

Birdlife Shoalhaven Newsletter

Autumn 2016



Photo by Christine Rigg

In this Newsletter

In this season's newsletter we have a report from our new President - Rob Dunn - plus a report given at the AGM earlier this month by our Conservation Officer - Chris Grounds. Chris has also included an article on the threatened bird species we have within the Shoalhaven, and the criteria that are used to determine the magnitude of the threat.

Frances Bray has submitted an article about the Halloran Proposal at Lake Wollumboola and wants everyone to register with Shoalhaven City Council to receive regular updates on the progress of the proposal.

Marg Hamon has written a report about her BirdLife Shoalhaven contribution to the recent BIGnet meeting, and a report about the meeting itself, and Mike and Rose Clear provided an article about their birding trip to Western Australia and some of the conservation issues we seem to share.

And there is so much more!

Enjoy!

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Contributions

If you have any information about conservation issues, or if you would like to share some of your birding experiences, travel stories or anecdotes with fellow members, please send details to the editor at shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au with any related photos, drawings or maps.

In addition, if you have any bird photographs you would like to share, please send them in as well. This includes photos of unidentified birds that could be used in our "What Bird is This" section.

Contributions / suggestions / criticisms / feedback etc. is always welcome.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the BirdLife Shoalhaven members who contributed articles to this newsletter, and also to those people who supplied images. These include - Christine Rigg, Frances Bray, Tom Kaar, Marg Hamon and Chris Grounds. Apologies to those contributors whose text or images may not have been acknowledged. If you have not been acknowledged please let the editor know.

Disclaimer

The information in articles submitted for publication in this newsletter is accepted in good faith and although the editor has endeavoured to verify the accuracy of all information, BirdLife Shoalhaven accepts no responsibility for any errors, inaccuracies or exaggerations that may be contained within articles in this newsletter.

Also, the views expressed in this newsletter are those of the editor, contributors or branch members. They may not be the views of BirdLife Australia.

Errors

If you find any errors - typographical or factual - in this newsletter, please let the editor know. The beauty of an electronic newsletter is that it can be amended after publication.

Cover Photo

Christine Rigg photographed the Crested Shrike-tit on this season's cover along the Basin View foreshore near Harriss Avenue in mid April. The sound of ripping bark is often the first that alerts birdwatchers to the presence of these birds.

Editorial

- by Brett Davis

Many of the news items we see on television or read in the paper - and even the emails we receive from the BirdLife Australia head office - are filled with doom and gloom about the future. If it is not global warming, it is pollution or habitat destruction, or the relentless advance of "civilization" across the face of the planet, or the imminent loss of yet another bird species.

We are continually informed about impending extinctions - of animals, birds and even the human race.

Here in the "unspoilt" Shoalhaven we are not immune from the consequences of the ridiculous belief held by our politicians that infinite growth is possible on a finite planet. Our own council is infamous for its apparent love of development, expansion, and the importance of jobs over the environment.

In the face of this incessant assault, it would be easy for many of us to just throw up our hands and surrender to the seemingly inevitable destruction of our world and the life it contains.

But it is not all doom and gloom!

While it is hard for any of us to attempt to combat global warming, we can at least "think globally and act locally" and hope that others around the country and the rest of the world are doing the same thing. If enough committed people work hard at the local level, changes can be made and victories won.

Frances Bray and her dedicated band of supporters have been protecting Lake Wollumboola for many years, and although the future of the lake is still not guaranteed, we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Similarly, the battle led by Chris Grounds against the development of Heritage Estates seems to be nearing an end, and while the pro-development lobby is not yet dead and buried, it is definitely on its last legs.

When council called for public input into the future of the Larmer Avenue land at Sanctuary Point, one of the initial suggestions was for a skate park! Thankfully, that suggestion has been ignored, and the conservation of the Bherwerre Wetland is now almost certain to proceed.

These three examples show that habitat destruction is not inevitable, wildlife extinctions are not unavoidable, and that defeat in the fight for the environment is not a certainty.

BirdLife Australia is fighting national battles, and BirdLife Shoalhaven is fighting local battles, and some of these battles are being won. If we win enough of them, we will eventually win the war!

President's Report

- by Rob Dunn

With over 12,000 members and a further 65,000 supporters, BirdLife Australia has been delivering conservation campaigns and providing a voice for the protection of our birds since 1901. A key strength of BirdLife Australia comes from its branch network. BirdLife Shoalhaven (BLS) and the activities of our members are now making an increasing contribution to the national organisation and its on-going projects.

BirdLife Australia's most recent campaign relates to migratory shorebirds. In partnership with the Australian Wader Studies Group, BirdLife Australia has been monitoring and protecting shorebird populations across Australia for many years. The Shorebirds 2020 project has been a cornerstone of this work and has been supported by several BLS members. This year BirdLife Australia's science-based lobbying has been influential in the Federal Government's review of its Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds, a task untouched for five years, as well as having the Eastern Curlew and Curlew Sandpiper listed under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.



Photo by Duade Paton

Just this month BirdLife Australia held a Shorebird Crisis Summit to secure commitments from Governments and conservation partners to implement the Federal Government's plan and make sure it does not gather dust. BLS newsletters have recorded both our own challenges and more importantly our successes for the protection of local migratory shorebirds. BLS and BLS members are playing a key part in this work.

The Shorebird Recovery Project has been a major focus for BLS members over many years, thanks to the support of the NPWS. The four focus species, Hooded Plovers, Little Terns, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, are all listed for protection by State and/or the Federal Government.

Increasing tourism, dogs, tides, foxes and more continue to put them at risk in the Shoalhaven and beyond. The Shoalhaven is crucial to the protection of these species. In BirdLife Australia's Biennial Hooded Plover Count in April 2014, 1,412 Hooded Plovers were recorded across its full range. Only 52 were in NSW and 28 were in the South Coast region, of which the Shoalhaven makes up a large part. This year BLS members recorded the most northern nesting event of a Hooded Plover at Hammerhead Point, south of Lake Wollumboola. This work is a vital contribution to the national organisation in its Biennial Count and Beach Nesting Birds program. Clearly the work of BLS members and NPWS plays a key part to collect critical data and educate the community about these important bird species.



Photo by Chris Grounds

An Important Bird Area (IBA) is an area identified using an internationally agreed set of criteria as being globally important for the conservation of bird populations. In 2009 BirdLife Australia, identified 315 IBAs across the country. Four of these are located wholly or partly in the Shoalhaven – Jervis Bay for the Eastern Bristlebird, Budderoo and Barren Grounds for the Eastern Bristlebird, Pilotbird and Rockwarbler, Lake Wollumboola for Chestnut Teal and Black Swan and Ulladulla to Merimbula for the Swift Parrot. While parts of these IBAs are located in national parks, the work of BLS partners is crucial.

The protection of the Heritage Estate will be critical to the Jervis Bay IBA and the work of the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association is vital to the many challenges presented by the multiple tenures in that IBA. As part of reporting to the international organisation, BirdLife Australia is running an IBA Guardians project to monitor changes in the condition and protection of these critical areas. Again BLS members are part of this national project.

