



The Twitcher

May
2026

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

Editorial Team: Allan Benson (0457 458 274) Wendy Mitchell (0423 388 529) & Robyn Price Volume 21, No. 5

DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
26/5/26	Next Meeting: Land-based sea bird watching Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite Hungry Jacks	David Mitford
30/5/26	Outing: Katandra, Mt Elliot, Strickland SF Meet: Meet 8.30am Katandra Picnic Area, Katandra Rd, Holgate	REMEMBER TO REGISTER Graham Nelson 0466 599 278
10/6/26	½ day Outing: Spencer / Mill Creek Meet: 8.30am Spencer Wharf opposite the Spencer Store, Wiseman's Ferry Rd, Spencer	REMEMBER TO REGISTER M and K Pointer 4374 1163
23/6/26	Next Meeting: Birders' contribution to Conservation Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite Hungry Jacks	Guy Dutson

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: Our speaker tonight is David Mitford. David is regarded as a seabird expert - one of the most challenging group of birds to ID. For many years, David has conducted land-based sea watches at Mistral Point at Maroubra. Over this time David has amassed some amazing records. Tonight, David will detail his observations.

Last Meeting: The speaker was Mick Roderick, the Regent Honeyeater Co-ordinator for Birdlife Australia. Mick provided us with an update on the progress of the captive release program which has been made necessary by the catastrophic decline in Regent Honeyeater numbers caused by loss and fragmentation of habitat. Mick's enthusiasm for Regents made it a compelling and informative experience for the audience. It was a pity only 24 people could attend - many regulars were at the Nundle camp.

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 1700 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.

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

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

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

CAMPS 2026

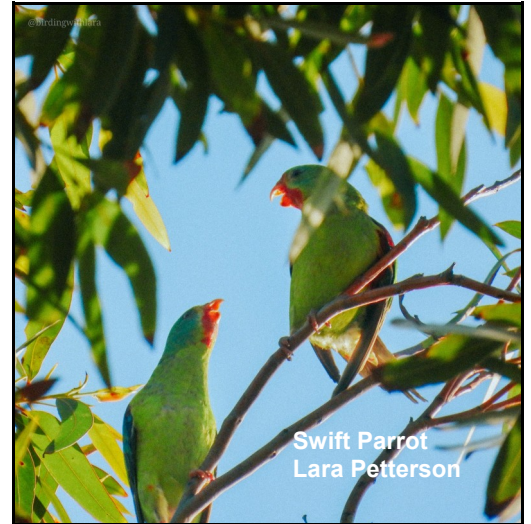
WHAT WAS NEW in May and WHAT CAN WE EXPECT in June?

The arrival of Swift Parrots at Bateau Bay caused great excitement. These are the first Swift Parrots on the coastal plain since 2021. 8 were found on the 3rd of May and numbers peaked on the 10th May at 36. Great work Nick Carson for (a) finding them and (b) continuing to monitor them. Another great find was a female Turquoise Parrot at Kiar Ridge. This is very uncommon species for the Central Coast.



Peaceful Dove
Meryl Newton

A Peaceful Dove at Doyalson is unusual in this location.



Swift Parrot
Lara Petterson

A Yellow-billed Spoonbill at CCW got some people twitching.

A couple of late departures for Spring migrants at Wyee, viz: White-throated Needletail, White-throated Gerygone and Fairy Martin. Some interesting records of Musk Duck and Great Crested Grebe from Lake Munmorah. There have been lots of records of Rose Robin.

Things will be very quiet in June but keep an eye out for Swift Parrots. They have left Bateau Bay but are likely to turn up elsewhere. Keep an eye and ear out for Regent Honeyeaters. This is the traditional time they are on the Coast.

OUTING REPORTS

Camp: April 27 - 30, 2026

NUNDLE

Leader: Doug Hocking

It was 16 years since the Central Coast Bird Group had a camp out at Nundle. Whilst it was very dry, the weather was clear with mild sunny days and cold nights. We birded in 3 distinct habitats, being the High Country around Hanging Rock, the Peel River Valley down to Chaffey Dam and Woolomin and south to Crawney Pass and Timor.

On Tuesday we were fortunate enough to visit the Pointers' property 'Verdon' hosted by Margaret, Kaye and Ben Pointer. While Doug was fixing a flat tyre (he had to leave and drive to Tamworth), we had Wedge-tailed Eagles flying around as well as a kestrel.

