



The Twitcher

July
2024

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

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

Volume 19, No. 7

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
23/7/24	Next Meeting: The RTA Reserve - Palmdale Landcare Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds	Colette Livermore
27/7/24	Outing: Chain Valley Bay Meet: 8.30am Community Centre Car Park, Scaysbrook Ave, Chain Valley Bay South	REMEMBER TO REGISTER Leeanne Lemke 0412 233 594
14/8/24	½ day Outing: Mooney Creek and Girrakool Meet: 8.30am Karool Rd (off pacific Highway), Mooney Mooney Creek	REMEMBER TO REGISTER Doug Hocking 0427 800 428
27/8/24	Next Meeting: Birding In Western Australia 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.	Christina Port



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: Our speaker tonight is Dr Colette Livermore. Colette is one of the principal organisers of the Palmdale Landcare Group which birders refer to as the RTA Reserve - one of the premier birding sites on the Central Coast. Colette will detail the history of the site including the on-going weed control and tree planting projects. As well, she will tell us about the fauna on site and mostly importantly the abundant bird life here.

Last Month's Meeting: 24 attendees heard a very interesting and professional presentation from Dr Matt Herring from Murray Wildlife about the Australian Painted Snipe. There is little known about the ecology of this nomadic bird, for example no call has never been recorded and its movements even at a local level have never been understood. The estimated population is 340 for this cryptic bird. To answer some of these questions, Matt and his team aim to attach satellite trackers to at least four birds. This not without its challenges. Most records of Australian Painted Snipe are from transitory birds and mist netting is not simple. However, two satellite trackers have been attached to Gloria and Marcelina. This has revealed that locally the birds roost in a different place every night and there appears to be a northward winter migration. Marcelina was last recorded near Daly Waters in the Northern Territory.

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.

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 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

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

The simple answer is not much. The prolonged periods of wet weather have not been conducive to birding. The last report of the Red-backed Kingfisher was the 24th June but it's probably still there. The predicted White-fronted Terns did appear while there have been good numbers of Shovelers at the Central Coast Wetlands.

The good news is that the resident birds have started breeding again, indicated by Fan-tailed Cuckoos calling everywhere. The first migrants will arrive back in mid-August.

OUTING REPORTS**1/2 Day Outing: June 12****SPENCER and BEYOND****Leaders: Margaret and Kaye Pointer**

Last minute information on tides was necessary to allow us to proceed. The Hawkesbury River had local rains and with Warragamba dam full and spilling, tides can hold back the flow and cover local roads.

At our meeting place, Spencer Wharf, we had clear evidence of tidal reaches. In the village the tidal cast was deposited on the edge of Wisemans Ferry Road. Thirteen members met at the wharf, with one-member late. Rainbow Lorikeets fed noisily in tall flowering eucalypts, Little Pied & Little Black Cormorants roosted with a Pelican. One White Ibis and Royal Spoonbills were resting on the pylons and mud bank, near the toilets. Two snowy white Domestic Doves flew free, three Crested Pigeon fed on the lawns, and a few Welcome Swallow flitted through.

We moved to Ingoola Road turn off, walking some distance on Wisemans Ferry Rd and a side road. Heard calls were common, but many birds remained concealed. Our best site was near Cohens Creek. Chestnut Teal and Black Duck shared the pondage area with Australasian Grebe and Eurasian Coot. We had excellent views of a male Mistletoebird feeding, numerous Welcome Swallow fed over the pond but the close calling Rose Robin would not show his colours. A Whistling Kite scouted the skies. The car park at Wombat Cafe proved a good morning tea and birding site. A family of Superb Fairy-wren fed around the building. Nearby Belted Galloway cattle grazed with Willie Wagtails riding on their backs and Cattle Egret and White-faced Heron around their legs. Wedge-tailed Eagle and White-bellied Sea-Eagle gave distant glimpses. A Grey Shrike-thrush came to investigate our presence and our missing member arrived in time for a cuppa and catch-up report.



En route to Mill Creek, in the National Park, we recorded no new species. Our interest was focused on the storm damage with temporary and ongoing repairs to Wisemans Ferry Road. The new fire pit arrangement in the camp grounds and dodging falling bark were the items of interest as the wind had picked up and the only birds showing themselves were Lewin's Honeyeater and Satin Bowerbird. A Rose Robin called near the Depot but refused to come close enough to see. Mistletoebird, Variegated Fairy-wren and Rainbow Lorikeet were spotted on our short walk before lunch. At our lunch stop a young Brush-turkey put in an appearance. With the increased intensity of wind gusts dropping small branches, it was time to call it a day. Kaye and Margaret would like to thank our group for their interest and helping others observe the special sightings. 54 bird species were seen or heard for the part day.

