

Photo by Brett Davis



In this issue ...



Birders & Landcarers working together after the fires

by Rob Dunn, BLS President

[Page 3](#)



Is it the Same Old Fight After All?

by Chris Grounds,
BLS Conservation Officer

[Page 5](#)



Interview with Fiona Stewart

by Perrie Croshaw

[Page 9](#)



Bushfire Research Project

by Gary Brady,
BLS Project Officer

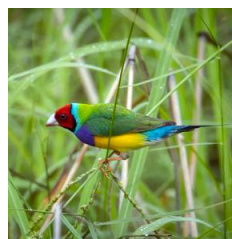
[Page 14](#)



Swarovski dG - the future of birding?

- by Daniel Payne,
Nature Lodge Optics

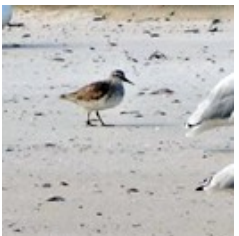
[Page 19](#)



Web Watch

by Chris Grounds
and Marly Grounds

[Page 20](#)



Conservation Curiosities

by Chris Grounds,
BLS Conservation Officer

[Page 25](#)



Facebook - what you've missed

by Brett Davis

[Page 28](#)



Brian O'Leary and the bushfire

by Brian O'Leary
and Brett Davis

[Page 30](#)

???????

Contributions Welcome!

by Everyone

Cover Photo:

Our cover photo this month is a Glossy Black Cockatoo, one of the bird species considered by the Australian Government to be most severely impacted by the Summer 2019 / 2020 fires. The photo was taken by our Editor, Brett Davis.

BirdLife Shoalhaven acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the Shoalhaven, their care of country, birds and habitat, and pays respects to all Elders.

Birders & Landcarers working together after the fires

- by Rob Dunn, President BirdLife Shoalhaven

It seems that when the going gets tough, the tough still go birding in the Shoalhaven. The continuing messages through our social media and the increasing number of bird surveys in our bushfire research project shows this to be the case. Birding certainly seems to provide a good distraction from the pandemic and is arguably a more educative and productive pursuit than jigsaws.

BirdLife Shoalhaven has also been busy, having just entered into a new partnership with Shoalhaven Landcare (SLA). As a result of recent bushfire funding from South East Local Land Services, WIRES and the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER), SLA will be undertaking a range of on-ground activities on properties impacted by the fires. These activities will include plantings, weed control, fox and deer control and community education in species identification. BLS's involvement will cover two support activities, as part of SLA's agreement with GER, funded by WWF.

The first of these will fit into our bushfire research project. SLA have asked for expressions of interest from members to fund on-ground works on their properties. From the successful applicants, BLS will invite property owners to have periodic bird surveys carried out as part of our project. The data we collect will give an indication of changes in bird abundance and diversity over time at Landcare project sites.

To date the majority of our survey sites are in national parks, state forests and crown lands, so expanding the project onto private land will certainly be invaluable. We already have some, as is the case with the property owned by Ian and Fiona Stewart, featured in the interview later in this magazine.

This partnership with SLA will help us expand our research on private land. Of course, the challenge will be to balance the number of new sites we can accommodate with the number of available survey volunteers. This is especially the case as many of our existing surveyors will be getting back to work with NPWS on monitoring our beach nesting birds and shorebirds shortly.



Shoalhaven Birds for Beginners


THE GREAT EASTERN RANGES
connecting people...connecting nature



We will certainly be very mindful of the need to balance the volunteer demands of all of these critical projects.

The second part of our work with SLA will cover a series of courses for property owners entitled 'Shoalhaven Birds for Beginners'. Yolande Cozijn will be running the courses at Landcare groups' meetings and field days, building on her successful 'Birds in Backyards' presentations to community groups. The aim is to improve landowners' bird identification skills and encourage them to learn more about the birds on their properties, as they recover from the fires.

We will be trialling the courses with the Kangaroo Valley Environment Group, that has focussed on reducing serious weed problems, like Madeira vine, repairing riparian habitats and increasing environmental awareness in the valley over the last 25 years.

This new partnership has the potential for birders to learn more about Landcare projects in the Shoalhaven and Landcarers to learn more about birds. Our winter magazine last year featured one of these, the Bengalee Lantana Clearing Project, which several BLS members have been involved in.



Birders and Landcarers, Kim Touzel (above) and Dan Crowley (below left) weeding and watering on their property in Tapitallee

Landcare groups across Australia are undertaking major long-term projects which both benefit farm productivity and nature conservation. Some people assume all farmers are the enemy of the natural environment, but many are not. The work of Landcare and how it benefits our fauna and flora often goes unappreciated because it happens on private land. This partnership will break down some of those pre-conceived ideas.

Keep warm, keep safe and keep birding!



Planting trees for our birds is fun!

Is it the Same Old Fight After All?

- by Chris Grounds, Conservation Officer

The 2019-2020 Bushfire catastrophe put us all in a new place, but some of the abiding long-term issues remain the same in conservation, with threatened species, other bird species, habitat and biodiversity at even greater risk.

At A Glance

- the Manyana Matters campaign has become the litmus test of the moment in Shoalhaven conservation
- the Bushfire Recovery Birds listing re-emphasises continuing risk and threat to Shoalhaven birds
- the EPBC Act challenges persist in a toxic political climate

One of the critical profiles of birds at risk from the bushfires is the Federal Department of Environment's list of bird species identified for "Bushfire Recovery Priority".

The interesting list of 17 species is even more interesting for the fact that **6 of the 13 threatened species** listed, and **all 4 species** provisionally included as "high priority whilst more information is gathered" occur in the Shoalhaven!

Note:

Readers will notice that the Eastern Ground Parrot is now called the Mainland Ground Parrot and that, for some reason, the Glossy Black Cockatoo we know as a Threatened Species, is not EPBC Act listed though it does appear as the South-eastern subspecies. The Capricorn and Kangaroo Island Glossies are the other two subspecies. The EPBC listed and critically endangered Swift Parrot is not listed either!



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BIODIVERSITY BUSHFIRE RECOVERY AND PRIORITY BIRDS

Name SHOALHAVEN	Scientific name	EPBC Act listed status	States & Territories
Birds (17 species)			
Western Ground Parrot	<i>Pezoporus wallicus flaviventris</i>	Critically Endangered	WA
KI Glossy Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus lathamihalmaturinus</i>	Endangered	SA
Rufous Scrub-bird	<i>Atrichornis rufescens</i>	Endangered	NSW Qld
Regent Honeyeater	<i>Anthochaera phrygia</i>	Critically Endangered	ACT NSW Qld SA Vic
Eastern Bristlebird	<i>Dasyornis brachypterus</i>	Endangered	NSW Qld Vic
Albert's Lyrebird	<i>Menura alberti</i>	-	NSW Qld
Mainland Ground Parrot	<i>Pezoporus wallicus wallicus</i>	-	NSW Qld Vic
Bassian Thrush (South Australian) Western Bassian Thrush	<i>Zoothera lunulata halmaturina</i>	Vulnerable	SA
Black-faced Monarch	<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	Migratory	NSW Qld Vic
Gang-gang Cockatoo	<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	-	SA Vic NSW ACT
SE Glossy Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus lathamii lathamii</i>	-	Vic NSW ACT Qld
KI Western Whipbird	<i>Psophodes nigrogularis lashmari</i>	-	SA
KI Southern Emu-wren	<i>Stipiturus malachurushalmaturinus</i>	-	SA
Species that are provisionally included as high priority whilst more information is gathered			
Rockwarbler	<i>Origma solitaria</i>	-	NSW
Pilotbird	<i>Pycnoptilus floccosus</i>	-	ACT NSW Vic
Superb Lyrebird	<i>Menura novaehollandiae</i>	-	ACT NSW Qld Vic
Red-browed Treecreeper	<i>Climacteris erythroptera</i>	-	ACT NSW Qld Vic

KI = Kangaroo Island

BLS Bushfire Recovery Project observations have produced repeated sightings of the Rockwarbler (see photo on previous page), a bird with a logical common name, and multiple recordings of the Superb Lyrebird, at least in escarpment and hinterland habitat where they were previously known. These sightings were all in bushfire affected sites.

