



THE IBOCC

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ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB INC NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2010



photo by Charles Dove

Nankeen Kestrel

Scientific name: *Falco cenchroides*
Family: Falconidae
Order: Falconiformes

Description

The Nankeen Kestrel is a slender falcon and is a relatively small raptor (bird of prey). The upper parts are mostly rufous, with some dark streaking. The wings are tipped with black. The underparts are pale buff, streaked with black, and the under tail is finely barred with black, with a broader black band towards the tip. Females tend to be more heavily marked and have more rufous on the crown and tail. Males have a greyish crown and tail, although the extent varies between individuals. Females are larger than males. Young Nankeen Kestrels closely resemble the adult female, with heavier markings.

Distribution

Nankeen Kestrels are found in most areas of Australia and are also found on islands along Australia's coastline, as well as New Guinea and Indonesia.

Habitat

Preferred habitats are lightly wooded areas and open agricultural regions and tend to be absent from dense forests. The Nankeen Kestrel's success as a bird of prey can be largely contributed to its tolerance for a wide variety of habitats and its ability to feed on a variety of foods and nest in a range of sites.

Seasonal movements

Some Nankeen Kestrels are partially migratory, others disperse in response to the availability of food and some are largely resident.

Feeding

The Nankeen Kestrel's diet is varied. It mainly feeds on small mammals, reptiles, small birds and a variety of insects. Prey is located from a perch or by hovering a

short distance above the ground on rapid wing-beats, using its fan-shaped tail as a rudder and keeping the head and body kept still. Once prey is spotted, the bird drops nearer to the ground until it is close enough to pounce. Some insects and birds may be caught in mid-air or snatched from tree branches.

Breeding

The Nankeen Kestrel nests in a wide variety of sites, including tree hollows, caves, ledges on the outside of buildings, and occasionally on the ground. The nest consists of anything from a simple scrape in the dirt of a ledge or tree hollow, to a nest of sticks or mud that has been abandoned by another species of bird. Pairs of Nankeen Kestrels usually stay together over successive breeding seasons, and will often use the same nest site or territory year after year. Usually only one brood of young is raised in a year. The female does the bulk of the incubation, while the male supplies the food.

(Nankeen Kestrel information; supplied courtesy of Birds in backyards)

CONTENTS:

June Activities	Page	1
Reports	Pages	2 - 4
Feather Tails	Page	5
Articles of Interest	Pages	6 - 7
Monthly Bird Sightings	Pages	7 - 9
Leeton Camp Report (Part 1)	Pages	11 - 12



'ONE GOOD TERN
DESERVES ANOTHER'

ILLAWARRA BIRD
OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.

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Founded in 1977

Club's Aim: To join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them.

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JUNE ACTIVITIES

Club Meeting – Monday 14th June 7.30pm - Fairy Meadow Community Hall.
Cnr of Cambridge Avenue & Princes H'way Fairy Meadow

Brian Hale will be presenting the

IBOC MEMBERS NIGHT.

Midweek Walk - Wednesday 16th June 2010 –
Blackbutt Reserve
Leader Chris Brandis Start 8.30am

Meet in the carpark off Shellharbour Road at 8:30 am. We will walk through the middle of the forest and down to the dam for morning tea then back to the cars. This is a remnant piece of bush with small bird numbers declining during the drought and hopefully we will get a good selection now there has been a bit of rain to liven things up.

Chris Brandis 0427 96 28 37

Monthly Outing - Sunday 20th June 2010
Escarpment S.R.A.
Leader Wal Emery Start 9am

Turn west off the Princess Highway Bulli into Hospital Road. Proceed to the end of Hospital Road, turn left at the T intersection into Highlands Parade, drive to the end of Highlands Parade & street park where available.

We aim to walk the Escarpment Service Trail to the intersection with the upper section of Rixon's Pass and return by the same route a return distance of about 8klm. This distance can be adjusted on the day if desirable and anyone wishing to do a shorter walk can return to their car along the same track.

The walk is through a mixture of wet eucalypt and rainforest. There are three or four moderately steep short hills 50 – 100 metres long where the trail drops in and out of gullies and creeks, but the majority of the walk is fairly easy with a good surface underfoot.

Bring and carry morning tea and lunch.

If we have had rain or heavy dews a piece of plastic to sit on might be a good idea.

Wal Emery

June Committee Meeting –

The meeting due to take place on Monday 17th May 2010 was cancelled.

This was due to 5 committee members submitting their apologies before the meeting date. This left the remaining 3 members with no quorum and as no business could be conducted, it was decided to cancel the meeting.

The next meeting will now be on Monday 21st June 2010 at Betty Hudson's, 1 Drualla Road Jamberoo, at 7.30pm. Ph 42360307.

