

Birdlife Shoalhaven Newsletter

Autumn 2017



Photo by Brian O'Leary



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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 them with any related photos, drawings or maps to brett@brettdavis.com.au

In addition, if you have any bird photographs you would like to share, please send them in as well.

Contributions, suggestions, criticisms, feedback and corrections are always welcome.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the BirdLife Shoalhaven members and friends who contributed articles and photos for this newsletter. These include - Brian O'Leary, Frances Bray, Narelle Wright, Kim Touzel, Dan Crowley, Rob Dunn, Chris Grounds, and Leunig.

In addition, images from the following websites may have been used in this newsletter - BirdLife Australia, Birds in Backyards and www.tailandfur.com.

Apologies to those contributors whose text or images may not have been acknowledged. If you have not been acknowledged please let the editor know, and the error will be rectified in the next newsletter.

Disclaimer

The information in articles submitted for publication in this newsletter is accepted in good faith and although the editor (Brett Davis) has endeavoured to verify the accuracy of all information, BirdLife Shoalhaven and BirdLife Australia accept no responsibility for any of the 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, individual contributors and branch members. They may not be the views of BirdLife Shoalhaven or BirdLife Australia.

Editorial Disclaimer

The views expressed in the Editorial in this newsletter are **definitely not** the views of BirdLife Shoalhaven or 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

This season's cover photo of a Boobook Owl and its prey was taken by Brian O 'Leary.

President's Report

- by Rob Dunn

Apologies to Kim Touzel

When Kim Touzel took over as BirdLife Shoalhaven (BLS) Secretary at the last AGM, I reassured her that there was only a few emails to handle every month and a quarterly set of minutes to write up. Two months later I have had to apologize for misleading her, as the pace of interest in BLS and email traffic has certainly increased in just the last few weeks.

Earlier this month, 70 people attended our talk on "Building Corridors for Woodland Birds". In the Bay and Basin area, Yolande Cozijn has given several talks on Birds in Backyards to community groups and written articles for the local *About* magazine. Matt Jones has given a talk in Nowra on bird photography techniques with more in the pipeline. In April Hugh Capes added to our calendar with a well-attended bird walk near Tomerong. At the beginning of the month a few of us ran a stall with Shoalhaven Landcare and led some bird walks at a fair at Bundanon.

Indirectly this has seen our membership increase from 200 to 215 in only three months, and we now have over 100 other names on our supporter list, which we started only a few months ago.

So apologies to Kim, but thanks to everyone who has helped make this happen.

Many thanks to Barry Virtue

In March Barry Virtue resigned from the BLS Committee, as he will soon be moving out of the Shoalhaven to settle in Bermagui. Barry was the first President of BLS when it was established in early 2014 and has been one of the key people behind Shoalhaven Birders for many years. Barry's enthusiasm and passion for birding has opened many people's eyes to what they can see out of their binoculars, and he has led countless bird walks.



Barry's contribution to birding in the Shoalhaven will be sorely missed, though Bermagui is hardly a long way away, and I can see a camp-out down south sometime in the future.

The BLS Committee has decided not to refill Barry's position prior to the next AGM next year, as this is not a requirement under our Rules of Engagement.

Vale John Clarke

Earlier this month the much-loved comedian John Clarke died from a sudden heart attack in the Grampians. While the majority of Australians will know him from his days as Fred Dagg and from *The Games* and the *Clarke and Dawe Interviews*, the birding world will know him as one of their own.



You may be able to dig out the interview he gave to BirdLife in the March 2012 magazine or enjoy his comic genius on YouTube by searching for "*Farewell Shorebirds: A Red Knot*", which was part of BirdLife's 2014 "*Farewell to our Shorebirds*" campaign. The world of comedy and birding has lost a special person.

Working as part of the wider birding network in NSW

On 1-2 April, I represented BLS at a meeting of the Bird Interest Group Network (BIGnet) near Wollongong. Every six months, bird groups from all over NSW come together to share ideas and experiences. The weekend allowed me to meet with groups like NSW Atlassers, Hastings Birdwatchers, Canberra Ornithology Group, Illawarra Birders, as well as our fellow BirdLife branches in NSW.



One of the items discussed was the second Bird Fair and Wildlife Expo, to be held on 3-5 November at Sydney Olympic Park. Over three days there will be presentations by speakers from across Australia and overseas with many stalls selling everything a birder could hope for - binoculars, cameras, overseas holidays and more. This is a major birding event for Australia and it is worth putting the dates in your calendar now.



Of direct relevance to BLS, the meeting also discussed the plans for NSW's third Key Biodiversity Areas workshop, which BLS will be hosting in St. George's Basin on 5-6 August. The latest BirdLife magazine explains the recent developments of the expansion of BirdLife's Important Bird Area program to now cover all threatened fauna, flora and ecosystems under the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) global conservation program. Two of these KBAs are located in the Shoalhaven, namely Jervis Bay and Lake Wollumboola, as well as part of the Ulladulla to Merimbula, and Budderoo and Barren Grounds KBAs.

The workshop aims to talk through these changes, provide training in BirdLife's Birddata survey tool and expand the field skills of bird groups working in KBAs. This will also be a great opportunity for our members to meet birders from across the State and learn more about the activities of other birding groups.

Council support for birding walks

Since the beginning of the year, members of the BLS Committee have been working with the Shoalhaven Council's Tourism team to promote birding through the printing of a new bird walks brochure and as part of an update to the Council web-site. Council will be meeting all the costs of design and printing and are planning to have the brochure printed in August in time for the KBA workshop.

Council have committed to doing a mass-print run of the brochure bearing our logo and web-site details. Having the brochure available in the Council's Visitor Centres and

caravan parks, motels and other accommodation, as well as freely available at talks we give to community groups and fairs will be a great promotional opportunity for us.

Building Corridors for Woodland Birds

On 10 April, BLS held its second evening talk in our series "Nature Conservation through Birds" entitled "**Building Corridors for Woodland Birds**" - with 70 people in attendance on the night.

Our main speaker was Gary Howling, a Director of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative and an expert in landscape-scale conservation programs. Gary opened his talk by highlighting the lack of in-depth knowledge of migration by species other than birds. Did you know that micro-bats, as well as the larger fruit bats, cover vast distances every year, as do butterflies and even dragonflies, who move across landscapes over multiple life spans!



Gary's talk went on to explain factors impacting on the different migration patterns of birds and how the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative is protecting the corridors they rely upon. This is one of the world's largest conservation projects, supporting and building upon community effort over 3,600 kilometres following the Great Dividing Range from far north Queensland to the Grampians in Victoria.



Gary explained that in the face of population growth, habitat loss and climate change, it will be increasingly vital for the survival of many species to build corridors and enhance connectivity along this eastern spine of Australia.

Gary ended by giving examples of how this is being achieved through partnerships of NGOs, government agencies, community groups and landowners working

together on revegetation, pest control, citizen science and community engagement projects.

Our second speaker, Gary Daly, an ecologist with Gaia Research, provided a local context, talking about the major plantings he has done over many years and the changes in bird life he has seen on his 40 hectare property at Tapitallee. He then linked this with Gary Howling's talk to pan out from his property with aerial photos showing the gaps in the landscape in other parts of NSW. While Gary's property is just a pin-prick within the Great Eastern Ranges, his talk showed how his work at a property scale is helping to build connectivity on the scale on which many of our migratory species rely.



Many thanks to our two speakers and to everyone who came along. A third talk in this series will be scheduled shortly, so watch this space!

Another woodpecker for my list

I have just returned from six weeks in Patagonia and this was my birding highlight, a male Magellanic Woodpecker.



The Picidae family - or Woodpeckers - are not found south/east of the Wallace Line and so I always get excited when I see one. If you have not heard about the Wallace Line, look up Alfred Russel Wallace, the father of biogeography.

Public Lecture on Sea Level Rise

The Milton NPA are holding a public lecture in Mollymook entitled "Sea-level Rise for the Australian coastline and our neighbours", presented by **Dr John Church**. The details shown below.

Date: **Saturday 17 June 2017**
Time: 2.30pm for **3.00pm** start
Where: Downstairs Auditorium
Mollymook Beach Bowling Club
60 Forest Way, Mollymook

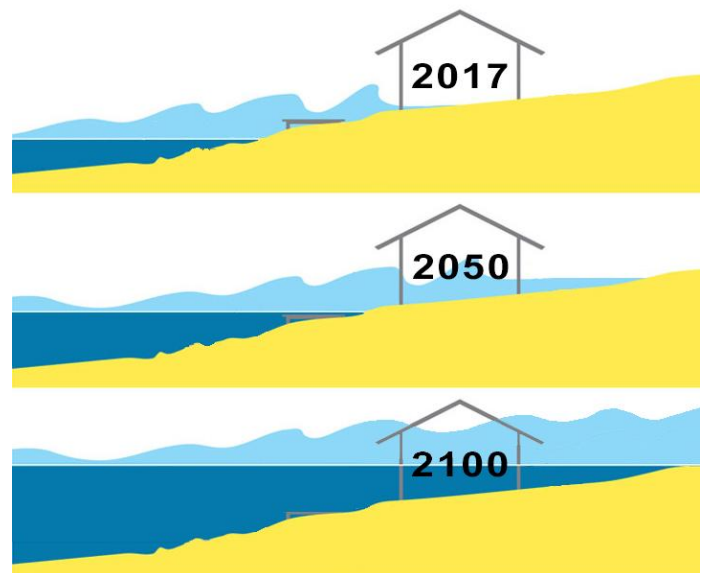
Few topics have been the subject of more intense public debate than that of climate change, in Australia as well as overseas. In the Shoalhaven, the Council is defying logic (and apparently the laws of gravity) by adopting sea level rise projections which ignore recommendations from both the CSIRO and their own expert consultant regarding the projected future impact sea level rise on our coastal region over the coming years.

