

Cumberland Bird Observers Club Inc.

NEWSLETTER

February 2009

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Our objectives are to encourage knowledge and enjoyment of native birds, and actively promote the protection and conservation of native birds and their habitat.

PO Box 550
BAULKHAM HILLS
NSW 1755
www.cboc.org.au



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*"This little island is one of the wonder spots of the world"
- Sir Douglas Mawson, 1919.*

Welcome to Macquarie Island

I visited Macquarie in December 2007 aboard a converted Russian ex Polar research vessel; there were 49 passengers, 25 of whom were Aussie birders. The tour was run by Heritage Expeditions out of NZ and included visits to the NZ sub-Antarctic islands of The Snares, Auckland and Campbell.



Macquarie, 34 km long, up to 5km wide and 433m high, lies 1 500km SSE of Tasmania on the Antarctic Convergence, the oceanic boundary between warm water from the north and cold Antarctic water from the south. Its 1997 World Heritage listing stated that it represents perhaps the best-preserved example of deep oceanic crust known above sea level. Also noted were its superlative natural phenomena.

Macquarie's typical weather is summarised by a member of the first Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE), 1948 - "For days on end the upper plateau would be shrouded in mist and a great wall of fog would blot out the sea on all sides. A fine misty rain would be falling continually and the inevitable wind would sweep in past the apparently impenetrable fog barrier". Conditions there are tough; the mean temperature is 4.8°C with a seasonal range of only + or - 3.7°C. It rains/hails on more than 300 days a year. It is not for the faint hearted!



The island's flora looked pretty drab. Apparently, it originated from long-distance transoceanic dispersal of seeds and spores

that arrived floating on water, carried by birds or swept around the globe by high-altitude winds. Typically, this has resulted in a relatively low species diversification - there are no trees. However, of interest were the dense forests of 10m long kelp which writhe in sinuous mats along the rocky shoreline.

The first recorded sighting of the island was made on 11 July 1810 by Captain Frederick Hasselborough from the sealing ship *Perseverance*. In just 10 years the estimated 200-400,000 fur seal population was devastated. Attention then turned to the oil of elephant seals and, likewise, the estimated 93-110,000 elephant seal population was reduced by 70% within 20 years. In 1889 the first steam digester plant was introduced to extract penguin oil, an industry believed to be unique to Macquarie Island, but this ceased in 1919 when the licence was revoked.

Unfortunately, with the sealers came cats (1820s), rabbits (1870s) and mice and rats (1890s). Also introduced, but thankfully now long gone, were horses, donkeys, pigs, cattle, goats, dogs, sheep and Wekas (or Maori hens) - the latter ground nesting birds putting pressure on the now extinct endemic Macquarie Island parakeet and rail.

Continued on page three

CUMBERLAND BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB INC 2008/2009

PRESIDENT

Cathy Goswell* 9809 5668 president@cboc.org.au

VICE PRESIDENT

Andrew Patrick* 9639 8549 website@cboc.org.au

TREASURER

John Duranti* 9873 1363 treasurer@cboc.org.au

SECRETARY & PUBLIC OFFICER

Peter Madvig* 9484 3362 secretary@cboc.org.au

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Phil Barker* 9484 3017 membership@cboc.org.au

PUBLICATIONS TEAM

Mark Fuller* 9832 2183 editor@cboc.org.au

4 Cody Place

Oakhurst NSW 2761

Jim Dixon* 9602 9031 Jimandcaroline1@optusnet.com.au

Tony Dymond* 9639 7346 tonydymond@optusnet.com.au

Colin Scouler* 4739 4294 interestingobs@cboc.org.au

Joan Wharton* 9980 5718 wharton@astron.net.au

Jane Miller 4739 1190

Alan Rogers 9481 9520

ACTIVITIES OFFICERS

Keith Brandwood* 4575 1514 outings@cboc.org.au

Janine Garlick* 9639 2702 janinegarlick@hotmail.com

Ann Pritchard* 9874 6318 anniep43@hotmail.com

NESTLINGS ORGANISER

Janet Love* 9484 7419 nestlings@cboc.org.au

CONSERVATION OFFICER

Ian Johnson* 9484 6626 conservation@cboc.org.au

BIRD DATABASE MANAGER

Tony Saunders* 4837 3141 database@cboc.org.au

BIRD RECORDS OFFICER

Colin Scouler* 4739 4294 interestingobs@cboc.org.au

PUBLICITY OFFICER & WEBSITE MANAGER

Andrew Patrick* 9639 8549 website@cboc.org.au

REFERENCE BOOK LIBRARIAN

Janet Love* 9484 7419 nestlings@cboc.org.au

* = Committee Member

Send all contributions for the next newsletter to the editors
by **1 MARCH 2009**

*Opinions expressed by the authors are their own and do not necessarily
represent the policies or views of the Cumberland Bird Observers Club.*

Editor's Patch

Welcome to the first issue of 2009, I hope you enjoy it.

