

August 2019

The Twitcher



CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

Editorial Team: Allan Benson (0457 458 274) Wendy Mitchell (4340 4870) & Robyn Price Volume 14, No. 8

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
27/8/19	Meeting: "Heron & Bass Strait Islands" Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds	John Carpenter
31/8/19	Full Day Outing: Quorrobolong Meet: 8.30am Shell Service Station, Freemans Drive, Freemans Waterhole	Andrew Melville 0427 766 486
11-15 Sep 19	Camp Out: Coonabarabran Meet: 8.30 am Getaway Tourist Camp, Oxley Highway, Coonabarabran (02 6842 1773) Birding around Coonabarabran, Warrumbungle NP, Baradine and Pilliga	Alan Morris 0418 269 482
17-19 Oct 19	Camp Out: Albury Meet: 8.30am Great Aussie Holiday Park, Bowna (Lake Hume) Tel:02 6020 3236 Please contact Michael if you are attending.	Michael Scobie 0411 243 433
24/9/19	Next Meeting: Birding in Africa Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds	Grace Bryant

Note: For all Outings bring your morning tea and lunch. A chair is a good idea.



Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be available at the end of the meeting.
To cover hall hire and refreshments a donation of \$3 would be appreciated.

Tonight's Speaker: John Carpenter is one of the founding members of our group and has a lifetime of birding experience. This doesn't mean John is resting on his laurels. He is still looking for new birds and new birding experiences. His journey has taken him to Heron Island as well as the Bass Strait Islands of King and Flinders. John will tell us about his trips to-night.

Last month's meeting: We enjoyed a very special night at last month's meeting, drinks and food to celebrate the awarding of honours to two of our members. Alan Morris came down from Laurieton to join us to celebrate his award of the Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Dr. Michael Scobie only travelled from Avoca but we were delighted to have him with us to celebrate his award of the Order of Australia Medal by Her Majesty!

Central Coast Mayor Jane Smith joined us and made a speech congratulating both Alan and Michael. She is obviously very aware of Alan's contributions to the environment having worked with him on quite a few projects. She was no less complimentary to Michael and acknowledged his incredible efforts in restoring sight to thousands of our neighbours in PNG, the scope of which many of us were unaware. David Mehan, Member for The Entrance, also graced us with his presence and spoke highly of our mighty pair. Allan Benson read the citation for Alan Morris's AM proposal, which was long and impressive! It is a concern that the body of work done by people of the stature of Alan and Michael can be continued on a volunteer basis. Long may they continue with their magnificent work. Thanks, must also go to Allan and Jude Benson and all who helped with the catering and organisation.

After the celebrations it was on to the presentation for the evening in which Mick Roderick, Woodland Birds for Biodiversity Project Coordinator for Birdlife NSW updated us on the status of our endangered birds focusing largely on the Regent Honeyeater. It was an excellent presentation but a very concerning story on the state of this species, which has had a high profile with us this year. Habitat loss is extremely concerning as it is with the Swift Parrot and it is going to take continued dedication from Mick with the team at Birdlife with support from us birders to stop us from losing this species completely.

James O'Connor, Head of Science and Research at Birdlife travelled up from Melbourne also spoke to our group. He enlightened us to the work the Birdlife is doing countrywide. It is well worth adding their website to your 'go to' directory it is <Birdlife.org.au>. We had a thoroughly memorable evening.

Malcolm Hill

Welcome to Visitors and New Members: 73 people attended our June meeting. Apologies were received from Tom and Elizabeth Karplus, Kaye Pointer, Ian Bailey, Robert Payne, Vivienne Schell, Grace Bryant, Barry and Diana Dean and Margret Hanson. People are encouraged to bring their own coffee cups to the meetings to reduce the plastic/polystyrene cups that that will be sent to landfill. For those people who remember to do this, congratulations! Thanks to Malcolm Hill's expertise, the collar microphone and pocket box, work well and there is now no problem with anyone hearing the speaker or the leader!

Reminder about Parking: When attending the Meetings at the Tuggerah Hall, **parking** is not available in the car parks of the private businesses next door. The donation for attending the meeting is \$3 and covers room hire and printing of the newsletter.

Webpage: Don't forget to check out the Birding NSW Webpage www.birdingnsw.org.au where there is plenty of info about outings, photograph gallery, and general info about the Club. Well worth a visit! Check out Central Coast Birders on Facebook as well! It now has 350 and keeps growing monthly.

SAVING STAMPS

Please bring your used stamps (on paper, trimmed) for Colin Mitchell to process for donation to charity.

WHAT WAS NEW June and WHAT CAN WE EXPECT August - September?

July/August is a traditionally a quiet month but in 2019 two new birds were added to our Central Coast List. Firstly, a Kermadec Petrel was added on the July Swansea Pelagic. Kermadec Petrels breed on Ball's Pyramid near Lord Howe Island and Phillip Island off Norfolk Island. They are regular further north off Southport and have been recorded off Port Stephens. Needless to say, this dark morph bird caused excitement on the boat along with a NZ Wandering Albatross and Providence Petrels. The second bird was a Rosy Starling sighted and photographed at Gwandalan. Rosy Starlings are native to Central and East Asia. They do migrate and there are a handful records from Broome and Cocos-Keeling Island but more significantly, there is one record from Coffs Harbour in 2006. There is a strong probability that this bird was ship-assisted. Twitchers descended on Gwandalan after the report but found nothing. There is some suggestion that it was there as far back as March. Twitchers are eagerly awaiting further reports.



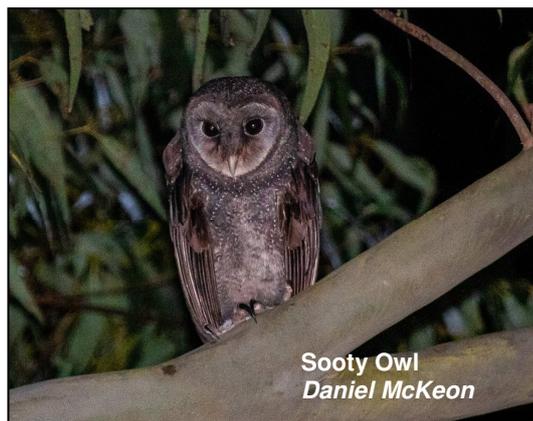
Rosy Starling



Reef Egret

An Eastern Reef Egret photographed at McMaster's Beach on the 30th July by Rod Lennon is a significant sighting. Reports have been few and far between for some time. Multiple sightings of Sooty Owls by Darren Earnshaw has made many birders envious. While Sooty Owls are not uncommon in their rainforest habitat, they are notoriously difficult to see. A Black-necked Stork was seen at a wetland at Kanwal and there was an unconfirmed report at Kariong Gardens. Nelmes Road Reconstructed Wetlands continues to deliver with Mick Roderick reporting a Spotless Crake. Again, there are probably lots of Spotless Crakes at such places as McPherson Road Swamp but they very difficult to see. The Regent Honeyeaters were still present until at least the 21/8/19.

