



The Twitcher

March
2024

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

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

Volume 19, No. 3

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
26/3/24	Next Meeting: Shorebirds in the Hunter Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds	Assoc. Professor Andrea Griffin
30/3/24	Outing: San Remo REMEMBER TO REGISTER Meet: 8.30am Corner of Richardson and Wills Road, San Remo	Meryl Newton 0435 780 380
10/4/24	½ day Outing: Outing Munmorah SRA REMEMBER TO REGISTER Meet: 8.30am Birdie Beach Drive near Elizabeth Bay Drive	Christina Port 0421 691 317
23/4/24	Next Meeting: Birding in Sri Lanka Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds	Alan Stuart

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 \$4 would be appreciated.

Tonight's Meeting: Andrea Griffin is Associate Professor in Wildlife Conservation Science, School of Environmental and Life Sciences (Psychology), at the University of Newcastle. Tonight she will be talking about shorebirds in the Hunter. The Hunter River estuary is one of the most important shorebird habitats in Australia and monitoring of shore birds here is a primary indicator for the health of the shorebird population.

Last Month's Meeting: The 25 people who attended the meeting were treated to a very professional and informative presentation by Professor Simon Griffith. Simon spoke about his work on monitoring lead levels in House Sparrows in Broken Hill and Mount Isa. The lead levels are correlated with the lead levels measured in the children's blood. These are regularly monitored by the NSW Department of Health. He found that sparrows with higher blood levels were not as strong flyers as sparrows with low levels of lead. This meant sparrows with high lead levels need to be more alert to danger when feeding. This was able to be demonstrated in these studies.

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 1200 members. A 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.

CAMPS 2024

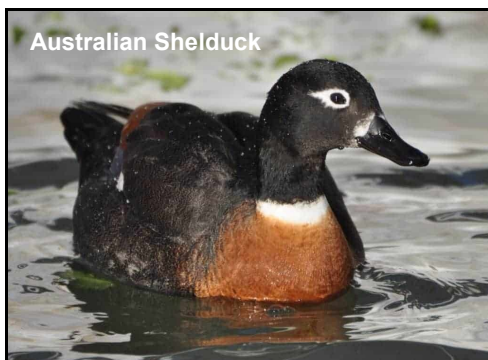
Fri 3 rd May - Sun 5th May	West Wyalong	Christina Port	0421 691 317	Ace Caravan Park Cnr Newell Highway and Mid-western Highway West Wyalong (02) 6972 3061
Fri 6th - Sun 8th September	Karuah	Graham Nelson	0466 599 278	Big 4 Karuah Jetty Caravan Park 88 Holdom Rd, Karuah 1800 005 552 or (02)4997 5520
Fri 18th - Sun 20th October	Harrington	Alan Morris	0418 269 482	Harrington Beach Holiday & Caravan Park 50 Crowdy St, Harrington (02) 6556 1228

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 March and WHAT CAN WE EXPECT in April?

The highlight of the last month was an Australian Shelduck at the South Wyong Treatment Works. This is only the 6th record for the Central Coast and the first since 2016. The Black-necked Storks continue to excite both birders and photographers. They have been seen almost daily at McPherson Road Swamp and a juvenile has been seen at the Dairy.

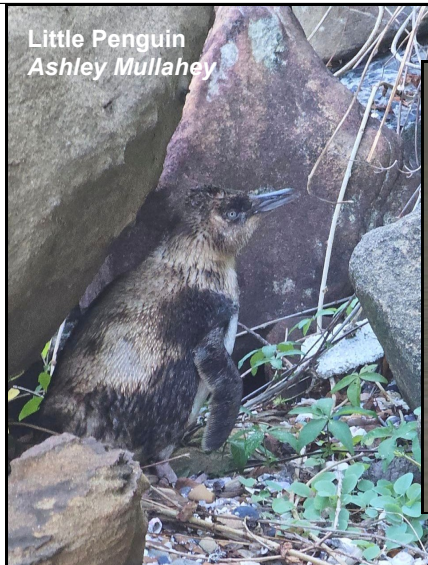


The observation of “pied” Little Penguin (nicknamed Whitey) at the Haven is interesting. Little Penguins are resident on the coast and probably breed here. There are irregular reports of sightings. However, this penguin has been at the Haven regularly and is even roosting in the rocks despite a parade of people and dogs passing by.

