



The Twitcher

April
2026

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

Editorial Team: Allan Benson (0457 458 274) Wendy Mitchell (0423 388 529) & Robyn Price Volume 21, No. 4

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
28/4/26	Next Meeting: Update on Regent Honeyeater Captive Release Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite Hungry Jacks	Mick Roderick
2/5/26	Outing: Chain Valley Bay Meet: Meet 8.30am Community Centre car park, Scaysbrook Ave, Chain Valley Bay	REMEMBER TO REGISTER Meryl Newton 0435 780 380
13/5/26	½ day Outing: Munmorah SRA Meet: 8.30am Birdie Beach carpark	REMEMBER TO REGISTER Leeanne Lemke 0412 233 594
26/5/26	Next Meeting: Land-based sea bird watching 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.	David Mitford



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 Mick Roderick, the Regent Honeyeater Co-ordinator for Birdlife Australia. When John Gould came to Australia in the 1830's. Regent Honeyeaters were the most common honeyeater he saw. However, there has been a catastrophic decline since then due to land clearing for agriculture on the western slopes which has resulted in fragmentation of Regent Honeyeater habitat. The estimated wild population is now estimated at 250 individuals. To ensure the survival of the species, a captive breeding program was initiated at Taronga Park Zoo and captive bred birds have been released at Chiltern in Victoria, Capertee Valley in NSW and more recently at the Tomalpin woodlands near Kurri Kurri. Mick will provide us with an update on the progress of this program.

Last Meeting: A good crowd of 41 people heard Patrick Diment from Bush Heritage give a most interesting and informative presentation about their properties Nil Desperandum & Naree on the Cuttaburra Channels north-west of Bourke and their management. He spoke about the endangered birds which are in that region, such as Little Eagle, Pied Honeyeater & Brolga and also the Shield Shrimp, a pre-historic crustacean, which hatches out after rain and provides food for the water birds. We also heard about feral pest management. Altogether a very interesting night. A donation of \$100 was made to Bush Heritage.

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

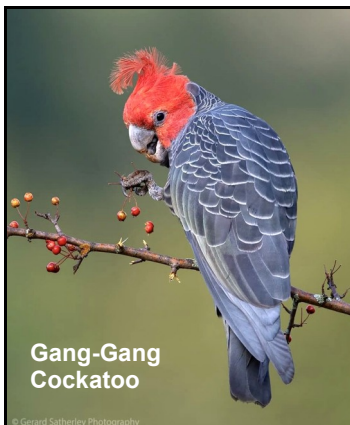
Fri 11th - Sun 13th September	Cootamundra	Christina Port	0421 691 317	Cootamundra Caravan Park 55 Macleay St, Cootamundra 02 6942 1080 www.cootundracaravanpark.com.au
Tue 20th - Thu 22nd October	Sandy Hollow	Lynette Callaghan & Margaret Vallance	0438 495 562	Sandy Hollow Tourist Retreat 1618 Golden Highway, Sandy Hollow 02 6547 4575 www.sandyhollowtouristretreat.com.au

WHAT WAS NEW in April and WHAT CAN WE EXPECT in May/June?

The Crescent Honeyeater at Bucketty Waterhole is the standout report this month. This is only the 5th Record for the Central Coast. A good number of raptor species have been reported. Most of the spring migrants have gone. The Gang-Gangs are already at Palmdale Road feeding on Liquid Amber. However, the trees still have lots of leaves and so they are not easy to see at the moment. There is a possibility that the Regent Honeyeaters reported at Bucketty Waterhole are still there. There was a report of Regents calling from the ridge above the waterhole.



Crescent Honeyeater



Gang-Gang Cockatoo

In May flocks of Top-knot Pigeon will be seen along the railway line from Narara to Ourimbah feeding on Camphor Laurel. Similarly big flocks of Pied Currawongs will be moving to the coast to feed on privet. There were two reports of Rose Robin this month. These reports should increase as they come down to the coast in Autumn after breeding at higher elevations.

The Swamp Mahogany is going off this year. Lots of trees are in heavy flower and those that are not are in heavy bud. Casual observation suggests that not much is feeding in them at this point in time but hopefully we will see Swift Parrots this year.

OUTING REPORTS

Outing: March 28, 2026

BULLS QUARRY & MT PENANG GARDENS

Leader: Frik Gautschi

Unseasonally cold weather eventually became a fine day and although it remained windy throughout, 16 rugged-up birders finally shed an outer layer or two by lunchtime.