Latham's Snipe should already be here but have not been reported yet. Olive-backed Orioles have been reported as well as very early Koels. The waders will start to return soon to join the ones that have over-wintered here, so keep an eye a out for Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Golden, Plover, Curlew Sandpiper as well as both Red and Great Knot which sometimes use Tuggerah Lake as a stopping off point. We should be hearing the melodious call of White-throated Gerygone soon as well as the "seep- seep" call of Sacred Kingfisher. Dusky Woodswallows should turn up at their usual haunts in September in such places as Waratah Road, Mogo and Munmorah.



Sooty Owl
Daniel McKeon

Correction to last month's Newsletter: Fantail Cuckoos parasite Scrubwrens whereas Shining Bronze Cuckoos parasite Fairy-wrens.

OUTING REPORTS

Full Day Outing - Saturday 27th July: Bucketty, Murray's Run and Wollombi Leaders: John and Carole Carpenter

Our meeting place at the Letter "A" can be really cold at this time of year but this time it was only cool. 30 keen birders joined the outing including six from Sydney to enjoy a sunny and pleasant day. The best bird here was a Buff-rumped Thornbill. Other birds seen or heard were Spotted Pardalote, Mistletoebird, Gang-Gang and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Grey-Shrike-thrush, and Golden Whistler. As we headed down Murray's Run Road, we added Noisy Friarbird, King Parrot, Eastern Spinebill, Wonga Pigeon, Superb Lyrebird were heard calling.

We had morning tea by a lake on private property along Willow Wyn Private Road where two property owners had generously allowed us permission. On the private property, we saw Yellow-tufted and Scarlet Honeyeaters, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-browed Scrubwren, Satin Bowerbird, White-throated Treecreeper, and Brown Thornbill. Around the lake we found Blue-faced Honeyeater, Superb Fairy-wren, Red-browed Finch, Hardhead, Coot, Australasian Grebe, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen,



*Birders
Esther Beaton*

and a beautiful Azure Kingfisher, Reluctantly, we left our idyllic

morning tea lakeside setting but not before we had great views of a Superb Lyrebird. As we continued along the valley on Murray's Run Road, it was quiet and peaceful but very dry. However, we were able to find two groups of White-winged Choughs as well as Double-barred Finches. As we admired the convict stonework at the culvert, we added White-cheeked and White-eared Honeyeaters to our ever-growing list. We then continued up Yengo Creek Road on our way to Wollombi. We were pleased to see 2 pairs of Jacky Winter, Fairy Martin, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Variegated Fairy-wren, Black-fronted Dotterel and Cattle Egret.



*Morning Tea
Robyn Price*

Blue-faced Honeyeaters joined us for lunch at Wollombi. Near the cemetery, we found a nearly dry waterhole. We recorded Yellow Thornbill and after much persistence and Graham beating the reeds, Golden-headed Cisticolas finally emerged and posed for photos. We left Wollombi and headed for the Great North Road at Bucketty. The constant hazard on this stretch of road were "suicidal" motor bike riders who took ridiculous risks by passing over double lines and blind bends. We checked out both the culvert and the waterhole at Bucketty. We only added one new bird to our list – White-naped Honeyeater but were captivated by a pair of Gang-gang Cockatoos as they explored a hollow, presumably as a nesting site. The final bird count was 74 species on the day. Many thanks to all who attended to help make it a very pleasant day's birding.

John & Carole



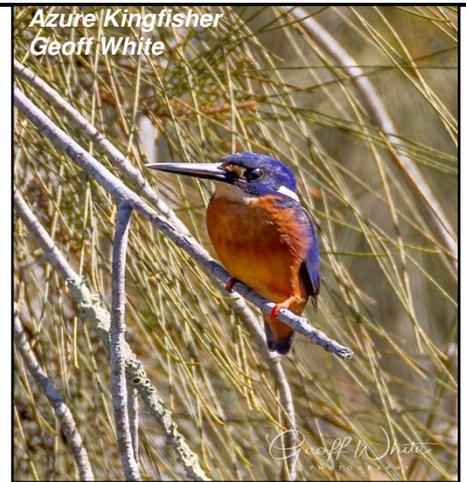
*Blue-faced Honeyeater
Daniel McKeon*

Half-day Outing - August 14: Chain Valley Bay

Leader: Meryl Newton

With a crystal-clear sky and no wind, (after of week of gales), a very keen crew of 29 Central Coast birders gathered at Tall Timbers Rd, Chain Valley Bay on Wednesday 14th August. Most were unfamiliar with the area, but very enthusiastic to explore. Our first track, in Chain Valley Bay Reserve led down to a little unnamed saltwater creek opening up into Lake Macquarie. Saltmarsh, mangroves, large stands of Angophora Costata (Smooth-barked Apple), Casuarina glauca lined the creek and track. Not much in the way of blossom as this is still a late winter landscape. A Striated Heron was seen skimming the surface, Galahs were busy lining hollows and Spotted Pardalotes were piping high up in the canopy. A pair of White Bellied Sea-Eagles, a gaggle of Black Swans, Scaly Breasted Lorikeets, Chestnut Teal and a Yellow Thornbill presented, as well as all the normal suspects. We then proceeded to end of Scaysbrook Ave, following the pathway through heavily wooded wetlands, to the swing bridge over Karignan Creek. Progress came to a halt pretty quickly with sighting of a Varied Sittella, and Scarlet Honeyeater in Swamp Mahogany near the start of the walk. Variegated Fairy

Wrens, Superb Fairy Wrens and various Honeyeaters skittered across the path as we approached the bridge leading to Chain Valley Bay North. Then all progress stopped as an Azure Kingfisher, in blazing colour, held as captive with its splendour. Tree Martins, White Necked Heron and Mallards also were observed. After a leisurely brunch break at Joshua Porter Reserve, we decamped to Weonga Pl, San Remo, to oh and ah over the Double Barred Finches. There were only two in residence while there but we saw lots of White-cheeked Honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebill, Spotted Pardalote and a Golden Whistler. One Osprey was seen landing on the communications tower off in the distance. As members started to peel away, others took the opportunity, while in the area to go over to Blue Haven in search of the Regent Honeyeaters but sadly none were around. Geoff White kindly took us on a tour of the wetland, pointing out trees they had been seen in, for those members that wished to return in the future. All up a count of 59 species over the 4 sites, and 29 very happy birders, all expressing the desire to come back again, to this end of the coast.



