



The Twitcher

June
2023

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

Editorial Team: Allan Benson (0457 458 274) Wendy Mitchell (4340 4870) & Robyn Price

Volume 18, No. 6

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
27/6/23	Next Meeting: Cuckoo Hosts in Australia Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds	Alan Morris
1/7/23	Outing: Bow Wow Gorge (NB challenging walk) REMEMBER TO REGISTER Meet: 8.30am Shell Service Station, Freemans Drive, Freemans Waterhole	Daniel McKeon 0407 076 118
12/7/23	½ day Outing: Strickland State Forest Meet: 8.30am Top parking area, enter off Dog Trap Road Central Coast UBD Map 6, Q16	Christina Port 0421 691 317
25/7/23	Next Meeting: Birds of Prey Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds Note: For all Outings bring your morning tea and lunch. A chair is a good idea.	Biggles Csolander



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.

Camps 2023

Gloucester	Fri 15 th - Sun 17 th September	Graham Nelson	0466 599 278	Gloucester Holiday Park, Denison St, Gloucester (02) 65581720
Gundagai	Fri 27 th - Sun 29 th October	Christina Port	0421 691 317	Gundagai Tourist Park 1 Nangus Rd, Gundagai (02) 6944 4440

Tonight's Speaker: Alan Morris AM is our speaker tonight. Alan is a legend of birding. He co-founded our group and is patron of Birding NSW. Alan will detail the relationship between the various cuckoo species and their hosts in Australia.

Last Month's Meeting: The 31 people who were fortunate to have attended the last meeting were treated to a fascinating and professional presentation by Mick Roderick from Birdlife Australia. Mick outlined the captive release program for Regent Honeyeaters which is vital to supplement the wild population. Regent Honeyeaters are critically endangered with an estimated less than 350 birds in the wild. The last two releases in the Tomalpin woodland were the most successful yet, with low initial mortality and the first zoo-bred birds actually fledging a youngster. The release program is extensively monitored so that lessons can be learnt to enhance future releases.

Next Meeting: Biggles Csolander is a specialist raptor photographer. He will take us through his extensive collection of excellent photos and provide some ID tips on this notoriously difficult group of birds to identify.

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 has now reached 970 members and keeps growing steadily each month - great job Malcolm Hill! The Facebook page is a huge success allowing bird-related issues to reach over 700 people on the Central Coast.

Saving Stamps: Please keep saving used stamps (on paper, trimmed) to pass to Wendy Mitchell for donation to charity.

Total Fire Ban Days and Outings: Outings may be cancelled on days of total fire bans. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the planned birding site being accessible and the potential risk. This decision will be made by the leader. If the outing is cancelled it will be published on Central Coast Birders Facebook. If in doubt contact the outing leader.

CAMPOUT PROCEDURES for Central Coast Group, Birding NSW

- Campouts will be limited to 20 birders.
- The leader is to be contacted prior to booking accommodation.
- Car-pooling may be necessary to enable all cars to park at some locations, otherwise the group will be unable to stop at these good birding areas.
- When there are several cars, please wait when turning off the main route for the following car to catch up.
- It is a custom at campouts to have a "Bird Call" in the BBQ area of the Caravan Park after the day's birding, to check all the birds seen during the day by everyone at the camp. People usually bring a drink and nibbles and socialise. Everyone is encouraged to attend the bird call to make sure no birds seen are omitted from the list for the camp.
- Generally, at campouts the group attends a local club or restaurant for dinner one night and usually has a BBQ meal together another night after bird call. Bird camps are a good time to socialise and get to know one another better.
- Please follow the leader's instructions. They are volunteers and have put a lot of time into organising the camp.
- It is best if everyone can keep up with the leader and stay together, where possible, so that all manage to see the birds and the leader is not constantly waiting for people to catch up.

WHAT WAS NEW in May/June and WHAT CAN WE EXPECT in July?

In general birding is very quiet as expected for this time of year. However there have been some very interesting sightings in May. Firstly, there has been an influx of Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters to the coastal regions. There have been two records on the Central Coast. The first was in Munmorah State Recreation Area and the second at The Dairy. These are the 9th and 10th records respectively. Two Kelp Gulls reported from Norah Head are only the 6th record.

12 Wandering Whistling Ducks at McPherson Road were a good record. The last survey at the Sewage Works found three Freckled Duck, Pink-eared Duck and good numbers of Shoveler as well as the regular Musk Duck which has now grown to two birds. The report of Red-browed Tree-creeper at Jilliby SCA is the first report for about five years.



Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
David Schuemaker



Pink-eared Duck
David Schuemaker

The Swamp Mahogany and the Bloodwoods are both flowering well and we would hope there will be more sightings of Swift Parrots to add to the two seen at Rocky Ponds Trail. Please check out previous hot spots including Bateau Bay and Joshua Porter Reserve at Chain Valley Bay.

There are reports of Restless Flycatcher, Scarlet Robin and Regent Honeyeater in relatively close nearby locations, so hopefully they may visit the Central Coast.

OUTING REPORTS

Half-day Outing: May 10

DUBBO GULLY & MANGROVE MOUNTAIN

Leaders: Margaret & Kaye Pointer

Sixteen members met at Mangrove Mountain Hall, corner of Wisemans Ferry and Waratah Rd. It was a cool start, but developed into a mild autumn day. In Waratah Rd, we recorded 20 common species. Fortunately, the track to Mangrove Creek was in fair condition. We made our first stop at Mangrove Creek Bridge. A male King Parrot gave a flash of colour but the wattles were too small, or aged to give sufficient colour to the scene. Sand deposits from floods made walking difficult but we appreciated Central Coast Council's mowing of part of the track upstream. Yellow-faced Honeyeaters on their autumn migration north, foraged in the old wattles. A beautiful male Golden Whistler, Eastern Rosella, and Rose Robin were admired. Kaye heard, and eventually located, 14 Varied Sittella.



Varied Sittella
Leonie Loewe

During morning tea back at the bridge, we had a low fly past by an immature White-bellied Sea Eagle, before we moved on past the old Cemetery and waterhole to the locked gate, disturbing a Lyrebird from his scratching. We parked and walked up to "Fairview" Homestead. Most of us saw Bassian Thrush, Purple Swampphen, 4 Pacific Black Duck, many Bell Miner and 2 Crimson Rosella which were high in the tall Eucalypts. On our return walk to the vehicles 2 Wedge-tailed Eagle were sighted. Lunch was enjoyed in the sunshine near the waterhole which was very quiet except for the friendly chatter of birders.



Dubbo Gully Birders
Leonie Loewe

Time was up, we had a break at Waratah Road to see a Green Catbird, Variegated Fairywren, Willie Wagtail, and Striated Thornbill up close and an Australasian Grebe on a farm dam. Thank you to appreciative members for your company. We had a total of 57 birds for the half day.

NB John and Carole Carpenter joined us to spend part of their wedding anniversary. (65yrs)

Outing: May 27

MYUNA BAY

Leader: Graham Nelson

Another great day for an Autumn outing. The air was crisp but not too chilly and the sun shone constantly giving us a pleasant day. The excitement was high to show some newcomers new birds and the old birders some not so common birds. 60 Black Swans were there to greet us only a few metres from the shore. A number of Swamp Mahoganies and gums were flowering so we heard lots of Lorikeets throughout the day, mostly Rainbows but see did see a number of Scaly-breasted as well.

The two Osprey were on their nest. The resident Striated Heron put itself on display up a tree. As we got to the bridge, we noticed something in the tree. My first thought it was a Nankeen Night Heron because of the colour but Frik verbalized looking at it, it appeared to be a piece of bark. Frik saw it move and I moved to a better position to then see its head and legs. It was indeed a Nankeen Night Heron and another was a little higher up. There have been so few seen on the coast for a number of years. They were lifers for a few and made a great start to the day. Of course, you expect Brahminy Kites at the Eraring outlet and they did not disappoint - sitting together in the top of a tree on the other side with one eating a fish. As we sat for morning tea that feeling of 'I just want to stay here all day' crept over us.

Due to the traffic, I lost two cars but after a phone call and a few minutes we were all reunited. The walk along Woody Point trail was cool but not a lot of birds. The few gums that were flowering brought Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and a Brown-headed Honeyeater. They moved so fast it was hard to tell if there was any other type



Nankeen Night Heron
James Humphries

around. Two wallabies watched us go by and there were a few common woodland birds but nothing to speak of.

Lunch at Pendlebury Park was accompanied by the screeches of Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets flying to and fro. We also had the company of some Blue-faced Honeyeaters which finished off the day nicely.

With a small group of 9, 53 species and a few lifers for some, it was a good day out for all.

