



**EUROBODALLA  
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
Inc.

**P.O. Box 888  
Moruya N.S.W. 2537**



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**NEWSLETTER NO. 141**

**JULY 2010**

**SHOREBIRD WORKSHOP NAROOMA 9:30 a.m. SATURDAY 9 OCTOBER**



Photo  
Demetrios  
Bertzeletos

The guest speaker at this long-awaited workshop will be Phil Straw who is a well-known expert on shorebirds, their habitats and their conservation.

A morning forum at 9:30 a.m. in the NSW National Parks and Wildlife office in Burrawang Street Narooma will be followed, after lunch, by a shorebird identification session on the nearby Wagonga estuary concluding about 4 p.m. Please bring your own lunch.

Numbers will be confined to thirty people. Please book with Mike Crowley 44742677 or Joan Fearn 44742801 [joan.fearn@bigpond.com](mailto:joan.fearn@bigpond.com) if you wish to attend. Mike Crowley

**2010 Annual General Meeting**

On Sunday 23 May at Trunketabella Gardens the meeting was held with nineteen members attending. The Minutes of the previous AGM were read and accepted.

**Chairman's Report** – Mike Crowley thanked members for a successful year with membership being constant at around seventy and records increasing. He spoke of the future direction for the Society and congratulated the Committee for their harmonious working.

**Secretary's Report** – Julie Morgan gave an update on promotion via newspaper and Shire website. Suggestions for field meetings had led to new venues and they would be appreciated again.

**Treasurer's Report** – Joan Fearn reported the annual income was \$1,848.07, expenditure \$2,563.98, bank balance \$6,425.75 and ANZ Term Deposit \$5,631.83.

**Election of Officers** – As no new nominations were received and the current Committee had agreed to stand, they were re-elected.

**Items discussed:** publication of the birdwatching book is progressing with a few sites still to be investigated and included.

Mike Crowley as co-ordinator, in his area, for Common Myna control explained the proficiency of that programme.

Many members had shown an interest in moths and the identification of local species is proceeding. Many thanks to the Brice family for kindly allowing our meeting to be held in their tea-rooms.

### Rarities on the Tuross Estuary

Over the past few years the Tuross estuary has had some very rare visitors, making it a potential hot-spot for shorebird enthusiasts. Bill Nelson and George Rayner spotted the only Australian rarity, an **Australian Pratincole** in 2006. The eagle-eyed Pattie Parker since then has spied five very rare waders that are seldom seen on the east coast of Australia: a **Long-toed Stint** on the sand flats in September 2008, followed by a **Ruff** in October 2009, a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** in November and December 2009, a **Dunlin** in January this year, and a **Semipalmated Plover** in April. The **Long-toed Stint** and **Semi-palmated Plover** are the first known records of these species in the Eurobodalla Shire. These sightings are a result of Pattie's hard work in systematically surveying the estuary several times a week and taking careful field notes and photographs. Congratulations Pattie.



Dunlin photographed by Pattie Parker

**WHAT TO EXPECT IN SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER.** The soft airs of spring bringing welcome warmth after winter's chill and all the frenetic activity of the breeding season in the wild. The birds don their new courting colours and choose mates and territories in a flurry of displays and battles for superiority, interspersed with guerrilla raids on adjoining territories and poaching parties to dismantle the unattended nests of neighbours. Peaceful co-existence is not part of nature's etiquette. In the wild world, the rule is: every creature for itself and devil take the hindmost. It is a rule that extends to all species - 'after you' does not apply when there are umpteen contenders for every morsel of food and drop of water. But the entire ladder of the food chain emerges in spring, somehow in just the right order so that each species, from butterfly to reptile to bird, can be assured of the correct food to sustain it and rear its young.

A steady stream of summer-breeding migrants drifts south to begin their breeding season, only to be greeted by the wily cuckoos, ready to drop their eggs into the nests of chosen surrogates. Of course, the residents have presented the cuckoos with their first chance but these parasites are not above spreading their largesse among as many hosts as can be found. Their trills and mournful scales join the woodlanders in the morning chorus of familiar calls, and others that we've not heard for five or six months. To me, the morning chorus is the true harbinger of spring.

