



# EUROBODALLA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Inc.

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## The South Island Pied Oystercatcher (*Haematopus finschi*) - Martens 1987

### Taxonomy

The genus *Haematopus* includes 11 species of large pied or black shorebirds commonly referred to as Oystercatchers. Australia has two common species: the Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers (*H. longirostris* and *H. fuliginosus* respectively). Occasionally a third species occurs on the south eastern seaboard as a vagrant from New Zealand; the South Island Pied Oystercatcher (*H. finschi*). One such individual was observed and photographed at Coila Lake on 14-15 October 2019. This record was the 11<sup>th</sup> observation for Australia and the 7<sup>th</sup> for NSW.



South Island Pied Oystercatcher (*H. finschi*)  
Photo D Bertzeletos

### Description and behaviour

At 46 cm in length, the South Island Pied Oystercatcher is the smallest Oystercatcher to occur in Australia. The only confusion risk is with the Australian Pied, but with careful observation they can be told apart. South Island Pied Oystercatchers have shorter legs and a more rounded appearance particularly around the chest and head. They also boast very long, slim beaks, longer than any Australian Pied can have. Combined, these characteristics give the species a shape more like that of Snipe or Godwits.



South Island Pied Oystercatcher in flight  
Photo D Bertzeletos

When the bird is in flight, look for extensive white underwings, a white rump that goes further up the back than in Australian Pied and a broader white wingbar that reaches the trailing edge of the secondaries. All these characteristics are less extensive on Australian Pied. The typical call of the South Island Pied Oystercatcher is a notably higher pitched "Pip-queek!" which differs somewhat from the "Pip-pipip!" of the local Pies.

The species is highly gregarious in New Zealand, often forming flocks of thousands particularly in the non-breeding season. All records of South Island Pied Oystercatchers in Australia have been in the company of Australian Pies. As such there should be ample opportunity to observe the above differences should you suspect a South Island Pied Oystercatcher is present. Unlike the Australian Pied, South Island Pied Oystercatchers utilise freshwater habitats

extensively; for this reason any Oystercatchers away from saline habitats are worth the extra scrutiny.

### Diet and breeding

In New Zealand the species breeds mainly on the South Island migrating to the North Island once breeding has been completed. Breeding occurs on a wide variety of wet habitats with pairs often forming loose breeding colonies. Nesting occurs between June and July at coastal sites and between August-October at inland locations. Both sexes look after up to six eggs which take 25 days to incubate. The chicks then take about a month to fledge but may associate with their parents until the following breeding season.

Given that South Island Pied Oystercatchers utilise a wide variety of habitats it should not be surprising that their prey is equally varied. They seem to take mostly soft prey, however, preferring worms and invertebrates at saline habitats whilst avoiding oysters and bivalves.

#### *Conservation and status in the Eurobodalla*

With a population of about 100,000 the species is considered as of least concern by the IUCN, and the species population has increased in New Zealand since European colonisation. Given its strong migratory habits it is much more prone to getting lost than the Australian Pied Oystercatcher. Outside the east coast of Australia, it has reached Norfolk Island and several Sub Antarctic Islands.



Australian (left) and South Island (right) Pied Oystercatchers  
Photo D Bertzeletos

Given our proximity to New Zealand, it is not surprising that one was found here, and, based on the observation that the individual was actively courting with Australian Pied Oystercatchers, it may yet be found breeding here. Dimitris Bertzeletos

#### **A reminder that 2020 membership fees are now overdue**

If your membership hasn't been renewed for the current year, a Renewal form has been included with this newsletter as a reminder. Single membership \$20, family \$30 and for under 18s \$5. There are a few copies of the 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of *Nature in Eurobodalla* still available - \$13 if collected at a field meeting or \$16 if posted.

#### **A warm welcome to new members....**

Marjolein Kromhaut, Moruya  
Karen McCann, Catalina  
Tony, Maria and David Montero Hawker, ACT

#### **What's coming up.....**

Who knows – but probably no meetings for the foreseeable future. Normally we include the program of field meetings for the next 3 months in the Newsletter. However, given the current, rapidly changing circumstances, the Committee has decided the most appropriate action is to cancel all meetings, including the Annual General Meeting which is normally held in May, until the Government indicates that it is safe to resume activities of this nature. When that happens, a new program will be developed and distributed via email, posted on the Field Meetings page of the Society's website (<http://enhs.org.au/>) and on the Events section of our Facebook page.

#### **Field Meeting at Meringo Point Sanctuary**

Our first scheduled field meeting for the year to Tebbs Road had to be abandoned because of the impact resulting from January's fires. It seems likely that our program will continue to be affected, and alterations will have to be made through the year.

So, our first gathering took place on 23 February at the private property of Julie Taylor-Mills, who greeted us at the entrance and gave us a rundown on the wonderful philosophy which rules the way her property is managed. She and her husband Mark have a covenant over the property which guarantees that it is to be maintained in its current state in perpetuity. Julie noted that 80% of the Eurobodalla had been burnt this summer, including 90% of the state forests and national parks. Her own property was fortunately unscathed. She has future plans to carry out eco-burns which are to be supervised by Indigenous people; this mosaic burning would protect the overall quality of the native forest and her plantings. She hopes that this will act as a model for other landowners, both private and public.



