

Endangered Hooded Plover



Photo by Kim Touzel

Contents

Contents	2
President's Report	3
CO report - Blinkered Vision	5
An Interview with Marg Hamon	7
Lake Wollumboola "Developments"	14
Booderee Botanic Gardens Bird Walk	15
JB KBA Report	16
Umbarah - an Aboriginal Perspective on Birds.....	17
What you missed on Facebook!	18
South Coast Shorebird Recovery	19
Free Glossy Black Cockatoo Nest Boxes	20
BLS World Environment Day Stall.....	20
Wongaloo - the Kakadu of QLD	21
South Coast Osprey News	23
Web Watch - Cool Season 2018	25
Birds See Change	30
2018 Aussie Backyard Bird Count.....	35
Images from Up North.....	36
BirdLife Shoalhaven Calendar for 2018	39

Interview

This season's interview is with Marg Hamon, colourful South Coast birding identity ... see page 7.



Contributions

If you have any information about conservation issues, or if you would like to share some of your birding experiences, travel stories or anecdotes with fellow members, please send them with any related photos, drawings or maps to brett@brettdavis.com.au

In addition, if you have any bird photographs you would like to share, please send them in as well.

Contributions of articles, images, suggestions, criticisms, feedback and corrections are always welcome.

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In addition, images and text from the following websites have been used in this magazine - theguardian.com, abc.net.au, news.com.au, theconversation.com and smh.com.au.

Apologies to those contributors whose text or images may not have been acknowledged. If you have not been acknowledged please let the editor know, and the error will be rectified in the next magazine.

General Disclaimer

The information in articles submitted for publication in this magazine is accepted in good faith and although the editor has endeavoured to verify the accuracy of all information, BirdLife Shoalhaven and BirdLife Australia accept no responsibility for any of the errors, inaccuracies or exaggerations that may be contained within articles in this magazine.

Also, the views expressed in this magazine are those of the editor, individual contributors and branch members. They may not be the views of BirdLife Shoalhaven or BirdLife Australia.

Errors

The beauty of an electronic magazine is that it can be amended after publication, so if you find any errors - typographical or factual - in this magazine, please let the editor know.

Cover Photo

This season's cover photo of an endangered Hooded Plover was taken by Kim Touzel. Hoodies are one of the birds targeted by the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program - see the 2017 / 2018 report on page 19.

President's Report

- by Rob Dunn

Bird conservation – a never-ending fight

It would be remiss of me not to mention two issues, one longstanding and one that unexpectedly came out of the last Council meeting.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment recently recommended that applications for the Long Bow Point Golf course and West Culburra mixed use developments at Lake Wollumboola be refused. Good news!

Public meetings of the Independent Planning Commission will now be held on 24th July in Culburra Beach. Given recent media, a wide range of views will certainly be expressed. One can only hope that the meeting upholds the NSW Government's recommendations and we have positive news to report in our next magazine.

Meanwhile at the last Council meeting, off-leash dog access was supported on Cudmirrah Beach, a critical site for our beach-nesting birds. Chris Grounds, our Conservation Officer expands on this issue later in the magazine. These issues are complex and multi-faceted with lots of misinformation and conflict.

BLS has a major role in supporting local organisations, like the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association, and our members in such fights. Paul Sullivan, BirdLife Australia CEO, is making submissions on both issues to make it clear these are not just local issues, but are of national, indeed international, importance.

What's in a name?

Those with an eagle eye may have picked up that we have renamed the "BirdLife Shoalhaven Newsletter", the "BirdLife Shoalhaven Magazine"!

This is hardly an earth-shattering decision by your Committee, but we feel "magazine" better reflects our aim to promote bird conservation to the wider community, rather than a "newsletter", which implies it is aimed only at our membership.

BirdLife Shoalhaven Magazine

Winter 2018

Please help us get the BLS Magazine "out there" to anyone who might be interested. The current issue and all back-issues are on our website and anyone can ask to be added to our mailing list to get the magazine directly sent to them.

Powerful Owl talk

It was great to have 60 or so people coming along to the talk by Dr. Beth Mott, on BirdLife Australia's citizen science Powerful Owl project in April. As well as providing fascinating insights into the ecology of the species, it showed how a great science communicator can get across important issues and at the same time maintain the interest of everyone.

Many thanks to Beth for coming down from Wollongong. We have been trying to arrange a date with our next speaker for the next evening talk. Hopefully we can finalize this soon.



Powerful Owl

Our last Committee meeting

The BLS Committee meets every quarter to review key issues that we have been working on and priorities ahead. One discussion point at our May meeting was building the Shoalhaven's first bird hide.

The obvious place to do this is at Lake Wollumboola. So, Mike Jefferis, BLS Committee member, and I went to the lake to meet with Frances Bray from the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association to discuss the idea and look at possible sites.



Frances Bray at Lake Wollumboola

Frances was really enthusiastic and then surprised us by saying the obvious site was at the existing bird viewing platform. "What bird viewing platform?" was our response. Frances then pushed through overgrown vegetation to reveal a very unloved and dilapidated platform, which still commands an amazing view of the lake and its birds.



We have spoken to Council staff, who have since visited the site and will be discussing options with us shortly. This may well raise issues of funding and we will need to put our heads together if that is the case. We may not end up with Shoalhaven's first bird hide, but a fully restored bird viewing platform at one of the Shoalhaven's premier birding locations will be a great result! So watch this space! We can then think about a bird hide!



Save the Glossies

In recent magazines, we have highlighted that we are always keen to hear from anyone who has projects that they want to take on.

Norm and Maureen Webb, two long-term members of Birdlife and leaders in conservation in the Bay & Basin area, recently raised the idea of planting Casuarina trees in the reserve adjacent to the Jervis Bay Maritime

Museum to provide habitat for, and promote the threats faced by the Glossy Black-Cockatoo.

A few of us will be planting the trees in mid-August. If you would like to help out please get in contact.

We also plan to hold a talk in October at the Museum, as part of their next art exhibition by Kurt Brereton entitled "Report from the Littoral Zone", to highlight the plight of the Glossies.



Aussie Backyard Bird Count

22-28 October are the dates for this year's Aussie Backyard Bird Count.

Many of you took part last year, many of whom were new to BirdLife Australia. We will be looking to run events and do media to get more people involved this year. If you would like to help out please get in contact or just get your friends to download the app and get counting! The app is called "Aussie Bird Count" and is available for both iOS and Android devices.



CO report - Blinkered Vision

- Conservation Officer report by Chris Grounds
- photos by Chris Grounds, Mike Clear, Jodie Dunn



The Ordinary Meeting of Shoalhaven Council on June 26 included further testimony to the parlous state of the knowledge and understanding of threatened species we have come to expect of some of our civic leaders.

The Jervis CMA region has 49 bird species listed in the region as Threatened Species with 10 of these also listed on the Commonwealth EPBC Act. Critically, the Hooded Plover is one of only four species listed as Critically Endangered in NSW. As such it is at extremely high risk of extinction in the immediate future for the population of 65 individuals in NSW (OEH).



Councillor Pat White tabled a proposal for a twelve month trial of a 24/7 "Dog Off-Leash" on Cudmirrah Beach and this was approved seven votes to five.

Yes, that old red herring of dogs needing beaches, "Off-leash"! Dare we spare a beach in the "Pet Friendly" obsessed Shoalhaven from dog intrusion, disturbance and further threat to threatened species shorebirds?

The idea in itself doesn't surprise that much but the sheer lack of veracity in the argument for such a proposal by Cllr White and the fellow councillors who supported the proposal, signals reasons for serious concern in the conservation of threatened species in the Shoalhaven.

One basis of her arguments was that Cudmirrah was not a shorebird nesting beach, specifically for Hooded Plovers, which is tragically wrong.



Council's own booklet "Guide to Off-Leash Dog Areas" of March 2016 on Page 7 designates Cudmirrah as one of the many shorebird nesting sites in the Shoalhaven and there is no current variation to that advice. It is a special pity when Councillors do not consult council's own documents, especially advice to the community and public.

The entrance to the beach from the Sussex Inlet Surf Club greets visitors with a "Dog On-Leash" advisory sign above Threatened Species signage and further along, an advisory sign with information about the Hooded Plover, co-signed by Council with NPWS and the CMA.

The NPWS Shorebird Recovery data certainly records the beach as having a history of Hooded Plover nesting area though not in the most recent breeding seasons.

Council has two officers designated to deal with threatened species matters but no staff report was used by councillors!

If you were going to develop such a proposal you would talk to the NPWS Shorebird Recovery team, right? Perhaps you would talk to the local, resident volunteers who have worked for some years in that program? No! Why let the truth get in the way of a bad proposal.



Endangered Hooded Plovers

nest on the south coast

This beach is home to a pair of endangered hooded plovers. Less than 50 of these birds remain in NSW. They need your help to survive. Please stay clear of the nesting areas by walking down by the water's edge and keeping dogs on leashes.



Hooded plover chicks

ests on the beach

Hooded plovers are small, timid shorebirds that nest between August and April. They make shallow nest scrapes in the sand just above the high tide mark and into the dunes.

Eggs and chicks are camouflaged to avoid predators. They are difficult to see and easily

stepped on by beach goers and dogs.

Nesting birds will leave their nests if you get too close. Unprotected eggs and chicks may be taken by predators such as ravens, get too hot or cold or chicks may even starve.



How you can help

- Stay clear of shorebird nesting areas.
- Keep dogs on leashes at all times.
- Don't let your dog chase birds.
- Stay down by the water when walking to avoid disturbing nesting birds and their chicks.
- Become a Shorebird Volunteer with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- Report any "Hoodie" sightings or disruptive behaviour to NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service on 4454-9500.



I believe BirdLife Shoalhaven is now a recognized group with quality information and advocacy to offer in the interest of threatened species conservation but we were not approached at all.