Why is this so and what is the truth of climate change? John Church presents the facts and the data about global sea level rise and spells out why we must adapt and mitigate to avoid the worst-case disasters.

John Church is a Professor in the Climate Change Research Centre, University of NSW. His area of expertise is the role of the ocean in climate, particularly climate change caused by humans. He is an expert in estimating and understanding global and regional sea-level rise, and is the author of over 150 refereed publications, over 100 other reports and he has co-edited three books.

He was co-convening lead author for the Chapter on Sea Level in the IPCC Third and Fifth Assessment Reports.

Members of the public are welcome to come along to hear John Church and to take part in a post lecture Q & A session.



Cultivating Murder

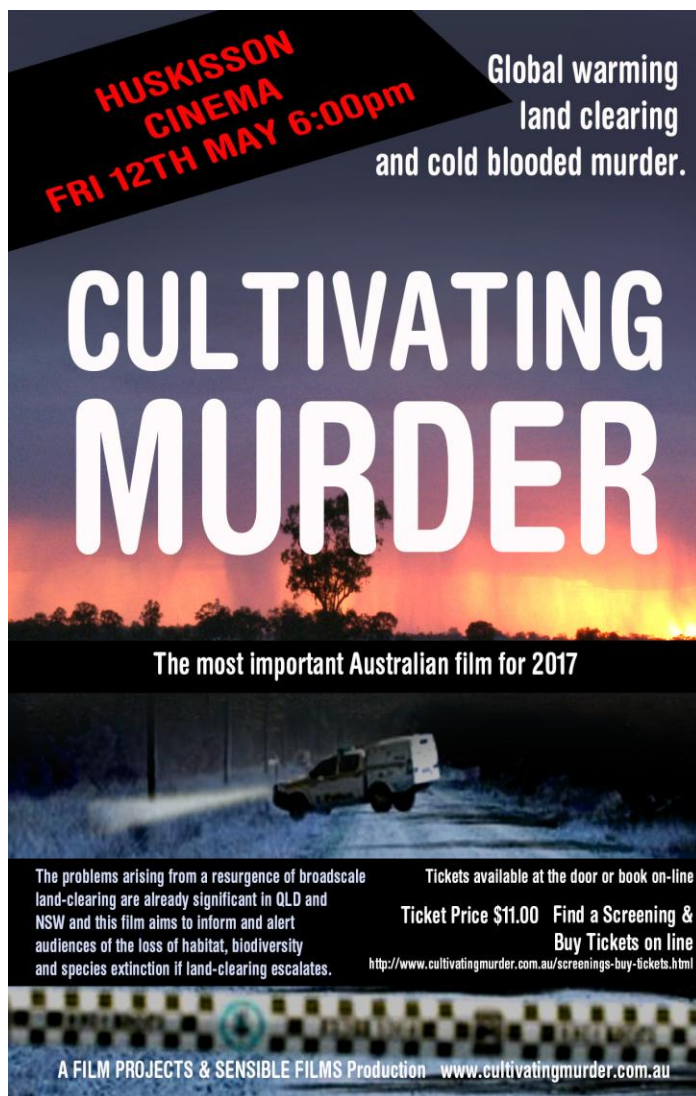
BirdLife Shoalhaven and the Jervis Bay Regional Alliance would like to invite you to a special one-off screening, which our groups are hosting, of a new groundbreaking, Australian, conservation film documentary.

"CULTIVATING MURDER – THE KILLING OF GLEN TURNER"

at the HUSKISSON CINEMA
on FRIDAY MAY 12 at 6PM

followed by a Q&A Session
with Gregory Miller,
Producer-Director.

Our conservation organizations are privileged to be able to work with Gregory and Film Projects to bring such an important film to the Shoalhaven and to the Huskisson Cinema and we are hoping for the same strong support enjoyed with UNDERSTOREY in 2016.



**HUSKISSON
CINEMA**
FRI 12TH MAY 6:00pm

Global warming
land clearing
and cold blooded murder.

CULTIVATING MURDER

The most important Australian film for 2017

The problems arising from a resurgence of broadscale land-clearing are already significant in QLD and NSW and this film aims to inform and alert audiences of the loss of habitat, biodiversity and species extinction if land-clearing escalates.

Tickets available at the door or book on-line
Ticket Price \$11.00 Find a Screening &
Buy Tickets on line
<http://www.cultivatingmurder.com.au/screenings-buy-tickets.html>

A FILM PROJECTS & SENSIBLE FILMS Production www.cultivatingmurder.com.au

Cultivating Murder is a new feature documentary that tells the heartrending story of the murder of Glen Turner, a public servant working for the Office of Environment and Heritage, who was gunned down on the side of a public road in Croppa Creek, 40 kilometres from Moree in 2014.

Glen Turner was investigating illegal land clearing when he was murdered, and since his death we have seen the NSW Government throw out the Native Vegetation Act and replace it with legislation that will allow even greater broadscale land clearing to occur, much as it has in Queensland.

This film offers an insight into what large farming concerns and agribusiness see as the future - with no responsible land management and no conservation of the natural environment. It reveals the pressure of recent rapid expansion in agribusiness as the laws protecting the environment are weakened across Australia.

The killer, Ian Turnbull, a wealthy NSW rural producer, had previously been prosecuted for illegal land clearing. During the murder trial Turnbull pleaded not guilty on the grounds of "substantial impairment" claiming the Office of Environment and Heritage was bankrupting his family agribusiness, and as a result, he was suffering acute depression. In court, both claims were shown to be untrue. Ian Turnbull (82) died on Monday 27th March this year in hospital while serving a 35 year sentence for the murder of Glen Turner.

The film tells the story of four people who are deeply affected by the murder:

Alison McKenzie, Glen's partner who is left alone with their two children and is concerned that the killer may escape a just punishment.

Fran Pearce, Glen's younger sister, who joins Alison as they attend the Supreme Court trial of Ian Turnbull. The two women struggle with personal grief as they attend each day of the murder trial in Sydney to show the judge, defense and the media that they want justice for Glen.

Alaine Anderson, a farmer in Croppa Creek and a neighbour of the killer Ian Turnbull. She has known the Turnbull's for years but is now concerned that the community has deeply divided.

Phil Spark, an environmental consultant, who has taken it upon himself, despite obvious danger, to investigate cases of broadscale land clearing when the government agencies fail to do so.

Tickets will be available at the Cinema.

Enquiries : Chris Grounds solum306@gmail.com

Conservation Officer Report

- by Chris Grounds

April - the Cooling *

One of the highlights of the year to report is that 2017 is the **50th Anniversary year for the National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS]**.

Ironically, this is a year in which 13 regions and managers are being “restructured” to 8 regions and directors and with this seems to be a swing to tourism and business management credentials.



BLS will be organizing some anniversary celebration walks with NPWS for members and friends later in the year.

First cab off the rank though is a suggestion to members to please check the details included in the Newsletter for the film documentary **"Cultivating Murder"** at the Huskisson cinema which we are co-hosting with JBRA. The film also has a dedicated website which members can check and the screening will be an important occasion for people with a dedicated conservation interest.

One of the most significant news items, which members will be aware of from emails from BirdLife Australia, is the progression from “Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas” [IBAs] to **“Key Biodiversity Areas” [KBAs]**.

This venture represents a very significant step forward for BirdLife and its partners. A separate article has been included in our Newsletter to cover the key elements of this development, which affects the four KBAs covered by the Shoalhaven.

There has been very recent good news [April 6] on the **Lake Wollumboola** front with the Ministerial decision that the current development proposal for a Golf Course at Long Bow Point is a “state significant development” and thus the Minister will become the “Consent Authority” for the development. This means that Shoalhaven Council will NOT be the Consent Authority

and this represents a real “watershed” point in the conservation battle.



The Remediation Engineering Plan for erosion in the **Heritage Estate** has been submitted to Council and this should proceed over the next twelve months as the offers to sell by landowners continue to be canvassed by the Foundation NPW.

Whilst BLS was not directly involved in the **Yerriyong** Motor Sports development it is still of great interest to us to see important habitat conserved. This proposal has lingered for seven years without planning resolution and the proponents, Motor Cycling NSW, have withdrawn their proposal following a failure to comply with requirements of the Joint Regional Planning Panel. This withdrawal was triggered, so it was claimed, by the survey of an important population of 100 Threatened Species Leafless Tongue Orchid [*Crypostylis hunteriana*], the very same orchid which was front and centre in the Heritage Estate battle.

The Australian Defence Force has been the source of another bushfire on **Becroft Peninsula** which was started when a very expensive ADF drone crashed.

The peninsula is of course part of the Jervis Bay KBA and was adversely affected late last year when a major bushfire resulted from a hazard reduction "controlled" burn that broke containment lines.

The area was used some years ago to "reseed" a population of the Eastern Bristlebird, listed on the EPBC as an "Endangered" Threatened Species and the "trigger species" for the former IBA.

At this rate there will be lucky to be any of the flightless birds left at Beecroft! This is not good news for BLS Treasurer Karen Davis in particular who is the "Guardian" for the Jervis Bay KBA for BirdLife Australia.