We entered the private property of The Verdon. Around the house we recorded Scarlet Robin, Spotted Pardalote, Grey Shrike-thrush, Mistletoebird, Welcome Swallow, White-throated Treecreeper and Brown Thornbill. Driving up to the Dam on the property we spotted Kookaburra, White-eared Honeyeater and more Treecreepers. A walk along the fence line and we had White-naped Honeyeater, Superb Fairywren, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and a lone Varied Sitella. Our lunch spot was up high (over 1000 m) looking over the Chaffey Dam. A beautiful spot but fairly quiet with all the birds down in the gully near the water. We saw Brown Thornbill, Red Wattlebird, Golden Whistler, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, White-plumed Honeyeater, Australian Magpie and a female Scarlet Robin. Back at the Homestead we added Jacky Winter,

Red-browed Finch, Pied Currawong and Crimson Rosella to our list.

Wedge-tailed Eagles were prominent every day and Kaye told us how, when the goats are kidding, flocks of up to 20 birds circle the goats predated the kids when they are dropped - unique feral pest control.

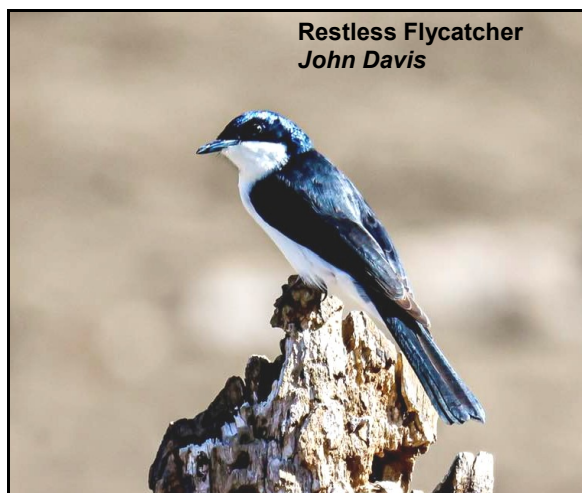


Birders at the Dam
Doug Hocking

Doug returned with a new tyre and we moved on to the Sheba Dam at Hanging Rock where there were Australasian Grebe, Little Pied Cormorant, Pacific Black Duck, Eurasian Coot, Kookaburra, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Red Wattlebird, Reed Warbler, Azure Kingfisher, Striated Thornbill, Golden Whistler, several White-naped Honeyeaters and White-browed Scrubwrens. On the way back to camp we called into Hanging Rock Lookout and were greeted by a lone White-eared Honey-eater calling and great views of a Wedge-tailed Eagle cruising in the valley below. We then had Bird Call at the Camp.

On Wednesday, we followed the River Road west to Bowling Alley Point, Chaffey Dam and Woolomin. Our first stop was Swamp Creek Camp Site on the Peel River. We saw a remarkable number of birds in a confined area - Rose Robin, Double-barred Finch, Little Corella, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Pied Butcherbird, Red-browed Finch, White-plumed Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Mistletoebird, Silveryeye, Common Blackbird, Noisy Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Rainbow and Scaly Breasted Lorikeets, Dusky Moorhen, White-faced Heron, White-browed Scrubwren, Grey Butcherbird, Striated Thornbill, Little Raven, Australian Raven, and Torresian Crow. We then moved further down River Road and birded on the roadside on a point above the river. We were fortunate to see 4 Diamond Firetails, Dusky Woodswallow, Spiny-cheeked and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Figbird, Crested Shrike-tit, Little Lorikeet and Willy Wagtail.

We moved further down River Road to Bowling Alley Point on the Dam and observed Restless Flycatcher, Crested Pigeon, Whistling Kite, Little Black Cormorant, Black Duck and Wood Duck, Coot, Brown Quail, Brown Falcon, (with a flyover and calling), White and Straw-necked Ibis, Black-fronted Dotterel (dangerously close to a very large black snake) and Masked Lapwing. We had morning tea at the Chaffey Dam camping area where there was Mugga Ironbark flowering. We spotted Musk Lorikeet, Hoary-headed Grebe, Great-crested Grebe, Sea Eagle, Grey Teal and many Coots. We stopped at the Dam Lookout and saw Pied Cormorant, Australasian Darter, Black-shouldered Kite, Purple-backed Fairywren and Yellow-rumped Thornbill.



