



"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

I.B.O.C. NEWS

<http://www.iboc.org.au/>

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

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 JUNE 2007

CLUB MEETING – Monday 11th June 2007 - 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall - Col Markham will be presenting some of the photos of birds and animals he took on his trip to Kenya. **Please remember to bring a mug and a small plate for supper afterwards.**

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 13th June 2007 – Hooka Point – Chris Brandis Meet at the car park at the end of Sussex, approaching from the west, and Holborn, from the east, Streets at 9 am for a walk out along Hooka Point and Hooka Creek. My mobile no. is 0427 962837. Bring morning tea, hats, sunscreen etc.

JUNE MONTHLY OUTING - Saturday 16th June 2007. Booderee National Park, Jervis Bay - Leader Betty Hudson. Meet at the car park at the Visitors Centre at the entrance to the National Park on the Jervis Bay Road. at 9.00am. We will drive into the park to Murray's Beach and then walk through the coastal forest and heath to the cliffs overlooking the ocean. The actual walk will depend on the weather. We will return to the cars and drive to the Botanic Garden and Lake Windermere for lunch and a short afternoon walk. To reach Jervis Bay take the left turn off the Princes Hwy south of Nowra, just after passing Falls Creek. Continue along this road until you reach the park entrance. It is suggested that we car pool as there is an admission fee to enter the park

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 19th June, at 7.30pm at the home of Joan and Tom Wylie, 4 Daphne St, Corrimal (Tel: 4284 2051). As usual, members are invited to attend.

JULY 2007 NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 21st June**. Please don't leave submitting your contributions to the last minute and where possible please submit by email to John Cashman: cashmansjr@bigpond.com.

REPORT ON MAY MEETING

It Builds A Nest...Lays Eggs...Has A Bill...But It Isn't A Bird!

Val Dolan

Speaker:Dr Tom Grant

When a specimen of this animal was taken to England in the late 1700s people thought they were being tricked by a composite of bird and animal. Indeed although Aborigines told settlers that these creatures lay eggs this was not believed. In an attempt to 'study' the animals in the early days of Queensland one man wrote that he had killed 1300 males and the same number of females! The same person removed a platypus from its pond and experimented to see how far it could walk to return, until it died trying.

Our guest speaker, Dr Tom Grant, has been studying the platypus for over 35 years. He told us these stories and was obviously appalled. When he asked for a show of hands from the audience of 50 most indicated that they had seen a platypus in the wild. Although it has a bill, lays eggs which develop like a bird's and has a leg spur in the male, it is undoubtedly a mammal. Scientists believe it is related to or descended from an ancient Patagonian animal now found only in fossil form. While there is a considerable difference in fur colouration and size from Queensland to Tasmania and from the eastern part of NSW to the Murray Basin they appear to be the same species. All close their eyes and ears when swimming and have grinding pads to crush their food, which can only be eaten under water. They must eat one third of their body weight daily to survive. In the wild much of this food is tiny in the form of insect larvae but in captivity they thrive on yabbies.

In 1986 scientists thought that the mucous covered nerve endings in the bill of the platypus worked in a similar way to the electric field that sharks and rays make use of in their nerve endings and that this assisted in the collection of tiny food items. The definitive use of the spur on the males' hind leg remains debateable too. Dr Grant showed us diagrams of the formation of the spur and photographic evidence of the swelling induced by picking up a male in the breeding season. He also showed diagrams of burrows and nests, explaining that a nest may be abandoned if infested with ticks .

A lively question time followed the presentation. Evidence has been found of a 21 year old female still breeding but generally 12 to 14 year olds are more common. A couple of reports have been received of Wedge-tailed Eagles carrying off platypus but their most common predator is the fox, which preys on them when they move overland. People who inadvertently catch a platypus while fishing and simply cut the line can cause slow and painful death. Loss of habitat, bank erosion, and shrinking water supply are all obvious problems.

Our members knew of platypus habitation of local creeks in the past. Kevin McGregor said there were two in American Creek at Figtree until 1988, when one was shot. On a happier note Dr Grant showed us photos of places on the Shoalhaven where several platypus are still thriving in spite of the 5 year drought.

Bruce O'Brien thanked our speaker on behalf of members and visitors for a most informative presentation.