In this issue we have some nice 'Champagne Moments' from 2008 as well as Bob Way's informative article on Macquarie Island. Local content includes an update from Bruce Cox on the Narrabeen Ospreys.

My Australian 'life list' currently stands at 299. I enjoyed honing my skills trying to reach 'the 300', although my elation at getting each new 'tick' was equal to my frustration at missing out on others. I'm not a good 'twitcher'.

This year I want to concentrate on my local 'patches'. I have compiled checklists to make atlassing the areas easier. The various sections of the Parklands Track have already yielded over 80 species. 100 by the end of the year is quite feasible; is that 'twitchy'?

After almost two years of atlassing Plumpton and Alroy Parks I thought I'd have everything, yet when I did my survey in January I saw four Black Swans flying overhead. Not only an impressive sight but also my first local record of these lovely birds.

Closer to home, Red Wattlebirds have nested in my bottlebrush and have had chicks. The noises stopped and I was very sad when I found them both dead on the lawn. The mystery has now been solved as the parents are running themselves ragged trying to feed the Eastern Koel they are raising.

Don't forget it is YOUR newsletter. Any comments or suggestions are always welcomed. All contributions, both large and small will be gratefully received.

Mark Fuller

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Subscriptions are valid from July to June the following year.
This includes receiving our Newsletter every second month.
Please renew promptly so as not to miss an issue and reduce costs.

Welcome to Macquarie Island *(Continued)*

Sporadic scientific investigation of Macquarie Island commenced in 1820. Captain Robert Falcon Scott collected specimens in 1901, and Sir Ernest Shackleton in 1909. Sir Douglas Mawson established the first scientific station on the island in 1911 which was maintained until 1914. The ANARE base was established in 1948 and has been in permanent operation since then. Macquarie is a baseline station for the World Meteorological Organisation which monitors trends in global warming and changes in climate and the ozone layer.

We entered Australian territorial waters halfway between Auckland and Macquarie Islands. The intensity for the Aussie birders rose immeasurably. Positions were taken either indoors on the bridge or outside but nearby – temperature difference, including wind-chill factor, about 35°C. As we were in very deep water the birds were scarce. However they were there and by nightfall we had seen Mottled, White-chinned, Northern and Southern Giant, Cape (Snares sub-species) and Kerguelen Petrel, Black-bellied and Grey-backed Storm-Petrel, Grey-headed and Campbell Albatross, Antarctic Prion, Common Diving-Petrel and Brown Skua. Of special mention is the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, surely the most graceful and perfectly sculptured of all birds; everyone's favourite.

We awoke to the sound of the anchor dropping at Buckles Bay where we offloaded the summer contingent of ANARE researchers. The avian welcoming party consisted of a flotilla of King Penguins accompanied by smaller numbers of Royal and Gentoo, and a flyby of Macquarie Island Shags and Antarctic Terns, with the occasional white morph Southern Giant Petrel. An absolute smorgasbord of new Australian birds.

We then made the short trip by sea to Sandy Bay and disembarked via the inflatables. The day was spent



walking amongst thousands of King and Royal Penguins, which covered much of the available space. Keeping company were sleeping/moulting Southern Elephant Seals, enormous belching behemoths, and their huge, black-eyed, month-old pups. Skuas and petrels patrolled the sky and Orcas the water, the latter to prey on penguins and/or the weaners when they finally leave the island in order to feed. As an adjunct to the spectacle, on the beach young male seals honed their fighting skills. What a fantastic and unforgettable experience!

Next day we returned to Buckles



Bay, home of the ANARE station. We were able to get up close and personal with a Gentoo Penguin colony but had to be satisfied with more distant views of cliff-ensconced Rockhoppers. Only a "plastic tick", but all the twitchers shamelessly sought and got fleeting views of disappearing Common Redpolls. Macquarie is the only place in Australia where they can be found - they have self-populated from NZ where they were introduced from the UK. We then enjoyed a tour, and the hospitality, of the station and watched as one of the twice-daily weather balloons was launched.

After lunch we motored to Lusitania Bay and, at anchor, had the only Southern Fulmar of the trip fly past. On the beach, 300,000 King Penguins – and, as ghastly historical reminders, rusting penguin digesters.

The degradation of the vegetation on Macquarie by the rabbits, greatly accelerated after the eradication of the cats, is soul destroying to behold. However, long overdue but now in preparation is the Federal/Tasmanian Governments' jointly funded \$25m rabbit eradication programme, due to commence in 2009. The NZ Government recently carried out a similar 100% successful programme on Campbell Island, so there is every reason to be optimistic that Macquarie will be feral free by about 2012.

Reluctantly we left Macquarie Island behind – but we were still in Australian waters. While crossing the nearby shelf we met up with a handful of Blue Petrels and, further out, picked up Southern Royal Albatross and Soft-plumaged Petrel. The Aussie birders had all had a fabulous birding experience thankful that the weather and the birds had been so kind.

