

BirdLife Shoalhaven Magazine

Winter 2022



In this issue ...

- Page 3 - 4 **The Bird Haven Festival is back** - by Rob Dunn
- Page 5 - 7 **The Bushfire Recovery Project report** - by Rob Dunn
- Page 8 **Bush Stone-curlew at Worrige** - by Phil Hendry
- Page 9 **Sanctuary Point Osprey Nest Update** - by Karen Davis
- Page 10 **Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove in Vincentia** - by Brett Davis
- Page 11 - 14 **The Law is an Ass: How to protect birds** - by Brett Davis
- Page 15 - 16 **Lake Wollumboola in a changing climate** - by Frances Bray
- Page 17 - 18 **A Bird in the Hand** - by Yolande Cozijn
- Page 19 **Two full houses in Huskisson** - by Rob Dunn
- Page 20 **Art Springs for Wildlife** - Exhibition and Festival
- Page 21 **Queensland Ornithological Conference - 2022**
- Page 22 **Support FOLAs - Fenced Off-Leash Areas for Dogs**
- Page 22 **Oppose SGARs - Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides**
 a) Let your Council know
 b) Let Bunnings know
- Page 23 **Wanted - Gould League Notes** - by Dennis Gosper
- Page 24 **How you can help BLS and The Fine Print**



Cover Image: This season's cover photo of a Brown Goshawk comes from Chris Grounds, former BirdLife Shoalhaven Conservation Officer and current freelance contributor.

Acknowledgment: BirdLife Shoalhaven acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the Shoalhaven, their care of country, birds and habitat, and pays respects to all Elders.

The Bird Haven Festival is back

- by Rob Dunn, President of BirdLife Shoalhaven



The Bird Haven Festival was a huge success in 2018 and 2019, bringing hundreds of people together in Shoalhaven Heads to celebrate birds and learn more about their behaviour, habitat and conservation. We are thrilled the Festival will be back again in 2022!

This October BirdLife Shoalhaven will be running three Festival events in three venues to coincide with the Aussie Backyard Bird Count.

1. Birds for Beginners: the Weird and Wonderful Life of Birds - on Saturday, October 15th from 2pm - 4pm at the Ulladulla Civic Centre, 81B Princes Hwy - **and it's FREE!**



This exciting event in Ulladulla coincides with the start of the Aussie Backyard Bird Count and will open the 2022 Bird Haven Festival.

After a 'test' of what you know about birds, you will hear from **Dr Holly Parsons - Urban Birds Program Manager, BirdLife Australia**. Holly's research at the University of Wollongong looked at the impact of urbanisation on Superb Fairy-wrens.

Since joining BirdLife Australia in 1999, she has worked on a range of ecological research projects, the 'Birds in Backyards' program and the annual 'Aussie Backyard Bird Count'.

Holly is passionate about environmental education, using birds as a way of communicating the importance of biodiversity to the broader community.

Holly will help you with the skills that birdwatchers of all levels and ages need to identify the birds they see and tell you more about them, both the weird and the wonderful.

Afterwards you will go outside to do your first Aussie Backyard Bird Count, as part of BirdLife Australia's annual bird survey. Some experienced local birdwatchers will be there if you need any help. **Make sure you bring a pair of binoculars!**

Bring your family and friends along too, if they want to learn more about the amazing birds we have on the NSW South Coast.

Tickets will be available soon and the link to register will be sent out to all BirdLife Shoalhaven supporters in August.

2. Birds for Beginners: Improve your Bird ID Skills - guided bird walks on Wednesday afternoon, October 19th from 3pm - 6pm at the JB Maritime Museum, 4 Woollamia Rd, Huskisson - **and it's FREE!**



BirdLife Shoalhaven will run free guided bird walks to improve the bird ID skills of "emerging" birdwatchers.

If you want to improve your bird identification skills, this is your perfect opportunity.

Experienced birdwatchers will take you on a bird walk around the grounds of the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum and the surrounding bushland to see what birds you can find.

Head to the pond on the creek side of the Museum where we will introduce to your guide before you head off in small groups for your walk.

You will be shown how to enter the birds you see into the Aussie Backyard Bird Count app, as part of BirdLife Australia's annual bird survey. When it is available, we will send you the link to download the app, which includes a full bird identification guide.

Some light refreshments will be available afterwards, when we will have a 'bird call' of all the birds that everyone has seen and those you still have to find!

It is essential that you bring a pair of binoculars with you!

Tickets will be available soon and the link to register will be sent out to all BirdLife Shoalhaven supporters in August.

3. Bird Haven Festival Conference - on Saturday October 22nd from 10.30am for registration to 5.30pm at the Shoalhaven Heads Bowling Club, 76 Shoalhaven Heads Rd

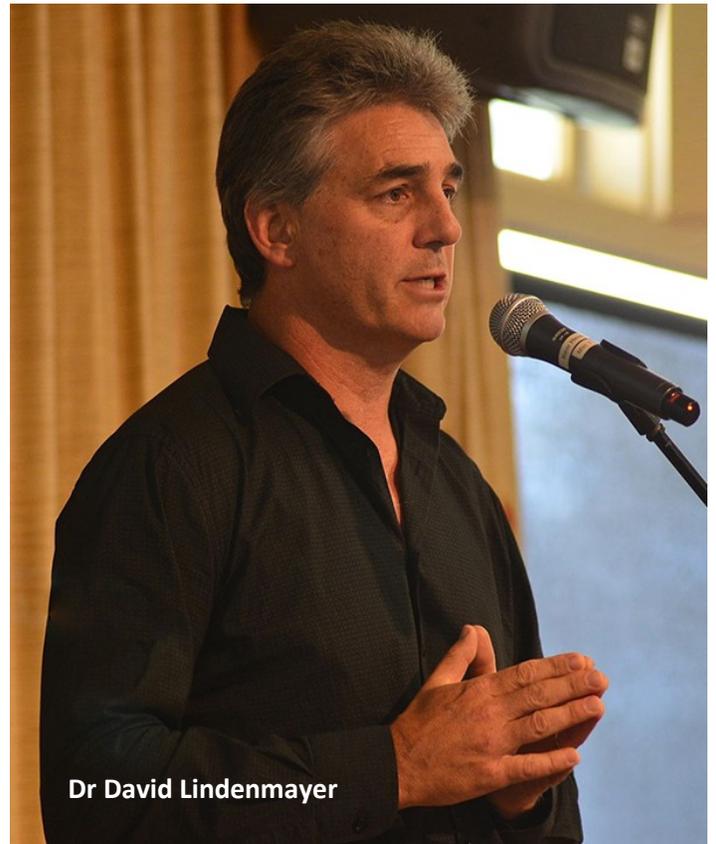


The 2022 Bird Haven Festival Conference at Shoalhaven Heads will bring some of our eminent scientists and leaders in bird conservation to the NSW South Coast. This will be an ideal opportunity to hear ornithologists and researchers speak about their work and the ecology of some of our bird species.

The Conference speakers will include:

Keynote speaker - **Dr David Lindenmayer AO - Professor of Ecology and Conservation Biology at The Australian National University's Fenner School of Environment and Society** - David's work on wildlife conservation and biodiversity has, for many years, led world research in this area and has been recognised through numerous awards, including the Eureka Science Prize (twice) and the Whitley Award (seven times).

David will talk about how healthy natural assets underpin farm productivity and landscape resilience and the role played by farmers, Landcarers, natural resource agencies and birds.



Dr David Lindenmayer

Alison Russell-French OAM - Chair Australasian Waders Studies Group and former President of Birds Australia - Alison will talk about how the East Asian - Australasian Partnership and inter-governmental collaboration is working to protect migratory shorebirds along the flyway.

Dr Alex Maisey - Research Fellow with La Trobe's Research Centre for Future Landscapes - Alex will talk about the impact of the 2019/20 megafires on the Superb Lyrebird and its role as an ecosystem engineer in south-east Australia's temperate forests.

Dr Catherine Price - Postdoctoral Research Associate with the University of Sydney's School of Life & Environmental Sciences - Catherine will explain a novel approach to bird conservation by fooling predators to leave bird nests alone through the use of fake odour.

Lunch and morning and afternoon tea/coffee will be provided.

Tickets are currently restricted to members of Birdlife Shoalhaven members, and to those attending the Bird Interest Group meeting the day after the Conference. The link to buy tickets will be distributed more widely in August.

To keep up-to-date on this year's Festival events go to www.birdlifeshoalhaven.org/upcoming.html and you can also subscribe to the BirdLife Shoalhaven mailing list on www.birdlifeshoalhaven.org/joinus.html

Bushfire Recovery Project report

- by Rob Dunn, President of BirdLife Shoalhaven

To try to better understand the long-term impact of the 2019-20 summer bushfires on bird populations in the Shoalhaven, BLS established the Bushfire Recovery Project.

