



I.B.O.C. NEWS

The Newsletter of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
 POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56 FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

[http://www.iboc.org.au/](http://www.iboc.org.au)

Founded in 1977

*" One Good Tern
 Deserves Another"*

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

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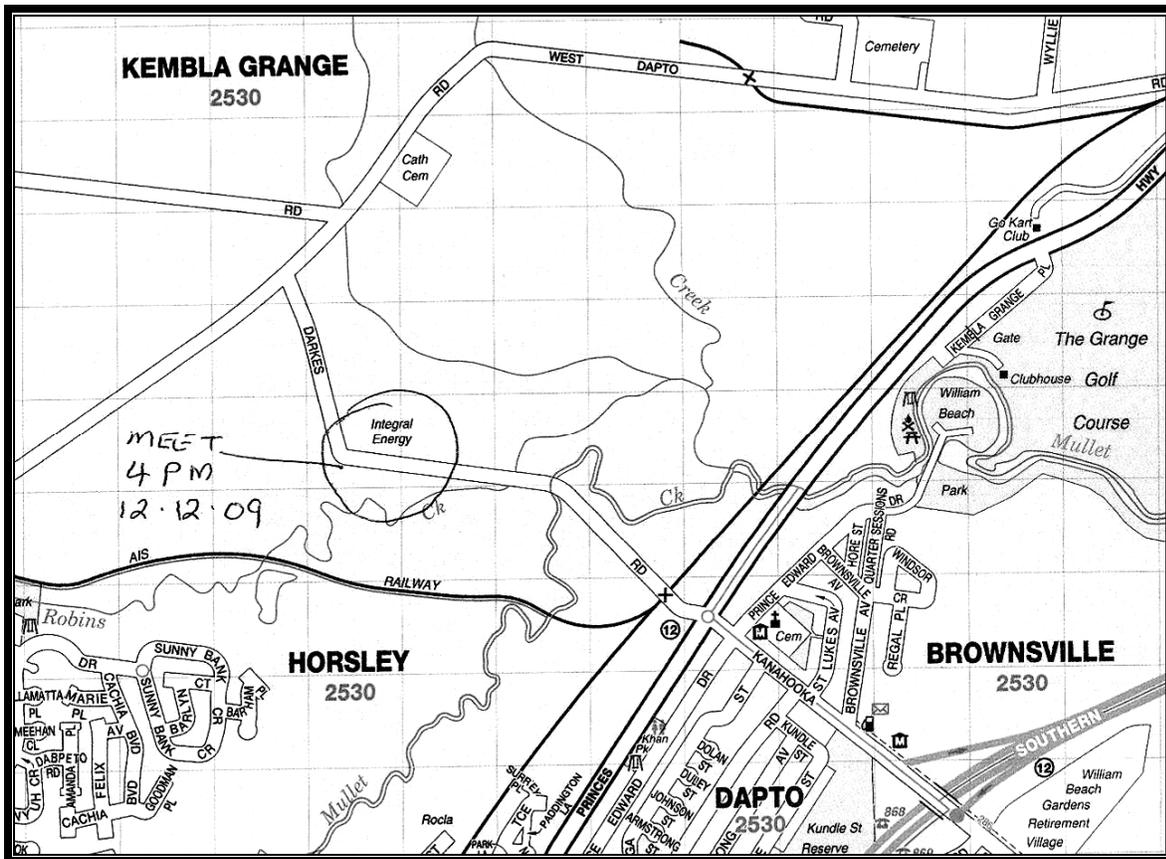
Blue-winged Kookaburra

Photo Tera Wheway

WADER COUNT – Sunday 6th December 8.30 am. at Windang. Leader – Martin Cocker.
Meet in the carpark under the pines. All welcome. Come and hone your wader identification skills. Bring your morning tea.

CHRISTMAS BarBQ Saturday 12th December - 4.00 pm, All are welcome. The BarBQ will be held at the Integral Energy Recreation Park, Darkes Road, Dapto. This park also is the home for the Motorlife Motor Museum Australia. Rolls, meat patties, and sauces etc provided. Bring your own salad and eating utensils

Arriving from the North via Southern Expressway take the Kanahooka exit, turning right at the traffic lights. Drive straight ahead, cross railway line continue until gate entrance is found on right hand side. Arriving from South take Princess Hwy to Dapto continue until roundabout then turn left into Darkes Road. Drive straight ahead, cross railway line continue until gate entrance is found on the right hand side.