Be sure to head for the high cliffs in the first three days of October, the traditional time to watch for the shearwaters migrating south to their breeding grounds. They left their fat young in the burrows at the end of summer and set off across the Pacific to the west coast of North America, the Bering Sea and the Aleutian Islands to take advantage of the wealth of food following the spring melt. And here they are again, a brown stream of birds unquestioningly following an age-old trail, a trail to test the strength and purpose of each bird, young or old. You have to admire their dedication. JW

### Of Floods and Fish

Cletus Heffernan, a local farmer, owns a property at Moruya that is roughly bordered by the Princes Highway, Larrys Mountain Road and the Moruya River. The place was awash during the heavy rains in early February this year but Cletus said the Moruya River was at least 3 metres from overflowing its banks. On the property is a small natural dam, roughly circular and about 30 metres in diameter, which is part of the natural drainage system. Everything below this dam had been

completely dry for at least a year before the rains and the dam itself had only a patch of damp clay in the bottom. Somewhere around the middle of February, Cletus rang and asked me to come and have a look at some fish in the dam. We estimated there was a school of about 200, 10cm-long fish that were swimming up and down in a long line and eating something off the surface of the water. We managed to catch one, had it identified and confirmed they were young Sea Mullet *Mugil cephalus*, which can grow to 80 cm. The dam is about 1.5 km from the Moruya River and about 1 km from the headwaters of Mullenderee Creek, which is a tributary of Dooga Creek on the other side of Larrys Mountain Road. Since the Moruya River did not overflow, Cletus thinks the only way these fish got into his dam was overland from the headwaters of Mullenderee Creek and while the water was still flowing over the paddocks. I have heard that fish, in general, have a powerful urge to swim upstream when possible - powerful indeed! SMG.

### **The Fanciful Winter Woes of a Forager**

Consider the humble worm, going about its legitimate affairs in its dark burrow, churning the earth and depositing it above ground in neat little tailings dumps, digesting leaves and small stones and using its castings to aerate the soil for the benefit of all nature's beings, and asking neither gratitude nor publicity for its endeavours. What thanks does it get for its philanthropy? Little enough. Instead it is hunted assiduously and without mercy by those birds known as carnivores and omnivores. Should the poor creature poke its head above ground for a breath of fresh air, a beady avian eye will latch on to the movement in a trice. And so it was this morning.

One of the resident mendicants, a Magpie, grabbed the worm's head, or was it the tail? No matter, Magpie hung on and pulled. The worm stretched, considered awhile, and calmly sacrificed its head, or was it tail? The Magpie was left with a small bead of flesh, so small that it fell to the ground and was lost. By this time Magpie's pride was pricked and its dander up; it scratched and muttered and grumbled, and by great good fortune, unearthed its prey or the small section visible above ground. Magpie pounced and pulled with all its strength, the worm stretched and stretched again and finally snapped, leaving the bird with another small bead of flesh. The two ends of worm quickly disappeared. The Magpie spurned an explanation of the worm's wondrous ability to join its dismembered parts together, as good as new. It dismissed the entire affair from mind and turned its attention to the compost. JW.

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**FIELD MEETINGS. Saturday 7 August, Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens.** On the eastern side of Princes Hwy between Batemans Bay and Mogo, meet in the car park at 2 p.m.

**Sunday 22 August, Comerang Farm.** Meet in Bodalla opposite the Police Station 9 a.m.

**Saturday 11 September, Wallaga Lake.** Turn east off Princes Hwy (south of Tilba), cross Wallaga Lake single-lane bridge. Proceed 1.7 km, turn L into Wallaga St, meet at car park beside lake at 2 p.m.

**Sunday 26 September, Hawdons Road, Moruya.** Meet at Moruya Council Chambers car park at 9 a.m. An easy walk for woodland birds.

### **Swift Parrot-Regent Honeyeater Survey 7-8 August**

The request to be on the lookout for these birds has again been made from Birds Australia Woodland Birds for Biodiversity project. Please report any sightings as soon as possible to [d.ingwersen@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:d.ingwersen@birdsaustralia.com.au) (Regent Honeyeaters) or [c.tzaros@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:c.tzaros@birdsaustralia.com.au) (Swift Parrots) or call them on 0393470757.

