

# Birdlife Shoalhaven Newsletter

Winter 2016

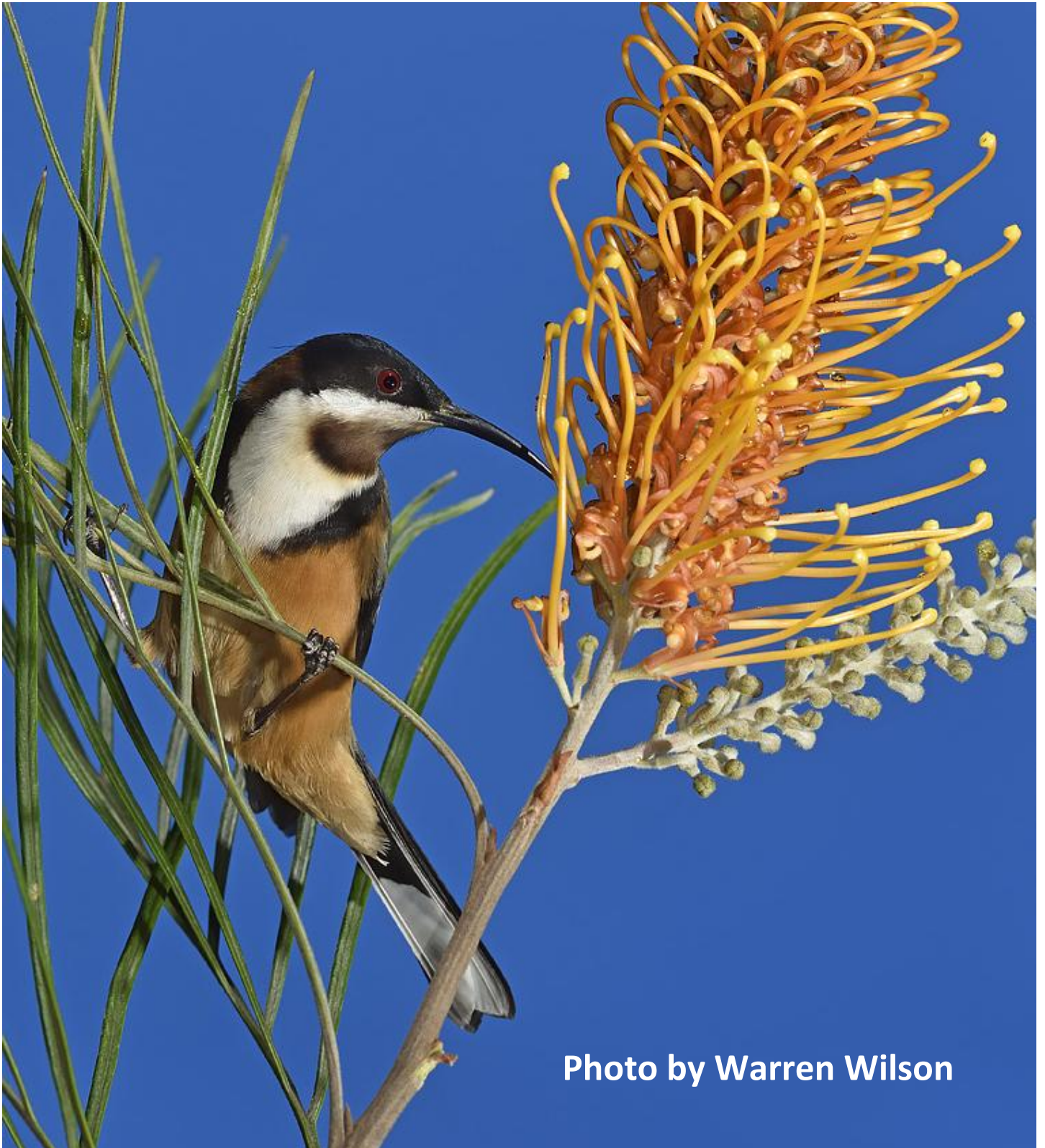


Photo by Warren Wilson

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## Contributions

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

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

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

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the BirdLife Shoalhaven members who contributed articles to this newsletter, and also to those people who supplied images.

Contributors to this newsletter include Christine Rigg, Frances Bray, Chris Grounds, Matt Jones, Rob Dunn, Stan Brown, Su Brown, Maggie Paton, Warren Wilson and Marg Hamon.

In addition, images from the following websites have been used in this newsletter - BirdLife Australia, the Office of Environment and Heritage, Save Collingwood Beach (website and Facebook page) and Shoalhaven City Council.

Apologies to those contributors whose text or images may not have been acknowledged. If you have not been acknowledged please let the editor know.

## Disclaimer

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

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

## Errors

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

## Cover Photo

The cover photo of an Eastern Spinebill was contributed by BirdLife Shoalhaven member Warren Wilson, as was the Eastern Yellow Robin (left). More of Warren's images can be viewed at [www.imageupphotography.com](http://www.imageupphotography.com)

## President's Report

- by Rob Dunn

In late May the new BLS Committee held its first meeting to look at how the branch could best build upon its work and achievements to date.

Firstly we revisited our **governance arrangements** and confirmed that these continue to provide a sound framework for the future. Accordingly BLS will continue to offer opportunities or promote activities in bird conservation, science, advocacy, education and recreation with our three goals – to improve conservation outcomes, to promote the appreciation and understanding of birds and to build a strong BirdLife Australia and BLS – remaining unchanged. Our Working Arrangements were also reviewed and some minor changes made in particular increasing the quorum from three to four given the increased size of the Committee. Another change was the result of a review of the values of BirdLife Australia, which are now stated as:

- Passion - We bring people together around a love of nature.
- Excellence - Science and knowledge is at the centre of everything we do.
- Leadership - We empower and inspire people to lead with courage and purpose.
- Collaboration – We embrace diversity and work in partnership with mutual respect.
- Integrity – Our success is based on experience, honesty, trust and fairness.
- Impact – We think globally, lead nationally and act locally

Any changes to the Working Arrangements need to be approved by the members at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting. Given the minor nature of the changes it was agreed that this would be done at the next AGM, though the Committee has already adopted the increased quorum for its meetings.

The majority of the meeting was taken up with discussion on **our activities and priorities for the medium and long term**. As with all volunteer organisations the challenge for BLS is to get the right balance between the Committee's and members' personal interests, skills and available time, while still covering all of the goals of the organisation. I am hopeful that we have got this right.

Key activities to date will obviously be a continued priority, such as our advocacy work, promotion of BLS members' programs and birding activities and events and the BLS newsletter. In addition some new ideas were put on the table at our meeting:

- Taking on a role of "guardian" for the Jervis Bay Important Bird Area for BirdLife Australia, and preparing an annual survey on changes in threats to the Eastern Bristlebird
- Expanding the BLS calendar to include workshops with guest speakers to complement the bi-monthly meetings of MUD Birders
- Getting behind the National Twitchathon on 29/30 October
- Promoting BLS and birdwatching at community fairs, film nights, book launches, etc.
- Improving our promotional materials to expand our reach
- Identifying and promoting good birdwatching areas and walks in the Shoalhaven to include bird hides where appropriate
- Expanding our links with other BirdLife branches and conservation oriented organisations

We will be expanding our thinking on these ideas and I will invite you to have your own input and give you the opportunity to get involved.