The BLS Committee have decided to pursue the "**dog issue**" on Shoalhaven beaches and Vice-President Matt Jones will be co-ordinating the development of a strategy that we will implement later in the year around the time of the arrival of migratory shorebirds.

One consequence of this is that the calculated recession of coastal shoreline averages 30 metres less in the Shoalhaven than it would with a 90cm standard.

This puts a disputed zone smack in the feeding, nesting and resting areas of our shorebirds which are under enough of a threat now and throw in East Coast Lows and seasonal extremes as part of the ocean warming and climate change scenario and the shorebirds will be even further challenged over the next 80 years.



POC nests are under threat with current sea level and ECLs.

There are a couple of stories on a conservation theme, which you may find interesting and I would like to share.

At the risk of a free plug but in the interests of a good story for BLS, the latest edition of **Australian Geographic** included a story [Ann Jones] of great interest on migratory birds of Australia, which did include a great poster.

In 2015 I had written to the Editor-in-Chief [EiC] to lodge a complaint about their promotion of "environmentally friendly 4X4 beach driving". This was another of those "oxymorons" that keep popping up when environment and tourism cross paths but as our letter suggested, 4X4 beach driving could be highly intrusive, disturbing and destructive to beach environment and the associated birds and their habitat.

The lack of a reply to two approaches to the EiC led me to the editor who managed to elicit a prompt immediate contact from the "chief".

The content and rationale of the response was far from satisfactory so as C.O. I bought in BirdLife Australia and the NPWS Shorebird Project and sent a further letter to indicate that we were not convinced and did not accept the magazine editor's position.

After a further amicable exchange the EiC recognized our case and gave a commitment to compensate for the material they had published by providing a migratory / shorebird feature in a future edition.

My contribution was to provide contacts within BirdLife Australia who could support such an article. Whilst it has



I did mention at our AGM that Council have refused to review **sea level standards to 2100** for the Shoalhaven despite formal requests from staff and the community members of Council's Natural Resources Committee.

Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, Eurobodalla and Bega councils have all adopted a 2100 sea level rise around a 90cm standard whilst Shoalhaven Council have adopted a 30cm standard.

taken longer than promised, two years on, the article turned up in the current edition of Australian Geographic with clear acknowledgements of BirdLife Australia staff used on a consultant basis.

The credits listed on the poster include "**BirdLife Australia advisers Dan Weller, Sean Dooley, Diana Gibson, Fiona Blandford.**"

The small sense of satisfaction was short-lived however as I discovered a full page advertisement with the contents page of the same edition for a Dual-Cab 4X4 shown ripping up a dune! But aren 't all 4X4 Dualcabs advertised ripping into some part of the natural environment?

A positive action BLS is involved with that should have some good conservation consequences is the production of a new **Shoalhaven Bird Walks pamphlet** with the Tourism branch of Shoalhaven Council.

A small, enthusiastic team from our committee are working on that venture with council and it is excellent to have such a direct input through consultation.

There is always progress to be made however and Mayor Findley acted to support a BLS request concerning two aspects of the **Shoalhaven Tourism Board Report** to Council.

The report named us as "Birdlife" rather than "BirdLife Shoalhaven" but a more contentious issue was the characterization of **BLS as a "Tourism Operator"**. Our BLS request was to amend the Report to describe us as a "**Conservation Organization**", which is what BLS is of course, and staff have been approached through Mayor Findley to ensure that change.

If Council's Tourism branch can get these things right we will move on a much better footing.

An approach was also made to the Amanda Findley group of councillors concerning the concept of "Sustained Growth of 6%" in the report of tourism in the Shoalhaven in 2016. The question was raised with these councillors, given the council commitment to "Sustainability", as to **what is regarded as "sustainable tourism growth" in the Shoalhaven?** There may not be an answer for that question of course!

Tourism growth of 33% to 2016-2020 is not "sustainable" and will certainly result in even higher impact on shorebirds and their habitat, especially with council tourism branch maintaining the "Unspoilt" – "Pet Friendly" combo.

The Shoalhaven coast is a critical shorebird habitat with threatened species populations and habitat, and involves major areas of KBAs and the coast is the focus of tourism.

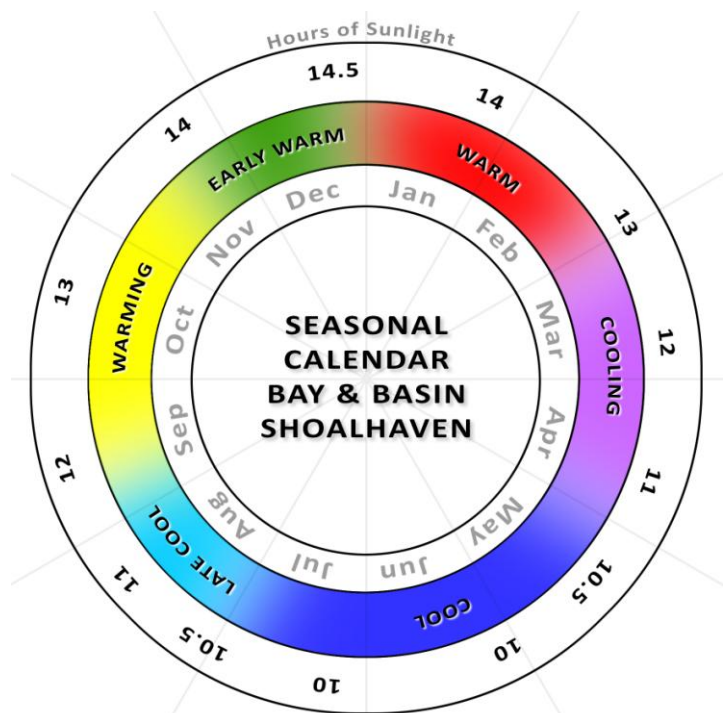


It is also the focus for the NPWS Shorebird Recovery program, which involves the whole Shoalhaven coast.

There have been clear signs in the 2016-17 summer that there are mounting pressures of many kinds in the tourism push, some on the threshold of tolerances, and that management of tourism is reactive rather than predictive, proactive and sustainable.

- by Chris Grounds

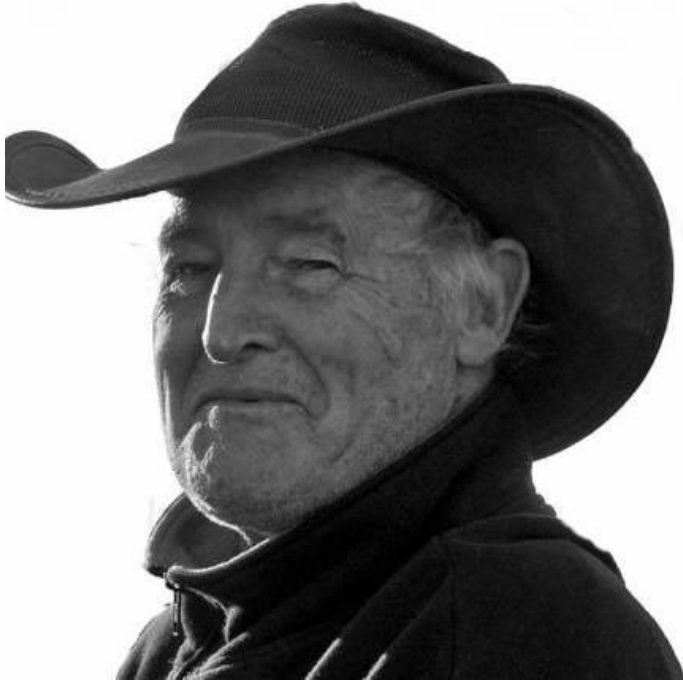
* the Cooling (see the title of this report) refers to the current time of the year as shown in the seasonal calendar below that more closely resembles reality than does the traditional 4 season calendar - Ed.



Brian O 'Leary - Photographer

- by Brett Davis

This is the first of an ongoing series of articles that will appear in this newsletter over the next few years featuring the work of an amazing number of bird and wildlife photographers who are also BirdLife Shoalhaven members.



In 2015 Brian O 'Leary won the inaugural Tom Oliver Award, a BirdLife Photography Award that seeks to entice photographers and/or photography educators to create an original and inspiring educational resource enabling fellow bird photographers to advance their photographic knowledge and skills.

Brian's entry for the award comprised an illustrated e-book describing a technique he uses to attract and photograph birds at close quarters using medium format telephoto lenses, and an accompanying video of photos and videos he has captured using the technique. The e-book and video can be found at [Tom Oliver Award 2015](#).

I emailed Brian a list of questions about his photography, and he rang me back to give me his answers. The questions and answers below are a composite of my hastily written notes from our conversation, and the bio information that can be found on Brian's website at [brianolearyphotography.com](#).

Q. What motivated you to become a photographer and why the focus on birds?

I have been keen on photography for about fifty years, going back to the good old days before the digital age, doing black and white prints, then slides.

I have been interested in birds for even longer. When I came to Australia from England as a 12 year old in 1948

(which makes me over 80 years old now) I knew most of the birds in England. On arrival in Australia I was looking forward to seeing a parrot as there are none in England. Imagine my delight at seeing them painted on the sides of buildings and on posters, mostly eastern Rosellas!



Q. What equipment do you use and why?

I bought my first digital camera a long time ago, a Nikon D100 and have had one ever since, the one I have now is the Nikon D7100.

Q. What is your favorite lens for wildlife photography - the one you use most often?

I use a Nikon f:4 80-400 telephoto zoom lens. It does all I want as I do not have the money or the stamina to carry a large lens and tripod. My style of photography is different to most photographers as most of my photos are taken from less than five metres, using a hide.

