



Manning Great Lakes Birdwatchers Inc

May 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
Public Officer	Liz McCauley	0431 878 395
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Items for the newsletter can be sent direct to the editor to either

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

From The Editor

Unfortunately, many of the outings during this quarter have been impacted by the Covid-19 virus. With the planned reduction of isolation rolling out over the next couple of months, we should be able to start enjoying birding as a group mid-year. Until then, you can keep an eye out for the return of winter migrants, during your exercise excursions locally.

Sadly we acknowledge the passing of one current and one past member of the birdwatchers in this newsletter, Barry Ralley and Graeme O'Connor (see page 4).

Although not due for another month or so, I have included the membership form for the next year financial year, for those that want to get in early. Sheila will love you for it.

Calendar of Outings

- 04/06 Cancelled due to Covid-19
20-21/06 Cancelled due to Covid-19
02/07 To be confirmed - Point Road / Tuncurry Breakwall / Chapmans Park - meet at the Point Road boatramp carpark Tuncurry
18/07 AGM - TBA
06/08 Baywood Drive Ponds Black Head / Diamond Beach - meet at the ponds. Follow Blackhead Road past Happy Hallidays and turn left at the roundabout into Baywood Drive and then first left into the access road. Lunch at Blackhead Beach Park
15/08 Towibakh NR / Manning Point / Vic Shoemith Reserve - meet at the NR carpark. Follow Manning Point Drive and turn left into Carramar Drive, approximately 500 m past Mitchell Island Public School

Port Stephens Campout - 14-16th February 2020 - By Various

Day 0 (13th Nicolette Bennett) - Tony and I cruised down the coast on a humid, sunny day arriving at our caravan park which fronted One Mile Beach, Anna Bay. After settling in, we did a quick sortie around the immediate area, where we were surprised to find a Horsfield's Bush Lark lurking in the grass near Birubi Beach. Along a well-trodden path, and with views back along Stockton Beach to Newcastle, we found a seat on the headland - once an Aboriginal midden - and enjoyed the view of 6 camels ambling along the beach, tourists onboard.

At our first drinks and nibbles that evening, we welcomed all our 'birdie buddies', (Lynn and Sheila, Brian and Liz, John and Helen, Dave and Shirley, Neil and Barbara, Elaine and Simon, Liz and Jim, Tony and Nicolette). Liz briefed us on Friday's activities, issued maps of the area and when all the canapés were consumed, we all repaired to our respective caravans/cabins for the night.

Day 1 (14th). Destination 1 - 7.15am start and it is overcast, but dry. Safari-style, we drive to Soldiers Point, arriving at Sunset Beach on the west side of Salamander Bay. The tide is out and the birds are

fossicking in the mud. We walked along the beach and on to an old wooden jetty giving us good views across the water. We spot Black Swan, Whimbrel, Far Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Osprey, Greater Crested Tern, Royal Spoonbill, Little Tern, Australian Pelican, Australian Pied Oystercatcher and Sooty Oystercatcher, to name but a few. We settled in to morning tea at this location with the sun putting out more heat as the day wore on. Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Galah, Little Corella, Eastern Rosella, Scaly-breasted and Rainbow Lorikeet's, Pied and Grey Butcherbird's entertaining us in the trees above. Before we moved on to our second destination, we totalled 42 birds here.



Far Eastern Curlew - Photo: Tony Bennett

Destination 2 - We drive a few kilometres south along the peninsular to the local Salamander Bay sports ground, where we find two huge drainage ponds connected by an old fire trail. The walk on the eastern side of the ponds was lined with beautiful Angophora trees, bracken and low scrub. Here we had good sightings of Nankeen Night Heron, Chestnut Teal, Australian White Ibis, Great Egret, Oriental Dollarbird, White-bellied Sea Eagle, various cormorants, Variegated and Superb Fairy-wren's, Brown Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-throated Gerygone, White-browed Scrubwren, Yellow and Brown Thornbill's, Rufous Whistler, Mistletoebird and Red-browed Finch. All in all, we spotted 39 species here.

We returned to Sunset Park for lunch and with an increasingly hot sun beating down, we finally finished up for the day earning a cool siesta before nibbles and drinks at 4.30pm. Terrific day had by all with lovely birds and beautiful landscapes to enjoy. Daily total of 67 species.