Outing: June 29**MYUNA BAY****Leader: Graham Nelson**

I had the feeling this was going to be a good outing. I rearranged the outing from previous one, did the recon on the previous Tuesday and was excited to do the real outing. The day started out cold with some fog about but it did get a little warmer through the day. With a few cancellations, I ended up with only 10 people but that make a more intimate group. We had two new members, Bruce and David, join us as well as Alex and Doris from Sydney who I hadn't seen for a few years. Most of the group had cameras so I took it a bit slowly to allow for photos.

Starting at Myuna Bay, it was a little quiet walking down to the Eraring outlet. We couldn't find the Nankeen Night-Herons this year but the two Osprey were sitting next to each other on the nest. This seemed to captivate everyone! We encountered two men who wanted to tell us all about their experience there which was interesting but invariably slowed us down. Down at the outlet there was the usual number of species but the bird we all wanted to see, the Brahminy Kite flew in the distance and disappeared. I had a feeling he might reappear. In the mean time we met two more ladies who may join us shortly and looked for what else was around. Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, a Royal Spoonbill and a Turtle took our attention. We headed off when the Brahminy Kite did reappear and circled above our heads. Arriving back behind schedule to the cars we had morning tea there. I supplied caramel slice that seemed to go down a treat.



After morning tea, we headed off to Dora Creek and the Eraring inlet. We were greeted by two White-bellied Sea-Eagles that chatted to each other while we were there. The Pied Butcherbird also sung for us. Whilst the Mistletoebird that I saw on Tuesday wasn't around we had a number of water birds and a mystery call. It's annoying when you know it but can't think of it. It was one of the rarer calls of the Brown Thornbill. A Swamp Harrier, Whistling Kite, Golden Whistler and Australian King-Parrot were also observed.



Taking a drive up to a new estate, Watagan Park at Cooranbong, Elaine saw a Black-shouldered Kite and Leonie saw a Wonga Pigeon. At Watagan Park they have created some ponds along the creek and left some bushland. They have also placed over 150 bird boxes. There were a number of birds about but the two best birds were the White-cheeked Honeyeater and the Hardhead.

Lunch wasn't until about 1.20pm at a nice place by the river on Freemans Drive near the Cemetery. Elaine was on fire finding us a Buff-banded Rail and Australian King-Parrot. I asked the group if they wanted to push on knowing we wouldn't finish until about 4pm. Seven were still keen to continue.

Driving a short trip across the road to Avondale University we drove to the start of Boys Walk. Not more than about 10 steps in we saw a Fan-tailed Cuckoo with another one calling behind us. We had the standard Lewin's Honeyeater and Eastern Yellow Robin then a Variegated Fairy-wren spotted by Elaine. I think it was Doris who found the Eastern Crested Shrike-tit. At least 3 of them captivated us for 10-15 minutes before we moved on. We tracked down Yellow-throated and White-browed Scrubwrens down the trail. Getting to where the bush meets the paddock, we encountered numerous birds including Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Brown Gerygone, Silvereye, Golden Whistler then Leonie beat me to the call of Varied Sittella. A male Satin Bowerbird and 15 Australian King-Parrots were also seen. A fantastic day birding with 78 species observed or heard. Thanks to those who joined me.

1/2 Day Outing: July 10 CENTRAL COAST WETLANDS / PIONEER DAIRY Leader: Leeanne Lemke

It was a beautiful clear winter's day with the sun shining and a crisp air for our outing to Pioneer Dairy, where 20 enthusiastic birders met in the carpark keen to find some birds after all the rain of previous weeks. We had some new faces which was great and an age range from 17 to John Carpenter which was wonderful to see. We headed west around the homestead and over near the rail line first and the first special bird seen was a Buff-banded Rail. This was the first bird on my last outing here. We observed an Australian Hobby chasing a pigeon. We were all keen to see Emu-wrens and we weren't disappointed when they were seen darting around with the Superb Fairy-wrens. We then headed back to the Gazebo to look for the Shovelers seen earlier which were way over the other side. Kaye Pointer also spotted a pair of Black-fronted Dotterels which have been absent for a little while and a swan sitting on a nest across the water.



Golden Whistler
Leeanne Lemke



Birders standing out
Leeanne Lemke

After some morning tea we headed over to the back paddock loop hoping for a closer view of Emu-wrens, but didn't see them and it was very wet and muddy which split the group of those with gumboots and those not going different directions. We saw a Brown Goshawk and Whistling Kite over there and then headed into the Greenfleet loop where we saw numerous small species like Large-billed Scrubwrens, Brown Gerygones and Thornbills. We then headed back for lunch and another look from the Gazebo where some saw the White-bellied Sea-eagle. Some saw the Pacific Baza over the Golf Range side while here and a distant Swamp Harrier was seen too. Thanks, Kaye Pointer, for your eyes and ears which don't miss much and thanks Graham Nelson and Carole Carpenter for being list keepers. In the end 80 species were seen which is great for a half day. Thanks all for a great outing.