Q. How do you get close to the birds?

The details are in my e-book, but basically I bring the birds to me using water. I set up water holes, all over the place. My first water hole was in Mary Cairncross Park at Maleny in Queensland fifteen or so years ago, and over the years I have photographed birds from the rainforest floor to the canopy that come in to drink along with the other creatures in the rainforest. One very unwelcome snake came in the hide one day but he did not stay long.



Q. What is more important for a bird photographer - the right equipment or a good knowledge of birds?

You can take good photos with almost any camera gear, especially if you take most of your photographs from less than five metres away, but it is essential that you know how to use whatever camera and lens and other equipment that you have. However, having a knowledge of birds is more important, and if you are in an unfamiliar area with unfamiliar birds, ask the locals!



Q. What are your favourite locations and times of year for photographing birds?

One of my favourite spots is Copeton Dam out from Inverell in northern NSW. I built a pond out there about ten years ago and I go there once or twice a year and spend a month or two, mostly in the winter as they are very mild, but in the last few years I go further north and get a lot of new species for me.

Paluma (between Townsville and Cairns in north Queensland) is the place where I get most of my bird shots now and in the three years I have been going there I have photographed forty new species.

Again, I use pond. Anything can be a pond as long as it holds water - I use cut down drums, jerry cans, anything I find or pick up from the local dump.

Q. Do you have a "bogey" bird - one you just can't find?

I would really like to photograph a Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher, but I am never in their area at the right time of the year. (The Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher migrates in November from New Guinea to its breeding grounds in the rainforests of Cape York and coastal northern Queensland - Ed.)

Q. Is there one special bird you love photographing?

I love the Robins - the Red-capped Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-browed Robin - in fact all of the Robins!



Q. What kind of tools do you use for post-processing?

I don't do a lot of post-processing, just a little bit of cropping and sharpening.

Q. What is the one thing you wish you knew when you started taking photos?

I wish I knew how frustrating it could be! If you want to be really frustrated, by a camera and photograph birds!

Q. Any final words of advice to someone starting out with or wanting to improve their bird photography?

Don't photograph nesting birds - they have a hard enough time without photographers disturbing them! And use water to bring the birds to you. Set up a waterhole. Use a simple water sprayer - it brings birds in just like using a magic wand!



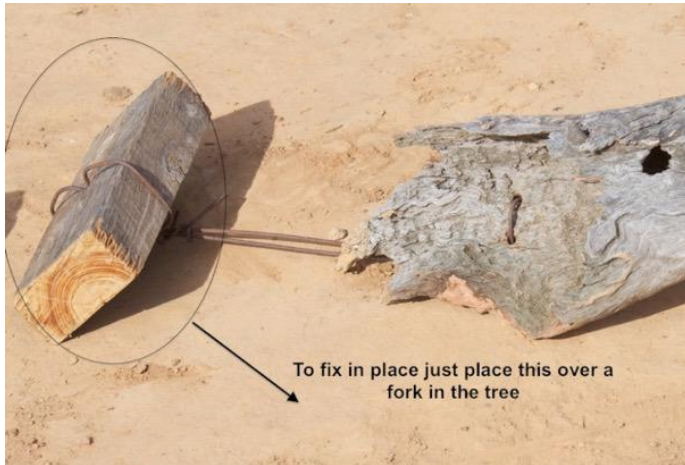
Create Nest Hollows!

- by Brian O 'Leary

I have been putting nesting boxes in trees for years using a very simple method that does not do any damage to the tree that it is fixed to - no nails and no damage at all after a number of years. I now have over 100 in place.

They have lots of birds using them plus Sugar Glider Possums, Squirrel Gliders, Frogs and Bats. I think if this method had more publicity we could have a lot more bird boxes up in bush and in back yards. There are a lot of birds on the endangered list that require nesting boxes.

The photos are pretty much self-explanatory ...



For man-made nesting boxes it is just as easy to fix them to a bit of scrap wood and place using the same method.



Editor's Note: Brian does not suggest you gather fallen timber that might be of use to other animals like snakes, frogs, lizards etc. But it would be great if you can rescue fallen timber that is destined to be burnt or wasted, such as from a block of land that has been cleared for development, or even from the green pile at the local tip!

Why is Lake Wollumboola birdlife so variable?

- by Frances Bray

Occasional visitors to Lake Wollumboola are often disappointed that their favourite bird species perhaps the Black Swans or the Little Terns are nowhere to be seen. I explain the lake's characteristic variability, where although birds are always present, the species and numbers vary, assuring them that their preferred species will return when lake conditions are suitable.

However such explanations belie the complex influences on the 104 bird species that rely on the lake's habitats at various seasons of the year and during differing conditions.

Birdlife at Lake Wollumboola is also influenced by other factors including conditions at the nearby Shoalhaven estuary and further a-field in the Murray-Darling Basin and along the east coast and the East-Asian Australasian flyway.

Increased numbers of people and disruptive activities such as prawning and crabbing adversely impact on birdlife. In the longer term, the impacts of climate change particularly increased storminess and sea level rise, may further disrupt the lake's cyclical behaviour and ecosystems, including bird species.

So why is Lake Wollumboola so variable?

The physical and hydrological complexities of the lake are the foundation of its diverse ecosystems, which provide food, shelter and roosting habitat for at least 104 bird species, including water birds, shorebirds, migratory waders, coastal and seabirds and raptors as well as fish and other aquatic species.

Bird habitats include the adjacent open ocean, sand bar, fringing salt marsh wetlands, fresh ground water soaks, open lake waters of varying depths and water quality, rocky reefs, sand/mudflats and muddy bottoms as well as abundant algae and sea grass.

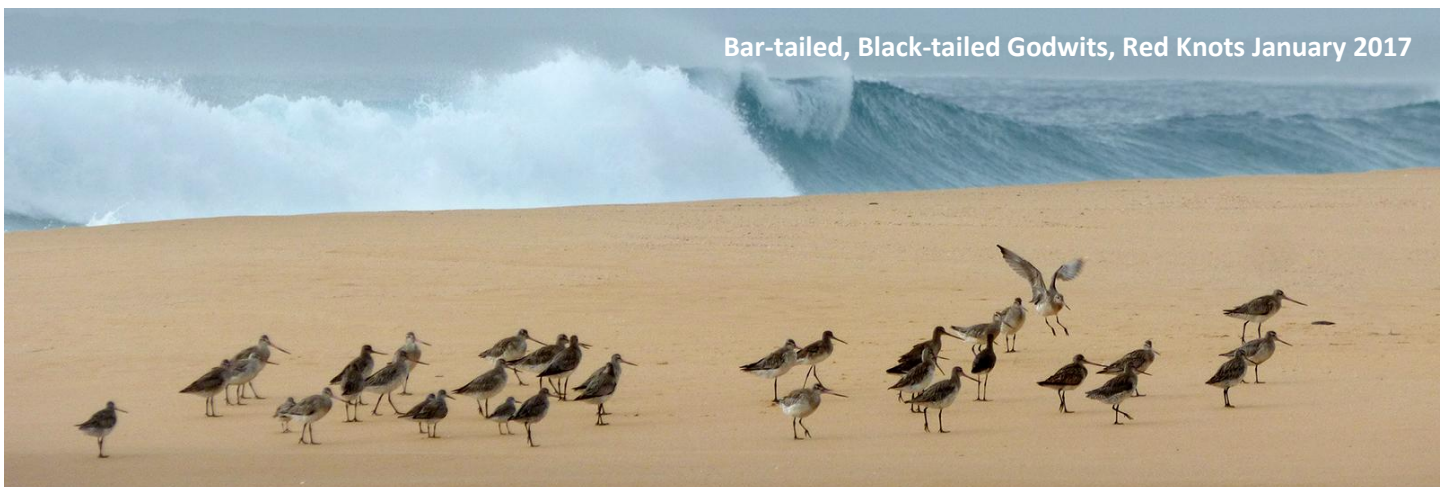
The lake is a naturally shallow, fresh to brackish coastal lake, one of the few remaining largely undisturbed natural ICOLLS (intermittently closing and opening lake or lagoons) in NSW. The lake formed 8,000-6,000 years as a result of past climate change when rising sea levels and onshore winds, caused sand to accumulate, closing off the headwaters of a tributary to the ancient Shoalhaven River.

Recent research by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) resulted in further classification of the lake as a "back dune lagoon," one of a small group of NSW coastal lakes where ground water is a major component of freshwater inputs, with significant influences on the lake ecology.

Weather conditions also play a big part in determining lake conditions. After prolonged heavy rain, ground water and surface water from the catchment creeks and wetlands, increases lake water levels, causing the lake to break through the sand bar. As the lake is perched above mean sea level, it takes approximately 12 hours before the water level drops to sea level.

Natural openings occurred in August 2015 and June 2016 during East Coast Lows. On other occasions local people dig through the sand bar causing the lake to open at lower than natural levels as occurred in June 2013. After openings the lake becomes tidal usually for several months until sand accumulates in the entrance and closes the lake again. The longest known opening is the current nine months. The June 2016 East Coast Low generated such high ocean surges and waves, combined with high tides, that they overwhelmed the sand bar, washing large volumes of sand into the lake, the reverse of usual openings. As a consequence, the lake will remain tidal until enough sand accumulates offshore to close it again.

During drought the lake remains closed, with evaporation reducing water levels and exposing 60% of the lake bed. The longest known closure is eight years. The Manly Hydraulics data logger in the lake reveals the daily fluctuations in the water level.



