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Contributions

If you have any information about conservation issues, or if you would like to share some of your birding experiences, travel stories or anecdotes with fellow members, please send details to the editor at shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au with any related photos, drawings or maps.

In addition, if you have any bird photographs you would like to share, please send them in as well. This includes photos of unidentified birds that could be used in our “What Bird is This” section.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the BirdLife Shoalhaven members who contributed articles to this newsletter, especially to Frances Bray, Mike and Rose Clear, Chris Grounds, Marg Hamon and Christine Rigg.

Thanks also to those people who supplied images – Jodie Dunn, Chris Grounds, Christine Rigg, Warren Wilson, Deb Andrew, Brett Stevenson, Ian Brown, Brett Davis, Narelle Wright and Maureen Webb. Apologies to any contributors whose text or images have not been acknowledged.

Disclaimer

The information in articles submitted for publication in this newsletter is accepted in good faith and although the editor has endeavoured to verify the accuracy of all information, BirdLife Shoalhaven accepts no responsibility for any errors, inaccuracies or exaggerations that may be contained within articles in this newsletter.

President's Report

Welcome to our first e-newsletter for Birdlife Shoalhaven. Our quarterly e-newsletter will be composed of members sightings, images and reports of our outings or other member's trips, plus reports about all the wonderful work being done by volunteers in the various conservation projects going on throughout the Shoalhaven.

I have always loved birding Lake Wollumboola, especially the Easter camps the Shoalhaven Birders had for many years at Coppercup Point and the regular walks at least once a year at the Culburra Lake entrance area. So it was shocking to hear of further pressures on the lake being proposed for the western shore of this exceptional birding area where so many people have devoted so much time and effort into protecting breeding birds.

After the recent debacle of the significant fauna site of the "bum tree" and road widening disrupting the Great Eastern Ranges' Berry Corridor initiative, it is clear that Shoalhaven Councilors have little or no appreciation or concern for environmental issues. Getting them on side for conservation is not easy.

This is why we have Birdlife Shoalhaven!

We will need to be tireless and very alert to bring pressure to bear on local and state authorities to protect the birding areas we care about. Lake Wollumboola, Comerong Island, vegetation corridors facilitating free, safe movement of forest birds and all our other personal special birding places, need to be protected from indiscriminate development! So many species have been lost to the Shoalhaven, mainly by habitat destruction. Habitats must be protected and every endeavour made to re-establish lost and degraded areas. We will probably have to get 'down and dirty'.

The success in establishing Birdlife Shoalhaven has been due to the energetic work done by Brett and Karen Davis - they must be congratulated on this initiative. But this is only the beginning. If we are to protect our avifauna and threatened species, we must be an active lobby group as well as sharing our hobby with like-minded friends. We also need to establish a more formal record keeping process to present statistical data on bird species and density more in line with Atlassing or National Parks records with dates and GPS recording of sightings, particularly of threatened species.

There are many active landcare, bushcare and conservation groups in the Shoalhaven and hopefully Birdlife Shoalhaven can do something to strengthen their community action and successfully help to protect vegetation and habitat communities and species.

Barry Virtue

Branch Formation

Last year (2013) a few local Birdlife members - Barry Virtue, Brett Davis and Karen Davis - formed a steering committee to establish a branch of Birdlife Australia within the Shoalhaven region of the NSW south coast, primarily to give birds and bird conservation a voice in the local area. Birdlife Shoalhaven would receive advice and support from the Birdlife Australia national office to speak on behalf of the national organisation, bringing weight and credibility to local conservation issues. The establishment of the branch was approved by the Board of Birdlife Australia late in the year.

The area covered by the branch conforms to the Shoalhaven City local government area and includes Berry, Kangaroo Valley, Nowra, Jervis Bay, Ulladulla and all the coastal towns from Seven Mile Beach to Durras Lake.

Wonderful work for bird conservation is already being done in the Shoalhaven by a number of different groups - at Lake Wollumboola, Shoalhaven Heads and on many of our beaches, to protect threatened and endangered species including Little Terns, Pied Oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers - and Birdlife Shoalhaven would like to support their work where we can.

In accordance with the Branch Working Arrangements of BirdLife Australia, an initial AGM was held - at Greenfields Beach (Vincentia) on Saturday March 1st. At the meeting Barry Virtue was confirmed as President, Karen Davis as Treasurer, and Brett Davis as Secretary.

A working group was set up to determine the aims and future direction of the branch in accordance with BirdLife Australia guidelines.

Our first birdwatching outing was to Lake Wollumboola on February 16th, 2014.





Birds Seen at Lake Wollumboola

February 16th, 2014 – 36 species

Australian Hobby
 Beach Stone-curlew
 Silver Gull
 Pied Oystercatcher
 Black Swan
 Pelican
 Great Cormorant
 Little Corella
 Crested Tern
 White-faced Heron
 Caspian Tern
 Little Tern
 Masked Lapwing
 White-bellied Sea-eagle
 Red-capped Plover
 Chestnut Teal
 Common Greenshank
 Pied Cormorant
 Little Pied Cormorant
 Little Black Cormorant
 Australian Magpie
 Superb Fairy-wren
 Australian Raven
 Royal Spoonbill
 Intermediate Egret
 Grey Teal
 Gull-billed Tern
 Red-necked Stint
 Whistling Kite
 Black-winged Stilt
 Little Egret
 Hoary-headed Grebe
 Swamp Harrier
 Black-shouldered Kite
 Magpie Lark
 Square-tailed Kite

Birds Seen at Barren Grounds

March 16th, 2014 – 25 species

Beautiful Firetail
 Black-shouldered Kite
 Brown Thornbill
 Brush Wattlebird
 Collared Sparrow-hawk
 Crimson Rosella
 Golden Whistler
 Grey Butcherbird
 Grey Fantail
 Grey Goshawk
 Grey Shrike-thrush
 Lyrebird
 New Holland Honeyeater
 Red Wattle-Bird
 Red-browed Finch
 Silver-eye
 Spotted Pardalote
 Superb Fairy Wren
 Tree Martin
 Welcome Swallow
 White-browed Scrub-wren
 White-headed Pigeon
 White-throated Needletail
 White-throated Treecreeper
 Yellow Robin



Birdwatching Outings

BirdLife Shoalhaven members may attend the outings of the Shoalhaven Birders and the Milton Ulladulla District Birdwatchers.

Shoalhaven Birders

Shoalhaven Birders hold regular birdwatching outings, usually on every third Sunday of the month meeting at 8.30am. Upcoming birdwatching events are as follows :

May 18

Cudmirrah and Berrara – meet at Bewong Roadhouse

June 15

Jerrara Dam and Spring Creek - meet at Berry Apex Park

July 20

Greenpatch and the Booderee Botanical Gardens - meet at the Booderee Visitors Centre

August 17

Fitzroy Falls and East Rim – meet at the Kangaroo Valley Showground

August 29 to September 5

Capertee, Dunn's Swamp and Mudgee – meet on Friday August 29 at Port Macquarie Homestead

Friday August 29 to Sunday August 31 at Port Macquarie Homestead in Capertee Valley, (4 bedrooms, sleeps 14, approximately \$50pp/pn.) Camping available in grounds. Two full days to bird at Dunns Swamp and Glen Davis

Monday September 1 to Friday September 5 at Mudgee staying at Mudgee Riverside Caravan and Tourist Park (phone 02 6372 2531) - cabins and powered or unpowered sites by the river. We will visit Putta Bucca Wetlands, Avisford N.R. and Munghorn Gap.

October 19

Bangalee - meet in the car park in Illaroo Rd at northern end of Shoalhaven bridge

November 16

Conjola and Yatte Yattah - meet at the Bewong Roadhouse

December 21

Moona Moona Creek at Huskisson at 5pm - BYO picnic bbq / drink to have after a short walk

Contacts:

Barry and Susan Virtue - 4464-1389

Peter and Julie Hale - 0402 076 548

Stan and Su Brown - 4443-4828



Milton Ulladulla District Birdwatchers

BirdLife Shoalhaven members may also attend the Friday birdwatching outings of the MUD Birdwatchers club. Membership of the MUD Birdwatchers club is open to all members of the Milton Ulladulla U3A. For more information about joining MUD Birdwatchers, please email mubirdclub@gmail.com or phone Marg Hamon on 4457-1129 or Chris Shinton on 4454-5584.

Upcoming birdwatching events are :

May 2

Little Forest Nature Track – meet at 8am at the back of Harry Higgs Room

Driving: 42km Time: 2 hrs Grade: Easy

Leader: Mike Jefferis 4455-5162

May 13 :

Tuesday Evening Meeting and General Meeting

Meet: 7:30 pm: Harry Higgs Room

Activity: Atlasing and Databases

May 16

North Fisherman's Paradise – meet at 8am at the back of Harry Higgs Room or at 8:15am at the Murrays Road Turnoff.

Driving: 30km Time: 1 hr Grade: Easy

Leader: Bob Rusk 4455-2169

May 30

Lake Conjola – meet at 8 am at the back of Harry Higgs Room, or 8:15am at boat ramp at end of Lake Conjola Rd

Driving: 30km Time: 1 hrs Grade: Easy

Leaders: John Olsen & Jenny Bryant 4455-1837

June 13

Meroo Head – meet at 8am at the Lions Park at Burrill Lake (by toilets)

Driving: 50km Time: 1 hrs Grade: Easy

Leaders: Marg Hamon & Maggie Mance 4457-1129

June 27

Warden Head – meet at 8am at Warden Head Lighthouse

Driving: 0 km Time: 0 hrs Grade: Easy

Leader: Chris Shinton 4454-5584

July 11

Garrads Lane – meet 8am at the back of Harry Higgs Room or 8:10am at 90A Garrads Lane Milton.

