

JUNE NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 24th May**. **NB. PENNY POTTER** will be the Editor of the June IBOC News so please send items to her at penny_potter@bigpond.com or mail them to her at 1/23 Hopetoun St, Woonona 2517

CELEBRATION.....2007 IBOC is 30 years old .

To acknowledge this birthday a Dessert & Coffee event will be held on the usual meeting night 9 July 2007 at 7.30pm in the Fairy Meadow Community Centre.

It will be an informal night beginning with Dessert & Coffee, with an opportunity to have fellowship and reflect on the Club's journey over 30 years before hearing from our Guest Speakers - Chris Brandis and Doug Prosser. Chris and Doug will share with us one of IBOC's projects over the years " Bird Surveys on Lake Illawarra". Cost to be advised (under \$ 10), and no need to bring supper that night. To assist with catering numbers RSVP to Fae & Kevin McGregor 42 71 3762 by 25 June 2007 please.

BITS and....

- **Fees.** Don't miss out on reading of Walks, Talks and other Club news. If you haven't already paid your fees, see our Treasurer, Bronwyn Wilson, pronto. Cheque her out personally, or send your cheque to her address at 8 Wellington Drive, Balgownie 2519.

The 2007 BASNA SEMINAR

Mike MORPHETT

On 24 March last, after casting my State member vote, I elected to attend another BASNA seminar, again held at Newington Armory, Sydney Olympic Park; this time the theme was 'A Celebration of Birds'. Speakers and audience did a mighty job focussing on the individual topics in very hot, humid conditions under fans tucked high in the tin roof. The oppressive atmosphere may have brought about the gremlins that intruded in three of the power-point presentations.

☐ **Secret Nightlife at Sydney Olympic Park:** Judy Harrington, who led our last September walk through Bicentennial Park, spoke of the varied wildlife in the Park despite the loud noise and bright lights accompanying human activities. Besides the nesting Tawny Frogmouth and Collared Sparrowhawk, she highlighted the Peregrine Falcon, Rufous Night-Heron, and also Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Godwit among the waders that settle on the mudflats within the Waterbird Refuge.

☐ **Bird Vocalisations:** With recordings and sonographs (prime example of which was the Eastern Whipbird) Fred van Gessel demonstrated a wide range of bird calls and songs and also some 'mechanical' sounds produced by certain species, using their bills, feathers or feet. He looked at sub-song, mimicry (the Chestnut-rumped Heathwren can reproduce calls of 12-15 other species), emotions producing weak or strong vocalisations, advertising, and times of day. Also variations, selecting the song of the Brown Thornbill and call of the Southern Boobook across different States and then similarities of calls of the Black-faced and Black-winged Monarchs in different regions.

☐ **What do Museum specimens tell us about the impact of urbanisation?:** Comparing the collection of pre-1900 bird specimens within a 10 km radius of Sydney GPO and observational data from the 2000 Atlasing program, Richard Major came up with a dichotomy of urban lovers and haters. Several Parrots, such as the Rainbow Lorikeet, large Honeyeaters (Noisy Miner for example), large carnivores/omnivores, and various introduced species (Rock Dove) have thrived with the expansion of human development, whereas small Honeyeaters and many insectivores and birds of fertile soils have declined; some to the extent of total absence, such as the Australian Bustard, White-fronted Chat (once at Homebush Bay and

Towra Point), and the Ground and Turquoise Parrots. About 20,800 bird skins are housed at the Australian Museum.

□ ***Cooperative breeding in Australo-Papuan Babblers:*** University researcher, Dean Portelli took us through the breeding habits of each of the five babbler species. Cooperative breeding (when more than two birds combine to raise a brood with ‘helpers at the nest’) was first discovered in the Grey-crowned. Similar behaviour exhibited by the Chestnut-crowned wasn’t confirmed until 15 years ago.

□ ***Going, going...gone? What chance Regent Honeyeaters in a disappearing woodland?:*** Despite 13 years of research, David Geering is still seeking information about this enigmatic, mobile and striking species, using sight records, colour-banding, radio telemetry and some speculation to ascertain its movement about, and use, of the landscape. He emphasised the significance of resource-rich (namely nectar) “hot spots” and the links between them as well as the combined cooperation of land-holders and volunteers (notably in the Capertee Valley) for the long-term survival of the species. Whilst there are only three remaining important breeding areas and despite the impact of drought, David has an optimistic outlook.

