



Manning Great Lakes Birdwatchers Inc

August 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 18 July 2020 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 |
| Archives Officer | Lyn Davis | 0401 865 784 |
| Librarian | Lyn Davis | 0401 865 784 |
| Newsletter Editor | Ashley Carlson | 6557 5393 |
| Committee | Simon Lemon | 0439 689 339 |
| | Errol Burley | 6554 7729 |
| | Dave Cottrell | 0407 664 119 |
| | Jeff Holden | 0438 536 205 |

Items for the newsletter can be sent direct to the editor to either

Email: ashley.carlson@midcoast.nsw.gov.au
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

In this edition we welcome new member Phil Buchanan and hope you enjoy your time with our group.

At the AGM this year, the existing committee was re-elected predominately unchanged. The one minor change was a general committee position, with Janis stepping down and Errol taking up the role. Thanks to Janis for her work over the past couple of years.

Normally, this time of year I would be asking members to keep an eye out for returning summer migrants and note their arrival dates. This year however, there have been numerous species recorded throughout the winter months, as shown in the interesting sightings. There have also been records of common local species breeding during the winter months.

Calendar of Outings

- 03/09 Firefly / Tipperary Road - meet at the wetlands in Wallanbah Road just off Mobbs Lane
- 19/09 Mt George / Rocks Crossing - meet opposite the Mt George Hotel on Nowendoc Road
- 01/10 Mudbishops / Old Bar / Saltwater - meet at the south-eastern end of the airstrip near the caravan park
- 4-12/10 Camp Lake Cargelligo - Based at Lakeview Caravan Park, 8 Naradhan Street, Lake Cargelligo ph (02) 6898 1077. Cabins \$75-\$110 and powered sites \$30. Arrive Sunday 04th and depart Mon 12th. Any other questions please contact Liz McCauley
- 05/11 Minimbah Nature Reserve - meet at the corner of Glen Ora Road and McKinnon Road just south of Nabiac
- 21/11 Cooperook Swamp / Harrington Rainforest - meet at the carpark in Cooperook Road just west of the Pacific Highway
- 12/12 Christmas Party - details to be advised

Mt George / Rocks Crossing - 16th May 2020

This outing was cancelled due to Covid-19

Brushy Creek / Coolongolook - 04th June 2020

This outing was cancelled due to Covid-19

Camp Dunbogan - 20-21st June 2020

This outing was cancelled due to Covid-19

Brimbin Nature Reserve - 02nd July 2020 By Brian McCauley

This was our first official club outing since the Covid-19 pandemic closed us down in March and it was very

pleasing to see 14 members in attendance, including a welcome guest Phil Buchanan, who also joined up on the day. I would like to thank all those that attended for observing the safe distancing regulations and using the hand sanitiser provided by the club when necessary.

Despite the cold, somewhere between 3 and 5 degrees depending on whose car gauge you believed, it was a great day out, which only got better as the sun rose higher and we, as well as the birds, all warmed up. The road in was very rough in parts, but no general public meant that there was enough parking for all.

We headed off down the closed Old Port Road and could hear a distant White-headed Pigeon, a Fan-tailed Cuckoo and saw some Yellow-faced Honeyeater high up in the sunlit parts of the trees. Beautiful in this sunlight was a passing pair of King-Parrot. Taking the Tommy Owens Creek Track on the right, we followed the creek through beautiful bushland and there were a lot of birds calling.

What a break that this area was spared the ravage of the bushfires. Brown Gerygone and Brown Thornbill were in abundance and several whipbird were calling. We arrived at the pontoon, but all was quiet, and realised that we should have commenced our walk from here, so we back-tracked getting the Golden Whistler on the way. From here we took the Kate Kelly's Track on the left, which crossed the creek and headed up a slight incline to the next junction. We heard a snapping noise that turned out to be a Crested Shrike-tit picking at the bark and leaves. General consensus was go left and after a short distance the forest opened out and it was like the sounds of an aviary. Yellow Robin, White-naped and Yellow-faced Honeyeater's, Grey Fantail and Grey Shrike Thrush were all spotted. On the way back, Sheila saw a Rufous Whistler making both species for the day. Back at the picnic ground for morning tea we saw a Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Yellow Thornbill and heard a distant Wonga Pigeon calling.

The Dawson River Track was very rewarding in both the habitat and the birds seen. Large-billed, White-browed and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens, Variegated and Superb Fairy-wren's, Lewin's and White-cheeked Honeyeater's, Brown Thornbill, Eastern Spinebill, another Rufous Whistler seen by everyone and the ubiquitous Grey fantail were all spotted.

