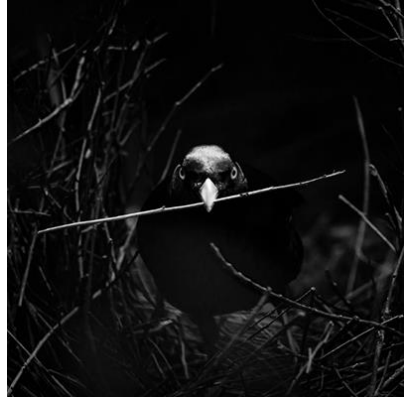




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**Contributions:** Articles about birds - from anyone and everyone - are most welcome!!! Send all contributions via email to [communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org](mailto:communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org)

**Cover Photo:** Male pre-adult Satin Bowerbird - by Chris Grounds

**Acknowledgment:** BirdLife Shoalhaven acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the Shoalhaven, their care of country, birds, and habitat, and pays respects to all Elders – past, present and emerging.

## President's Report - "Good news and more good news"

- by Rob Dunn, President of BirdLife Shoalhaven

### A decade of BirdLife Shoalhaven

In late 2013, BirdLife Australia approved the establishment of a branch in the Shoalhaven. BirdLife Shoalhaven was officially born.

However, it was not until March 2014, ten years ago - give or take - that we held our first AGM at Greenfields Beach in Jervis Bay. At the meeting Barry Virtue was confirmed as President, Karen Davis as Treasurer, and Brett Davis as Secretary. Barry now lives in Bermagui, where he is very involved in Far South Coast Birdwatchers, while Karen and Brett are still very much involved with BLS.



*BLS's first birdwatching outing – Lake Wollumboola February 2014*

Over the past ten years, BLS has achieved so much. We do not need to write a book about our achievements, as it has all been captured in the last 40 editions of the BLS Magazine. The magazines document our many conservation battles waged - including our wins and losses - our talks and events held, and our bird walks taken.

Many thanks to everyone who over the past decade has played their part in those stories and made sure that BLS continues to be the voice for birds in the Shoalhaven.

A N N I V E R S A R Y

### The 2024 Twitchathon – a win for the University of Sydney and the Shoalhaven!



For those that don't know what a Twitchathon is, where have you been???

Every year on a weekend in October, teams of birdwatchers go out to record as many bird species as they can find in a set time. There are three events:

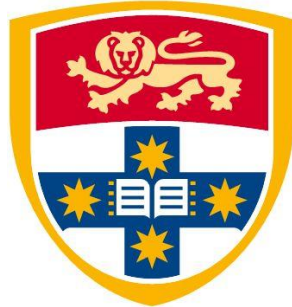
- The Big Weekend is a 30-hour mega-twitch for the "crazy" with a target well above 200 species being their normal goal.
- The Champagne race is an 8-hour event for the less "crazy" wanting something more sedate.
- The 3-hour Birdathon is for both experienced birdwatchers and novices looking for a chance to cut their teeth.

Twitchathons are competitive. Extremely competitive for some – and that's an understatement!

There are rules, importantly around birdwatching ethics and safety, but amazingly it relies on honesty! What sport would be based on honesty and when are its competitors not cheats? A Twitchathon and birdwatchers are both exceptions to the rule!

The more serious side of this annual event is to fundraise for a bird conservation project selected by the NSW & ACT Bird Interest Group Network, of which BLS is a member. In recent years up to \$30,000 has been raised.

I am delighted that this year, the project that was selected was submitted by **Dr Catherine Price** from the University of Sydney's School of Life & Environmental Sciences – *Acoustic tools to protect NSW beach nesting birds from mammalian predators*. Part of which will be carried out in the Shoalhaven. An exciting birthday present in our tenth year!



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

The focus of Catherine's research is understanding how mammalian predators use multimodal sensory information, odours and sounds, to find food, and how 'misinformation' can be used strategically to protect threatened birds from predation.

BLS first met Catherine at the 2022 Bird Haven Festival in Shoalhaven Heads, when she spoke about her research on how olfactory misinformation was used to reduce nest predation by ferrets, cats and hedgehogs on beach nesting birds in New Zealand. Results of her study showed a 1.7-fold increase in hatching success across all sites, which is similar to lethal control through shooting and baits.

**Olfactory Misinformation:**  
using "fake news" to  
protect shorebirds from  
invasive species

**Catherine Price**

ARC Discovery Early Career Research Fellow  
Behavioural Ecology & Conservation Research Group  
School of Life & Environmental Sciences



Her presentation can be found at [2022bhfcatherinepricepresentation.pdf \(birdlifeshoalhaven.org\)](https://birdlifeshoalhaven.org/2022bhfcatherinepricepresentation.pdf)

Then last year BLS awarded its Student Research Grant of \$4,000 to Shani Masani, a PhD candidate in Catherine's research group. Her work is looking at spatial and temporal aspects of the use of odour, which is explained in her article in the last BLS Magazine.

In October, Shani is coming to the Shoalhaven to test the responses of foxes to odour, which she will place on properties where no lethal control is currently undertaken. We are currently working with her to find sites to carry out this field work.

The Twitchathon grant will allow Catherine to expand her research into the effectiveness of another form of 'misinformation' – sound. Catherine's team will record the sounds that are emitted from nesting colonies, using equipment funded by the Twitchathon.

They will then use these recordings to test the response of wild predators to sound cues of nesting and fledgling birds. Part of the field work will be carried out in the Shoalhaven, testing the response of feral cats and foxes to our own Pied Oystercatchers, Hooded Plovers and Little Terns.

BLS along with Shoalhaven Landcare's Fox Control Program, NPWS and Booderee National Park will be meeting with Catherine and Shani next month to look at ways in which we can support their field work to build a better understanding of how both odour and sound can be used to reduce the impact on mammalian predation on our birds.

Collaborations like this, between universities, governments, community groups and landowners, have the potential to make meaningful progress in bird conservation.

And in October everyone will be able to play their part to support this exciting research by being part of a Twitchathon team or by making a donation.

### **Greg Thompson recognised with Council's Environment Award**

It was great to see Greg Thompson, Vice- President Shoalhaven Landcare, recognised in the Shoalhaven Council's Australia Day Awards in January.

Greg was awarded the Environment Award for his work as "an inspirational Landcare volunteer and protector of the Shoalhaven natural environment for decades".

He has worked closely with BLS on several projects, which has helped forge a really productive partnership, which has helped introduce Landcarers to birds and birders to Landcare.

It was great to see Greg recognised in this way.