□ ***Why are Barking Owls so uncommon in Southern Australia?:*** Even after 20 years of surveys, Rod Kavanagh advocates further studies, especially within private properties, to better understand this bird’s conservation status, such as one conducted in the NW NSW Pilliga. Among the potentially limiting factors, he listed habitat and food availability, breeding success, predation (chiefly by goanna) of nestlings, and disease as impacting on this species that has a home range of about 2,000 hectares.

□ ***Important Bird Areas:*** Phil Straw referred us to the *IBA March 2007 Newsletter* and Birds Australia website www.birdsaustralia.com.au/project/ibas, requesting further suggestions to the 116 identified potential important areas, which, in our region, includes Budderoo and Barren Grounds, Burraborang Valley, Lake Wollumboola and Jervis Bay. Mid-2008 is the target for designating all sites in NSW which are to be recognised as globally significant for bird conservation.

□ ***Birds in Backyards:*** Holly Parsons said one of the project’s aims is to restore the balance between small birds, currently in decline, and large aggressive species that are on the increase. Strategies include the management of disturbances and threats and the creation of bird-friendly spaces (for our benefit as well as birds’) and of corridors. Also, Guidelines for Enhancing Urban Bird Habitats, targeting home-owners, environmental officers, bush regenerators, planners and landscapers. The guidelines should be accessible in May as a pdf on www.birdsinbackyards.net website.

□ ***North Head Surveys and Cowra Woodland Birds Program:*** drawing our attention to their posters, representative speakers again emphasised the need for ongoing assistance from volunteers.

□ ***BASNA Twitchathon:*** In the wake of a very successful fundraiser last year, Alan Morris urged the participation of more bird groups, suggesting some from the Illawarra, in October; something for our IBOC Committee to consider perhaps. Alan also sought more Atlasers, advising that GPS data can be Googled.

□ ***Australian Bird Education Centre:*** BASNA chairman, Ian Hume expressed the hope that this would open mid-year, initially on a weekend basis, to the public, but also with a view to targeting school groups in particular, after the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, which would charge only a nominal rent. The BASNA Office will move from Crows Nest into one of the allocated four buildings that border the western side of the 48-hectare Newington Nature Reserve. During the lunch break we were given opportunity to inspect the rooms, a short walk from the seminar venue. The centre will very much require the assistance of volunteers.

There are over 100 heritage buildings on the Newington Armory site, which at present is restricted to Sundays for public access. With undulating open and woodland areas bordering the Parramatta River, it was formerly occupied for over a century by the Royal Australian

Navy as an armament depot, after the Blaxland family had been colonial occupants. Together with the Newington Nature Reserve it makes up Homebush Bay, touted as the “new heart of Sydney”. I’d rather think of it as a revitalised lung as a counterpart to the eastern one in the form of the Botanic Garden and Centennial Park and as a specially bird-friendly place.

Mid-Week Walk – Wednesday 11th April – Wollongong Botanic Gardens - Chris. Cartledge

It was a lovely autumn morning, and when I arrived at the Murphys Ave car park it was almost full. My first thought was wow! The whole club membership has turned out. But alas, it was school holidays and at the entrance to the gardens were about 20 children from St Bridget’s Primary School doing their stretches before training for a cross-country running competition.

The IBOC contingent ended up to be eleven, including our esteemed treasurer Bronwyn, who was also taking advantage of the school holidays to make use of this great public facility.

As usual, Tom had his notebook out and before leaving the car park had 13 entries to start the sightings list for the day. It totalled 44. We did an anti-clockwise circuit of the gardens working our way through the various temperate zone plantings. An early highlight was the first of three bowers to be seen on the walk. Amongst the grevilleas, on the eastern perimeter, was the most recently constructed bower with a male satin bowerbird attending to two females.

We moved on, up to the top of the hill to see five Australian King Parrots on top of the ‘Mercury’ five islands sculpture. On closer inspection, we saw the parrots were waiting their turn for a bath in a small residual pond at the base of this now dry sculpture. When first opened in Wollongong Rest Park this gift to the city was spectacular sight with water gushing over each ‘island’.

Almost an hour later we reached the ‘Illawarra rainforest’ and saw small birds for the first time. We then moved into the ‘Sub-tropical rainforest’ area where, on their previous recce, Tom and Joan spied a Boobook Owl devouring a smaller bird. The carrion was still on top of the stump.

After morning tea on the amphitheatre stage we moved over to the old caretaker’s cottage at the back of Glennifer Brae. Here, in the massive fig tree overshadowing the cottage we watched numerous orioles feeding on the plentiful fruit. We wandered back to the car park via the rose garden and duck pond. Thanks once again to Joan and Tom for a most enjoyable mid-week walk!

