



The Twitcher

May
2024

CENTRAL COAST GROUP, BIRDING NSW

Editorial Team: Allan Benson (0457 458 274) Wendy Mitchell (4340 4870) & Robyn Price

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DATE	ACTIVITIES	LEADER/SPEAKER
28/5/24	Next Meeting: Madagascar Adventure Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds	Dick Jenkin
1/6/24	Outing: Gosford Waterways REMEMBER TO REGISTER Meet: 8.30am Gosford Regional Art Gallery, Adelaide St, East Gosford	Graham Nelson 0466 599 278
12/6/24	½ day Outing: Spencer REMEMBER TO REGISTER Meet: 8.30am Spencer Wharf, opposite the store, Wiseman's Ferry Road	Margaret & Kaye Pointer 4374 1163
25/6/24	Next Meeting: Tracking the endangered Australian Painted Snipe Meet: 7.30pm Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac Rd, Tuggerah, opposite McDonalds Note: For all Outings bring your morning tea and lunch. A chair is a good idea.	Matt Herring



Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be available at the end of the meeting.

To cover hall hire and refreshments a donation of \$4 would be appreciated.

Tonight's Meeting: Our Speaker Tonight is Dick Jenkin. Dick focuses on bird photography and judges our annual Photographic Competition. Tonight, he will talk to us about Madagascar. Madagascar is a fascinating place offering a range of habitats which support a wealth of endemic bird and animal species.

Last Month's Meeting: 25 attendees heard a very interesting presentation from Alan Stuart on the endemic birds of Sri Lanka that he saw and photographed on a 3-week trip in 2017. We were treated to some great photos and a great insight to the culture and habitats in Sri Lanka.

Webpage: Don't forget to check out the Birding NSW Webpage www.birdingnsw.org.au where there is plenty of info about outings, photograph gallery, and general info about the Club. Well worth a visit! Check out Central Coast Birders on Facebook as well! It has now reached over 1200 members. A great job Malcolm Hill! The Facebook page is a huge success allowing bird-related issues to reach over 800 people on the Central Coast.

Total Fire Ban Days and Outings: Outings may be cancelled on days of total fire bans. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the planned birding site being accessible and the potential risk. This decision will be made by the leader. If the outing is cancelled it will be published on Central Coast Birders Facebook. If in doubt contact the outing leader.

CAMPS 2024

Fri 6th - Sun 8th September	Karuah	Graham Nelson	0466 599 278	Big 4 Karuah Jetty Caravan Park 88 Holdom Rd, Karuah 1800 005 552 or (02)4997 5520
Fri 18th - Sun 20th October	Harrington	Alan Morris	0418 269 482	Harrington Beach Holiday & Caravan Park 50 Crowdy St, Harrington (02) 6556 1228

CAMPOUT PROCEDURES for Central Coast Group, Birding NSW

- Campouts will be limited to 20 birders.
- The leader is to be contacted prior to booking accommodation.
- Car-pooling may be necessary to enable all cars to park at some locations, otherwise the group will be unable to stop at these good birding areas.
- When there are several cars, please wait when turning off the main route for the following car to catch up.
- It is a custom at campouts to have a "Bird Call" in the BBQ area of the Caravan Park after the day's birding, to check all the birds seen during the day by everyone at the camp. People usually bring a drink and nibbles and socialise. Everyone is encouraged to attend the bird call to make sure no birds seen are omitted from the list for the camp.
- Generally, at campouts the group attends a local club or restaurant for dinner one night and usually has a BBQ meal together another night after bird call. Bird camps are a good time to socialise and get to know one another better.
- Please follow the leader's instructions. They are volunteers and have put a lot of time into organising the camp.
- It is best if everyone can keep up with the leader and stay together, where possible, so that all manage to see the birds and the leader is not constantly waiting for people to catch up.

Saving Stamps: Please keep saving used stamps (on paper, trimmed) to pass to Wendy Mitchell for donation to charity.

WHAT WAS NEW in April/May and WHAT CAN WE EXPECT in June?

The most exciting news was the sighting of a Red-backed Kingfisher at Mt Penang Gardens on the May Outing. The Red-backed Kingfisher was not identified at the time but later in photographs the next day. Oddly, the same bird was photographed sometime previously but again not identified. This is only the second record for the Central Coast, the last was at Somersby in 1995. On the same outing Fuscous Honeyeaters were recorded at Bull's Quarry. This is a regular site at this time of year.

A Little Friarbird at the Dairy was a good record. It is possibly a first for the Dairy. The predicted Restless Flycatcher did turn up at Mangrove Dam on the 1/2-day outing. The May Terrigal pelagic yielded a good haul of Albatross with seven being recorded including a Wandering. Wanderers are a lot less common on pelagics than



Little Friarbird
Leanne Lemke

in years gone by. It was nice to see a record of Dusky Woodswallow. These are thin on the ground at the moment. There have been some records of Swift Parrots (see Swift Parrot section for details) but none seemed to have stayed in our LGA. Drongos are being reported regularly, particularly from the bike track at Lakes Beach. There are multiple flocks of Topknot Pigeons with up to 50-60 birds in each flock feeding on Camphor Laurel along the railway line around Ourimbah/ Lisarow.