Footnote: *I went to Macquarie Island to see the contingent of Australian birds there. If I had had the option to go directly from the Australian mainland I would have taken it. However, had I done so I would have missed an unforgettable experience. Each of the NZ sub-Antarctic islands was unique and fascinating, full of natural and historical interest, endemic birds, as well as too-close-for comfort confrontations with obstinate fur seals. Sailing in the "Roaring Forties" and "Furious Fifties" is something else! The isolation, the bleakness, the relentless westerly wind and constant beating through the huge swells were worlds apart from my normal experience. It reminded me of a recent TV ad which asked - "When was the last time you did something for the first time?"*

Bob Way

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Looking ahead, the 2009 Club calendar displays a year full of great outings and opportunities for all our members. I hope you have been inspired to plan to participate in many of the activities listed.

Many Members may not be aware, but 2009 is the Club's 30th Anniversary year. A programme of special events is planned to celebrate this significant milestone in the history of the Club. These events will be widely advertised in the Newsletter and at activities, so please keep an eye out for the details closer to the events and join in the festivities. The Members' Weekend in Dubbo to be held in May is the leadoff event (details opposite).

The Club's year has begun with a highlight already. The Club meeting held in January – our recent Members Night was a great success with seven members giving interesting presentations.

Thank you to those Members who submitted Champagne moments of 2008 to the Newsletter. One of the great advantages of the Club and the Newsletter is the opportunity to share observations or ask questions. Please take the opportunity to send a quick email or a letter to our Editor of your experiences or comments which can be included in the Field Notes and Anecdotes section. Other members would really appreciate sharing those experiences, especially those close to home.

Clean Up Australia Day is an opportunity for Members to join together to contribute to the improvement of a location enjoyed by the Club over many years. The Club is again organising an event in conjunction with Rotary at Pughs Lagoon, Richmond meeting at 8:30am Sunday, 1 March. Please contact Keith Brandwood on 4575 1514. We have been helping for more than five years now and the results are most noticeable. Consider joining this Australia wide event with us. The more hands, the lighter the job and there will be a BBQ brunch and birds to see and hear!

Members who attended our July 2008 Meeting will remember the guest appearance of the Club's Ambassador Steve Abbott, aka Sandman, who entertained us with a short performance and then surprised six Members in the audience requesting them to share some of their birding experiences. Now "Birdbrain - A definitive list of other peoples bird sightings" a 10 part podcast series exclusive to abc.net.au/local has been launched. The media release describes Birdbrain as "a very simple idea that is partly a reflection on Steve's life, partly about birds, partly about birdwatchers and it has a strong underlying environmental message – birds are a clear and quantifiable barometer for the health of our eco-systems". The first Birdbrain podcast will be available on Monday, 16 February.

As you see, the coming months are full of a variety of interesting activities so I hope everyone enjoys the rest of Summer and welcomes the onset of cooler weather.

Cathy Goswell

The committee would like to welcome the following New Members:

Lyn Lewis & John Reardon

Steven Girot

Catherine McLauchlan

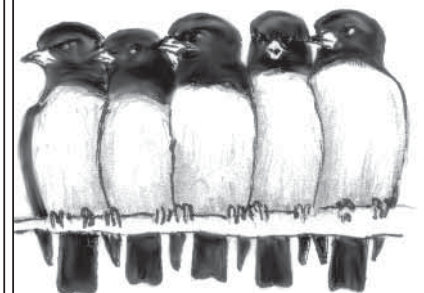
Gail Neeson

Glenorie

Lane Cove

Lane Cove

Lane Cove



The Narrabeen Ospreys

As Bruce Cox recounted in his article in the February 2008 CBOC newsletter, in 2007 he monitored a pair of Eastern Ospreys which raised one chick in a nest at Middle Creek, Narrabeen Lakes. This is believed to be the first successful breeding event for the species in the Sydney area, at least for many years. In 2008 the birds nested again at the same site, and again Bruce kept watch. His initial impression was that they had hatched two chicks. This note (an edited version of one he sent to the Northside-birders group in late November 2008) relates how he made the discovery that there was a third chick. It is not unusual for Eastern Ospreys to lay three eggs in a clutch, but often only two eggs hatch, or the third chick, usually the youngest, does not survive. **Colin Scouler**

I think I can now confirm that the Narrabeen Ospreys have fledged at least two chicks, possibly a third. The sequence of events (or at least my sightings) leading to this conclusion are as follows:

11.11.08 - Three birds seen at the nest, all believed to be chicks. One in the nest was obviously younger than its siblings, two were on branches of the dead nest tree. The birds were identified as young by the white tips and edges of their back and wing feathers and by having more streaking on the neck and cap than the adult birds.

18.11.08 - One chick seen in the nest, one chick free flying and an adult believed to be the female seen. I assumed that the chick remaining in the nest was not fledged. Over the course of the hour I watched, the chick in the nest did wing flapping exercises, it looked alert and healthy but made no attempt to fly.

21.11.08 - There was lots of action today with three birds circling, comings and goings to and from the nest and culminating with four birds at the nest together, both adults and two young. Despite all the activity there were periods when there were no birds in or on the nest, hence my conclusion that at least two chicks fledged.