There has also been a recent record of the Red-browed Treecreeper, a 'Priority' species, in the Manyana development block.

The total fauna 'Priority' list is quite extensive and speaks to the nature of the threat to biodiversity from the bushfires.

Now that many more birders are involved with the Birdata App, especially with 'Backyard Birding', recording it is important to make sure any sightings of these particular birds are recorded on the database. 'Backyarders' may like to check the Conservation Curiosities graphic on urban cats.



Black-faced Monarch

EPBC ACT 1999

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 was John Howard government legislation, which has been under formal Review. There are concerns with the Review finalized that the release of the report is being delayed.

As can be seen from the above 'Biodiversity Bushfire Recovery and Priority Birds' List, it remains, for the moment at least, a very significant point of reference for conservation in the post-bushfire context.

One example would be Manyana where specific surveying has been completed by a BLS team involving the Mud Birders for EPBC Act listed bird species. The Swift Parrot has been prime among these but, curiously, does not appear on the above Bushfire Concern list, perhaps because it does not breed when on the mainland. The Swift Parrot remains a focus species for BLA in their current campaigning.



Manyana

BLS has also been involved in our most recent submission, which concerned Manyana and the EPBC Act, with advocacy to the Federal Minister Sussan Ley. This submission is available on the BLS website under 'Conservation'.

In our conclusion, BLS made the point to the Minister that, given its name, the legislation is actually about protecting the environment and conserving biodiversity. Is that too obvious?

A problem here has been that Minister Ley on April 23 was reported in The Guardian as flagging that "the government may change environmental laws before a review is finished late this year". Ley has indicated that where she could make "sensible changes" before the final Review Report she would do so. This is not a good sign - being quite presumptuous, politically motivated and poor governance.

An underlying concern is however the example provided in the NSW government legislation, the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2017. It was recently revealed in a Report that the government had to be pushed to reveal that clearing in NSW has increased threefold. The environment in the bushfire context can hardly sustain state and federal legislation hand-in-hand that is so anti-environment.

There are some paradoxes involved with the Act. It is twenty years old and the world has changed dramatically in that time and it needs review and change but not simply for the resolving of "Greentape", a political mantra that is waddled out in defence of the changes anticipated. In its own inimitable way the EPBC Act has been a pillar of reference for conservation, campaigns, planning and community actions.

It is the Act that metamorphosed the Heritage Estate to an environmental and conservation paradigm in 2009 with the Peter Garrett decision.



It is the Act that is currently the basis of high level action by Manyana Matters with the Minister and Supreme Court in their multi-faceted action.

However, since the Act passed in 1999, the list of threatened species and ecosystems has grown by more than 33 percent to 1,974.

University of Queensland associate professor of environmental policy Chris McGrath says "the act is like a Ferrari, but you've got to take it out of the garage to use it ... it's got all the tools; the powers are there. It can act as a green safety net for threatened species and the environment. But the political will to enforce the rules is the problem." [SMH June 14]



Breeding hollows have suffered terribly in the bushfires

Suzanne Milthorpe, the Wilderness Society's national environment laws campaign manager, says the federal minister's powers under the EPBC Act are firmly established in law, but there is a "gaping chasm" between the objectives of the act and its subsequent use.

The Humane Society's Nicola Beynon notes that "The legislation does not compel the federal minister to protect threatened species and their habitat". The system is very permissive and even the last remaining habitat for a threatened species could be approved to be cleared."

If these problems are not clearly and unequivocally resolved in new legislation we will have not progressed so it is somewhat of a 'baby and the bathwater' challenge. It is certainly not as simple, as has sometimes been made out, that we just need a new Act. Remember that we got one in NSW.

Another vital aspect to the Act was signaled in Huskisson Community meetings by Peter Garrett and Tony Burke prior to the Federal election in 2019, who both pointed out on separate occasions when questioned about threatened species, that there has been quite substantial cuts to public service support staff and thus the provisions of the Act were being undermined and slowed.

A Senate Inquiry in 2019, an inquiry examining the country's extinction crisis, was told that Australia is taking at least six years to list habitats as threatened under national environment laws. The Inquiry was also told that cuts to the environment department's budget had caused the timeframe for listing ecological communities as threatened under the act to blow out and fewer assessments were occurring. [The Guardian Aug.2019]

Considered views indicate that it is a little more complex than this with the administrators accused of being "ineffective in managing risks to the environment", and of creating "a blow-out in the time taken to make decisions correlated with a reduction in funding and staffing".



The Toondah Wetlands Example



Toondah Wetlands - a major BirdLife Australia campaign

Every summer 32 species of migratory shorebirds, comprising 40,000 individual birds, visit Moreton Bay. Around 20% of the world's eastern curlews and 50% of all grey-tailed tattlers feed, breed and rest at the wetland following their migration from Russia.

The wetland should be protected under the EPBC Act but systemic failures in laws mean a development proposal by Walker Corporation involving dredging and reclaiming 40 hectares of Ramsar listed wetland have been able to reach an advanced stage in the assessment process.

The Australian Conservation Foundation has launched a legal bid to access documents, kept secret by the federal government, concerning meetings between a major political party donor and authorities assessing plans for a development on protected wetlands near Brisbane.

It is hardly surprising that there are calls for an 'independent national environmental authority'.

The Manyana Matters campaign

The Manyana Matters campaign has become the Shoalhaven's classic post-bushfire environmental battleground.



The campaign continues in a context of advocacy which struggles with so many of the challenges: the EPBC Act, the Federal Minister, State Ministers, development, Local Environment Plans, profit motives, future community character, threatened species, the bushfires and the pre-emptive value of habitat-corridor and biodiversity in a regional setting.



Offset Issues

Scientists (reported in The Guardian) have pointed to a scathing audit which found major flaws in a system supposed to help protect threatened species from extinction of how the federal environment department administered national conservation laws suggesting the use of offsets was worsening the impact on endangered species, not reducing it. Offsets are measures that are supposed to compensate for the loss of nationally important environmental areas to major development that has been approved under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

BLA is opposed to 'Offsets', which continue to prove an environmentally damaging prop to development as they will always lead to loss of environment and biodiversity. For example, a proposed development that would involve the loss of habitat that was home to Tasmanian devils could be approved if another existing area of devil habitat was protected and improved.



Offset has been a distinct niggle in the conservation plan for the Bherwerre Wetland at Sanctuary Point on St Georges Basin.

Somebody please turn the lights on before we leave!

Interview with Fiona Stewart

- by Perrie Croshaw

Recovering Yatteyattah

Fiona and Ian Stewart would agree that they have lived a blessed life during the past 35 years.

In 1984, they fell in love with, and bought, 40 acres at Yatteyattah. Since then they have worked tirelessly to revegetate this once dairy country with an extensive rainforest area backing onto Morton National Park to create a sanctuary for plant and wildlife.

Fiona and Ian stand up for nature. Fiona is a walks leader with the National Parks Association; she volunteers for Milton Landcare; and she was instrumental in starting the Budawang Coast NatureMapr - Atlas for Life, an easy app which records plant and animal species. She has hosted house music events in their beautiful home and garden, surrounded by birdsong and greenery, and they opened their land to bird and plant researchers.



However, the New Year's Eve 2019 firestorm changed all that. The Stewarts lost their precious rainforest, their home, its contents, an office, outbuildings, equipment - just about everything.

All that was left was a rundown shed which they have now converted into a temporary home. Outside this shed, with the help of their 2 sons, they have created a restorative oasis, surrounded by fast-growing native bushes, containing the steel fireplace from their home which is now their outdoor firepit, a wooden table and benches, and the clucking hens in a small pen. They had left their caravan at a friend's home in Milton, and Fiona says how wonderful it was to go back into this small travel space and feel at home again - "there was even a potato peeler in the drawer! So wonderful."