Driving: 3km Time: 0.5 hrs Grade: Easy

Leader: Geoff Andrews 4454-3580

Lake Wollumboola

by Frances Bray

(Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc)

The Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc is a community environment group located at Culburra Beach. We are passionate about conserving the natural environment of Lake Wollumboola and its catchment, a commitment which we as a group made 21 years ago and are still working to achieve in the face of continuing urban expansion pressures and Government indecision. Our activities include advocacy, practical conservation including Shorebird volunteering and Bushcare as well as community education and support for nature tourism and historical research. The Association is a member group of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW. Several members are long term members of Birds Australia-Birdlife Australia.



Lake character, ecology and recognition.

Lake Wollumboola is a natural highly variable, shallow intermittently closing and opening coastal lake. It is located between the Shoalhaven-Crookhaven River estuaries and Jervis Bay. It opens naturally across the sand bar following weeks of continuous, heavy rain and becomes tidal. Storm waves and sand drift rapidly close it. The lake is mainly closed, with closures lasting up to 8 years. The lake bed and extensive sand and mud flats are exposed following openings and during drought.

This complex, extreme system provides rich and varied habitat for abundant biodiversity- aquatic plants and marine life, water birds, migratory sea and shorebirds and wetlands including Endangered Ecological Communities such as Coastal Salt Marsh and Swamp Oak Flood Plain Forest.

Bird habitats range from the sand bar and adjacent open ocean, to deep and shallow open water, abundant algae, especially *Lamprothamnium papulosa* and sea tassel *Ruppia megacarpa*, fresh water soaks, sand banks, mudflats, rocky reefs, sedge and coastal salt marsh as well as Swamp Oak and Melaleuca forests around the shore. The significance and use of these habitats varies with each

bird species and is influenced by seasons, water levels, brackish/saline quality and nutrient levels as well as lake opening/closing status.

Over 100 bird species have been recorded, including 16 species are listed under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act*. At least 20,000 birds at any one time have been recorded, with Black Swan and Chestnut and Grey Teal comprising the greatest numbers. The greatest numbers and diversity occur during summers when the Lake level is low, attracting both migratory waders and sea birds as well as water birds.

The Lake's significance as bird habitat is recognized by;

- inclusion of the Lake, its sand bar and southwest catchment in Jervis Bay National Park.
- recognition as a Wetland of National Importance.
- listing as a Globally Important Bird Area for Black Swan and Chestnut Teal by Birdlife International
- recognition in international treaties as migratory bird habitat including breeding habitat for the Little Tern as part of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway with 34 species protected under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.

Over 9,000 birds at any one time enjoyed the lake's rich and varied habitat during February 2014 with the endangered migratory Little Tern flock successfully nesting and raising 46 fledglings.

The undeveloped parts of the catchment are also environmentally significant. The catchment comprises largely undisturbed coastal forest and wetlands, supporting seven endangered ecological communities, wetlands and habitat for some 28 threatened fauna species, including habitat for threatened bird species such as the Glossy Black Cockatoo and the Powerful Owl.



The South Coast Regional Conservation Plan 2010 (DECCW) identifies the catchment as a regionally significant Wildlife Corridor.

The South Coast Regional Strategy 2007 adopted independent expert advice that the Lake catchment is unsuitable for urban development and should be zoned E 1 National Park in recognition of its significance in protecting the lake ecosystem and in the light of its own conservation significance as threatened species habitat.

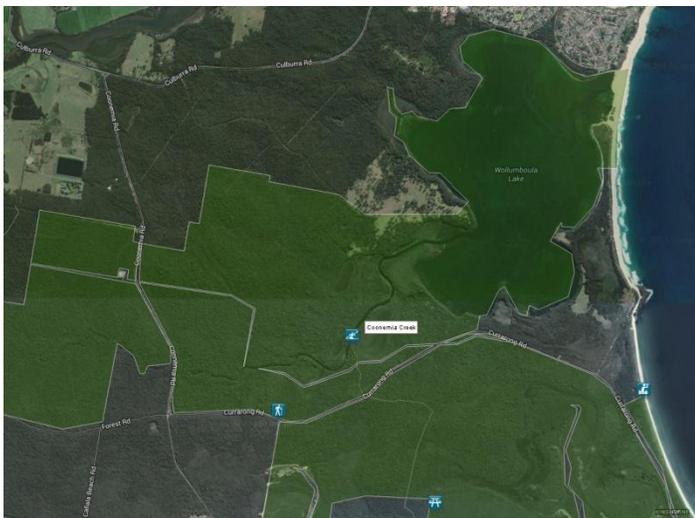
Sensitivity to development pressures.

The well-being of Lake Wollumboola is dependent on maintaining the natural surface and ground water runoff quality and volume by retaining the natural vegetation of the catchment.

Levels of nutrients, organic material, sediments and other pollutants are naturally low. These are washed into the creeks and Lake from surface water during heavy rainfall and continuous ground water seepage. Nutrients accumulate in sediments providing the source of the Lake's abundant sea grass, algae and wildlife.

Recent research by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage titled *Environmental Sensitivity of Lake Wollumboola: input into considerations of development applications at Long Bow Point, Culburra,* Scanes P et al 2013, has reaffirmed previous longstanding expert advice that urban expansion in the lake catchment would have disastrous consequences. The report concludes:

- "... we consider that the lake is **vulnerable to a catastrophic state change** if key processes are disrupted by nutrient enrichment and there is significant loss of charophytes and macrophytes." (Charophytes, algae species are an important part of the lake ecosystem.)
- "The lake **would never recover** from the loss of charophytes and macrophytes and the ecosystem services they provide.... resulting in loss of swans and other fauna."



(Map of Jervis Bay National Park showing the unprotected catchment to the northwest of Lake Wollumboola)

What is LWPA doing to conserve Lake Wollumboola and its catchment?

Advocacy

The contribution of both individual members and the group as a whole has been influential in protecting and conserving the Lake and sensitive parts of its catchment.

We have achieved significant milestones with:

- refusal of the Long Bow Point subdivision in 2000
- gazettal of the Lake bed and sand bar as part of Jervis Bay National Park in 2002
- adoption in the statutory South Coast Regional Strategy 2007 of recommendations from independent Inquiries that the lake catchment should be zoned E 1 National Park, to be achieved via negotiations with the landowner to offset urban development approved in the adjacent Crookhaven River catchment.

However our long campaign to have Long Bow Point and other high conservation value parts of the catchment included as National Park has suffered a major setback.

The NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure advised in March 2014 that he had agreed to a Shoalhaven City Council recommendation and landowner request to defer the Environment Conservation zonings in the lake catchment as exhibited in the draft Shoalhaven LEP to enable the major landowner to propose expansion plans for "sustainable" development and environment protection at Culburra Beach and Callala Bay.

This decision was made despite recommendations for protection of the Lake catchment from urban development since 2000 from independent expert inquiries and the expert advice from Office of Environment and Heritage and appeals from respected organizations, including Birdlife Australia, the Australian Coastal Society, the NSW Nature Conservation Council, Total Environment Centre as well as LWPA.

In our view this decision puts the Lake at risk of catastrophic collapse, as warned by the Office of Environment and Heritage Report.



We acknowledge that the Minister and his Department have set conditions for the master plan, that it should recognise the environmental sensitivities of land in the Lake Wollumboola catchment, consistent with endorsed

strategic planning for the area and also allow for sustainable growth in Culburra Beach and Callala Bay.

However we consider these conditions are inadequate given that the company is seeking urban expansion over hundreds of hectares of environmentally sensitive land in both the lake and Crookhaven River catchments at Culburra Beach, as well as at Callala Bay.”

Accordingly we have requested that additional conditions are imposed, including that;

- the master plan excludes urban development from the lake catchment and dedicates the most sensitive areas, including the Long Bow Point peninsula, to Jervis Bay National Park as an offset for urban development in the Crookhaven catchment, as adopted in the South Coast Regional Strategy and previously supported by the landowner.
- cumulative impacts of all the company’s urban expansion plans are taken into account by placing a moratorium on further development applications during the course of the master plan process and by deferring decisions regarding existing development applications in the catchment, including the proposed golf course and West Culburra urban development, until the master plan is finalised.

Disappointingly, efforts by the Office of Environment and Heritage to progress listing of the lake under the Ramsar Convention as LWPA has long urged, are on hold because of opposition from Shoalhaven City Council and lack of action by NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

Our other contributions to conservation of the lake include;

- documentation of the lake’s character and ecology, particularly its bird life
- volunteering with the NSW South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program
- volunteering with Shoalhaven City Council’s Bushcare Program as members of the Lake Wollumboola Bushcare Group.
- promotion of lake values and community education and information provision

Documentation of the Lake birdlife.

In 1993 Ornithologist Joy Pegler commenced her monthly observations of the Lake’s bird life, which continue to date. Her meticulous records have been central to demonstrating the importance of the Lake as habitat both for indigenous and migratory birds and the Lake’s inclusion in the Jervis Bay National Park in 2002 as well as the case for listing under the Ramsar Convention.

Joy’s data and analysis of the importance of Lake Wollumboola as bird habitat is documented in a NSW NPWS publication, “Patterns of Water Bird Assemblages in Lake Wollumboola” - Jillian Keating and Joy Pegler 2003, and included in the NSW NPWS Jervis Bay National Park Plan of Management 2011.