July 2010 Newsletter –

Deadline for Articles and **Photos** in the next IBOC newsletter is Wednesday 23rd June 2010
Email contributions to Charles Dove newsletter@iboc.org.au or post to 2/39 Purry Burry Ave. Primbee 2502. Ph: 42752383

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS – 2010 fees are now due:

Family \$35.00, Single \$30.00, Junior \$10.00

please pay **Browyn Wilson Treasurer** by cash, cheque or money order.

REPORTS

MONTHLY MEETING REPORT - Monday 10th May

Bill Zealey

Helping Threatened Birds-Some Successes and Some difficult Cases

Jack Baker is probably best known to IBOC members for his work the Ground Parrot and Eastern Bristlebird at Barren Grounds. In his talk at our May meeting, he provided an in-depth review of a wide variety of threatened bird species, including details of their present population, threats, and possible remedial action we can take. This talk was all the more appropriate since 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity.

Jack presented several success stories:

Goulds Petrel- Where a program of eradication of rabbits and elimination of the Bird-lime tree on Cabbage Tree Island, Port Stephens has led to an increase in population to 1000 nesting pairs.

The Little Tern- Where signage to minimise human disturbance and control of introduced animals, in particular foxes, has led to increasing numbers of fledglings.



photo by Charles Dove

He also looked at less successful cases, including the Barking Owl, where the loss of mature River Redgums has severely impacted the population with no obvious solution in sight.

He concluded a fascinating and informative talk with the following thoughts (the last of which seems to be a call to arms):-

- A lot of research goes into recovering threatened species.
- Solid research documents are behind every recovery action.
- Volunteers are essential
- Expertise is essential and most of all - every cause needs a champion!

Jack presented evidence that eradication of the most obvious predator will not always provide a solution. Interactions between predator species must also be considered. The Mallee Fowl is regarded as vulnerable, as populations have declined by at least 20% over the past three generation. A program of 1080 fox baiting has reduced



photo by Charles Dove

the main predator. However feral cats have replaced the foxes in predated the Mallee Fowl, since foxes also suppress feral cat numbers. Other examples were discussed where control of foxes has less effect than expected included that of Albert's Lyre Bird. Any presentation from Jack Baker would not be complete without mention of either the Ground Parrot or the Bristle Bird, and this talk was no exception. He described his two decades of involvement with Ground Parrots. He presented data showing that the original ideas about the role of fire on the parrot population had changed and that an imposed fire regime is not required to maintain a suitable habitat.

Jack ended his talk with up-to-date news of the apparently successful relocated colonies of 45 Bristle Birds to the Beecroft Peninsular and 50 birds to the Cataract Dam area.

Mid-week Walk – Wednesday, 12th May, 2010

Korrungulla Swamp, Purry Burry Point and walk to Heritage Park

Jann Gowans

On a fine but blustery morning, our group of 19 birdwatchers set out to explore Korrungulla Swamp in Primbee. It was good to see some new faces among the group. Although it was quite windy and cool, when we entered the forest that edged the swamp, numerous birds were heard and seen including many of the usual suspects (spotted pardalote, New Holland honeyeater, Eastern yellow robin, grey fantail and fan-tailed cuckoo).

The she-oaks proved popular with many red-browed finches, yellow thornbills, silvereyes and even bulbuls. As we went around the swamp, a raptor burst out of the foliage near the group causing great excitement and a long discussion to arrive at a consensus that it was most likely a grey goshawk.

Darters were plentiful at the swamp and Charlie even showed us a nest with a youngster displaying some fine golden colouring. Nearby, an azure kingfisher was spotted through the tall reeds. On several occasions, a few lorikeets flew by at speed, challenging our identification skills to note both rainbow and musk lorikeets. Although we didn't see a few of the more unusual birds recently spotted at the swamp (spangled drongo and musk duck), it was a good morning.



Photo by Charles Dove

We then shifted to Purry Burry Point for morning tea and filled in the remaining cormorant species and spotted both Caspian and crested terns. We walked along the foreshore of the lake and while we didn't add a lot of birds, it was a nice relaxing walk. Most of us hadn't realized there was access to the lake there (mainly locals use the path). The sighting of a pair of European goldfinches in the car park brought the list to 48 species and topped off a most enjoyable outing. Thanks to Charlie for showing us his local patch!

Bird Sightings List

Chestnut teal	Dusky Moorhen	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Pacific Black Duck	Masked Lapwing	Golden Whistler
Australasian Grebe	Caspian Tern	Australian Magpie
Spotted Dove	Crested Tern	Grey Fantail
Crested Pigeon	Silver Gull	Willie Wagtail
Australasian Darter	Rainbow Lorikeet	Australian Raven
Little Pied Cormorant	Musk Lorikeet	Magpie-lark
Great Cormorant	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Yellow Robin
Little Black Cormorant	Azure Kingfisher	Silvereye
Pied Cormorant	Superb Fairy-wren	Welcome Swallow
Australian Pelican	Yellow Thornbill	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Eastern Great Egret	Spotted Pardalote	Common Starling
White-faced Heron	Eastern Spinebill	Common Myna
Little Egret	Little Wattlebird	Red-browed Finch
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Red Wattlebird	House Sparrow
Grey Goshawk	New Holland Honeyeater	European Goldfinch

BIRD SONGS

Oh, there's music in the forests
And there's music in the glen,
As the birds are warbling greetings
To the spring that's come again.

