



The Twitcher

August
2025

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

Editorial Team: Allan Benson (0457 458 274) Wendy Mitchell (0423 388 529) & Robyn Price Volume 20, No. 8

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
26/08/25	Next Meeting: Rainforest Birding in North Queensland Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite Hungry Jacks	Doug Hocking
30/8/25	Outing: Dubbo Gully Meet: Meet 8.30am at Mangrove Mountain shops, Cnr Waratah and Wisemans Ferry Rd, Mangrove Mountain	Margaret & Kaye Pointer 4374 1163
10/9/25	½ day Outing: Bensville Meet: 8.30am at St Huberts Island on the left just past the bridge	Christina Port 0421 691 317
23/9/25	Next Meeting: The NSW Big Year Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite Hungry Jacks	James Bennett

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: Doug Hocking is our speaker tonight. In January 2025, Doug and his wife ventured to North Queensland in search of the rain forest specialities. His first stop was Yungaburra where he amassed an impressive list of birds. His second stop was the legendary Iron Range where he managed to see most of the endemics along with some impressive reptiles.

Last Month's Meeting: An excellent crowd of 36 attendees came to hear John Rawson talk about a trip to the tiny country of Bhutan. John explained in detail about culture and the scenery in Bhutan including some very scary narrow mountain roads. Most of the birding was conducted along roads and John showed some amazing shots of colourful birds taken by his daughter.

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 1500 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.

CAMPS 2025

Tue 2nd - Thu 4th September	Parkes	Doug Hocking	0427 800 428	Spicer Caravan Park 37a Albert St, Parkes. (02) 6862 6162
Tue 21st - Thu 23rd October	South West Rocks	Alan Morris	0418 269 482	Ingenia Caravan Park Gordon Young Drive, South West Rocks (02) 6566 6264

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.

PAY YOUR MEETING DONATION ELECTRONICALLY

Don't scratch around for cash!

Graham Nelson has set up an account so your meeting donation can be paid electronically:

BSB: 063097 A/C: 89676934

Used Stamps: I have been remiss in recent years in finding recipients for the stamps that members so kindly collect because a number of charities no longer accept stamps for their fund-raising. Following the recent donation of a very large box of stamps by Ella de Jong, I was motivated to renew my efforts.

I am pleased to report that I have delivered:

1. **10 kg** of used stamps to the North Sydney office of *Mary MacKillop Today*:

The stamps are forwarded to an auction house and funds raised are used to provide access to learning opportunities for the poorest communities in Australia and internationally in Timor-Leste, Peru, and Fiji.

2. **4 kg** of stamps to Terrigal Uniting Church which will be forwarded to the *Synod Stamp Committee*:

Donated stamps and collections are sold to dealers to raise funds for a variety of projects which aim to reduce suffering and improve the health and wellbeing of communities in need.

I still have a considerable quantity of stamps and am waiting to hear back from two other charities. *Wendy Mitchell*

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

The weather has not been conducive to birding and highlights are few and far between. The most exciting record was an immature male Rose-crowned Fruit-dove at Norah Head - the 10th record for the Central Coast. Fairy Martins have returned with sightings at the Dairy. Also at the Dairy, a Spotless Crake was heard and glimpsed. Black-necked Storks have been recorded at Wyee and McPherson Road Swamp. Pied Currawongs have been conspicuous as they make their winter migration to the coast. Two Brahminy Kites on the Brisbane Water Winter survey may suggest they could breed here. Regardless, it is more evidence of Brahminy Kite moving southward.

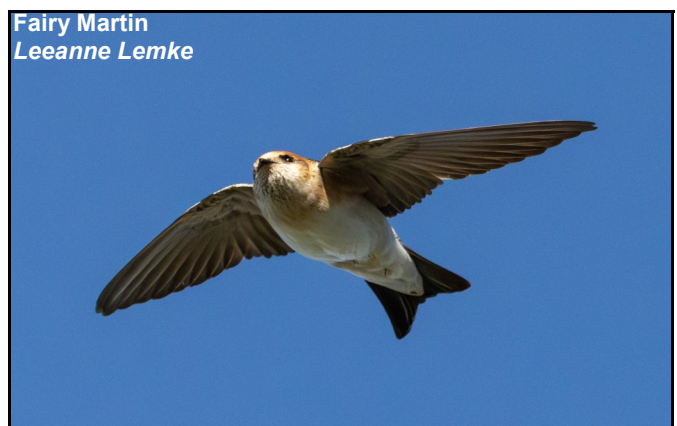


Rose-crowned Fruit-dove
Leeanne Lemke

September will see the return of some of the spring migrants. Hopefully it stops raining and the Coast dries out.



