

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 16th May 2006, at 7.30pm at the Cashman's,
5 Madden St, Fernhill. 4284 0538. To get there. Turn west from Princes Highway at the lights into Caldwell Ave. (shops and car repairs on the north corners) Proceed west to a roundabout, with palms growing in it, at Tarrawanna, continue on 0.2k approx, then turn left into Devenish St and first right into Madden St. We are the third and last house on the left. If coming on the Northern Distributor, turn west at the lights into Towradgi Rd. Keep in the left lane to cross the Princes Highway at a small dog-leg into Caldwell Ave. Then as above. All members welcome.

JUNE 2006 NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Friday 19th May**. Contributions from all members welcomed, but please submit your contributions early, by email preferably, otherwise by post, to the editor at 5 Madden St, Fernhill 2519.

Reports of the April Holiday Camp will appear in the IBOC News for June

From Your Committee

1. Finance Closing balance for 31.1.06 was \$2,373.12, Receipts \$596.00, Expenses \$121.20 Closing Balance at 31.3.06 was \$2,847.92
2. A decision on how much to support the publication of a 2nd edition of *Birds of the Illawarra* was deferred for a couple of months.
3. Following a suggestion from Terry Dawson, a reservation has been made at the UNSW Field Station on Smiths Lake for the club Spring Camp. The dates are 21 – 28 October 2006
4. Chris Cartledge has taken over the reconstructing of the club web site, and is continuing this work

April Meeting Guest Speakers

Kevin McGregor

Our April IBOC News introduced our guest speaker Barry Prior and Ron Parker and gave us details of their history and experiences while working at the Wongawilli Colliery and involvement with the St John Ambulance First Aid Courses.

Their presentation of the First Aid material to assist us in our outings with the club was most helpful and will be beneficial to us in the future. The items included were:

Safety: Good communications are necessary while we are on outings (mobile telephone etc);

- Wear protective clothing and good footwear;
- predetermine destination and ETA back to starting point;
- carry ample water;
- if lost, stay together and find a clear spot to wait, light fire if necessary;
- *carry a First Aid Kit.*

First Aid: Should an accident occur:

- Do not panic, stay calm,
- If thought to be serious, call for help,
- check for any danger to yourself and others,
- check casualty's level of consciousness (ask questions), breathing and bleeding.

Demonstrations were given by Barry on Ron (as the patient) on how to treat the casualty by lying them down and getting them rested, controlling the bleeding with pressure bandages and checking their breathing. How to roll a patient over if they were having difficulty in breathing. A further full demonstration was given on CPR treatment necessary in some cases where the patient is not breathing. This treatment is to be given quickly and consists of 30 pushes on the chest following by 2 breaths and as fast as possible. Look, listen and feel is the procedure. Full details of how to treat snake, tick and leech bites were given and a record of these procedures are now available in the library. If someone has a fall, recognising signs and symptoms is most important. These are pins and needles in the limbs or shoulders and loss of movement or feeling in the spine or limbs.

Thanks were given to Barry and Ron for their presentation and great advice. Thanks also go to Neil Wheway for arranging their attendance at our meeting. Great night and certainly very helpful to all who attended. Again reminded full details of the address can be seen in the library.

BIRDING ABROAD

Over the past few years David and Elizabeth Winterbottom have been going overseas to look at birds and other things. Here is a vignette from a voyage in October 2000.

Okavango

We were up for “tea” at 5.30 am so as to be back before it got really warm and the tsetse flies became a nuisance. On the way out we disturbed two silver backed jackals which were stalking a flock of over a hundred Helmeted Guineafowl. Plenty of giraffe, tsessebe, elephant, impala and zebra were seen, but all seemed just a little shy. A cheetah was the highlight. Birds included a Brubru Shrike and White-bellied Sunbirds, Blue Waxbills and Weavers.

Later we saw three lions in some meagre shade. The lioness got up as if to find a better spot, but then froze. The others were immediately alert. She then shot off after a female warthog. She manoeuvred it back past us and on round so that the lion could take up the chase. He did and caught and killed it before our very eyes. He allowed the cub and lioness to feed off the rear end for ten minutes or so, but then shook them off and proceeded to eat his lion’s share. He finished off everything, bones, skin and hair. All that was left were some bloodstains in the sand.