All their piping is so merry
That the woodlands seem to ring,
With the praises of the birdsongs
For the coming of the spring.

Join the joyous woodland chorus
And raise high your voice in cheer,
Join the birdsongs in thanksgiving
For the springtime of the year!

WEEKEND WALK TO TRIPARINA NATURE RESERVE

15th. MAY, 2010

Terry Edwell

Sunday was a beautiful day for our walk at Trilarina Nature Resrve. There were lots of birds, calling as we walked, but it wasn` t till we reached a dam that we found yellow faced honey-eaters, bathing and singing, which allowed us to identify their calls. Mike spotted a white eared honey-eater drying itself off, high in a tree, so most of us had a good look. There were some small parrots there as well, identified as Little Lorikeets. Wombats had left calling cards on most of the surrounding rocks and there were tracks, all through the bush and reeds. Not much else was spotted there, but it



photo by Charles Dove

has great potential though, as in 2009, a few of us ventured near the river and saw dozens of Raibow Bee-eaters and Yellow-tufted Honey-eaters, so therefore, it could be worth a visit in the summer months. We then moved on to the next part of our day, which was still in the Nowra District, along the river, or part of it to a place called Ben`s Walk. Here, we had lunch



photo by Mike Morphett

and a rest in the parking area. Whilst having a break, we noticed a huge flowering gum, and craned our necks to find Musk Lorikeets, well hidden in the top branches. A beautiful Sea Eagle was seen, gliding around, further up the river. We then walked down many steps to a lovely walk along the river. Not many birds were seen nor heard, but a few of our walkers turned back, and they said that there were birds everywhere, so we must have stirred them up. It was a good walk back and it was a challenge for me to climb over the rocks at the end of the creek. We then proceded back along the other side and across a swinging bridge and we then climbed many steps, back to the carpark. We commenced with seventeen people and lost a couple along the way, but eventually met up again. Thanks to Betty for another lovely day, and for finding all those places for us to go and enjoy our bird watching.

Morning walk Triplarina Nature Reserve

Pacific Black Duck	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Whipbird
Little Black Cormorant	Brown Thornbill	Golden whistler
Little Pied Cormorant	Lewin`s honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush
Little Eagle	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Dusky Moorhen	White-eared Honeyeater	Grey butcherbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Little Lorikeet	New Holland Honeyeater	Silvereye
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Spinebill	
White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Yellow Robin	

Lunch & Afternoon Walk Nowra Showground & Ben`s Walk

White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Magpie-lark
Galah	Brown Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Musk Lorikeet	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail
Crimson Rosella	Lewin`s Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Laughing Kookaburra	White-eared Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Raven
Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Satin Bowerbird
Spotted Pardalote	Eastern whipbird	Welcome Swallow
White-browed Scrubwren	Golden whistler	Silvereye



The pelican that pooped on me
 Was the biggest I have seen,
 I found it quite outrageous,
 That it thought me a latrine,
 I was a wee bit angry,
 And I looked somewhat obscene,
 For it pooped on me with malice
 Pooping pelicans are mean.

It trickled down my cheek and
 forehead,
 I knew I'd been defaced,
 It was sticky, white and smelly,
 I wiped it off with haste,
 Then instinctively I licked my lips
 It had a fishy taste,
 Like a cross between a rotten prawn,
 And out of date Pecks Paste.

My sister said it's lucky,
 To be pooped on from on high,
 I should buy a lottery ticket,
 A trifecta I should try.
 "It wasn't you was pooped on"
 I told her with a sigh,
 "And the only thing that's lucky:
 Is that elephants don't fly."

To the harbour every day I'll walk,
 I am a coastal dweller,
 My looks are unremarkable,
 You'd hardly call me stellar
 But when I'm walking people say,
 "There goes a funny fella,
 For even with no hint of rain,
 He carries his umbrella."

There were twenty seven pelicans
 Down at the wharf today,
 They were sitting all on light poles,
 And I'm sure I heard them say,
 "We've scored another bullseye",
 Then I thought they cheered:
 'Hooray',
 I was pooped on by a pelican,
 Down at the wharf today.

Bigruss May 05



Bassian Thrush

This bird has been doing the rounds of my back garden for over 2 hours, mainly jabbing at worms & grubs in the lawn, reminiscent of blackbirds back in Britain. For the 1st time I noted a gentle rocking to & fro, as mentioned in Pizzey's guide. I played a recording of this species on our CD player, nice & loud, but it made no impact on this individual - too preoccupied with its stomach, I guess.