Joy also took initiatives through Birds Australia to have Lake Wollumboola recognized as a globally Important Bird Area with her observations showing that more than 1% of the world’s population of Black Swan and Chestnut Teal are regularly recorded at Lake Wollumboola, with flocks numbering over 13,000 Swans. She has generously shared her knowledge of birds with other LWPA members and the community through NPWS Discovery walks at the Lake sand bar and our community education initiatives.

Members participated with Joy in Shorebird 2020 counts and continue with monthly Shorebird counts covering all bird species.

Spring-Summer 2014 bird observations

This season Lake Wollumboola provided excellent habitat for nesting shorebirds, as well as thousands of migratory, water and fish eating birds. The Lake water level was very low, as a result of an illegal opening at the end of June 2013 and drought conditions persisting during spring and summer. Large areas of the lake bed were exposed increasing habitat variety.

Some **52** species were recorded by Joy and other members including threatened and rare species including:

35 Pied Oyster Catchers regularly recorded

30 White-fronted Chats

12 Curlew Sandpipers

236 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers

138 Red-necked Stints

78 Bar Tailed Godwits

1 Beach Stone Curlew (present to greet the members of the Shoalhaven Branch of Birdlife Australia on 16th February)

70 plus Royal Spoon Bills

Joy recorded 5, 242 Black Swan in February together with flocks of Chestnut and Grey Teal and Hard Head Ducks also in the thousands.



Members also monitor, photograph and report to NPWS/Office of Environment and Heritage regarding Lake conditions, including Lake opening, (recent openings have been illegal interventions) Lake vegetation, especially presence of rare and threatened species and management issues, including disturbance to birds from dogs and recreational activities.

Shorebird Conservation

Both President Frances Bray and Vice-President Narelle Wright are volunteers with the NSW Shorebird Recovery Program, with other members assisting on occasions. The program at Lake Wollumboola includes the Endangered Little Tern and the Vulnerable Pied Oyster Catcher.

Frances co-ordinates the volunteer contribution to conservation measures in support of the migratory Little Terns that nest on the sand bar during summer. We monitor and record on a daily basis Little Tern numbers, nest locations, eggs laid, chicks hatched, losses, predator activities and numbers of fledglings. Both this data and photographic monitoring enables evaluation of the success or otherwise of the season and thus the overall program.

Our work also involves observing site, wave and weather conditions, erecting string fences to protect nests/habitat, monitoring the electric fence erected to deter foxes, erecting/repairing signage, monitoring fox and raven tracks and behaviour and liaising with NPWS staff and contractors, persuading dog walkers to take their dogs elsewhere, observing and reporting on threats to Little Terns from recreational and other human activities, generally engaging with beach visitors and providing information and interpretation of Little Tern conservation measures.

This season the Little Terns nested on both the sand bar and the mudflats commencing in mid December and departing mid March.

100 adult Little Terns were breeding at Lake Wollumboola this season, with Little Terns numbering over 200 at times.

The results were:

50 Nests
96 Eggs
81 Chicks hatched
46 Fledglings !!!



This was the first year since 2008-9 that the Little Terns had nested successfully at Lake Wollumboola. Whilst the outcome is very pleasing, unfortunately some 23 chicks and runners were lost, mainly due to fox predation.

35 Pied Oyster Catchers was the highest number observed at Lake Wollumboola. They were attracted by an abundance of small molluscs in the exposed sand/mudflats. Unfortunately 6 Pied Oyster catchers were observed to have serious injuries due to abandoned fishing lines entangled around their feet and legs. One bird lost both feet and was subsequently attacked by a fox and died. We were not able to obtain the necessary equipment to facilitate rescue and rehabilitation of these birds.



Well over 100 visitors came to the sand bar this year specifically to see the thousands of birds. Many advised us that they came as a result of the ABC TV NSW 7.30 Report program in October 2013, which featured Lake Wollumboola and the threat to the Lake ecology from proposed development expansion. This program was a LWPA initiative.



The volunteers were pleased to host the Illawarra Birders, the Shoalhaven Branch of Birdlife Australia, the Chairperson of the NSW Nature Conservation Council, Professor Don White and the South Coast Region Director of NPWS Diane Garrod during the season.

In 2008 the "Lake Wollumboola Little Tern Conservation Program - a case study from the NSW South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program" won the National Trust Heritage Award for Conservation-Landscape Heritage, with the then Department of Environment and Climate Change, Shoalhaven City Council and the South Coast Shorebird Volunteers as the organizations involved.

Other practical conservation activities

LWPA members also document wetland vegetation around the Lake shore, particularly at low water levels. This work includes monitoring and photographing occurrences of the Endangered wetland plant *Wilsonia rotundifolia* which we have shown can survive under water for 8 years and re-emerge when the Lake margins are exposed.



Lake Wollumboola Bushcare Group

LWPA members have been active for more than 20 years in conservation and regeneration of much of the public reserve along the northern lake shore. The Lake Wollumboola Bushcare Group formed in 1999 continues this work focussing on SEPP 14 Wetland No 365 and the Sheepwash Creek area including the Endangered Ecological Bangalay Sand Forest community east of the Lake boat ramp.

The condition of the wetland and riparian vegetation has improved considerably through this dedicated and consistent work. The area is an important habitat corridor along the northern shore. Association members also monitor and photograph native bird species in this area.

LWPA members through the Bushcare Group were instrumental in developing interpretive signage for the Sheepwash Creek-boat ramp area of the northern shore. "Caring for our Country" funding provided for this joint SCC-Bushcare Group project, which features the flora and fauna of the area, as well as the Lake's Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Aboriginal cultural heritage signage was developed in partnership with the Jerrinja Local Aboriginal Land Council and features the importance of the Black Swan as part of ongoing cultural heritage.

Community education and interpretation.

LWPA is pro-active in provision of information and community education re the natural and cultural values of Lake Wollumboola. Our website www.wollumboola.org.au is currently being updated. In previous years we letterboxed Christmas newsletters, throughout Culburra Beach, but now place periodic newsletters on our website.

In 2012 we produced a brochure "LWPA Presents Lake Wollumboola birds." This coincided with the LWPA stall

at the Love Culburra festival, which featured photographs and information. We organised LWPA stalls for the three years of the festival as well as other street stalls. This brochure is also on our website.



Our newsletters include "Lake Wollumboola-part of Jervis Bay National Park" and "Lake Wollumboola displays why it is internationally significant for birdlife" Spring-Summer 2013-14.

It is a paradox that although we have such a magnificent, internationally significant natural treasure in Lake Wollumboola at Culburra Beach, opinion is divided regarding Lake conservation and the major landowner's development expansion plans with some people swayed by promises of additional services and employment and interest in and recreational pursuits before conservation.

We remain hopeful that with the support of younger members of the local community and the wider Shoalhaven community as well as prestigious organizations such as Birdlife Australia that eventually the most sensitive parts of the Lake catchment will become National Park and that the lake and its bird life will be conserved into the future.

Frances Bray PSM BA B Ed Dip Ed
President, Lake Wollumboola Protection Association
April 2014



South Coast Shorebird Recovery Project

by Jodie Dunn (NPWS)

The South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program began in 1999 in response to a dramatic decline in native beach nesting birds. Little Tern numbers were reduced to only 110 breeding pairs on the entire NSW coast and Hooded Plover's (Hoodies) had become extinct in the northern part of their range, with less than 50 birds remaining south of Jervis Bay. The Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers were also added to this list of rapidly declining shorebirds. Something needed to be done before we lost these beautiful native birds from our coastline forever.



All four species were listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act (1995) and protected by state legislation - the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) took action. Recovery teams were formed and recovery plans were written, identifying the key to recovering these dwindling populations – improve breeding success. The plans listed the specific threats to breeding success and the recovery actions required to manage them. Overall, the aim was to increase the survival rates of eggs and chicks on the beaches, so these little ones would develop into breeding adults and increase the size of the NSW populations.

These shorebirds nesting on our beaches face a growing number of threats to their breeding success. Their nests are a simple scrape forming a shallow depression in the sand between the high tide mark and dune vegetation (the birds won't nest in the denser plants of the dune revegetation areas). Consequently, most nests are in the clear sandy area just above the high tide mark where people and dogs are walking.



The shorebird eggs and chicks are both camouflaged to avoid predation by their natural predator – the raptor. These birds of prey such as whistling kites and sea eagles find food by sight, so the best strategy to avoid being eaten is to not be seen – camouflage. This means the eggs and chicks are light yellow, beige and grey in colour with darker flecks, to blend in with the sand. They are very difficult to see but therefore very easy for us to step on.

The main threat to shorebird nests and chicks was being trampled by beach goers and dog walkers who did not even realise they were there! The tiny eggs and chicks were so easily stepped on and killed, yet we do not mean to do it. On top of that dogs were also trampling eggs and chasing the little birds.



The best solution is to find the nests first and protect the eggs and chicks by installing temporary fencing and signage on the beach around their nesting area. Now each season when the birds start nesting in spring, the NPWS and community volunteers survey the beaches along the south coast, monitor the breeding pairs of shorebirds, identify the best nesting sites and keep watch for signs of nesting.

In addition to this threat of being trampled, shorebird eggs and chicks also have a new predator to deal with – the introduced red fox. This predator has been detrimental to Australia's native ground nesting birds and small mammals. Foxes are found throughout our towns, in the bush and on our beaches looking for vulnerable wildlife and scavenging for rubbish. Sadly the fox especially likes shorebird eggs and chicks. NPWS undertakes as much fox control as possible to protect the shorebirds.



Raven predation has also become a major threat to the shorebirds with raven populations increasing due to the food provided by people - trash, bait bags and road kill and being especially elevated around caravan parks. This predator also likes shorebird eggs and chicks.