*Greg Thompson (centre) with other Shoalhaven Landcare members with awards and some local native plants*



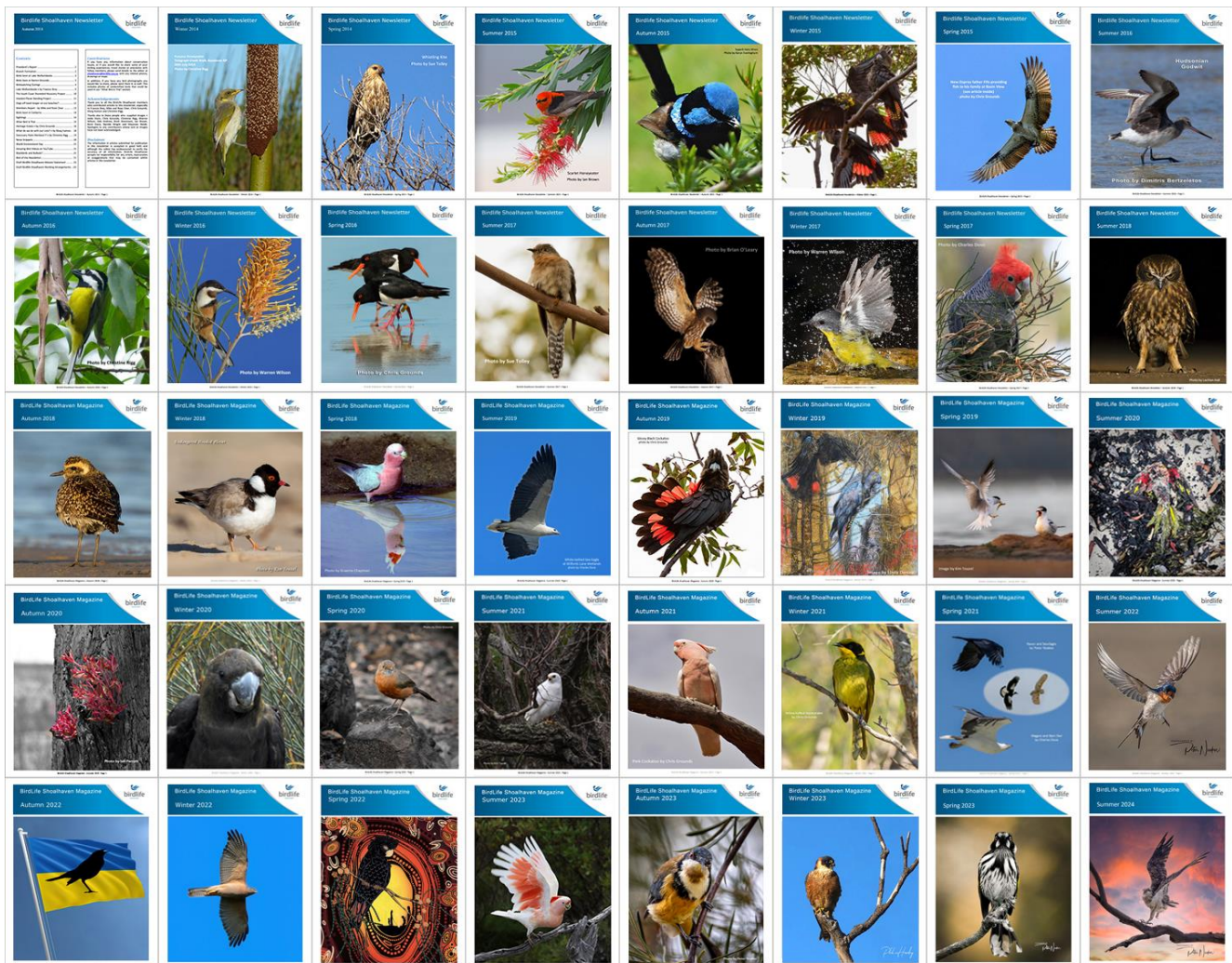
## Another successful annual get-together

BLS held its AGM in Sanctuary Point in February, where Dr Jenny Pierson, a Senior Ecologist at Australian Wildlife Conservancy, was the guest speaker. We had a great turn-out of 50 or so members to hear Jenny's excellent and informative talk about AWC's research, which is helping to protect Malleefowls, Gouldian Finches and other threatened birds at their sanctuaries around Australia.



After Jenny's presentation, I gave an update on what BLS has been up to in 2023, which you can read in the last BLS Magazine. My update gave me the opportunity to thank Brett Davis, Emily Dyball and Oisin Sweeney, who stood down from the Committee in 2023, for their work on the BLS Committee. I also welcomed Deb Callister-Carter, who took over the role of BLS Conservation Officer from Emily last year.

I made special mention of Brett, who was one of the inaugural BLS Committee members and has helped raise the profile of BLS across the Shoalhaven by editing all of our 40 BLS Magazines and managing our social media.



Still, this is not all bad news ... read on ...

## Hearing the call of JFK

As would be expected with any community group's AGM, I did not disappoint by making the normal Presidential plea for members to put up their hand to join the BLS Committee or help in other ways, if committees were not their "thing".

*"Ask not what BLS can do for you,  
But what you can do for BLS"*

It would appear that some people were listening, as since the AGM we have been able to expand our committee, while also covering another key role.

So I would like to officially welcome Carla Jackett and Jacky Fogerty as BLS's new General Committee Members.

Carla is an excellent birder. Her bird identification skills and knowledge are "up-there" with the best.



She runs birding tours for tourists and through her art and photography shares her passion for birds and their conservation with everyone. Jacky certainly does not claim to be in Carla's birding "league".

On the contrary, Jacky admits she has a lot to learn and has found our bird walks to be part of that learning process since moving to Jervis Bay a year or so ago. She is passionate about nature conservation and sees BLS as a way for her to contribute more.

Since the AGM, Fiona Evans has taken over the role of Bird Walk Coordinator from Sue Mitchell, who will continue to stay on the committee for the rest of the year. Sue has done a great job in expanding the bird walk calendar and Fiona has already picked up the reins.

While Sue has managed to pass over the bird walk "baton" to Fiona, Brett is still hoping that we can find someone to pick up the role of Editor. After 40 and now 41 editions, he needs to take a breather very soon, so please get in contact with me. All you need is good Word skills and please be assured that Brett has a straightforward template to make the quarterly task not onerous.

While Jacky has recently moved to Jervis Bay from Canberra, Carla has lived near Kangaroo Valley for many years. Thanks to Carla putting her hand up, we now have someone from "north" Shoalhaven on the Committee. There has been a "north-centre-south" divide for some years, and with Phil Hendry being our only "south" Shoalhaven member, we continue to be too JB-centric. Local knowledge is important for us, and while it is great to have a couple of non-Jervis Bay people at the table, a few more will be vital in the future.

**So more "northerners" and "southerners" are especially welcome!**

For the record, the current BLS committee members are -

- President - Rob Dunn
- Secretary - Phil Hendry
- Treasurer - Karen Davis
- Conservation Officer - Deb Callister-Carter
- Media - Yolande Cozijn
- General committee members - Jacky Fogerty, Carla Jackett, Sue Mitchell

- and Fiona Evans and Brett Davis (for now) fill the equally important non-Committee roles of Bird Walk Coordinator and Magazine Editor, respectively.

## Helping our local Ospreys nest

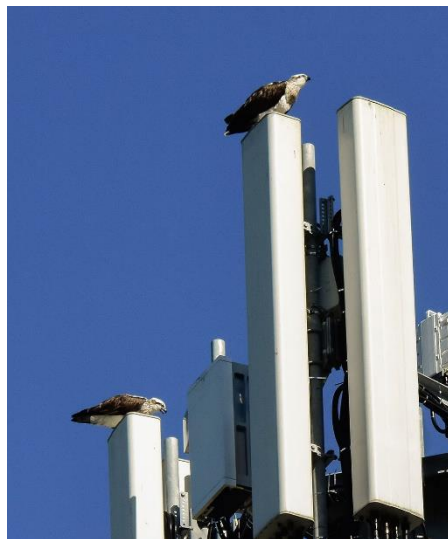
- by Karen Davis

Back in September 2021 I wrote to Telstra on behalf of BirdLife Shoalhaven to ask if they could help with installing an Osprey nesting platform on the Telstra Communications Tower near Bherwerre Wetland in Sanctuary Point – see photo at right.

