



*"One Good Tern
Deserves Another"*

The Newsletter of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56 FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519
Founded in 1977. website www.iboc.org.au

I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

Issue No. 311 February 2008

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$30 SINGLE \$25. JUNIOR \$5. Please pay Bronwyn Wilson, our Treasurer, by cash, cheque or mail order

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FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS February 2008 MID-WEEK

WALK – Wednesday 6th February. 5.30pm – Windang. Leader Chris Bogaert.
Meet under the pine trees on the north side of Windang Estuary, east of the bridge, at 5.30pm. Bring along a picnic supper for after the walk. At Windang take Acacia St east off Windang Rd, then take second right (south), Waratah St. Ahead of you should be the combined entrance to Windang caravan Park & Windang Surf Club. Follow the arrow towards the surf club and meet at the eastern end of the Norfolk Island Pines.

CLUB MEETING – Monday 11th February 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall. Speakers: Chris Brandis and a Consultant for the Killalea Accommodation Development. Please remember to bring a plate of goodies and your cup for supper.

MONTHLY OUTING –Saturday 16th February 2008 Robertson Rainforest & Belmore Falls: Leader Betty Hudson.

Meet at the entrance to Robertson Rainforest Reserve at **8.00am sharp.**

To reach the reserve turn left immediately after the Robertson pub, cross the railway and turn left again. Park cars on the grass by the entrance. This will be a short walk before we move onto Belmore Falls. Morning tea & lunch will be by the vehicles.

I aim to finish after an early lunch or if the day is cool and anyone is interested we could continue to Fitzroy Falls Dam. Betty's mobile number is 0423 892 945

COMMITTEE MEETING This will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 19th February at the Cashman's, 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519 4284 0538. Members of the club are always welcomed to attend Committee Meetings

MARCH NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is Thursday 21st February. Please send items to the editor, cashman5@bigpond.com (Please note our newish email address) or mail them to 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519



‘How to tell whether you are your Mum’s favourite !’

Penny Potter found this great photo on the web

APRIL CAMP 19 to 26 April at the Grenfell Caravan Park, some 300 k from Wollongong. There are just 3 cabins available, but plenty of room for tents and vans. There are also motels in the town. More details next month. But to book early, phone the Park (02) 6364 1194. More information too, from Betty Hudson or the editor

IBOC TALE COVERTS Greenshank vs. Marsh Sandpiper

Martin Cocker

Recently there have been reports of Marsh Sandpipers from Why Juck Bay on Lake Illawarra. This ID, from photos, has subsequently proved to be incorrect. In case others may be drawn into the same incorrect assumptions this edition of “Tale Coverts” points out some tips to separate these sometimes confusing species. Firstly it is apparent that shorebirds or waders as transcontinental migrants are facing major universal challenges through

climate change and loss of habitat. In our own domain the current drought and the improved environment of Lake Illawarra will promote population movements and provide added attractions for these birds to “stopover” in our area. Improved identification skills will enhance our collective knowledge of the impact of these pressures and changes on these populations.

First the sighting at Lake Illawarra of Greenshank:



Length: 30-35cm (Compared to Bar Tailed Godwit of 37-39cm)

Australian Population Estimate: 19,000

A shorebird with long neck and legs, and long tapering slightly upturned bill.

Legs pale greenish grey.

Pale plumage with slight dark mark before and behind eye, upper parts pale grey brown with white underparts with streaking on sides of breast.

In flight shows white rump and white wedge up back which contrast with dark unbarred wings. Feet extend beyond tip of tail.

Seen at tidal flats.

This bird is described in *A Handbook of Birds found in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Adjacent Tablelands* by Chafer, Brandis and Wright. (Buy your copy at IBOC library!)- as a locally common summer migrant with flocks of up to 60 birds in Lake Illawarra and Shoalhaven Heads.

Now for the Marsh Sandpiper



This bird is sometimes called the “Little Greenshank” so there is an excuse for confusion!

Length 22-26cm

Australian Population Estimate: 9,000

A shorebird with very long legs, long neck and long needle shaped bill.

