



The Twitcher

September
2023

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

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

Volume 18, No. 9

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
26/9/23	Next Meeting: Bird Photography - Tips and Tricks Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds	David Stowe
30/9/23	Outing: Pearl Beach, Warrah Trig, Patonga REMEMBER TO REGISTER Meet: 8.30am Pearl Beach Arboretum, Crystal Ave, Pearl Beach	Daniel McKeon 0407 076 118
11/10/23	½ day Outing: Dooralong, Jilliby, Lemon Tree REMEMBER TO REGISTER Meet: 8.30am Cnr Hue Hue and Dooralong Roads, Jilliby	Carole & John Carpenter 0490 045 361
24/10/23	Next Meeting: Madagascar 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.	Dick Jenkin



Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be available at the end of the meeting.
To cover hall hire and refreshments a donation of \$4 would be appreciated.

Camps 2023

Gundagai	Fri 27 th - Sun 29 th October	Christina Port	0421 691 317	Gundagai Tourist Park 1 Nangus Rd, Gundagai (02) 6944 4440
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Tonight's Speaker, David Stowe: Everyone calls me Dave. I'm a husband, father, bird nerd, and professional photographer based in Sydney, Australia. Whilst photographing people through Society Photography is my main profession, I have a real passion for wildlife and the environment, with a special focus on birds. Whilst I've been a full-time photographer since the mid 1990's, it wasn't until the early 2000's that I really got into bird photography. And I haven't looked back! It has been a real blessing to have travelled all over Australia and beyond, capturing images of wildlife. There are so many amazing places to visit and I always look forward to the next adventure, whether that be with my family, my friends, or leading a tour. I've been a passionate member of the Australian Institute of Professional Photography and have won the AIPP NSW Nature Photographer of the Year 3 times. I've also had the immense honour and pleasure of being part of the judging panel at the state and national AIPP awards, as well as the BirdLife Australia Photography Awards. A highlight of my photographic career was definitely being crowned the overall ANZANG Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year in 2015. It's a competition that I have entered for many years and it's always a thrill to have images in the shortlist. In more recent years I've become focused on education and teaching others about photography and how to get better images of birds and wildlife. Along with my great mate Henry Cook, in 2017 we started Flock Wildlife Tours to further that vision.

Last Month's Meeting: A good crowd of 30 people turned up to hear Biggles Csolander give a very comprehensive and informative presentation on raptors. His brilliant photos illustrated the differences between the various species as well as stages of development of the birds. He showed a photo of every Australian raptor except the Red Goshawk. His tips will be of great value to everybody.

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 over 1000 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 800 people on the Central Coast.

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

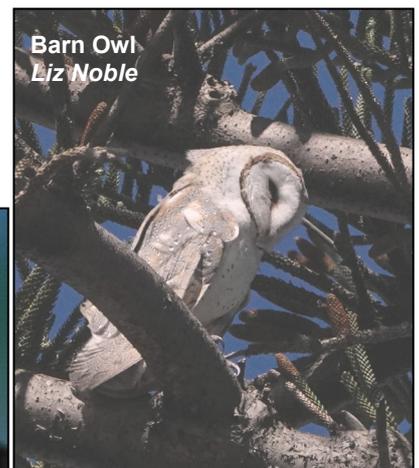
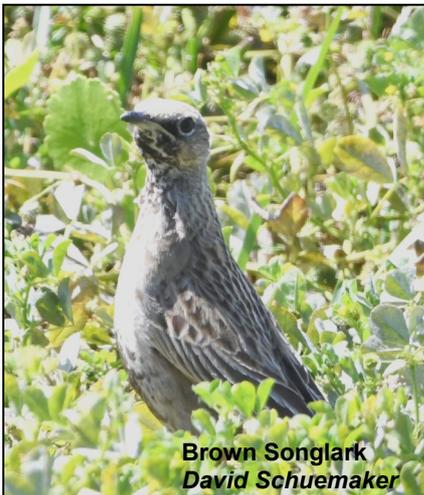
Total Fire Ban Days and Outings: Outings may be cancelled on days of total fire bans. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the planned birding site being accessible and the potential risk. This decision will be made by the leader. If the outing is cancelled it will be published 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 August/September and WHAT CAN WE EXPECT in October?

There have been some exciting finds in September with the first sign that the inland is drying out and inland birds are coming to the coast. Firstly, a Barn Owl was reported by Liz Noble right on the coast at The Entrance. This was followed up by Andy Robinson finding both a Brown and Rufous Songlark just north of The Entrance Surf Club house. Another Rufous Songlark was recorded by Allan Benson at Greengrove. This is the 6th Record for a Brown Songlark on the Central Coast. Both Brown Songlark and Rufous Songlark were both last recorded in 2019.



