



THE IBOCC

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE No. 334

ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB INC NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010



Black Shouldered Kite

photo Martin Cocker

Scientific name: *Elanus axillaris*
Family: Accipitridae
Order: Falconiformes

What does it look like?

Description

Black-shouldered Kites are medium to small raptors (birds of prey), and are mostly pale grey above, with a pure white head, body and tail and black shoulders. The wings are white underneath, with black wing tips and the wing span is 80 cm to 100 cm. Females are larger than males. The red eye is marked by a black comma that extends behind it. The nostrils are yellow and the legs and feet are also yellow. The Black-shouldered Kite has a direct flight with quick shallow wing beats interspersed with glides on upswept wings (like a seagull), and is often seen hovering, with feet dangling.

Similar species

The Black-shouldered Kite is very similar to the related raptor (bird of prey) species, the Letter-winged Kite, *E. scriptus*, but has a distinctive black comma shape above and behind the eye, lacks the black underwing 'w' or 'm' pattern, and has a white rather than grey crown. The Letter-winged Kite also has a slower, deeper wing beat when flying.

Where does it live?

Distribution

The Black-shouldered Kite is found across mainland Australia.

Habitat

The Black-shouldered Kite is found in treed grasslands and on farms, along roads, and in vacant waste lands of urban and coastal areas.

Seasonal movements

Nomadic; populations may erupt in response to plagues of mice in particular areas.

What does it do?

Feeding

The Black-shouldered Kite feeds mainly on rodents, particularly the introduced House Mouse, *Mus musculus*, often following mice plagues in agricultural areas. Also will eat insects such as grasshoppers. It prefers to hunt during the day, particularly early

morning and late afternoon, often hovering with its wings held upright in a V-shape, before dropping down and grabbing prey with its talons. Prey items are eaten while flying or on a perch, which can be a high tree or an artificial structure, e.g. a powerpole.

Breeding

The Black-shouldered Kite forms monogamous pairs. During courtship, the male will feed the female in mid-air: she will flip upside down and take food with her feet from his, while both are flying. Both sexes build the nest, which is a large untidy shallow cup of sticks, on high tree or on an artificial structure such as a bridge or power pole. The young birds can feed themselves seven days after fledging and leave their parents within a month.

Living with us

Living with humans

The Black-shouldered Kite has expanded its range since European arrival, benefiting from land-clearing and irrigation practices that create suitable habitat, and numbers often increase in response to plagues of mice around crops and grainaries. However, some populations may be affected in areas with high sheep and rabbit numbers, as these animals can reduce suitable habitat for prey items (by compacting the soil and reducing feed). The Black-shouldered Kite sometimes uses artificial structures such as bridges and poles for nesting.

(Black-shouldered Kite information; supplied courtesy of Birds in backyards)

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**'ONE GOOD TERN
DESERVES ANOTHER'**

ILLAWARRA BIRD
OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.

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Founded in 1977

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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MARCH ACTIVITIES

Club Meeting – Monday 8th March 7.30pm - Fairy Meadow Community Hall.
Cnr. of Cambridge Avenue & Princes H'way Fairy Meadow

Guest Speaker Holly Parsons from Birds Australia, working on the Birds in Backyards Program. *Holly gave us a very entertaining presentation some years ago on Fairy-wrens which she was studying for her PhD and has now completed. Holly's presentation is to be "Birds in Backyards - 'What are we doing and what are our plans for the future?"*

Please bring a plate of goodies and a cup for supper after the meeting.

Midweek Walk - Wednesday 10th March 2010 – **Croome Park.**

Leaders Michelle Rower and TerryEdwell.

Please meet at the Croome Road Sporting Complex, Albion Park. Note if coming from the Albion Park Rail end of Croome Rd (near the railway museum) take the turn with Tennis in the list of sports. Drive past the driveway (dirt) on the left that leads to the car park for the tennis courts and travel a further 100-150 metres to where there is a large carpark near an oval on the RIGHT. **Meet in this carpark at 9.00am.** If coming from Jamberoo way you go past the basketball stadium and through the roundabout into Croome Rd. Go past the cemetery on the right and take the next driveway LEFT into the Croome Rd Sporting Complex and park in the first carpark you come to on the RIGHT.

Bring morning tea and Mosquito repellent – the mozzies can be brutal here.

You can contact Michelle on 0409 071 815.

Monthly Outing - Sunday 14th March 2010

Royal National Park Waterfall

Leader Betty Hudson

Meet at the car park at the southern end of Lady Carrington Drive at 8.30am. To reach this car park travel via the Freeway to Waterfall turn left following the R.N.P. signs into The McKell Drive continue until you reach a T junction immediately after crossing a river bridge. Turn left (Sir Bertram Stevens Drive) and the car park is very shortly on your right. Alternatively you can travel via Stanwell Park and Lady Wakehurst Drive to the T junction where you keep straight on. Beware it is a gravel parking area on a sweeping uphill curve. Please park responsibly as there is limited space.

NOTE There is an entry fee per vehicle to the R.N.P. 2 years ago it was \$11!