Black-necked Stork
Leonie Loewe



Fairy Martin
Leeanne Lemke

OUTING REPORTS

Outing: July 26

MYUNA BAY

Leader: Graham Nelson

The day kicked off with rain at 5:30am. Greeting us at Myuna Bay was a chilly drizzle that made us question our life choices. After a brisk ten-minute walk, the rain decided to take a break for the rest of the day - thankfully! While we can't confirm if a rainbow showed up to brighten the mood, Rainbow Lorikeets certainly made their colourful presence known. We also spotted some Scaly-breasted Lorikeets and heard calls that I confidently blamed on Musk Lorikeets. The Osprey nest was suspiciously quiet, though we speculated the female might have been playing hide-and-seek. Two boys revved

an outboard motor so fiercely to cross a sandbank that they scared a Nankeen Night Heron into a surprise flight seen only by Louise, who clearly has eagle eyes. Our peaceful stroll to the Eraring outlet was accompanied by the usual suspects: Cormorants, Egrets, Terns, and Gulls. We caught sight of two adult White-bellied Sea-eagles, soon joined by two 2–3-year-old juveniles. The Brahminy Kite was a no-show, probably busy with other bird business. We also spotted two turtles casually hanging out in the canal. On the way back, Frik spotted two Nankeen Night Herons deep in the trees - though the view was limited, it was a win for the day. The male Osprey made a grand entrance at the nest with a fish, causing the female to make a dramatic exit and chase off a White-bellied Sea-eagle. A group of thornbills arrived fashionably late, accompanied by a Rose Robin.

White-bellied Sea-eagle
Linda Deverell



Dressed for the weather - Myuna Bay
Linda Deverell

Morning tea was enjoyed near the cars and behind some trees, where the cold breeze reminded us that nature doesn't do comfort zones. Next, we drove to Dora Creek playground and wandered along the Eraring inlet, where two White-bellied Sea-eagles perched like royalty on the oval lights. A male Satin Bowerbird made a cameo appearance, but otherwise, the wildlife kept a low profile. Our adventure continued to Whistlers Drive, Watagan Park, Cooranbong - an area bursting with creeks and leafy corridors. The trail led us to a pond, where we first encountered White-cheeked Honeyeaters and then chased the elusive sounds of Double-barred Finches. Along the way, we met a colourful cast: Red-browed Finch, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Little Wattlebird, Pied and Grey Butcherbirds, Spinebill, Thornbills, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and a variety of waterbirds who probably judged us for our slow pace.

As the sun finally decided to show up, we passed through Cooranbong and stopped just beyond the playground at the public toilets - because nature calls, literally. Behind them, a bridge led to seats beside Dora Creek, which was so overgrown with weed it looked like a jungle gym for King Parrots, who often drop by for lunch dates.

Turning at the lights onto Central Road at Avondale University, we took the second right onto Cedar Lane, passed the cemetery (where the residents stayed quiet) and reached the car park at the Boys Walk trailhead. This 2.9-kilometre loop starts with a 1.8-kilometre stretch alongside the creek, then loops back 1.3 kilometres through buildings and paddocks. The walk is a treasure trove for birdwatchers, with chances to spot Powerful Owl, Grey Goshawk, Crested Shrike-tit (last year's highlight), Varied Sittella, a bunch of Honeyeaters, small woodland birds and waterbirds. During our stroll, we saw several Honeyeaters, Thornbills, Silvereyes, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Large-billed and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens, Wonga Pigeon, and a shy Bassian Thrush that only showed itself when it thought no one was looking. We also bumped into plenty of Antechinus, who weren't curious about us as they scurried to hidey-hole's.

A big thanks to the nine brave souls who faced the early morning rain with us. Top two birds for the day were the Rose Robin and the Bassian Thrush. Despite the chill, the day was a birding blast, with a whopping 81 species tallied.

½ Day Outing: August 13 MOONEY MOONEY CREEK & GIRRAKOOL

Leader: Doug Hocking

It was a sunny winter's day with light winds; whilst cold, it was a good day to bird on Mooney Mooney Creek – a coastal estuary and the sandstone ridge of Girrakool National Park. Unfortunately, the birds were quiet with limited species flowering. It is four years since we have walked the Mooney Creek track – the vegetation and track are in good condition.