BirdLife Australia's volunteer network, including MUD Birdwatchers, Shoalhaven Birders and other BLS members, has been playing their part to build an atlas of Australia's birds since 1998. It now includes over 400,000 surveys and over 7 million bird records. This data has been used in numerous research projects, including the

Australia Bird Index, which provides information about broad-scale trends, both for birds and the environment. The index tracks changes in bird groups, such as honeyeaters, mallee birds, as well as individual species, and trends in different regions. It is hoped that this can influence policy and become part of Governments' future State of the Environment Reporting. Surveys by BLS members are helping to make this happen. BirdLife Australia are about to release a new app and portal to make bird surveying easier, more efficient and fun, maintaining the collection of bird data into the future.

These are just some of BirdLife Australia's key national research and conservation projects. Our challenge is to look at how we can more effectively support BirdLife Australia, promote activities involving BLS members and advocate on key bird conservation issues in the Shoalhaven. I am especially keen to look at how we can expand our impact across the Shoalhaven by increasing our membership and building links with other organisations interested in the conservation of birds. We currently have 195 members, an increase from 150 when we were established three years ago.

So please tell your family and friends about the importance of BirdLife's work, both nationally and in the Shoalhaven and encourage them to join!

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who attended the BLS Annual General Meeting on 4 April and made it such a successful meeting. I feel that our new committee is a sign of a stable and maturing organisation, for which the previous committee can take credit. I am really pleased that all of the committee from last year have agreed to continue their support of the organisation. Barry Virtue, our previous President, will stay on as a committee member, while Brett Davis, Karen Davis and Chris Grounds will continue as Secretary, Treasurer and Conservation Officer respectively. Our two new committee members are Matt Jones in Callala Bay and Mike Jefferis in Ulladulla. They will bring new skills and help expand the committee's links across the Shoalhaven.

I am looking forward to taking on the role of President and will be continuing as a Board Member of BirdLife Australia. I am excited by having the opportunity to play my part at the grass-roots level of the national body.

I am always keen to hear from you about how BirdLife Shoalhaven can make a difference for the conservation of birds, provide opportunities for us all to learn more and have fun at the same time! So please do not hesitate to get in contact and come and say hello at our stall at the JB Maritime Museum World Environment Day on 4 June.

- Rob Dunn
president@birdlifeshoalhaven.org.au - 0438 250 600

Conservation Officer Report

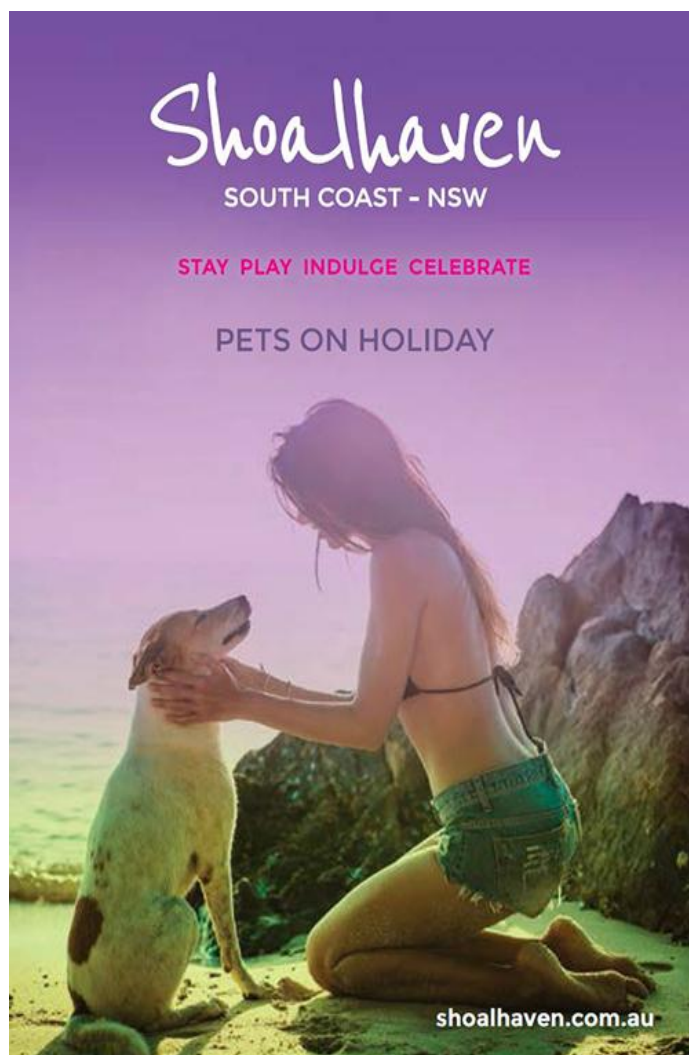
- by Chris Grounds

2015-16 has been my second term in this role and my report will be an overview of where we have been with conservation as a chance to pause and reflect.

BLS continued its support of Frances Bray and the LWPA with letters and submissions regarding the development and planning issues in the Lake catchment. This matter remains one of the great conservation challenges in the Shoalhaven, involving one of our IBAs and National Parks.

Our newsletter has carried a series of articles with a designated local conservation message. In Autumn it was the Eastern Ground Parrot and South Coast Shorebird Program features with update reports on Heritage Estate, Bherwerre Wetland and Myola Sand Spit.

The winter newsletter carried updates for Heritage Estate and Myola Spit, and reports on the Curlew Sandpiper and Eastern Curlew, the Saving Our Species state government election pledge, and the local Eastern Osprey nesting.



Part of Council's "Pet Friendly" Shoalhaven Promotion. Note the dog on the beach with no collar and no leash - obviously on an "off-leash" area of the beach.

In the spring issue Bherwerre Wetland was on the agenda again as was South Coast Shorebird Recovery, with a feature article on the conservation status of birds in the Shoalhaven based on the major data from BirdLife Australia survey. That article was also used in the New Bush Telegraph newspaper. The first successful nesting of the Eastern Osprey on the south coast of NSW was reported. The cudgel was also taken up regarding the impact of dogs on our beaches and bird habitat and the "Pet Friendly" tourism promotion by Council.

The Summer newsletter offered a heartening report on planning progress for Lake Wollumboola and associated bird reports and BLS again took up the tourism issue and the "Unspoilt" Shoalhaven mantra pushed by Council to add to an update on the Bherwerre Wetland, which was the subject of a major feature article in the Autumn New Bush Telegraph.

Adopting a bird survival focus, there were three terrific stories to come out of 2015-16. The first was the successful fledging of two offspring by the Eastern Osprey at Basin View, a NSW south coast first for a threatened species for BLS members and the Basin. It took three years and a winter without severe wind storm but it was reward for a prolonged monitoring. The second was the northern-most nesting by Hooded Plovers (an EPBC Act Vulnerable threatened species) at Hammerhead Point, south of Lake Wollumboola and the third the one successful Hoody fledging at Caves Beach. The Hoody records are testament to the continuing voluntary work of so many of our members in the NPWS Shorebird program.



Hammerhead Point Hoody Chick

In April 2015 BLS had a satisfying victory when ecologist report material for the Currumbene Creek dredging project was literally replaced by our own data on Myola Sand Spit birds by council staff. Basically we pointed to the bad errors in bird species reporting which downplayed the risks involved at the site for domestic

and threatened and migratory species shorebirds. BLS had previously been in contact with council re the intrusion of dogs into a dog prohibited area zoned E1 and that issue persists.