Bruce Cox

CBOC's 30TH ANNIVERSARY Members Weekend in Dubbo 2/3 May 2009

UPDATED INFORMATION

- Members come and go under their own steam, as and when they please.
- Bags of accommodation in Dubbo to suit all tastes and pockets.
- We are planning activities for the Friday, Saturday and Sunday including doing a couple of the local bird routes, visiting Geurie Nature Reserve, visiting Goonoo Forest and at least one private property.
- On the Friday we will be meeting for an informal meal together in the Bistro of Dubbo RSL from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm and this will be followed at 8:00 pm in the Jacaranda Room of the RSL by our 30th Anniversary Lecture entitled "Birding @ 100 knots" by Terry Korn. Prior to his retirement Terry was Director Western in the National Parks and Wildlife Service from 1999 to 2006. He is currently President of the Australasian Wildlife Management Society and counts birds for the University of NSW.
- On the Saturday afternoon we will be meeting up with members of the Dubbo Field Naturalists & Conservation Society in Goonoo Forest to 'count the glossies' and for a BBQ.
- We will be car pooling as much as possible each day, as we did last year in Forbes.
- For those interested in purchasing the relevant TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS 1: 50 000 FIRST EDITION - they are GEURIE, MOGRIGUY and BALLADORAN. (They can be obtained from the Map Centre, 440 Church St. (cnr Grose St.), North Parramatta, NSW 2151 (ph 9890.2080)
- We are using Dubbo City Caravan Park in Whylandra St., which has a wide range of accommodation, as our base for the weekend - Toll Free 1800.824.820 or ph 02.6882.4820 or email dccp@dubbo.nsw.gov.au
- For more information go to www.dubbocaravanpark.com.au

**PLEASE ADVISE TONY DYMOND IF YOU PLAN TO GO AND DETAILS OF YOUR ACCOMODATION WHEN IT HAS BEEN BOOKED. ALSO PLEASE ADVISE IF YOU WILL BE DRIVING A 4WD VEHICLE.
THANK YOU.**

Champagne Moments 2008

Almost impossible to say any one incident stood out, there were really so many. However I think that a couple of days spent free camping at Fowlers Bay in the Shark Bay area must lay claim to my premier Champagne moment.

The caravan was parked virtually on the beach in glorious isolation, the views were of various waders and a magnificent stretch of water. Thirty seconds after emerging from the van I was in serious birding territory. The Rufous Fieldwren will always be for me a magnificent reminder of a pristine area, magnificent scenery and a couple of happy days when my cup runneth over.

David Simpson

I enjoyed listening to a Superb Lyrebird for at least 20 minutes going through its repertoire of about 13 calls only a few metres over our back fence in Asquith on a wet Friday in February.

Kel Eggins

Alighting from the Indian Pacific train at Cook on the Nullabor Plain, I was hoping to see a further "lifer" to cap off a wonderful birding holiday in the west. As we wandered around in the heat, another passenger remarked that I was "very unlikely to see any birds here!" However, as he said it, I heard an unrecognised call and in a low tree behind him, saw a Scarlet-chested Parrot.

Jeff Byron

Late on an August afternoon, watching the setting sun turn the stone cliff faces in The Capertee Valley to a golden glow.

John Duranti

Seeing Dusky Grasswrens hopping across the rocks on Mt Gillen and being able to observe them for several minutes. I'd dipped on my first attempt so it made my second climb worthwhile!

Joan Wharton

A stunning, male Gibberbird on the vast gibber plains of Sturt N.P. sent me quite gibberish.

Peter Madvig

This is a case of extreme good fortune. Last year my champagne moment for those of you who remember was the finding of my telescope safe and sound after leaving it at Bushells Lagoon.

Well I have to tell you that it happened again this year, except this time I left it standing on the side of the road in full view of passing traffic near the sports fields in Benson Road Richmond. It was not until some ten minutes later when I had a need to use it I realized it was not there. Again my heart dropped into my ankles, jumping back into the car I raced to where I had left it, and yet again to my utter delight it was still where I had left it looking over the fields.

This has got to be the luckiest telescope I will ever own and it deserves a crate of the bubbly. I'm dreading next year's champagne moment.

Keith Brandwood

A special time for me was early one morning at Broome Sewage Works. We stopped the car in a shady spot. A Pheasant Coucal – the first we'd ever seen – was walking through the low scrub. Soon after, we saw Rainbow Bee-eaters for the first time.

Julie Byron

Sitting on a rock in the bush near Fisherman's Point on the Hawkesbury in May, I was being closely inspected for ten minutes by about 20 small bush birds of various species, while we were holidaying in a secluded cottage for a week.

