organiser for the group's



Central Coast Group, 2019. Alan Morris, centre

activities until he and Anne moved further up the coast to Laurieton in 2018. Since then, a number of group members have stepped into volunteer roles, with, in 2020, Michael Scobie as the Group Coordinator.

Although a largely self-sufficient group, membership of the Central Coast Group is still obtained through membership of Birding NSW. Alan Morris saw the advantages of it being part of this structure, as BNSW is incorporated and thus can provide insurance cover to its sub-branch, among other benefits.

Tom Karplus

Finally, in this section on Club management, the significance of the part Tom Karplus has played must be highlighted.

Tom joined the committee in 1986, becoming Newsletter Editor in 1988. As well as the demanding responsibility of the editorship, he represented the Club at many meetings with other organisations, particularly with BIGnet. He recognised the advantage for bird clubs to work together on Conservation issues, while continuing to retain their independence and identity. With this perspective he has promoted the efforts of BIGnet to focus on group cooperation to pool ideas, strategies and information on conservation matters and he was an early supporter of the merger between BOCA and Birds Australia.

Tom handed over the reins as Editor when he was elected President at the AGM in September 2008. At the Annual General Meeting in September 2009 he was awarded a Life Membership in recognition of his valuable contribution. Since then he has continued as Club President, maintaining his commitment to working with other Clubs, while steering the Club through the challenges of gaps in volunteers for committee positions, adaptation to the embrace of digital technology, encouraging the Club's continued independence and most recently, the Covid-19 crisis. All with pragmatism, tact and rationality. His two positions on the committee now add up to 34 years commitment of time and talent to the Club.

Birding Activities

The wide range of birding activities in place at the end of the last century continued into the new millennium. Allan Richards had become the Club Activities Officer in 1985 and has continued in that role until the present. His organisational skills and wide knowledge of birds and their habitats has ensured that the central role that birdwatching holds in the Club has been ably fulfilled. He established the schedule of three regular monthly field outings, campouts on most of each year's holiday weekends, and has organised numerous tours to various parts of outback Australia, and several overseas trips for members, as well as leading many of these activities himself. Many birders' life lists have been enhanced by Allan's birding skills, especially his ability to recognise a bird by its calls. His willingness to share his knowledge, like Arnold McGill and Ern Hoskin before him, has helped many beginning birders as well as old hands. Allan was made a Life Member in 2006 in recognition of these significant contributions to the Club.



Sydney Christmas outing Scheyville. Allan Richards is the last person on the right of the table

Field Outings

The outings for Sydney members are conducted on the two Saturdays following the monthly Club meeting and are usually full day trips to a specific area in the Sydney region, often visiting three or four different sites to maximize the number of species seen. The midweek outing on the last Wednesday of most months is usually to a site selected for its ease of access and suitable facilities as well as its birding value.

While the framework of outings remains constant in each year's calendar, except for the disruptions due to Covid-19 in 2020, there are a variety of changes due to a range of factors. Locations become more or less attractive for birders, although some are always excellent, Royal National Park being one foremost amongst these. Other sites have lapsed from the list, for a variety of reasons. In some places population increase in the area was the underlying cause, resulting in urbanisation, as at Bent's Basin, or the tracks became too busy, as in Lane Cove and Field of Mars. Poor local environmental management has allowed degradation of habitat at some sites, an example being management of water flow at Mason Park in Strathfield. Sometimes it was changing social norms that eliminated a site, as at the McGrath's Hill Sewage Works, where new Workplace Health and Safety legislation forced it out of bounds for local birders. Sometimes it was changes in Club members which became a critical factor, as in the case of Waratah Bay in Ku-ring-gai Chase which older members found steeper every year.

Many of these lapsed sites have been replaced by greater use of existing locations, for example, Centennial Park and Sydney Olympic Park, for easy places to access, Bushell's Lagoon and Pitt Town Lagoon for water birds, and the Chiltern Track in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park for bush birds. The development of new recreational areas, including the Western Sydney Parklands and Shanes Park and Mt Annan Botanical Gardens, also in western Sydney, have provided new locations.

The range of birds has altered too. Some for the better, such as the increase in Powerful Owls seen in Sydney in general. King Parrots are a welcome addition to suburban bush remnants, although more Noisy Miners are not so welcome by all. More Channel-billed Cuckoo encroachments have diminished the numbers of Pied Currawongs and even suburban populations of small birds such as Superb Fairywrens and thornbills are decreasing.

The pool of Club members to lead outings has also changed over the years. Some people retired and moved away from Sydney. Other people have retired and had more time to volunteer. And sadly, some of the Club leaders over the years have felt the vicissitudes of age and have reduced their activities. For many years, Ted Blackman organised the Midweek outings, leading many of them himself. Carol Abbott took over from Ted in 2011, but in 2017 this task was subsumed into the Activities Officer's work.



Central Coast Birders at Colongra Swamp in 2018. Neil McLennan, Rowena Wallace, John Carpenter, John Wallace, Graeme Catt

The Central Coast Group outings, organised by Alan Morris until 2018, are now organised by Christina Port. There is a monthly full day outing, usually on the fourth Saturday of the month, but a special Christmas outing in December, which is always based at the Carpenter's place. Most months there is also a half day Wednesday outing. The venues are from the Hawkesbury to the Newcastle area, with some on the coast and others inland, providing a wide range of good birding habitats. There are also pelagic trips out of Swansea organised by Allan Benson three times a year, with limited places available.