Highlights were a female Rose Robin, a Green Catbird, Regent Bowerbird and Lyrebird. Some other species included Striated Thornbill, Brown Gerygone, East-



Female Rose Robin

© Stevografix.com.au

ern Yellow Robin, Whipbird, Fantail Cuckoo, Wonga Pigeon, Superb Fairywren, Grey Fantail, Brown Thornbill, Mallard (only water bird sighted), White-browed Scrubwren, Lewin's Honeyeater, Satin Bowerbird, White-breasted Sea-eagle, Bell Miner, Kookaburra, and Pied Currawong.

We had morning tea at Girrakool National Park. There was reasonable flowering in the heath, and this probably reflected the 10 or so Eastern Spinebills we saw. Once again there were very few birds. However, some species sighted included Little Wattlebird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Pied and Grey Butcherbird, Variegated Fairywren, a fly-through of a Blue-faced Honeyeater, and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo spotted on the way out after lunch. Only 35 species approximately were sighted for the outing. Continued wet weather and lack of flowering would be a major contributor to this small number. However, it was a pleasant day with a small group of enthusiastic birders in good habitat.



There were 9 birders and we welcomed Ann-Marie Psarras and Ken Booth on their first outing with the Central Coast Birders.

SPECIES LIST

JULY 2025

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
Bold – Threatened and or rare species			
Australian Shoveler	4	3-15/7/25 Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Kelly Nash
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	3/7/2025 Mangrove Mountain	Allan Benson
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	8/7/2025 Maidens Brush Rd, Wyoming	Bors Vesterberg
Hoary-headed Grebe	25	7/7/2025 Budgewoi Lake, Malvina Ave, Lake Haven	Noel Lonergan
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	60	1-4/7/2025 at feeder, Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Brush Bronzewing	2	24/7/2025 Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Ken Janson
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	IMM	16/7/2025 Norah Head Lighthouse (10 th CC record)	Alan Morris
Buff-banded Rail	3	11/7/2025 Berkeley Vale foreshore	Christina Port
Buff-banded Rail	1	19/7/2025 Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Caroline Quillan
Buff-banded Rail	1	24/7/2025 Aust. Reptile Park, Somersby	Stuart Quick
Red-capped Plover	6	4/7/2025 Pelican Point, Norah Head	Dean Purcell
Double-banded Plover	3	4/7/2025 Pelican Point, Norah Head	Dean Purcell
Ruddy Turnstone	2	4/7/2025 Pelican Point, Norah Head	Dean Purcell
Bar-tailed Godwit	2	14/7/2025 Illoura Res, Davistown	Arnie Boyaci
Grey-tailed Tattler	2	4/7/2025 Pelican Point, Norah Head	Dean Purcell
Red-necked Stint	5	4/7/2025 Pelican Point, Norah Head	Dean Purcell
Brown Skua	9	18/7/2025 Terrigal pelagic	Stephanie Owen
White-fronted Tern	1	16/7/2025 North Entrance near Surf Club	Graham Nelson
Black-browed Albatross	5	3/7/2025 Crackneck to Wyrabalong Trig, Bateau B.	Josiah Jackson
Black-browed Albatross	3	16/7/2025 off Norah Head	Allan Benson
Black-browed Albatross	2	16/7/2025 off Soldiers Pt, Norah Head	Alan Morris
Campbell's Albatross	1	18/7/2025 Terrigal pelagic	Stephanie Owen
Ind. Yellow-nosed Albatross	1	14/7/2025 off Copacabana	Zee Merven
Ind. Yellow-nosed Albatross	2	18/7/2025 Terrigal pelagic	Stephanie Owen
White-capped (Shy) Alb.	1	14/7/2025 off Copacabana	Zee Merven
White-capped (Shy) Alb.	1	16/7/2025 off Soldiers Point, Norah Head	Alan Morris
White-capped (Shy) Alb.	2	18/7/2025 Terrigal pelagic	Stephanie Owen
Northern Giant-Petrel	2	18/7/2025 Terrigal pelagic	Stephanie Owen
Providence Petrel	1	18/7/2025 Terrigal pelagic	Stephanie Owen
Fairy Prion	3	3/7/2025 Crackneck to Wyrabalong Trig, Bateau B.	Josiah Jackson

