



The Twitcher

March
2026

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

Editorial Team: Allan Benson (0457 458 274) Wendy Mitchell (0423 388 529) & Robyn Price Volume 21, No. 3

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
24/3/26	Next Meeting: Nil Desperandum Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite Hungry Jacks	Patrick Diment
28/3/26	Outing: Bull's Quarry Meet: Meet 8.30am Tunnel Creek Fire Trail, Woy Woy Rd, Woy Woy	Frik Gautschi 0404 467 097
8/4/26	½ day Outing: Bensville Meet: Meet 8.30am Just past the bridge on St Hubert's Island	Christina Port 0421 691 317
28/4/26	Next Meeting: Update on Regent Honeyeater Captive Release Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite Hungry Jacks Note: For all Outings bring your morning tea and lunch. A chair is a good idea.	Mick Roderick



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: Patrick Diment from Bush Heritage is our speaker. He will tell us about their property Nil Desperandum and their adjacent Naree Station Reserve. They lie in the Mulga Lands bioregion, 150 km north-west of Bourke. on the Cuttaburra Channels that connect the Paroo and Warrego Rivers at Yantabulla Swamp, which adjoins the property to the west. This is one of the least disturbed and most intact areas of the Murray-Darling Basin. The reserve provides a safe-haven for species that rely on arid-zone wetlands and waterways. Many river systems in the Murray-Darling Basin are severely degraded. The flows of the Paroo River, which feed into Yantabulla Swamp, have been protected from modification since 2003, making it the last free-flowing river in the basin. The purchase and ongoing management of Nil Desperandum gives them the opportunity to improve the management of Yantabulla Swamp, a nationally important wetland and breeding site for a wide range of waterbirds. The land's ecology reflects the boom-and-bust cycles of wet and dry that are typical of the rangelands of inland Australia.

Last Meeting: 38 people were in attendance to hear a very polished and professional presentation on digital photography from Akos Lumnister and his partner Netra. The take-home message was that digital photography has revolutionised bird photography with the continuing evolution of digital cameras. With inbuilt A1 amazing outcomes can be achieved.

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 1600 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.

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

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

CAMPS 2026

Tue 28th - Thu 30th April	Nundle	Doug Hocking	0427 800 428	Fossickers Caravan Park 103-119 Jenkins St, Nundle 02 6769 3355 www.fossickersatnundle.com.au
Fri 11th - Sun 13th September	Cootamundra	Christina Port	0421 691 317	Cootamundra Caravan Park 55 Macleay St, Cootamundra 02 6942 1080 www.cootundracaravanpark.com.au
Tue 20th - Thu 22nd October	Sandy Hollow	Lynette Callaghan & Margaret Vallance	0438 495 562	Sandy Hollow Tourist Retreat 1618 Golden Highway, Sandy Hollow 02 6547 4575 www.sandyhollowtouristretreat.com.au

WHAT WAS NEW in February/March and WHAT CAN WE EXPECT in April?

The record of six Regent Honeyeaters at Bucketty Waterhole is very, very significant. Regent Honeyeaters are critically endangered with an estimated population of 250-300 birds. Six is the most Regents seen on the coast for many years. There have been a couple of records of early Spangled Drongo. Most spring migrants will have departed but please report any late stragglers.



For April, we will see a changing of the guard. The spring migrants will mostly be gone with White-breasted Woodswallows the last to go and Double-banded Plover and Spangled Drongo appearing. Gang-gang will soon be at Palmdale Road to feed on the Liquid Amber. We can only keep our fingers crossed to get more records of Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots.

OUTING REPORTS

Outing: February 28, 2026

ASH ISLAND/STOCKTON SANDSPIT

Leader: Daniel McKeon

An overcast day after numerous wet and wild days saw a small group of ten enthusiastic birders meet at Minmi Oval with hopes of a great day's birding and some interesting sightings to be had. A quick scan of the foliage around the oval had us off to a decent start with Pacific Koel and Noisy Friarbirds being our starting point highlights.