Yet this woman who has lost so much, still puts her community, the environment, plants and animals first.

BLS: Can you remember when you were first so attracted to nature?

Fiona: We moved to Booderee National Park from Papua New Guinea where Ian was teaching. He got a job at Jervis Bay school, so some of our children were born in Nowra and we lived right in Booderee among the birds and wildlife. That's where my interest in nature began, although I think I've always been interested in nature, it's just a part of me.

We knew that we couldn't stay in Booderee, so we started looking for a special place to buy. In 1984 we found this property in Yatteyattah, fell in love with it, and bought it.

Then we moved to the Northern Territory for work, and came back 8 years later, around 1990-91, to build our home and settle down here.



We were both management consultants by then and still doing a lot of travelling - to Canberra, Sydney, overseas. But we were based here in Yatteyattah. It was home. Always somewhere to come home to.

I was a knowledge management consultant, collecting knowledge in the developing world to use for good purposes - in grassroots areas such as women & children.

When we came here it had been a dairy farm and mostly cleared. We restored more than 15 acres of forest after our intensive planting and weeding program.

We let trees grow in gullies and on the verges and the land reforested itself, and became a mature forest with virtually no wattles. We kept some clear land as grass meadows. We saw our land always as a refuge for wildlife, especially as the number of houses continued to increase and the land available for animals to live decreased.

BLS: Tell us about your involvement with the National Parks Association and Landcare

Fiona: I'm an enthusiast and a starter of things.

Robert, our youngest son, joined Milton Rural Landcare first and we've been involved off and on since it started about 25 years ago. I've become more involved since I retired and we were providing from our property some plant material to propagate by seed, cutting or division - www.miltonlandcare.org

Early on I also became a member of the National Parks Association (NPA - npansw.org.au) and I joined their walking group. I am now a walks leader. My passion for leading walks is to get people into the national park because most people just stay on the coast.

I had heard about the Land for Wildlife program and discovered it wasn't in this area. So we started that and got 15 land holders to get assessments. The idea was that we would run all sorts of education programs.



I invited a Land For Wildlife assessor to come here and see if our area had significant biodiversity value. They said yes. Not only do we have wombats, wallabies, possums, birds, etc, but we are not far from the waterfall in Yatteyattah

Nature Reserve near Milton where there are significant bat colonies.

Land for Wildlife encourages and assists landholders to include nature conservation along with other land management objectives. They provide support to approved landholders in signage, training, programs, records and data keeping.

And in the process of starting Land for Wildlife, the woman who came to do assessment said, "Do you know much about your plants?" And I said, "No, I'm an enthusiast!"

Land for Wildlife

Land for Wildlife is a voluntary property registration scheme that encourages and supports landholders to manage areas of their property for wildlife habitat. Registration is free and does not alter the legal status of a property. Private landholders play a key role in nature conservation. The continued survival of many rare and threatened animals and plants is dependent on restoration of habitat on private lands.

Benefits of joining Land for Wildlife include:

- Receiving advice and support to achieve restoration goals on your land,
- Learning about local native plants, wildlife and ecosystems,
- Inclusion of nature conservation into your overall property management,
- Opportunities to meet and learn from other like-minded landholders.

See environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/LandForWildlife

Then she told me about this great program called NatureMapr, where you can log pictures and sound recordings of birds, plants, everything. So I ran around and put 35 pictures of plants up online but it didn't work. For months I went backwards and forwards with people online saying, look, it just doesn't work. A great program but it just doesn't work. Eventually someone said, Well where are you? I said Yatteyattah, and they said, well you're not on the map!

So I said how can I get on the map. So Michael Mulvaney (from Canberra's NatureMapr) and Libby Hepburn (from Atlas of Life Coast Wilderness) came to visit and that's when our Budawang Coast NatureMapr started to take shape.

We cover half of the Eurobodalla LGA (Local Government Area) and all of the Shoalhaven LGA. Budawang Coast is now 2 years old, has a committee, 450 members and many more than 300,000 sightings. It is recording citizen science info all over the place.

Since then I've been involved in helping and promoting NatureMapr to other communities, so we now have Wollondilly, Bathurst is interested, Noosa, and Albury - Wodonga.

NatureMapr

Naturemapr documents the natural world to species level, recording birds, plants, mammals, insects, reptiles, frogs, terrestrial invertebrates, fungi, mosses, liverworts, fish, marine and freshwater invertebrates, fossils and geological features and watering and feed stations in protected areas, including national and marine parks, private land and everything in between. Validated records are added to the Atlas of Living Australia, which is the national biodiversity database.

See Fiona's property on Budawang Coast Naturemapr: budawangcoast.naturemapr.org/Locations/3743

Hear audio of her Green Catbird at - budawangcoast.naturemapr.org/Sightings/4201176

BLS: Have you done many bird surveys on your land?

Fiona: Mike Jefferis, Marg Hamon and Maggie Mance (from BLS and MUD Birders) were planning to do bird surveys here. But then the fires came.

Previously I did the Backyard Birdcount and recorded 29 species of little birds just by my bird bath.

Straight after the fire I contacted Mike and with his first bird survey they didn't get anything.

With the second one they saw and heard 10 species and there should be many more when the next survey is done.

[We are sitting in Fiona's small, replanted garden and our interview is interrupted by constant bird song - glorious!]

Ian is a really keen photographer and takes beautiful pictures of birds. Before the fires, we had been recording sightings on NatureMapr - I have our property listed there - budawangcoast.naturemapr.org/Locations/3597

I'm the ideal citizen scientist (a bit of a numpty!) but I'm keen to learn. The beauty of NatureMapr is that it's for people who aren't experts.

There are lots of specialist nature ID programs, like for frogs or fungi, but they are more for experts - NatureMapr is user friendly and does it all. And it helps with identification for those of us who are novices in some areas.

I want to share all our information so have opened up our location page. I have 334 results.

BLS: And other surveys?

Fiona: We have participated in "Whose Living on my Land", which is an NPA initiative. We put cameras up a couple of years ago and we have cameras up again now.

Cameras in the rainforest before the fire recorded lots of wombats, echidnas, bandicoots, sugar gliders, redneck and swamp wallabies, catbirds, lyrebirds. Lots of *rattus fuscipes* (Bush Rat), and I thought, Bloody hell – I knew that because they used to get into my house! But others said, Oh, that's exciting, because there are only two places around here where they live. I think they are back now, after the fire, because there are lots of little holes into the chicken pen!

There's also wombats now, but not much else at this time.



Friends came after the fire and said, What can we do? I actually needed people to go with me into the forest as I couldn't do it on my own. I used to know every little plant and when it was going to flower, where you were likely to see birds and animals.

Brigitte Nairn from NPA said we should do a post-fire survey. So, we have chosen three distinct areas in the bush and a group of friends will come every three months for the next two years to take photos of everything (uploading onto Naturemapr) and make a record of the progress. We are documenting the recovery. What works and what doesn't.

BLS: So what other plans do you have after the fire?

Fiona: People came and fed any animals that were left after the fire, which we were very grateful for at the time. But the bird seed is now growing and there's a bit of a weed disaster.

The bush burned because we didn't just have any old fire, we had a firestorm. The ember attack took out our Hebel house after a late backburn by the RFS, which was not extinguished before catastrophic weather came. In our new house we will be watching the roof construction very carefully!

Read an ABC article about the controversial backburn at - www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-08/witness-accounts-of-new-years-eve-bushfire-at-conjola/12317258?nw=0

BLS: What specifically would make your heart sing to see return to your land?

Fiona: Oh, all of these animals and birds. But the lyrebirds and the catbirds tell me I have a rainforest. So, actually to hear one of these would be marvellous.

We found birds such as a female bowerbird that just fell out of the sky – not burned, just suffocated.



A couple of days after the fire we spotted Gang-gangs up in the trees. I think they like roasted nuts!