Red backed Kingfisher
Liz Noble

For June, hopefully we get some more records of Swift Parrot. Joshua Porters Reserve at Chain Valley Bay is one of the more likely spots, so its worth checking on a regular basis. There is still a possibility of a Scarlet Robin on the Mangrove Mountain plateau so it is worth keeping an eye out. Ospreys have been refurbishing their nests in preparation for breeding, so they will be sitting on eggs in the near future. The spring migrants have gone leaving behind a few stragglers that will over-winter. Bush birds are quiet at the moment and this will continue until they start to breed again in August.

OUTING REPORTS

Outing: April 27

BULL'S QUARRY & MT PENANG GARDENS

Leader: Frik Gautschi

The bleak weather forecast (40% chance of showers) not only came to naught, instead 22 birders enjoyed blue skies and a windless day. Included in the group were six visitors, duly encouraged to become members of Birding NSW.

Even more pleasing than the perfect conditions, was the comparative abundance of birds along the Tunnel Fire trail leading to the former quarry. Honeyeaters were constantly calling and seen, being mainly Yellow-faced, Scarlet, New Holland and White-cheeked, but we saw at least one each of Lewin's, Fuscous, Brown and Brown-headed Honeyeaters. Little Wattlebirds were everywhere and obviously the easiest to identify. There was little sign of any blossom so, instead of burying their heads somewhere in the canopies, the honeyeaters were darting about after insects and presented a different birdwatching challenge. Other birds seen here were a few Eastern Spinebill, Red-browed Finch, Superb Fairywren and Silvereye. A Golden Whistler was briefly seen after calling a few times, but the elusive Whipbird wasn't, nor was the Fan-tailed Cuckoo. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, although faintly heard in the distance were eventually seen from close up at our next stop.



Fuscous
Honey-

The flooded former sandstone quarry was occupied by a solitary Australasian Grebe and an equally lonely Eurasian Coot with a few Welcome Swallows overhead. An Eastern Yellow Robin showed up for some people-watching but there was much less activity of note beyond this point other than a Brown Honeyeater, so we returned to the cars with a tally of 27. We recorded 36 species last year but, from memory, not nearly as many birds.

Mount Penang Gardens was our venue for morning tea and later for lunch. The lone picnic table was all ours and most welcome after two hours' birding. A foursome of Eastern Rosellas and a few Sulphur-crested Cockatoos almost went unnoticed, probably because they're here every year. Later in the day two far-off raptors made for more deckchair viewing. Appearing very dark with chunky tails they looked like Wedgies at this great distance, but after much debating we settled for young Sea-Eagles.

The Kariong Fire trail treated us to 3 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos feeding on fallen pinecones under a clump of trees and afforded our photographers a great opportunity. Little Wattlebird, Superb Fairywren and Red-browed Finch were all we saw on this quiet walk, but a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and Pied Butcherbird added to the quality of the modest tally here.

Back at the Gardens were all the usual waterbirds: Eurasian Coot, Swamphehen, Dusky Moorhen, countless Wood Ducks, a colourful assortment of Mallard-Black Duck hybrids and a few Cormorants.

The Garden walkways were traversed after lunch and were as rewarding as in past years. We saw both Brown and Yellow Thornbills, several Superb Fairywrens and an unusual-looking Kingfisher about 150m away across the small lake outside the gardens. With only a front-on view, opinions varied between Sacred and even young Kooka, the former being recorded after observing the bird collecting an insect on the lawn. The next day Carol Edwards had a closer look at her photographs and a Red-backed Kingfisher was revealed. A lifer for most!



A Spotted Pardalote caused much excitement when it showed up soon after calling and even stayed for a while. Our last bird was a White-browed Scrubwren, which was called in. Within a split second the little cutie had settled on a perch just a few metres away, instantly bursting into song.

35 species here: 50 for the day (cf 56 last year and only 36 the year before). Contact the leader for a comprehensive list. Thank you, attendees for: your great company, sharing your expertise and the kind Facebook posts.

Camp Out: May 3 to 5**WEST WYALONG****Leaders: Graham Nelson and Doug Hocking**

It was time to visit West Wyalong again as our last camp was in 2017. The target habitats were high rainfall mallee, box woodlands, mugga iron bark, cypress pine, casuarinas, wetlands and farmlands of the area. The Ace Caravan Park is a great place to stay with a great range of habitat that hosts birds that included: Pink Cockatoo, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Apostlebird, Red-rumped Parrot, Australian Ringneck, Bluebonnet, Red Wattlebird, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Pacific Black Duck and Little Pied Cormorant on the water hole at the back.

Our first site visit was the Charcoal Tank and Buddigower Nature Reserve. At the Charcoal Tank we saw White-eared Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Rufous and Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Spotted and Striated Pardalote, Common Bronzewing, Eastern Yellow Robin, Mistletoebird, Weebill, Australian Raven and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. We stopped at Alleena Silos where the resident Peregrine Falcon gave us great views, as well as an Inland Thornbill and Superb Parrots. Buddigower was very quiet with a howling easterly and only a Collared Sparrowhawk and White-eared Honeyeater evident. A Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen on the Newell Highway along with Little Ravens.



Pink Cockatoos
Jan Mahondras

On the way back to town for lunch we made a stop on the southern side of the West Wyalong Golf Club and had great views along the fairways where there are many Aleppo Pines. This proved exciting for all of us with 70+ Pink Cockatoos (both red and yellow crested), Bluebonnets (both red and yellow vented) and 15 Superb Parrots with great views of a mature male.