SPECIES LIST

JUNE 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
Musk Duck	3	27/6/2024	Off Bluebell Pk, Berkeley Vale, Tuggerah L. Allan Benson
Australasian Shoveler	12	1-23/6/24	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah David Schuemaker
Pink-eared Duck	3	4/6/2024	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah Chris Jamieson
Owlet-Nightjar	HC	1,15/6/24	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn Kaye Pointer
Tawny Frogmouth	3	10-15/6/24	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn Margaret Pointer
Pheasant Coucal	1	29/6/2024	Jilliby Rd, Jilliby Guy Dutton
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	9/6/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn Kaye Pointer
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	1	2/6/2024	Mill Creek Campground, Dharug NP Carol Abbott
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	3/6/2024	Ourimbah Creek, RTA Reserve Allan Benson
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	28/6/2024	Mill Creek Camp, Dharug NP Greg Shaw
Common Bronzewing	1	5/6/2024	Mangrove Dam Picnic Area Nick Carson
Topknot Pigeon	20	26/6/2024	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming Rob Montgomery
Topknot Pigeon	10	30/6/2024	Picnic Point Reserve, The Entrance Arnie Boyaci
Buff-banded Rail	1	2/6/2024	Blackwall Rd, Blackwall, Woy Woy Greg Shaw
Buff-banded Rail	1	6/6/2024	Ansells Point, Chittaway Carole Carpenter
Buff-banded Rail	1	19/6/2024	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah Tricia Sweet
Lewin's Rail	2	24/6/2024	Ourimbah Rest Stop, M1 Motorway Steve Bowman
Double-banded Plover	1	17/6/2024	Karagi Point, The Entrance Leeanne Lemke
Double-banded Plover	3	26/6/2024	Pelican Point, Norah Head Hitomi Ward
Red-capped Plover	1	17/6/2024	Karagi Point, The Entrance Leeanne Lemke
White-fronted Tern *	2	19-20/6/24	Norah Head Allan Benson
White-fronted Tern *	1	25/6/2024	Pelican Point, Norah Head Steve Bowman
White-fronted Tern *	2	24-25/6/24	Terrigal Skillion Ashley Mullahey
Caspian Tern	11	6/6/2024	Ansells Point, Chittaway John Carpenter
Brown Skua	3	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic Andrew Robinson
Yellow-nosed Albatross	9	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic Andrew Robinson
Buller's Albatross	8	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic Andrew Robinson
White-capped Albatross	12	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic Andrew Robinson
Black-browed Albatross	10	20/6/2024	off Norah Head Leanne Lemke
Black-browed Albatross	10	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic Andrew Robinson