Unfortunately a lot of the Committee's time continues to be taken up on advocacy issues, as evidenced in the Conservation Officer's report. I am now starting to



appreciate the time and energy required to fight for the conservation of birds and react to issues as they arise. I take my hat off to BLS members that are committed to take on this often very challenging work.

Despite the time this has involved recently, some progress has been made on a number of issues:

- On 4 July a birding stall was set up at the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum Enviro Fair. A special thanks to Stan Brown and other BLS members, who ran things on the day. Importantly we got a lot of interest and Stan and his helpers had a lot of fun too. We aim to run a similar stall at the Sanctuary Point Community Pride Fair on 29 October.
- MUD Birders want to let all BLS members know they are very welcome to go to their club meetings in Milton. The September meeting promises to be an extra special evening with a presentation by Joe Forshaw, Australia's number one expert on parrots.
- In May, I attended the BirdLife annual meeting of branch representatives to discuss national programs and how these could be supported by branches (see photo on previous page). At the meeting I talked to people from BirdLife Southern Highlands and BirdLife Southern NSW, who are keen to support us in any way they can - on advocacy issues, by speaking at our events and by inviting us on their outings.
- We are building a productive relationship with the Jervis Bay Regional Alliance on the Collingwood Beach campaign and a proposal to move the tenure of local State Forests to Jervis Bay National Park.

I look forward to updating you on further progress in coming newsletters.

In the meantime do not hesitate to get in contact if you have any other ideas for BLS to make a difference for the conservation of birds and how we can all learn more and have fun at the same time!

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



Collingwood Beach vandalism

## Vale Peter Ward

Sadly, Peter Ward passed away on the evening of Thursday 14th July 2016.

Peter was one of those lovely gentlemen who had a great love of nature, boating and the outdoors. His interest in shorebirds, especially in and around the Shoalhaven River, was very strong and passionate.

Peter was involved in the 2020 Shorebird Survey Program, and would sometimes show you his favourite hidden spots on the river. He had time for everyone, whether you were his regular crew or not. He was always ready to help, especially when Rex Worrell was out of action, to survey the Shoalhaven Heads. He was there with gusto and his help was much appreciated by all involved in the program.

Peter was a cheery soul and keen birdwatcher with a good sense of humour. On Shorebird Surveys he would often bring along some homemade cake or a bucket of fruit and vegetables to share.

He will be missed by many, on and off the water. No doubt the birds will miss him too.

Farewell old friend. May the Curlews be with you.

**- Stan Brown**



Rex Worrell (left) and Peter Ward

## Conservation Officer Report

- by Chris Grounds

The months since the formation of the new committee in March have been very busy with conservation actions. The following have been subjects of conservation consideration and action:

- Collingwood Beach Dune Vegetation Management
- Shoalhaven Seaplane Development Application
- Bherwerre Wetland
- Lake Wollumboola - Culburra Golf Course proposal
- Shoalhaven State Forests lobbying

There is a comprehensive separate report from Matt Jones and Rob Dunn concerning the **Collingwood Beach** dune vegetation management issue, which has generated a lot of community based conservation action.

BirdLife Shoalhaven (BLS) is part of that action which also involves the Jervis Bay Regional Alliance, Vincentia Matters and Bushcare volunteers whilst the Greens have expressed support for the actions of the local groups.

BLS wrote a letter to the Mayor, all councillors and the General Manager to voice our objection to a proposed demonstration site. A major thrust of the letter was to establish that the dune vegetation is also bird habitat with associated important connections and that the demonstration site would damage this.

BLS became aware earlier this year of a development application (DA) before council to operate a **seaplane tourism business** when we were approached about the possibility of being involved in monitoring this operation.

This DA proposed to operate on the Shoalhaven River, over Shoalhaven Heads and Comerong Island as well as Island Point on St. Georges Basin and had been with council since 2015, so some considerable work had already been done by council and other authorities.

BLS provided a submission objecting to this DA on a number of grounds, including the likely disturbance in key bird, migratory bird and threatened species sites.

Council had proposed to BLS that we could be involved in monitoring this operation but a key response in this submission was that BLS was not prepared to be involved in any proposed monitoring of the seaplane operation.

Two key BLS recommendations were that '*... alternative flight paths should be sought which are not likely to directly impact on the lifecycle requirements of threatened/migratory and protected avian species and ... Revised assessments of significance be prepared ...*'.

The D.A. was subsequently approved for a period of two years and BLS may refer this to the Commonwealth.

The **Bherwerre Wetland** project has been a more positive recent experience. It was a site for a SeeChange Arts Festival activity called "Reading The Land" in which a group of artists were guided through an experience on the wetland as an art stimulus.

This began with a slide show featuring a range of wetland area birds now catalogued by BLS, then a number of walks and activities designed to develop a strong visual stimulus for the artists. The bird photos are now being used to develop large scale paintings for static display at the wetland. The intention is that this will lead to the artists producing an art work in a media of their choice for a future exhibition on the wetland.

The bird catalogue has been extended by six species to seventy four with the Pacific Heron and Hoary-headed Grebe being added when the recent east coast low rain brought Basin waters in over the wetland.

It is of some passing interest that birds were strongly represented in a number of exhibitions in the art festival.

BLS also provided a submission to Council concerning the proposal for a **Golf Course at Long Bow Point** in the NW peninsula of the Lake Wollumboola catchment.

BLS made one emphatic recommendation in our submission, which was "... the complete rejection of the proposal for a golf course on Long Bow Point" because it would represent a significant and unjustified risk to Lake Wollumboola and its catchment, particularly the lake's international significance as habitat for so many bird species, including threatened migratory species. Instead BLS considers that the future of this site should be settled via the Halloran Planning Proposal Determination process and zoned for environment protection hopefully as part of JB National Park.

BLS has also been a signatory to a joint proposal concerning **regional State Forests** to the state Environment Minister, Mark Speakman. The proposal, which originated with the Jervis Bay Regional Alliance, is to move the tenure of the Tomerong, Currumbene, Nowra the northern section of Yerriyong State Forests to JB National Park and to halt any proposed logging, noting major connectivity issues and threatened species habitat. The Australian Orchid Council and Australian Conservation Foundation-Shoalhaven branch were the other signatories.

Most importantly, the letter is a deliberate networking with other conservation organizations which BLS is committed to in our statement of values. Such networking is essential to successful conservation action for BLS and other conservation bodies in the Shoalhaven.

# Lake Wollumboola Report

- by Frances Bray

This winter Lake Wollumboola has undergone dramatic changes as a result of the East Coast Low 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> June and is continuing to provide fascinating insights into migratory and native bird life behaviour.

Tom Kaar and I continue to undertake Birdlife 2020 counts each month at Lake Wollumboola and Tom joins Peter Ward and Phil Craven for the Shoalhaven-Crookhaven River estuary count by boat!

The last few months have been busy with the Development Application for the proposed golf course at Long Bow Point in the Lake catchment back on exhibition.

As the NPWS Shorebird volunteer coordinator at Lake Wollumboola, I played a small part in the preparation of the delightful children's story book - "The Birds, the Sea and Me" - about South Coast Shorebirds, which was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

## Impact of East Coast Low

Huge waves and high tides opened Lake Wollumboola just before midnight on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June. They carved out a deep and wide opening over several days, whilst maintaining the lake water level. This is the first lake opening that I know of where the opening was from ocean forces rather than the lake breaking through the sand bar. Eroded sand and foreshore vegetation have been washed into the Lake. The Lake remains open, but with calmer weather, it is likely to close quickly.