Striated Thornbills Photo L McVeigh

A major focus of the Sanctuary is the sympathetically restored old dairy which now serves as a meeting place for many groups including environmental groups and nature workshops. The timbers and the main roofbeam are works of art in themselves. It is indeed a beautiful and atmospheric space.

Julie joined us for much of our walk, which took us through grasslands, eucalypt forest, coastal forest and along the beach. Our bird list totalled 47 different species, with highlights being a female Restless Flycatcher, a Grey Goshawk, a male Leaden Flycatcher, several Australasian Gannets and a pair of Grey Shrike-thrushes. There was also a mob of more than 20 Eastern Grey Kangaroos grazing within view of the dairy, which was our venue for lunch. In

addition to all her other activities on the Sanctuary, Julie is also a WIRES carer and is currently raising two Eastern Grey Kangaroo joeys.

It was good to catch up with friends after a recess of nearly 3 months. Private properties always prove popular field meeting venues, as this large gathering of more than 20 members confirmed. Mandy Anderson

### **After the drought, fires, storms and floods.....**

This summer was indeed difficult for many in our community and has had a profound impact both on us as individuals and our communities. Many of the activities that mark the summer period for all of us, like having family and friends come to visit, swimming in the ocean, or exploring our beautiful coastline, were not able to take place.

The many months of drought left our environment vulnerable to the bushfires and were a contributing factor to the devastation that occurred, and the storms that followed have also had a significant impact on our ecosystems. We acknowledge also that a number of our members have had their properties impacted and we are all feeling your loss.

It will be a while before we know the full extent of the impact of the bushfires. Many areas of national park and state forest remain inaccessible and it will take time to understand the implications for our local species of flora and fauna. But there are changes that many of us have already noticed.

There has been an increase in the number of birds reported that are usually more abundant further west, including Gang-gang Cockatoos, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, and Little and Australian Raven. These species have been reported more widely and in greater numbers this summer. There has also been an increase in reports of birds visiting suburban areas that normally reside in our gullies, for instance Rufous Fantail, Brown Cuckoo-Dove and Black-faced Monarch.

Some bird species did not depart as expected. In Moruya, we had up to 15 Cattle Egret in full breeding plumage over summer. Perhaps their passage north was impeded by the Currowan fire which started at the end of November. Others species of birds did not arrive, with no White-breasted Woodswallows at Moruya Heads this summer, and far fewer Noisy Friarbird, Common Cicadabird, Sacred Kingfisher and Oriental Dollarbird across the shire. The cuckoos arrived but disappeared quickly, as did the many of the migrants that arrived early in the season.

There is much concern that the fires may have resulted in local extinctions of flora and fauna. With the devastation of the forests west of the highway, the species that come to mind are the ones we mainly see in those forests, including Brush Bronzewing, Pilotbird, Olive Whistler, Yellow-throated and Large-billed



Scrubwren, Diamond Firetail, Spotted Quail-thrush and Buff-rumped Thornbill. Time will tell how they fared. There is also concern for the population of Superb Lyrebird but early reports of the species in fire affected areas are encouraging.

Some unusual sightings this summer included an immature male Red-capped Robin at Comerang, a Brown Honeyeater calling at Surfside, a gathering of 120 Pied Oystercatcher at Coila Lake, and a number of young Sooty Tern up and down the coast.

The recovery has started and many species of birds nested in February, including a pair of Whistling Kite at Durras. Epicormic growth has appeared on a number of eucalypt species as the trees attempt to survive the loss of leaves through the process of photosynthesis. We have also observed this response in eucalypts in unburnt forests where trees are recovering from the impact of the drought. It will be an interesting but different future from a natural history perspective and we are in a unique position to observe the recovery. Julie Morgan and Helen Kay



Juvenile Red-capped Robin  
Photo J Collett

### The Native Cherry – an unusual plant

*Exocarpos cupressiformis*, with common names that include native cherry, wild cherry, cherry ballart, and cypress cherry, belongs to the Family Santalaceae. It is one of a group of plants that are *hemiparasitic*, meaning it can make its own food through photosynthesis after siphoning water and mineral nutrients from a host plant. The Santalaceae includes many other root parasites, such as *Leptomeria acida*, the native currant, *Santalum acuminatum*, the Sweet Quandong and *Santalum lanceolatum*, the Northern Sandalwood. These plants are closely related to the mistletoes which belong to the family *Loranthaceae*.

The Genus *Exocarpos* includes 26 species, 10 of which occur in Australia with 9 of those endemic. Two species – *E. cupressiformis* and *E. strictus* - occur within open forests in our region from the coast to subalpine altitudes, with *E. cupressiformis* the larger and more obvious of the two.