After lunch we headed off home but decided to stop at a few places along the road out and lucky we did with a total of 28 species seen in the early to late afternoon. We saw the Pied Butcherbird, Striated Pardalote, White-naped Honeyeater, Australian Magpie and Satin Bowerbird at one spot and further along at a grassy clearing Striated Thornbill, Variegated Fairy-wren and Red-browed Finch. The best spot however was at the junction of Cedar Party Road where we saw Jacky Winter, Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet's, Noisy Friarbird, Little Wattlebird, Noisy Miner, Wood Duck, Cattle Egret, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Welcome Swallow and Laughing Kookaburra. Total species for the day: 55



Striated Thornbill - Photo: B McCauley

Bird List - Australian Wood Duck, White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Wonga Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Topknot Pigeon, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Cattle Egret, White-faced Heron, Laughing Kookaburra, Eastern Rosella, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Australian King-Parrot, Satin Bowerbird, White-throated Treecreeper, Variegated Fairy-wren, Superb Fairy-wren, White-cheeked Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Scarlet Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Lewin's Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Brown Gerygone, White-throated Gerygone, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, White-browed Scrubwren, Large-billed Scrubwren, Yellow Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Brown Thornbill, Eastern Shrike-tit, Rufous Whistler, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Eastern Whipbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Pied Currawong, Australian Magpie, Pied Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Magpie-lark, Torresian Crow, Jacky Winter, Eastern Yellow Robin, Welcome Swallow, Red-browed Finch

Black Head / Diamond Beach - 06th August 2020 - By Nicolette Bennett

3 degrees, sunny and windless. A perfect day for birding.

Our team of 15, suitably garbed for a cool start, met at Baywood Drive ponds. From here we did a brief walk past decidedly frosty lawns to the back of the Senior Citizens Club, where amongst the trees and spent leaves, we spied a small, but perfectly formed Satin Bowerbird nest, complete with blue trimmings composed mostly of plastic blue bottle tops. No sign or sounds of the owner.

In convoy we drove out to Diamond Beach to the entrance into the Serenity Resort area. Out of our cars and wandering into the bush we found a family of Double-barred Finch excitedly flitting from tree to tree, providing a great start to the day. There was water in the creek and flowering trees, so it wasn't surprising to also find Red-browed Finch, Superb and Variegated Fairy-wren's, and tucked away amongst the tree-tops, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Galah, Little Corella, Eastern Rosella and Rainbow Lorikeet. In the nearby paddock, Straw-necked Ibis, Masked Lapwing and White-necked Heron. Moving further towards the resort, a great spotting of a Brown Falcon, White-naped

and Yellow-faced Honeyeater's, Noisy Friarbird, Little Wattlebird, Spangled Drongo, Eastern Yellow Robin and of course, Willie Wagtail, to name but a few.

We eventually wrenched ourselves away and took up a position north, behind the Resort. This area, Khappinghat Nature Reserve, was greatly affected by fires and drought, so where huge Banksias once stood, this area now presented itself as a wet, grassy and stumpy-treed landscape. We decided to head along a mowed pathway towards the tree-line. The walk began with a sighting of a Grey Goshawk and hearing the sound of frogs croaking, we were not surprised to see a magnificent Great Egret carefully picking his way towards dinner! As we walked towards the tree-line the areas on either side of us became drier and we were thrilled to see a Southern Emu-wren, who put on quite a show for us. The cameras were clicking furiously and the bird did not disappoint! The eyebrow and throat were a magnificent almost duck-egg blue, in contrast to his rich tawny body, and he sported a very sparse but long tail - quite the little show-off! We made it to the tree-line where we saw Drongo and White-cheeked and White-naped Honeyeater's.

As the time was moving on and our members were thirsting for morning tea, we made our way back to our cars (taking in a further sighting of the Southern Emu-wren), and drove back to Black Head Beach. Here we saw Brahminy Kite, Dusky Moorhen, Crested Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Silver Gull and Kookaburra.

Having consumed liquid and a lamington, our revitalised group then moved up the road to begin the Rainforest Walk at the back of Black Head Bowling Club. After a somewhat quiet start, we managed to see some very nice small birds like the White-throated Greygone, White-browed and Large-billed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Golden Whistler, as well as Australasian Gannet, Great Cormorant, Great Pied Cormorant, Pied and Grey Butcherbird's and Torresian Crow. We repaired back to the picnic area, now well-inhabited with young picnickers, and had our lunch. 61 birds sighted.