McPherson Road Swamp has been visited by Plumed Whistling Ducks twice in this period. Noisy Pittas are being reported from Palmdale. Birding, in general, is slow with the birds rarely calling and certainly not responding.

The Spring migrants are starting to depart. It looks like Dollarbirds have gone along with some other species. They will mostly be gone in April. White-breasted Woodswallows will be the last to depart. Although Fairy Martins should be gone, there are still numbers at the Dairy. These will probably over-winter.

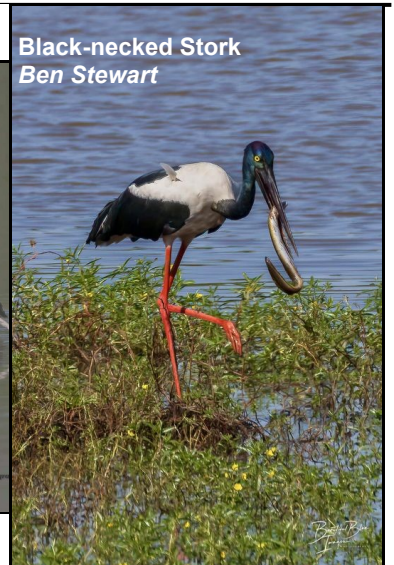
See Page 3 for more photos



Little Penguin
Ashley Mullahey



Whistling Ducks
Rick Worthy



Black-necked Stork
Ben Stewart

OUTING REPORTS

Outing: March 2

MOGO AND MANGROVE DAM

Leader: Graham Nelson

On the way to The Letter 'A' there were a few drops of rain and a few wet roads but the rain held off for most of the day. Unfortunately, that wasn't the only thing that held off. It was a bad day for photographers and not much better for birders. There were few birds around and we only managed 49 species for the day. Most of the birders didn't get to see that many as a number of birds flew across the road and were gone. Only the few lucky people looking in the right direction had sightings of them.

At the Letter 'A' Gang Gangs, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Eastern & Crimson Rosella flew across the road with only a few seeing them. There was evidence of birds cutting off flowers on the ground throughout the day which may have indicated Gang Gangs were present earlier but could have been something else. At least the Musk Lorikeets and Noisy Friarbirds captured the birders attention for a while.

Convict Corner was very quiet until a White-throated Treecreeper came close and the Scarlet Honeyeaters started playing. On the way back to the cars we had a few Striated Thornbills.

The waterhole was even quieter. The White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike (Non morph) was seen briefly as was the White-naped Honeyeater. The birds just weren't there. I think we were lucky to find about 10 species.

A bit down on not finding many birds we headed to Mogo Camp-ground hoping for better, unfortunately that didn't happen. No Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Spotted Quail-thrush or Painted Button-quail. It was very quiet. Down on the back track we could hear birds, mainly White-cheeked Honeyeater, but they didn't want to show themselves. We were able to see glimpses of the White-cheeked Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater and Variegated Fairywren but that was about all.

Lunch was at the recently re-opened Mangrove Dam where it started to lightly rain. A Lace Monitor kept us entertained as Elaine fed it. We learnt that they like avocado. The only bird of note was the 7 Rainbow Bee-eaters that flew past.



'Beware of the Goanna'
Francesco Martins

Even though I sent out invitations to the birds it seems my charm (or humour) has worn thin. There are days like that where the birds are just not around when you are. A number of trees had blossom across the valley but obviously not the right type of tree to attract birds. We still had a great day enjoying the outdoors and each other's company. I'd like to thank the 23 people who came and especially the newcomers. Hopefully next year might be better.

We met at Picnic Point on a glorious autumn day and had a look out on the lake before heading off. Tuggerah Lake has quite a lot of water in it, so the sandbars where the birds roost were under water. Still, we had Black Swans, Australian Pelicans, and 4 species of Cormorants in and around, flying and fishing. The trees had Rainbow Lorikeets and Musk Lorikeets flying over. A lone Noisy Friarbird flew by while Little Corella, Grey Butcherbird, Masked Lapwing were seen. Along the shore was a White faced Heron. A calling White-bellied Sea-eagle was seen in the distance.

We headed out for our walk. Pacific Black Ducks, Chestnut Teals and Silver Gulls were along the shore. A Bar-shouldered Dove, Spotted Doves and on the markers more Cormorants and an Australasian Darter. Superb Fairywrens flitted around and a family of White-browed Scrubwren came in close. A Little Egret was feeding in the creek and a Pied Butcherbird called the whole time.