In the afternoon we went to Hiawatha TSR with great habitat but tough birding. However, we managed to see Australian Ringneck, Common Bronzewing, Buff-rumped Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Double-barred Finch, Zebra Finch, White-winged Chough and Brown Quail. Before day's end we visited the West Wyalong Wetlands and saw Dusky Moorhen, Coot, Purple Swamphen, White-breasted Woodswallow, Dusky Woodswallow, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, White-plumed Honeyeater, White-faced Heron, Little Black Cormorant, Australasian Darter, Hardhead and 40 Hoary-headed Grebe.

On Saturday with rain forecast, we went back to the wetlands first thing and saw a diverse range of birds visiting a sentinel dead eucalypt and surrounds that included: Brown Goshawk, Peaceful Dove, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Striated Pardalote, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and Red Wattlebird. We then went to Nine Mile Tanks and saw a lone Grey Butcherbird. It started raining so we headed back to camp until 1:30 pm and prepared for a much-anticipated visit to the Lake Cowal Conservation Centre but it was a very wet visit with 40 mm of rain. On the way we saw a Yellow-throated Miner.

The Lake Cowal Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit Conservation Trust established in 2000 that represents environment groups, landholders and the Evolution Mine. The Lake Cowal Conservation Centre has well established education facilities managed by our Host, the extraordinary Mal Carnegie and Education Officer Sally. Lake Cowal is an ephemeral lake of some 14,000 hectares, it can be dry for many years at a time but is now 80 percent full. It fills primarily from the Bland Creek and Lachlan River. The bird species list is some 270. In 2021/22 an estimated 30,000 Straw-necked Ibis nested there. Mal Carnegie gave us a wonderful presentation of the Lake, the Trust and their activities/projects that extend throughout the southwest. It was then time to brave the weather for a late visit to Lake Cowal, the road, whilst all weather, was slippery with some water inundation. At the Lake there is a wonderful undercover viewing area, but with pouring rain we only saw Musk Duck, Whistling Kite, Royal Spoonbill, White Ibis, Eastern Rosella, Brown Falcon and White-plumed Honeyeater. Led by Mal we then slipped and slid back to the Conservation Centre where we had our usual bird call followed by a sumptuous BBQ and a dessert of Sally's homemade pavlova.

Sunday dawned relatively fine and it only improved during the day. Mal Carnegie, once again, took us to an active Malleefowl mound not far west of the township. Whilst the bird was not present, the fresh wind-rowed mulch was some 20 metres long. The Conservation Trust is very active working with Birdlife Australia, farmers both around West Wyalong and Rankin Springs on the Malleefowl Conservation Project. They have increased numbers in one area from 5 to 50 birds. They have also had provisional permission to collect a small number of eggs that they incubated, with all but one of the eggs hatching and the chicks released into the wild.



The Mallee mound at Tallimbalong
Graham Nelson

It was then onto Barmedman for morning tea where we had good views of a Singing Honeyeater in town, and at the Cemetery we saw our first family of Grey-crowned Babblers. We then headed for Curraburrama State Forest, zigzagging through farmland and stopping on the way where we saw Restless Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Black Falcon, Swamp Harrier, Black-shouldered Kite, Nankeen Kestrel, White-necked Heron, and more Grey-crowned Babblers. At Curraburrama the highlight was Peaceful Dove, Striped Honeyeater and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. At the Back Creek Crossing (that had plenty of water in it) on the way to town, we saw Double-barred Finch, Wood Duck, Pied Cormorant, Hardhead, Black Duck, Grey Teal and Striped Honeyeater.

After a late lunch we went out to Back Creek Reserve, 10 kms north of town on the Newell Highway for our camp-out birding highlight. About 200 metres into the pine/casuarina and eucalypt forest we saw Speckled Warbler, Red-capped Robin (bathing itself in a puddle), Double-barred Finch, Yellow-rumped and Yellow Thornbill, Mistletoebird, Varied Sit-tella, and White-throated Treecreeper.

It was a tired 15 birders for our last bird call for a total of 100 species. Christina Port had done a wonderful job setting up a great camp, but unfortunately because of a family bereavement could not attend.

Half Day Outing: May 8

DUBBO GULLY

Leaders: Margaret and Kaye Pointer

In place of a half day in Dubbo Gully, abandoned due to considerable rain during the weekend, we "birded" safer spots with sealed road access, around Mangrove Mountain and the Kulnura area. The 13 participants were a mix of experienced birders and those new to bird watching. Few birds were seen or heard at our meeting point near Mangrove Mountain Hall so we drove down Waratah Road, parked above the locked gate and walked down the track. There was more chatter on the track than birds in the bush. Only Sulphur-crested and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Eastern Spinebill, Spotted Pardalote and Golden Whistler were seen.

A stop at the end of Waratah Road increased our bird list substantially although no exciting birds were around, the best being distant views of Bar-shouldered Dove, King Parrots and Australasian Grebe. The lead car occupants saw a Black Shouldered Kite en route to Bloodtree Oval for morning tea. We watched the rain shower from the verandah, followed by a brief walk to see a few common birds. Driving on wet roads through showers to the Mangrove Dam viewing area, was not promising.