We set off to our first official stop on the day, Bulbul Crescent Wetlands, at Fletcher. Last time we visited here on an outing we found Magpie Geese, Pink-eared Ducks and the day's highlight, four Painted Snipe. Hopes were high. However, water levels were low. So low in fact the water birds seem to have migrated early as there were none to be seen. A small group of Tree Martins kept us entertained on what was a very bird lacking site. A Black Kite flew over showing off that distinctive tail of its and lifted all our spirits. The main wetlands weren't producing much in the way of birds, so we ventured to the northern end of the road looking out towards Hexham Swamp, hoping for some more luck. Small nectar eaters were order of the day, Brown and White-cheeked Honeyeater tussled with Silvereye and Yellow Thornbill for the top of the one flowering tree. A lone Swamp Harrier did a discreet fly by in the distance and was added to our list.

The decision was made that this place was dead, so off to Ash Island we went with morning tea and some renewed hope on our minds. After a morning tea packed with mozzies we went for a walk. Some group members had to be pried away from where a Little Grassbird had been heard deep in the reeds. Not too far along the walk a Brown Falcon was

flushed from the long grass. Soon after a second Falcon was flushed and the size difference showed them to be a male and a female. The first bunch of trees we came to a medium sized black bird was spotted flitting about in the tops of the Casuarina. Two Spangled Drongo were soon identified and a lot of photos of Drongos with needles in the way were taken.

A distinct call was heard and a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater was located and put on a show for the group. Small birds were feeding in the tops of the trees and kept us captivated until all of the different Thornbills had been identified. A Whistling Kite made itself known to the group and the main walk was at an end. Back along the main road a pair of Far Eastern Curlew were spotted feeding in the mud along with a large group of Masked Lapwing and White Ibis. Back at the cars we loaded up and were once again on the move to another birding spot, Stockton Sandspit.

The view from the bridge didn't give a very encouraging picture. The tide was super low and so was the bird count. As we ate lunch a raptor was spotted and identified as a Brahminy Kite, a great addition to any list. We wandered out to the mudflats hoping the birds were just really small and hard to see from the road. Alas it was not to be, a pair of Whimbrel were the only waders to be seen. After what had been a slow day with smattering of fairly decent birds sprinkled in we called time on our adventures. Thank you to everyone who came out and thank you to the minimal birds that made an appearance.



**Spiny-cheeked
Honeyeater
Leonie Loewe**

Campout: March 6-8, 2026

NARRABRI

Leader: Gabrielle Rees

Fifteen birders gathered at an unseasonably hot and dry Narrabri township, experiencing two days of thirty-six-degree temperatures and an unforecasted eighty millilitres overnight downpour of rain. Mt Kaputar, Sawn Rocks and Waa Gorge were unexpectedly closed for aerial pest control. Nonetheless a good variety of birds were seen.

The campground was alive with Musk, Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, Blue-faced Honeyeaters and three roosting Tawny Frogmouths. We made an early start on Friday visiting Culgoora SF and Round Lagoon. Two perched Wedge-tailed Eagles were seen en route. Red-capped Robin, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Silvereye, Jacky Winter, Australian Hobby, Peaceful Dove, Striped and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters were seen. Then we headed to Yarrie Lake which still contained water and the wetland had residual ponds. Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Whistling Kite, Black-fronted Dotterel, Sacred Kingfisher, Eastern Yellow Robin, Bar-shouldered and Peaceful Dove were spotted and a flock of Australian Ringnecks fed happily above us for some time.

After lunch we headed to Narrabri Lake at only a third of capacity. Twenty Yellow-billed Spoonbills, four species of Egret, Pied Stilt, Masked Lapwing, five Magpie Geese and a lone Black Swan were present. Genanagie Street dam provided Superb, Purple-backed and White-winged Fairy-wrens and White-breasted Woodswallows.