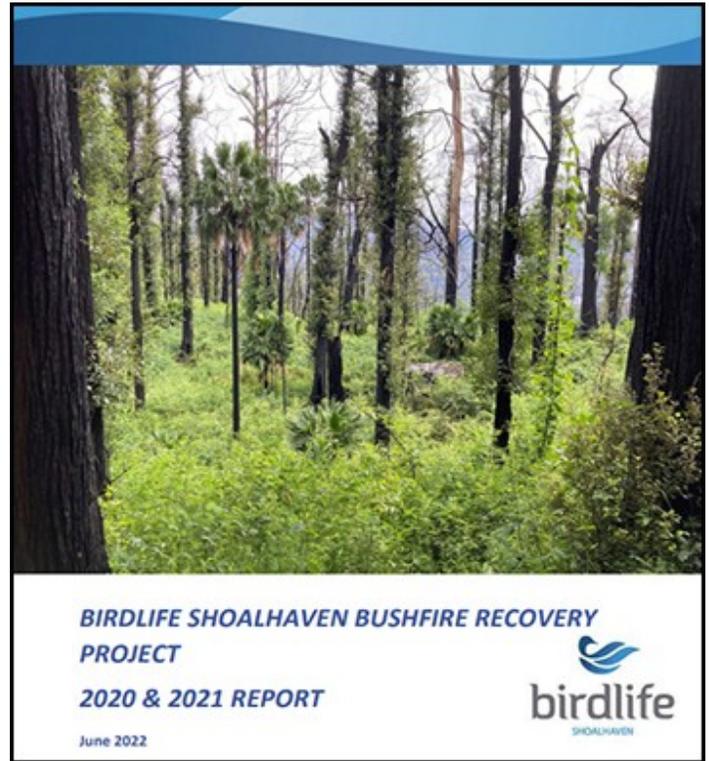
The long-term aim of the project is to examine changes in bird species richness and abundance in the Shoalhaven in the post-fire period.

In June, BLS released its Bushfire Recovery Project 2020 & 2021 Annual Report - click this link to download the report - [Bushfire Recovery Project 2020 & 2021 Annual Report](#).

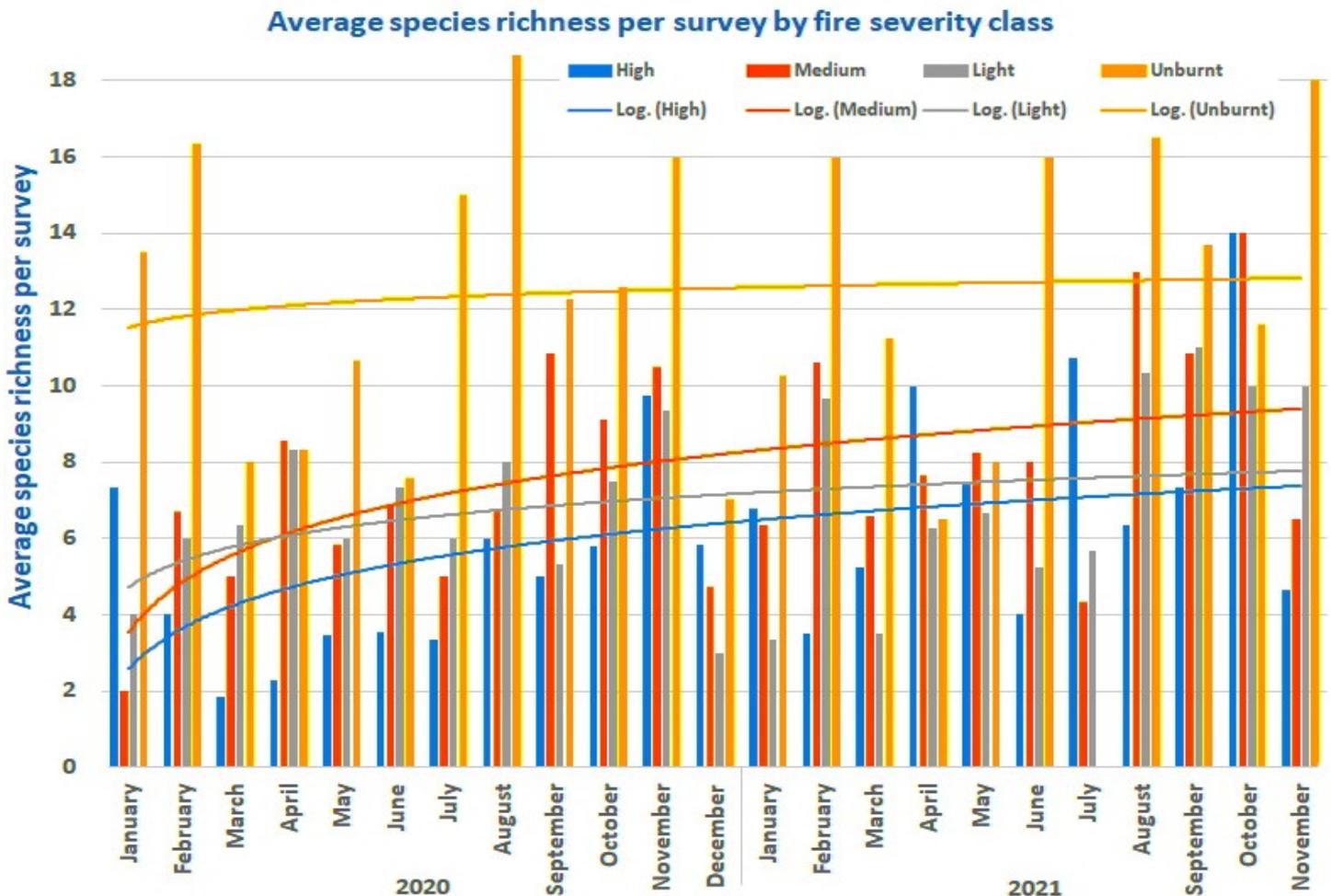
The motivation for the project came from the local birdwatching community's desire to contribute to the post-fire recovery effort. Overnight more people were submitting more surveys into BirdLife Australia's (BirdLife) Birdata database than ever before.

This has now continued for over two years since the launch of the project in March 2020 and through on-going presentations, social media and articles in this magazine.

The report covers the eight seasons from the peak period of the fires in January 2020 to the end of spring in November 2021.



Graph 1 (below) – average species richness per survey at sites within the fire footprint analysed by fire severity with relative trends indicated



The analysis is based on 486 surveys completed within the fire footprint, using BirdLife’s Birdata 20 min. 2 ha. survey technique. The report also draws upon a further 308 surveys outside the fire footprint for comparison purposes.

Three main findings are:

- Within the fire footprint, there is not a significant difference in both average species richness and abundance between high, medium and light burnt sites. However, there is still a marked difference compared to unburnt sites (refer graph 1 on previous page).
- Within the fire footprint, across both burnt and unburnt sites, average species richness and abundance increased. However, in the second year of surveys, the rate of this increase has levelled out (refer graph 1 on previous page).
- There is still a significant difference in both average species richness and abundance between sites within the fire footprint, compared to sites more than 10 kilometres away (refer graph 2 below)

Graph 2 (below) – Comparison of the average species richness of the 486 BRP surveys inside the fire footprint to 308 surveys recorded at sites more than 10 km. from the fire footprint and changes through the year.

The surveys also show that of the ten species found in the Shoalhaven on the Australian Government’s list of species identified for ‘Bushfire Recovery Priority’, six were recorded at high and/or medium fire severity sites.