The Tunnel Fire trail leading to the former quarry was relatively quiet and we saw mainly New Holland and White-cheeked Honeyeaters and Little Wattlebirds. The only noticeable blossom was on Red Bloodwoods, which seemed to attract the White-cheeked Honeyeaters. Other sightings were two courting Eastern Spinebills, a solitary Red-browed Finch and a few Superb Fairywrens. No Silvereyes nor the usual flocks of Red-brows! A male Rufous Whistler was a welcome find on the return walk, followed by three or four Brown-headed Honeyeaters, then two Bar-shouldered Doves which calmly walked ahead of us for a few hundred metres.



White-cheeked Honeyeater

The biggest thrill was watching three Spotted Pardalotes close by on our way back to the cars, having only heard them calling a few times on our way in. The water in the old quarry was quiet as it's always been but it had two Eurasian Coots in addition to the usual Black Ducks and Welcome Swallows. We returned to the cars with a list of 22 species which was less than in previous years (but a month earlier).

Mount Penang Gardens was our venue for morning tea and later for lunch. The lone picnic table was all ours, most probably due to the windy conditions as the venue was teeming with school kids and parents attending Saturday sport on the local fields.

The Kariong Fire trail was extremely quiet, but we enjoyed watching the interaction between an adult and juvenile Pied Butcherbird, then saw a 15-strong flock of Straw-necked Ibis and a Brown Goshawk in flight. A Wedge-tailed Eagle was also seen some distance away.

Back at the Gardens we saw all the usual waterbirds on the lake: Eurasian Coot, Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, countless Wood Ducks, a colourful assortment of Mallard-Black Duck hybrids and Cormorants.

The Garden walkways were crisscrossed after lunch. A Coot was nesting just below the café terrace and revealed two eggs when it briefly stood up for a stretch. We saw a Brown Thornbill trio, several Superb Fairywrens, a family of Magpie Larks and their tidy mud nest, then a family of Willie Wagtails on the bank of the northern lake outside the gardens.

31 species here; 50 for the day. Contact the leader for a comprehensive list.

Thank you, attendees, for your great company and for sharing your expertise.

½ day Outing: April 8, 2026

BENSVILLE

Leader: Christina Port

On a beautiful autumn day our meeting spot at St Huberts Island provided the bird of the day. A Brahminy Kite flew in and caught a fish in front of us and took off with his catch to eat it in private. No cameras were ready to catch all of this. Lots of Pied Cormorants, Pelican, Australasian Darter, Pied Oystercatcher, and a hunting Little Egret. Our first stop was quiet but Australian Wood Duck and a group of Figbirds flying over were noted.

On to Cockle Bay Reserve. There was a large number of flying insects to dodge, Scarlet Honeyeaters were calling and eventually seen well, as were White-cheeked, Lewin's and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. The Swamp Mahogany is starting to flower attracting lots of bird life including Spotted Pardalote. Up above the trees circling around was a Brown Goshawk and a Collared Sparrowhawk was seen a little later. Down lower we noted Brown Thornbill, Brown Gerygone and Grey Fantail. Both Brown Cuckoo Dove and White-headed Pigeon flew through.

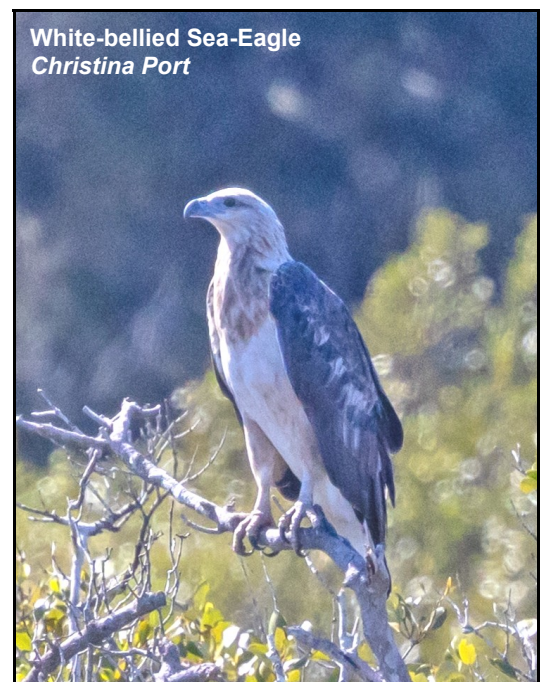
After morning tea, Palmers Lane also had Scarlet and Lewin's Honeyeaters and a Mangrove Gerygone appeared and disappeared. Brown Honeyeaters called. Silveryeye and Golden Whistler were seen. In the distance in the mangroves an immature, White-bellied Sea-Eagle patiently sat. Bensville Wharf was a little busy with holiday makers, but we added Black Swans to our list.