Most of the spring migrants have returned including Fairy Martin, Latham's Snipe, White-breasted Woodswallow, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpiper, Red Knot, Golden Plover, Koel, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Olive-backed Oriole, Black-faced Monarch, Rainbow Bee-eater, White-throated Gerygone and Sacred Kingfisher. It is expected that Rufous Whistlers are here but haven't been reported yet. Glossy Black Cockatoo have been reported from multiple sites which is excellent news.

The balance of the spring migrants will return in October. We can expect reports of Rufous Fantail, Leaden Flycatcher, Cicadabird, Brush Cuckoo and White-throated Needletails.

Hopefully more inland species will come to the coast. Be on the lookout for Red-capped Robin, White-winged Triller, Masked and White-browed Woodswallows and possibly even Crimson and Orange Chat!! It is worth regularly checking the Migrant traps viz. The Entrance especially Picnic Point, Tuggerah Salt Marsh at Lake Road, The Dairy and Wybung Head.

OUTING REPORTS

Outing: August 26

GLENOLA FARM – BUNNING CREEK

Leaders: Margaret & Kaye Pointer

On a cool, partly cloudy, late winter morning 22 birders met near St Barnabas Church at Yarramalong. Topknot Pigeon, King Parrot, Little Wattlebird and Eastern Rosella were among the 13 birds sighted before we moved into the churchyard. There several Rose Robin were calling. Eventually a female was sighted - the only sighting all day. Eastern Yellow Robin, White-throated Treecreeper, Noisy Friarbird, Noisy Miner and White-browed Scrubwren searched for a feed but other species vocalised but remained out of sight. It was too cool for most birders to stand around looking for birds so we left the churchyard for our short drive to "Glenola Farm".

It was a good decision to take a walk back to the bridge, and along the north eastern section of the farm, before morning tea. A Buff-banded Rail was feeding along the edge of the pond we had driven past minutes earlier. Along with a number of common bush birds, we located Jacky Winter, Wedge-tailed Eagle, and Crested Shrike Tit. Birds were a little harder to see walking among the trees, planted some 25 years ago and now shading and stabilizing the creek banks. A large tortoise rested on a partly submerged log. Returning to the shelter for morning tea we paused to admire a Black-shouldered Kite hovering over the grass land providing views for the less mobile birders.

On and around the main pond, with little water, Masked Lapwing, White-faced Heron and an Australasian Grebe were wary as a Brown Goshawk flew over.

Then we tramped through some long tussocks to the North West of the wetland to watch a large flock of Red-browed Finch. When a call of Southern Emu-wren was heard the birders' chatter ceased. We were able to located a small family of these tiny birds. This was the bird of the day! A lifer for at least five of the group!

As we walked along the planted corridor between the hill and the creek, we stopped to check out some flowering Swamp Mahogany and paperbark for Scarlet Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, and Rainbow Lorikeet. Although it had warmed up, we only

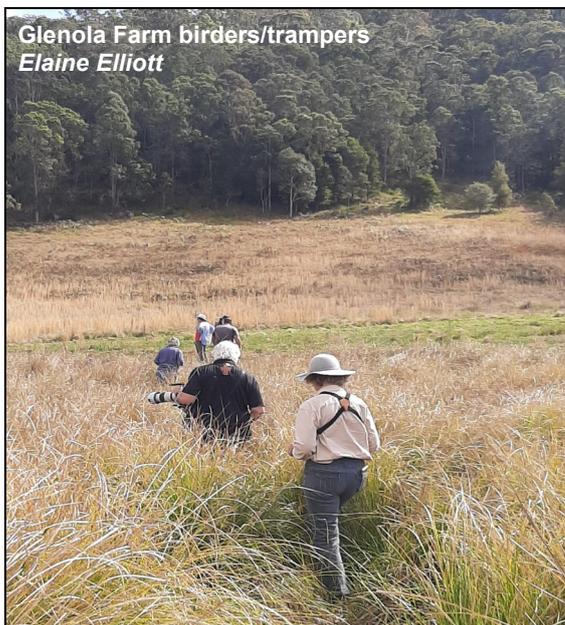
heard a few birds as we skirted along the creek.



Jacky Winter
David Schuemaker



Southern Emu-wren



Glenola Farm birders/trampers
Elaine Elliott

After lunch we proceeded to 'Jack Gear Oval', sighting Grey Teal, Dusky Moorhen and Coot on a dam along the way. The oval was deserted. Nearby on the oxbow pond were Black Duck, White-faced Heron, Brown Gerygone and Lewin's Honeyeater. The walk along the creek was also quiet with only Grey Fantail, Bell Miner, King Parrot, Satin Bowerbird, and Eastern Yellow Robin present.