Disappearing Lake Wollumboola sand bar

The habitat for birds, particularly nesting birds has changed. What is left of the sand bar is very flat compared with the recent past and at low tide extensive sand banks and mudflats have opened up. The Lake is likely to produce excellent conditions for migratory waders this summer, and possibly for Pied Oystercatchers but good conditions for nesting Little Terns is less certain.



Bar-Tailed Godwits sheltering

There was an immediate response from the birds. Surprisingly I saw 4 Little Terns the day after the opening. More significant though was the dramatic increase in Bar-Tailed Godwit numbers. A flock of about 30 overwintering Bar-Tailed Godwits together with 8 Black-tailed Godwits had been present since the summer. However their numbers increased dramatically to at least 250 birds immediately after the opening. A small group of 5 Red Knots were also with them.

The Bar-Tailed Godwit numbers are less now, but as they are spreading out over the extensive shallow areas it is difficult to count them. I took the photo of the Bar-Tailed Godwits as they sheltered together against the gale. Matt Jones took the accompanying photo of both Bar-Tailed and Black-Tailed Godwits in flight.

After their first migration, young Bar-Tailed Godwits spend their first few years fattening up in Australia's coastal wetlands before commencing their first return flights to breed in Alaska. Small flocks usually stay at Lake Wollumboola until April but this year has been different.

Within days of the opening Swans, Chestnut and Grey Teal and native waders including Red-Necked Avocets and Black Winged Stilts departed as the lake changed to tidal mode and from fresh-brackish to salt water.

## Eastern Curlews

The Eastern Curlew is the largest of the migratory waders. Tom and I counted 3 Eastern Curlews at Lake Wollumboola during our March count. However the really significant sighting was 89 in March, which Tom and others counted at Shoalhaven Heads.

It is tragic that so many of the migratory waders are now listed as Threatened Species. Numbers of key species are declining rapidly mainly because of the loss of their coastal wetland habitats on the Chinese and South Korean coast, but also because of loss of habitat in Australia. The Bar-Tailed Godwits were listed this year as Vulnerable under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act with the Eastern Curlew listed as Critically Endangered in 2015.

150-200 Bar-tailed Godwits and 5-10 Black-tailed Godwits  
Lake Wollumboola  
10 June 2016



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As Shoalhaven residents we have a custodial responsibility to ensure that the two most significant NSW South Coast migratory wader habitats that is, Lake Wollumboola and the Shoalhaven Crookhaven Estuary, are protected into the future.

#### **Golf course development application**

Shoalhaven City Council put the application for a golf course at Long Bow Point, Lake Wollumboola on public exhibition in May-June for the third time since 2011. Thanks to Birdlife Shoalhaven and individual members for lodging objections to this development proposal. If it were to proceed, it would cause pollution of surface and ground water runoff to Lake Wollumboola with devastating consequences for Lake water quality and ecology, including loss of its diverse birdlife.

The Halloran Planning Proposal Determination, as determined by the Department of Planning and Environment should be the means whereby the future of the Lake catchment, particularly Long Bow Point is decided - not the golf course DA.

The Determination requires that Long Bow Point be zoned for environment protection.

#### **Book Launch - The Birds, the Sea and Me \***

The children's book - The Birds, the Sea and Me - was launched at Ulladulla Civic centre on 9<sup>th</sup> July. This NPWS

project was funded by the NSW Environment Trust and produced by Anna Jarrett and Julie Sydenham in collaboration with students from six schools between Shoalhaven Heads and Ulladulla.

The Birds, the Sea and Me is a delightful story of a young girl spending her mornings on the beach looking out for the shorebirds. It was developed through a series of workshops at shorebird nesting sites followed by workshops at each of the schools. I participated in the onsite workshop at Lake Wollumboola for Culburra Public School students telling them stories about the Little Terns and Pied Oystercatchers and showing them Narelle Wright's photo panels.

At the launch students, parents and teachers expressed their enthusiasm for the project and for protection of shorebirds. Hopefully we will see the students and their family members visiting the shorebird sites and engaging with the volunteers this season and into the future.

Congratulations to all concerned.

Copies are available for \$20 from NPWS Offices and all good bookstores. Phone Jodie Dunn, NPWS Shorebird Recovery Coordinator, on 0427 012 960 for more info.

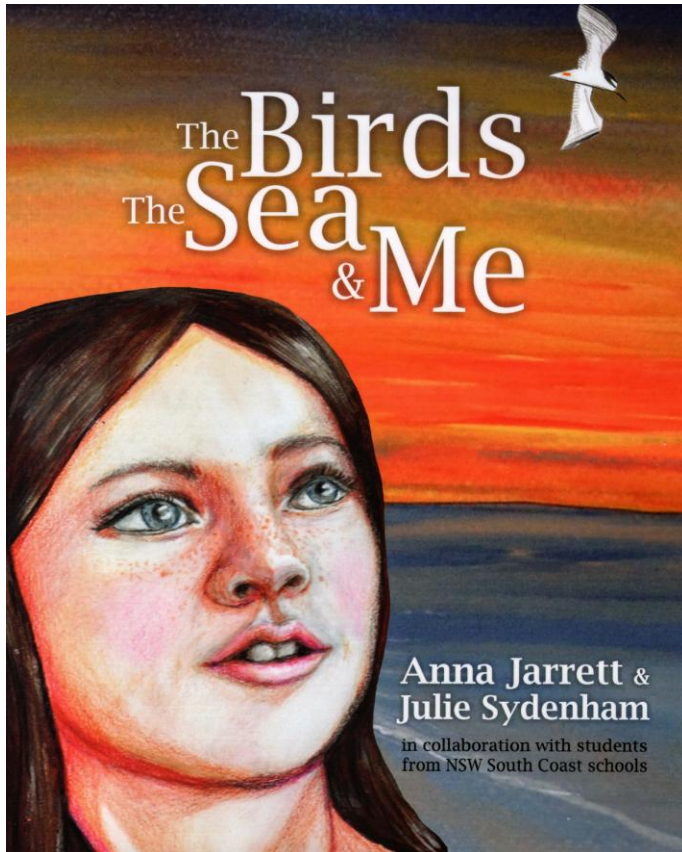
- Frances Bray

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(\* see book review on next page - Ed)

## The Birds, the Sea and Me

- book review by Chris Grounds

A highly productive collaboration of National Parks and Wildlife with Shoalhaven schools, an artist, an author-story teller and a local publisher has resulted in a wonderful portrayal of the shorebird story of our coast, "The Birds The Sea and Me".



The story line is authentically south coast: "Rikki loves to explore the beaches and learn about the birds that live there while her dad goes for his morning surf. She watches the shorebirds find homes, make nests and try to raise their chicks in the wild coastal landscape that is often as harsh as it is beautiful."

Jodie Dunn [NPWS] describes this book as "a beautiful collaboration. The Birds, The Sea and Me is an inspiring and informative story for children and families. It makes a powerful creative tool for environmental education and community-based shorebird protection programs".

The Hooder Plover, Pied Oystercatcher and Little Tern are the principal bird characters and iconic sites like Shoalhaven Heads, Lake Wollumboola, Berarra Creek, Lake Conjola, Racecourse Beach and Narrawallee testify to the geography of our coast.