Campbell's Albatross	2	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Providence Petrel	4	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Fairy Prion	4	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Fluttering Shearwater	10	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Hutton's Shearwater	1	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic	Carol Edwards
Red-footed Booby	1	21/6/2024	Terrigal pelagic	Andrew Robinson
Black-necked Stork	2A	10/6/2024	Dairy Swamp, Central Coast Wetlands	David Schuemaker
Black-necked Stork	2J	10/6/2024	Porters Creek Wetland, Alison	Hitomi Ward
Black-necked Stork	1	14/6/2024	flying over Jilliby	Leonie Loewe
Black-necked Stork	J	29/6/2024	Dairy Swamp, Central Coast Wetlands	David Schuemaker
Nankeen Night-Heron	3	3/6/2024	Woy Woy Rd, Kariong	K. L'Herpinere
Nankeen Night-Heron	1	16/6/2024	Rosehill Lane, Yarramalong	Paul Shelley
White-necked Heron	1	5/6/2024	Willoughby Rd, Wamberal	Darren Earnshaw
White-necked Heron	2	7-8/6/24	Elizabeth Drive, Noraville	Steve Bowman
White-necked Heron	1	10/6/2024	Woodbury Park, Wyong	Nerida Carter
Straw-necked Ibis	105	26/6/2024	Narara Valley fly over	Nerida Carter
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	6-8/6/24	Mt Penang Gardens, Kariong	Neryl Richards
Osprey	3	3/6/2024	Gosford Bay & Sailing Club	Gary Jackson
Osprey	2	5-13/6/24	nesting on roundabout tower, Woy Woy	Carol Edwards
Osprey	1	9/6/2024	fishing at Soldiers Point	Danny O'Brien
Osprey	1	15/6/2024	at nest? Canton Beach	Hitomi Ward
Pacific Baza	1	9/6/2024	Wyee-Doyalson	Leonie Loewe
Pacific Baza	1	30/6/2024	Erina	Nick Carson
Black-shouldered Kite	1	3/6/2024	Woy Woy Tip	Darren Earnshaw
Black-shouldered Kite	1	2-8/6/24	Mt Penang Gardens, Kariong	Arnie Boyaci
Black-shouldered Kite	1	24/6/2024	Ourimbah RSL Club	Darren Earnshaw
Square-tailed Kite	1	8/6/2024	Umina	Tracie Benge
Square-tailed Kite	1	9/6/2024	Cresthaven Ave, Bateau bay	Adam Moore
Square-tailed Kite	2	18 & 21/6	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Whistling Kite	2	4/6/2024	Patonga	Gary Jackson
Whistling Kite	2	28-30/6/24	The Entrance	Grace Bryant
Brahminy Kite	A	14/6/2024	Wybung Head, Munmorah SCA	Arnie Bonaci
Brahminy Kite	A+J	29/6/2024	Wybung Head, Munmorah SCA	Steven Clark
Brown Goshawk	1	9/6, 24/6	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Brown Goshawk	1	14/6/2024	Ourimbah Rest Area, M1 Motorway	Julie Peksis
Brown Goshawk	1	16/6/2024	Wyee-Doyalson	Leonie Loewe
Grey Goshawk	2	3-24/6/24	x6 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Grey Goshawk	1	29/6/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Elaine Tan
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	24/6/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Hitomi Ward
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	2/6/2024	Mt Penang Gardens, Kariong	Gary Jackson
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	9/6/2024	Wyee-Doyalson	Leonie Loewe
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	11/6/2024	Woy Woy Tip	Darren Earnshaw
Little Eagle	1	5/6/2024	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	Stephen Clark
Little Eagle	1	8/6/2024	Chittaway	Leeanne Lemke
Red-backed Kingfisher	1	1-24/6/24	Mount Penang Gardens, Kariong	Carole Carpenter
Nankeen Kestrel	1	3/6/2024	Woy Woy Tip	Darren Earnshaw
Nankeen Kestrel	1	3/6/2024	Gosford Racecourse & Manns Road	Carol Edwards
Nankeen Kestrel	1	9/6/2024	Wyee-Doyalson	Leonie Loewe
Australian Hobby	2	9/6/2024	Wyee-Doyalson	Leonie Loewe
Australian Hobby	1	15/6/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Martin Allen
Brown Falcon	1	19/6/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Peregrine Falcon	2	3/6/2024	Woy Woy Tip	Darren Earnshaw
Peregrine Falcon	1	6/6/2024	Woy Woy Council Depot Tower	Carol Edwards
Peregrine Falcon	2	10/6/2024	Capt Cook Lookout, Copacabana	Elaine Elliott
Sooty Owl	HC	28/6/2024	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Ann Yuan
Masked Owl	RK	9/6/2024	Pacific Motorway, Alison	per Ian Benson
Barn Owl	1	28/6/2024	Sunrise Ave, Budgewoi	Craig Marshall

Powerful Owl	HC	7/6/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Powerful Owl	1	29/6/2024	Mingara Access Rd & Wyong Rd intersec'n	Paul Schofield
Yellow-tail Black Cockatoo	100-150	12/6/2024	private property, Somersby	Gary Jackson
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	5/6/2024	Mangrove Dam Picnic Area	Nick Carson
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	29/6/2024	Kincumba Mountain	Nerida Carter
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	28/6/2024	Spencer Village	Gordon Arthur
Gang Gang Cockatoo	11	6/6/2024	Bucketty Waterhole	Daniel McKeon
Gang Gang Cockatoo	4	14-28/6/24	Upper Palmdale	Leeanne Lemke
Musk Lorikeet	4	6-14/6/24	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Superb Lyrebird	2	4/6/2024	Upper Palmdale	Carol Abbott
Superb Lyrebird	1	24/6/2024	backyard, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Regent Bowerbird	50	11/6/2024	Ourimbah Rest Area, M1 Motorway	David Schuemaker
Southern Emu-wren	4	2/6/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Tricia Sweet
Brown-headed Honeyeater	4	28/6/2024	Doyalson	Nick Carson
Scarlet Honeyeater	4	14/6/2024	South Kincumber	Laurie Smith
White-cheeked Honeyeater	6	15-28/6/24	unusual! Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Buff-rumped Thornbill	4	8/6/2024	Wye-Doyalson	Meryl Newton
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	3	13/6/2024	Waratah Rd North, Mangrove Mountain	Allan Benson
Varied Sittella	3	3/6/2024	Ourimbah RTA Reserve	Allan Benson
Varied Sittella	7	6-28/6/24	x8 Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Crested Shrike-tit	2	14/6/2024	Ourimbah Creek, RTA Reserve	Leeanne Lemke
Crested Shrike-tit	1	18/6/2024	Rumbalara Reserve Gosford	Elaine Elliott
Crested Shrike-tit	2	19/6/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Kaye Pointer
Varied Triller	AM	3/6 & 24/6	Ourimbah Rest Area, M1 Motorway	David Schuemaker
Rock Warbler	2	2/6/2024	Old Great North Road, Wisemans Ferry	Joshua Porter
Rock Warbler	2	3-19/6/24	Koolewong	Tricia Sweet
Rock Warbler	2	6/6/2024	Mangrove Dam Lookout	Daniel McKeon
Pied Currawong	100+	13/6/2024	Feeding on Camphor Laurel fruits, Narara	Kaye Pointer
Jacky Winter	2	8/6/2024	Wye-Doyalson	Meryl Newton
Jacky Winter	4	14-15/6/24	Tathra Taila HSD Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Rose Robin	1	2/6/2024	Mill Creek Camp Ground, Dharug NP	Carol Abbott
Rose Robin	1	9/6/2024	Wye-Doyalson	Leonie Loewe
Rose Robin	1	10/6/2024	Capt Cook Lookout, Copacabana	Elaine Elliott
Double-barred Finch	15	6/6/2024	Lombardy Rd, off Ironbark Rd Man. Mtn	Graham Nelson
Double-barred Finch	10	8 & 14/6/24	Weonga Place, San Remo	Allan Benson
Bassian Thrush	2	25-30/6/24	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Rob Montgomery
Bassian Thrush	1	9 & 22/6/24	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Bassian Thrush	1	23-28/6/24	Upper Palmdale	Bruce Ward-Smith

