



"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

The Newsletter of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.  
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56 FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

# I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

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

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5**

## IBOC NEWS Contents

Report on October Meeting	p 2
Forbes Interesting Wetland	p 2
Grevillea Park	p 3
Fitzroy Falls Reservoir Walk	p 4
Friends, Planners, Developers	p 4
Birding Abroad: Tanzania	p 5
A Collective of Honeyeaters	p 6
Unusual Sightings	p 8

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## FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS NOVEMBER 2006

**AGM & CLUB MEETING – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November - 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall - Bruce and Josh Coyte** will be presenting some of the bird photos taken by Josh over the last few IBOC camps. **Please remember to bring a mug and a small plate for supper afterwards.** Note: a nomination form for the AGM can be found at: <http://www.iboc.org.au/info/NominationForm2007.doc>

**MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November – Macquarie Pass, Clover Hill Road – Chris Brandis** Meet in the small carpark half way up Macquarie Pass on the left hand side going up, at 8:30 am. As the parking area is rather small I suggest we meet initially at the bottom of the pass in front of the mown area by 8:15am and pool cars to ensure all fit in. We will walk in, have morning tea and then walk out back along the same road. My mobile is 0427962837. Bring morning tea, hats, sunscreen etc.

**NOVEMBER MONTHLY OUTING - Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2006. Shoalhaven Heads / Comerong Island Wetlands - Leader Betty Hudson.** Meet at 8.30am **sharp** in the River Road foreshore car park at the eastern end, adjoining the Holiday Haven Tourist Park. Travel via Gerringong, Gerroa, Shoalhaven Heads Road. Turn off to the left at the second turning to Shoalhaven Heads (just beyond the speed camera). Take the first on the right (Bailey Rd) and then left again at the end into River Road. Bring eats, drinks etc also **insect repellent** in case of sandflies. Be prepared to get your feet wet to get close up views of waders/shorebirds and to test your identification skills. On the return journey we will call in at Gerroa to check out the estuary there and if time permits to walk along the river through the forest.

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 21st November, at 7.30pm** at the home of Val Dolan, 26 Morandoo Have, Mt Keira (4229 6737). Turn off Mount Keira Road at Yates Ave, first right heading down hill. All members welcome.

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**DECEMBER 2006 NEWSLETTER** Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November**. Please don't leave submitting your contributions to the last minute and where possible please submit by email.

## **REPORT ON OCTOBER MEETING**

**Val Dolan**

### **SLIDE SHOW – Brian Hales**

Brian Hales, Life Member and former IBOC president for 10 years, began his slide show with a brief history of our club. We saw Doug Gibson, whose WEA course led to the formation of the club. Many of the slides were taken by Lennie Klump and left after his death, in Doug's care. These slides may be borrowed by club members by arrangement. There are over 2000 of them!

Brian showed an amusing slide of a portable hide with two legs protruding and described how the photographer moved gradually closer until birds accepted his presence. He also spoke of the risk taking behaviour of climbing ladders to take photos of nesting birds before photography was improved by technology.

The first slides shown were all Australian birds such as the White-breasted Sea-eagle at rest and in flight, Peregrine Falcon and Nightjar, or seasonal visitors like the Channel-billed Cuckoo and female Koel. A group of colourful kingfishers began with our local Kookaburra and compared it to a young Blue-winged Kookaburra. Brian showed his particular sense of humour by slipping in a roast chook - 'the sort of bird you buy at Coles'.

When he arrived from Yorkshire 30 years ago Brian was immediately impressed with the variety of avian life in Australia. Featherdale Park provided an excellent setting for viewing a large number of birds that would perhaps take years to spot in the wild.

