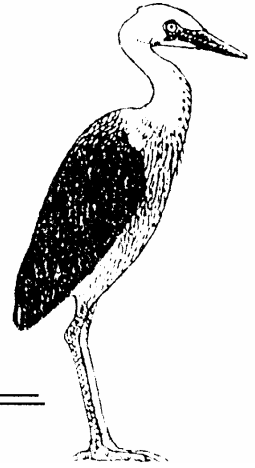




EUROBODALLA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.



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

Chairman: Mike Crowley, 22 Dell Parade, Moruya Heads 2537 4474 2677
Secretary/Recorder: Julie Morgan, PO Box 888, Moruya 2537 4474 5888 juliettamorgan@gmail.com
Treasurer: Joan Fearn, 245 Percy Davis Drive, Moruya 2537 4474 2801
Editor: Jill Whiter, PO Box 248, Batemans Bay 2536 4471 7007 jwhiter1@bigpond.com

NEWSLETTER NO. 143

NOVEMBER 2010

ENHS Website

Work has begun on a website for the Society. David Num, David White and I are currently working to set it up under the guidance of local expert, Peter Anderson. If all goes well, the site will be up and running early in the New Year. The website will include information on the Society, membership, field meetings, local wildlife and a chat room or blogging facility. This will be an area where only members will be permitted to contribute and interact with one another, post interesting sightings, ask questions and share photographs. To ensure security of the site, members will need to register to use this facility. They will then be notified when the website is ready to access, and allocated a username and password so they can contribute to the members' area.

* To register, members are asked to send their name and email address to juliettamorgan@gmail.com JM

Census of Indian Mynas



Photo: Geoffrey Dabb, COG.

Eurobodalla Shire Council, with the assistance of a number of dedicated volunteers, has been carrying out a Myna control program during 2010 and has been successful in eradicating a number of these pests from strongholds throughout the Shire. In order to assist the campaign, the ENHS has decided to conduct a census during the week of Sunday 6 March to Saturday 12 March 2011. We will be asking members to survey their local area during that week and to report on the location and numbers of Mynas in their neighbourhood. We will provide census sheets and instructions in the next newsletter.

Another Alaskan arrival

The day after our very successful Shorebird Workshop on 9 October, one of those present, Bob Rusk from Ulladulla, spotted a flagged Bar-tailed Godwit on Burrill Lake. I contacted the Alaskan banding team for details. The godwit, a female, was one of nine fitted with transmitters on North Slope, Alaska in mid-July. She was tracked as she flew across the Pacific, but contact was lost around New Caledonia when the antenna malfunctioned on 3 October. They were very pleased that she had reached Australia on 10 October after a non-stop flight of 12,610 km. Simply amazing. MC

Membership Renewal

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 January and the form is attached. *Nature in Eurobodalla No. 24*, the annual record of observations in the Shire during 2009, can be ordered on the same form.

Welcome to new member Colin Morrison from Frenchs Forest.

What to expect in January-February

Now is the height of summer and the spring breeding has reached its culmination: the last young are being weaned off dependency, the summer-breeding migrants already turning their eyes to the north while the residents contemplate the pleasures of life without young. The Little Terns' breeding usually finishes in January and they will be gone by the end of February. As a race, the terns show few signs of intelligent adaptation, their stubborn adherence to traditional breeding places that are no longer suitable, or even downright dangerous, leaves them hostage to an uncertain future, but they are unvaryingly prompt in departing immediately breeding has finished, indeed sometimes leaving late or weakling chicks to face whatever end awaits.

The main breeding populations of those small cuckoos, Fan-tailed, Horsfield's and Shining Bronze, Pallid and Brush, are fairly regular in their departure habits too; they arrived early, laid their eggs promptly in the chosen hosts' nests and are now ready to head north. One can never be didactic about arrivals and departures; the creatures of the natural world accept and react to the fundamental rhythms that drive the earth and adjust their behaviour accordingly. So no two years are alike and there will always be the aberrations. We have all heard and seen them, perhaps singing heartily in the depths of winter or perched prominently out of season and, I suspect, sniggering at the confusion caused.