UNUSUAL GOSFORD-WYONG SIGHTINGS JULY - AUGUST 2019

Species List: the names and the order in which they occur are in accordance with the new Birdlife and IOC System, as presented in "The Australian Bird Guide" P. Menkhurst et al 2016.

	* = First return of migrants	** = Last birds to depart	LN = biggest number since January	OW = Over-winter
Brown Quail	3	18/7/19	Kariong	Anna Pillich
Brown Quail	3	24/7/19	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Tricia Sweet
Australasian Shoveler	19	20/6/19	Tuggerah STW	Kaye Pointer
Hardhead	50	26/7/19	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	Margaret Pointer
Hoary-headed Grebe	19	20/6/19	Tuggerah STW	Kaye Pointer
Antipodean Albatross	1	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
Black-browed Albatross	3	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
Yellow-nosed Albatross	2	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
Campbell's Albatross	1m	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
Northern Giant Petrel	1	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
Fairy Prion	1	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
Kermadec Petrel	1	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
Providence Petrel	3	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
Fluttering Shearwater	600+	23/7/19	Soldiers Port Reef, Norah Head	Alan Morris
Black-necked Stork	AM	25-27/7/19	Kanwal Wetlands, Walker Ave, Kanwal	Fred Hampton
Spotless Crake	1	14/8/19	Nelmes Rd, Blue Haven	Mick Roderick
White-necked Heron	4	20/6/19	Tuggerah STW	Margaret Pointer
White-necked Heron	1	29/6/19	Cnr Bloodtree & Wisemans Ferry Rd	Kaye Pointer
White-necked Heron	1	26/7/19	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	Margaret Pointer
Eastern Reef Egret	1	30-31/7/19	McMasters Beach	Rod Lennon
Nankeen Night-Heron	1	19/7/19	Budgewoi Creek, Budgewoi	Steve Merrett
Nankeen Night-Heron	3	23/7/19	Eulalia St Wharf, Davistown	Doug Hocking
Striated Heron	1	19/7/19	Budgewoi Creek, Budgewoi	Steve Merrett
Straw-necked Ibis	100	10/6/19	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Eastern Osprey	2+N	19-6/8/19	Moore Oval, Canton Beach	Bill Lancaster
Eastern Osprey	2+N2E	23-31/7/19	2 eggs on 31/7, Erina Works Depot	Mairin Ireland
Eastern Osprey	2A+N	3/8/19	San Remo	Meryl Newton
Eastern Osprey	2A+N	5/8/19	Doyle St, South Kincumber	Laurie Smith
Black-shouldered Kite	1	24/7-6/8	x3 McPherson Rd Swamp, Tuggerah	David Russell
Pacific Baza	1	20/6/19	Tuggerah STW Dog Area	Margaret Pointer
Brahminy Kite	1	22/7/19	Spencer Wharf	Michael Breheny
Brown Goshawk	M&F+N	11/6-24/7	x3 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Brown Goshawk	1m	24/7/19	Blue Haven Wetlands	Allan Benson
Grey Goshawk	1	23/7/19	Tuggerah STW	Darren Earnshaw
Grey Goshawk	1	6/8/19	McPherson Rd Swamp, Tuggerah	Graham Nelson

Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	7/6-16/7	x6 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	21/7/19	Ironbark Rd, Mangrove Mtn	David Catt
Little Eagle	1	25/7/19	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Buff-banded Rail	1	31/7/19	Cochrone Lagoon, McMasters Beach	Carol Edwards
Double-banded Plover	1	24/7/19	Soldiers Pt Reef, Norah Head	Alan Morris
Black-fronted Dotterel	3	27/7-6/8	Tuggerah STW	Tricia Sweet
Painted Button-quail	2	1-7/6/19	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Eastern Curlew	2	23/7/19	Brisbane Water Waterbird Survey	Michael Scobie
Whimbrel	1	23/7/19	Bensville Broadwater	Doug Hocking
Brown Skua	1	25/7/19	Swansea-Norah Head Pelagic	Mick Roderick
White-fronted Tern	3	23/7/19	Soldiers Pot Reef, Norah Head	Alan Morris
White-fronted Tern	20	4/8/19	Karagi Point, The Entrance	Luke Ullrich
Gull-billed Tern	1	9/8/19	Pelican Point, Norah Head	Luke Ullrich
White-headed Pigeon	12	20/6/19	Narara Railway Station	Margaret Pointer
Emerald Dove	1	22/7/19	flew into window, Palmdale Mem. Gardens	Luke Ullrich
Brush Bronzewing	1	19-28/7/19	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Trisha Sweet
Peaceful Dove	5	3-30/7/19	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Topknot Pigeon	3	20/6/19	Narara Railway Station	Kaye Pointer
Tawny Frogmouth	7 prs	16/7/19	Berkley Vale/Chittaway/Sth Tacoma	Christina Port
Owlet Nightjar	1	2/6 & 28/7	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Azure Kingfisher	1	19/7/19	Marsden Rd, Blue Haven	Noel Lonergan
Azure Kingfisher	1	29/7/19	Ourimbah Uni Campus	Allan Benson
Noisy Pitta	1	25/7/19	Rainforest Walk, Rumbalara Res, Gosford	Ric Tannerman
Peregrine Falcon	1	30/6/19	took Brown Cuckoo-Dove Man. Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Peregrine Falcon	1	31/7/19	McMasters Beach	Graham Nelson
Australian Hobby	1	27//19	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	Tricia Sweet
Nankeen Kestrel	2	15-30/7/19	Harry Moore Oval, Canton Beach	Steve Merrett
Nankeen Kestrel	1	24/7/19	North Entrance	Alan Morris
Nankeen Kestrel	1	25/7/19	Jiliby	Rosie Wood
Yellow-tailed Bla Cockatoo	80	19/7/19	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	John Carpenter
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	3-11/6/19	x3 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	22/7/19	Mt Ettalong, Umina	Robert Payne
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	24/7/19	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Gang Gang Cockatoo	2	2/6/19	Kulnura Fruit Stall	Margaret Pointer
Little Lorikeet	2	27/6/19	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Little Lorikeet	6	1/8/19	Figtree Bay Drive, Kincumber	Christina Port
Swift Parrot	2	28/7/19	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Darren Earnshaw
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	HC	15/6/19	Tathra Taila HSD Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Sooty Owl	1	20/7/19	Forest Of Tranquillity, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Sooty Owl	HC	207/19-	Hidden Valley, Palmdale	David Peet
Sooty Owl	1	27/7/19	Hidden Valley, Palmdale	
Southern Boobook	HC	7-8/7/19	Umina Beach	Robert Payne
Southern Boobook	1	18 & 20/7	Ourimbah Ck Rd, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Southern Boobook	1	20/7/19	Ourimbah Ck Rd, Ourimbah	Greg Miles
Powerful Owl	HC	24/7/19	2230 hrs Murray St, Bateau Bay	Anne Morris
Powerful Owl	HC	31/7/19	0600 hrs NW Gully Brisbane WNP, Umina	Robert Payne
Powerful Owl	HC	5/8/19	Oliver Rd, Mt Elliott	per R. Montgomery
Eastern Koel	HC	2/8/19	Tuggerah Business Park	David Russell
Eastern Koel	HC	3/8/19	Byrnes Rd, Ourimbah	David Russell
Eastern Koel	HC	6/8/19	Killarney Vale	Daniel McKeon
Southern Emu-wren	3	24/7/19	McPherson Swamp, Tuggerah	David Russell
Brown Honeyeater	1	28/7/19	Kariong garden	Karen Cee
Regent Honeyeater	3	19/7-7/8/19	Marsden Rd, Blue Haven	Noel Lonergan
Regent Honeyeater	3+	22/7 & 7/8	Charmhaven/Wallarrah Creek	Boris Branwhite
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	1	14/4/19	private garden ,Kariong	David Catt
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	2	18/7/19	private garden, Kariong	David Catt
Little Friarbird	2	14-17/7/19	Marsden Rd, Blue Haven	Carol Abbott