Restless Flycatcher
John Davis

We then moved on towards Woolomin but on the way stopped at a small reserve on the Peel with excellent habitat. However, the area had been taken over by Bell Miners. A Brown Falcon flew over. Lunch was taken at the Woolomin township reserve and once again it was good birding right where we had lunch. There were Fuscous, Yellow-tufted and Striped Honeyeaters foraging in the trees above us, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-throated Treecreeper, Striated Pardalote, House Sparrow, Satin Bowerbird, King Parrot, Eastern Spinebill, and a Bar-shouldered Dove calling.

We travelled up the west bank of Chaffey Dam to the abandoned Dulegal Arboretum and saw a Yellow-billed Spoonbill on the way as well as Australian Hobby, Eastern Rosella, Noisy Miner, Striated Pardalote, Whistling Kite, and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet.

We had bird call at the Caravan Park and Ben Pointer called in giving us some good tips on birding in the Nundle area before we had dinner at the Peel Inn.

On Thursday, Christina Port was the Leader as I had to leave. The first stop along the Crawney Road near The Dag was mostly quiet, although we had good views of Crimson Rosella and then Eastern Rosella as well. Noisy Friarbirds, Noisy Miner, Spotted Pardalote were recorded and a Hobby zoomed through.

Golden Whistler, Superb Fairywren, Eastern Spinebill and then Red-browed Treecreepers were seen well in good numbers. Great excitement! A resting White-faced Heron posed before we turned around and wandered back for morning tea. White-browed Scrubwrens were seen rock hopping in the river and then more Red-browed Treecreepers were seen well and calling. After morning tea we packed up and left, much to the relief of the lone camper, and drove up through Crawney National Park heading for the summit. It was proving very quiet until we spooked a group of Glossy Black Cockatoos feeding on Casuarinas near the top. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos were heard as well. Arriving at the top of the Great Dividing Range, 950 metres above sea level, we were met by Australian Raven, Noisy Friarbird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Crimson Rosella.

Our stop at a highland swamp was very quiet except for the usual suspects. An Eastern Yellow Robin called and an Australian Kookaburra flew off. Our lunch spot was a treed area down the bottom. Female Golden Whistler, Brown Thornbill, Nankeen Kestrel, White-throated Treecreeper, Wedge-tailed Eagle, a Restless Flycatcher, Australian Magpie and Red Wattlebird kept us company.

As we drove further south along the Timor Road following the eastern flowing Isis River a group of Yellow-rumped Thornbills and then a Jacky Winter made us stop. The river below had Dusky Moorhen, and a Black Duck. The trees had another Restless Flycatcher, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Australian Raven, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, Spinebill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Double-barred Finch, White-plumed Honeyeater, another lone Varied Sitella, Galah and Common Myna. After a chat with the property owner of "North Glen Dhu" we then headed into Timor which was quiet. We returned to camp after a successful day.

There were 22 Birders at the Camp Out and we saw 111 Species whereas in 2010 the count was 104.