Lyn Eggins

F3 Expressway. Weekend. Traffic at a complete standstill. Motorists alight from their vehicles to walk around, chat and enjoy the sunshine. I grab my binoculars to check out the surrounding heathland. Panning skywards, I notice a Whistling Kite in the mid-distance. Noticing my skyward gaze, a young couple approach and excitedly ask 'Is that really a Wedge-tailed Eagle?' I hesitate, and noticing the look of sheer excitement and anticipation, I nod. 'Yes, indeed it is'. Absolute glee with their chance encounter with a legendary Australian. Guilty of misinformation I know, but I am warmly reminded of the sheer thrill and childlike wonder that an unexpected bird sighting may bring.

Robert Wall

It was late Friday afternoon in August and Barren Grounds was living up to its name; cold wet winds lashed the heathland, only New Holland Honeyeaters braved the elements. It was dark by the time I left and headed back to my hotel in Jamberoo.

I enjoyed my pre-booked pelagic trip on Saturday, but first light on Sunday saw me back at Barren Grounds. After waiting patiently for over an hour I decided to stroll along the track before going home.

As I walked the wind died down and I felt the warmth of the sun as there on the path in front of me was a distinctive-looking bird hopping around in the sunlight, bigger and more colourful than I had expected. Eventually I walked back to the car, grinning like a cheshire cat.

Great views of my Australian bird number 282, the Eastern Bristlebird.

Mark Fuller

'Tipped off' and pointed in the right direction by local John Rawsthorne at the start of our Forbes weekend, it was with great anticipation that we pulled up at the precise location. There immediately in front of us we spotted not just one Ground Cuckoo-shrike but five. It was a real Champagne moment to behold the smiles on the faces of 32 excited CBOC members who enjoyed fabulous views for nearly 30 minutes.

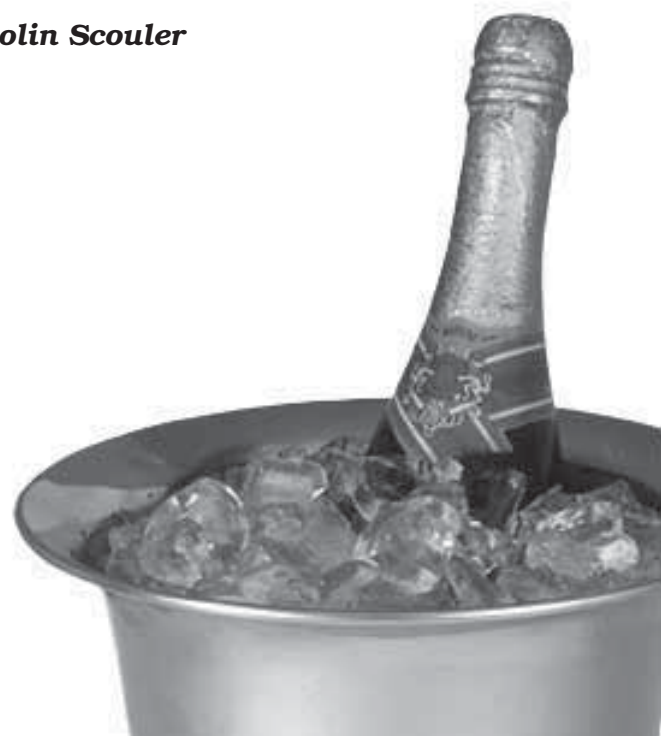
Tony Dymond

My Champagne moment for 2008 happened on 6 June at Bryce Creek on the Gibb River Road in Western Australia.

I was on a tour led by George Swan to the west and central Kimberley, and one of the birds I was anxious to see was the Pictorella Mannikin. I'd been in the bird's range in northern Australia on three previous occasions, searched intensively but never found a sign of it. Now we had stopped and were exploring rank grass by the roadside. And suddenly there it was, on top of a grass stem not five metres away! A beautiful adult male with its pearly gorget. I was ecstatic.

A day or so later in a different location we came across a flock of more than 40 Gouldian Finches feeding on the roadway, including many adults. Gaudy, ostentatious, but for mine they couldn't top that first sighting of the Pictorella.

Colin Scouler





Cumbria's Corner

News from the CBC
(Courtesy of the Editor of Cumbria
Bird Club Bird News, UK)

Wind turbines and Sensitive Bird Populations

As some CBOC members know, in the UK there are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has been concerned for some time that the areas lying outside these statutory nature conservation designated areas which support important populations of birds have not been accurately mapped and are not adequately protected through the planning system. This has become an issue especially with the large number of wind energy proposals in Cumbria.

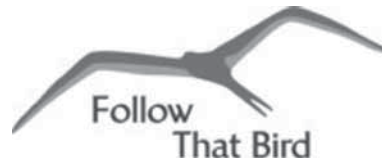
Tim Youngs of the RSPB writes: "Some areas outside statutory nature conservation designated areas are 'functionally linked' to an SSSI/SPA because the bird species which are associated with the SPA cannot be sustained from within the SPA alone and birds regularly occur outside of the protected area. A good example of this are wintering geese and swans, which roost within an SPA (for example the Upper Solway Flats and Marshes SPA) and feed on surrounding (non designated) farmland on the Solway Plain. Such areas can often extend several kilometres away from an estuary. A similar effect can also occur around the fringes of the uplands.