Bar-tailed, Black-tailed Godwits, Red Knots January 2017



Tannin-coloured ground water - photo by Narelle Wright

The lake's opening and closing cycles also influence water quality, which ranges from fresh, predominantly ground water following rainfall, to hyper-saline, when water levels are low during drought, to seawater when the lake is open with daily tidal fluctuations.

2013-15 research by OEH established the importance of low phosphorous ground water to the lake ecosystem. The lake's seagrass and algae species, the basis of the aquatic food chain, providing food and shelter for fish and other aquatic species as well as birdlife, are in large part, dependent on low phosphorus ground water. Maintaining this natural ground water supply is critical for survival of the lake's ecosystem including its birdlife.

Black Swans are also reliant on ground water to flush salt from their systems when the lake becomes hyper-saline. The swans, sea grass and algae are interdependent, as the swans graze on these aquatic plants as well as fertilising and propagating them. Most of the Swans departed after the lake opened in June 2016 possibly because of disturbance due to tidal fluctuations and the attractions of the flooded Murray Darling wetlands.

Heavy, persistent rain during March and April 2017 resulted in significant fresh tannin-coloured ground water flows into the lake, causing an immediate reduction in salt-water and fish eating birds such as Pelicans, Cormorants and Crested Terns, contrasting with the return of Grey and Chestnut Teal, White-faced Herons and Sacred Ibis.

The largest bird populations occur in summers when drought affects the Murray-Darling Basin and water birds flock to east coast lakes and estuaries including Lake Wollumboola, where low lake levels and exposed mud and sand flats rich in crustaceans and worms attract large populations of migratory shorebirds.

During the summers of 2000-2002, up to 20,000 birds were present, including Black Swan, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal and coastal birds such as Pelicans, Silver Gulls and Crested Terns, as well as large populations of migratory waders contribute to such spectacular events. Over 13,000 Swans were recorded on several occasions. Lake Wollumboola is recognised by Birdlife International as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), previously known as a globally Important Bird Area (IBA) for Black Swan and Chestnut Teal. Numbers of Grey Teal and Eurasian Coot are also likely to qualify.

The lake is also recognized under international treaties between the Australian Government and China, Japan and Korea as internationally significant habitat, part of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway for migratory wading species.

Waders feast on sea worms, crustaceans, insects and tiny shellfish on the sand bar and in the lake's shallows as well as on exposed sand banks and mudflats. Some species enjoy seaweed flies and their eggs and larvae which emerge when seagrass and algae dies and decomposes as the lake waters warm up during summer.

Swans drinking ground water



Some migratory wading species also rely on the Lake as a home for their first 2-3 years before leaving on their first flight north to breed. A flock of Bar-tailed Godwits (250 to start with), Black-tailed Godwits as well as Red Knots over-wintered at Lake Wollumboola last winter and continued until March this year when they departed on their epic flights to the northern hemisphere, hopefully to return here in Spring. Eastern Curlews continue to feed here in small numbers.

The migratory Little Tern, local Pied Oyster Catchers and Red Capped Plovers and on occasions the Fairy Tern also rely on Lake Wollumboola for breeding habitat. It is of great concern that the summer of 2016-17 was unsuccessful for the nesting shorebirds at the lake apart from the Red Capped Plovers.

The open lake and low sand bar may have contributed to the Little Terns' decision not to nest at the lake this summer, as many as 97 returned here from end of December to fish and fatten up the fledglings prior to their northern migration with some 40 remaining until 18th March 2017.

Two Pied Oyster Catcher pairs nested with 3 known nests and 1 advanced chick. Two birds are permanent residents. However both pairs nested south of the lake opening making it difficult for Shorebird Volunteers and NPWS staff to access and protect their nests with electric fences to deter foxes.

Increased human presence, particularly prawners at night and crabbers by day has caused major disturbance to feeding and roosting birds over the past two summers. These human visitors ignore the birds. They spread out across the shallows disturbing roosting birds and leaving massive amounts of rubbish and by-catch behind. This attracts hungry predators including foxes and ravens, which threaten waders and nesting shorebirds and possibly led to the death of a young pelican killed by a fox.

Whilst the tragic loss of habitat through development in China and South Korea resulting in death and catastrophic decline of wader species dependent on coastal wetlands is of much greater significance, nevertheless, the impacts of increased human visitation at Lake Wollumboola represents a significant threat to lake birdlife.

Shorebird Volunteers and Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc members are pursuing these concerns with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Shoalhaven City Council. Also we look forward to the lake closing, thus putting an end to prawning and crabbing until the next lake opening.

- text and photos by Frances Bray
President, Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc
April 2017

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)

- by Chris Grounds

BirdLife Australia is currently involved in the development of a **critical, shared conservation model** involving the development of the concept of **Key Biodiversity Areas** (KBAs) from Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas.



The Jervis Bay KBA including Heritage Estate

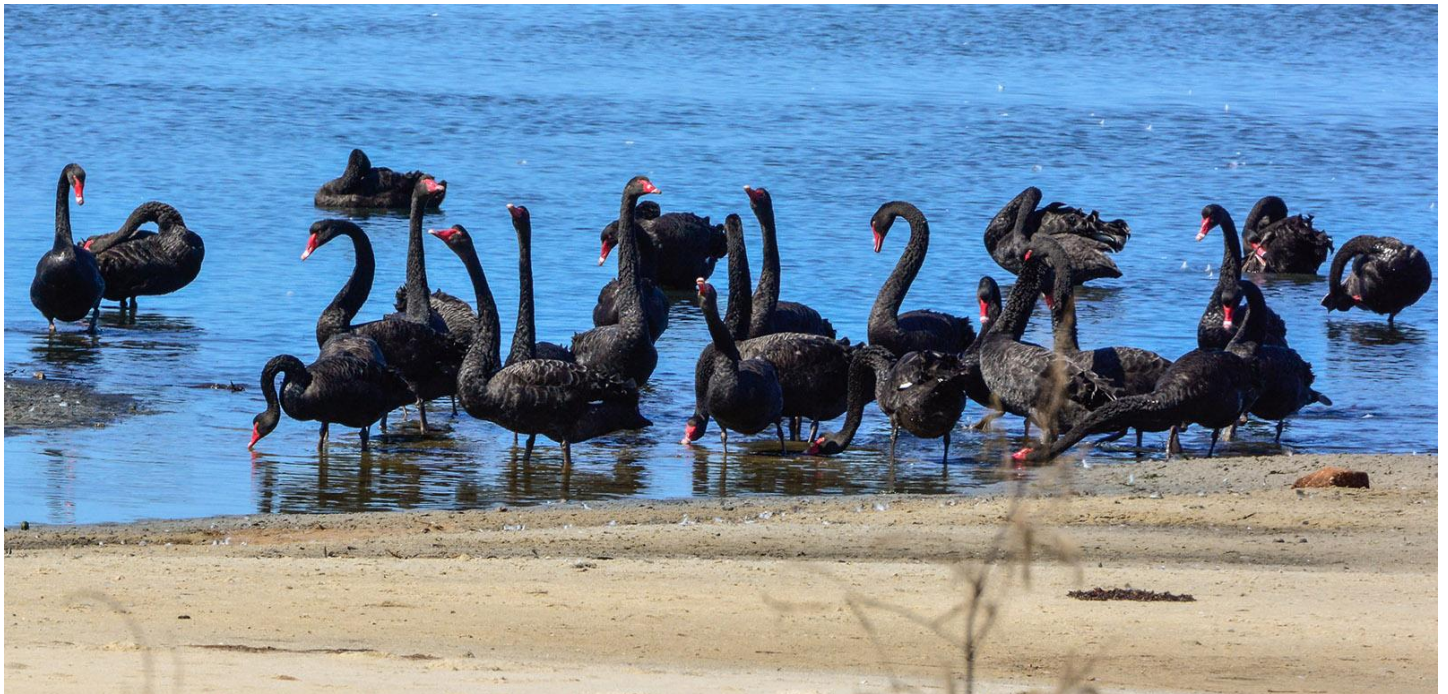
Last September, BirdLife International, on behalf of BirdLife Australia and 120 other bird conservation NGOs worldwide, signed up to a partnership of 11 leading, global conservation organisations to agree on a consistent approach to identifying and protecting the world's nature hotspots: KBAs.

The existing IBA-KBAs either shared by or in the Shoalhaven are Cambewarra Range as part of the Budderoo National Park / Barren Grounds Nature Reserve KBA, Lake Wollumboola KBA, Jervis Bay KBA and the Ulladulla-Merimbula Coast KBA.

There are 315 KBAs in Australia and over 95 per cent of Australia's IBAs qualify as KBAs based on the threatened bird species and populations occurring there. The remaining IBAs are being assessed for other threatened taxa occurring in them.



The older IBAs were identified on the basis of a “trigger species of bird” so the base could be seen to be somewhat narrow. For example, the Jervis Bay IBA was identified according to the presence of just the Eastern Bristlebird (shown above).



Black Swans at the Lake Wollumboola KBA

Almost all Australian IBAs qualify as KBAs, based on their bird values alone.

The new KBA Standard consolidates approaches to conservation under one "umbrella", empowering environmental NGOs like BirdLife Australia to advocate for better policy protection and management of our most important places for nature.

Key Biodiversity Areas are designed to expand to include all biodiversity, thereby strengthening the level of advocacy for protected areas. Critically, the KBA Standard provide a consistent approach for conservation that governments understand and assist governments to meet their conservation obligations under various international treaties.