Fluttering Shearwater	45	3/7/2025	Terrigal Point Lookout	Josiah Jackson
Black-necked Stork	2	8 & 27/7	McPherson Rd Swamp, Tuggerah	Leeanne Lemke
Osprey	A+N	6/7/2025	San Remo woodland	Leeanne Lemke
Osprey	2A+N	6/7/2025	Harry Moore Oval, Toukley	Kelly Nash
Osprey	1+N	19/7/2025	Woy Woy Comms Tower	Greg Shaw
Pacific Baza	1	20/7/2025	Cresthaven Ave, Bateau Bay	Ian Kerr
Black-shouldered Kite	2	16/7/2025	Magenta Shores	Graham Nelson
Black-shouldered Kite	1	22/7/2025	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Kelly Nash
Black-shouldered Kite	1	25/7/2025	Mount Penang Gardens, Kariong	Tracey Wilson
Square-tailed Kite	1	3/7/2025	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Square-tailed Kite	1	18/7/2025	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Mike Barrow
Square-tailed Kite	1	23/7/2025	Berkeley Vale	Graham Nelson
Brahminy Kite	1	3/7/2025	Rip Bridge, Daleys Point	Darren Earnshaw
Brahminy Kite	1	14/7/2025	Peats Ferry Bridge, Mooney Mooney	Max Weatherell
Brown Goshawk	1	24/7/2025	M1 Motorway, Ourimbah Rest Area	Ted Elks
Grey Goshawk	1	6/7/2025	Glenworth Valley	Lee Emery
Grey Goshawk	1	24/7/2025	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Ken Janson
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	17/7/2025	Norah Head	Dean Purcell
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	20/7/2025	Billabong St, Woy Woy	Grey Shaw
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	3/7/2025	Mangrove Mountain	Allan Benson
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	6/7/2025	Glenworth Valley	Lee Emery
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	7 & 19/7	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Caroline Quillan
Little Eagle	1	22/6/2025	Glenworth Valley	James Garnham
Little Eagle	1	3/7/2025	Central Coast Hwy, Erina Heights	Darren Earnshaw
Little Eagle	1	4/7/2025	Mount Penang Gardens	Guy Dutson
Spotted Harrier	2	8/7/2025	Ironbark Rd, Mangrove Mountain	Leeanne Lemke
Azure Kingfisher	1	9/7/2028	Carawah Reserve, West Gosford	Linda Deverell
Azure Kingfisher	1	25/7/2025	Mount Penang Gardens, Kariong	Tracey Wilson
Powerful Owl	1	10/7/2025	Palmdale Rd, Palmdale	Dean Purcell
Powerful Owl	1	23/7/2025	Rumbalara Reserve, Gosford	Nick Carson
Nankeen Kestrel	1	16/7/2025	Magenta Shores	Graham Nelson
Nankeen Kestrel	1	18/7/2025	Terrigal Skillion	Nick Carson
Australian Hobby	1	6/7/2025	Tuggerah Creek, Central Coast Wetlands	Julie Peksis
Australian Hobby	1	9/7/2025	McPherson Rd Swamp, Tuggerah	Leeanne Lemke
Peregrine Falcon	2	22/7/2025	Hardys Bay, Bouddi National Park	Ian Kerr
Yellow-tailed Bla Cockatoo	50+	24/7/2025	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Bruce Ward-Smith
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	25/7/2025	Wyee	Leonie Loewe
Gang Gang Cockatoo	3	3/7/2025	Jilliby	Matt Cunningham
Gang Gang Cockatoo	8	3/7/2025	Wyong Creek	Joanne Hagan
Gang Gang Cockatoo	9	1-14/7/25	Upper Palmdale	Tricia Sweet
Brown-headed Honeyeater	2	6/7/2025	San Remo woodland	Leeanne Lemke
Fuscous Honeyeater	1	17/7/2025	Mill Creek, Dharug NP	Marie Lister
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	15/7/2025	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Tricia Sweet
Blue-faced Honeyeater	2	19/7/2025	Cresthaven Ave, Bateau Bay	Ian Kerr
Blue-faced Honeyeater	5	22/7/2025	Winifred Ave, Umina	Ken Janson
Rock Warbler	1	11/7/2025	Koolewong Garden	Tricia Sweet
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	2	3/7/2025	Ironbark Rd, Mangrove Mtn	Allan Benson
Varied Sittella	4	18/7/2025	Davistown Boardwalk	Ken Jansen
Rufous Whistler	AM	6/7/2025	San Remo woodland	Leeanne Lemke
Rufous Whistler	2	3/7/2025	Girrakool picnic area, Brisbane Water NP	Chris Anderson
Dusky Woodswallow *	1	19/7/2025	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Prasad Ganesan
Spangled Drongo	1	4/7/2025	Wyong Milk Factory	Bruce Ward-Smith
Spangled Drongo	1	15/7/2025	Norah Head Bushland Trail	Nick Carson
Spangled Drongo	1	16/7/2025	Noraville heaths	Graham Nelson
Jacky Winter	6	3/7/2025	Ironbark Rd, Mangrove Mtn	Allan Benson
Jacky Winter	1	12/7/2025	Waratah Rd, Nth Mangrove Mtn	Nick Carson
Rose Robin	AM	20/7/2025	Pearl Beach	Laurie Smith