Many Club members have led outings over the year, too many to name them all. But all have contributed to the success of the Birding Activities programs in Sydney and on the Central Coast which play such a vital role in the life of the Club.

Club Campouts

Campouts have become a regular activity for the Club since the 1980s with camps being arranged for most holiday weekends in regional areas of the state with longer periods being arranged between Christmas and New Year and over Easter. Camping venues are selected by considering the time of year and possible bird species; cool mountainous campsites for the hot summer months and coastal areas for the camps during the winter. Weekend camps are also sometimes arranged by the Sydney group, including to the wetlands in the Newcastle and Shoalhaven areas. Since 2017, these have been scheduled annually in February, alternating between the two sites. Four weekend campouts are arranged by the Central Coast Group each year, two in Autumn and two in Spring, usually based in areas inland.

Right through these first two decades of the 21st century, campouts have continued their popularity, but their nature has slowly changed. In the early noughties most campouts were on private properties. These were often without basic facilities, so the Club 'Portaloos' constructed by Stuart Fairbairn, had to be transported and erected, with the concomitant rather arduous digging. National Parks and caravan parks were eschewed as they were often found to be too crowded.

As time went on, long time members got older and younger members wanted better facilities. At the same time, cabins became an attractive alternative in caravan parks and the National Parks became better managed. Now many campouts are organised so that members can choose to be accommodated or to camp, although some desirable birding areas are still best accessed via camping.

Trips and Tours

The Club continued its association with Bert Bolton Tours under the new management of Mark and Sarah Wardrop. The first years of the 2000s saw several successful tours, especially a series of 4WD trips along the northern section of the Canning Stock Route, including the new Birds Australia Reserve of Newhaven.

However, Outback Track Tours bookings declined over the years, as coach trips became less popular. Many older members had already visited the interesting birding areas made accessible on previous trips. For younger members the attraction of coach tours decreased as information on locations and birds became readily available on the internet, making it easy and more flexible to plan their own small group birding tagalongs.

The Easter camping trips started by Bert Bolton in 1983, continued under the management of Mark and Sarah up until 2014. This last trip was to Four Corners Station, a farm-stay near Nymagee in the Central West, and was available either under canvas or in accommodation.

Overseas Tours

There are now so many companies organising Birdwatching tours to all parts of the world, that there is much less pressure on the Club to provide these opportunities to its members. The only one has been to the favourite haunt of Lord Howe Island as part of the celebration of the Club's 50th anniversary. This was fortuitously completed just before the Covid-19 pandemic caused the cancellation of all overseas travel.

Club Meetings

Sydney

Amongst the problems to be dealt with at the beginning of the century was the matter of the venue for the monthly meetings. For most of its history, the Club had held its annual monthly meetings at the Hallstrom Theatre at the Australian Museum. As the prices for the use of this venue increased, the search for a suitable, less expensive site began. The Club moved the annual Arnold McGill lecture and Christmas Party to the Norman Nock Theatre in the grounds of Royal North Shore Hospital in 1999 and continued to hold that event there until 2007. However, the regular meetings continued to be held at the Museum until the end of 2007, despite the Club having to change its traditional Tuesday night dates for Wednesday nights for 2002, due to priority for Museum groups.

In the 2007 December Newsletter it was announced that prices for Museum bookings had risen to 'unacceptable levels' and the committee decided it must act. The Club was fortunate in being able to book the Norman Nock Theatre for the 2008 meetings till September. In that interim, the indefatigable Barrie Ayers discovered the Sydney Mechanics School of the Arts in Pitt Street. It had a suitably sized theatre, with a well-equipped audio-visual set-up, a good central location close to plenty of (paid) parking and to Town Hall station and was reasonably priced. The first Club meeting there was in October 2008, and all meetings since then have been happily held there.

The format of the meeting has remained basically the same, with any necessary Club business presented first, followed by an illustrated lecture by a guest speaker, and, after questions to the speaker and a vote of thanks, ending with members reporting any unusual sightings over the past month. Topics presented by the speakers range across the spectrum of birdwatchers' interests. Conservation topics have included big picture issues, such as the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, to reports on research studies of specific endangered birds, the Regent Honeyeater being a good example. More generalised topics such as Bird Life in the Wet Tropics and NSW Woodlands Management appear, as well as very specific topics such as Vocalization in the Pied Butcherbird. Also featured are bird-filled travelogues on trips overseas and in Australia by Club members.

There are two fixtures on the Club meeting Calendar.

The Photographic Competition meeting in November has been a highlight of the club's calendar every year since it began in 1983. The advent of digital photography caused a few headaches for the committee in its early years. In 2004, digital photos were allowed entry into the competition. Two years later, the number of digital and slide entries were equal, the next year saw the elimination of a separate category for slides and in 2008 the committee bowed to the inevitable and stipulated all entries must be digital. Mounting the Photo Competition is a complex activity involving input from many volunteers.