Breeding and other records - June

Black Swan: 2+N Central Coast Wetlands 1/6 (TSw); **Pacific Black Duck:** A+4Y Central Coast Wetlands 17/6 (RMo); **Masked Lapwing:** 2+N CCW 1-19/6 (TSw); **White-headed Pigeon:** J at Erina Heights 12/6 (DEa); **Black-necked Stork:** 1 Wyong Christian School, Tuggerah 20/6 (NCa); **Osprey:** 1 Malvina PDE Lake Haven 5/6 (NLo), 1 Heritage Walk, Summerland Pt 6/6 (Hwa), 1 Burge Rd Woy Woy 10/6 (GSh), 2 The Entrance Bridge 13-30/6 (GNe), 1 Terilbah Res 17/6 (FWa), 1 Patonga 21/6 (PdJ), 1 Terrigal Skillion 25/6 (GNe), 1 Ghosties Bch MSCA 29/6 (HWA); **Black-shouldered Kite:** 2 Central Coast Wetlands 17/6 (RMo); **Wedge-tailed Eagle:** 1 Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 3/6, 21/6,25/6 (MPo), 2 Mangrove Dam Picnic Area 5/6 (NCa), 1 Ourimbah Rest Area 20/6 (JBa), 1 Mill Ck Camp, Dharug NP 28/6 (GAR); **Nankeen Kestrel:** 2 Central Coast Wetlands 19/6 (TSw); **Peregrine Falcon:** 1 Gosford North 2/6 (JBr), 2 Wamberal Cemetery 14/6 (DEa), 2 Wyrabalong Trig Tower, Forresters Beach 14/6 (EVo), 1 Kariong 25/6 (SOW); **Glossy Black Cockatoo:** 2 Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 3/6, 9/6, 17/6 (KPo); **Crested Shrike-tit:** Mill Creek Camp, Dharug NP 28/6 (GSh); **Rose Robin:** AF Koolewong 16/6 (TSw), 4 Springs Rd Kulnura 28/6 (NSo), 1 Mill Ck Camp, Dharug NP 28/6 (GAR).

Good Birding!

SWIFT PARROT SURVEYS July - August 2024

The second Swift Parrot survey commenced on 13th July and will finish on the 24th August. There doesn't appear to be much flowering at the moment but we know there are Swift Parrots north of the Central Coast and they are likely to pass through in this period. We put in a huge effort in the Autumn survey - let's keep that going.

TWITCH LIST July 2024

Graham Nelson	219	Daniel McKeon	171	Robyn Price	141
Allan Benson	213	Julie Peksis	165	Gabrielle Rees	136
Christina Port	195	Chris Jamieson	163	Diana Hogan	136
Carole Carpenter	183	Margaret Pointer	162	Michael Scobie	132
John Carpenter	179	Doug Hocking	158	Frik Gautschi	123
Krystyna Lonergan	178	Rowena Wallace	147	Paul Shelley	114
Kaye Pointer	176	Leonie Loewe	142	Judy Clark	110

Graham Nelson has maintained his solid lead with Allan Benson slowly chipping away at that lead with the rest of the field well behind.