So on top of dealing with people and dogs on our beaches, shorebirds now have foxes and ravens threatening the survival of their eggs and chicks, as well as the natural threats of raptor predation and nests being washed away in king tides and big swells. Nesting on the beach has gotten a lot harder for shorebirds, and they need our help to survive.

Over the 13 years this recovery program has been running, numerous interested community groups and volunteers have come on board to help NPWS protect their local beach nesting birds. On the south coast there are now more than 100 caring and dedicated locals watching over the shorebirds and helping protect their nests and chicks. These wonderful people spend hours each spring and summer walking the beaches looking for the shorebirds, finding threatened nests and chicks and working with the shorebird recovery coordinator on installing fencing, signage and other protective measures.



NPWS provides training courses and workshops for the volunteers so the birds receive the best protection possible on our beaches. We also give community talks, media releases and beach education sessions throughout the season to raise awareness in beach goers, dog walkers and visitors. Recently we started a school education program.

From humble beginnings the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program has become an amazing example of community based conservation and has attracted a number of state and federal grants to support the efforts of NPWS, local councils and the amazing shorebird volunteers.



We are dedicated to protecting the local beach nesting birds and it has started working! The endangered Little Tern population is now up to around 500 breeding pairs along the NSW coast and the critically endangered Hoodies have doubled in numbers on the south coast, with fourteen breeding pairs now nesting between Jervis Bay and Batemans Bay. This is a great reward after all our hard work. Thank-you to all the shorebird volunteers and supporters in the community.

If you would like more information about the program or would like to join us in watching over your local shorebirds, please call Ulladulla NPWS on 4454-9500 or email the Shorebird Recovery Coordinator at – jodie.dunn@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Hooded Plover Banding Project

by Jodie Dunn (NPWS)

After years of preparation and training we finally have a banding project to learn more about our NSW Hooded Plovers. The need for banding became clear after years of recovery and nest protection work between 2001 and 2006 fledged 70 chicks, but the adult population failed to increase (even though fledglings look like adults after one year and can start nesting). In fact numbers appeared to still be declining with less than 50 Hoodies remaining in NSW. The species was relisted as critically endangered. Over the last two years NPWS, funded by a grant from the Foundation for National Parks, has been trapping and banding Hooded Plovers along the coast of NSW and initial results are very exciting!



So far 65 Hoodies have been banded, including 5 fledglings from 2012/13 (3 re-sighted this season) and 7 fledglings this season. The results have confirmed a recent increase in the south coast region (SCR: Jervis Bay to Batemans Bay) population. With 38 birds alone banded in this part of the NSW range and at least another 6 unbanded adults sighted, it is a definite increase on the 2008 estimated population of 19 adults.

When we look further into the data and consider the 4 banded Hoodies not re-sighted this season and assumed deceased, then we now have a total of at least 38 adult birds (32 banded + 6 unbanded) in the SCR with 14 breeding pairs monitored. A doubling of the local population in 5 years!

In the far south coast region (FSCR; Batemans Bay to Vic border) the population appears stable with 21 adults banded so far plus one fledgling last season and 5 fledglings this season. Of these 21 adults only one was not re-sighted again and the 2012/13 fledgling also disappeared, leaving us with 20 adults plus approximately another 8 unbanded adults.

This gives us a total population of 28 Hoodies in the FSCR, which is similar to the 2008 estimate of 30 adults. Together these results give us a total adult population in NSW of at least 66 adult birds. A very exciting increase for a species with such critically low numbers, especially after all the hard work of volunteers and NPWS.



Please look out for both banded and unbanded Hooded Plovers (see photo) and report any sightings to jodie.dunn@environment.nsw.gov.au.



Please note flag code, date and location. Sightings of unbanded Hooded Plovers are also needed. We aim to have the whole NSW population banded by June 30 this year, then we can gain valuable data about fledgling and adult survival rates, nest site and mate fidelity, home ranges, breeding territories and important winter feeding and flocking grounds.

The next phase will be genetic studies ...

Contact:

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National Parks & Wildlife Service
Office of Environment & Heritage
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jodie.dunn@environment.nsw.gov.au

Dogs off leash longer on our beaches?

Shoalhaven City Council is trialing extended winter off leash times for dogs – from May to September from 10am until 3pm. At the moment the trial is only for Huskisson, Culburra and Nelsons (Vincentia) Beach, but the SCC website states - “Should the trial prove successful, extended Winter times for dog off leash access may be adopted Shoalhaven-wide”.

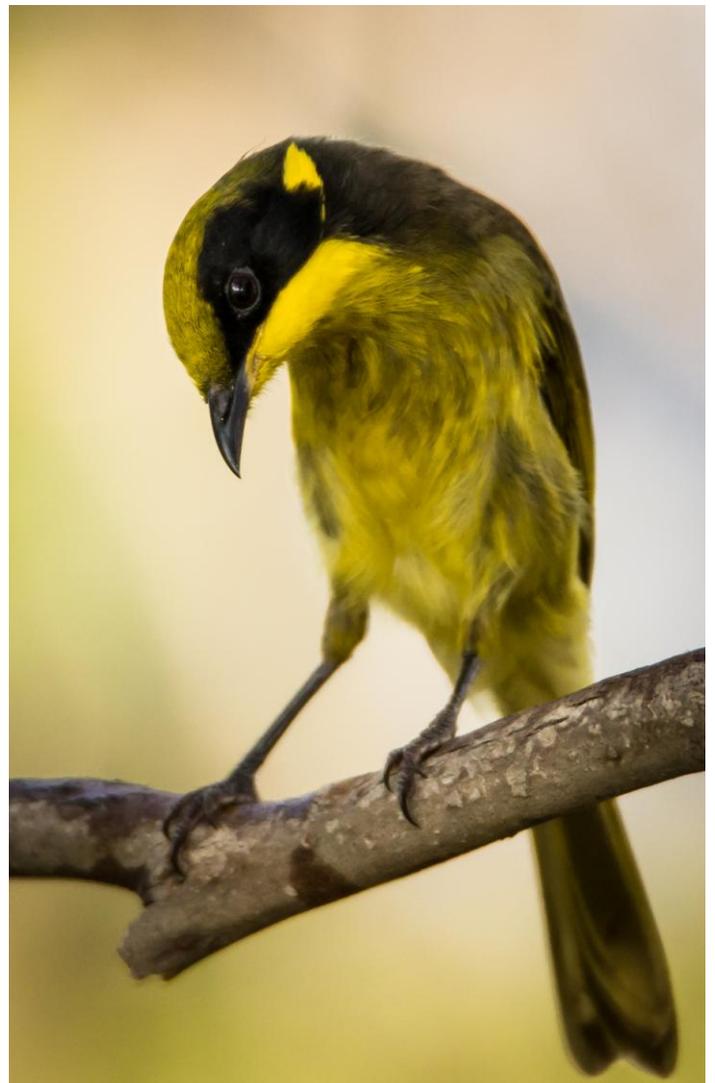
You can have your say at the following page -

<https://www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/DiscoverShoalhaven/Beaches/DogOffLeashAccessAreas.aspx>

Bird Photos

If you have any photos of birds you would like to share with your fellow BirdLife Shoalhaven members, please send them in to shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au

The lovely photo below of a Yellow-tufted Honeyeater was taken by Sue Tolley.



Members Report

Magnifying Simple Pleasures and Happenstance in Birdwatching

by Mike and Rose Clear, Cudmirrah

Over the last 12 months or so we've begun to enjoy birdwatching in a more concerted way. We've had experience over a number of seasons now, with endangered beach nesting birds. Beyond this we've had a general interest in birdwatching, but put quite simply, we have much to learn.

We've enjoyed many birding experiences, including a few now with Shoalhaven Birders, but for the moment we fancy sharing just three of the more noteworthy experiences of the past 6 months. Amongst other things, they highlight the interesting and diverse locations and ecosystems experienced in the birdwatching quest, and the more predictable aspects of nature that offer the ever present possibility of wonderful surprises.

The first experience we want to share is time we spent in the splendid Capertee Valley National Park and included, along with a range of other species sighted, an extended observation of the rare and endangered Regent Honeyeater (6) – see below. This was in mid-September 2013 and they were observed feeding on flowering Mugga Ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) close by our accommodation near the Port Macquarie Homestead and Cottage at the NP grounds. This was significant, but there were a number of other interesting birds.

We saw 52 species and took great pleasure observing Double-barred Finch, and the frenetic activity of a pair of Australian Reed-Warblers in the bank of the Capertee River, again, not far from the Homestead. We were fortunate to share this weekend with other birding friends from the Shoalhaven, Debbie Andrew, who is Senior Natural Heritage Officer, Ecosystems and Threatened Species Unit with the Office of Environment and Heritage, and Debbie and Brett Stevenson, both of whom have considerable experience and expertise in natural heritage.



(The Capertee River where Reed Warblers were observed)

The second experience we'd like to share relates to our visit to the Australian Botanic Gardens at Mt Annan on November 19, 2013. This was an event organised by Birdlife Southern NSW . We joined 25 other birders and Alan Leishman, an Honorary Research Associate with the Royal Botanic Gardens, who is conducting bird-banding and research at the Mt Annan Botanic Gardens. We sighted 37 species of birds over a 3 hour period in naturalised thicket, woodland and lakes. These included Latham's Snipe (3). We observed the use of mist nests, and banding of 3 species of captured bird; A Red-rumped Parrot, a Brown Fantail and a juvenile Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

A report that we wrote on this event including photos can be found in Birdlife Southern NSW e-news of 28 November, 2013.