The three categories in the competition of Single Bird, Group of Birds, and Bird in Flight have remained stable over the years, although any one category could have several prizes awarded according to criteria selected by the committee. Bert Bolton began the tradition of donating a tour of the winner's choice with Bert Bolton Tours at the first competition in 1983, with the Club donating a range of prizes depending on the criteria of the awards for other winners. This custom continued when Mark and Sarah Wardrop took over Bert's company. However, changing attitudes among Club members, especially amongst top class photographers, made a coach tour less attractive and from 2014 the Club awarded cash prizes in all categories. Refinements continued to be made to the rules and conditions of entry. In 2015, including a nest or nest site in view was disallowed. In 2016, the competition was opened to non-members with payment of \$50, later reduced to \$20.

The second immutable fixture on the Club's calendar is the Arnold McGill Memorial Lecture, held each year since 1994 at the December Meeting. There is always serious thought given to the invitation of the guest speaker for the lecture, as is appropriate for an event honouring a man who made such a significant contribution to the Club. Over the years many well-known figures from Australian bird clubs, conservation organisations and the media have appeared. Examples include media personality John Dengate in 2014 on 'Bird

Flight'; well-known ornithologist Penny Olsen on 'Working with the Night Parrot' in 2017; Graeme Hamilton, CEO, Birds Australia on the very significant merger of Australia's two biggest bird clubs in 2010. The best attended 'Arnold McGill' in the last 20 years was in 2006 when over 100 members and friends gathered to hear Sean Dooley speak very entertainingly on his race to see 700 Australian Bird species in one calendar year.

The December meeting was given extra gravitas when the AGM was moved from September and held immediately prior to the Memorial Lecture in 2013. The addition of a Christmas party, organised by a small group of volunteers and catered for by attendees, provided a cheerfully festive note, making the meeting an appropriate finale to the Club's activities for the year.

This well-oiled system was interrupted in 2020 by the restrictions on gatherings necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the Club rallied with its usual resilience and ran its monthly meetings through the Zoom platform while restrictions were in place. Using Zoom had become so widespread that most speakers were happy to present their lecture with illustrations through that format.

Central Coast Group Meetings

Since its beginnings in 1995, the CCG have held a monthly meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month, except December, in the Tuggerah Progress Hall. At the first meeting there were 32 attendees, the number rising over the years to up to 60. There is usually a speaker with an audio-visual presentation on topics ranging from scientific papers to trip reports and finally the traditional Club Unusual Sightings. The cost for the hire of the hall and the supper is met by a small donation from each attendee.

John and Carole Carpenter have been responsible for the logistics of the meetings, setting up the Hall, organising the supper and managing the funding, since the beginning. Allan Benson is the current meeting organiser and newsletter editor, arranging speakers, introducing any necessary business and taking the unusual sightings. Members' Nights are held annually with contributions by Group participants instead of a speaker on bird-related events or observations they have experienced.

Publications

Communication with the Club membership has seen more changes over the last 20 years than any other aspect of the Club, largely as a result of the introduction of digital technology.

The Newsletter

The Newsletter has remained the main communication channel with members. While the content has continued to feature a similar range of articles and sections as it had before 2000, the format and especially the distribution have changed significantly.

In the content, regular sections included the President's Report/Editorial, information on upcoming activities, meeting previews and reports, outing reports from both Sydney and the Central Coast Group, Unusual Reports and the Club Directory. Other content has depended partly on what was happening in the State or National bird world, partly on what had been sent to the editor for (hopeful) inclusion. NSW Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee (ORAC) Review Lists and BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee (BARC) Review Lists were always published. Book reviews, trip reports on destinations within Australia and overseas by solo or small group bird watchers featured when available. Articles by members on subjects as disparate as how to record bird calls to an account of saving a tiny Grey Goshawk chick provided variety. Personal anecdotes from Club members were encouraged, introducing interesting and amusing stories of interactions or observations of birds.

The newsletter also continued to provide information on events organised by allied associations. Although not organised by the Club, members were encouraged to participate in those that interested them, thus ensuring an abundance of activities for members to engage in. The Sydney Pelagic Trips were a case in point, as BNSW had not organised boat trips since the late 1990s.

Coverage of conservation matters rose, as climate change, urban development and population growth all added pressures to birding habitat, food supply and breeding success. The newsletter has published a wide range of articles ranging from plans to save specific birds such as the Hooded Plover to articles all the way through local, state and national issues to global disasters such as the loss of feeding sites for migrating birds in the North Korean Yellow Sea.

The format of the Newsletter has evolved over time with different editors and new technology. Tom Karplus's steady hand as Editor until he became President maintained a high level of consistency in information provided and range of articles. Illustrations appeared first in 2005 in the form of line drawings by Harry Roberts, accompanying his articles on local birdlife. The first black and white photographs were introduced with a rather blurry advertisement for O'Reilly's Bird Week in the June 2007 issue. Photographs of members on outings and campouts slowly followed. Tom's influence on the Newsletter continued after he relinquished the Editorship, as author of the President's Report. Stan Jones was Editor for a few months only, but claimed a place in Club history as being responsible for the first online edition of the Club Newsletter at the end of 2009.