HO HO HO MEETING Monday 14th December - 7.30pm, Fairy Meadow Community Hall – No guest speaker but instead, for your entertainment, numerous people will pull out all stops to keep you amused with an evening of song, verse, music, slide shows and brain training quizzes. (Brush up on bird names and towns). Dress in your bird/Christmas/favourite T-shirt and join the parade. Great prizes to be won. So come along and bring that extra special plate for supper and be assured of a happy and fun filled evening.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING Monday 18th January 2010 at 7.30pm at Alan and Anne Cousin's home, 4 Adelaide Place, Tarrawanna.2518, Phone 4283 3197

February 2010 Newsletter Deadline for articles for the next IBOC News is **Friday 22nd January 2010** Email your contributions to the **new editor, Charles Dove**, at powerart@bigpond.net.au. or post them to Charles at 39 Purry Burry Avenue, Primbee 2502

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: Family \$35, Single \$30, Junior \$10. Please pay Bronwyn Wilson, our Treasurer, by cash, cheque or mail order.

The Editor and numerous assistants wish all club members and their friends

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

*'For Unto Us a Child is Born
For Unto Us a Son is Given'*

Of Birds and Poems

John Douglas Pringle

The Scot, John Pringle, came to Australia, shortly after World War 11. Pringle was editor of the Sydney Morning Herald, and later of the Canberra Times. This essay was published 35 years ago, in his book, On Second Thoughts, and records his astonishment at seeing the birds of Australia, which we so easily take for granted. This now follows on from the IBOC News of February 2009 and concludes his essay

I would like to write about the Australian owls but dare not. My experience of them is too limited. Instead I would strongly recommend to any reader who is interested, a remarkable book by David Fleay called *Nightwatchmen of Bush and Plain*, which describes a life-long obsession with, and search for, the rare powerful owl, the masked owl, the sooty owl and fascinating species. It has photographs of incomparable beauty.

It might be thought that an interest in birds of prey did not easily fit with the life of a busy journalist in Sydney. And of course many species can be seen only in the wild country of the outback and coastal ranges. Yet it is surprising how many survive in and about the city. I have several times seen peregrine falcons flying over the harbour near the Bridge, and it is said that a pair once nested on a Bridge pylon. I have seen a brown hawk – really a falcon – over Chinaman's Beach and a brown goshawk many times at Ball's Head and Berry Island. (One even came and perched on a willow tree outside our house at Lavender Bay.) Kestrels can be seen in many suburbs: I watched a pair swoop on a sparrow in McMahon's Point. (They missed.) Most remarkable of all, the powerful owl – one of our rarest birds – once lived for three years in the suburb of Pymble. For those who do not know Sydney, all these places might fairly be described as near the heart of the city. Further out it is better still. Where we now live on Pittwater one may see almost anything if one waits long enough. An immature female goshawk spent a day in our garden perched on a lofty spotted gum. Twice we watched her swoop down in a swift, descending curve on some small bird in the scrub below the house. Both times she missed, probably from inexperience. (Not many people realize how difficult it is for a hawk or falcon to catch its prey. A

Mt Keira Scout Camp Walk - 11 Nov 2009

It was a lovely spring morning, 24 degrees without a cloud in the sky. Kevin McGregor usually leads this walk but as he was away Joan Wylie stepped up and did a good job leading the twenty or so who came. Ken and Sue Brown from Corrimal were welcomed on their first mid-week outing with us.

high proportion of attempts end in failure, and it is known that many young birds die each year before they can learn what prey to choose and how to go about it.) It was curious to see this splendid bird, legs wide apart, plunge deep into the foliage of a bush, looking at the same time fiercely proud, and slightly foolish while the currawongs and noisy miners stared in astonishment. And one night two boobook owls, one after the other, perched on a tree outside our sitting room and gazed in at us as we sat watching the fading light to the west, before they glided away on soft moth-like wings.

It is moments like these that one remembers with delight. Another evening, sitting on the same balcony we watched 30 black swans – I had time to count them – flying in formation down Pittwater, a thrilling black line drawn across the sunset. A fairy penguin catching a fish in clear shallow water – I could see its beak open and close upon the fish – six feet from where I stood on Paradise beach while children played and swam all around me. Pelicans soaring in perfect, lazy circles high in the air above Lake George. A peregrine killing and eating a crimson rosella at the foot of Black Mountain in Canberra. The 'insolent emu' stepping delicately over the arid plain on the border of South Australia and New South Wales, with his striped chicks – his not hers, for it is the male emu which looks after the young. A flock of crimson rosellas like bloodstains on the snow of the Brindabella range. Giant wandering albatrosses gliding on infinite white wings over the swell off Avalon. To me, at least, these are not the least of the pleasures offered by the Lucky Country. But oh, how I wish that I too were a poet.