A pair of Ospreys have been attempting to build a nest on the satellite dish support on the side of the tower for a few years without being able to create a solid platform.



The location is obviously favoured by the Ospreys as it is near Erowal Bay and Cockrow Creek for their fishing. After numerous follow-ups with Telstra Base Station, they eventually told me - in September 2022 - that they wouldn't be installing a nest platform at this site.



I was very disappointed with this response after waiting hopefully for my request to go through the machinations of the Telstra hierarchy. Then - in mid-2023 - there was renewed hope when a pair of Ospreys built a nest on top of a bank of lights adjacent to the Francis Ryan Reserve in Sanctuary Point. This was a perfect, large, stable platform for

the nest and many locals were watching on with interest. I was hoping for nesting success so I could stop pursuing the construction of the other platform.

At the same time, the pair from the Telstra tower were also trying to nest again, so there were two pairs of Ospreys attempting to nest in Sanctuary Point. Unfortunately, a severe windstorm damaged the light-pole nest and the Osprey pair deserted it. Meanwhile, try as they might, the Telstra pair again couldn't establish a solid platform on their tower.





Soon after the nesting season I was on a kayaking trip to the Tweed Shire in northern NSW where I saw a few nesting poles and cradles installed by their Council who are very supportive of these threatened birds. I made contact with the relevant person in the Tweed Council and they sent me information and the plans they use to construct the nesting platforms.

I then decided to contact Endeavour Energy to source a free, used (or new) pole around 15 - 17m high. IF I was successful, I would then see IF the local Men's Shed could build the platform, and IF that was a 'yes' then I would approach Shoalhaven Council to see IF they would approve the installation of the pole near the current Telstra Tower on Bherwerre Wetland grounds, or any other location they – and we – deemed suitable.

I was referred to the local Nowra depot of Endeavour Energy and the tallest pole they can provide is 10 metres, which I think might be too short once a couple of metres of it is embedded in the ground. At this point I haven't heard back from Endeavour Energy about whether another depot could provide a taller pole.

So once again I am stalled while deciding my next move, but if anyone knows where I can get a pole around 15m high, please let me know. Also, if you have a mesh satellite dish that you no longer use with a diameter of around 1.5m (give or take) I would be very interested!

**Postscript:** Since I wrote this article, I decided a 10 metre pole would probably be fine as the Ospreys seem to use whatever height structure is available if it meets their other requirements.

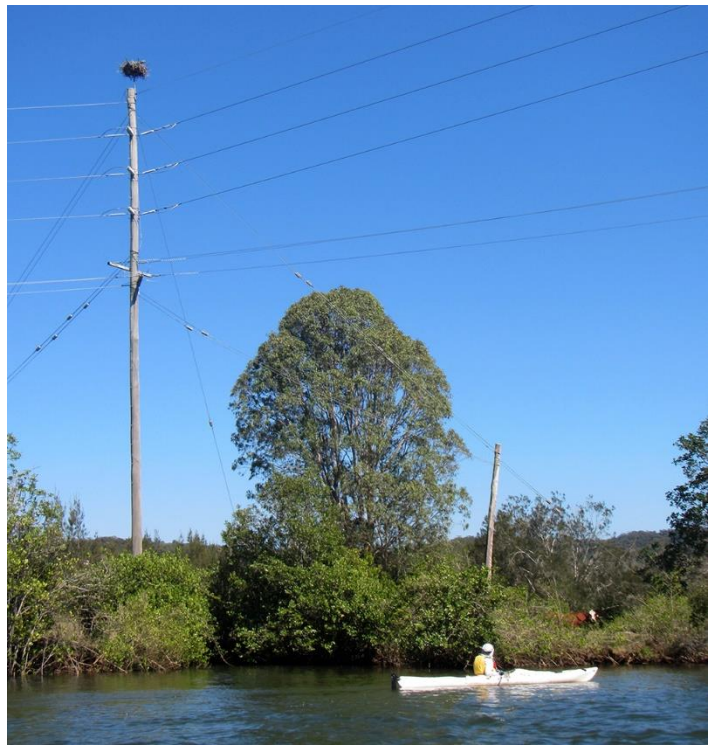
In addition, there are many different designs available, (see next page) and many of them project well above the base pole, so size is not necessarily critical. The style at right is what we are hoping for, but the Council and perhaps the NPWS will have to agree.

Endeavour Energy have also agreed to supply and deliver a 10m pole to the location in the wetlands that is eventually decided.

There has been a further setback with the Men's Shed guys saying they would be unable to construct the cradle, so I need to find another community group / business / government department for the construction before approaching Council for approval – IF I can find another community group / business / government department that can dig a hole and erect the pole and cradle.

### Can anyone help?

[Clicking [storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d69ccd78e0be4aa3ab2163a6d806ebf6](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d69ccd78e0be4aa3ab2163a6d806ebf6) will take you to the "Ospreys of Tweed" website.]



# Alternative Osprey Nest Platform Designs

The nesting option we are hoping to avoid



## Crops, Gizzards and Guts

- Chris Grounds, Conservation Correspondent

### THE SOUTH-EAST GLOSSY BLACK COCKATOO *Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami*

Conservation status: A NSW and Commonwealth Vulnerable threatened species.

The “Glossy” is an iconic species of the Shoalhaven and seems to hold a special place with all birders. Perhaps this is due, in part at least, to its genteel, quiet and accommodating nature though, as the photos show, they can get irritated. It is but one of only two species in its genus.

A recent conversation with Dr Nicholas Dexter, the Country and Conservation Manager at Booderee National Park about a special Glossy sighting in the Park (see photos), triggered a better look at the Glossy. He pointed out that there was one special difference with the Glossy of particular scientific and evolutionary significance. I had never heard or read of this so here is the story in brief.

Backtrack to the days of Sir Edward Hallstrom at Taronga Zoo. He was the first to breed the Glossy in captivity in 1946 and consequently discovered differences in diet and food intake. It was discovered that **the Glossy, unlike other parrots, has no ‘gizzard’** and it seemed to be a second crop with a gizzard like muscle in the intestine. This muscle had two valves, one of which became easily blocked if the chick was fed the likes of bran, oats and wheat. That knowledge was critical to survival of chicks being bred in captivity.

I wonder how well this might have been applied in post-bushfire support in 2020-1. There is more background to this story at: [An Experience with Glossy Black Cockatoos \(animalinfo.com.au\)](http://animalinfo.com.au). There is another Shoalhaven bird that has no gizzard and is the sole Australian bird in its family! Hard Quiz!



## Peter Noakes – bird photographer

- by Peter Noakes

I'm a 66-year-old retired truck driver who has always loved birds and photography but knew very little about either until I retired and joined Bay and Basin Camera Club to try to absorb some knowledge on both.

Through various helpful members - and hours and hours of online tutorials - I think I now have a reasonable amount of knowledge on both subjects, when my memory allows it!

I try to get out at least once or twice a week to hone my skills and I still get excited when I photograph a bird I never knew existed!

A recent road trip to South Australia was a prime example, with many new species added to the catalogue, especially the Mulga and Australian Ringneck parrots at BirdLife Australia's Gluepot reserve - well worth a visit. Rainbow Bee-eaters were another I'd not seen on the coast.