Mike

Pooping Pelican



I was pooped on by a pelican,
 Down at the wharf today,
 I didn't see it coming,
 I didn't feel its spray,
 I didn't know what happened,
 Till I heard my missus say,
 "You've been pooped on by a pelican,"
 She smirked- and turned away.

I wasn't under cover
 When I felt that dreaded splat
 I didn't have my cap on,
 I didn't have my hat,
 It seems that I walked underneath
 The pole on which it sat,
 I was an easy target,
 For that pelican- when it shat.

Now a pelican's not tiny,
 Like a sparrow or a tit,
 So it's not a trifling matter
 When it scores a direct hit,
 The pain is not the worry,
 It's your pride that hurts a bit,
 When you're pooped on by a pelican,
 You know you're in the shit.



Fishings was good for some at Sawtell - Charlie



Afternoon Tea in Brisbane - Charlie



On my neighbour's roof at Farmborough Heights
 Andrew Wood

[The Albatross are starting to slowly arrive with the cuttlefish - forever vigilante](#)

THANK YOU:- Recently I joined IBOC for an amazing week of birdwatching at Leeton. As a visitor I was made so welcome. Members of the group patiently helped me learn new skills and shared their expert knowledge so willingly. Through your newsletter I'd like to say I appreciate this very much. **Thank you.** Sylvia Cohen.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

A short extract from the report on Black Necked Storks by Greg Clancy and published in the Australian Field Ornithology.

110 AUSTRALIAN Field Ornithology 2009, **26**, 110–115

Species review—

The Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*:

An Overview

GREG. P. CLANCY

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Summary

Nineteen species of stork (Ciconiidae), belonging to three tribes, occur throughout the world, mostly in tropical areas. Some are migratory, some are colonial nesters and most are dependent on wetlands. Four to five species are considered threatened globally. The Australasian populations of the Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* are likely to be split from the Asian populations in the future, as the Satin Stork *E. australis*.

Recent research on the species in New South Wales covering its distribution and territories, breeding biology, feeding behaviour and diet, threats and status, will be published in detail elsewhere.

Introduction

Nineteen stork species, ranging from 75 cm to 152 cm in length, of the order Ciconiiformes, suborder Ciconiae and family Ciconiidae, are found throughout the world, with the greatest diversity in the tropics. Six species belong to the tribe Mycteriini (wood storks and openbills), seven species to the tribe Ciconiini ('typical' storks), and six species to the tribe Leptoptilini ('giant' storks) (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). The Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* (and Satin

Stork *E.a. australis*) belong to the last tribe, which also includes the Saddlebill *E. senegalensis*, Jabiru *Jabiru mycteria*, Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*, Greater Adjutant *L. dubius* and Marabou *L. crumeniferus*. This tribe shows a classic Gondwanan distribution pattern with species occurring in Africa, India, Australia and South America.

Some stork species are migratory, some are colonial nesters and some are dependent on wetlands (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992) (Table 1). Seventeen of the 19 species are piscivorous, at least occasionally. Some are highly specialised in their diet, with the openbills *Anastomus* spp. possessing bills especially modified to break open aquatic snails, and Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii* feeding almost exclusively on army worms *Spodoptera exempta* (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). Twelve species are colonial and six are solitary nesters, with one species, the Jabiru, mostly solitary. Fourteen are migratory or partially so, and one is nomadic. Four species, including the Blacknecked Stork, are resident, with a further seven species partly resident. Only four species are not dependent on wetlands, although a further four are occasionally found away from wetlands.

Australia's stork species

The Black-necked Stork is a large, iconic bird species found throughout northern Australia, and down the eastern coast to about Sydney, New South Wales.

It is also found in southern New Guinea and parts of southern and south-eastern Asia. It is commonly referred to as 'Jabiru' in Australia, but this is confusing as this name properly refers to the Jabiru of South America.

Taxonomically, the nominate subspecies *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus asiaticus* is found in Asia, with birds in Australia and New Guinea being considered to a separate subspecies *E.a.*



photo by Charles Dove at Featherdale Park

australis (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Recent genetic work has indicated that the Asian and Australasian subspecies are distinct enough genetically to be considered separate species, although a more extensive dataset with better-documented specimens is required to confirm this (Christidis & Boles 2008). If confirmed, Australasian birds would be known as *Ephippiorhynchus australis*. My recommended common name of 'Satin Stork' has been adopted by the Birds Australia Common Names Committee (Andrew Ley pers. comm.),

assuming that full specific status is confirmed. The Black-necked Stork is 110 to 137 cm in length and weighs ≥ 4 kg (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Despite its large size, distinctive appearance and widespread distribution in Australia, it has been rarely studied and there are few publications on its ecology (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Feeding behaviour, nest-sites and threats to the species have been discussed (Purcell 1993; Dorfman *et al.* 2001).