Bring a carry morning tea and lunch. We will walk along Lady Carrington Drive to the junction of the Walmurra track and follow this along a creek and through a rainforest area, before returning to the main track. We will then take the Forest Walk through eucalyptus forest back to the car park area. We should finish early afternoon.

Contact Betty on 42360307 or mobile 0432 892 945

March Committee Meeting - will be held at 7.30pm, at the home of Barbara & Brian Hales, 32 Shearwater Boulevard, Albion Park Rail. Ph 4257 4431 All members are welcome

March 2010 Newsletter - Deadline for Articles and **Photos** in the next IBOC Newsletter is Friday 26th March 2010
Email contributions to Charles Dove newsletter@iboc.org.au or post to 2/39 Purry Burry Ave. Primbee 2502.
Ph:4275 2383 M. 0417 422 302.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS – 2010 fees are now due: Family \$35.00, Single \$30.00, Junior \$10.00
please pay Browyn Wilson Treasurer by cash, cheque or money order.

REMINDER

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, and the Sturt Hwy via 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) (ONLY 4 STILL AVAILABLE @ 4.02.10), 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 (*noting my new email address*) or phone 4236 0307 detailing the accommodation you have booked.

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

BEWARE: Leeton is in the Fruit Fly Exclusion Zone. This means that NO Fruit, Vegetables or plant material may be taken more than a few km past Wagga. (Cooked items are OK) There are roadside quarantine bins between Wagga & Narrandera. You will need to shop on arrival in Leeton or if running late in Narrandera.

There is a large Woolworth's as well as an IGA store in Leeton which is a large regional centre. These are approx 1km from the caravan park.

Lake Illawarra Entrance 2nd February 2010 Midweek Outing Windang.*Sylvia Garlic*

Twenty four members arrived with picnic baskets and seats hoping the weather would remain fine. As we walked along the sandy track we saw hundreds of small crabs marching along the sand. Heading towards the entrance where the water was running very fast two people in canoes were having difficulty returning to shore, they made it to shore then one went back into the water to collect his paddle and was swept out to sea and with a big effort made it back to shore under the watchful eye of a water rescue team. On the sandbar Red-capped Plovers and Red-necked Stints stood together, some Black-winged Stilts nearby. Crested Tern and Masked Lapwings were present.

Quite a few Cormorants:- Great, Little Black, Little Pied some resting others flying. Along the track the bush provided cover for Australasian Figbird, Variegated Fairy-wren, Superb Fairy-wren, Yellow Robin, Silvereyes and Yellow Thornbills.

Back at the Picnic Area were some Crimson Rosellas, Crested Pigeons and a Willie Wagtail. Perched high in a pine tree was a Black-shouldered Kite.

Good to see lots of members supporting our first outing of the year. Dinner under the pine trees, cake was shared with our cups of tea. A very pleasant start to 2010. Thanks to Betty and our new committee.

A list of 29 Birds recorded.

Spotted Dove	Red-capped Plover	Little Wattlebird
Crested Pigeon	Masked Lapwing	New Holland Honeyeater
Little Pied Cormorant	Bar-tailed Godwit	Australasian Figbird
Great Cormorant	Red-necked Stint	Australian Magpie
Little Black Cormorant	Crested Tern	Willie Wagtail
Australian Pelican	Silver Gull	Australian Raven
White-faced Heron	Crimson Rosella	Eastern Yellow Robin
Australian White Ibis	Superb Fairy-wren	Silvereye
Black-shouldered Kite	Variegated Fairy-wren	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Black-winged Stilt	Yellow Thornbill	

P.S. As we were leaving down came the wonderful rain.

Shoalhaven Heads 13th February 2010*Neil Wheway*

Would we or wouldn't we? That was the question we asked ourselves as we headed down the highway on a damp and gloomy very early Saturday morning. Imagine our surprise to find other tough club members at the car park. Remember the old saying "when the going gets tough the tough keep going".

It was overcast but not raining as eleven started off around the edge of the lagoon at high tide. Water was high from the in-flow coming down the Shoalhaven River, caused by the heavy rain. We were able to skirt around a narrow bit of sand and follow the edge of the water. After about fifteen minutes a bloke was spotted hurrying to catch us up. Catching up he wasn't one of us but Jim from Birding NSW. He had mistaken us for his group, so we adopted him and carried on. Stopping to observe many birds across the water Jim set up his spotting scope, his knowledge and use of his scope were invaluable. Many thanks, Jim, your contribution was much appreciated.

About this time the ever threatening rain made an appearance but donning an assortment of wet weather gear we trudged on. Some time later it was decided enough was enough and head back to the cars for morning tea. Walking back along the beach with the high tide pounding away, another group was spotted struggling towards us. Jim's lost companions from Birding NSW, some of whom had been camping up at Bob Ashford's place in very wet conditions, sharing with them a host of hungry leeches. They were another tough mob; one of them was our very own Jill Molan after a chat and laugh we all continued on our way.

At the car park we said goodbye to Andy and Dorothy, Canadian visitors, who had been to the Monday meeting and decided to come along for the walk. Morning tea was taken at a nearby picnic shelter with new members Peter and Judy. While we assured them we were not fanatical twitchers going out in all conditions and weather, just crazy bird watchers having an enjoyable morning. Even though the weather was a little inclement it was an enjoyable morning with 35 different birds seen.