The reptiles are using these months to fatten up on a rich supply of late-summer food. Skinks, lizards and Lace Monitors have done their duty and bred, their eggs stowed away in warm and favoured places. Snakes have laid their eggs too, or given birth to living young, each species following a genetic path laid down aeons ago. The garden lodger, *Drysdalia rhodogaster*, produces living young and in summer we beat the grass before mowing to dislodge the little ones, but are sometimes dismayed to find a roughly-chopped stowaway flung out in our wake. Life can be precarious in a suburban lawn.

The Paper Nautilus



Female Paper Nautilus *Argonauta nodosa*
at Montagu Island.

Photo: Mike Crowley

The Paper Nautilus *Argonauta nodosa* is widely recognised by its beautiful thin white shell that occasionally washes ashore on local beaches but few people have seen the animal that lives inside the shell. Recently large numbers of living Paper Nautilus were washed ashore on Montagu Island and I was able to see these beautiful animals for the first time. Their spectacular pink/purple legs and mantle and bright pink spotted eye were a stunning sight.

Unlike the true chambered nautilus, the 'argonaut' or 'paper nautilus' is not a nautilus at all but a type of octopus. It spends its life floating on the surface waters of open oceans, feeding on small fish and shrimp. The female produces a paper-thin shell as a brood chamber for her eggs. She grows to about 30cm in length and lives her whole life within the shell, gripping it with her suckers. As she grows she lays down more shell from the broad webs that extend from her upper pair of arms. These webs are spread over the outside of the shell as she swims and feeds, using her funnel for jet propulsion. Paper Nautilus are generally animals of the deep open ocean but in part of their life cycle, swarms of females periodically move into shallower coastal waters where they shed their eggs and die, leaving the shells to be washed up on local beaches.

The male argonaut is very small, only about 3cm long and has no shell. He has a long modified arm in which he stores sperm. During mating, this arm breaks off in the female and the male dies. The sperm is then used to fertilise the eggs.

Argonauta nodosa is one of the three living species of Paper Nautilus in the world, but because the other two species are found in tropical and sub-tropical waters, the shells of *Argonauta nodosa* are the most common that occur in this area. MC

The Mullenderee Maternity Wards

In a paddock that was probably first cleared 150 years ago and now hosts a handful of ageing, dead or dying eucalyptus trees, new generations of birds are being reared. A passing glance might condemn the site as a wildlife wasteland. On the contrary, it is an ideal situation for a nursery: a brimming swamp-cum-dam and a creek nearby, verdant fields stretched around, and a highway and side road for convenient hawking and scraping up of road kills. The busy comings and goings first catch the eye and then it takes a good half-hour to appreciate the number and disposal of nests, more or less in layers from the first branches to the all-but-last. Nobody wants to be at the very top of a tree, exposed to all sorts of dangers, not the least of which is the weather. Every tree has at least three or four tenants that appear to have accepted a degree of amity, at least for the time being.

A Chestnut Teal sits, unmoving, in the first fork, her back and head low enough to suggest she is occupying a shallow hollow or dip. There is a Magpie sitting tight halfway along a branch in an untidy, untypical nest of dry grass. A Galah suns itself outside a hollow, and a pair of Starlings occupies the branch above. The Wood Ducks are on the last but one branch, such a long jump for their little young to make when it comes time to leave the nest.

Further along, an Eastern Rosella enters a hollow, turns and surveys the world from her peephole. Another Galah has rights to a somewhat larger hole, a pair of Wood Ducks settled above and several Tree Martins flutter anxiously round a branch, perhaps inspecting with a view to purchase? The Kestrels have claimed the high, dead branch and, strangely, the other tenants don't seem to mind their unlikely neighbours. On the right, a Magpie Lark's deep pudding-bowl nest might or might not be occupied, there is another Magpie's head visible above the rim of a conventional twig nest and two determined looking Galahs are eyeing off a hole that could be already occupied. Altogether, a most satisfying paddock. JW.