The production of a Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by Cumbria County Council provided the incentive to produce a document which would highlight such sensitive areas. As a result, the RSPB (working with Natural England and Cumbria County Council) has produced a 'Spatial Planning Guide for Windfarm Developments in Cumbria'. This enables us to illustrate these important bird areas and through the Cumbria Wind Energy SPD, we have the mechanism to encourage planners and developers to use it. The document is supported by Natural England and is included in the Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base.

In summary, the Spatial Planning Guide has been produced to identify areas of Cumbria which support important populations of bird species sensitive to wind farm developments. A series of four maps have been produced (based upon existing data sources) which have been developed to trigger detailed consultations between developers, local authorities, statutory agencies and other agencies, including the RSPB.

The RSPB views climate change as the most serious long-term threat to wildlife in the UK and globally, and therefore we support the Government's target to source 15% of electricity from renewables by 2015. To meet this target, the RSPB favours a broad mix of renewables, one of which is wind power. However, poorly sited wind farms can cause severe problems for birds through disturbance, habitat loss/damage or collision with turbines.

The RSPB comments on all major wind farm developments across Cumbria and submitted detailed responses on over 15 wind farm related planning applications in 2007 alone".



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CLUB ACTIVITIES

Meetings, Outings, Field Surveys & Campouts

NOVEMBER MEETING

The meeting opened with Colin Scouler telling us about the White-winged Triller. This is a small dimorphic cuckoo-shrike which is a summer visitor here and which should be seen on field outings in the coming months.

Our speaker tonight Peter Madvig and wife Penny and her sister and brother-in-law went on a trip to Chile and the Southern Ocean in January-February 2006. Peter recounted their travels on the *Polar Pioneer* from Ushuaia to Las Malvinas (Falklands), South Georgia, South Orkneys, South Shetlands and the Antarctic Peninsula. His brother-in-law didn't take bad pictures, either.

The four of them enjoyed it so much they decided to make a further trip by road into Chile, exploring Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia, with the spectacular Torres del Paine N. P. They then went by air via Puerto Montt and Chiloe Island, Santiago and Valparaiso, and northwards all the way to Arica and the Altiplano.

Peter described the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, steamer ducks, torrent ducks, surfbirds, the Diademed Plover, tapaculos (huet-huets) and Inca Terns, to name a few. His commentary was engaging and the many people who came to hear him were well rewarded.

Thank you Peter.

DECEMBER MEETING

Cathy Goswell reported that the CBOC had received a Christmas card from the Sydney Olympic Park Authority thanking us for all our help during the year. Tony Dymond reported that we are working on a submission regarding the V8 Supercar race to be held at Sydney Olympic Park each year for five years starting in December 2009.

After so many years it is amazing that our Quiz Team, John Duranti and Colin Scouler manage to find so many new and challenging questions to ask. But ask them they did at our annual

Christmas Bird Trivia night. The queries and objections were, as usual, voiced loudly and with great passion, but our gallant duo prevailed and their judgement was maintained. It was great fun.

Drinks and a party spread followed as we celebrated another year together.

BUS TRIP TO MT KEIRA & LAKE ILLAWARRA 25.10.08

Mark Fuller

The bus was almost full as we set off from Castle Hill at 7:30 am. A Twitchathon was conducted on the day, so it was eyes peeled as we headed south to Mt Keira. By the time we arrived, we already had over 30 birds on the list.

We met our leader Chris Brandis at the breathtakingly beautiful Mt Keira summit; what a fantastic view. After a refreshment break it was on to the rainforest below. With so many people it was decided to split into two groups. Trevor Waller kindly agreed to lead the other group. The rainforest birds were elusive, but we soon had good views of Bassian Thrush and Large-billed Scrubwren. Trevor's group managed to see several Yellow-throated Scrubwrens, and a few were lucky enough to catch a quick glimpse of our target species, the Australian Logrunner.

After lunch we visited Ash Pond at Tallawarra Power Station, west of Lake Illawarra. The club emblem, a male Mistletoebird, stood out on a branch as if to herald our arrival. The lakes had an assortment of waterbirds but it was the raptors that captured our attention. Three Whistling Kites spiralled lazily in a thermal, whilst an Australian Hobby in a large tree gave good views for all.

Our tally of 90 birds for the day bolstered the club contribution to the Twitchathon. Thank you to Chris and also to Trevor for helping us enjoy a great day in a great location.

CAMP OVERNIGHT AT GREENS SWAMP, LOWER PORTLAND

02.11.08

Renee Doyle

This private property is situated in Lower Portland, Hawkesbury and has a number of different habitats that include lagoons, creeks, rainforest, woodland, casuarina and melaleuca forest, grassland and rocky hills which makes the property very interesting for birding and for enjoying the fauna and flora generally.

The Club camped at this property in March 2007 and it was known to a few of the eight that camped overnight on Saturday. We camped in the same delightful grassy clearing with rocky hills behind us and a creek frontage. The weather was overcast but no rain eventuated.