Consultation was clearly based on talking to the people whose specific vested interest you seek to represent and not to the people who can mount a serious counter argument.

This raises the deeper concern of dividing and polarizing the community and serious questions about the veracity of the proposal and compliance with policy and principles of community engagement.

BLS is working with conservation partners to provide a response to this decision. I was interviewed by ABC Illawarra on July 5, at their request, about this matter.

I have also written to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Gabrielle Upton, advising her of our opposition and serious concerns. The letter says in part:

The beach has a known history of Hooded Plover nesting which has ceased only in recent breeding seasons when local volunteers have reported the growing presence of off-leash dogs. The known history with nesting at this beach is logged with the NPWS Shorebird Recovery Program. The beach is currently an "On-Leash" dog beach.

The Hooded Plover is a "Critically Endangered" shorebird species in NSW. This status is covered by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act.

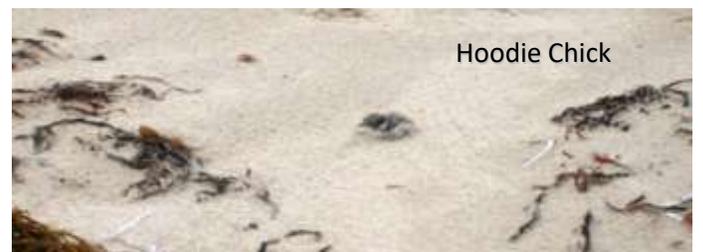
The species is also involved in your government's "Save Our Species" conservation strategy. That strategy involves a specific south coast program, which operates in the Shoalhaven under the co-ordination of the NPWS. There is an entire volunteer, citizen science, observation and data recording action involving literally dozens of volunteers under NPWS supervision. Many of our BLS members are involved in this program.

The beach is also part of the critical threshold, northern distribution of the Hooded Plover in NSW. The group of beaches, Mary, Cave, Bherwerre and Cudmirrah, constitute the most northerly population distribution in NSW. Any fragmentation of this habitat-breeding zone in this threshold area will exacerbate the already highest level threat to the species.

That view is supported by BirdLife Australia and its research staff involved with Hooded Plovers. Their experience points to quite significant increases in breeding success when dogs, particularly off-leash dogs, are not on breeding beaches- with fledgling rates trebling in just a few years.



This particular matter is a "litmus paper" test of the commitment to proper management of the most threatened bird species on our coast by both local and state government.



Hoodie Chick

An Interview with Marg Hamon

- by Brett Davis

Marg Hamon is well known in birding circles on the South Coast through her activities with the Milton-Ulladulla District Birdwatchers, South Coast Shorebird Recovery, BIGnet (the Bird Interest Group Network) and more. She lives in the quiet seaside village of Bawley Point with her partner of 46 years, Maggie, and Mit - their cat (!)



Marg's father lived at Bawley Point from 1918 when he was 8 months old until he went to university, and he went back there for the last eight years of his life. His parents were both from Milton, descendants of pioneers who came to Milton in the 1850s. Marg was born in Sydney but considers herself a Bawley Point local.

Marg lived in Chatswood, then Cronulla, and she spent some time in England when her father got a fellowship to study at the National Institute of Oceanography. Marg studied Arts and got a Dip Ed (Diploma of Education). Her Arts subjects - Anthropology, and Indonesian and Malayan Studies - were not exactly teaching subjects, so Marg was one of the first seven graduates to do the Primary Dip Ed. She spent a couple of years in Malaysia with Australian Volunteers Abroad, where she taught Years 11 and 12 in a boarding school set up mainly for the daughters of royalty, and then the next year teaching the "bottom rung" of Years 7 and 8.

Apart from 5 years as an Anthropology research assistant, Marg was a Primary school teacher for most of her working life.

BLS: So how did you end up on the South Coast?

MH: When I was a kid we always used to come down here in the holidays. My grandparents ran the Bawley Point Guest House, but we didn't stay there very often. Instead we camped out on Willinga Point. My great-grandparents lived down here too. Maggie and I decided to move down here permanently in 2005.

BLS: So how did you get interested in birding?

MH: The two ladies next door were very keen birders - members of RAOU and BOCA (see below). They used to go to all kinds of places around Australia on birding trips - like the Kimberley and Iron Range. And my father was into birding too. It was always a part of life. I wasn't a diligent birder in those days because I was too busy - teaching, and canoeing, walking and skiing. The two ladies next door were involved in the first bird atlas which started in 1977 when they had 1 degree squares. The second atlas started about 1999 and it went to the 10 minute squares we have today. So I sort of grew up with birding, with the two ladies next door and Dad.

RAOU

The RAOU (Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union) was founded in 1901 to promote the study and conservation of the native bird species of Australia and adjacent regions. The RAOU changed its name to Birds Australia (BA) in 1996.

In 1905 some members of the RAOU formed the BOC (Bird Observers Club), which changed its name to BOCA (Bird Observers Club of Australia) in 1991. In 2007 BOCA changed its name to Bird Observation & Conservation Australia so the acronym remained the same.

In 2011, BA and BOCA merged to form BirdLife Australia - which is Australia's oldest national birding association, and Australia's largest non-government, non-profit, bird conservation organisation.

BLS: When did you really take up birding seriously?

MH: I had a pretty bad bike accident in 1998, and retired at the end of 1999, and birding was one way to get back into life after the accident and retirement. Having been around birders and birding for most of my life I just thought that I really should start taking it a bit more seriously! We were living in Balmain and we joined up with Cumberland Bird Observers Club - which was a bit of an effort to get to from Balmain - and we soon realised that we had a rather casual attitude towards birds and that there was so much more to learn! It has just gone on from there really, so it is now almost twenty years.

BLS: So that is relatively recent!

MH: Yes it is! That's why I regard myself as only being a "mediocre" birder. It is not the entire focus of my life, but it is something I enjoy doing. I enjoy our group down here (the MUD Birders). I don't think of myself as a "twitcher" - I wouldn't drop everything to fly to somewhere remote to see a rarity - mostly because I am sure it would be gone by the time I got there!

BLS: Tell me about your first set of binoculars ...

MH: I think they cost about \$40 and they were Nikons, but we have always sort of had binoculars. The ladies next door had Zeiss binoculars, so that was an early introduction into what good binoculars were all about.

BLS: And what binoculars do you have now?

MH: We have Swarovskis!

BLS: (Serious envy!) - So how did you get involved with the MUD Birdwatchers?

MH: When we moved down here in 2005 the MUD Birders didn't exist, but the U3A (University of the Third Age) had a course run by Paul Allen every 4th term on birdwatching, so I said to Maggie "Let's go along to find out where he goes". We had our places, but we wanted to find out about all the other good places in the area as well - particularly further north because I knew the area around Bawley Point pretty well! We did that for a couple of years, and we did a dedicated birding trip with Paul and his wife up through western NSW to Cunnamulla (including the sewerage works - a highlight), to the property just outside it called Bowra (see below).

Bowra Sanctuary

Bowra Sanctuary is a former cattle station just outside of Cunnamulla in south-west Queensland. It is now a 140 square kilometre nature owned and managed by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy.

The AWC bought the property in 2010 with assistance from the Federal Government's National Reserve System, and from Birds Australia and Bird Observation & Conservation Australia (now BirdLife Australia), and Birds Queensland, as well as private donors.



Searching for a Burke's Parrot at Bowra

MH: We did another dedicated birding trip to Tasmania a few years ago, led by Judy Harrington (a ranger at Sydney Olympic Park - Judy gave a presentation for BirdLife Shoalhaven in 2017 on White-bellied Sea Eagles). And we did the Plains Wanderer tour in about 2003, with Phil Maher. We saw a little female Plains Wanderer and she looked like she had a checked neck-scarf on, and she was just standing there looking absolutely beautiful!

But getting back to the MUD Birders ... after a few years of the Term 4 course with the U3A, people starting saying that they'd like to do it all year round, so we formed a club with Long Bob (Bob Black) being the leader of it for a few years, but then he decided to up-sticks and move to Scotland - and somehow I became the next leader! The club still operates as a U3A activity.

I like the fact that the club is a U3A group, and I feel that my main part in it is to look after newcomers - to see that they learn how to use binoculars, and that they see at least some of the birds and don't entirely miss out, because I can remember going out with Cumberland BOC and they would have 40 people on a walk. If you were down at the end of the line you would have no idea what they were seeing up the front. We have the odd spare pair of binoculars that we can lend to newcomers, until they work out what to get.

BLS: Do you do special birding holidays these days?

We would do one if something came up. I would still like to get out to Newhaven (see below) - and Broome, but I am pretty busy doing bird surveys around here for the Birddata atlas now. We have several sites here, including some on private properties, that we survey every three months, and one we do every month. Our surveys are entered into Birddata (the BirdLife Australia database).



Birding at the Cunnamulla Sewerage Works

Newhaven

Newhaven is a 2,622 square kilometre wildlife sanctuary about 360 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs. It is a former pastoral cattle-grazing property, and was purchased by Birds Australia in December 2000. Several threatened species of birds have been recorded on Newhaven, including Grey Falcon, Night Parrot, Princess Parrot, Striated Grasswren and Grey Honeyeater.

In December 2005 Birds Australia signed an agreement with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) that saw AWC assume ownership of Newhaven, with Birds Australia (now BirdLife Australia) being involved in its management and BA members having access.

MH: Oh, we went to the Houtman Abrolhos recently and they took us to an island where the Lesser Noddy breeds, and although it wasn't breeding season there were still some Lesser Noddies on the island. And we also met up with Roseate Terns, which are absolutely gorgeous.

Houtman Abrolhos

The Abrolhos Islands (formally known as Houtman Abrolhos) is a chain of over 100 islands in the Indian Ocean off the west coast of Australia about 80km west of Geraldton. A limited number of tourists are permitted on the islands for day trips, but some are off limits for habitat conservation. It is also the site of many shipwrecks including the Dutch ship Batavia which was wrecked in 1629.