Rose Robin	1	23/7/2025	Rumbalara Reserve, Gosford	Nick Carson
Fairy Martin *	1	19/7/2025	10 on 28/7, Central Coast Wtlds, Tuggerah	Prasad Ganesan
Double-barred Finch	5	3/7/2025	Weonga Place, San Remo	Dean Purcell
Bassian Thrush	1	8/7/2025	M1 Motorway, Ourimbah Rest Stop	Michael Ronan

Breeding and other records: July 2025

Purple Swamphen: 2A+Y Central Coast Wetlands 10/7 (TSw); **Black-browed Albatross:** 12 Terrigal pelagic 18/7 (SOw); **Osprey:** 1 Terilbah Reserve Nth Entrance 23/7 (SQu); **Wedge-tailed Eagle:** 1 Wisemans Ferry Rd Central Mangrove 12/7 (NCa); **Little Eagle:** 1 Spencer 20/6 (NCa), 1 Woy Woy Tip 3/7 (DEa). *Good Birding!*

TWITCH LIST July 2025

Nick Carson	224	Krystyna Lonergan	167	David Schuemaker	120
Allan Benson	202	Doug Hocking	161	Frik Gautschi	115
Christina Port	185	Margaret Pointer	160	Robyn Price	110
Carole Carpenter	180	Chris Jamieson	159	Diana Hogan	103
Kaye Pointer	174	Daniel McKeon	142	Lynette Callaghan	100
Julie Peksis	171	Gabrielle Rees	135		
John Carpenter	169	Judy Clark	128		

Nick Carson has maintained his 20+ bird advantage over Allan Benson.

BIRDATA SURVEYS YTD 2025

Alan Stuart	199	Daniel McKeon	32	Doug Hocking	20
Graham Nelson	174	Meryl Newton	29	Ann Lindsay	15
Allan Benson	135	Frik Gautschi	29	Michael Scobie	12
Robyn Price	53	C Clutterbuck	25	David Schuemaker	5
Guy Dutson	32	Leeanne Lemke	22		

YTD 2025 survey number is now 1222 compared with 1453 in 2024.

Alan Stuart has opened up a gap on the field with Graham Nelson a close second and Allan Benson trailing by a fair margin. 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 July 18 to August 10, 2025

Only 45 surveys have been completed. The weather has been awful and there is not a lot of bird activity at survey sites. The following number of surveys were completed:

Allan Benson	29	Greg Shaw	6	Graham Nelson	4
Nick Carson	3	Robyn Price	2	Frances Westwick	1

No Swift Parrots were found at survey sites. The closing date for surveys is August 31.

BIRD-A-DAY CHALLENGE

Leeanne Lemke is undertaking the Bird-a-day challenge. This involves photographing a new bird every day. Leeanne is going really well - up to the 15th August she had photographed a new bird every day.

She was up to bird 227 - Gibson's Albatross. Things are getting desperate though. She is down to Silver Gull and Purple Swamphen.

SOUTH WYONG SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS

July Survey

4 observers completed this survey on a sunny winter's day. In contrast to last month the ponds were very low, in fact the Pied Stilts were barely getting their feet wet 15 metres from the shore. As a result, there were almost no water birds on the ponds - only 32 Australasian Grebe and 5 Black Duck. The survey was complicated because they were mowing the banks and we usually get excluded while this is happening. But after a chat to the operator, we agreed to minimise our time there. Highlight was 15 Black-fronted Dotterel feeding along the muddy edges. Only 35 species were recorded.