**NEW MEMBER.** We welcome Amanda Marsh from Dalmeny.

**OBITUARIES.** Rhonda Streeter of Narooma. It is with great regret we mark the death of Rhonda in June and extend our condolences to Bob.

Harry Black of Wallaga Lake. Himalayan trekker, Antarctic veteran, orchardist, keen observer of the natural world, a jolly raconteur and a member for over 20 years, died 27 June. We extend our sympathies to his family.

## INTERESTING AND UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

First sighting of **Emu** since February at TS (GR/WN).

Single **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross** off CO in May (K. Arnold-Garvey).

**Black-browed Albatross** and **White-fronted Tern** off Bogola Head in June (FM).

A juvenile **Hooded Plover** on Noosa estuary possibly blown north by strong S winds.

Two **Bar-shouldered Doves** on track to BP lighthouse on 2 May (G. Clark).

Single **Pilotbird** at MYA State Forest in June (JH).

Twelve **Dusky Woodswallow** at Mystery Bay in May (MA).

Migrating **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** in May and **Red Wattlebird** in May and June.

One **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, 2 **Flame Robin** at Belowra in June (JC).

Five **Bassian Thrush** at ERBG in May (EA).

Dark morph **Greater Glider** emerging from a tree hollow near CO Ck in June (I. Hendley).

Single **Lesser Wanderer** butterfly at Comerang and Pedro Swamp in May (JC/JM).

## VULNERABLE AND THREATENED SPECIES

**Square-tailed Kite**: May: 1 at Mystery Bay.

**Bush Stone-curlew**: no reports.

**Australian Pied Oystercatcher**: May: more than 15 at Coila; max. 10 at NA; 2-4 at TS; 2 at Mystery Bay; 1 at Bengello. June: max. 5 at TS; 2 or 3 at Coila and Bengello; 2 at MHS.

**Sooty Oystercatcher**: May: 4-10 Mystery Bay; max. 4 at Candlagan Ck; singles at TS and NA; call at BP. June: 2 at Bogola Head; 1 at TS.

**Glossy Black-Cockatoo**: May: 4 at Mossy Pt; 3 at Pedro and Bergalia; 2 at PDD; call at MKS. June: up to 5 at PDD; 1-3 at Bergalia.

**Barking Owl**: May: 1 at Pedro. June: 1 at Pedro and Comerang.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SYSTEMATIC LIST RECORDS

The following records are from May and June 2010.

**GROUND BIRDS**. Up to 10 **Stubble Quail** at Comerang (JC); 2 **Brown Quail** at Bergalia in May (DHK).

**WATERSIDE**. Max. 283 **Black Swan**; **Aust. Wood Duck**, **Pacific Black**, **Chestnut Teal** with young; 2 **Aust Shoveler** at Comerang in May; 1-4 **Musk Duck** at Pedro Swamp, males displaying, 2 at Nargal L. and L. Brunderee (JM/FM); max. 22 **Aust. Grebe**; up to 43 **Aust. White Ibis** and 160 **Straw-necked** at Comerang; max. 53 **Royal Spoonbill** at TS, up to 30 at NA, 8-15 at MYA, up to 6 at Coila and Comerang, 3 at Coopers I. Juvenile **Nankeen Night Heron** at Bumbo Rd, adult at WL (FM/MA); single **Striated Heron** at TS, Coopers I.; 11 **Cattle Egret** at Mystery Bay, up to 6 at MYA, max. 5 at Comerang, 3 at TS, 2 at Coopers I. (MA/JM/JC/JH/FM); single **White-necked Heron** at Bergalia; up to 11 **Eastern Great Egret** in MYA; max. 37 **White-faced Heron** at Comerang; up to 9 **Little Egret** at TS, 8 at Mystery Bay, NA, singles at MHS and Coila L. (GR/WN/JH/MA/BS/JM); 2 **Eastern Reef Egret** at Candlagan Ck and Mystery Bay, singles at BP and MHS; max. 50 **Pelican**; up to 60 **Aust. Gannet** at TS; max. 50 **Little Pied Cormorant**, 30 **Little Black**, 2 **Pied**, 20 **Great**; 2 **Darter** at TS, single at Pedro Swamp, immature at Comerang (GR/WN/JM/JC).

