



Manning Great Lakes Birdwatchers Inc

February 2020 Newsletter

Field Outings - are held on the first Thursday and third Saturday of each month (except January and December) and commence at either 8am during eastern standard time or 7:30am during eastern daylight saving time (edst)

The Annual General Meeting of the Manning Great Lakes Birdwatchers Inc. held on the 20th July 2019 elected the following Office Bearers:

President	Brian McCauley	0431 878 395
Vice President	Shirley Henry	0429 338 241
Secretary	Brian McCauley	0431 878 395
Treasurer	Sheila Perrottet	6554 3032
Activities Officer	Liz McCauley	0431 878 395
Records Officer	Ashley Carlson	6557 5393
Publicity Officer	Tony Bennett	0429 188 842
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Items for the newsletter can be sent direct to the editor to either

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Post: PO Box 4074 Forster NSW 2428

All other correspondence should be forwarded to the club address: PO Box 281 Forster NSW 2428

From The Editor

I hope everyone made it through the silly season safely

Prior to Christmas we were ruminating on the impact of fires throughout the surrounding environment and the resultant significant damage. Many areas are going to take years to recover and some of our outings may require tweaking in the areas most impacted. However as this goes to air, our 'land of contrasts' has been brought to the fore, with widespread localised flooding occurring throughout many of those areas impacted by both drought and fire. This rain will be a god send for many in the drought affected areas in our region and will hopefully reboot the regeneration of the environments we love to explore.

For many of us, the Roseate Tern holidaying at Mudbushop's Point was a birding highlight to finish the year. Normally found north of the Queensland border, was this individual checking out more favourably clims. Similar to its congener, the Aleutian, is it looking for an alternative summer destination?

Calendar of Outings

- 05/03 (edst) Brimbin Nature Reserve - meet at the reserve carpark. From Taree, turn right into Cedar Party Road (500 m prior to the Mayo Hospital). Turn right into Old Port Macquarie Road and follow onto the reserve carpark
- 21/03 Cruise Port Macquarie - Eco River Cruise with Dolphin spotting. Board 11:40 for 12:00 departure (Portjet Cruise Adventures, Town Wharf). Cost is \$40 per person which includes lunch (chicken or fish with chips or salad). Phone Jodi on 0419 620 765 to book and mention the birdwatchers
- 02/04 (edst) Pacific Palms Sports Field - meet at the carpark in Karnang Drive. Lunch at Elizabeth Beach / Elizabeth Beach trail
- 18/04 Bight Road / Wingham Brush - meet at the Bight Cemetery along Tinonee Road
- 07/05 Bungwahl Creek / Serene Close Bushwalk / Darawank Memorial - meet at the caravan park down Aquatic Road. Aquatic Road is approximately 500 m south of Failford Road off The lakes Way
- 16/05 Mt George / Rocks Crossing - meet at the Mt George Hotel on Nowendoc Road. Lunch at Rocks Crossing

Cattai Wetlands - 16th November 2019

Unfortunately, due to the surrounding fires this outing was cancelled.

Harrington Environs - 18th January 2020

By Brian McCauley

The first outing of the year and probably it is the first outing where everyone was hoping for rain. We have had a very prolonged dry spell and the forecast was for rain. We managed to gather at the new starting time of 7:30 am at the front of Harrington Marine Rescue in warm but very overcast conditions. Looking across the breakwall, we spotted several Far Eastern Curlew, a very welcome sight, considering their critically endangered status. Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Pacific Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit and to the sharp-eyed, several Red-capped Plover in the far distance were also seen.

The tide was still high, so the first location was to be Grass-tree Trail, part of Crowdy Bay National Park and situated near to the Sewerage Plant. Like a lot of sites, this area had been severely burnt, but the good news is that the habitat is making a fast recovery and the newly grown grass trees were in abundance. This would be a good opportunity to see how severely the fires had impacted on the birds and unfortunately there were not very many to be seen.



