

Blue-billed Duck

Scientific Name: *Oxyura australis*

Featured bird groups: Water birds

Atlas Number: 216

Description:

The Blue-billed Duck is a compact diving duck with males having a large scooped bright, light blue bill. Males have a rich deep chestnut plumage overall except the dark head and upper neck and an orange-brown to white area at the centre of the belly. The tail is dark with stiff



photo by Charles Dove

Gatton QLD

pointed feather tips and is usually held flat on the surface of the water except when in display. The female has a brown bill with darker plumage than the male and each feather is barred with narrow bands of light brown. The upper tail is black and the chin and throat are speckled black. It is also known as Blue Bill, Stiff Tail, Spinetail and Little Musk Duck.

Similar species:

The female Musk Duck, *Biziura lobata*, is similar to the female Blue-billed Duck though much darker. The Blue-billed Duck floats higher than the Musk Duck.

Distribution:

The Blue-billed Duck is endemic to Australia, being found in the temperate wetlands of the south-east and south-west parts of the continent.

Habitat:

The Blue-billed Duck is almost wholly aquatic, and is seldom seen on land. Non-breeding flocks, often with several hundred individuals, congregate on large, deep open freshwater dams and lakes in autumn. The daylight hours are spent alone in small concealed bays within vegetation or communally in large exposed rafts far from the shore.

Seasonal movements:

The Blue-billed Duck is seasonally nomadic.

Young birds disperse each year from their natal (birth) swamps on inland New South Wales to non-breeding areas on the Murray River system and coastal lakes of Victoria and South Australia where they moult. Experienced breeders tend to be sedentary.

Feeding:

The Blue-billed Duck feeds on the surface of the water or by diving. It takes aquatic insects including chironomid fly larvae, caddis flies, dragonflies, flies and water beetle larvae. They may also eat the seeds, buds, stems, leaves and fruit of a wide variety of plants. Feeding occurs in permanent areas of clear fresh water. Late afternoon and early morning are common feeding times.

Breeding:

Blue-billed Ducks breed in secluded, densely vegetated situations with the nest constructed in cumbungi (bullrushes, *Typha* sp.) beds or other vegetation generally over water. Nests are usually constructed from dead *Typha* leaves, and are sometimes thinly lined with down. Blue-billed Ducks are polygamous, and pair-bonds are short-term i.e. for the duration of copulation and laying of the eggs.

information courtesy of <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

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**'ONE GOOD TERN
 DESERVES ANOTHER'**

Founded in 1977

Club's Aim:

To join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the bird life around them.

ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.

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**Club Meeting:****EASTER MONDAY 9th April 2012****No meeting due to Easter Holidays****Midweek Walk:****Wednesday 11th April 2012****Kembla Grange**

Leader Ted Simpson.

Meet at 9am at 328 Reddalls Rd, Kembla Grange. This is the private property of John and Jenny Ellis and leads to the escarpment. The property is at the end of the road, drive through the gates and we will park in a given spot. Be prepared for some slight inclines. Bring morning tea.

Contact Ted on Mob. 0425 121 221

Monthly Outing:**Saturday 14th April 2012****Barren Grounds Nature Reserve**

Leader Betty Hudson

The April monthly walk will be at Barren Grounds Nature Reserve Jamberoo.

Meet in the car park adjacent to the picnic area at 8.30am. Bring a carry morning tea and lunch to eat in the picnic area. The exact track we walk will depend on the weather and rainfall between now and then.

Travel via Jamberoo Mountain road and turn left immediately at the top of the pass into the Reserve. Alternately you can travel from Albion Park up Macquarie Pass, turn left just before Robertson Pie Shop into Jamberoo Road. Continue on until you come to the steep descent sign and the Reserve is on the right. The entrance is well marked.

The Leader will be Betty Hudson ph 4236 0307 or mobile 0432 892 945

Committee Meeting -**Monday 16th April 2012**

The next Committee Meeting will be held on Monday 16th April 2012, at Ken & Sue Brown's home, 12 Meads Avenue, Corrimal at 7.30pm. Any members with anything they wish to raise are welcome to attend the meeting. All welcome.