Roseate Terns on the Abrolhos Islands

MH: We did a trip in 1988 to Adelaide and up through the Centre, to Kakadu and west across the top down as far as Port Hedland, then back through Queensland, but the trip was not primarily for birdwatching. It has always been an adjunct to other activities. In the early days, most of our trips were canoeing-based, but we would look for birds wherever we were.

BLS: Do you keep lists?

MH: I do. We've kept a list for the local area for the past forty plus years, and I still keep a monthly record. Nowadays, if we are travelling around to other parts of Australia we will very likely do a 500 metre radius area survey or a 20 minute 2 hectare survey for the atlas. We did a trip out to Gluepot and Hattah in 2016 with Bob and Celia Black when they came home from Scotland, so we did lists while we were there and entered those into the atlas.

BLS: Do you have a Life List?

MH: I have a life list tucked away in a drawer somewhere, but it's not a big focus of my existence really. Every now and then I will discover it and think "Oh, yes, I've got that" but I don't think about it apart from that. When I see something new I think "Oh, goody! I haven't got that one", but I don't think "I haven't got that one so I had better go out and get it!"

BLS: So do you know your life list number?

MH: No. (Ed. No amount of cajoling changes this answer)

BLS: Do you have a bogey bird?

MH: I suppose that the Ground Parrot up on Little Forest Plateau is a kind of a bogey bird - I live in hope of seeing one up there.



Ground Parrot



Marg and Maggie

MH: One evening years ago I said to Maggie "We are going up to the plateau at sunset to try to see a Ground Parrot, because that's when they are more likely to come out, and we will just sit up there quietly overlooking the heath and we'll watch out for them". So we went up there - and it was as quiet as a tomb and we didn't see anything - nothing moved at all!

Mike Jefferis and Bob Black were up on the plateau one day and Mike asked Bob if they ever got Ground Parrots up here. Bob had just finished saying "Not really" when one flushed almost under his feet! We have seen a Ground Parrot at Barren Grounds, but just not up on Little Forest Plateau.

BLS: What is your favourite bird?

MH: I would have to say that my favourite is the Southern Emu-wren. I think they're gorgeous. I love that lavender-blue colour on the front of the males and that wispy little tail, and they are such elusive little birds. It makes it very hard to find them, and there's also the thrill of finding them unexpectedly.

I found one on the side of the road at Brooman in a place where I would never expect to see them. We saw them down Garrads Lane (in Milton) and we didn't expect to see them there either, and we've seen them on one of our survey blocks up at Woodburn.

They turn up in such unexpected places, yet you go to some habitat that should be ideal for them and you don't see them! I also like White-winged Fairy-wrens and Variegated Fairy-wrens, so I suppose that as a group, the Fairy-wrens are what I like.



BLS: What is your most exciting bird experience apart from the Plains Wanderer?

MH: We went to Lord Howe Island, and we were waiting at the airport to be picked up and taken to our accommodation, when a Lord Howe Island Woodhen just wandered out from underneath a luggage trolley! We were wondering if we would see a Woodhen during our stay and one pops up at the airport and says "Here I am!" What a welcoming committee! I will probably think of lots of exciting birding experiences after the interview!

(Maggie prompts Marg about working with Ian Hutton)

MH: That was a great experience - working with the shearwaters! Ian Hutton was going out on a boat trip from Lord Howe Island and he was monitoring shearwater chicks, and he had to take measurements twice a day. And for some reason he chose the two of us to help him. You had to stick your arm right down a burrow - fortunately Maggie has really long arms - (laughs) - and feel around, and it was usually a beak that you could feel, and you'd bring it out and weigh it and measure it and they were gorgeous little chicks - that was pretty special! They don't have snakes on Lord Howe - I certainly wouldn't do it on the Tasmanian Islands!

(Maggie again prompts Marg - this time about a sick Hooded Plover chick at Meroo)

MH: I found the chick just lying on the sand and thought "That doesn't look too good!" - so I rang Jodie (NPWS ranger with South Coast Shorebird Recovery) and told her about it. It was quite big, nearly fledging, and I said that it

looks really sick, so she said to bring it in. I put it in Maggie's hat and took it in to Jodie. We then took it to the vet, and Jodie and I were actually discussing what we would do with the body when it died, but the vet flushed out its crop and re-hydrated it, and we passed it on to Marie Gardner for some TLC, and in a couple of days it was upright and sprightly and we were able to take it back down to the beach and release it back to its family!

(Maggie takes up the story)

MM: And it ran over to the family and they just looked at it like "Who are you?" - and we thought "Oh, gosh - there is going to be a bit of a kerfuffle here" but all of a sudden it was completely accepted, even though it probably smelled of vet and other things and foreign food! And that was really thrilling - it was great!"



Jodie and Marg banding a Hoodie (above) and a Kim Touzel photo of a Hoodie (below)

BLS: How long have you been with Shorebird Recovery?

MH: Oh, a long time now. I think I first made contact with them in 1999 when I found a nest on this beach down here (pointing through the trees).

Mike Jarman came down and we fenced it, but the nest didn't survive. But that got me interested in it, and when we moved down to Bawley Point we joined the Shorebird program and we have been in it ever since.



A Hoodie Trap

BLS: You've had successes since then?

MH: Yes, we have had successes, amid the myriad failures, but you have to look at the long term, and the numbers have been slowly increasing. There is a lot of heartbreak of course, but you just have to learn to be scientifically objective about it and take the good with the bad. The numbers have increased from about fifty to now over seventy - so progress has been slow but steady.





BLS: Do you use Birdata to record your surveys?

MH: Yes, but the MUD Birders have always used eBird for their outings. I tried to change them over to Birdata but I haven't had any luck. I really like the new Birdata app. For the two hectare 20 minute surveys I use pen and paper, but for the 500 metre where there is no time limit, it's excellent!

BLS: You do Twitchathons ...

MH: Yes, yes - that's the only time I become a twitcher!

BLS: And your team is the Wooden Spoonbills (see photo below) - who came up with that name?

MH: That was me, because when we started we didn't do very well! It was probably about 15 years ago. Sometimes we would do the Twitchathons in Sydney, and sometimes we would do them down here. We would never, ever, get the most birds, because down here we don't have an estuary so that immediately eliminates a lot of potential species, but we have done well on the fundraising! And that's the whole purpose for the event!

I don't think that last year's new online system is as good, because now you are basically saying to people "Please give me a donation for doing the event" - whereas in previous years there was a real incentive to see more birds because we would then raise more money.

BLS: And you've had the inevitable disappointments?

MH: The worst experience we had was when the Hoodies nested in the only 24-hour dog off-leash beach in the area, and that was really hard going. Recently we've started having the Pied Oystercatchers coming in to this area and breeding. We've had a couple of chicks fledge down on Island Beach.

BLS: Which is your patch of coast?

MH: Mainly around here in the Bawley area. There is another coordinator who does Kioloa up to Brush Island, and we do from Murramarang to Meroo, and then the Tabourie people do Termeil.

There is a crowd of us down here, but unfortunately we have lost one volunteer who used to walk up to Meroo every day, and that's disappointing ... but then we haven't had a successful nest down here for a couple of years now, and they haven't bred on Meroo or Willinga for a couple of years.

The pair of Hoodies that were here at Willinga moved up to Termeil, and we don't know why they have abandoned these beaches because to my mind, last year, this beach would have been ideal.

But who knows what goes through a Hoodie's mind?



BLS: Have you had the experience in the Twitchathon where only one person sees the bird - at least half of the team members have to see a bird for it to be recorded - or where you didn't see birds that you expected to see?

MH: Oh yes! Having only one person see a bird and not be able to count it is a real disappointment. We have also missed birds that are common for 364 days of the year, but didn't turn up on Twitchathon day. After finishing one Twitchathon at 4pm, and not seeing a single King Parrot all day, a whole flock of them flew past at 4:05! And then we had the great Swan hunt one year, and another year we couldn't spot a single Gannet.

BLS: And you have also been involved with BIGnet?

MH: Yes. From about 2003 to 2007 I was on the committee of Birdlife Southern NSW. In fact I ended up being secretary of it for a few years, and I became involved in BIGnet through that involvement.

And then when BirdLife Shoalhaven (BLS) started down here, I realized that it would be a good thing for BLS to be involved in, so in the beginning when nobody else in BLS was too keen, or unable to get to BIGnet, I would go and represent BLS. I did that for a few years until I was able to persuade BirdLife Shoalhaven to get more directly involved.

I thought it was more important to represent BLS rather than the MUD Birders, because the MUD Birders do field trips but BLS is the major conservation organisation in the area.

It would be sad if BLS was the only Birdlife branch not represented.

BIGnet

BIGnet stands for Bird Interest Group Network – an assemblage of birding groups and clubs throughout New South Wales. A weekend conference is held twice a year in NSW. The event is a chance for birders from groups both large and small, from across NSW to network, compare notes and hopefully be inspired with new ideas! This September (9th and 10th) BIGnet will be in Urunga for a program coordinated by BirdLife Northern NSW.

BLS: And now you are into NatureMapr?

MH: NatureMapr was started in Canberra. People can go to the website and upload pictures of plants and animals, as well as their location. Fiona Stewart who works with us at Milton Rural Landcare (MRL), tried to add a sighting and couldn't because the NatureMapr area did not extend as far as the Shoalhaven Coast, so she said, "Well in that case we will just have to expand the area!" so MRL became a sponsor and ran a few workshops and seminars to get it all going locally, and now we have "Atlas of Life – Budawang Coast" which extends from Moruya to north of Nowra.

BLS: Will you be entering bird sightings into NatureMapr?