Chris. Cartledge

Our first stop was the 'Storm Shelter', a building near the camping area and used for obvious reasons. The eastern wall is lined with about eighty A4 sized pictures of Australian birds courtesy of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club. I noticed Charles Dove's name on the bottom of most of them. Volunteers

have recently cut a couple of observation holes in the wall adjacent to the bird pictures to encourage youngsters to look out into the rainforest below. On this day they would have seen a Lyrebird scratching around in the undergrowth.

We walked up to the 'cathedral', a natural rock formation against the escarpment and had a rest on the bush pews. Barbara and Brian Hales have attended a wedding service here (after being supplied with individual packets of salt in the car park). After leaving the 'cathedral' we came across a rock wallaby and then a Yellow-throated Scrubwren on the side of the path near a foot bridge. A perfect photo opportunity for Charles Dove who earlier signaled this was the bird he was looking to shoot on the day. Wal Emery went back looking for Charles but the opportunity was gone.

Morning tea was outside 'The Lodge' a beautiful old natural stone building used as a meeting place. It was here where the only raptor, a Peregrine Falcon, was seen as it left the Robertson Lookout area we visited the previous month. However, the break was interrupted by the sound of a genuine chainsaw nearby, unfortunately not an avian imitation from the many Lyrebirds heard as we walked around the camp.

Across the path on the way back to the roadway lay a diamond python about 2 metres in length. It didn't move as its picture was taken and we all, some more gingerly than others, walked past.

We stopped for a minutes silence on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month as a large male Brush-turkey with enormous wattles scratched nearby. All in all, a very pleasant outing with 22 sightings.

Sightings Mt Keira Scout Camp – Mid-week Walk 11 Nov 2009

Australian Brush-turkey	Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Whipbird
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Satin Bowerbird	Golden Whistler
Wonga Pigeon	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Pied Currawong
Topknot Pigeon	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Fantail
Peregrine Falcon	Brown Gerygone	Black-faced Monarch
Crimson Rosella	Eastern Spinebill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	
Laughing Kookaburra	Little Wattlebird	

Cronulla - Botany Bay Walk 14.11.09

11 members met to explore several locations along the Cronulla - Kurnell foreshores of Botany Bay, including South Head. After a little confusion as to the exact meeting place, we walked along a board walk cycle way between the mangroves and the buildings, although the tide was falling birds were scarce. We returned to the cars for a short drive to the Leagues club car park and the Woolooware Bay Mangrove Board walk, with several members having to front the RBT unit, Neil for the 2nd time that morning. Again birds were scarce but the board walk gave a few exciting moments when it creaked & wobbled and those on the lookout complained of seasickness. On returning to the car park everyone was pleased to get a very good close look at a Brown Honeyeater feeding in the lantana as well as other honeyeaters and bush birds.

After this we drove to Bonna Point at the entrance to Botany Bay. Morning tea was eaten to the accompaniment of the roar of jet planes coming in to land at the airport. They seemed so low that we could almost touch them. A walk along the beach showed that although the tide was getting towards low tide, very little in the way of mud flats were

Betty Hudson

exposed. As a result waders were few with only six Bar-tailed Godwits and two Australian Pied Oystercatchers being seen. The sea breeze was appreciated as soon as we got back into the shelter of the mangroves and casuarinas where some small birds were seen briefly, but proved very elusive.

Leaving here we drove to the entrance to Botany Bay National Park, to find that we need to buy tickets at a machine. The one taking coins seemed to be jammed, so we took a chance and continued on our way with a few inadvertent diversions to a nicely shaded picnic area. Those who hadn't paid went to the visitors centre and paid there.

After lunch we drove to the end of the road in the park and walked a short way along the cliff track, but the heat and lack of birds sent us scurrying back to the cool of the cars. Even the sea birds were missing. Leaving here we went looking for a lake along the bay foreshore, following directions Jill had got on her phone. Thanks Jill they were spot on, but the lake promised much and delivered little. one Bar-tailed Godwit, one Pied Oystercatcher and a solitary Black Swan.