We finished the outing with a total of 60 species of birds for the day. It was enjoyable to bird "Glenola Farm" again after a long break due to Covid and floods. No cattle had grazed the area, but mowed 'tracks' made walking easy and safe in most areas.

12 birders met up at Remembrance Dr, Wamberal on a beautiful, windless day.

Wamberal Lagoon saw the return of a few species not seen in recent years, notably Eurasian Coots, Dusky Moorhens and, in particular, Grey Teals. Still missing were the rafts of Coots of a few years back, but it was interesting to see all four species of Cormorant in the first few minutes. Welcome Swallows were out and about in limited numbers as usual and a stately Brush-turkey also got itself counted. The reserve adjacent to Ocean View Drive was a bit quiet – just a chirruping Brown Thornbill or two, Superb Fairy Wrens on the water's edge and a Grey Butcherbird calling in the distance. An immature White-bellied Sea-Eagle did a fly-over just before we returned to the cars. 30 species noted so far (mainly water birds), but up from the 23 of last year's subtotal.

Next stop was Terrigal Lagoon where the forest was waterlogged due to a full lake, however the path further away from the lake rewarded us with a Yellow-throated Scrubwren (not often seen here), and 2 Green Catbirds (also seen last year). Brown Gerygones were also out in large numbers, judging by the calls coming from all directions. 29 species here (up from 21 last year), then morning tea in the park opposite Terrigal Scout Hall.

The third stop was North Avoca Lagoon, accessed from Lake Shore Drive. A solitary Australasian Grebe was seen, but at least 6 have been noticed this year in various parts of Bulbararing Lagoon for the first time in many years. There was also a solitary Black Swan and White Ibis, but most of the activity was in the trees and shrubs - many Brown Gerygones, Brown Thornbills, Superb Fairy Wrens and White-browed Scrubwren. 20 species here, down from 32 last year, possibly also due to summer migrants, such as Sacred Kingfishers, Black-faced Monarchs, Dollarbirds, etc still being awaited. However, Olive-backed Orioles were heard in this and previous locations.

We then headed to Avoca Beach, settling down for lunch under the large Ficuses at Heazlett Park on the edge of Bulbararing Lagoon. A Nankeen Night-heron (only one) was soon spotted in the high canopy for the first time in at least 3 years and created a nice photo opportunity. There were a few Little Corellas foraging on the playing field to add to a Figbird (calling), Rainbow Lorikeets and a few of the usual water birds.

10 species over lunch, down from 12 last year.

Last stop was Captain Cook Lookout at Copacabana in the hope of finding a Peregrine Falcon, previously seen in 2021. After 15-20 minutes our patience was duly rewarded, initially a few loops at the distant cliffs, then a leisurely pass close enough to see the hood and yellow eyes without binoculars. Sadly, only 5 birders were there to see it. A Red Wattlebird was another surprise in our list of 7 species here.



Peregrine Falcon
David Schuemaker

The total count for the day was 59 species, up from 52 last year. For those who didn't see the Peregrine Falcon, bird-of-the-day was a tie between The Nankeen Heron and the Catbirds. Contact the leader for a full list of species seen/heard.

Thank you to all the attendees for your contributions, great company, and kind comments on Facebook.

SPECIES LIST

AUGUST 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	
Musk Duck	26	27/8/2023	Colongra Lake (restricted access)	Andrew Robinson
Australasian Shoveler	2	12-18/8/23	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Mel Stratton
Australasian Shoveler	1	27/8/2023	Colongra Lake (restricted access)	Andrew Robinson
Pink-eared Duck	2	12-18/8/23	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Hoary-headed Grebe	3	18/8/2023	Tuggerah STW	Andrew Robinson
Brown Quail	3	17/8/2023	West Gosford	Darren Earnshaw