An onsite meeting was held with Paul Shelley from Central Coast Council re the renovation of the ponds. In summary, the ponds we survey are storm water overflow ponds. Whilst still in the planning stage, the ponds will be dredged and the dredged material will be dumped in the far end of the ponds thus reducing the size of the ponds. Vegetation needs to be cleared 3 metres back from the wall which will result in a significant amount of vegetation being removed. They plan to create two islands in the ponds. We won't be able to do surveys while this process is happening.

Paul showed me around the site. At the back are two ponds where they discharge water to Bateau Bay. These ponds had between 400 and 500 ducks on them, nearly all Chestnut and Grey Teal and some Black Ducks.

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

Terrigal Pelagic

July 18, 2025

Departed: 6:20am from The Haven, Terrigal

Conditions: Seas – rough, Winds – strong and increasing, Water Temp – 19 Degrees

We left the Haven a bit before dawn, minus a few passengers for differing reasons. With winds forecast stronger than anticipated, there was a good chance we wouldn't make it out to the shelf - something that ultimately proved true. The wind was from the south and the seas lumpy, so most people were rugged up in their best wet weather and winter gear, which was very much needed. As we began our wet and bouncy ride out, Albatross began to appear from the early morning gloom. While we initially assumed them to be Black-browed, it wasn't until the light improved that we could confirm their identity. The strong winds were clearly influencing bird flight behaviour, with many moving differently than usual to compensate. By the 10-mile mark, the worsening conditions forced us to abandon our attempt to reach the shelf. Fortunately, there was plenty of bird activity around us, both nearby and on the horizon, so we put out a slick to see what might come in.

By 7:30am we had 4 Brown Skuas and the same number of Black-browed Albatross feeding at the boat. A number of Crested Terns made the most of the food offerings as well, often flying at speed past our heads to get some tasty morsels. We noticed several birds out wide that were flying low then soaring up high, in a manner similar to petrels, and for a while caused some excitement. However, they turned out to be Fluttering-type Shearwaters exhibiting unusual back-and-forth flight across the slick, rather than their typical rapid flybys. Unfortunately, they stayed too far for decent photography but their behaviour was certainly worth noting.



Black-browed Albatross
Stephanie Owen

By 8:30am, with cresting waves and a weather front on approach, two Shy Albatross joined the growing group around the boat. Then, at 9:30am, as the front came through, we were treated to brief but rewarding views of an adult Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross and a Providence Petrel, both of which were spotted by most onboard before disappearing again. Just 15 minutes later, a juvenile Indian Yellow-nosed dropped in and settled on the water. By this time, we had 9 Brown Skuas feeding around the boat, the highest number that most people onboard had seen at one time before. One of the birds was noticed to have a band on its leg, which we have taken shots of to try to get some information about this individual bird. At one point all of the Skuas had drifted some distance away and something caused them all to lift. As we scanned the birds in flight a Northern Giant Petrel emerged from the group and did a few laps of the boat before heading off.

With conditions worsening we decided to do a slow motor back towards the Haven, burleying on the way, to see if anything would join the birds flying back with us. A few of the Skuas and most of the Albies followed the boat. The waves made the trip back a bit unsettling for both the passengers and the burley buckets, with the buckets emptying fish across the deck after one particularly spicy wave. All in the name of good fun, as long as no one gets hurt. Arriving safely back in the Haven we were surprised to see another Northern Giant Petrel flying around inside the Haven itself before heading back behind the rock shelf to continue flying up and back just along the coastline.

All in all, despite not making it to the shelf and some unpleasant boating conditions it was a pretty interesting day out there with most punters happy with what they had seen.

In total 12 bird species were seen beyond The Haven as follows:

Brown Skua 9 (9), Silver Gull - 1 (1), Crested Tern - 20 (9), Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross - 2 (2), Shy Albatross - 2 (2), Black-browed Albatross (Black-browed) - 12 (9), Black-browed Albatross (Campbell) - 1 (1), Providence Petrel - 1 (1), Northern Giant Petrel 2 (1), Fluttering Shearwater 10 (4), Fluttering-type Shearwater 35 (4), Australasian Gannet - 8 (2).

