



**MINUTES OF BIRDLIFE SHOALHAVEN COMMITTEE MEETING
3 LOUISA GROVE, VICENTIA
30 JANUARY 2017**

1. Attendance and apologies

Present: Rob Dunn, Karen Davis, Brett Davis, Mike Jefferis, Chris Grounds, Barry Virtue
Apologies: Yolande Cozijn, Matt Jones
Visitors: Kim Touzel

2. Acceptance of the agenda – No additional items

3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting

Moved Rob, seconded Chris - carried.

4. Business arising from the previous minutes

29 August 2016 meeting

2. Brett and Chris to liaise to set up Conservation Officer e-signature and do the same to set Kim up as Secretary- pending
3. Brett and Rob to review website content - pending
6. Rob to develop a bird walks business case for presentation to Committee - done

21 November 2016 meeting

1. Brett discussed Matt Jones presentation with Bay and Basin Camera Club President, Lois Sparkes, and Matt will present at the club sometime in 2017. He is already scheduled to present to the Shoalhaven Camera Club. - done
2. Sharing of stalls with Shoalhaven Landcare at the Bundanon Field Day and Kangaroo Valley - done
3. Brett and Rob to progress arrangements for the AGM - done
4. Brett to write a letter of thanks to the donor of the telescope and tripod - done
- 5a. Rob to advise the volunteers at the BLS stall at the Sanctuary Point community day in October on the outcomes from the Committee meeting - done.
- 5b. Rob to purchase agreed items for future events and arrange for copies of the newsletter to be printed - pending.
- 5c. Brett and Karen to update and reprint the BLS flyer - done.

5. Updates and related issues

a) President's report – Rob made the following points:

The agenda covers areas that are evolving or likely to come up in 2017 – Bird walks, Birddata, Indian Mynahs, Field days. With the existing activities we are already committed to, it was important that the Committee still focuses on issues where they have the time, expertise or interest. This means that drawing in other members to get involved will need to be looked at.

The Save Collingwood Beach campaign continues and will have implications for the whole of Bushcare across the Shoalhaven, including the development of a Tree Vandalism policy.

Rob will be attending the BIGnet meeting on 1-2 April. Brett question the need for us to be involved and Rob said that it provided an excellent opportunity to network and share ideas. He will report back to the Committee on what came out of the meeting. **Action 1**

It was agreed that the potential to apply for funding from ABEF by 31 May should be assessed at the next meeting. – **Action 2**

b) Conservation Officer report - Chris stated that articles in the newsletter cover latest conservation happenings, and he would present a more comprehensive report at the AGM. Also said that apparent "wins" in the conservation battle should not allow us to rest on our laurels, and there is a need for us to remain vigilant at all time.

c) Secretary report - Brett stated that mundane correspondence would not be tabled, and that most key correspondence on conservation issues would be reported by the Committee members handling each particular issue. Brett said that BLS had over 200 members and approx. 50 supporters, which were now also being tracked.

d) Webmaster and social media report - no report.

e) Newsletter editor report - Brett reported excellent feedback about the Summer edition despite the short lead time while he was away caretaking the Australian Wildlife Conservancy property at Bowra near Cunnamulla in Queensland. Brett also reported an email exchange with member Brian O'Leary which has prompted him to begin an ongoing series of articles spotlighting the many excellent photographers amongst BirdLife Shoalhaven members.

f) Treasurer report

INCOME AND EXPENSES 2016

Bank Balance at 1/1/2016		\$	743.60
<u>Income</u>			
Twitchathon funds raised	720.95		
Misc item sales	131.00		
Talk entry donations	136.00		
Hall hire refund	90.00		
Birdlife Funding	0.00	1077.95	
<u>Expenses</u>			
Hall Hire	206.00		
Website	71.76		
Twitchathon funds tfr to head office	720.95		
Meeting exps	111.84		
Postage	0.00		
Bank Fees	<u>9.80</u>		
			<u>1120.35</u>
Cashbook Balance at 31/12/2016			701.20
Add: Unpresented Cheques	# 11		75.00
			<u>776.20</u>
Bank Balance at 31/12/2016		\$	<u>776.20</u>

g) Recent media, presentations & events - Yolande not present to report.

h) Shoalhaven Birders - Barry reported no issues.

i) MUD Birders - Mike J reported no issue.

6. Arrangements for the AGM

The agenda for the AGM was discussed and finalized with some minor re-ordering of items. Brett to send out email detailing the AGM agenda, along with links to the minutes of the previous AGM and to a

document detailing the minor changes made by the committee to the BirdLife Shoalhaven Mission Statement and Working Arrangements.