The book is a very nicely balanced mix of environment, literature and art, which speaks to the creative talent of Anna Jarrett as Creative Director and Writer and Julie Sydenham as Artist and Illustrator.

Jodi Dunn and Simon Tedder of the NPWS Shorebird Recovery Project steered the project to fruition for the Office of Environment and Heritage on the back of an Environmental Trust Grant. The Shorebird Recovery volunteers also contributed, made critical support and were thanked at the very successful launch on July 9 at the Ulladulla Library. The south coast touch was completed with publishing by Harbour Publishing House based at Ulladulla.

A truly impressive and noteworthy element of the process was the participation and engagement of primary and high school students around the Shoalhaven.

The schools involved were Milton Public School, Sussex Inlet Public School, Culburra Public School, Shoalhaven Heads Public School, Ulladulla high School and St. Mary's Star of the Sea at Milton. The students involved at these schools and their teachers are to be congratulated.

The speech by local school teacher Jessica Marks at the launch was testimony to the degree and intensity of involvement required of both staff and students, as were the words of both Anna and Julie.

The experience of being involved and then seeing such quality literature portraying such an important conservation story of their home will be a memorable life-long experience for the students.

The book is an authentic Shoalhaven / South Coast production with a powerful message directed at the whole community. Perhaps Shoalhaven Council and their Tourism section might use this story for their "Unspoilt Shoalhaven" promotions.

As the book's main character Rikki concludes "I feel so lucky to be living here in this wild place . . . I want everyone to know about these special endangered birds. The more we know, the more we can help to care for them."

The book is a steal at \$20 and is available from NPWS Offices and all good bookstores.



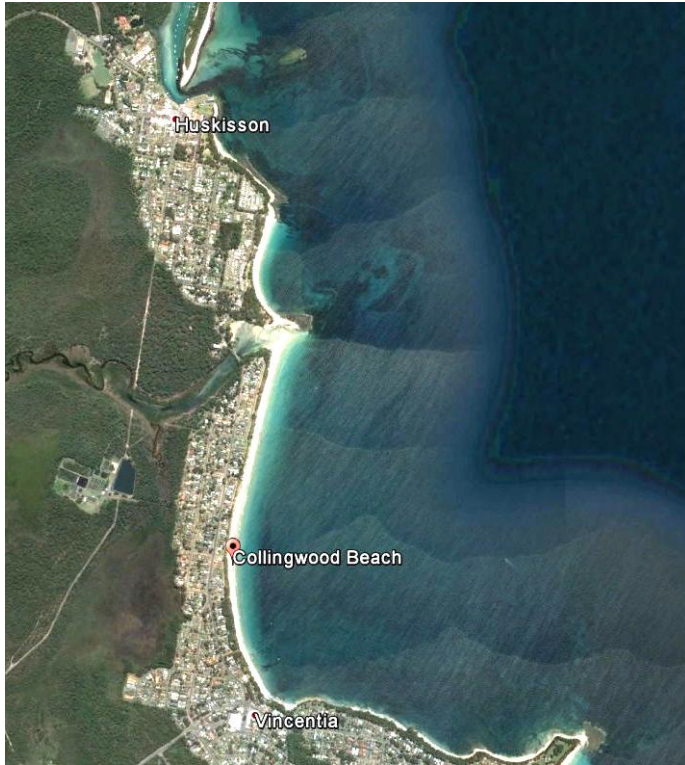
Julie Sydenham, Jessica Marks, Anna Jarrett, Jodie Dunn



## Save Shoalhaven's Dunes!

- by Matt Jones & Rob Dunn

Collingwood Beach, a 2.5km stretch of foreshore at Vincentia overlooking Jervis Bay, has had a chequered history of low intensity use, development, storm damage, remediation, care and vandalism. The environmental security of the land has grown hostage to the demand for views by adjacent landholders.



In response to a small but motivated lobby group, Shoalhaven City Council is now proposing to implement a dune vegetation management plan that severely impacts on tree and tall shrub growth across the northern 1.5km stretch of beach.

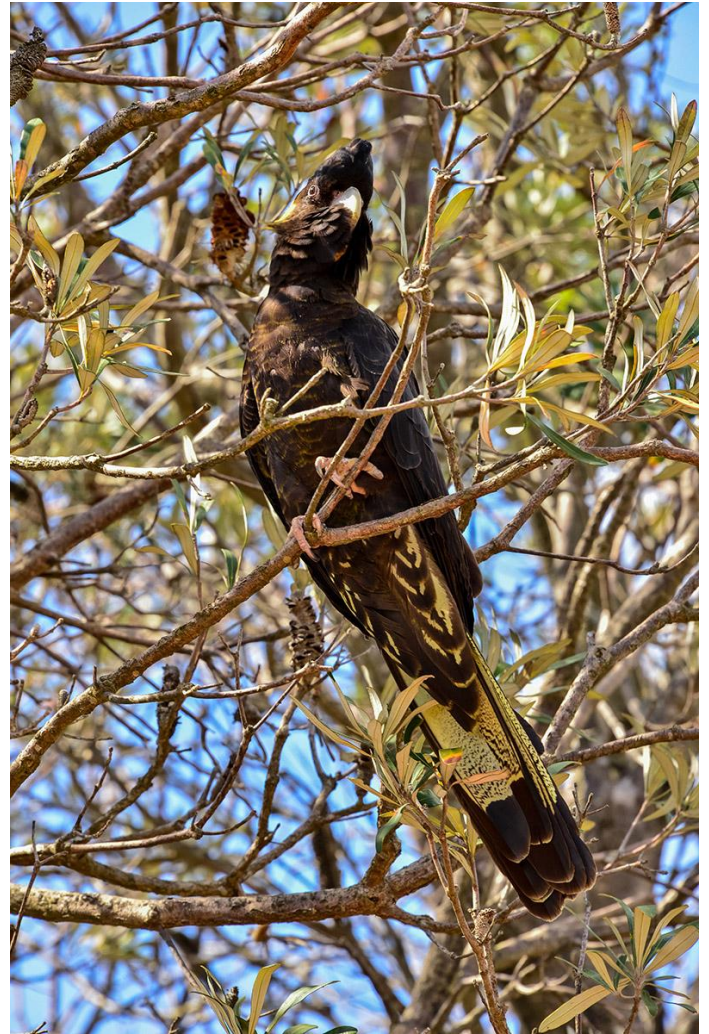
Whilst researching the article it became evident that Council is proposing to ignore its previous policy of conserving and caring for the coastal dunescape. Instead various actions are planned that will reverse years of collaboration and investment of community money, time and goodwill, including pruning of 50m of remnant Coast Banksias as a demonstration site and reducing the heights of major sections of the vegetation on the dune to around 1 metre.

### WHAT IT MEANS FOR OUR BIRDS

Ecologically this will spell disaster for the thousands of resident and migratory bird species that utilise the dunes for foraging and in some cases nesting resources.

For example, at this time flocks of various species of honeyeaters and Silvereye, which have migrated to the Shoalhaven, can be observed at the site. The range of honeyeaters includes Noisy Friarbird, Red Wattlebird,

Little Wattlebird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater and Fuscous Honeyeater.