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

MASSIVE FLOCK OF CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SWIFT PARROTS SEEN NEAR BENDIGO

By Alice Walker and Prue Bentley

What is believed to be close to the entire population of Swift Parrots has gathered on the outskirts of Bendigo in Victoria. The critically endangered birds, which face major threats of habitat loss and predation, migrate to the mainland from Tasmania each year to search for food.

Swift Parrots have fascinated Adrian Martins for years, but last month he had an incredible day at the office when he saw more of the critically endangered birds in one spot than he had ever recorded before.

The natural environment program manager at Victoria's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action was monitoring the "swifties" that had come to roost in central Victoria as part of their annual migration from Tasmania. He was astonished as a flock of a few parrots grew in size to dozens, then hundreds, right before his eyes. "We were getting up around that estimated population size ... around that 600 to 700," Mr Martins says. And that's significant because there are thought to be only 750 of the birds left in the wild in Australia "Every night I was back at this site watching and observing new behaviours that I'd never seen before," Mr Martins says.

One of the first people he called about his discovery was wildlife ecologist Chris Tzaros. Mr Tzaros grew up in the local area and spent his weekends as a child riding his bike through bushland to spot the birds. He was working in the field in New South Wales, six hours' drive away, but couldn't stand missing out once he saw Mr Martins's updates. "I thought, 'Stuff this, I'm going to drop everything and get down there and have a look,'" Mr Tzaros says. "It was amazing."

The predominantly bright green swift parrot is about 25 centimetres long, noisy and endemic to south-east Australia. Mr Tzaros has been working with Swift Parrots for three decades and has seen the population plummet. While big aggregations are known to occur, he says this one was significant. "I've been monitoring the bird pretty closely [and] normally ... a big flock might be between 50 and 100 birds."

Now ecologists are questioning why so many "swifties" congregated this season and why they chose that particular site near Bendigo.



Chris Tzaros

Mr Tzaros says dry conditions could have limited available food sources for the parrots, but it is unclear what makes the location remarkable. And his excitement to see such a large flock is tempered by the reality the birds face. "It doesn't change the fact that what we're dealing with is a critically endangered species."

The threat level to Swift Parrots was upgraded to critically endangered in 2016. Rob Heinsohn from Australian National University (ANU) leads a team of conservation biologists working with the Swift Parrot. Professor Heinsohn says the parrots face threats both in their breeding ground of Tasmania and on the mainland where they seek nectar in the cooler months. Habitat loss and a surprising opportunistic predator, the sugar glider, are the bird's biggest threats. Professor Heinsohn says his team expects the species will quickly become extinct. "We modelled it all and we said that sometime in the early 2030s, at this rate there won't be any Swift Parrots left."

Mr Tzaros says the Swift Parrots sighted in central Victoria were feeding mainly on private land and roadsides. He is concerned future development could affect the species. "We don't have to go obliterating habitat every time we want to ... establish a new residential estate for people," he says.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT JOINS NSW ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST AS POPULATION DIVES

By Catherine James



Ian Davies

The Black-tailed Godwit has been listed as endangered in New South Wales after studies showed its population has declined as much as 77.5 per cent.

It is one of five bird species to be classified by the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee this month.

Ecologists say the decline of the Black-tailed Godwit is detrimental to Australia's ecosystem. Scientists fear a remarkable migratory shorebird, which flies vast distances each year to reach Australia, will become extinct in the near future. The Black-tailed Godwit is capable of reaching speeds of 95 kilometres per hour as it flies from as far as Siberia to Australian coastlines and inland locations such as the Macquarie Marshes in western New South Wales.

"Black-tailed Godwits are a truly impressive bird, flying more than 10,000km twice a year to and from the Northern Hemisphere where they breed," UNSW ecologist Richard Kingsford said. "Not many other birds in Australia fly such long distances."

Despite its strength and endurance, the bird was classed as endangered by the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee in late July. Its estimated population met the "endangered" threshold of a 50 per cent to 80 per cent loss over three generations, or 23 years. The committee also added four other birds to the state's threatened species list for the first time, determining the Grey Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and Red Knot birds all met the "vulnerable" threshold of a 30 to 50 per cent population decline.