Brown-headed Honeyeater	2	18-23/7/19	x4 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Rockwarbler	1	23/7/19	Mangrove Dam Carpark, Kulnura	Rob Montgomery
Buff-rumped Thornbill	2	27/7/19	Letter A, Bucketty	Joanne Hagan
Crested Shrike-tit	2	2/8/19	Ourimbah Creek RTA Res	Elisabeth Noble
Rufous Whistler	3	21/7/19	Pearl Beach Arboretum	Robert Payne
Olive-backed Oriole	1	24/7/19	McPherson Swamp, Tuggerah	David Russell
Torresian Crow	1	28/8/19	Sunnyvale Close, Lisarow	Darren Earnshaw
Torresian Crow	2	1/8/2019	Mangrove Mountain store	Margaret Pointer
Torresian Crow	4	6/8/19	Dairy Swamp, Central Coast Wetlands	Ann Lindsay
Spangled Drongo	1	18/7/19	Kariong	Anna Pillich
Spangled Drongo	1	8/8/19	Bateau Bay Beach	Christina Port
Rose Robin	AM	28/7/19	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Rosy Starling	1	13/8/19	Gwandalan	Sharon Boyter
Double-barred Finch	3	2/6/19	Private property, Kulnura	Margaret Pointer
Double-barred Finch	15	18/7-6/8/19	Weonga Place, San Remo	Marj Kibby
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	6	18/7/19	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	John Carpenter
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	7	24-26/7/19	McPherson Swamp, Tuggerah	David Russell
Bassian Thrush	1	11/7/19	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Barry Pointer
Common Blackbird	AM	15/7/19	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Margaret Pointer
Common Blackbird	AF	22/7/19	Mangrove Mountain Store	Margaret Pointer

Comments

Other reports and breeding records include **Osprey**: 1 South Tacoma 30/6 (RMO), 1 near nesting platform Rileys Island 22/7 (MSc), 1 Wamberal Lagoon 29/7 (RMontgomery); **White-fronted Tern**: 1 Soldiers Pt Norah Head 14/7 (JC), 1 Munmorah SCA 15/7 (DStokes); **Nankeen Kestrel**: 1 McMasters Bch 31/7 (GN), 1 Terrigal Oval 31/7 (KP); **Southern Boobook**: HC on 12 nights Mountain Ash Way Umina, Pearl Beach & Mt Ettalong Jul (RP); **Brown-headed Honeyeater**: collecting wool from Wiltshire Sheep at Pointers for nesting purposes 18-23/7 (MP); **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet** Nesting Blackwell Mountain 13/8 (R Furniss)

Good Birding !

CENTRAL COAST TWITCH 2019

The 2019 race remains tight with the top three participants only a couple of sightings apart. Graham Nelson still looks to be favourite as a three-bird lead at this time of the year is significant. Kermadec Petrel and other Pelagic birds were the major contributors to the Twitcher totals in July/August.

Set out below are the totals that were given to Robyn Price on 10/8/2019. Please advise her if these totals are incorrect.

Graham Nelson	235	Krystyna Lonergan	187	Robyn Price	166
Allan Benson	232	Margaret Pointer	183	Rowena Wallace	155
Christina Port	231	Noel Lonergan	177	Diana Hogan	153
Daniel McKeon	216	Andrew Melville	176	Judy Clark	139
Carole Carpenter	204	Rex Schmidt	175	Coleen Southall	133
John Carpenter	203	Michael Scobie	175	Mike Kuhl	122
David Catt	194	Graeme Catt	173	Steve Merrett	117
Kaye Pointer	190	Doug Hocking	173		
Alan Morris	189	Nick Carson	170		

RECORD FOR THE NUMBER OF BIRDATA ATLAS SURVEYS IN ONE DAY

Alan Morris

At the last Club Meeting on 22 July 2019, James O'Connor, Head of Science and Research for Birdlife Australia, in a speech congratulating me on my appointment of a Member of Australia Award (AM), told the gathering that I hold the record for the greatest number of Birddata sheets submitted in one day. This was on July 13, 2007! This was news to me so it had me looking up my records to see what was the occasion. It turns out that the event occurred on a trip to North-west NSW that I did with fellow club member Mike Kuhl, with the intention of visiting Narran Lake Nature Reserve, which was in flood at the time. This was the scene of a big colonial waterbird breeding event. The NPWS had organised a special opening of the Reserve and organised a guided tour via canoes for those people who had booked in advance. We arrived at the Reserve early in the afternoon, put our gear in the shearers quarter where we were to stay, and set off in the canoes. Straw-necked & White Ibis, and Royal Spoonbills were breeding on lignum clumps, and Yellow-billed Spoonbills and Great Egrets in flooded Red Gums as well as many ducks and other waterfowl. Half an hour into the

survey, the heavens opened and there was a big thunderstorm. We got very wet! It was decided to return to the camp but the rain kept coming, to the extent that that Ranger suggested that instead of staying the night at the Reserve it would be more sensible to head for Lightning Ridge, 40 kms away. Otherwise if the rain set in we would be stuck at the Reserve for the next few days. So, we had a very hairy drive back into Lightning Ridge but made it, thanks to Mike Kuhl's driving skills and his trusty old long-wheel based Landrover. It continued to rain overnight, but stopped in the morning so we set out for Nyngan on bitumen and formed roads! On 13/7/07, we left at 7 am and travelled from Lightning Ridge to Nyngan in one day. We drove 400 kms, via Cumborah, Narran River Bridge, Four Corners, Brewarrina, Golgongon, and then travelled on the western side of the Macquarie Marshes via Monkey Bridge, Munadoo Bridge, Coolabah Rd and Crown Pine, arriving at Nyngan at 5.50 pm. During that time, we did 12 twenty-minute, 2 ha surveys, 14 Incidental Surveys and one 20-minute 500m survey, making 27 surveys all together. On that occasion, seasonal conditions were excellent There was plenty of grass and new vegetation, and many trees and shrubs in flower. During that day we saw 81 species. The bird list included Brolga, Red-tailed Black and Major Mitchell's Cockatoos, Superb, Mulga and Red-winged Parrots, Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Hooded Robin and Crimson Chat. It was a great trip, during great seasonal conditions.