BIRDATA SURVEYS YTD 2024

Nick Carson	211	Robyn Price	42	Doug Hocking	17
Graham Nelson	186	Frik Gautschi	33	Michael Scobie	14
Allan Benson	180	Guy Dutson	25	Leonie Loewe	7
Alan Stuart	161	Meryl Newton	20	David Schuemaker	6
Leeanne Lemke	76	C Clutterbuck	18		

For June 2024, 218 surveys were completed compared with 215 in 2023. YTD 2024, 1197 surveys were completed. This is a significant improvement on 2023 where 817 surveys were entered. Nick Carson put in a big effort in June to take a significant lead,

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 June Survey

The 3 observers saw the ponds very full with a good number and array of waterbirds. Highlights were 2 Pink-eared Ducks and 12 Shoveler. 700 waterfowl were counted, dominated by Eurasian Coots, which is one of the higher counts at this site. 41 species were recorded overall.

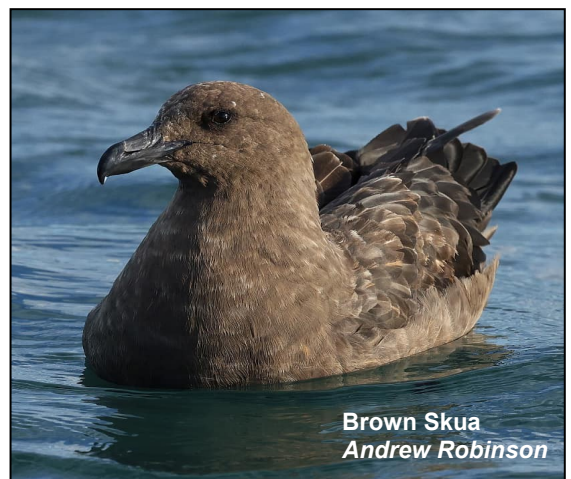
The survey takes place the Wednesday after our meeting. Meet at the Ibis Rd entrance at 9.30am.

Terrigal Pelagic Trip Report: June 21, 2024

Andrew Robinson

The trip didn't quite live up to expectations following last weekend's excellent pelagic out of Sydney and some good birds out of Port Stephens on Wednesday. No doubt the change in wind direction from south to west mid-week didn't help our cause. That said, an enjoyable day with good company was had and we were never without Albatrosses around the boat, including 5 species at one time (4 on the water). It was also nice to see the first Fairy Prion of the day alight on the slick for extended periods which provided all on board with excellent views and some good photo opportunities.

The highlight of the trip undoubtedly came on the return trip when we ventured a drift approx. 8 miles from shore. This immediately produced a hungry and therefore obliging Brown Skua, shortly followed by a frustratingly distant Red-footed Booby which was only the second at-sea record for the Central Coast (third overall), following a pair of well-reported birds from our February trip this year.



Brown Skua
Andrew Robinson

In total 13 species were seen beyond The Haven with 8 of those Tubenoses * : Black-browed Albatross – 9 (4), Campbell Albatross – 4 (2), Black-browed type Albatross – 17, Shy Albatross – 12 (3), Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross – 9 (2), Buller's Albatross – 11 (3), Fairy Prion – 4 (1), Providence Petrel – 5 (2), Fluttering Shearwater – 16 (3), Brown Skua – 3 (1), Greater Crested Tern – 8 (2), Silver Gull – 3, Australasian Gannet – 125 (30), Red-footed Booby – 1.

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

SWEET SOUNDS AS ZOO-BRED BIRDS GO WILD

Bianca Hall

D-d.. d-d-d...d. The distinctive trill of the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater brings a beam to woodland bird expert Mick Roderick's face. It's a giddy high: this quintessentially Australian bird, with its black head, spotted breast and soaring black and gold tail is elusive and enigmatic. Spotting them in the wild is a birdwatcher's dream.

Regent Honeyeaters made the headlines three years ago when researchers discovered their rarity was leading to them forgetting their own songs. Instead, they were mimicking like Noisy Friarbirds and Eastern Rosellas.

But this could be turning around. Birdwatchers from Birdlife Australia report zoo-bred birds released into the wild seem to have learnt the songs of wild birds. "In one flock in the Hunter Valley, researchers identified three birds that had been bred in captivity and released" said Roderick, Birdlife Australia's Regent Honeyeater recovery co-ordinator. "We think there's about 12 birds all up, of which three are birds we released in 2022 - two males and one female- both the males have picked the song of the wild male that they have been hanging around with. The songs are akin to wild bird's songs and different to those recorded when they were released."

With fewer than 400 birds left in the wild, researchers feared there were simply not enough mature males to teach youngster males how to sing their way into the heart of a would-be mate.

Taronga Zoo behavioural ecologist, Dr Ben Pitcher said when the conservation breeding program began almost 20 years ago, young birds who had their songs were bought into captivity. In the early days, keepers recorded wild regent's call and put cassette tapes of recordings of bird-song in the captive birds' aviary. Later, they put microphones into aviaries with adult birds and speakers in the juveniles' aviary.