At the river there were heaps of birds about. Blacksmith’s and Crowned Plovers, the occasional cadaverous Maribou Stork, and Water Dikkop (like a Stone-curlew) were on the banks, with Red-winged Pratincoles jerking overhead. Along the edges were Yellow-billed and Open-billed Storks, Common Sandpipers and other waders, and a variety of herons and egrets. On the lily pads amongst the glorious flowers were both African Jacanas and their dainty relatives the Lesser Jacana. Flying were the huge Pied and the diminutive, but startling, Malachite Kingfishers, together with the magnificent but ubiquitous African Fish Eagles uttering their haunting cry.

In the late afternoon we went on a walk; the guide set out the rules. Single file with him and his rifle in the lead, no straggling for any reason. If we meet lion or hyena, stop and stare them down, never turn or run. Stop for elephant and back off if it continues to threaten. Climb a tree from buffalo, if there is time, otherwise lie down – better to be trampled than gored – and with their rotten eyesight they might not see you! We did not see much and had no dramas.

Bits and...

- In *The Bedside Book of Birds* Graeme Gibson (author Margaret Atwood’s husband) writes about an enormous albatross drifting over a ragged wave in a misty southern ocean. ‘It was enough to have seen it at that moment and I was left with an enchanted sense that I had received a gift. At its heightened moments, birdwatching can encourage a state of being close to rapture. It is an ecstasy that is said to accompany the writing of poetry;

sometimes it comes when we are listening to music.' Madelaine Murray 'The joy in the voyeur's eye' Spectrum p17 SMH 1,2 April 2006

The CASCADES WALK, 12 April, Leader - Joan Wylie

Val Dolan

On a perfect autumn morning ten IBOC members met at the foot of Macquarie Pass. After seeing many birds while waiting in the car park, Magpie-larks, Magpies, male Satin Bower Birds, Raven, Wagtail (strangely all black and white) a decision was made to first walk the northern track besides the creek. As we entered the forest several Black Cockatoos glided overhead. Then bird life disappeared from sight and hearing as we marveled at the tall, straight turpentine trees reaching for the sun. Many spiders' webs sparkled in the branches and copious butterflies fluttered high in the canopy or gathered in pools of sunlight on the ground. The babbling brook added to our pleasure. Then keen eyes began to sight many birds and our leader, Joan Wylie, was a great help in identifying these. Ted and I agreed that we need such a leader as small grey or brown birds silhouetted in the trees look all the same to us! And how would you know how to pronounce Gerygone unless you go out with experienced bird watchers? Joan noticed some scratchings on the track and no sooner had we agreed that it was Lyrebird habitat than Chris Cartledge spotted one ahead on the track. Closer to the Cascades we saw several male Lyrebirds dashing through the under brush. Later, on the southern track Judy turned to see another one cross the track behind her. Great that they were so plentiful ! Clearly visible, hanging over the creek was a wonderful large woven nest: home to a Yellow Throated Scrub Wren. Doug Rickers spotted a Flame Robin and Tom Wylie a Yellow Robin. We all heard very noisy Whip Birds but I'm not sure if any were sighted - they're elusive.

Morning tea was welcome on our return to the grassy area near the car park. Red-browed Finches and a family of Superb Wrens entertained us by flying in and out of the shelter. It was such a glorious morning we all decided to cross the road and inspect the southern track. We had an excellent sighting of a White Throated Tree Creeper. I found a small woven nest and tugged the branch to have a closer inspection. Cleverly a single leaf had been woven in to cover the entrance hole. Neil Wheway reminded me that had the nest been in use I'd have driven the parents away. Sometimes my excitement and curiosity override my commonsense. Point taken for the future.

Back at the car park Tom (suffering from a cold) read out our bird list of 34 sightings. Tera suggested that we needed to sing Happy Birthday to him before he went off for a family celebration. Driving off some say Tom was heard to mutter, "I'd rather go fishing."

White-faced Heron	Brown Gerygone	Grey Fantail
Straw Necked Ibis	Brown Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Crimson Rosella	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Black-eared Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Laughing Kookaburra	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Spinebill	Satin Bowerbird
White Throated Tree Creeper	Flame Robin	Red-browed Finch
Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Welcome Swallow
Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Whipbird	Bred-whiskered Bulbul
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Golden Whistler	Silvereye
White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Thrush	
Large-billed Scrubwren	Magpie-lark	

...Pieces

* A lady friend has now joined AGGRO, the screeching-thief-stopping sulphur crested cockatoo (mentioned 2 months ago) in his cage at the Hardex Store in Fairy Meadow. In consequence, Aggro has now quietened down quite a bit. Ahh! Domestic bliss !