Fortunately, showers cleared as we strolled around watching Eastern Yellow Robin, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and Little Black and Little Pied Cormorant on the dam. We had a fly past by a defence aircraft probably en route between Williamtown and Richmond. A decision was made to have lunch and hope a few more birds would come by. The whole time Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters were active, a heard Restless Flycatcher did a flyby then fed quietly in the background (a lifer for several of the group), a Rockwarbler heard well down the slope, eventually, alighted on the fence beside us to say hello, while a Spotted Pardalote gleaned in eucalypt leaves above. Then a large flock of over 50 Red Wattlebirds flew out of the gully from left and right en route to a destination further north.



Restless Flycatcher
Chris Jamieson

All this exciting bird activity, and birder exercise dashing between bird sightings, neck exercises, stepping up and down from better vantage points, was languidly watched by a basking Lace Monitor. With the sky to the east darkening, it was decided to call it a day on a high note. We had done most of our exercise for the day. With 54 birds seen or heard and the friendly company of other keen birders sharing the half-day birding adventure, we were satisfied with the outing.

SPECIES LIST**APRIL 2024****Bird names used and the order in which they occur are in accord with the IOC World Birdlist Version 11.1.2021**

First Migrant arrival *	Last Migrant departure **	LN = biggest number since January	OW = Over-winter	
Australian Shelduck	AF	6-7/4/24	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	Andrew Robinson
Australasian Shoveler	4	14-24/24	Dairy Swamp, CCW Tuggerah	Kylie Wilson
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	HC	2-27/4/24	calling daily Tathra Taila HSD, Man. Mtn	Margaret Pointer
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	22/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Owlet-Nightjar	1	1/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Tawny Frogmouth	3	24/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Margaret Pointer
Peaceful Dove	2	17-23/4/24	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Peaceful Dove	2	18/4/2024	Bloodtree Rd, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Peaceful Dove	2	18/4/2024	Dogtrap Rd, Somersby	Kaye Pointer
Topknot Pigeon	50	13/4/2024	Narara	Nerida Carter
Topknot Pigeon	14	26/4/2024	Collies Lane, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Topknot Pigeon	50	28/4/2024	Upper Palmdale	Gary Jackson
Buff-banded Rail	1	20/4/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Meryl Newton
Black-winged Stilt	30	6/4/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Andrew Robinson
Bush Stone-curlew	1	19/4/2024	Kincumber Cres, Davistown	Doug Hocking
Bush Stone-curlew	1	20/4/2024	Foreshore Res, St Huberts Island	Allan Benson
Bush Stone-curlew	1	29/4/2024	Henderson Rd, Saratoga	Daniel McKeon
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	22/4/2024	Dairy Swamp CCW, Tuggerah	Rick Gatenby
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	21/4/2024	The Entrance Channel	Andrew Robinson
Caspian Tern	27	21/4/2024	The Entrance Channel	Andrew Robinson
Black-necked Stork	AM	21/4/2024	Wyeec farm dam	Leonie Loewe
Black-necked Stork	2A,2J	22/4/2024	Jiliby Farm	Sue Abram
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	1/4/2024	McPherson Rd Swamp, Tuggerah	Mel Stratton
Osprey	1	8-28/4/24	The Entrance Bridge	Margaret Hislop
Osprey	1	8/4/2024	Tumbi Umbi	Andrew Robinson
Osprey	1	10/4/2024	Lake Munmorah	Christina Port
Black-shouldered Kite	1	6/4/2024	Lisarow	Andrew Robinson
Black-shouldered Kite	1	9/4/2024	Magenta, North Entrance	Andrew Robinson
Black-shouldered Kite	1	10/4/2024	Birdie Beach Campground, Munmorah SCA	Christina Port
Square-tailed Kite	1	1/4/2024	Narara	Andrew Robinson
Square-tailed Kite	1	2-3/4/24	Niagara Park	Nerida Carter
Square-tailed Kite	1	16/4/2024	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Rob Montgomery
Brahminy Kite	A	7/4/2024	Avoca Beach	Laurie Smith
Brahminy Kite	1	19/4/2024	Pipi Point, Davistown	Allan Benson
Brahminy Kite	1	23/4/2024	The Entrance Channel	Andrew Robinson
Brown Goshawk	1	15/4/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Biggles Csolander
Brown Goshawk	2 Im	12/4/2024	Narara	Nerida Carter
Brown Goshawk	2	24/04/24	Erina	Graham Nelson
Grey Goshawk	1	7/4/2024	Palmdale	Andrew Robinson
Grey (white) Goshawk	1	20/4/2024	Evans Rd, Toukley nr Wyrabalong NP	Leeanne Lemke
Grey Goshawk	1	28/4/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Julie Peksis
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	14/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Ross Pointer
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	4/4/2024	Mardi	Peter Mortimer
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	6/4/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	25 & 29/4	Ourimbah Rest Area, M1 Motorway	Graham Nelson
White-bellied Sea-eagle	5 Im	14/4/2024	Dairy Swp, Central Coast Wtlds, Tuggerah	Biggles Csolander
Azure Kingfisher	1	3/4/2024	Bulls Quarry, Brisbane Water NP	Ken Jackson
Red-backed Kingfisher	1	27/4/2024	Mt Penang Parklands	Carol Edwards
Nankeen Kestrel	2	3-29/4/24	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Tricia Sweet
Brown Falcon	1	10/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Peregrine Falcon	2	10 & 14/4	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Ross Pointer
Peregrine Falcon	1	25/4/2024	Calga Anzac Service	Margaret Pointer
Sooty Owl	1	14/4/2024	Ourimbah Creel Rd, Ourimbah	Darren Earnshaw
Barn Owl	1	11/4/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Christy Bryson