Day 2 (15th Shirley Henry) - Well after months of enduring diabolic weather conditions, we woke this morning to a fresh crisp morning which developed into an almost perfect day. There was not a cloud in the sky, barely a breeze and temperature somewhere in the mid 20's. What more could you want! A day of birdwatching to make the day even more perfect.

We set out from camp to Shoal Bay. What a beautiful part of the world this is! Absolutely gorgeous! No sooner had we alighted our car when Musk Lorikeet were seen flying along with the all-familiar Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet's.

Our first adventure was to walk the Tomaree Headland, but due to lack of birdlife and a steep climb we abandoned this walk in favour of a more comfortable walk up a small pathway through the National Park to the coast overlooking Zenith Beach. The sea was very rough with a huge swell pounding the rocks below. Reportedly there had been sightings of a Peregrine Falcon in this area but unfortunately not on this occasion.

There were numerous Noisy Friarbird, both Red and Little Wattlebird's and Noisy Minor in the bush as well as Grey Butcherbird.

We then walked along the water's edge towards Tomaree Head. There was so much activity on the water with people enjoying canoeing, wave surfing on kayaks, paddle boarding, boating and fishing. There was a huge swell coming through the headlands. A couple of dolphins were spotted.

On the rocky shorefront there were three stunning Sooty Oystercatcher, along with a Little Pied Cormorant preening and sunning itself. There were many terns, including one Caspian Tern along with the full assortment of cormorants. A White-bellied Sea-Eagle was sighted flying overhead as was the elusive Peregrine Falcon, which was being chased by many other birds, including one persistent magpie.

But wait! Bird of the day, bird of the year, bird of the century! Two of our keen spotters, Liz and Lyn, noticed a dark little bird in the water. They both correctly identified this bird as a Little Penguin. This sighting, I am sure, is the first ever-recorded sighting of a Little Penguin by the MGLBW. All present enjoyed exceptional viewings of this special little bird. Lots of photos were taken by the keen photographers. Woohoo!

After this very exciting encounter we ventured to our next destination, Barry Park at Fingal Bay. Another picturesque location with wonderful scenery. We ventured down the track to the lookout which looked out across Fingal Bay to the north and out to the sea from the south. Absolutely breath-taking scenery. Not much in the way of birdlife though. Most of our crew then made their way down the boardwalk track where a number of smaller birds were sighted and added to the list. These included Variegated Fairy-wren, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-browed Scrubwren, Golden Whistler and Eastern Yellow Robin. A Spotted Pardalote was heard by members.

After lunch we were wrapping up the day's birding list when an Osprey flew by, resulting in a tally of 45 birds for the day. This number of birds sighted was not as great as some other days but it was a perfect outing - perfect weather, stunning scenery and quality birds. A good day was had by all.

Day 3 (16th Lyn Davis) - A change in our itinerary today as the habitat at Boat Harbour is much the same as our previous outings. Lemon Tree Passage (No. 8 on the HBOC Birding Route guide) promised some different habitat and proved to be so!

At Tanilba Bay we surveyed the expansive mud flats with little to observe except a Far Eastern Curlew a few Bar-tailed Godwit, Great Egret and Black Swan. We went on the boardwalk that started at the Caswell Reserve and wandered through the Tilligerry habitat. This coastal forest included some very large trees, including Swamp Mahogany, paperbark, and Coastal Banksia to name a few.

As we continued through this rich habitat, we started to see all the species we had failed to see at the other spots. Soon Golden and Rufous Whistler's were seen, followed by White-cheeked, White-plumed White-naped, Brown-headed and Brown Honeyeater's and Eastern Yellow Robin. We were in honeyeater heaven, not knowing which way to look first. A friendly pair of Whipbird gave us great views as we moved along the boardwalk and ending at a Gallery Workshop where information and a rest stop were on offer. This is such a great asset for this area and is well used by the locals.

On the way back to Caswell Reserve we saw Sacred Kingfisher and great spotting by Barbara, a Tawny Frogmouth secreted in a paperbark tree overhanging the water.

Next venue was Gibber Point in search for Grey-tailed Tattler. Here we had some information from a member of Hunter Birders, who confirmed that the tattler were seen here. Moving along the shore we observed more Bar-tailed Godwit, Black Swan, Pied Oystercatcher and Chestnut Teal. Tony said he saw some smaller waders flying up the creek, so we gave chase. There they were, 3 Grey-tailed Tattler with a Bar-tailed Godwit.