* 'Look at that sanderling,' she exclaims, pointing to an innocuous little grey and white wader whirring along the shore. 'It breeds in Siberia then flies over 11,000 km back to Australia for the summer. The adult flies back when the chicks are about 3 weeks old. The chicks fly to Australia alone when they are 6 weeks old. Isn't that the best story in the world ? Don't you just love it ?

Madelaine Murray 'The joy in the voyeur's eye' Spectrum p17 SMH 1,2 April 2006

* Have you heard about the **BIG SAVINGS !!!** eh, well, eh, not actually for you, but for the club. Here's how you do it. Simply swap to receiving your IBOC News by email ! Sure, lots of people like to have a hard copy in their hand, I do myself, or you may not be on email, and that's fine. Not to worry at all. But if 10 more members moved to receiving IBOC News by email rather than by post, the club would save \$55 pa on postage. If you do feel like swapping to email, please let Chris Brandis know at cbrandis@speedlink.com.au Thanks.



On the Cascades Walk: 'Two Innocents Abroad,' Tom Wylie Esq & Neil Wheway Esq.

Photo : Tera Wheway

Barren Grounds - Ground Parrot Survey 2006

9am to noon Sunday 13 August 2006 Ground parrot surveys at Barren Grounds have been conducted annually since the January 1983 fire. Volunteers from Birds Australia, COG, CBOC, Birding NSW, the University of Wollongong, NPWS and elsewhere have always come along to help.

! WE NEED YOUR HELP THIS YEAR !

The results over the past few years have been quite erratic.

What will happen this year ?? **BE THERE YOURSELF AND FIND OUT** Bring stout walking gear, wet weather gear, hats or sun bonnets, and a picnic lunch. For more information, contact Jack.Baker@environment.nsw.gov.au

Latham's Snipe: Once moderately common, it has become scarce in our region, owing to habitat destruction, visiting us in summer from northern Japan and eastern Siberia. It was so named by the RAOU in 1975 after Latham's description in 1801. Dr John Latham (1740-1837) was a British physician (practising in Kent until his retirement in 1796), naturalist and author. He helped form the Linnean Society of London in 1788 and became a Fellow of the Royal Society. He subsequently earned the reputation of 'grandfather' of Australian ornithology through his scientific naming and publishing of so many of our birds, including the Emu, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Australian Magpie. At the age of 81 he began his eight years work on the *General History of Birds*, designing, sketching and colouring his own illustrations.

Lewin's Rail & Lewin's Honeyeater: These are birds of contrast, apart from being resident here and their somewhat staccato calls. The dense-cover, wetlands rail is scarce, whilst the common honeyeater frequents forests and gardens. John William Lewin (1770-1819) was an English naturalist, engraver and early settler in Sydney, where he later became a portrait artist and city coroner. He made three significant expeditions, firstly accompanying James Grant, surveying areas to Bass Strait and then the Hunter River, and lastly Governor Macquarie on the new Blue Mountains road to Bathurst, drawing events during construction work and plants. He collected wildlife specimens until his death. His re-issued seven-volume *Birds of New Holland* (1808) five years later became the first illustrated book to be engraved and printed in this country. His other major work, *A Natural History of the Birds of New South Wales*, was published 19 years after his death.

Richard's Pipit: A common resident passerine and the most widespread in the world of the Motacillidae family. It is the only avian species to have been named after Monsieur Richard of Luneville in the region of Lorraine, who was a French naturalist and collector. It was so given and described by his compatriot and fellow naturalist, L.P. Vieillot in 1818.

Sabine's Gull: Listed as a vagrant by Christides and Boles, it hasn't been recorded off our coastline for approaching 20 years. Outside of its circumpolar breeding season on the coasts and tundra, it is essentially pelagic, wintering in the North Pacific south towards Peru and Chile and in the Atlantic. Botanist Joseph Sabine named this species after his brother Edward (1788-1883), who discovered it, nesting among Arctic Terns, on some rocky islands (also later given his name) lying off the west coast of Greenland. Edward was an Irish astronomer and scientist, who researched the earth's magnetic field. He settled in England and joined the Royal Artillery, attaining the rank of Major-General and a knighthood. In 1818 & 1819 he took part in two voyages in search of the Northwest Passage. His interest in natural history and ornithology sprang from his visit to the Niagara frontier, and he eventually became President of the Royal Society (1862-1871). *Birds of Greenland* was one of his major works.