Southern Boobook	HC	7/4/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Southern Boobook	HC	16/4/2024	Rumbalara Reserve nr Donnison St, Gosford	Elaine Elliott
Powerful Owl	F,HC	18/4/2024	2100 hrs Aldinga Drive, Wamberal	Ashley Mullahey
Yellow-tail Black Cockatoo	12	8/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Glossy Black Cockatoo	4A+J	1,21 & 27/4	Old Road Café, Mount White	S.Watts/G.Jackson
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	3-8/4/24	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	Carole Carpenter
Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	16/4/2024	Holgate	Clair Mieluk
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	32	27/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Margaret Pointer
Gang Gang Cockatoo	4	27/4/2024	Yarramalong	Leeanne Lemke
Gang Gang Cockatoo	12	28-30/4/24	Upper Palmdale	Gary Jackson
Musk Lorikeet	8+	1-8/4/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Little Lorikeet	4	9/4/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Little Lorikeet	10	10/4/2024	Preston Rd, Kangy Angy	Tricia Sweet
Musk Lorikeet	6	8/4/2024	Toukley St, Toukley	Leeanne Lemke
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	2	8/4/2024	Umina	Greg Shaw
Swift Parrot	6	12/4/2024	near Wyee	Leonie Loewe
Swift Parrot	2	26/4/2024	Haynes Ave, Umina	Allen Oxenham
Superb Lyrebird	1	12/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Ross Pointer
Superb Lyrebird	F	30/4/2024	with nesting material, Umina	Collette Livermore
Southern Emu-wren	2	14/4/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Andrew Robinson
Fuscous Honeyeater	1	27/4/2024	Tunnel Trail, Brisbane Water NP	Frik Gautschi
Brown Honeyeater	1	27/4/2024	Tunnel Trail, Brisbane Water NP	Frik Gautschi
Blue-faced Honeyeater	2A+J	7/4/2024	Narara Oval	David Schuemaker
Blue-faced Honeyeater	1	8/4/2024	Wyong Creek	Joanne Hagan
Striated Pardalote (yell tip)	1	13/4/2024	Woy Woy Rd, Brisbane Water NP	Andrew Robinson
Large-billed Scrub-wren	2	6/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Varied Sittella	7	19 & 26/4	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Crested Shrike-tit	2	29/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Crested Shrike-tit	2	30/4/2024	Upper Palmdale	Elizabeth Noble
White-breast Woodswallow**4		20/4/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Arnie Boyaci
Dusky Woodswallow **	3	23/4/2024	Tathra Taila HSD, Mangrove Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Spangled Drongo	6	30/4/2024	Lakes Beach Track, Budgewoi	Meryl Newton
Rufous Fantail **	2	8/4/2024	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Rob Montgomery
Rufous Fantail **	1	15/4/2024	Murrumbung HSD, Mardi	John Carpenter
Jacky Winter	2	17 & 24/4	Tathra Taila HSD Mangrove, Mountain	Kaye Pointer
Rose Robin	3	23/4/2024	Pearl Beach Arboretum	Carol Edwards
Rose Robin	1	27/4/2024	Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah	Andrew Robinson
Rose Robin	AM	30/4/2024	Upper Palmdale	Elizabeth Noble
Red-whiskered Bul Bul	4	9/4/2024	Point Clare	David Lamont
Bassian Thrush	1	2/4/2024	Henry Kendall Gardens, Wyoming	Rob Montgomery
Bassian Thrush	1	27/4/2024	Yarramalong	Jan Mohandas
Bassian Thrush	1	28/4/2024	Upper Palmdale	Meryl Newton

Breeding and other records - April

Chestnut Teal: 2A+ 7 Y Saltwater Ck Killarney Vale 13/4 (GNe); **Topknot Pigeon** 50 Wyoming 21/4 (ARo); **Red-capped Plover:** 2A+J The Entrance 3/4 (Eno); **Caspian Tern:** A+J The Entrance 3/4 (ENo); **Osprey:** at nest at Woy Woy CBD Tower 24-30/4 (TEI), 1 Gwandalan Nest 20/4 (MNe), 1 Gosford Cenotaph 25/4 (GJa), 2 Norah Head 29/4 (MLa); **Black-shouldered Kite:** 1 Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 9-21/4 (KPo), 12 Central Coast Wetlands 15/4, 28/4 (BSO,JPe); **Square-tailed Kite:** 1 Copacabana 23/4 (ZMe); **Wedge-tailed Eagle:** 2 Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 8-21/4 (RPo); **Brown Goshawk:** 1 Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 9-21/4 (KPo), 1 Central Coast Wetlands 14/4 (BSO); **Grey Goshawk:** 1 Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 2-27/4 (MPo); **Glossy Black Cockatoo:** 1 Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 1-13/4 (MPo); **Little Wattlebird:** A+N Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn (KPo); **Red-browed Finch:** N+5 eggs Tathra Taila HSD Man. Mtn 12/4 (KPo); **Bassian Thrush:** 1 Tathra Taila HSD Man, Mtn 12/4 (RPo).