Central Coast Group - Birding NSW

Channel-billed Cuckoo *	1	31/8/2023	Springfield	Daniel McKeon
Eastern Koel	1	14/8/2023	Cresthaven Rd, Bateau Bay	Ian Kerr
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	4	10/8/2023	Karignan Ck, Chain Valley Bay	David Russell
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	18/8/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Owlet-Nightjar	1	15&22/8/23	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Tawny Frogmouth	1	2 & 8/8/23	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Tawny Frogmouth	1,2	23/8/2023	Chittaway Pt & Sunshine Res	Graham Nelson
Tawny Frogmouth	1	27/8/2023	Sunshine Park, Chittaway	Laurie Smith
White-headed Pigeon	30	17/8/2023	Pluim Park, Lisarow	Kaye Pointer
Brush Bronzewing	1	7/8/2023	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Ken Jansen
Topknot Pigeon	50	17/8/2023	Glenn Rd, Ourimbah	Rob Montgomery
Topknot Pigeon	10	27/8/2023	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Elizabeth Noble
Topknot Pigeon	10	27/8/2023	Ourimbah Shell Service Stn	Diana Shang
Buff-banded Rail	1	23-26/8/23	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Carole Carpenter
Buff-banded Rail	1	26/8/2023	Glenola Reserve Yarramalong	Margaret Pointer
Painted Button-quail	M,F	1/8/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Pied Stilt	160	7/8/2023	Tuggerah Bay Saltmarsh	Rick Worthy
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	12/8/2023	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Mel Stratton
Latham's Snipe *	1	10-27/8/23	2 on 15/8, Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Wood Sandpiper *	1	5-9/8/2023	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Mel Stratton
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *	2	18-20/8/23	6 on 20/8 Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *	1	18/8/2023	Tuggerah STW	Andrew Robinson
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *	6	20/8/2023	Tuggerah NR, Sth Tacoma Point	Andrew Robinson
Caspian Tern	23	19/8/2023	The Entrance Channel	Andrew Robinson
Black Bittern	1	8/8/2023	Narara Creek, Narara	Darren Earnshaw
Eastern Osprey	2+N	6-17/8/23	Mutu St/Ocean Bch Rd, Woy Woy	Laurie Smith
Eastern Osprey	N+3Y	7/8/2023	Gosford Stadium	Rob Montgomery
Eastern Osprey	1+N	27/8/2023	Doyle St, Kincumber	Laurie Smith
Pacific Baza	1	7/8/2023	Girrakool, Brisbane Water NP	Andrew Melville
Pacific Baza	2	6/8/2023	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Tricia Sweet
Pacific Baza	1	17/8/2023	Erina Heights	Darren Earnshaw
Black-shouldered Kite	2	7/8/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Black-shouldered Kite	2	20-26/8/23	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Maki Okamoto
Black-shouldered Kite	2	26/8/2023	Glenola Reserve, Yarramalong	Margaret Pointer
Brahminy Kite	1	1-30/8/23	x4 Avoca Beach	Laurie Smith
Brahminy Kite	1	9/8/2023	Snapper Point, Munmorah SCA	Gordon Arthur
Brahminy Kite	1	15/8/2023	Mourawaring Moor, Bouddi NP	Laurie Smith
Square-tailed Kite	1	15/8/2023	Mourawaring Moor, Bouddi NP	Laurie Smith
Square-tailed Kite	1	18-27/8/23	x3 Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Square-tailed Kite	1	18/8/2023	Ourimbah Creek Rd, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Square-tailed Kite	1	23/8/2023	Wamberal Lagoon	Graham Nelson
Wedge-tailed Eagle	3	8-30/8/23	x5 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	17/8/2023	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	17/8/2023	Rumbalara Res, Gosford	Gary Jackson
Brown Goshawk	1	11-28/8/23	x4 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Margaret Pointer
Brown Goshawk	1	23&28/8/23	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Brown Goshawk	1	28/8/2023	Erina Heights	Darren Earnshaw
Grey Goshawk	1	11&27/8/23	Ourimbah	Kellie Harvey
Grey Goshawk	1	12/8/2023	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	Mel Stratton
Grey Goshawk	1	26/8/2023	Kangy Angy	Andrew Robinson
Eastern Barn Owl	1	20/8/2023	Toukley Library	Alison Cliff
Eastern Barn Owl	1	27/8/2023	The Entrance	Elizabeth Noble
Southern Boobook	1	19/8/2023	Summerland Point	Rozi Potts
Southern Boobook	HC	21/8/2023	0010 hrs Tathra Taila HSD, Man. Mtn.	Kaye Pointer
Southern Boobook	1	25&27/8/23	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Azure Kingfisher	1	27/8/2023	Palmdale	David Schuemaker
Nankeen Kestrel	1	9/8/2023	Snapper Point, Munmorah SCA	Gordon Arthur
Nankeen Kestrel	2	26/8/2023	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Maki Okamoto
Nankeen Kestrel	1	26/8/2023	Yarramalong	Chris Jamieson
Australian Hobby	1	27-28/8/23	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Elizabeth Noble
Peregrine Falcon	1	15/8/2023	Mourawaring Moor, Bouddi NP	Laurie Smith
Peregrine Falcon	1	23/8/2023	Wamberal Lagoon	Graham Nelson
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	7/8/2023	Koolewong	Tricia Sweet
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	10/8/2023	Chain Valley Bay	Lynne Kuiters
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	11/8/2023	Sparks Rd, Warnervale	Leeanne Lemke
Glossy Black Cockatoo	8	25-27/8/23	Lisarow	Gary Jackson