Great Egret
David Lamont

Our last spot was along the waterfront at Kincumber with great views of Tawny Frogmouth, Little Corella, Laughing Kookaburra and Dusky Moorhen.

Thanks for a great outing and thanks to the 9 participants.



White-bellied Sea-Eagle
Christina Port

SPECIES LIST**MARCH 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			
Pied Oystercatcher	15	17/03/2026	Woy Woy Alan Stuart
Pacific Golden Plover	50	2/03/2026	Blue Bay Rocks Linda Deverell
Double-banded Plover*	1	15/03/2026	Blue Bay Rocks Leonie Loewe
Whimbrel	2	28/03/2026	Yattalunga Frances Westwick
Wandering Tattler	2	2/03/2026	Blue Bay Rocks Gary Jackson
Latham's Snipe	7	1/03/2026	Mt Penang Gardens Guy Dutson
Musk Duck	6	4/03/2026	Berkeley Vale Gary Jackson
Black-necked Stork	2	5/04/2026	South Wyong sewage Paul Shelley
Black Bittern	1	2/03/2026	Erina Creek Doug Hocking
Brown Quail	2a,5j	31/03/2026	CC Wetlands C & J Carpenter
Brown Quail	2	8/03/2026	Tuggerah Bay saltmarsh Chris Jamieson
Osprey	2	26/03/2026	Mingara Graham Nelson
Osprey	2	17/03/2026	Terrigal Anne Markovina
Osprey	1	11/03/2026	The Entrance Matt Whittaker
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	12/03/2026	Woy Woy Bor Ge
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	11/03/2026	Erina Heights Darren Earnshaw
Brahminy Kite	2	31/03/2026	Chain Valley Peter Mortimer
Brahminy Kite	2	12/03/2026	Ettalong Darren Earnshaw
Square-tailed Kite	1	28/03/2026	Narara Nerida Carter
Square-tailed Kite	1	3/03/2026	Shelly Beach Shaun Harris
Spotless Crane	HC	17/03/2026	CC Wetlands Leeanne Lemke
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	10/03/2026	McPherson Rd Swamp Leeanne Lemke
Brown Goshawk	1	18/03/2026	Woy Woy Tip Darren Earnshaw
Grey Goshawk	1	18/03/2026	Woy Woy Tip Darren Earnshaw
Grey Goshawk	1	14/03/2026	RTA Ourimbah Colette Livermore
Hobby	1	27/03/2026	Budgewoi Leeanne Lemke
Peregrine Falcon	1	23/03/2026	Terrigal Darren Earnshaw
Peregrine Falcon	1	13/03/2026	Blackwall Darren Earnshaw
Barking Owl	HC	4/03/2026	Woy Woy Carl Morris
Masked Owl	HC	20/03/2026	Narara Ecovillage Guy Dutson
Boobook	1	2/03/2026	Ourimbah SF Elizabeth Noble
Boobook	1	19/03/2026	The Entrance Nick Carson
Powerful Owl	HC	17/03/2026	Wagstaffe Wendy Harvey
Powerful Owl	1	13/03/2026	Gosford Gary Jackson
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	14/03/2026	Mangrove Mountain Julie Peksis
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	17/03/2026	Mt White S Watts
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	8/03/2026	Kariong Darren Earnshaw
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	8/03/2026	Ourimbah Darren Earnshaw
Little Lorikeet	4	21/03/2026	Wye Leonie Loewe
Brush Bronzewing	1	16/03/2026	Warrah Trig Alan Stuart
Brush Bronzewing	1	30/03/2026	Magenta Leeanne Lemke
Pacific Koel**	1	30/03/2026	Kincumber Denny O'Brien
Pacific Koel **	juv	20/03/2026	Killcare Heights Steve Ward
Azure Kingfisher	1	9/03/2026	Mardi Ben Stewart
Crimson Rosella	2	14/03/2026	Mogo Julie Peksis
White-throated Needletail	100	25/03/2026	Wamberal Darren Earnshaw
White-throated Needletail	300	19/03/2026	Tuggerah Daniel McKeon
White-throated Needletail	100	16/03/2026	Warrah Trig Alan Stuart
White-throated Needletail	20	2/03/2026	Rumbalara Elaine Elliott
Tree Martin	2	17/03/2026	Blackwall Alan Stuart
Fork-tailed Swift	2	16/03/2026	Warrah Trig Alan Stuart
Buff-rumped Thornbill	1	8/03/2026	Wye Leonie Loewe