Purcell (1993) identified the following research priorities:

- assessing the rate of wetland loss in the Richmond Valley, New South Wales;
- assessing the impact of exotic plants on the rate of wetland loss or decline;
- identifying all Stork nest-sites in the Richmond Valley;
- recording the breeding success of the Stork so as to aid in the modelling of population trends;
- the development of a better understanding of the behaviour of the Stork in the Richmond Valley, with particular reference to breeding behaviour; VOL. 26 (4) december 2009 Black-necked Stork: An Overview 113
- assessing the impact of powerline strikes on populations of the Stork in the Richmond Valley;
- assessing the impacts of environmental pollution on Stork mortality and fecundity, with particular reference to pesticides and heavy metals;
- investigating the potential of livestock dip-sites to act as a point source for wetland pollution;
- attempting, by observation rather than experimentation, to determine the environmental factors that limit the population of the Stork in the Richmond Valley; and
- assessing what role, if any, movement plays in the maintenance of local populations of Storks.

Most of these priorities have been partly addressed in my research (Clancy 2008).

Dorfman *et al.* (2001) concluded that changes in land-use patterns are likely to be one of the most important influences on the species, in addition to powerlines and pollutants, and suggested that the Cane Toad *Bufo marinus* may also pose a threat.

The Stork's distribution in Australia is reported in journals and newsletters, including extralimital records from south-western Queensland and north-eastern South Australia (Baxter *et al.* 2001) and New South Wales (Bell 1963; Salmon 1965). In the Alligator Rivers Region of the Northern Territory there was an estimated regional population of about 1800 Storks (Morton *et al.* 1993). The total population for New South Wales was estimated to be 37–43 Storks (Salmon 1965).

Acknowledgements

This review was prepared as part of my PhD thesis at the University of New England, Armidale, NSW. Hugh Ford and Richard Kingsford supervised this project, which was funded by an Australian Postgraduate Allowance. The Waterbird Society provided a grant to assist with travel costs during the fieldwork.

Bird List for May 2010

Compiled by Martin Cocker

SPECIES	Qty.	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Australian Brush-turkey	1	04-May-10	University of Wollongong	Parkland/forest	Penny Potter
Musk Duck	1	07-May-10	Primbee	Swamp	Charles Dove
Black Swan	42	02-May-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Superb Fruit-Dove	1	10-May-10	Mt. Keira Garden	Dead juvenile male, window strike	Val Dolan
Tawny Frogmouth	1	Several Dates in April	Farmborough Hts	Residential	Andrew Wood
Black-browed Albatross	1	04-May-10	Off Bellambi	Ocean	Tom Wylie
Australasian Darter	5	24-Apr-10	Korungulla Swamp	Wetland	Martin Potter