The new webpage developed in 2010 dovetailed neatly with the production of an online newsletter. From the February 2010 issue the Club has published both an online and a paper version of the Newsletter. The two versions had the same content and format, except the photos in the online version were in colour, while those in the paper version continued to be in black and white. The committee determined at the outset that the Newsletter should only be available to Club members and so access to it on the website was made password protected, which is still the practice in 2020. The paper version has been continued as there are still some members without internet access and some members who prefer reading the newsletter as a paper copy. At the end of 2020, 45% of members were still receiving a Newsletter via Australia Post, although only 9% of members had no email address recorded, indicating quite a number of members recognise significant advantages in a paper copy.

It was serendipitous that the new Editor in 2010, Rae Lister, was experienced in writing digital documents. She used this to good advantage to improve the layout and structure of the newsletter under her guidance. Also used to good effect was one of the major benefits of online publishing, colour photographs, starting with her first issue in February 2011, increasing the number and variety of subjects in each issue.

The Club changed to a new printing company using a better quality of paper. The benefits from this showed in the improved clarity of the black and white pictures and legibility of text. A happy corollary of moving to this printer was the disappearance of the volunteer task of stuffing the Newsletter into envelopes and organising them for postage.

Ian Bailey became Editor in 2015, Rae having moved to Canberra. A year later he combined this role with Conservation Officer. Ian's biggest influence has been to increase the use of colour photos not only to illustrate articles, but as a feature in themselves. In December 2018 a centrefold spread of the winning photos of the recent Photo Competition held pride of place in both the online and print version, accompanied by full page colour photos on the front and back pages. These were the first colour photos to appear in the print edition. This format has continued in both versions, although in the print version photos illustrating other articles are still in black and white, due to the cost of colour printing. The centre spread has followed a particular theme such as birds in the same family, or in similar habitat. Ian also introduced a segment called 'Editor's Inbox' which has allowed him to include short, unconnected items as a coherent collection. His work as Club Conservation Officer gave him access to a wide selection of such items.

Email and the Birding Bulletin

The first club email address was birdingsnw@yahoo.com. In 2010, the new look website prompted the committee to introduce three new email addresses based on the website name, thus presenting a more coherent public face. Two of the addresses were for specific roles within the Club and one, info@birdingsnw.org.au, for general information, which is managed by the Club Email Coordinator, currently Elisabeth Karplus.

In 2003, the advantage of the immediacy of email communication was harnessed when a list was compiled by Keith Morris by members sending him their address. This allowed the dissemination of information about matters or updates arising in between the bi-monthly newsletter. By 2011, members' email addresses were included in the register of members' contact details, and the process was formalised into a monthly Bulletin. Elisabeth Karplus took over its compilation, with Keith Morris continuing its distribution. This arrangement has continued to the present. The contents of the Bulletin now very much reflect its name. It acts as a reminder of details of upcoming outings and meetings, provides information on conservation activities, future diary dates, and snippets on matters of birding interest.

A recent survey attempting to find out which communication channels members most appreciated indicated that the website, Newsletter and Birding Bulletin were all found useful by at least some of the members.

Central Coast Group Publications

Their first newsletter was in 1995, a single sheet produced by Alan Morris who continued as editor until Craig Arms took over and named it 'The Twitcher'. With this name, it has expanded to include information and photos on upcoming activities, outing reports, local birding news, and unusual sightings in the Central Coast area. It is distributed by email to BNSW members living on the Central Coast, as well as being published on the Birding NSW website. In 2020, there is an editorial team of Wendy Mitchell, Allan Benson and Robyn Price.

The Group also has a highly successful Facebook page managed by Malcolm Hill, well patronised by the Group's birding photographers, but also allowing bird-related issues to reach over 550 people on the Central Coast and in Sydney.

Conservation

The Club has continued to promote support for conservation issues through its strategies of practical action of data collection primarily through surveys, direct financial donation, and submissions to governing bodies.

Surveys

It was several years after the Bathurst Survey before Birding NSW engaged in its own next major survey, but club members had plenty of opportunity to participate in various surveys organised by other bird clubs and organisations, who asked for volunteers via the Club Newsletter. From 1988 to 2002, Birds Australia was promoting the entry of sightings for the New Atlas of Australian Birds, and encouraged data collection to continue even after that. The Cowra Woodland Birds Survey begun in 2003, the annual Spring Sydney Olympic Park survey series, the NSW Wader Study Group regular and special surveys organised by Phil Straw, all became ongoing events providing Club members with opportunities to engage in productive birdwatching. The Barren Grounds Surveys provided a different habitat until Birds Australia closed the Observatory in 2004. The annual Gould League Bird Study Camp was always featured, as befitted its position as the original source of the NSW Field Ornithologists Club, Birding NSW's first name. Sadly, the NSW branch of the Gould League Bird Study group discontinued functioning in 2011.