Salvin's Prion: This is one of 15 avians named after Osbert Salvin (1835-1898), an English naturalist, who became a Fellow of the Royal Society. Central America became the main focus of his studies, where he prized, and shot, quetzals. Thousands of their plumes were transported across the Atlantic to meet the demand from collectors and fashionable milliners' shops. He combined with fellow naturalist, Doctor Frederick du Cane Godman to compile the 40-volume *Biologia Centrali Americana* (1879) and later to present their bird collections to the British Natural History Museum over a 15-year period.

Saunders's Tern: Only the one local record, dating back to 1903 and, according to Christides and Boles, unlikely to be valid. It is very similar in appearance to the Little Tern, with which some consider it may be conspecific, and is best differentiated in breeding plumage. The two species regularly overlap around the Arabian Peninsula and nearby Indian Ocean. With estuaries, coastal areas and tidal lagoons as favoured habitats, its range extends from the Red Sea to Tanzania, Madagascar and the Seychelles. Howard Saunders (1835-1907) was originally a British merchant banker, which afforded him much travel, notably Brazil, Chile and Spain, which in turn led to his interest in ornithology and research at the British Museum. He became the foremost expert on gulls and terns, applying strict standards to field identification, culminating in his book *Sternae* (1889).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: One of the earth's most widespread and abundant birds, breeding in Antarctica and many sub-Antarctic islands, it is an uncommon visitor here, mostly out to sea. It was so named in 1823 by Emperor Napoleon's nephew, Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte, the 'father of systematic ornithology', who in turn had ten bird species named after him. The first to study American birds in their natural habitats, Alexander Wilson (1766-

1813) was often called the Father of American Ornithology, completing seven volumes of his *American Ornithology* (1808-1813). Born in Paisley, Scotland, he became an itinerant poet and pedlar of muslin. After ridiculing manufacturers, he was gaoled for libel and, after his release in 1794, emigrated to the United States. While working as a Pennsylvania village schoolmaster, he began his research into birds and became an accomplished artist.

References:

Bo Beolens & Michael Watkins (2003): *Whose Bird? Men and women commemorated in the common names of birds*. Christopher Helm, London.
 Chris J. Chafer, Chris C.P. Brandis & Diana Wright (1999): *A Handbook of Birds found in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Adjacent Tablelands*. Illawarra Bird Observers Club
 Leslie Christides & Walter E. Boles (1994): *The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories*. RAOU
 Barrie Heather & Hugh Robertson (2005): *The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*. Viking.
 J.D. MacDonald (1987): *The Illustrated Dictionary of Australian Birds by Common Name*. Reed.
The New Australia New Zealand Encyclopedia (1982 Bay Books)
 Various web-sites

Venue for October 2006 Camp 21st to 28th October 2006

The IBOC Spring Camp will be held at Smiths Lake Field Station of the UNSW. This is north of Myall Lake and south of Forster on the mid north coast. The surrounding area has a rich bird fauna in a wide variety of habitats, with approx 100-120 species likely to be recorded. Full details will be in the next newsletter..

BOOK REVIEW John Huxley *Dead Parrots*

This is a murder mystery, set in Sydney. The body of the murdered one is found in the sands at Kurnell, head down and half buried ! It’s the body of a prominent twitcher.

The detectives investigating the crime have all sorts of things to cope with: getting time with the family, trying to make sense of what clues they have, having some love life, investigating some odd people, keeping the press at bay, and trying to pacify their boss who is threatening, and demanding results, results, results !

The dead man was high flyer – Sydney’s answer to David Attenborough – with his own TV show, and his own line of walking boots and socks. He was in the 700 club, but there is little love lost between him and some rivals. ‘Little love’ is putting it mildly. He has a murky past too, and was engaged in some questionable business deals.

It’s not a bad yarn, if you like reading crime. Nice to have it set in Sydney, and nice to have bird observers featured, though the high flying twitchers portrayed are not very nice people. This is John Huxley’s first venture into fiction. He is an assistant editor at the Sydney Morning Herald.