The KBA project in Australia was started by BirdLife Australia through its contribution to BirdLife International's IBA project, which identified IBAs in Australia in 2008. A project was launched in September 2016 between BirdLife International and ten partners to develop slightly modified criteria as part of a global standard to identify KBAs. [Funding for this initiative was received by Rio Tinto.]

To qualify as a Key Biodiversity Area, a site must meet at least one of the KBA criteria, with relevant criteria briefly summarised as follows -

KBA CRITERIA AND THRESHOLDS

A. THREATENED BIODIVERSITY

- A1. Threatened species
- A2. Threatened ecosystem types

B. GEOGRAPHICALLY RESTRICTED BIODIVERSITY

- B1: Individual geographically restricted species
- B2: Co-occurring geographically restricted species
- B3: Geographically restricted assemblages
- B4: Geographically restricted ecosystem types

C. ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

D. BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES

- D1: Demographic aggregations
- D2: Ecological refugia
- D3: Recruitment sources

E. IRREPLACEABILITY THROUGH QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Members can find out more about KBAs, including global and Australian KBA maps at the following two sites:

<http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/mapsearch>

<http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/KBA>



Web Watch

- by Chris Grounds

The second of our "Web Watch" conservation articles continues our cyber spying on sources of news with bird interest. Remember, just copy the web address and paste it into your search engine to read the full article to extend the summary we provide. There has been no shortage of news these last few months and this edition leads with one of the most significant items. Members will notice the sources are mainstream, reliable news sources with authentic journalism so in one sense it is what is reaching the public eye – we hope!

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-03-23/night-parrot-sighting-in-wa-shocks-birdwatching-world/8377624>



A group of four birdwatchers from Broome has photographed Australia's most mysterious bird, the night parrot, in Western Australia.

The sighting is all that more remarkable when you consider that the night parrot was not confirmed as still alive in Australia until three years ago, and that the photograph was taken in a patch of spinifex 2,000 kilometres from where the bird was rediscovered in Western Queensland. While the group described the parrot as a "fat budgerigar", the sighting was the equivalent of winning the bird watching lotto.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/war-on-feral-cats-australia-aims-to-cull-2-million-20170214-gucp4o.html>



The federal government will unleash every weapon in its arsenal to wipe out **2 million feral cats** – about a third of the population – and will provide \$5 million to community groups to serve as foot soldiers in the battle. It's a race to save about 124 species of native wildlife at risk of extinction from feral cats, which are notoriously hard to kill.

"They are the single biggest threat to our native animals, and have already directly driven out of extinction 20 out of 30 mammals lost," he said.

<https://theconversation.com/government-needs-to-front-up-billions-not-millions-to-save-australias-threatened-species-74250>



Southern cassowaries, orange-bellied parrots, Leadbeater's possums, and Australia's only purple wattle are among the threatened species the government is seeking conservation investment for under its recently released threatened species prospectus. The prospectus seeks business and philanthropic support in partnership with the government and community groups to raise around A\$14 million each year.

The government has proposed 51 projects, costing from A\$45,000 to A\$6 million. At first glance the prospectus is a positive initiative. But it also highlights that the current government is unwilling to invest what's needed to assure the conservation of our threatened plants, animals and other organisms.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-27/saving-the-rufous-fantail-with-a-taxidermied-chipmunk/8212760>

Early European settlers in Australia called rufous fantails "mad fans", because of their wagging, fanned tail and the fact that they never sit still. Rufous fantails (*Rhipidura rufifrons*) have cousins all over the Pacific. In fact, subspecies of these twitchy creatures are dispersed across Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Mariana Islands.



<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-24/captive-bred-orange-bellied-parrot-chick-adopted-by-wild-mother/8194666>

High above the windswept button-grass plains of Melaleuca in Tasmania's south-west, a fluffy chick is tucked away in a nesting box. But this is no ordinary chick. The little bird is the first captive-bred orange-bellied parrot to have survived its first week in the nest of an adoptive mother in the wild.



http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-24/infection-kills-16-endangered-orange-bellied-parrots/8205046?WT.mc_id=newsmail&WT.tsrc=Newsmail



For the second time in a year there has been a spate of deaths in the critically endangered orange-bellied parrot population at a captive breeding centre in Hobart. A common bacteria variety has killed up to 16 birds in the past month from a population of 136 at the Taroona facility.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/dec/28/climate-change-driving-birds-migrate-early-research-reveals-edinburgh-global-warming>

A University of Edinburgh study finds birds are arriving at breeding grounds too soon, causing some to miss out on food. Migrating birds are responding to the effects of climate change by arriving at their breeding grounds earlier as global temperatures rise, research has found.



<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/blogs/creatura-blog/2015/04/apostlebirds-keep-it-all-in-the-family>

When an apostlebird builds its deep, cup-shaped nest made from dried grasses held together with mud and manure, it will share the experience with around nine other apostlebirds. This 'breeding unit' comprises a single dominant male and adult female, plus several juvenile birds from a previous breeding season that stuck around to help out.



<https://theconversation.com/arctic-birds-face-disappearing-breeding-grounds-as-climate-warms-62656>

Next month, the cruise ship Crystal Serenity will embark on a controversial voyage, becoming the first cruise liner ever to sail Canada's Northwest Passage – a formerly icebound route that only became navigable in 2007. It's a dramatic symbol of the change that is currently taking place in the Arctic, which is warming more rapidly than anywhere else on Earth.



This warming is already affecting polar bears, greening the tundra, and physically shrinking red knots. Now, in a new study, we show that it could contract the breeding habitat of millions of migratory birds that travel to the High Arctic.

Countries worldwide could see declines in the numbers of migratory birds reaching their shores, and the Canadian and Russian Arctic islands may be the last refuges these species have.

<https://blog.csiro.au/australia-breeds-brainy-birds/>



Ask someone to name a unique Australian animal and most likely they'll say kangaroo, platypus or koala. But we should also spare a thought for our unique birds.

Our parrots are not only visually spectacular – with splashes of every colour, in every size and shape – they are also some of the smartest and longest lived birds in the world. Our songbirds – ravens, honeyeaters, magpies, bowerbirds, lyrebirds – have some of the greatest minds of the animal kingdom. They go fishing, remember people's faces, mimic other species and even play hide-and-seek. They stay younger for longer than Northern Hemisphere species and can live twice as long.

<https://theconversation.com/when-birds-go-roaming-the-mystery-of-avian-irruptions-71262>



Red-breasted Nuthatches are irrupting this winter across North America.

But every once in a while, something unexpected happens. Hundreds or thousands of birds of a single species leave Canada's boreal forests and move far south of their typical ranges in a phenomenon called an **irruption**. These irregular movements are big events for birders and wildlife biologists. Much of what we know about irruptions is based on data from long-running citizen science projects. These initiatives collect crowd sourced data produced primarily by nonprofessionals – in this case, birders and nature lovers.

<https://blog.csiro.au/moon-kite-missing-in-the-simpson/>



Population numbers of the letter-winged kite, also known as the moon kite, aren't what they used to be. The letter-winged kite has watched on as Australia's arid zone lost 32 native mammal species in a couple of centuries. Now, this unique animal is also under threat.

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/plastic-pollution-toll-on-wildlife-expected-to-rise-to-95-per-cent-catches-attention-of-g20-20170306-gurkp0.html>



An x-ray showing a plastic bag swallowed by a green turtle.

More than half the world's turtles and two-thirds of some bird species along Australia's east coast are being found to have ingested plastics as the toll from pollution mounts, a leading CSIRO researcher said.

On current projections, by mid-century, some 95 per cent of all sea birds will be found with plastic inside them, said Denise Hardesty, a senior CSIRO research scientist, said.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-08/northern-australian-magpie-geese-breeding-at-lake-cowal/8249136?pfmredir=sm>



Northern Australian magpie geese are breeding at Lake Cowal for the first time in more than two decades after floodwater filled the largest inland lake in NSW. The geese are but one of a profusion of species that have flocked to the ephemeral lake, near West Wyalong, in the central west of the state.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/11/rspb-drone-britain-vulnerable-birds>

Military technology used to hunt down insurgents in Afghanistan has been taken up by Britain's biggest nature conservation charity to safeguard some of the country's rarest birds.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is using a remotely controlled drone to spy on the nests of endangered breeds and monitor the progress of reintroduced species.





The Berry Corridor 'Big Lift'

May 6th & 7th 2017

Get involved in the restoration of the Berry Wildlife Corridor!

Join Berry Landcare in a fun weekend of tree planting and weed punishment.

Come for two hours or longer, morning or afternoon.

Sessions start: Saturday 9:00am and 2:00 pm, Sunday 9:00am.

BBQ lunch provided (1:00pm).

Meet at Camp Quality Park, Woodhill Mountain Rd carpark (just south of Bundewallah CK bridge).