This was new area for most of the group, and showed us the potential of a new place, with 45

species recorded. A visit at a different time of year might be more rewarding.

Bird Sightings

Black Swan	Rainbow Lorikeet	New Holland Honeyeater
Spotted Dove	Crimson Rosella	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Crested Pigeon	Red-rumped Parrot	Grey Butcherbird
Great Cormorant	Eastern Koel	Australian Magpie
Little Black Cormorant	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Pied Currawong
Pied Cormorant	Yellow Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Australian Pelican	Laughing Kookaburra	Willie Wagtail
White-faced Heron	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Raven
Australian White Ibis	White-browed Scrubwren	Magpie-lark
Nankeen Kestrel	Yellow Thornbill	Silvereve
Masked Lapwing	White-plumed Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Bar-tailed Godwit	Noisy Miner	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Silver Gull	Little Wattlebird	Common Starling
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Red Wattlebird	Common Myna
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Brown Honeyeater	House Sparrow

IBOC COMMITTEE

The following people were elected to the IBOC Committee at the November AGM

President: Alan Cousins

Vice President: Daryl Goldrick

Secretary: Elizabeth Hudson

Treasurer: Bronwyn Wilson

Committee Members: Barbara Hales, Anne Cousins, Lorraine Pincus, and T Wylie Esq

Two previous members of the Committee, Jill Molan and Penny Potter, did not stand for re-election. Betty Hudson thanked them on our behalf for their generous work for the club.

Also appointed to various other positions were -

Activities Organiser: Betty Hudson

Librarian: Anne Cousins

Newsletter Editor: Charles Dove

Public Officer: Chris Brandis

Records Officer: Martin Cocker

Noticeboard Supervisor: Martin Potter

Web Master: Chris Cartledge

Supper Supervisor: Betty Hudson

Hall Monitor: Tom Wylie

Badge Monitor: Neil Wheway

Martin Cocker

John Cashman

Martin Cocker, is our outgoing President. Martin entered the Presidency somewhere between a fresh breeze and a whirlwind. As well as being great at bird identification himself, he has been a bundle of energy for the club, organising more walks, wader counts and identification mornings. He was active in plans to update the Newsletter, advertise and promote both the club and its membership. He sought to encourage more cooperation between our club and other bird organisations. Martin is a man of big plans and ideas. Opinions differ, but none can deny Martin's enthusiasm for bird observing and for the club. For that we all owe him hearty thanks. It is pleasing to report that Martin has agreed to continue on as our Records Officer .

A NOTE of THANKS

John Cashman

May I express my thanks to numerous people who have helped and been involved in the production of the IBOC News over the last four years.

this so with Chris Cartledge when my computer crashed. Many thanks to you three. Penny also stood in as Guest Editor on several occasions.

On the technical side, I could not have got by without enormous support, instruction and responding to frantic calls for help to Penny Potter, Chris Cartledge and Charlie Dove. All three gave me generous stacks of time, computer expertise, advice and calmed the frantic nerd. Particularly was

Val Dolan was a fine proof reader, as was Robyn Cashman. Val also was our courier, collecting the hard copies from the printer and delivering them to members Norma Almond and Peg McKinlay who regularly folded the News and posted them out.

Bronwyn Wilson greatly helped in keeping the list of members receiving the News by email up to date

Then there were our writers of reports and articles: some such as Betty Hudson, Chris Brandis, Mike Morphett, Bob Ashford, David Winterbottom, Jill Molan and others appeared in the News frequently. Then lots of people contributed with occasional articles and/or reports - Chris Cartledge, Wal Emery, Barbara Hales, Sylvia Garlick, Lorraine Pincus, Neil Wheway, Val Cooper, Penny Potter, Dave Thomson, Sylvia Loader, Danie Ondinea, Val Dolan, Alan Cousins, Lyndall Dawson, Alison Foley, Nerida Hudspith, Terry Edwell, Tom Wylie, Roger Trusscott, Richard Miller, Barbara Hales, Joan Zealey and more.

Martin Cocker, Chris Cartledge, Robyn Cashman, Penny Potter and others often referred me to articles in newspapers or at other Bird sites which might be useful in the News

Tera Wheway, Charlie Dove, Peter Fackender, Graham Meany, Chris Brandis, Alan Cousins,

Michelle Rower and several others sent in lots of great photos, and Chris Chafer let us use his collection too.