Australian Wood Duck	Musk Lorikeet	Black-faced Monarch
Mallard	Australian King Parrot	Maggie lark
Pacific Black Duck	Crimson Rosella	Grey Fantail
Chestnut Teal	Eastern Rosella	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian Pelican	Laughing Kookaburra	Olive-backed Oriole
Royal Spoonbill	Superb Fairy wren	Grey Butcherbird
Purple Swamphen	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Dusky Moorhen	Brown Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Masked Lapwing	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Raven
Silver Gull	Red Wattlebird	Satin Bowerbird
Rock Dove	Little Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
Spotted Turtle-Dove	Noisy Miner	Silvereye
Galah	Lewin’s Honeyeater	Common Myna
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Rainbow Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	Goose (domestic)

Wellington Camp April 2007

Gwen Robinson

On the way to camp we passed through the towns of Bathurst and Orange. The streets were ablaze with autumn trees; yellow, orange and every shade of red. This spectacular show gave way to drought stricken paddocks of withered grasses and red-brown soil.

Wellington Caves Tourist Park was a good choice with units, cabins and a large area for vans and tents. We were greeted by resident birds grazing in the dry grasses: Australian King-Parrots, Red-rumped Parrots, Eastern Rosellas and Noisy Miners. Among the trees were Blue-faced Honeyeaters and Grey Butcherbirds. At night a Barking Owl caught moths fluttering before a light, or just posed for us. At the end of the first day the list was of 36 species, thanks mostly to the early arrivals.



On Sunday, the now 22 Birdos walked through the adjoining golf course into the surrounding dry area. Birds were few. Red-browed Finch, Superb Fairy Wren, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Crested Pigeons and a Grey Fantail were some seen. The bird list had climbed to a modest 52 when read out around the camp fire. Yes, we had a camp fire, thanks mostly to Neil and Tom and other wood gatherers.

Monday was a big day with a long hot walk on the Yarroman track around Mt Arthur reserve. Some of us saw only the Grey Fantail but others had better luck sighting the Tawny Frogmouth, Golden Whistler and Inland Thornbill. Fortunately sightings were more productive both before and after the walk, and Sivereye, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, White-fronted Treecreeper, Crimson Rosella, Long-billed Corella, Zebra Finch were some added to the list. Unfortunately Joan slipped and cracked the bone in her left forearm. With her arm in plaster, did this stop Joan? Not at all.

At 4pm we met for a most interesting tour of Wellington Caves led by Dr Michael Augee who formerly lectured at UNSW, and club member, Dr

Betty: set for the Zoo *Photo Brian Hale* Lyn Dawson who worked on fossils in the caves in the 1980s for her thesis on Vertebrate Palaeontology at UNSW, and later while associated with the Australian Museum. Michael, now a Wellington resident and the Deputy Mayor, organised a BarBQ for us provided by the Shire Council. Mike BarBQed tasty sausages and his partner Christine provided salads and a delicious slice for our tea and coffee. Drinks were provided too. We felt very special. Great BarBQ, and good company, including the Mayor, the Ranger, and others. Thank you Mike for a great night!

Tuesday: to Burrendong Dam and Arboretum. Here were sighted the Crested Shrike-tit, Mistletoebird, Speckled Warbler, Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail, Peaceful Dove, Yellow Robin and Fantailed Cuckoo. Waterbirds sighted included Great Crested Grebe, Black Swan, Great, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, Pacific Black Duck and Great Egret. By the end of the day the list had climbed to 92, a large number for such dry conditions. Burrendong

Dam was only 2.5% of capacity but despite this, Wellington township is not on water restrictions.

Next day saw an early start to Dubbo Zoo resulting in a most interesting day studying the animals. Some animals were fed while we watched. Some members walked, keen ones rode bikes, while others drove in cars. We finished the day in a huge aviary where we saw many endangered species including Regent Honeyeaters with their sweet calls, the Malleefowl and a surprising number of Diamond Firetails feeding young and building nests. Birds flying free were a Black Kite, Red-capped Robin, White-browed Babblers and Grey-crowned Babblers.

That night, back at Wellington, we dined out at the 'Lion of Waterloo,' a hotel built of vertical timber boards in 1843. It was a Cobb and Co. coachhouse with lots of atmosphere, and the food was fine too.

Thursday was a free day and more birds were added to the list particularly by those who visited Burrendong Dam again. The list was now 107. Next day, Tony, the Ranger for Mt Arthur took the group on an interesting but very arduous walk down by the Macquarrie River. No new birds were seen but a Brown Songlark was seen by a member elsewhere.