I reside in Shoalhaven Heads and often wander around the headland, and I come across many different birds who visit throughout the seasons.

I shoot with a Canon R5 (a full frame mirrorless camera with a 45MP sensor) and have recently purchased a 200-800 lens to get extra magnification without having to disturb the birds by getting too close.

**Editor's note:** One of Peter's photos graced the cover of our Summer magazine (below) ...







## Is the Shoalhaven Coast sustainable bird habitat?

- by Chris Grounds, Conservation Correspondent

*Chris is a community representative on the Shoalhaven Council Central Coastal Management Planning Committee.*

**BirdLife Shoalhaven members and supporters are very knowledgeable about the bird biodiversity associated with the Shoalhaven coastlands and right now is a time to test this.**



*Myola is critical coastland for bird, especially threatened species*

Our BLS conservation interest is in the recognition of Shoalhaven birds and their status and this raises the first association with coastal management planning.

One of the contemporary, major operations of Shoalhaven Council, and other councils on the south coast, is the preparation of Coastlands Management Plans. The documentation dealing with the "Open Coast and Jervis Bay" has now been released and birders and shorebirders on our coast may well like to check the documents and assess whether these satisfy for birds. The documentation can be checked at <https://getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/open-coast-and-jervis-bay-cmp>

There is no more a genuine coastal bird than the 'Hoody' or Hooded Plover (the retained BLA name). Shoalhaven shorebirders are now familiar with the warm season breeding status of the most threatened resident species as it is Critically Endangered, the highest risk in the shortest time for extinction.

In the 2023-4 season on our coast 11 breeding pairs produced 16 chicks with only 4 surviving to fledge. Whilst 2022-3 season produced 12 fledglings, 2021-2 produced only 5 fledglings. (Data courtesy of NPWS). The enormous range of dangers and risks, both natural and human and a distribution shrinking southward on the Shoalhaven coast speak to the complexity of their highly threatened survival.



*Hoodies (left) fight for life*

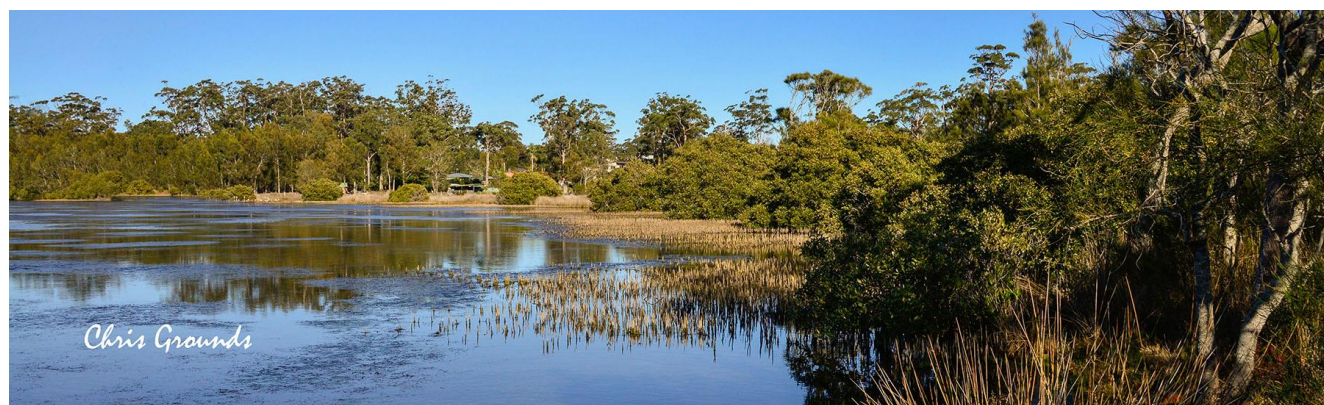
Clearly, in this day and age, Coastal Planning is critical, particularly for a Plan that embraces the next 10 years with a reach to the next 100 years on our coastal country.

Not all coastal planning is complete and an area classified as “Highest Priority”, St Georges Basin [SGB], Bherwerre, remains in development until at least the middle of the year, so there is still quite a bit of ground, or should I say coast, to cover. Progress with Planning can be checked at: <https://getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/sussexinlet-stgeorgesbasin-berrara-swanlake-cmp>



*St Georges Basin northern shoreline*

SGB is one of the Shoalhaven’s many valuable coastal systems but is distinctive as an extensive coastal lake, open to the sea through Sussex Inlet, featuring significant and valuable marine and shoreline habitats. It is also connected to major terrestrial habitats and tenures such as the catchments of Wandandian Creek and Tomerong Creek. All this is critical habitat to an impressive array of biodiversity, including of course, birdlife.



*Seagrass meadow, mangrove and saltmarsh coastland.*

It contains some of the most extensive and important seagrass pastures in the Shoalhaven, but it also accommodates one of the Shoalhaven’s largest urban populations on its northern precincts and continuing pressure on its extensive shoreline. Many of the problems of the hinterland are translated to the shore and coast. In every respect, birds are involved in this coast.



The northern shoreline of the Basin varies in its character, tenure and public access but in all these guises is important habitat to a range of bird species, both waterbird and bush birds.



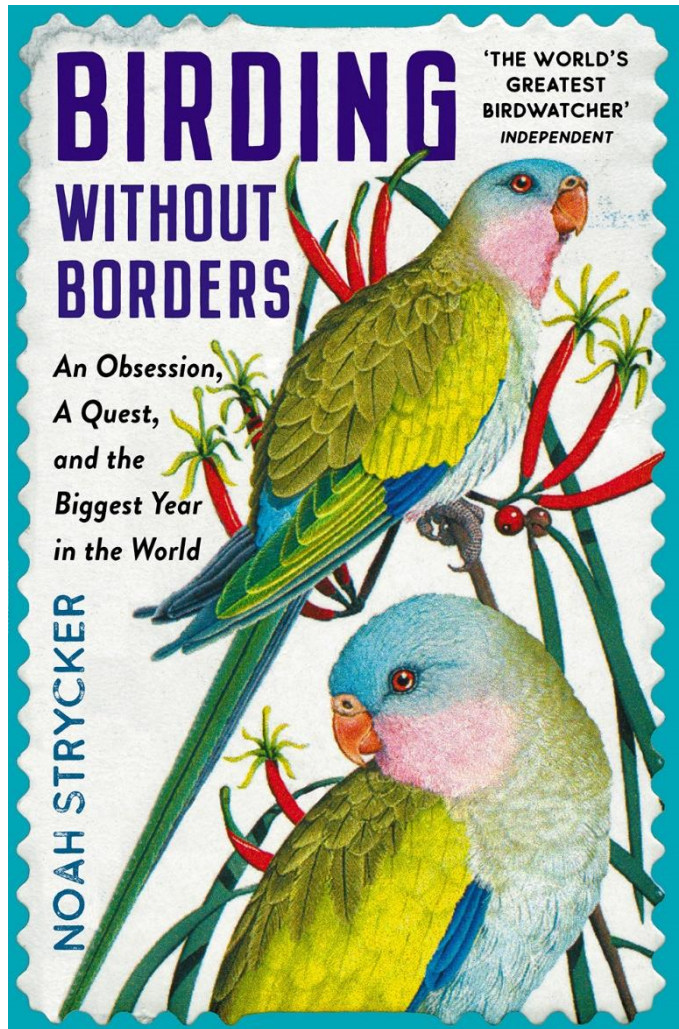
*Casuarina, sedge and mangrove shoreline is valuable habitat for Black Swans and Eurasian Coots*

This same shoreline has been the focus of much controversy over time, which has invariably involved preservation and regeneration of a natural shoreline, reserve mowing, tree vandalism, intrusive jetties, legitimate use as a recreational resource, councilor contrariness and council attempts to balance all these elements in management, many of which are to be commended.