Grey-tailed Tattler - Photo: Tony Bennett

Back at camp we rested for the afternoon to prepare for our farewell dinner at the Soldiers Point Bowling Club. Courtesy buses were organised and ferried us to the venue, where we enjoyed our meal with much lively chatter and merriment to complete our day and weekend with 74 species recorded for the day.

Grateful thanks were extended to Liz for organising the weekend and Brian for his valued assistance. Another great weekend for the 16 members who attended.

Bird List - Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Chestnut Teal, Rock Dove, White-headed Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Crested Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Tawny Frogmouth, Eastern Koel, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian

Coot, Little Penguin, Royal Spoonbill, Australian White Ibis, Nankeen Night-Heron, Striated Heron, Great Egret, White-faced Heron, Little Egret, Australian Pelican, Little Pied Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Great Pied Cormorant, Australasian Darter, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Sooty Oystercatcher, Masked Lapwing, Whimbrel, Far Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey-tailed Tattler, Silver Gull, Little Tern, Caspian Tern, Greater Crested Tern, Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Oriental Dollarbird, Sacred Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Galah, Little Corella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Eastern Rosella, Musk Lorikeet, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Australian King-Parrot, Satin Bowerbird, Variegated Fairy-wren, Superb Fairy-wren, White-cheeked Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Blue-faced Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Scarlet Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Red Wattlebird, White-plumed Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Spotted Pardalote, White-throated Gerygone, White-browed Scrubwren, Yellow Thornbill, Brown Thornbill, Australasian Figbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Rufous Whistler, Golden Whistler, Eastern Whipbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Australian Magpie, Pied Butcherbird, Grey Butcherbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Magpie-lark, Torresian Crow, Australian Raven, Eastern Yellow Robin, Tree Martin, Welcome Swallow, Silvereys, Common Myna, Mistletoebird, Red-browed Finch

Point Road, Breakwall and Tuncurry Racecourse - 05th March 2020 By Simon & Elaine Lemon

A stalwart little group of just seven members gathered at the meeting point near the boat ramp at 7.30 am on an overcast and humid day, courtesy of the remnant tropical cyclone Esther. Rain threatened early in the day but we were hopeful it would hold off for a while. Lynn Davis was our appointed master of ceremonies for the day in the absence of our usual leaders Liz and Brian.

We moved off to our first stop just at the end of Point Road where we gained access to the shores of the Wallambah River and Lake Wallis through the mosquito-infested bush. A number of water bird species were sighted; Pelican, Pied Oystercatcher, cormorant as well as a couple of raptors including a Whistling Kite and an Osprey nesting on a purpose-built platform atop a wooden pole. Several smaller bird species including honeyeater, thornbill and wren were seen amongst the bushes close to the river. We continued through the jungle adjacent to the shore and towards the caravan park where there was a good vantage point overlooking Ohmas Bay. We could see Sulphur-crested Cockatoo across the water feeding in the pine trees and Darter, cormorant, egret, Silver Gull and tern amongst the oyster beds and channel markers.

Having fed the mosquitoes for an hour or so we made our way back to Point Road only to be met by Dave and Shirley who put in a cameo appearance en-route to appointments in Forster. Back at the boat ramp we sighted Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet's in the palms across the road and a lone Blue-faced Honeyeater, seemingly out of place amongst several agitated Pied Butcherbird.

An early morning tea beckoned at the Tuncurry rock pool where we were pleasantly surprised by the appearance of one of our life members, Helen Bevan who would accompany us for the rest of the outing. The first bird call for the day tallied 39 species.

After some light refreshment (and a blood transfusion) Errol Burley led us out along Chapmans Road towards the race course, stopping along the roadside at the caravan storage yard for a glimpse of Yellow Thornbill, Silvereye, Red-browed Finch and Brown Cuckoo-Dove. Further along this road towards the Tuncurry Lakes Resort property we were witness to a remarkable recovery of the littoral rain forest following the summer bushfires. We were greeted by a friendly family of Kookaburra and a colourful Variegated Fairy-wren. gerygone, Eastern Whipbird and a Rufus Whistler (or was it Neil's Golden Whistler) were also evident at this location.