Autumn Camp Tumbarumba**21st - 28th April 2012****Newsletter -**

Deadline for Articles and Photos in the next IBOC newsletter is 27th April. Email contributions to Charles Dove newsletter@iboc.org.au or post to 2/39 Purry Burry Avenue, Primbee 2502. Ph: 0417 422 302

Are you interested in participating in a half day Pelagic trip in July 2012?**Read On**

The club is making preliminary enquiries as to the level of interest in a half day Pelagic Trip between 8th and 21st July 2012. This is a good time of the year to sight albatrosses. The cost is likely to be around \$45-\$50 if we have 20 participants, increasing to around \$50-\$60 for 15 participants.

At this stage no approach has been made to SOSSA who run the trips, so prices are estimates based on last year. Note the cost is for the charter of the boat and has to be shared between participants to a maximum of 20 people.

The trip leaves Wollongong Harbour wharf at 7.30am prompt and returns at 11.30am. Participants need to be at the wharf at 7.00am for the safety talk and boarding. The trip can be cancelled if the seas are too rough.

If you would be interested in participating please contact Betty Hudson by phone or email. Please indicate if there are dates in the suggested period when you are not available. Places will be allocated in the order of contacting Betty. Once a booking has been made with SOSSA your place on the trip will be confirmed when you pay your money. There will be no refunds unless the trip is cancelled.

At the beginning of May a decision will be made if there is sufficient interest to proceed. SOSSA will be contacted, a date will then be chosen, the cost verified and a booking made. Those interested in going will be notified and the date for the payment of the money advised. All money has to be paid at least 2 weeks before the date of the trip.

Further details will be in the June Newsletter.

Contact details for Betty Ph. 4236 0307 email elizabethjudson@bigpond.com**IBOC has pleasure in welcoming all New members**



CLUB REPORTS

CLUB MEETING MONDAY

12th MARCH 2012

Alan Cousins

Our evening commenced with a presentation by Gleniss Wellings which was relevant to us all 'SANDFLIES'(Biting midges). The following is a precise of a very interesting subject. Biting midges are Class Insecta and have no exoskeleton or backbone, three body divisions, three pairs of legs, one pair of antennae and possess wings. These are the adult characteristics and are not always obvious. Within the Class Insecta there are many different broad types of insects which are grouped together in Orders. Sandflies belong to the Order called Diptera which are insects with only one pair of wings and are commonly called flies and form one of the largest insect orders which include mosquitoes, house flies, blow flies and march flies. What we call a sandfly is not really a sandfly but a biting midge. The female lays up to 40 eggs in wet moist situations and only

the females take blood which is used for egg development. These flies are worldwide except for New Zealand and Antarctica. Biting midges are well known to humans, their bite can cause gross annoyance and allergic response and the most important feature in treatment is to avoid scratching and local corticosteroids' or oral antihistamines can be helpful. Preventative action can include personal and outdoor repellants and cover up. If you live in a biting midge area understand when and where midges bite, keep out of dense shrubbery, keep lawns well mown and establish an airflow around the house. Contrary to 'Old Wives tales' biting Midges do not pee, lay eggs onto or burrow into the skin. The presentation generated many questions which Gleniss ably answered after we had all had a 'scratch'.

Then followed another excellent presentation by 'Mr. Puffin' himself (Brian Hales) who showed us some magnificent photographs of birds in the UK. Brian started by saying that Australia is fortunate to have 750+ species of bird. Of the UK 250+ species. Brians presentation included photographs of some of these, too many to list here, but included

Robin, Chaffinch, Golden Eagle, four types of Swan, a Woodpecker, Goldcrest - the smallest bird in the UK, Song and Mistle Thrush, the odd named Ring Ousel, Black Grouse which is indigenous to the UK, numerous water birds including the Eider Duck, Goosander and Mergans.

We were very fortunate to have two totally different and interesting presentations in one evening.