**Spotted Bowerbird
Christina Port**

We rested until birdcall then headed off to stake out a dam in Killarney SF until sunset, seeing two Emu on the way. We were spoilt with flocks of Galahs, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Australian Ringnecks, Eastern Rosellas and hybrid Eastern/ Pale-headed Rosellas coming in to drink joined by Common Bronzewing, Spotted Bowerbirds, Singing, Brown, Striped and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters. Australian Ravens and Red-winged Parrots flew over and the birds were joined at the dam by Swamp and Red-necked Wallabies and Eastern Grey Kangaroos. Twilight was peaceful and the sunset amazing. It was a truly special experience!

Saturday we headed to the Pilliga stopping along Pilliga Forest Way spying honeyeaters in the flowering mistletoe. We were greeted by Red-capped Robin, Grey-crowned Babbler and four Glossy Black Cockatoos at Schwagers Bore along with a herd of goats coming in to drink. Then on to the Salt Caves and dam where some climbed the tower for the spectacular view of the Pilliga. It was light on for birds only providing Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, a lone Sitella, Eastern Yellow Robin and pigs coming in to drink at the dam.

Some went home from there while others continued to Pilliga Pottery for Devonshire tea and pottery browsing. Restless Flycatcher, Dollarbird, King Parrot and Brown-headed Honeyeater were added to the list. A lovely dinner was had at the local Chinese restaurant.

Eighty mls of unpredicted rain fell overnight and the temperature dropped significantly so on Sunday morning the birds were out in big numbers. We headed to Upper Bullawa Creek Road and stopped at a number of spots along the road. Jacky Winter, Grey-crowned Babbler, Diamond Firetail, Leaden and Restless Flycatchers, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and a lone Crested Shrike-tit were some of the birds seen.

The rain meant the finches and fairywrens were not at the Fitzroy Road grasslands and the racecourse and cemetery were quiet. After lunch the Narrabri Creek Walk provided Red-browed Finch and a Restless Flycatcher followed by Brown, Yellow-faced, White-eared and White-plumed Honeyeaters and Australian Figbirds in a flowering gum and a Brown Goshawk flew over.

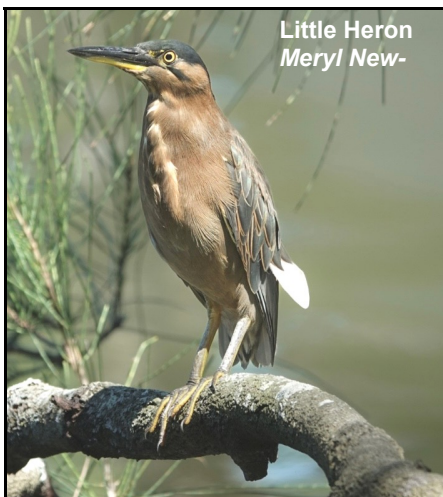
Final birdcall gave us a total of 119 birds seen over the weekend. Many thanks to a hardy group who were keen and enthusiastic despite the adverse conditions.

½ day Outing: March 11

SAN REMO

Leader: Meryl Newton

After days of heavy rain, we were blessed with a cloudless sky, and cooling breeze for the first leg of our walk, around the remnant heath along the ridge at San Remo. As I'd predicted, woodland birds were fairly sparse, until arriving at the western end of the track. One flowering paperbark attracted numerous honeyeaters - Scarlet, Yellow-faced, White-cheeked and a small flock of Brown-headed, a lifer for many. Notably absent were Striated Pardalote, and Double-barred finch, seen only once.