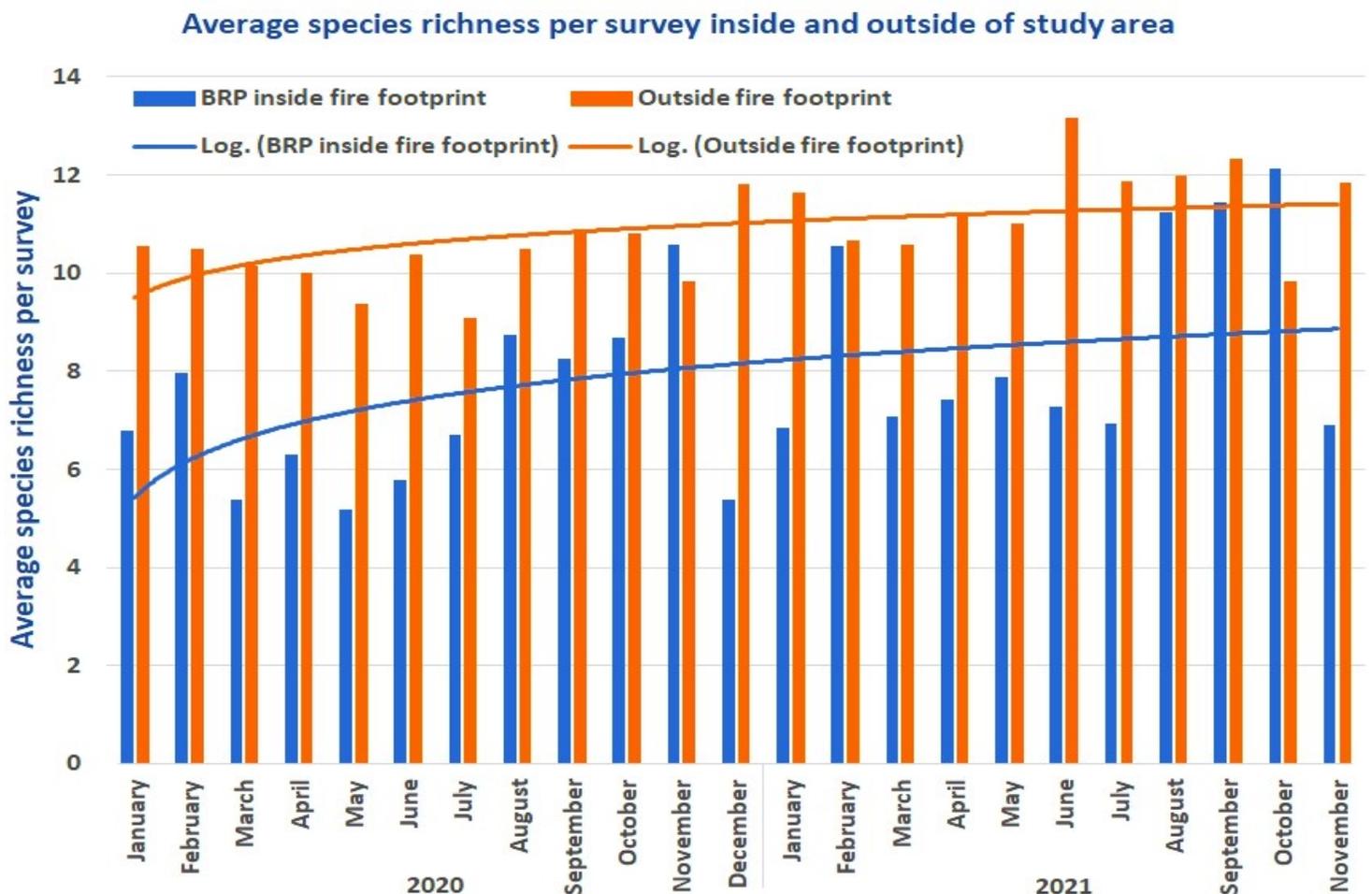
These six birds are Superb Lyrebird, Rockwarbler, Black-faced Monarch, Gang-gang Cockatoo, Glossy Black-Cockatoo and Pilotbird.

However, any conclusions from the results to date need to be qualified, as there is insufficient data available from the period before the fires to provide a meaningful comparison with pre-fire species richness and abundance.

There is also one other key issue that needs to be taken into account. The results in this report consolidate surveys from multiple sites across the Shoalhaven. With consistent, heavy rainfall since the bushfires, there has been significant habitat recovery.

However, this recovery has not been uniform across all sites. Some high burnt sites with more fertile soils now have dense understorey regrowth. This is impenetrable in some locations and could impede movement and foraging for some species.

In contrast, large areas exposed to catastrophic fires and with less fertile soils still show minimal regrowth - see the photos on the next page.

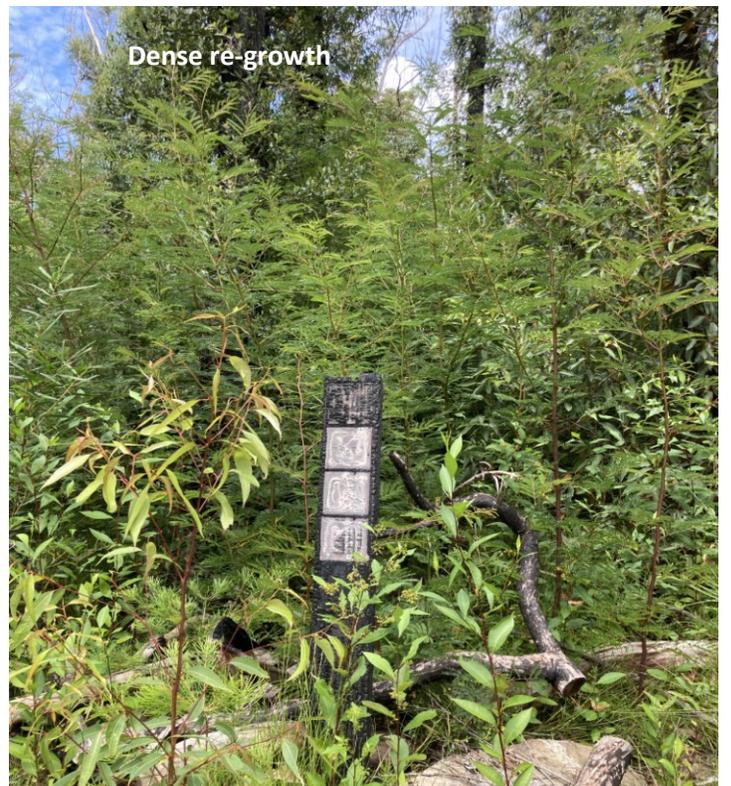


Minimal re-growth



To analyse the impact on birds of this marked variation in regrowth between sites, and who the 'winners' and 'losers' might be, is beyond the scope of this project.

BLS appreciates the commitment to the project that local birdwatchers continue to show through many hours of effort in the field. Without their support this report would not have been possible.



Dense re-growth

Moderate re-growth



Bush Stone-curlew at Worrigeer

- by Phil Hendry

In late April this year, a strange looking bird was reported to South Coast Wildlife Rescue as needing rescuing. It had been hanging around "The Growers" at the Worrigeer Sports Club for a few days - and had even ventured into the bistro!

One of the staff at the club, Lauren Manning-Darby, photographed and identified that bird as a Bush Stone-curlew (BSC). She mentioned the bird to Olympia Hendry - a member of Wildlife Rescue South Coast - and they discussed options for protecting the bird. Since it seemed to be safe and settled, they decided to leave it alone.

Where did the bird come from? They are rarely sighted in our region, and there are only two Birddata records of BSC in our area, one in March 2021 in Fairy Meadow, and another in November 2014 in North Nowra.

Once widespread throughout Australia, they now are only commonly observed in Northern Australia. The Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary - north-east of Canberra - see www.mulligansflat.org.au/bushstone-curlew - has had a reintroduction program since 2014. BirdLife Shoalhaven treasurer Karen Davis called them to see if this bird could possibly be an escapee from the reserve, but she was told that all the birds released from Mulligans Flat have leg tags - and the Worrigeer bird is not tagged. Therefore the origins of this bird remain cryptic.

The BSC has remained at the location for at least a few months and was last seen several weeks ago, having moved some distance from the clubhouse.



Photo by Lauren Manning-Darby



Bush Stone-curlew on the bowling green at Worrigeer - photo by Phil Hendry

Sanctuary Point Osprey Nest Update

- by Karen Davis

In previous BirdLife Shoalhaven magazines - starting in 2015, our former Conservation Officer Chris Grounds has reported on Eastern Osprey nests on the South Coast, and especially in the Bay and Basin area.

Our local Ospreys have chosen to build their nests almost exclusively on man-made structures - primarily on communications towers.

I first saw an Osprey nest in the Shoalhaven back in 2008 - on the tower near the Huskisson tip, and Chris has written in previous magazines about the nest on a tower at Basin View a few years ago.

Our Spring 2021 magazine had a snippet about a nesting attempt by Ospreys on a tower at Sanctuary Point on the fringe of the Bherwerre Wetland, and it would appear that this nest might now be viable!

The uninspiring start of the nest is shown below ...



... but over time more sticks were added as can be seen in the image below from our last magazine ...



Images of the latest, more substantial construction in July 2022 are shown below ...



I'm not sure what kind of transmitter / receiver (?) is shown in the images (input is welcome) but I don't think that the nest would be helping its functionality!

I have contacted Telstra requesting they build a nesting platform for the Ospreys on the tower, pointing out the dual benefits of improving the tower's operation and providing positive public relations to the community and enhancing Telstra's environmental credentials.

Telstra have responded with a job number (!) but given their current workload due to recent rain events, I am not expecting any major developments in the near future ...

Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove in Vincentia

- by Brett Davis

I often receive requests for bird IDs from both BirdLife Shoalhaven members and members of the public, but one I received recently had me stumped.