Black Swan	Masked Lapwing	Lewin's Honeyeater
Australian Wood Duck	Bar-tailed Godwit	Little Wattlebird
Spotted Dove	Eastern Curlew	White-fronted Chat
Crested Pigeon	Red-necked Stint	New Holland Honeyeater
Little Pied Cormorant	Caspian Tern	Eastern Whipbird
Great Cormorant	Silver Gull	Grey Butcherbird
Pied Cormorant	Galah	Australian Magpie
Australian Pelican	Rainbow Lorikeet	Willie Wagtail
Little Egret	Eastern Rosella	Magpie-Lark
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	Sacred Kingfisher	Welcome Swallow
Pacific Golden Plover	Superb Fairy-wren	Common Myna
Red-capped Plover	Brown Thornbill	

n.b. whilst all care is taken in preparing this report mistakes may occur - ignore them.

A Trip to the Flinders Ranges August 2009

BY Betty Hudson

PART ONE OF TWO

Late in August 2009, seven IBOC members headed off on their long anticipated trip to Wyperfeld N.P. and the Flinders Ranges. We travelled west along the Murrumbidgee and Murray River Valleys before crossing the Murray into Victoria at Barham, rain and cold winds from a southerly change following us until we left Deniliquin. An Ostrich and a Brolga were seen along the roadside between Deniliquin & Barham, with our first sighting of Superb Parrots creating great excitement in the Showground at Deniliquin. Late rain had greened everywhere masking the effect of the drought, even though the rivers were mere trickles in deep river beds.

After a night at Kerang Caravan Park where the adjacent river produced our first sighting of a Black Kite and a Royal Spoonbill with other interesting birds, the Musk Lorikeet, Blue-faced Honeyeater, and Little Raven. Thanks to Anna & Andy, we spent a profitable but cold morning at McDonalds Swamp near Kerang, with numerous waterbirds and others, including a Whistling Kite, Swamp & Spotted Harriers, Australian Hobby, Australian Shelduck, Black-winged Stilt (reported as the first seen at the swamp by the local farmer come bird watcher), large numbers of Black-tailed Native Hens, Black-fronted & Red-kneed Dotterels, Little & Long Billed Corellas, White-fronted Chat, White-winged Triller, Tree & Fairy Martin's & Zebra Finch. This was followed by a brief visit to the renowned Ibis Rookery Lagoon where we were rewarded by more sheltered conditions but few birds. Reluctantly we left here for our journey further west to Rainbow, stopping for lunch in Leaghur State Forest, for our first sightings of Grey-crowned Babblers & a Red-capped Robin. The landscape was now flat with slight undulations of old sand dunes criss-crossed by a grid of roads which disappeared far into the distance each time you reached the crest of a rise. We learnt a salutary lesson here; rural Victoria closes down at 11am on a Saturday. No petrol! The RACV came to the rescue directing us to a servo which had 24hr fuel via a credit card with a pin number. Alan was greatly relieved, towing takes much more fuel than you realise. As we neared Rainbow the fields took on a golden appearance with the canola crops in flower and catching the evening sun. What a welcome sight after a very long day, Rainbow Caravan Park.

Now we were able to have a break from the long days of driving as we visited Wyperfeld N.P. especially to try to see the Mallee Fowl. No luck, but we were rewarded with the Splendid Fairy-wren, cobalt blue and almost luminescent in the sun-no photos unfortunately- and several emus playing chicken on the entry road. Lunch was enlivened by a Shingleback Lizard hoping for hand outs. This park is



Shingleback Lizard Wyperfeld National Park
Photo Betty Hudson

Mallee desert country and following the walking tracks showed us how easy it would be to get lost. It also gave us our first sightings of several new birds, Australian Ringneck, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, White-browed Babbler, Chestnut Quail-thrush, the Black-winged form of the Grey Currawong, and a Hooded Robin. Due to the unseasonal rains the wild flowers were spectacular with many different types evident.

Leaving here we returned to the Murray Valley travelling through those places with odd names, Walepeup, and Patchewalup, where Andy & Anna diverted to Loxton to visit another nature reserve in the hopes of seeing Mallee Fowl, and rejoining us the next morning in Berri they added the Southern Boobook to the list. The rest of the party visited Hattah Lake, one of a number of lagoons along the Murray Valley which had received environmental water earlier in the year. Large numbers of water birds had returned as well as many arboreal species, the most noteworthy the Regent Parrot a beautiful large gold parrot with a long dark tail & wings, spectacular in flight and the Yellow phase of the Crimson Rosella. Now we knew we were getting on westwards. Leaving here for Mildura and the long run to



Car Ferry Morgan S.A.

Photo Betty Hudson

Renmark, we were herded off the highway by police for two enormous trucks moving at 80km/h and taking up all four lanes of the road. Once again the weather turned against us, being cold, wet and windy for several days. Neglected grapevines were a constant reminder of the cost of the prolonged drought in the area. The wind & rain, that followed a dust storm, were so bad at Renmark that Alan & Ann were unable to put their camper van up. Next morning was fine, sunny & cold, much to the delight of the several families of Wood Ducks moving around.