Little Pied Cormorant
Christina Port

We headed back for morning tea watching Eastern Rosellas feeding on the grass. We then walked to the pines to see the breeding Pied Cormorants and an Osprey flew through. A young Little Corella with adult gave great diagnostic views and a Figbird arrived. Back to cars and we drove over to the mouth of the Entrance with Caspian and Crested Terns roosting and 5 Bar tailed Godwits feeding on the disappearing sand bar as the tide poured in. We then made our way over to Terilbah Sensory Garden. Very quiet here although we added Australian White Ibis, Great Egret, White-breasted Woodswallow, Red Wattlebird and finally a Striated Heron who eventually allowed everyone to see it well. The Pied Currawong kept watch at lunch time as we chatted about many things. A great group of 11 people and 49 birds recorded birds. Thanks everyone for a great day's birding.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

20 members of our Group gathered at the Waterfront Restaurant at The Entrance on 26th February to celebrate the special birthdays of Eileen Davy (80th) and Graham Nelson (60th), both long-standing and very active members of our group. It was lovely to have one of our founding members, Lorraine Johnstone from Gloucester, and newer members, Julie Peksis and Margaret Vallance, join the rest of us "regulars" for the birthday breakfast. Many thanks to Frik Gautschi for his organisation and for obtaining the beautiful and much-admired cards to present to the guests of honour.



Graham and Eileen
Robyn Price

BIRTHDAY BREAKFAST ON 8 APRIL

This is another chance to join in Central Coast Birders' custom to celebrate (senior) milestone birthdays (60, 70th etc).

Coleen Southall and Christina Port tick the right boxes this round. Feel free to let me know if there are others in the next few months, as we don't keep personal records on the Coast.

Let's join Coleen and Christina for breakfast at The Waters Edge Café, The Entrance on Monday 8 April at 9am. Presents are BANNED, in case you don't know and everyone pays for their own breakfast. We may have a birding stroll afterwards, weather and mood permitting.

Please text or phone Frik Gautschi on 0404 467 097 to confirm numbers.

SPECIES LIST

FEBRUARY 2024

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
Plumed Whistling Duck	7	17-20/2/24	14 on 24/2 McPherson Rd Swp, Tuggerah
Australian Shoveler	5	12/1/2024	Tuggerah STW
Brown Quail	4	1 & 27/2	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn

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Hoary-headed Grebe	16	28/1/2024	Tuggerah STW	Andrew Robinson
Pheasant Coucal	2	17/2/2024	Tuggerah Bay Saltmarsh Track	Andrew Robinson
Peaceful Dove	2	19-26/2/24	x3 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	1	13/2/2024	14 th CC record, Palmdale Rd, Palmdale	Krystyna Lonergan
Wonga Pigeon	5	4/2/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Owlet-Nightjar	HC	4,5 & 23/2	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Owlet-Nightjar	1	11/2/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Andrew Robinson
White-throated Needletail	250	15/1/2024	Lisarow	Andrew Robinson
White-throated Needletail	100	2/2/2024	0800 hrs West Bateau Bay	Nick Carson
White-throated Needletail	800+	4/2/2024	0930 hrs W. Barrett Dve Entrance, Toukley	Daniel McKeon
White-throated Needletail	100	22/2/2024	0730 hrs The Entrance Rd, Killarney Vale	Daniel McKeon
White-throated Needletail	200+	22/2/2024	0810 hrs Central Coast Hwy, Erina Heights	Nick Carson
Pacific Swift	1	18/2/2024	0900 hrs Terrigal Haven	Paul Shelley
Buff-banded Rail	1	15/2/2024	Mount Penang Parklands, Kariong	Archie Brennan
Buff-banded Rail	1	17/2/2024	McPherson Rd Swamp, Tuggerah	Carole Carpenter
Buff-banded Rail	1	23/2/2024	Ansells Point, Chittaway	Allan Benson
Aust. Spotted Crake	1	2/2/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Allan Benson
Bush Stone-Curlew	1	1-11/2/24	Gwandalan	Roz George
Bush Stone-Curlew	1	14-23/2/24	Davistown Boardwalk	Doug Hocking
Bush Stone-Curlew	1	14/2/2024	Davistown RSL Club	per Doug Hocking
Pied Oystercatcher	2+J	4/2/2024	Karagi Pt, The Entrance	Andrew Robinson
Ruddy Turnstone	10	4/2/2024	Moonie Beach, Munmorah SCA	Kerr Brad
Ruddy Turnstone	18	3/2/2024	The Entrance Channel	Andrew Robinson
Pacific Golden Plover	28	4/2/2024	Moonie Beach, Munmorah SCA	Kerr Brad
Latham's Snipe	1	3/2/2024	Kanwal Pond	Carole Carpenter
Latham's Snipe	6	5-6/2/24	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	Alan Benson
Latham's Snipe	1	15/2/2024	Mt Penang Gardens, Kariong	Archie Brennan
Whimbrel	1	15/2/2024	Point Frederick	John Carpenter
Wood Sandpiper	1	6-17/2/24	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	Davy Ryan
Common Greenshank	1	18/1,3/2	The Entrance Channel	Andrew Robinson
Common Greenshank	1	18-20/2/24	Terilbah Island, Nth Entrance	Leeanne Lemke
Long-tailed Jaeger	1	2/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic 3 rd CC record	Andrew Robinson
Pomarine Jaeger	3	15/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Sooty Tern	2	2/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
White-tailed Tropicbird	2	2/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic 4 th CC record	Andrew Robinson
Shy Albatross	2, 2	2/2 & 15/2	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Tahiti Petrel	1	2/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic 2 nd record	Andrew Robinson
Black Petrel	1	15/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic 76 th CC record	Andrew Robinson
Grey-faced Petrel	2,6	2/2, 15/2	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Kermadec Petrel	1	15/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic 4 th CC record	Andrew Robinson
Herald Petrel	1	2/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic 1 st CC record	Andrew Robinson
Gould's Petrel	1	15/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic 8 th CC record	Andrew Robinson
Fluttering Shearwater	3	2/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Fluttering type Shearwater	18	2/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Hutton's Shearwater	2	2/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Flesh-footed Shearwater	100,40	2/2, 15/2	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Sooty Shearwater	2,5	2/2 & 15/2	Terrigal Pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Red-footed Booby	2	15/2/2024	Terrigal Pelagic 2 nd CC record	Andrew Robinson
Nankeen Night-heron	1	8/2/2024	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Rob Montgomery
Nankeen Night-heron	2	14/2/2024	Taylor St, Woy Woy Bay	Louis O'Neil
Black-necked Stork	2A	2-24/2/24	McPhersons & Dairy Swamp, Tuggerah	David Schuemaker
Black Bittern	1	2/2/2024	Wyong River, near Porters Creek entry	Steve Bowman
Pacific Reef Heron	2	4/2/2024	Moonie Beach, Munmorah SCA	Kerr Brad
Osprey	A+J	4/2/2024	Avoca Beach	Louise Finch
Osprey	A+N	12-16/2/24	Gosford Stadium	Rob Montgomery
Osprey	2+N	12-14/2/24	Mingara Tower	Graham Nelson
Pacific Baza	J	1/2/2024	Brisbania Public School, Saratoga	J. Nina Rua