All five species are migratory birds that travel to Australia through the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, an internationally recognised waterbird travelling route stretching from the Arctic Circle to New Zealand via East and South-East Asia. Citing several population studies, the committee report noted the Australian numbers of the black-tailed godwit had fallen by a minimum of 52 per cent to as high as 77.5 per cent in 23 years. It outlined how its habitat at stopovers on its long-haul journey are shrinking, competing with humans for the preferred coastal locations, and climate change and water management impacting on inland wetlands.

Professor Kingsford said it was a similar story for all the birds newly added to the list, with the challenges echoed across forests and estuaries. "They're all indicative of the same problems — habitat loss and altered ecosystems — but also things like pollution, diseases and over-harvesting," he said. Using an analogy of biodiversity as an aeroplane, he described how each declining species "rattled" the ecosystem. "It's the equivalent of thinking about a plane that's stitched together with little rivets. If you start to lose those rivets, there's some point where that plane might fall out of the sky," Professor Kingsford said.

Professor Kingsford said the Black-tailed Godwit played an important role in the ecosystem, such as its contribution to improved water quality as a predator of worms, crustaceans and molluscs in mudflats and shallow waters. He said while it faced an "imminent risk of extinction in the next 10 to 30 years", its decline along the way had also had a detrimental impact. "We depend so much on what biodiversity gives us," Professor Kingsford said. "There's just so many ecosystem services that we get and extinction is one of the major drivers of us losing some of those ecosystem services."

Professor Kingsford encouraged people to consider the environmental changes needed by directly addressing policy and to think longer term. "The environment, things like climate change and pollution, and flooding in rivers, these are all major threats, and most of those are really a reflection of policies by governments and communities," he said. "There's no more important way of influencing that than through the political process ... not just for the next election cycle, but the next 100 years."

Winter Water Bird Survey Brisbane Water KBA - Thursday July 17

Doug Hocking

The Winter Bird Survey was carried out on the above date. Weather conditions were light winds and we timed the survey for a low tide at 9.30 am. The birding highlight for the day was a pair of Brahminy Kites at Daleys Point.

There were some slight changes to bird numbers with Great Pied Cormorant up from 20 last year to 78. White Ibis and Black Swan numbers were down probably due to a good season inland. There were only 3 overwintering Godwits and one Eastern Curlew. Other bird numbers were similar to 2024.

Observers were Allan Benson, Graham Nelson, Michael Scobie and Doug Hocking.

As usual it was a comfortable survey in Michael's boat. Survey route – Paddy's, Lintern, Cockle (Davistown Channels), Bensville, St Hubert's and Rileys Island Channels, then Orange Grove and the Pelican Colony.

See next page for survey figures

WINTER SURVEY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Silver Gull	60	40	72	40	44	83
Australian Pelican	150	150	212	250	150	140
Little Pied Cormorant	44	40	51	130	65	86
Pied Cormorant	11	17	22	30	20	78
Little Black Cormorant	8	300	111	57	20	36
Australasian Darter	15	5	11	16	12	3
Great Egret	9	6	10	15	15	14
Little Egret	7	2	11	12	11	6
Royal Spoonbill	13	10	21	20	10	5
White-faced Heron	4	10	7	21	17	22
Nankeen Night Heron	1	2	0	0	0	0
Northern Mallard	23	25	65	83	52	17
Australian Wood Duck	1	0	0	4	2	8
Chestnut Teal	11	8	5	20	20	31
Caspian Tern	8	6	9	16	9	14
Crested Tern	2	2	0	3	0	2
Pied Oyster Catcher	8	5	9	16	19	22
Bar-tailed Godwit	12	10	0	4	11	3
Eastern Curlew	6	0	7	1	1	1
White-bellied Sea Eagle	2	1	2	1	5	0
Eastern Osprey	1	2	1	4	2	2
Masked Lapwing	1	1	12	6	9	7
Welcome Swallow	6	5	50	3	2	13
Raven Spp	1	2	18	4	8	4
Black Swan		2	2	87	45	8
Striated Heron		1	1	0	0	0
White Ibis		5	14	18	35	10
Black Pacific Duck			15	53	8	6
Brown Honeyeater			2	0	0	0
Rainbow Lorikeet			8	6	7	10
Australian Magpie			6	3	7	1
Magpie Lark			2	1	4	1
Kookaburra				1	0	0
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo				2	0	1
Great Cormorant				2	0	6
Hoary-headed Grebe				26	0	0
Little Corella				41	23	32
Black-winged Stilt				2	0	0
Grey Teal					4	0
Brahminy Kite						2