Brian's English collection began with a Robin whose muted colours contrasted with Australia's more vivid examples. He went on the show us a Green Lapwing, tiny Blue and Great Tits, a Spotted Woodpecker, the Mute Swan, and the endangered Golden Eagle. A breeding program has been most successful in building up their numbers. Brian showed a slide of a pheasant and recalled a visit to a shoot which he described as a 'moronic waste'. The Black Grouse is believed to be Britain's only indigenous bird. And being Brian no slide show would be complete without the much admired Puffin. Kevin McGregor thanked Brian for his presentation and remarked on the pleasure of again seeing the slide of three open mouthed Mistletoebird nestlings, an excellent photograph among many others.

## **Forbes Interesting Wetland**

**Neil Wheway**

Travelling in late August on the Newell Hwy a couple of kilometres south of Forbes on the way to West Wyalong there is a sign pointing to a bird hide off to the right. Open the barbed wire gate and a short drive of a few hundred metres brings you to the hide situated on the edge of a large wetland which was surprisingly full of water considering the current drought conditions the rest of countryside is experiencing. This area was home to hundreds of ducks, the predominant species we saw being Grey Teals, Pink-eared Ducks, Black-fronted Dotterels and Black Swans. It was possible to see the pink ears on the ducks closest to the hide, (with our binoculars of course). Nesting in the numerous dead trees in the water were Galahs and feral pigeons, the air was alive with flying insects with which the Welcome Swallows were having a veritable smorgasbord. Anyone driving in the Forbes area wanting a rest break from driving then this could be just the place to do it.

**MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October – Grevillea Park  
Alan Cousins**

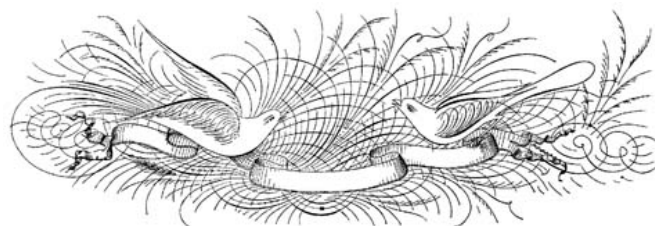
After short introductions by members to guests, 16 said members and guests set off into the Grevillea Park on a beautiful warm spring morning. Our introduction to the park was the wonderful sound of a Golden Whistler and some time was spent trying to get a sighting of said bird, we eventually saw a female. Joan led us up the garden path!! at a slow deliberate stroll and it appeared that we were all as interested in the plants and flowers as the birds. We heard many and saw thirty-four (34) species of bird during the walk through the park and the forest above. At one point we all stood and saw four nests in use, they being the Grey Butcher Bird, Friar Bird, Tawny Frogmouth – an amazing camouflage, (its mate was well spotted in a tree a little further along the track) and the lovely mud nest of the Magpie Lark (Pee-wee).

We followed up the track by the dry creek bed and stopped for morning tea, some seeking shade and others enjoying the warm sun. We continued on our way after this leisurely stop and heard lots more nice bird songs and not so nice squawking of parrots, and also heard an echidna snuffling in the leaf litter on the high side of the track.

Returning to the entrance to the park we admired the Grevillea that has been cultivated by a member of the park – Bulli Beauty. It was a great morning out and thanks to Joan and of course that WYLIE OLD BIRD Tom.

Bird List

Grey Goshawk	Yellow Robin	Spotted Pardalote
Masked Lapwing	Golden Whistler	Eastern Spinebill
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Black-faced Monarch	Silvereye
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Fantail	Magpie Lark
Rainbow Lorikeet	Whip Bird	Indian Myna
King Parrot	Superb Fairy-Wren	Grey Butcherbird
Crimson Rosella	White-browed Scrubwren	Currawong
Kookaburra	Brown Gerygone	Green Catbird
Dollarbird	Little Wattlebird	Satin Bowerbird
Tawny Frogmouth	Friar Bird	Australian Raven
Welcome Swallow	Lewins Honeyeater	
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	New Holland Honey Eater	