In all 26 club members and family attended the camp. Betty Hudson is to be congratulated for her work in organizing such an interesting camp. It was a great time together. And we hope Wellington received some of the rain which fell out west.

Bird List for Wellington Camp

There was a total of 115 species recorded during the camp on the camp site and the various other locations in the area we visited

Species only sighted at Dubbo Zoo, are marked with an asterisk.

Species only sighted at either Molong or Yeoval are marked with a hash

*Black Swan	Red-kneed Dotterel	Weebill	Magpie Lark
Australian Wood Duck	Masked Lapwing	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Mallard	Silver Gull	Inland Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Rock Dove	Chestnut-rumped	Black-faced Cuckoo-
Grey Teal	Crested Pigeon	Thornbill	shrike
* Chestnut Teal	Peaceful Dove	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Black-faced
* Hardhead	Galah	Yellow-rumped	Woodswallow
Australasian Grebe	Long-billed Corella	Thornbill	Dusky Woodswallow
Great Crested Grebe	Little Corella	Yellow Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
Darter	Sulphur-crested	Spiny-cheeked	Pied Butcherbird
Little Pied Cormorant	Cockatoo	Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Little Black Cormorant	Cockatiel	Noisy Friarbird	Pied Currawong
Great Cormorant	Australian King-Parrot	Little Friarbird	Australian Raven
Australian Pelican	Superb Parrot	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Little Raven
White-faced Heron	Crimson Rosella	Noisy Miner	White-winged Chough
Great Egret	Eastern Rosella	White-eared	Apostlebird
#Nankeen Night Heron	Red-rumped Parrot	Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Australian White Ibis	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	White-plumed	Double-barred Finch
Straw-necked Ibis	Barking Owl	Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Black-shouldered Kite	Southern Boobook	Eastern Spinebill	Diamond Firetail
Black Kite	Tawny Frogmouth	Jacky Winter	Mistletoebird
Whistling Kite	Azure Kingfisher	Red-capped Robin	Welcome Swallow
White-bellied Sea-	Laughing Kookaburra	Hooded Robin	Tree Martin
Eagle	White-throated	Eastern Yellow Robin	Fairy Martin
Brown Goshawk	Treecreeper	Grey-crowned Babbler	*Clamorous Reed-
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Brown Treecreeper	White-browed Babbler	Warbler
Little Eagle	Superb Fairy-wren	Varied Sittella	#Brown Songlark
Brown Flacon	Spotted Pardalote	Crested Shrike-tit	Golden-headed
Nankeen Kestrel	Striated Pardalote	Golden Whistler	Cisticola
Purple Swamphen	White-browed	Rufous Whistler	Silvereye
Dusky Moorhen	Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Blackbird
Eurasian Coot	Speckled Warbler	* Restless Flycatcher	Common Starling

...and Pieces * The Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater surveys are on once again. Surveys are run twice a year in NSW, ACT, Vic and parts of SA and QLD. The aim of the surveys is to record both of these species as they migrate away from their typical breeding areas. The Swift Parrot leaves Tasmania and is found on the mainland from April- September. The Regent Honeyeater breeds in three main areas: the Capertee Valley, central NSW; Bundarra- Barraba, northern NSW; and Chiltern in north-east Vic before dispersing.

We have over 800 people contributing to these surveys but considering the large area these species cover and the fact that their non-breeding distribution seems to vary between years, we would love more involvement.

Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater surveys. *Dates:* 19-20th May, 4-5th Aug 2007

Location: Surveys cover NSW, ACT, Vic as well as parts of SA and QLD. Please contact a project coordinator (listed below) to discuss which area you are able to survey and to receive relevant newsletters and the survey form. You may survey different sites in your local area over the weekend. *Time:* You can undertake surveys at any time over the weekend. Surveys can take as little time as 10-20 minutes each. *Contacts:*

Swift Parrots:

Belinda Cooke, Swift Parrot Project Officer, NSW, ACT, SA, QLD
Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW
swiftparrots@yahoo.com.au, Freecall 1800 66 57 66

Regent Honeyeaters:

David Geering, Regent Honeyeater Recovery Coordinator,
Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW,
David.Geering@environment.nsw.gov.au, Freecall 1800 621 056

BIGnet Report 17-18/3/07

Chris Brandis

The Bird Interest Group Network was held at Manna Park, just north of Merimbula, hosted by the Far South Coast Birdwatchers and attended by representatives of 14 clubs or government departments. Subjects discussed included the spread of the Indian Mynah down the south coast, control of Common Starlings, and an interesting scientific trial to remove Bell Miners from Manna Park and the Mandini complex. It was suspected that Bell Miners contribute to eucalypt die back and a reduction in the range of small birds. Members have been mist netting Bell Miners, euthanasing them in some areas and banding them in others and then observing any changes to the forest and bird numbers, and if the Bell Miners move back into areas they have been removed from. Initial results indicate that the trees recover, the number of small birds increased, and the Bell Miners have not moved back into de-stocked areas.