MH: Probably not very many - as I use Birdata - but I will certainly be putting animal and plant sightings into it! Charles Dove is doing an excellent job with bird photos in NatureMapr. We have Birdata for bird surveys, but NatureMapr is so much broader. It's not just about birds, and it has the potential to really get kids involved, and if we don't start getting young people involved in connecting with nature, we will not get anywhere.

NatureMapr - naturemapr.org

NatureMapr is a citizen science project that uses innovative cloud software to help organisations collect, manage and analyse information from the natural world. In the Shoalhaven, we are part of the Atlas of Life - Budawang Coast - which can be found at atlas-budawangcoast.naturemapr.org. Their mission is to help every important plant and animal species by ensuring their existence is known by people in positions of power.

Their sophisticated citizen science platform coupled with their partnerships with state and local government ensures everyday information makes its way to the right people where it can be viewed, analysed and then acted upon.

BirdLife recommends Birdata for recording bird sightings, but people may also like to enter data about birds into NatureMapr as well. It is also meant for sightings of Plants, Fungi, Mosses, Liverworts, Mammals, Insects, Reptiles and Frogs, Terrestrial invertebrates, Fish, Marine Invertebrates, Freshwater Invertebrates, Fossils and Geological Features!

NatureMapr is perfect for young people with their smart phones and their apps! And it's good for us too, because it broadens our interest away from birds, to the wider natural world.

NatureMapr will never supplant Birdata, but it complements it. And the data still goes to the Atlas of Living Australia.

Birdata

Birdata is the online tool for entering data into the Atlas of Australian Birds, but it has been expanded to take in data from various dedicated monitoring projects such as Shorebirds 2020 and WA Black-Cockatoos as well.

Birdata is the most convenient and efficient method of contributing to these programs.

BLS: Are you involved in any other projects?

MH: Yes, I am involved with the Milton Ulladulla Historical Society, Milton Rural Landcare, Bawley Bushcare and the Murramarang Community Garden. I'm still mountain-biking and kayaking as well, when I have time.

BLS: Any tips for budding birders?

MH: I think my tip would be enjoy the moment, just enjoy the birds. You don't have to go off chasing birds all around Australia - just enjoy what's around you!

Lake Wollumboola "Developments"

- by Frances Bray

Long Bow Point Golf Course

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has recommended the Independent Planning Commission **refuse** the Long Bow Point Golf Course Application.

Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc members are delighted at this news. We strongly support the recommendation as we consider that Long Bow Point should be included in Jervis Bay National Park.

The Department's main concerns include:

- inconsistent with strategic planning objectives to protect Lake Wollumboola from future urban development.
- inability to demonstrate with scientific certainty that the proposed stormwater management system would achieve a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality in the lake.
- inadequate information on ground water inputs to the lake to inform an accurate assessment of potential impacts on ground water.
- potential water quality impacts represent an unacceptable risk to the lake's unique ecosystems and the threatened and migratory species it supports.
- likely significant impacts for lake and Long Bow Point threatened flora and fauna.
- potential social and economic benefits unlikely to significantly outweigh environmental impact.

The report can be found by clicking the following link -

<http://ipcn.nsw.gov.au/resources/pac/media/files/pac/projects/2018/07/long-bow-point-golf-course/department-of-planning-and-environments-assessment-report/assessment-report.pdf>

We encourage you to become familiar with the Department's report and recommendations.

West Culburra Development Concept

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has recommended that the Independent Planning Commission **refuse** this application.

The Department's main concerns - shared by the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association - as outlined on their website (see link below) are:

- unsuitable scale and location of urban development proposed.
- inconsistent with current strategic plans for future urban development in Culburra Beach.

- 650 housing lots compared to Shoalhaven City Council's estimated 280 additional dwellings over the next 20 years.
- potential water quality impacts for the Crookhaven River estuary and unacceptable risk for oyster growing, fish habitat, protected wetlands and marine vegetation.
- scientific uncertainty that storm water impacts could be reduced to avoid serious or irreversible impacts.
- potential water quality impacts for Lake Wollumboola incompatible with objectives to protect the lake from urban development.
- likely serious and irreversible impacts on Aboriginal heritage, sites of cultural significance.
- unresolved concerns regarding traffic and access.

However, we have always expressed the view that we are not opposed to "limited" urban development in the Crookhaven catchment, as recommended by the 2006 South Coast Sensitive Urban Lands Review. This is a concept plan - an idea - not a development application. It is a long and complicated process with no quick decisions.

Even if the West Culburra Concept application is approved, development would take years to get under way, after separate development applications for each stage are lodged and approved.

The Halloran Planning Proposal process will also take years before any approved rezoning and development occurs. This process involves independent, expert evidence based studies, as the basis for future rezoning decisions for environment protection and development opportunities in Culburra Beach.

We encourage you to become familiar with the Department's report and recommendation at http://www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=8674

The Independent Planning Commission will hold **public meetings** regarding both the golf course application and the West Culburra development at Culburra Beach Bowling Club on 24 July 2018 at 10:30am for the golf course and 1:30pm for West Culburra.

You can apply to make a short presentation or to write a submission. Come along to show your concerns.

Email for further details: ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au or phone 02 9383 2100

The content of this page first appeared on the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association website which can be found at <http://www.wollumboola.org.au/>

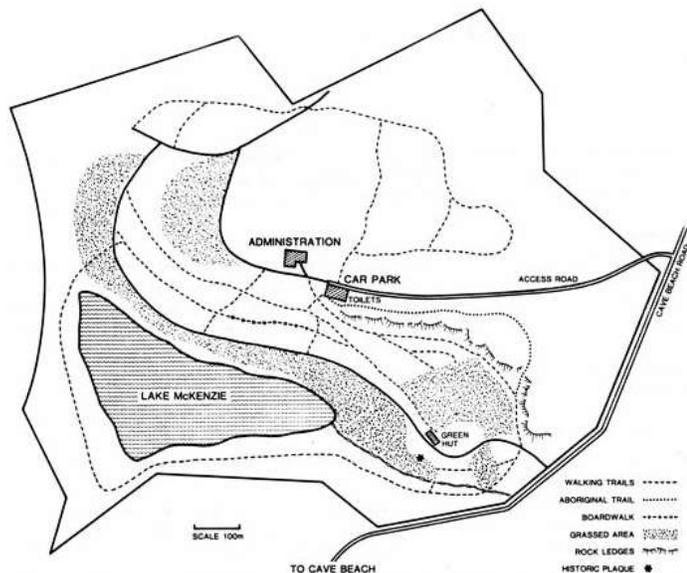
Booderee Botanic Gardens Bird Walk

- by Brett Davis

The Booderee Botanic Gardens walk is walk #7 in the Shoalhaven Bird Walks brochure which can be viewed at birdlifeshoalhaven.org/pdfs/shoalhavenbirdwalks.pdf (and it can be downloaded as well).



The blurb in the brochure says - "With lots of sealed paths and good bush tracks, this is a great place for all ages and both beginner and experienced birders. Freckled Ducks have been seen on Lake McKenzie and Sooty Owls have been spotted at night, but the residents are the main attraction.



"The species list for the gardens is long and varied, including many honeyeaters and thornbills, Grey and Rufous Fantails, Cicadabirds, King-Parrots, Gang-gang, Yellow-tailed and Glossy Black-Cockatoos, Leaden Flycatchers, Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebes, Hardheads, Chestnut Teals, Rufous and Golden Whistlers, Brown Gerygones, Olive-backed Orioles and the Eastern Koels in summer.

"Nature trails and paths combine to create a loop walk around Lake Mackenzie. Interpretive signage, toilets, picnic area and barbeque facilities are available.

"A second circuit on the opposite side of the carpark goes around the heathland habitat. Allow from one hour to a whole day for your visit. Entry fees apply in Booderee NP".



Whether you are a birdwatcher, a native plant lover, a photographer, or just someone looking for a great place to take the family for a picnic and a half day out, the Booderee Botanic Gardens are well worth a visit!

JB KBA Report

- by Karen Davis

As the guardian for the Jervis Bay Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), I thought I should update you on this year's happenings so far.

The KBA primarily consists of Booderee NP, Jervis Bay NP, Woollamia NR and Beecroft Weapons Range. This KBA was identified as its coastal heath supports the largest sub-population of the endangered Eastern Bristlebird (EBB) - isolated from other sub-populations. The KBA is also important because it supports the Eastern Ground Parrot, breeding Sooty Oystercatchers on Bowen Island, occasional large numbers of Chestnut Teals on Lake Windermere, and for its non-bird biodiversity as well.

For the third year I have completed the **Easter Health Check** for the KBA with the help of Chris McGregor (Birdlife Shoalhaven member and ANU ecologist). This health check basically reports to BirdLife Australia the health of the habitat and what threats exist to it. The threats to our particular KBA include such things as building development, invasive plants and animals, fire, and recreational activities involving motorbikes and dogs.

The threats are rated for when they are likely to happen, their scale and severity. If the sum of the ratings exceeds a given figure the KBA is flagged as "in danger" so that conservation action can be targeted to reduce the threats earlier rather than later.

For our KBA the main threat seems to be fire. In the last three years I have had to report on a major fire in the KBA each year.

In November 2015 and October 2016, both during bird breeding seasons, there were out-of-control fires on the Beecroft Weapons Range in separate habitat, and then in April 2017 a Defence drone crashed and burnt a further small area.

In September 2017 there was another fire - this time in Booderee NP. Below is the report on that fire ...

"In September 2017 a fire burnt 1700 hectares (27%) of Booderee NP with areas of wet and dry heath, forest and woodland burnt. Many animals and birds were killed by the fire including recently introduced Long-nosed Potoroos and Southern Brown Bandicoots. During the ANU surveys in October, Eastern Bristlebirds were detected in many of the burnt and unburnt heath sites and even in the forest in the western half of the park. Chris MacGregor is confident the EBB's will recover in the main burnt area in the eastern part of the park."