Good Birding!

TWITCH LIST April 2024

Graham Nelson	213	Julie Peksis	157	Robyn Price	127
Allan Benson	200	Chris Jamieson	155	Doug Hocking	123
Carole Carpenter	180	Margaret Pointer	153	Gabrielle Rees	120
John Carpenter	177	Rowena Wallace	146	Paul Shelley	114
Christina Port	175	Leonie Loewe	135	Frik Gautschi	114
Kaye Pointer	171	Daniel McKeon	129	Michael Scobie	110
Krystyna Lonergan	170	Diana Hogan	127	Judy Clark	98

Graham Nelson still maintains a solid lead for the Twitch Trophy on 213 species with the nearest birder, Allan Benson, on 200.

BIRDATA SURVEYS YTD 2024

Graham Nelson	127	Frik Gautschi	24	Michael Scobie	7
Alan Stuart	119	Robyn Price	20	David Schuemaker	3
Allan Benson	87	Guy Dutson	17	Daniel McKeon	2
Leeanne Lemke	63	Doug Hocking	11	M & K Pointer	2
Nick Carson	32	C Clutterbuck	11		

For April 2024, 236 surveys were completed compared with 117 in 2023. YTD 2024, 678 surveys have been completed. This is a significant improvement on 2023 where 462 surveys were entered. Graham Nelson has maintained a good lead for the Alan Morris Trophy but Alan Stuart is on his heels. A big thank you to Leeanne Lemke for her contribution this month.

We would like to see more birders putting in more surveys. Birdata is one way, as a birder, you can make a contribution to bird conservation.

SOUTH WYONG SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS April Survey

The 7 observers had a disappointing day as mowing prevented the group from entering the main pond. A brief secondary survey was conducted from Canntree Road which only allows viewing of 2/3rds of the ponds. The ponds were very full after all the rain. 230 waterfowl were counted, dominated by Eurasian Coots and only 30 species were recorded overall, with the highlight two Shovelers seen by John Carpenter in the reeds from the Ibis Road entrance.

The survey takes place the Wednesday after our meeting. Meet at the Ibis Rd entrance at 9.30am.

SWIFT PARROT SURVEYS APRIL 2024

Thank you to everybody who has made such a big effort with the surveys this April. 129 surveys have been recorded in 2024 compared with 32 in 2023. Main contributors:

Leeanne Lemke	48	Doug Hocking	7	Michael Breheney	6
Nick Carson	13	Leonie Loewe	7	Meryl Newton	5

There were no Swift Parrots recorded in the survey, which is the usual story. There have been confirmed sightings at Wyee as well as unconfirmed sightings at Munmorah Power station and Umina. These Swifties look they might have been passing through. The Swamp Mahoney is flowering sporadically. In some survey sites it is flowering moderately and is alive with Rainbow Lorikeets and other nectar feeders. In other sites, where there is plenty of Swamp Mahogany, nothing is flowering.

Please note there are two distinct habitats we are survey. One dominated by Swamp Mahogany and the second by Spotted Gum/ Ironbark. The latter sites are more likely to flower in the spring and become more important in the second survey.

Little Tern Report 2023-24

Andrew Robinson

Timing:

Little Terns arrived at Soldiers Point on the Central Coast in late September and were first observed at Karagi Point in early October with courtship and nest prospecting commencing soon after. Numbers then steadily built to 300+ breeding adults with the first clutches of the season being laid in early-November, followed by hatching from late-November and the first fledglings from mid-December. Peak nesting was throughout December / early January when Nankeen Kestrel predation had a significant impact. The colony began to disperse from early-January as chicks fledged, and the last fledgling was observed late-January, with the site abandoned soon after. Large numbers of fledglings (with their parents) were then observed back at the rock-platforms at either end of Soldiers Beach throughout February, before departing north in early-March.

Little Terns
Andrew Robinson



2023/24 Karagi Point Breeding summary:

- 282 nests (including replacement clutches), comprising 685 eggs were recorded which was consistent with the long-term state average of 2.4 eggs per clutch.
- The breeding pair estimate was 178 (356 breeding adults) which is comfortably the most on record.
- The fledgling rate was 0.75 (slightly higher than the long-term NSW rate).
- The minimum / confirmed fledgling count was 134, though this is considered conservative, and it is thought that up to 180 chicks may have fledged.
- Over 300 Little Tern chicks were lost to Nankeen Kestrel predation.

Karagi Point in a State-wide context:

Without going into too much detail (as this is for others to report on and some media can be expected soon), Karagi Point was the highest performing breeding colony in NSW in 2023/24, accounting for nearly one third of the state's estimated breeding pairs and over one third of the state's fledglings. Nesting was observed at 16 sites in total with Shoalhaven and Lake Conjola also performing exceptionally well. Of note, the number of breeding pairs in NSW has more than doubled over the last 5 seasons.

Karagi Point historically:

Since 2000/01 (when Little Terns recommenced nesting at Karagi Point after a long absence), an estimated 546 fledglings have been recorded. Of interest is the comparison in fledgling success historically with more recent best practice management:

- 2000/01 – 2019/20 (20 breeding seasons) = 229 confirmed fledglings / average of 11.45 fledglings per season (previous / 'reactive' management).
- 2020/21 – 2023/24 (4 breeding seasons) = 317 confirmed fledglings / average of 79.25 fledglings per season (current / best practice management).