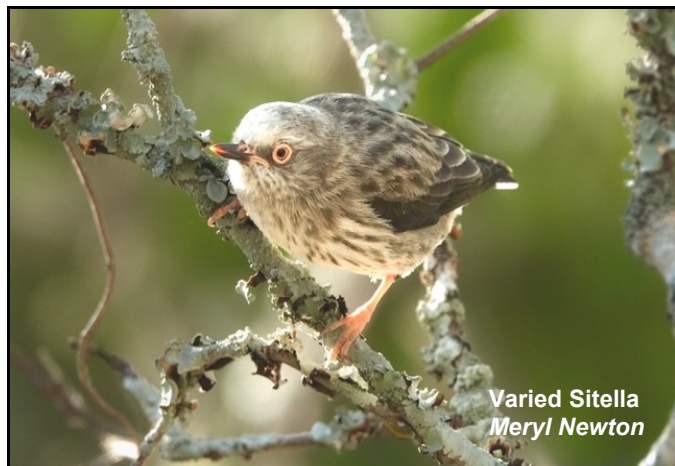
Outing May 2, 2026

CHAIN VALLEY BAY

Leader: Meryl Newton

We were blessed with glorious weather, as 12 members gathered at Chain Valley Bay Community Hall to meander along the pathway over the suspension bridge at Karignan Creek to Chain Valley Bay North. Along the way we all participated in 2 Swift Parrot Surveys. Whilst not seeing any Swifts, the Swamp Mahogany blossoms were alive with Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Scarlet Myzomela. It was unusually quiet otherwise, with understory birds like Fairywrens and Finches few and far between. Morning tea was taken at Joshua Porter Reserve, where both Swift Surveys were done. Many Scaly-breasted Lorikeets were observed in the flowering gums, a White-bellied Sea-eagle flyover and dozens of Little Corellas kept everyone entertained.

We then drove over to Summerland Point, to the Heritage Walk, which links Summerland Point to Gwandalan, passing through really interesting forest, with a gully transecting the track. The gully didn't disappoint, with lots of birding activity, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Eastern Spinebill, and Varied Sitella landing close enough for all to observe. Most people on the walk hadn't been to this location before, but expressed the desire to return again as it was so pleasant and with such easy access.



We then went to the boat ramp park at Summerland Point for lunch. Many ducks were around the foreshore, including Mallard, Chestnut and Grey Teal and Pacific Black. As some members then proceeded to leave, I took a couple of people back to the reserve along Tall Timbers Rd, to see if the Owlet Nightjar was peering out of its hollow but not this time. However, they now know where to look. As always, terrific company, with 43 species observed. Not huge numbers, but I hope I managed to introduce a couple of new places to explore.

½ day Outing: May 13, 2026**LAKE MUNMORAH SCA****Leader: Leeanne Lemke**

There were a few cancellations due to the weather report which was 95% chance of rain but twelve of us pushed ahead regardless and ended up being so lucky with the weather throughout the day. We watched squalls and heavy rain patches pass us by with rainbows over spectacular scenery and our raincoats stayed in the car until the last 15 minutes of the day.

I thought I was early, but a number of people beat me to the meeting spot. By that stage they had only seen a Golden Whistler, so I hadn't missed much. We moved back to the spot where I had meant to start about 50 metres back and then we had 12 species by 8.31am while waiting for the rest of the crew to arrive. By the time we were all there and ready to move on to the next spot, we had 17 species here with nice views of a Fan-tailed Cuckoo and a lovely male Scarlet Honeyeater in a Banksia at eye level. This turned out to be the best birdlist location all day but we still had fun looking. From here we moved on to the Geebung Trail where we walked about 1km along the trail. This was very quiet and different from the day before when I'd done a recce. Perhaps the overnight rain had changed things. A White-bellied Sea-eagle was seen and a Spotted Pardalote was heard before a dozen Musk Lorikeets flew over and landed in a tree which was a lifer for 2 people.



Musk Lorikeet
John Davis

The bird quest of the day was Tawny-crowned Honeyeater. A number of us wanted to see one and as I'd seen 3 the day before in 2 different locations, I was 90% sure we would see at least one and really wanted to get this bird for a few people there. Alas it was not meant to be and it remains a mythical creature for some. Doug Hocking managed to spy one but everyone was looking elsewhere at the time and it didn't pop up again.



Birders
Leeanne Lemke

We had morning tea at Freemans Camp ground which was lovely with the sun out, good conversation and more birds. Highlights here were the flocks of Musk Lorikeets being spooked and landing before taking off again which was great for those seeing these for the first time. We also had some lovely views of Silveryeyes, Tasmanian subspecies *lateralis*, feeding in the low Banksia.

The park has lots flowering at the moment and one of the spots which is coming into bloom early this year is the Grass Tree Walk. Such a stunning landscape and always worth a look. Not much going on bird-wise at the moment but a Brown Goshawk flying overhead was spotted here, some Silveryeyes flying away and an Eastern Yellow Robin.

We then moved down the hill for a sea-watch and the sure thing - close views of White-bellied Sea-eagles. None of that happened. It was all extremely quiet out to sea and a White-faced Heron hunting down on the rock platform was the most exciting bird here. A few decided to go home at this point and the remaining 8 of us pushed on further north. We stopped above Moonee track and decided to walk a little bit of the track as Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters were mentioned again and while we didn't see them, we added a few more species here. There were a few raptors about and at one point Jaeger was called which soon was quashed with a photo of a Black-shouldered Kite which looked like it was over the sea. Two more White-bellied Sea-eagles and a frustratingly unidentified raptor went by too fast.