But I'm realistic, I don't think this rainforest will recover and if it does it won't be in my lifetime. We had a significant canopy of turpentines and ironbarks and they are now gone. There are some rainforest plants and trees coming up, but all that is left of most ironbarks is a hole in the ground and a skeleton where the trunk was. Once ironbarks are a light, it's almost impossible to put them out. For a month after the fires, you could see the candles in the forest. A lot of the really significant canopy trees are gone and I don't think you have a rainforest without the canopy.



That said, there are quite a lot of things slowly regenerating. We will begin to work once again on our project.

Some neighbours have chopped down the burned trees and bush, but we are leaving ours. We read that you shouldn't touch it, that nature has a way of repairing itself.

Even the weeds are ok because they are breaking up the soil, because the soil in some parts (where the firestorm happened) is baked and now hydrophobic (the water just runs off). That said we have weeds here that we've never seen before and some of them are very nasty.

Nothing came up for weeks after the fire, except for fire fungus which in itself is amazing. 3-4 days after the fire, the fungus came up - examples below from Naturemapr.



BLS: Tell us about the Three Trees

Fiona: We have three Turpentines in the main paddock. I said to Ian "If these trees don't survive, I'm leaving!" - but thankfully, all 3 trees made it through.

These trees pre-date white settlement in Australia and are maybe 300-400 years old. They are huge and look like oak trees. One gets hit by lightning fairly regularly, but still it survives. One was covered in mistletoe before the fire burned all that. The old local farmers know this place by these three trees.

All the trees were hit by the fire and the big one in the middle was hollowed out – a metre round hole – but it's still alive. An arborist came to look at it and said they are as tough as all getout and will probably survive anything. I do hope so.



Here is an edited version of Fiona's letter:

"—Our family lost our home and our land was profoundly destroyed in the NYE bushfires at Yatteyattah, NSW.

"The impact of the fires has resulted in a loss of just about all mammals, many birds, residual rainforest and other forest. It will take many years for our land to recover and provide a suitable habitat for the creatures that lived on our land and surrounding forests previously. Our land was listed as habitat under 'Land for Wildlife'.

"Our experience is mirrored by most of our neighbours and friends, as well as in the surrounding national parks and state forest.

"We live very close to the Manyana bushland that is due to be developed.

"Ministers and Mrs Hancock, I beg you to end the wholesale exploitation of our natural resources and to preserve and protect the remaining natural environment that we have left. (The Manyana) development is one example where immediate action to halt development would be both a salve to local, traumatized communities, as well as providing a small but significant piece of habitat available as a refuge for wildlife ...

" ... to save Manyana now and move to protect our remaining forests from logging and land clearing will reassure us, as voters, that our concerns and our pain is acknowledged and acted upon. And most importantly, that our government actually values and protects for future generations, our greatest asset, which is our unique natural environment."



Bushfire Research Project

- by Gary Brady, BLS Project Officer

Progress so far

Our volunteers have completed a substantial number of 2 hectare/20 minute surveys across the Shoalhaven so far in 2020, providing valuable data to map the fate of bird populations.

As a method of better analysing the data from the surveys we have now divided the Shoalhaven up into a number of localities, as shown in the map on page 15. These have been based on their habitat, vegetation and fire history.



	Surveyors	Surveys	Sites
Jan-Mar	25	130	84
Apr-June	27	116	107
2020 to date	36	246	191

Locality	No. of Surveys 2020	Species per survey	No. of birds per survey
1 Kangaroo Valley (note A)	5	5	49
2 Tapitallee	16	14	26
3 Comberton	3	5	16
4 Parma Creek	14	5	18
5 Jerrawangalla	13	5	20
6 West Braidwood Road (note B)	7	4	8
7 Bewong	4	8	23
8 Lake Conjola (note C)	55	9	22
9 Little Forest	1	4	4
10 Meroo	37	10	34
11 Bawley Point	35	9	28

Early observations from the survey data

Despite the differences in survey time in each locality and with only six months of surveys, as we would expect, the data collected indicates lower species diversity recorded in the more fire affected areas.

For example, based on Birdata's pre-fire data, Kangaroo Valley registered 14

- A. High number of birds due to a significant record of 120 migrating Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters (above right)
- B. Omitting one unburnt site, the species and birds per survey are even fewer – refer case study.
- C. High number of surveys due to support for Manyana community campaign.

As in all citizen science programs, volunteers' choice of sites is influenced by proximity to their homes, so we see a lot more surveys in areas close to where birders live.

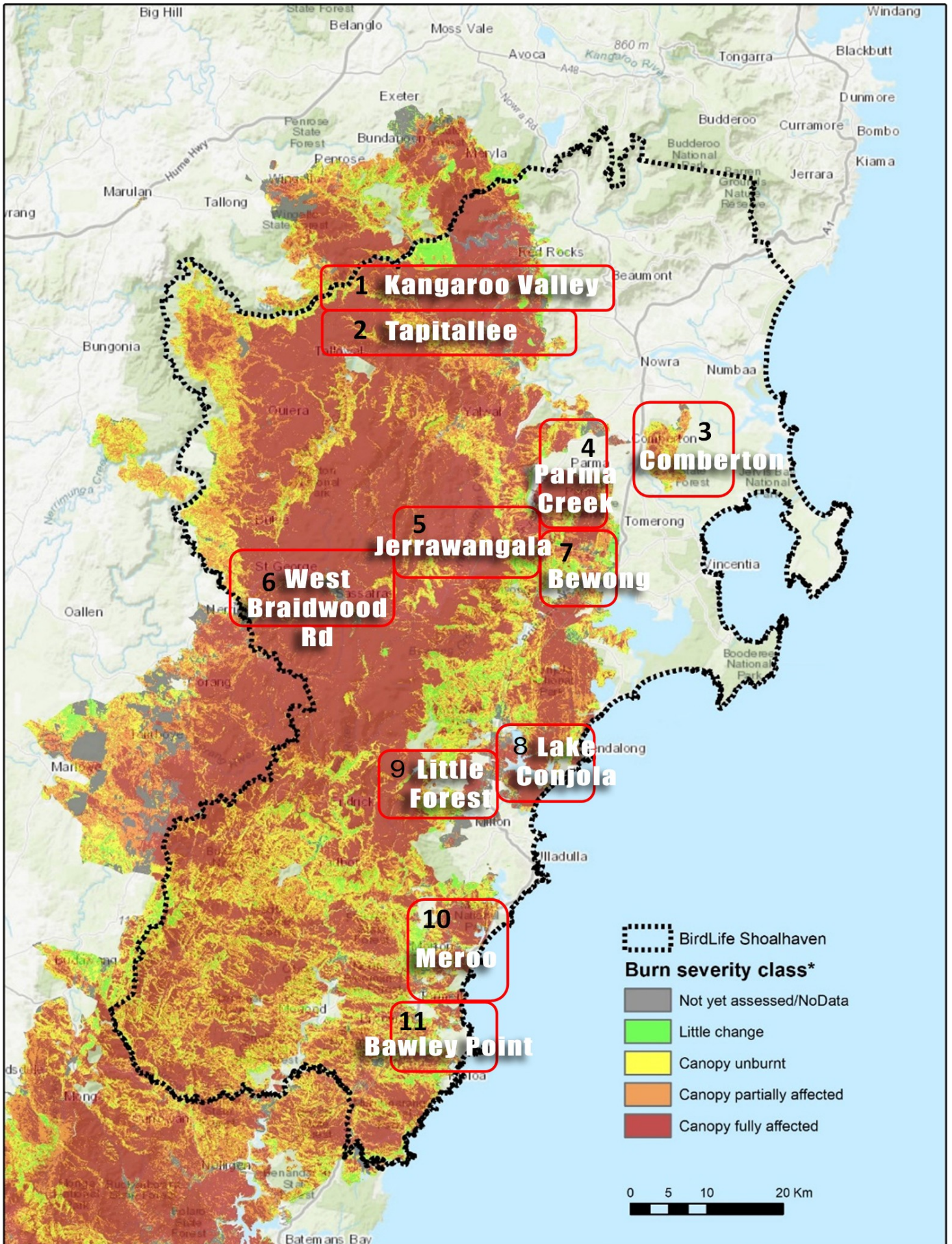
An uneven pattern of effort over time poses problems if we are to produce meaningful results; not only do the birds have to be there, they have to be seen or heard, which is obviously affected by the length of the survey time e.g. is the number of species to June 2020 recorded in Meroo, which has had 10 hours of detection time, comparable to those in Comberton, which has only had one hour? To address this problem, we are now reviewing the number of sites and surveys that need to be done in each locality.

species per survey, while in the burnt areas in the valley since the fires, only five species have been recorded per survey. Similarly, West Braidwood, Comberton and Parma Creek have a lower species diversity when compared to the localities that have been comparatively less burnt.