Whiter than Greenshank, heavily streaked crown and white supercilium

In flight shows white rump and white streak up back which contrast with dark unbarred wings. Feet extend beyond tail much further than Greenshank and has much sharper pointed wings. Occurs in fresh or saltwater wetlands avoiding intertidal mud flats

This bird is described in *A Handbook of Birds found in the Illawarra* as a rare summer migrant with one to seven birds recorded each year from Killalea, Lake Illawarra, Shellharbour Swamp and Lake Wollumboola

Hope this helps folks to clear up what can be a difficult ID. Good Birding and send in all your records to: cocker@speedlink.com.au

References: *Shorebirds of Australia* by Geering, Agnew and Harding
Field Guide to the Birds of Australia by Pizzey and Knight
The Shorebird Guide by O'Brien, Crossley and Karlson

Surveying at Scotia

At the end of September 2007, I spent a week in the Australian Wildlife Conservancy property of Scotia surveying for the endangered Black-eared Miner, a few of which had been released from the nearby Gluepot area several years ago trying to establish as many independent populations around the mallee region as possible. Scotia is on the NSW/SA border some 100 Km north of Wentworth and was once an Earth Sanctuary run by Warmsley, the cat hat man, and is mainly there to save endangered mammals. This was the third of a 3 week project with some 40 people taking part doing 6 days of surveying after an initial introduction into using a GPS to negotiate 6 to 8 km transects through the, almost, featureless mallee. We were guided by Richard Jordan, who many remember from Barren Grounds and Emu Tours, but who now organises surveys for the AWC. We were well accommodated and took turns to prepare the main meal at night with the afternoons often spent birding looking for missed species others had seen.

We recorded many other birds as we went also and most people saw mallee species including Gilbert's Whistler, Southern Scrub Robin, Shy Heathwren and Striated Grasswren with some lucky ones seeing Spotted and Owlet Nightjars, but Mallee Fowl was only seen by a lucky few. Although very dry, with birds quite sparse, the group saw 84 species within the sanctuary, and even the

Chris Brandis

inexperienced people partnered with the more experienced saw most of the species. We found a few Black-eared Miners, but mostly in the company of Yellow-throated Miners with hybrids of various amounts of each. Hybridising with the more common Yellow-throated Miner appears to be one of the main causes of decline of a species that was confined to old mallee without open areas but the development of grazing opening up many of the areas letting in the Yellow-throated Miners. These surveys will indicate if it is worth continuing to relocate birds in good areas but within close proximity of Yellow-throated Miners and under what conditions Black-eared Miners survive best.

Some of the people managing the place gave talks on what was being achieved within the large feral free enclosures and it was great to go spotlighting and seeing Greater Bilbies, Bridled Nailtail Wallaby, Burrowing Betong (Boodie), Brush-tailed Betong (Woylie) and Rufous Hare Wallaby (Mala) breeding so well that you had to be careful driving around not to run over them. There were also Numbats and I was lucky enough to see one of these run across the air field one afternoon; it is amazing what a difference no cats and foxes make with some input from the dedicated ecologists that live in quite some isolation and make it all happen. The ground in places is ploughed up by Bilbies looking for

food which allows vegetable matter to become buried and rain to enter the soil with minimal run off. It will be interesting to see what Australian mallee use to be like before white man.

While travelling there and back I managed to atlas 3 grids that had not been covered before but these required

BIRDING ABROAD Brazil

David and Elizabeth Winterbottom have often been overseas to look at birds and other things. Here is a vignette from a voyage they made in August 2007.

The Iguacu Falls, between Brazil and Argentina near the border with Paraguay, are the most spectacular we have ever seen. Of course the scene was heightened by watching the Great Dusky Swifts coming into roost behind the waterfall and Parakeets apparently flying straight into the walls of the cliff to disappear into tiny crevices. Then an obliging Bat Falcon seemed to supervising matters with busy Snail Hawks patrolling the rapids above and Black Vultures gathering below.

The Pantanal is a huge seasonal swamp with an area of 100,000 square kilometres! The banks of the waterways and ponds were crammed with caimans – there were literally thousands of them in view. They eat only fish and so took no notice of the ten different species of Heron we saw, nor the four species of Ibis, the storks, Limpkins or the Roseate Spoonbills, which potted around in between them. The dozens of Capybaras, juicy prey for any other crocodile, were equally ignored. The most striking of the water birds is the Sun Bittern which exhibits large bright

travelling along farm tracks and fence lines for up to 15 km as there were no roads through the areas.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy have a number of sanctuaries around Australia and mostly available to volunteers so for a not so relaxing holiday I recommend spending time at one.

David Winterbottom

yellow “suns” on its wings when taking off.