Little Wattlebird nests and fledglings have been observed recently on the site. This is clearly related to this year's extended, seasonal flowering of the Coast banksia. This banksia is also a food source for the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, which is often observed and is the symbol of the Shoalhaven. It is a species whose numbers are in decline in this part of Australia.

Other bird species also make use of the dunes as an extension of the more intact bushland further along the beach and into Booderee National Park.

### WHAT SHOULD BE DONE - IN COUNCIL'S OWN WORDS

What follows (in italics) is an account of Vincentia's "Collingwood Beach Story" in the Council's very own words from its excellent graphics display used in an earlier community consultation process.

#### *SAVE OUR SAND DUNES*

*Why are dunes important?*

*Coastal dunes are a natural and dynamic part of the environment that constantly changes in response to the*

weather conditions. They protect the beach and the land behind the beach from storms and waves. Sand dunes are home to many unique communities of plants and animals. The plants on the foredune have adapted to grow under conditions of disturbance and burial. The dunes move and their shape and size change over time. During calm weather the plants capture wind-blown sand and gradually fore-dunes are built up.

#### PROTECTING THE DUNES

You can help protect these valuable areas:

- Use the fenced paths to get to the beach. Walking on dunes can damage the fragile plants and disturb birds and animals.
- Dispose of all rubbish properly. Don't bury your rubbish, it will be uncovered again.
- Drive and park in designated areas.
- Never dump garden waste in natural areas, weeds can spread and take over dunes.

#### DUNE RESCUE – A COOPERATIVE EFFORT

After realising how vulnerable the beachfront had become after removal of the sand dunes in the 1960s, the State Government, Shoalhaven City Council and the local community worked together to rehabilitate Collingwood Beach.

Concerned local residents formed the first dune care group in Australia and began the enormous task of stabilising the beach.

The rehabilitation included:

- Reshaping the dunes
- Planting especially selected grasses, shrubs, and trees to stabilise the dunes
- Installing fences to protect the dunes
- Constructing designated pathways to the beach



Poisoned trees along Collingwood Beach



An old photo of the Collingwood Beach dunes

#### TODAY-TOMORROW

The Collingwood Beach scenario sounds very familiar. Some beachfront residents are more interested in views than maintaining the natural environment, ignoring the potential for coastal erosion and the enjoyment of visitors wanting to go for a bit of birdwatching, a walk or cycle in the shade.

While the efforts of Bushcare groups' are applauded by the majority, they are also constantly challenged by a self-interested minority.

With plans to lop, chop and remove native trees and shrubs to establish views of Jervis Bay that directly benefit a few residents, a terrible precedent will be set at the expense of ecologically dependent systems. If it is allowed to happen on Collingwood Beach, it could easily mean dune vegetation will be lost along other parts of the Shoalhaven coast.

Today we enjoy a functioning ecology with floristic diversity and structural complexity suitable for a range of birds and other species. Tomorrow could be another story.

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

The threats that are faced at Collingwood Beach could be realised at any time. Vegetation could be removed for the demonstration site very soon with the Council's proposed management plan going on public display with only four weeks for submissions. We will keep you up to date with ways in which you can help in the coming weeks.

For more information, please go to the Save Collingwood Beach website at [www.savecollingwoodbeach.com](http://www.savecollingwoodbeach.com). You can also visit the Save Collingwood Beach Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/savecollingwoodbeach>

## Lord Howe Island Birding

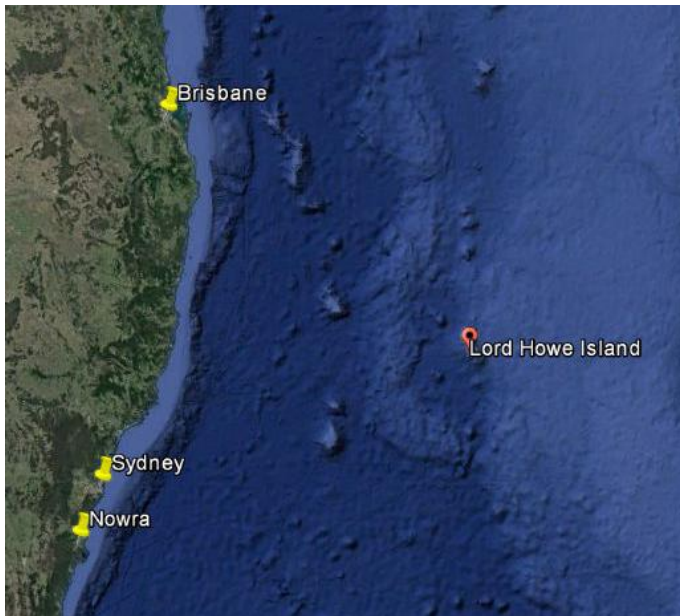
- by Christine Rigg

According to Wikipedia, Lord Howe Island is a crescent-shaped volcanic remnant in the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand, 600 kilometres directly east of mainland Port Macquarie, and about 900 kilometres south-west of Norfolk Island. It is about 10 km long and between 2.0 km and 0.3 km wide with an area of 14.55 km<sup>2</sup>, though just 3.98 km<sup>2</sup> of that comprises the low-lying developed part of the island.

Along the west coast there is a sandy semi-enclosed sheltered coral reef lagoon. Most of the population lives in the north, while the south is dominated by forested hills rising to the highest point on the island, Mount Gower (875 m).

The Lord Howe Island Group comprises 28 islands, islets and rocks. Apart from Lord Howe Island itself the most notable of these is the volcanic and uninhabited Ball's Pyramid about 23 kilometres to the south-east of Lord Howe.

Our visit to Lord Howe Island was in mid June, just after the ECL (East Coast Low), and the weather was perfect; cloudless blue skies and no wind. Warm enough to go snorkeling with a group tour, where we had a couple of small Galapagos Sharks cruising below us, amid the other brightly coloured fish. The water however was too cool to swim without a wetsuit for more than a couple of minutes.



On our first morning we heard what was definitely a Currawong, but the call was different. The LHI Pied Currawong apparently has a thicker beak than the mainland form. After a few hours, we learned to ignore most rustling noises on the ground, as they were always English Blackbirds in plague proportions!

UNESCO records the Lord Howe Island Group as a World Heritage Site of global natural significance. Most of the island is virtually untouched forest, with many of the plants and animals found nowhere else in the world.

Despite the World Heritage listing and the pristine nature of the island, rats continue to be a problem on the island. We didn't see any live ones, but there are pvc-pipe T-traps with poisoned bait laid in the forest floor. One tour guide said that the fact that the Woodhen population is now back to around 300 birds, demonstrates the success of this strategy. The eradication of cats and pigs decades ago obviously helped significantly.

Another tour guide scoffed at "the rat problem", and was in favour of having poison baits airdropped to eradicate them; a strategy which has been used successfully on other islands around the world. We tourists sensed disagreement within the LHI locals, about how much of a problem the rats are and what strategy should be used to completely eliminate them.

At Ian Hutton's talk he suggested that when the rats are under control enough, the mainland forms of the Grey Fantail, Gerygone, and Red-Crowned parakeet could be introduced to replace the extinct LHI forms.



Mt Lidgbird (left) and Mt Gower

Providence Petrels were the only seabird nesting whilst we were there; dens in the forest floor around Mt Lidgbird. Our guide Clive drove us to the base/start of the serious walk up Mt Gower; at that point he "hollered" and the birds in their hundreds came circling down above us, calling back. (No we didn't do Mt Gower).