To all the afore-mentioned, a thousand thanks. Overall, producing the News has been a great team effort.

Then thanks to Dave Thomson, former President. Dave regularly sent in critiques of the News. For an editor he could at times be an irritant, but for the most part, he was right. Dave not only criticized errors of spelling and the taxonomomy, his criticisms extended to grammar, matters of style and anything else that caught his eagle eye. Occasionally I told him to go jump, but for the most part his criticism was salutary, for along the way I had, among other things, discovered two new species, the Bred-whiskered Bulbul and the Black-eared Cockatoo! Dave also proposed a 'spot the errors' competition, but I vetoed this as I knew who would win every time. Give a bloke a chance Dave! but thanks all the same!

'Birds of the Illawarra' Brochure Launch Speech

Good Morning everyone. A warm welcome to the Southern Gateway Centre for the launch of IBOC's "Birds of the Illawarra" brochure. It is pleasing to see so many members and guests here. Thank you all for attending and I extend a special welcome to Mr. Jason Welsh from the IMB and Mr. James Cook from Tourism Wollongong.

We are extremely fortunate to be able to hold the launch in this superb location dedicated to the promotion of tourism in the Wollongong and Illawarra region. The tourism industry is always trying to attract increasing number of visitors and promote the facilities of a region. Increasingly, we see that these initiatives are aimed at special interest groups that are attracted to the particular characteristics and facilities of a region. The Illawarra is blessed with an outstanding and diverse environment, many parts of which are still largely unspoilt. That is an increasingly attractive destination for many city residents and that has great potential to offer outdoor and environmental activities.

Bird watching is a boom industry. A recent report from the US Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that 20% of the US population are birdwatchers and their activities contribute some \$36 billion to the economy. A similar picture is present in the UK where the RSPB has some million members as well as being supported by a strong regional network of

Martin Cocker

birding clubs. Australia is following this trend. Increasingly we are seeing brochures such as our own and Local Councils investing in pathways and walks specifically aimed at bird watching activities.

I have done web searches on Australian sites for "Bird Watching holidays" that had 72,000 hits, "Birdwatching Walks" had 39,000 hits and "Birdwatching Illawarra" had 18,000. A recent ABC News report provided details of initiatives made by Coonabarabran council to promote birding in its area following a recent successful tour by American tourist operators. So obviously there is an increasing demand and tourism potential.

IBOC was established in 1977 and is a community organisation run by volunteers. Currently the club has over 100 subscribers. The aim of the club is to promote knowledge and enjoyment of bird life and birding in the Illawarra and this is delivered through an active programme of weekday and week end field trips, a regular monthly meeting, a monthly newsletter and a web site. IBOC is part of a national network of Bird watching clubs and our neighbours are Birding NSW, Hunter BOC, Cumberland BOC, Canberra BOC, Southern Highlands and South Coast BOC.

The idea for the brochure was conceived by the current committee as it was felt that the Illawarra required such a resource to promote the Club and

birding activities within the region. The production of this brochure has required months of hard work from many members but particularly I should acknowledge Penny Potter who has coordinated the project, Charles Dove who has provided many photographs and his professional skills in graphics and print and Chris Brandis who is an expert birder and a long time Illawarra resident who has provided much advice and assistance.

In addition the club is blessed with members who are skilled photographers so I would like to thank Josh Coyte, Chris Chafer, Charles Dove, Peter Fackender, Ron Imisides and Tera Wheway for donating many excellent images. Despite all of this volunteer effort the production of this brochure would not have been

possible without a community grant from the IMB, I hope that they find that the brochure has done justice to their generosity

The task ahead is now to get the brochures out into the community and we are targeting tourism information centres, motels, caravan and camp sites so if you know of locations that would be potential distribution sites then please let us know. Thankyou all for coming. It gives me great pleasure to formally launch "Birds of the Illawarra" brochure and I trust that it will bring an increasing interest in birding activities within the Illawarra.

November Meeting 'Birds of WESTERN QUEENSLAND' - Bruce Coyte

Ron Imisides entertained members with his recollections and encounters, illustrated by some magnificent photographs To "write up" Report may not do justice to Ron's rich presentation, however I will decipher my notes hastily written during the presentation:-

Starts Map-2006 to 2008 Converted to digital photos. Joined the grey nomads, birding, awakening to the birds morning chorus.