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Pacific Baza	2	8/2/2024	Avoca Beach	Louise Finch
Pacific Baza	1	23/2/2024	Ourimbah	Allan Benson
Black-shouldered Kite	1	2/2 & 11/2	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Black-shouldered Kite	1	11/2/2024	Wisemans Ferry Rd, Berecra	Kaye Pointer
Black-shouldered Kite	1	17/2/2024	McPherson Rd Swamp, Tuggerah	Carole Carpenter
Square-tailed Kite	1	6/2/2024	Empire Bay Drive, Kincumber	Ashley Mullahey
Square-tailed Kite	1	11/2/2024	Ettalong	Paul Thompson
Square-tailed Kite	1	12/2/2024	Wyoming	Trish Nicole
Whistling Kite	1	12/2/2024	Wamberal lagoon	Graham Nelson
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	16/2/2024	Terrigal Skillion	Catherine Walker
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	19/2/2024	Bulls Quarry, Tunnel Track	Timothy White
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	19-25/2/24	x2 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Brown Goshawk	A+J	1-17/2/24	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Brown Goshawk	1	21/2/2024	Woy Woy Bay Public Wharf	Louis O'Neill
White Goshawk	1	10/2/2024	Mount White	Sue Watts
Grey Goshawk	1	8/2/2024	Ourimbah	Meredith Lee
Grey Goshawk (White)	1	9/2/2024	Gwandalan	Roz George
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	23/2/2024	Tuggerah Railway Station	Graham Nelson
Azure Kingfisher	1	6/2/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Meryl Newton
Azure Kingfisher	1	13/2/2024	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Kylie-Anne Cramsie
Sooty Owl	HC	4/2/2024	2230 hrs Avoca Heights	Nick Carson
Southern Boobook	HC	3,12,23/2	mostly early AM, Murrumbung HSD Mardi	John Carpenter
Southern Boobook	1	12/2/2024	Memorial Ave, Blackwall	Cecile La Lionne
Powerful Owl	HC	4/2/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Powerful Owl	1	3/2/2024	Katandra Reserve, Wyoming	James Brown
Nankeen Kestrel	2	10-14/2/24	Terrigal Skillion	Paul Di Michiel
Nankeen Kestrel	1	17/2/2024	Ourimbah Creek Rd, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Brown Falcon	1	12/2/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Peregrine Falcon	1	12/2/2024	The Entrance Rd, The Entrance	Graham Nelson
Yellow-tailed Bla Cockatoo	8	1-12/2/24	x6 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	4/2/2024	Wye	Josy Kennedy
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2A+J	17/2/2024	Mount White	Sue Watts
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	21/2/2024	Taylor St, Woy Woy Bay	Louis O'Neill
Gang Gang Cockatoo	6	13/1/2024	Olney SF (within CC LGA), Cedar Brush	Andrew Robinson
Little Lorikeet	6	29/2/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Superb Lyrebird	1	10/2/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Noisy Pitta	1	7/2/2024	Palm Grove, Ourimbah Creek Rd	Steve Bowman
Noisy Pitta	1	8/2/2024	Ourimbah Ck Rd, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Noisy Pitta	1	2-21/2/24	Palmdale Rd, Palmdale	JJ Harrison
Southern Emu-wren	4	4-19/2/24	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Gary Jackson
Scarlet Honeyeater	2A+N	18/2/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
White-naped Honeyeater	4,6	2 & 16/2	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Brown Honeyeater	1	8/2/2024	Chittaway Point	Elizabeth Noble
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	9/2/2024	Oscar St Umina	Peter De Jongh
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	23/2/2024	Mardi	Graham Nelson
Brown-headed Honeyeater	3	13/2/2024	Brisbane Water NP, Thommos Loop Track	Louis O'Neill
Mangrove Gerygone	1	14/2/2024	Saratoga Wetlands	Carol Abbott
Striated Thornbill	6	23/2/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Rock Warbler	1	21/2/2024	Brisbane Water NP, Woy Woy Bay	Louis O'Neill
Large-billed Scrubwren	4	10/2/2024	Carawah Res/Adcock Pk, West Gosford	Rob Montgomery
Varied Sittella	1	2/2/2024	Cockle Bay NR, Empire Bay	Peter De Jongh
Varied Sittella	7	17/2/2024	Bucketty	Andrew Robinson
Varied Sittella	7	25-27/2/24	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Crested Shrike-tit	2	8/2/2024	Hidden Valley, Jiliby SCA	Maki Okamoto
Crested Shrike-tit	2	13/2/2024	Upper Palmdale	David Schuemaker
Crested Shrike-tit	2	15/2/2024	Narara Creek	Archie Brennan
Leaden Flycatcher	F	1/2/2024	Mangrove Dam Picnic Area	Rob Montgomery

Leaden Flycatcher**	1	27/2/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Spangled Drongo *	1	14/2/2024	Halekulani	Hitomi Ward
Spangled Drongo *	1	16/2/2024	Lakes Beach Bike Track	Leeanne Lemke
Spangled Drongo *	1	28/2/2024	Werepi St, Budgewoi	Leeanne Lemke
Double-barred Finch	2	28/1/2024	Mangrove Mountain	Lynette Callaghan
Double-barred Finch	3	3/2/2024	Wisemans Ferry Rd Mangrove Mtn	Lynette Callaghan
Bassian Thrush	1	5/2/2024	Ourimbah Creek RTA Reserve	Therese Elsey
Bassian Thrush	1	9-13/2/24	Upper Palmdale	Neryl Richards
Bassian Thrush	1	28/2/2024	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Rob Montgomery
Eurasian Blackbird	1	7/2/2024	Mount Penang Gardens, Kariong	Anne Durkin
Eurasian Blackbird	1	19/2/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer

Breeding and some other records - February

Black Swan: 2A+J McPherson Rd Swamp 10/2 (DSc); **Australian Grebe:** 2A+2Y Springfield Ponds 11/2 (PPE); **White-throated Needletail:** There were 39 reports that I was able to find for Swifts in February, a good number, and these were forwarded to Dr Tarburton for his research; **Purple Swamphen:** A+J Springfield Pond 11/2 (PPE); **Bush Stone-curlew:** 1 Malinya Rd Saratoga 15/2 (CAb); **Osprey:** 2 The Entrance Channel 18/1, 2 Terrigal Skillion 13/2 (JDr), 1 Narara Creek 15/2 (ABr), 1 Killarney Vale 23/2 (GNe); **Square-tailed Kite:** 1 Tumbi 16/1 (ARo), 1 Toukley Ave Toukley 10 & 13/2 (LLe), 1 Hood St Ettalong 11/2 (LO'N); **Grey Goshawk:** 1 Dairy Swamp CCW 18/2 (MTy); **Dollarbird:** A+2DY Magenta 13/2 (ENo); **Glossy Black Cockatoo:** x4, 2 Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 2-25/2 (KPo), **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo:** 2A+J Man. Mtn 1/2, 8/2 (MPo); **Noisy Pitta:** J Ourimbah RTA Reserve 1/2 (Damian Moey); **White-naped Honeyeater:** 2A+J Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 17/2 (KPo); **Golden Whistler:** AF+J Tathra Taila HSD M. Mtn 6/2 (KPo); **Rufous Whistler:** F+J Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 25/2 (KPo); **Figbird:** 2A+J Saratoga Oval 14/2 (DHo); **Grey Butcherbird:** A+3Y Murrumbung HSD Mardi 12/2 (CCa); Red-browed Finch: A+J Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 15/2 (KPo).
 Good Birding!

TWITCH LIST March 2024

Graham Nelson	202	Chris Jamieson	133	Rowena Wallace	112
Carole Carpenter	172	Leonie Loewe	131	Michael Scobie	107
John Carpenter	168	Christina Port	130	Diana Hogan	106
Allan Benson	166	Daniel McKeon	129	Frik Gautschi	91
Kaye Pointer	162	Margaret Pointer	128	Gabrielle Rees	91
Krystyna Lonergan	151	Robyn Price	118	Judy Clark	81
Julie Peksis	146	Doug Hocking	117		

Graham Nelson hasn't added to his February total but still holds a very solid lead on 202.

BIRDATA SURVEYS YTD 2024

Graham Nelson	103	Robyn Price	11	Guy Dutson	4
Allan Benson	54	Nick Carson	10	David Schuemaker	3
Alan Stuart	53	Michael Scobie	6	Daniel McKeon	2
Frik Gautschi	14	C Clutterbuck	5	M & K Pointer	2

For February 100 surveys were completed compared with 108 in 2023. YTD 2024, 310 surveys were completed. This is a significant improvement on 2023 where 256 survey were entered. Graham Nelson has maintained a substantial lead for the Alan Morris Trophy followed by Allan Benson and Alan Stuart.

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.

SOUTH WYONG SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS

February Survey

7 observers completed the survey. Nothing special was seen with the highlight a number of individual Swamp Harriers and a perched Whistling Kite. Total species count was 55 with a good number of bush birds recorded. Total waterbird count was 280 which is on the low side.

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

Terrigal Pelagic 15th February

Andrew Robinson

In total 14 pelagic species were seen beyond The Haven with 10 of those Tubenoses, as follows:

Shy Albatross – 2 (1)
Grey-faced Petrel – 6 (3)
KERMADEC PETREL – 1
BLACK PETREL – 1
GOULD'S PETREL – 1
Wedge-tailed Shearwater – 250+ (50+)
Short-tailed Shearwater – 6 (3)
Sooty Shearwater – 5 (1)
Flesh-footed Shearwater – 40+ (15)
Fluttering type Shearwater – 4 (2)
RED-FOOTED BOOBY – 2 (2)
Pomarine Jaeger – 3 (1)
Greater Crested Tern – 3
Silver Gull – 9



Also seen:

White-faced Heron – 1
Eastern Osprey – 3 (2 adults & juvenile at The Haven)
Unidentified shorebird on the way out with suggestion of Pacific Golden Plover
Both Offshore Bottlenose and Short-beaked Common Dolphin.