Strategies for increasing active club membership were discussed, as they are at nearly every meeting, and the development of an Australian Bird Education Centre at the Sydney Olympic Park by Birds Australia, and the request for volunteers to man the centre when finished. The Important Bird Areas project progress was summarised, the Little Tern project monitoring by the host Club along the Sapphire Coast, the upcoming Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater count and finally the site of the next meeting in September. Any member that would like to represent IBOC is welcome to, and can contact me for details at any time.

***Colour Supplement** Colin and Melissa Markham traveled to Kenya in August last year. They stayed at three tented camps which have a vast array of bird species; in the Samburu Game Reserve, at Masai Mara, and in the Great Rift Valley .
The **Markhams** have provided the two back pages of their bird photos of this IBOC News, *gratis*, to the club.

Unusual Records for March 2007

Chris J. Chafer

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

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Great Crested Grebe	47	3-Mar	Wingecarribee Reservoir	lake	BA
Kermadec Petrel	few	30-Mar	east of Kiama	pelagic	LS
Gould's Petrel	few	30-Mar	east of Kiama	pelagic	LS
Royal Albatross	1	31-Mar	east of Jervis Bay	pelagic	LS
Red-tailed Tropicbird	1	30-Mar	east of Kiama	pelagic	LS
Masked Booby	1	31-Mar	east of Jervis Bay	pelagic	LS
Osprey	1	10-Mar	Albion Park Rail	overhead	BBH
Pacific Baza	1	3-Jan	lower Macquarie Pass	forest	IM
Pacific Baza	2	4-Mar	Kangaroo Valley	overhead	CJ
Black Kite	2	12-Mar	Dunmore	overhead	RB
Grey Goshawk	1	2-Mar	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	3-Mar	Nepean Dam	overhead	BA
Brown Falcon	1	8-Mar	Moss Vale	overhead	DG
Peregrine Falcon	1	20-Mar	Tianjara plateau, Morton NP	overhead	MZ
Buff-banded Rail	2	10-Mar	Albion Park Rail	lake edge	BBH
Latham's Snipe	2	10-Mar	Albion Park Rail	lake edge	BBH
Ruddy Turnstone	19	3-Mar	Bellambi Lagoon	shore	NH
Grey Ternlet	1	31-Mar	east of Jervis Bay	pelagic	LS
White-headed Pigeon	2	12-Mar	Macquarie Pass NP	forest	RT
Peaceful Dove	1	3-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	BA
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	30-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR
Powerful Owl	1	1-Mar	Kanahooka	forest	MC
Barn Owl	1	23-Mar	Corrimal	garden	RT
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	several	20-Mar	Tianjara plateau, Morton NP	heath	MZ
Rose Robin	1	2-Mar	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Rose Robin	1	12-Mar	Macquarie Pass NP	forest	RT
Rose Robin	1	30-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR
Crested Shrike-tit	2	26-Mar	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Crested Shrike-tit	2	30-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR
Leaden Flycatcher	1	29-Mar	Balgownie	garden	TE
Satin Flycatcher	1	2-Mar	Mt. Keira	forest	CB
Spangled Drongo	1	1-Mar	Bellambi	overhead	TW
Diamond Firetail	1	30-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; RB - Roger Bogeart; CB - Chris Brandis; TE - Terri Edwell; ME - Mary Eskdale; DG - Darryl Goldrick; BBH - Brian & Barbara Hales; NH - Nerida Hudspith; CJ - Carla Jacket; IM - Ian McKinlay; JM - Jill Molan; MM - Mike Morphet; MR - Michelle Rower; RR - Robert Rind; LS - Lindsay Smith; RT - Roger Truscott; TW - Tom Wylie; MZ - Marnix Zwankhuizen

Comment: A special SOSSA pelagic boat trip that set sail from Ulladulla at the end of March produced some quite interesting observations off the continental shelf. Of note was only the 2nd regional record of Masked Booby, the previous one being in March 2003.

Finches

A tiny spill of bird things in a swirl
and crest and tide that splashed the garden's edge,
a chatterful of finches filled the hedge
and came upon us with a rush and curl
and scattering of wings. They were so small
I laughed to see them ludicrously gay
among the thorny stalks, and all that day
they teased me with their tiny throated calls.

Thomas Shapcott *Little Book of Birds*