INTERESTING AND UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

The **Olive Whistler** *Pachycephala olivacea* is one of the more elusive birds in this area, more often heard



than seen. Listen for its beautiful and distinctive call throughout spring and summer. Its regular habitat is in thick wet sclerophyll or rainforest gullies above 500 m although it occasionally turns up in coastal thickets during the autumn and spring. One of the best places to see Olive Whistlers is on the top of Gulaga although they are found in most wet gullies in the higher parts in the Shire.

I took this photo of a male Olive Whistler in September 2010 in rainforest near Plumwood Fire Tower west of Moruya.
Mike Crowley

On 3 Oct. 2 **Indian Peafowl** at Dunn's Ck Rd (EA).

First flock of 50 **Short-tailed Shearwater** at BP 15 Sept. (JW), thousands passing S in steady stream, many hundreds beach-cast.

Single **Intermediate Egret** on 9 Sept. at MYA; on 9 Oct. at NA (JM/FM).

Two **Black-winged Stilt** at Comerang on 6 Oct. (JC).

Two **Grey-tailed Tattler** on 9 Oct. at WL (EA).

Field notes submitted for first known Shire sighting of a **Spectacled Monarch** at Broulee (DR).

VULNERABLE AND THREATENED SPECIES

Eastern Osprey: male, at entrance to Bowns Ck and flying over samphire flats on Reedy I. 13 Sept.

Square-tailed Kite: 1 at Mystery Bay on 3 Sept., 1 with damaged primary feather between Pedro Swamp and PDD both months.

Bush-Stone Curlew: NA bird not reported.

Australian Pied Oystercatcher: **Sept:** 1 or 2 at Candalagan Ck, Coila L., Mystery Bay, MO; up to 4 at MHS; 3-9 at TS; 8 at WL. **Oct:** up to 15 (1 banded) at TS; 2 at Mystery Bay; 5-13 at WL; 1 at Broulee.

Sooty Oystercatcher: **Sept:** 1 or 2 regularly at BP, Candalagan Ck; 4 at Broulee; 6 at Mystery Bay. **Oct:** 1 or 2 at BP, TS, Mystery Bay, Broulee; 4 at Depot Bch, MO.

Hooded Plover: 6 on 11 Sept., 2 on 8 Oct. at WL, no breeding recorded.

Little Tern: single at WL on 10 Oct.

Glossy Black-Cockatoo: Sept: 2-4 at PDD; 1-3 at MKS; 2-10 at Pedro Swamp; 2 at Pedro. **Oct:** calls at MKS; 2 at PDD, Pedro Swamp, Mystery Bay, Pedro.

Powerful Owl: calls at MKS during Oct.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SYSTEMATIC LIST RECORDS

The following records are from September and October 2010

GROUND BIRDS. Increase in **Emu** to 6 at TS, 5 plus 4 dep. young at Horse I.; up to 10 **Stubble** and 2 **Brown Quail** at Comerang.

WATERSIDE. Max. 100 **Black Swan** at TS, fewer than 50 elsewhere; **Wood Duck** with young common; up to 50 **Pacific Black Duck**, 20 **Grey Teal**, 40 **Chestnut Teal** daily at Comerang, breeding (JC); 2 or 3 **Hardhead** at MYA (JL); 1 **Musk** at Pedro Swamp, 2 at Coopers I., OMBS; 2 **Shy Albatross**, 1 **Southern Giant Petrel** at MO (NM); up to 8 **Aust. Grebe** at Pedro Swamp, fewer elsewhere; both **Ibis sp** as usual; max. 6 **Royal Spoonbill**; **Nankeen Night Heron** scarce; 1 or 2 **Striated** at TS; max. 33 **Cattle Egret** on Mullenderee Flat (EA); single **White-necked Heron** occasionally at Comerang, once at Broulee; 1-6 **White-faced** widespread; 1-3 **Eastern Great Egret**; 1-5 **Little**; single **Eastern Reef** at usual haunts; max. 30 **Pelican** including 2 juv. at TS (GR/WN); hundreds of **Gannet** from BP to Mystery Bay declining in Oct.; no more than 14 **Little Pied Cormorant**, 50 **Little Black** at TS, 4 **Pied** at Coila L.; V formation of 100 **Great** over MHS on 24 Sept. (JM); 1 or 2 **Darter** at Comerang.