The highlight: the Double-barred Finch family and the very smartly- dressed Southern Emu-wren.

Bird List - Australian Brush-turkey, Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Spotted Dove, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Dusky Moorhen, Straw-necked Ibis, White-necked Heron, Great Egret, Australasian Gannet, Great Cormorant, Great Pied Cormorant, Masked Lapwing, Silver Gull, Grey Goshawk, Brahminy Kite, Laughing Kookaburra, Brown Falcon, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Galah, Little Corella, Eastern Rosella, Rainbow Lorikeet, Variegated Fairy-wren, Superb Fairy-wren, Southern Emu-wren, White-cheeked Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Eastern Spinebill, Lewin's Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, White-throated Greygone, White-browed Scrubwren, Large-billed Scrubwren, Yellow Thornbill, Brown Thornbill, Australasian Figbird, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Eastern Whipbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Butcherbird, Grey Butcherbird, Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Spangled Drongo, Leaden Flycatcher, Magpie-lark, Torresian Crow, Eastern Yellow Robin, Tree Martin, Welcome Swallow, Common Myna, Red-browed Finch, Double-barred Finch

Other Snippets

COVID-19 Activities

Simon decided to occupy some of his lockdown time by building and installing three nesting boxes in trees near his digs. Interest was shown within two days of the boxes being installed. Time will tell how successful the venture was.



Galahs - Photo: S Lemon



Rainbow Lorikeets - Photo: S Lemon

Australian Bird Count 2019 - Summary

Lyn received a summary for the Australian Bird Count held during early December 2019. Our group counted 46 species which was 28% of the NSW total and 1377 individuals which equated to 22% of the NSW total.

Victoria to Tasmania - Part 2 Text and photos by Liz & Brian McCauley

Sat 22nd Feb - leaving Heathcote, we travelled approximately 90 km south-east to Yea via Seymour. We were continuing to have great birding weather since we had left Port Stephens. Yea was originally a gold mining town in the late 1800's, with many historical buildings. With a population of 1,586, it is now a rural town. The Yea River flows around the edge of the town centre and the wetlands are adjacent to the river, the reason for our targeting this area.

Unfortunately it had succumbed to the lack of rain with tiny puddles of water remaining.

Sun 23rd Feb - on the second day we decided to drive 29 km south to the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve. Situated in the northern end of Toolangi State Forest, about 1½ hours' drive north east of Melbourne, the reserve comprises 1,068 hectares of mixed species eucalypt forest, which includes waterfalls, tree fern gullies and an abundance of bush walking tracks. There is a track which follows the river and we spent the morning here. The birds of interest we found that day were Long-billed Corella, White-eared Honeyeater and Brown Gerygone.

Mon 24th Feb - in the morning we went back to Murrindindi Scenic Reserve and after a long drive along Murrindindi Road we turned off and parked at the Tall Trees Trail. Along the first half kilometre of this trail we got a lone Crescent Honeyeater, the ubiquitous Eastern Yellow Robin, a Rufous Fantail and a flighty Grey Fantail, as well as the White-eared Honeyeater. That afternoon we went for another longer walk around the wetlands, but the only birds seen were a couple of White-necked Heron plus one solitary White-faced Heron, several wrens, thornbill and rosella.



Crescent Honeyeater

Tue 25th Feb - we headed 150 km south to our next destination South Werribee Caravan Park, nestled on Port Phillip Bay at South Werribee. Being situated just over 30km south-west of Port Melbourne made it convenient for our early morning boarding of the Spirit of Tasmania scheduled for March 6th. That afternoon we did the drive to the Ferry Terminal to familiarise ourselves with the route. On the return trip we popped into the Werribee Shopping Centre to get supplies for the next ten days we had planned to spend in the area. Later that afternoon we went for a foreshore walk. Near a headland we watched a bloke trying to land a huge fish, unfortunately we didn't stay for the result as it dragged him along the beach avoiding swimmers. There were lots of Seagulls and diving Little and Crested Tern's and Brian got a chance to practice photographing birds in flight.

Our first destination was to be the Western Treatment Plant, an internationally recognised site for birdwatching. The plants, lagoons, grasslands and coastline provide an ideal and varied habitat for birds with a permanent water supply, plenty of food, and

little interference from humans. It provides a haven for tens of thousands of birds.