Please let us know when you're coming, so we can juggle the snags, contact Bill Pigott on 0409 469655

wpigott@bigpond.net.au

Our new secretary

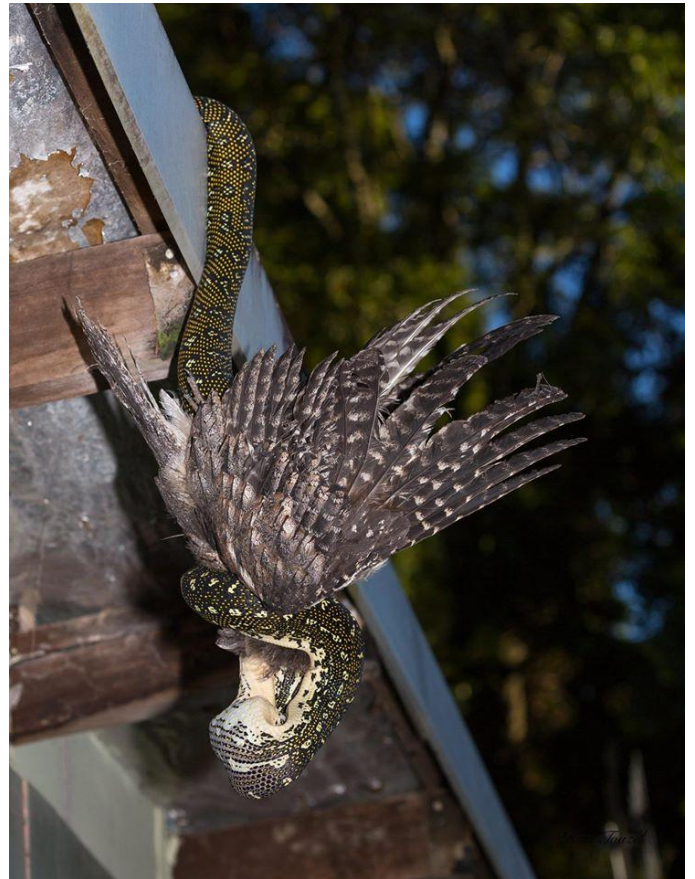
In February this year Kim Touzel took over the role of BirdLife Shoalhaven secretary from Brett Davis, leaving him lots more time to devote to Facebook and to this newsletter - thank you Kim!

Kim has had an extremely busy start to 2017. Apart from her BirdLife Shoalhaven secretarial duties, she was also the first person to notice the Inland Dotterel at Shoalhaven Heads in January - see photo below. Kim also contributes her amazing photographs (which will be featured in the future in our series of articles on BirdLife Shoalhaven photographers) to our Facebook page.

The photos below are from Kim's own Facebook page. The diamond python eventually dropped the Tawny Frogmouth after realizing that the bird was too big to get its jaws around.

And the fox's days are apparently numbered after Kim got in touch with the local NPWS people and their contract fox hunter.

Keep up the good work, Kim!



Snippets

Twitchathon Success!

The national Twitchathon last Spring was contested by three teams from the Shoalhaven made up entirely from BirdLife Shoalhaven members.

Although none of the Shoalhaven teams finished near the top of the list for most birds seen, they all should take a bow, as they comprised more than 10% of the total number of teams for all of Australia, surely an over-representation and an indication of the enthusiasm for birding in our branch.

In addition, the Wooden Spoonbills - comprised of Milton Ulladulla Birders and BirdLife Shoalhaven members Bob Rusk, Evelyn May and Rosemary Hales - raised the second most funds nationally!

Over \$18,000 was raised by all the teams in the event, with proceeds going directly to conservation of Gould's Petrels and White-faced Storm Petrels on Cabbage Tree Island off Port Stephens on the NSW Central Coast.


So congratulations to the Wooden Spoonbills for their fundraising efforts, and also to the Paradise Shoal Ducks - Barry Virtue, Kim Touzel and Carla Jackett - and the Many-eyed Goat Suckers - Brett Davis, Karen Davis and Yolande Cozijn for their efforts as well.

And a huge thank you to all of you who sponsored the teams!

Media Officer Talks

As mentioned by Rob Dunn in his President's report earlier in this newsletter, Yolande Cozijn - our Media Officer - is giving talks on Birds in Backyards and creating bird-friendly gardens to local community groups, including the Honey Beez Garden Group, the Country Women's Association, the Werri Beach Gardening Club, Jervis Bay Probus, the Shoalhaven Permaculture Group and the Jervis Bay Gardening Club. Yolande also writes articles for the Bay and Basin "About" magazine.

About..... Local Birdlife



Eastern Yellow Robin

Contributed by Yolande Cozijn.

The Eastern Yellow Robin is found in the forests and woodlands of Jervis Bay and can often be seen in the garden sitting motionless on a perch looking for a tasty morsel to eat. A medium sized robin, it has a grey back and head, and yellow underparts. Both sexes are similar in plumage colour and pattern, but the female is slightly smaller. Young Eastern Yellow Robins are rufous-brown.


Eastern Yellow Robins feed on insects, spiders and other arthropods. These are caught mostly on the ground, and are pounced on from a low perch. A confident and inquisitive bird around people the Eastern Yellow Robin will often perch close by when you are working in the garden. It is hoping that you will disturb something for it to eat! Birds normally feed alone, but may also be seen in pairs or small family groups.

During breeding season, breeding pairs of Eastern Robins may lay up to three clutches of eggs. The female builds the nest and incubates the eggs. The nest is a woven cup of bark, grasses and other vegetation, bound together with spider web and lined with finer material and leaves. It is normally built in an upright tree fork, up to 20m above the ground, but usually within 5m. Both parents, and sometimes some other helpers, care for the young birds.

Eastern Yellow Robins belong to the genus *Eopsaltria* which translates as 'dawn-harper'. Appropriately, they are among the first birds to be heard at dawn.

For more info about other Birds in Backyards www.birdsinbackyards.net.

For info about birding in the Shoalhaven www.shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au.



13

Stall at Bundanon

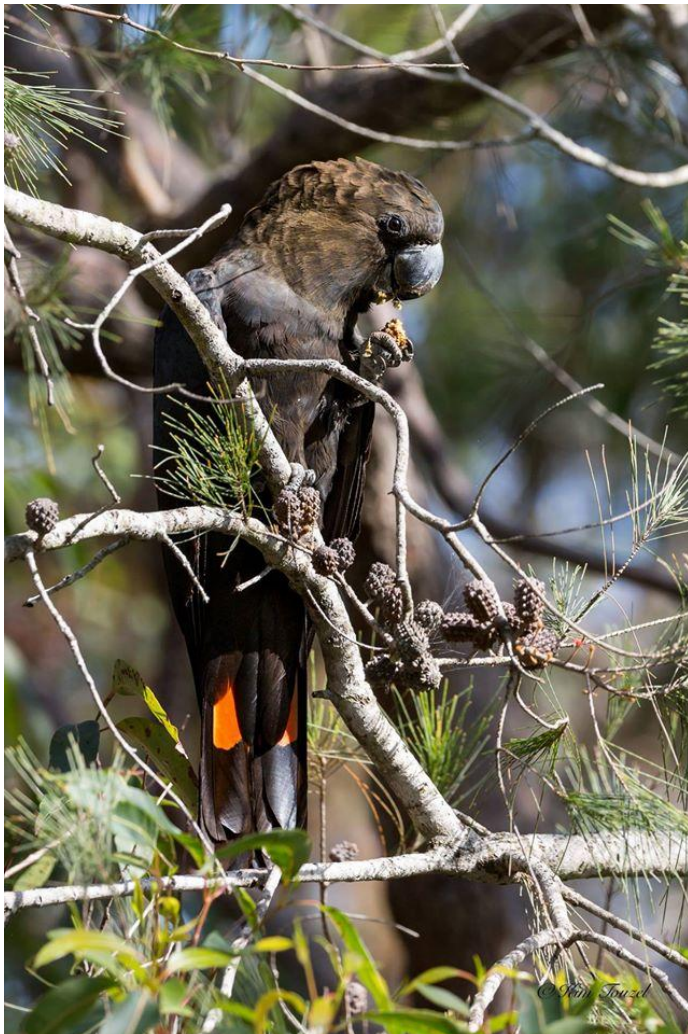
Below is a photo of our extremely hard working President Rob Dunn setting up the BirdLife Shoalhaven stall at the Bundanon Field Day earlier this month. A similar stall will be set up on World Environment Day on June 3rd at the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum - any other volunteers?



Birdwatching at Booderee

A very successful birdwatching outing was held at the Booderee Botanic Gardens on the morning of April 15. Birdwatching in Autumn can sometimes result in low bird counts, with most of the migratory birds gone and those that are left hunkering down for the winter and looking forward to the joys of Spring. Despite this, 37 species were recorded, including Glossy Black Cockatoos, Crested Shrike-tits, Rose Robins and Scarlet Honeyeaters.

Thanks to Kim Touzel and Dan Crowley for the bird images.



- by Brett Davis

What are the greatest threats to bird conservation in Australia?

If you take a look at BirdLife Australia's website at birdlife.org.au/conservation/science/threats-to-birds you will find the following threats mentioned ...

- Climate Change
- Sea Level Rise
- Coastal Development
- Disturbance of breeding birds by people and their activities
- Environmental Flows - regulation of river flows to suit irrigation rather than the environment
- Habitat Clearance and Fragmentation
- Reduction of nesting hollows
- Invasive Species - weeds and feral animals such as foxes, cats, pigs, goats, camels, brumbies etc.

How are these threats being handled by governments and conservation organisations and individuals?

Climate change is like the weather (in fact climate change IS the weather) in that everybody talks about it but nobody does anything about it. Similarly, sea level rise, coastal development, inappropriate river flows, habitat clearance and fragmentation, and the reduction of nesting hollows are all opposed by individuals and conservation organisations, and the various governments and councils pretend to listen to everybody's concerns but continue to follow their own agendas and those of their backers, donors and supporters.

Almost all of the threats to birds in Australia (with the exception of invasive species) could be significantly reduced and even removed entirely by one simple solution - stopping human population growth.

It is bleeding obvious that if we had less people on the planet, we would have less climate change, less sea level rise, less coastal development, less disturbance of breeding birds, less need for restricting river flows, less habitat clearing, less habitat fragmentation, and less destruction of nesting hollows.