Half-day Outing: June 14

BRISBANE WATER FORSHORE

Leader: Graham Nelson

As much as we enjoy the regular spots for outings, we try to keep it interesting by going, at different times of the year, to old places we haven't been for a while and occasionally find new places. This was one of those times. We tried a new outing from East Gosford around to Point Clare along the mangroves. It is tricky trying to get the timing right (next year will be a little different) but the hardest thing is to get everyone to the next point, down major roads, without losing someone. We didn't lose anyone. Yay!

Starting out at Gosford Regional Gallery, East Gosford, we were met by 4 Australian Brush-turkeys. They seem to be in numbers everywhere I go at the moment. The Scaly-breasted Lorikeets also seem to be everywhere as well. We enjoyed a nice stroll around the gallery and down the boardwalk. It was missing a few of its regular species but still supplied a number of common birds. It is one of those places where if you walk fast, you miss everything or by the time you walk back the birds show up.



Point Frederick, although a nice park (the only place on the outing with a short steep concrete gradient) doesn't offer that many birds. The best time to go is when it is in flower or at low tide when you may get a few more shore birds. It is known for getting the odd raptor (Goshawk, Sparrowhawk, Sea Eagle or Osprey).

Adcock Park and Carawah Reserve are well known birding spots. Not that we saw them this time but you may find Mangrove Gerygone there. A variety of shore birds are often seen including the Royal Spoonbills, Great Egret and Dusky Moorhens that we did see. You normally see scrub and woodland birds including the Red-whiskered Bulbul.

We then drove to Fagan Park at Point Clare. Fagan Park was a great place to have morning tea although the wind was a little cool. We walked from Fagan Park to Coorumbine Creek where I was hoping to find the Mangrove Gerygone that I have seen in the past. Unfortunately, they wouldn't come out and play. An Osprey did and gave us great views as it soared overhead for a while. A number of birds were seen along the way but the highlight was a few trees with numerous Brown Honeyeaters in them. They were accompanied by Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Yellow Thornbills. A total species count of 59 is not a bad day. Five people had to cancel but the other thirteen enjoyed the birds, the sun and each other's company. I'm looking forward to tweaking the outing and doing it again next year.

SPECIES LIST

MAY 2023

Bird names used and the order in which they occur are in accord with the IOC World Birdlist Version 11.1.2021

First Migrant arrival *	Last Migrant departure **	LN = biggest number since January	OW = Over-winter	
Wandering Whistling Duck	12	19-20/5/23	McPhersons Rd Swamp Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Musk Duck	M,2F	10-11/5/23	Colongra Swamp NR,	David Russell
Musk Duck	2	24-27/5/23	Tuggerah STW	Kerr Brad
Freckled Duck	3	24-26/5/23	Tuggerah STW	Kaye Pointer
Australasian Shoveler	21	26-27/5/23	Tuggerah STW	Kerr Brad
Pink-eared Duck	1	2-27/5/23	2 on 24/5, 7 on 27/5, Tuggerah STW	John Carpenter
Brown Quail	2	24/5/2023	Wybung Head, Munmorah SCA	Leeanne Lemke
Hoary-headed Grebe	3	2/5/2023	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Meryl Newton
Hoary-headed Grebe	17	2-26/5/23	Tuggerah STW	Carole Carpenter
Brush Bronzewing	1	15/5/2023	Magenta Shores	Meryl Newton
Brush Bronzewing	2	26-28/5/23	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Waters NP	Nick Carson
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	1/5/2023	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Kaye Pointer
Topknot Pigeon	160	1/5/2023	Lisarow	Andrew Robinson
Topknot Pigeon	300	11-14/5/23	Ourimbah Creek Rd, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw

Topknot Pigeon	40	13/5/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	12	28/5/2023	Ourimbah Creek RTA Reserve	David Schuemaker
Brush Cuckoo	1	8/5/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Owlet-Nightjar	1	5/5/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Buff-banded Rail	1	27/5/2023	McPherson Rd, Tuggerah	Graham Nelson
Buff-banded Rail	1,1	30/4/2023	nr Bunya Pines & Pioneer Ck Bridge, Dairy	Carole Carpenter
Bush Stone-curlew	1	20/5/2023	Davistown Boardwalk	Jenny Stiles
Comb-crested Jacana	1	13/5/2023	McPherson Swamp, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Sooty Oystercatcher	24	9/5/2023	Karagi Point, The Entrance	Andrew Robinson
Black-fronted Dotterel	6	14/5/2023	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Andrew Robinson
Sanderling	7	10/5/2023	Soldiers Point Reef, Norah Head	James Bennett
Kelp Gull	2 Im	9/5/2023	Norah Head Reefs	Luke Ullrich
Little Black Cormorant	120	27/5/2023	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Graham Nelson
White-faced Storm-Petrel	2	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	20	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Black-browed Albatross	12	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Buller's Albatross	12	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Campbell's Albatross	10	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Indian Yellow-nosed Alb.	1	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Shy (white-capped) Alb.	13	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Providence Petrel	16	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Grey-faced Petrel	1	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Flesh-footed Shearwater	1	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Sooty Shearwater	1	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Short-tailed Shearwater	1	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	J	7/5/2023	Birdie Beach, Munmorah SCA	Leonie Loewe
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	1	12/5/2023	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Black-necked Stork	AF,2J	1-14/5/23	McPhersons Swamp & Dairy Swamp	David Schuemaker
Black Bittern	J	17/5/2023	found Cutler Dr, Wyong	Jacky Hunt
Nankeen Night-Heron	2	21/5/2023	Chittaway Ck, Chittaway Shops	Graham Nelson
White-necked Heron	2	8/5/2023	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	John Carpenter
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	7/5/2023	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Osprey	2	6/5/2023	The Entrance	Andrew Robinson
Osprey	2	27/5/2023	Sunrise Ave, Budgewoi	Craig Marshall
Black-shouldered Kite	3	8-27/5/23	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Rex Schmidt
Brahminy Kite	j	1/5/2023	Lakes Beach Bike Track, Budgewoi	Leeanne Lemke
Square-tailed Kite	1	1/5/2023	Norah Head	Andrew Melville
Brown Goshawk	1	7/5/2023	Ocean Beach Rd, Ettalong	Julie Peksis
Brown Goshawk	1	17/5/2023	Rogers Park, Woy Woy	Julie Peksis
Grey Goshawk	1	16 & 22/5	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	28/4-30/5	x8 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	2/5/2023	M1 Ourimbah Exit, Ourimbah	Gary Jackson
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	15/5/2023	Ironbark Rd, Mangrove Mtn	David Schuemaker
Noisy Pitta	2	30/5/2023	Ourimbah Creek RTA Reserve	Julie Peksis
Nankeen Kestrel	1	28/5/2023	Mangrove Mountain	Andrew Robinson
Australian Hobby	1	2/5/2023	Berkeley Vale	Mairin Ireland
Australian Hobby	1	6/5/2023	Killarney Vale	Daniel McKeon
Australian Hobby	1	9/5/2023	Toukley	Frank Ullrich
Peregrine Falcon	1	12/5/2023	Kincumba Mountain Reserve	Kaye Pointer
Peregrine Falcon	1	26/5/2023	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Leeanne Lemke
Peregrine Falcon	1	26/5/2023	Woy Woy Bay	Andrew Robinson
Glossy Black Cockatoo	5	7/5/2023	Ourimbah Creek Rd, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Glossy Black Cockatoo	6	10-13/5/23	Kincumba Mountain Reserve	Larry Melican
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	14/5/2023	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Little/Long-billed Corella	580	26/5/2023	mixed flock, Central Coast Wetlands	Leeanne Lemke
Gang Gang Cockatoo	2	3/5/2023	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Kaye Pointer
Gang Gang Cockatoo	10	1-29/5/23	Upper Palmdale	Rick Gatenby
Musk Lorikeet	300	6/5/2023	Noraville	Andrew Robinson
Musk Lorikeet	20+	6/5/2023	Tuggerawong	Robert Olive
Little Lorikeet	26	7/5/2023	Wallarah	Andrew Robinson
Little Lorikeet	30+	11/5/2023	Noraville	David Russell
Little Lorikeet	10	22/5/2023	Tuggerawong PS	Graham Nelson
Crimson Rosella	1	14/5/2023	Wyoming	Barbara Melville
Red-rumped Parrot	14	17/5/2023	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Swift Parrot	2	22/5/2023	Rocky Ponds Trail, Brisbane Water NP	Nick Carson
Red-browed Treecreeper	5	27/5/2023	Jilliby SCA, Ourimbah	Andrew Robinson