## Fitzroy Falls Reservoir walk 14th October 2006 Lorraine Pincus.

The forecast was for a hot 36deg C. 10 keen members met Betty at Robertson Service Station, no early morning heat but very windy, (hat blowing windy). We drove in convoy to the reservoir, a large expanse of water which gave no protection, thus the wind appeared much stronger. While parking and organising ourselves the Noisy Mynas were busily flying around - on closer observation changing positions on the nest, one nest contained young. The surface of the water had developed waves and a small swell, (this from the wind) it was blowing a gale. This was uninviting to only 2 Black Swans, a Black Duck, and a single Australasian Grebe who bobbed up and down with the swell. The walking paths around the reservoir were many and varied; some were small protected areas out of the wind displaying small "donkey" orchids, Dillwynia (eggs and bacon) and in other areas Pattersonia (native Iris). Because of the wind the birds hadn't ventured out except in the protected areas, there were Thornbills Striated and Brown, Yellow Robin, Superb Fairywrens and Scrubwrens. The reservoir was approximately 2kms from end to end. We walked the first km, had morning tea and finished the second half. This had tall eucalyptus and here we observed Crimson and Eastern Rosellas. As the morning progressed we could feel the heat of the day increasing, the decision was made lunch then home.

Thank you Betty for an enjoyable morning, also for showing some of us the start of a future walk.

## Friends, planners, developers, lynd me your ears

Mike MORPHETT

There have been two Robert Lynds of note, whose lives almost coincided on either side of the Atlantic. Robert Staughton Lynd (1892-1970) was an American sociologist who, in collaboration with his wife, Helen, conducted field observations of the social stratifications within the city of Muncie, Indiana and published what became classic surveys, titled *Middletown* (1929) and *Middletown in Transition* (1937).

Robert Wilson Lynd (1879-1949) was an essayist, journalist and Irish nationalist, born and buried in Belfast. In 1901 he moved to London, where he later became literary editor of the *Daily News* (later *News Chronicle*) for 35 years. With his wife, Sylvia, he formed a literary group, hosting writers like J.B. Priestley and James Joyce. He was a staunch supporter of Sinn Fein and the Gaelic League and a critic of English snobbery. In response to the common remark of unpleasant things being un-English, he suggested that some of the activities of the palefaces on the American prairies be described as un-Indian.

So what has all this to do with birds? Well, I was struck by a quote I first came across on the Tangled Wing Wildcare Conservancy (in North Carolina and Tennessee) web-site and which has been attributed to both Lynds on various sites. After further probing, I'm satisfied it came from the latter's publication of *The Blue Lion and Other Essays* (1923), one of his many works spanning over 40 years. In it he wrote: "There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before". It seems to me such sentiment is much more significant nowadays than it was 83 years ago and that we would benefit from having planners working for government departments and developers alike with the observational skills of either Robert Lynd.

## **BIRDING ABROAD 9.05**

*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 September 2005.*

### **Tanzania**

We drove Land Rovers and camped in the National Parks of Tanzania. "Stay in your vehicle. Keep to the roads", proclaim the Park rules. Yet we were expected to get out in the middle of nowhere, pitch our tents and cook on an open fire. The loo was a shovel and a walk out of sight! No real dramas during the day, but one night a pride of lions sniffed the back of the little tent and later, Elizabeth, woken by a Spotted Hyena brushing the gauze of our tent door, was not amused. However, finding no soap or boots to chew, it moved on.

Never mind, the birds made up for it. The brilliantly coloured Superb Starlings are as cheeky as the Hyena, if not so alarming, as are the noisy, if a little drab, Arrow Marked Babblers, and Ashy Starlings, all of which seem to haunt most camp sites. Weavers, with their intricate nests, have to be looked at closely to tell a Baglafaecht from a Black-necked or Golden-backed which we did see, and from the other half dozen or so yellow with some black weavers which we didn't identify. The all black male Vieillot's is more obvious.