I thought I saw a Yellow-rumped Thornbill but it was called a Striated by someone else so that's what made the list, as did Brown Thornbill and Red-browed Finch, New Holland and White-cheeked Honeyeaters and a random flock of Maned Geese flew past. We then quickly ran out to Snapper Point as some had gone the other way to Frazer Beach for lunch.

With some wild-looking weather approaching across the water, there wasn't time to hang around but we saw a couple of Australasian Gannets and a Great Crested Tern. We then headed off and joined the others at Frazer Beach where we finally put our raincoats on and ate lunch in some light rain. The only new bird added to the list here was Pied Butcherbird. In the end, the official list is 45 species with Doug seeing the Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and Doug and Graham seeing a Brush Bronzewing on the way out which would make 47 Species. Thanks everyone for a fun day and great company.

SPECIES LIST**APRIL 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

Great Crested Grebe	2	24/04/2026	Lake Munmorah	Andrew Robinson
Kelp Gull (11th record)	1	16/04/2026	Soldiers Pt	Archie Brennan
Eurasian Whimbrel	1	18/04/2026	Hardy's Bay	Bruce Ward-Smith
Eastern Curlew	1	3/04/2026	Davistown	Zee Merven
Australasian Shoveler	20	29/04/2026	Sth Wyong Sewage	Graham Nelson
Australasian Shoveler	5	25/04/2026	Sth Wyong Sewage	Andrew Robinson
Musk Duck	6	19/04/2026	Berkeley Vale	Christina Port
Musk Duck	16	24/04/2026	Lake Munmorah	Andrew Robinson
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	17/04/2026	CC Wetlands	Meryl Newton
Black Bittern	1	2/04/2026	The Orchards, Lisarow	Allan Benson
Black-necked Stork	2	17/04/2026	South Tacoma	Steve Bowman
Black-necked Stork	F	25/04/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Black-fronted Dotterel	13	29/04/2026	Sth Wyong Sewage	Carole Carpenter
Spotless Crake	2	24/04/2026	Lake Munmorah	Andrew Robinson
Lewin's Rail	1	24/04/2026	Chain Valley Bay	Andrew Robinson
Brown Quail	6	5/4/20206	CC Wetlands	Leeanne Lemke
Grey Goshawk	1	18/04/2026	RTA Reserve, Ourimbah	David Schuemaker
Brown Goshawk	1	13/04/2026	Woy Woy tip	Darren Earnshaw
Little Eagle	1	15/04/2026	CC Wetlands	Leeanne Lemke
Little Eagle	1	3/04/2026	Wadalba	Leeanne Lemke
Brahminy Kite	2	8/04/2026	St Hubert's Island	Christina Port
Brahminy Kite	2	11/04/2026	Chain Valley Bay	Julie Peksis
Osprey	1	3/04/2026	Central Coast Stadium	David Lamont
Osprey	4	22/04/2026	Erina	Darren Earnshaw
Pacific Baza	1	10/04/2026	CC Wetlands	Neryl Richards
Pacific Baza	2	29/04/2026	Sth Wyong Sewage	Leeanne Lemke
Pacific Baza	2	25/04/2026	Sth Wyong Sewage	Andrew Robinson
Pacific Baza	1	28/04/2026	Tuggerah	Darren Earnshaw
Square-tailed Kite	1	12/04/2026	Gosford	Gary Jackson
Peregrine Falcon	1	3/04/2026	Wadalba	Leanne Lemke
Hobby	1	11/04/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Peregrine Falcon	1	13/04/2026	Woy Woy tip	Darren Earnshaw
Peregrine Falcon	2	16/04/2026	Woy Woy tip	Darren Earnshaw
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	3/04/2026	Palmdale	Leanne Lemke
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	13/04/2026	West Gosford	Darren Earnshaw
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	24/04/2026	Kariong	Matt Whittaker
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	29/04/2026	Mangrove Mt	Andrew Robinson
Little Lorikeet	2	27/04/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Little Lorikeet	4	27/04/2026	Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Little Lorikeet	2	29/04/2026	Yengo NP	Andrew Robinson
Gang-gang Cockatoo	4	8/04/2026	Palmdale	Allan Benson
Gang-gang Cockatoo	3	3/04/2026	Palmdale	Leeanne Lemke
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	2/04/2026	Budgewoi	Leeanne Lemke
Glossy Black Cockatoo	1	5/4/20206	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Glossy Black Cockatoo	6	20/04/2026	Mangrove Mt	Nerida Carter