SWIFT PARROT AND REGENT HONEYEATERS

Chris Timewell

Thank you to everyone that was able to participate during May 2019 in the first of the two annual targeted survey periods for the critically endangered Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater. It is greatly appreciated and makes a significant contribution to their conservation and recovery efforts. The information that we've received for 2019 so far is fascinating, and once again provides new insights into their ever-changing movements across south-eastern mainland Australia.

Summary of sightings from 2019:

1. Swift Parrots

- The first major wave of Swift Parrots was detected on the mainland following a series of strong southerly winds in late March. Sightings were scattered through Victoria and southern NSW during April, with hotspots around the Werribee Western Treatment Plant, Ocean Grove (southern Vic) and Heathcote (central Vic). There were many reports of strong Grey Box flowering across the central Victorian goldfields. In NSW and the ACT, birds initially filtered in during late April and good-sized flocks were found on the NSW South Coast, but then birds soon gravitated to two main sites where 100+ Swift Parrots then "established base camp" for the ensuing weeks. These were the Mount Annan Botanic Gardens in South-west Sydney (where up to 100 Swift Parrots have been found) and at Chain Valley Bay on the southern shores of Lake Macquarie (where counts of close to 150 Swift Parrots were made). An unusually western report came of two birds using trees in a park in Griffith in mid-April.
- During the May survey period, the majority of Victorian Swift Parrot sightings were from the central-western Box-Ironbark region. A range of public reserves and state forests supported flocks of up to 60 birds feeding on Grey Box and Yellow Gum flowers and lerp as well. Many of these reserves were historically important Swift Parrot sites but have been only sporadically visited by smaller flocks of Swift Parrots in recent years. Good numbers of Swift Parrots continued to be reported from Ocean Grove. Other nectar-feeders have also been reported in high numbers from these regions, including usually prolific Noisy Friarbirds in western Vic and large Musk Lorikeets flocks in Ocean Grove (including one flock exceeding 800 individuals). There were one-off sightings of smaller Swift Parrot flocks elsewhere across the state, including Chiltern (NE Vic). In NSW the vast majority of reported birds were still at the Mount Annan Botanic Gardens or Chain Valley Bay sites, with smaller flocks reported from Sydney's northern beaches, Canberra and Port Macquarie (these birds being the most northerly Swift Parrots at that stage).
- Since the May survey period, Swift Parrots continue to be regularly recorded in central-west Victoria in good numbers. Relatively large flocks were also seen over a number of days across the Altona Meadows area (a suburb to the west of central Melbourne) and in Sunbury (central Vic). Reports in the ACT dried up completely post-May, whilst in NSW the flock at Chain Valley Bay remained until mid-June and now seems to have moved on. However, many of the Mount Annan birds are still present at the time of writing – could these birds spend their entire mainland season at this single site? Further north a couple more sightings were made around Port Macquarie, whilst the one and only Queensland observation came from Springfield Lakes whilst people were looking for the pair of Regent Honeyeaters found there (see below). Scattered reports of small numbers on Swift Parrots came from other parts of NSW but the most notable report was of a flock of around 30 birds found in Sydney's northern beaches region, with keen observers working out exactly where the birds were roosting (great detective work!)

2. Regent Honeyeaters

- Following the final reports of Regent Honeyeaters associated with the breeding event in the Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ) in late January, the lead-up to the May survey period was another tale of “single birds in strange places” with lone birds found in Picton, Symonston (ACT), Rushworth (Vic), Richmond (Western Sydney) and a well-watched male at Burrewarra Point Reserve, Guerrilla Bay (south coast NSW). This latter bird was recorded performing almost solely Little Wattlebird calls; something we seem to be seeing often in lone male Regent Honeyeaters. Unfortunately, a bird was found injured after colliding with a window at Lake Cathie Public School and later died. The most exciting report of Regent Honeyeaters pre-May was up to 4 birds being present along the Great Northern Rd, Bucketty (in the vicinity of Mogo Campground in Yengo National Park). These birds were mostly feeding in Red Bloodwood blossom.
- Ex-captive birds were also found in Victoria pre-May, with Blue-White/Orange-Metal ('BWOM'; 2017 release) seen feeding in a planted tree in Noorinbee in February. Orange-Metal/Blue-Orange ('OMBO'), also released Chiltern 2017, was found visiting planted Grevilleas in a garden in Springvale South and was seen on and off from late March to mid-April.
- During the May survey period there were more coastal Regent Honeyeaters located, with two birds at Morisset (Lake Macquarie) and a single bird at Dunbogan, all feeding in Swamp Mahogany blossom (this being another male bird doing only Little Wattlebird calls). In the Barraba region a pair of birds were found feeding on Mugga Ironbark in Coonoor TSR along the Bundarra-Barraba Road. An unusual report came from a bird found in a small clearing inside a large forested area at Drake, west of Casino in northern NSW. The only Queensland report during the May survey period was of a single bird that was seen briefly at Harding's Paddock in Goolman, south of Ipswich. This brought the total to seven Regent Honeyeaters found during the May survey period, which although still a worryingly low tally was a big improvement on the May 2018 survey period when no wild Regent Honeyeaters were reported to us!
- Since the May surveys, most Regent Honeyeater reports have been of more birds found in Swamp Mahogany dominated habitats. The most exciting find was a large flock (by modern-day standards) of birds found in Myall Lakes National Park (near Bungwahl) comprised of no fewer than twelve (12) individuals. This sized winter flock provided a rare window of opportunity for Taronga Zoo to supplement the captive population (to boost the genetic stock) and 4 birds were subsequently taken. The remaining 8 birds are still present. Four other Regent Honeyeaters were reported from an artificial wetland complex at Blue Haven, on the NSW Central Coast, with at least three of these birds still present at the time of writing. This is the first group of Regent Honeyeaters found in Swamp Mahogany dominated habitat on the Central Coast in several years. Further, a second bird arrived at the Dunbogan site, bringing the total of reported Regent Honeyeaters found in or near Swamp Mahogany forests to 21 individuals; well over half of all Regent Honeyeaters reported since the end of summer 2019. In Victoria, at least two Regent Honeyeaters were reported from Chiltern in early June, with one likely being a wild bird. Finally, in Queensland, two “now famous” birds were also found in a park at Springfield Lakes in south-west Brisbane, having been seen by well over a hundred observers and attracting much media attention.
- Finally, one observation is perhaps worthy of special attention. This was of two birds found by a lucky observer in their backyard in Oxley Park in the western suburbs of Sydney in early June. Normally that would be exciting enough, but on this occasion, it was 'extra-special' because one of the birds was a wild/unbranded Regent Honeyeater, the other one of the captive-bred birds released at Chiltern in 2017. This bird had travelled over 463km from the release site (in a straight line, so obviously much further than that), making it the 4th longest recorded movement by a Regent Honeyeater ever!