It is also obvious why there is so much silence about population growth in the media and in government - because big business runs them both and a reduction in population growth hurts big business - but why is there so much silence in the community in general, and in conservation organisations in particular?

The Liberal Party has no population policy. The Labor Party has no population policy. But what about the Greens?

A cynic like me would say that it really doesn't matter what the Greens' population policy is anyway, because they will never achieve government and therefore will never have to put their policies into effect. As a result, they should be the most outspoken of all of our political parties when it comes to population, shouldn't they?

So how outspoken are they?

The Greens have 3 stated aims concerning population (as shown at greens.org.au/policies/population).

1. A reduction in Australia's use of finite natural resources to a level that is sustainable and socially just.
2. Human settlements which are designed and built to minimise environmental harm ...
3. Full implementation of the 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population ... including:

- increasing our contribution to programs that empower women ...
- increasing our overseas aid budget to a minimum of 0.7% of GNI;
- ensuring that overseas aid is focussed on clean water and sanitation ...
- community debate about population, acknowledging that there are complex issues involved in population policy, including: ...
 - limits to unsustainable growth and resource use;
 - the survival of other species and ecosystems;
 - women's rights, and especially education and access to family planning;
 - unsustainable resource use; and
 - the inequitable distribution of wealth and power.

The 3 Aims of the Greens sound pretty good until you realize that nowhere in their policy is there any mention of stopping population growth, let alone reversing it.

If the Greens don't have a viable population policy, what hope is there for our environment and for our birds?

If BirdLife Australia and BirdLife Shoalhaven are serious about bird conservation, they should have a policy advocating the reduction of the human population to a sustainable level.

"Too political" is the cry! "We are non-political bodies!"

But can a population policy be political if even the political parties don't talk about it ... ?

BirdLife Shoalhaven Calendar for 2017

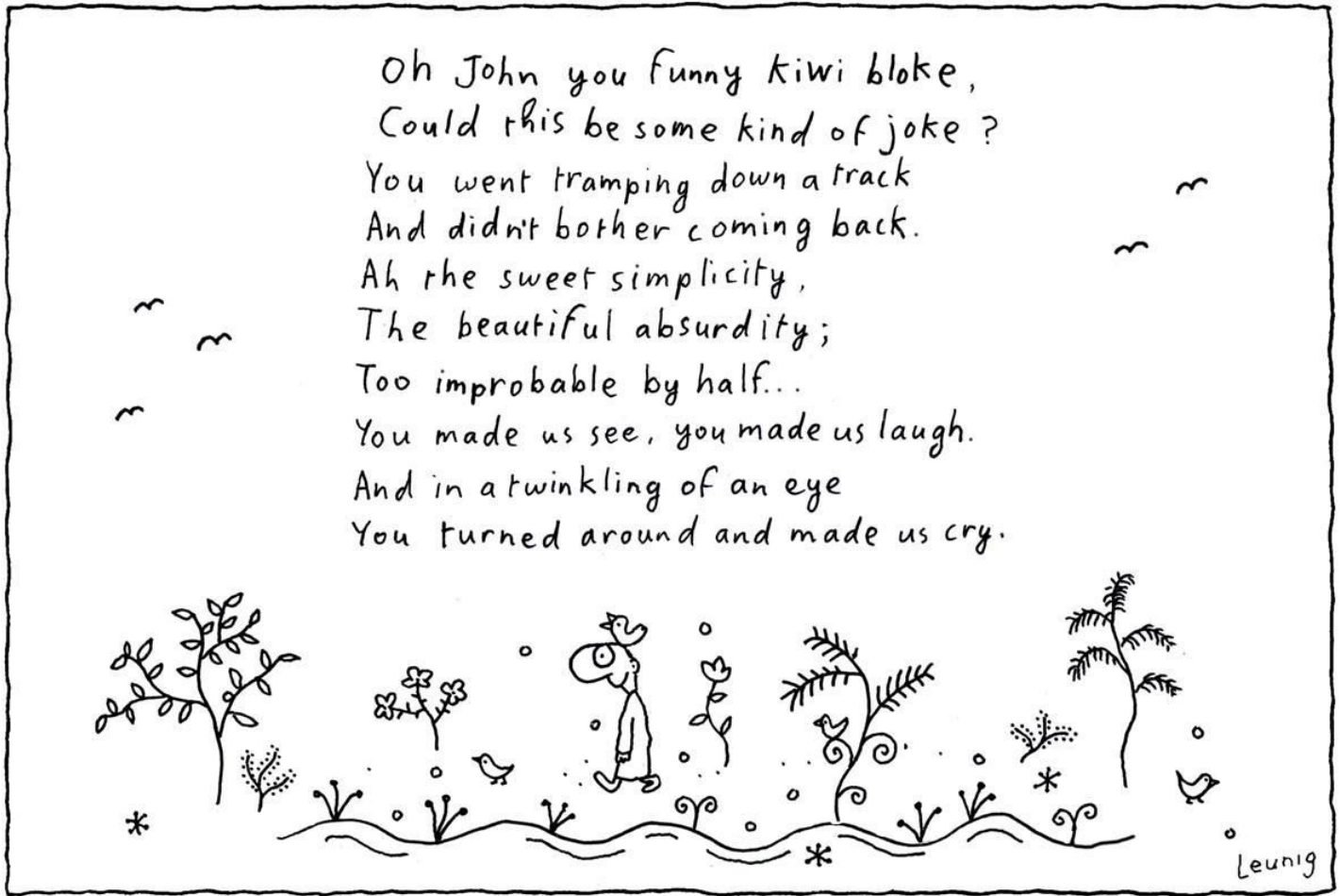
| Date | Location and Group* | Details - meeting time and place, leaders etc. |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| April ----- | | |
| Friday 28th | Little Forest Plateau (MUD) | Meet 8 am: Back of Harry Higgs Room; Bob Rusk 4455 2169 |
| Sunday 30th | Nowra Ck / Ben's Walk (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the Nowra Showground lookout |
| May ----- | | |
| Sat 6 / Sun 7 | Berry Corridor Tree Planting | See page 23 for details |
| Tuesday 9th | Evening Meeting (MUD) | Meet 7:30pm: Harry Higgs Room for General Meeting and talk by Charles Dove on Terns |
| Friday 12th | South Pacific Heathland (MUD) | Meet 8am: Pitman Ave, Ulladulla; Mike Jefferis 4455 5162 |
| Friday 12th | Cultivating Murder | 6pm at Huskisson Cinema - see page 6 for details |
| Saturday 13th | Vincentia WTP (BLS) | Meet 8am at Vincentia Water Treatment Plant in Berry Street. Morning tea at Robyn's after - so bring thermos, coffee, cake etc for yourself! |
| Sunday 21st | Currarong (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the corner of Coonemia / Currarong Roads |
| Friday 26th | Kioloa Circuit (O'Hara's Head) | Meet 8am: Kioloa boat ramp; Marg & Maggie 4457 1129 |
| June ----- | | |
| Saturday 3rd | World Environment Day | BirdLife Shoalhaven will have a stall at the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum |
| Friday 9th | Property on Conjola Ck (MUD) | TO BE CONFIRMED, meet 8am at back of Harry Higgs Room |
| Saturday 17th | Sea Level Rise Talk | See page 5 for details |
| Sunday 18th | Bangalee (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the Illaroo Rd carpark at northern end of the bridge |
| Friday 23rd | Meroo Head (MUD) | Meet 8am Lions Park Burrill Lake; Chris Shinton 4454 5584 |
| July ----- | | |
| Friday 7th | Warden Head (MUD) | Meet 8am at the lighthouse; Geoff Andrews 4454 3580 |
| Sunday 16th | Jervis Bay/Greenpatch (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the Booderee NP Visitor Centre carpark |
| Saturday 22nd | Bomaderry Creek (BLS)** | Meet 8am at carpark / picnic area in Nerang Road ** |
| August ----- | | |
| Sunday 20th | Bundanon (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the Illaroo Rd carpark at northern end of the bridge |
| September ----- | | |
| Sunday 17th | Bellawongarah (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the north side of Apex Park, Berry |
| October ----- | | |
| 10th - 13th | Southern Highlands trip (SB) | Accommodation details to be advised ... |
| Sunday 15th | Jerrara Dam / Spring Ck (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the north side of Apex Park, Berry |
| November ----- | | |
| Sunday 19th | Lake Wollumboola (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the lake entrance at Culburra |
| December ----- | | |
| Sunday 17th | Greys Beach / Golf Course (SB) | Meet 8:30am at the launching ramp at Greys Beach |

* The BirdLife Shoalhaven calendar contains activities from the branch (BLS) and two associated birdwatching groups - Shoalhaven Birders (SB) and the Milton-Ulladulla District Birdwatching Club (MUD). Members can attend all activities.

** BirdLife Shoalhaven outings are organised by Karen and Brett Davis - 0487 208 437 and 0497 868 471.

Shoalhaven Birders (SB) meet every third Sunday of the month at 8.30am. There are no leaders on their outings, and it is possible that nobody else will turn up, especially if the weather is bad. Trips away usually go ahead. Contacts: Stan and Su Brown 4443-4828, Peter and Julie Hale 0402 076 548. Click this link for the [Latest program](#).

MUD Birdwatchers (MUD) have outings every fortnight on Fridays from 8am until about 11am. 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 4457-1129 or Chris Shinton 4454-5584 or email mubirdclub@gmail.com. Click this link for the [Latest program](#).



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