Meetings and Walks for June to December 2006

June	Meeting	12.06.06 nb Public Holiday	Neil & Tera Wheway	Antarctica
	Mid Week Walk	14.06.06	Barbara	Macquarie Rivulet
	Outing	Saturday 17.06.06	Betty Hudson	Saddleback Mtn & Hoddles Track
July	Meeting	10.07.06	Col Markham	South America

	Mid Week Walk	12.07.06	Judy Parkinson	Scout Camp
	Outing	Sunday 16.07.06	Betty Hudson	Bass Point &/or Killalea Lagoon
August	Meeting	14.08.06	Peter Nolan	Birds of America
	Mid Week Walk	16.08.06	Chris Brandis	Rocklow Archery Range Dunmore
	Outing	Saturday 19.08.06	Val Dolan	Homebush Bay
September	Meeting	11.09.06	TBA	
	Mid Week Walk	13.09.06	Chris Brandis	Tallawarra
	Outing	Sunday 17.09.06	Betty Hudson	Redhill Fire Trail Fitzroy Falls
October	Meeting	9.10.06	TBA	
	Mid Week Walk	12.10.06	Joan Wylie	Grevillia Park
	Outing	Saturday 14.10.06	TBA	
	Camp	21.10.06 to 28.10.06	Betty Hudson	Smiths Lake
November	Meeting/ AGM	13.11.06	Josh & Bruce Coyte	Bird Photos
	Mid Week Walk	15.11.06	Chris Brandis	Macquarie Pass Clover Hill Road
	Outing	Sunday 19.11.06	Betty Hudson	Gerroa/ Crooked River Seven Mile Beach NP
December	Christmas Picnic	Saturday 9.12.06	TBA	TBA
	Christmas Meeting	11.12.06	TBA	

TWITCHATHON 2005 REPORT OF 11 MARCH 2006

The 2005 Twitchathon was a wonderful success with the greatest number of species seen (229) on any Twitchathon since NSW went it alone in 1994 and the greatest amount of funds raised, viz \$14979.25 gross (so far) with about \$14000 available to be donated to the Gluepot Reserve Education Unit. On this occasion there were 92 registered Twitchers, with 11 Main Race, 13 Champagne and 6 Children's Teams taking part.

The Winning Main Race Team, the Wacked-out Woodswallows (229) lead their opponents, the Hunter Home Brewers by just two species (227), while the Hunter Thickheads & The Black-necked Stalkers tied with 201 species each.

The Champagne Race winners *Lesstictum phoradae* led with 147, from their nearest rivals Trio Twitchin (134) and the Warbler Specklers (127). In the Children's Teams, the Elegant Eagles with 127 species were well out in front of all others and the Logrunners, in the under 10 years category saw 75 species. I recently went to Sawtell Public School where I presented the winning prizes to the Elegant Eagles and Logrunners and found much support there for the Twitchathon.

The winners in respect of raising the most funds were Keith Brandwood \$3143 which was somewhat below his best year of \$3900 in 1994; second was Tiffany Mason with \$1639 and third was Carol Proberts with \$1360. What a sterling effort these three people made in raising all these funds. Overall the Main Race Teams manage to raise about 70% of all moneys raised. Congratulations to all those people who took part. The prizes for the most funds raised were presented at the BASNA AGM on 25 March 2006 at Sydney Olympic Park.

Birds Australia and BASNA thank all those people and the Bird Clubs who encouraged the Teams and helped with the fund raising. We look forward to your continued support in 2006

Alan Morris

Twitchathon Co-ordinator Tel 0243 342776, email: amorris@ceinternet.com.au

More on the Twitchathon in a later IBOC News

The Wagtail

So elegant he is and neat
from round black head to slim black feet !
He sways and flirts upon the fence,
his collar clean as innocence.

The city lady looks and cries
'Oh charming bird with dew drop eyes,
How kind of you to sing that song !'
But what a pity – she is wrong.

'Sweet-pretty- creature' – yes, but who
Is the one he sings it to ?
Not me – not you.

The furry moth, the gnat perhaps
On which his scissor-beak snip-snaps.

Judith Wright

Good Grief ?

A blast from the past . 'Ada and Elsie have just been on the air. Ada said, "Dadda has just been mending our cuckoo clock. Now the cuckoo backs out and asks 'What's the time ? What's the time ?' "'

This quote is from a slim but delightful book, *Mother Stayed at Home*. Edited by Toni Mackenzie. It's a collection of letters that her Mum wrote in the early 1950s to her daughter who was away on her big overseas trip: going O/S by sea in those days. It's amusing and entertaining. It drips with nostalgia for more innocent days when Jack Davey ruled the air waves, Menzies ruled the roost, and winning the Davis Cup was really something.