The first European to record the species was Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardière, the French botanist on d'Entrecasteaux's expedition in search of the lost ships of La Perouse. He published a popular account of his journey and the first general description of the flora of Australia, which includes a wonderful sketch of *E. cupressiformis*.

The species grows from the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland to southern Tasmania, and across to the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. It is a large shrub or small tree, 3 to 8m tall, often pyramidal in shape, looking like a small cypress tree. Its root system taps into the roots of other woody shrubs and trees to extract nutrients. Its inconspicuous flowers are arranged in clusters on short spikes 3–6mm long. Only one flower on each spike eventually forms a fruit.



*E. cupressiformis* Photo J Cooke



Fruit of *E. cupressiformis*  
Photo J Cook

The inedible fruit is a globular, hard, greenish nut, 4-6mm long, containing one seed. It is found on top of a short stalk, the pedicel. As the fruit develops the pedicel swells to 5-6mm in diameter and turns yellow or red, to form the edible "cherry" (which lacks the hard stone of a European cherry). The true, seed-like fruit (a nut containing the seed, like the acorn) is found on the outside of the fleshy false 'fruit', hence the name *Exocarpos*, from the Latin meaning *outside fruit*.

Indigenous Australians ate the cherries, used the wood for spear throwers and reportedly used the sap as a treatment for snakebite. They called it Tchimmidillen (Queensland), Palatt or Ballot (Lake Condah, Victoria) and Ballee (Yarra). Cherry ballart also has an Australian Yuletide connection: their

conifer-like appearance (the specific name *cupressiformis* means “cypress-like”) was noted by homesick European settlers, who chopped them down for Christmas trees.

The second *Exocarpos* species found locally is *E. strictus*, with the common names pale-fruit ballart, pale ballart, and dwarf cherry. Key differences between the two species include: size, shape and arrangement of flowers. *E. strictus* is a smaller shrub, growing to 2.5m in height, the branchlets are flattened and sharply angular in section and the fruit is usually pale pink/lilac. Helen Kay

### Where have all the Christmas Beetles Gone?

Over the New Year two of our grandchildren were staying with us. Luckily, they are both budding naturalists and kept the adults diverted from the bad news with their fascination for the wildlife around us. My granddaughter found a beetle (which she called Bertie) which absorbed her for days; she was disappointed that she couldn't take it home.

Prompted by her interest, I decided to do some research on these ornamental insects. The first task was to identify which beetle Bertie was. The Australian Museum has an excellent website and even offers a Christmas Beetle ID app. After comparing my somewhat inadequate photo with those on the website, I decided that it was an *Anoplognathus viriditarsis*, common name Queen Beetle.



*Anoplognathus viriditarsis*,  
Photo E Lenton.

Where do Christmas beetles live, and how?

Christmas beetles are found across Australia, except in our deserts. There are around 35 endemic species. The most common ones include *Anoplognathus chloropyrus* and *Anoplognathus montanus*, both golden-brown beetles.

The classic habitat for Christmas beetles is woodland, where the soil beneath the trees is rich. The larvae develop in the soil, and remain there as curl grubs, feeding on grass, rotten wood and plant roots, including the surface roots of eucalypts, until they pupate and dig their way out with their strong forelegs. As adults they eat mainly eucalyptus leaves but are known to consume the foliage of introduced species such as the peppercorn tree.

The life cycle of the Christmas beetle is between one and two years, depending on conditions and species. Most species emerge as adults in mid-November to early December and stay around until Christmas and sometimes into February. The adult lifespan is only a few weeks, and that's if they're fortunate enough not to become a meal for birds.

Why Christmas?

The reason we only see these colourful insects during the festive season has nothing to do with Santa; the end of spring and start of summer is when the larvae hatch. The adults appear just before Christmas, when they mate and lay eggs.

Christmas beetle appearance

Christmas beetles are identified by the colour of their attractive exoskeletons. Most species have the characteristic sheen, often in gold and brown hues, although some are vibrant greens and pinks. Males and females are identical in colour, but males have thicker legs and a larger shovel shaped snout which they use to flip over rivals.

Other features include large, hooked claws on the legs and a flat spine between the midlegs. In both sexes, the tail-end of the abdomen protrudes beyond the wing cases and the features of the abdomen – such as hairiness and sheen – are used to identify many of the species.

Sadly, there are concerns that Australia's endemic Christmas beetle (*Anoplognathus*) population is in decline. Although there's no hard data on numbers, many entomologists are reporting a drop in sightings. Beetles are particularly susceptible to drought - if the soil is too dry and hard, the larvae can't get out and just die in the pupal cells.

Entomologists are calling for the public's help to paint a clearer picture of the problem so they can develop solutions to help tackle the challenge. We are all encouraged to take part in citizen science projects by downloading apps such as the Australian Museum's Christmas Beetle ID app and iNaturalist Australia. How about getting family and friends interested in tracking Christmas beetles? If you would like some advice on creating a beetle friendly habitat in your backyard, visit: <https://www.gardenersworld.com/plants/five-habitats-to-make-for-beetles/> Helen Kay

### A platypus bug?

As many of you know, ENHS has a Facebook page and, in February, Kevin Dawes posted a photo of an interesting insect. I had never seen anything like it before, but its head reminded me of a Platypus' bill.