The group moved back to the racecourse entrance where we had a vantage point beside the back straight to spot a number of water birds including six Royal Spoonbill resting on the far shore of the lake, as well as Australian Wood Duck, Purple Swamphen and Eurasian Coot amongst the floating vegetation in the lake. Small flocks of White Ibis and Pelican were seen overhead, perhaps on the lookout for new feeding opportunities following the rain? An attempt to follow a short roadway near the entrance to the racecourse was thwarted by the onset of persistent rain but not before we had sight of a Lewin's Honeyeater, resplendent amongst a bunch of ripe fruit in a palm tree. This was our last sighting recorded for the day for a grand total of 52 species. Thank you Lynn and all for a great day.

Bird List - Australian Wood Duck, Rock Dove, Spotted Dove, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Crested Pigeon, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Royal Spoonbill, Straw-necked Ibis, Australian White Ibis, Plumed Egret, Australian Pelican, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Great Pied Cormorant, Australasian Darter, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Sooty Oystercatcher, Masked Lapwing, Silver Gull, Greater Crested Tern, Osprey, Whistling Kite, Laughing Kookaburra, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Eastern Rosella, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Variegated Fairy-wren, Brown Honeyeater, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, White-throated Gerygone, Yellow Thornbill, Brown Thornbill, Eastern Whipbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Australian Magpie, Pied Butcherbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Magpie-lark, Welcome Swallow, Silvereye, Mistletoebird, Red-browed Finch

Cruise Port Macquarie - 21st March 2020

This outing was cancelled due to Covid-19

Pacific Palms - 02nd April 2020

This outing was cancelled due to Covid-19

Bight Road / Wingham Brush - 18th April 2020

This outing was cancelled due to Covid-19

Bungwahl Creek / Darawank - 7th May 2020

This outing was cancelled due to Covid-19

Other Snippets

Vale Barry Ralley

Sadly we acknowledge the passing of Barry on the 01st April. Barry was introduced to the club through Janis back in January 2014. Although primarily not a birdwatcher, his skills in looking at details was a valuable asset in identifying birds he soon learnt to appreciate. His real passion was plants, and this was soon to become an accompaniment to our birdwatching outings, the endless knowledge of the vegetation that the birds we love habituated in. Barry steadfastly maintained a website that listed not only the flora of the Midcoast area, but birds and animals also. It was a valuable resource for those that used it. Barry's enthusiasm at club outings will be missed by those that were infected with his passion for knowledge. Our thoughts go to both Janis and Barry's family for their loss.

Vale Graeme O'Connor

Long-time members will remember club visits by Graeme, who resided in Newcastle. With Graeme's parents living in Cundletown, not far from the Langdown's, he was a member from 1991 to 2012. It would be nothing for Graeme to have driven from Newcastle and be first at the meeting place, before any of the locals arrived, and have a page full of birds before we got going. With an infectious laugh and dry sense of humour, Graeme could 'flap his gums' with anyone. For those that did not know him, he took great delight in pulling the wool over your eyes. Sadly Graeme passed away on the 05/04 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Victoria to Tasmania - Part 1 Text and photos by Liz & Brian McCauley

Feb 2020 - After spending an enjoyable four days at Port Stephens, with fourteen of our club members, and after fond farewells, we headed off for a couple of weeks birding in Victoria, prior to boarding the Spirit of Tasmania to Devonport on March 6th.

On the 18th February we arrived in Chiltern, a town in the north-east of Victoria between Wangaratta and Wodonga. It is a perfectly preserved gold-rush era

town, built in the late 1850's. Close by is the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park, with over 200 species of birds recorded, and its Cyanide Dam was to be our first destination. In the NP, the Ballarat Road/White Box walk area is famous for the release and monitoring of the Regent Honeyeater. We were privileged to be part of a bird count of the Regent Honeyeater in 2016.

As soon as we were settled into Lake Anderson Caravan Park in Chiltern, we headed straight to the Honeyeater Picnic Area at Cyanide Dam, where Brian had photographed the Antechinus on our previous visit in March 2016. We were shocked to see the changes to the surrounding bush, crispy dry due to the drought. The Dam, devoid of water, was encompassed by sad looking trees with no sign of the beautiful Yellow-tufted Honeyeater we had seen on our previous visit. After despondently trudging around the track, Brian suddenly became excited, he had seen movement amongst the fallen trees and dry undergrowth. Then Brian saw it. There it was scurrying along the ground as cute as ever, we had found our Antechinus. It was about a couple of hundred metres from where we had seen it previously, but still the same type of habitat; large fallen dry tree trunks, tangled branches and stumps with old hollows. We were rewarded for staying still and quiet and observed its daily tasks. Brian was thrilled to now get video of this small native marsupial, our first tick for the trip.