Birdo's on the Grasstree Trail Walk - Photo: Liz McCauley

We managed to locate a Leaden Flycatcher male, a pair of Brown Thornbill and a couple of Noisy Friarbird and Golden Whistler, White-throated Gerygone and Eastern Whipbird were heard. The bush along the eastern side of Industrial Road had not been burnt and here we saw Eastern Spinebill, Olive-backed Oriole, White-cheeked Honeyeater, lots of Grey Fantail and a Grey Shrike-Thrush. On the way back for morning tea, next to the Bowlo, we spotted some White-headed Pigeon, White-

throated Needletail, Pelican, more Bar-tailed Godwit and Pacific Golden Plover, and a White-faced Heron.

After morning tea we went back to the Marine Rescue but it had started to drizzle so we spent more time looking over the sand flats from the Breakwall rather than brave the beach. The rain set in so for a last effort we went on to Crowdy Head for a quick look at the harbour where a pair of Sooty Oystercatcher were seen and then to the lighthouse where we spotted a family of Variegated Fairy-wren. Some of us went back to the Bowlo Picnic area again for lunch and we spotted a pair of Osprey, a White-cheeked Honeyeater and lots of Australasian Figbird. Total species 62

Bird List - Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck, White-headed Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Crested Pigeon, White-throated Needletail, Purple Swamphen, Straw-necked Ibis, Australian White Ibis, Cattle Egret, White-faced Heron, Australian Pelican, Little Pied Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Great Pied Cormorant, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Sooty Oystercatcher, Pacific Golden Plover, Red-capped Plover, Masked Lapwing, Far Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Silver Gull, Little Tern, Osprey, Square-tailed Kite, Whistling Kite, Rainbow Bee-eater, Sacred Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Galah, Eastern Rosella, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Variegated Fairy-wren, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Eastern Spinebill, Lewin's Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Noisy Miner, White-throated Gerygone, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Australasian Figbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Eastern Whipbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Australian Magpie, Grey Butcherbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Leaden Flycatcher, Magpie-lark, Torresian Crow, Eastern Yellow Robin, Welcome Swallow, Common Myna

Booti Booti National Park - 06th February 2020 - By Liz McCauley

Very overcast and rain threatening didn't deter 11 intrepid birders who arrived at the Lakeside Trail for this new walk for the club. First birds seen from the carpark were a small flock of White-headed Pigeon and a pair of Superb Fairy-wren. The trail started from behind the National Parks Compound and then widened out into a well seeded grassed area adjoining the Helipad. There were Red-browed Finch in abundance, several more pairs of Superb Fairy-wren, lots of Lewin's and Yellow-faced Honeyeater's flitting about and an Eastern Spinebill, Rufous Fantail and Variegated Fairy-wren were briefly spotted.

Three White-bellied Sea-Eagle flew over very low and as we walked along the trail, the habitat changed several times with stands of Cabbage Palm, very tall eucalypts and casuarinas along the lake edge. Errol spotted 3 Brown Cuckoo-Dove high up and we were thrilled to get a family of about 8 Varied Sittella, which came down quite low giving a great sighting. Yellow and Brown Thornbill's and Brown Gerygone were seen and we saw several Golden Whistler females and one male.

It started to rain quite heavily and the wet gear that the members had donned came in very handy. When the

rain stopped, five members headed back to the carpark and six of us walked another 300 metres to Booti Point where we saw Pelicans and Great and Great Pied Cormorant's out on the water, two Pied Stilt passing by and a really good sighting of more Varied Sittella. The others were very lucky to see a female Common Cicadabird and a White-throated Treecreeper.

We all caught up at the grassy clearing and followed the tree line north of the Helipad, spotting a White-browed Scrubwren, but it started to rain again and quite heavy so we ran back to the nearby cars. It was time for morning tea and birdcall so we headed to Green Point, but the shelter was taken so we then headed back to The Sailing club. Unfortunately that shelter was also taken by a large group so we set up chairs lakeside and tried to get in the birdcall but it started to rain again. We decided to call it a day but despite the weather it had been a great morning with this new track very popular with all who attended. Total species 41