Ledromorphis planirostris Photo K Dawes

Where to start with finding out what it was? Bugs are a large group of insects, so I started looking there, and one group that was unfamiliar was leaf and treehoppers. I was pleasantly surprised to find that Kevin's insect was a leafhopper, *Ledromorphis planirostris*. In fact, it is Australia's largest leafhopper measuring 21-28mm. The nymphs of the species can be found on the bark of smooth eucalypts, like our Spotted Gums.

All specimens collected in Australia are female, so it is believed that the species reproduces parthenogenetically (derivation from the Greek "virgin birth"). In other words, reproduction can occur from an egg without fertilisation by a sperm. This method of reproduction has been found in species of insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds, including Zebra Finch.

Donovan (1805) first described the species and included an illustration of an insect without an ovipositor (the long extension to the abdomen that deposits eggs) indicating that the insect was a male. There has been some debate among entomologists about this and the consensus seems to point to the fact that Donovan often completed illustrations from memory, and his illustration may in fact be a simple mistake in his recollection of the details. Julie Morgan

### Fire at Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden

Members will be aware that Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden has been comprehensively devastated by fire, and as if that were not enough, the flooding rain that followed washed away the last remaining bridge on the Children's Walk. But by mid-January our damaged site was starting to recover. In a lovely organic choice of phrase, Garden Manager Michael Anlezark reported that "trees in many areas have bunches of green hugging their trunks and branches".

Once fresh shoots break through the bark, insects will feed on the sap, and once there are insects, birds will follow. Cicadas emerged two weeks after 1 January. On 16 January, the day that the Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley, visited, a Grey Shrike-thrush called. Around the same time, two Lyrebirds were seen in front of the Visitor Centre as well as a Whipbird hopping around its usual location, the Orchid House. Since then Michael reports that each day he sees a few more birds, so that by 27 February he added to the list one Superb Fairy-wren, one Grey Fantail, and a couple each of Kookaburras, Swamp Hens, and Pacific Black Ducks.

The Kookaburras will have plenty of lizards to eat, but may steer clear of one goanna, seen in early January. The question remains – where is the rogue Kookaburra that used to steal food from the plates of guests sitting on the deck outside the cafe? Other reptiles include Red-bellied Black Snakes which appear to be even more lethargic than normal and we wonder about the effect of smoke? Another question arises over the identification of three small snakes, approximately 25cm long, which – if they are tentatively identified as Dwarf Crowned Snake – appear to be well outside their range.



Kookaburra with hamburger  
Photo K Cockerill



It is sad to note that the mob of Eastern Grey Kangaroos has been reduced from about 40 to five or six. Swamp Wallabies have always lived at ERBG and two have been spotted, but a Red-necked Wallaby was a new sighting. One Echidna appeared. The Shire's environment team dropped out food and ERBG put up feeding stations. It is hoped that the team will also set up a camera to see whether bandicoots have survived.

The Garden is expected to reopen in mid-April. Local government insurance is expected to cover most of the losses, and Friends of ERBG stand ready to contribute funds to amenities if the policy falls short. Moral support from members of ENHS has been much appreciated. Heather Haughton, President, Friends of ERBG

## Birdwatching in Tasmania

I visited Tasmania in February 2020 with Ilana tours. Tasmania has 12 endemic bird species and our tour guide worked hard to ensure that we ticked each one. I have visited Tasmania several times, not always for birdwatching, but even so I already had 7 of the 12 endemics on my life list. The Tasmanian Native Hen, for example, is so numerous that we were almost tripping over them each day. The Black Currawong and Yellow Wattlebird are also widespread. But the smaller bush birds are more challenging. The most difficult, according to our guide Cat, is the Scrubtit, but we had good views of it on our first day on the slopes of Mt Wellington.

For me, the most important target endemic bird was the Forty-spotted Pardalote, followed by the three Tasmanian honeyeaters. We had fleeting glimpses of the pardalote on the "mainland" of Tasmania, but it was on Bruny Island, the location of Inala's home property, that we had wonderful sightings. The Forty-spots nest within the grounds and Inala has an excellent viewing tower, so that we were at canopy height of their feed trees, mostly the Manna gum or White-gum, *Eucalyptus viminalis*.



Buller's Albatross Photo M Anderson

The honeyeaters were much less of a challenge, particularly the Yellow-throated, which was surprisingly common. Strong-billed and Black-headed were also cooperative at several locations, including Bruny. Dusky Robins and Green Rosellas became regular sightings, and all twelve endemics were ticked off within the first few days.

Our itinerary promised two highlights. The first was a pelagic trip off Eaglehawk Neck to the continental shelf, to see the amazing variety of marine birds. Conditions were not ideal, so the trip was shortened from eight hours to five and a half. But I was satisfied, seeing 5 different Albatrosses and two Petrels, as well as other more common oceanic birds. Our guide for this day was a marine ornithologist whose ability to distinguish amongst these very similar species was outstanding.