Striated Pardalote	1	16/03/2026	Warrah Trig	Alan Stuart
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	21/3//2026	Ettalong	Alan Stuart
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	6/303/2026	Pt Clare	David Lamont
Regent Honeyeater	6	15/03/2026	Bucketty Waterhole	Nick Carson
Crescent Honeyeater	1	16/03/2026	Bucketty Waterhole	Kaye Pointer
Brown-headed Honeyeater	1	27/03/2026	Bushells Ridge Rd	Meryl Newtown
Brown-headed Honeyeater	1	1/03/2026	San Remo	Neryl Richards
Brown-headed Honeyeater	1	28/03/2026	Bulls Quarry	Nerida Carter
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	8/03/2026	Settlers Rd, Bucketty	Leeanne Lemke
Sahul Cicadabird**	1	1/03/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Olive-backed Oriole	1	26/03/2026	Chittaway	Graham Nelson
Olive-backed Oriole	1	26/03/2026	Jiliby	Leeanne Lemke
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	14/03/2026	Mogo	Julie Peksis
Leaden Flycatcher**	1	1/03/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Black-faced Monarch**	1	2/03/2026	RTA Ourimbah	Elizabeth Noble
Jacky Winter	1	27/03/2026	Bushells Ridge Rd	Meryl Newtown
Rufous Fantail **	1	11/03/2026	San Remo	John Davis
Rose Robin	1	19/03/2026	Strickland SF	Guy Dutson
Spangled Drongo*	1	7/03/2026	East Gosford	Gary Jackson
Tawny Grassbird	4	15/03/2026	Mt Penang Gardens	Guy Dutson

TWITCH LIST

March 2026

Graham Nelson	191	Doug Hocking	140	Margaret Pointer	94
Nick Carson	181	John Carpenter	137	Daniel McKeon	93
Leeanne Lemke	164	Kaye Pointer	134	Diana Hogan	84
Leonie Loewe	159	Krystyna Lonergan	131	Judy Clark	78
Allan Benson	159	Chris Jamieson	108	Robyn Price	77
Christina Port	158	Frik Gautschi	105	David Dowling	74
Carole Carpenter	150	Gabrielle Rees	99	Rowena Wallace	70
Julie Peksis	140	Lynette Callaghan	99		

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

BIRDATA SURVEYS YTD 2026

Alan Stuart	97	Frik Gautschi	23	Doug Hocking	6
Graham Nelson	81	C Clutterbuck	18	Daniel McKeon	2
Leonie Loewe	51	Carl Morris	16	Nick Carson	2
Allan Benson	34	Robyn Price	11	Ann Lindsay	1
Guy Dutson	28	Frances Westwick	8		

March 2026 surveys totalled 60 compared with 114 in 2025. YTD surveys for 2026 are 628 compared to 427 in 2025.

There has been a significant increase in surveys completed in the first three month of 2026 compared to 2025. Alan Stuart has taken a slight lead from Graham Nelson with Leonie Loewe putting in a great effort.

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

SOUTH WYONG SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS

March Survey



7 participants found the water levels extremely low with significant areas of exposed mud. Waterfowl numbers were reasonable with 300 counted on the ponds.

The highlights were 10 Shoveler and 6 Black-fronted Dotterel. 46 species were recorded overall.

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

Swift Parrot Surveys

The annual Swift Parrot autumn survey will commence on Anzac Day (25th April) and run for 6 weeks. The Swamp Mahogany is flowering early so let's keep our fingers crossed. It is frustrating that Swift Parrots have not been turning up on our surveys but our surveys form a small part in piecing together the Swift Parrot Story and their ultimate conservation.

Seats at Central Coast Wetlands

Graham Nelson is co-ordinating the purchase and instalment of three seats to be placed along Pioneer Creek at Central Coast Wetlands. Birding NSW has agreed to sponsor these seats and CCW volunteers will install them. Graham is proposing one seat be placed in the composting toilet vicinity and another overlooking the dam. This needs to be confirmed with CCW.