The next day, we headed out to another top birding location in the area known as Bartley's Paddock. On a previous visit we found it to be disappointing but this time hopefully it would deliver the goods. After totally walking the perimeter twice we found a Red-capped Robin, Jacky Winter and several very common small birds flitting in the trees edging the Paddock, we had hoped for more.

Our last day in the area, Thursday 20th, we headed 60km south-west of Chiltern, to our friend Pippa's property, where Brian had photographed the Turquoise Parrot in 2016. We were welcomed with the sad news that no Turquoise Parrot had been seen recently anywhere in the area. Possibly because the Copper Weed, on which the parrots feed, were nowhere to be seen in the paddocks adjacent to Pippa's garden. Red-rumped Parrots were there instead. Her garden and property is set out to encourage birds, so Brian was in his element, whilst I chatted and caught up over a cuppa. There were birds everywhere feeding and drinking in the numerous watering spots and flowering bushes and trees around the garden, Diamond Firetail, Superb and Variegated Fairy-wren's and Yellow-tufted Honeyeater. Whilst Pippa prepared lunch, Brian and I walked up the rocky hill behind the house and garden. Brian did get some great video of a friendly Hooded Robin. Pippa was pleased with the Robin sighting as she hadn't seen it around the house gardens this year, so after lunch we all walked back up the hill to find it. On the way back to the house we saw in the empty dam a couple of Brown Treecreepers sitting on some tree stumps and feeding off the ground. Apparently this was a favourite spot since the dam became dry. After a wonderful day catching up, we bade her farewell. Pippa was hopeful that the

Turquoise Parrots would be there on our return trip in March and would keep us updated.

Our next destination followed a 260 km drive south, to Heathcote, an old Gold mining town with a population of 2,763. It lies 45 km's east of Bendigo and just over 100 km's north of Melbourne. An abundance of wineries and local produce makes this a very popular tourist destination place. However we fell in love with it for the birding on our previous stay in 2016. It has a good value caravan park in a delightful spot just behind the main street of the town.

The Forest Drive adjacent to the Caravan Park runs along the side of Mclvor Creek, which we discovered to be a good birding spot. We headed off to do a walk along the creek but there wasn't near as many birds as in 2016 and disappointed we returned for a late lunch. Later in the afternoon we drove to the other end of the Drive via the main road and this was what we were after. Just after 4 pm the area came alive with birds, Speckled Warbler and the Buff-rumped Thornbill being the best get but there was stunning Golden and Rufous Whistler's and several close ups of the Eastern Spinebill, as well as the White-eared Honeyeater. We planned to do this same area early the next morning and headed back via the Forest Trail.



Speckled Warbler

On the way back to the caravan park, in now very late afternoon, we spotted a lot of Crimson Rosellas foraging on the grassy paddock in a picnic ground and the juveniles of this species are so beautiful with totally different colours to the adults. Again Brian got some great photos and video, but even better were the Galahs and rosellas foraging on the ground just opposite our caravan. A baby Galah was continually pestering its parent for food and it was a delight to see the chase as the adult tried to avoid the persistent baby. In the late afternoon light a Common Bronzewing was positively glowing iridescent with beautiful wing colours.

Branching left off Forest Drive is a dirt track that takes you up to the Heathcote Powder Magazine where, in 1852, the explosives for the gold mining at Mclvor Creek were stored. We went here very early the next morning on our way to the intended destination along the Forest Drive. The trees around the Powder Magazine were ablaze with colour and full of

Honeyeaters. Brian was especially delighted to get great footage of Brown-headed Honeyeater, as well as the White-eared and White-plumed. A track behind the building took us along a bush walk with heaps of potential, but it was getting late and we really wanted to get on with our itinerary. We decided to return later for a longer look.