BIRD COUNT OF BRISBANE WATER JULY 23, 2019

Skipper: Michael Scobie

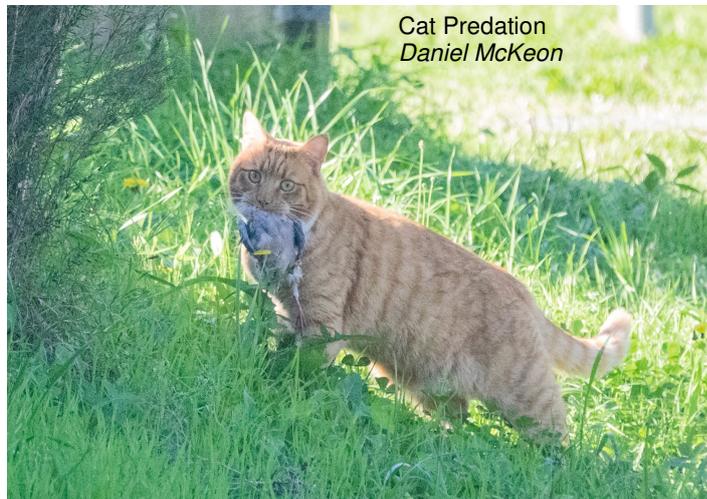
Thanks to the generosity of Michael Scobie for the use of his boat, Allan Benson, Doug Hocking and Alan Morris had a pleasant trip around Brisbane Water in sunny conditions, starting and finishing from Gosford Boat Ramp. Again, what was most significant on the day was what was not there. The number of Swans 143, is the 2nd highest count, the number of Great Egrets, Little Egrets & Little Pied Cormorants of 18, 9 & 83 respectively, was the greatest numbers reported for these species. The fact that there are 4 breeding pairs of Ospreys on Brisbane Water (Erina, Gosford, Kincumber and Rileys Island, yet we only saw one bird, on Rileys Island was interesting! The 3 Nankeen Night-herons seen in the mangroves at Amy St Wharf, Davistown, is the biggest number seen on Brisbane Water!, 48 Northern Mallards is a low count (is Central Coast Council trapping and removing them?). Generally more Little Black Cormorants are seen in winter so the number seen, 123, reflects the good number seen while 12 Royal Spoonbills is

the biggest count for them since July 1999. Eastern Curlews and Whimbrels are usually few in number in winter but generally we get 8-15 Bar-tailed Godwits in winter but none were seen on this trip while reflects a nationwide trend.

Alan Morris

CAT PREDATION AT REGENT HONEYEATER SITE

The presence of predatory cats at Nelmes Road Constructed Wetland at Blue Haven, where four critically endangered Regent Honeyeaters have been present for the last six weeks has alarmed BirdLife Australia, the country's peak bird conservation organisation." There have been two cats observed attacking birds at this site "said Mick Roderick, spokesman for BirdLife Australia. "Regent Honeyeaters are critically endangered with an estimated 400 left in the wild. To lose a critically endangered bird with such a perilously small population by predation from a domestic cat would be tragedy. "Mr Roderick said that "cat owners are often naive regarding their pet cats, claiming they are well fed, too old or too slow to catch wildlife but the reality is that cats are instinctive hunters and take a significant toll on birds, reptiles and small mammals." Mr Roderick urged cat owners in the area to ensure their cats are not allowed to roam, particularly while the Regent Honeyeaters are still present. The Central Coast Representative on the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Team, Allan Benson approached Rangers to remove the cats but were told "that cats were allowed to roam freely unless it was a gazetted wildlife area. "We are now in the process of putting a submission to council and are hoping it won't be too late" said Mr Benson.



Cat Predation
Daniel McKeon

BIRDING IN SOUTH WEST QUEENSLAND – JUNE 2019

Doug Hocking

The Warrego and Paroo Rivers, Currawinya NP, Bowra Station, Lightning Ridge and the Pilliga

I have long wanted to visit Currawinya NP and Bowra Station, two diverse and excellent birding destinations. After good rain in Central and South West Queensland, I felt it was time to go. So, in June 2019, Judy and I headed to Nyngan and Bourke, crossed the Warrego at Fords Bridge onto Yantabulla and stayed in Hungerford for two nights – a good hop-off for Currawinya NP. Given it had been dry for so long, the little birds were scarce and the water birds had dispersed with the abundance of water. There are good lagoons and swamps off the Warrego River and the Cutta Burra Creek that are good birding areas on route to Hungerford. Currawinya has five different habitats namely mulga, lakes and swamps, samphire flats, dune field, shrublands and riverine plains. The fresh water (Lake Numalia) and salt water (Lake Wyara) lakes are two highlights. The roads are in good shape and access is easy. The fresh water lake was 40% full but the salt water lake was dry.

I saw some 60 species for the day with highlights being Crimson Chat, Red-winged Parrot, Mulga Parrot, Australian Ring-neck, Blue Bonnet, Cockatiel, Rufous Whistler, Spiny-cheeked, Striped, Blue-faced and Singing Honeyeaters. There were literally thousands of Woodswallows, mostly White-browed and Masked. On the fresh water lake there was a large raft of ducks that I didn't have time to get to, but there were Red-necked Avocets, Red-capped Plover and Black-fronted Dotterel. Over 200 bird species have been recorded at Currawinya with the migratory waders being one of the highlights. After a good season Currawinya must be a sight to behold. An old friend of mine was the Manager there in the 1960s when AML&F owned it and his stories always fascinated me on the abundance of wildlife. The Station was always well cared for.