Species	Count	Date	Location	Observer
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater 1		15-31/5/23	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Kim Farley
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater 1		11/5/2023	Freemans Camp, Munmorah SCA	Nathan Russell
Brown Honeyeater	1	1/5/2023	Norah Head	Andrew Melville
Brown-headed Honeyeater	2	7/5/2023	Wallaharah	Andrew Robinson
Fuscous Honeyeater	7	6-28/5/23	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Allan Benson
Fuscous Honeyeater	3	7/5/2023	Wallaharah	Andrew Robinson
Blue-faced Honeyeater	3	6/5/2023	Killarney Vale	Daniel McKeon
Striated Pardalote	2	7/5/2023	Wallaharah	Andrew Robinson
Striated Pardalote	1	24/5/2023	Bateau Bay	Andrew Robinson
Large-billed Scrub-wren	2	6/5/2023	Upper Palmdale	John Carpenter
Rockwarbler	3	7/5/2023	Pearl Beach	Andrew Robinson
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	5	10-28/5	x2 sites, Mangrove Mtn private properties	David Schuemaker
Varied Sittella	6	10/5/2023	Dubbo Gully Reserve	Kaye Pointer
Varied Sittella	5	10/5/2023	Mangrove Mtn private property	David Schuemaker
Varied Sittella	4	20/5/2023	Cockle Bay NR, Empire Bay	Nick Carson
Varied Triller	1	14/5/2023	Ourimbah Creek RTA Reserve	David Schuemaker
Crested Shrike-tit	3	27/5/2023	Jilliby SCA	Andrew Robinson
Crested Shrike-tit	2	27/5/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Dusky Woodswallow	9	26/5/2023	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Nick Carson
Jacky Winter	2	25/5/2023	Stinsons Lane, Wyong Creek	Meryl Newton
Jacky Winter	3	28/5/2023	Mangrove Mountain	Andrew Robinson
Jacky Winter	1	29/5/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Rose Robin	3	10/5/2023	Dubbo Gully Reserve	Kaye Pointer
Rose Robin	AM	13/5/2023	Noraville Heaths	Tricia Sweet
Rose Robin	AF	27-28/5/23	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Christine Reid
European Starling	40	8/5/2023	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	John Carpenter
Bassian Thrush	1	6 & 27/5	Upper Palmdale	Diana Shang
Bassian Thrush	2	11/5/2023	Somersby Falls Reserve	Paul Hyland
Bassian Thrush	1	14/5/2023	Ourimbah Creek RTA Reserve	David Schuemaker

Breeding and some other records - May

Black Swan: 2A+1 cygnet McPherson Swamp 13/5 (NLo); Topknot Pigeon: 20 Murrumbung HSD Mardi 18/5 (JCa); **Top-knot Pigeon:** 16 Central Coast Wetlands 8/5 (CCa); **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo:** A+1DY Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 17 & 27/5 (KPo); **Glossy Black Cockatoo:** 2 Tathra Taila HSD M. Mtn 9/5 (KPo), 2 Richard Woodbury Res, Mangrove Ck 21/5 (WCo); **Gang Gang Cockatoo:** A+J Palmdale 2/5 (GJa); **Australian Hobby:** 1 Dairy Swp CCW Tuggerah (DSc); **Varied Sittella:** 5 Tathra Taila HSD Na. Mtn 18 & 29/5 (KPo); **Bassian Thrush:** 1 Mount White garden 29/5 (SWa).

Good Birding!

CENTRAL COAST TWITCH - JUNE, 2023

Andrew Robinson	237	Kaye Pointer	171	Doug Hocking	144
Graham Nelson	223	Daniel McKeon	167	Diana Hogan	142
Allan Benson	197	Noel Lonergan	161	Gabrielle Rees	133
Dean Purcell	193	Krystyna Lonergan	161	Judy Clark	127
Carole Carpenter	188	Julie Peksis	161	Frik Gautschi	127
Christina Port	180	Margaret Pointer	155	Andrew Melville	122
John Carpenter	179	Chris Jamieson	151	Robyn Price	117
David Schuemaker	172	Rowena Wallace	145	Paul Shelley	115
				Michael Scobie	107

Andrew Robinson has shot to a substantial lead in June. 237 is a very impressive number at this stage of the year. However, there is a long way to go and the Law of Diminishing Returns will start to kick for Andrew, giving the field a chance to catch up.

BIRDATA SURVEYS 2023

NB: There is a glitch in Birdata. Not all surveys are showing so numbers are under-reported. Hopefully, this will self-correct over time. Although surveys were showing last month, earlier surveys are still missing. For those people with * against their name, their totals are under reported.