(Sun setting on the Capertee Valley)

The third experience was on January 12, 2014 when we spent about 3 hours birdwatching in the historic gold mining town of Chiltern in north-east Victoria. The Chiltern-Mt Pilot NP forms part of the backdrop of the town and it is home to threatened woodland bird species such as the Regent Honeyeater, the Swift Parrot and the Square-tailed Kite.

It turned out to be a 40 degree (Celsius) day and we left our birdwatching until nearer dusk. Our aim was to explore the areas around some of the old gold mining sites in Box and Ironbark forest. We didn't see any threatened species,

but along with other species, enjoyed sightings of White-browed Babbler, Yellow -tufted Honeyeater, Dusky Woodswallow and Eastern Yellow Robin. Many birds found the old dam sites at dusk on such a hot day, irresistible.

After an enjoyable session with the birds we thought we'd satisfy our own compelling thirst at a different sort of water-hole. We arrived at the local pub, only to find, that the intense heat had resulted in an infrastructure crash. Sadly, the machinery driving the beer supply was not working. For all intents and purposes this was the Pub with no beer! The opportunity to wash away some of the dust and quench our thirst, turned from the tap to the bottle.

In sharing these experiences, we feel we should say, that for us at least, good binoculars have tended to transform our birdwatching experience from pleasant to intensely satisfying.

We have also complemented our use of binoculars with a spotting scope. In fact, in order for us to fully participate in the threatened species conservation work with our failing eyesight, the spotting scope has become indispensable. It has greatly assisted us to read flag codes and monitor nests from a suitable distance without disturbing nesting shorebirds.

Overall, quality optics has greatly enhanced our enjoyment of this recreation activity and our conservation interests. We still take great pleasure, without the benefit of magnification, watching from the kitchen window, as native birds in our garden take to the birdbath, find goodies in the shrubs and forage on the ground beneath. Some are regulars, but then there's always the chance of surprise.

[Feeding Regent Honeyeater photo by Deb Andrew; Capertee River where Reed Warblers observed and Sun setting over Capertee Valley photos by Brett Stevenson]

Editor's Note:

If you have any birding experiences, travel stories or anecdotes like the one above from Mike and Rose that you would like to share with fellow members of BirdLife Shoalhaven, send them in to shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au along with any relevant photos or maps.



Birds Seen in Canberra

Weekend of April 10 and 11

Australian Raven
Black Duck
Black Swan
Black-Faced Cuckoo Shrike
Black-Shouldered Kite
Brown Thornbill
Cattle Egret
Chestnut Teal
Common Starling
Crested Pigeon
Crimson Rosella
Darter
Dusky Moorhen
Eastern Rosella
Eurasian Coot
Galah
Golden Whistler
Great Cormorant
Grey Currawong
Grey Fantail
Grey Teal
Grey-Backed Butcher Bird
Hardhead
Hoary-Headed Grebe
King Parrot
Kookaburra
Little Black Cormorant And Little Pied Cormorant
Little Eagle
Magpie
Magpie Lark
Masked Lapwing
Musk Duck
New-Holland Honey-Eater
Noisy Miner
Pelican
Peregrine Falcon
Pied Currawong
Purple Swamphen
Red Wattle-Bird
Red-Browed Finch
Red-Rumped Parrot
Sacred Ibis
Scarlet Robin
Silver-Eye
Spotted Pardalote And Striated Pardalote
Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo
Super Fairy Wren
Tree Martin
Varied Sittella
Weebill
Welcome Swallow
Whistling Kite
White-Plumed Honey-Eater
White-Throated Treecreeper
White-Winged Chough
Willy Wagtail
Wood Duck
Yellow Thornbill
Yellow-Faced Honeyeater
Yellow-Rumped Thornbill

Sightings

On Tuesday April 1 at 11.20am in Booderee National Park at Governor Head (above), overlooking the beach a Regent Honeyeater (below) was sighted and photographed. It was in a flock of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, but there were also New-Holland Honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebills and Little Wattlebirds in the vicinity. The vegetation included banksias and casuarinas.



Wendy Hartman sent in the following report -

With all this gloomy rainy weather we have been having lately, I have been seeing one or two **Ground Parrots** feeding on the side of the road during the day as we travel up and down Booderee Avenue, Hyams Beach.

Stan Brown from Basin View sent in this report –

Sitting in our back yard on Wednesday 9th April, we observed a **Pink Robin** fly out of Corramy NR into our bird bath area and then proceed to have a bath and drink before being harassed by a pair of grey fantails. We had a good look at it as it flew to the fence and back to the bird baths prior to heading into the bush again.

Stan also reported “We were in South Nowra, Cumberland Ave on Thursday and saw two **Double-barred Finches**”.

Also, **Red-rumped Parrots** have been regularly sighted near the 2nd green at the St Georges Basin Country Club golf course.

What Bird Is This ???

This photo was sent in by BirdLife Shoalhaven member Ian Brown of Sanctuary Point. The bird was spotted recently in the Great Ocean Road and Cape Otway region of Victoria. Can anyone tell us what it is?

Please email your guess, impression or definitive positive identification and arguments for and against to shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au

Also, if you have any photos of birds that you are not certain about, please send them in as well so our members can try out their identification skills in future newsletters.

Incorrect IDs may be published, but members names will not be published – to avoid embarrassment.

Our President will make the final decision!



Heritage Estate

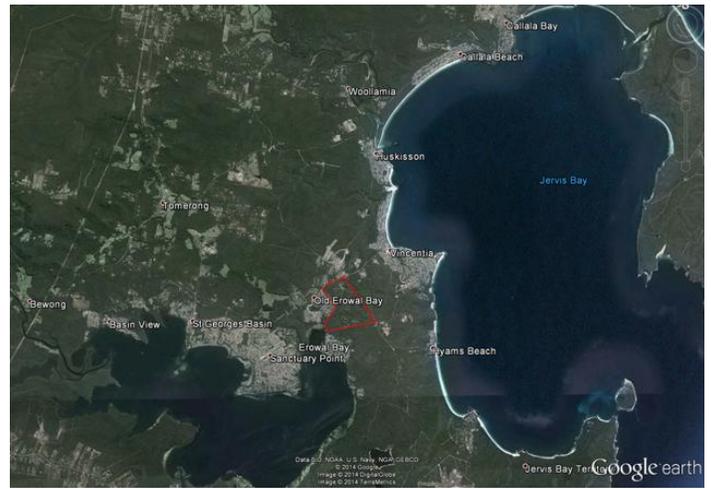
- a Conservation Case Study

- text and photos by Chris Grounds

It is generally agreed that the Heritage Estate is one of two great conservation battle zones in the Shoalhaven. The other is of course Lake Wollumboola and its environs though the lake itself is part of Jervis Bay National Park. Both battles continue.

The Heritage Estate had its origins in the doomed Henry Halloran 'grand vision' plan of "Pacific City" of 1915. The battle to conserve the Estate began in the late 1980s when Warren Halloran, Henry's son, sold the property to Michael Tsovaris of Heritage Estate Pty. Ltd., who was described as a "land shark" in a Sydney Morning Herald feature article.

The 170 ha estate consisted of urban sized lots organized in four 'estates', all zoned Rural in the first Shoalhaven Local Environment Plan of 1985.



Individuals and groups comprised mostly of local and Shoalhaven environmental activists and conservationists, took up the cudgels of opposition early in the Estate saga. Two particular groups, the Erowal Bay Action Group and the Jervis Bay Regional Alliance were prominent and involved in raising and organizing funded scientific study of the Estate to assist in establishing the ecological value of the Estate environment. Many were involved over the years in lobbying government and ministers, writing submissions, gaining publicity and keeping the pressure on to prevent destruction of a fine example of coastal ecology.

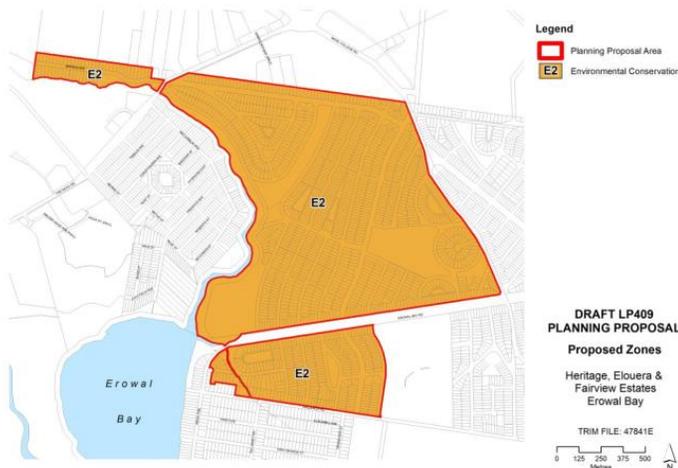
The May 2009 Garrett decision was a watershed in Estate history and whilst it was initially received with warranted joy it was not to be the finale to the conservation battle.

A point of consensus developed however with a range of people and authorities, many of whom had vehemently opposed conservation, that after the Commonwealth decision, conversion to National Park was the only realistic outcome. NSW National Parks and Wildlife was joined by Shoalhaven City Council, Commonwealth Environmental agencies and the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife in developing a proposal to fund voluntary acquisition and move for its inclusion in Jervis Bay National Park. That proposal was realized with the announcement in October 2012 that over \$5 million had been granted to purchase Estate lands.

This was another major watershed but not the ultimate solution, at least in the shorter term.

Prior to this, the next wave of conservation action had developed when no real solution was apparent, since the first application for Commonwealth funding was rejected and conversion to national park appeared to be at a stalemate.