Gang Gang Cockatoo	2	6 & 25/8/23	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Margaret Pointer
Southern Emu-wren	2	10/8/2023	Karignan Ck, Chain Valley Bay	David Russell
Southern Emu-wren	3	26/8/2023	Glenola Reserve, Yarramalong	Kaye Pointer
Fuscous Honeyeater	3	23/8/2023	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	David Schuemaker
Brown Honeyeater	1	10/8/2023	Point Clare Foreshore	Sophie Walker
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	7/8/2023	Terrigal	Peter Brady
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	7/8/2023	Mogo Camp, Yengo NP, Bucketty	Veeraj Sharma
Varied Sittella	3	5-15/8/23	x3 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Margaret Pointer
Varied Triller	AM	11-28/8/23	x3 Ourimbah Creek RTA Reserve	Neryl Richards
White-breast Woodswallow*	2	21-24/8/23	Dairy Swamp, CCW, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
White-breast Woodswallow*	1	28/8/2023	Cochrane Lagoon, McMasters Beach	eBird
Olive-backed Oriole *	1	2/8/2023	calling at Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Olive-backed Oriole **	1	26/8/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Jacky Winter	2	26/8/2023	Glenola Reserve, Yarramalong	Kaye Pointer
Rose Robin	1	6/8/2023	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Rose Robin	1	26/8/2023	Glenola Reserve, Yarramalong	Kaye Pointer
Torresian Crow	2	10/8/2023	Erina Leagues Club	Darren Earnshaw
Torresian Crow	2	16/8/2023	2 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Ross Pointer
Little Grassbird	2	1/8/2023	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Little Grassbird	3	27/8/2023	Colongra Lake (restricted access)	Andrew Robinson
Bassian Thrush	1	11/8/2023	Ourimbah Creek RTA Reserve	Kellie Harvey
Bassian Thrush	1	27/8/2023	Palmdale	David Schuemaker

Breeding and some other records - August

Masked Lapwing: 2A+4Y Springfield Pond 26/8 (PPe); **Eastern Osprey:** 1 The Entrance Bridge 6/8 (MHi), Terrigal pair active in the Haven 7/8 (DOB); **Glossy Black Cockatoo:** 3 Lisarow 25/3 (GJa); **Square-tailed Kite:** 1 Mourawaring Moor, Bouddi NP 15/8 (LSm); **Brahminy Kite:** Im Endeavour Drive, Avoca 29-30/8 (LSm); **Brown Goshawk:** CC Wetlands 20/8, 1 Halekulani 27/8 (ARo); **Grey Goshawk:** 1 Tathra Taila HSD Mangrove Mtn 20-21/8 (KPo), 1 Ourimbah; **Southern Boobook:** 1 Wyoming 24/8 (ARo); **Red-rumped Parrot:** 2+nest Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah 27/8 (ENo).

Good Birding!

CENTRAL COAST TWITCH - SEPTEMBER, 2023

Andrew Robinson	259	Krystyna Lonergan	184	Diana Hogan	157
Graham Nelson	245	Noel Lonergan	183	Gabrielle Rees	155
Dean Purcell	232	John Carpenter	181	Rowena Wallace	151
Allan Benson	220	Kaye Pointer	176	Frik Gautschi	146
Christina Port	206	Chris Jamieson	173	Judy Clark	140
David Schuemaker	206	Julie Peksis	170	Robyn Price	130
Carole Carpenter	189	Margaret Pointer	167	Andrew Melville	129
Daniel McKeon	185	Doug Hocking	158	Paul Shelley	127
				Michael Scobie	124

Andrew Robinson has maintained his substantial lead. 259 is a really impressive number at this stage of the year. It may be that Andy is heading towards a new record which is in the 270's. This will depend on which vagrants turn up in the remainder of the year.

BIRDATA SURVEYS YTD, AUGUST, 2023

Allan Benson	236	Guy Dutson	68	Daniel McKeon	19	Leanne Lemke	13
Nick Carson*	216	Frik Gautschi	52	M & K Pointer*	17	Michael Scobie*	12
Graham Nelson	162	Robyn Price*	32	Doug Hocking	17	C Clutterbuck*	12
Alan Stuart	153	Rebecca Citroni*	27	David Schuemaker	17	Anna Pillich	10

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.