Birdo's displaying wet weather fashions - Photo: Liz McCauley

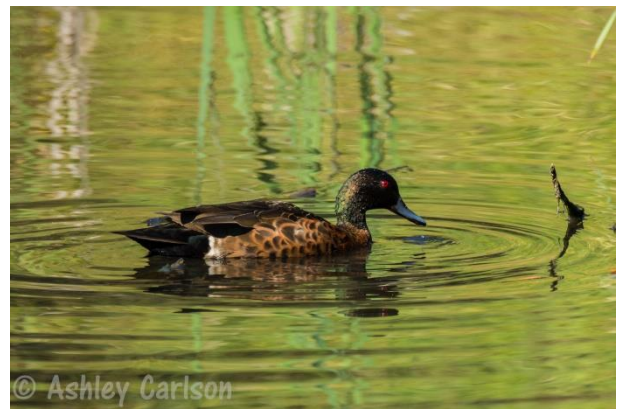
Bird List - White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Australian Pelican, Great Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Great Pied Cormorant, Pied Stilt, Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Satin Bowerbird, White-throated Treecreeper, Variegated Fairy-wren, Superb Fairy-wren, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Lewin's Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Brown Gerygone, White-browed Scrubwren, Yellow Thornbill, Brown Thornbill, Varied Sittella, Australasian Figbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Eastern Whipbird, Common Cicadabird, Pied Currawong, White-breasted Woodswallow, Willie Wagtail, Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail, Black-faced Monarch, Torresian Crow, Eastern Yellow Robin, Welcome Swallow, Red-browed Finch

Other Snippets

The Painted Snipe - Text and photo by Brian McCauley

Notification of a sighting of a Painted Snipe at Tea Gardens came through from both Nick and Ashley and this bird was high on our list and had been for some time. Nick had sent a stunning image which showed that he had been able to get quite close, so the next morning Liz and I headed off to Tea Gardens, with detailed instructions from Nick on how to find the ponds.

Arriving at around 8am we quietly and expectantly walked along the embankment between the ponds, carefully scanning the edges where the bulrushes were very sparse but offering good cover for a snipe. Normally snipe are very skittish, and though we moved very carefully, we really expected to flush the bird. However we just couldn't see it anywhere on either pond so we sat about hoping it would show itself from the thicker cover. There were other waterbirds on the ponds including a lovely pair of Chestnut Teal, a lone Hardhead, several Australasian Grebe, White Ibis, Eurasian Coot, Purple Swamphen and Dusky Moorhen.



Chestnut Teal - Photo: Ashley Carlson

Several Birders from other areas arrived and left and then to our pleasant surprise Errol Burley and Elizabeth Galvin arrived. Errol had a spotting scope but after a very careful study of the area the snipe still could not be found. Probably another half hour later Tony and Nicolette Bennett arrived and we sadly informed them that so far the bird had not appeared. The layout of this area was two ponds with a raised embankment between and a third pond which went under a road bridge but looked more like an inlet.

On a whim, Liz and I went to investigate this other inlet and so we headed off around the adjoining houses to discover a footpath headed sort of where we meant to go. About 50 metres along, we discovered that it was indeed a saltwater inlet with a small adjoining but separate freshwater lily pond with good unrestricted access. We walked up to the pond along an embankment and flushed a Latham's Snipe from the other side and then within seconds another snipe flushed, flew around the pond twice and landed about 15 metres in front of us on our side. It was the Painted Snipe.

After we both had a good look and several photos taken, Liz went to get the others I sat on the embankment and took some great video. The bird was very relaxed and even when the others came and settled down it just went about foraging on the muddy edge of the lily pond. We also saw three more Latham's Snipe and a Baillon's Crake and a pair of Purple Swamphen were feeding two very newly hatched chicks. A curious local came out on the opposite side near the houses and the Painted Snipe flew off, circled the pond and then landed right in front of her. I went over to talk to her and also try to get even closer to the bird. She had never noticed any of the snipe but did inform me that they had a daily visit from a Black-necked Stork. She was very interested in what we do so perhaps another convert? The Painted Snipe had become restless and it took off and went back in the direction of the two original ponds.

We had all had a good sighting with great photos so we went off to Tea Gardens for refreshment and made our own way back home. Liz and I went back to the pond but apart from four Latham's Snipe we didn't see anything new and certainly no sign of the Painted Snipe. What great luck and what another great tick for everyone that was present.



Part 2 - A taste of Brazil (July 2019) Text by Nicolette and photos by Tony Bennett

Goodbye Africa. It has been everything and more

Joburg to Sao Paulo, South America. There is a hiccup with our tickets, but we are finally (and hurriedly) escorted to our boarding gate and 11 hours and two movies later we arrive in Sao Paulo. We wait and wait for our suitcases, thus we miss our shuttle bus, but after a bit of a wait and a short drive we make it to our hotel. This is a massive city and our hotel, The Marriott, is 25 km from town. We grab a quick meal and crash into bed.