Late in 2011 a community, conservation network was formed as a private network to reliably inform those with a genuine interest and, when needed, to act in the interest of conservation of the Estate. The intention was to ensure that all public figures, agencies and authorities, as well as the community, would be in no doubt that the conservation interests of the Estate would be actively argued, supported



The lots were advertised for \$4950 and falsely marketed with a view to rezoning for residential and speculative increases in value and use. Landowners received support in that endeavour and a residential development push continued from the early 1990s to May 2009. With Shoalhaven Council supporting some rezoning and development, the proposal had to be submitted for Commonwealth approval. That approval was denied in the Peter Garrett decision of March 2009, which was quite correctly based on the provisions of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act. The decision specifically referenced 'Threatened Species' and the threat to the biodiversity of Booderee National Park to which the Heritage Estate is critical.

The Estate area itself is a wonderful and valuable composite of various ecologies including estuary, forest communities, woodland communities, heathland and sedgeland. It includes an Endangered Ecological Community [EEC] and Crown Land adjacent to Worroing Creek.

and promoted. The flagship of the network is the newsletter “HEST” of which there have been thirty five editions since March 2012. The newsletter covers the full range of interests that Estate conservation involves from historical and political to environment and ecology.

The HEST Network has been active in submissions on any matter relating to the Estate but particularly intrusion, damage and destruction and has made major submissions on funding, Estate management, access issues and Rezoning. Activities have also included various events to raise awareness of the conservation value of the Estate, morning teas and the presentations of a purpose prepared slide show to community groups.

The network has expanded over time with strong links to the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife, who have been very supportive, and a valuable working relationship with both National Parks and Wildlife and Shoalhaven City Council.

Individual research has been undertaken and an extensive catalogue of photographs developed covering all natural aspects of the Estate. This has proven valuable to the Foundation NPW.

One major outcome of this has been the extension of the bird list adding five species previously not seen or listed in the Estate, including one species since declared as “Threatened”- the Little Eagle.



Birds listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act (NSW) are the Eastern Bristlebird, Gang-gang Cockatoo , Glossy Black Cockatoo, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl, Square-tailed Kite. Birds listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Commonwealth) are the Eastern Bristlebird and 5 migratory species: Black-faced Monarch, Latham’s Snipe, White-bellied Sea-eagle, White-throated Needletail and Rufous Fantail.

Some locals also moved to have the Council owned St Georges Avenue Reserve, which includes the EEC, included in the Council Bushcare program and both

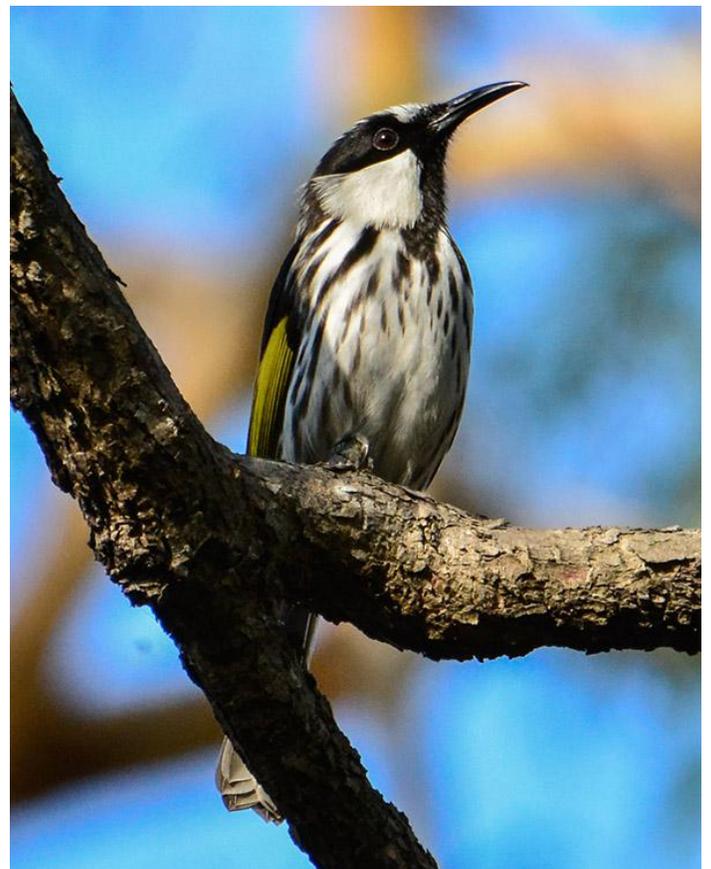
infrastructure and planting work have been completed over the last three years.

So where is the battle currently?



Well, a Federal Court decision on the landowner case for compensation is still to be handed down after six months of deliberation. Shoalhaven City Council has finally proceeded with rezoning of Heritage and neighboring Estates from Rural to Environment Conservation and submissions close on May 9. The Foundation still needs to purchase about 600 lots to complete the voluntary buyback and ensure the transition into Jervis Bay National Park. The court case needs to be finalised for that to happen.

So the battle is not over and the conclusion not yet in sight.



What do we do with our Lists?

A Report on BIGnet - by Margaret Hamon

The Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) hosted the Bird Interest Group network (BIGnet) meeting in Canberra on the weekend of 12-13 April. BIGnet is an association of bird clubs and organisations from all over NSW which come together every six months to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern.

I was particularly interested in attending this meeting because a whole afternoon session was to be devoted to atlasing and databases. I thought I'd get it sorted out in one easy session, and I'd have the answer as to which was the best system to go with. Not so!

The BirdLife Australia (BLA) Atlas is the system with which I am most familiar. The original Atlas was conducted from 1977 to 1981, and then a second Atlas commenced in 1998. This was intended to also run for five years, but it became apparent there was no need, in this electronic age, to end it at all, although a hardcover book was produced at the end of the five years. So it has become the Ongoing Atlas of Australian Birds.

Since then, other databases have been developed. Many of you will be familiar with Eremaea, and its Birdline site for reporting interesting or unusual sightings. Eremaea has recently joined forces with eBird, a global database set up by Cornell University. Eremaea eBird is now being used by a number of different clubs and individuals.

Another database is conducted by the Atlas of Living Australia. This has the advantage of being not just about birds, but other types of fauna and flora as well. It is the system chosen by COG to run their "Bird of the Year" Gang-gang Cockatoo survey, which they have started off this year to mark their 50th anniversary.

So how does one choose? It is worth considering a few factors. Long term, systematic data collection is of enormous benefit in providing information about the distribution and abundance of birds. Who uses this information? Apart from ordinary birdwatchers, the results of surveys are used by university researchers, governments at all levels, and agencies like the Rural Fire Service. Want to do a controlled burn or clear some bush for a road? A database should inform you of the likely whereabouts of threatened species, special nesting sites or other significant matters.

To be useful, the data must be accurate, and to be accurate there must be some system of vetting the information entered into the database. The entry and retrieval of data must also be easy. Data should be able to be shared among the different systems without problems of duplication, and all the data for a particular site should be able to be accessed easily.

Intellectual property rights and the sensitivity of private property are also concerns that must be addressed. If a rare

bird is reported on private property, you don't want a horde of twitchers stampeding all over the property. Another problem which arose was that of taxonomy. The three systems use different lists, based on different taxonomies.

So if you want your bird lists to go somewhere other than your bottom drawer, a choice needs to be made. Fortunately, data is exchanged among the three systems, but even so you may find that one system suits your purpose and requirements better than another system. BLA is aware that their Atlas database needs an upgrade, and the proceeds from this year's Twitchathon have been allocated to it for this purpose.

The BIGnet meeting was not only about the databases. There was a meeting for club conservation officers about their various concerns, particularly about CSG leases in the Hunter region. Phil Straw gave a presentation on his proposed Bird Fair in October. The pros and cons of clubs affiliating with BLA were discussed. A financial report was presented. COG explained their Gang-gang survey. The Gang-gang was chosen as the club's first Bird of the Year, as in spite of being the club and ACT Parks and Gardens logo, little is known of its abundance, movements, breeding success, food preferences etc. Alan Morris reported on the Twitchathon and a Cumberland Bird Observers Club (CBOC) representative introduced the IBA seminar that will be held in July. Bird Outings and how to run them successfully were discussed, and then ideas were shared on how to lobby politicians successfully.

2014 AUSTRALASIAN BIRD FAIR
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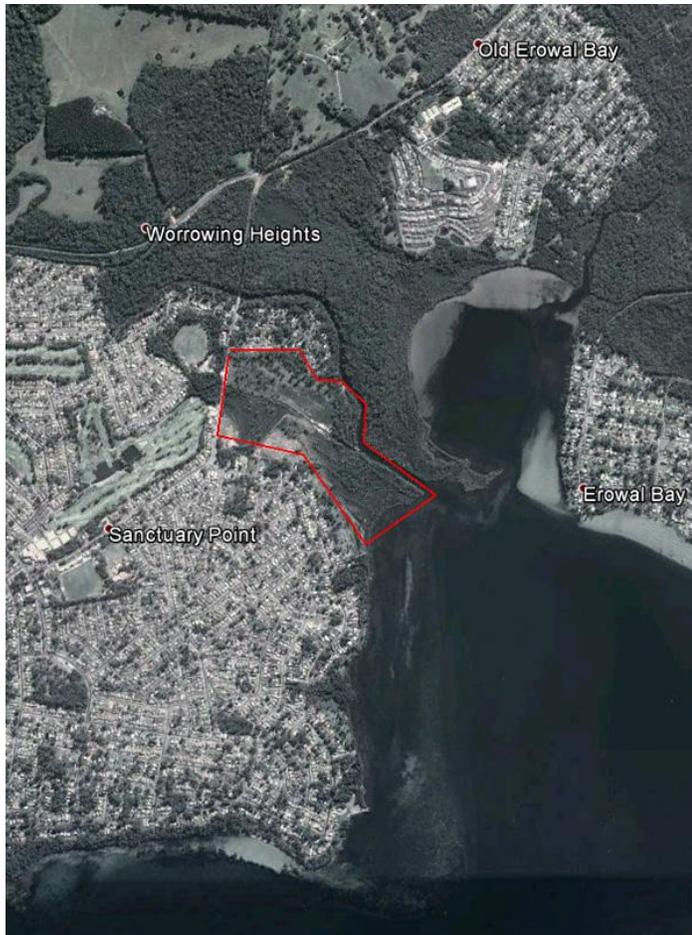
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Sanctuary Point Wetland !?

by Christine Rigg

Larmer Avenue is regarded as the ‘gateway’ to Sanctuary Point. It is a low lying stretch of road with the Little Athletics ground to the west, and many hectares of ‘vacant’ land to the East.