Barwon Junction, Charleville, McKinley, Quombie, Camoweal Grey headed Lapwing, White-fronted Honeyeater, Black Honeyeater (also seen by some at Barradine), Mulga Parrot, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill (white eyes), Halls Babbler, Bourke's Parrot, White-crowned Treecreeper, Owllet, Nightjar, Boobook Owl, Barn Owl.

Looney Tunes Car Variety Club around Australia Fund-Raiser Bash., Augathella Rest Area, Barcoo River- very good bird spot

*Birding Priorities for West Queensland:-

Have plenty of solar panels and a good lightweight set of cooking pans to allow for good self-reliant camping away from caravan parks etc.

*Barr River;Crested Bellbird,near Longreach, Near Winton a good spot is the Long Waterhole, Yellow-billed Spoonbill seen.

*Kyuna Qld- Great sunset .The melodic call at sunrise of the Pied Butcherbird ,budgies, Painted Honeyeater. Quamby-Rodeo, Varied Lorikeet.

*Winton-Boulia Road-camels, headed for the races. Boulia 1985 I.B.O.C members trip photos, wonderful people great memories. Great photos of Whistling Kite and Little Eagle highlighting how to pick the difference.

Boulia Camel Races (shades of Birdsville 1999 dust storm. Boulia Windmill- a beauty!

*Camoweal-Georgina River-Drovers Ball -Luna Eclipse. Black Kite, Pygmy Geese, Caspian Terns, budgies nesting just behind the van, Red-throated Honeyeater, Brolgas, Lapwinged Dotterals.

Just 11Kms west of Camoweal is NT and another story."

Nic proposed for members a vote of thanks and admired Ron's wondrous photos from a fixed lens digital and mused at just what images Ron can capture with a big lens. As a new caravan owner, he looked to Ron for some handy camping/venue hints. I guess we will all stand in line to tap into Ron's practical camping caravanning gray nomading, coupled with birding know-how. We look forward to "another story"

Twitchathon. The Gong Gang would like to thank everyone who sponsored us for the Twitchathon. A total of 105 species were heard and seen and a total of \$300 was raised for Important Bird Areas in Western NSW. It would be great to have more than one team running next year so that we could enjoy a bit of healthy competition and have a finish line in Wollongong. (Note: Ideal numbers for a team are 3-4 people.) Penny Potter *The News* looks forward to a full report of the 'Gong Team's 24 hours' later

Don't Forget The New editor is Charles Dove powerart@bigpond.net.au 39 Purry Burry Ave, Primbee 2502

.Autumn Camp Leeton Caravan Park 10th April to 17th April 2010.

The IBOC Autumn camp is to be held at Leeton Caravan Park, Yanco Avenue, Leeton, NSW, Ph (02) 6953 3323. Leeton is approximately 125km west of Wagga Wagga in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Travel is via the Hume Hwy, Yass, & Gundagai, and then the Sturt Hwy to Wagga Wagga and Narrandera. The Caravan Park is on the right hand side of the road on the southern outskirts of the Leeton a few km after you pass Yanco Township

The caravan park has 8 cabins (all identical), 65 powered sites and 100 unpowered sites.

Charges	<u>Cabins</u>	\$70 per night for 2 people
	<u>Powered sites</u>	\$23 per night for 2 people
	<u>Unpowered sites</u>	\$20 per night for 2 people

NOTE: The manager of the caravan park advised me that these charges may rise slightly in the new year. I have NOT reserved any accommodation this time. Once you have booked please let Betty Hudson know either by email or phone 4236 0307 detailing the accommodation you have booked.

This is an outstanding birding area with the potential for new species for members.

In Search of those rare ones

On September 4th 2009 we set out with four other members of my family all keen bird watchers from Maroochy River, destination Magpie Creek several kilometres from the town of Canungra. From here we spent a day at each of the following places Mt Tamborine, O'Reilly's and Binna Burra, hoping to see at least one of the following: Alberts Lyrebird, Rufous Scrub Bird and Logrunner. As we had no joy at Mt Tamborine we then searched the rainforest at O'Reilly's with only a glimpse of a logrunner but nearing the guest house on the board walk we were rewarded with close views of several logrunners! We were amazed to see several Regent Bowerbirds decorating the trees in the garden and awaiting their handouts and we saw one female amongst the boys which was a first for some of us! The following day we saw several Little Lorikeets in the eucalypts near our accommodation prior to our visiting Binna Burra and the Antarctic Beech Forest hoping to see the Rufous Scrub Bird - but in vain.!