For August, 180 surveys were recorded. YTD 930 surveys have been completed compared to 1088 in 2022.

Allan Benson	53	Greg Shaw	19	Robyn Price	8	Josh Collins	3
Nick Carson	51	Doug Hocking	12	Guy Dutson	7	Leanne Lemke	2

Allan Benson has regained the lead, followed by Nick Carson. 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

August 2023

122 Swift Parrot Surveys from 85 sites have been completed in the August survey period 2023 compared with 121 in 2022. There are 142 sites on the Central Coast, so we surveyed 60%. No Swift Parrots have been recorded. The total number of surveys for 2023 was 225.

Thank you everybody who participated in this program.

For all of Australia, in round 2 surveys a total of 1053 surveys were completed an increase of 36% over 2022.

Very few Swift Parrots have been reported. Some sites where Swifties were seen in NSW include Coal Point (Lake Macquarie) and Rouse Hill, Mulgoa, Elanora Heights, Wianamatta Park, and Westmead in Greater Sydney.

SOUTH WYONG SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS

August Survey

Only 2 observers turned up for the survey on a beautiful, warm sunny day. Once again there was a scarcity of waterfowl on the ponds. In total, the final count was less than 100 which is our lowest survey count for the first time in about 12 months. The Musk Ducks were not found. Total species count, however, was about standard with 44 species being recorded and the highlight being a Buff-banded Rail.

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

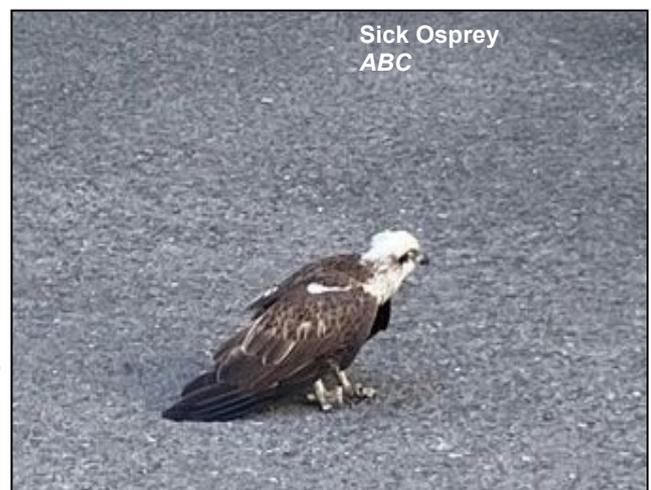
SAD NEWS ABOUT ONE OF OUR CENTRAL COAST OSPREYS

The female adult of the Eastern Osprey couple that made their home above Industree Group Stadium for the past six years has passed away due to an unknown illness. Having only recently given birth to chicks for the sixth straight year in the nest high in the south-west light tower, the Osprey female had been rescued by WIRES and transferred to Taronga Park Zoo for urgent medical care after being found in a distressed state.

Venue Manager Kath Casey has since been advised that the Osprey female did not respond to treatment and has passed away. An autopsy is being carried out to identify the cause of death.

In further disappointing news, one of the three young chicks living in the nest has also died. Raptor experts believe this is most likely a result of the weakest chick being relegated in the pecking order as the delivery of fresh fish to the nest was reduced as a result of the loss of one of the adult birds. Nature is relentless and unchangeable at times.

“We know how much love local residents have for Our Birds so this is indeed sad news for everyone,” said Ms Casey. “The Eastern Osprey pair had been with us for six straight years and produced offspring each year. The good news is that the adult male and two of the chicks appear to be doing well and Dad has taken on the nesting duties.”



Bird watchers from around the globe have taken an interest in the Eastern Osprey family that has enjoyed the best seats in the house at Industree Group Stadium on the NSW Central Coast.

The adult Osprey couple, dubbed Rosie and Hutch by locals, were frequently seen flying high above the stadium and feeding in Brisbane Water, as have their offspring as they grow and develop.

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED REGENT HONEYEATER makes 'record' flight, encouraging conservationists

By Emma Siossian

A critically endangered Regent Honeyeater, released as part of a captive breeding program, has travelled a record 350 kilometres in only three months, delighting conservationists. Birdlife Australia's Regent Honeyeater Recovery Coordinator Mick Roderick said the bird's long-distance travel highlighted that zoo-bred birds could thrive in the wild. "Never before has a Regent Honeyeater been recorded flying so far, in so short a time ... it's quite remarkable," Mr Roderick said.