It was not possible to provide the same input on Sussex Inlet, Lake Conjola or Shoalhaven Heads, the other dredging sites. It was clear from the Currumbene Creek site that formal ecologist reports may not be adequate. Being able to offer bird data for particular sites in Shoalhaven, especially IBAs, will be a powerful action in conservation at such sites where development, government and council action potentially threaten birdlife and habitat.

BLS has made significant inputs for council and the BCCR Steering Committee on the Bherwerre Wetland (BW) Project.

The BW Concept Plan has now been released to the Steering Committee. This commenced with the provision of a 68 species catalogue of bird species for the site developed from May 2014 to May 2015. BLA, at the request of the steering committee conducted a site workshop of a core of members earlier this year to provide recommendations for bird hides on the site and subsequently, the building of these hides. Will these be the first in the Shoalhaven?



One possible design for the Shoalhaven's first bird hide

An illustrated presentation to a Shoalhaven Wetlands Conference in May will feature on the agenda with a field walk, both with BLS conservation officer input.

BLS provided a supportive submission for Cudmirrah BirdLife members to Shoalhaven Council regarding request for off-leash area on Cudmirrah Beach.

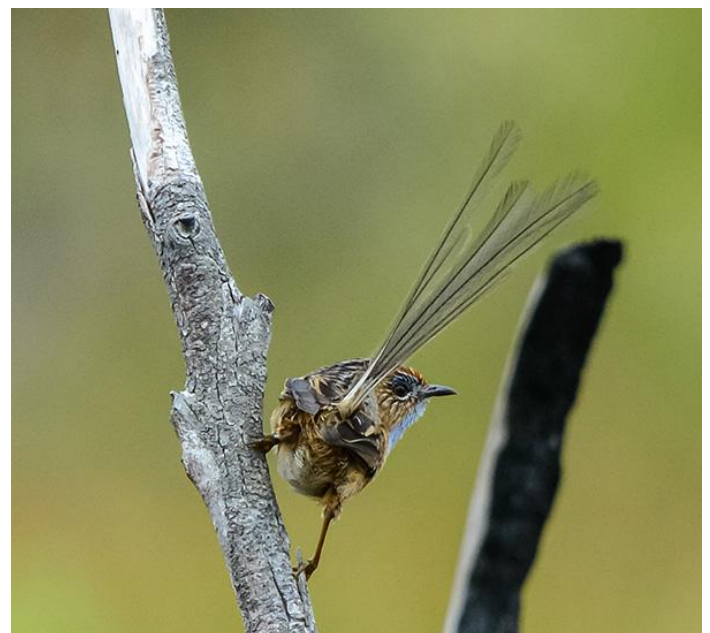
Fortunately, we are part of a national network and tapping in to that is one key to our operation. The continuation of our conservation focus in our newsletter is another key.

BLS has already taken up the tourism culture as it involved "Pet Friendly" dogma, "Unspoilt" and the dogs on beaches issues in the Shoalhaven and this will most certainly continue and require our input and responses because of the impact on habitat.



Our conservation focus has perhaps been a little central Shoalhaven oriented. The tourism and dogs issues, which are strongly related, will move us out of that. However we will need member interest, interest of other groups and some good networking to broaden our horizon.

In the greatest sense it will be our shared vigilance and networking, which will create a knowledge of the conservation issues affecting birds in the Shoalhaven. The Natural Resource & Floodplain Committee changes within Council, which have seen the three committees reduced to one for the whole of the Shoalhaven, will be a new challenge but a chance as always for the few BLS members on these committees to speak to conservation matters as they involved birds and habitat.



South Coast Shorebird Recovery Summary

- by Simon Tedder

2015/16 Shorebird Recovery Coordinator



It's been another challenging yet fulfilling season for all stakeholders in shorebird recovery on the south coast. From fox control to beach wardening, nest protection, chick sightings, school workshops, film nights, shorebird books and beach stalls!

The Enhanced Fox Control Projects, funded by the Local Land Services and Crown Lands enabled us to start early season baiting and conduct over 60 nights of strategic and reactive shooting and trapping across most land tenures. This has provided broader, landscape based fox control to support the regular baiting programs undertaken by NPWS on reserve. The enhanced program continues into 2016/17, aiming for a breathing space from fox populations at critical cycles in the shorebird breeding season.

The Threatened Shorebird Community and Schools Education Project, funded by the NSW Environmental Trust, has been a huge success. 1632 individuals have been involved in the activities with many flow-on benefits through promotional materials and education resources.

Other initiatives have included morning beach stalls at Shoalhaven Holiday Haven Tourist Parks, volunteer capacity building, training of university students, partnering on events with the surfing community and those working to keep our coast-line clean.

These initiatives have certainly assisted breeding rates of south coast shorebirds this season. However it is the volunteer shorebird wardens who can take the most credit for ongoing shorebird population recovery with over 3300 volunteer hours contributed towards shorebird recovery activities during the 15/16 season.

Hooded Plovers

Hooded Plovers nested on the south coast, between Hammerhead Point, Jervis Bay National Park and Dawsons Beach, Murramarang National Park, with only an estimated 40 adult along this section of coast.

Hooded Plovers had poor success from early nesting and only one fledgling recorded by Xmas, but they kept at it with 14 breeding pairs, 28 nesting attempts, 68 eggs and 21 chicks. 9 fledglings were recorded by March 31.

This year marked a considerable milestone for the NSW population with an (re)expansion of their breeding distribution. While individual birds have been sighted north of Jervis Bay at Culburra and Shoalhaven Heads, this year a 3 egg nest was discovered at Hammerhead beach, being a new distribution of breeding territory for the population! In a sickening twist of fate, the nest was subject to inundation from Christmas tides just hours before hatching. Luckily shorebird recovery volunteers were on the scene and managed to salvage two of the three eggs and replace them in a faux scrape some metres from its original location. Returning the next day, volunteers were astonished to discover the eggs had hatched, one chick dying from exposure but the other alive, watched closely by the parents! But just days later, the pair were spotted at Lake Wollumboola. The new chick had been lost, with ravens the most likely culprits.



Each of the surveyed sites experienced a similar mix of good and/or bad news. Just one of these was at Berrara Beach, where a new pairing displayed early signs of territorial behaviour and by mid-September, volunteers had found a 3 egg nest well positioned on the dune incline. Plenty of storm debris on the beach face provided great habitat for the pair but volunteers had to intervene when an unknown local began collecting and burning it in bonfires in an attempted 'clean up'. Luckily our pleas to leave the habitat untouched were heard by the community and first 3 chicks of the season hatched.

Despite the great habitat the driftwood provided, Ravens were often seen surveying the beach and soon the 3 chicks were reduced to 1. By mid-November, this chick had successfully fledged and was later banded. Given this early season success, additional nesting attempts were expected and soon after volunteers discovered a well-camouflaged 2 egg nest amongst the pumice and spinifex at the southern end of Berrara beach. However the nest quickly disappeared on Xmas Eve, most likely to Ravens.