A Bushcare group working near Plantation Point in Jervis Bay (Vincentia) found a dead bird on a walking path and sent me the following two photos for identification.



In retrospect the ID should have been fairly obvious, but without a good image of the bird's face I was reduced to guessing. The green back and wings suggested either a female Satin Bowerbird or a Green Catbird but the beak shape and yellow underparts didn't quite gel - perhaps a juvenile bird or a genetic mutation?

I requested another image showing the bird's head in more detail, and within seconds of its arrival the mystery was solved!



The bird was obviously a juvenile dove of some sort, probably a fruit-dove, and most likely a Rose-crowned Fruit Dove. A quick look at a field guide confirmed this ID.

In retrospect, I should have made the ID immediately, because I'd seen a very similar (but living) bird that had been spotted in Vincentia in 2019 (pictured below).



Normally found much further north, the Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove has Birddata sightings south of Bermagui in 2006, near Lakes Entrance in Victoria in 2010, and in Devonport in Tasmania in 2016!

Strangely, Birddata does not show the 2019 Vincentia Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove. I will be seeking an explanation for this omission from BirdLife Australia.

Perhaps it is due to BirdLife Australia's Sensitive Species Bird Data Policy which is currently being prepared?

The Law is an Ass: how to protect birds

- by Brett Davis

My wife and I make regular donations to a number of conservation organizations, one of which is the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC). The mission of the AWC is "the effective conservation of all Australian native animal species and the habitats in which they live."



This statement made me wonder why the Australian government does not have a similar philosophy, so I did a little bit of research to find out the "mission statement" of the Australian government concerning the environment - and I started my research by looking at our Australian Constitution.

It is a fascinating document, but given that almost all of it was written over 120 years ago, our Constitution has absolutely nothing at all to say about the environment. It does not mention conservation, climate, climate change, wildlife, flora, fauna, animals, plants, global warming or extinctions.



The Australian coat-of-arms depicts a kangaroo and an emu. There is no mention of them in the Australian constitution

[Interesting piece of trivia: once upon a time the Australian Constitution mentioned "aboriginal natives" - in Section 127 where it stated " In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth ... aboriginal natives shall not be counted", but this was repealed in 1967 so now "aboriginal natives" are not mentioned at all.]

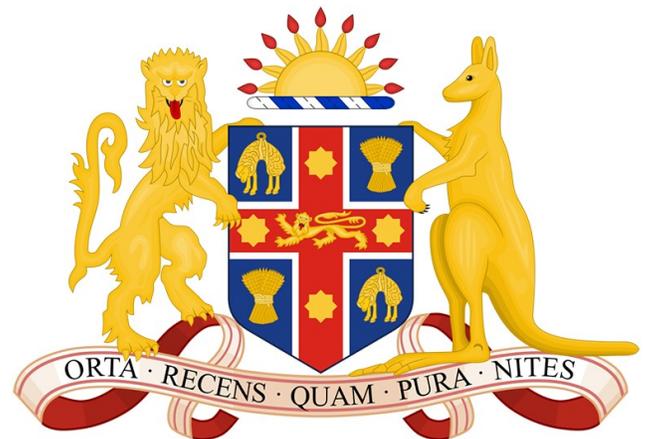
The only animals I could find mentioned in the Australian Constitution were fish - Part V - Powers of the Parliament, section 51 - Legislative powers of the Parliament states in paragraph (x) that "The Parliament shall ... have power to make laws ... with respect to fisheries in Australian waters beyond territorial limits"!

[Paragraph (xix) of the same section grants the Parliament the power to make laws with respect to aliens!]



I then researched the NSW Constitution to see how the environment is protected at a state level - once I had recovered from my amazement that the individual states actually had constitutions!

Like the national constitution, the NSW constitution is also devoid of any references to wildlife, conservation, climate, animals, fish, birds and agriculture, but the word "environment" actually appears twice!



The Land and Environment Court coat-of-arms. The emu has gone extinct, due to a large cat ...

Unfortunately, the only times "environment" is mentioned in the NSW constitution is to describe the Chief Judge of the Land and Environment Court, and the equal status of the Supreme Court, the Industrial Court and the Land and Environment Court. There is no reference to the actual environment itself!

The NSW constitution does state that "The Legislature shall ... have power to make laws for the peace, welfare, and good government of New South Wales", but there is no definition of the actual meaning of "welfare of NSW".

Not knowing the definition of "Legislature" as used in the above paragraph, I looked it up, and interestingly (to me) found that "legislature" is defined by a clause in the NSW constitution that states "Legislature means **His Majesty the King** with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly."

His majesty?



"His majesty" is mentioned 8 times in the NSW constitution. "Her majesty" is mentioned 32 times. The word "majesty" is actually mentioned on two other occasions, both of which describe the wording for bills to do with referendums - "BE it enacted by the **King's** Most Excellent Majesty ..." !!! Does anybody check this stuff?

[The NSW constitution referenced above can be found at legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1902-032]

But I digress!

Having found no real mention of anything to do with the environment at a national or state level, I looked at local government. Local government is not mentioned in the Constitution of Australia, and two referendums in 1974 and 1988 to alter the Constitution relating to local government were unsuccessful. Every state / territory government recognises local government in its own respective constitution.

In the NSW constitution, local government is mentioned 9 times, with all the entries basically saying that the state shall have a system of local government and that the powers of local government are "determined by or in accordance with laws of the Legislature" - which takes us back to the NSW constitution, its "majesty" shambles, and

its non-mention of anything to do with conservation and the environment!

So why do our various governments make laws about the environment, conservation, global warming, flora, fauna etc. when they don't actually have to? Some cynics might argue that it is merely a vote-winning exercise. It should be noted that because those laws are not subject to the requirements of a constitution, they can be taken away just as easily as they are introduced.

For example, consider the Murray Valley National park. It was created in 2010, but a few years ago there was a push in NSW by the local National Party member Austin Evans to de-gazette the entire national park to give the local timber industry access to the largest River Redgum forest in Australia!

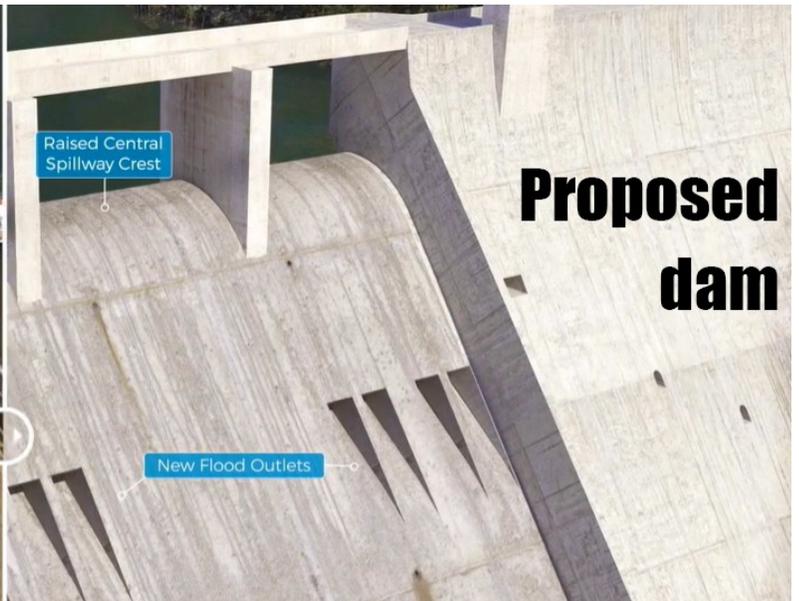


The Murray Valley proposal failed, but similar proposals for national parks actually went ahead! The NSW government allowed horse-riding in wilderness areas and decided feral horses should no longer be culled in alpine regions including Kosciuszko NP - against the advice of their own environment department and national parks service!



And we all know about plans to raise the Warragamba Dam wall to allegedly provide flood mitigation below the dam while also allowing more development on the Nepean floodplain.

Whichever way you spin it, a higher dam wall would flood sacred aboriginal sites and 4,500 hectares of land above the dam. That land is not only part of the Blue Mountains National Park, it is also a World Heritage Area!



So who is looking after the environment if it is none of our governments - National Parks?

There are only six true "national" parks administered by the Commonwealth government - Christmas Island NP, Pulu Keeling NP, Norfolk Island NP, Kakadu NP, Uluru - Kata Tjuta NP and our own Booderee National Park. All the other so-called national parks are not actually national - they are parks operated by departments of state and territory governments.

If we ignore for a moment who administers all of our national parks, we can say that in the 143 years since the creation of our first national park - the Royal National Park south of Sydney - all the efforts of all the campaigning of all of the conservationists in Australia combined with the massive economic resources of government has resulted in 28 million hectares of land being designated as national parks - about 3.65% of Australia's land area.