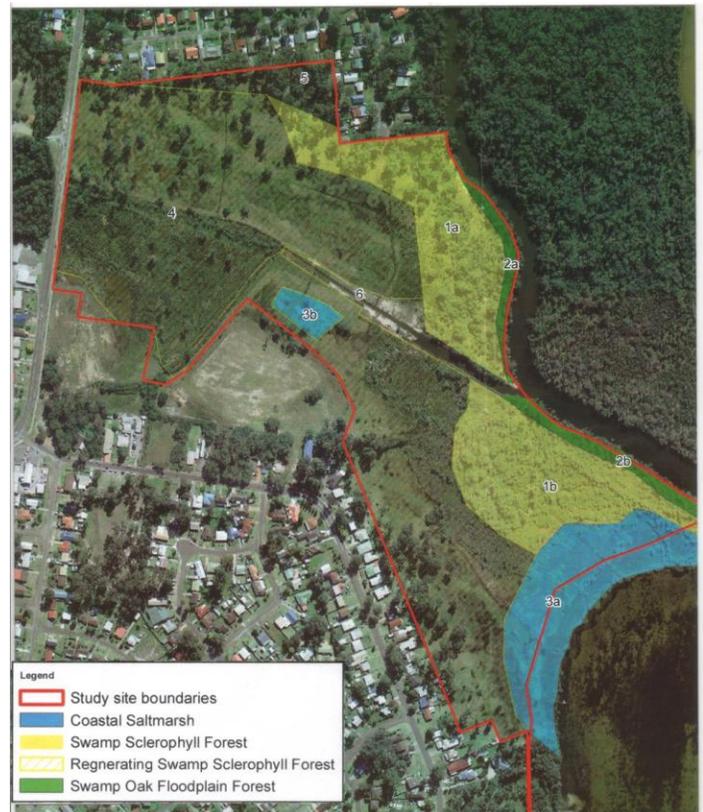
Many decades ago a previous owner excavated some channels in the middle of the area, branching off from the Cockrow Creek. These channels still exist, though they are less distinct than when they were originally cut, due to natural revegetation & erosion. Being highly flood-prone has ruled-out this area’s suitability for buildings or playing fields. In addition there are concerns about the presence of acid-sulphate soils subsequent to disturbance of the natural ground in recent years.

In 2013 the Shoalhaven City Council acquired the land, and asked the community about what should be done with it. In February 2014, the Basin Villages Forum (CCB) hosted a special presentation by Council staff, specifically on this land; the question being “What would the local community like to see done with this land?” There were over 60 people at the meeting - residents whose homes immediately adjoin the land, and other locals who had a general interest in the land’s use.

The use of the land that was proposed (and supported by a strong spirit of consensus) by attendees at the meeting, was

that the area be designated as an ‘official Wetland Reserve’. There is a Sanctuary Point foreshore walking track that currently exists from the Wool Lane to John Williams Reserve; heavily used by locals and visitors and provides an excellent opportunity for passive recreation by a wide range of people. The Forum proposed that this track be extended right along foreshore land to meet the Larmer Ave shared pathway, and link into the wetland.

There is the potential for board walks and bird hides; and management of the area as a visitor destination in the Bay and Basin area, as well as providing a recreational & educational opportunity for the community. The land supports important vegetation communities that should be protected, and this type of proposal makes the area accessible to the community as well. Ideally there would be network of paths that would be accessible by disabled / wheelchair-dependent people. It is likely that community volunteers would be interested in helping restore and maintain the proposed reserve, as is already done with SCC’s Bushcare and Parkcare programs.



The Basin Villages Forum sent a letter to Council, requesting a formal Plan of Management be written for the Larmer land, so currently the process is in Council’s hands.

The Basin Villages Forum is happy to be the organisation responsible for liaising between Council & Community on this proposal.

If you would like to be kept apprised of the wetland’s progress, email the Basin Villages Forum’s secretary (christinemrigg@gmail.com) and request to be added to the Forum’s emailing list.

News Snippets

BirdLife Shoalhaven in the News

Our treasurer Karen Davis sent an article about BirdLife Shoalhaven into the South Coast Register. It was published (with different titles) in both the SCR and the Nowra News in the second week of April.

Bird group focuses on conservation

In January this year a branch of BirdLife Australia was formed in the Shoalhaven.

BirdLife Australia is the only national organisation focused on native birds and their environment.

It has over 100 years of experience in bird research and conservation in Australia.

BirdLife Shoalhaven was established to give birds and bird conservation a voice in the local area.

The first outing for the group was to Lake Wollumboola in February when the lake was alive with waterbirds, waders and little terns.

The group was privileged to have Frances Bray and Narelle Wright (president and secretary of the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association) along with other shorebird volunteers present on the day to provide information about the birds in the lake area.

They got an update on the success of the breeding little terns and the work done to protect them.

The importance of protecting the lakes catchment was emphasised to the group as although the lake and surrounds are now part of Jervis Bay National Park, the catchment is not.

The number (estimated at 7500) and variety of birds on the lake was a sight to be seen and a great identification challenge.

Some of the group had never been to the lake and were amazed to see this important wetland.

BirdLife Shoalhaven had its first annual general meeting on Saturday, March 1 at Greenfields Beach with an enthusiastic attendance.

The aim was to establish basic committee positions and discuss the direction the group

should take.

There will be a field trip on the third Sunday of every month and the group plans to have a couple of information nights throughout the year with guest speakers.

Wonderful work for bird conservation is already being done in the Shoalhaven by a number of different groups – at Lake Wollumboola, Shoalhaven Heads and on many beaches, to protect threatened and endangered species including little terns, pied oystercatchers and hooded plovers.

Many of these volunteers are members of BirdLife Shoalhaven.

If you would like more information about the group or would like to join in on field trips, see www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-shoalhaven or contact secretary Brett Davis on 0497 868 471.



The little tern is one of the birds which will be monitored by Shoalhaven BirdLife Australia.

Birds on the EDGE

Scientists from the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and Yale University recently assessed the world's 9,993 bird species according to their evolutionary distinctiveness and global extinction risk to produce a list of the world's 100 most Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) species.

The full list can be found here –

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/10/worlds-100-most-unique-endangered-birds>

Unfortunately, there are 7 Australian birds on the list, two of which can be found in the Shoalhaven*.

Christmas Island Frigatebird
Noisy Scrub-bird
Rufous Scrub-bird
Eastern Bristlebird*
Western Bristlebird
Plains-wanderer
Australian Painted Snipe*

BirdLife Insurance

BirdLife Insurance is for everyone for all events and activities advertised in the BirdLife Australia events calendar, in the branch newsletter or minuted at a branch committee meeting.

Everyone is covered by Public Liability and Accident and Illness, but **please note**: Accident and Illness is for **loss of work hours only** and is designed for those in paid work from 16 to 80 years of age, before and after ages are covered by Public Liability.

We encourage participants and members (if they are concerned) to have their own health insurance, and ESPECIALLY AMBULANCE COVER.

If the leader of a U3A activity is not a BirdLife member, one of the BirdLife members on the trip should volunteer to be a co-leader for insurance purposes.

All participants in a BirdLife Australia activity are required to sign on and to follow reasonable directions given by the leader. By signing the attendance sheet, you agree to accept the terms and conditions of BirdLife Australia's insurance policies and your responsibilities as a participant.

You also agree to disclose to the leader any medical conditions likely to need attention whilst in their care.

Members of the public are also covered under the same terms when participating by invitation in an officially organised and controlled BirdLife Australia event.

The BirdLife Shoalhaven attendance sheet can be downloaded from:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9qW2bNHctFoNndMcFBhUUZsR0E/edit?usp=sharing>

southcoastregister.com.au

NOWRA NEWS FRI 11 APRIL 2014

communityfocus



BIRDS ON THE BRAIN: Members of BirdLife Shoalhaven gather to foster their shared interest at Lake Wollumboola recently.

Birdlife Shoalhaven takes flight

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BirdLife Shoalhaven has been primarily established to give birds and bird conservation a voice in our local area.

All members of BirdLife Australia that reside in the Shoalhaven Shire are automatically members of the new branch.

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The group was privileged to have Frances Bray and Narelle Wright (president and secretary of the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association) along with other shorebird volunteers, present on the day to provide information about the birds in the lake area as well as an update on the success of the breeding little terns and the work done to protect them.

The importance of protecting the lakes catchment was emphasised to the group as although the lake and surrounds are now part of Jervis Bay National Park, the catchment is not.