**RAPTORS**. One or two **Kestrel**; 1 **Aust. Hobby** at Pedro Swamp; 2 **Brown Falcon** at Comerang and Mystery Bay; single **Peregrine** at BP, Pedro Swamp and Comerang in May; a **Black-shouldered Kite** at MHN and Bergalia (EA/DHK); up to 7 **Whistling Kite** at TS Estuary (GR/WN); max. 5 **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** at TS; single **Swamp Harrier** at Barlings and Comerang in May (JW/JC); single **Grey Goshawk** at TS (GR/WN); 1 **Brown Goshawk** at Coila L.; 1 or 2 **Wedge-tailed Eagle**.

**CRACKS, RAILS, GALLINULES & BUTTON-QUAIL**. Up to 26 **Purple Swamphen** at Coopers I. (EA); 2 or 3 **Dusky Moorhen**, dy at Pedro Swamp; more than 10 **Eurasian Coot** at Coopers I. (FM).

**WADERS**. Up to 58 **Masked Lapwing** at Comerang (JC); max. 47 **Red-capped Plover** at TS, 40 at Coila, 14 at Mystery Bay, 5 at Bogola Head; 20 **Double-banded** at Coila, up to 16 at TS, 3 at

Bogola Head (JH/GR/WN/FM); 3 **Black-fronted** at Eurobodalla Rd (EA); max. 125 **Bar-tailed Godwit** at NA in May (BS), fewer in June; 2 **Whimbrel** at NA in May; single **Red-necked Stint** at TS in June.

**SKUAS, GULLS & TERNS.** Max. 100 **Silver Gull** at Coila and TS; up to 9 **Caspian Tern** at Coila and TS, 1 at Coopers I.; no more than 40 **Crested Tern**; 6 **White-fronted Tern** at TS in June (GR/WN).

**OTHER NON-PASSERINES.** Up to 8 **Rock Dove** in MYA; max. 8 **White-headed Pigeon** at TS; no more than 8 **Spotted Dove** in MYA (JL); 1 **Brown Cuckoo-Dove** at NA (MA); up to 30 **Common Bronzewing** at Pedro in May (JS); more than 35 **Crested Pigeon** at Coopers I.; max. 4 **Wonga Pigeon**; 2 **Peaceful Dove** or call at PDD; max. 9 **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo** and dy at Comerang (JC); 2 **Gang-gang** at Mystery Bay, Mossy Pt and PDD, 1 at MYA SF (MA/HR/BA/JH); **Galah** inspecting tree hollows at PDD in June (JF); up to 220 **Little Corella** in MYA (JM); max. 45 **Sulphur-crested**; up to 30 **Rainbow Lorikeet**, 30 **Musk**, 20 **Little**; max. 10 **Crimson Rosella**; up to 15 **Eastern Rosella** at Comerang (JC); up to 20 **Aust. King Parrot** at MKS (SMG). **Brush Cuckoo** call at Pedro Swamp in June; 2 **Fan-tailed** at PDD, Pedro Swamp, Comerang and Bergalia, calls widespread; single **Horsfield's Bronze** at OMBS and PDD (TH/JF); 1 **Shining Bronze** at Coopers I., calls at PDD, MKS, Pedro Swamp; 1 **Southern Boobook** at Pedro, TS and MYA (JS/GR/WN/JL); regular **Tawny Frogmouth** pair at Mystery Bay, 1 at TS; 1 **Aust. Owllet-nightjar** at Comerang in May; more than 10 **Kookaburra** at OMBS (TH); 1 **Sacred Kingfisher** at Candlagan Ck (HR); 2 **Azure Kingfisher** at TS, 1 at Comerang.