Crossing state borders had its own problems, as no fruit or vegetables could be taken from one to another. S.A. was particularly strict with searches of all caravan fridges and cupboards. Shopping was a nightly chore. Leaving Berri in S.A. we finally saw the start of

the semi arid country – salt bush beside the road, although grapevines and crops were in adjacent paddocks. At this point the Murray River is too wide to allow economic bridging, so 24hr free car ferries operate at road crossings. After shopping we headed west along the Murray to Moorook Lagoon near Barmera, very large numbers of Swans, Moorhens & Coots but no ducks. Our first sighting of an Adelaide Rosella, the orange form of the Crimson Rosella, as well as our first look at a Mulga Parrot and tantalising glimpses of the Regent Parrot. A Caspian Tern and Silver Gull were seen on the river by the lagoon.

The Murray River looked full of water, most likely the effect of the locks, as it flowed between high cliffs below a flat saltbush plain with patches of cultivation for fruit and crops. After a hasty lunch at Morgan, watching the car ferry and trying to prevent everything blowing away in the wind, we finally turned due north, towards Burra, an old mining town, now the centre of a prosperous agricultural area, we crossed saltbush plains, with hovering Black-shouldered Kites, until shortly before Burra where a line of hills appeared, vividly green in the distance, our first for several days. The steep hills were in sharp contrast to the flat plains we had been crossing for so long. On again to Melrose, still several hours away over steep ridges between fields of well grown wheat and golden canola. The wind on this stretch caused problems with the vans and slowed us down. Approaching Melrose, Mt Remarkable at 900m, the highest of the southern Flinders Ranges, appeared slowly over the horizon to the west, in contrast to the flat plain on the east. A collective sigh of relief was heard when we finally turned into the caravan park nestling at the base of the mountain. Melrose is an old town with many beautiful restored stone buildings, and a remarkable sculpture in the town centre celebrating both the Heysen and the Mawson Trails which cross here.

Next morning was warm and still, ideal for the walk along the Mt Remarkable Nature Trail. The whole area was unusually green, as there had been considerable unseasonal rain with the creek running well. Wild flowers were putting on a spectacular display with many species of ground orchids seen, as well as a variety of very yellow wattles.

We had our first sighting of a Common Bronzewing. Birds were plentiful along the creek lines with many checking out nest holes preparatory to breeding. Weebills, Yellow and Inland Thornbills, and many honeyeaters including the Spiny-cheeked & Brown-headed were seen. Having crossed the creek on a swing bridge at the start we



Purple Sun Orchid Mt Remarkable

Photo Betty Hudson



IBOC at Waikerie Creek

Photo Gloria Stephens

were faced with stepping stones to return, one wobbly stone which rolled underfoot, I fell flat on my back in the creek, camera held safely but the binoculars a little muddy and as I later discovered, broken. Only my dignity was dented but I was unable to get up without assistance from the men. Stranded whale was not in it! To Andy & Anna, A big "Thank You", for the loan of your spare binoculars. We headed back to camp for lunch, then on to Alligator Gorge for the afternoon. What a spectacular drive along a winding road with precipitous drops on each side, and a glimpse of Spencer's Gulf to the west. It was well worth the entry fee. A lookout gave spectacular views of the gorge from the top while walking tracks led down the gorge. Along this track down to the creek we had good sightings of the Red-capped Robin and several Rufous Whistlers while I photographed at least 6 species of ground orchids including a Donkey Orchid and a green hooded Orchid amid a profusion of wattle species with beautiful

golden balls of flowers. It was a reluctant party that returned, rather late, to camp for a frosty night.

Next day was a short drive to Quorn and leaving the vans at the caravan park we headed to the Flora Reserve after morning tea. It was another warm day and we saw few birds probably due to the lack of water nearby but the flowers were spectacular. A Bearded Dragon by the cars gave the photographers something to do. We headed on to Waikerie Creek on the northern flank of Mt Remarkable for lunch, crossing pasture land towards the hills when suddenly turning a corner there was the start of the gorge. The waterfall was dry but there was evidence of water in the creek. The track led along the dry creek bed as with so many in the area, the scenery magnificent with huge River Red Gums just like in Hans Heysen paintings, but birds were scarce with Red-capped Robins most in evidence. On the return drive along the road we stopped at a windmill where 10 Peaceful doves were resting and a nearby tree had many Crested Pigeons and House Sparrows along the roadside. No Raptors were seen all day although a Mistletoebird, Scarlet Robin, Brown Songlark and Australian Pipit were seen.