Thank you Gleniss and Brian

Mid-week Walk – Wednesday 14th March, 2012

Jann Gowans

Bass Point

Our group of 19 gathered at Basset Park on a beautiful sunny morning. We dispersed as some went to check out nearby wetlands and others wandered towards the beach for a quick look. We followed a group towards the wetlands and alternated between running the gauntlet of traffic on the surprisingly busy road and wading in the dewy grass by the side of the road to see what was about. A Black-shouldered Kite sat in a distant tree and many Coots were on the water with a single Black Swan (later joined by another). We spent some time trying to ID numerous small pale-yellow-looking birds popping out of the grass and ducking back under. Eventually everyone had a good look at what were Golden-headed Cisticolas. Two Black-fronted Dotterels were

spotted, one on each side of the road, walking along the sand edging the water. A Swamp Harrier was also spotted flying low through the trees in the background and I learned the best way to ID one---the white rump (my raptor skills always in need of improving!).

We then moved along to Bass Point to wander through a bit of the bush and along the rocky shore. A young nankeen kestrel was spotted perched in a small tree. He dove down to the rocks and we watched him nearby curiously moving about with one wing extended and then the other as we presumed he caught something. He took off and those who investigated what he had been eating reported a skink cowering in a split in the rock. Safe for another day!!!!

We saw a pair of Sooty Oystercatchers and Crested Terns among the numerous gulls (silver bee-eaters??!) out and about. Silvereyes and New Holland Honeyeaters twittered in the adjoining bush with further glimpses of the young Nankeen Kestrel.

We enjoyed our morning tea with the company of numerous Superb Fairy-wrens and a young inquisitive Magpie. Further wanderings nearby added several species including Bulbuls; a Gannet flying by quite close in was fantastic to see.

Sadly, talk of previously spotted Powerful Owls, Rose-crowned Fruit-doves and Noisy Pitas did not manage to conjure any of them up. Our morning was capped off by the sight of a White-reasted Sea-Eagle being pursued by two Ravens as we drove out. Thanks to Ted and the wonderful company of the group for a very enjoyable morning. As someone mentioned, we had a sizeable list (as follows) for a few hours of birding.



Nankeen Kestrel at Bass Point by Terry Edwell

Bird List for Bass Point Walk

Wednesday 14th March 2012

Bassett Park, adjacent beach & wetland

Black Swan	Little Egret	Silver Gull	Australian Magpie
Chestnut Teal	Black-shouldered Kite	Rainbow Lorikeet	Magpie-Lark
Pacific Black Duck	Swamp Harrier	Yellow Thornbill	Golden-headed Cisticola
Great Cormorant	Dusky Moorhen	Little Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
Pelican	Eurasian Coot	New Holland Honeyeater	Common Starling
Cattle Egret	Black-fronted Dotterel	Willie Wagtail	House Sparrow

24 species sighted

Bass Point

Australasian Gannet	Satin Bowerbird	Red Wattlebird	Australian Raven
Little Pied Cormorant	Superb Fairy-wren	New Holland Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Little Black Cormorant	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Whipbird	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Nankeen Kestrel	Brown Thornbill	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Silvereye
Sooty Oystercatcher	Spotted Pardalote	Golden Whistler e-race	Welcome Swallow
Crested Tern	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	European Goldfinch
Kelp Gull	Little Wattlebird	Grey Fantail	

27 species sighted

Monthly Outing - Bellawongarah and Fitzroy Falls -

Saturday 18th March

Andrew Wood

In yet another case of go bird watching and visit somewhere you otherwise probably wouldn't have, a dozen or so IBOCers gathered at a track near the hamlet of Bellawongarah, just off the road between Berry and Kangaroo Valley. The day was promising rain, but was mild and overcast at about 8:30 am when we arrived.

We followed a very nice trail that gave majestic views of the ranges to the west. There was not a great deal of bird activity and unfortunately the Australian Logrunner which is known in the area did not reveal itself. Some of the other usual suspects were present; however, including the Lewin's Honeyeater and the highlight of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos making a lot of noise and flying overhead.