RAPTORS. **Australian Kestrel** widespread, the breeding pair is missing from Gunday Oval; 1 or 2 **Hobby** at PDD, Comerang; max. 3 **Brown Falcon** with 1 dep. young. at Comerang (JC); single **Peregrine** at MO, BP; single **Black-shouldered Kite** at Coila, Mystery Bay; up to 4 **Whistling**; 1-3 **W-bellied Sea-Eagle** some juvenile to sub-adult; 1 or 2 **Swamp Harrier** regularly; **Grey Goshawk** singles at Pedro Swamp, **Brown** widespread; 1 or 2 **Collared Sparrowhawk** at Pedro, Pedro Swamp, Comerang and CO Creek where pair nesting (I. Hendley); 1 or 2 **Wedge-tailed Eagle**, juvenile at Mystery Bay on 12 Oct. (MA).

CRAKES, RAILS, GALLINULES & BUTTON-QUAILS. Max. 12 **Purple Swamphen**; 4 **Dusky Moorhen** daily at Comerang; 2 **Eurasian Coot** at Coopers I. on 8 Sept.; **Painted Button-quail** singles at Pedro Swamp, MO.

WADERS. **Masked Lapwing** common, max. at Comerang, dy at TS; 1 or 2 **Pacific Golden Plover** at TS, MHS; 5 **Grey** at TS (GR/WN); **Red-capped** max. 27 at WL; 2 **Black-fronted** at Eurobodalla Rd, 1 at MO, 2-4 at Comerang; max 350 **Bar-tailed Godwit** at NA (FM); 1 or 2 **Whimbrel** at Candalagan Ck, WL, MHS, 3 at MO, 1-4 at TS; max. 20 **Eastern Curlew**; 1 **Common Greenshank** at TS (GR/WN); 2 **Ruddy Turnstone** at TS; 10 **Red Knot** at TS, 5 at WL; 12 **Red-necked Stint** at TS.

SKUAS, GULLS & TERNS. Single juvenile **Pacific Gull** at TS, 1 at NA; fewer **Silver Gulls** max. 50; 8 **Caspian Tern** at TS, elsewhere 1-3; more than 200 **Crested** at TS.

OTHER NON-PASSERINES. Sixty **Rock Dove** counted at TS bridge waiting at traffic light; up to 10 **White-headed Pigeon**; max. 6 **Spotted Dove** at Broulee; **Brown Cuckoo-Dove** calls at MKS (SMG), 1 at Rosedale, Pedro Swamp, Coila L.; **Common Bronzewing** up to 10 widespread; max. 12 **Crested Pigeon** in MYA (JL); **Wonga** widespread, up to 4 at Mystery Bay, MKS; **Peaceful Dove** recorded only at PDD; 7 **Topknot Pigeon** at MHS, 5 at NA; max. 15 **Y-t Black-Cockatoo**, dy at BP (BA); some good numbers **Gang-gang Cockatoo** max. 30 at MO; **Galah** widespread and breeding; **Little Corella** up to 100 in MYA; **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** counts of 30, 20 in MYA, Broulee; good numbers of **Rainbow**, **Musk**, **Little Lorikeet**. **Pallid Cuckoo** single at Glenduart Cemetery, PDD, 3 at Comerang incl. 1 dy fed by male; **Brush** many calling, 1 at MO (NM); **Fan-tailed** everywhere; 1 or 2 **Horsfield's**, **Shining-Bronze**; **Koel** common; first return **Channel-billed Cuckoo** at Pedro 16 Sept. (JS), thereafter 1-3. **Southern Boobook** vocal, 2 at OMBS, singles at MO, Bergalia (TH/NM/DKH); **Tawny Frogmouth** 1 or 2 as usual at Mystery Bay, TS; 1 at Mossy Pt; **White-throated Nightjar** calls at Pedro Swamp, singles at Pedro; **Aust. Owlet-nightjar** call at Pedro Swamp, 1 or 2 at Comerang, Pedro; 12 **White-throated Needletail** returned 13 Oct. over Pedro Swamp (JM); **Dollarbird** later this year, from 4 Oct. at Comerang; up to 4 **Sacred Kingfisher**; few **Azure**, one fishing in Waldrons Swamp (JF).