Keith Brandwood came to the camp on Saturday for a spot-lighting session and thanks to his bird attracting skills we got good sightings of a pair of White-throated Nightjars. The presumably male bird came close to investigate us but soon lost interest.

Another five members joined us at 8.30 Sunday morning and we spent the day walking the property.



Highlights:

Birds: Rockwarbler, White-throated Nightjar, Australian Owlet-nightjar, Cicadabird, five species of cuckoo – Brush, Fan-tailed, Channel-billed, Shining Bronze and Eastern Koel.

Trees were dripping with Scarlet Honeyeaters.

Mammals: Wombat, Ring-tailed Possum, Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Black Wallaby

Disappointments:

None except for missing out on the Australasian Bittern this time.

CBOC would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter, the resident manager, and Lesley for making this wonderful property available to us and Peter extends an invitation to all Club members to visit at any time.

WEEKEND CAMP-OUT, BIGGA

08 – 09.11.08

Peter Madvig

I love camp-outs, especially when they take place in such spectacular surrounds, and when the birding is good. That said, everyone else camped, while Penny and I stayed in a cabin!

Tony and Noelene Saunders had again made their property 'Bimbimbie' near Bigga, north-west of Crookwell, available for a CBOC weekend outing. Some arrived already on the Friday and set up camp, followed by a stroll around the property, repeated on the Saturday morning. They were rewarded with a right royal drenching for their efforts.

When the rest of us pitched up, the sun shone and we had beautiful weather for the rest of the weekend!

Rainbow Bee-eaters appeared from an embankment and dazzled in their splendour; some saw Brown Treecreepers with a nest, and assorted other bush birds, such as Buff-rumped Thornbill, White-throated Gerygone, and Rufous Whistler showed up readily. Over 60 birds were seen in the area over the weekend.

Sunday morning we convoyed to another private property in this scenic Upper Lachlan countryside – it was magnificently green, with yellow, white, pink and purple flowers; very hilly, with enormous granite boulders strewn about, some 'balancing' - and a blue sky above. We did a bit of a survey for our hosts, Sean and Brenda Proudman, who rewarded us with a splendid morning tea.

Just some of the birds noted: Australian Hobby, Peaceful Dove, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Brown Treecreeper, Rufous Songlark, White-winged Triller (with nest), Jacky Winter, Little Friarbird, Noisy Friarbird (on nest), superbly vocal Striped and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Dusky Woodswallow (and nest) and Olive-backed Oriole. We counted 45 species and Tony recommends another survey in say, late May.

We stayed at the Grabine State Recreation area in a comfortable cabin, looking on to the rather depleted Lake Wyangala – a suitably close alternative to camping (outside school holidays), with lots of Eastern Grey Kangaroos in near proximity. We took a bit of a circular trip home, picking up Southern Whiteface, Australasian Pipit, Brown Songlark, Hooded Robin, and Dollarbird on the way, and near Frogmore 8 + gorgeous Superb Parrots. A fitting end to a superb weekend.

Thank you.

BEGINNERS & NEW MEMBERS
PUGH'S LAGOON & TURF FARMS,
RICHMOND
22.11.08
Andrew Patrick

Nineteen members attended and enjoyed a sunny and ultimately, windy day. Janine Garlick started proceedings by discussing birding ethics and how to use binoculars properly. Trevor Waller continued with a discussion about field guides and note-taking.

We then strolled about taking good looks at the assorted waterbirds such as swans, an Australasian Darter and a family of Australian Wood Ducks. The Willie Wagtails and Magpie-larks were easy to see but the White-plumed Honeyeaters and Australian Reed-Warblers tested our binocular skills.

After morning tea we drove around to Triangle Lane and found a male White-winged Triller feeding on the ground and Eurasian Skylarks battling the strong winds, but singing all the time. We proceeded to Mitchell Park but it was closed because of storm damage, so continued on to Cattai National Park for lunch. The wind was extremely strong. Leaves and branches were falling all around. We managed good views of Yellow Thornbill and kangaroos but only fleeting views of a male Golden Whistler, a Rainbow Bee-eater and a Bar-shouldered Dove before deciding to call it a day.

SWALLOW REACH, EBENEZER
30.11.08
Max Breckenridge

The day was split into two parts with the morning spent on the lovely Swallow Reach walk along the Hawkesbury River and in a couple of nearby small reserves.

Many interesting species were recorded including Bar-shouldered Dove, Wonga Pigeon, Scarlet Honeyeater, Rainbow Bee-eater, Varied Sittella, Australian Owlet-nightjar, White-throated Needle-tail and no less than seven species of cuckoo – Fan-tailed, Brush, Pallid, Channel-billed, Horsfield's Bronze, Shining Bronze and Eastern Koel.

After lunch we proceeded to our final destination, a private property at Wheeny Lagoon. We were all very fortunate to get excellent views of six or seven Wandering Whistling-Duck, a species which is something of a rarity in the County of Cumberland. Other highlights included Nankeen Night-Heron, Eastern Great Egret, Cicadabird, White-throated Gerygone, Tawny Grassbird and another Brush Cuckoo.