Morning tea was held at the Koala Park, with the expected Grey Butcher-birds omnipresent. However, missing were Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos from the grove of pines across the road. As it was starting to heat up, rather than explore more open heath, we decided to head over to the lake at Woodland Reserve, Budgewoi. We all remarked it was unusual to see Grey Teals with Chestnut Teals and not long after me saying that Bar-tailed Godwits enjoy feeding in the wrack along here, 3 flew in, for really nice close views. We then settled into Mackenzie Reserve at Budgewoi for lunch, with a delightful walk around Dunkey Island. All the usual cormorants and corellas, but excellent views of a Little Heron, I believe a brown morph, because of such vivid colours. 56 species seen by a crew of 16, all delightful company as always.

SPECIES LIST

FEBRUARY 2026

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

Musk Duck	7M	5-27/2/26	Berkeley Vale Jetty	Christina Port
Brown Quail	2	8/2/2026	Magenta Shores	Elizabeth Noble
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	22/2/2026	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Christina Port
White-throated Needletail	150	7/2/2026	1027 hrs Narara Ecovillage	Guy Dutson
White-throated Needletail	300	7/2/2026	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Coleen Porter
White-throated Needletail	36	10 & 12/2	0800 hrs Wyong	Jill Nelson

Pacific Swift	20	7/2/2026	1027 hrs Narara Ecovillage	Guy Dutton
Pied Oystercatcher	3	15/2/2026	The Entrance Channel	Leanne Lemke
Buff-banded Rail	1	7/2/2026	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Coleen Porter
Latham's Snipe	3	7/2/2026	pond at Bateau Bay	Nick Carson
Latham's Snipe	1	22/2/2026	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Christina Port
Latham's Snipe	1	24/2/2026	private wetland, Wyee	Leonie Loewe
Wood Sandpiper	1	22/2/2026	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Christina Port
Common Greenshank	1	15/2/2026	The Entrance Channel	Leeanne Lemke
Wandering Tattler	1	17/2/2026	Blue Bay Reefs	Leonie Loewe
Sooty Tern	2	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Steven Edwards
Pomarine Jaeger	3	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Stephanie Owen
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	9	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Stephanie Owen
White-bellied Storm-Petrel	1	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Steven Edwards
Black-browed Albatross	6	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Stephanie Owen
White-capped Albatross	4	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Steven Edwards
Grey-faced Petrel	1	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Steven Edwards
Sooty Shearwater	2	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Stephanie Owen
Fleshy-footed Shearwater	29	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Steven Edwards
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	410	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Steven Edwards
Short-tailed Shearwater	1	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Steven Edwards
Fluttering Shearwater	1	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Steven Edwards
White-tailed Tropic-Bird	2	20/2/2026	Terrigal Pelagic	Stephanie Owen
Black-necked Stork	2	1/3/2026	McPherson Rd Swamp	Carole Carpenter
Nankeen Night-heron	1	8/2/2026	The Entrance Channel	Elizabeth Noble
Osprey	1	2/2/2026	Terrigal Lagoon	John Carpenter
Osprey	2+N	16/2/2026	new artificial nest, Harry Moore Oval, Toukley	Nick Carson
Osprey	1	28/2/2026	The Entrance	Graham Nelson
Square-tailed Kite	1	15/2/2026	The Entrance/Long Jetty	Luke Willcox
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1,1	18/2/2026	Elizabeth Bay & Budgewoi	Meryl Newton
Little Eagle (dk morph)	1	14/2/2026	Wyoming	Darren Earnshaw
Brown Goshawk	1	3/2/2026	Wyong Creek	John Carpenter
Grey Goshawk	1	28/1/2026	North Gosford	Richard Hardiman
Grey Goshawk	1	7/2/2026	Dooralong	Eloise Deverett
Grey Goshawk	1	12/2/2026	Wamberal	Darren Earnshaw
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	11/2/2026	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Rob Montgomery
Southern Boobook	1	4/2/2026	Redhill Rd, Ourimbah	Elizabeth Noble
Powerful Owl	HC	9/2/2026	Narara/Niagara Park	Julie Peksis
Powerful Owl	HC	22/2/2026	Ourimbah Creek Rd, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Nankeen Kestrel	1	14/2/2026	North Gosford	Darren Earnshaw
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	8/2/2026	Blue Haven	Sharon Salmi
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	10/2/2026	Erina	Jill Ashby
Glossy Black Cockatoo	1	24/2/2026	private wetland, Wyee	Leonie Loewe
Gang Gang Cockatoo	2	10/2/2026	Kulnura	Anne Pillich
Crimson Rosella	1	4/2/2026	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Noisy Pitta	HC	17/2/2026	Upper Palmdale	Meryl Newton
Southern Emu-wren	2+	1-4/2/2026	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Meryl Newton
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	1/2/2026	Kingfisher Shores	Marj Kibby
Crested Shrike-tit	2	17/2/2026	Upper Palmdale	Meryl Newton
Dusky Woodswallow	1	1/3/2026	McPherson Rd Swamp	Carole Carpenter
Tree Martin	5	1/2/2026	Wyee Wetlands	Leonie Loewe