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 11th May – Kelly's Falls
John Cashman

17 club members, 4 ladies - Val, Mary, Robyn and Jane, 5 couples - Joan and Tom, Tera and Neil, Brian and Barbara, Sylvia and David, Ross and Jann, and 3 men - Ted, tall Chris and John met for the walk. The club hadn't done this walk for a few years, though it was a favourite of a former long time member, Jack Heslop. Jack lived near-by and was delighted to take other bird watchers around his 'backyard'.

Joan had seen some birds on the road in, and we started back that way with sightings of Eastern Spinebill, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Crimson Rosellas, Rainbow Lorikeets and a flock of Little Corellas flew overhead. Then down to the falls which had a healthy stream of water pouring over them, and on towards Helensburg. Bird sightings were few, but there were magnificent views back to the falls, and down the valley to Bald Hill with the sea beyond. And the wildflowers were wonderful. Talk about an early spring: we saw creamy white Wattles, Egg and Bacon, Bottlebrush, Native Fuchsia, Flannel flowers starting to

bloom, and various other flowers that Sylvia and others could identify. All were wonderfully lush, as though the flowers had decided, 'It's been so dry, we are going to make the most of that recent rain!'

Ross recalled walking this way when he was in the Thirroul Cubs, and Scouts. They caught the train to Stanwell Park, and walked up to the Falls, quite a hike itself, then crossed the upper end of the valley, over the ridge, and down the far side through some properties to catch the train home from Otford. Ross said some of the property owners were a bit like hill-billies: ran a few horses and cows, but were pretty grumpy if they caught you. At these properties, he recalled, the Cubs and Scouts crept low behind lantana and shrubs, and scuttled quickly across open areas. Quite an adventure!

After morning tea, we set off on the loop track. Again bird sightings were few, but there were various honeyeaters, wattlebirds, a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, a White-throated Tree-creeper and others. There were a lot of trees and foliage and sometimes we could hear more birds than we could see. But it was magnificent country: huge sandstone crags, cliffs and boulders spray-painted delicately with lichens and mosses, stacks of Gynea lilies preparing for a towering display in spring, Flannel flowers that couldn't wait for spring, and the tans, oranges, grays and red-browns of angophoras - their limbs twisting and turning, as though as young trees they had seen extraordinary energetic dancing of aboriginal katachi men and wanted to preserve that memory for ever.

The last part of the loop walk was back along a fire trail, and a Spotted Pardalote, the ubiquitous magpie and Magpie-lark were seen, at least bringing our modest total up to a celebratory 21. Many thanks to Joan and Tom. Not a lot of birds, but a luscious walk!

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Spinebill
Little Corella	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Whipbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Red Wattlebird	Golden Whistler
Rainbow Lorikeet	Little Wattlebird	Magpie-lark
Crimson Rosella	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
White-throated Treecreeper	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Magpie



LORD HOWE ISLAND TRIP, FEBRUARY 2008

At the May monthly meeting a proposed Lord Howe Island trip was announced and a clipboard passed around for those interested in taking part to register. The response was excellent and immediate with 26 seats being taken up. As numbers for flights and accommodation are limited we had to act quickly to try and secure our preferred dates and we were lucky to be given our second choice. We will be spending 7 nights on the island in self catering accommodation from 9th-16th February 2008. We realise that not everyone can make it to meetings so if you missed out and would like to be included please call Barbara Hales on 4257 4431 immediately and we will do our best to a) take you with us, b) put you on a reserve list in case of cancellations or c) if there are more people than we can cope with, try and arrange a second group.

Cost is \$1,680 per person twin share which includes standard accommodation and airfare plus we have been quoted \$39 per person for travel insurance. Food, excursions etc. are extra.

Drenched in Darwin

Neil & Tera Wheway

We flew to Darwin for the last week in February for five nights; hopefully see the build up of the wet season thunderstorms and to do the odd bit of bird watching. Luckily we got to observe both. We landed late at night after a thunderstorm had passed; driving into town in the hire car debris on the roads was evidence of the storm's passing.

After enjoying a calorie loaded breakfast at the hotel in the company of the Penrith Panthers football team we headed off with binoculars into the Darwin sauna. The temperate was in low thirties with the humidity in the high nineties. Our first location was the sewerage works but unfortunately we were unable to gain access to them or the ponds to see any birds. Undaunted we drove to Lee Point to find any shore birds. By now it was getting very hot walking along the beach in the shade of trees. Red tailed Cockatoos flew among the beach casuarinas, but irritating shore birds remained unidentified. Leaving the hot beach for the shade of park nearby we were being entertained by Figbirds, Yellow Orioles and a Northern Fantail. Late in the afternoon driving past a bowling club car park Tera spotted Magpie Geese in the short grass. The remainder of this car park was over grown with very long grass full of seed heads. We returned to this car park many times to watch the Golden-headed Cisticola, Zebra Finch, Double-barred Finch, Crimson Finches and Chestnut-breasted Manikins.