In 1994, a national project to stem the decrease in population of the Regent Honeyeater was set up with a coordinating team drawn from a wide range of relevant organisations from its three home states (Queensland, NSW and Victoria). This Regent Honeyeater Recovery team developed a multi-pronged



Tree planting in the Capertee Valley, 2018

approach, the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Plan (RHERP), two aspects of which have involved ongoing Birding NSW commitment. One was an annual survey program of specific sites in the Capertee Valley. Birding NSW was given the October Survey to manage. Survey teams were first organised by Penny Drake-Brockman, then Ted Nixon, followed by Doug Bateman, with Elisabeth Karplus the final organiser until the surveys were replaced by other surveillance methods in 2018.

The other strategy supported by the Club was tree-planting in the Capertee Valley to increase suitable habitat. This was organised twice a year by the Capertee RHERP Committee, set up by Cumberland Bird Observers Club with Iain Paterson the Chairman, and representatives from various quarters, including Birding NSW. The BNSW contingent have been organised by largely the same Club members as were responsible for the Surveys, until 2014, when Madeleine Murray took over for two years, with John Rawson succeeding her and continuing till 2020.

Centennial Parklands Survey

In October 2009 the Club began an involvement with the Centennial Parklands in conjunction with their management to track the changes in the bird population in the area over time. It began with regular but individual surveys by individual birders. Their data was entered into a database under parklands management.

This methodology progressed to quarterly surveys across a number of sites within Centennial Parklands by members of Birding NSW in loosely organised groups. The surveys count all birds observed within a twenty minute time frame from specified vantage points. By fixing the time frame and the vantage point, the survey accumulates scientifically sound longitudinal data. This method does not ensure a complete list of all bird species which visit the Parklands but it does allow reliable examination of changes over time. Data is now recorded in a database managed by Birding NSW and imported into Birdata, used by BirdLife Australia for research. The Club's participation in this survey was, and still is, organised by Allan Richards and Graeme Robinson.

To understand the big picture driving the next major survey committed to by Birding NSW it is necessary to return to BIGnet, the loose alliance of NSW bird clubs mentioned in the section on club management. Formed in 1993, it gathered strength in the new century. Two weekend conferences each year, in Autumn and Spring,

were established. Time at weekend conferences was allocated to conservation issues, with much useful information being exchanged and action points established. At the spring BIGnet meeting in 2003, Birds Australia, as a member of BirdLife International, introduced the concept of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) to NSW Bird clubs. The suggestion was that identification of IBAs in Australia, followed by their monitoring and protection, would significantly contribute to maintaining bird populations.

In 2016, following co-operation between multiple international conservation organisations, Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Australia were reclassified as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). This concept is based on the ideas and scientific rigour of the IBAs, which originally involved birds only, but includes all fauna and flora to increase the political impact for conservation. In NSW by 2020, there were 47 KBAs with 45 based on birds and the remaining two listed because of critically endangered species of crayfish.

The Grenfell Survey

In June 2011 Birding NSW adopted South-west Slopes IBA in the area around Grenfell as regular surveys, with Elisabeth Karplus as Survey Coordinator, with much assistance from Allan Richards. The target bird species in this IBA were the Superb Parrot, Swift Parrot, Painted Honeyeater and Diamond Firetail. It was determined to organise two surveys each year, one in early autumn and the other in early spring. Initially 15 sites to be surveyed were identified. The survey methodology was for 20 minute observations of all species seen or heard over a 100m strip in each of four to five sites allocated to teams of three to five people. The number of sites increased over time to about 30, with over 30 people from Birding NSW and other bird clubs taking part in each survey.

This survey was enhanced by significant engagement with the local community from the beginning, facilitated by enthusiastic and practical support from local landholders, Mikla Lewis and Wayne Laver. Through them BNSW had access to private property owners willing to allow surveying to take place on their land. They have also organised a BBQ at their property on most survey weekend Saturday evenings for the teams. Friday evening's dinner gathering at a local hotel and a bird walk together at Company Dam on Sunday morning also became part of the surveyors' weekend activities.

The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted some of these peripheral events, but the two surveys planned for 2020 have, by lucky timing, both been able to take place.

Superb Parrots in varying numbers have been seen on most surveys but Diamond Firetails have been recorded rarely. The remaining target species have not been encountered on any survey to date. By 2020 the Club had undertaken 18 surveys around Grenfell. All data is entered in a database managed by the Club. It will be analysed after 20 surveys are completed.



Grenfell surveyors et al, 2014, including Elisabeth Karplus (front row, 2nd from right,) with Mikla Lewis on her left

Financial Support

For many years it was Club practice to ask for grant applications from interested parties such as postgraduate students working on a PhD thesis. Sometimes the Club committee decided to fund existing projects considered particularly worthwhile and/or relevant to the Club in some way. For example, in 2016, it contributed over \$6,000 shared between projects including the Powerful Owl breeding study in Sydney, the Bitterns in Rice research in Leeton, and support for a Regent Honeyeater ecology PhD thesis through the Australian National University. The Club has benefited from providing this support as those receiving grants became speakers at a Club meeting, so members were able to hear first-hand descriptions of research work they may have supported.

The Twitchathon has expanded considerably since its first occurrence and is now a successful annual event, with up to 20 teams of birdwatchers competing to record the most species seen or heard during a set time. Money is raised by persuading friends, relatives and colleagues to sponsor each team or competitor. In recent years, approximately \$20,000 has been raised for the nominated project.