*Parenthesis denotes the maximum number of that species seen at any one time, while uppercase is considered a goodie.

For those interested, the Red-footed Booby (2), was a first at sea record for the Central Coast, NSW (there is a previous record of bird taken into care in the late 90's). A dark morph Kermadec Petrel was only the 4th CC record, while both Black and Gould's Petrel have each been recorded less than 10 times, with Black being seen 3 out of the last 4 trips. The Red-footed Booby was the 45th pelagic species recorded on these trips, this being the 19th outing.

Entrance Brave Kid

Andrew Robinson

There's been a bit of attention around a leg-flagged Bar-tailed Godwit at The Entrance, so a quick update for those interested.

In early January, not long after we noticed the previously reported juvenile Pied Oystercatcher that had fishing line caught around its legs, we sadly came across a Bar-tailed Godwit that was in a similar predicament. Both birds were struggling to forage, were very underweight as a result and were seeking refuge within the fenced Little Tern nesting area. Needless to

say, intervention was quickly required. The Oystercatcher was disentangled and released in early February, but I'm devastated to say, was taken into care soon after and didn't survive.

Attention then turned to the Godwit, which after an unsuccessful attempt, was caught on 16/02 thanks to a huge team effort, especially by NPWS staff and volunteers including Kath, Louise and others. The bird, a female, was freed of fishing line from its legs and was thankfully in good enough condition to be released on site, but not before getting some bling i.e. being leg-flagged / banded so that she could be monitored. She received the leg-flag code EBK (orange flag over green) and is now affectionately known as 'Entrance Brave Kid' thanks to Christophe.



Bar-tailed Godwit
Andrew Robinson

A week or so after release there were some reports of a leg-flagged Godwit at The Entrance and the smart money was on EBK but unfortunately views / photographs were not close enough to confirm this. So, on Sunday it was good to confirm that this was indeed EBK and that she seems to be doing well; having noticeably put on weight, strongly flying several times and appearing alert. In fact, EBK foraged almost non-stop the whole 2 hours I observed, while the other 9 present Bar-tailed Godwits were far less active i.e. mostly roosting / loafing, with only the occasional forage. She is obviously working overtime to get back to her 'fighting weight', and it was great to see her successfully catching small crabs as can be seen in the photo.

Several of the Godwits present are starting to come into breeding plumage but not 'Entrance Brave Kid' as yet, so it will be interesting to see if she overwinters.

Thanks to those that have reported so far and if others see her / a leg-flagged Godwit please let us know as we'll do our best to keep track.

RIDDING MACQUARIE ISLAND OF PESTS PAYS OFF AS SEABIRDS COME BACK FROM THE BRINK – BUT RECOVERY HAS JUST BEGUN

Jeremy Bird, Justine Shaw and Richard Fuller ·

One of the largest publicly funded conservation investments in history is starting to pay off on Macquarie Island, our newly published study shows. Sealers and whalers introduced cats, rats, rabbits and other animals to the island in the 19th century. Their impacts devastated the millions of seabirds breeding on the island. Numbers fell to a fraction of their former populations. From 2011-14, the last non-native pests were cleared from the island. It was the end of a deadly chapter in the island's history during which two bird species, a rail and a parakeet, were lost from the planet forever.

We looked for signs of recovery in populations of petrels, a group of highly specialised seabirds. We found that species listed as threatened have recovered to the point where they can be delisted. There's still a long way to go, though, before their populations return to historical levels.

A highly threatened group of birds

Petrels can live for decades and spend most of their lives over the open oceans far from land. Some circumnavigate the Pacific each year. Petrels return to land only to breed on remote islands that are naturally free of mammalian predators. Under natural circumstances petrels can be enormously abundant. This means they play important roles in marine food webs. And, by transferring marine nutrients to breeding islands, they enrich whole island ecosystems. Petrels usually come ashore only at night and nest in underground burrows to ward off predatory birds. However, these behaviours have been no defence against the cats and rats introduced to most of the world's islands. As a result, petrels are among the world's most threatened bird groups. These habits make petrels extremely difficult to study, so good information is lacking. We used novel technologies and new analytical approaches to calculate the population and distribution of four species across Macquarie Island and to compare these with surveys from the 1970s.