Subsequent days followed in a similar vein. At Fogg Dam where the water was higher than on our dry season visits we spotted Large-billed Gerygone and Shining Flycatchers with the females chasing the males (what a life). Also there were the Jacanas, kites and egrets. A lone Jabiru flew in and landed in the water near a Great Egret. Tera's sister spotted a crocodile swimming between them but the bird's keen eyesight spotted it and the crocodile went hungry, but not the mosquitoes even with us well slathered in repellent they were well fed. A visit to Litchfield National Park had us seeing Red-backed Fairy-wrens and a Northern Rosella. Pheasant Coucals guarding their territory along the roadsides were smarter than cane toads which didn't get off the road in time for vehicles. At Howard Springs we went looking for Rainbow Pittas but spotted several Orange-footed Scrubfowl and a nest mound. Four metres diameter and over a metre high, "Slater" describes their mound 12 metres across and 3-5 metres high - an enormous undertaking by anyone's standard. We had just about given up because of heat and mozzie bites then found in the undergrowth Rainbow Pittas, well worth the afternoon exertions. One bird seen on several occasions was the Black Butcherbird which after much thumbing through the book was able to be identified. It was difficult because of its size compared with other butcherbirds we looked at crows, ravens etc. We jokingly thought that we had discovered a new species for Australia.

A must for any visitors to Darwin is an evening meal on the wharf with its underwater lights watching the large fish attracted by the lights to feed on fish and chips thrown over into the water. Arrive early to get a table. It is truly a wonderful ambiance; it was from here we watched a storm build up the lightening was a wonderful show. Leaving the eating area we watched a Reef Egret on a boat mooring rope about 300mm above the water. Using the rope as a trapeze the egret swung down and was plucking small fish off the surface of the water. It never missed. So engrossed we failed to see the storm approaching. Within seconds the heavens opened with horizontal rain soaked to the skin we battled to car and the sanctuary of the hotel. Windscreen wipers are totally useless in such conditions.

We left Darwin on the Ghan on a two night journey to Adelaide. Luckily we did because a few days later the wet started in earnest with flooding and the railway cut off at Adelaide River. A low depression from cyclone George caused rainfalls not seen for several years according to Tera's sister who has lived in Darwin for many years. Train travel either on the Indian Pacific or the Ghan is to be recommended. It is a reminder of days gone by when life was lived at slower pace. It is a civilized way to travel in luxury with delicious meals and attentive staff. Traveling along the track we never forgot to be on the lookout for birds: Budgies, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo and many raptors were left unidentified because of fleeting glimpses and lack of knowledge.

Whilst northern Australia during the wet season is hot sticky and uncomfortable it does have its compensations. Sitting on the wharf eating fish and chips watching storm clouds rolling in. Watching the sunset over Fanny Bay while enjoying dinner in the gardens of the Darwin Sailing Club and of course a refreshing cool drink of amber fluid. What bird watching trip would be complete without a glass of port or two. Last but not least is the wonderful variety of colourful birds that we are lucky to be able to observe. One bird not seen but always looked for is the Gouldian Finch, but having purchased a stubby holder with its picture on I can drink a beer and dream.....

Top end bird list

Orange-footed Scrubfowl	Pied Imperial-Pigeon	Grey Whistler
Magpie Goose	Red-tailed Black-cockatoo	Grey Shrike-thrush
Australian Shelduck	Galah	Broad-billed Flycatcher
Australian Darter	Little Corella	Leaden Flycatcher
Little Pied Cormorant	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Shining Flycatcher
Little Black Cormorant	Red-collared Lorikeet	Restless Flycatcher
Little Egret	Red-winged Parrot	Magpie-lark
Eastern Reef Egret	Northern Rosella	Northern Fantail
Pied Heron	Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	Willie Wagtail
Great Egret	Pheasant Coucal	Spangled Drongo
Nankeen Night Heron	Azure Kingfisher	White-Bellied Cuckoo-shrike
Straw-necked Ibis	Blue-winged Kookaburra	Varied Triller
Royal Spoonbill	Forest Kingfisher	Yellow Oriole
Black-necked Stork	Sacred Kingfisher	Olive-backed Oriole
Whistling Kite	Rainbow Bee-eater	Figbird
Brahminy Kite	Dollarbird	White-breasted Woodswallow
White-bellied Sea-eagle	Rainbow Pitta	Black Butcherbird
Brown Falcon	Red-backed Fairy-wren	Pied Butcherbird
Ruddy Turnstone	Large-billed Gerygone	Torresian Crow
Comb-crested Jacana	Silver-crowned Friarbird	Zebra Finch
Bush Stone-curler	Little Friarbird	Double-barred Finch
Pacific Golden Plover	White-gaped Honeyeater	Crimson Finch
Masked Lapwing	Bar-breasted Honeyeater	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
Silver Gull	Rufous-banded Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
Emerald Dove	Rufous Throated Honeyeater	Golden-headed Cisticola
Peaceful Dove	Dusky Honeyeater	
Bar-shouldered Dove	Grey-crowned Babbler	