One problem with repeated fires in the same area is that the ecology of the habitat will change from heathland to grassland, with the result that it no longer suits the EBB.

This year I have established ten **Shared Survey Sites** within the KBA boundaries and some of our members have volunteered to do surveys, at least quarterly, for these sites (thank you Kim, Yolande, Wendy and Chris).

Details of each of these sites can be found on Birdata under the Shoalhaven region along with the shared sites for all the walks in our latest Bird Walk brochure. They are either 2 hectare / 20 minute surveys, or 500m radius surveys. By doing these surveys regularly we will be able to see how the birds vary between the seasons and also if the species mix or numbers are changing.

Note: if anyone else would like to volunteer for a site please let me know, OR if you are at one of these sites you are welcome to do a survey (per the type required) and enter the data in Birdata.

Also, if you are already doing regular surveys of a particular area make sure you enter them in Birdata so the information is not wasted - see my Spring 2017 Newsletter article - "Shoalhaven Shared Sites on Birdata".

If you need help with anything to do with Birdata, please ask me.

Remember: if you enjoy getting out on a bird walk make sure you diarize all the walks in the Calendar at the end of this magazine.



Eastern Bristlebird

Umbarah - an Aboriginal Perspective on Birds

- by Chris Grounds

BirdLife Shoalhaven acknowledges Aboriginal peoples, their Elders past and present, and their country in the Shoalhaven as part of the great south coast Yuin Nation.



Umbarah - Pacific Black Duck

An Aboriginal perspective of our natural environment is known to be necessary, essential and valuable though not always easy to access.

It is a perspective not always recognized and available in relation to birdlife though it certainly does exist and warrants better knowledge and understanding.

This brief article is a limited introduction only but starts at the most fundamental point for our BirdLife Shoalhaven members.

Perhaps the best single example of such perspective in the Shoalhaven and on the NSW south coast is the cultural significance associated with the **Pacific Black Duck or UMBARAH.**

Umbarah is the totem of the Yuin Nation peoples of the NSW south coast.



Pacific Black Ducks

This symbolizes a connection between people and their country and a commitment to care for the country handed down from generation to generation.

"Country" is a term that should be taken to mean all aspects of environment; land and waters, wildlife and birdlife and both the traditional, historic and contemporary association of these with Aboriginal peoples.

It is also a common thread which draws people together around an identity as south coast Aboriginal people.

In that sense it is a sacred bird associated with particular recognition through Dreaming stories, laws such as a ban on hunting of Umbarah, and with a sacred site such as Merriman Island.

Umbarah as a symbol derives from a geographical or place association with "Merriman Island" in Wallaga Lake. Merriman Island when viewed from above, as from the sacred mountain Guluga, resembles and symbolizes the Pacific Black Duck or Umbarah.

The island name associates with a very significant Aboriginal identity, Merriman, for whom the Black Duck acted as a warning of dangers for both he and his people.

Umbarah is also a personal totem to particular Aboriginal people and a totem to the Wallaga Lake community as well as a totem to the Yuin Nation.



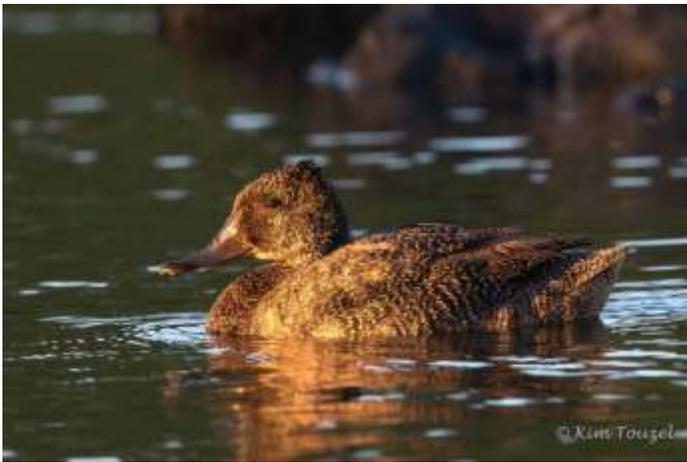
What you missed on Facebook!

If you haven't visited the BirdLife Shoalhaven Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pg/shoalhavenbirdlife this season, here is a sample of some of the reports that you have missed just in the last month ...

June 18 - Dolphins at Rennies Beach - Charles Dove



June 29 - Freckled Ducks at South Nowra - Kim Touzel



July 3 - Banded Stilt (left) at Wollumboola - Charles Dove



July 6 - Hudsonian Godwit at Wollumboola - Kim Touzel



July 10 - Tawny-crowned Honeyeater - Charles Dove



And lots more spectacular photography and important news about sightings and events!



South Coast Shorebird Recovery

- from the Shorebird Recovery Newsletter 2017-2018

The South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program continues to monitor and protect endangered nesting shorebirds along our beaches, train and support volunteers along the south coast and obtain funding to undertake comprehensive fox control and community education programs. The program has been running now for almost 20 years and the ongoing support on the south coast is inspiring!

This season the amazing 92 volunteers monitored a total of 118 endangered shorebird nests between Gerroa and Batemans Bay and recorded 3563 volunteer hours. Their passion and dedication to shorebird recovery keeps the program running and has immeasurable effects through their links into the local community.

These birds nest right on our beaches, so raising awareness, improving knowledge and local community support are extremely important for their survival into the future.



However, despite these efforts, critically endangered Hooded Plover numbers took a slight downturn this season from 13 to 11 breeding pairs (41 to 37 adults). The weather was not kind this year. The breeding season was short, plus eggs and chicks were lost to storms and inundation.

Overall there were only 4 Hooded Plover fledglings for 2017/18. This is disappointing after the steady increase and overall doubling of the south coast population in the last decade.

Hopefully fledging success will improve next season.



The endangered Little Terns also had a difficult season. It was shaping up to be a big colony at Lake Conjola, but early raven predation dispersed the nesting birds across five sites. The volunteers really stepped up to the challenge and we achieved at least 20 fledglings for 2017/18.

The endangered Pied Oystercatcher breeding pair numbers were similar to last season, 27 pairs were monitored with nests. A few more breeding pairs are quite remote, so there were likely a few additional nests that were missed.

But we will get better with time and more volunteers! Overall the Pied Oystercatchers fledged 17 chicks this season.

Thanks to Saving our Species, Crown Lands and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, our comprehensive fox control program was maintained in 2017/18 to reduce predation of shorebird eggs and chicks. The Local Land Services and Holiday Havens funded yet another awesome season of community shorebird education programs.

The entire Shorebird Recovery Newsletter can be found at southcoastshorebirdrecoverynewsletter2017-18

Free Glossy Black Cockatoo Nest Boxes

- by Hugh Capes

I have five nest boxes for glossy black cockatoos to give away. Each has chains and bolts for attaching to a tree. There is also an instruction sheet.

They can be difficult to erect as they are heavy and need to be filled with mulch. A cherry picker may be required.

I have three on my property which have not attracted nesting Glossies, but this is probably because there is already sufficient nesting habitat in nearby forests. The nest box design is based on the "cockatube" model which has been used with considerable success on Kangaroo Island and in other places.

If you would like the possibility of a family of glossies living near, contact me for your free nest box!

Hugh Capes - hughichi@gmail.com - 0499 219 449



BLS World Environment Day Stall

- by Kim Touzel

In spite of 15 degree temps, occasional drizzling rain, wind and a lower number of participating stalls the day was successful for BLS. We had a steady flow of people at our stall and we solved the usual backyard bird mysteries.



We gained a few BLS supporters for our email list, and also had a couple of people who seemed seriously interested in BLA membership leave with brochures.

Yolande's talk on Birds in Backyards and how to attract birds to your garden was amazing as always and we had approximately 25 attendees, but unfortunately the bird walk was rained out.



Great organization by Karen had the day flowing very smoothly with the help of Robyn and Doug to set up in the morning and Stan and Su alternating with Karen and Brett at the stall.

Well done all!

Wongaloo - the Kakadu of QLD

- by Yolande Cozijn

- photos by Yolande, Janet Robino and Norm Rains

Thursday June 7th 2018 and I'm standing in the scrub looking out towards a wetland filled with thousands of magpie geese, hundreds of Brolga and many pelicans, black swans and other water birds. It is a privilege to view such an abundance of water birds.

Where am I?

Wongaloo Wetlands. It seems incredible that this natural wonder is barely 40 minutes drive south of Townsville.



So how did I discover these wetlands?

Its starts with a series of happy co-incidences. I was planning to visit my sister in Townsville in early June. Two weeks before my visit she rang to tell me about this wetland she had heard being discussed on the local ABC.



My sister had never heard of Wongaloo before. Did I know anything about it as it sounded like it was a special place?

I knew nothing about the wetlands but as luck would have it I was attending the national Birdlife Australia conference the following week and surely someone there would know. At the conference I met Wal Threlfall the secretary of Birdlife Townsville. Of course the Townsville branch knew all about Wongaloo.

So how do you visit there was really the question my sister and I wanted answered. Fortunately for us, on the first Thursday of each month Birdlife Townsville does a bird count at Wongaloo and we would be welcome to join them and help out on the count.

On Thursday June 6th my sister and I spent the day with Norm Rains and Janet Robino participating in the monthly count. We visited a selection of wetland, grassland and forest habitats and observed 66 different bird species.

The number of bird species was not what was so amazing that day - it was the sheer quantity of water birds out on the various lagoons and wetlands. I felt that I had been transported to Kakadu as that is the only other place in Australia that I have ever had the pleasure to see such an incredible abundance of our magnificent birdlife.

A bit more about the Wongaloo Wetlands.

According to the QLD Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, these wetlands are listed in the "Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia" (DIWA) and adjoin the Bowling Green Bay Ramsar site.