PASSERINES. Superb Lyrebird calls; breeding White-throated Treecreeper; 2 Red-browed at PDD; the Fairy-wrens widespread, breeding; Striated Pardolote at Pedro Swamp, Comerang, Belowra, MO, ERBG; 10 Brown Gerygone at TS; White-throated calls thrilling FM on 26 Sept.; all Thornbills as usual, most breeding. At Comerang more than 200 Yellow-faced Honeyeater; Lewin's, White-naped, New Holland in good numbers, widespread; single Fuscous on 17 Sept., up to 4 White-cheeked both at PDD; Brown-headed at Pedro Swamp, MO, PDD, Eurobodalla Rd; 1-3 or calls of Scarlet. Numerous Noisy Friarbird, Little and Red Wattlebird all breeding; max. 12 White-fronted Chat at TS; up to 4 Rose Robin; nestlings of Varied Sittella at Pedro Swamp; 1 or 2 Crested Shrike-tit at MKS, PDD; Rufous Fantail from 17 Oct. (NM); Black-faced Monarch returned to PDD 24 Sept.; max. 6 Leaden Flycatcher; single Restless at Comerang, Belowra, call at Mogendoura; Grey Butcherbird widespread; FM counted 300 Magpie in 2 paddocks beside Eurobodalla Rd; more than 30 Dusky Woodswallow at Eurobodalla Rd; early return of Cicadabird 1 Sept. at Pedro Swamp; Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike widespread, White-bellied at Pedro Swamp, MKS, Comerang; 4 White-winged Triller at Belowra; 2 Figbird at NA (MA), calls MYA, TS; 7 Little Raven overflying BP; small numbers White-winged Chough breeding; one Bassian Thrush at TS 25 Oct.; up to 6 Blackbird in MYA (JL); max. 30 Tree Martin daily at Comerang, nesting; 1 or 2 Reed Warbler, calls of Golden-headed Cisticola reported only from Comerang (JC); Aust. Pipit widespread, nestlings being fed at Eurobodalla Rd.

MAMMALS. Echidna out and about; calls of Sugar Glider at Pedro Swamp, 1 seen at Pedro; 2 Greater (1 dark form) at Pedro Swamp on 24 Sept.; 1 Ringtail and up to 4 Brushtail Possum; abundant macopods. One Aust. Fur Seal swimming regularly off BP. Dingo heard at Comerang; Red Fox at Pedro; Deer sp at MYA SF, Mystery Bay. Ten Bottle-nosed Dolphin off TS 3 Sept (GR/WN); dolphin sp from Corunna Pt, TS, Mystery Bay; max. 7 Southern Right Whale off Broulee in Sept., only 2 off TS in Oct.; pods of Humpback travelling south both months.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS. Snake-necked Turtle more obvious; colonies of Dark-flecked Garden Sunskink at BP (JW); Blue-tongue inhabiting gardens at TS; more than 10 Water Dragon 10-30 Sept., 8 Gippsland daily at Comerang; 1 or 2 Lace Monitor. Diamond Python at Pedro Swamp, Mystery Bay; 1 or 2 Red-bellied Black Snake; Eastern Brown at PDD, MKS. Frogs: Common Eastern and Haswell's Froglets, Brown-striped, Spotted Grass, Brown and Tyler's Toadlets. Tree Frogs: Bleating, Brown, Jervis Bay, Lesueur's, Peron's, Leaf-green, Tyler's, Verreaux's.