Little Terns

The saddest story of the 2015/16 season was of the poor success experienced by Little Terns. Significantly less Little Terns returned to the south coast this season after considerable numbers in 2014/15. In total, the south coast region recorded only 60 breeding pairs incubating 83 nests containing 137 eggs with 8 chicks but no fledglings. Of the birds that did attempt to breed, foxes and avian predators were the main cause of egg and chick losses.



At Lake Wollumboola, the sand bar opened naturally due to the swelling volume in the lake and Little Terns appeared as early as mid-October and gradually increased to approx. 60-80 birds. Fencing was erected by volunteers in late November and early December, however soon after the eggs were gone. The lack of predatory tracks in the sand indicated that the mysterious avian predator which decimated the colony in 2014/15 had returned in 2015/16 for second helpings. Five more nests were subsequently laid on the Wollumboola bar, which were caged by volunteers in early January. Again these nests were lost to the unidentified predator. Later in January, the number of birds present at the site increased to over 100 birds, including fledglings from other colonies further south, but no additional nesting was recorded at Lake Wollumboola.

Little Terns were fishing and courting at Lake Conjola from mid-October. Because of the fox activity experienced at Conjola throughout spring, the worst was feared for an establishing Little Tern colony. Trapping and shooting continued in December and while fox tracks remained present to the south of the site, more nests began appearing on the spit without disturbance. On New Year's Day the colony peaked at 52 active nests containing 88 eggs and 5 chicks. But the next two days, wet weather and southerly winds prevented nest surveys. Holiday makers were also restricted to their tents and caravans. This rare opportunity of an empty

beach was too irresistible. The smells and sounds of hatching eggs drew immediate interest from nearby foxes. By January 4th, fox tracks littered the spit and the colony was reduced to 22 nests containing only 37 eggs and 2 chicks. Contractors were called in as an emergency response and a fox was removed from the colony on January 5th. Despite the removal of this animal, fox tracks continued to be observed within the fenced area and by January 7th all remaining nests were lost to fox predation. Further nesting attempts followed with 30 new eggs being laid in 21 nests. But fox activity continued and by January 26th there were no Terns present on the spit at all. A devastating and frustrating end to the Little Tern breeding season at Conjola.

Pied Oystercatchers

Twenty six breeding pairs of Pied Oystercatchers were monitored on the south coast, between Lake Illawarra and Batemans Bay in 2015/16. In addition, it is suspected an additional 4 pairs were breeding but constraints to monitoring these birds could not confirm any nesting attempts. A total of 17 Pied Oystercatchers fledged during the 2015/16 breeding season.

The usual hot spots such as the Shoalhaven and Crookhaven Rivers, St Georges Basin, Lake Conjola and Batemans Bay experienced good numbers and breeding success. New birds also arrived on the coast and formed new breeding territories on the sand spits at Crooked River, Gerroa and Lake Tabourie.



Of the many sites that were surveyed just one shows the huge effort required to achieve any success. With Comerong Island undergoing significant fox baiting and shooting and the river channel providing the perfect barrier to restrict dog walkers, it was thought that a relatively threat free environment could be created for the birds. The first nest was found by NPWS staff in September but a subsequent visit revealed the loss of this nest to the tide or surf.

By October, volunteers sighted Pied Oystercatchers sitting in the dunes from the northern side of the Shoalhaven river entrance. Staff later found 2 eggs in the nest, presumably from this pair. As staff ventured further around to the beach, another pair were also found incubating 1 egg. No fence was erected as all the gear had been used on the first nest!

Staff continued to the southern end of Comerong Island where another pair were suspected of nesting. Here, a 2 egg nest was found nestled among flowering pigface on the Crookhaven River breakwall. Being a popular fishing spot, temporary signage was installed but access to the breakwall could not be restricted. Unfortunately at the end of October, when staff returned to the Island to continue fox baiting, all three nests had been taken, presumably by foxes.



Photo by Rex Worrell

Considering the optimism about removing foxes while the river entrance was still open, this was particularly disappointing news. Contractors continued spotlighting the beaches and private property and baiting until the end of November. In mid-November, the first pair was found sitting on 2 eggs on the Shoalhaven Heads side of the river. Just days later, the second pair also laid 2 eggs on the Comerong Island side of the river entrance. This time staff and volunteers took no chances and erected string and electric fences around both of these nests.

In typical fashion, the threats kept appearing for these birds. Over on Comerong Island, the fox activity continued and contractors unsuccessfully attempted a week of trapping prior to the expected hatching date. However by the time the hatching date passed, the birds continued sitting – eventually, the eggs were removed at the end of December and deemed not viable.

At Shoalhaven Heads, November king tides threatened the nest which required an epic effort by staff and volunteers to raise the eggs with sand bags. This was undertaken just in time to prevent them from being washed away. Both eggs hatched in mid- December and

volunteers placed debris out as shelters for the young chicks. However within 10 days one of the chicks was presumably lost to a fox. The remaining chick was taken into nearby vegetation and kept there until it was about 4 weeks old. The birds then returned to river mouth sand flats where they nested, and made good use of the shelters made by volunteers. The last remaining Shoalhaven Heads chick had fledged by January 24th!

Sooty Oystercatchers

Surveys of Sooty Oystercatchers nesting on south coast islands were conducted late in the season due to sea conditions and staff availability. Several empty scrapes were found among the 16 pairs counted on Brush Island and one pair displayed behaviour indicative of nearby chick(s), but empty egg shells were the only evidence of any breeding. Any predation is likely to have occurred by the local Swamp Harrier. 9 pairs were counted on Belowla Island, but rough seas prevented any attempt at landing. On the Tollgate Islands, a total of four active nests with seven eggs were discovered between five Sooty Oystercatcher pairs. A subsequent survey revealed that most of these eggs had suffered predation from birds of prey and only one chick remained to fledge. Snapper Island was also surveyed, though only one pair was sighted and no active nests were found.



The mainland nests surveyed in 2014/15 were also monitored this season at Beecroft Weapons Range. On Bhindijine beach, a 2 egg nest was recorded, but a later survey found an empty nest but not chicks. Days later, volunteers photographed a chick which is suspected to having fledged. The Pied Oystercatchers on Green Island also shared their territory with nesting Sooty Oystercatchers. Volunteers reported these Sooties were incubating 2 eggs with one fledgling sighted later. NPWS hope to improve the regularity of monitoring Sooty Oystercatchers in 2016/17.

I would like to give a big thank you to the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program volunteers for their efforts in shorebird protection and awareness in 2015/16. Their invaluable contributions provides invaluable life support and beach presence at shorebird nesting sites.

See you on the beach in seasons to come!

Halloran Proposal re Lake Wollumboola

- by Frances Bray

“Register with Shoalhaven City Council to receive updates regarding the Halloran Planning Proposal for rezoning of lands at Culburra Beach, Callala Bay and Currarong.”

In Birdlife Shoalhaven’s Summer Newsletter, I provided details of the Department of Planning and Environment November 2015 Determination regarding the Halloran Planning Proposal. This involves rezoning of undeveloped private lands in the Lake Wollumboola catchment and near Kinghorne Point for Environment Protection potentially as part of Jervis Bay National Park, whilst also providing for protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage and for residential, commercial and industrial development in surrounding areas.

The outcomes of the Planning Proposal are critical for the long term conservation of Lake Wollumboola and its catchment, including its international significance for birdlife and for protection of the Crookhaven River catchment and estuary.