The huge Southern Screamers look like oversized geese but there were few ducks – we saw the beautiful White-faced Whistling Duck, Brazilian Teal and that farmyard ancestor, the Muscovy. Black, Turkey and Yellow-headed Vultures were much in evidence overhead, as were the similar sized Great Black Hawk together with Plumbeous Kites, Roadside, Savannah, Black-collared and Crane Hawks. The most common raptors, especially near settlements, were the noisy Southern Caracaras.

Most unusual to our eyes were the Chaco Chachalacas, Guans, Piping Guans and Curassows. All huge birds, mostly black, ground dwelling and noisy particularly at dusk when they fly into trees to roost. Cowbirds and three species of Oropendula – striking birds also with loud calls – were not quite as common as their cousins the Chopi Blackbirds. Hummingbirds, always difficult, were not as common as expected but have lovely names – White-tailed Goldenthrout, Glittering-throated Emerald and Blue-tufted Starthroat were all seen.

The forests make for difficult birding. There are Antbirds, Antthrushes, Antpittas, Antshrikes, Antwrens and Tinamous mostly skulking in the undergrowth and Woodcreepers, Spinetails, Treehunters, Foliage Gleaners sidling through the middle storey with Manakins, Flycatchers, Tyrants, Tyrannulets and Tanagers flitting mostly in the canopy. Crick go your necks!

However, pride of place must go to the Psittacidae. The Hyacinth Macaw was

perhaps the most gorgeous, but the Red and Green and the Yellow-collared Macaws are great too. Then seeing the White-eyed, Peach-fronted, Black-hooded, Monk, Yellow-chevroned Parakeets and Blue-headed, Scaly-headed and Blue-fronted Parrots, leaves one dizzy and a little bemused. Finally the bizarre, but common, Toco Toucan, the smaller Yellow-ridged Toucan and the Blue-crowned Trogon add to the kaleidoscope of colour and sense of wonder.



Hyacinth Macaw

Photo David Winterbottom

A Few More Special Recoveries of Banded Birds. Dave Thomson

In earlier newsletters, most recently April 2006, we've listed some interesting records of birds banded and then turning up a long way from the banding place, a long time after banding, recaptured many times and so on. These records give us a sense of the lifespan and mobility of some of our birds. *Corella*, the journal of the Australian Bird Study Association from which

these records were taken, continues to show interesting records and below are a few from the *Corellas* of March '06 (Vol 30 No 1) to Sept '07 (Vol 31 No3/4. As before, "oldest" means the longest time since original banding and "furthest" means the greatest distance from the banding place, both for the species concerned. The website of the ABSA, www.absa.asn.au, lists the oldest /

furthest records for bird species banded and recaptured.

Southern Giant-Petrel. Banded in March, 1970 on Macquarie Is and recovered dead at banding place in June 2006, 36 years later. Oldest.. (*Corella Vol 31/No 1*).

Herald Petrel. Banded on Raine Is, Qld in July 1984 and recaptured on Mauritius, Indian Ocean, in April 2006, 21 ½ years after banding and 9,186 km away. Oldest **and** furthest. (*Cor.31/2*).

Wandering Albatross. Banded as adult on Crozet Islands, Indian Ocean in Jan 1962 and recovered dead on beach, Yorke Peninsula, SA, in Jan 2006, 44 years after banding. Oldest. (*Cor.30/1*).

Red-tailed Tropicbird. Banded as nestling on Raine Is, Qld, in April 1984 and recaptured twice at banding place, latest in Dec 2006, over 22 years after banding. Oldest. (*Cor.31/1*)

Australian White Ibis. Nestling banded on Phillip Is, Vic, in Sept 1980 and recovered dead on Pt King Beach, Vic, in Oct 2006, only 53 km away but 26 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.31/1*).

Pied Oystercatcher. Adult banded at South Arm Neck, Tas, in Oct, 1977 and noted in field nearby in Dec, 2004, 27 years after banding. Oldest. (*Cor.31/1*).

And a crop of fairy-wren records.

Splendid Fairy-wren. Immature banded near Capel, WA, in Nov, 1990 and recaptured at banding place in Nov 2001, 11 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.31/2*)

Variiegated Fairy-wren. Adult banded at Bungwahl, NSW, in Feb 1993 and observed in field at banding place in March 2002, 9 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.31/2*).

Red-winged Fairy-wren. Nestling banded at Middlesex Study Centre, WA, in Nov 1990 and recaptured at banding place in April, 2000, over 9 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.31/2*).