Brown-headed Honeyeater

The Birding at the start of the Forest Drive was really great in the morning light and we got several more views of the Speckled Warbler, Yellow-rumped and Buff-rumped Thornbill's, some Red-browed Finch, White-cheeked, New Holland and White-eared Honeyeater's, a pair of Scarlet Robin and some beautiful Crimson Rosella. It had been a really great morning and we headed back to the Powder Magazine area, but it was really too hot now to do the walk so we headed back for a late lunch and for Brian to assess his images and footage.

To be continued ...

Elmley England - Text and Photos by Judi Homewood

In March, I was in London so took the opportunity to do some birding. We chanced upon Elmley, a family owned farm which is also a National Nature Reserve on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent about an hour and a half from central London. Numerous volunteers help to maintain the Reserve. It has vast amounts of fresh water habitats embedded in the grazing marsh, and is separated from the Swale Estuary by a large sea wall. It had been uncommonly wet before we arrived so the hides were not accessible. No matter, because there was lots to see. The drive from the main road to the car park wends its way through the grazing marsh, which is maintained for ground-breeding waders, in particular Lapwing and Redshank. The requirements are to use your vehicle as a hide and to stop on the side of the road to view birdlife from the comfort of your car. While numbers of ground-breeding birds are in decline in many parts of the world, Elmley has hundreds and hundreds of Lapwing and Redshank. We were fortunate to see Lapwing courtship flights, as well as flocks being spooked by the numerous resident Marsh Harrier and Common Buzzard. The ponds and surrounds were teeming with Mallard, wigeon, Bar-tailed Godwit, moorhen, curlew, White-faced Coot with

the occasional Oystercatcher and Grey Heron's. Grazing in the pastures were many male pheasant, likely to have been captive bred and released, currently avoiding being shot as game.



Common Redshank

Despite that the weather was not kind (the wind would have blown a dog off a chain and it was sleeting when we left) we saw three owls. The Long-eared Owl, named for its ear tufts, is a nocturnal hunter so seldom seen. Luckily, one was roosting adjacent to the main carpark but deep in the trees. It seemed word had got around because there was a steady stream of warmly-dressed and scope-carrying visitors. I heard several comments that it was a lifer. We also saw the Short-eared Owl, which hunts in daylight from perches and flies low over coastal marshes hunting for voles. The Owl trifecta was completed thanks to a tip from staff at Elmley to check for the Little Owl in the open eaves of an old barn adjacent to the turn off to the main road. My UK bird guide says the Little Owl, a small (21-23 cm) squat bird with a short tail, hunts at dusk for small rodents and insects, but sometimes perches in the open in daylight and this can attract the attention of smaller birds. Indeed, we first saw it perched and was then it flushed by something. That was the end of that.



Black-headed Gull

The following day we went to Oares Nature Reserve on the mainland, on the opposite bank of the Swale Estuary. Once again it was blowing a gale and bitterly cold. Birds were not as prolific, except there were scores of avocet working the mudflats and many Black-headed Gull coming into their breeding plumage and others still in their first winter plumage. In one of the

ponds the pintail were showing well, and good sightings of shoveler, teal, Tufted Duck and Greylag Geese rounded out our total of waterbirds. Carrying a British field guide signals a novice on the patch, and what was noticeable was the generosity of local birders pointing out birds of interest and identifying them.

Blast from the past - Overview of the Lake Cargelligo Spring Camp Sept 2015 - By Brian McCauley

Lake Cargelligo is about 800 kims from Forster and it certainly proved to be a great location for our spring camp. Sixteen members were in attendance, including three visitors, Graham and Kerry Gill from Melbourne and Roger Kershaw. The venue, Lakeside Caravan Park was very clean and adequate and our hosts, Kate and Dan O'Connor very hospitable. We all met up on Sunday at 5 pm and discussed the plans for each of the five days.

Conveniently there are 5 bird routes, one for each day and the first day, Monday, was route 1 which took in the Sewage outflow wetlands area in the morning and in the afternoon a town birding walk around Frog Hollow and parts of the main town lake.

Tuesday morning, route 2, saw us at Chat Alley, South Booberoi crossing and Round Hill Nature Reserve but because the weather turned with a cold and blustery wind and with rain threatening the already wet dirt roads constituted a hazard. The group decided to move on quickly back to bitumen for lunch, then on to Euabalong and back to base.