Each year a number of applications for this funding are submitted to BIGnet. These applications are carefully vetted by members of the BIGnet alliance and the successful applicant decided by four or more members of the group. The BIGnet Autumn meeting confirms the project to be allocated the current year's Twitchathon funds. In 2020, the BNSW committee decided that the Club should choose one of the runners-up as a funding recipient, rather than requiring separate grant applications to the Club. The funds donated are the combination of all the donations the Club receives from members through the year.

Central Coast Group and Conservation

Many Central Coast Group members contribute to BNSW conservation initiatives as part of their membership of the whole Club. Some participate in the Grenfell or Centennial Park surveys, or help out by volunteering for duty at Bird Fairs or similar events. Those members who make a donation with their renewal subscription add to the funds BNSW donates to studies of bird habitat and survival issues. And there have been a number of enthusiastic Twitchathon teams whose efforts helped to swell that funding.

However, there have also been some specifically CCG conservation programs over the decades. In 2000, the Central Coast Group undertook a program to protect Little Terns breeding at The Entrance, with members rostered to patrol the breeding area on weekends. This program continued for several years. In recent years, Wyong Council took over the responsibility for protecting the Little Tern breeding area, although CCG members continued to help with patrolling the area.

Central Coast Surveys

In the early 2000s, a CCG team participated in the BOCA Challenge Bird Count. An area within Gosford/Wyong LGAs of not more than 40km radius was selected and all the birds within that counted in 24 hrs. This happened in Spring for several years.

Central Coast group members are the Guardians of the two KBAs in the Central Coast area, Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Water. Alan Morris originally provided annual reports on these. With Alan's move to the north coast, Doug Hocking now reports on Brisbane Water KBA while Nick Carson reports on the Tuggerah Lakes KBA, with Winter and Summer waterbird surveys conducted by boat providing data.

Currently regular monthly surveys at South Wyong Sewage Treatment Works are being organised. Over the past few years members of the group have been actively encouraged to record sightings using Birddata and a number of members regularly do this.

Submissions to all levels of Government

The Club objectives in the 2017 revision of Club Constitution (2017) specifically include 'To promote the study and conservation of Australian birds [.....] through submissions to all levels of government.' This is the province of the Club Conservation Officer and team. Dedicated Conservation Officers over the years have written innumerable letters to both Federal and State Government Ministers and MPs, and to local Councils expressing concerns on matters likely to destroy precious habitats. The range of issues in terms of possible environmental impact is enormous, from the hugely controversial Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and the management of water resources in the Murray-Darling Basin in NSW to the proposed closure of Wallaby Scrub Road, Warkworth.

Many letters have been sent to multiple parties. Quite often there is no reply. Those received have often been vague and repetitive, the words seeming part of a form letter. The most effective submission in recent years has been an argument against a development application (DA) for the Kogarah Golf Club site, the DA being deferred for five years.

The Future

Throughout its 50 year history the Club has maintained its commitment to providing a wide range of birdwatching activities and maintaining a high level of communication to its members on birding matters. Although there are some challenges ahead for all bird clubs, including habitat degradation, effective use of digital technology, and societal changes with its implications for community groups, Birding NSW can be confident it is in a good position to meet these head winds.

The Club has shown its ability to adapt by its successful use of Zoom for both Club and committee meetings during Covid lockdowns, the broadening of its membership base to welcome bird photographers, and in the Central Coast Group's use of social media. This willingness to change while maintaining its commitment to its objectives is the best augury for Birding NSW's future in an uncertain world.