Back at our starting point for morning tea and a rare burst of sunshine, we were entertained by a local RFS member coming to the nearby station to check the fire-truck and turn over the engine. We then wandered to the nearby historic cemetery for some more birding.

Leaving Bellawongarah, we drove on to Fitzroy Falls. This was a case of going to a very well known spot you've probably been to before but seeing it in a whole new light – for the birds. We wandered down some nearby trails near the car park then had lunch in the picnic area, where we were entertained by a Rufous Fantail putting on a great show and lots of scrub-birds in a nearby copse of trees. Just to show us how adaptable birds can be, a couple of Lewin's Honeyeaters were acting somewhat like gulls at a beach and landing right on the picnic tables.

The birds of the area had adapted so much to the tourist population, in fact, we saw far fewer birds on the 1.2 km walk after lunch to the Warrawong Lookout than we had at the picnic shelter. I think we managed to add an Eastern Spinebill to the day's list.

A bonus of being there was that after all the recent rain the falls themselves were magnificent. Not only the main falls were going strong – several other cascades were flowing on the surrounding cliff faces.

As we were finishing off for the day some rain was beginning to fall so we had been fortunate to get a good day before it set in again. Hopefully we all had a safe trip home.

Bird List for Bellowongarah & Fitzroy Falls Walks Sunday 18.03.12 13 attended

Bellowongarah		Black Ash Reserve	8.30-9.30am	23 species sighted
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Eastern Whipbird		Grey Fantail
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren	Golden Whistler e-race		Willie Wagtail
Crimson Rosella	Brown Gerygone	Grey Shrike-thrush		Australian Raven
Laughing Kookaburra	Brown Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird		Eastern Yellow Robin
Superb Lyrebird	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Magpie		Red-browed Finch
White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Spinebill	Rufous Fantail		

Fitzroy Falls Picnic Area & Eastern Rim Track 11.30am -2.30pm 26 Species sighted

Pacific Black Duck	Brown Thornbill	Eastern Whipbird	Rose Robin
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Spotted Pardalote	Varied Sittella	Eastern Yellow Robin
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Eastern Spinebill	Golden Whistler e-race	Silveryeye
White-throated Treecreeper	Lewin's Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler	Welcome Swallow
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Little Wattlebird	Rufous Fantail	Red-browed Finch
White-browed Scrubwren	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail	
Brown Gerygone	New Holland Honeyeater	Black-faced Monarch	



THE BIRDS IN MY BACKYARD

By Joan Zealey

BIRDS OF LANGSON AVENUE

After 26 years we are leaving Langson Avenue, so I pause to remember the highlights of birding in my own garden.

Silveryeyes and Yellow Thornbills prospected regularly among the bushes along the fence. Superb Blue Wrens courted on the kitchen windowsill, nested somewhere in my Hawaiian patch, sang on the powerline, and the handsome blue male attacked his reflection in the car mirror.

No one has been able to identify the bush outside my kitchen, but in spring its dark red bell flowers were immediately claimed by Little Wattlebirds. While they fended off New Holland Honeyeaters, Spinebills sneaked in for a sip of nectar, while the Lewin's, too big for the Wattlebirds to intimidate, shouldered its way through the leaves.

Bulbuls sang joyously from the plum tree and nested in the hydrangeas, exacting a payment in plums – mostly those too high for us to pick – for their work of catching caterpillars and other insects.

One day Bill and I stood on the balcony to watch two Sea Eagles courting in wide circles in the skies above Figtree. On another occasion, while hanging out the wash, I had two Peregrines skim just above the Hill's hoist and over the fenceline. Late one afternoon we traced floating feathers back to a young Peregrine, calmly plucking his honeyeater dinner on next door's aerial.

Two years ago Grey Butcherbirds nested high in a melaleuca at the back. We didn't discover the nest until the young were nearly fledged, but other eyes had been watching. We found a pile of grey and white feathers on the grass. Then Bill opened the back door and disturbed a Brown Goshawk, just outside, which flew off with another luckless Butcherbird in its talons.