Thankfully that was the last of the bad weather and from then every day was bright, clear and sunny. Route 3, on Wednesday, was our longest drive, heading west on the Lachlan Valley Way, then north to Mt. Hope through open fields and wooded terrain. A highlight was a detour to the Brewster Weir. This trip produced the highest count and we had a great lunch at Mt. Hope Pub where we were served the best hamburger with the lot and scrumptious crispy fried chips.

On Thursday we did route 5 which took us along the eastern side of Lake Cargelligo looking mainly for chats in the saltbush paddocks with no luck and we attempted a cross country return from Sheet of Water following the Lachlan River but the track became far too boggy so we backtracked and returned via Euabalong.

Our final day, route 4, was a 25 km drive south down the Rankin Springs Road to the upper Yelkin State Forest where several roadside stops and lunch along an adjoining dirt road, near wheat fields, produced some great birding. That afternoon we spent at the Sewage Outflow Wetlands where we lucky to see two Baillon's Crake. We went out to dinner at the Commercial Hotel and had a fine meal over lots of discussion and recounting of our experiences and highlights of the outings.

The spring camp was a very enjoyable birding experience with most members having at least one or

two ticks (new birds not blood suckers *ed.*). Well done to the trip organisers for putting together a great campout.

Some birds seen recently



Rainbow Lorikeet - Photo: Tony Bennett



Powerful Owl - Photo: Ashley Carlson

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
12/02/20	D Morris	White-throated Needletail 100+	Taree South
15/02/20	C Galle	Beach Stone-Curlew	Wallis Point Island, Forster
18/02/20	B Ralley	Wompoo Fruit-Dove 2x	Forster
21/02/20	D Turner	Square-tailed Kite	Forster Keys
25/02/20	A Carlson	White-throated Needletail 60x	Taree
26/02/20		Spangled Drongo	Pipers Bay, Forster
27/02/20	B Ralley	Common Cicadabird	Nabiac
29/02/20	A Carlson	Spotless Crake	Pipers Bay, Forster
01/03/20	B Ralley	Southern Boobook	Botanic Gardens Taree
03/03/20		Little Penguin	Shelly Beach, Booti Booti NP
06/03/20	P Goonan	Square-tailed Kite	Forster Golf Course
07/03/20	H Bevan	Regent Bowerbird, Satin Bowerbird 2x	Tuncurry
08/03/20	D Turner	Topknot Pigeon 10x	Forster Keys
	N Fraser	Aleutian tern 3x, Common Tern, Pacific Golden Plover, Beach Stone-curlew	Mudbishops Point
10/03/20	B Ralley	Topknot Pigeon 23x	Nabiac
11/03/20	D Turner	Eastern Koel (last sighting)	Forster Keys
12/03/20	B Ralley	Red-browed Treecreeper 3x	Seal Rocks
14/03/20		White-winged Chough 3x	Nabiac
23/03/20		Grey-crowned Babbler 4x	Dyers Crossing
30/03/20	A Carlson	Square-tailed Kite	Forster
05/04/20	D Turner	Glossy Black-Cockatoo 3x	Forster Keys
07/04/20	A Carlson	Topknot Pigeon 40x	Moorland
		Grey Goshawk	Darawank
08/04/20	B McCauley	Square-tailed Kite	Lakes Estate, Forster
09/04/20		Pheasant Coucal	Forster Grange
21/04/20	S Perrottet	Glossy Cockatoo 2x, Grey-crowned Babblers 8x	Wallamba SF
24/04/20	D Ongley	Aust Owllet-nightjar, Masked Owl 2x	South Forster
25/04/20	A Carlson	Spotless Crake	Pipers Bay, Forster
26/04/20		Common Cicadabird, White-breasted WS 2x	Pipers Bay, Forster
26/04/20	D Ongley	Southern Emu-wren 2x	Green Point
28/04/20	A Carlson	Southern Boobook	South Forster
01/05/20	D Ongley	Common Cicadabird 2x	Southern Parkway, Forster
03/05/20		Aust Owllet-nightjar, Masked Owl	South Forster
08/05/20	P Goonan	Powerful Owl	South Forster
09/05/20	A Carlson	White-breasted Woodswallow 2x	Pipers Bay, Forster
10/05/20		Grey Goshawk	The Lakes Way, Mayers Flat



Little Terns - Photo: Peter Goonan