Compare that to the amazing efforts of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC), an NGO (non-government organisation) funded primarily by donations which started only 31 years ago. It is now the largest private owner and manager of land for conservation in Australia, protecting endangered wildlife across more than 12.9 million hectares (equivalent to almost one half of the area of all of Australia's national parks).

As funding for national parks services is cut, the AWC is partnering with various state and territory governments to take over the management of many conservation projects formerly handled by national parks services!

Remembering that the stated mission of the AWC is "the effective conservation of all Australian native animal species and the habitats in which they live", land managed by AWC is already protecting -

- 74 per cent of native mammal species (215 species)
- 88 per cent of native bird species (546 species)
- 54 per cent of reptile species (555 species)
- 56 per cent of amphibian species (133 species)



Bush Heritage (BH) is a similar NGO to AWC. It owns 42 reserves covering over 1.2 million hectares, while working in partnership with Aboriginal groups and other land-owners to plan and deliver conservation work on another 10.1 million hectares - a total of 11.3 million hectares.

The land-under-management figures for BH and AWC are astounding, almost equivalent to the land occupied by all of our national parks. Conservation in Australia is becoming more and more reliant on private organisations that rely on donations.



Some of these are international organisations like the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace. Many are national organisations like our own BirdLife Australia, AWC, BH, Landcare Australia, Australian Conservation Foundation, Australian Marine Conservation, and the Environmental Defenders Office.

In addition there are state-based organisations such as the Conservation Council of South Australia, Environment Victoria, and the Nature Conservation Council (of NSW), as well as various single-issue conservation groups like the Colong Foundation, Reclaim Kosci, and the Australian Koala Foundation (what other kind of koala is there?)

Since 1788, despite the efforts of Australian governments and national parks services, more than 10% of the 320 land mammals known to have been living at that time are now extinct. Australia has the dubious reputation of being the world leader in mammal extinction.



The situation is also dire for Australian birds. The BirdLife Australia website states that "a shameful total of nine species of Australia's birds are known to have become extinct since European settlement. Virtually all of these inhabited our offshore or oceanic islands, and only one, the Paradise Parrot, has become extinct on the Australian mainland.

"However, at least 15 subspecies have also become extinct in that time, and many of Australia's birds are currently threatened by a whole variety of different sources."

Knowing that we can't rely on government, how do we protect our birds?

One of the easiest things you can do is become a member of BirdLife Australia (BA), which is now the country's largest organisation devoted to the conservation of our native birdlife, and has the single aim of creating a bright future for Australia's birds.



I am not only a member of BA, I am also a Wildbird Protector, with a small but regular donation automatically deducted from my bank account going to BA each month.

If your conservation interests lie beyond birds, consider supporting other organisations like AWC and BH or others as well.

And your support doesn't have to be just money - your time is valuable as well. You could volunteer for the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program, Landcare, Parkcare or Bushcare or similar conservation programs.

All are worth supporting!

If you have some creative talent you could contribute bird photographs and articles to this magazine. You can check out the Facebook pages of BirdLife Shoalhaven and other conservation groups and share anything you like.

You can take the time to make submissions opposing any inappropriate development that is happening in your area. You can sign petitions like the ones mentioned elsewhere in this magazine that support the establishment of fenced, off-leash areas for dogs which will help protect wildlife.

There are no doubt many other things we could all do to further the conservation cause in Australia. Not only will it benefit the environment, it will make you feel good about yourself as well!

Let's make the world a better place!

Lake Wollumboola in a changing climate

- by Frances Bray

Lake Wollumboola is an intermittently opening and closing coastal lake, also identified as a Back Dune Lagoon. The water level is variable due to the height of the sand bar and the variation in rainfall and runoff from the catchment.

Tidal conditions then formed several channels to the ocean. Incoming tides washed eroded sand back into the lake, forming large sand banks which likely smothered the sea grass and algae.

These play a major part in maintaining the lake's oxygen rich surface waters as well as providing food for the Black Swans.

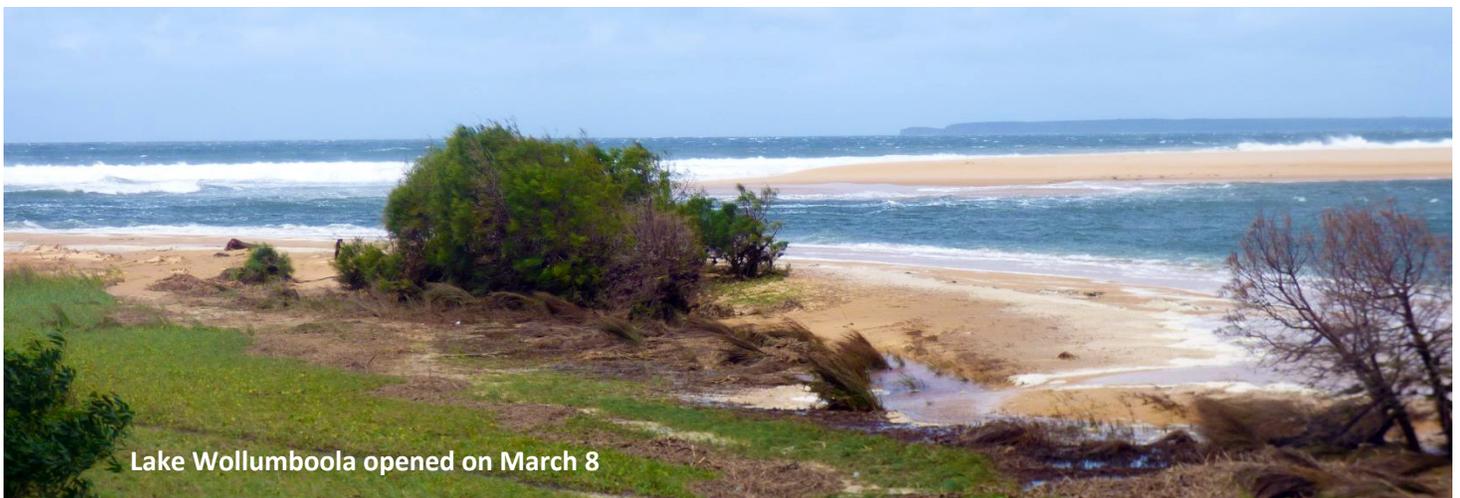


Washover occurring on March 4 prior to the Lake opening

The lake level rose gradually from below mean sea level during the 2020-2021 summer to about 2 metres with the commencement of La Nina storm conditions in October 2021. After a brief interlude of warmer weather in January 2022, storm conditions returned in February and into March, with the lake rising rapidly. It opened at 2.5 metres AHD in the early hours of 8th March 2022.

With the weather moderating during mid-June, it seemed that the lake entrance would close. However, storm conditions returned from late June and into July causing a wider channel to develop.

Those conditions also caused further erosion of the dunes at the lake entrance and north along Warrain Beach.



Lake Wollumboola opened on March 8

The lake is still open with water levels varying dependent on high tides and storm waves. Ground water seepage continues to flow into the lake shore, limiting access.

Storm conditions continued through April and May with major erosion of the lake sand bar, the northern shore and Warrain Beach to the north.

Accordingly, there is no access to the sand bar from the north, and attempts to wade across the outlet are not recommended. The only other access route is to drive to Kinghorne Point and walk north along the steep and eroded Warrain Beach. The response of the birdlife to these conditions is complex and variable.

The Pied Oystercatcher pair were all set for a successful season. However, on 14th October 2021 - the day their eggs were due to hatch - a fox took the eggs. I see foxes intermittently loafing on the sand bar during moderate conditions.

Little Terns arrived on the same morning. However, their numbers gradually declined as the harsh south easterlies made nesting on the exposed sand bar impossible. Instead, they flew to Shoalhaven Heads, where nesting sites were more protected and had a very successful season. However, after several wave wash-overs resulting in nest losses, they returned to Lake Wollumboola from 3rd January 2022 with their fledglings, with numbers increasing to almost 200. A small group of 10 stayed on and I observed them fishing during the storms that opened the lake sand bar on the 8th March.

However, the imminent lake opening in early March resulted in hundreds of Pelicans and more Cormorants arriving, feasting on mullet, likely eels and other fish before and after the lake opening.

Swans were feeding intermittently further west in the lake in more protected areas due to ferocious south easterlies.

Black Swan and Chestnut Teal, the key-note species at Lake Wollumboola for IBA listing, appeared intermittently at the lake in April-May in response to the calmer conditions of the northern shore and North West Bay.

The largest flocks included several thousand Swans, and less for Chestnut Teal. There seemed to be very few Grey Teal. Unfortunately, on the day I observed the largest flocks, a helicopter came low over the lake and dispersed them all.