Next morning we awoke to leaden grey skies and left for Warren Gorge in intermittent light rain. This gorge is a spectacular gash in the ridge with vertical rock strata. Just before the start of the gorge we had another great sighting, the Elegant Parrot, a new one for most of us. The creek in the gorge had some water and the area was very green, but due to the rain the walking tracks were impassable, so we confined our walk to the road, dodging the puddles as vehicles passed. Variegated Fairy-wrens were seen and plenty of calls heard but proved extremely hard to locate. With the rain getting harder we continued on our way along the Buckaringa Scenic Drive crossing a major creek at a dry causeway where we stopped for lunch. This proved a good spot with many birds including Tree Martins, White-browed Babblers, Sacred Kingfisher, Southern Whiteface & Apostlebirds. As the rain was setting in we moved on hoping to get back to the bitumen before it got too heavy, bypassing a lookout on the ridge as everything was shrouded in rain. We crossed a flooded creek in heavy rain & thunder and crossing a rocky ridge the soil changed to red clay and we quickly found a very slippery patch just short of the bitumen. Andy had a few hairy moments as his vehicle slid all over the place, before getting back on a firm surface. As we returned to Quorn along the bitumen it was obvious that there had been extremely heavy rain with the ground covered by water. Entering the IGA store we found that both the staff and patrons were ecstatic. Later a Banded Lapwing was seen in a flooded dip by the caravan park.

Next morning we had a late start due to wet camper vans and myself getting a puncture, which had to be mended. Being a Saturday no one opened early!. Dave & Andy changed the wheel and the local garage mended the puncture before I could repack the car to leave. While waiting Andy thought he saw a Red-backed Kingfisher in camp but was disappointed to be unable to confirm this. Finally leaving we travelled to Kanyaka Historic Site where there is a large creek and permanent waterhole filled with water after the rains. A very interesting place with the remains of stone buildings, it was originally the base of huge but successful pastoral holding but the whole area was then subjected to a closer settlement scheme for crops devised during a spell of unusually wet seasons and doomed when seasons returned to normal aridity, the arrival of the original Ghan Railway hastening this. Many birds were seen on a walk around the area with Mulga Parrot, Australian Ringneck, Southern Whiteface, and a first sighting of the Yellow-throated Miner. We continued on to Hawker with the plains on one side contrasting with the increasing hills on the other. We arrived in Hawker for lunch, after which Anna & Andy left for Wilpena Pound where they stayed, while the rest of us visited Yourambulla Caves a steep climb up a track and then ladders, but well worth it for the views over the plains towards the east. Along the track several different types of salt and blue bush were in flower. Masked, Black-faced and White-browed Woodswallows were all seen, the first for the trip. Leaving here we decided to visit a lookout on Jarvis Hill to the west of Hawker. It was a very steep gravel road to the car park and then a steep climb to the lookout. With rain threatening and memories of wet gravel roads we beat a hasty retreat.



Road into Bunyeroo Gorge

Photo Betty Hudson

PART TWO CONTINUED IN THE APRIL NEWSLETTER –

The complete bird list will be available at <http://www.iboc.org.au/>

'Although no members of IBOC actually made it to the camp, the trip report from Birding NSW is below:'

TRIP REPORT: CAPTAINS FLAT CAMPOUT

23 – 26 January, 2010-02-09

Written by Allan Richards, Birding NSW

Most members arrived by Friday night so were ready for walk from the camp for birdwatching on Saturday morning. We were joined by four who were staying in Captains Flat. It was very hot so birdwatching was slow. Crimson Rosella, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater were seen near the house but as we walked further up the hill, we added Scarlet Robins, lots of Buff-rumped Thornbill, Brown Thornbill and White-naped and White-eared Honeyeaters. Gang Gangs were heard but remained elusive. A Crested Shrike-tit feed high in the tree-tops. On a visit to dams on nearby property in the afternoon, we failed to find the Baillon's Crake and Eurasian Coots which had been seen there but we did see families of Australasian Grebes with their stripy young. Stubble Quail could be

heard in the paddocks surrounding the dams. Few other birds were added to the list on other walks around "Paringa". Those remaining on Monday morning visited Lowden Forest Park. This beautiful spot added Rufous fantail, Red-browed Treecreeper and an immature Black-faced Monarch. A pair of Leaden Flycatcher was feeding two young. A total of 67 species were recorded. After very hot weather on Friday and Saturday, the twelve members who stayed at "Paringa" welcomed the cool change that arrived late on Saturday afternoon. Special thanks to Steve and Helen Stephinson for their generous hospitality and allowing us to camp on their special corner of the earth once again.

CORRECTION

An error occurred when transcribing the 2008 CHRISTIDIS & BOLES list from the book to an electronic form for members to use. The Australian Darter should be correctly called the "AUSTRALASIAN DARTER". Thanks to Dave Thomson for bringing this to our attention.

Also **Christitis** should be **Christidis**

Thanks to Mike Morphett for bringing this to our attention. Please amend your lists accordingly..

A big thank you to Martin and Terrill in gaining approval of government funding for IBOC to purchase its own scope. Which is now being purchased and will be in operation shortly.

ASG Survey Success

The NSW DECCW, in conjunction with ASG, are conducting seabird surveys on islands on the NSW coast as part of a program to update the information we have available on our seabird populations. In December 2009 two separate island surveys by members of ASG proved highly successful. Six offshore islands of Lord Howe were surveyed by three ASG members, supported by the Lord Howe Island Board. For some of these islands it was the first time that any surveys had been attempted. Complete estimates of Masked Boobies, Sooty Terns and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were made during the trip as well as valuable information on the vegetation, weeds and the presence of introduced rodents. The highlight was fantastic views of White-bellied Storm-Petrels carrying out nest prospecting.