Wed 26th Feb - up and away early, we were anxious to go to our favourite locations at the Treatment Plant. Unfortunately this was our first rainy day, accompanied by cold winds. We weren't too concerned as we had planned for lots of days at the Treatment Plant ponds. We were expecting to see Blue-winged Parrot, because they were in abundance on our previous visit, but this year we couldn't find any at all. We did however get great video of the Striated Field-Wren and also of White-fronted Chat, which were present in good numbers. Large flocks of Yellow Spoonbill were present on some of the ponds, but because of the exposed banks it was difficult to get close. One highlight was a pair of Brolga, which Brian was able to sneak up to and get some really good video, and another was a large flock of swans drinking fresh water off the sea during a heavy downpour. As usual, Musk Duck moved off as soon as they spotted us, but generally the weather limited our birding to just driving around the barriers.



Striated Fieldwren

Thur 27th Feb - thank goodness the rain and wind had gone and it was a lovely sunny day. We headed north 26 km to check out Jawbone Reserve, consisting of two wetland lakes. It is only 8 km from the heart of Melbourne and adjacent to Williamstown. This reserve was an amazing spot for waterbirds, especially ducks. For years we had been chasing Blue-billed Duck, and here they were right in front of us along with Shoveler, Hard-head and Pink-eared Duck's. This park is a very well maintained reserve with easy access, sealed paths and wonderful habitat for lots of species. We got great sightings of Australian Reed-Warbler, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, and Great Crested, Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebe's. The only downside was the maniacal cyclists and we had to take great care not to be mown down as we dashed about the track. The ducks were obviously used to all the people using the park and not as flighty as we were used to, so we were able to get lots of excellent close up video.

We caught up with a Melbourne birder. He suggested that we check out another spot on Racecourse Road and joined him as he walked along the largest lagoon, opposite to where we had been. We got a closer look

at some Great Crested Grebe, Pink-eared Duck and the ubiquitous Eurasian Coot, but didn't finish the whole walk endeavouring to come back again the next day.

Fri 28th Feb - the birding was not as good as yesterday and also it felt like all Melbournians were either on bikes or skate boards, with only visitors walking. Brian couldn't resist doing some more close-ups of the ducks and after lunch we headed back to the Werribee Caravan Park.



Blue-billed Duck

Sat 29th Feb - being a Leap Year we were happy to have an extra day in February to spend birding in Victoria so we headed for the Water Treatment Plant. On arrival at the first gate we rang our local birdwatching friend David to organise our day with him at the ponds. He suggested we also visit the Serendipity Sanctuary 15 km south-west of the sewerage ponds, as it was a great place to get the Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

It was a lovely sunny day, great for birdwatching and we saw large flocks of Red Knot along the foreshore, lots of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Pacific Golden Plover and very large flocks of different cormorants, but no Black-faced Cormorant, which was one bird that we were after. On the ponds, there were lots of spoonbill, Chestnut and Grey Teal's, evasive Musk Duck, Magpie Geese and Great Egret. On the dividing barriers we got quite close to Tree and Fairy Martin's and Yellow-rumped Thornbill and all along the scrubby banks and marshes were Australian Reed-Warbler, White-fronted Chat, Little and Tawny Grassbird's and Striated Fieldwren. After lunch we headed off to Serendipity Sanctuary. For a Saturday, and free admission, we were surprised how few people there were, most of the visitors being large family groups picnicking at the kiosk and tables both outside and inside. Our advice was to hang about the aviaries because the Eurasian Tree Sparrows were known to get in through the wire and eat the seed. However the walk through aviaries were very popular with the families and the kids were as usual very noisy and active, so we had to be very patient to finally get shots outside the aviaries without wire in the background. On one of their many lagoons there were hundreds of Magpie Geese and the odd Cape Barren Goose. This is a great Sanctuary with beautiful well maintained and natural habitat and well worth a visit.

Sun 1st Mar - spent the morning wandering around the shops at Hooper's Crossing, 16 min's drive north-east of the van park. We checked out a couple of sports shops for backpacks and ended up buying them at bargain prices at Kmart, one for Brian's camera gear and the other for food on the Spirit of Tasmania.

Mon 2nd Mar - we rang David really early as the weather was pretty ghastly and rescheduled our day with him to the following Wednesday. The day improved so we decided to head 86 kilometres south to Point Addis, as I had seen reports of recent sightings of the Rufous Bristlebird on e-Bird. Just over half way down the Point Addis Road we saw a bird race across the road and we knew at once it had to be the Rufous Bristlebird. We spent quite some time finding the right spot and had a wonderful morning observing and videoing them.