Allan Benson	116	Frik Gautschi	39	Robyn Price*	16	C Clutterbuck*	11
Graham Nelson	100	Rebecca Citroni*	27	Doug Hocking	13	Anna Pillich	8
Nick Carson*	80	Guy Dutson	25	David Schuemaker	13	M & K Pointer*	6
Alan Stuart	77	Daniel McKeon	17	Leanne Lemke	12	Michael Scobie*	4
						Vicki Stokes*	2

For May, 197 surveys were recorded. YTD 656 surveys have been completed compared to 817 in 2022. Allan Benson continues to lead the count with Graham Nelson a close second. Nick Carson has made a big move boosted by Swift Parrot surveys. We would like to see more birders putting in more surveys. Birddata is one way, as a birder, you can make a contribution to bird conservation.

SWIFT PARROT SURVEYS

Despite the Swamp Mahogany flowering at least moderately well, only two Swift Parrots were recoded in the survey period. Nick Carson found them on Rocky Ponds Trail in Brisbane Water National Park.

93 surveys were completed from 51 sites. There are 142 sites on the Central Coast so we managed to survey about 30%. We completed 74 surveys in 2022.

SOUTH WYONG SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS

May Survey

The 10 observers who turned up for the survey were rewarded with some great birds. Not only were Shoveler and Pink-eared Duck found but Kaye Pointer found three Freckled Duck which is the first record in 2023. At least two Musk Ducks were also reported. The majority of the waterfowl were Chestnut Teal with good numbers of Eurasian Coot and Australasian Grebe with some Hoary-headed as well. It was a good day for raptors with a Grey Goshawk, Whistling Kite, two parent & two juvenile White-bellied Sea-eagles and a Swamp Harrier or two. 51 species for the survey was a great haul and is a record number for the treatment work surveys. Water levels in the ponds are lower than last month and they look in good condition.

The survey takes place the Wednesday after our meeting. Meet at the Ibis Rd entrance at 9.30 am. All welcome.

VALE: Frank Ullrich 28th December 1948 - 7th June 2023

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the sudden passing of Frank Ullrich. Frank was a passionate bird photographer, an interest he shared with his son Luke. Frank and Luke spent many, many hours together chasing the perfect shot. Many of us will have run into Frank at the popular birding spots over the years. He was a regular contributor to our Facebook page.

Frank was born in Germany and came to the Central Coast at age 13 where he developed an interest in the great Australian outdoors in general but with the water in particular. Frank was a keen sailor, surfer and kayaker. He also loved riding dirt bikes, mountain bikes and in his latter years, lawn bowls.



Frank was a member of Canton Beach Bowling Club where a pair of Osprey are nesting nearby. The Club members have now named the pair Frank (both birds, because they are not sure which is the male) in honour of Frank.

Our sincere condolences to Luke and his family

TRIP REPORT

Terrigal Pelagic, May 12

Andrew Robinson

With sunny skies, light NW winds and a moderate (1.5m) SSE swell forecast, 10 of us (along with Skipper Paul Minto) departed Terrigal Haven at 6:30am and were soon making our way for the feature known as 'The Kink' some 24 nautical miles out on the shelf slope. Following a week of strong southerly winds and huge seas, hopes were high, and we were soon amongst the birds with a few rafts of Australasian Gannet and several Black-browed type

and Shy Albatross seen close to shore. Soon after we saw our only Short-tailed Shearwater for the day, closely followed by a loafing Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross which allowed a close approach and photo opportunities. We were soon on our way again with regular, albeit mostly distant Albatross sightings, including a Buller's. Arriving at the shelf at 9am, Dean Purcell soon had a considerable slick in place and we were almost immediately rewarded with nice views of White-faced and Wilson's Storm Petrel, with the latter's numbers continuing to build.

Albatross in the form of Black-browed, Campbell, Buller's and Shy (assumed White-capped), along with Providence Petrel soon began to make regular appearances, providing those on board with excellent views, even if they were reluctant to alight. This was to be the pattern for the remainder the day, with ever present Wilson's Storm Petrel and half a dozen foraging Crested Tern (including one individual that caught a funky denizen of the deep before struggling for 15 minutes to inhale it) keeping us entertained during some short lulls. Other than a White-faced Heron flyby, it became clear we'd maxed-out in terms of species diversity and the call was made at 12:30pm to head for land in what was an uneventful but pleasant trip back with only a single Wedge-tailed Shearwater being added to the trip list. Closer to shore we had several more rafts of 30 odd Australasian Gannet, along with some distant Humpback Whales.