On that basis the SGB Coastal Management Plan is critical. In this jigsaw, birds feature as highly valuable natural features and thus need to be recognized in the development of Coastal Management Planning for SGB.

It is vital now that bird interests are tendered for the development of the SGB Coastal Management Plan. BLS, its members and supporters are very well placed to do this.





**BIRDING WITHOUT BORDERS** by Noah Strycker

A Big Year - and it certainly was for Noah in 2015 when he set out from America to see, record and beat the previous record of 4,300 bird species in one year.

On reaching his target he then aimed for 5000.

This book takes you through 40 countries travelling by ship, plane, cars, motorbikes plus lots of hiking up mountains, through rainforests and across deserts and grassy plains.

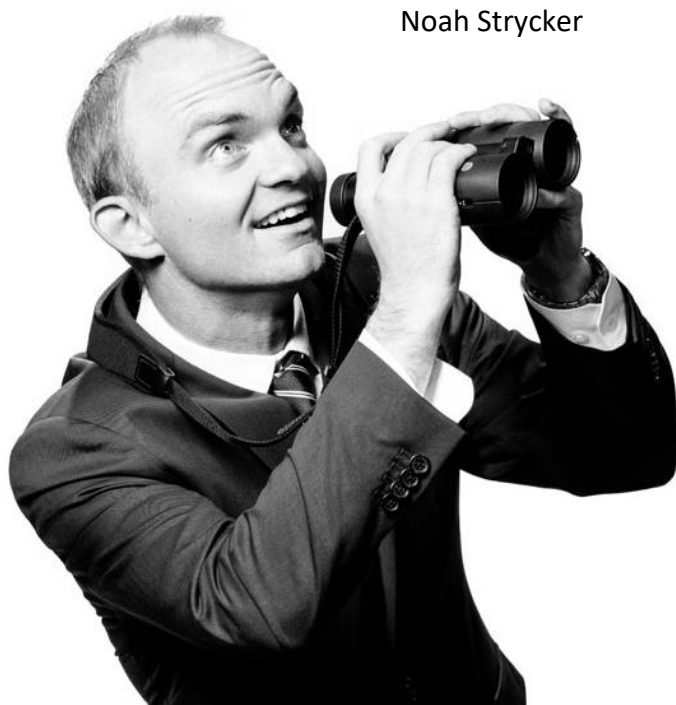
Noah's contacts for each country were amazing and reliable. There was no time to waste!!

In October he reached 5000 so he set a new target of 6000.

Good humour throughout. Close encounters with birds, animals, typhoons, car accidents and language barriers make this book a real adventure and a great read.

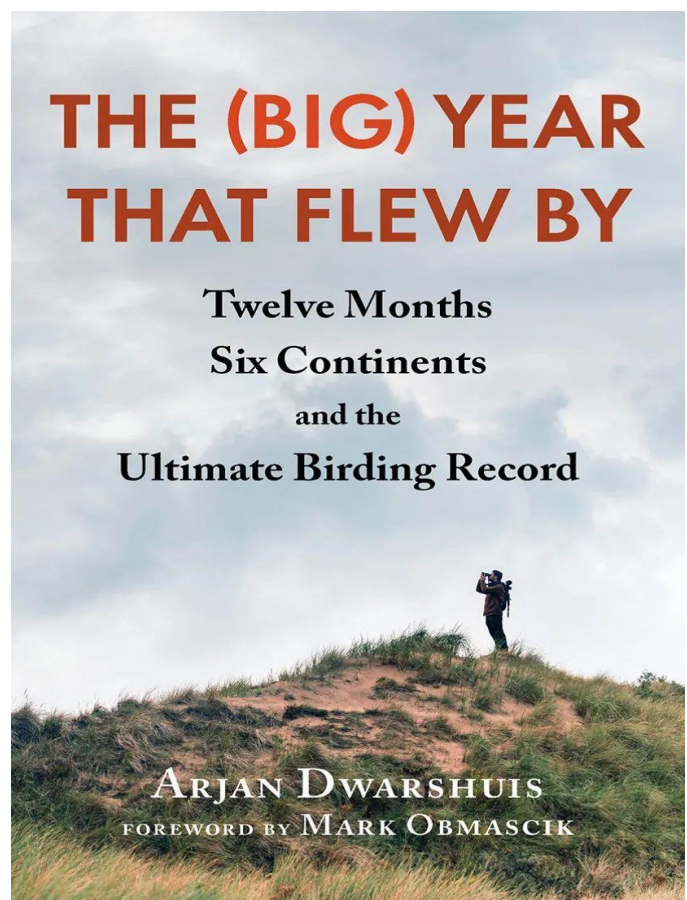
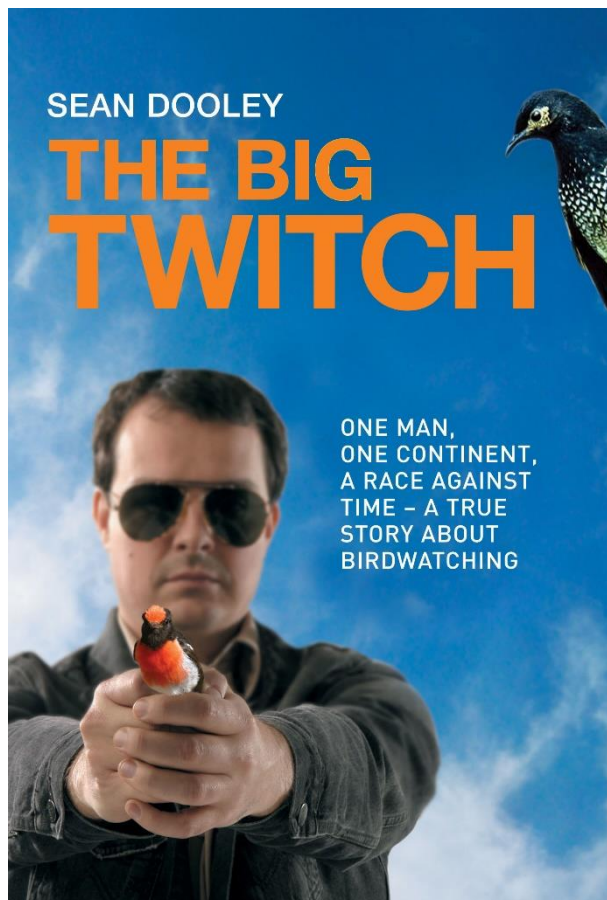
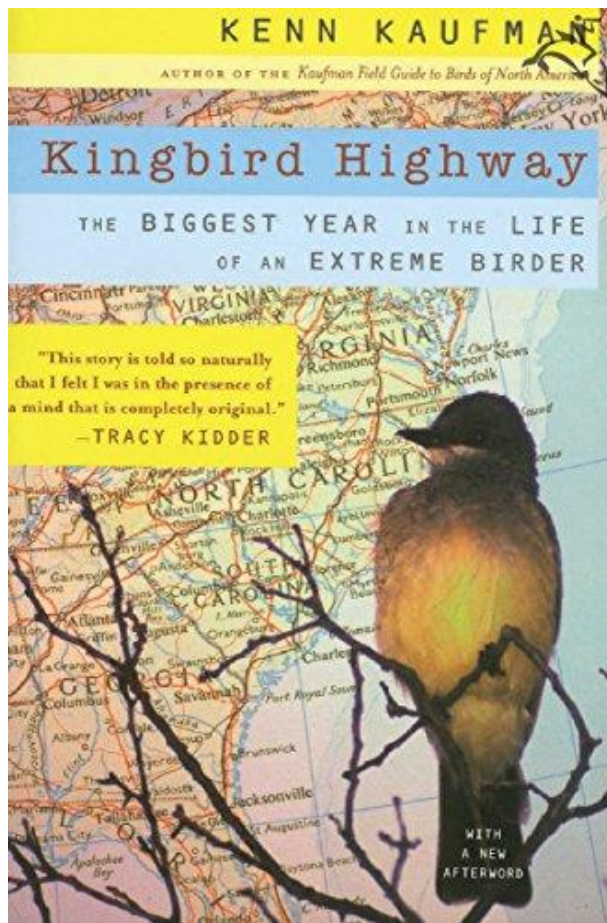