Next day we are back at the airport early and total chaos. We have trouble with our ticket again but finally we are on the plane to Campo Grande - and the Pantanal. Our driver is late, but finally we are on the road. 238 km on highway, then 50+ km on dirt road to

get to our Caiman Lodge. On the way we stop at the local roadside diner for lunch. What should have been a snack, turned out to be a feast as they don't do small here! They LOVE their red meat and EVERYTHING comes with ham! We get to our lodge at about 15:30, quickly change into safari gear and take a 3 km guided walk through the bush alongside our camp. Dinner at 19:00 and our host is young Pedro (not the fisherman). The camp is situated on a 53,000 hectare cattle ranch in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. The Caiman Ecological Refuge is a pioneer in ecotourism, with particular work being done on Blue-fronted Parrot and the Hyacinthine Macaw. Our fellow guests are made up of poms, American-based Chinese, Japanese and Americans - all anxious to see Jaguar killing animals. We have a lovely meal and finally to bed.

The routine here is 6:30 breakfast, 7:00 out on our drive until 12:00. Rafael (pronounced Haffa) is our guide today and we spot Pampas Deer, Black-Hooded Parakeet, Guira Cuckoo (with crazy hair), Southern Caracara, Road-side Hawk, Wattled Jacana. There are amazingly beautiful birds everywhere you look! Back for lunch then siesta until 15:30, then out on drive 16:00-19:00.

We have already ticked off 54 birds when we spend the next day with our expert guides. Haffa and Mauricio who take us to some different areas and we see Red and Green Macaw, Hyacinthine Macaw, Toco Toucans to name a few. All with very different hair-does and interestingly shaped heads and all very exotic in colour and plumage! Our last stop of the day, we pull up beside a lagoon and hop out of the truck to do a slow stroll to a fig tree. Whilst scanning the area, we see a Jaguar some 50 metres away. He looks at us and after some time slowly rises to his feet, so we (wisely) decide to get back into the truck! Awaiting us on our return to camp is a one foot long snake - not unlike a viper. The boys remove it with assurances that 'it's not poisonous'!!!

After lunch and siesta, we are driven to an enormous lake where we hop into a Canadian-style canoe and are rowed around as the sun slowly sets. It is the right time of day to spot many Greater Fishing Bats, dipping and scooping insects and water from the lake surface. Quite a sight! On the drive back to the lodge we witness a partial eclipse of the moon. Our days have been filled with great sightings of Crab-eating Fox, Coati, Crab-eating Raccoon, Brazilian Rabbit, Capybara, feral pig, White-lipped Peccary, Pampas Deer, Red-brocket Deer, Brown-brocket Deer and Ocelot. Add to that the Jaguar, 6-banded and 9-banded Armadillo's, Black and Gold Howler, Giant Anteater, Tapir and Brown Capuchin monkeys.

That night we had dinner at the station house - base camp some 20 km from our lodge. The hacienda was ablaze with lights, huge barbecues were busy cooking meat for our delectation and the bar awaited our orders! Meat from the bbq was delivered on a huge five foot-long skewer, sliced to order with an enormous knife and placed on our plates. We were invited to work our way through an enormous sideboard of salads and delicious side dishes of every variety. All this

whilst three musicians, complete with sombreros and ponchos, sang and played for our enjoyment! Very touristy!

Regular flooding late in the year here means the land is regenerated and replenished. So much of the forest could be in Australia. Ironwood trees, mango and fig trees. Bromeliades too! The ponds are filled with lotus flowers, Caimen, rails, jacana and of course, Anaconda! Today we reach 100 new birds! Macaws, jabiru, Great Kiskadee, Sayaca Tanager, Purplish Jay, the list goes on. On our last night at the lodge, we spot a jaguar attempting to kill a calf. It was interesting to see the herd surround and defend the calf - laying into the Jaguar with their hoofs and horns. The Jaguar, intimidated, skulked off. There was definitely damage done to both the calf and another larger cow, so the Jaguar will no doubt bide his time. Nature will work it all out. We are taken to the middle of a forest for dinner under the stars. Our pathway lit with hundreds of candles and kerosene lanterns, it was quite surreal. It would have taken hours to set it all up - not forgetting the wild animals all around us! We serve ourselves to more wonderful food and try the local drink - a Caiparingha.