The Regent Honeyeater is one of Australia's rarest birds, with fewer than 300 thought to remain in the wild. There is an ongoing breeding and release program involving Birdlife and other organisations to try to ensure the species' future. Last November, 50 Regent Honeyeaters were released in the New South Wales Lower Hunter Valley. One of the birds released, a male named "OG-Bling", was photographed in April at nearby Kurri Kurri, socialising with other zoo-bred and wild Regent Honeyeaters. The bird was named after the orange and green-coloured plastic identifying bands on his left leg, and the "bling" of hot-pink and metal bands on his right leg. Mr Roderick said in July, OG-Bling was spotted and photographed much further north at Red Rock, near Coffs Harbour, with several wild Regent Honeyeaters. He said it was "really great news", as Regent Honeyeaters needed to be able to travel large distances in search of flowering food trees. "The released birds are very naive birds, raised in captivity, so to be able to survive in the wild, they need to be able to move around, which is what their wild cousins do," Mr Roderick said. "To see that a bird is not only surviving, but actually moving significant distances and ... hanging out with wild birds, pretty much ticks all of the boxes. "OG-Bling" was photographed by avid birdwatcher and ornithologist Keith Fisher, who lives in Grafton and was holidaying in the Red Rock area.



Regent Honeyeater "you have to crane your neck to see them" - Jason McDonald - Gosford Art Gallery
Photo: Allan Benson

Mr Fisher said he noticed the "bling" on the bird's legs. "The birdwatcher side of me was just thrilled, it's amazing to see a Regent Honeyeater, it's just wonderful; it also makes you want to cry as it's such a precarious situation [for the species]," he said.

Mr Roderick said the previous distance record for a zoo-bred Regent Honeyeater was 470km, but that was achieved over a much longer time span. He said in that case, a bird released in Chiltern in Victoria in 2017 later turned up in south-west Sydney in June 2019. "This bird [OG-Bling] has blown the record out of the water," he said.

Long-distance flight motivates conservationists

The Regent Honeyeater breeding program is a partnership between the NSW government's Saving our Species program, Taronga Conservation Society Australia and Birdlife Australia. Taronga Conservation Society's Monique Van Sluys said OG-Bling's long-distance travel was very encouraging. "So much care and effort goes into breeding and caring for these birds in the zoos at Sydney and Dubbo, as well as ensuring we use conservation science to optimise their survival post release," Dr Van Sluys said. "After more than two decades working with this iconic species, to know we're making improvements and seeing record-breaking results motivates us to keep working ... to ensure this beautiful bird flourishes."

Where are Regent Honeyeaters breeding?

Mr Roderick said OG-Bling and the other Regent Honeyeaters had since left the Red Rock area, and it was assumed they'd moved into breeding areas. "Obviously if OG-Bling was able to breed that would be another box ticked," he said. Mr Roderick said the breeding season was just kicking off and people were encouraged to report any Regent Honeyeater sightings, in a bid to help the conservation team protect nest locations. He said key breeding sights were around "the periphery of the Greater Blue Mountains", including the Upper and Lower Hunter, the Capertee Valley, Western Sydney and also the Northern Tablelands.

"We have one pair found in one of their breeding locations, and that pair was found by birdwatchers," he said. "We are talking about a bird with a range basically from Melbourne to Brisbane, and there's only a handful of us who do the monitoring, so we really do rely on the public reporting sightings." Mr Roderick said conservationists were hoping for a more successful breeding season than last year, when the birds bred under the radar. "It was a very poor season for Regent Honeyeaters — we know they did breed, but it's the first breeding season ever that we didn't find successful nests, and that's a huge concern," he said.

THE DAY A NEAR EXTINCT BIRD WANDERED ONTO LAKE CARGELLIGO'S MAIN STREET

Edwina Mason

Space junk may be falling from the sky, China's sun bears might be suffering an identity crisis, but nothing compares to what recently turned up in Lake Cargelligo. The small northern Riverina town of about 1400 people was minding its own business when an unusual quail-like bird was spotted squatting on the main street by Harper Hart, grandson of local, Neil Hart. Not just any bird – but a very rare, on the brink of extinction species of bird, way too far from its regular stomping ground. His interest piqued, Neil took photos and sent them to the Lake Cargelligo Birds Facebook page administrator before relocating the bird to the far safer confines of a nearby garden. That administrator, Bec Van Dyke, said her jaw dropped when she saw the photos; the tiny bird, astonishingly, was a Plains-wanderer. "Well, it looked like a Plains-wanderer but," she said, "that would be extraordinary given its location. No way would such a rare and special bird be found on the pavement in the busiest street of town."