Appendix 1. Committee Members 1970 - 2000

Year	President	Vice-Pres.	Hon.Sec.	Hon. Treas	Newsletter Editor	Activities Officer	Ass. Sec.	Conservation Officer(s)	Minutes Sec.	Records Officer	Journal Editor	Member Records
1970	G Dibley	R Mason	L Smith	L Smith		M Dibley	R Cooke	H Battam		A Rogers	L Haines	
1971	G Dibley	R Mason	L Smith	L Smith		M Dibley	R Cooke	H Battam A K Morris		A Rogers	L Haines	
1972	G Dibley	R Mason	L Smith	L Smith		M Dibley	R Cooke	R Mason, M Cameron		T Kenney	A K Morris	
1973	G Dibley	R Mason	L Smith	L Smith		M Dibley	R Cooke	M Cameron		A Rogers	A K Morris	
1974	J Francis	A McGill	J Pegler	G Dibley	R Cooper	M Dibley	R Cooke	M Cameron		A Rogers	A K Morris	
1975	J Francis	A McGill	J Pegler	G Dibley	R Cooper	M Dibley	R Cooke	M Cameron		A Rogers	A K Morris	
1976	J Francis	A McGill	J Pegler	G Dibley	R Cooper	M Dibley	R Cooke	M Cameron		A Rogers	A K Morris	
1977	J Francis	A McGill	J Pegler	G Dibley	R Cooper	M Dibley	R Cooke			A Rogers	A K Morris	
1978	J Francis		J Pegler	G Dibley	R Cooper	M Dibley	R Cooke	D Larkins		A Rogers	A K Morris	
1979	J Francis		J Pegler	G Dibley	L Smith	M Dibley	R Cooke	D Larkins		T Lindsay	A K Morris	
1980	A Rogers		J Pegler	N Russill	L Smith	E Lisser	R Cooke	D Larkins		T Lindsay	A K Morris	
1981	A Rogers		C Macdonald	K Lisser	A McBride	A Lindsey	R Cooke	D Larkins		T Lindsay	A K Morris	
1982	A Rogers		C Macdonald	K Lisser	A McBride	A Lindsey	N Maxwell	R Buchanan		T Lindsay	A K Morris	
1983	A Rogers	P Roberts	C Quested	K Lisser	A McBride	A Lindsey	N Maxwell	L Albertson		T Lindsay	A K Morris	
1984	A McBride	P Roberts	N Maxwell	K Lisser	V Taylor	N Maxwell	A K Morris	C Quested		T Lindsay	A K Morris	
1985	A K Morris	P Roberts	N Maxwell	K Lisser	V Taylor	N Maxwell	A K Morris	M Sach	T Lindsay	A K Morris	K Lisser	
1986	A K Morris	P Roberts	N Maxwell	N McKelvie	M Tyler	A Richards	N Maxwell	J Dalby	M Sach	T Lindsay	A K Morris	K Lisser
1987	P Roberts	A K Morris	N Maxwell	N McKelvie	T Karplus	A Richards	F Brown	J Dalby	M Sach	T Lindsay	A K Morris	K Lisser
1988	P Roberts	A K Morris	F Brown	N McKelvie	T Karplus	A Richards	N Maxwell	E Karplus	M Sach	R Cooper	A K Morris	K Lisser
1989	P Davie	S Fairbairn	S Stephens	N McKelvie	T Karplus	A Richards	N Maxwell	E Karplus	J Ironside	R Cooper	A K Morris	K Lisser
1990	P Davie	S Fairbairn	R Hill	T Florin	T Karplus	A Richards	N Maxwell	E Karplus	M Sach	R Cooper	A K Morris	K Lisser
1991	P Davie	S Fairbairn	R Hill	T Florin	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	E Karplus, J Melville	M Sach	R Cooper	A K Morris	K Lisser
1992	P Davie	S Fairbairn	R Hill	R Powell	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	P Mackey, T Ivison	M Sach	R Cooper	A K Morris	K Lisser
1993	P Davie	S Fairbairn	R Hill	R Powell	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	P Mackey, T Ivison	P D-Brockman	A K Morris	A K Morris	K Lisser
1994	S Fairbairn	P Drake-Brockman	S Witt	H Biddle	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	P Mackey	A van Roekel	A K Morris	A K Morris	D Dallimore
1995	S Fairbairn	P Drake-Brockman	S Witt	C Ryan	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	P Mackey	A van Roekel	A K Morris	A K Morris	D Dallimore
1996	E Karplus	S Fairbairn	P Drake-Brockman	C Ryan	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	P Mackey	A van Roekel	A K Morris	A K Morris	D Dallimore
1997	E Karplus	S Fairbairn	P Drake-Brockman	C Ryan	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	A Fabbro, S Guiffre	A van Roekel	A K Morris	A K Morris	D Dallimore
1998	E Karplus	S Fairbairn	P Drake-Brockman	C Ryan	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	A Fabbro, S Guiffre	A van Roekel	A K Morris	A K Morris	D Dallimore
1999	E Karplus	S Fairbairn	P Drake-Brockman	C Ryan	T Karplus	A Richards	B Harvey	A Fabbro, S Guiffre	A van Roekel	A K Morris	A K Morris	D Dallimore
2000	E Karplus	S Fairbairn	P Drake-Brockman	C Ryan	T Karplus	A Richards	S Kitchen	A Fabbro, S Guiffre	A van Roekel	A K Morris	A K Morris	D Dallimore

