



EUROBODALLA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Inc.

PO Box 888
MORUYA NSW 2537

www.enhs.org.au



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The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*) – Horsfield 1821

Taxonomy and distribution

The genus *Calidris* includes 21 species of small to medium sized, highly migratory sandpipers that breed in the Arctic and spend the non-breeding season in more southerly latitudes. The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is a typical member of the family, breeding in eastern Russia and spending the non-breeding season mainly in Australia and Papua New Guinea. It has no subspecies.



D. Bertzeletos

Adult Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Photo: D. Bertzeletos

Description and behaviour

At 17-21 cm in length the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is a medium-small shorebird. Its call is a soft, clear whistle. In our area it is most likely to be seen in non-breeding and juvenile plumages. Adults in non-breeding plumage are overall greyish brown in appearance, with scaly-patterned upperparts, a rufous cap and a prominent supercilium. The throat and chest are streaked faintly with erratic lines which spread to the flanks, belly and undertail coverts. The base of the downcurved beak is yellow with a darker tip and the legs are green. In flight the upperparts, including the rump, appear uniformly dark while the underparts flash pale. In breeding plumage, adult birds have extensively

chevroned underparts, but birds rarely complete their full moult prior to departing on their migration north. Juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpipers are gawdy compared to non-breeding adults. The whole plumage can be saturated rufous - though this varies greatly from bird to bird - with a nice warm wash to the chest, which has no striations. All this colour tends to be lost within a month of arrival in Australia.

Sharp-tailed Sandpipers are generalist feeders. They can be encountered on any shallow (1-2 cm deep) wetland, coastal or inland, whether freshwater, brackish or salt. They prefer to feed in rotting vegetation and algal mats on a variety of invertebrates. They can also be found on slightly moist salt fields chasing salt flies or on wet pasture and sports ovals where they hunt small insects. When feeding, birds often defend a small territory, though they quickly abandon this when in danger. The species is easy to approach with patience: if one sits quietly on the sand, a whole flock will often move to within less than a metre.

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is highly gregarious. It and the Red-necked Stint (*C. ruficollis*) are the only small calidrines that still form flocks in the thousands in south eastern Australia. The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper forms mixed flocks with many other *Calidris* species as well as similarly sized plovers and shanks (*Tringa* sp.). Familiarity with the species will thus enable observers to identify the scarcer species that occur in these flocks. It is similar in size to Pectoral and Curlew Sandpipers (*C. melanotos* and *C. ferruginea* respectively),

Sanderling (*C. alba*), Red Knot (*C. canutus*), female Ruffs (*C. pugnax*), Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) and Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*). It is bigger than the stints and the Broad-billed Sandpiper (*C. falcinellus*), but smaller than Great Knot (*C. tenuirostris*), and appears very small when close to 'Alaskan' Bar-tailed Godwits (*Limosa lapponica baurei*).

The colour of the plumage separates the species from Curlew and Broad-billed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Red and Great Knot and Sanderling, all of which are paler birds, and from the Ruddy Turnstone, which is darker. The other species are trickier to tell apart. The Pectoral Sandpiper is the closest in appearance but can be distinguished by the lack of a rufous cap, by a long, much more strongly bicoloured beak, a strongly marked 'V' chest pattern that ends cleanly just above the belly, much reduced striations on the flank and none on the undertail coverts. The Pectoral Sandpiper is also a slightly bigger bird on average, with a heavier, bustier appearance. At a distance, Sharp-tailed and Wood Sandpiper can be very hard to tell apart. The latter has darker, finely spotted underparts, a black cap, smudged not streaked flanks and a longer straight beak. In flight the Wood Sandpiper has four to five fine tail bars and a pure white rump. A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper will never be as small as a Red-necked Stint. If you think you see a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper this size, you have most probably found yourself a Long-toed Stint. Whilst a male Ruff is twice the size of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, the female (Reeve) is only slightly bigger. It is distinguished by its plain underparts and a pale unmarked face without a rufous cap and by leg colour which varies from green to orange.

Breeding

The species breed in the tundra. The male mates with several females, which then lay 3-4 eggs in scrapes on the ground and raise the young unassisted by the males. The adults depart a month before their chicks can migrate and the young fly south on their own. In Australia the first adults begin to return in late August, with juveniles turning up in late September.

Conservation and status in the Eurobodalla

Despite drastic declines in nearly all shorebird species along the east Asian-Australasian flyway, the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper appears to be maintaining a steady population. This could be due to this species' ability to utilise more habitats than other species, which are largely restricted to estuarine areas during migration. It is one of a few migrant shorebirds considered to be of least concern from a conservation perspective. In the Eurobodalla the species is mainly observed in the spring and summer months, though a few overwinter. It occurs at a few well-known sites such as Tuross and Brou Lakes, but it can also appear in shallow freshwater habitats. Dimitris Bertzeletos

What's coming up....