These variations are to be expected given the range of levels of destruction of habitat and food and the differing rate of recovery in vegetation between and within the localities since the fires.

We are also picking up seasonal changes in summer and autumn with records of migratory honeyeaters, like the Red Wattlebird and Yellow-faced Honeyeater. These sightings are of very small groups of birds, compared to significant flocks before the fires.

We will continue to assess the increase in species diversity and abundance as the bush recovers, taking into account the different habitats and the rate of its recovery over time, to get our best assessment of the state of Shoalhaven's birds each year.



Sightings of threatened species

From the surveys, combined with other incidental sightings, we have recorded several species listed by the Federal Government as requiring urgent management intervention after the fires, covered in Chris Ground's article on page 5.

Some of these species are appearing in places they were not seen before the fires and/or in higher numbers.

For example, there are several sightings of large groups of 20+ Glossy-Black Cockatoos and recently 30 Gang-gang Cockatoos were seen in Booderee NP. Clearly the fires have forced these birds to move to obtain food, though it remains to be seen if their increased densities will deplete the available resources in the future.

Our surveys have also recorded several Superb Lyrebirds and Rockwarblers on the edge of areas decimated by fires, though with so much of their previous range lost, it is still unclear if they can maintain viable populations before the habitat in burnt areas recovers sufficiently.

Case study one – West Braidwood Road

The drive west along Main Road 92 provides a sobering insight to the range in severity of the fires and differences in how the vegetation has recovered since January. Jerrawangala NP was severely burnt in the fires with all understory and most of the canopy lost.

You then move on to see different fire intensities, indeed there are pockets where there appears to have been little impact. Then as you come to Sassafra, where homes were lost you get views north and south across areas of total devastation. Rob Dunn did surveys here in January and July.

"If you stand at the Old Wool Road sign before you head down to the Endrick River, you look south over hundreds and hundreds of hectares of what I can only refer to as 'ground-zero'.

"This was where the Currowan and Tianjara mega-fires joined up, were renamed Currowan Two and continued to rage for several weeks.

"Six months later it is very hard to spot any change, even though we have had good steady rain each month. The trees have basically all gone and the few that remain are still black with minimal regrowth.

"There are also hardly any green shoots coming up. The heat here was intense, and went down into the soil, killing seed stock, while the sandstone breaks off in plates when you walk on it.

"Doing bird surveys here is disturbing. My first survey recorded just one Red Wattlebird, the second, one Eastern Spinebill, and in the third I saw or heard nothing.



Can you spot any differences on West Braidwood Road between January 2020 (top) and July 2020 (above)?

"In July, on a walk with Shoalhaven Bushwalkers, the only birds seen and heard in five hours were a Wedge-tailed Eagle, a White-throated Treecreeper and two Thornbills!



"During this walk, after passing through ground-zero 'habitat', we stopped just 5 kilometres from the road to look down into the Ettrema Gorge, which passes through the middle of this section of the Currowan Two fire.

Looking down into Ettrema Gorge (July 2020)



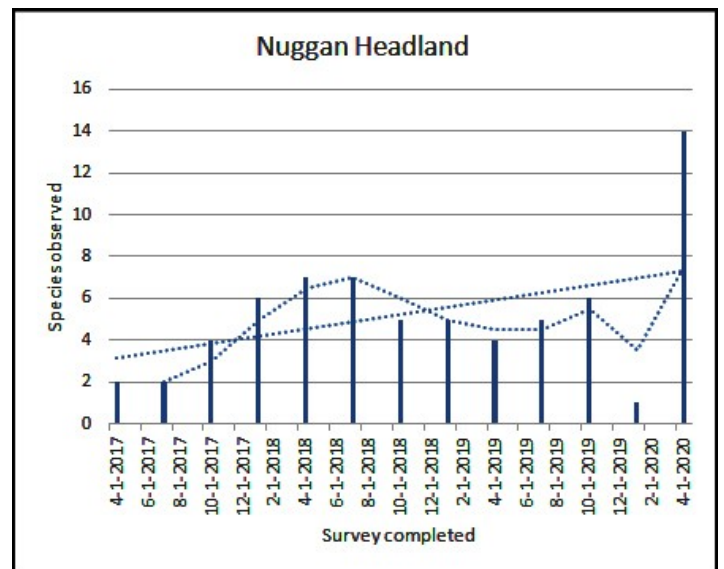
"Here we saw that the canopy inside the gorge is still completely intact, while the top of the escarpment is completely burnt. You can clearly also see this on the fire severity mapping on page 15.

"The creeks into the Ettrema have also had good flows since the fires, which should ensure the habitat in the gorge is in good condition after the long dry period last year. Given the remoteness of the area, it will be some time before we find out what species used this vast area as a refuge during the fires. But could it be an avian 'Noah's Ark'?"

Case study two – Bawley Point

Marg Hamon has been observing and recording in Birddata since 1999, both in the inner west of Sydney and around Bawley Point. Two of her established sites at Nuggan Headland and Woodburn State Forest have data going back over many years. The results for these sites (2017-2020) show changes in species diversity over the years, and surprisingly show an increase in species diversity in autumn 2020 after the fires. Nuggan Headland is the most significant, as it was burnt more severely in the January fires, losing most of the understory, a significant proportion of the canopy and a loss of ten large trees. Marg commented on the Nuggan Headland site.

"Nuggan Headland is on a sandstone ridge with shallow soil. It is prone to drying out and this I consider has a bearing on the numbers of birds using it. Conversely, when it rains the site can remain quite wet for a while with water collected in depressions in the ground. This was the case when we surveyed it in April and probably accounts at least partly for the increased number of birds despite the fires. Although the water would be a major factor, there are doubtless other factors involved here.





"Once again water could be a factor. This site has no natural water sources but catches rainwater in depressions in the ground. In April one of these depressions was the centre of activity for the site.



"There have been fluctuations in the species diversity over time at this site. Ten years ago the population was more diverse in January than April, but this had recovered to more normal levels by 2018. Diversity dropped off in 2019, probably as a result of the drought, before the big crash in January 2020 after the fires and then the spectacular recovery in April after rain.

Although the fires undoubtedly had a major impact on the area, we must not forget the drought leading up to them also would have affected site usage over the preceding years."



This case study shows that certain species can rebound in some areas as the habitat recovers. It also shows the importance of standardized bird surveys completed over several years by experienced birders.

Our project has got off to a great start, but maintaining this long-term research project, without impacting NPWS's beach nesting bird and shorebird projects and BirdLife Australia's KBA program, will not be easy.

"The Woodburn SF site doesn't show so much of a discrepancy between January and April over the years as Nuggan did until the fire went through this year. It was not as severely burnt as Nuggan with more understory intact.

So, if you are confident in your bird identification skills and would like to get involved, please get in touch with us using the following contact details.

Contact

Gary Brady, BLS Bushfire Research Coordinator
 Mobile Phone: 0431 772 369
 Email address: brp.coordinator@gmail.com

Swarovski dG - the future of birding?