The Determination requires that twelve studies, planning agreements and a revised Planning Proposal and Master Plan be submitted to the Department prior to a 60 day public exhibition period, with the entire process to take place over two years.

The Department has established a Project Control Group comprising staff members from the Department, Office of Environment and Heritage and Shoalhaven City Council to oversee management of the process.

Council has agreed to a Community Information Strategy “to set out how the community will be informed during the Planning Proposal process” and to include a Project Page on Council’s website and a “Project Newsletter.”

Council staff members have invited community members to register to receive newsletters.

I recommend that BLS members register their interest in receiving regular Project Newsletters by emailing council@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au and quoting reference 49256E and asking to receive the Halloran Planning Proposal newsletters.

See also the following Project Page link: [The-Halloran-Trust-Planning-Proposal-PP006](#)

The Project Page also provides updated background on the project and maps and a process diagram.

It is concerning that Shoalhaven community members will not be consulted until the final draft stage. However this timeframe is consistent with procedures for all Planning Proposals. Nevertheless Council is doing what it can to keep us informed. Lake Wollumboola Protection

Association Inc will also continue to clarify issues where necessary and provide comment on the Proposal as it progresses.

The Project Control Group has prioritised the twelve studies, with two to be completed as top priorities for determining areas for environment protection zones and the potential development footprint and proposed rezonings.

The priority study areas are:

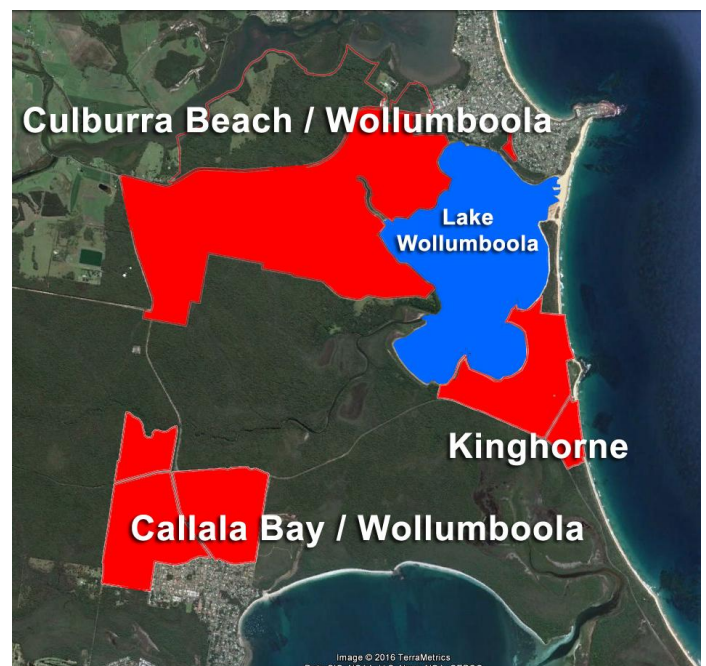
- Flora and Fauna Studies targeting Threatened Species and Endangered Ecological Communities and related Biodiversity Offset proposals, in consultation with the Office of Environment and Heritage.
- Hydro-geomorphic studies of surface and ground water quality including buffers to coastal/riparian area and water quality management strategy and clarification of the Lake and Crookhaven River catchment boundary. (There are differing views on the location of the water shed between the Lake and River.)

I understand these studies and consultations regarding the Aboriginal cultural heritage studies have already commenced. Council will commission some studies, whilst also supervising Halloran Trust consultants in studies into Flood and Bushfire Risk, Traffic, Contamination, Geo-technical studies (e.g. Acid Sulphate Soils) and infrastructure delivery.

[Click this link](#) for full details of the "Determination."

- Frances Bray

President Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc



Report from BIGnet

- by Marg Hamon

On the weekend of 9-10th April, I represented BLS at the BIGnet meeting held at the Learning Centre, Centennial Parklands, Sydney. BIGnet (Bird Interest Group network) is a group of delegates from birding clubs and organisations in NSW who meet every six months to share information and ideas.

Saturday morning was given over to a Conservation Officers' meeting, which I did not attend as I am not the Conservation Officer, and therefore I missed the sighting of the Noisy Pitta which turned up near the Learning Centre before the meeting started. However during the lunch break I was able to make a quick dash to view two beautiful Powerful Owls a little further away.

After lunch there were several presentations focusing on using data from the various databases in use. As well as the BirdLife Australia database and Eremaea eBird, some of the older clubs like Canberra Ornithologists Group have their own databases. Some groups, such as COG and the Hunter BOC (HBOC) produce quite detailed annual reports from their records. As databases grow, increasingly sophisticated interrogations become possible, resulting in increasingly informative reports. These reports are available to both individuals and government agencies, and may be used to inform, for example, the listing of Threatened Species. Recently, COG has joined with a number of other organisations to produce the interactive Canberra Nature Map (canberranaturemap.org) and app.

New BLA Atlas Portal

Paul Sullivan, CEO of BirdLife Australia, gave an update on the new BLA Atlas portal which has been developed with the assistance of funds raised from a past Twitchathon. It is planned to launch the portal and an app to accompany it in late June 2016.

BLA shares data with eBird, but a lot of the data sent in doesn't have reliable geo-locations, so is of limited scientific use. This is an important thing to keep in mind if using eBird for club walks. Try to keep to fairly homogeneous habitat areas and within reasonable time frames. It is better to keep several lists for an outing rather than have one that is too broad and ill-defined. There is useful information about site selection on the eBird website. The BLA Atlas sets out defined areas/times as well.

Paul agreed that records need careful "moderating" (vetting) and that more cooperation with eBird to achieve consistency is needed. At present, eBird seems to be better moderated. It was agreed that the use of volunteer moderators at the local level is a powerful tool

for accuracy, and better than one or two moderators in a central location without the detailed knowledge of a locality.

On Sunday Paul gave a general report from BLA. He and Sam Vine, the Conservation Chair, had attended a Federal Government Shorebird Summit on Friday. The government is launching a new Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds, focusing on the Eastern Curlew. This Action Plan will be a legal instrument. An interactive Shorebird Conservation Map is planned as well.

Twitchathon

There were two proposals for recipients of proceeds from the 2016 Twitchathon, one a project involving weed removal and predator protection for Gould's Petrels on Cabbage Tree Island to assist recovery after the storm damage of a year ago, and the other the on-going Bitterns in Rice Project.

After discussion it was decided that this year the money should go to the Gould's Petrel, and in 2017 it should go to the Bitterns in Rice Project.



Gould's Petrel - Photographer: Nicholas Carlile, DEC (NSW)

The Twitchathon will be undergoing a change this year. It is being rolled out as a national fundraiser, although each state can still nominate where its funds are to go. There are new coordinators, Joshua Bergmark and Ashwin Rudder, and the format has changed. The Main Race will stay the same, but the Champagne race will be reduced from 24 hours to 8, and a new competition, a "Birdathon" will be held involving shorter periods of time.

More details will be sent out to the clubs and branches later, and it is hoped with these changes to involve a greater number of people.