7. Promotion of bird-watching & bird walks

The papers (refer below) provided details of the meeting between BirdLife Shoalhaven and Council, which shows that Council are keen to promote Birdwatching and Bird Walks in the Shoalhaven, but would like a complete redesign of their bird brochure to align it with their latest branding and promotional material, as well as our recommendations for additional / alternate bird walks that could be included. Barry and Mike J agreed to research walks and provide information to Council, and Brett agreed to act as liaison between Council and BirdLife Shoalhaven photographers who will be asked to provide images for the new brochure. Mike & Rob will be the primary points of contact to move this forward with Council. **Action 3**

8. Birddata & bird monitoring

The papers (refer below) provided details on this issue. A lengthy discussion about Birddata, eBird and the Atlas of Living Australia went unresolved, given the newness and teething problems of the Birddata app which BirdLife Shoalhaven should be using and promoting. However, it was agreed that there did not need to be any change to how groups recorded their data now or in the future. Rob to arrange a separate meeting of key Birddata users to come up with a recommendation on how we might progress. **Action 4**

9. Indian myna humane reduction program

The papers (refer below) provided details on this issue. Brett agreed to remove John Fimmano's name from the page on our website devoted to Indian Mynas. The page has links to BirdLife Australia policies, and to Council resources should members want to participate in a reduction program. Rob to talk to Bill Handke, President of Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG), and keep contact with Council on development after Bill's presentation. **Action 5**

10. Upcoming events and field days

The papers provided details on upcoming events. It was agreed to have a stall at the Bundanon event on 9 April 2017, sharing space and facilities with Shoalhaven Landcare. Kim and Barry agreed to contribute their time. Rob will liaise with Shoalhaven Landcare on arrangements. **Action 6**

11. Other business

There was no other business.

12. Next meeting

Rob proposed new dates for meetings to allow Kim to attend – Friday 7 April and Friday 30 June - but will liaise with Kim further and let us know future meeting dates when they are decided. **Action 7**

Actions to be carried forward to next meeting

29 August 2016 meeting

2. Brett and Chris to liaise to set up Conservation Officer e-signature and do the same to set Kim up as Secretary- pending
3. Brett and Rob to review website content - pending

21 November 2016 meeting

- 5b. Rob to purchase agreed items for future events and arrange for copies of the newsletter to be printed - pending.

30 January 2017 meeting

1. Rob to report back to the Committee on what comes out of the BIGnet meeting.
2. The potential to apply for funding from ABEF by 31 May 2017 should be assessed at the next meeting.
3. Barry and Mike agreed to research walks and provide information to Council and Brett agreed to act as liaison between Council and BirdLife Shoalhaven photographers re. images for the new brochure. Mike & Rob will be the primary points of contact to move this forward with Council.
4. Rob to arrange a meeting of key Birddata users to come up with a recommendation on how we support and make use of Birddata.
5. Brett to remove John Fimmano's name from the page on our website devoted to Indian Mynas. Rob to talk to Bill Handke, President of Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG), and keep contact with Council on developments after Bill's presentation.
6. Rob to liaise with Shoalhaven Landcare on arrangements for a BLS stall at the Bundanon field day on 9 April.
7. Rob to propose dates for future BLS Committee meetings to accommodate Kim's attendance.

APPENDIXES – KEY PAPERS DISTRIBUTED BEFORE THE MEETING FOR REFERENCE

AGENDA ITEM 7 – PROMOTION OF BIRD-WATCHING & BIRD WALKS

On Tuesday 24/1 Mike & I met with Coralie Bell, Council Tourism Manager, and Kristy Mayhew, Tourism Marketing Specialist, to share our ideas on how we could work together to promote bird-watching and bird walks in the Shoalhaven. She said she was glad we had set up the meeting, as it was something they had been talking about, but realized they needed to be working with the right people.

The end result was that they:

- realise we are the right people!
- want to work with us to re-do the bird walk brochure as a first step.
- will pay for all costs of printing, layout, graphic design and distribute through Visitors' Centres, caravan parks.
- will print enough for our own purposes, such as events, field days, etc.
- want us to select the top 10 or so walks to feature in the brochure, draft the copy and provide relevant images.
- do not want to simply reprint the existing brochure, given it does not align with their other branding and promotional material.
- are keen to progress this whenever we are ready.
- will determine the brochure size, based on the amount of detail, photos and a map, but a fold-out A3 is likely.