In total 14 species were seen beyond The Haven with 10 of those being Tubenoses (5 Albatross species). All in all, a solid Autumn Day at sea with great company and very enjoyable conditions. As always, a massive thanks to Skipper Minto, co-organiser Dean Purcell and all who participated. The next Terrigal Pelagic is scheduled for Friday 23rd June 2023 – if interested please feel free to flick me a message or email at andyfredrobbo@outlook.com

Trip list as follows:

White-faced Storm Petrel – 2 (1), Wilson's Storm Petrel – 50+ (20+), Black-browed Albatross – 9 (2), Campbell Albatross – 10 (2), Black-browed type Albatross – 12, Shy Albatross – 13 (2), Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross – 1, Buller's Albatross – 12 (2), Providence Petrel – 16 (2), Wedge-tailed Shearwater – 1, Short-tailed Shearwater – 1, Crested Tern – 16 (6), Silver Gull – 3, Australasian Gannet – 275 (70), White-faced Heron – 1.

*Parenthesis denotes the maximum of that species seen at any one time.

FLYWAYS

Michael Scobie

The documentary film, Flyways, was recently screened at Avoca Cinema. It is a beautifully crafted tale about migratory shorebirds, concentrating on the Eastern Curlew, Hudsonian Godwit and the Red Knot. They face increasing threats to their survival from ever-expanding human development and are in serious decline.

The film follows three teams of scientists, one led by Dr Richard Fuller from The Fuller Lab in Queensland, another by Nathan Senner and Jennifer Linscott from The Senner Lab in the USA and Chile, and Dr Van Gils from The Netherlands. With help from amateur bird enthusiasts across the world they use modern technology to trace their journeys to unravel navigation mysteries and marvel that some can fly non-stop for nine days or more without stopping to refuel. Footage comes from many locations including Australia, Africa, China, Chile, Alaska and Siberia. The film is narrated by Australian actress Mia Wasikowska, with an ethereal music score by award-winning Polish-born Australian composer Cezary Skubiszewski (try pronouncing that one!)



Needless to say, climate-change and man-made obstacles such as the shore reclamation swallowing up their mid-flight feeding grounds present significant challenges to the survival of these birds. There are hundreds of dredges hard at work in the South China Sea dumping onto the adjacent mud flats where the birds used to feed up to re-charge their batteries.

It's a visually stunning and insightful film, well worth watching, and luckily for you will be screened on the ABC soon or you can catch it on iView.

PROJECT UPDATE: TRACKING ENDANGERED AUSTRALIAN PAINTED-SNIPE

Matt Herring

As some of you are already aware, and despite our best efforts, we were unable to catch and tag any birds before they chased the warmer weather and vanished. There were about a dozen sites reported nationally, mostly in NSW, since our crowdfunding ended just before Christmas. But only one site showed real promise for catching. It was near Mungindi in the Gwydir region and consistently had birds for over a month. Local bird guru, Pat Johnston, recorded 32 individuals at one stage, making it the best site, in terms of abundance, recorded anywhere for years.

We were ready to pounce and then it dried out. It was terribly disappointing. Most of the other sites involved just one or two birds moving through and we remain deeply concerned for this species. Still, we are raring to go and once spring arrives the birds will begin returning. We will rely heavily on sightings so as it warms up please get out there amongst the mud and rushes and try to find some of these wetland enigmas for us.

In the meantime, we are building a dedicated website that will launch when the birds return. It will be a one-stop shop for all things Australian Painted-snipe and it's where you can follow our tracked birds, such as Gloria and Clive. You can already find us on Facebook and Twitter at "Tracking Australian Painted-snipe".

And some good news, we were successful in our bid to be the recipients of this year's NSW/ACT Twitchathon fundraising. The project, "Engaging the custodians of Australian Painted-snipe", will enable us to visit the wetlands that our tracked birds use and meet with the owners to highlight their special visitors. We will engage wetland managers across NSW, such as farmers, traditional owners, local government officials and park rangers, by meeting them on the ground as our birds move, then develop concise, site-specific conservation plans for them to manage their wetlands for APS. There is also the advantage of assessing the habitat (e.g. water depths, vegetation cover, grazing regime) while birds are present, seeing if additional birds are there, are they breeding, and so on.