In early days a White-faced Heron used to prospect for grasshoppers and skinks on the back lawn. One day my neighbour called me. The heron had perched on the fence, slipped, and was caught upside down with its leg trapped between the palings. While I pried the fence apart, my neighbour threw the bird up into the air and it flew off into a nearby yard. It didn't return for years.



Every year Sulphur Crested Cockatoos descended on the garden once the wattle seed had set, occasionally bringing a Corella with them. They left a discarded pile of pods, seeds all removed, on the ground. One year they attacked the apple tree, carried the fruit on to the neighbour's gable, and let most of it bounce down her tin roof. In late years other parrots discovered the apple tree, and Crimson Rosellas, King Parrots and Rainbow Lorikeets all descended for the feast. Until the pine trees three doors up were felled, a family of five Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos would come around regularly to inspect the cones and munch on the ripe ones.

Cuckoos seem to have increased in the area. Channelbills overfly with their raucous cries, Koels move through the tall trees at the back, occasionally a Fantailed Cuckoo calls – birds I never saw in the early years.

For the last few years we have had a pool with an inflatable rim in the back yard in summer. One evening I was greeted by a great rush of water and the indignant calls from the blue gum of a Boobook Owl, which had perched on the pool rim, only to have it sag beneath its weight. Other night visitors have included a Tawny Frogmouth, perched quietly on the Hill's hoist, and bats from the Flying Fox colony which have taken up residence near the F6 exit.

Altogether the garden has attracted a good selection of Wollongong suburban birds as well as lizards, bats and insects all apparently undeterred by our succession of cats and dogs.

Joan Zealey

Be inspired..... Send in your story of your own backyard garden and the birds PLEASE

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

ALLAN SEFTON MEMORIAL LECTURE _ PLEASE NOTE CHANGE TO DAY, TIME AND LOCATION FROM PREVIOUS YEARS - RSVP 16 April 2012

You are invited to the Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture to be held Friday 27 April 2012 at the University of Wollongong, Building 35.G45 commencing at 5.30pm. The Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture will now be held in conjunction with the School of Earth & Environmental Sciences Prize Night (which will commence at 6.30pm with light refreshments in Building 41 first floor foyer.) Could you please advise if you will be attending.

RSVP by 16 April 2012 by email sees_administration@uow.edu.au or wendyw@uow.edu.au or phone 02 4221 3721.

The following

ALLAN SEFTON MEMORIAL LECTURE FRIDAY 27 APRIL 2012 5.30PM BUILDING 35.G45

**The rewards of being persistent: A NSW public servant reflects on 42 years of fauna conservation
Dr Dan Lunney (Office of Environment and Heritage NSW)**

Dan Lunney is a Senior Principal Research Scientist in the Office of Environment and Heritage, New South Wales. He started his working life in the Department in 1970, when it was the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. For his first three years he was an Education Officer, but was drawn into research as the questions kept mounting as to how we might conserve the State's wildlife and natural areas. Dan's areas of particular interest include the conservation of forest fauna, and koalas in particular, long-term research, ecological history, and the human dimensions of wildlife management. He received a Doctor of Science (honoris causa) in 2006 from both Murdoch University, in Perth, and the University of Sydney. He is also a council member of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, where he has been an honorary editor of *Australian Zoologist* and the Society's fora for the last 25 years. While he has regularly published his own research, he is very keen to see the work of others published so that everyone's efforts can contribute to understanding and conserving our native animals.

Australian BirdLife Vol. 1 No. 1 March 2012

Club members will be familiar with the iconic birding magazine Wingspan, back copies of which are in our library and available for loan at meetings. In March 2012 a new magazine called Australian BirdLife was launched replacing Wingspan.