Noah Strycker



Noah Strycker

## Recommended Big Year Media



## Georgina Steytler - my Favourite Bird Photographer

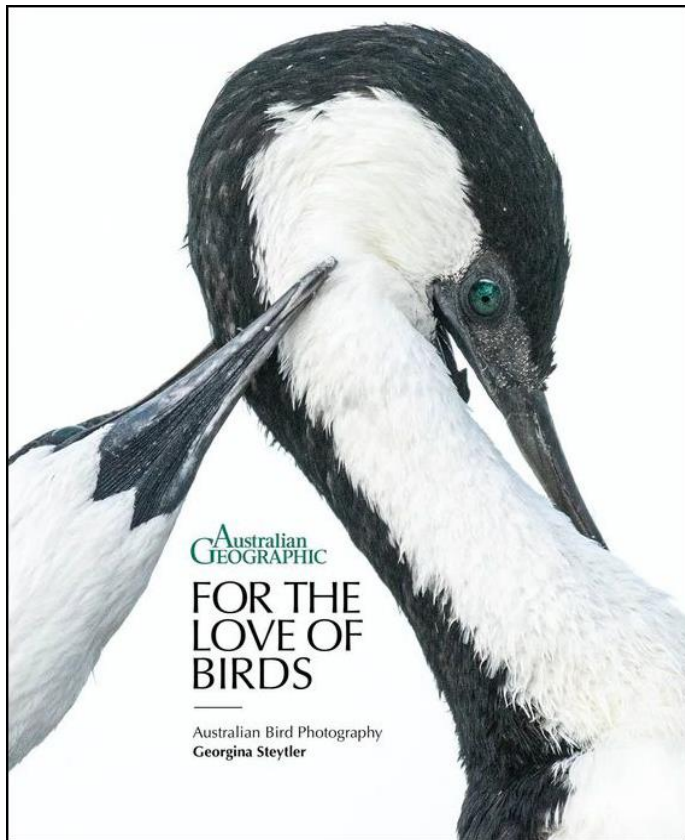
- by Brett Davis

I've admired and followed the work of Georgina Steytler for many years – probably since 2016 when she won BirdLife Photography's Best Photograph of the Year.

Her website at [georginasteytler.com.au](http://georginasteytler.com.au) showcases her work, gives tips to aid your own photography, provides links so you can buy her prints and books, and is truly inspirational.

Georgina is a conservationist as well as a photographer, as illustrated by her article on ethical bird photography in the BirdLife Shoalhaven Spring 2019 magazine. One of her books – “For the Love of Birds” – sits proudly in one of my bookcases.

A lot of “arty” photographers talk about “the light” rather than the subject being the most important aspect of photography - and once upon a time I thought that “the light” was relatively unimportant. Georgina's photos, however, made me realize just how wrong I was ...







## Cormorant at Gannet Beach

- by Marg Hamon

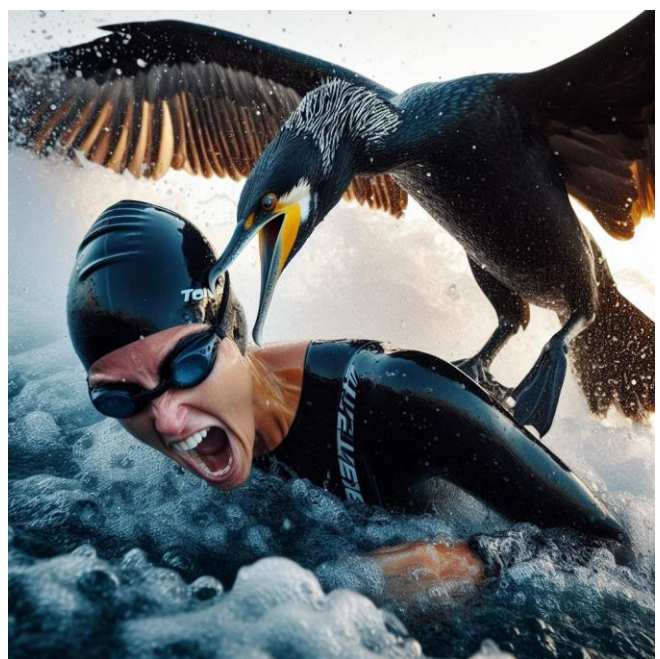
A friend of mine, Klas Johanssen, was swimming laps of Gannet Beach at Bawley Point when the following incident occurred. Here is how he described the incident:

“I was ocean swimming back and forth across Gannet Beach. While swimming towards the southern end I felt a heavy thud on my back. As I turned my head I stared straight into the face of a cormorant. It looked as startled as I was and immediately took off.

“It is difficult to tell which, but either the bird landed on my back, or it was surfacing after a dive and collided with my back as I rolled with my breaths.

“It scared the daylights out of me but was kind of funny once I realised what had happened.”