The number (estimated at 7500) and variety of birds on the lake was a sight to be seen and a great identification challenge.

Some of the group had never been to the lake and were amazed at the important wetland so close by.

BirdLife Shoalhaven had its first AGM on Saturday, March 1 at Greenfields Beach with an enthusiastic attendance.

The aim was to establish basic committee positions and discuss the direction the group should take.

There will be a field trip on the third Sunday of every month and the group plans to have a couple of information nights throughout the year with guest speakers.

Wonderful work for bird conservation is already being done in the Shoalhaven by a number of different groups – at Lake Wollumboola, Shoalhaven Heads and on many beaches, to protect threatened and endangered species including little terns, pied oystercatchers and hooded plovers.

Many of these volunteers are members of BirdLife Shoalhaven.

If you would like more information about the group or would like to join in on field trips, see www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-shoalhaven or contact secretary Brett Davis on 0497 868 471.

World Environment Day

BirdLife Shoalhaven will be manning a stall at the World Environment Day expo at the Lady Denman Maritime Museum in Huskisson on 7th June 2014 from 8am to 2pm.

In the past the stall has been organised by the Basin Birdwatchers whose members are now all members of BirdLife Australia, with the entire expo organised by fellow member Maureen Webb.

We provide information about BirdLife Australia and our local branch, as well as trying to answer any questions about birds put to us by members of the public.



Amazing Bird Videos on YouTube

There are a lot of bird videos on the Internet, some good and some bad, but if you have not seen them before, the following bird videos are absolutely amazing !!!

In fact, even if you have seen them before, these videos are still amazing!

Surfing Swans

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZ27MpBoHNc>

Magpie and Dog Playing

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/qaEBb4IN4Q?rel=0>

Blackbirds and Bulbuls?

Frank Fickers from Bomaderry sent in a list of birds seen on his property in the past few years. The list shows many often-seen birds in the Shoalhaven. It includes the Blackbird and the Red-whiskered Bulbul.

The editor lives in St Georges Basin (SGB) and has never seen a Red-whiskered Bulbul in his area – or indeed south of the Shoalhaven River. Blackbirds have been seen in SGB, but only very occasionally.

Are these two introduced birds in your region of the Shoalhaven?

Bird of the Newsletter



The **Lewin's Honeyeater** (*Meliphaga lewinii*) is named after the Australian artist John William Lewin, an English-born artist active in Australia from 1800.

Lewin was the first professional artist of the colony of NSW, and he illustrated the earliest volumes of Australian natural history.

WORLD Jervis Bay ENVIRONMENT Day
The Lady Denman Heritage Complex Dent Street Huskisson
Saturday 7th June from 8am to 2pm

Family fun day, local schools and community groups in conjunction with the Lady Denman monthly markets.

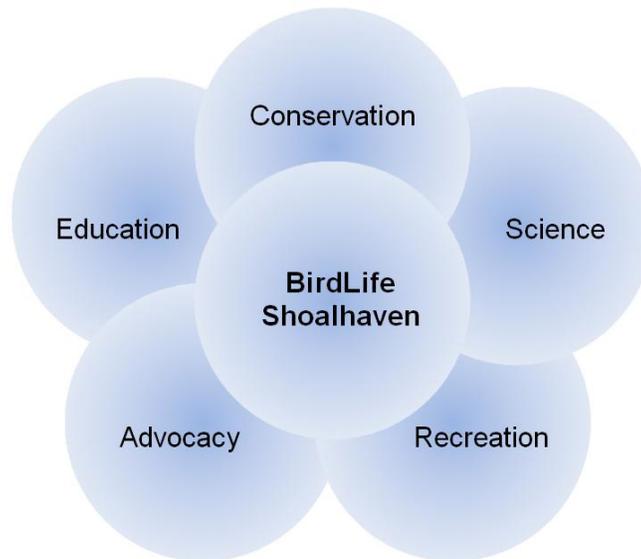
Join us in Jervis Bay to celebrate this global day for positive environmental action.

FREE Displays - Demonstrations - Exhibitions - Fun Activities - Music - Entertainment - Art - School Projects. BROWSE exciting markets stalls. ENJOY great food & coffee.

Lets aim for a NO WASTE DAY (Huskisson is Plastic Bag Free)
REDUCE - Bring your own bags, REUSE - your refillable water bottles, RECYCLE - choose the right bin for disposal of waste.

MAKE IT - BAKE IT - SEW IT - GROW IT
email admin@ladydenman.asn.au phone 44415675

DRAFT BIRDLIFE SHOALHAVEN MISSION STATEMENT



Our mission: To give Australian birds a bright future by finding solutions to the threats they face and by inspiring action to ensure birds and their habitats flourish.

Goal 1
Improve
conservation
outcomes

- provide a local face and voice for BirdLife Australia
- provide a focus on regional and local conservation matters and advocate for the conservation of birds and their habitats
- conduct research and conservation programs and participate in national projects where possible
- support the Important Bird Areas program
- support the Beach Nesting Birds project
- support the Shorebirds 2020 project
- contribute data to the Birds Atlas
- champion local conservation causes

Goal 2
Promote
the appreciation and
understanding of birds

- encourage and support the activities of members who wish to actively participate in BirdLife Australia's programs
- promote and foster recreational bird watching
- organise outings, activities and events of interest to members
- promote an interest and understanding of birds and their conservation in the wider community by arranging and participating in community events

Goal 3
Build
a strong BirdLife Australia
and BirdLife Shoalhaven

- engage and inform all members
- grow the member and supporter base by promoting membership of BirdLife Australia
- build connections with other BirdLife branches and group

HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

- by the increase in the membership of BirdLife Shoalhaven
- by attendance at outings and talks
- by the number of events and activities undertaken

Comments (by the end of May) on this draft mission statement are welcome !!!

BIRDLIFE SHOALHAVEN WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

1. These working arrangements are based on the BirdLife Australia (BirdLife) Branch Working Arrangements and only cover key issues relevant to BirdLife Shoalhaven (BLS).
2. These working arrangements will be reviewed by the Committee and any changes approved by the Members at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Special General Meeting (SGM).
3. BLS must operate in accordance with the BirdLife Branch Working Arrangements.
4. Under the Constitution of BirdLife, BLS cannot have the status of a separate legal entity.
5. BLS will adopt the following values when conducting its business:
 - We encourage leadership and innovation
 - Our work is based on sound research
 - Our advice and advocacy is frank and independent
 - We are inclusive, tolerant and fair
 - We collaborate and contribute to common goals
6. All BirdLife Members who reside in the Shoalhaven Local Government area will be deemed to be members of BLS, unless they choose to opt out. BirdLife Members who reside outside the area may also register as a member of BLS.
7. No membership fees are payable to become a BLS Member.
8. BLS Members are eligible to participate in the activities of BLS, to receive communications and nominate and vote for the Executive Committee.
9. Visiting members of BirdLife from other Branches shall be eligible to attend meetings or other Branch functions but cannot nominate candidates or vote.
10. The Committee will consist of President, Secretary and Treasurer (at a minimum) and shall be elected annually at the BLS AGM.
11. Meetings of the committee will be held four times a year by whatever means it sees as appropriate.
12. The timing of the BLS AGM will be set by the Committee but not later than the end of February. The AGM will cover reports on activities of the Branch, approval of the financial report for the year ending 31 December, election of the Executive Committee for the coming year, review of the operating plan and working arrangements and any other business.
13. The Secretary shall give notice of the AGM and call for nominations to the Executive Committee at least 40 days before the AGM. Completed nomination forms may be lodged at least 28 days prior to the AGM. The Secretary must distribute the agenda and papers, including names of all Members nominated no less than 21 days prior to the AGM and include procedures for lodging proxy votes.
14. If there are insufficient numbers of nominations, nominations can be taken from any Member present at the meeting. If more than one Member has nominated for the same position, the outcome shall be determined by ballot. All proxies should be in writing and received by the Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
15. If a Committee member position becomes vacant between AGMs, the Committee may co-opt a Member to fill the vacancy.
16. The Committee shall have the authority to appoint no more than two additional persons to the Committee for a period up to the next AGM for the purpose of providing advice on a specified matter, or to fill newly created committee positions.
17. All Committee Members will hold office from one AGM to another and may be re-elected.
18. The Committee may call a SGM to discuss any urgent matter and shall be bound to upon receiving a written request signed by at least 5% of the Members or by the BirdLife Board. The meeting agenda and papers shall be given to Members no less than 14 days before the meeting.
19. Quorums for meetings shall be ten Members for AGMs and SGMs and three Members for Committee meetings.
20. The Committee will liaise with BirdLife National Office on all operational issues. The Committee must advise the National Office of the receipt of all donations and submission of proposals to fund research, conservation or education projects. A submission for reasonable Branch expenses may be submitted to the National Office. BLS will need the approval of the National Office to set up a bank account. The Treasurer will be responsible for receiving, paying and handling funds and keeping the records of BLS's finances. The annual financial accounts must be approved at the AGM and signed by the President and another Committee member, other than the Treasurer prior to submission to the National Office.
21. No Member shall receive any pecuniary interest from BLS, unless the Committee approves the reimbursement of a Member's expenses incurred in fulfilling BLS's objectives.
22. The Committee, or Members delegated by the Committee, may arrange fundraising, periodic meetings, talks, functions, birdwatching outings and campouts and other activities, for purposes that help achieve the BLS objective's, with all members allowed to attend, plus other persons approved at the discretion of the Committee
23. All BLS materials must be produced with the BirdLife logo.
24. All correspondence on local conservation causes must be approved by a majority of the Committee.

**Comments on these working arrangements
are welcome – until the end of May!**