Bar-tailed Godwits

With regard to migratory waders, I observed large numbers of Red-necked Stints in early Spring on the sand bar but they did not remain during the increasingly harsh conditions. A small flock of 20 Bar-tailed Godwits were present at Lake Wollumboola early in Summer, as well as large flocks of Crested Terns - up to 230 including chicks - and young Caspian Terns and various cormorant species.

Until the most recent storms in late June and early July, I have regularly observed a flock of Bar-tailed Godwits on the shores of the Lake. The numbers vary between 10-40. I assume they are young birds remaining in the southern hemisphere for their first 2 years, before commencing their first migration to the northern hemisphere.



Swans and Teal in May

A Bird in the Hand ...

- by Yolande Cozijn

Most birders have heard of or stayed at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat in the World Heritage listed Lamington National Park in south-east Queensland. It is surprising to me that this birding gem is so close to the hustle and bustle of the Gold Coast.

In order to maximise your chances of encountering the wonderful diversity of birds at O'Reilly's, it really is best to stay there. The great thing is that there is accommodation for every budget.

It really is quite frustrating to be so close to a much sought-after bird and then hear other photographers say "we saw it three times this morning", "I photographed it this afternoon", or "it was only 300 metres from the resort" ... you get the idea!

The thing about bird photography is that it looks so easy – but really is so hard, but the great attraction of the O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat is that there are so many other special birds to see that are much more obliging and easy to photograph!



Satin Bowerbird - photo by Peter Owen

Prior to the National Birdlife Photography Conference at the Gold Coast, my husband Warren and I recently enjoyed a four day stay at O'Reilly's with some other bird photographer friends. Our aim was to capture images of the Regent Bowerbird and the Albert's Lyrebird.

There are many tracks in the rainforest around O'Reilly's to walk and bird watch, so we foolishly believed we would encounter the elusive Albert's Lyrebird easily.

We heard the Albert's Lyrebird calling each day. It teased us by seemingly being quite close at times, but when we walked to where we had heard it calling from, it had moved away!

There is a free guided bird walk every morning at 6.30am. All the local birds (except for the Albert's Lyrebird) have this walk in their daily timetable and make sure that they are waiting for the humans to tag along with them! It helps that the O'Reilly's staff have a bit of food for the birds to encourage them. This walk is the opportunity to see up close the Regent Bowerbirds, Satin Bowerbirds, King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, Eastern Whipbirds and White-browed Scrubwrens.

Did I say "see up close"? Hmmm - that means on your head, on your shoulders, or a bird in the hand. It is a privilege to be able to see these gorgeous birds so close.

Despite our best efforts, we never saw the lyrebird we were so keen to encounter, so it looks like there will have to be another visit to O'Reilly's to try to finally capture an image of the elusive Albert's Lyrebird!

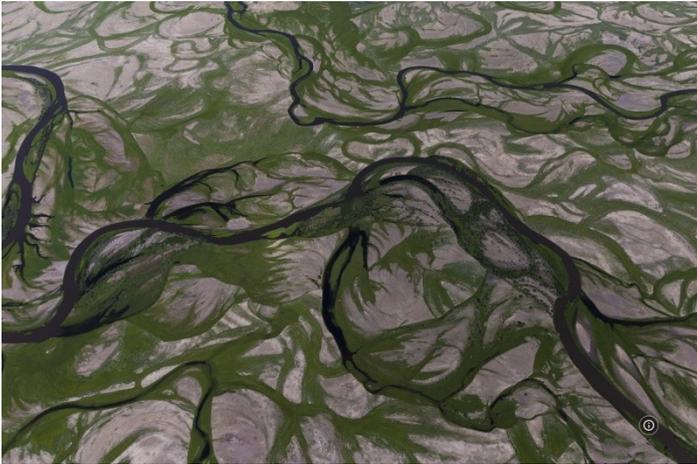


Two full houses in Huskisson

- by Rob Dunn, President of BirdLife Shoalhaven

In June, two award-winning nature films were shown at the Huskisson Movie Cinema.

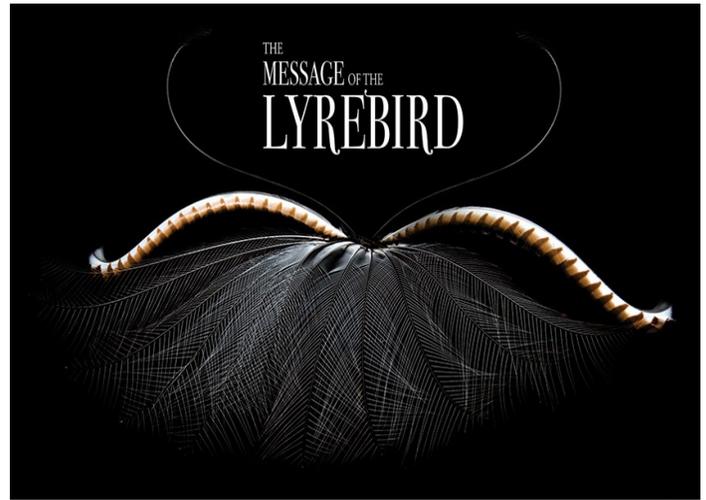
The first film, "River" was shown on World Environment Day and was hosted by the Heritage Estate Network. The film has been screened at both the Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals and overseas. It showed the extremes in terms of both the beauty and degradation of rivers around the world with amazing aerial footage.



The second film was "The Message of the Lyrebird" with a brief Q&A session afterwards with Mark Pearce, the film's Creative Producer. It has been recognised in film festivals in the US, India and Hungary and got a great reception in the Shoalhaven.

This film explores the on-going debate of the Superb Lyrebird's mimicry of humans, as well as bird calls. Insights from the cinematographer, the lyrebird keeper, the activist, the scientist, the study group, the sound recordist and the knowledge-holder, all teased out competing views on this amazing story.

As birders, we all think we know a lot about lyrebirds, but a special insight is given in the film by Frances Bodkin, a descendant of the Bigigal clan of the D'harawal Peoples.



Aunty Fran tells how the Lyrebird is depicted as the "peacemaker" in the D'harawal Dreaming story called "Yandel'ora" - meaning "The Land of Peace Between Peoples":

"The lyrebird was the creature that spoke all languages; it was the mediator, translator and so it became the peacekeeper." She also adds, "We have a saying: 'To look to tomorrow, you must first know yesterday'. And that's exactly what the Lyrebird does - it listens and learns."

Mark later sent a message of thanks for the success of the night:

"The picture theatre had a real regional buzz about it. It's awesome to see so many people inspired by nature in the Shoalhaven. I like to think the movie brings an energetic match to its audience and I clearly witnessed this with some enlightening conversations after the screening. A huge thank you to all who came to watch the film. And amazing congrats to BirdLife Shoalhaven for pulling-off a fantastic evening and initiating friendship to me from afar."

"The Message of the Lyrebird" showing in Huskisson occurred on the same day as the opening night of "Elvis" across Australia, including in Huskisson. Two amazing voices, but while lots of tickets were sold for "Elvis", it was the Lyrebirds that actually filled the cinema!



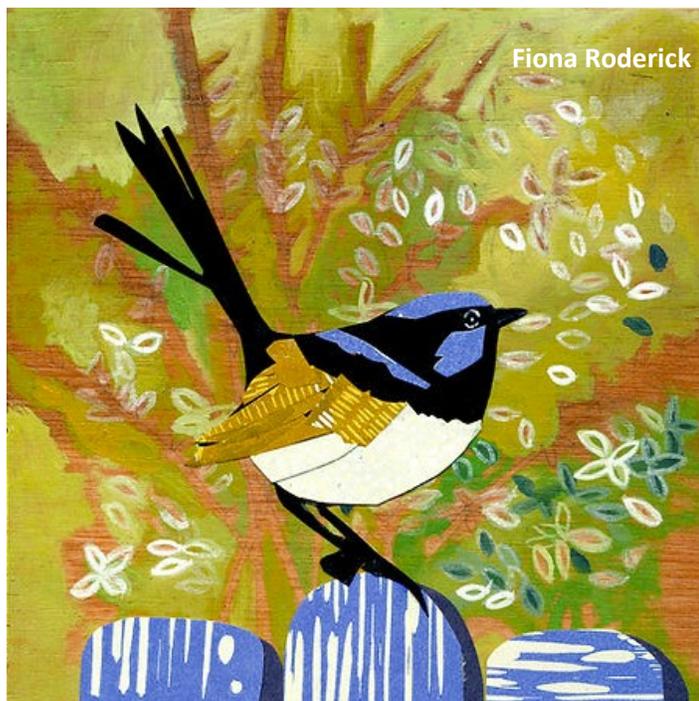
Art Springs for Wildlife

Exhibition and Festival

The Art Springs for Wildlife Exhibition and Festival is a not-to-be-missed event being staged at the **Berry School of Arts** in historic, beautiful Berry over the long weekend in October - **from 29th September to 3rd October**.