For those of you that chose rewards as part of your donation, you can look forward to them arriving over the next few weeks. We have some lovely cards from wildlife artist, Judy Kirk, and a stunning image from renowned Australian wildlife photographer, David Stowe.



WESTERN GRASSWRENS RELOCATED TO DIRK HARTOG ISLAND

Coco McGrath

When Dutch explorer Dirk Hartog first arrived at a large island off the coast of what is now West Australia in 1616, he encountered a pristine landscape known as *Wirruwana* by the Malgana traditional custodians. Bandicoots, Dibblers and desert mice scurried through shrubland, while pairs of brown grasswrens called to each other in high-pitch squeaks and twinkles.

Since Dirk Hartog's arrival the island, which was subsequently named after him, has suffered greatly from European invasion. The sheep and goats that were introduced to the area saw vast swathes of vegetation across the 633km² island destroyed. Feral cats contributed to the extinction of 10 out of the 13 mammal species that called the island home.

Dirk Hartog Island went from one of the most untouched ecosystems in the country, to a landscape marred by habitat destruction and species extinction.

The Return to 1616 ecological restoration project run by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and funded by the Gorgon-Barrow Island net Conservation Benefits Fund aims to return the vegetation, habitats and species of Dirk Hartog Island to the condition it was found in in 1616.

The project has already seen the translocation of

- the Banded Hare-wallaby,
- the Rufous Hare-wallaby,
- the Shark Bay Bandicoot,

- the Greater Stick-nest rat,
- the Shark Bay mouse and
- the Dibbler.

85 Western Grasswrens were successfully translocated to the island from and Francois Peron National Park and Bush Heritage's Hamelin Station Reserve on Malgana and Nanda Country, bordering the Shark Bay World Heritage Area.

The translocation was informed by researcher Aline Gibson Vega's PhD project and is part of a collaboration between DBCA, Bush Heritage Australia and the University of Western Australia.

As an undergrad searching for an exciting PhD project, Aline was immediately drawn to the Return to 1616 project and eager to get involved. "I went to the Australian Mammological Society Conference and heard Keith Morris [principal research scientist at the WA Department of Parks and Wildlife] talk about Dirk Hartog Island. I just thought, this is amazing. It's at the forefront for translocation. I was so keen to get involved in some way, shape or form." After approaching the research team, Aline was introduced to the Western Grasswren, the only bird species to be translocated as part of the project. "Through this PhD project, my love for the birds has grown a lot. They're great and strangely mouse-like. They love being on the ground to forage on the base of shrubs and sometimes they'll literally just scuttle into the shrub like a mouse." After studying the birds extensively, Aline determined from their genetics and behaviour that the best translocation approach would be to mix birds from the subpopulations at Hamelin Station and Francois Peron National Park.



Conservationists from Bush Heritage and DBCA captured family groups of grasswrens in specifically designed mist-nets and transported them to Dirk Hartog Island in a helicopter. When the birds were released on to the island, the first brave bird would venture out before calling to the others to follow. "They form these little trains so the male will run across first and the female will come along, and then usually a third individual as well. They're like little carriages," says Aline.

Western Grasswrens are territorial birds who assert their territory through song, calling to their neighbours and defending their patch if they hear a bird inside their territory. Though territorial disputes are uncommon, it was crucial for the research team to release the birds in areas with sufficient space for the family groups to establish a new territory, as well as areas with suitable habitat so that later generations could thrive.

"I've seen some territory disputes before and it's really quite fierce," says Aline. "I've even seen one pin another to the ground and really tell it off before just running away as if nothing had happened!"

A subset of the 85 birds were fitted with small transmitters that will record their movements for the first month post-translocation. The research team will then install compact audio recorders to monitor the grasswrens calls remotely, minimising on-ground disturbance as they settle into their new home.

According to Dr Michelle Hall, Bush Heritage ecologist and one of Aline's PhD supervisors, "It was very exciting to see the first grasswrens taking off to their new island home after all the research, planning, and hard work leading up to the moment. It will hopefully expand the extent of the Western Grasswren in Western Australia."

The success of the Return to 1616 project will be measured by the response of the native wildlife species and vegetation recovery, but it is hoped that the translocated species will become self-sufficient and that the island will provide a safe haven for them to thrive.

"Island populations are becoming much more valuable in conservation because we don't need to contend with feral animal predation," says Aline. "Dirk Hartog Island, as West Australia's largest island, is an awesome bit of land that we can put animals on that will eventually be the largest population of that species. It's just great to see that we're going to have this little insurance population essentially."