Broughton Island, off Port Stephens NSW, was also surveyed by six ASG members. With support from the local NPWS office, a difficult survey was completed of the shearwaters of this 122 ha island. Night time spotlight surveys were done to determine if White-faced Storm-Petrels had begun prospecting the main island following the eradication of rats earlier in 2009. While none of these delightful birds were spotted it is hoped in future surveys that they will be found where they formerly nested in their thousands. A fantastic discovery by the group was the presence of Gould's Petrel breeding on the island. This is only the third nesting island in the world for this species. Surveys of the outer islands of the Broughton Group are planned for 2010.

WHAT, YOU THINK I'M A WATTLEBIRD?!

There has been a recent taxonomic revision of the Regent Honeyeater (Christidis and Boles 2008). And it is now considered to be closely related to Wattlebirds. As a result of this change the scientific name is now *Anthochaera phrygia*, not *Xanthomyza phrygia*. Based on current evidence the closest relatives are the Yellow Wattlebird of Tasmania and the Red Wattlebird. So when you see the next Red Wattlebird attacking a Regent Honeyeater perhaps you could remind it that they are basically cousins. Though perhaps that explains the aggression we see.



Recovery Plan Making Progress.

At the time of writing the draft of the next version of the recovery plan is nearing completion.

Calls for Sightings to be Reported

Volunteers and Bird Observers are reminded that they are able to report sightings to the recovery Coordinator free of charge thanks to the projects freecall phone number. If anyone finds a Regent Honeyeater please contact us as soon as possible on 1800 621 056 or E-mail d.ingwerson@birdsaustralia.com.au

MEMBERS REMINDER.

Could members please ensure all your current details are correct, we have had members change address, phone number and email address without forwarding it to IBOC which does make it difficult for IBOC to contact them if need be.

Please contact. membership@iboc.org.au

Postal address:

The Illawarra Bird Observers Club Inc.
PO Box 56 FAIRY MEADOW NSW 2519

AUSTRALIAN BIRDFAIR

DATE CHANGE.'

THIRD WEEKEND IN SEPTEMBER ANNUALLY

As you may be aware, the Australian Birdfair is held annually in Leeton, south east NSW in the Riverina region. The dates for the upcoming Australian Birdfair are 11th September - 19th September 2010.

The event is a nature based event based around Birdwatching but takes in all other aspects that couple with Birdwatching, including optics, cameras, art, photograph, seminars, lecturers, ecotourism and of course, Birdwatching tours.

The theme for the 2010 Birdfair is "**Birds of Prey and their environment**" with the Australian Birdfair Committee working co-operatively with the Australian Raptor Association to secure key presenters and exhibitors to present on relevant topics.

For more information on the Australian Birdfair please visit www.australianbirdfair.org.au or contact the coordinator at email coordinatori@australianbirdfair.org.au.

We look forward to seeing you in September.

Regards
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Over the previous four months my local bird study had taken a back seat: only a very few forays into the old Excelsior #2 mine site and delays in recording birds within my immediate neighbourhood adjoining it in Thirroul. Why the sagging motivation? My study area had seemed insignificant after my first visit to Kakadu National Park with its spectacular wildlife and scenery. But prior to this experience, my walks through the Excelsior had increasingly aroused feelings of sadness and anger; I was losing that sense of connection and tranquillity, and this bushland area was not the 'sanity belt' I had long enjoyed. Others, falling into two groups, had also discovered its value for self-expression, but with devastating impact to this environment: thrill-seeking youths astride mountain bikes and spray-paint vandals. Trees were felled to make way for tracks and for the construction of ramps or were graffiti-tagged with various paint colours; their roots were undermined by revolving wheels eroding the terrain and by the removal of soil for ramp-making. Litter in the form of drink containers, food wrappers, pressure packs, and plastic bags continued to be scattered among the receding vegetation. Only one of my nine study sectors has remained unscathed: the central,

only because of its steep and generally inaccessible terrain. It seemed the landowner was turning a blind eye to this relentless process of degradation and, if he knew, was quite possibly approving, as it would support any further application by him for extensive housing development on this unstable, undulating land. Over the past four years or so I have noted a decrease or absence of certain animal species. I don't come across logrunners or snakes or hear the powerful owl. Satin bowerbirds now appear only in ones and twos, and much less evident are the golden whistler and grey shrike-thrush. A coincidence or cause and effect? I began to question the point of my visits: why expend so much time and energy in such a project and in the face of relentless forces, especially in my senior years? I identified with threatened indigenous peoples and animals by the destruction of their nurturing habitats in different parts of the world. Lately I have wondered if the currently screened sci-fi movie *Avatar* and the plight of the Na'vi inhabitants of Pandora will help viewers see the need to respect the natural environment and not just take delight in the successful action-packed means of retaliation, as an extension of play-station games.



Up close and personal with an eastern water dragon, one of the few animal species that is holding its ground in the study area, perhaps because of the relative safety of Flanagan's Creek system and pools. Similarly secure is the very mobile and adaptable sulphur-crested cockatoo.