"A few years ago, we did a study of the success of the birds that we bred and released out and we found that one of the big predictors for success for the birds was whether they been tutored (in birdsong) or not." Pitcher said. "if they had a better song when they were released, they were more likely to go on to be successful in the wild and we put that down to probably forming up flocks with other Regent Honeyeaters as well as the opportunity to find a mate."

Taronga Zoo redoubled its efforts, partnering with the Australian National University to find the most effective way to teach their full-length and complex song. They discovered that 'live' tutors - wild born bird who still sang their intact song - were the best teacher.

"And thanks to all to all that effort in the last season or two, we've really had some great successes in terms of zoo-bred birds recovering that wild song and singing correctly, and now we can put them back in the wild," Pitcher said.

As Spotted gum flower along the east coast of Australia this winter (they flower every few years), they are creating irresistible conditions for regents and birdwatchers. Birdlife Australia's woodland birds' team and citizen scientists have been busy recording sightings. "Regent Honeyeaters are extremely mobile but they are also extremely fussy" Roderick said. "They have their favourite trees just like koalas have their favourite trees and that has probably been their undoing because when you clear 90% of your habitat and you are still roaming and turning up your nose at other blossoms that's available, it's a high-risk life-style."

Dr Ross Crates, from Australian National University, sounded a note of caution about whether captive-born birds regents were recovering their song after release to the wild. Crates, a co-author of the research showing Regent Honeyeaters were adopting the song of other bird species, said there was no evidence from many years of zoo observations that Regent Honeyeaters could drastically change their songs once they were more than a year old.

"Most songbirds are what we call "close-ended learners", which means their adult songs are pretty much fixed by the time they are a year old" he said." As far as I am aware there are only one or two observations in the wild of zoo-bred birds making vocalisations that somewhat resemble those of wild birds. I'm not saying it's impossible that zoo-bred birds can't learn wild songs after they are released, just saying that currently the evidence is anecdotal. Our research over the coming years will shed more light on this."



CAMOUFLAGED BEACH DISCOVERY PROMPTS EXCITEMENT AFTER 20 YEARS OF FEAR

Michael Dahlstrom

They're so hard to spot that walker, dogs and 4WDs often squash them. But Little Terns are on the rebound.

While it's still common to spot sea gulls on our beaches, numbers of another unassuming little seabird have been falling for almost two decades and that's had experts fearing it could face extinction. But this year something remarkable occurred.

Little terns (*Sternula albifrons*) are squat little shorebirds, with thin yellow legs, and black feathered skull-caps. Because they nest on beaches, their sand-coloured camouflaged eggs are often accidentally squashed. They face threats from animal predators, humans and their dogs, vehicles and increasingly erratic weather.

Last time little tern numbers were stable in NSW, it was the turn of the century, and NSYNC was topping the charts with Bye Bye Bye and Russell Crowe was looking young and fit in the Hollywood blockbuster Gladiator. The species is listed as endangered both by NSW and the Commonwealth and ecologists have been working with landholders, beachgoers, volunteers and councils to help it recover.

How many rare little terns hatched this year?

It was a welcome surprise that a NSW Parks and Wildlife survey of little terns over the 2023-2024 breeding season discovered close to a 15 per cent jump in numbers of breeding pairs — an increase from 380 last season to 430 this time around. This followed an exhaustive effort that included 417 survey days and 5,000 little tern observations.

Its head of coastal operations called the result "incredibly uplifting". "We are always hoping for a prosperous season for these animals, and we could not be happier with the results we have seen over this season," Naomi Stephens said.

The surge in breeding pairs led to another welcome result. More babies hatched across the 16 beaches between Wilsons Head in the north and Wallagoot Lake in the south that were surveyed by NSW Parks and Wildlife. A total of 370 fledglings were observed — almost 100 fledglings more than the previous season.

BIRD FLU COULD WIPE OUT AUSTRALIAN BLACK SWANS, GENE STUDY REVEALS

Genelle Weule

The graceful Black Swan is a familiar sight in waterways across Australia, but it could disappear if avian flu ever takes hold here. That's the grim conclusion of an international study that has sequenced the iconic bird's genome — and that of its white cousin — for the first time.

"Black swans have a similar genetic basis [to mute swans], but there are distinct differences," said Kirsty Short, study co-author and virologist at the University of Queensland. The study, published in the journal *Genome Biology*, found Australian Black Swans (*Cygnus atratus*) lack some immune genes that combat viral infections found in other species of swans and waterfowl. "What it tells us is that if avian flu ever got into Australia, Black Swans would be really, really vulnerable," Dr Short said. "And that's a really scary proposition because ... this virus is going gangbusters [overseas]."

She said the finding highlighted the ongoing need to deal with global outbreaks as well as the importance of surveillance and biosecurity. "Ultimately, you can't control where birds migrate, can you?"