Our next stop was Mt Clunie cabins situated on the edge of the forest in a beautiful area with views of Mts Lindsay and Barney. Again the forest yielded little despite daily trips over a period of a week and we did not sight the Lyrebird as we had hoped! However, we did have a great view of the magnificent Wompoo pigeon, three of which were feeding on figs at the edge of the forest

On leaving Mt Clunie we spent a couple of days in Casino and then made our way to Tenterfield where we visited Bald Rock a huge granite monolith second only in size to Uluru. Here Tony and I parted company with the family and made our way to

Val & Tony Cooper

Barrington where we stayed with friends at Poley's Place on Thunderbolt's Way

The trip from Nowendoc is quite an experience as you make your way through the beautiful wooded mountains which is part of the well known area of Barrington Tops - the views are breathtaking! And finally after many years of yearning to visit the 'Tops' we made our way there next day going as far as Polblue. So disappointing as we had expected mainly rainforest. However Honeysuckle walk provided a small but beautiful area of Antarctic beech where we glimpsed a mouse like creature scurrying through the leaf litter too fast to identify!

Next day it was Gloucester Tops - much more rainforest and a most rewarding walk on the short track in the Forest Walk. Here amongst the Antarctic Beech and treeferns and soon after we passed the small waterfall of the Gloucester River we saw IT! This bird the size of a Rufous Scrub Bird with white throat emerged from the undergrowth to sit in clear view on the frond of a treefern some metres away for a few seconds or until Tony reached for his binoculars! However it did not appear to be the dark colour I had expected - more grey, but this may have been due to the light - we had seen one or two fluttering amongst the ferns prior to this appearance and these were quite dark. We heard some calls following this brief sighting. On checking Birds - a report of last sighting in 2001 was at the same spot, Gloucester Tops. So then we felt our trip had been worthwhile.

No Emus please! From a 1957 copy of the Watt Street News, the Parent's Support Group for the Mentally Handicapped Children of Watt Street Hospital - 'Thanks for the Canary and Cage that have been donated and received by the children with much joy. Budgerigars too would also be very acceptable. But, by request, no emus please!'

Weekend Campout 23 - 26 January:

Jill Molan

A combined camp with Birding NSW, Cumberland BOC and IllawarraBOC on a private property, "Paringa" at Captains Flat.

Directions - Turn-off at Goulburn to go through Tarago and Bungendore. From Bungendore, travel 41 kilometres to Captains Flat. Go over the bridge, past the post office and continue on for about 18 kilometres along the Jerangle - Bredbo Road over Balanfard and Sherlock Creeks. Alternatively you can travel via Queanbeyan to Captains Flat. You are welcome to arrive before the camp and stay on afterwards. A pit-toilet will be provided. Bring warm clothing as the nights can be very cold. Our hosts are well-known birdwatchers Graham and Helen Stephinson 6230-8237 Enquiries: Allan Richards 9660-8062



The early bird meets a paid up-member of WoRM (Worms Resistance Movement)

Sorry. I have forgotten where I saw this. Ed

Baradine Camp Report 25th October - 1st November 2009

Betty Hudson

32 members met at Camp Cypress in Baradine, on 25th October. The early arrivals had to contend with temperatures in the high 30's as they were setting up camp. It was great to welcome Ron Imisides and Bob & Lydia David to camp. Long time no see. Charlie almost didn't make it after car problems at Mudgee delayed him for several days. A pleasant surprise was that 14 members of the Shoalhaven Bird Group were also visiting Camp Cypress for the initial weekend of our camp. It was good to catch up with Barry Virtue again.

At first the birds were congregating around any sources of water, with great numbers at some of the dams in the forest. 11 species of honeyeater, 20 Noisy Friarbirds, a number of Little Friarbirds, and hundreds of White-browed Woodswallows, along with one Australian Ringneck (Port Lincoln form) were seen in one two hour period at Bark Hut Dam on a hot morning. Also an Emu came down to drink and much to my amazement squatted down on its

heels to get at the water. (Remember that Emu cannot walk backwards). Each evening birds came to the sprinkler watering the grass in the caravan area, including a Black-eared Cuckoo and Double-barred Finches as well as numerous honeyeaters.

Monday morning saw a change in the weather with steady rain making bird watching almost impossible. Boredom got the better of us in the afternoon and we travelled along the Coonamble Road (all bitumen) to a lagoon where Betty had seen large numbers of birds. Many of the floodways on the road were already beginning to fill with water and many of the birds had dispersed.