A leisurely start to this our final day with a four hour drive back to the airport and Sao Paulo - usual confusion at the airport and we walk miles to find our shuttle. We overnight at the same hotel. This is the only way to access the Iguassu Falls.

Up at 4 am and we set off once again for the airport and this time Iguassu! One and a half hours later we arrive and are escorted by our guide, Ciro, to our hotel, the pink palace, Belmond Hotel Das Cataratas, surrounded by nature and Atlantic rainforest. Absolutely gorgeous place, Portuguese-styled and old-worldly! Our room is not quite ready, so we stroll across the road and take in 'The Falls'. There are so many tourists, mostly locals, well it IS holiday time and it IS a Saturday. Everyone is taking selfies, everyone is oblivious to the Coatis ferreting around at their feet! We wander back to our hotel and access our room. Devine! We have views over the falls and awaiting us is a bottle of red wine, some cheese and chocolates as an apology for delays in our travels. Very nice! A Caipiringha cocktail is in order as we watch the sun set over the Iguassu Falls, followed by a light meal in the bar area, then bed.

After a great sleep, Ciro and driver pick us up at 10 and we drive to the Argentinian side of the falls. We cross the border (with hundreds of others) into Argentina and access the park after having our passports stamped. We walk for about ½ hour through littoral forest to a train that uses natural gas. We access the metal elevated walkway over the Iguassu Falls. Spectacular! Massive! Strange sights along the way. Our walkway is three metres wide. It is amazing to pass parents pushing prams with sleeping babies and people in wheelchairs along this awkward and lengthy pathway which runs for about 2 km to the falls. But it was worth it! The scramble to get selfies has to be seen to be believed. This area is called the Devils Throat and you can see why. The din as the falls drops away down

basalt walls some 80 metres to the base has to be experienced to be believed. We eventually retraced our steps and ended up having a lovely lunch in a local restaurant in the park, all you can eat for 700p. Everyone likes their meat here, so we watch people returning again and again for their money's worth!

After lunch, we walked to where our wet experience was to begin. We give our hats, wallets, bags and worldly goods to Ciro and join the, mostly young, nutters. Before we set off we read with great mirth the sign on the office wall. It is a list of do's and dont's for those people who do not qualify for this ride. One particular line catches our fancy. You are not allowed on this boat if you have 'preternatural anus'!!! Well. What can one say? We journey through the forest in a truck to a point where we alight, then scale lots of steep steps downwards to the river. On the boat we attempt to cover up our clothing with a token plastic poncho, why we bothered I don't know! Off we went. Time to take some snaps, then, provided with a special waterproof bag for camera and shoes, we secrete them away when the captain gives us the word. He then drives the boat into the falls. Not once but twice! Shit! Wet! Cold! Scary! Wet to the bone! Drenched we are pleased to see the falls drop away behind us as we return to shore and a chance to get dry. Slowly drying off, we got back to our hotel after passing back through the border. Quite some experience!!! Back at the hotel we quickly changed and made it to the bar in time for another Brazilian sunset from the balcony. We also caught up with our Canadian friends from Nsefu lodge. A cocktail was in order and later we dined in the hotel restaurant.

Ciro picked us up on our final morning and on the way out of Iguassu we stopped off for a visit to the Aves Park. Really glad we did as the display here was something else! Here we saw all the birds we have spotted so far and MORE. Everyone more exotic, more colourful than the next! Flamingoes, Harpie, burrowing owls, and, most particularly, the three different types of Macaw. A very impressive display. The forest is caged high and wide to give the birds a fairly natural setting in which to spread their wings. We journeyed across the border into Argentina yet again, this time to catch our plane. The airport and surrounding area looked like a bombed-out city in Syria! What a mess! After a scramble to get on the plane we finally made it to Buenos Aires.