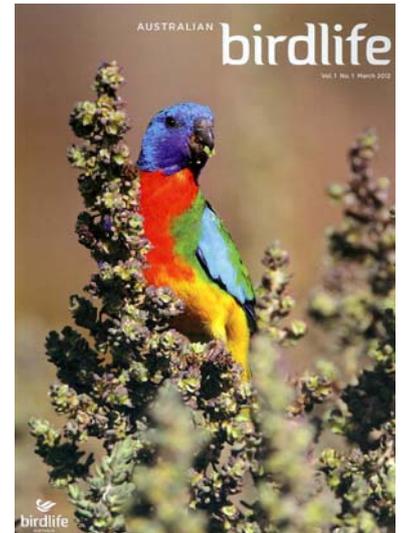
The new magazine is published by BirdLife Australia the new national birding organisation bought about by the merger of Birds Australia and Bird Observation & Conservation Australia (BOCA). There is a new website www.birdlife.org.au

With Sean Dooley continuing as editor the new magazine is expected to maintain the very high standard and range of interesting articles of the publication it replaces.

Australian BirdLife Vol. 1 No. 1 has a focus on birds and birders of Bass Strait. Of particular interest to me is the article titled 'In dog we trust' by John Peters. The Maremma is an Italian sheep dog that can be trained to bond to animal flocks such as sheep. The dogs actually live with the flock protecting it from predators 24/7.

After a successful ground-breaking trial at Middle Island near Warrnambool Vic where the dogs protected a breeding colony of Little Penguins being ravaged by foxes, Maremma have since been used with great success to protect Australia's largest gannet colony at Lawrence Rocks near Portland. This is a great bird conservation story.

I will add Australian BirdLife Vol. 1 No. 1 to the Club's library at the April meeting.
Chris. Cartledge



The State Library of NSW presents - "Lewin Wild Art".

This major retrospective showcases over 150 beautiful original works by John Lewin (1770 - 1919), Australia's first professional artist. A free exhibition until 27 May 2012.

In 1813 Lewin produced his first book "Birds of New South Wales," the first illustrated book published in Australia.

State Library Macquarie St Sydney
www.sl.nsw.gov.au



Attack Claim a Real Hoot

Reported in the Illawarra Mercury 26/03/2012

What does a hooting Barn Owl and a screaming woman have in common? A lot, apparently, according to alarmed Victorian fishermen who called Police, fearing a woman was being attacked on Friday night. The fishermen at Malacoota on Victoria's east coast went on a torchlight search to find the woman. Police also investigating found it was a feathered offender, a Barn Owl – which can make a scream similar to a woman.





On a mid February stay in Merimbula, the Hales and the Cousins planned a day trip to Errinundra Rain Forest Board Walk, just over the Victorian border, in search of a Pink Robin (not the first time for the Hales). Talking it over with Wal previously he was kind enough to send us his field notes and also contacted his grapevine (The David's who had also seen it there) and it seemed our timing was a bit sus but, as always, we lived in hope. We set off on our drive in good weather enjoying the scenery of the high country along the way and dawdling a bit on the road in when a group of Flame and Yellow Robins captivated us. By the time we got to the board walk the weather was changing and the thunder which had been distant suddenly released the loudest clap overhead which sent us scurrying on a record breaking circuit of the board walk. We made the briefest stop to play the Pink Robin's call, alas, to no avail. In pouring rain Alan drove back safely down the mountain, our bird watching washed out but we all agreed it had still been a great day.

Thank you Wal, Lydia and Bob for the info. **We will return Nov/Dec next time.**



Wal Emery's Field Notes

Whilst out walking with birdo's, there's a question some pose,
 Hey, is that robin a pink, or is it a rose?
 Now whether they're perching, or flying about,
 If you've ever seen both, you're left in no doubt.
 Because a rose, well, it's rose, and a pink, well, it's pink.
 And there's really quite a difference, whatever you may think.

It's grey on the male rose that covers his back,
 But you can't call the pink grey; it's a sort of sooty black.
 The pink and rose females they're both coloured brown,
 With a buff or white spot at the base of the crown.
 Pink wing bars are buff, rose wing bars are white,
 And if you think that's confusing, you've got to get the tail right.
 The white edge on the rose, in the green of a tree,
 Like the grey edge on the pink, is not easy to see.

Now if you find an immature, cute little fellow,
 Well it's like its mum, except its gape is bright yellow.
 No I shouldn't have said that, it isn't quite right,
 Because both their wing bars are buff, there's none of them white.
 Don't bother with head spots; they're also both buff,
 Forget sorting out babies, it's really too tough.