White-winged Fairy-wren. Adult banded at Brookfield CP, SA, in Dec, 1993 and recaptured at banding place in Dec, 1999, 6 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.31/2*).

Red-backed Fairy-wren. Adult banded at Mt Cotton, Qld, in June 1990 and recaptured at banding place in Jan, 1995, 4 ½ years later. Oldest. (*Cor.31/2*).

Inland Thornbill. Immature banded at Charcoal Tank NR, West Wyalong, in Dec 1989 and recaptured at banding place 13 times, most recently in June 1998. (*Cor.31/2*).

Striated Thornbill. Adult banded at Bridgewater, SA, in Feb, 1978 and recaptured at banding place in Aug, 2001, 23 ½ years after banding. Oldest. (*Cor.31/3.4*).

White-browed Babbler. Adult banded at Charcoal Tank NR, West Wyalong, in May, 1996 and recaptured at banding place 8 times, most recently in Oct, 2006, 10 ½ years after banding. (*Cor.31/2*).

Silvereye. Adult banded at Bridgewater, SA, in April 1981 and recaptured at banding place in Dec, 1999, 18 ½ years after banding. Oldest. (*Cor.31/3.4*).

Common Myna. Immature banded at Deakin, ACT, in Feb 1995 and recovered dead at Deakin in April 2007, 12 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.31/3.4*).

Lord Howe: Here we come !!

A group of 28 IBOC club members and friends are setting off on Saturday 9th Feb for a week's birding on Lord Howe Island. Have fun! And tell us all about it! Make sure you also have a go at snorkling among the tropical fish at Ned's Beach. They are fantastic !

IBOC UNUSUAL/INTERESTING SIGHTINGS DECEMBER 2007

Compiled by Martin Cocker

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SPECIES	NUMBER	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Black Swan	50	3-Dec	Purrah Bay, Kanahooka	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Pink-eared Duck	3	2-Jan	Tallawarra Ash Ponds	wetland	Chris Brandis
Great Crested Grebe	2	23-Dec	Fitzroy Falls Reservoir	scrub/water	Nigel Jackett
Darter	2. M and F	21-Dec	Macquarie Rivulet	river side	Michelle Rower
Great Egret	3	7-Dec	Balorang	creek side	Lorraine Pincus
Striated Heron	2	3-Dec	Minnamurra River	creek side	Lorraine Pincus
Striated Heron	1	9-Dec	Koonawarra Bay	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Striated Heron	1	9-Dec	Why Juck Bay	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Striated Heron	2	17-Dec	Lake Illawarra Entrance	coastal	Tera Wheway
Striated Heron	1	30-Dec	Mullet Creek, Kanahooka	estuarine	Lorraine Pincus
Striated Heron	1	1-Jan	Why Juck Bay	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Nankeen night Heron	2	2-Jan	Tallawarra Ash Ponds	wetland	Chris Brandis
Osprey	2	22-Dec	Comerong Island	nesting behaviour	Nigel Jackett
Pacific Baza	1	17-Dec	Devil's Glen, Kangaroo Valley	rural	Nigel Jackett
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	1-Jan	Kanahooka Point	overhead	Martin Cocker
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	2-Jan	Unanderra	overhead	Martin Cocker
Australian Hobby	1	11-Dec	Figtree	urban	Lorraine Pincus
Australian Hobby	1	16-Dec	Windang Estuary	overhead	Martin Cocker
Peregrine Falcon	1	1-Dec	Mount Warrigal	overhead	Norma Burke
Peregrine Falcon	1	23-Dec	Kanahooka Point	overhead	Martin Cocker
Nankeen Kestrel	2 Adult, 4 fledglings	4-Jan	Figtree	suburban	Lorraine Pincus
Black-tailed Native-hen	1	29/10, 1/11	Why Juck Bay	estuarine	Gleniss Wellings
Latham's Snipe	2	9-Dec	Purrah Bay, Kanahooka	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Bar-tailed Godwit	10	9-Dec	Why Juck Bay	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Common Greenshank	4	9-Dec	Why Juck Bay	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Common Greenshank	3	1-Jan	Why Juck Bay	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	24-Dec	Little Lake, juvenile bird	estuarine	Michelle Rower
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	17	3-Dec	Purrah Bay, Kanahooka	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	200+	2-Jan	Tallawarra Ash Ponds	wetland	Chris Brandis
Curlew Sandpiper	1	2-Jan	Tallawarra Ash Ponds	wetland	Chris Brandis
Curlew Sandpiper	1	9-Dec	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	Martin, Penny Potter
Pied Oystercatcher	8	16-Dec	Windang Estuary	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Black-winged Stilt	2 plus 1 chick	12-Dec	Why Juck Bay	estuarine	Lorraine Pincus
Black-winged Stilt	10+3 chicks	5-Jan	Hooka Point	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Grey Plover	1	22-Dec	Comerong Island	estuarine	Nigel Jackett
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	9-Dec	Bellambi Lagoon	lake side	Tom and Joan Wylie
Kelp Gull	1. Juvenile	24-Dec	Little Lake	estuarine	Michelle Rower
Crested Tern	70	16-Dec	Windang Estuary	estuarine	Martin Cocker
Little Tern	2	22-Dec	Comerong Island	estuarine	Nigel Jackett