The second highlight was the flight to the south-west wilderness area, to a place known as Melaleuca, accessible only by air or on foot. This was the promised location of the Orange-bellied Parrot, a lovely bird in great peril, with numbers in the wild estimated to be around 50. A captive breeding program at Melaleuca currently has about 40 birds set to be released. One major threat to this parrot is the seemingly innocuous and appealing little Sugar Glider, introduced to Tasmania in the early 1900s. It has proved disastrous to the OBP, eating both eggs and chicks.

The timing of our visit to the parrot observation hut at Melaleuca proved ideal – there were 17 OBPs at the feeding station, an unusually large number. We also saw other small groups flying overhead during the day. We were less lucky with the Eastern Ground Parrot, which eluded us for the entire trip.

Our final two nights were at a rustic wilderness lodge in the north-west of the state near Leven Canyon. Our target bird here was the Pink Robin, which we did not see. We were also informed that Tasmanian Devils and Spotted-tailed Quolls visit regularly during the night to feed on chicken pieces left near the huts by the lodge owner. One couple in our party, visiting from England, rostered themselves to two hour vigils and were rewarded, as they were the only ones to get good views of both species. I was lucky enough to see a Devil during an early morning visit to the bathroom. But I missed the quoll.

I never tire of visiting Tasmania, and this trip dedicated to birds and other animals took me to some remote places which I had never seen before.

Tasmania's total number of bird species is 217, which includes approximately 50 pelagic, leaving around 167 land-based birds. My personal tally of 111 was quite satisfying, including 14 lifers and all of the endemics.  
Mandy Anderson

### **The Nature Coast Marine Group**

You may not know it, but there is a community organisation in the Eurobodalla that focuses on all things marine - the Nature Coast Marine Group or NCMG. Led by a small group of dedicated people and with larger group of supporters, NCMG maintains a program of activities aimed at helping people enjoy the marine environment, as well as helping to conserve what we are lucky enough to have on our doorstep.

The NCMG does not have a regular program as much of what it does is weather and season dependent. However, over the course of a year NCMG runs a variety of activities including rock pool explorations, snorkelling and kayaking outings, and scuba diving, generally with knowledgeable volunteer guides. The idea is that if people know more about the marine world, they will come to love it and want to protect it.



The seastar *Pentagonaster dubeni* Photo B Barker

NCMG also runs a range of education activities in schools and the community. In this vein, NCMG works with school groups, runs regular information activities such as stalls at 'Art on the Path' at Broulee, the 'What's Under the Wharf' event at Narooma and provides occasional talks. There are also regular newspaper articles, a Facebook page and website. NCMG has been involved in research activities over the years, ranging from marine life surveys by divers and snorkellers, monitoring grey nurse sharks and looking for nudibranchs and other sea slugs. The group is also actively involved in advocacy aimed at protecting the marine environment, particularly the Batemans Marine Park.

The NCMG is always looking for new supporters and members. You can find out more from the website [www.ncmg.org.au](http://www.ncmg.org.au), from Facebook or by ringing Bill Barker on 0417237639. Bill Barker

### **Tuross Head Shorebirds**

The Tuross Head Shorebird Group, under the direction of the NSW National Parks shorebird coordinator, has been monitoring the breeding activities of Little Tern and Pied Oystercatcher for some years. The 2019/2020 breeding season proved to be a very trying one for these shorebirds.

Around mid-November, on the flats at Coila, members of the group saw eight Little Tern. They were pairing up and making scrapes in the sand. We thought they would nest there, but they left after a couple of weeks and we think they joined the main colony on Tuross south spit.

Early in December, there were 32 active nests and around 80 adults on the south spit, but a couple of foxes invaded the site and took around 70 eggs. A shooter from NPWS shot one fox, and the Little Tern re-laid, but the other fox took more eggs before being killed by the shooter. Then we had extreme weather and bushfires and the beach was covered in debris, charcoal and fine grey ash. When we returned in early January, only 22 adults remained, plus five fledges, four runners and one nest with two eggs. It appeared that the birds had stopped laying.

In late January, I heard that two pairs of Little Tern had been seen at Coila, looking as though they were preparing to nest. I went there early one morning and watched for about 40 minutes. Four Little Tern were sitting on the water's edge, flying out over the water then returning to the lake's edge. One landed on the dry sand, walked around for a while then settled on the sand briefly before flying back to join the others on the lake's edge. I checked where it had been sitting but there was no nest or scrape.



On 3 February, we confirmed that we had had 10 fledges at south spit from 32 breeding pairs, a good outcome considering the losses to foxes and tidal inundation as well as the fire and smoke during January. The rate of 0.3125 fledges per breeding pair is well down on last year's rate of 0.975 fledges per breeding pair, and not good in terms of the long-term survival of the Little Tern. Nonetheless, we are pleased with the outcome given the difficulties encountered at the site this season.