In other words, the current, more intensive management approach adopted by Central Coast Council has resulted in an incredible 7-fold increase in fledgling success (the main measure of success).

Management:

This management approach has included; robust fencing and interpretive / regulatory signage installation, construction of a sand levee to mitigate the impact of inundation (this management action saved the nest site from inundation on several occasions), regular rubbish removal to mitigate the threat of avian predation, chick entanglement etc., a program of weekly nest monitoring, an effective fox control program, environmental education & community engagement, a range of communications and media and major events management including several site closures to mitigate increased visitation and associated impacts.

Predation:

Thankfully, only a small number of clutches were lost to fox predation early in the season however, as many will be aware, there was a significant new avian predation threat this season that had a devastating impact. This involved a pair of adult Nankeen Kestrel that were regularly observed taking mobile Little Tern chicks over 6-week period that is thought to have resulted in the loss of over 300 chicks. Needless to say, this was a difficult period for all involved, especially on the back of Silver Gull predation last season. Accordingly, management options are being considered should avian predation present a similar threat next season and beyond.

Australian Fairy Tern:

This comes up quite a lot, so hopefully the following sheds some light on the recent arrival of Fairy Terns (listed as vulnerable under Federal threatened species legislation) to the Central Coast.

The Australian Fairy Tern was first recorded at Karagi Point during the 2022/23 season when 2 pairs of breeding adults were observed breeding sympatrically with Little Terns. Unfortunately, nesting proved unsuccessful as both clutches were predated by Silver Gulls.

This is significant because it marked the northerly most breeding record for this species on the east coast. To put this into context, while Fairy Terns are more common in Victoria, in NSW the species is generally only seen on the far south coast where the population is thought to be as small as 50 individuals.

This season, 3 or 4 Fairy Terns were detected during peak Little Tern nesting in early-December, though unlike last season they were only observed interbreeding with Little Terns this season. In addition, several hybrid adult birds were also observed pairing with Little Terns.

As a result of these mixed pairs, several hybrid chicks were observed, though it is not known if these chicks fledged as there is a reasonable chance they were lost to Kestrel predation.

Of note, as the breeding range of the Fairy Tern possibly expands northward and as hybrid young are apparently fertile, there is thought to be a risk that genetic distinctiveness of the two species will be compromised through hybridisation.

Take away message:

Despite Kestrel predation, 134 (and up to 180) confirmed fledglings is an exceptional outcome and the most successful Little Tern breeding season on record at Karagi Point. It was also the first time that the magic triple figure mark has been reached (the previous best result being 96 in 2021/22).

Following 4 successive high-performing seasons, Karagi Point is now considered one of the most important breeding sites for endangered Little Terns in NSW, having produced more fledglings in that time than any other nest site, thus significantly contributing to the species long-term survival in the State.

The project is a great example of various stakeholders, with community support, working together to deliver conservation outcomes, outcomes that are made even more remarkable when one considers the surrounding urban environment and suite of threats and management issues present during the Little Tern breeding season.

Of course, a great deal of credit goes to Council staff involved in the project (everything from fence installation to fox control) and partner agencies (including DCCEEW / NPWS and the Saving Our Species, Beach Nesting Birds and Share the Shore Conservation Programs). A huge thanks also to Central Coast birders and birding visitors alike for their passion, support and safeguarding of the nest site which has encompassed reporting a range of management concerns (i.e. damaged fencing, nests outside the fenced area), practising ethical bird photography, encouraging the broader public to do the right thing and even litter collection. Lastly, special recognition to Nick Carson for his ongoing efforts in environmental education and help with nest monitoring (I would be fossilised on site without it) and Alan Morris for his significant contributions over many years and in providing historical records.

Assuming best practice management continues, it is likely that Karagi Point will remain one of the most important nest sites in NSW. In fact, based on what we've seen in recent seasons, the site is now thought capable of regularly producing 200+ fledglings per season which would truly be something to celebrate.

Let's hope for an even better result next nesting season.

Terrigal Pelagic Trip Report: May 10, 2024

Andrew Robinson

16 of us had a very solid day at sea in what were enjoyable conditions with the rain staying away for most of the day. Given lead-in conditions, we were hopeful of a few more Southern Ocean goodies, however 7 species of Albatross off the east coast (the most for a Terrigal pelagic), is a pretty cracking day in my books!

In total 17 species were seen beyond The Haven with 14 of those Tubenoses, as follows:

Wandering Albatross – 1, NZ Wandering Albatross – 5 or 6 (all sub-sp. gibsoni except for a possible juvenile antipodensis), *Black-browed Albatross – 7 (2), Campbell Albatross – 3 (1), Shy Albatross – 2 (1), Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross – 2 (1), Buller's Albatross – 2 (1), Wilson's Storm Petrel – 26 (10), White-faced Storm Petrel – 3 (2), Fairy Prion – 2 (1), Providence Petrel – 18 (3), Sooty Shearwater – 3 (1), Short-tailed Shearwater – 500 (200), Flesh-footed Shearwater – 4 (1), Greater Crested Tern – 5 (2), *Silver Gull – 7 (5), Australasian Gannet – 14 (5).

Parenthesis denotes the maximum number of that species seen at any one time.

The only cetaceans were a small pod of Short-beaked Common Dolphin on the way out.