Heathcote National Park, Monthly Walk, 20th May 2007

Neil Wheway

It was on a pristine autumn morning that 15 of us gathered for our trek into the park. It was an easy stroll for the first few hundred metres, then after leaping over boulders, we clambered down to a fire trail. The rain on the previous Friday had left the bush clean and washed. Wandering along past Lake Toolooma the trees seemed to be alive with Eastern Spinebills and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. At the northern end of the lake a dam was sighted, as well as, the ruins of an old pumping station, the old boiler and foundations with an old pipe line going up the cliff face. It was thought that this facility was constructed to supply water for the trains at Waterfall railway station in the bygone era of steam trains. On this section there was no shortage of Red Wattlebirds.

Shortly after passing the pipeline a Pilotbird was spotted high upon a rock face; on the lake Swamp Hens and a couple of Black Ducks. We wandered through Camp Coutts scout camp, and took morning tea at Coutts Creek, the warm sun was very pleasant after walking in the shade past Lake Toolooma. It was here that we were joined by a pair of White-eared Honeyeaters

After leaving Coutts Creek we continued to the power transmission line and began the slow walk up the steep winding track between Lake Toolooma and the Westmacott Ridge. A 4WD vehicle had left tracks and rubber on some of the rocks, evidence of the steep difficult terrain. On one very steep section there were still some fragments of bitumen to be seen. It could well have been that bitumen was used to assist and help drivers when the power lines were inspected from the ground. In this modern age they fly helicopters along the lines completing the job much faster and easier. Reaching the top, and enjoying the view, we had to walk down the other side, with no maintenance the track had become deeply scoured by heavy rain.

On reaching Heathcote Creek we left the fire trail, and headed off along a narrow walking track to Kingfisher Pool. Sadly there were no kingfishers that morning. However the toilet and picnic table were a welcome relief for some walkers. Lunch was eaten in this idyllic spot some using the table, others sitting on the rocks at the edge of the creek.

After crossing Heathcote Creek, pestered with biting little bush flies, we turned off the fire trail walking through shoulder high undergrowth back to the first fire trail track. It was then we realized that what had been climbed down, we must climb back up. The slow slow climb up with many stops to get our breath back, enabled us to admire the Eucalypts, Angophoras and rocks we had to climb and scramble amongst on the way back to finish the walk.

14 finished the walk. Brian Kelly a long time club member had to return home at morning tea time for a luncheon engagement. For the members who knew Brian it a pleasant surprise for them to see him again.

It was a very pleasant day with 35 birds seen. Also seen were many noisy silver birds flying over head heading for Mascot.

Pacific Black Duck	Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Yellow Robin
Little Pied Cormorant	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Whipbird
Australian Pelican	Pilotbird	Golden Whistler
White-faced Heron	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Brown Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Purple Swamphen	Yellow Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Dusky Moorhen	Red Wattlebird	Pied Butcherbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Rainbow Lorikeet	White-eared Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Australia King-Parrot	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Crimson Rosella	New Holland Honeyeater	Silvereye
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Spinebill	

Birds Around Berry - November 2004**Bob ASHFORD**

“What are we stopping for?” asked one of the kids in the back seat. I pointed to the ginger horse in the paddock. On its back stood an Australian Raven sporting what appeared to be a large bushy ginger moustache. Seemingly oblivious to the abuse its body was receiving the horse grazed happily on while the Raven systematically tugged hair from its mane and tail. By the time he had a beakful the Raven did indeed sport a very fetching moustache! Watching the bird's antics kept us all amused for several minutes until one of the kids asked “Where are we going now?”