A magnificent Crowned Crane perched atop a thorn tree to supervise our departure from one camp whilst Secretarybirds and Black-bellied Bustards stalked the grassland. Vultures are not uncommon on the plains. African White-backed is the usual one, but we also saw Hooded, Lappet-faced, Palm-nut and White-headed Vultures.

Some swamps were amazing with the surrounding grass, on the sticky black soils, eaten short. That made it easy to see the Great, Little and Cattle Egrets, Egyptian Geese and White-faced Duck, as well as Yellow-billed and Marabou Storks, a variety of Herons and the odd wader. In the longer grass, birds hawked from the back of warthogs or hippos with considerable success.

Perhaps one's greatest joy is to awake to the Francolin and Guineafowl calling and getting up to find we are sharing the campsite not just with birds, but with a mother elephant and her calf (doing their best to hurry us pack up and move as it seemed we had camped under a favourite figtree), two giraffe, a small herd of impala, the odd zebra and a couple of gazelle. One certainly gets close to nature on these trips!

### **Good Grief!**

A Frenchman walked into a bar with a parrot on his shoulder. The bartender asked, "Where did you get that thing?" The parrot replied, "In France. There are millions of them!"

Two novice duck hunters were out on the marsh duck hunting. One hunter said, "We're not having much luck to-day. We're not getting any ducks." The other hunter replied, "Maybe we're not throwing the dog high enough!"



**A 'Collective' of Honeyeaters****Bob Ashford**

In mid November, 2004, I was showing Alberta, a delightful lady from San Francisco, around the birding hot spots of the northern Shoalhaven. One morning I pointed out a large bottlebrush bush in our garden and explained that at its flowering peak in October there had been up to eight different species of honeyeater in it at one time, all battling for control of the nectar-rich flowers. Interestingly it wasn't always the biggest species that won.

Of the three biggest species individual supremacy should have gone to the Red Wattlebird but their bullying cousins, the slightly smaller Brush Wattlebirds, won most of the battles through sheer numbers. The Noisy Friarbird, a less frequent visitor, tucked in wherever it could but rarely for long! The mid-sized contestants included the Lewin's Honeyeater, the Yellow-faced Honeyeater and the New Holland Honeyeater. Down a size was the Eastern Spinebill and smallest of all was the stunning Scarlet Honeyeater.

The Scarlet was a smart player using its brilliant colouring to hide in the equally brilliant flowers. It focussed on feeding not fighting. The Yellow-faced meekly gave way to the New Holland which in turn was outfaced by the Lewin's. In spite of their size difference the Spinebills and the Lewin's regularly squared up to each other and both regularly fought their own. Nonetheless, by sheer determination and frenzied activity these last two often gained control of the bush. I was searching for a collective noun to describe this drama to Alberta and came up with 'a hierarchy of honeyeaters'.

Alberta felt that was a good effort on my part and then told me of one they use in California - 'a kettle of vultures'. A *kettle*? It seems that as the vultures gather to check out the menu they continually drop and lift in the thermals giving the impression of being in a 'boiling pot' – hence kettle!

So we started to ponder on collective names for species or groups of birds. Nothing as ordinary as 'a flock of birds', something more along the lines of 'a gluttony of gulls'. If you have tried to eat fish and chips at Gerroa you'll know what I mean. Other inspired examples might include 'a packet of fantails', 'an exaggeration of Lyrebirds', 'a poise of pigeons', 'a who of owls' and 'a fistful of Dollarbirds. Another example Alberta gave me I particularly liked - 'a zipper of flycatchers'.

Taking these thoughts a little further we discussed sponsorship of birds, rather like sponsoring whales or orang-utans! Rather predictably 'the Ford Falcon' came to mind while local birds might be 'the Berry Hotel Nightjar', 'the Shell Oystercatcher' and, at a stretch, the Rural Fire Service Red-browed Fire(r)ail.

And as Alberta and I tried to outdo each other so I began to wonder what other birders might have invented for species 'collectives'?. A 'Jam of Rosellas'?