OTHER INVERTEBRATES, INSECTS. Ladybirds, Shield bugs, Cicada sp, large hatch of both Damsel and Dragonflies, Grasshoppers at Comerang. The spiders: Huntsman, Badge Huntsman, White-tailed, Black House, Red-back, St Andrews Cross, Water, Wheel-weaving Garden, Little Striped Wolf, Green Flower Spider *Diaea variabilis*.

LEPIDOPTERA. Moth families' identification at Lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/moths.html. **Limacodidae:** *Doratifera pinguis*, **Pyrilidae:** *Tipanaea patulella*. **Geometridae:** Black Geometrid, *Idiodes apicata*, *Dissomorphia australiaria*, Hakea Moth, *Paraterpna harrisoni*, Red-lined Geometrid, Emerald, *Scopula perlata*, *S.rubraria*, *Chrysolarentia mecnata*, *C. plagiocausta*, *C. severata*, *Epyaxa subidaria*, *Chloroclystis filata*. **Lasiocampidae:** *Pernattia pusilla*, Long-nosed, Wattle-snout, Common Pinara. **Anthelidae:** *Nataxa*, *Anthela acuta*, *A. ferruginosa*. **Sphingidae:** Convolvulus Hawk. **Lymantriidae:** Tinged Tussock, *Iropoca rotundata*, White Tussock. **Arctiidae:** *Lyclene structa*, Magpie, Dark-spotted Tiger, Crimson Tiger, Tiger. **Noctuidae:** *Pantylia sparsa*, *P. capistrata*, Whistling, *Eutrichopida latinus*, *Comocrus behri*, Green-blotched, Bogong, Variable Cutworm. Butterflies: Orchard Swallowtail returned; Imperial and Black Jezabel, Brown and Grey Ringlet numbers rising late Oct at Pedro Swamp; Yellow Admiral, Common Pencil-blue, Yellow-spotted Blue.

BLOSSOM. All the flowering trees and shrubs one would expect in Spring, as usual. Orchids reported: *Dendrobium*, *Calochilus robertsoni*, Rat's Tail Orchid, Tongue Orchid.

WEATHER. The night of 4-5 September produced the wildest winds known for many years (at MKS speeds up to 150 km/hour) that ripped trees from the ground, snapped others and stripped living trees of leaves, mostly west of the Princes Highway in a fairly narrow band, stretching from Durras in the north to Moruya Heads in the south. It was a windy, cool month, night temperatures quite low and most rain in the first half. October continued the windy and cool trend, the rain again in the first half.

Rainfall: Sept: BP 50.5 mm, MKS 32 mm, MYA 32 mm, TS 36 mm, Comerang 31 mm. **Oct:** BP 77.5 mm, MKS 54 mm, MYA 58 mm, TS 41 mm, Comerang 41 mm.



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

Grubs



This handsome moth with markings that suggest skeletal fingers evolves from a Processionary Caterpillar. Above the tuft of white tail is a narrow yellow band, then bold bands of black and orange. After the female lays hundreds of eggs and covers them with fine hairs she dies within a few days as she has no mouth parts and cannot feed.

Notodontidae *Ochrogaster lunifer*, male

Unlike the Processionary Caterpillar which moves in a single line along a silken thread, these larvae were found on Percy Davis Drive mimicking a Rugby rolling maul. No food in sight. After their pupal stage they will become Sawfly adults.



Sawfly larvae JF

Green Cape Shearwater panorama

Some pre-breeding females and young were still migrating south. Renovation or excavation of new burrows takes place early in November and the birds go out feeding until the last week of November when they return to lay their single eggs.

CONTRIBUTORS

ABBREVIATIONS

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

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL and a

HAPPY NEW YEAR... thank you for your support and for your observations without which NIE and the newsletter would wither away.