It was then on to Eulo and Cunnamulla, Bowra Station, an Australian Wildlife Conservancy property. Once again, there is a diverse range of habitats and an extensive and diverse bird list. It is easy to get around and has excellent accommodation in the shearer's quarters, as well as catering for campers and caravans. There is a bird call every night and some 80 species were seen each of the three days we were there. I had two full days birding – not nearly enough time. Whilst I didn't see all the following birds, I did get Pied Honeyeaters, Crested Bell Birds, Halls Babbler, and White-winged Fairy Wrens, White-winged Trillers, and again thousands of Woodswallows. Some of the highlight birds at the bird call were – the three Babblers, Crested Bellbird, Brolga, Bustard, Crimson and White-fronted Chat, Splendid Fairy Wrens, Pied Honeyeater, Black Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater, Chestnut-breasted Quail-Thrush, Hooded Robin, Banded Lapwing, Budgerigar, Major Mitchell, Bourke's Parrot, Mulga Parrot, Australian Owlet-Nightjar.

It was then onto Lightning Ridge through Bollon on the Wallam Creek, Dirranbandi, crossing the Culgoa River before Hebel. The highlight here for me is always a soak in the thermal pool at daylight and dusk and watch the western parrots fly over. It was then onto the Pilliga Forest via the towns of Pilliga, Gwabegar, Baradine. We stayed at the Pilliga Pottery with its marvellous pottery range, unique accommodation and bird tour. The destination is deep in the Pilliga. Once again there were very few birds, highlight was Hooded Robins but there were no Speckled Warblers which are usually common in the area. Whilst there has been some rain, it is still very dry and hopefully there is more rain to come and the bird populations may start to recover. We travelled 2800 kms.

POWERFUL OWLS

By Heather Catchpole

The Powerful Owl, *Ninox strenua*, is Australia's largest and most powerful owl. It's also the only owl in Australia that hoots like the owls in children's books - "whoohoo" - rather than screeching like a Barn Owl. From March to April, Powerful Owls start hooting more frequently. The male is the one making most of the ruckus, calling to tell other owl pairs that this is his territory. "They are basically saying this is our patch, buzz off," said Dr Rod Kavanagh, principal research scientist, NSW Department of Primary Industries. By May, the owls quieten down as the time to nest approaches. Throughout June and July, they still call softly to each other as the female starts to roost in the nest.

Powerful Owl pairs occupy large areas. When they start to court in March the owls move closer together, roosting on the same tree and then the same branch. They make their nests in trees with a large hollow, preferably a eucalypt over 200 years old. Like all of the *Ninox* family, Powerful Owls are winter breeders, nesting in late May to early June. Almost like clockwork, the female enters her nest hollow at the same time each year. The female Powerful Owl lays an almost spherical, dull white egg around four to five centimetres in diameter, usually laying another after a gap of a few days. She incubates the eggs for 35 to 38 days, and will spend another 30 days with the chicks before she's free to leave the nest and hunt for herself. During this time the male roosts nearby, keeping an eye on his family as the female incubates the eggs and the chicks grow and mature. Throughout this period, he is solely responsible for the family's food. "The males do the lion's share of the work for three months," said Kavanagh. The chicks begin to fledge in September. The older chick (from the first laid egg) will leave the nest first.

From September until December it's a great time to look for Powerful Owls, as the whole family can be seen roosting close together. The fledglings (juveniles) are strikingly different from the adults, with soft white plumage with dark streaks and eye patches like a mask. They lose this plumage at about four to five months. Unlike the adult's hoot, juveniles make a loud trilling noise when begging for food.

Like many other birds, Powerful Owls are reputed to mate for life. To test if this is really true, Fiona Hogan PhD student at Deakin University in Melbourne has been collecting feathers from Powerful Owls over the last three years. Hogan is sampling DNA from the shed feathers from roost trees. She has also collected blood feathers from chicks in order to do paternity tests. Her results will shed light on the monogamy of owls, as well as detect any genetic diversity between owls in Queensland versus owls in Victoria.

So far, they're suggesting that Powerful Owls may not be as monogamous as we'd thought. "I don't know if it is as straightforward as people think, as we have found that adults who lose a mate have replaced this mate by the following breeding season," said Hogan. People have also reported females booting another female out of the nesting area, she said. "It's hard to say 'yes' it's definitely the same male and female breeding each year" said Hogan.

Powerful Owls are capable hunters and include sugar gliders, greater gliders, ringtail possums and brushtail possums in their diet. According to Dr Raylene Cooke from Deakin University, Powerful Owls eat an astounding 250 to 350 possums a year. Dr Cooke analysed 2500 owl pellets to determine this fact. Unseen and unheard, the winged hunter swoops onto an unwary possum, grasping it with its claws and breaking its neck. In one great bite the Powerful Owl can eat a possum's head. The male will then take the headless possum back to the roost and eat some more, as well as provide meat for the female and two chicks. Powerful Owls will also eat mice, insects and a range of other birds, including quite large prey such as white cockatoos, magpies, and even ravens. They specialise in their diet, but eat a broad range of animals over their habitat area. Coastal Powerful Owls will favour Ringtail Possums, while in the high country they prefer Greater Gliders.

Like all hunters, Powerful Owls require large areas to hunt. In Victoria 65% of their habitat has been cleared and the remaining habitat is fragmented. They need a large hollow to breed in because of their large size - a fully grown female as well as two large chicks need to fit into the family home. Despite this and although they are listed as vulnerable, Kavanagh said there may be more owls than previously thought, with records of thousands of owls spotted in New South Wales. Kavanagh and others think this may mean that the owls are more adaptable to different environments than previously thought, with owls even roosting in plantation pine forests.

JULY SWANSEA PELAGIC REPORT

Daniel McKeon

Another great pelagic on Thursday 25th July with the Central Coast Birding crew. and some Hunter people. We had some good birds, some really good birds and one potential great bird that turned out to be a disappointment. A lifer for me was a Kermadec Petrel which was a new bird for the Central Coast list.

A whole lot of other birds came close to the boat to the delight of the photographers on board. Albatross seemed to be the order of the day with Black-browed, Indian Yellow-nosed, NZ Wandering and an immature Campbell Island Albatross all showing up for all to enjoy. Providence Petrel, Kermadec Petrel and a Northern Giant Petrels did multiple fly-bys with an occasional visit to the throng of Crested Terns feeding behind the boat. Three Skua turned up as we were coming back to shore with two of them being the epitome of Brown Skua and one looking and acting like a South Polar Skua. However, even though the SPS showed four features of that species- smaller, smaller wing flashes. finer bill and foot projection, being a possible dark morph means telling its true identity is near impossible as there is so much overlap between dark phase SPS and Brown Skua. In theory, SPS should not be off our coast at this time of year.