AUSTRALIA'S PESTICIDE REGULATOR SETS NEW RULES BANNING SOME RAT BAITS FROM PUBLIC SALE

By Madigan Landry and Georgia Loney

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has declared second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides a restricted chemical product. The ruling means popular, commercially available rat baits could only be sold to licensed operators, such as pest controllers.

Over-the-counter rat baits could soon be taken off shelves after a federal regulator announced it would be declaring significant restrictions on popular commercially available poisons.

Four years after starting a review into rodenticides, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has recommended certifying second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) as restricted chemical products (RCP).

The RCP status would mean that purchasing products containing certain ingredients would be restricted to individuals who meet specific licensing requirements.

SGARs have a devastating effect on native reptiles and birds, including owls, that receive lethal or crippling doses when they consume poisoned rodents. Wildlife advocates have been calling for the ban due to the poison's risk to native animals.

Regulator embraces feedback

APVMA chief executive Scott Hansen said the decision would change the availability of baits.

"You would need to demonstrate and show your accreditation or your licence to be able to purchase," he said.

"They will only be available for sale to people who have demonstrated competencies and experience, which in most cases will mean they'll be taken off the shelves of retail outlets."

The recommendation is the first time the APVMA has certified a chemical as an RCP in more than a decade.

In December, the APVMA published a draft decision that only went as far as mandating changes to labelling and instructions. Spokesman for APVMA, Scott Hansen said "The final recommendation came after extensive consultation with state and territory authorities on the implications of the draft decision. "The feedback highlighted that it would be a much simpler and straightforward way to police the fact that SGARs were only sold to people who were trained and competent in their use by making them a restricted chemical product".

It is now the responsibility of state and territory regulators, in coordination with the APVMA, to identify what criteria and training would allow individuals to purchase the poisons.

Mr Hansen said the regulator hoped new restrictions would minimise the impacts the poisons had on the environment. "Their toxicology, their long half-life in the environment ... means that they are a threat and a risk to non-target species," he said. "The way in which they are used needs to be very carefully monitored, very carefully deployed to ensure that you minimise that risk to non-target species."

Significant change to wildlife safety

Animal advocacy groups have been lobbying across the country for a ban on SGARs since 2020.

In the South West of WA, Capes Raptor Centre manager Tara Finch said the latest recommendation was a step in the right direction. "Ideally, we would like them completely out of use," she said. "Anywhere they're being used, they have that potential to be causing harm and you can't guarantee they're going to remove poisoned rodents from the environment. It definitely goes a long way to reducing the harm to our wildlife."

Ms Finch said it was a relief to see the regulator respond to the concerns raised by advocacy groups. "There's been such a huge upswelling of support from the general public, which has been fantastic, for Australians to really care about our wildlife, our raptors, our owls," she said. "It's great that the government has responded to the community's concerns."

CONSERVATIONISTS SUCCESSFULLY TEACH YOUNG REGENT HONEYEATERS HOW TO SING THEIR UNIQUE SONG

By Emma Siossian

When wildlife photographer Richard Shaw spotted a rare Regent Honeyeater on the New South Wales Mid North Coast, he was not sure if his eyes were playing tricks on him. The species is critically endangered, and it is estimated that there are fewer than 300 wild birds remaining. "My first thought was, 'Is that what I think it is?'" he said. "I've never seen [a regent honeyeater] before in the wild ... it was just such an exciting thing to see ... it's something I will remember for a long time."

Singing to a different tune

BirdLife Australia's regent honeyeater recovery advisor Mick Roderick said the sighting at Lake Cathie, south of Port Macquarie, was encouraging for the species, but sparked concern as the regent honeyeater was not with any others. It was instead interacting closely with a little wattlebird, and was recorded mimicking its calls, underscoring concerns the regent honeyeater is slowly losing its unique song.

"Some regent honeyeaters, in particular lone males that aren't associating with other regent honeyeaters, are singing the songs of other birds, particularly larger honeyeaters, and that's exactly what is happening with this bird at Lake Cathie," Mr Roderick said.

"It's symptomatic of the fact there's so few Regent Honeyeaters left across the landscape ... they aren't picking up the song of their species."