Birdlife Shoalhaven Report to BIGnet

9-10 April 2016

- by Marg Hamon

Birdlife Shoalhaven, incorporating the Shoalhaven Birders and the Bay and Basin Birders, continues to run monthly Sunday outings and the occasional camp, and has a reciprocal agreement with Milton Ulladulla District Birdwatchers whereby each group can attend the other's outings. MUD Birdwatchers, under the auspices of U3A, run outings fortnightly on Fridays in the Milton Ulladulla District.

Conservation Issues

Lake Wollumboola continues to be the focus for conservation efforts. NSW Department of Planning and Environment's November 2015 Determination to approve the Halloran Planning Proposal offers potential for the remaining undeveloped private lands in the Lake Wollumboola catchment, together with Kinghorne Point, to be included in Jervis Bay National Park.

The Determination specifies that, "Council is to zone Long Bow Point" (described as a South coast jewel in the Departmental media release) "for environment protection due to the recognised high environmental sensitivity of Lake Wollumboola dependent on the outcomes of a biodiversity offset strategy."

Shoalhaven City Council and the Department of Planning and Environment will now have two years to undertake studies, conduct community consultation and arrive at final proposals for rezoning 1,700 hectares at Culburra Beach, Callala Bay and Kinghorne Point south east of Lake Wollumboola towards Currarong for residential, commercial, industrial and environmental purposes and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

It is now likely that the Planning Proposal process will overtake the application for a golf course development for Long Bow Point.

The proponents for the development have been advised by Council staff for the second time that the draft Species Impact Statement for the proposed golf course does not meet the Director-General's requirements, so it seems unlikely that the application would be approved, particularly in the light of the planning proposal decision.

Rare Visitors

Two rare vagrants, a Hudsonian Godwit from the Americas and a Paradise Shelduck from NZ, turned up at Lake Wollumboola over the summer. Lake levels were low, with sand and mudflats opening up. They attracted a lot of attention from birdwatchers.

It was a tragic season however, for Little Terns, Pied Oystercatchers and Red-capped Plovers despite extensive

nesting habitat and abundant food. Avian predators and a fox were responsible for the losses. Prawners also contributed by disturbing nesting and roosting birds and attracting predators with rubbish left behind. Of special interest was a Hooded Plover nest south of Lake Wollumboola at Hammerhead Point, the first one north of Jervis Bay for many years. Unfortunately no chicks fledged from this nest.



Shelduck at Wollumboola - photo by Iain - 1inthebush.blogspot.com.au

Larmer Ave Wetland Project Report

A steering committee has been formed and met on 20th October. A decision was made that "Larmer Ave" was not a suitable name. Local Aboriginal community have always called it "Bherwerre", so this is likely to be the new name. Chris Grounds, BLS Conservation Officer, is on the committee as a representative of the Basin Villages Forum. A conundrum is that the project is aligned with bio-banking, which Birdlife policy does not support. BLS has provided Council and Basin Villages Forum with a list of 68 birds seen at the site over 12 months. This was highly valued and extended the biodiversity value of the site and provided a stimulus for progressing the project.



The ill-fated Hammerhead Point Hoodie chick

Grey Plovers

The Grey Plover is a migratory shorebird, but it's also an enigma — it seems that only female Grey Plovers visit Australia each summer.

Where do the female Grey Plovers go when they leave Australia? We know that they meet up with the males on their Arctic breeding grounds, but how do the females get there?



To try and answer these questions, the Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG, a special interest group of BirdLife Australia) has mounted an expedition to Roebuck Bay, near Broome—a national hotspot for migratory shorebirds.

In the oppressive heat of a North West Australian summer, the AWSG expedition, comprising over 30 scientists and volunteers from eight different countries, under the leadership of Dr Clive Minton, captured 14 Grey Plovers, and attached satellite transmitters to five of them. Funding for the devices was raised by a Pozible crowdfunding campaign last year and by the North West Australia Expedition itself.

Sending a signal every 3 days, the tagged birds have now embarked on an epic migration from Broome to Arctic Russia or possibly Alaska, where they will nest.

If we can begin to understand where these unique birds go on their annual migration, we should be able to pinpoint which areas need protection, and so ultimately save the birds.

It won't solve the mystery of why only female Grey Plovers visit Australia, but at least it might point us in the right direction.

To follow the birds' journeys, head to the Marvel of Migration website that shows the routes of the plovers at birdlife.org.au/campaigns/the-marvel-of-migration

Feather Map

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) and the University of NSW (UNSW) are undertaking a citizen science project called the Feather Map of Australia Project.

The aim of the initiative is to understand and improve the health of wetlands and wetland birds across Australia.

Why not become a citizen scientist today and collect wetland bird feathers?

Wetlands are habitats that are critical for Australia's waterbirds however they are under threat from reduced river flows and flooding, drought, climate change and land use changes.

Help turn the tide by simply collecting wetland bird feathers you find on the ground or in the water from inland wetlands across Australia.

Researchers from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) and the University of New South Wales will analyse the feathers using nuclear techniques to track the movement of waterbirds, creating the first ever Feather Map of Australia. This information can be used by water and wetland managers to inform decision making and help researchers better understanding waterbirds to ensure their survival.

Find out how you can get involved by following this link - www.ansto.gov.au/feathermap

Migratory Shorebirds Campaign

BirdLife Australia has launched version 1 of the Shorebird Conservation Map - <http://map.birdlife.org.au/>

The purpose of this map is to develop a clearer picture of the state of migratory shorebird habitat across Australia by tracking and visually representing the cumulative threats facing shorebirds as well as the collective impact of conservation actions taken by our tireless volunteers.

We have been invited to add to this map by entering information about what's happening at shorebird sites in our area.

BirdLife Australia believes this will be an important advocacy tool in demonstrating just how much important habitat is being lost to port developments, housing and industry in Australia each year. But it will also put a spotlight on communities taking action to protect the wetlands and shorebirds they love.

Let's get involved!

WA Conservation Issues and Report

- by Mike and Rose Clear

A brief reflection on conservation issues along with our bird sightings from a trip to Perth and the south west of Western Australia- 25th January to February 6th 2016

As many of you will appreciate (better than us no doubt) the south west region of WA is quite beautiful and many of the beaches, framed by amazing granite outcrops, and the wetland systems, especially on our particular route that of the Warden Lake system in Esperance, are superb.

We were, however, rather disturbed and at times simply distressed that the fragile and beautiful coastline, that we observed was so readily shared with and compromised by 4WD vehicles. The thoroughly contradictory messages by government imploring on the one hand 'caring for the fragile coast' and the regulatory arrangements on the other, that seemed to so easily privilege vehicle access to the beach was, for us, astonishing to witness. Also, unleashed dogs are a serious problem.

There's little doubt in our mind that, beyond the loss of natural beauty and a pristine quality, threatened shorebird species are lost because of this bizarre and quite silly privileging of recreational users. Also, it is likely that the large treads of the tyres on these vehicles help disperse the destructive plant pathogen, *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and environmental weeds such as Sea Spurge. The flow-on impacts to biodiversity are potentially large.

It is noteworthy, that the Euphorbic Sea Spurge weed (*Euphorbia paralias*) that we manage on our dunes here on the NSW south coast appears to be quite out of control on the south west coast of WA. Amongst other things one wonders how this impacts on the availability of beach nesting sites for shorebirds such as the endangered Hooded Plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*).