Bec immediately deferred to the Bush Heritage Australia website which revealed the Plains-wanderer was, "critically endangered and at risk of imminent extinction". The small ground dwelling bird resembles a quail but they have lankier yellow legs and a yellow bill. Native to southeastern Australia with small, fragmented populations in Western Victoria, eastern South Australia and the Western Riverina region of NSW, they prefer semi-arid, treeless, short native grasslands with 50 per cent bare ground on red-brown soils.



Plains-wanderer
Pedionomus torquatus

Bec said the locals immediately leapt into action. "When we realised the bird was so rare and in a risky location, with predators [dogs and cats] and cars close by, Neil was able to capture it again and put it in a safe, quiet, secure place. We then started the process of figuring out what to do with this special individual," Bec explained.

News of the find travelled fast. One of the first people to contact Bec was David Parker of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) who is involved in the Plains-wanderer conservation breeding program at Taronga Western Plains Zoo. This project is part of a National Recovery Plan which aims to establish a population in purpose-built aviaries in the zoo's sanctuaries with the goal of reintroducing them back into the wild. "The program has seen successful releases in the past onto private properties in the Western Riverine near Hay where landholders receive support to manage their ground cover for both livestock production and Plains-wanderer conservation," Bec said. "It's a project that is a massive team effort of co-ordination, care and planning." Bec said the bird, which Neil named Lettie, after his granddaughter, was immediately transported to Dubbo, checked over by vets and, after a few days in an acclimation box, is now part of that program.

The sighting came just weeks after another rare species of bird – the Australian Bustard – was also discovered in the region. Bec said it was bird number 220 in their Lake Cargelligo bird count. A large ground dwelling bird measuring up to one metre in height – Bec said it was like a mini emu. Found mostly in open country, despite its wide distribution across Australia, the Bustard is less common and mostly extinct in the southeast. "We thought there would be no chance of ever seeing a Bustard, that it was just a bird of the past but again we were proven wrong," Bec said.

"I say it often and I will say it again: you just never know what is going to turn up or where. I now officially believe in the unbelievable. Also, it is so important to take a little bit of notice and to care, our birds depend on it. Once you start to look deep into ecosystems it becomes quite magic really, and you realise that there is much more than first meets the eye in the places you are walking into," Bec said.

THE SEA ICE AROUND ANTARCTICA IS MELTING, AND WITH IT, THE HABITAT OF BABY EMPEROR PENGUINS

By Michael Slezak and Mary Lloyd

Thousands of baby Emperor Penguins drowned last year in Antarctica as sea ice broke up early and reached record lows, British researchers say, reinforcing dire predictions about the future survival of the species.

Research shows four of five colonies in an area off the Antarctic Peninsula, called the Bellingshausen Sea, suffered what researchers call a "catastrophic breeding failure". Warming seas caused the sea ice that baby penguins live on to break up early, researchers say, killing them before they had matured enough to survive in the water. Observing five colonies in the Bellingshausen Sea region, west of the Antarctic Peninsula, the researchers believe all chicks were killed within four colonies. As many as 10,000 baby penguins may have died in those colonies, the lead author on the study told the ABC, pointing the blame at human-induced climate change. "Climate change is really the elephant in the room," the British Antarctic Survey's Peter Fretwell said.

It is the first time such widespread regional breeding failure has been seen in emperor penguins and follows projections the species will be all but extinct by the end of this century. "That's the first time really, where we've seen this type of breeding failure due to sea ice loss since we've been studying penguins for the last 15 years," Dr Fretwell said. "It's sort of a sign of things to come, that we expect to happen, with the declining sea ice around the continent."

But more recent work by the same team, not yet published, suggested the fate of Emperor Penguins in 2022 was even worse than the paper published today demonstrates. Dr Fretwell said they had since looked at every known Emperor Penguin colony in Antarctica and found more than a fifth had total breeding failure — meaning no chicks were thought to have survived — with even more seeing some losses. Worse still, the researchers are waiting anxiously to see what happens to the penguins this year, since the sea ice was tracking at even lower levels, likely to drown and freeze even more baby penguins. "It's going to probably be an even worse year in 2023. So, it looks like we're having three years of breeding failure, which is unsustainable if it carries on like this" Dr Fretwell said.

In their breeding cycle, babies usually hatch about August. They then are supported by their parents until November or December when their waterproof feathers have grown, and they can fend for themselves. If the sea ice the chicks are on breaks up before they have their waterproof features, the chicks fall in the water. If they cannot get back onto some ice, they drown. But if they do get back onto ice, their fluffy feathers are sodden and freeze, killing the baby penguins. Either way, if the sea ice breaks up, the baby penguins die, Dr Fretwell said.