Let's get back to the adults, the pink and the rose,
 There's really no problem when you're sorting out those.
 Whether you view from the front, or you view from the rear,
 The difference in the two species is really quite clear.
 So, to sum up the rhyme, if you need time to think,
 Just tick off a rose, because it sure ain't a pink.



Pam Hazelwood

Was looking around the Scout camp at Mt Kiera and came across a couple great Pics.

Left - Bassian Thrush
 Right - Rufous Fantail



Alison Foley
 Put in a proud effort to create this magnificent cake with the Crimson Rosella icing.



Double-banded Plover at Windang on 14th March arriving for the Winter
 By Terry Edwell

King Island

February 2012

Neil and Tera Wheway

Tera and I decided that we would like to visit and photograph the lighthouses of King Island, which there are four; one being Cape Wickham the tallest lighthouse in the Southern Hemisphere. The island is part of Tasmania and is in Bass Strait about thirty five minutes flying from Melbourne. It is also home of the famous King Island cheeses, and a Bull Kelp farming industry but not a California quail to be seen.

The many ship wrecks all around the island was the reason for the construction of the lighthouses. Early population consisted of the lighthouse keepers and their families, also scavengers who collected and salvaged from the numerous ship wrecks. Four days passed quickly, folk on the island are friendly all 1350 of them, no one locks cars or doors car drivers all give a cheery wave.

Grass seeds escaped from one of the ships and quickly spread all over the island with thick lush green grass, which initiated the dairy industry and cheese making. Cheese is the main industry because of the abundant green grass, though, whilst we were there it was very dry and brown. The weather was quite warm and humid with the expectation of rain any time soon. A visit to the visitors centre at the cheese factory was a necessity and the cheese tasting was a pleasure.

We were there for four nights and allowed ourselves one lighthouse per day, along with sightseeing and looking for birds. The island is roughly 60klms x 30klms and is mainly serviced by gravel roads so distance travelled was not great but time taken was. There is a huge population of wallabies and possums and the road kill is very considerable even travelling at very low speeds.

Birding wasn't too bad we saw lots of turkeys freely roaming everywhere, no shortage for Christmas lunch, White-backed Magpies, Stubble Quail, Flame and Dusky Robins, Pacific Gulls and Pheasants (1 new tick) for us. We saw 7 of the Endemic Tasmanian species, Green Rosella, Tasmanian Thornbill, Yellow Wattlebird, Yellow-throated Honeyeater, Strong-billed Honeyeater and Black Currawong. We had a list of 61 different species. There were some Sparrows and thousands of Starlings many on the rocky seashore feeding on the flies. March flies chased after Neil and were very invasive and in large numbers.

On our third day we drove to photograph the islands southern light and met a couple kelp farming, which is done at low tide and after very rough seas. The couple, a man and his wife from South Africa, now Australians. It was an interesting stop to learn how the kelp is harvested and what happens to it.

There are no foxes or rabbits on the island but they do have leeches which found Neil!! While birding at a water dam, used for bushfire fighting, a leech attached itself to Neil. We spotted an enormous puddle of blood on the floor, his trousers were soaked along with a sock and shoe. Blood was freely oozing from the fleshy part of his calf. Band-aids were not very effective; so we drove into Currie Hospital. It was a 30 minute drive into town constantly on the alert for wallabies and possums. Casualty at the hospital was not like here, where one waits for hours to get attention, there, we had to go and find someone. Tera and the nurse thought it was leech bite I thought I had burst a vein because of the amount of blood. A doctor on standby, was called to check it out. But it was only a leech bite, what shocked Neil the most and quite a let down, was that he had red not blue blood, a commoner not of noble blood. An eventful end to 4 days of sightseeing and birding.



Members Sightings February & March 2012

Please keep your sightings coming in, everything you consider unusual or interesting.