- by Daniel Payne, Nature Lodge Optics

Welcome to my first article for BirdLife Shoalhaven - to keep you informed of new products and innovations in the world of birding optics.

This month sees the introduction of the ground-breaking Swarovski 8 x25 dG digital observation device.



The **Swarovski dG digital Guide** is a unique birding ID tool. A joint project by Swarovski Optik and the Cornell University Ornithology Lab, the dG combines a high-quality 8x25 monocular with a **built-in digital camera** and the Merlin Bird ID smartphone app, helping birders with difficult bird identification problems. The dG also comes with its own app that turns it into a **Wi-Fi hotspot** that allows up to 5 devices within 5 metres to receive images or **stream videos directly** from the device.

The dG is the first long-range optical device to allow you to identify and document your sightings and share them with other people.



With the **Swarovski dG** you can -

- use the device as you would use binoculars
- **link** the device to your mobile phone via wifi
- **photograph** what you see
- **identify birds** and mammals
- **share the vision** with up to 5 devices via wifi

The full potential of the dG is unlocked when you link it to your smartphone. You need the **Swarovski Optik dG app** to connect your dG to mobile devices. It also allows you to connect to apps like Merlin Bird ID and dG Mammals, which help you to identify and share your sightings. This app is available for all current smartphones from the App Store and Google Play.

There are only a handful available in Australia and we at **Nature Lodge Optics** are proud to have sourced just 2 pcs.

You can see **Swarovski dG digital Guide** at our Berry Store at 108 Queen St, Berry or visit www.naturelodge.com.au. For more details you can check out the product on this video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJydRRYZBQ4

Happy Birding!

Specifications

- Monocular with 8x25 optics.
- built-in digital camera with 13 megapixel resolution and 343 mm focal length.
- internal storage for 10 photos.
- connects though Wi-Fi to mobile phones or tablets.
- connection to a mobile device is required in order to take more photos.
- weight: 550 grams.

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Web Watch

- by Chris and Marly Grounds

This Web Watch should technically be the most redundant to date given that it coincides with the Covid isolation time. As always it is testimony to the interest in birds that is found in reliable media sources.

I have now rectified hogging the limelight with Web Watch over these many months with a documented recognition of my research staff - see byline above! This will help avoid a pay rise!

Birds of prey fly again after feathers melted by bushfires

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-06/birds-of-prey-await-return-to-the-sky-with-feather-transplant/12316846>



A wildlife clinic in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales is adopting an ancient technique of feather transplant to help birds of prey which were badly burned during the recent bushfires.

Birds of prey suffered horrific injuries in the bushfires. Sanctuary staff will attempt feather-transplant procedure. The impact of the fires could affect birds for years to come.

Eight eagles, owls and tawny frogmouths remain in care at the **Higher Ground Raptor Clinic** in Fitzroy Falls. The birds would normally need to wait months for their feathers to grow back.

But wildlife carer **Peggy McDonald** said they could also undergo a transplant, through a process known as imping.

Drones track endangered Swift Parrots in NSW Riverina

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-12/drones-track-critically-endangered-swift-parrots-in-nsw-riverina/10221302>



One of Australia's most endangered birds, the swift parrot, is being tracked by drones in the NSW Riverina, in a bid to better protect the remaining parrots and help ensure the species' survival. "The swift parrot is in dire straits with numbers having declined below a thousand pairs," says Wildlife Drones researcher, Debbie Saunders. The parrot migrates to the Australian south-east mainland between March and October and they return to Tasmania where they breed from September to January, nesting in old trees with hollows.

Eastern Curlew's 10-day flight to China stuns birders

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-06/eastern-curlew-flight-toondah-harbour-cleveland-qld/12322856>



A critically endangered Eastern Curlew successfully made its maiden flight to China, after it flew some 8,000 kilometres from the mudflats of Queensland's Moreton Bay. Researchers have been tracking the movements of three-year-old Eastern Curlew named AAJ. The bird was one of three that were caught and fitted with tiny trackers so their movements could be monitored.

Glossy black cockatoo chicks found hatching on fire-ravaged Kangaroo Island

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-26/glossy-black-cockatoos-on-kangaroo-island-recover-after-bushfire/12285656>



There are renewed hopes for the future of an endangered bird on Kangaroo Island, after hatchlings have been discovered. Natural Resources Kangaroo Island discovered 23 glossy black cockatoo chicks on the island, some in areas heavily hit by bushfires. There is work underway to protect the chicks from predators such as possums. The hatchings come as the RSPCA winds down its wildlife feeding program.

Volunteers return lesser noddy seabirds to Abrolhos Islands after once-in-a-decade storm

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-07-08/abrolhos-islands-lesser-noddy-seabirds-released/12430302>



A threatened species of birds has been returned to its island habitat, after a flock was blown hundreds of kilometres down West Australia's coast during severe storms in May. The lesser noddy birds weigh about 100 grams and, according to research, are travelling more than 100 kilometres from the Houtman Abrolhos in search for food. A seabird rescue group gave the 18 birds six weeks of round-the-clock care to ready them for release.

Hunters kill migrating birds on their journey to Australia

<https://theconversation.com/be-still-my-beating-wings-hunters-kill-migrating-birds-on-their-10-000km-journey-to-australia-138382>



Estimating the extent to which birds are hunted over large areas was like completing a giant jigsaw puzzle. We discovered that since the 1970s, three-quarters of all migratory shorebird species in the flyway have been hunted at some point. This includes almost all those visiting Australia and four of the five globally threatened species. Some records relate to historical hunting that has since been banned. All migratory shorebirds are now legally protected from hunting in Australia.

Breakthrough for Norfolk Island's morepork owl, one of the world's rarest species

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-17/norfolk-island-morepork-owl-new-generation/12150012>



The first Norfolk Island morepork owl chicks in more than a decade have survived to become fledglings. There are less than 50 of the species left in the world. In the 1980s the owl population declined to a single female. Researchers say one of the world's rarest owl species has a chance at survival after a breakthrough discovery on a remote Australian island. For the first time in almost a decade, a pair of Norfolk Island morepork owl chicks have been located. Rohan Clarke, an avian ecologist from Monash University, said the chicks represented the future of the species.

Gold Coast 'celebrity' Olive the osprey defies odds to take flight but refuses to leave nest

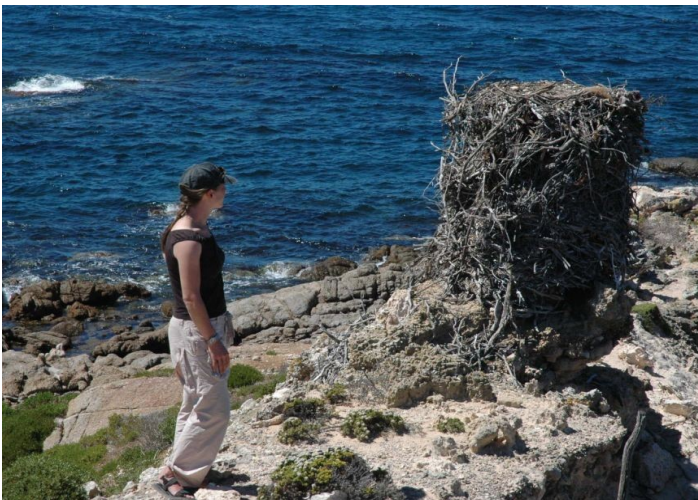
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-11-09/young-osprey-defies-survival-odds-but-refuses-to-leave-nest/11683012>



A young osprey on the Gold Coast — which has survived numerous flight attempts, the death of a sibling and its father's rescue — is testament to the proverb that says "it takes a village to raise a child".