As we drove off and climbed the bends of Berry Mountain I was asked another question “Are we there yet?” To entertain the kids I told them why October was such a great month for birdwatching. “It's spring and birds are easy to see and hear because they are busy and too distracted to worry about us birders as they go about their courting, collecting nesting material and looking after demanding kids!”

At Cambewarra Lookout the kids ran around exploring while I gratefully sipped a latte. Almost immediately a magnificent Wedge-tailed Eagle ‘whooshed’ into view. Another slowly circled in the sky not so far away. The first one gave us patrons a reckless impersonation of one of those stomach-churning fun-fair roller coasters. Intent on impressing its mate it climbed high in the sky where it tucked in its wings and hurtled earthwards until just before the tree canopy when it would pull back the flaps and shoot skyward again. As it reached the point where gravity finally conquered motion it would tip, briefly hang in the air and then hurtle earthward again. Utterly entranced I returned to my cold latte to be interrupted by one of the kids asking ‘Can we go to Maccas?’

As they munched their way through their ‘Maccas’ I told them about the Bush Stone Curlew that Alan Henigan had emailed me about earlier in the month. He had heard the birds calling just above his house in Sabal Close. Bush Stone Curlews used to be found in the Shoalhaven but are now virtually extinct. Feigning great interest one of the kids asked “Can we get an ice cream?”

Pushing on I explained that the birds live and breed in woodlands where foxes find them easily and had virtually wiped them out so that in the last 50 years only a handful of them had been reported in the Shoalhaven. Phil Craven, of National Parks and Wildlife in Nowra, had called me to find out the exact location Alan had heard them. He explained that Alan had probably heard the bird's courting calls and he wanted to play back a tape of these calls to check if they were still there. He was very excited about the possibilities of Bush Stone Curlews being back near Berry. Between chips one of kids asked “Can we go to the beach?”

On the beach at Shoalhaven Heads each kid peered in turn through my telescope as I pointed out the different species of waders that could be seen. The little Red-capped Plovers chased hoppers and flies on the surface and the large long-billed Bar-tailed Godwits probed deep in the sand for worms. I told them that the Bar-tailed Godwits breed in the Russian Arctic and Alaska and come here to rest and fatten up ready for their next breeding season. To get here some undertake the longest single-flight over-water migration in the bird world. Some fly direct from Alaska to New Zealand, a distance of 11,000 kilometres non-stop. The ones on the beach fly non-stop from the Yellow Sea in China, over 7,000 kilometres. If the winds were kind they could cover the distance in 6 – 7 days and they would lose half their body weight by the time they arrived. No Stop, Revive, Survive. No MacDonalD's. Just 7,000 kilometres in one unbelievable effort!

A voice from the back seat called as we pulled away from the beach ‘Can we get a drink?’

Bob Ashford, 02 4464 1574, bobashford@bigpond.com

Of Birds and Poems

John Douglas Pringle

The Scot, John Pringle, came to Australia, shortly after World War II. Pringle was editor of the Sydney Morning Herald, and later editor 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. Continued from the August News

The citizens of Canberra are even more fortunate. A member of Parliament, leaving the House to walk to the Canberra Hotel, can see on any evening numerous crimson and eastern rosellas with countless red-backed parrots on the stately avenues of the capital. If he drives even a few miles into the country he is bound to see the white cockatoos and galahs, and in winter, when he goes to a diplomatic reception in Mugga Way he will see flocks of the noisy but beautiful gang-gang parrots craning down their rosy heads to peer at him while they scream their harsh sardonic cry from the gum-trees on each side of the road. And if he cares about birds he can drive up into the prickly ranges of the Brindabella and glimpse, as I once did, a flock of giant yellow-tailed black cockatoos, looking almost as large as eagles as they flap heavily through the big timber, calling harshly to each other. In the dark, somber gullies they seemed like evil spirits or huge bats aroused from a tomb;

the wild black cockatoos, tossed on the crest
of their high trees, crying the world's unrest.

Nothing is more difficult than to describe a bird to someone who has never seen or heard it. But here I am lucky. All the poets of Australia seem to love birds and have described them with a vividness and precision I could not hope to rival. I propose to borrow from them shamelessly. Judith Wright, from one of these poems these lines are taken, is the richest source: in 1962 she published a whole volume of poems on birds. But there is hardly a contemporary Australian poet who has not written at least two or three. I think of Judith Wright as the poet of parrots and birds of the forests; of Douglas Stewart as the poet of little finches, scarlet robins and honeyeaters; of David Campbell as the poet of hawks which hang motionless over the bare Monaro hills and 'windy crows' whose harsh melancholy cry is perhaps the most unforgettable of all the Australian bird-sounds. But birds, like flowers and birds and words are the poets currency: I could fill an anthology with poems on the magpie alone.