Striated Heron	1	02-May-10	Lake Illawarra Windang	Estuarine	Lorraine Pincus
Royal Spoonbill	35	22-Apr-10	Why Juck Bay, Lake Illawarra	Estuarine	Lorraine Pincus
Eastern Osprey	1	01-May-10	Lake Illawarra Kanahooka	Fighting Sea Eagle	Ian McKinley
Eastern Osprey	2	08-May-10	Manildra Plant, Bomaderry	floodplain	Martin and Penny Potter
Black-shouldered Kite	3	02-May-10	HaywardsBay	Swamp	Roger Truscott
White-bellied Sea-eagle	2	22-May-10	Thirroul	Overhead	Mike Morphett
White-bellied Sea-eagle	2	15-May-10	Thirroul	Overhead	Mike Morphett
White-bellied Sea-eagle	2	24-Apr-10	Korrungulla Swamp	Wetlands	Martin Potter
White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	18-Apr-10	Abrahams Bosom, Currarong	Coastal	Martin and Penny Potter
White-bellied Sea-eagle	3	13-Apr-10	Minnamurra River	Lakeside	Lorraine Pincus
Whistling Kite	2	02-May-10	HaywardsBay	Swamp	Roger Truscott
Brown Goshawk	1	07-May-10	Seacliff Bridge	Overhead	Mike Morphett
Brown Goshawk	1	04-May-10	Thirroul	Forest	Mike Morphett
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	11-Apr-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Woodland	M Potter, Dave Bourne
Grey Goshawk	2	12-May-10	Excelsior Mine Thirroul	1grey, 1 white morph	Mike Morphett
Swamp Harrier	1	25-Apr-10	Bellambi Lagoon	Wetland	Joan Wylie
Swamp Harrier	1	02-May-10	HaywardsBay	Swamp	Roger Truscott
Swamp Harrier	1	08-May-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Peregrine Falcon	1	12-May-10	Excelsior Mine Thirroul	Overhead	Mike Morphett
Buff-banded Rail	1	23-May-10	Woonona Garden	Frequent garden visitor	Keith Curle
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	2	02-May-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	2	02-May-10	Lake Illawarra Windang	Estuarine	Lorraine Pincus
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	07-May-10	Seacliff Bridge	Rock Platform	Mike Morphett
Pacific Golden Plover	2	02-May-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Red-capped Plover	6	02-May-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Red-capped Plover	33	02-May-10	Lake Illawarra Windang	Estuarine	Lorraine Pincus
Double-banded Plover	28	02-May-10	Lake Illawarra Windang	Estuarine	Lorraine Pincus
Double-banded Plover	63	02-May-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo	3	12-May-10	Excelsior Mine Thirroul	Overhead	Mike Morphett
Red-rumped Parrot	Pair	06-May-10	Wollongong Golf Course	Parkland/Coastal	Martin Potter
Powerful Owl	1	02-May-10	Purry Burry Point Primbee	Sitting on Sign Post	Charles Dove
Powerful Owl	1	25-May-10	Corramy State Recreation Reserve Basin View	Forest	Stan Brown
Noisy Pitta	1	05-May-10	"Bolwarra" Foxground	Rainforest	Jeffrey Long
Superb Lyrebird	1	28-Apr-10	Mt Kembla Ring Track	Forest	Andrew Wood
Eastern Bristlebird	2+	01-May-10	Bellawongarah	Forest	Carla Jackett
Rockwarbler	1	07-May-10	Bomaderry Creek Nowra	Sandstone Gorge	Hales & Garlicks
White-plumed Honeyeater	1	22-Apr-10	Brookes Creek Kanahooka		Glenis Wellins
White-plumed Honeyeater	1	05-May-10	Dapto	Garden	Neil Wheway
White-fronted Chat	4	02-May-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Australian Logrunner	1	05-Apr-10	Corrimal Escarpment	Rainforest	Wal Emery
Australian Logrunner	1	08-Apr-10	Corrimal Escarpment	Rainforest	Wal Emery
Australian Logrunner	2	01-May-10	Corrimal Escarpment	Rainforest	Wal Emery
Cicadabird	1	03-May-10	Thirroul	Forest	Mike Morphett
Golden Whistler	2	05-May-10	Dapto	Garden	Neil Wheway
Rose Robin	1	07-May-10	Bomaderry Creek Nowra	Sandstone Gorge	Hales & Garlicks
Bassian Thrush	1	16-May-10	Scarborough	Rain forest garden	Danie Ondinea
Bassian Thrush	1	16-May-10	Thirroul	Garden	Mike Morphett
Bassian Thrush	3	04-Mar-10	Thirroul	Forest	Mike Morphett
Beautiful Firetail	1	March	Barren Grounds Nature Reserve	Heathland	Hales & Garlicks

Top of the list this month must be the the Suberb Fruit-Dove. This bird is classified as a rare nomad in our area. Pizzey and Knight make the following comments in their field guide that is spot on the mark for this sighting. "Many also inexplicably migrate south through Sydney to south coast of NSW in all months with peak in April-May, frequently hitting windows at night, many are young birds". Many thanks to Val Dolan for this record.

Good to see sightings for Eastern Bristlebird, Logrunner and another Noisy Pitta in our area.

Many thanks to you all for your sightings.

Regards

Martin Cocker
Records Officer



photo by Charles Dove
at Featherdale Park



Reversing the decline of the Cowra woodland birds



Call for bird surveyors

The Cowra Woodland Birds Program was established in 2000 under BASNA with the aim of helping to reverse the decline of woodland birds in the Cowra district. Birders are well aware of the plight of our native woodlands and their associated birds. Our major on-going project is quarterly bird surveys. The first six years of data were analysed in a recent report – see <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/our-projects/cowra-woodland-birds.html>. To improve our understanding of the trends in woodland bird populations, the report recommended continuing the surveys and increasing the number of sites of better-quality bird habitat. Thus, we have selected about 20 more sites for future surveys.

We now need a small number of extra volunteers to help with surveys. Perhaps some old faces will show up again but new-comers are welcome. A survey weekend usually involves:

- A team of two or three birders (one needs to be competent at woodland bird identification and GPS if possible)
- Friday night briefing for allocation of sites, maps and other information
- Saturday and Sunday morning surveys at about four sites per morning
- Saturday night social event with the other surveyors

Being a voluntary effort, surveyors have to meet all of their own costs. You don't have to commit to every survey weekend but we do need 2-3 more teams for each survey. To register your interest, please contact Malcolm Fyfe mfyfe@tpg.com.au

Remaining survey weekends for 2010 are 16-18 July and 15-17 October.