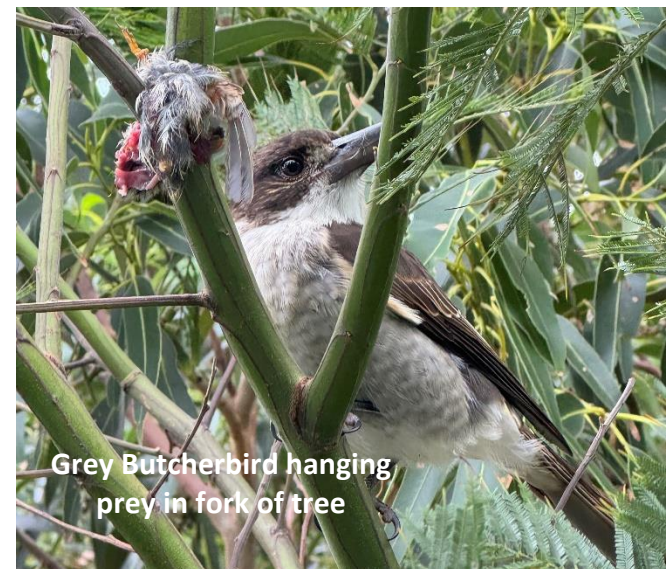
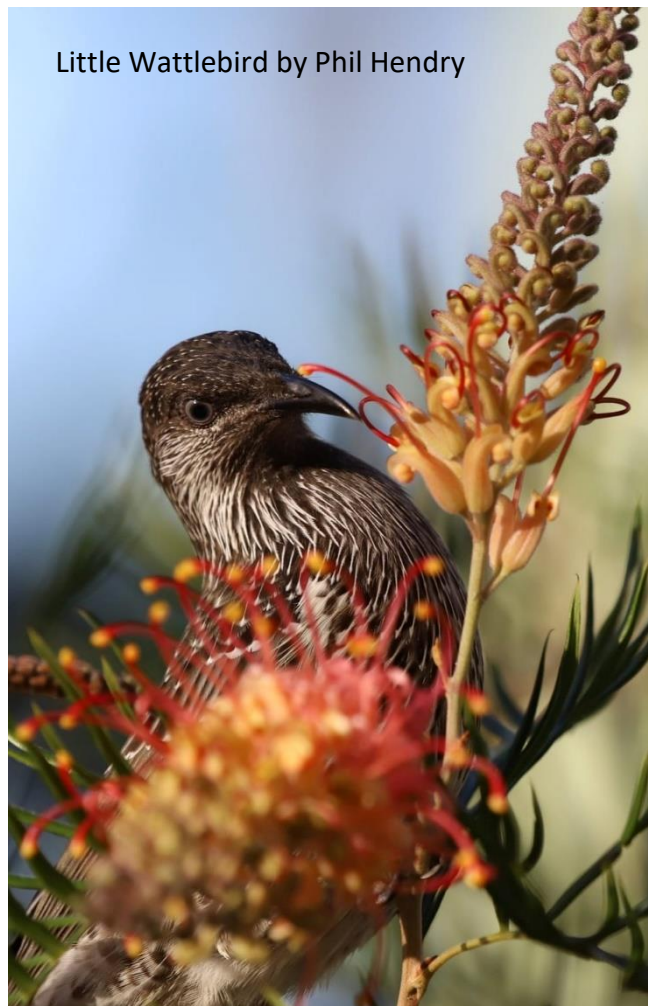
**Editor's note:** There were obviously no photographs to accompany this story, so I went to a couple of AI image generators, punched in “Cormorant attacking ocean swimmer” and came up with the following results ...



## Our Facebook page - what you may have missed

If you haven't been visiting our Facebook page during the past few months, here are some examples of what you missed, including the latest news on conservation issues, unusual bird sightings in the Shoalhaven, confirmation of strange bird behaviour, and great bird photography from Kim Touzel, Phil Hendry and Yolande Cozijn!

Our Facebook page can be found at [www.facebook.com/shoalhavenbirdlife](https://www.facebook.com/shoalhavenbirdlife)





Logrunners by Kim Touzel



*© Kim Touzel*



Eastern Bristlebird by Kim Touzel

Willie Wagtail by Yolande Cozijn

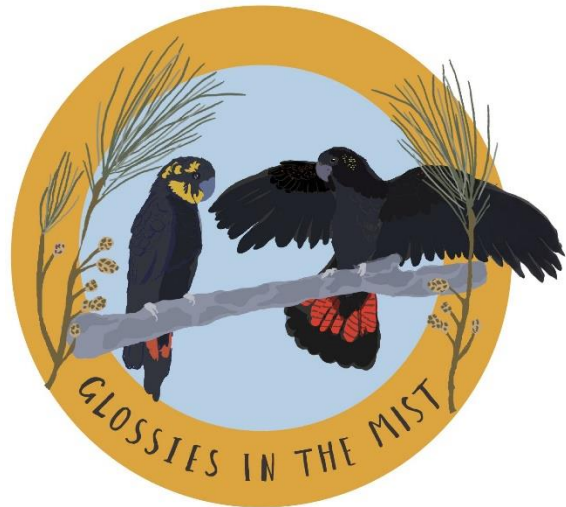


## Great Glossies get busy!

- by Beth Mott

Glossy Black-cockatoos are one threatened species that plays a large role in the bird story of the Shoalhaven. Wheezy calls, cone cracking and carpets of chewings under casuarina trees are the signature of this shy bird. Unlike their noisier yellow-tailed cousins, Glossies often pass through the landscape unnoticed, until you look up and see the magnificent marking of cheeks and tails, that let you know you are seeing something special.

Glossies are 46 to 50 centimetres long and are smaller than other black-cockatoos, and without the showy crest. The male can be identified by the browner colour on the head and underparts and by bright red panels in the black tail. The female has a wider tail which is red to reddish yellow, barred with black and often has yellow markings around the head. These markings are individual and allow us to understand who is moving where in the landscape. Juvenile birds are often seen accompanied by their parent birds and have a spangle of yellow dots on the breast and abdomen.



Aboriginal families and communities of the Shoalhaven have strong cultural connections to the black-cockatoo, its relationship to fire and rain, and to specific places on-Country that connect the story of the broader landscape. Nowra, the regional hub of the Shoalhaven is named after the Yellow Tailed Black-cockatoo.

Other parts of the landscape are closely related to this storyline, including Cambewarra Mountain, Paringa, Coolendel and Yalwal. These places should be revered and protected to ensure the story is celebrated and lives on in tangible ways for all generations to come.

Glossies have a patchy distribution in Australia, having once been widespread across most of the south-eastern part of the country. In New South Wales, the current distribution covers areas from the coast to the tablelands and extends as far west as the Riverina and Pilliga Scrub.

Glossies often live in rugged country, where extensive clearing has not taken place. They favour drier forest areas, open inland woodlands or timbered watercourses where the main food source, the casuarina (she-oak), is common. In the Shoalhaven Glossies prefer to feed on mature *Allocasuarina distyla* (Scrub She-oak) and *Allocasuarina littoralis* (Black She-oak), but they are selective in the choice of food trees, choosing trees that produce seeds with a high nutrient value. Glossies may make short visits to various feed trees in a small area, checking the quality of the seeds. Once satisfied, birds will settle in a feed

tree and harvest all the mature cones, processing hundreds of cones in a day. Glossy Black-cockatoos also rarely eat seeds from eucalypts, acacias and hakeas.



Habitat surveys conducted by Healthy Country estimate that unburnt habitat in the Shoalhaven has a carrying capacity of 2000 Glossy Black-cockatoos. However, we suspect the size of the local population to be far less than that.

Unburnt Scrub She-oak dominated heathlands of Jervis Bay produce the most Glossy food in the area, making these areas an incredibly important unburnt refuge for Glossies in the Shoalhaven.

Saving our Species is working through the Indigenous-led Healthy Country Plan and the Glossies in the Mist project on the Southern Tablelands to better understand our lovely Glossies, and to secure foraging and breeding habitat. These projects have been working in tandem to better understand the direct impacts of bushfire on feed and nest tree resources, and on population movement.

Identifying how and where Glossies breed is a big part of this story. Glossies are shy about where they breed so finding nest trees is often hard to do and only a handful of nest trees are known from Australia's east coast. The trees Glossies love to nest in are often large living or dead eucalypts, with hollow entrance diameters of 20 centimetres or more. Hollows are usually more than 10m above the ground in vertical or near vertical spouts.