Appendix 2. Committee Members 2001 -2020

Year	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Newsletter Editor	Activities Officer	Membership Secretary	Conservation Officer	Committee Members	Minutes Secretary
2001	E Karplus	D Dallimore	M Latham	C Ryan	T Karplus	A Richards	B Ayres	S Guiffre, A Fabbro	P Brook	A van Roekel
2002	E Karplus	D Dallimore	M Latham	C Ryan	T Karplus	A Richards	B Ayres	S Guiffre, A Fabbro	P Brook, S Mulvenna	A van Roekel
2003	D Dallimore	E Karplus	M Latham	B Ayres	T Karplus	A Richards	B Ayres	S Guiffre, T Nixon		P Brook
2004	D Dallimore	E Karplus		B Ayres	T Karplus	A Richards	B Ayres	S Guiffre, T Nixon		P Brook
2005	D Dallimore	E Karplus		B Ayres	T Karplus	A Richards	B Ayres	S Guiffre, T Nixon		P Brook
2006	D Dallimore	E Karplus		B Ayres	T Karplus	A Richards	B Ayres	S Guiffre, T Nixon, B Hope		P Brook
2007	D Dallimore	T Nixon		B Ayres	T Karplus	A Richards	B Ayres	S Guiffre	S Gilks	P Brook
2008	T Nixon	S Gilks		B Ayres	T Karplus	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen	S Guiffre	P Brook, D Dallimore, S Jones, M Hicks	
2009	T Karplus	S Guiffre	S Gilks	B Ayres	S Jones	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen	S Guiffre, J Nancarrow	P Brook, D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2010	T Karplus	J Nancarrow		B Ayres	R Lister	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen	J Nancarrow	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2011	T Karplus	J Nancarrow			R Lister	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen	J Nancarrow	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2012	T Karplus	J Nancarrow		L Hall	R Lister	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen	J Nancarrow	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2013	T Karplus	J Nancarrow		L Hall	R Lister	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen	J Nancarrow	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2014	T Karplus			L Hall	R Lister	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen		D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2015	T Karplus			L Hall	I Bailey	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen	T Nixon	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2016	T Karplus		B Dundas	L Hall	I Bailey	A Richards	A Niewenhuizen	I Bailey	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2017	T Karplus		B Dundas	L Hall	I Bailey	A Richards	A van Roekel	I Bailey	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2018	T Karplus		B Dundas	L Hall	I Bailey	A Richards	A van Roekel	I Bailey	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2019	T Karplus			L Hall	I Bailey	A Richards	A van Roekel	I Bailey	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	
2020	T Karplus			L Hall	I Bailey	A Richards	A van Roekel	I Bailey	D. Dallimore, E Karplus	

Appendix 3. Non-Committee Management Roles 2001 – 2020

Year	Birding Bulletin	Bulletin Distributer	Email Coordinator	Website Coordinator	Speakers' Coordinator	RHERP Survey	Tree Planting RHERP C'ttee	Name Tags, Badges	Club Sales Desk	Midweek Outing
2001						Penny Drake-Brookman	Penny Drake-Brookman		Pierre Charbonneau	Ted Blackman
2002						Ted Nixon	Ted Nixon		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2003		Keith Morris				Ted Nixon	Ted Nixon		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2004		Keith Morris				Ted Nixon	Ted Nixon		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2005		Keith Morris				Ted Nixon	Ted Nixon		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2006		Keith Morris				Ted Nixon	Ted Nixon		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2007		Keith Morris				Ted Nixon	Ted Nixon		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2008		Keith Morris				Ted Nixon	Ted Nixon		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2009		Keith Morris	Keith Morris	M Hicks	J Jones	Doug Bateman	Doug Bateman		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2010	M Hicks	Keith Morris	M Henderson	P Diegutis	J Jones	Doug Bateman	Doug Bateman		Angela Plant	Ted Blackman
2011	E Karplus	Keith Morris	M Henderson	P Diegutis	R Lister	Doug Bateman	Doug Bateman	Norma Ikin	Angela Plant	Carol Abbot
2012	E Karplus	Keith Morris	M Henderson	P Diegutis	G Walters	Doug Bateman	Doug Bateman	Norma Ikin	Elisabeth Karplus	Carol Abbot
2013	E Karplus	Keith Morris	M Henderson	P Diegutis	G Walters	Doug Bateman	Doug Bateman	Norma Ikin	Coleen Southall	Carol Abbot
2014	E Karplus	Keith Morris	M Henderson	M Edwards	G Walters	Elisabeth Karplus	Madeleine Murray	Norma Ikin	Coleen Southall	Carol Abbot
2015	E Karplus	Keith Morris	M Henderson	M Edwards	G Walters	Elisabeth Karplus	Madeleine Murray	Norma Ikin	Coleen Southall	Carol Abbot
2016	E Karplus	Keith Morris	M Edwards	M Edwards		Elisabeth Karplus	John Rawson	Norma Ikin	Coleen Southall	Carol Abbot
2017	E Karplus	Keith Morris	E Karplus	M Edwards		Elisabeth Karplus	John Rawson	Norma Ikin	Coleen Southall	Now Activities Officer Role
2018	E Karplus	Keith Morris	E Karplus	M Edwards	T Karplus	Surveys Ceased	John Rawson	Norma Ikin	Coleen Southall	
2019	E Karplus	Keith Morris	E Karplus	M Edwards	T Karplus		John Rawson	Norma Ikin	Lindy Jones	
2020	E Karplus	Keith Morris	E Karplus	M Edwards	T Karplus		John Rawson	Norma Ikin	Lindy Jones	

Appendix 4. Central Coast Group Management Roles

Group Coordinator: Michael Scobie
Treasurer: John Carpenter
Outings Organiser: Christina Port

Meetings Organiser: Allan Benson
Meetings Logistics: John and Carole Carpenter
Newsletter: Wendy Mitchell, Allan Benson, Robyn Price

Facebook page: Malcolm Hill
Sydney Liaison: Judy Clark
Brisbane Water KBA: Doug Hocking

Tuggerah Lakes KBA: Nick Carson
Pelagic Trips: Allan Benson

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The Minutes of the Committee of the NSW Field Ornithologist's Club 1970 - 2000

The Proceedings of the Royal Zoological Society 1966 -1969

For the history of the Club in the 21st century the NSWFOC/Birding NSW Newsletter Issues 177 - 302 were consulted.