South Australian bird enthusiasts hope 24-hour osprey live-stream could help save species

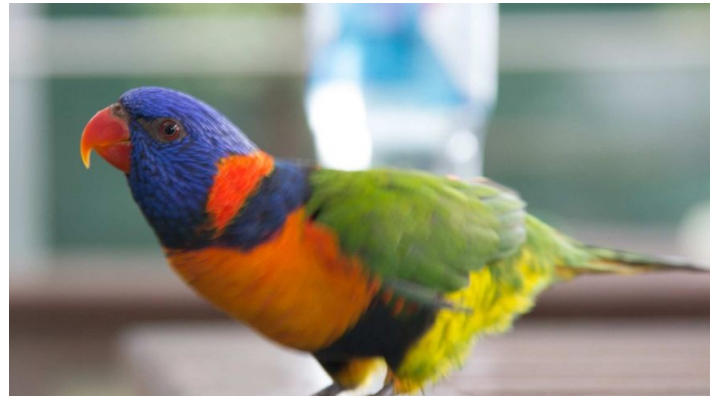
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-12/wild-osprey-raptor-eagle-breeding-island-video-surveillance-nest/12235164>



Bird enthusiasts say a large raptor nest on remote Thistle Island off the coast of South Australia could have survived for two centuries, withstanding wind gusts of up to 100 kilometres per hour. A video camera is filming an eastern osprey pair in a nest off South Australia's Thistle Island. Video of a nesting pair on a barge near Port Lincoln has an international YouTube following. The nest is home to one of only 40–50 breeding eastern osprey pairs, or *Pandion cristatus*, remaining in South Australia, and is critical to their survival.

Parrot fever alert issued after three people test positive to bird disease in Blue Mountains

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-14/parrot-fever-warning-blue-mountains-psittacosis-bird-disease/12243694>



The Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD) issued the advice to residents of Blue Mountains and Lithgow after several locals were recently diagnosed with Psittacosis or parrot fever. Health officials are advising residents to avoid contact with wild birds after three people tested positive for a potentially dangerous bacterial infection

Virus causing lorikeets to 'drop out of the sky' resurfaces in South-East Queensland

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-01/mysterious-virus-killing-lorikeets-in-queensland/12205888>



Experts don't know what causes it or why, but a virus that spreads quickly in close contact is causing rainbow lorikeets to "drop out of the sky" across South-East Queensland. The syndrome leaves the bird with a clenched claw, meaning it cannot land and hold on to a branch. It has a similarity to Coronavirus in that it spreads quickly when birds are in close contact. Bird expert Darryl Jones from Griffith University said while it was not related to COVID-19, it had an important similarity in that it spread quickly when the birds were in close contact.

Love calls of powerful owls ring out in eastern Australia

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-04-19/love-calls-of-powerful-owls-ring-out-along-eastern-australia/12132824>



Mating calls of Australia's largest owl — the powerful owl — are now being heard along eastern Australia. "They are the only bird in Australia that carries more than its own body weight in food when it flies," conservation biologist Beth Mott from **BirdLife Australia**, says. The birds are a top predator and adults stand at about 60 centimetres high and have a wingspan of 1.5 metres — the same length as our social distancing requirements!

Pigeon racers keen to know why some birds never make it home, and it's most likely bigger birds

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-02/pigeon-racers-are-keen-to-know-why-some-birds-never-make-it-home/12206194>



Where do the birds go when they go awry? And why don't some ever make it home? Pigeon racers constantly debate whether telecommunication signals, the Earth's magnetic field, or even solar flares disorientate their birds. There is "no established evidence" phone towers disrupt birds' navigation. BirdLife Australia says it is more likely that urban development and predation is causing the pigeons to go missing.

Golo Maurer, from Birdlife Australia's Key Biodiversity Areas project, said he was unaware of any evidence that signals from mobile phone towers disrupted a bird's navigational sense. Dr Maurer has done extensive studies into wild bird migration and believes variations in the Earth's magnetic field could be sending pigeons off course.

Sea eagle released into wild after being found covered in fish oil and close to death

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-18/tasmania-sea-eagle-released-after-near-death/12159230>



The juvenile white-bellied sea eagle was found coated in salmon oil on Bruny Island. Rescuers believe it may have been trapped in a "mortality bin", a dump of fish disposed of by commercial operators. The bird spent six months at Raptor Refuge, south of Hobart, before its release. After a few unorthodox bubble baths its feathers were restored to reveal its burgeoning plumage. Since then, conservationists at the park have been helping it rebuild its strength on a steady diet of fish and chicken.

Sumbiotude: a new word in the vocabulary for our emotional connection to the environment

<https://theconversation.com/sumbiotude-a-new-word-in-the-tiny-but-growing-vocabulary-for-our-emotional-connection-to-the-environment-136616>



The author of this article is inventing new words to better describe our emotional connection to the environment.

The tailorbird's nest-making is unbelievable!

<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/blogs/creatura-blog/2020/04/the-tailorbirds-nest-making-has-to-be-seen-to-be-believed/>



To construct its nest, the common tailorbird (*Orthotomus sutorius*) - found throughout South and Southeast Asia - uses its delicate beak to stitch together leaves in exactly the same way we humans would if given a needle and thread.

One cat, one year, 110 native animals: lock up your pet, it's a killing machine

<https://theconversation.com/one-cat-one-year-110-native-animals-lock-up-your-pet-its-a-killing-machine-138412>



Cats have played a leading role in most of Australia's 34 mammal extinctions since 1788, and are a big reason populations of at least 123 other threatened native species are dropping. But pet cats are wreaking havoc too. Our new analysis compiles the results of 66 different studies on pet cats to gauge the impact of Australia's pet cat population on the country's wildlife. The results are staggering. On average, each roaming pet cat kills 186 reptiles, birds and mammals per year, most of them native to Australia. That is 4,440 to 8,100 animals per square kilometre per year for the area inhabited by pet cats.

Numbers of critically endangered orange-bellied parrot soar from low 20s to more than 100

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/27/numbers-of-critically-endangered-orange-bellied-parrot-soar-from-low-20s-to-more-than-100>



Numbers of orange-bellied parrot in the wild have grown so low that even though their numbers have increased low genetic diversity could be an issue for the future. Just 23 birds arrived at the species' breeding site at Melaleuca, deep in the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness Area, last spring. But six months on there are tentative positive signs, with the number of birds heading north for the winter reaching 118, the first time the flock has topped 100 in more than a decade.

Fire-ravaged Kangaroo Island is teeming with feral cats. It's bad news for this little marsupial

<https://theconversation.com/fire-ravaged-kangaroo-island-is-teeming-with-feral-cats-its-bad-news-for-this-little-marsupial-141201>



Recent research found there are almost double the number of cats per square kilometre on Kangaroo Island than on the mainland - bad news for the Kangaroo Island dunnart. The recent bushfires on Kangaroo Island were the largest ever recorded there, destroying swathes of habitat. Over a period of 49 days the fire burnt 211,255 hectares, impacting almost half of the island, particularly the western and central regions.

Cats and Australian wildlife by the numbers

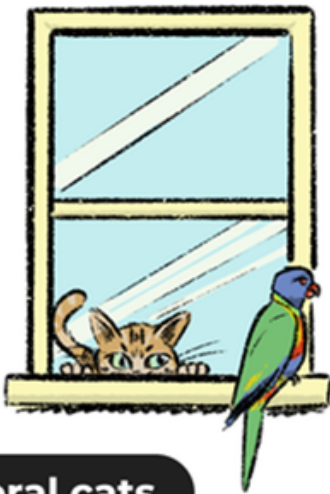
Pet cats

There are 3.8 million pet cats in Australia, of which:



...are kept inside 24 hours a day.

...are allowed outside to roam and hunt.



- Roaming pet cats **kill 390 million animals** collectively per year in Australia
- An individual roaming pet cat **kills 186 reptiles, birds and mammals per year**, most of them (59%) native species
- A study found **39% of cats** brought in at night **snuck out** for nocturnal roaming and hunting
- Pet cats bring home only 15% of what they hunt.

Feral cats

- The average feral cat **kills 748 reptiles, birds and mammals** a year
- In the bush there is **one feral cat per 3 to 4km²**, versus **40 to 70 pet cats per km²** around towns
- **Pet cats kill 30-50 times more animals per km²** around towns than feral cats do in the bush.