Mr Roderick said Regent Honeyeaters were once common across south-eastern Australia, ranging from Brisbane to Adelaide, but their numbers and range had "drastically" reduced. "We now suspect that Regent Honeyeaters are almost entirely within NSW and the majority of birds are within striking distance of the Greater Blue Mountains," he said.

Saving the honeyeater's 'love song'

Scientists from The Australian National University (ANU) and the Taronga Conservation Society Australia have been working for several years to restore the regent honeyeaters' traditional song, as part of a long-running captive breeding program. Recently, they started to have some success.



**Regent Honeyeater with
Wattle Bird**
James Bennett

Joy Tripovich, a behavioural ecologist with the conservation society, said the song was a cultural trait vital to the species' breeding success, territory marking and social cohesion. "It's really important for reproducing that they are able to sing the song that will allow the male to attract the female ... it's sad, it's losing its love song," Dr Tripovich said.

Dr Tripovich said researchers first began trying to teach captive male Regent Honeyeaters their song during the 2020-21 breeding season. She said in the first year, the team played the recorded songs to young Regent Honeyeaters, and in more recent seasons, two wild male birds were brought in to help teach juvenile males how to sing. "The simplest way that we've actually cracked this code is by just mimicking what happens in nature, by having a tutor, a wild bird, next to the youngsters, so they had direct interactions," Dr Tripovich said. "It's pretty remarkable ... the first time it happened the smiles on people's faces were just amazing because you knew you'd just managed to capture this wild song." They also refined their "classroom" setting. "Just like a classroom, in a room with fewer students in it, the students were learning more," Dr Tripovich said. "So in the third year ... we knew that with four or five students per tutor, the message was getting relayed in a better way."

The wild song the birds are being taught is known as the Blue Mountains Typical, a song no longer being observed in full in the wild. "The wild call is changing and becoming a clipped call," Dr Tripovich said.

"We are releasing the birds that can actually sing into the wild, with the hope that wild calls can be re-established."

CONSERVATION WIN AS FIRST PALM COCKATOO CHICK FLEDGES FROM ARTIFICIAL HOLLOW IN AUSTRALIA

Megan Strauss

Conservationists in Australia are celebrating the fledging of a Palm Cockatoo chick, a species considered endangered in the country. It fledged from an artificial log hollow installed on a tree for breeding cockatoos. The structure is one of 29 such spaces created as part of People For Wildlife's (PFW) Breeding Habitat Restoration Project, in partnership with Apudthama Traditional Owners and Palm Cockatoo expert Christina Zdenek. The Palm Cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*) is a stunning large parrot, with smokey-black feathers, red cheek patches and a dramatic crest. As part of their courtship displays, males fashion tools out of sticks and seed pods to drum on hollow trees.

Palm Cockatoos live in Australia and on the neighbouring island of New Guinea. In Australia, they are confined to a patch of rainforest and savanna woodland on the remote Cape York Peninsula of northern Queensland. They're one of Australia's most threatened parrots, with possibly fewer than 2,000 left in the wild.

"They disperse the rainforest seeds," Robert Heinsohn of Australian National University told U.K. state broadcaster BBC. "They have these massive great beaks, and they're the only creatures that can break into some of the larger seed pods."

The species is a slow breeder. Females lay just one egg roughly every two years. For nesting, the mating pair carefully selects a hollow in an old-growth tree and builds a deep platform out of sticks, where the female lays her egg. The loss of such natural hollows is a major threat to the species. Zdenek said ‘that natural Palm Cockatoo hollows have been lost primarily due to “unnaturally hot fires” and land clearing for bauxite mining”.

With the goal of boosting breeding success, the conservation team created several types of artificial and enhanced hollows. They designed them based on years of research findings and local knowledge to meet the birds’ specific needs.

So, they were pleasantly surprised when a pair laid an egg inside one of the artificial hollows just one month after installation. Using remote cameras to monitor the nesting site, they captured the moment the fledgling chick emerged from its nest.

“Witnessing a successful fledgling event is rare as it is,” Zdenek said, “but to do so out of a hollow erected by humans ... that’s incredible!”

The team say they hope this marks the beginning of a conservation comeback for Palm Cockatoos in Australia, and plan to grow the project if funding allows.

“This is truly hard work paying off,” PFW executive director Daniel Natusch said. “It’s a testament to the power of collaboration between Traditional Owners, scientists, and conservationists to ensure the survival of one of Australia’s most fascinating birds.”



Palm Cockatoo