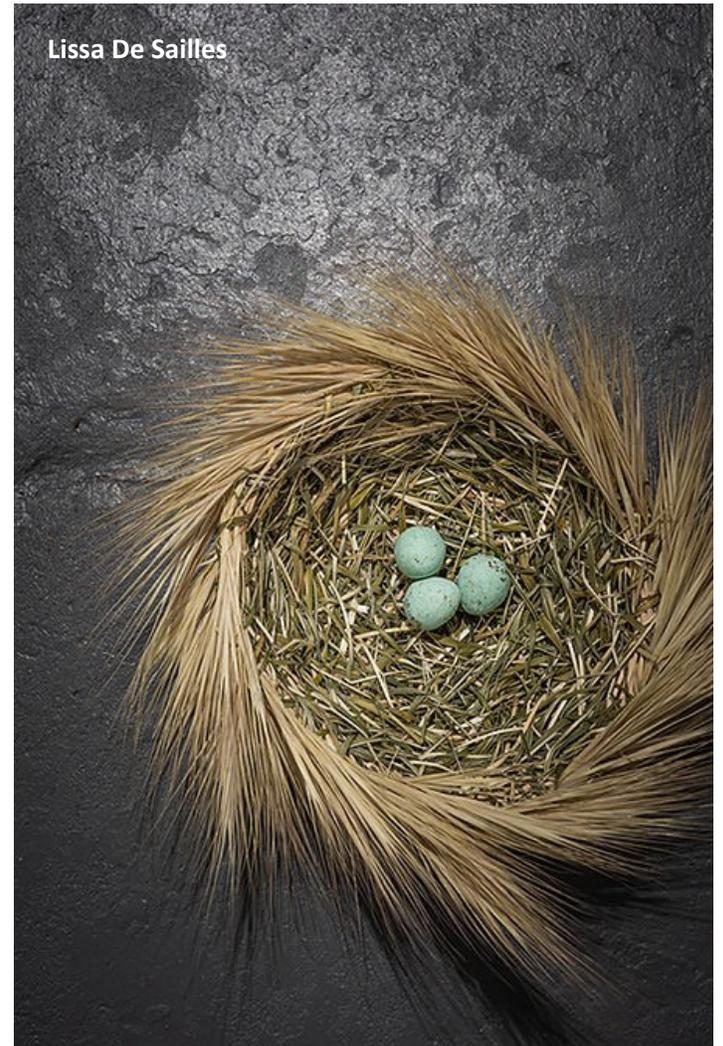


The exhibition is your chance to view and buy works from the exciting array of local and non-local artists. Media used include painting, sculpture, recycled material, prints, glass, ceramics and weaving. In buying a work it will be supporting both the artists and Wildlife Rescue South Coast's work of care.



Fiona Roderick

The festival hosts a number of events - creative workshops for adults and children, performance poetry and music of various styles. Informative talks about our wildlife and their care will be presented by volunteers from Wildlife Rescue South Coast.



Lissa De Sailles

At the festival Yolande Cozijn from BirdLife Shoalhaven will be talking about the birds we are most likely to see in our gardens. Yolande has a lifelong passion for Australian birds and native gardens and in her role as the publicity officer for BirdLife Shoalhaven she is utilising her 30 years experience leading sales and marketing teams to now inform and educate community groups about the birds in our area and how we can make our gardens a safe haven for birds and wildlife.

Profits from the exhibition and events go to Wildlife Rescue South Coast and its dedicated volunteers who rescue and care for sick and injured wildlife.

Come along and be engaged, surprised, entertained, stimulated by music, art, poetry and ideas. There will be much to see and experience!

For more details visit www.artspringsforwildlife.org

Queensland Ornithological Conference

2022

The conference will be held on the 6th of August at the Pullman Hotel in Brisbane. This event brings together local and national experts and enthusiasts on Australian avifauna to share and discuss the latest bird research and conservation. This year the conference theme is Conservation Challenges and Opportunities.

Go to www.QOC2022.au/program to find the full details.

Whilst this may be some distance for some of you, there is also a raffle as part of the fundraising activities to support the conference and the conservation work of Birds Queensland and Birdlife Southern Queensland. First prize is a pair of Swarovski 8x32 NL Pure binoculars valued at \$3190.

In addition, O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat has donated a luxury accommodation package valued at \$1,000. The QOC 2022 committee would like to thank Swarovski and Mt Barney Lodge for their generous support in kindly donating the prizes.



O'Reilly's

If you would like a chance to win one of these prizes, simply scan the bar code below or go to the raffle website - www.raffletix.com.au/qoc2022 - select how many tickets you would like, and enter your details. Tickets are \$5 each and they will be sent to you electronically.

The raffle will be drawn at the end of the conference on the 6th of August and winners notified electronically and followed up by the event organisers. The raffle is only available for purchase by QLD and NSW residents.

1st Prize

RRP \$3190



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Support FOLAs

(Fenced **Off-Leash Areas** for Dogs)

On 11 June 2019, Shoalhaven City Council resolved to consult with the community in relation to additional off-leash dog areas on a case by case basis.

BirdLife Shoalhaven supports the establishment of fenced off-leash areas for dogs because everybody wins. It is good for the dogs, their owners, members of the public, and for wildlife including birds!

Shoalhaven Council would like your feedback on the new Dog Fenced Off-Leash Areas (FOLAs) at Burrill Lake Lions Park and Culburra Park.

Consultation on Burrill Lake FOLA is to determine support for the identified location.

Consultation on Culburra Park FOLA is preliminary to determine the suitability and community support for Culburra Park to be used as a dog off-leash area.

There are currently two surveys re these FOLA proposals, and they will **close on August 1st**. Here are the links to the two surveys ...

Burrill Lake

https://getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/dogs?tool=survey_tool&tool_id=burrill-lake-fola-survey#tool_tab



Culburra Park

https://getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/dogs?tool=survey_tool&tool_id=culburra-survey#tool_tab



Oppose SGARs - let your Council know

(Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides)

Second-generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) are poisoning and even killing native wildlife like owls, eagles, magpies, and quolls. It's not just wildlife, beloved family pet cats and dogs are also at risk. Many Australian councils use dangerous SGARs to control rodents in council-managed buildings and spaces, without realising the impacts this has on wildlife and pets in the community.

SGARs are already heavily regulated or banned in Europe and North America, and some proactive Australian councils are already phasing out SGARs because of the risks.

Encourage your local council to phase out SGARs in your community! Click the link below, select your local council area, modify the standard email with your own words and send a message to Shoalhaven City Council !

The link is <https://www.actforbirds.org/ratpoison>

Oppose SGARs - let Bunnings know

The Powerful Owl pictured below is one of the many birds that can be killed by Second-generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides.



Bunnings is apparently one of the main stockists of SGARs so why not send them a message by clicking on the link below and adding your name to the petition asking Bunnings to take bird-killing poisons off their shelves!

The link is <https://www.actforbirds.org/bunnings-petition>

Wanted - Gould League Notes!

- by Dennis Gosper

Now retired, my interest is in the history of the Gould League, particularly on the influence that the writings of prominent NSW ornithologists of the time had on students of the 1940s to the 1960s. These writings were published in "**Gould League Notes**".

My own interest in birds was stimulated by reading Gould League Notes in primary school, and by a teacher who picked up on this and encouraged my observation and writing.

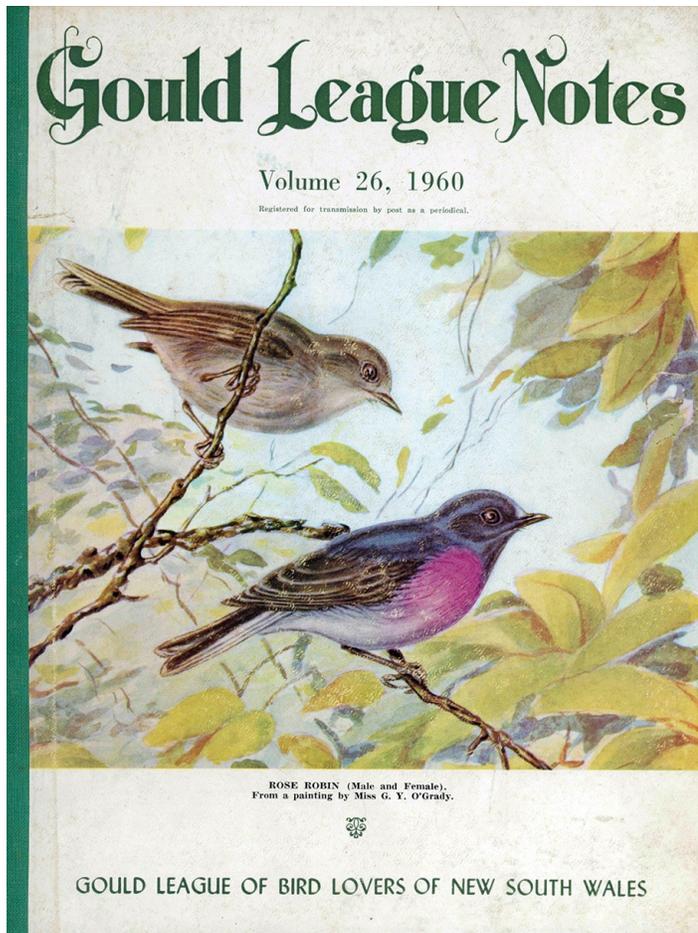
Through donations - thanks to Peter Roberts, former editor of "Notes" - and purchases from online sites such as eBay, I have obtained all but about 6 issues to date.