Whatever you come up with, have fun !

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## Unusual Records for August- September 2006

Chris J. Chafer

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

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Brush-turkey	1	29-Aug	Mt Keira scout camp	rainforest	GB
Black Swan	4,000+	27-Aug	Lake Wollumboola	weland	CJC
White-necked Heron	4	27-Sep	Jaspers Brush	paddock	KM
Pacific Baza	2	2-Sep	Kangaroo Valley	overhead	NJ
Grey Goshawk	1	12-Aug	Shoalhaven Heads	overhead	GB
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	29-Sep	Mt. Pleasant lookout (Kiama)	overhead	NJ
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	5-Oct	Killalea State Park	forest	MR
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	16-Aug	Kangaroo Valley	urban	NJ
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	2-Sep	Dharawal State Recreation Park	overhead	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	16-Sep	Croome Rd Park, Albion Park	woodland	GB
<b>Pectoral Sandpiper</b>	1	29-Sep	Comerong Is	sandflats	NJ
Black-fronted Dotterel	4	23-Aug	Myimbarr wetland (Shellharbour)	wetland	KM
Great Skua	1	26-Aug	off Wollongong	pelagic	GB
<b>Pacific Gull</b>	1 imm	3-Sep	Windang	sandflats	GB
Gull-billed Tern	1	1-Oct	Shoalhaven Heads	sandflats	PMP
White-fronted Tern	6	26-Aug	off Wollongong	marine	GB
Common Tern	10	27-Aug	Lake Wollumboola	wetland	CJC
Whiskered Tern	6	27-Aug	Lake Wollumboola	wetland	CJC
White-headed Pigeon	2	15-Aug	Jamberoo	urban	KM
Common Bronzewing	4	7-Aug	Falls Creek	woodland	KM
Common Bronzewing	1	7-Aug	St. Georges Basin	forest	KM
Common Bronzewing	2	6-Oct	Bargo gorge	woodland	MR
Peaceful Dove	4	3-Sep	Thirlemere Lakes NP	woodland	CJC
Musk Lorikeet	few	26-Aug	Sussex Inlet	urban	KM
Red-browed Treecreeper	1	4-Oct	Budderoo Plateau	forest	MR, TE
<b>Brown Treecreeper</b>	2	6-Oct	Bargo gorge	woodland	MR
Southern Emu-wren	4	15-Sep	Budderoo Plateau	woodland	MR, TE
Pilotbird	2	22-Sep	Barren Grounds NR	forest	MS
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	1	27-Aug	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	JM
White-plumed Honeyeater	12+	19-Aug	Macquarie Rivulet, lower	riverine	GB
Scarlet Honeyeater	few	6-Oct	Bargo River track	forest	MR
Flame Robin	2	31-Aug	Budderoo Plateau	woodland	MR, TE
Flame Robin	3	15-Sep	Budderoo Plateau	woodland	MR, TE
Rose Robin	1	7-Aug	Falls Creek	forest	KM
Varied Sittella	5	6-Oct	Bargo River track	forest	MR
<b>Spectacled Monarch</b>	1	27-Sep	Balgownie	garden	TE
Figbird	5	19-Aug	Wollongong	CBD	KM
Figbird	6	30-Sep	Berkeley	urban	CJC
Grey Currawong	1	31-Aug	Budderoo Plateau	woodland	MR, TE
<b>Tawny Grassbird</b>	1	29-Sep	sth Windang bridge	reedland	NB

**Contributors:**

GB – Graham Barwell; CB – Chris Brandis; NB – Norma Burke; CJC – Chris Chafer; TE – Terri Edwell; NJ – Nigel Jacket; KM – Kevin Mills; JM – Jill Molan; PMP – Penny & Martin Potter; MR – Michelle Rower; MS – Mary Shaw; RT – Roger Truscott; NW - Neil Wheway.