Next day dawned much better as we set off for Bark Hut Dam. We were very disappointed as all the birds had now dispersed as there were plenty of other

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sources of water. A check of another dam further along the same road showed the same thing. The afternoon saw us heading along the Pilliga Road to Kenebri. Not long after leaving Baradine we started closely watching an ominous black cloud in the northwest, which got blacker and closer the further we travelled. As we left the bitumen for the forest the rain started in earnest and we perforce had to return to the bitumen. Only 1-2km back towards Baradine it was dark like night with heavy rain, but the large number of birds hawking for insects over the road were incredible: White-throated Needletails, Forktail Swifts, Sacred Kingfishers, Dollar Birds, woodswallows of various kinds amongst others. Most of us retreated to camp but Neil W with Penny following along, decided that the road would be OK to get to Trapyard Dam on a nearby forest road. Everything went fine until he tried to turn round to return to the road. Bogged!! Nothing was to any avail, they were firmly stuck. Penny and Martin returned in the by now torrential rain to fetch help in the way of the NRMA ie Ron with his trusty ute. Arriving and one good pull and they were out.

From 3pm that afternoon until 10pm that night Baradine recorded 68mm of rain. In that flat country this spelt flooding. The camp ground was awash as we left the Hales' and Cousin's cabin after the get together, to paddle back to vans and tents. Even the recycling crates ready for the next days garbo's were almost floating down the road. Leaks long forgotten were found in tents and vans.

Due to the rain, the next day we kept to the main roads and went via Coonabarabran and the Newell Hwy to the Sandstone Caves, an Aboriginal Heritage site, of spectacular rock formations with views across the plains to the north. The lowest layer of sandstone was very friable and crumbled on contact leaving caverns beneath the exposed upper layers. Striated Pardalotes were seen excavating a nest hole in the sandstone cliffs at one point. Returning through the forest we found that the road showed plenty of evidence of the ferocity of the rain with sand washed into many dips and washouts in many places along the edges, which got worse near Baradine.

Another day another outing this time west of Baradine towards the Warrumbungle foothills. The road crossed many creeks and provided some fun as we crossed the flooded causeways. Travelling through the grain fields we recorded many different birds including cockatiels, Rufous and Brown Songlarks, Horsfield's Bushlark, Fairy Martins

getting mud from a puddle in the road, Brush Cuckoo, Spotted Harrier and Red-winged Parrot. At one point it looked as though Betty, in her trusty corolla, would have to turn back due to the water flowing over the road on a corner, but a closer inspection revealed nothing too deep, and it was safely traversed. Lunch was had at a lookout in the Warrumbungle foothills after an interesting standoff with a large bull loose on the road.

Every day much time was spent by individuals at either the Square-tailed Kite's nest or the Spotted Bowerbird's bower at either end of the same street in the town. Bruce and Josh almost lived with the kites, which were feeding two young in the nest. Many were the photos taken of both, and some other interesting birds seen while waiting for the adult kites to return.

Almost our last day, and we headed out into the forest to places that IBOC had camped at in the past. We hoped to call in a Barking Owl, but no luck. We made a long sweep through the forest visiting The Aloes Picnic Area, Rocky Creek Mill Site, and Salt Caves where there are splendid new facilities. Camping is prohibited in the forest which is now a National Park. Salt Caves Dam showed the effect of the rain with a huge washaway behind the spillway. Returning to camp it was only the efforts of Neil McKinley and front wheel drive that saved Betty from a long trip round, when a creek with a deep sand build up blocked the way. Calling at Bark Hut Dam once again, there were still no birds to be seen.

It was decided that our last day would be a trip out to Odells Crossing where good birding had been reported since the rain. We were not disappointed, with Diamond Firetails, Speckled Warbler, Musk Lorikeet, White-throated Gerygone, and Olive-backed Oriole, amongst others. That night we had our one and only get-together under the stars, and what stars. Capping it all I heard a Southern Boobook calling as I went to bed. It must have been very close.

A great camp in a unique environment of mixed Callitris Pine and Eucalyptus forest bordered by paddocks of grain with some dams and lagoons. The effect of previous fires was plain to see in the northern parts of the forest with only the eucalypts regenerating and in some places only low heath. I was sorry to read in the paper this week that a further 850ha of the NW forest had been burnt already.

The Camp's Bird List will appear in the next News. Thanks once again to Betty for another great Camp