My preference is to acquire actual magazines, and I would be open to purchasing parts, or a complete set should someone consider parting with same.

Specifically, I am after copies of the annual magazine that was published by the Gould League of Bird Lovers of NSW from 1935 to 1967.

The magazine was distributed to state schools, and to private schools with active Gould League branches.

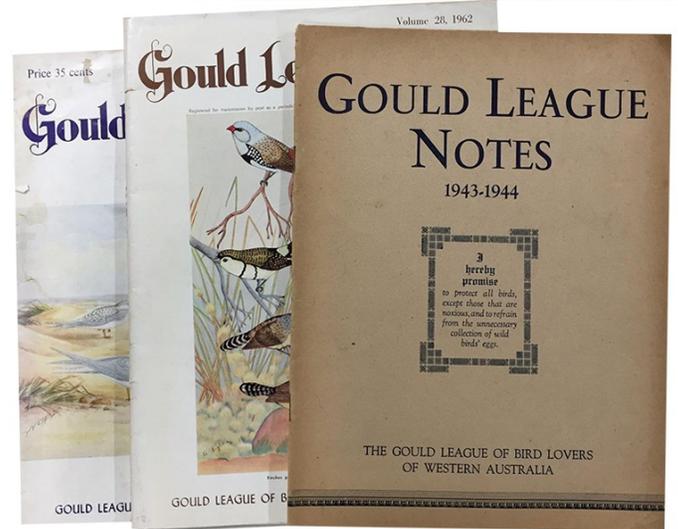
If you can help in any way at all, please contact Dennis Gosper at dgosper@yahoo.com.au



Editor's Note:

The Gould League is an independent Australian organisation promoting environmental education, founded in Victoria in 1909 and named after the English ornithologist John Gould. Largely autonomous branches were subsequently established in other Australian states.

When formally established in 1909, it was called the **Gould League of Bird Lovers**, and it was devoted to bird protection (especially the prevention of bird egg theft), the promotion of interest in and knowledge of birds, and to campaigning for the formation of bird sanctuaries. Members would take a pledge to protect Australian birdlife and not to collect their eggs.



One of the main sponsors was the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (now BirdLife Australia). **Alfred Deakin** - the second Prime Minister of Australia - was the first Gould League president.

The League had considerable success during the first 50 years after its establishment, particularly in education. Activities included field days for the public to be introduced to birdlife, and publishing educational material.

Many of our older birdwatchers today owe their start in their hobby to the **Gould League of Bird Lovers!**

How You Can Help BLS

If you would like to get involved in bird conservation in the Shoalhaven, either as part of a specific BirdLife Shoalhaven project or by taking on a committee position, please let us know!

There are, however, a lot of other things that you can do. You could write an article (or articles) for this magazine. You could lead a bird walk in your local area, something that you might do on a regular basis anyhow, but something that no other BLS members usually do.

You could also become one of our Facebook editors, send us some photos, or tell us about conservation issues in your neighbourhood!

Just email communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org

The Fine Print

Contributions - any bird photographs, articles, conservation issues, birding experiences, anecdotes or sightings that you would like to share with fellow members, please send to the editor (Brett Davis) at communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org

Requests for **re-publication of articles** must be referred to the Editor for approval.

General Disclaimer - the information in articles in this magazine is accepted in good faith and although the editor has tried to verify the accuracy of all information, BirdLife Shoalhaven and BirdLife Australia accept no responsibility for any errors, inaccuracies or exaggerations in this magazine.

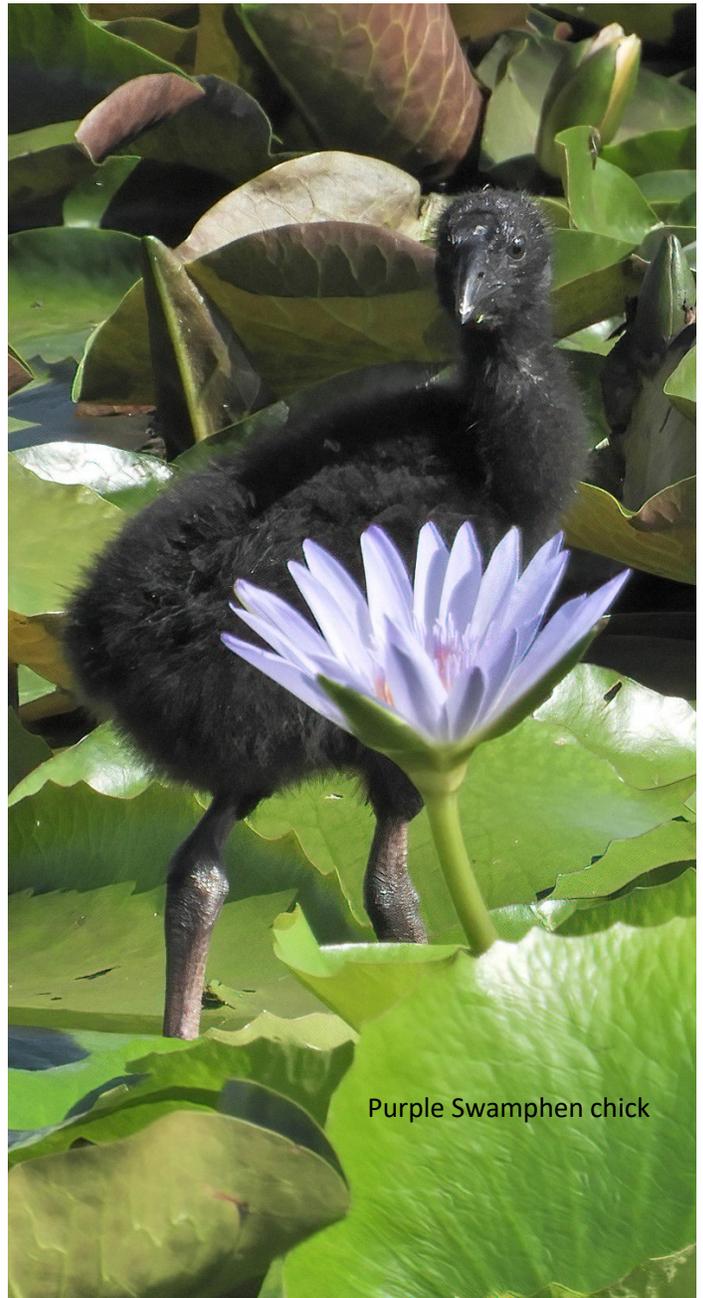
Errors - if you find any errors in this magazine, please inform the editor at communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org

Acknowledgements - thank you all of this season's contributors.

Sources - images and text from the following websites may have been used in this magazine - australiangeographic.com.au, themonthly.com, birdlife.org.au, wikipedia.org, abc.net.au, theguardian.com, theconversation.com, australia.museum, smh.com.au, southcoastregister.com.au, google.com/earth, sciencemag.org, and newbusstelegraph.org.au. If you like the content from those websites, we urge you to visit those websites and subscribe to their content.

Apologies - to contributors and sources who have inadvertently not been acknowledged. Let us know of our oversight and we will acknowledge your contribution in the next magazine.

Opinions - the opinions expressed in articles in this magazine are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of BirdLife Shoalhaven or BirdLife Australia, especially the article by Brett Davis on page 11!



Purple Swamphen chick

Purple Swamphens are common throughout eastern and northern Australia, with a separate subspecies common in the extreme south-west of the continent. Birds have transported themselves from Australia to New Guinea and New Zealand and throughout the islands of the south-west Pacific. It has been suggested that the New Zealand population of Purple Swamphens (locally called the Pukeko) originated in Australia.

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

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Help us create positive outcomes for birds and their habitats