John Rankin for the CWBP

Leeton Camp Report

10 – 17 April 2010

Confessions of a new birdwatcher –

by Linda Cohen

Part 1 of 2**Day 1 : Leeton****Fivebough Swamp (am)**

Our first day. I was awake early with excitement and walked around the caravan park and along the back road before breakfast. The birds were also up early and I saw a Yellow-throated miner. What a way to start the day – a new sighting!! We all met at 8.30am so we could get our instructions and head off in a convoy. First stop today was Fivebough Swamp. I had been reading up on the local birding areas in some very helpful brochures at the Caravan Park (“Bird Routes of Leeton” and “Bird Routes of Narrandera”) and many of us were hoping to see lots of waterbirds at the swamps, which had an international RAMSAR listing. We had a long walk through head-high rushes out to the swamp itself. I was expecting a lot more water as it didn’t look at all like the photos. Once we reached the water however it became much more exciting as we saw 3 Brolgas feeding on the other side of the swamp. The club’s new telescope was in high demand as we all wanted a good look at them! We were very lucky to see them as they weren’t there later in the week. We also saw lots of Australian Shelducks (this was a new sighting for me!) and several Black-fronted Dotterels. Other sightings included the usual waterbirds: Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and Royal Spoonbill, Sacred Ibis and Straw-necked Ibis, and White-faced Heron. Our sightings became much clearer once the cattle moved out of the foreground ... Several members were also fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of the Little Grassbird. Another highlight for many of us occurred on our way out when we also saw a pair on Nankeen Kestrels perched on the ledge of a house on the other side of an irrigation channel. It looked like their regular roosting place judging from the white streaks down the chimney ...

Tuckerbil Swamp (pm)

In the afternoon we went to another nearby swamp. Again we didn’t see the variety or numbers of waterbirds that we expected, probably due to the drought and the floods in Queensland. It didn’t matter to me as I had an open mind. As it was my first camp I had no preconceived ideas and I was just happy to see anything. It was very beautiful and we had some good sightings of both waterbirds and bushbirds. This was an easier walk as the track circled the swamp on a slightly raised ridge. This made it easy to have a good look at the birds and to get closer to those on the other side of the water. A thrill for many of us was seeing several groups of Zebra Finches “up close and personal” feeding and calling and flying between low bushes next to the track. This was very exciting for me as I knew straightaway what they were – there aren’t many other similar species! However it does show just how useful it is to read through your birdbooks in your spare time to study up on the species that you aren’t familiar with. One of those times when Mum’s advice has paid off! (She is always telling me to read through my field guides and study the birds I don’t know). Seeing a pair of White-throated Chats was also a thrill for several members as we watched them perch and fly between tussocks at the edge of the swamp.



Photo by Betty Hudson

Day 2 : Cocoparra National Park

This was an all-day excursion and our first “big day out”. It was an 80 km drive there (it is near Griffith). Along the drive we saw several raptors including a Black-shouldered Kite. The radios were very useful as we could alert each other if we saw something interesting driving along. Suddenly someone would radio (for example) “Raptor on the right” and we would all look and stop to see if we could identify it. It must have looked really funny to anyone driving along to see a convoy of about eight cars all pulled off the road and about 20 people with binoculars all looking in the same direction and totally oblivious to anything else!

Along the dirt road at the entrance to the park we all stopped for some Blue Bonnets and a magnificent Red capped Robin – who was very cooperative and sat in the sun on a dead branch for ages. I caught just a glimpse of the Blue Bonnets as they flew off. This was just enough of a look at them to make me want to see them again, properly (which I did on the last day). Once we arrived at the park we stopped for morning tea (and a pit stop). I wandered around trying to find the birds that I could hear. The first bird I saw I had no idea what it was so I had to call in reinforcements. It turned out to be a group of Double-barred Finches. They were very pretty with their black and white facial markings and patterned backs. We saw them again later on our walk and I was really glad that Mum saw them as she missed them the first time. She was so excited to see them (it was her first sighting) that she danced for joy!

One of the highlights was seeing three Wedge-tailed Eagles fly down the gorge just above us. Also seeing a Speckled Warbler perching in a tree. We all lined up along the path with our binoculars. It was so funny to hear us all trying to describe where it was, for example “in the tree on that branch in front of you” (how many trees are there??), “see this tree in front of you, see the dead bit that forks – go up from there and then across to the right and it’s sitting on that branch – the third branch up from the ground”. It’s a miracle we saw it ... Some final highlights from today included a Grey shrike Thrush (thank you Tom for calling it down to us!), Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, White-browed Babbler, Peaceful Dove, and a pair of Mulga Parrots feeding on the ground. As we left the park, Tom and Neil stopped us to see a Jacky Winter sitting on a fence and chasing insects. This was a thrill for Mum especially as she had only seen one once (a female sitting on a nest) and yet apparently they are common and the fence behaviour was “typical textbook” so it was quite satisfying to finally see this.