Most of the Pied Oystercatcher (POC) at Tuross Head nest on a couple of the islands in the river estuary. By the end of the POC breeding season, we had three fledges from nine breeding pairs, giving a success rate of 0.33 per breeding pair. Last season's rate of 0.50 followed three years of no fledges. The state average for POC is 0.65 per breeding pair. We have a couple of hypotheses about the comparatively low success rate in our area. One is that human disturbance with an associated depletion of their food supply has had a negative impact. In recent years, fishing in the area has increased and bait pumping in the tidal zone, where the POCs feed, has also increased. This occurs despite fencing and signposting. It appears that some chicks die from starvation. Another hypothesis, put forward after a veterinarian examined dead runners, is that they are dying as a result of bacterial infection within the food chain. This possibility is currently being investigated through feather analysis. Bill Nelson

### Highlights from ENHS records - Summer 2020

Avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Stubble Quail	5	Com	JC	
Brown Quail	1	Com/Montagu I	JC/MA	
Freckled Duck	1	BBWG	JM/NC	
Hardhead	2	MO	NM	
Aust Shoveler	1 or 2	MO	NM	
Aust Grebe	2, 4	Kianga/MO	MA/NM	
Hoary-headed Grebe	2	Bingie	DHK	Kelly's L
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	30, 20	MKS/NA	SMG/JMG	
Peaceful Dove	2	Com	JC	
Topknot Pigeon	25, 12	MO/PS	NM/JM	
White-throated Nightjar	2 or call	PS/MKS	JM/SMG	
White-throated Needletail	40	Bergalia/MO	DHK/NM	
Eastern Koel	Up to 6	Broulee	GLM	
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	PS/TS	JM/M Craig	Young being fed by Pied Currawong at both locations
Brush Cuckoo	1	PS/MO	JM/NM	In Dec
Pallid Cuckoo	1	Com	JC	In Dec
Buff-banded Rail	1	BBWG	DB	
Aust Spotted Crake	1	BBWG	NC/JM	
Baillon's Crake	1	BBWG	DB	
Spotless Crake	1	BBWG	NC/JM	
Short-tailed Shearwater	Hundreds	Off MO	NM	In Feb
Fluttering Shearwater	2	Montagu I	MA	
Royal Spoonbill	12, 7, 4	Coila L/DY/ BBWG	DB/MA	With 2 young at BBWG
Aust Little Bittern	1 to 3	BBWG	DB/NC/JM	
Nankeen Night Heron	Up to 7	BBWG	NC/JM	
Cattle Egret	Up to 15, 2	MYA/BBWG	LB/JM	In breeding plumage. Unusual at this time of year.
Little Egret	12	Nangudga	MA	
Eastern Reef Egret	1	MO/ Mullimburra Pt	NM/DHK	
Australasian Gannet	6, 5	MO/Sth DS	FM/JCof	In Feb
Great Pied Cormorant	7, 6, 5	MO/CO/Coila L	NM/PG/NC	
Australasian Darter	1	Sth DS/Com/ NA	JCof/JC/MA	
Aust Pied Oystercatcher	Up to 120	Coila L	DB/NC	In Jan

Sooty Oystercatcher	22	CO	PG	In Feb
Pied Stilt	3, 2	Com/MO	JC/NM	
Grey Plover	Up to 4, 3	Coila L/Brou L	NC/DB	Immature bird at Coila
Pacific Golden Plover	5, 3	CO/MB	PG/NC/MA	
Red-capped Plover	80, 40, 8	Brou L/Coila L/ Sth DS	DB/JCof	2 active nests at Coila, 2dy and 2 fledglings at DS
Black-fronted Dotterel	4, 2	MO/Com	NM/JC	
Whimbrel	Up to 12	MHN	B Nagle	In Feb
Far Eastern Curlew	5, 3, 1	MHN/NA/ Cullendulla	PG/MA/RSor	
Bar-tailed Godwit	350, 80, 50	NA/TS/Coila L	MA/M Craig/NC	Fewer elsewhere
Ruddy Turnstone	1	Coila L/Brou L	DB/NC	
Great Knot	2, 1	Brou L/Coila L	DB	
Red Knot	33, 2	Brou L/Coila L	DB	
Sanderling	1	Coila L	DB	
Latham's Snipe	3, 1	BBWG/MO	DB/NM	
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	Brou L	DB	
Little Tern	16, 8, 2	Coila L/Brou L/ CO	DB/NC/PG	
Fairy Tern	1	Coila L	DB	
Pomarine Jaeger	1	MHS	DB	In Feb
Powerful Owl	2	MO	NM	
Osprey	1	MHS	JM	
Square-tailed Kite	1	MKS/MYA/PS/ MO/MB	SMG/JM/DHK/ MA	
Pacific Baza	1	Bumbo Rd	D McLaughlin	After fire
Little Eagle	1	Carters Beach	T&A Ross	
Spotted Harrier	1	Montagu I	MA	
Grey Goshawk	1	CO/MO	DHK/NM	
Oriental Dollarbird	6, 3	Com//MO/MB	JC/NM/MA	Nest with young at Com
Azure Kingfisher	1 to 2	Sth DS/Com/ MO	JCof/JC/NM	
Sacred Kingfisher	5	PDD	JF	With young in Feb
Australian Hobby	1	Sth DS/PS/MO	JCof/JM/NM	
Peregrine Falcon	1	MKS/PS/Com	SMG/JM/JC	
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	8, 6	MKS/Broulee	SMG/GLM	Fewer at other locations
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	13, 12	Cool/Broulee/ Bergalia	DO/GLM/ DHK	More widespread than usual after the fires
Gang-gang Cockatoo	10, 8	Broulee/PS/Sth DS	GLM/JM/JCof	More widespread than usual after the fires
Eastern Rosella	10, 6	MO/Com	NM/JC	More records than usual after the fires
Little Lorikeet	16, 12	Bergalia/PS	DHK/JM	
Superb Lyrebird	4, 1	NA/Malua Bay	JMG/MW	Quite a few records after the fires
Green Catbird	2	NA	JMG	
Red-browed Trecreeper	1	Sth DS	JCof	
Southern Emu-wren	4	Broulee	GLM	
White-cheeked Honeyeater	5, 4	Sth DS/NA/PS	JCof/JMG/JM	
Brown Honeyeater	Call	Surfside	DB	First record in Eurobodalla
Brown-headed Honeyeater	11, 8, 5	Com/PS/MO	JC/JM/NM	
Scarlet Honeyeater	11, 10	Sth DS/PS/MO	JCof/JM/NM	Fewer elsewhere
White-fronted Chat	3	Coila L	MA	Immature
White-throated Gerygone	2, 1	Com/MYA/ Deua R	JC/LB/A Cram	