Lower Kalgan River Albany Sighting of Terek Sandpiper
(it is sitting on the rock)

We practised listening to the calls of three local species that we had hoped to hear, if not see. They didn't oblige on this visit. These were the Noisy Scrub-bird, the Western Whipbird and the Western Bristlebird. In this context we should add that, the evidence of bushfire and the impact on wildlife, including of course birdlife, was significant. As just one example of this we saw evidence of intense bushfires in Two People's Bay Nature Reserve (Albany). This is important habitat for the endangered Noisy Scrub-Bird and Western Bristlebird, and as it happens home to the world's rarest marsupial, the critically endangered Gilbert's Potoroo.

Finally, we were fortunate to be able to join with members of the Albany branch of Birdlife Australia and some others from the local community on World Wetlands Day (February 2nd) for an early morning bird walk at Lake Seppings, Albany.

Bird Lists

Perth region and south - 27 species

Spotted Turtle Dove, Australian Raven, Magpie Lark, Crested Pigeon, Yellow-Throated Miner, Domestic Pigeon, Black Swan, Pelican, Australian White Ibis, Pied Oystercatcher (Swan River spit) ##, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Black-winged Stilt, Western Wattlebird, Australian Magpie, Australian Ring-necked Parrot (Port Lincoln Parrot), Willie Wagtail, Australian Wood Duck, Galah, Silver Gull, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (Roleystone hills), Rainbow Bee-eater (Wave Rock, Hyden, Brookton Hwy.), New Holland Honeyeater #



Ramsar listed Lake McClarty near Mandurah WA.
Often 'home' to 32 migratory species. This year it was dry.

Esperance region - 41 species

Caspian Tern, Yellow Spoonbill, Common Bronzewing, Australian Ring-necked Parrot (Port Lincoln Parrot), Willie Wagtail, Crested Pigeon, New Holland Honeyeater #, Magpie Lark, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Domestic Pigeon, Silver Gull, Western Wattlebird, Red Wattlebird, Black Swan**, Pelican, Emu (near entrance to Cape Le

Grand NP), Red-necked Stint (Lake Windabout & Mullet Lake)** ^^, Common Greenshank (Lake Windabout & Mullet Lake)** ^^, Pied Cormorant **, Black Cormorant **, White-faced Heron **, Australian White Ibis **, Great Egret **, Silver Gull, Pacific Gull (Adults & a Juvenile at Le Grand NP Bch), Black-winged Stilt (Monjilup NR), Hoary-headed Grebe **, Eurasian Coot **, Whistling Kite, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Cattle Egret, Red-capped Plover (2 at Mullet Lake)** ##, Australian Shelduck **, Black-shouldered Kite (Mullet Lake)** **, Purple Swamphen, Sooty Oystercatcher (8 at Fourth Beach) ##, Grey Currawong, Fairy Tern, Yellow-tail Black Cockatoo, Tree Martin, Crested Tern



Wilson's Inlet at Ocean Beach Denmark WA.
Sightings of Hooded & Red-capped Plover

Albany region - 22 species

Splendid Fairy-wren (1 at Cheynes Beach car park), Bart-tail Godwit (Mudflats, Emu Point) ^^, Fairy Tern, Elegant Parrot , Silver Gull, Galah, New Holland Honeyeater #, Red-capped Plover (2 at Mudflats, Emu Point) ##, Red-necked Stint (100s at Mudflats, Emu Point) ^^, Grey Fantail (Two Peoples Bay NR), Superb Wren (Two Peoples Bay NR), Terek Sandpiper (2 at Kalgan River) ^^, Pied Oystercatcher (Kalgan River) ##, Sooty Oystercatcher (Little Beach, Two Peoples Bay NR) ##, Rock Parrot (2 at Two Peoples Bay), Musk Duck*, Blue-billed Duck *, Silvereye, White-breasted Robin, Caspian Tern, Hooded Plover (3 along with Red-capped Plover at the Estuary, Wilson's Inlet Ocean Beach, Denmark) ##, White -bellied Sea Eagle (2 at Ocean Beach, Denmark)

Dominant and ubiquitous

Birds of concern or endangered species (4)

* Lake Seppings is a repaired wetland in Albany.

** Sighting occurred in Warden Lakes Wetlands, Esperance. This is a series of lakes (Pink Lake, Lake Warden, Windabout Lake, Woody Lake & Mullet Lake), that make up a Ramsar listed wetlands system- wetlands of international significance.

^^ Migratory Species (4)

The total species sighted was 63.



Suffocating wetland trees in Lake Windabout
(Ramsar listed wetlands, Esperance WA)



Mullet Lake Esperance - superb heath and wetland
(two photos above)

Heritage Estate Walk

- by Brett Davis

On Saturday 9th April our Conservation Officer Chris Grounds led a walk for BirdLife Shoalhaven members in Heritage Estate.



Chris leading the birdwatching group

At the BirdLife Shoalhaven AGM the previous Monday Chris had previously talked about the long battle to save the land from development, and its outstanding conservation values.

He had also detailed the damage done to the park by motorbikes and dumpers because of unfettered access due to the needs of the remaining landowners in the estate, and a seeming reluctance by council to commit time and money to maintaining its own land within the estate.



A dumped and burnt-out van

Chris guided us around the estate, pointing out the different ecosystems, flora and fauna, as well as showing us the damage that had been done.

There were two birding highlights during the couple of hours we spent in the estate. The first was a couple of fly-bys by a small flock of Little Lorikeets, who eventually decided to avail themselves of the nectar provided by a couple of tall, flowering eucalypts. Despite knowing exactly where the birds were, it was incredibly difficult for us to locate them in the tree tops.

The second birding highlight was an addition to the bird list for the estate of a bird not previously seen there - the Brown-headed Honeyeater.



One of the water hazards in Heritage Estate

The bird list from the day is shown below -

Laughing Kookaburra [1]
Yellow-tailed Cockatoo [2]
Crimson Rosella [>5]
Aus. King parrot [2]
Little Lorikeet [15-20]
Rainbow Lorikeet [>50]
Satin Bowerbird [2]
Eastern Spinebill [>10]
Yellow-faced Honeyeater [>10]
Little Wattlebird [>10]
New Holland Honeyeater [>10]
Brown-headed Honeyeater [<5]
Spotted Pardalote [>10]
White-browed Scrubwren [1]
Brown Thornbill [<10]
Golden Whistler [H] [2]
Rufous Whistler [H] [1]
Grey Fantail [<10]
Silvereye [>20]
Red-browed Finch [5]
Scarlet Honeyeater
White-naped Honeyeater [H]
Noisy Friarbird [H]
Fan-tailed Cuckoo [2]

Threatened Bird Species

Federal Environment Protection, Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999

- text and photos by Chris Grounds [Conservation Officer]

The Commonwealth *Environment Protection, Biodiversity & Conservation Act 1999* names six categories of species status considered under the Act: [Total national number of bird species in category]

EXTINCT [22]

EXTINCT IN THE WILD [0]

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED [13]

ENDANGERED [47]

VULNERABLE [67]

CONSERVATION DEPENDENT [0]