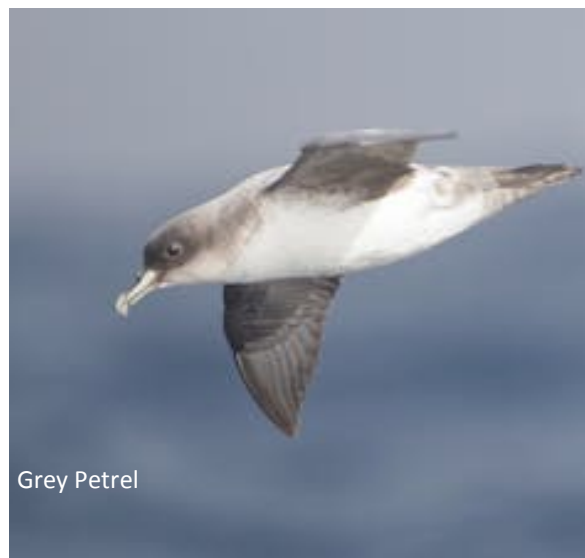
What did the study find?

Antarctic Prions (*Pachyptila desolata*) remain the most widespread and common of the four species. They survived on the barren, elevated interior of the island in areas relatively inhospitable to predators. There are about 160,000 breeding pairs today, increasing by around 1% each year. In the 1970s, cats ate an estimated 11,000 White-headed Petrels (*Pterodroma lessonii*) each year. Only 15% of nests were successfully fledging chicks. Today there are about 12,800 pairs with a breeding success rate of about 80%.

White-headed petrels' range remains smaller than it was, and they were likely close to extinction before cats were eradicated in 2001. Listed as vulnerable in Tasmania, the population is growing by 1% a year and now warrants de-listing.

Two species, Grey Petrel (*Procellaria cinerea*) and Blue Petrel (*Halobaena caerulea*), became extinct on the main island in the 1900s. Grey Petrels disappeared altogether, while 500–600 pairs of Blue Petrels survived on a few coastal rock stacks. Both have now recolonised the main island. Grey Petrels still number only in the low hundreds and Blue Petrels in the thousands, but are increasing at more than 10% each year.

Our data suggest blue petrels no longer qualify as a federally listed vulnerable species. Grey Petrels will no longer qualify for listing as endangered in Tasmania if they increase at the same rate until 2026.



Recovery has only just begun

It is testament to the hard work of all those involved in eradicating invasive species that these bird species are showing signs of recovery. Yet we found ourselves pondering what “recovery” really means. We don’t know what Macquarie Island was like before humans first visited in 1810. To try to understand this, we identified suitable areas for recovering petrel populations by comparing with analogous islands with different invasive species histories. The species we studied still occupy only a tiny fraction of the island. They were almost certainly many times more abundant historically. It will take decades for populations to fulfil their ecological roles again – if threats like climate change and avian influenza don’t halt their recovery.

A vision of an island of abundance reborn

This is our vision of Macquarie Island if these amazing birds make a full recovery.

Days before visitors first sight land, thousands of seabirds swirl around the ship at sea. The white undersides of Blue Petrels and prions outnumber the spindrift cresting each wave. Rather than ones or twos, there’s a constant stream of White-headed and Soft-plumaged Petrels.

On the island, all must tread carefully, sticking to managed paths to avoid collapsing burrows in the super-colonies that cover seaward-facing slopes. These areas, once denuded by rabbit grazing, have revegetated. A labyrinth of tunnels through the undergrowth blurs the lines between the surface and underground world. In places the smell of ammonia is powerful. Even more pervasive is the warm, musty smell associated with petrel plumage. By day, predatory skuas patrol the colonies, going from burrow entrance to entrance, as the occupants sit silently within. As the sun sinks, a scan from land with binoculars finds the petrels approaching en-masse, loitering over coastal waters as they wait for the cover of darkness. At dusk, black silhouettes swarm like flies up and down the coastal hills. Where once the night was silent save for the wind, the slopes are bubbling with the purr and chatter of Blue Petrels, the “*kwick, kwick, kwick*” calls of White-headed Petrels and the mournful cries of Soft-plumaged Petrels. Once a forlorn few, the calls have become an excited cacophony.