Thanks to everyone that joined us, it was great to see some new faces, catch up with some old ones and as always, see people getting some new birds.



AI poison devices are the latest weapon in fight to save King Island endangered birds from feral cats

By Georgia Hogge

The King Island Scrubtit (left) and the King Island brown Thornbill (right)

The critically endangered King Island Scrubtit and King Island Brown Thornbill are among five Australian bird species considered most likely to become extinct within 20 years. Both are subspecies endemic to the island, and their populations are thought to be between 50–100 individuals for the thornbill and less than 50 for the scrubtit.

However, conservationists are hopeful the use of poison delivery devices that use artificial intelligence (AI) technology to identify and poison passing cats, will help protect the birds from predation, buying more time to restore crucial habitat areas.



An AI approach to managing feral cats

Cats in Australia are estimated to kill 2 billion animals each year and threaten more than 100 native species. They have been implicated in at least 27 of Australia's 30 extinctions since they were introduced during European settlement. Traditionally, feral cats are caught using baited traps that are manually set and monitored. But because King Island is remote, vast and difficult to traverse, these traps are less effective and more expensive to maintain than they are in other parts of the country.

Not-for-profit foundation Thylation has developed the Felixer trap, which founder John Read believes will work better on King Island because it is "automated and self-managing. You don't actually have to physically catch or hold a cat or deal with it," he said. The devices use AI-imaging technology to identify passing cats and a projectile system to shoot poison onto them. An internal AI camera system works to differentiate cats from other small, ground-dwelling animals such as pademelons and quolls, preventing misfires. Once a cat is identified, the range finder measures the distance of the cat from the device. Then, the unit shoots out 8 milligrams of sodium fluoroacetate gel, also known as 1080, which sticks to the cat's fur and is ingested when it self-grooms. Once the toxin is ingested, the cat's central nervous system slows, leading to unconsciousness.

Non-lethal trials of the device have been underway on King Island since July 2023, capturing and storing images of animals as they pass by. This has enabled researchers to determine feral cat population density in certain areas and has strengthened the AI camera's machine learning, preventing misfires. Surveying conducted by Deakin University researcher Christian Knapp suggests there are at least 300 feral cats on King Island.

The importance of birds

King Island was nominated and listed as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) in 2006. Between 2021 and 2022, systematic searches of King Island were undertaken as a part of the recovery program, with both important remaining habitat and remnant populations identified. The King Island Landcare Group's bird survey project Wings on King, managed through the Birds of King Island website, undertakes surveys twice a year and is involved with monitoring all King Island endemic birds. Based on the data collected, key habitat patches for the King Island Brown Thornbill and Scrubtit have been identified and the Felixers have been optimally positioned in high-priority areas.

Little penguin mass death reported along South Australia's south coast as birds wash up at Goolwa

Researchers counted 28 little penguins on Granite Island in October. (ABC South East SA: Caroline Horn)
© Provided by ABC News (AU)

Testing is underway to find out the causes of death of more than 50 little penguins along South Australia's south coast. Flinders University researcher and volunteer Stephen Hedges told ABC Radio Adelaide a member of the public reported about 30 penguins washed up at Goolwa over the weekend. He said the most recent deaths have been reported to the Department for Environment and Water, but the situation's underlying causes were unknown. "It seemed to have been going on for a while but yesterday was awful," Mr Hedges said. Mr Hedges, who has been recording penguin deaths near the Murray Mouth, said there were usually two or three deaths a month after each breeding season, which ends around late summer.

But the researcher — who also volunteers at Granite Island, which has long been home to a little penguin colony — said he had been getting calls reporting a new dead penguin every couple of days.

"We had about 11 dead in February ... 14 in March, 13 in April, and it was just daily almost that I'd get a call. We're up to nearly 57 so far this year," he said. "The really sad news yesterday was we got a call ... to say there were up to 30 birds washing around on the beach at Goolwa. We haven't seen a bird come back to Granite Island this week from the sea."

Mr Hedges said the penguins most likely came from along the south coast, and that he was now "nervous" the Granite Island colony could come under threat. "Last census we had 30 birds live on Granite Island and we had a good breeding season, they actually popped out 27 chicks," he said.

In February, volunteers urged visitors to the island to shut the causeway's gate, fearing the struggling penguin population could be wiped out by a fox in a single night. Mr Hedges said the number of penguins had "picked up" after nine penguins were killed in a fox attack 2020.

Blue-green algae could be to blame

Mr Hedges said most of the dead penguins that had been found were a healthy size. Some of the carcasses showed clear evidence of injury — but it is unclear if those injuries were only inflicted after the animals had died.

"Most of them are whole birds which showed something internal," Mr Hedges said. "The one in front of me is ... 1.2 kilograms. "Years ago when we had a lot that died, they were all under a kilo — 700 grams — so it seemed like they were starving."

Mr Hedges said he and the department have been collecting feathers from the carcasses this year for testing.

He said one of the possible causes of death was blue-green algae. SA Health issued a warning in March for people to avoid contact with River Murray water between Wellington to Goolwa after it detected elevated levels of the algae.

"Blue-green algae is almost invisible and if you think where penguins are on the food chain, if they're eating little creatures up to pilchards, they're concentrating the toxins," Mr Hedges said.

Testing to find the cause of death may take a while, Mr Hedges said.

The department has been contacted for further information.