Far the commonest of Australia's cockatoos are the sulphur-crested white cockatoos and the galahs. The galahs especially can be seen in enormous numbers almost anywhere in the inland; they are as common as wood pigeons in England – an almost as unpopular with farmers. Indeed because they are so common they are not appreciated. Galahs are something of a joke to people in the country, and, for some reason which I have never been able to understand, the word is used to describe any stupid or idiotic individual – 'You silly galah!' But poets and writers have always been quick to recognize their beauty. Let me quote from Francis Radcliffe's *Flying Fox and Drifting Sand*, one of the best books ever written about the Australian outback

Galahs are lovely things. Their breasts and underparts are of varying shades of rich rose. Their backs and wings are bluish grey. Sometimes, when the light falls on them, this colour looks almost as pale as clean smoke – rather like the colour which the sky assumes when there is a haze on the horizon. At all times of the day galahs can be seen in twos and threes sailing about with their easy but unsteady flight, but it is in the evening that they provide their great spectacle. At the close of the day they gather together in flocks, and fly about in mass formation and fly about like so many of the parrot tribe. And with every swift change of direction the birds take on a different hue. One moment they will be flying down the light, a cloud of grey ghosts barely visible against the eastern sky. Then in a flash they will wheel around towards the sun: and it

seems to all the world as if a new flock had suddenly come into being, as though solid bird bodies had been created out of nothing but the thin air and the sunset colours.

And I cannot resist adding these lines from Judith Wright's poem, 'For New England.'

But look, oh look, the Gothic tree's on fire
With blown galahs, and fuming with wild wings.

Unusual Records for March - April 2007

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	5	11-Mar	Sassafras	paddock	KM
Fuscous Honeyeater	2	21-Apr	Barrack Heights	garden	MR
Osprey	1	16-Apr	Tallawarra	overhead	CB
Grey Goshawk	1	14-Apr	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	29-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	14-Apr	Cambewarra lookout	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	15-Apr	Saddleback Mountain	overhead	MR
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	16-Apr	Thirlmere Lakes NP	overhead	MR,TE
Peregrine Falcon	1	3-Apr	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Latham's Snipe	7	21-Mar	Myamba wetland, Shelharbour	wetland	KM
Black-fronted Dotterel	1	8-Apr	Myamba wetland, Shelharbour	wetland	MR
White-headed Pigeon	15	19-Apr	Berry	?	BA
Peaceful Dove	1	16-Apr	Bargo Gorge	woodland	MR,TE
Bar-shouldered Dove	10+	3-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	CB
Topknot Pigeon	50	6-Apr	Berry	overhead	GBr
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	10-Apr	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR,TE
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	19-Apr	7 Mile Beach NP	forest	BA
Little Lorikeet	3	16-Apr	Barrack Heights	garden	MR
Little Lorikeet	5+	16-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR,TE
Red-rumped Parrot	1	18-Apr	Primbee dunes	parkland	CB
Barn Owl	1	30-Apr	University of Wollongong	parkland	RT
Brown Treecreeper	1	10-Apr	Bargo Gorge	woodland	MR,TE
Fuscous Honeyeater	1	22-Apr	Blackbutt	garden	CB
Fuscous Honeyeater	4+	29-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR
Scarlet Honeyeater	3	14-Apr	Barrack Heights	garden	MR
Scarlet Honeyeater	10+	16-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR,TE
Crested Shrike-tit	2	10-Apr	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR,TE
Crested Shrike-tit	1	21-Apr	Rhododendron Park, Balgownie	forest	TE
Spangled Drongo	1	6-Apr	Austinmer	garden	GM
Spangled Drongo	1	16-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR,TE
Spangled Drongo	1	18-Apr	Blackbutt	garden	CB
Double-barred Finch	3	10-Apr	Bargo Gorge	woodland	MR,TE
Beautiful Firetail	1	10-Apr	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR,TE
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	5	21-Mar	Myamba wetland, Shelharbour	wetland	KM

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GBr – Grant Broise; CB – Chris Brandis; TE – Terri Edwell; GM – Graham Meany; MR – Michelle Rower; Km – Kevin Mills; RT – Roger Truscott;