They are part of one of the largest coastal wetland complexes on the east coast of Australia and have remained a natural ephemeral hydrological system.



The swamps vary from very wet with dense stands of "Bulkuru"- the primary breeding and food source for Magpie Geese - to barren and dry 'playgrounds' for the Brolga, as part of a critical annual cycle.

The wetland system is home at various times of the year to some 255 species of birds, 51 species of reptile, 44 species of mammals and countless species of invertebrate and is a vital stage on the migratory "flyway".



The Wongaloo wetlands are managed by the Wetlands and Grasslands Foundation (WGF) as Trustee for QLD National parks and Wildlife Service. As the wetlands were previously a cattle property there is a need for vigorous weed control measures.

Interestingly, as well as the use of chemicals to control the weeds the foundation use about 400 head of agisted cattle to "work" on weed control. Fencing keeps the cattle in the targeted areas.

The intensive cattle grazing appears to work quite well. During our day in the wetlands we observed cattle happily munching their way through various invasive pest species.

If Wongaloo was just about wetlands that would be amazing enough but wait there is more! As well as the freshwater lagoons themselves there are interesting creeks and gullies, melaleuca swamps and woodlands, stands of *Livistona* palms and pandanus, lowland vine forest and open grassland. The woodland is habitat for the endangered black-throated finch as well as many other bird species.



How can I visit Wongaloo?

Birdlife Townsville will welcome any Birdlife Shoalhaven members to join them on their monthly surveys on the first Thursday of the month. Contact them via the address below:-

contact@birdlifetownsville.org.au

Thanks to Wal Threlfall for making our visit possible and to Norm Rains and Jane Robino for taking us out for a most amazing day of birding.

South Coast Osprey News

- text by Chris Grounds
- photos by Chris Grounds and Charles Dove

BLS has followed the breeding fate of the south coast Eastern Osprey over a few years now so an update is timely in this breeding season as the record and profile extends for this relatively uncommon bird.

The Basin View nest, which had produced three fledglings over two years, 2015 and 2016, was unproductive last year for an Osprey pair and appears to have been abandoned this year.

The Batemans Bay - Clyde River first year nest of 2017 produced a fledgling. It is an exceptional nest in the sense that it is in a natural structure – a tree! An inspection a few weeks ago found the nest intact but no birds were sighted, and a report today (July 19) says the nest was destroyed by high winds this week.



The Eurobodalla Natural History group was very active in monitoring a Batemans Bay nest in 2017 and more than a bit excited when it produced a fledgling last October.

A new nesting attempt at Moruya Heads has now been revealed by Julie Morgan, president of the Eurobodalla Natural History group.

The new site unfortunately is a relatively new Telstra Tower and at this stage the nesting attempt amounts to a drop of about half a dozen sticks so it will be interesting to monitor how this turns out. The NPWS are now directly involved with this nesting attempt at Moruya.



At this stage of the Cool season better progress might be expected and it is not that good a picture. There have been quite a few wind storms, some of which have been somewhat extreme and that does not help the Osprey nesting on high, exposed structures.



One fabulous sighting occurred on Paradise Beach Bay at Sanctuary Point over lunch on July 10. An adult male Osprey flew in over the bay on St Georges Basin and put on a flight and hunting display for nearly two minutes. These are great birding moments of course so Marly (my wife) and I enjoyed the "occasional encounter" and, as you so often do, pondered what we would have missed by not being there at that precise time – with the camera of course.

Charles Dove has also reported an individual Osprey at Burrill Lake. As Charles's photo below reveals this is a bird with an identification leg ring and is known as a male over at least 20 years of age. Must be all those good fish from the lake!

I would be very pleased to hear of any Osprey sightings, especially any nesting activity.



Web Watch - Cool Season 2018

- by Chris Grounds

Well, the content for Web Watch just keeps coming from the good sources at the ABC, the Guardian, the Sydney Morning Herald and the Conversation - and how interesting it has proven to be yet again. I never cease to be amazed at the sheer variety of content that presents itself each quarter and I trust you share this interest. Click on or copy and paste the link into your browser and read on. Perhaps the Golden-shouldered Parrot link would be a good place to start.

Indigenous leaders saving parrot in peril

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/indigenous-leaders-shoulder-duty-of-saving-parrot-in-peril-20180705-p4zpmu.html>

Being the totem for an indigenous clan and having spectacular plumage and unusual nesting habits turn out to be no guarantees for survival. That's the case for the golden-shouldered parrot. Known as the "Alwal" to the Olkola traditional owners, the birds once soared in huge flocks over savanna woodlands and grasslands of the central Cape York Peninsula in Queensland. Reduced to fewer than 2000 individuals in the wild, the parrot is now listed as endangered both nationally and in Queensland - a status also recognised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



Mass killing of Wedge-tailed Eagles in Victoria

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-12/wedge-tailed-eagles-killed-east-gippsland/9859880?>

Authorities have confirmed 136 dead wedge-tailed eagles have been found under suspicious circumstances in Victoria, in what could be the worst illegal bird cull the

state has ever seen. And wildlife officers suspect more dead animals may still be found in East Gippsland, in the state's east.



Its comes after the ABC reported last week hundreds of dead wedge-tailed eagles were found after suspected poisoning on a Tubbut farm, near the New South Wales border. Victoria's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) said another four protected species were also found dead, including two ravens, a kookaburra and a raptor.

Given the number of dead native animals discovered so far, the offender is facing possible jail time - or about \$115,000 in fines.

How to bird watch in Sydney's CBD

<https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tales-of-a-twitcher-how-to-bird-watch-in-sydneys-cbd-20180521-h10boo.html>

"For most of my life, I didn't pay attention to birds," wrote author Jonathan Franzen in his essay *Why Birds Matter*. "Only in my 40s did I become a person whose heart lifts whenever he hears a grosbeak singing or a towhee calling and who hurries out to see a golden plover that's been reported in the neighbourhood, just because it's a beautiful bird, with truly golden plumage."



Feral pigs decimating cassowary numbers

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-30/pigs-decimating-cassowaries-in-world-heritage-listed-daintree/9815164>



A filmmaker says feral pig numbers in the world-heritage listed Daintree Rainforest in far north Queensland are out of control. University of New South Wales doctoral student Dan Hunter has spent the past nine months filming cassowaries in the Cooper Creek area, north of Cairns, in what is thought to be the world's oldest surviving rainforest. Cassowaries are listed as endangered, with as few as 2,500 believed to remain in the wild, and Mr Hunter said he can see why. "The feral pig problem is out of control in national parks," Mr Hunter said.

Dog squad sniffing out endangered Baw Baw frog

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-10/frog-detection-dog-program/9848392?>



Mr Edwards and his partner Tracy Edwards run Canidae Development, an organisation that selects and trains dogs to search for animals. "We sort of live a bit differently than most people with working dogs," Mr Edwards said. "We've got five dogs ... and they're all inside dogs with us. First and foremost they are working dogs but we live as a unit, as a pack.

"We spend a lot of time out in the field together, we spend a lot of time working away from home together ... we've got a pretty close relationship." The dogs have worked looking for koala and tiger quoll scat, as well as dead birds and bats as part of windfarm mortality surveys.

Shrill screech may help save Cockatoo from extinction

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2018-05-13/south-eastern-red-tailed-black-cockatoo-screeching-for-survival/9751082>

The south-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo lives in a small area, completely isolated from its closest evolutionary neighbours by huge swathes of impassable terrain. These are birds that stand on the precipice of extinction.



Unusually, the female of this cockatoo species is more colourful than the male. He is truly glossy; black as tar glistening in the heat, with a strong circle of red revealed on the tail, most visible when seen from below. But he pales in comparison to his mate. She is a stunner, with black feathers scalloped in yellow, red and orange that swirl into a broach on her chest and give her sub-species their name — the painted lady.

Sperm race to help save the sugar-lapping hihi

<https://theconversation.com/a-sperm-race-to-help-save-one-of-new-zealands-threatened-birds-the-sugar-lapping-hihi-94650>



Researchers are studying sperm quality to figure out what contributes to the low breeding success of the hihi, or stitchbird.

It's likely you've never heard of a hihi, let alone seen one in the wild. Also known as stitchbirds, these colourful little critters are a true taonga, or treasure. They're only found in New Zealand, and currently restricted to just seven sanctuary sites.



Without the caché of kiwi or kākāpō, hihi have gone largely ignored by conservation fans and also, crucially, by funders. Researchers have been interested in these sunny little birds for decades because of their crazy mating system and high-octane lifestyle. A major part of hihi research goes into figuring out ways to make more hihi and get them in more places. Now, we're combining research on hihi sperm with a major fundraising effort to try to turn this bird's fortunes around.

Australian magpies can understand other bird calls

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/17/australian-magpies-can-understand-other-bird-calls-study-finds>



Australian magpies can understand what other birds are saying to each other, a new study has found. The research, published in the journal *Animal Behaviour*, says

the wily magpie has learned the meanings of different noisy miner calls and essentially eavesdrops to find out which predators are near. Noisy miners – a small, native honeyeater – have different warning calls for ground-based and aerial predators. By playing both kinds of recording to a series of wild magpies, researchers observed the magpies raising their beaks to the sky, or dropping their heads to the ground.