Brush Bronzewing	1	23-Dec	Barren Grounds	heath/forest	Nigel Jackett
Long-billed Corella	few	13-Dec	Barrack Point	parkland	Michelle Rower
Long-billed Corella	150+	22-Dec	Shellharbour Square	parkland	Norma Burke
Musk Lorikeet	few	13-Dec	Shellharbour	parkland	Michelle Rower
Superb Parrot	1	18-Dec	Lake Illawarra High School	Escape??	Cheryl Akhurst
Ground Parrot	1	23-Dec	Budderoo National Park	forest	Nigel Jackett
Brush Cuckoo	2	23-Dec	Black Ash Reserve	forest	Nigel Jackett
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	3-Dec	Purrah Bay, Kanahooka	parkland	Martin Cocker
Powerful Owl	1	14/11	Bass Point	woodland	IBOC
Azure Kingfisher	1	21-Dec	Macquarie Rivulet	river side	Michelle Rower
Sacred Kingfisher	1	November	Blackbutt Reserve	parkland	Michelle Rower
Sacred Kingfisher	1	26-Dec	Jerra Dam	water edge	Tera Wheway
Sacred Kingfisher	1	3-Jan	Figtree	suburban	Lorraine Pincus
Sacred Kingfisher	1	2-Jan	Mullet Creek, Dapto	water edge	Martin Cocker
Red-browed Trecreeper	1	23-Dec	Barren Grounds	heath/forest	Nigel Jackett
Southern Emu-wren	5	23-Dec	Budderoo National Park	forest	Nigel Jackett
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	2	23-Dec	Black Ash Reserve	forest	Nigel Jackett
Large-billed Scrubwren	2	23-Dec	Black Ash Reserve	forest	Nigel Jackett
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	23-Dec	Barren Grounds	heath/forest	Nigel Jackett
White-plumed Honeyeater	Numerous	21-Dec	Macquarie Rivulet, feeding young.	river side	Michelle Rower
White-fronted Chat	6	22-Dec	Comerong Island	estuarine	Nigel Jackett
Flame Robin	2	23-Dec	Budderoo National Park	forest	Nigel Jackett
Varied Sittella	1	23-Dec	Fitzroy Falls Reservoir	scrub/water	Nigel Jackett
White-winged Triller	1, female	1-Dec	Dapto	urban	Bruce O'Brien
White-winged Triller	1, male	9-Dec	Why Juck Bay	parkland	Martin Cocker
Beautiful Firetail	1	23-Dec	Barren Grounds	heath/forest	Nigel Jackett
Common Blackbird	1	28-Nov	Blackbutt Reserve	parkland	Norma Burke

Nigel Jackett reports “Osprey1-2, possibly have a nest on the island as 1 or 2 Osprey were catching fish in the lagoon and heading to the same spot on the island”. This would certainly be a new record as the southern most breeding record for NSW is currently Narrabeen Lakes. So if you are visiting the Shoalhaven Heads/ Comerong Island area then keep your eyes open!

Also Lorraine Pincus was lucky enough to see a pair of Nankeen Kestrels with four fledglings in the Figtree area. All reports of successful breeding are welcome and now is the time, particularly keep careful note of any fledgling and immature raptors in your area.

If you would like to join the 30+ members who have given me their email address and so receive more regular updates than is possible through the Newsletter then please advise me: cocker@speedlink.com.au.

Happy New Year and Good Birding!

Volunteers!

Birds Australia seeks all kinds of volunteers, for short or long term to help out at the Discovery Centre at the Sydney Olympic Park. See Chris Brandis for more details