Barn Owl	1	10/04/2026	Mangrove Mt	Daniel McKeon
Peaceful Dove	1	29/04/2026	Doyalson	Meryl Newton
Fairy Martin**	2	27/04/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Azure Kingfisher	1	21/04/2026	Alison	Ben Stewart
White-throated Needletail**	2	6/04/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Tree Martin	2	9/04/2026	Gwandalan	Meryl Newton
Tree Martin	5	24/04/2026	Chain Valley Bay	Andrew Robinson
Rock Warbler	1	25/04/2026	Mt Ettalong	Carol Edwards
Blue-faced Honeyeater	2	9/04/2026	Narara	Julie Peksis
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	22/04/2026	Berkeley Vale	Rex Schmidt
Spangled Drongo	1	25/04/2026	Pearl Beach	Christina Port
Rose Robin	imm M	1/4/2026	RTA Reserve, Ourimbah	Allan Benson
Rose Robin	M	10/04/2026	RTA Reserve, Ourimbah	Tricia Sweet
Rose Robin	1	25/04/2026	Mt Ettalong	Carol Edwards
Rose Robin	1	23/04/2026	Pearl Beach	Ken Janson
Rose Robin	1	25/04/2026	Bouddi NP	Frances Westwick
Rose Robin	1	10/04/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Bassian Thrush	1	3/04/2026	Palmdale	Leeanne Lemke
Leaden Flycatcher**	F	12/04/2026	Wyrabalong	Leeanne Lemke
Eastern Shrike-tit	2	8/04/2026	RTA Reserve, Ourimbah	Julie Peksis
Little Grassbird	2	24/04/2026	Lake Munmorah	Andrew Robinson
Little Grassbird	1	3/04/2026	CC Wetlands	Leonie Loewe
Rufous Whistler**	1	9/04/2026	Gwandalan	Meryl Newton
Reed-warbler	1	29/04/2026	Sth Wyong Sewage	Allan Benson
Varied Sitella	2+	9/04/2026	Gwandalan	Meryl Newton
Varied Sitella	2	27/4/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
White-throated Gerygone**	1	17/04/2026	Wye	Leonie Loewe
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	3	29/04/2026	Mangrove Mt	Andrew Robinson

TWITCH LIST

April 2026

Nick Carson	201	Doug Hocking	140	Gabrielle Rees	99
Graham Nelson	196	John Carpenter	140	Margaret Pointer	94
Leeanne Lemke	187	Krystyna Lonergan	139	Diana Hogan	91
Christina Port	175	Kaye Pointer	137	Robyn Price	90
Leonie Loewe	173	Frik Gautschi	123	Judy Clark	78
Allan Benson	164	Daniel McKeon	120	David Dowling	78
Carole Carpenter	153	Chris Jamieson	117	Rowena Wallace	70
Julie Peksis	146	Lynette Callaghan	105		

A new leader in April, with Nick Carson edging ahead of Graham Nelson, and Leeanne Lemke still in with a shot.

BIRDATA SURVEYS

YTD 2026

Alan Stuart	121	Guy Dutson	30	Robyn Price	11
Leonie Loewe	96	Frances Westwick	24	Doug Hocking	6
Graham Nelson	92	Nick Carson	24	Ann Lindsay	3
Allan Benson	50	Carl Morris	23	Daniel McKeon	2
Frik Gautschi	36	C Clutterbuck	20		

April surveys were 254 compared with 255 in 2025. YTD surveys 2026 are 882 compared to 682 in 2025.

There has been a significant increase in surveys completed in the first four months of 2026 compared to 2025. Alan Stuart has taken the lead from Leonie Loewe with Graham Nelson 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

April Survey

7 participants enjoyed a warm sunny day. The water levels remained extremely low with significant areas of exposed mud. Waterfowl numbers were reasonable with 220 counted on the ponds. The highlights were 20 Shoveler and 13 Black-fronted Dotterel, a pair of Pacific Baza, a very late departing (over-wintering) Reed-warbler, Black-shouldered and Whistling Kites. 44 species were recorded overall.