Airport-dwelling magpies get in less flap about planes

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-25/airport-dwelling-magpies-get-in-less-of-a-flap-about-planes/9800990>

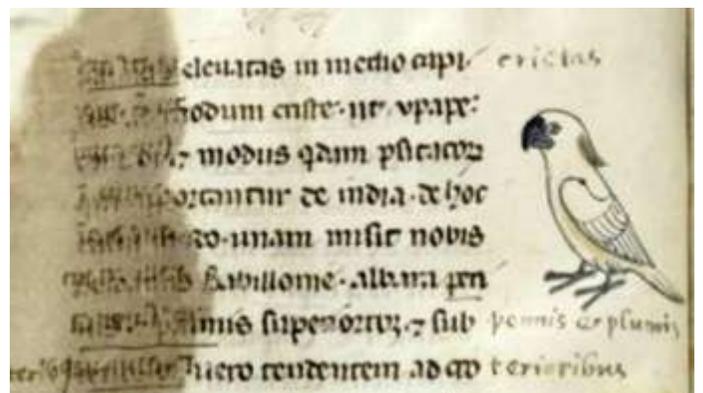
Magpies that live at airports are less likely to flee from aircraft noise than those that live elsewhere, according to our research. But it is unclear whether this makes them more likely to be involved in a collision.

Magpies that are more blasé about aircraft noise are likely to come into closer proximity with passing planes. But conversely, they might also be less likely to attempt a risky escape flight that would actually increase the danger of a collision.



13th century illustration of Australian Cockatoo

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-26/medieval-cockatoo-illustration-debunks-australian-history-myths/9911892>



A 13th-century illustration of an Australasian cockatoo debunks the myth Australia was "a dark continent" and reveals trade routes around the country's north were flourishing as far back as medieval times, a study shows. Researchers found the illustration in a manuscript that was either written by, or belonged to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. It is the oldest-known European illustration of the bird, found in a book dating from between 1241 and 1248, and pre-dating other European illustrations of cockatoos by 250 years.

A third of world nature reserves threatened by humans

<https://theconversation.com/one-third-of-the-worlds-nature-reserves-are-under-threat-from-humans-96721>

In the 146 years since Yellowstone National Park in the northwestern United States became the world's first protected area, nations around the world have created more than 200,000 terrestrial nature reserves.

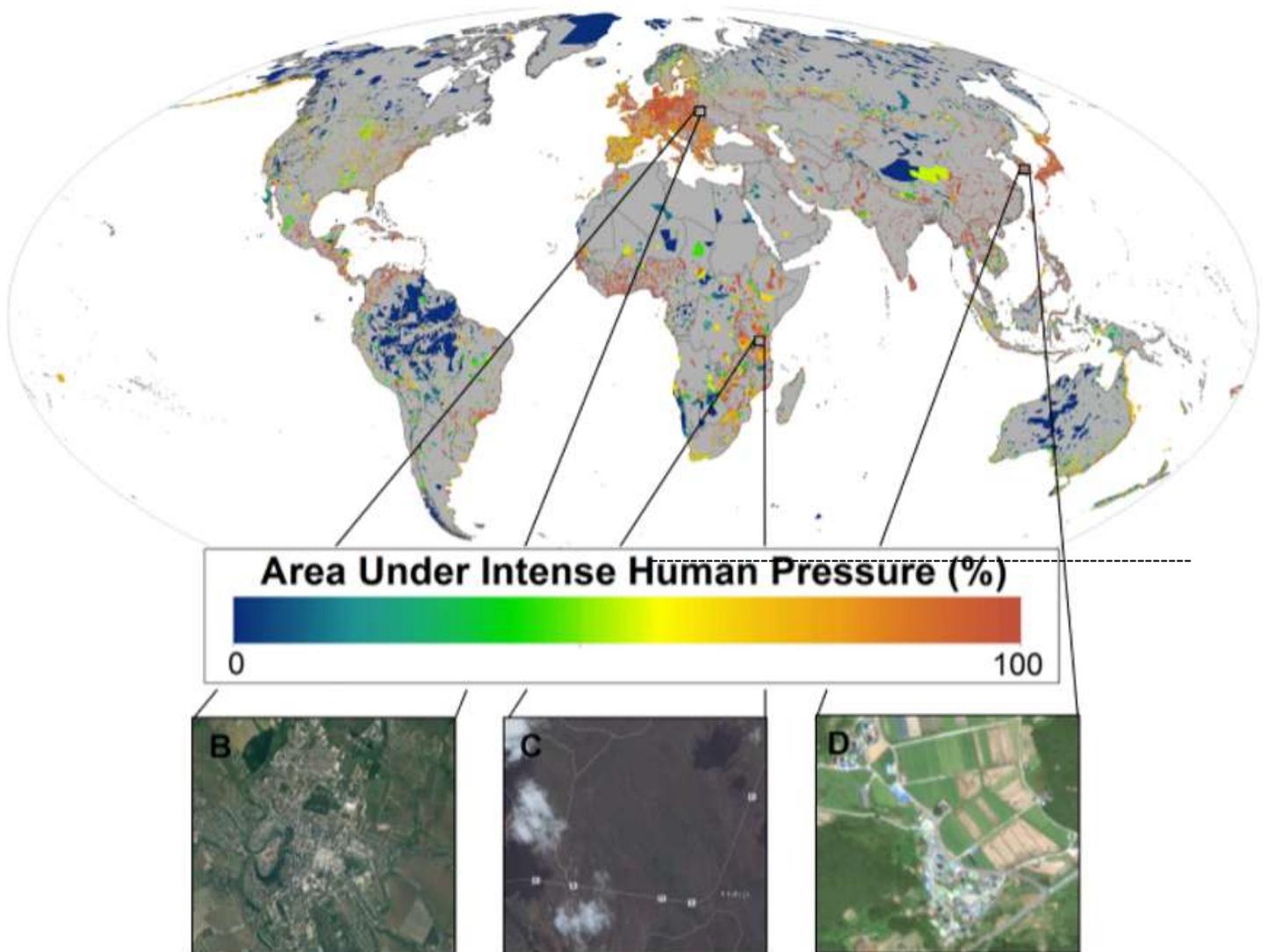
Together they cover more than 20 million km², or almost 15% of the planet's land surface – an area bigger than South America.

Governments establish protected areas so that plants and animals can live without human pressures that might otherwise drive them towards extinction. These are special places, gifts to future generations and all non-human life on the planet.

But in a study published today in Science, we show that roughly one-third of the global protected area estate (a staggering 6 million km²) is under intense human pressure. Roads, mines, industrial logging, farms, townships and cities all threaten these supposedly protected places.

It is well established that these types of human activities are causing the decline and extinction of species throughout the world. But our new research shows how widespread these activities are within areas that are designated to protect nature.

Astoundingly, almost three-quarters of countries have at least 50% of their protected land under intense human pressure. The problem is most acute in western Europe and southern Asia. Only 42% of protected land was found to be free of measurable human pressure.



Reports of sick or injured barn owls up 875 per cent

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-12/something-killing-barn-owls-in-victoria/9980016?>

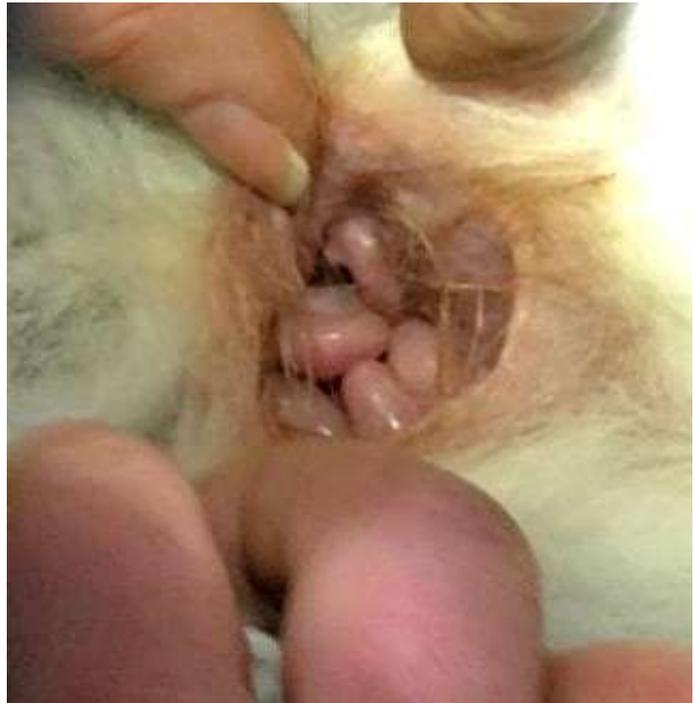
The rate of sick or injured barn owls reported to Wildlife Victoria so far this year has increased by 875 per cent on the same period last year.

In 2018 Wildlife Victoria received over 117 rescue requests for barn owls between January to mid-July. The year prior during the same period, there were only 12. Both Bird Life Australia and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) have named rat bait as being the most likely cause of death in barn owls.



Booderee National Park Natural Resource Manager Nick Dexter said researchers have already learnt a lot from the quoll colony.

"There remain challenges ahead to establish a sustainable population, but to have 30 per cent of the female quolls produce pouch young from this pilot project is a move in the right direction," he said.



Eastern quoll colony in Booderee have their first babies

<https://www.news.com.au/technology/science/animals/eastern-quoll-colony-in-booderee-have-their-first-babies/news-story/d20ba3537c74dcfec26051a31cd4dd0b>

THE first baby eastern quolls born in mainland Australia's wild for half a century have been found in Booderee National Park. And they're going to be viciously cute.

"We've been tracking every animal in this project with a GPS collar, and unlike other translocation projects we've been able to quickly discover and manage threats. We've also learnt about the behaviour of these quolls, about their movements and preferred habitat."

Quolls also are making a comeback elsewhere in Australia.

Birds See Change

- by Chris Grounds (BLS Conservation Officer)

(Thank you to the artists for use of photos of their selected works)

For those of us "birdos" who enjoyed the delights of the See Change Arts Festival 2018, one thing may have become quite obvious after a while - there was an awful lot of "bird art" across quite a few exhibitions and what a great thing this was for everyone, "birdos" and all others and not to be missed.

It wasn't contrived, planned or arranged. It just happened and it was a first really. There has been some bird art before in See Change but the sheer number of exhibitions, the range of art and media, subject and themes was unprecedented.