There are a number of different subtypes of avian influenzas. Most of these are low pathogenic viruses that circulate all the time in wild birds and cause little to no disease. Only certain strains of two subtypes — H5 and H7 — cause severe disease and death. Both originally appeared in poultry and spread to wild birds and back again.

Unlike other species of swans and wild birds such as Mallard Ducks, Black Swans are known to be particularly susceptible to these highly pathogenic avian influenzas (HPAI), better known as "bird flu".

While their paler cousins and water fowl may suffer only mild symptoms such as listlessness, Black Swans die so quickly there are often no signs, said Anjana Karawita of the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness. "They usually die within two to three days".

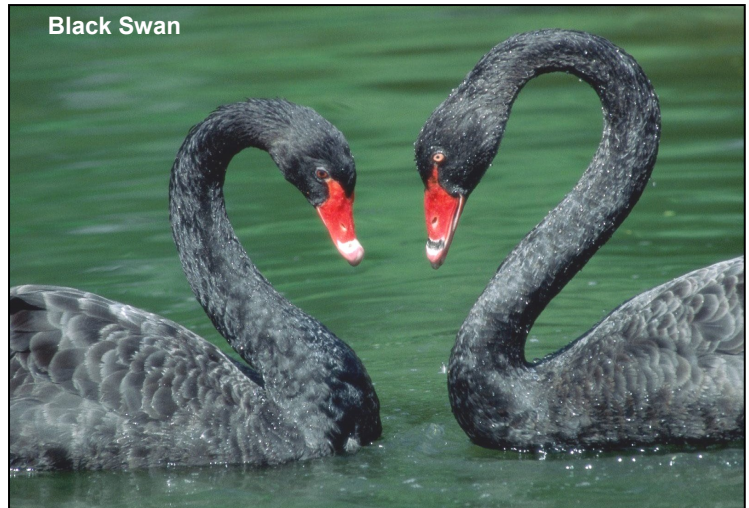
In 2020, five black swans at Jerusalem Biblical Zoo died after being infected with H5N8 strain, but mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) and water fowl were not affected at all.

Until the genomes were sequenced, no-one knew why Black Swans were so susceptible to avian flu.

Michelle Wille of the University of Melbourne said the study was one of the first to look at the immune system of wild birds. "As the virus sweeps through sub populations [of birds], we discover species that are highly susceptible," said Dr Wille, who was not involved in the study. "This is one of the very few studies that is actually being proactive instead of reactive."

Along with sequencing the two swan genomes — which also revealed the gene responsible for the different coloured plumage — the team led by Dr Karawita looked at how genes in cells responded to the virus. This analysis, known as a transcriptome, revealed that cells taken from Black Swans mounted an uncontrolled inflammatory reaction when they were infected, in much the same way as someone with severe COVID-19.

Dr Short said the finding that Black Swans were missing key genes suggested they were probably not just susceptible to avian flu, but a whole lot of different viruses. "I suspect that the isolation of Australia has probably played a role in keeping out these viruses and therefore keeping the black swan safe."



'It's on our doorstep'

Over the years there have been small home-grown instances of HPAI viruses in Australia.

The most recent was an outbreak of H7N7 in farms Victoria in 2024, which evolved in poultry from a low pathogenic virus found in wild birds in Australia. Thousands of chickens and turkeys had to be culled before the outbreak was contained. The bird flu virus of greatest concern is H5N1, which has not arrived in Australia yet. Since H5N1 first appeared in the late 1990s, it has evolved "like crazy", Dr Short said. "For the first time ever, it's entered South America and it's just decimating the bird populations there," Dr Short said. It's also widespread in Europe, the UK, North America and Asia. "It's on our doorstep."

What are the symptoms of bird flu in poultry?

- Sudden death
- Difficulty breathing, such as coughing, sneezing, or rasping
- Swelling and purple discolouration of the head, comb, wattles and neck
- Rapid drop in eating, drinking and egg production
- Ruffled feathers, drowsiness, closed eyes
- Diarrhoea

The overseas outbreak has been devastating, said Dr Wille, who is involved with the surveillance of avian influenza in Australian wild bird populations. "We have no understanding of how many how many wild birds have died [overseas] from this outbreak because most agencies are not counting. "There are just so many dead birds and there is no indication that it is going to decrease any time soon."

Dr Wille said screening of birds in Australia had not detected any sign of the virus here yet. "I think the risk will be low probably until September when the migratory birds come back."

Waterfowl, which are thought to have had a role in the spread of the H5N1 virus in Europe, Asia and Africa, don't migrate to Australia. While smaller wading birds are not considered common hosts of HPAI viruses, Dr Wille said the risk was unclear. "We need to remain vigilant because even if only one shorebird migrates with HPAI onboard and arrives in Australia, this could trigger outbreaks."