The tally for the day was a very creditable 108 species but more importantly everyone enjoyed a wonderful day birding with our expert leader Keith Brandwood. Thank you to everyone for making the day such a success.

MT. WILSON
20.12.08
Colin Scouler.

Mt. Wilson on a fine day was the beautiful natural setting for the final club outing for the year. Cathy Goswell led about 16 participants on walks to Du Fours Rocks and around the Cathedral of Ferns.

The combined total of birds seen or heard by the group was forty one.

Birding highlights included:

- A pair of Cicadabirds carrying nesting materials.
- A Red-browed Treecreeper posed motionless on a tree trunk for a minute or so and gave crippling views to those members of the group for whom this was a lifer.
- A Black-faced Monarch which also remained still for some time in plain view.
- Splendid close-up views of Large-billed Scrubwrens.

We dipped on three of the target species, Pilotbird, Crescent Honeyeater and Grey Currawong, none of which were seen or heard. No matter, it was a very pleasant way to spend a Saturday.

Thank you Cathy, for a well-planned and interesting excursion.

NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

1. Please try to limit reports on field outings to 150 to 200 words.
2. The important features of reports are:
 - Particular features of the site in relation to birds.
 - Any interesting or unusual sightings (species or high numbers).
 - Any breeding records or observations.
 - The number of species recorded.
 - The number of attendees.
 - Any particularly interesting or important incidents.
3. Please note that we do not require a long list of the birds seen. If any members want this sort of information they should contact the leader directly in the first instance.

The Editorial Committee.

MEETINGS

- 17 March
8.00 pm** **North Head and Botany Bay Wetlands – Andy Burton**
In recent years Birds Australia has conducted surveys for various bodies. These surveys raise important questions regarding urban land management and tell us about the amazing birds found there.
- 21 April
8.00 pm** **Putting the List Together
(Systematics & Taxonomy of Australian Birds)
– Walter Boles**
Collection Manager of Birds at the Australian Museum in Sydney
- 19 May
8.00 pm** **Birding in Belize and Costa Rica - Chris Chafer**

CUMBERLAND DATABASE UPDATE	
As at 14.06.07	
No. of Records	232 390
No. of Surveys	11 711
No. of Species	441
Coverage	93%
Send data sheets to CBOC Inc attn: Atlas Manager PO Box 550 Baulkham Hills NSW 1755	

OUTINGS

- Saturday
21 February
8.00 am** **St Ives Wildflower Garden.**
Meet in car park of the gardens. Morning tea and lunch at cars
Leader Keith Brandwood Phone 4575 1514 Mobile 0447 457 554
- Sunday
22 February
12 noon to
4.00 pm** **Nestlings' Outing to Long Reef at Collaroy**
Meet in car park up the hill alongside Long Reef Golf Club off Anzac Avenue. Bring lunch and an afternoon snack. For more information please see the insert. Please ring Janet Love (9484 7419) or email (nestlings@cboc.org.au) with your intention to come by Thursday 19 February
- Sunday
1 March
2.30 pm** **Gees Lagoon, Central Colo - Private Property.** Turn left off Putty Rd just prior to crossing the Colo River Bridge then left into Upper Colo Rd. Drive 3km along this road and meet on the left opposite Gees Lagoon. Dinner at cars. Please bring a torch for spotlighting.
Leader Bryan Wood Phone 4575 4084
- Wednesday
11 March
7.30 am** **Wednesday Warblers Bus Trip - Shortland Wetland Centre, Newcastle & Stockton Spit**
Meet in the car park at the rear of the Entertainment Centre off Carrington Rd, Castle Hill. Bus will leave promptly at 7.30 am. There will also be a pick up opposite the police station at Hornsby. There is a small charge (\$4.50 per person) to enter the bird area of the Wetland Centre. Cost of bus trip \$35.00 for members and \$45.00 for non-members. Lunch at bus. Cafe at the Wetland centre.
For bookings phone Janine Garlick on 9639 2702 & please pay before the bus trip.
- Saturday
21 March
8.00 am** **Royal National Park**
Meet in the car park at Wattle Forest, Audley end of the Park. Morning tea and lunch at cars.
Leader Chris Shinton Phone 9743 2437 Mobile 0419 373 625

PLEASE SEE INSERT FOR DETAILS OF MORE OUTINGS

CLUB MEETINGS

Meetings are held in the Tribute Room at the new Castle Hill Community Centre, corner Pennant Street and Castle Street, Castle Hill at 8.00pm on third Tuesday of each month. Field Outings are held on the Saturday following each meeting and Sunday 8 days later.

PELAGIC TRIPS

Boat trips to the edge of the continental shelf specifically to view seabirds are regularly organised by independent operators from Wollongong. The cost per individual is around \$90.00. Bookings are essential. Wollongong departures Contact: Lindsay Smith Phone 4271 6004