Compiled By Betty Hudson

SPECIES	No.	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	3	19.02.12	Jamberoo	Garden	Betty Hudson
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	1	5.03.12	Wyalla Rd Jamberoo	Bushland	Tony Loader
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	1	18.03.12	Black Ash Reserve Bellawongarah	Rainforest	IBOC
Topknot Pigeon	4	24.02.12	Balgownie	Rainforest Garden	Wal Emery
Australasian Gannet	1	14.03.12	Bass Point	Off Shore	IBOC
Square-tailed Kite	2	6.03.12	Towradgi	Overhead	Jack Baker & Jean Clarke
Square-tailed Kite	1	11.03.12	East Corrimal	Overhead	Tom & Joan Wylie
Square-tailed Kite	1	8.03.12	Balgownie	Overhead	Wal Emery
Whistling Kite	1	23.02.12	Tarrawanna	Overhead	Anne & Alan Cousins
Brown Goshawk	1	9.03.12	Albion Park Rail	Overhead	Peter Fackender
Grey Goshawk	1	24.02.12	Albion Park	Garden	Christine Shipp by email
Swamp Harrier	1	5.03.12	Dunmore Swamp Road	Low over paddock	Brian & Barbara Hales
Swamp Harrier	1	14.03.12	Bassett Park Shellharbour	Over Swamp	IBOC
Nankeen Kestrel	1 juv	14.03.12	Bass Point	Perched in dead tree	IBOC
Australian Hobby	1	10.03.12	Albion Park Rail	Overhead	Peter Fackender
Buff-banded Rail	1	2.03.12	Albion Park Rail	Grass over fence	Brian & Barbara Hales
Buff-banded Rail	1	14.02.12	Wollongong	Botanic Garden	Terry Edwell
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	14.03.12	Bass point	on rocky shore	IBOC
Kelp Gull	1	14.03.12	Bass Point	Shore	IBOC
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	7	11.03.12	Berkeley	Overhead on Freeway	Tera Wheway
Pheasant Coucal	1	18.02.12	Carrington Falls	Heard	Jack Baker & Jean Clarke
Eastern Koel	1 f	2.03.12	Albion Park Rail	Garden	Brian & Barbara Hales
Azure Kingfisher	1	12.03.12	Balgownie	Creek behind house	Bill Zealey
Sacred Kingfisher	1	7.03.12	Oak Flats	Perched on chair in garden	Sylvia Garlic
Dollarbird	1	6.03.12	Killalea Minnamurra River	Mangroves	Paul Nesbit
Superb Lyrebird	4	18.03.12	Black Ash Reserve Bellawongarah	Rainforest	IBOC
Green Catbird	1	6.03.12	Balgownie	Rainforest Garden	Wal Emery
Satin Bowerbird	1 f	2.03.12	Albion Park Rail	Clothes line in garden	Brian & Barbara Hales
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	1	11.03.12	Austinmer	Rainforest Garden	Meri Stefanidakis
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	1	18.03.12	Black Ash Reserve Bellawongarah	Rainforest	IBOC
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	1	18.03.12	Fitzroy Falls	Rainforest	IBOC
Eastern Whipbird	1	11.03.12	Unanderra	Lantana in reserve	Shane Spence
Varied Sittella	Few	18.03.12	Fitzroy Falls	Rainforest	IBOC
Grey Shrike-thrush	2	2.03.12	Albion Park Rail	Garden table	Brian & Barbara Hales
Rufous Fantail	1	18.03.12	Black Ash Reserve Bellawongarah	Rainforest	IBOC
Black-faced Monarch	1	18.03.12	Fitzroy Falls	Rainforest	IBOC
Rose Robin	2 f	18.03.12	Fitzroy Falls	Rainforest	IBOC
Golden-headed Cisticola	1	14.03.12	Bassett Park Shellharbour	Reed bed by swamp	IBOC
Indian Ringneck	1	26.02.12	Brownsville	Garden	Mariane Newhouse



Blue Billed Duck female



Black Falcon



Southern Boobook

just a couple of pics from Toowoomba Charles Dove

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While all due care has been taken to ensure that the content of this newsletter is accurate and current, there may be errors or omissions in it and no legal responsibility is accepted for the information in this newsletter.