Buff-banded Rails (see photo on next page) are abundant; one tour guide said that a future cull might be considered, as they compete for the Woodhens' food.



Buff-banded Rail

We got to know several of the people on our plane - they were staying at the same accommodation as us, and were also eager twitchers. We had all been expecting to have to stalk stealthily through inhospitable gullies to see the legendary Woodhen, but thankfully, they're easily seen around town - see photo on next page. As our tour minibus drove past a remote house, there was a melee going on in the front yard - eight Woodhens were squabbling with some Buff-banded Rails over some tasty food that had been left out on the ground.



Silvereyes and Golden Whistlers were the only bush-birds we noticed. There are no eucalypts on the island, so there are no honeyeaters.

We were treated to a good viewing of a flock of Ruddy Turnstones and Golden Plovers feeding on a rock shelf exposed by low tide.



Lord Howe Island Woodhen

A beautiful sighting is the Emerald Dove, self-introduced from New Guinea. It quietly potters around in the scrub, appearing to prefer the safety of secluded undergrowth. After dozens of "throw-out" pics, I eventually got one perfect pic of a dove in the sun, with its iridescent emerald wings shining beautifully.



Pacific Golden Plover

Eating out is expensive; all supplies literally have to be shipped in, but the meals were superb. For people who can live without mobile phones, wine bars, gyms, having to lock your doors, noise and traffic, put Lord Howe Island on your bucket list.

**- Christine and Margaret Rigg**

## Gull-billed Terns at Lake Wollumboola

- by Christine Rigg

In early July my mother and I took a drive out to Lake Wollumboola. Interesting sand-spit changes presumably since the recent east coast low. The 'knoll' that the birdwatching group stood upon last season, to look down upon the Tern nesting area, is completely gone, flattened. Also a sizeable entrance out to the sea is now there, preventing access to the southern side if you're not prepared to get seriously wet legs.



Although there were not many birds there, the trip ended up being very worthwhile. We were treated to a wonderful aerobatic display by a pair of Gull-Billed Terns overhead, circling, swooping down to the sand catching (we presume) insects.

This was a particular treat as Mum had never seen them before, and I'd only ever seen one as a speck amongst a birdie crowd, through someone's spotter. Their display for us was often too close and quick for photos; just a watch and "soak in the experience" event.

- Christine and Margaret Rigg

## Talk by Joseph Forshaw

**Topic:** Australian Parrots: Where did they come from and where are they going?

**When:** Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2016, at 7.30 p.m.

**Where:** Ulladulla Bowling Club, upstairs meeting room.

Milton Ulladulla Birdwatchers are pleased to invite you to a talk on the past history and future prospects of Australian Parrots to be presented by Joseph Forshaw.

Joseph Forshaw is regarded as the world's foremost expert on parrots. He has written numerous books on parrots and other species. A number of these, including "Parrots of the World", 1973, were in collaboration with the renowned illustrator, the late William T. Cooper. He is one of the first honorary members of BirdLife Australia's Parrots Association, which started in 1996.

Joseph was a senior environmental officer with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. He is a Research Associate in the Department of Ornithology at the Australian Museum and a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists Union.

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## Invitation to Book Launch

**Heathlands: Walks and Wildflowers of the Ulladulla Headlands - by Nicholas de Jong**

Nick's interest in heathlands began in the 1970s. His parents retired to Narrawallee and Nick and Merridee and their young family came to stay. A love of surfing enhanced the connection with Ulladulla's magnificent coastline.

Walks through South Pacific Heathland Reserve were a family favourite to be recalled 20 years later, when Nick studied Banksia communities for his honours degree. At this time, Nick met Chris Humphries, cofounder of the heathland reserve.

Investigating wetland plant communities for his PhD led to a collaborative study with Phillip Kodella at the Sydney Herbarium.

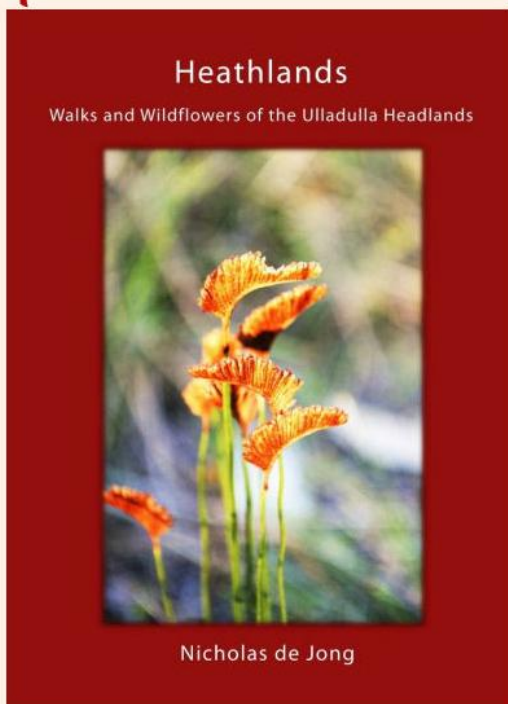
After a teaching career of 34 years, Nick and Merridee retired to Ulladulla. They realized Nick's hobby of plant photography, coupled with his experience and a connection with the herbarium, could be put to positive use.

Nick's book, written for the layperson, but with important new scientific data, invites us all to know more of Ulladulla's unique natural botanic gardens.

For details, see the flyer on the following page ...

# Book Launch! Heathlands Walks and Wildflowers of the Ulladulla Headlands

Special price at  
launch \$35.00



11.30 am Saturday 20th August at  
Milton Ulladulla ExServos Club

- A book you will love to use
- 320 native plants described
- Quality photos aid identification
- 10 great coastline walks
- Where and when to see the flowers
- Habitats and ecology explained
- Birds, butterflies, cultural history

Join Dr de Jong and other botanists on a tour of iconic South Pacific Heathland Reserve following the launch and light refreshments provided by the ExServos and Reserve Trust

**Mail order:**

**heathwalks@gmail.com**

**\$40 + postage:**



Please RSVP by **13th** August for catering purposes:  
Heathlandbook@gmail.com

## The Knowledge Tool in Conservation

- by Chris Grounds

The conservation interest in particular places, in the birds and habitat of a site, followed over time, will invariably reveal new and developing knowledge, which is a very powerful conservation tool.

New knowledge of particular bird species so often seems to be unfavourable as the list of threatened species grows or decline in numbers of other species is revealed.

In a perverse way this new knowledge can be a very powerful tool in conservation, especially as it may apply at sites within the Shoalhaven or the broader region.



This is reflected in two of the well-known shorebird species on the Shoalhaven Coast, the Hooded Plover and the Bar-tailed Godwit (subspecies *baueri* - above) which are now both listed as "Vulnerable" in the Commonwealth Threatened Species list.



On the positive side it appears that the Eastern Osprey have produced at least one fledgling in a successful 2016 nesting at the Basin View site, six weeks ahead of the 2015 schedule. Photo below taken in June this year.

The Eastern Osprey is categorised as Vulnerable in the NSW Threatened Species list and this nest is also the first documented successful nesting site of the species south of Sydney.

Two familiar Shoalhaven conservation sites which also illustrate the point are the Heritage Estate and Bherwerre Wetland where BLS has been involved.