<https://theconversation.com/one-cat-one-year-110-native-animals-lock-up-your-pet-its-a-killing-machine-138412>

Name Change Indeed Poll

The iconic Eastern Ground Parrot is now called the Mainland Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus wallicus*). It is to be distinguished from the Western Ground Parrot [ssp. *Flaviventris*] and Tasmanian Ground Parrot [ssp. *leachi*]. The name should soon appear on both the Birddata App and BLA website.

If you web search for the bird you may have to stick with Eastern Ground Parrot for the moment.



Counting Bristlebirds



I am sure many of you are aware of the story of the Eastern Bristlebird capture at Mallacoota just prior to the horrendous bushfires there. Curiosity got the better of me when I read a short report in the last BLA Magazine and followed up with some internet research on this EPBC Act Listed species.

There were 15 birds captured using 'gossamer netting' or 'mist nets' and they were accommodated at the Melbourne Zoo. Only 7 of these birds made it back to Mallacoota and that fact led me to write to the new BLA Magazine editor, Cara Schultz and suggest the story of the other 8 birds was probably just as critical as it suggested a worrying attrition. She agreed and commented that BLA should have covered the whole story.

All the repatriated birds were appropriately banded but fortunately this was Victoria.

So what of the remaining eight birds that didn't make it back?

Cara's reply noted that: *"from what I understand from the zoo, some birds have been retained in captivity, to aid understanding of the species and I think to investigate the possibility of captive breeding."*

Interesting! The area the birds were collected from was not subject to the expected burn.

Stop Press:

The Conversation this morning (July 14) reported that 6 of the 15 died at the Zoo, presumably from a fungal lung infection.

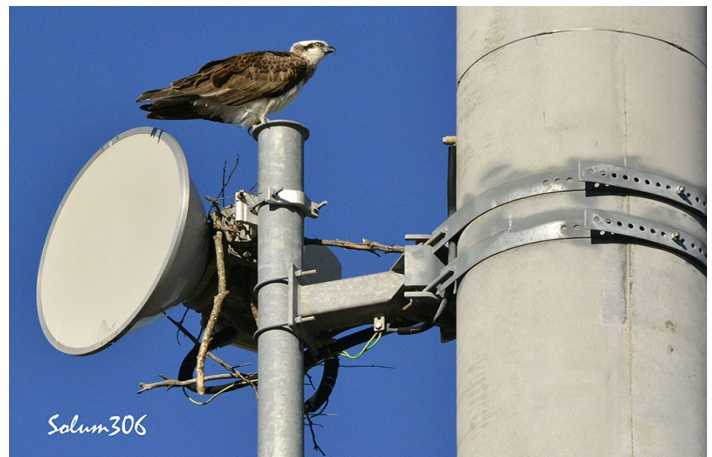
Conservation Threshold Warbler



The Rockwarbler, one of the bird species not on the Threatened species list but which has been listed as requiring post-bushfire monitoring as a "Priority Species" is, as a number of other species, known in the Shoalhaven. In that regard it was marvelous to see and photograph a pair on the escarpment west of St Georges Basin in a severely fire impacted area.

Telstra Plan Nest

St Georges Basin - or Bherwerre by its more appropriate name - often turns up Osprey sightings but the latest is a mark of the curious nesting by this Vulnerable species.



Keen birders noticed a nesting attempt involving a pair of Eastern Osprey on the mobile phone tower in Sanctuary Point on the fringe of the Bherwerre Wetland. There are more sticks below the tower than on the tower, which is not a good sign in the very middle of their breeding season - they must be on a cheaper plan! One of the pair hasn't returned but the second bird has persisted on the tower. There is a record of failed nests on the south coast. In recent years only one successful nest has been in a natural structure. Ospreys like 360 degree views.

Flagged Return



Recent sightings by Booderee Park staff and Shorebird volunteers Brett and Karen Davis have provided verified sightings of the Hooded Plover flagged E6 on Bherwerre Beach. A photo provided by the Park staff also revealed two juveniles on Bherwerre Beach. NPWS staff can work on that conundrum!

It was noted in the Curiosities column that E6 and its unbanded partner had disappeared off Cave Beach and the near coast after losing two advanced chicks late in 2019. Monitoring of Marys, Cave and Bherwerre Beaches had not produced any sightings until very recently. These two Hooded Plovers were successful breeding birds so their sighting close to another breeding season is reassuring for this critically endangered, Shoalhaven species. That little lady C7 also survives.

Glossy Gangs

The heathland in Jervis Bay National Park and the associated KBA is often favoured habitat for the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos in sometimes big numbers but a recent sighting of distant black cockies got a little exciting when a flash of red begged a closer look. A flock of 6 Glossy Blacks were having a rest in a small isolated eucalypt behind the Naval College Road.

The high value South Pacific Heathland Reserve at Ulladulla recently produced a feeding flock of 28 Glossies for BLS committee secretary Mike Jefferis, [lucky Mike] who also indicated more than usual numbers of Gang Gangs around that area.

It certainly appears such birds have been pushed toward refugia areas of the coast post-bushfire, but as Mike said, the worry becomes how long forage can persist with the increased pressure.



These birds are listed on the EPBC Act threatened species list. Sightings are thus critical as is the recording of such sightings and there is no better place to contribute than the **Birdata App**. It is an excellent app, free, relatively easy to use and actually allows you to do something quite direct and supportive about conservation. The record of such species is crucial in conservation campaigns.

Varied Sittella

The Varied Sittella is one of the Shoalhaven's state listed Threatened Species [Vulnerable] and a delightful small bird.



It is one particular species which emphasises the value not just of habitat but corridor as small flocks whiz across landscape such as heathland to forest, stopping for a foraging on trees in the shelter of plants – if they escaped the bushfires.

Facebook - what you've missed!

- by Brett Davis

The BirdLife Shoalhaven Facebook page is becoming more and more popular, with over one thousand followers as of the date of publication of this magazine - so we must be doing something right!

Long time contributor of bird photographs for the page, Charles Dove, was one of the reasons for our following increasing greatly over the past few years. With Charles' move to Queensland, the responsibility for our Facebook page images has been taken up by former BirdLife Shoalhaven Secretary Kim Touzel, and there has certainly been no drop-off in the standard of photography as the images in this article will prove (see images on next page).

If you have not been following our Facebook page in the past few months, here are some examples of the type of posts and shares that you have missed ...

- a Conversation with Peggy McDonald from the Higher Ground Raptor Centre.



Check out Peggy's site at www.highergroundraptors.com and www.facebook.com/HigherGroundRaptors

- Claudia Karvan and the Manyana Matters campaign



3,814 Views

Manyana Matters
3 July at 09:00 · 🌐

👍 Like Page

THANK YOU so much to the wonderful Claudia Karvan for her continued support of the #ManyanaMatters movement!

- Links to articles in the New Bush Telegraph, the Guardian and the Conversation.com
- BirdLife Australia's Birding at Home initiative
- Updates on how you can help our Bushfire Research Project



- Info about the Glossies in the Mist project
- A report on a bird walk at Bangalee including a map on where to go

- Encouragement to use Birddata to report sightings of threatened species
- Twitchers would have been interested in a report on the sighting of a NZ South Island Pied Oystercatcher in the Eurobodalla Shire



- Notice of a webinar on nest boxes



- Great photos from Kim Touzel!



Brian O'Leary and the bushfire

Brian O'Leary - featured in the interview in the Autumn 2017 magazine - lives in the middle of the Shoalhaven bushfire zone. Late last year he almost lost his house, with fire surrounding his property, but although his house was saved, he did lose his bird hide, tripod, pond and the water pipes which fed it!



Contributions - any bird photographs, articles, conservation issues, birding experiences, anecdotes or sightings that you would like to share with fellow members, please send to the editor (Brett Davis) at communications@birdlifeshoalhaven.org

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