**PASSERINES.** **Superb Lyrebird** at MYA SF, call at L. Brunderee; max. 4 **White-throated Treecreeper** at PDD and Comerang; 1-4 **Red-browed** at PDD (JF/BA); up to 12 **Variegated Fairy-wren** at BP, no more than 4 elsewhere; up to 40 **Superb** at TS; max. 6 **Spotted Pardalote**; up to 7 **Striated** at Pedro Swamp, 2 at Comerang; no more than 10 **White-browed Scrubwren**; 4 **Brown Gerygone** at Mystery Bay, max. 3 at PDD, 2 at MYA SF, BP and Comerang; thornbills widespread; **White-eared Honeyeater** at BP, Bumbo Rd, PDD, MKS, Pedro Swamp; 1-5 **Fuscous** at MKS (SMG/JM); **Lewin's** widespread; more than 10 **Brown-headed**; more than 20 **White-naped**; **Noisy Friarbird** calling in May at Pedro and MKS (JS/SMG); up to 30 **New-Holland**; 1-5 **White-cheeked** at PDD; max. 6 **White-fronted Chat** at TS; up to 14 **Jacky Winter** at Belowra; max. 3 **Rose Robin** at MKS, 2 at Comerang, 1 at PDD, Pedro Swamp and Mystery Bay; 4 **Scarlet Robin** at Belowra, 2 at Pedro Swamp and Bergalia (JC/JM/DHK); max. 4 **Eastern Whipbird** at PDD and Mystery Bay; up to 15 **Varied Sittella** at Pedro Swamp, 10 at Coopers I., 8 at PDD, 3 at Comerang, call at Nargal L.; max. 6 **Golden Whistler** at Comerang; 1 **Rufous Whistler** at Pedro Swamp in May; single **Crested Shrike-tit** at Nargal L. in June; 1 **Leaden Flycatcher** at Bergalia in May; single **Restless Flycatcher** at Bergalia, Mystery Bay, Comerang and Belowra (DHK/MA/JC); 60 **Aust. Magpie** at Eurobodalla Rd in June (GR/WN); up to 40 **Pied Currawong** at Comerang in May; juvenile **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** at PDD (BA); 2 **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** at Comerang and Pedro Swamp, 1 at BP (JC/JM/JW); **Aust. Figbird** calling in MYA in May; 2 **Olive-backed Oriole** at Pedro Swamp, Bumbo Rd and Mystery Bay, singles and calls elsewhere, immature at Comerang; 35 **Little Raven** at Comerang in May (JC); max. 12 **White-winged Chough** at Pedro Swamp, 8 at BP, 7 at Mystery Bay, 5 at Pedro and Bodalla (JM/JW/MA/JS/JH); a **Satin Bowerbird** attending bower at Mystery Bay; up to 60 **Tree Martin** at Comerang; small groups of **Silvereye** moving north both months; max. 12 **Mistletoebird** at Comerang, 2 at MYA SF, Bumbo Rd, 1 at Coopers I., call at Pedro Swamp; up to 15 **Aust. Pipit** at Comerang, 12 at TS; 2 **Diamond Firetail** at Belowra, including 1 dy in June (JC); max. 20 **Red-browed Finch** at PDD and Comerang.

**MAMMALS.** **Spotted-tailed Quoll** scats at Pedro Swamp; **Long-nosed Bandicoot** signs at L. Brunderee and Nargal L. (FM); 1 **Sugar Glider** at Pedro, calls at BP and Pedro Swamp; **Common Ringtail Possum** at Mossy Pt in May; 2 **Brushtail Possum**; max. 25 **Eastern Grey Kangaroo**; up to 5 **Red-necked** and **Swamp Wallaby**; 2 **Grey-headed Flying Fox** at Mossy Pt; **microbat sp** Mossy Pt and Pedro Swamp (HR/JM); single **Fox** and calls; 6 **Dolphin sp** at Bogola Head (FM); **Aust. Fur Seal** at BP and Mystery Bay in May.

**REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS.** Dark and Pale-flecked Garden Sunskink; 1 Weasel Skink at Mossy Pt in May; 1 Eastern Blue-tongue; 1 or 2 Jacky Lizard in May; 1 Eastern Water Dragon at Horse I.; Red-bellied Black Snake at PDD in May. Frogs calling or seen: Common Eastern Froglet; Brown-striped Frog; Spotted Grass Frog; Haswell's Froglet; the Toadlets: Brown, Tyler's; the Tree Frogs, Bleating, Brown, Jervis Bay, Peron's, Tyler's, Verreaux's.