They also would promote bird-watching through their social media and are currently overhauling the web-site. Kristy has a web designer working with her to allow drill downs through Google maps to allow all available 'experience' opportunities to be shown in a given area. This could include more details of the bird walk route, vegetation, photos of species and other information.

One other idea they came up with was promoting migratory species as a way to draw visitors to the Shoalhaven outside the summer period. I also mentioned the Aussie Bird Count in October as a way for the Council to leverage BirdLife national events.

We raised bird walk signage and bird hides as part of a wider promotion, but this is not on their short-term priorities. Their immediate focus is a bushwalking booklet, which clearly is causing them issues around signage.

It was agreed that Kristy and I will be the points of contact between Council & BLS.

Clearly the offer is there for us to work with Council to build on our recreation and education agendas without doing our own fundraising. Let's talk this through and agree next steps.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – BIRDDATA & BIRD MONITORING

I met with Greg Thompson, President Shoalhaven Landcare, before Christmas. One of the issues he raised was for us to carry out structured bird monitoring at their revegetation sites.

I told him that while many of our members record their sightings in eBird and other applications, as a branch of BirdLife Australia, we want to encourage our members to use our structured monitoring system, Birddata. He said that they need a scientific based approach to effectively measure the success of their long-term revegetation projects, e.g. they have reporting requirements under some government agreements for 10 years. I told him that we still had to discuss how we would expand the use of Birddata by our members and what support and resources this would require.

Afterwards I spoke to Andrew Silcocks, BirdLife's Birddata project manager. He confirmed that while the new Birddata interface and App is ready to use, they are still to promote the system to members or arranged training sessions due to current teething issues. However they are keen for branches to have administrator rights and vet

data. He has set up a layer for the Shoalhaven LGA for our purposes. He can also set up polygons for individual sites, so this could be for any Landcare sites and the bird walks we select.

I have flagged this with Marg Hamon of MUD Birders, who is a keen atlasser, as is Gary Daly, who is a BLS member and on the Shoalhaven Landcare Committee.

I feel this is an important, but big issue, for which we will need the right people around the table. As such it warrants a separate meeting of key Birddata users to come up with a recommendation on how we progress.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – INDIAN MYNAH HUMANE REDUCTION PROGRAM

John Levett, Greens Councillor, wants Council to set up an Indian Mynah humane reduction program. He currently traps Mynahs on his own property at Erowal Bay and has already raised the issue with some of our members and sent an email to Brett asking to speak at the AGM.

I met with John on 25/1, when he told me that he has raised a motion for Bill Handke, President of Canberra Indian Mynah Action Group (CIMAG), to present to Council on the issue. John has already lined up Bill, so this is likely to happen fairly soon. I have heard Bill speak before and the success of their program would have to be one of the best in Australia.

I talked John through BirdLife's pest management policy and their case study on Mynahs, which can be found on their web-site. BirdLife's position is that other approaches, like native plant gardens, removal of scraps/dog food and community engagement are preferable to the more expensive culling option. They stress the need for research, before and after monitoring, selection of a trail sight and compliance with culling guidelines. BirdLife state that the long-term benefits of culling are anecdotal and research is not yet conclusive. John understood these views and I gave him copies of the policies.

CIMAG's position is not that different from BirdLife's. Their website states:

We have three elements in our Strategy:

1. *increased public awareness that this bird is a serious environmental and health threat, not just a nuisance*
2. *public education aimed at limiting the spread of the species by reducing its feeding and breeding opportunities, and*
3. *a humane reduction program.*

The Group recognizes that its endeavours are unlikely to totally eliminate Indian Mynas from the Canberra environment. However, with a concerted, coordinated and sustained effort, we believe a significant impact can be made on the Indian Myna population in the region, thereby helping to protect our native birds and small mammals.

I told John that we would be discussing the matter at our meeting. I added that it was not appropriate for him to talk at the AGM, given he is not a member, we are still to discuss the issue and it would need to have been flagged in the agenda. He had no issue with this. I said I would be keen to meet Bill and reassured him, that we would have a lot of common ground and Bill's advice would be invaluable.

The key issue for us is the volunteer effort to co-ordinate a humane reduction program effectively, and underpinned by science. Our own website shows John Fimmano in Erowal Bay as the contact for more information, which may not be the current situation, and there would be other contacts in Ulladulla and Nowra. We would need to bring them into the discussion.

We have not raised this as a priority, but our members will have very firm views, as was made clear to me at the MUD Birders AGM. Clearly we need to talk through how we approach this, especially given Council and CIMAG's interest, this will quickly be picked up by the media.