Tue 3rd Mar - today we headed for the Cheetham Wetlands which is a series of artificial and natural lagoons on the western shore of Port Phillip Bay, approximately 20 kilometres south-west of Melbourne. It was formerly a salt works but was set aside in 1996 to protect the wetlands and migratory birds. The Wetlands had some great walking tracks, but no new birds were seen, although Brian did get great video of a Grey-tailed Tattler.

Wed 4th Mar - David was waiting for us when we arrived at the Sewerage Ponds. After catching up, we followed him to what he considered were the best birding spots. This was by far our best day yet, and he was able to find a Pectoral Sandpiper and several Fairy Tern, both first ticks for us. The grand finale to the day was when we were shown the release aviaries for the critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot, which are being bred at Werribee Open Plains Zoo and Healesville Sanctuary. After David left we had to double back to the aviaries to retrieve our speaker and on rounding a bend on the track 3 small Parrots flew up. They had to be either Orange-bellied or Blue-winged, but it happened too fast to positively identify them. We got out our chairs and sat for some time hoping they would reappear. I saw them again about ½ hour later, but just too far away. In the meantime Brian was videoing a pair of White-fronted Chat tending young in their nest.

Thur 5th Mar - it poured all last night and we got up to overcast skies. Luckily on the day before we left for Tasmania, we had planned to stock up on supplies for our trip, excluding fruit and vegetables. Brian washed the car in between showers. We went for a drive to try to find, unsuccessfully, David's spot for the Greenfinch. Brian hitched up the caravan and we stowed everything away ready to leave.

The following morning we got up very early and left for our trip to Tasmania

To be continued ...

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 |
|----------|------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 16/05/20 | N&B Ryan | Plumed Whistling -Duck 3x | Rainbow Flat |
| 22/05/20 | A Carlson | Square-tailed Kite | Pipers Bay Forster |
| 23/05/20 | | Peaceful Dove 2x | Talawahl NR |
| | | White-winged Chough 1 1x | Hillville |
| 30/05/20 | P Goonan | Double-banded Plover, Far Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit | Mudbishops Point |
| 02/06/20 | A Carlson | Topknot Pigeon 9x | Purfleet |
| | | Grey Goshawk | Darawank |
| 04/06/20 | D Turner | Common Cicadabird | Forster Keys |
| 06/06/20 | | Collared Sparrowhawk, Common Cicadabird, White-throated Gerygone, Varied Sittella | Wallamba Tourist Park |
| 22/06/20 | | Square-tailed Kite | Forster Keys |
| 25/06/20 | | Topknot Pigeon 5x | Forster Keys |
| 28/06/20 | P Goonan | Olive-backed Oriole | Booti Booti NP |
| 30/06/20 | B McCauley | Australian Logrunner 2x | Sandbar |
| 02/07/20 | MGLBW | White-throated Gerygone | Brimbin NR |
| 04/07/20 | C Curson | Crested Shrike-tit, Rufous Fantail | Wallingat NP |
| 09/07/20 | S Henry | Grey Goshawk | Crowdy Head |
| 13/07/20 | B McCauley | Buff-banded Rail 5x | Cooperbrook |
| | A Morris | Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit 9x | Mudbishop's Point |
| 20/07/20 | S Henry | Black-necked Stork | Stone's Oysters, Harrington |
| 22/07/20 | E Masters | Glossy Black-Cockatoo 3x | Brimbin Settlement Ponds |
| 24/07/20 | A Carlson | Topknot Pigeon 18x | Forster |
| 01/08/20 | A Stuart | Double-banded Plover 41x, Bar-tailed Godwit 37x Far Eastern Curlew 4x | Mudbishops Point |
| 02/08/20 | | Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, White-fronted Tern | Harrington |
| 03/08/20 | D Ongley | Wonga Pigeon, Shinning Bronze-Cuckoo, Green Catbird, Australian Logrunner 2x, Cicadabird | Booti Booti NP |
| 06/08/20 | MGLBW | Grey Goshawk, Southern Emu-wren, White-throated Gerygone, Spangled Drongo, Tree Martin | Hallidays Point |
| 07/08/20 | D Onlgey | Brush Bronzewing | Tuncurry |
| 12/08/20 | A Carlson | White-breasted Woodswallow | Pipers Bay, Forster |