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

Swift Parrot Surveys

A huge effort by Central Coast birders with 20 observers recording 218 surveys at 97 sites up to the 15th May. Surveys will continue until Friday 5th June. We have been rewarded with up to 36 Swift Parrots recorded at Bateau Bay. There is every chance the birds will turn up at other sites. People are doing multiple surveys at the same sites which is really important.

The following people have recorded surveys:

Nick Carson	56	Ann Lindsay	5	David Dowling	1
Allan Benson	34	Tracey Flynn	5	Chris Jamieson	2
Leanne Lemke	32	Christina Port	4	Nicholas Gregory	1
Meryl Newton	21	Graham Nelson	4	Lara Petterson	1
Doug Hocking	16	Nerida Carter	4	Jo Greenwood	1
Leonie Loewe	15	Robyn Price	3	Robert Olive	1
Frances Westwick	9	Ken Janson	3		

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, another overlooking the dam and the third one past the Hannan Shed.

MORE SHEARWATERS ARE WASHING UP DEAD ON AUSTRALIAN BEACHES. IT'S NOT DUE TO 'NATURAL' CAUSES.

Jennifer Lavers

You might know the Short-tailed Shearwater and Sable (Sooty) Shearwater by the common name "muttonbirds". These two species of seabird breed on islands off southeastern Australia. Both undertake a breathtaking two-week, non-stop flight across the Pacific to the Bering Sea, more than 10,000 km away near Alaska and Russia. Here, they spend the northern summer.

Shearwaters have to survive often-ferocious conditions. Researchers using tracking technology found a shearwater flying inside the eye of a hurricane for 11 hours at an altitude of 4,700 m and winds exceeding 200 km/h. The bird lived. (*Editor's Note: Streaked Shearwater*)

These remarkable birds have evolved special features such as tendons in their shoulder joints allowing them to take advantage of intense winds. Rather than being harmed, they use powerful winds to catapult them vast distances while expending minimal energy.

This is why it's puzzling when many people – and wildlife agencies – blame strong winds or “migration” for the increasing numbers of dead shearwaters seen on Australian beaches.

In our new research, we point to the real cause of deaths in Australian waters: starvation linked to climate change. Researchers overseas have also pinpointed ocean warming as a key factor in mass deaths of seabirds.

Why blame the wind?

Pelagic (ocean-going) seabirds such as shearwaters rarely approach land other than to breed on their chosen islands – or if they are sick, starving or dying and don't have enough energy to use the wind as they want.

In these cases, the wind can often push them onshore where beachgoers might see them and assume the strong winds are to blame.

Dead or dying beach-washed shearwaters are typically found over a vast area, from Queensland to Tasmania. This means the causes of these deaths must cover a large area – it can't just be localised storms.

Shearwaters can survive long periods without food, but they have their limits. The waters of Australia's east coast are a hotspot for marine biodiversity. But these same waters are warming significantly faster than the global average. As more and more heat is funnelled into the oceans, the prey species the shearwaters rely on are moving elsewhere, or going deeper. With their food out of reach, the birds grow weaker and many will die.

Many beachgoers spotting a dead shearwater may think this is normal, as they have seen this before. But it's not normal. Of the world's roughly 10,000 bird species, about 1,800 migrate, travelling long distances every year. These include shorebirds, land birds and seabirds. Almost none are regularly found dead on beaches or anywhere else. When they are found dead, they are very often emaciated.



Mass deaths are multiplying

The death of large numbers of birds in a short time is called a “wreck”. In birds, these sad events are typically linked to less prey and warmer waters.

From 2014 to 2015, around 400,000 Cassin's Auklets died off the Pacific northwest of the United States. The mass death of these small seabirds was linked to falling prey numbers brought on by a powerful marine heatwave which spread like a wildfire across the ocean.

Of all the extra heat trapped by climate change, more than 90% pours into the ocean. While the ocean gets gradually hotter, sudden marine heatwaves can bring abrupt, unwelcome change. Marine heatwaves are now striking more often and with increasing intensity.

While some species can adapt to some levels of change, others will not. Indeed, researchers predict “more losers than winners” as the rates of ocean warming rise.