Well, February 1st 2010 recently arrived, marking exactly thirty years of my ongoing surveys of the Excelsior and local backyards under the project title of SWECTRA (Study of the wildlife of the Excelsior Coalmine Thirroul and adjoining residential area). No celebration, no fanfare. Blow it! (Or something stronger) I thought to myself. I must act. That day I took a long walk and, sure enough, there was plenty of evidence of the youths' further activities and misuse of an environment that has striven to regenerate since coal-mining operations were shut down for good some sixty-odd years ago; two large bagfuls of litter for a start. Not much sign of non-human presence either. Ah, well. But then almost at the end of my journey late afternoon, I was heartened by some activity down in the south-east corner, where pit ponies once grazed and back then

this mini-wetland area had been known as Frogs' Hollow. For several minutes I stood still and watched and listened to various small bush birds while they foraged. Not before had I seen parties of both superb fairy-wrens and variegated wrens in such close proximity or a large-billed scrubwren in company with both white-browed and yellow-throated at the same time. Other members of the guild were a rufous fantail, a family of black-faced monarchs, and a small flock of silvereyes and yellow Thornbills; and, in characteristic pose, high on an overhanging dead branch was a dollarbird. I felt energised by this encounter and came to the realisation that these very familiar birds are still just as significant as the twitchable, tickable species of far-off places, perhaps more so, to me anyway. I vowed to step up my surveys again

LATE DECEMBER 2009

SPECIES	No	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
White-throated Needletail	40	27-Dec-09	Primbee	Urban	Ron Imisides
White-throated Needletail	20	28-Dec-09	Primbee	Urban	Ron Imisides
Black-winged Petrel	1 beach washed	27-Dec-09	Narrawallee beach	Coastal	Richard Allen
Spectacled Monarch	Present	Dec. 2009	Yatta Yatta NP	Bush	Bob Rusk

JANUARY 2010

SPECIES	No	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Stubble Quail	call	31-Jan-10	Woodlands area, nr Mittagong	Rural	Graham Barwell
Australian Shelduck	17	30-Jan-10	Berrima Sale Yards, Berrima	Farm Dam	Lorne Johnson
Australian Shelduck	5	31-Jan-10	Woodlands area, nr Mittagong	Rural	Graham Barwell
Blue-billed Duck	1 M.	20-Jan-10	Woodland Road, Mittagong	Farm Dam	Terry Dunlea
Blue-billed Duck	1 male	31-Jan-10	Woodlands area, nr Mittagong	Rural	Graham Barwell
Wonga Pigeon	1	30-Jan-10	Mt. Keira	Yard/Bush	Val Dolan
Tawny Frogmouth	1	28-Jan-10	Tarrawanna	Garden	Peg McKinlay
Eastern Reef Egret	1	27-Jan-10	Windang	Estuarine	Graham Barwell
Grey Goshawk	1	01-Jan-00	Tom Thumb park	O'head, regrowth	David Winterbottom
Australian Hobby	1	10-Jan-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Australian Hobby	1	31-Jan-10	North Macquarie Road	Rural	Graham Barwell
Peregrine Falcon	1	24-Jan-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Pacific Golden Plover	155	10-Jan-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Pacific Golden Plover	200	24-Jan-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Eastern Curlew	1	10-Jan-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Eastern Curlew	4	24-Jan-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Ruddy Turnstone	9	26-Jan-10	Woonona	Rock Pool	Martin and Penny Potter
Great Knot	1	24-Jan-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	Martin and Penny Potter
Long-tailed Jaeger	1	23-Jan-10	Pacific Ocean off Wollongong	Pelagic	Graham Barwell
Pacific Gull	1 Imm	02-Jan-10	Port Kembla	Coastal	Lindsay Smith
Gang-gang Cockatoo	2m 4f	02-Jan-10	Calderwood	Rural	Pauline Duren
Turquoise Parrot	1	16-Jan-10	Wollongong	Golf course	David Winterbottom
Ground Parrot	1	26-Jan-10	Barren Grounds	Heath/Bush	Jim O'shea
Black-eared Cuckoo	1	20-Jan-10	Primbee	Small Wetland	Terrill Nordstrom
Dollarbird	1	28-Jan-10	Marshall Mount	Eucalyptus Woodland	Anna Knowlson
Eastern Bristlebird	1	26-Jan-10	Barren Grounds	Heath/Bush	Jim O'shea
Pilotbird	1	26-Jan-10	Barren Grounds	Heath/Bush	Jim O'Shea
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	26-Jan-10	Barren Grounds	Heath/Bush	Jim O'Shea
Spangled Drongo	1	14-Jan-10	Bulli	Bush	Graham Barwell
Eurasian Skylark	call	31-Jan-10	Woodlands area, nr Mittagong	Rural	Graham Barwell
Beautiful Firetail	2	26-Jan-10	Barren Grounds	Heath/Bush	Jim O'shea