We had a an "unusual" prion and it looked good for Antarctic off the back of the camera and, indeed, showed many plumage features consistent with Antarctic but ultimately the decision came out as Fairy. We also saw a Fur Seal sitting on a ship's rudder with a posse of admirers floating nearby. A great day was had by all thanks goes to Allan Benson for organising the trip and thanks to all on board for their great company and conversation throughout the day 13 species on the day- full list- Black-browed Albatross, Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Campbell Island Albatross, Antipodean (NZ Wandering) Albatross. Australasian Gannet Providence Petrel, **Kermadec Petrel**, Northern Giant Petrel, Fairy Prion, Fluttering Shearwater, Brown Skua, Crested Tern, Silver Gull.

SEABIRDS CAN DRINK SALT WATER!

Cornell University

A human stranded at sea has a big problem. There is plenty of water around, but none to drink. Saltwater worsens dehydration. But many marine birds—such as penguins, gulls, albatrosses, and pelicans—have built-in water desalination filters. With salt glands and ducts connected to their bills that rid their bodies of excess salts, these birds can drink seawater straight up or eat prey, such as squid and crabs, that are as salty as seawater. Comparative physiologist Knut Schmidt-Nielsen studied the functions of salt glands in Great Black-backed Gulls more than 50 years ago. In one experiment, a gull ingested about 1/10 of its body mass in seawater (the equivalent of a 150-pound human drinking about 2 gallons of seawater, more than a lethal amount). After three hours, the bird had totally eliminated the salt load, mostly via excretions from its salt glands (which were 10 times higher than salt elimination from its kidneys).

GREY GOSHAWK PREDATION EVENT

Allan Benson

Darren Earnshaw and I were birding at the RTA reserve on Monday 5th August when we were approached by very excited Landcare volunteers. They had witnessed and had video footage of a Grey Goshawk with a Green Catbird in its talons on a log in Ourimbah Creek. We know Grey Goshawk are resident at the RTA reserve and they have nested here. They all agreed it was an amazing experience to witness such an event.

LYREBIRD LEGENDS abound, but not all the stories are true. Let's sort fact from fiction.**ABC Science**

By Ann Jones

The story goes that a lyrebird was raised in captivity in the New England Highlands, and in the house, there was a young boy who was learning to play the flute. The bird copied him, and when it was released into the bush, it repeated that song and the song itself spread. This is partially true, in that there is a special group of lyrebirds that have a different dialect in the New England Highlands, and it is called the "flute dialect". But a study found that the song is their very own — an incredibly complex whistle song. It sounds different in every region, but the one in the New England Highlands is particularly stunning. re lyrebirds natural-born singers?

Chicks don't come out of the egg with full repertoires. They learn it very slowly over time by listening and copying the other lyrebirds around. "Lyrebirds, like the other songbirds, learn their vocalisations — so it's a culturally transmitted

trait," Dr Anastasia Dalziell said. "That means a particular variance of their songs is passed down, not just from parent to offspring like a genetically inherited trait, but also to siblings and unrelated individuals across multiple generations. "There's little to no change [in repertoire] even over decades. Lyrebirds in large part learned their mimicry from other lyrebirds. Hearing the original sounds keeps that mimicry accurate." After the lyrebird was introduced to Tasmania in the early 1900s, it took decades for the birds to cease copying the sounds of mainland birds.

Probably the biggest misconception, because it's often the first and funniest reaction, is that the lyrebird is copying video game sounds, Star Wars lasers, or kids' toys. But the sounds of the "laser" or a "spring in a tunnel" are the male lyrebirds' own sounds. The "lasers" are actually the very first part of a four-section repeating sequence of sounds that have been studied in detail by a team of scientists, including Dr Dalziell. The male lyrebird stands on his mound and performs his complex song repertoire in conjunction with dance moves to convince the female to mate. This dance and movement sequence is like musical theatre — there is singing, there is choreography, and there is an agreed way in which the sounds and the movements fit together. Do they copy anything at random in the forest?

In fact, there is no evidence that wild birds copy any man-made sounds at this point — neither chainsaws nor lasers. Researchers aren't ruling it out entirely, it's just that there are no recordings. In fact, male lyrebirds are not as creative as it may seem, and stick to a set repertoire of mimicry that has been described by Dr Dalziell. "In the wild they're mimicking a set repertoire of sounds and all the males seem to be doing something extremely similar," she said. "So, within one location, they really like to mimic Kookaburras, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Grey-shrike Thrushes. Baby Currawongs for some extraordinary reason and Whipbirds are also big favourites."

There are LOTS of stories though, of human-made-sound mimicry, such as copying the sounds of steam trains in the Blue Mountains, the organ playing of spinster sisters in the bush, camera clicks of tourists, and maybe even copying mammal sounds like dog barks. If you hear something like that, whip out your phone to record it and become a part of the lyrebird story!

SWANSEA PELAGIC UPDATE

Tuesday 8th October – fully booked with six reserves. However, still a chance to get on if you are interested. We will back this trip up

Sunday 10th November- Preference will be given to Port Stephens regulars but the balance will be on a first come basis. You need to email Allan Benson if you are interested. Cost is \$100. It is fully booked out with three reserves but there is still a chance to get on.

WHERE TO GO BIRDING ON THE CENTRAL COAST

McPherson's Road Swamp - Tuggerah

This place is well birded and turns up some interesting birds. Unfortunately, the quality of both the wetland and the surrounding bush has declined over the years. The surrounding bush is becoming overgrown with blackberry and kikuyu and the wetland itself is choked with salvinia. However, it is still a great spot.

Where is it – Corner of McPherson and Gavenlock Roads Tuggerah. The Entrance is off Gavenlock Road opposite the church. There are a couple of spots to view the wetland off McPherson's Road.

What to see -. Rainbow Lorikeet, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Galah, Eastern Rosella, Musk Lorikeet, Spotted Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Noisy Miner, Indian Myna, Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Australian Magpie, Magpie Lark, Welcome Swallow, Little Wattlebird, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Olive-backed Oriole, Australasian Figbird, Satin Bowerbird, Brown Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, White-browed Scrubwren, Pacific Black Duck, Red-browed Finch, Golden-headed Cisticola, Swamp Harrier, Black-shouldered Kite, Silvereye, Golden Whistler, Eastern Whipbird, Lewin's Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, Eastern Spinebill, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Masked Lapwing, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Intermediate Egret, Great Egret, Purple Swamphen.

What birders go to see – Latham's Snipe (summer), Chestnut-breasted Mannikin (was a reliable spot and only just been seen again) Tawny Grassbird, Southern Emu-wren, Freckled Duck, Pink-eared Duck. Spotted and Spotless Crane and Buff-banded Rail have been recorded but conditions to sight them are far from ideal at the moment.

Rarities - Black-tailed Native hen, Painted Snipe, Black-necked Stork, Goldfinch.