**INSECTS.**

The Spiders: St Andrew's Cross, Huntsman, White-tailed, Leaf-curling, Little Striped Wolf, Water, Spiny, Crab, Flat Rock, Red-back. The Beetles: Ladybirds, Shield and Dung. The Dragonflies and Damselflies: a few still flying in June.

**MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES.** The Moths: Ghost, Wood, Black and Red-lined Geometrid, White Satin, Twisted, the Emeralds, Plantain, Gum Snout, White-stemmed Wattle, Wattle, Heliotrope, Magpie, Green-blotched, Bogong, Brown and Variable Cutworm. The Butterflies: Small Grass Yellow, Imperial and Black Jezebel, Cabbage White, Common Brown, Meadow Argus, Aust. Painted Lady, Monarch, Lesser Wanderer, Plumbago Blue, Common Grass Blue.

**Blossom.** *Eucalyptus paniculata*, *E. tricarpa*, *Acacia falcata*, *A. ulicifolia*, *A. suaveolens*, *Banksia integrifolia*, *Phragmites australis*, *Correa reflexa*, *Pimela linifolia*, *Persoonia linearis*, *Scaevola ramosissima*. Fungi: *Amanita muscaria*.

**Weather.** Winds turned south-westerly, cooler nights and days. Rain at the end of May caused flooding and replenished water bodies. High winds led to severe storm damage in the south. **Rainfall: May:** 147mm at BP, 179.5mm at MYA, 133mm at Pedro Swamp, 151.5mm at TS, 255.5mm at Comerang. **June:** 14.5mm at BP, 24mm at Pedro Swamp, 14.5mm at MYA, 10mm at TS, 15mm at Comerang.



*This is the corner where members place interesting articles or publish their queries. We encourage you to send items to the Editor.*

**OOZLUM'S CORNER**

Following the AGM we lunched at Coopers I. and walked north on to Evans' farmland. At the end stage of the walk there was a Bloodwood tree hosting a variety of birds, I doubt any aviary could have bettered it. Varied Sittella, a silent Shining Bronze-Cuckoo showing the barring fully across its chest, a vocal Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeaters, male and female Golden Whistlers, male Spotted Pardalote, Brown and Yellow Thornbill and a male Mistletoebird all seen in a few minutes. At the completion of our walk we had forty-nine species to record, so we felt compelled to find one more. Could we find a Darter down the waterway? No – but about thirty Crested Pigeon were perched in the tops of a couple of Casuarina trees.

**CONTRIBUTORS**

**ABBREVIATIONS**

BA	B Allan, PDD	JM	J Morgan, Pedro Swamp	BB	Batemans Bay
MA	M Anderson, Mystery Bay	WN	W Nelson, TS	BBWG	BB Water Gardens
EA	E Andrew, SB	HR	H Ransom, Mossy Pt	BI	Bermagui
JC	P&J Collett, Comerang	GR	G Rayner, TS	BP	Burrewarra Point
MC	M Crowley, MHS	JS	J Sagar, Pedro	CO	Congo
JF	J Fearn, PDD	BS	B Scales, NA	ERBG	Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens
SMG	M&S Guppy, MKS	JW	J Whiter, BP	MH	Moruya Heads N & S
JH	J&J Houghton, TS	FM	Field Meeting	MKS	Maulbrooks Rd S
TH	T Hunt, OMBS		K Arnold-Garvey	MO	Meringo
DHK	D&H Kay, Bergalia		I Hendley	MYA	Moruya
JL	J&J Liney, MYA		G Clark, ACT	NA	Narooma
				NP	Newstead Pond
				OMBS	Old Man Bed Swamp
				PDD	Percy Davis Drive
				PP	Potato Point
				SB	Surf Beach
				TL	Tilba L.
				TN	Tomakin
				TS	Tuross Head
				WL	Wallaga L.