FEBRUARY 2010

SPECIES	No	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Australian Brush-turkey	1 chick	Feb. 10	Mt Keira Ring Track	Rainforest	Wal Emery
Stubble Quail	2+	07-Feb-10	Swamp Road, Dunmore	Fields	Graham Barwell
Plumed Whistling-Duck	20	01-Feb-10	Near Berry	Farm Dam	Mark Whittaker
Musk Duck	1	01-Feb-10	Berrima Sale Yards, Berrima	Farm Dam	Terry Dunlea
Australian Shelduck	19	01-Feb-10	Berrima Sale Yards, Berrima	Farm Dam	Terry Dunlea
White-throated Needletail	5	08-Feb-10	Sutton Forest	Roadside	John Rawsthorne

Intermediate Egret	1	13-Feb-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	BNSW
Striated Heron	1	20-Feb-10	Mullet Creek, Brownville	Riparian	Lorraine Pincus
Striated Heron	2	20-Feb-10	Mullet Creek Kanahooka	Riparian	Lorraine Pincus
Royal Spoonbill	3	07-Feb-10	Marshall Mount	Farm Dam	Anna Knowlson
Eastern Osprey	1	07-Feb-10	ShoalhavenHeads	Estuary	Penny & Martin Potter
Eastern Osprey	1	20-Feb-10	Mullet Creek Kanahooka	Riparian	Lorraine Pincus
White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	03-Feb-10	Bulli	Overhead Rainforest	Roger Truscott
Brown Goshawk	1	21-Feb-10	Primbee, Heritage Park	Bush	Charles Dove
Grey Goshawk	1	10-Feb-10	Scout Camp, Mt. Keira	Bush	Charles Dove
Brown Falcon	1	16-Feb-10	Bellambi Dunes	Bush	Alan Cousins
Australian Hobby	1	10-Feb-10	Heritage Park, Primbee	Bush	Charles Dove
Australian Hobby	1	14-Feb-10	Bulli Surf Club	Coastal	Martin and Penny Potter
Australian Hobby	4	21-Feb-10	Primbee, Heritage Park	Overhead	Charles Dove
Peregrine Falcon	2	10-Feb-10	Purry Burry Pont, Primbee	Bush	Charles Dove
Lewin's Rail	2A 4Y	18-Feb-10	Jerrara Dam	Swamp	Chris Brandis
Australian Pied Oystercatche	3	07-Feb-10	Lake Illawarra Entrance	Sand Flats @ low tide	Darryl Goldrick
Great Knot	1	13-Feb-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	BNSW
Long-tailed Jaeger	1	23-Jan-10	Pacific Ocean off Wollongong	Pelagic	Graham Barwell
Sooty Tern	1	03-Feb-10	Woonona Bulli	Landed near railway line on sandy gravel	Kim Maute
Musk Lorikeet	1-"rescued"	16-Feb-10	University of Wollongong	Park	Alison Foley
Turquoise Parrot	1	16-Jan-10	Wollongong	Golf course	David Winterbottom
Brush Cuckoo	call	05-Feb-10	Bulli	Forest	Graham Barwell
Azure Kingfisher	1	20-Feb-10	Mullet Creek Kanahooka	Riparian	Lorraine Pincus
Yellow-throated scrubwren	3	10-Feb-10	Scout Camp, Mt. Keira	Bush	Charles Dove
Large-billed Scrubwren	1	1 & 15/2/10	Excelsior Forest, Thirroul	Forest	Mike Morphett
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	26-Jan-10	Barren Grounds	Heath/Bush	Jim O'shea
White-fronted chat	5	13-Feb-10	Shoalhaven Heads	Estuarine	BNSW
Australian Logrunner	1	10-Feb-10	Scout Camp, Mt. Keira	Bush	Charles Dove
Australian Logrunner	1	08-Feb-10	Cloverhill Rd, Macquarie Pass	Forest	Chris Brandis
Australasian Figbird	2 f	11-Feb-10	Windang	Suburban	Graham Barwell
Spangled Drongo	1	14-Jan-10	Bulli	Bush	Graham Barwell
Spangled Drongo	1	16-Feb-10	Mt. Ousley	Garden	Judy Baker
Spangled Drongo	1	17-Feb-10	Heritage Park, Primbee	Park	Charles Dove
Beautiful Firetail	2	11-Feb-10	Barren Grounds	Heath	Graham Barwell

Some interesting stuff around this month! The Blue-billed duck is classified as a Rare Nomadic visitor to the Illawarra, the sighting of the Sooty Tern, a rare summer visitor, and the dead beach washed Black-winged Petrel, rare summer visitor, follow on from several sightings of both of these species in our region following a severe storm in the Lord Howe Island region. The Turquoise Parrot is classified as a rare nomad and it has been suggested that this may be an aviary escapee, however, we will never know! The Black-eared Cuckoo is classified as Accidental and was a real treat for Terrill Nordstrom enjoying a well earned day out! Spangled Drongo have been reported at several locations in the Sydney region so it could be a good year for these winter migrants.

As we slide from summer to autumn and migration starts again it is a good time of year to expect the unexpected also the recent heavy rain across much of the State could trigger bird movements so please keep me informed of your sightings.

Many thanks for all your records! Please send in your sightings to cocker@speedlink.com.au and don't forget that these lists are on our website www.iboc.org.au. Good Birding!