Varied Sittella	8	PS	JM	
Eastern Shrike-tit	2	PS/NA	JM/JMG	
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	Surfside	DB	First at this location
Common Cicadabird	6, 1	PS/MO/Bumbo Rd /Com/MKS	JM/JC/SMG/NM/D McLaughlin	Left shire sooner than in other years
White-winged Triller	4, 1	Com/PS/MYA	JC/JM	December/January
Dusky Woodswallow	10, 5	Com/Sth DS	JC/JCof	Nesting with young at Com
Rufous Fantail	1 to 2			Widespread
Little Raven	1	Deua R	RS/AR	Unusual at this time of year.
Spangled Drongo	1	BB	DB	
Leadend Flycatcher	2, 1	PS/Bergalia/NA /MO/MKS	JM/DHK/JMG/NM/SMG	Fewer than usual
Restless Flycatcher	1	Com/MO	JC/FM	
Black-faced Monarch	8, 2	PS/MO/NA	JM/NM/JMG	Singles elsewhere
Little Raven	Up to 60, 50, 2	Cool/MKS/MO	DO/SMG/FM	Unusual at this time of the year
Rose Robin	1	NA	JMG	
Red-capped Robin	1	Com	JC	Immature male. First record for this location.
Golden-headed Cisticola	8, 3	Com/Montagu I	JC/MA	
Aust Reed Warbler	2, 1	Com/MO/BBWG	JC/NM/NC	On nest at BBWG in Dec.
Brown Songlark	3	Com	JC	In Dec
Rufous Songlark	1	Com	JC	Feeding in box trees
Little Grassbird	1	MO	NM	In Feb
Bassian Thrush	1	LP/NA	IAG/JMG	
Australasian Pipit	6	Com/Coila L	JC/NC	

<b>Non-avian species</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Observer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Common Wombat	1	MB/Cool	MA/DO	
Short-beaked Echidna	Singles			Across the shire
Sugar Glider	Calls	Com/Cool	JC/DO	
Common Brushtail Possum	Up to 5, 3, 2	Com/Cool/LP	JC/DO/IAG	
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	78, 38	Cool/ Sth DS	DO/JCof	
Red-necked Wallaby	5, 2	Bergalia/Cool/ Mossy Pt	DHK/DO/HR	
Grey-headed Flying Fox	300, 100, 20, 10	Broulee/MHS/ PS/BBWG/Com	GLM/JM/JC	In their usual camp at MHS.
House Mouse	1	Cool	DO	
Snake-necked Turtle	6, 1	Com/Mossy Pt	JC/HR	
Yellow-bellied Water-skink	Up to 6	Com	JC	
Eastern Water-skink	1	LP	IAG	
Jacky Lizard	5, 4, 2	MO/PS/Cool	FM/JM/DO	
Gippsland Water Dragon	10, 1	Com/Malua Bay	JC/MW	
Lace Monitor	1 or 2	DS/LP/PS/ Com/Cool	M Burk/IAG/JM/ JC/DO	Eating Snake-necked Turtle eggs at DS
Diamond Python		MB	MA	
Mustard-bellied Snake	1	Sth DS	JCof	
Red-bellied Black Snake	3, 1	Com/Mossy Pt/ PS/Cool	JC/HR/JM/DO	