Photo by Betty Hudson



Photo by Betty Hudson

The walk itself was beautiful too, and once we climbed up through the gorge we came out onto a plateau where we could see for miles. The views were breathtaking and it would have been worth it even without the bird sightings!

Narrandera to Leeton – drive home

Sometimes your best sightings happen by chance. Betty and Katharine stopped at Yenda on the way back just to see if there were any birds on the irrigation channel. We heard them radio that they had Plumed Whistling Ducks so we pulled over also. This was very exciting for me as I thought I would never see these beautiful ducks. I love the way their plumed feathers sit up. There were about 14 of them swimming around. Then as we were about to get back into our cars we looked up to see a dozen White-breasted Woodswallows sitting on an aerial, lined up just as you see them in the field guide illustrations. They are so cute with their dark and white colouring, and I have always liked them.

This was the first time that I had seen either of these birds. Altogether it was a great day filled with lots of new birds ☺



photo by Betty Hudson

Supper and bird meeting

Our bird meeting tonight was brightened with a special cake to celebrate Tom's birthday. It was a surprise that Joan had arranged. The cake went down very well with the port and helped us keep warm in the chilly evening while we recorded all of the birds seen today and made our plans for tomorrow.

Day 3 : Leeton

Stoney Point Road

This was a quieter day to give us all time to recover from our big day out yesterday. We drove just out of Leeton along back roads to Stoney Point Road, which has grey Boree (*Acacia pendula*) laden with grey Mistletoe (*Amyema quandang*). Our brochure told us we would see some interesting birds here. A few of us were hoping for the Painted Honeyeater, but perhaps it was too late in the season. We did see the Mistletoe bird feeding in the mistletoe (!), as well as the Singing Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Variegated Fairy-wren and several thornbills (I can never tell them apart). Thank you Joan and Teera for spotting and identifying the Whistling Kite flying overhead. It was good to be able to match up seeing the kite with hearing its call. Our explorations were curtailed with the unwelcome sighting of an active Yellow Cropduster.

In the afternoon, we had some "free time" to rest, catch up on washing, or explore other areas. I made an apple teacake to take to our supper meeting and tried to catch up on my bird lists and reading up on the new species that I had seen so far this week. I had brought several bird books with me expecting to have plenty of time to read up the birds I saw but we've hardly had any spare time so far – what with early starts, a full day's activities, a short break for dinner, the evening meeting to write up the bird list and then early to bed to be ready for another day.

Day 4 : Cuba State Forest

As a beginner and a new member of the club, I have really appreciated everyone's time, patience, and friendliness this week. Both Mum and I have felt very welcome and it's encouraging to have others take the time to help us to improve our birdwatching skills. Everyone has also made sure that we have seen all of the birds, especially if they are new birds for us.

On our way into Cuba State Forest today I was able to "give something back" to everyone which felt great. I spotted a Cockatiel sitting on the top of a dead tree, so I nervously radioed to the group that we were stopping for a Cockatiel and where it was. We all stopped and jumped out and fortunately the light was behind us so we were able to really see it well. This was probably the first time I felt confident using the radio – despite my nickname of "Colonel".



photo by Betty Hudson



Photo by Betty Hudson

Naturally, we were all hoping to see the Superb Parrots and we weren't disappointed. We saw them several times in the forest, both flying and also in pairs feeding on the ground. Several of us were able to creep up on them for a closer look and some photos. I was amazed at how brilliant green they are. The pictures in the field guides just don't do them justice. Other notable sightings here included the Blue-faced Honeyeater, Brown Treecreeper, Yellow Rosella and Superb Blue Fairy-wren.

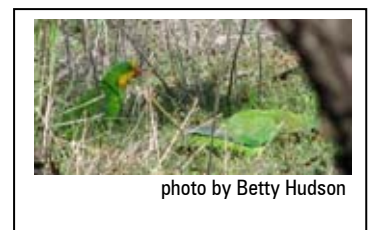


photo by Betty Hudson

Gogeldrie Weir

We stopped for lunch at Gogeldrie Weir at a very pleasant camping ground and picnic spot. The highlight here was seeing three Crested Shrike-tits feeding in the trees. This caused great excitement in the group and everyone lined up for a good look at them. We also saw a pair of Mistletoe birds, a Whistling kite and White-plumed honeyeaters. Check out the full birdlist for Gogeldrie Weir on the website for more details.

Leeton – Menangle Hill Road

One of the most memorable and significant sightings all week occurred by chance – word spread quickly that Tom, Joan, Neil and Teera had spotted Ground Cuckoo-shrikes in a field on the outskirts of Leeton on our "free afternoon", so this afternoon many of us went back to the same place at the same time hoping to see them. We saw FIVE of them – feeding on the ground, flying around and calling to one another, until they were chased away by several Magpie Larks. It was totally unexpected to have seen them this camp and I'm sure many of us will remember this for years to come.



Photo by Betty Hudson

Continued in July Newsletter