In New South Wales, breeding takes place from March to August with the female settling down to brood her single egg for 30 days. The birds tend to nest in the same areas as other nesting pairs, sometimes even sharing the same nest tree. After hatching, the downy chick stays in the nest being fed by mum for another 54-66 days, until it leaves the nest. At this point dad steps in and helps to feed the fledgling. The fledgling may stay with its parents for over 12 months.

Large hollow-bearing trees are more vulnerable than younger trees during fire, and without them our Glossies cannot breed and flourish. After the 2019-2020 wildfires devastated large areas of habitat there was great community interest in installing nest boxes in unburnt areas of the Great Western Wildlife Corridor to provide nesting habitat for Glossies and other species.



To date these nest boxes have been used by more than 20 species. While there has been no evidence of breeding, Glossies have inspected the nest boxes in 2022/3 and other species including threatened species such as Greater Gliders, Gang Gangs, gliding mammals, birds, small bats, butterflies, Antechinus and tree frogs have been using the nest boxes for shelter, foraging and breeding.

Early data analyzing why the nest boxes have not been successful for Glossies has uncovered that during the breeding season nest boxes can be eight degrees cooler than natural tree hollows - that's very cold for eggs and female Glossies sitting on them! With your help we would love to continue this research in 2024 by finding some more Glossy nest trees to measure.

*Photo by Shane Collins*



Saving Our Species would love to know more about your local Glossies, and to have your help finding nests so we can better protect our precious hollow-bearing trees. Knowing more about natural nests will also help us refine our nest boxes to make them successful and allow us to better understand breeding success for our Shoalhaven birds.

Reporting your sightings of birds will help us zero in on where nest trees are. When breeding, at dusk glossies come to water to drink, then consistently beeline back to the nest tree. This is the magic behaviour you will be seeing in Autumn!

By following the line of flight, you may be lucky enough to find a nest in a large, old tree. Please stay tuned to the Glossies in the Mist Facebook page to join us on a nest hunt this Autumn - [www.facebook.com/glossiesinthemist](https://www.facebook.com/glossiesinthemist). We will be training nest hunters far and wide in how to collect breeding data gently.

You can also help Glossies by retaining existing stands of feed trees, protecting all living and dead large, hollow-bearing trees, and avoiding habitat when collecting firewood. Getting to know your local Glossies might also save them from illegal trapping or poaching. If you suspect any illegal activities, report them to Wildlife Watch - freecall 1800 819 375.

Happy hunting this beautiful breeding season!

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Go to [Glossy black-cockatoo conservation | NSW Environment and Heritage](#) to report sightings of Glossy Black-cockatoos and to learn more.

Go to [Saving our Species program | NSW Environment and Heritage](#) to find out more about threatened species in NSW and the Saving Our Species program.

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## What's your bird story?

- by Brett Davis

Everyone who is a birdwatcher has tales to tell about their interactions with birds. The rare sighting of the Blue-faced Honeyeater in the Shoalhaven which was reported on our Facebook page recently is a classic example of a good bird story, but even the mundane can make for pretty interesting stories, although what I'm about to write might not be too riveting!

Anyway, here is my bird story about my recent experiences with birds ...



In the Summer 2017 BirdLife Shoalhaven magazine I included a saga with the title of "Magpie Wars and Incest" which told the story of the magpie family that my wife Karen and I had been providing prime beef snacks for since 2005. At the time, our resident breeding pair were Ricky and Lucy, and seven years later the same two birds are still coming to our door!

Ricky is the most regular visitor, but sometimes he will not turn up for a week or more, but a few days ago he visited us three times! Lucy's visits are less frequent, but she and Ricky often come in together – and take turns getting their treats!

The magpies are not the only birds that we have been dealing with recently. Our neighbour Rhonda went overseas for six weeks and left her six hens in my care. They had to

be let out of their coop each morning, locked away each evening, with fresh feed and water checked every day, eggs collected, and chicken shit removed regularly from their roosting / laying cubicles.

There were two brown, two black and two white hens – named Brownie, Brownie-Brownie, Blacky, Blacky-blacky, Whitey and Whitey-whitey, and I soon discovered that they each have their own distinct personalities!

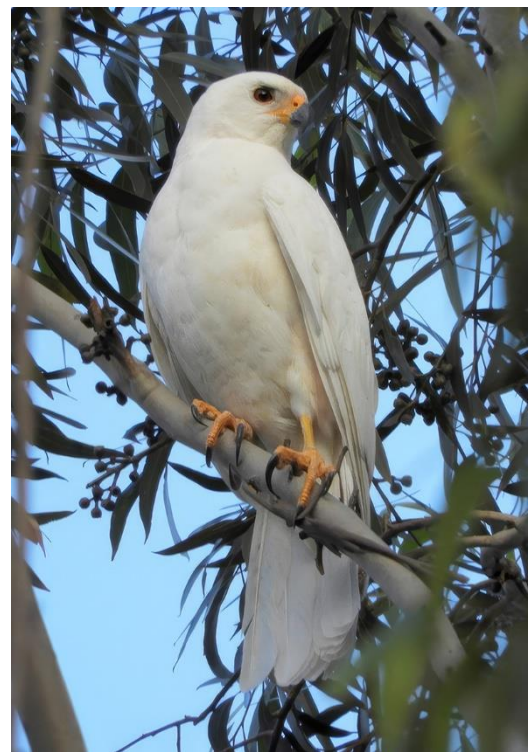
While I was looking after the hens, a white-morph Grey Goshawk landed in the treetops above the yard where they were free-ranging. Normally I would be happy to see a Goshawk – but not when it was threatening my girls! Luckily, no carnage occurred.

Just prior to Rhonda's return, Blacky started acting strangely quiet and subdued – and I immediately feared the worst. I didn't want one of the chickens to die on my watch! Should I take a \$20 hen for a \$100 consultation with a vet? Blacky was still alive when Rhonda came home, and I was informed that similar problems were usually fixed by Rhonda's brother – and his axe!

Earlier this month we had a couple of days of heavy rain and the frogs in the pond in our front yard were ecstatic – going into a breeding and calling frenzy which appeared to attract the attention of a Boobook Owl. I noticed the bird's silhouette on our balcony railing early one morning.

It was in the exact same place the next morning as well, so that evening I put some "magpie mince" on the railing, in the hope that the owl would take the food and learn to return each night for another hand-out. Alas, he did not return. Next time it rains, and the frogs go crazy, I will put the food out for the owl immediately.

If that turns out to be successful, I might have another bird story for you in the future!



## The Last Page - and how you can help BirdLife Shoalhaven

If you would like to get involved in bird conservation in the Shoalhaven, either as part of a specific BirdLife Shoalhaven project or by taking on a BirdLife Shoalhaven committee position, please let us know!

There are, however, a lot of other things that you can do. You could write an article (or articles) for this magazine. Or you could lead a bird walk in your local area - something that you might do on a regular basis anyhow!

You could also become one of our Facebook editors, send us some photos, or tell us about conservation issues in your neighbourhood!

Send all correspondence by email to [communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org](mailto:communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org)

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## The Fine Print

**Contributions** - if you have any bird photographs, articles, conservation issues, birding experiences, anecdotes or sightings that you would like to share with fellow members, please send to [communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org](mailto:communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org). Requests for re-publication of articles must be referred to the BirdLife Shoalhaven committee for approval.

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**Acknowledgements** - thank you to all of this season's contributors.

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