The Little Lorikeet was catalogued in the original bird list for the Heritage Estate but has since been added to the NSW Threatened Species list. The BLS Estate walk after our AGM included observation of this species, which was the first in a long while.

The threatened species Little Eagle (see photo below) had not been seen nor catalogued in the Estate until an encounter during Bushcare work in the council reserve on the Worrowing Creek in August 2011.



The Dusky Wood Swallow was not seen and thus not catalogued in the original bird list either until observed and added in February 2014. The Dusky Wood Swallow (see photo on next page) has now been added to the NSW Threatened Species list as a Vulnerable species.

When this profile of three more Threatened Species birds is added to the growing knowledge of orchids, fungi and vegetation in the Estate it establishes very clearly that the site is even more environmentally valuable than at first thought.



Sightings of the threatened species Spotted Harrier (below) and Eastern Ground Parrot adjacent to the Heritage Estate seriously enhances the arguments for conservation of the site. It is pleasing to report that this long-awaited conservation is now proceeding through Council and the NPWS.



The case for the conservation of Bherwerre Wetland was significantly enhanced when BLS provided catalogue of bird species developed by BLS members from twelve months of observation on the site.

This noted 68 species, including two threatened species, the Square-tailed Kite and Eastern Osprey. The catalogue has since been extended by another six species.

Initially there was no specific, formal knowledge of the birdlife associated with that site but now that knowledge has helped to support and stimulate conservation arguments for that site.

The recent "east coast low" episodes associated with flooding and very high tides brought St Georges Basin (Bherwerre) into the wetland on the southern section.

Known species such as the Black Swans will always follow these waters in and were seen right at the back fences of adjacent residents.

The recent flooding also brought in a Pacific Heron and a raft of Hoary-headed Grebes (see photo below). Both species were new to the catalogue for the site.



BLS has been involved in very much the same way in 2016 with other sites for which we have sought conservation: Lake Wollumboola, some Shoalhaven State Forests, Shoalhaven Heads-River and Collingwood Beach. These are covered in separate reports in this newsletter.

That knowledge is also created in the bird atlases, where it is possible for BLS members to record observations and build species knowledge for places and regions such as the Shoalhaven.



More knowledge – more conservation!



## Back to Bungles Week

- by Stan Brown, Su Brown and Maggie Paton

On April 18th this year the three of us set up camp at the very well-organised camp site at Warrumbungles National Park.

Next morning we met up with Dr Gillian Dunkerley who is the Science Coordinator for Office of Environment and Heritage. The purpose of our trip was surveying the birds to assist in monitoring their recovery after the devastating 2013 fires.

Over the next four days we surveyed various different areas in 3 groups. On the Wednesday all participants drove to an area not normally accessible to the public and which had not been burnt.

On the other three days we rotated through three main areas and surveyed clearly defined transects.

The total number of species surveyed in the four days was 79. Highlights included Turquoise Parrot, Red-capped Robin, Speckled Warbler, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike and Wedge-tailed Eagles performing stunning aerial displays ... and the list goes on!

Most days we had completed the surveys by 12:30pm when we would regroup, share results and prepare for the following day.

Afternoons were free to explore the surrounding area "at your leisure". We included a great trip to the "Sculptures in The Scrub" in the Pilliga region (maps available from the very informative Discovery Centre at Barradine).



One of our own special highlights was to walk an area near the campsite which we had not had any chance to survey. We saw thirty one species including close-up views of Speckled Warblers, Diamond Firetails and Turquoise Parrots.



Speckled Warbler

Various people stayed at the camp-site in either tents or caravans. Powered and unpowered sites are available. Others stayed in a relatively nearby motel.

It was a wonderful experience enhanced by the fact we were contributing to the scientific research.

There are two official surveys each year, one in Autumn and the other in Spring. The expected date of the Spring "Back to Bungles" survey is 23rd-26th September. Those interested in doing the surveys should contact Dr Gillian Dunkerley - [gillian.dunkerley@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gillian.dunkerley@environment.nsw.gov.au)

Individuals can contribute by completing their own surveys and forwarding to Gillian or handing in at the Parks office. These can be downloaded from the webpage at <https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/back-to-bungles-bird-week>

We can thoroughly recommend visiting the Warrumbungles and being involved in the survey.



Image courtesy of the Office of Environment and Heritage

## BirdLife Shoalhaven Calendar \*

### August

1-28	Bird Feeding & Watering Study	See <a href="#">Feeding Birds</a> for details
Friday 5	Mt Bushwalker track (MUD)	Meet 8am Back of Harry Higgs Room. Leader: Chris Shinton 4454-5584
Friday 19	Meroo Head (MUD)	Meet 8am Lions Park Burrill Lake. Leaders: Marg Hamon & Maggie Mance 4457-1129
Sunday 21	Bangalee (SB)	Meet Illaroo Rd, northern end of bridge, at 8:30am.

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### September

Friday 2	Conjola (MUD)	Meet 8am: At Conjola Fire Station. Leader: Charles Dove 0417 422 302
Tuesday 13	Presentation (MUD)	Meet 7:30pm: Ulladulla Bowling Club. Presentation by Joe Forshaw, Australian parrot expert.
Friday 16	Bomaderry Creek (MUD)	A full day outing to Bomaderry Creek, Lake Wollumboola, Orient Point. Meet 8 am: Back of Harry Higgs Room for car pooling. Leader: Mike Jefferis 4455-5162
Sunday 18	Barren Grounds (SB)	Meet Berry Apex Park, North St, at 8:30am.
Sunday 25	Vincentia WTP (BLS)	Meet 8:30am at west end Berry Street, Vincentia. Bring morning tea.
Friday 30	Burrill Caves & Beyond (MUD)	Meet 8am Lions Park Burrill Lake. Leader: Charles Dove 0417 422 302

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### October

4-10	Albury / Chiltern (SB)	Week camp. Box Ironbark NP, Mt Pilot, local wetlands. Details TBA.
12 - 15	Capertee (MUD)	"Port Macquarie Homestead" has been booked and has accommodation for six people at \$25 per person per night. Camping at nearby NPWS campsite is available, which has to be booked separately by individual campers. Contact Mike Jefferis on 0412 480 371 for more details or to secure one of the beds in the cottage.
Sunday 16	Florance Head (SB)	Meet Bewong Roadhouse at 8:30am.
Saturday 29 29 - 30	Frances Ryan Reserve (BLS) National Twitchathon (BA)	BLS stall at Sanctuary Point Community Pride Fair (9am-1pm) Email <a href="#">Karen Davis</a> for details

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### November

Sunday 20	Vincentia / Greenfields (SB)	Meet near the roundabout at Vincentia shops at 8:30am.
Sunday 27	Greenpatch area (BLS)	Meet 8am at Hyams Beach turnoff. Bring morning tea.

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### December

Sunday 18	Berry Masonic Hall (SB)	5pm Xmas Party BYO picnic barbecue. Show your 2016 birding pictures on the big screen.
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\* 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.