Sadly, shearwaters look to be one such species. During a strong marine heatwave over the 2023-24 southern summer, an estimated 629,000 adult shearwaters died on Australian beaches. For the Short-tailed Shearwater, that's around 3% of the global population, gone in a matter of weeks.

Shearwaters are globally recognised as sentinels of ocean health. When their populations are expanding and birds are able to successfully rear their young, this indicates the surrounding ocean is healthy and robust.

The deaths of hundreds of thousands of shearwaters in a single summer is an early warning of what is to come as ocean temperatures keep rising.

POACHED:

COULD A VIDEO OF TREE-CLIMBING EGG THIEVES HELP SAVE AUSTRALIA'S VULNERABLE HONEYEATERS?

Graham Readfearn

Captured on one of Bianca McBryde's tree-mounted cameras, the brush-tailed possum crawled into the frame, lowered its head into the nest and bites into the egg.

The snack was a shop-bought quail's egg and the nest was artificial – a crafty construction made of half a tennis ball, some brown paint and fibres from the husks of coconuts.

But the interaction was a vital clue in the increasingly desperate efforts to stop Australia's critically endangered Regent Honeyeater from going extinct.

McBryde wanted to know how often these native possums were likely taking the eggs of this striking Australian songbird.

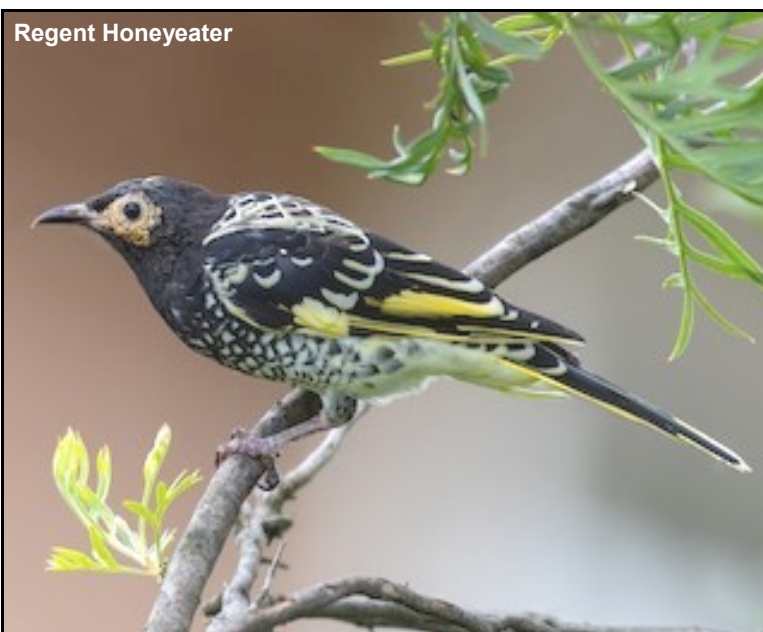
The answer was: not very often, but often enough to matter.

Over two weeks, possums raided only four of the 40 fake nests placed in trees at North Head in Sydney. As little as three decades ago, when Regent Honeyeaters were far more common, such infrequent raids would have made little difference to the species. "It's likely possums have always done this occasionally and it wouldn't have had an impact," says McBryde, a researcher at the University of Sydney. "The occasional egg here and there was probably just a part of the normal balance of things."

But when McBryde fed her new data into a computer model, the effect of these occasional raids on the honeyeaters' prospects for survival was profound.

If this happened in the small populations of honeyeaters that are clinging on today, McBryde's research found the loss of just a few eggs to the opportunistic possums could increase their risk of extinction within 20 years by about 35%.

Regent Honeyeaters are one of Australia's most threatened birds, with fewer than 250 likely left in the wild restricted to three sites on the periphery of the Blue Mountains, to the west of Sydney.



Regent Honeyeater

Once seen in large and mobile flocks that would help pollinate eucalypt trees across vast distances, most of their woodland habitats have been lost to developments and farming.

"They're a uniquely Australian bird," says Mick Roderick, the Regent Honeyeater recovery adviser at BirdLife Australia, which alongside the Taronga Conservation Society helped pay for McBryde's research.

"It can mimic the calls of other birds and it's the only honeyeater on Earth that can do this. Their strategy was to arrive at blossom events and chase other birds away. Their flocking strategy doesn't work anymore. A flock might just be three birds."