Neither artists nor the organizers, Jervis Bay and Basin Arts, realized this would happen but what an absolute delight that it did.

The "**READING BHERWERRE WETLAND**" exhibition at the Sandholme Guesthouse featured twelve works from five artists that dealt with birds. Vicki Robinson's two cockatoo ceramic pieces, Bob Dixon's two paintings, one

of the Pacific Heron and one of the Azure Kingfisher, Helen Nugent's Red-browed Finches and your C.O.'s photograph of the White-faced heron were a major component of this exhibition, indoors at least.



A number of the outdoor bird portrait collages prepared by Vanessa Barbay for actual wetland site display adorned the other guesthouse verandah. These featured in our Autumn magazine.



The "Salon" group exhibition that this was part of also featured a Q & A session in the second week led by Vanessa Barbay and Chris Grounds and birds were the focus of much of the discussion.

Julie Cunningham's "**BIRD**", featured paintings, print, photography and sculpture in a very engaging exhibition at the Huskisson Community Centre. Julie is to be congratulated on her concept and for the effort that just getting the exhibition mounted involved.

The group show included Fiona Roderick, David Gribble ACS, Sarah Parker, Meaghan Potter, Julie Cunningham and emerging Indigenous artist Sheree Morris, plus local artist Randall Sinnamon. Also included was music by [Geoff Datson and Annette Hughes](#).



Randall Cinnamon's bird sculptures were, as always over the years, a happy and intriguing delight.



Two large works by and prints by Fiona Roderick were delightful and appealing. These were backed by display piece photographs of David Gribble of a few species on Comerong Island.

A single piece feature was the painting of the south coast Yuin Totem, the Pacific Black Duck, "Umbarah" by Indigenous artist Sheree Morris. This in itself was a special piece because, in this writers view, birds and the local art too often lack an Aboriginal perspective.



It is a bird that really needs to be recognized in BLS's next venture into a Bird Walks brochure, in deference to and recognition of a local Indigenous cultural perspective if nothing else (see Umbarah article this edition).



BLS contributed with a talk by committee member Yolande Coizin but weather prevented the associated walk.

The Vincentia group exhibition at Ilfrachrome Street, "THREADS", featured some high end art pieces by Vanessa Barbay and our readers have a full background on her work from our last newsletter.

The work is shown in the next column and is entitled "Hello Billyjoe (Summer Cockatoos)". It is a fascinating and completely different work from one of our leading artists, who delights in working with birds.



BLS's own Robyn Hill, who is also a Shorebird Recovery volunteer, again worked some of Linda Denning's small bird watercolours into the home exhibition "TRACES", featuring the Superb Wren in wall hangings. Bill Chalmers wood sculptures are always a delight but the floor-standing Darter really caught the eye. His bird baths were popular as always and easy on the eye and pocket and will certainly support those "birds in backyards".



Species exhibition in Wollongong earlier in the year. The Eastern Ground Parrot photograph featured in BirdLife's 2017 calendar. The best of it was just how much attention the EGP attracted from all visitors – a very popular bird it seems – even with non-birdos!



"REtroSPECT" also featured an audio-visual presentation of the 2017-2018 breeding season of the Critically Endangered Hooded Plover at Cave Beach in Booderee National Park and this proved very popular, though as many commented it was a bit sad. That withstanding it was well received as an insight into the bird that is one of the apex threatened species in the Shoalhaven.

A spectacular array of ceramic mosaics at a "A Glimpse of Gaudi" at Sanctuary Point by students from Mad Cow Studio workshops, provided three bird related gems.



Our veritable BLS C.O. Chris flew the flag with exhibition pieces at "REtroSPECT" of the local, threatened species Eastern Ground Parrot and Eastern Osprey. Both photographs had been involved in a NPWS Threatened





2018 Aussie Backyard Bird Count

Can you help make the 2018 Aussie Backyard Bird Count even bigger in the Shoalhaven?



Since 2014, as part of its National Bird Week celebrations every October, BirdLife Australia has run the Aussie Backyard Bird Count (ABBC) with the numbers of people involved and the number of birds counted doubling during this time.

It has been a great, fun way to get more people looking at birds, especially school children. It has opened up doors with more Local Councils and generated a lot of media to promote our birds.

Of course, despite vetting within the ABBC app and by BirdLife Australia staff, there are some limitations in this data, but is still a valuable monitoring tool of our backyard birds.

As for the involvement of people in the Shoalhaven, 201 people registered to submit surveys last year, involving 323 observers. Of the 201 that registered only 55 were existing BLS members or Wildbird Protectors and a half of the other 146 people who registered had no previous engagement with BirdLife Australia. A great result for the ABBC, but clearly something for the branch to build upon.

The BLS Committee is already starting to think about the ABBC this year. The ABBC surveys do NOT have to be in your own backyard. The surveys can be anywhere, like a public park, golf course or school.

We all love birds and birdwatching, and 20 minutes a day for a single week is not a lot of time, so why don't we all participate in the ABBC in October this year?

In the meantime:

- download the Aussie Bird Count app,
- put 22 to 28 October 2018 in your diary, and
- tell your family and friends!

So what were the results for the Shoalhaven in the last ABBC? See the list below ...

In the 2017 ABBC, 207 species were reported in the Shoalhaven with a total of 18,932 individual birds observed. The most common species were:

Rainbow Lorikeet	3,155
Little Wattlebird	801
Red Wattlebird	592
Crimson Rosella	579
Australian Magpie	565
Silvereye	555
Superb Fairy-wren	529
Silver Gull	510
Welcome Swallow	495
Galah	482
Red-browed Finch	459
Eastern Spinebill	410
Little Corella	368
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	368
Satin Bowerbird	340
Laughing Kookaburra	328
Magpie-lark	325
Australian Wood Duck	298
Chestnut Teal	297
Common Myna	285
Australian King-Parrot	278
Black Swan	241
Eastern Whipbird	232
Crested Tern	230
Willie Wagtail	210
House Sparrow	207
Noisy Miner	204
Grey Fantail	176
Masked Lapwing	166
Common Blackbird	164
Crested Pigeon	158
White-headed Pigeon	155
Australian Raven	152
Brown Thornbill	149
New Holland Honeyeater	145
Lewin's Honeyeater	130
Spotted Dove	121
Scarlet Honeyeater	112

If you are interested in helping lead an ABBC survey walk or you know of schools that might be interested in getting involved, please call Rob Dunn on 0438 250 600 or email robarb@bigpond.com.

Images from Up North

- by Brian O'Leary

White-bellied Sea-Eagle



Azure Kingfisher





Willie Wagtail and Kangaroo



Red-winged Parrot



BirdLife Shoalhaven Calendar for 2018

Date **Event / Location / Group*** **Details - meeting time and place, leaders etc.**

July

Fri 20th Garrads Lane (MUD) Meet: 8am at back of Harry Higgs Room or 8:10am 90A Garrads Lane Milton. Leader: Geoff Andrews 4454 3580

August

Fri 3rd Kioloa - O'Hara's Head (MUD) Meet 8am: Kioloa boat ramp. Leaders: Marg Hamon & Maggie Mance 4457 1129

Fri 17th Narrawallee (MUD) Meet: 8am: Back of Harry Higgs Room or 8:15am at the end of Leo Drive, Narrawallee. Leader: Chris Shinton 0423 352 718

Sun 19th Vincentia WTP (SB) Meet 8:30am at the gate of the sewerage works at the west end of Berry Street.

Fri 31st Yatte Yattah NR (MUD) Meet: 8am: Back of Harry Higgs Room or 8:15am at Yatte Yattah NR. Leader: Mike Jefferis 0412 480 371

September

Fri 14th Burrill Lake area (MUD) Meet: 8am: Lions Park Burrill Lake. Leader: Bob Rusk 4455 2169

Sun 16th Callala Bay Wetland (SB) Meet 8:30am at the sportsground car park in Emmett Street, Callala Bay opposite the shops.

Fri 28th Day Out and Picnic Lunch (MUD) A full day outing to Bomaderry Creek Regional Park, Lake Wollumboola, and Orient Point. Meet: 8 am: Back of Harry Higgs Room for car pooling. Leader: Charles Dove 0417 422 302

October

Sun 21st Cudmirrah/Berrara (SB) Meet at 8:30am at the big car park on the south-east corner of the intersection of Sussex Inlet Road and the Princes Highway.

November

Sun 18th Lake Wollumboola (SB) Meet at 8:30am at Lake Entrance car park at end of Lake Entrance Circuit in Culburra.

December

Sun 16th Xmas get-together (SB) BYO drink, picnic, and nibbles to share. Meet at 5pm at the Moona Moona Creek Picnic area. North side of creek. Enter via Jervis Street, Huskisson

* The BirdLife Shoalhaven calendar contains activities from the branch (**BLS**) and two associated birdwatching groups - Shoalhaven Birders (**SB**) and the Milton-Ulladulla District Birdwatching Club (**MUD**). BLS members can attend all activities. SB have no leaders on their outings and it is possible that nobody else will turn up, especially if the weather is bad. Contacts: Stan and Su Brown 4443-4828 and 0419 287 224, Peter and Julie Hale 0402 076 548. MUD have outings every fortnight on Fridays from 8am until about 11am. For information about joining MUD phone Marg Hamon 4457-1129 or Chris Shinton 4454-5584 or email mubirdclub@gmail.com.



Australia's voice for birds since 1901

BirdLife Australia is dedicated to achieving outstanding conservation results for our native birds and their habitats.

With our specialised knowledge and the commitment of an Australia-wide network of volunteers and supporters, we are creating a bright future for Australia's birds.

birdlife.org.au

Add your voice

- join us**
Enjoy the rewards of membership, making a real difference for our native birds
- volunteer**
Contributing your time is one of the most effective ways to help
- donate**
Help us create positive outcomes for birds and their habitats