Eastern Curlew - Eastern Russia Summer breeding migrant



Bird species in the Jervis / Shoalhaven area listed in the EPBC Act 1999 and shown below:

Source: <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl?wanted=fauna>

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

Regent Honeyeater

Orange-bellied Parrot [predicted presence]

Eastern Curlew

Curlew sandpiper

Critically endangered Eastern Curlew



ENDANGERED

Swift Parrot [Ulladulla South IBA "Trigger Species"]

Australasian Bittern

Eastern Bristlebird [Jervis Bay IBA "Trigger Species"]

Wandering Albatross

Southern Giant Petrel

Endangered Eastern Bristlebird



VULNERABLE

Hooded Plover

Gibson's Albatross

Northern Giant Petrel

Shy Albatross

Black-browed Albatross

Criteria for Threatened Species

Federal Environment Protection, Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999

	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	ENDANGERED	VULNERABLE
It [the species] has undergone, is suspected to have undergone or is likely to undergo in the immediate future a reduction in numbers, which is	Very Severe	Severe	Substantial
Its geographic distribution is precarious for the survival of the species and is	Very Restricted	Restricted	Limited
The estimated number of total individuals is	Very Low	Low	Limited
and either of			
a) continue to decline at a rate which is	Very High	High	Substantial
b) or the number is likely to continue to decline and its distribution is	Precarious	Precarious	Precarious
The estimated number of mature individuals is	Extremely low	Very Low	Low
The probability of its extinction in the wild is at least	50% immediate future	20% near future	10% medium term



Vulnerable Hooded Plover

Shoalhaven Birders Outings - 2016

Shoalhaven Birders welcome BirdLife Shoalhaven members on their outings. They meet every third Sunday of the month, meeting at 8.30am. There are no actual leaders to the outings, and it is possible that nobody else will turn up, especially if the weather is iffy, so be prepared to have your own birdwatching outing. Trips away usually go ahead.

May 6-9 Weekend camp to Canberra

Saturday May 7th - 12 Noon at Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Meet at car park off Dairy Road near Kelly's Swamp. Bring lunch. Followed by birding at Arboretum.

Sunday May 8th - Mulligans Flat and Yerrabi Pond. Meeting time and place to be advised. Some people will be staying overnight at Gunning on the Saturday. There is free camping at the Barbour Park Rest Area (which may be a bit crowded) or try Motel Gunning - 54 Yass Road, Gunning on (02) 4845-1191.

May-15 Hyams Beach
Meet turnoff Jervis Bay Rd

Jun-19 Jerrara Dam / Spring Creek
Meet north side Berry Apex Park

Jul-17 Jervis Bay Botanical Gardens
Meet Information Centre, park entrance

Aug-21 Bens Walk
Meet Nowra showground lookout

Sep-18 Barren Grounds
Meet Berry Apex Park, North St

October 3-10 Albury / Chiltern

We had a camp from a van park there some years back with some good birding in the Box Ironbark NP, Mt Pilot and local wetlands. It is a long way, maybe 8 hours to Albury but the accommodation is good and we could get some special birds.

Oct-16 Florance Head
Meet Bewong Roadhouse

Nov-20 Vincentia heathland / Greenfields Beach
Meet roundabout Vincentia shops

Dec-18 Shoalhaven Riverside Park
5pm Xmas Party BYO picnic barbecue

Contacts: Stan and Su Brown 4443-4828
Peter and Julie Hale 0402 076 548
Barry and Susan Virtue 4464-1389

MUD District Birdwatchers Outings

Membership of the MUD Birdwatchers club is open to all members of the Milton Ulladulla U3A. For information about joining MUD Birdwatchers, phone Marg Hamon on 4457-1129 or Chris Shinton on 4454-5584, or you can email mubirdclub@gmail.com

MUD Birdwatchers have outings every fortnight on Fridays from 8am until about 11am. Their programs are produced on a term by term basis.

Program for Term 2

29 April: Little Forest Nature Track
Meet: 8 am: Back of Harry Higgs Room
Driving: 42km Time: 2 hrs Grade: Easy
Leader: Mike Jefferis 4455-5162

13 May: Narrawallee
Meet: 8 am: Back of Harry Higgs Room or 8:15 at the end of Leo Drive
Driving: 8 km Time: 0.5 hrs Grade: Easy
Leader: Bob Rusk 4455-2169

27 May: Ulladulla Sports Ground
Meet: 8 am at the South end of Camden Street
Leader: Chris Shinton 4454-5584

10 June: Tabourie
Meet: 8am Lions Park Burrill Lake (by toilets)
Driving: 30km Time: 1 hrs Grade: Easy
Leaders: Charles Dove 0417 422 302

24 June: Wilfords Lane Wetlands
Meet: 8am: Back of Harry Higgs Room
Driving: 5km Time: 30 min Grade: Easy
Leader: Marg Hamon & Maggie Mance 445- 1129

8 July: Warden Head
Meet: 8 am at the lighthouse
Leader: Mike Jefferis 4455-5162



You never know what you will find
on a MUD District Birdwatching Outing!

Interesting Sightings

In early March Tom Kaar reported a couple of interesting sightings at Penguin Head near Culburra (as reported on Facebook page at the time) - a seal sunbaking on the rocks, and a Lesser Frigatebird soaring above.

The Frigatebird is normally seen in northern Australia (the editor has seen them at Cape Leveque in Western Australia and at Portland Roads on the eastern side of Cape York). Tom thinks they have been seen as far south as Merimbula.



Any Conservation Issues?

BirdLife Shoalhaven wants to do as much as it can to help native birds and their habitat in the Shoalhaven and surrounding shires. If you know of an issue in your area that may result in birds or their habitat being harmed, please send an email to shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au. We cannot always guarantee to respond immediately and will not be able to resolve every issue, but we will do what we can within the BirdLife Australia and BirdLife Shoalhaven policy frameworks to help with your issue and most importantly, help the birds we love and the environments in which they live.

Dead Raven Mystery

National Parks and Wildlife Rangers have been finding many dead Australian Ravens beside roads in the Shoalhaven recently, and there was concern that the birds may have died from Avian Flu.

A NPWS pathologist examined the remains of all the ravens, and discovered that the cause of death was NOT Avian Flu, but was actually from vehicular impacts.

During the analysis it was noted that varying colours of paints appeared on the birds' beaks and claws at the sites of the impacts which killed them.

By analysing these paint residues it was found that 98% of the ravens had been killed by impact with motorcycles while only 2% were killed by cars.

Because cars far outnumber motorbikes on our roads, an Ornithological Behaviourist was engaged to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentages of motorcycle kills versus car kills.

After an exhaustive study the Ornithological Behaviourist concluded that when ravens eat road kill, they always have a look-out raven to warn of danger.

They concluded that while all the lookout ravens could shout "Cah", not a single one could shout "bike"!

Australia's voice for birds since 1901

BirdLife Australia is dedicated to achieving outstanding conservation results for our native birds and their habitats.

With our specialised knowledge and the commitment of an Australia-wide network of volunteers and supporters, we are creating a bright future for Australia's birds.

birdlife.org.au

Add your voice



Enjoy the rewards of membership, making a real difference for our native birds



Contributing your time is one of the most effective ways to help



Help us create positive outcomes for birds and their habitats