Shoalhaven Birders 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, so be prepared to have your own birdwatching outing. Trips away usually go ahead. Contacts: Stan and Su Brown 4443-4828, Peter and Julie Hale 0402 076 548, Barry and Susan Virtue 4464-1389

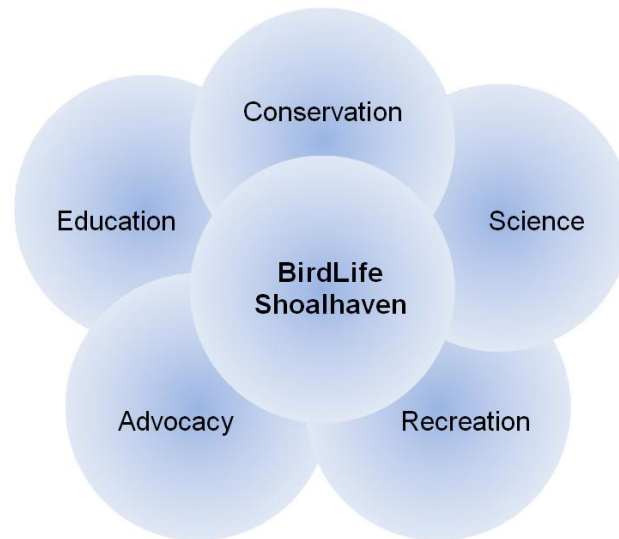
MUD Birdwatchers have outings every fortnight on Fridays from 8am until about 11am. Membership of the MUD Birdwatchers club is open to all members of the Milton Ulladulla U3A. For information about joining MUD Birdwatchers, phone Marg Hamon 4457-1129 or Chris Shinton 4454-5584 or email [mubirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:mubirdclub@gmail.com).

## Changes to the BLS Working Arrangements

These Working Arrangements include the changes made at the Committee's May meeting. The key changes were to increase the quorum from three to four, given the increased size of the Committee, and changes in the values in line with a recent review by BirdLife Australia. This will need to be approved by the members at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting. Given the nature of the changes it was agreed that this would be done at the next AGM, though the Committee has already adopted the increased quorum for its meetings.

## BirdLife Shoalhaven Mission Statement

**Our vision: A bright future for Australian birds**



**Our mission: To give Australian birds a bright future by finding solutions to the threats they face and by inspiring action to ensure birds and their habitats flourish.**

<b>Goal 1</b> Improve conservation outcomes	<b>Goal 2</b> Promote the appreciation and understanding of birds	<b>Goal 3</b> Build a strong BirdLife Australia and BirdLife Shoalhaven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide a local face and voice for BirdLife Australia</li><li>• provide a focus on regional and local conservation matters and advocate for the conservation of birds and their habitats</li><li>• conduct research and conservation programs and participate in BirdLife Australia projects</li><li>• champion local conservation causes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• encourage and support the activities of members who are actively participating in BirdLife Australia's programs and other bird projects</li><li>• promote and foster recreational bird watching</li><li>• organise and participate in outings, activities and community events of interest to members, their guests and the community</li><li>• pursue the education of members and the community in birds and their conservation to assist development of their interest, understanding and participation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• engage and inform all members</li><li>• grow the member and supporter base by promoting membership of BirdLife Australia</li><li>• build networks and connections with other BirdLife branches and like-minded local and regional conservation organisations and groups</li></ul>

### HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

- by the increase in the membership of BirdLife Shoalhaven
- by attendance at outings and talks
- by the number of events and activities undertaken

## BirdLife Shoalhaven Working Arrangements

1. These working arrangements are based on the BirdLife Australia (BirdLife) Branch Working Arrangements and only cover key issues relevant to BirdLife Shoalhaven (BLS).
  2. These working arrangements will be reviewed by the Committee and any changes approved by the Members at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Special General Meeting (SGM).
  3. BLS must operate in accordance with the BirdLife Branch Working Arrangements.
  4. Under the Constitution of BirdLife, BLS cannot have the status of a separate legal entity.
  5. BLS will adopt the following values when conducting its business:
    - Passion - We bring people together around a love of nature.
    - Excellence - Science and knowledge is at the centre of everything we do.
    - Leadership - We empower and inspire people to lead with courage and purpose.
    - Collaboration – We embrace diversity and work in partnership with mutual respect.
    - Integrity – Our success is based on experience, honesty, trust and fairness.
    - Impact – We think globally, lead nationally and act locally.
  6. All BirdLife Members who reside in the Shoalhaven Local Government area will be deemed to be members of BLS, unless they choose to opt out. BirdLife Members who reside outside the area may also register as a member of BLS.
  7. No membership fees are payable to become a BLS Member.
  8. BLS Members are eligible to participate in the activities of BLS, to receive communications and nominate and vote for the Committee.
  9. Visiting members of BirdLife from other Branches shall be eligible to attend meetings or other Branch functions but cannot nominate candidates or vote.
  10. The Committee will consist of President, Secretary and Treasurer (at a minimum) and shall be elected annually at the BLS AGM.
  11. Meetings of the Committee will be held four times a year by whatever means it sees as appropriate.
  12. The timing of the BLS AGM will be set by the Committee but not later than the end of February. The AGM will cover reports on activities of the Branch, approval of the financial report for the year ending 31 December, election of the Committee for the coming year, review of the operating plan and working arrangements and any other business.
  13. The Secretary shall give notice of the AGM and call for nominations to the Committee at least 40 days before the AGM. Completed nomination forms may be lodged at least 28 days prior to the AGM. The Secretary must distribute the agenda and papers, including names of all Members nominated no less than 21 days prior to the AGM and include procedures for lodging proxy votes.
  14. If there are insufficient numbers of nominations, nominations can be taken from any Member present at the meeting. If more than one Member has nominated for the same position, the outcome shall be determined by ballot. All proxies should be in writing and received by the Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
  15. If a Committee member position becomes vacant between AGMs, the Committee may co-opt a Member to fill the vacancy.
  16. The Committee shall have the authority to appoint no more than two additional persons to the Committee for a period up to the next AGM for the purpose of providing advice on a specified matter, or to fill newly created committee positions.
  17. All Committee Members will hold office from one AGM to another and may be re-elected.
  18. The Committee may call a SGM to discuss any urgent matter and shall be bound to upon receiving a written request signed by at least 5% of the Members or by the BirdLife Board. The meeting agenda and papers shall be given to Members no less than 14 days before the meeting.
  19. Quorums for meetings shall be ten Members for AGMs and SGMs and four Members for Committee meetings.
  20. The Committee will liaise with BirdLife National Office on all operational issues. The Committee must advise the National Office of the receipt of all donations and submission of proposals to fund research, conservation or education projects. A submission for reasonable Branch expenses may be submitted to the National Office. BLS will need the approval of the National Office to set up a bank account. The Treasurer will be responsible for receiving, paying and handling funds and keeping the records of BLS's finances. The annual financial accounts must be approved at the AGM and signed by the President and another Committee member, other than the Treasurer prior to submission to the National Office.
  21. No Member shall receive any pecuniary interest from BLS, unless the Committee approves the reimbursement of a Member's expenses incurred in fulfilling BLS's objectives.
  22. The Committee, or Members delegated by the Committee, may arrange fundraising, periodic meetings, talks, functions, birdwatching outings and campouts and other activities, for purposes that help achieve the BLS objectives, with all members allowed to attend, plus other persons approved at the discretion of the Committee.
  23. All BLS materials must be produced with the BirdLife Shoalhaven logo.
  24. All key BirdLife Shoalhaven correspondence on local conservation causes must be approved by a majority of the Committee.
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### Australia's voice for birds since 1901

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

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

[birdlife.org.au](http://birdlife.org.au)

### Add your voice



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



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



Help us create positive outcomes for birds and their habitats