Breeding and other details February

Grey Goshawk: 1 Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah 24/2 (MSm).

Good Birding!

TWITCH LIST February 2026

Graham Nelson	191	Kaye Pointer	129	Margaret Pointer	93
Nick Carson	181	Julie Peksis	127	Diana Hogan	80
Leonie Loewe	159	Krystyna Lonergan	125	Chris Jamieson	80
Christina Port	158	Doug Hocking	124	Rowena Wallace	75
Allan Benson	149	Frik Gautschi	105	Robyn Price	70
Carole Carpenter	147	Gabrielle Rees	95	Judy Clark	58
Leanne Hodge	144	Daniel McKeon	93		
John Carpenter	137	Lynette Callaghan	93		

While Graham Nelson is leading with 191 species, Nick Carson is snapping at his heels, with Leonie Loewe and Christina Port putting in solid efforts.

BIRDATA SURVEYS YTD 2026

Graham Nelson	70	Guy Dutson	20	Frances Westwick	2
Alan Stuart	61	C Clutterbuck	12	Nick Carson	1
Allan Benson	32	Robyn Price	9	Ann Lindsay	1
Leonie Loewe	30	Doug Hocking	4		
Frik Gautschi	23	Daniel McKeon	2		

January 2026 surveys totalled 408 compared to 313 in 2025.

There has been a significant increase in surveys completed in the first two months of 2026 compared to 2025. Graham Nelson has maintained a slight lead over Alan Stuart.

Birdata is one way, as a birder, you can make a contribution to bird conservation.

SOUTH WYONG SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS February Survey

7 participants found the water levels extremely low with significant areas of exposed mud. Waterfowl numbers were reasonable with 300 odd counted on the ponds. The highlights were 9 Shoveler, 5 Black-fronted Dotterel, Buff-banded Rail, Golden-headed Cisticola and 52 Pied Stilt. 40 species were recorded overall.

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

WHY BIRDWATCHING MAY BE ONE OF THE BEST HOBBIES FOR YOUR BRAIN

By Caroline Igo

What if one of the most peaceful hobbies on the planet could physically change your brain?

Birdwatching has long been celebrated for its calming, meditative qualities, but new research suggests the benefits go far deeper than stress relief. A 2026 study published in the *Journal of Neuroscience* found that expert birdwatchers don't just enjoy their hobby. They actually have measurably different brain structure in regions tied to attention, perception, and memory. These brain benefits appear to persist into old age, offering a potential buffer against cognitive decline. Here's what the science says, and why you might want to pick up a pair of binoculars.

Why birdwatching is uniquely good for your brain

Birdwatching might seem like a leisurely pastime, but it's actually a cognitively demanding skill. Expert birders learn to identify hundreds of species by subtle visual differences, songs, calls, flight patterns, and habitat preferences. They're constantly integrating multiple streams of information, making rapid decisions, and building an ever-expanding mental library. This kind of sustained, complex learning is exactly what neuroscientists believe drives neuroplasticity: the brain's ability to reorganize and strengthen itself in response to experience.