We arrive very late in Buenos Aires, transfer from one airport to the next, board another plane, and finally land in Santiago at 2.30 am, where we were fortunately met and transferred to our hotel, the Singular. Old-world and in the trendy part of Santiago called Lastarria. Fell into bed finally and slept 6 hours. It was Monday, we took a slow stroll around the area on foot in 8° temperature and eventually found a lovely little restaurant for lunch. Whilst admiring the view it occurred to me that the clouds I was impressed with were actually the snow-covered mountains of the Andes, which surround the city of Santiago! A rest again in the afternoon and drinks and dinner at our hotel. Tony ordered Conger eel for dinner (he had that on his own).

We leave Brazil for Australia, another 14+ hour trip and we lose a day! 24 airport check-ins / passport control, security checks later we are home.

Ciro our guide in Iguazu Falls was a stand-out. He asked us what we were most interested in, what we wanted to see and catered to that. We were not rushed, but he got us ahead of the crowds, took us to see what we needed to see and imparted some great information about his country. Five star.

In Brazil: EVERYONE wears what looks like white sandshoes. Every woman - young, old, fat, thin, wears lycra-tight pants, everyone takes selfies. NO ONE puts paper of any kind in the toilet. Not even toilet paper. Figure that one out! I never could in Brazil. I may have left a lasting impression ...

Prettiest small bird: Scaled Dove

Most unusual bird: Southern Screamer



Most colourful bird: Hyacinth Macaw



Bird with the best name: Chaco Chachalaca

Most Attractive: Caracara

Disclaimer: Opinions and views expressed by authors in this newsletter are their own and do not necessarily represent the policies or views of the Manning Great Lakes Birdwatchers Inc.

Unusual and Interesting Sightings - Compiled by Ashley Carlson

Date	Observer	Species	Location
15/11/19	K Bettink	Beach Stone-Curlew	Old Bar
20/11/19	M Kearns	Sooty Tern 3x, Black-winged Petrel, Black Petrel 2x	Crowdy Bay pelagic
23/11/19	J Holden	Glossy Black-Cockatoo 3x	Rainbow Flat
26/11/19	B Ralley	Common Cicadabird	Forster
28/11/19	E Burley	Olive-backed Oriole	
		Brown Honeyeater 2x, Eastern Spinebill	Racecourse Estate, Tuncurry
01/12/19	T Morris	White-throated Needle-tail 500+	Tuncurry and Forster
04/12/19	D Morris	Eastern Shrike-tit 2x	Forster
05/12/19	B Ralley	Brush Cuckoo	Darawank
06/12/19	L Davis	Common Cicadabird	Forster
31/12/19	D Turner	White-throated Needle-tail 500+	North Tuncurry / Darawank
05/01/20	L Murphy	Roseate Tern, Grey Plover 2x	Mudbishops Point
09/01/20	R Burton	Red-backed Wren 2x	Cattai Wetlands
10/01/20	D Morris	White-throated Needle-tail 100+	Forster
	A Carlson	Wompoo Fruit-Dove	Pipers Bay, Forster
11/01/20		Grey Goshawk	Darawank
12/01/20	D Turner	White-throated Needle-tail 10x	Forster Keys
13/01/20	A Carlson	Square-tailed Kite	Pipers Bay, Forster
14/01/20	S Henry	Black-necked Stork	Melinga
	D Morris	White-throated Needle-tail 10x	Forster
		White-throated Needle-tail 20x	Taree
19/01/20	D Turner	White-throated Needle-tail 10x	Forster Keys
20/01/20	J Perrottet	Spotted Harrier	Dyers Crossing
24-28/01	HBOC	Owlet-nightjar, Grey Goshawk, Turquoise Parrot, Varied Sittella, Spectacled Monarch	UNSW Field Station, Smith's Lake
25/01/20	G Tong	Spectacled Monarch	Grandis Tree
		Pale-yellow Robin 2x	O'Sullivan's Gap
	A Brennan	Black Noddy	Seal Rocks
	P Goonan	Masked Owl	Wallingat NP
05/02/20	B McCauley	Square-tailed Kite	Lakes Estate, Forster
06/02/20	MGLBW	Varied Sittella 8x, Common Cicadabird	Booti Booti NP
08/02/20	B McCauley	Pacific Golden Plover 8x	Lakes Estate, Forster



Roseate Tern - Photo: Brian McCauley