<b>Frogs</b> SB/JC/ JM/HR/DO/JS/ B Beveridge	Common Eastern Froglet, Brown Striped and Spotted Grass Frog, Smooth and Tyler's Toadlet; tree frogs: Green, Eastern Sedgefrog, Jervis Bay, Keferstein's, Peron's, Tyler's, Verreaux's. Cane Toad, first record at Catalina.
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<b>Moths</b> JC/JM/KMD	Meal, Eggfruit Caterpillar, Black Geometrid, Pink Arhodia, Cream Wave, Plantain, Dark Patch Carpet, Rufous Snout Moth, Coprosma Hawk, Sparshalli, Lichen-eating Caterpillar, Magpie, Mistletoe, Black Noctuid, Brown Cutworm, Native Budworm.
<b>Butterflies</b> MA/JC/SH/PB/ GLM/JM/ DO/HR/FM	Splendid Ochre, Narrow-brand and Dark Grass-dart, Blue Triangle, Orchard Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Dusky Knight, Brown Ringlet, Varied Sword-grass Brown, Wonder and Common Brown, Meadow Argus, Aust Painted Lady, Yellow Admiral, Common Grass Blue.
<b>Dragon &amp; Damselflies</b> JC/JM	Common Bluetail, Blue-spotted Hawker, Black-faced, Wandering Percher, Blue Skimmer, Tau & Australian Emerald.
<b>Beetles</b> JC/JM	Net-winged, Pintail, Reptimus, Christmas, Dotted Paropsine & Small Blue Leaf, Dung, Argentinian and Green Scarab, Banded Pumpkin, Click, Metallic Green Acacia, Three-lined Potato, Tortoise, Honeybrown, Botany Bay Weevil, Soft-winged Flower, Comb Clawed, Pacydissus Longicorn; Ladybirds: Transverse, 26 Spotted, White collared, Striped, Fungus-eating, Mealybug, Steel Blue, Tortoise shelled, Minute Two-spotted.
<b>Bugs</b> JC/JM	Water Strider, Water Boatman, Bronze Orange, Harlequin, Assassin, Green Vegetable. Cicadas: Double-spotted, Black Prince, Greengrocer, Razor Grinder, White Drummer.
<b>Other insects</b> JCof/JC/JM/ KMD	Blue Banded, Teddy Bear and Masked Bee. Wasps: Common Paper, White-faced Brown Paper, Blue Flower, Mason, Orange Caterpillar Parasite, Cuckoo, Bembix Sand. House Centipede. Yellow-winged Locust.
<b>Spiders</b> MA/JC/JM	Spiny, White-spotted Swift, Black House, Leaf-curling, Jumping, Huntsman, Net Casting, Water, Daddy Long Legs, Golden Orb, Two-tailed, St Andrew's Cross, Flat Rock.

**RAINFALL (mm). December:** 1 at LP, 7 at MKS, 13 at Com, 5.5 at MB, 9.25 at Cool. **January:** 25 at LP, 34.5 at MKS, 33 at Com, 44.75 at Cool. **February:** 102 at LP, 317 at MKS, 187 at Bergalia, 282 at Com, 157.75 at Cool.

#### Contributors

MA	M Anderson, MB	JMG	J&M Gordon, NA	RSor	R Soroka, Surfside
SB	S Benjamin, Catalina	IAG	I&A Grant, LP	RS/AR	R Stacey & A Rees, MYA
DB	D Bertzeletos, Surfside	SMG	S&M Guppy, MKS	MW	M Wilkinson, Malua Bay
LB	L Burden, MYA	SH/PB	S Holliday & P Buckley, ACT	FM	Field Meeting
NC	N Clark, Surfbeach	DHK	D&H Kay, Bergalia		B Beveridge, MHS
JCof	J Coffey, Sth DS	GLM	G&L McVeigh, Broulee		M Burk, DS
JC	J&P Collett, Com	NM	N Montgomery, MO		M Craig, TS
KMD	K & M Dawes, Surfside	JM	J Morgan, PS		A Cram, Deua R
JF	J Fearn, PDD	DO	D Ondinea, Cool		D McLaughlin, Bumbo Rd
MF	M Fyfe, Broulee	HR	H Ransom, Mossy Pt		B Nagle, Broulee
PG	P Gatenby, Broulee	JS	J Sagar, Pedro		T&A Ross, NA
<b>Places</b>					
BB	Batemans Bay	ERBG	Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens	PDD	Percy Davis Drive, MYA
BBWG	Batemans Bay Water Gardens	LP	Lilli Pilli	PS	Pedro Swamp
BI	Bermagui	MKS	Maulbrooks Rd S, MYA	PP	Potato Point
BP	Burrewarra Point	MO	Meringo	SB	Surf Beach
Cool	Coolagolite	MYA	Moruya	SF	State Forest
Com	Comerang	MH	Moruya Heads, N&S	T`bella	Trunketabella
CO	Congo	MB	Mystery Bay	TN	Tomakin
DS	Durras	NA	Narooma	TS	Tuross
DY	Dalmeny	NP	National Park	WL	Wallaga Lake

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