What the research found

The research team recruited 29 expert birdwatchers and compared them to 29 age-matched novices who had little to no birding experience.

Using advanced brain imaging, the team measured something called "mean diffusivity," which reflects how tightly packed brain tissue is. Lower mean diffusivity indicates more structurally compact, organized tissue.

The results were striking:

- Expert birders had significantly more compact brain tissue in frontoparietal and posterior cortical regions, areas tied to attention, perception, and visual processing.
- These same regions lit up during functional brain scans when experts tackled challenging bird identification tasks.
- More compact brain structure correlated with better identification accuracy.

Crucially, these structural advantages persisted even in older experts.

In other words, decades of dedicated birdwatching didn't just make these experts better at spotting a warbler from a vireo. It appeared to physically reshape their brains.

How birdwatching may protect against cognitive decline

The brain regions that showed structural differences in expert birders are the same areas that typically deteriorate with age. Attention networks, visual processing centres, and memory systems all tend to decline as we get older. But the expert birders in this study seemed to buck that trend.

The researchers point to a concept called "cognitive reserve," the idea that enriched brain structure and function can act as a buffer against age-related decline. Think of it like building a savings account for your brain: the more you invest through challenging mental activity, the more you have to draw on later. Older birders also showed better memory for arbitrary information when it was linked to their area of expertise. Their brains had essentially built specialized pathways that remained robust even as other cognitive functions naturally slowed. Of course, diet can also play a role in protecting your brain, but this research highlights how the right kind of mental engagement matters just as much.

What makes birdwatching so effective

Not all hobbies are created equal when it comes to brain benefits. What makes birdwatching particularly powerful? It requires sustained learning. There's always a new species to identify, a new song to learn, a new habitat to explore. Expert birders never stop building their knowledge base. It engages multiple cognitive systems. Birding involves visual discrimination, auditory processing, memory recall, pattern recognition, and decision-making, often all at once. It gets you outside. Time in nature has its own well-documented benefits for mental health and cognition. Birdwatching combines cognitive challenge with the restorative effects of being outdoors. It builds community. Many birders participate in group outings, citizen science projects, and online communities. Social engagement is another known factor in healthy brain aging. It's accessible at any age. Unlike physically demanding activities, birdwatching can be adapted to any fitness level and continued well into older age.

How to get started (or go deeper)

You don't need to become a world-class expert to benefit. Here's how to put this research into action: Start where you are. You don't need expensive equipment or exotic locations. A simple bird feeder in your backyard or a walk in a local park is enough to begin. Pay attention to the birds you see regularly and try to learn their names, songs, and behaviours. Use resources to accelerate learning. Apps like Merlin Bird ID can help you identify species by photo or sound. Field guides, local Audubon chapters, and birding groups can deepen your knowledge and keep you motivated.

Embrace the challenge

The brain benefits come from pushing your skills. Once you've mastered your backyard birds, venture to new habitats. Learn to identify birds by song alone. Keep a life list and set goals.

Make it a habit

Consistency matters more than intensity. Even 20 to 30 minutes of focused birding a few times a week adds up over years and decades.

Know it's never too late

The study included participants across a wide age range, and the benefits of expertise showed up even in older adults. Your brain retains its capacity for neuroplasticity throughout life. (And while you're building healthy habits, be aware of other factors that affect dementia risk.)

The bottom line

This research offers a powerful, hopeful message: birdwatching isn't just a relaxing hobby. It may actually be protecting your brain.

Developing expertise in birding appears to build more structurally compact brain tissue in regions tied to attention, perception, and memory. And those structural changes may help buffer against the cognitive decline that typically comes with aging.

So, the next time someone dismisses birdwatching as a quiet pastime for retirees, you can tell them the science says otherwise.