A copy of the full 2019 Field Meeting program is included with this newsletter.

Saturday February 9, 2pm: Captain Oldrey Park: Meet at the corner of George Bass Drive and Broulee Rd. Coastal Sand Bangalay forest with a mix of honeyeaters, Sacred Kingfisher, Bar-shouldered Dove, Spotted Pardalote, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo and Olive-backed Oriole.

Sunday February 24, 9am: Mystery Bay and Corunna Lake: Meet at the entrance to the camping ground on Mystery Bay Rd. A mix of shorebirds, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, honeyeaters, robins, thornbills, Olive-backed Oriole, fairy-wrens and fantails.

Saturday March 9, 2pm: Tuross and Coila Lake: Meet at the toilet block on Tuross Boulevard on the corner with Bridges Avenue, Tuross Head. A walk along the pathway alongside Coila Creek. Pied Oystercatcher and shorebirds, Caspian Tern, Australian Pelican, mix of bush birds, Eastern Whipbird, Wonga Pigeon.

Sunday March 24, 9am: Durras Discovery Trail: Meet at the NPWS pay station on North Durras Rd. There is a fee payable to use the park unless you have a pass or an exemption pass. The track takes us through forest and wet gullies, before reaching the lake. Eastern Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Rose Robin, Rufous Fantail, Large-billed Scrubwren.

Saturday April 13, 2pm: Mogo State Forest: Meet in the car park near the toilet block, just off Tomakin Rd, near the corner with the Princes Hwy, Mogo. Several bush tracks are available, and we will select one based on the flowering activity of the eucalypts, with the hope that Swift Parrot and unusual honeyeater species will be around.

Sunday April 28, 9am: Deua National Park, German Creek: Meet at the Tuross turnoff, corner of the Princes Hwy and Hector McWilliam Drive for 4WD car-pooling. Wet eucalypt forest with Brown Barrel and

Mountain Grey Gum, cool temperate rainforest, with Pinkwood. Olive Whistler, Superb Lyrebird, Flame and Scarlet Robin, Pilotbird.

A warm welcome to new members

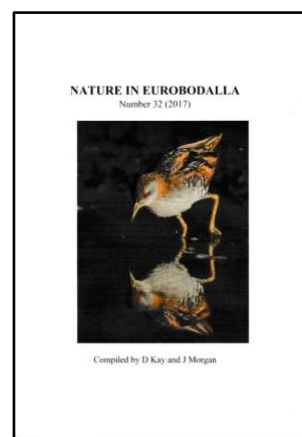
David Dedenczuk, Narrabundah
Adrienne Brennan, Dalmeny

2019 Memberships Are Now Due

A membership renewal form has been included with this newsletter. Single membership is \$20, family \$30 and for under 18s \$5.

Nature in Eurobodalla Number 32 (2017)

We have published the 32nd edition of *Nature in Eurobodalla*. It is a summary of members' observations by species for 2017 and costs \$13 if picked up or \$15.50 if posted.



Update on the Eastern Osprey breeding activity in the Eurobodalla

In the last newsletter, I reported on the breeding efforts of two pairs of Eastern Osprey, one at Batemans Bay and the other at Moruya Heads.

The Batemans Bay pair built a new nest on a very tall electricity pylon, after their old nest on Budd Island crashed to the ground when the tree that they were nesting on snapped in half in July. Throughout spring, the ospreys continued to be seen on and around the nest, with a third osprey sometimes present. The height of the nest has made it more difficult for observers to see what has been happening and it has often looked as if there was no bird present. Geoff McVeigh reported that moving to a better vantage point was often rewarded with a view of the head of a bird in the nest or one flying out of the nest, confirming that it was still occupied. On 18 December, an Eastern Osprey was photographed on the electricity pylon west of the one the nest is situated on.



Eastern Osprey at nest, Batemans Bay Photo: Geoff McVeigh

The Eastern Osprey pair at Moruya Heads abandoned their nest after it was damaged during a series of strong gales. They were still rebuilding the nest in August but by September they were only using the telecommunication tower as a resting spot. Julie Morgan

Comerang Field Meeting, October 2018

Field meetings to Comerang are special: they usually yield a long, varied bird list, and members are always treated to something new or unfamiliar, whether avian or non-avian. The October meeting was no exception. On a dry, breezy day, a crowd of over twenty gathered at Bodalla for a pre-visit briefing by Julie Morgan. We were reminded to watch out for snakes – very active at this time of year – and to avoid electric fences. The convoy then made its way through the trees and out along a dusty dirt road where the landscape opened up to fields greened in recent rain and a backdrop of mountains. Set on the Tuross River among forested hills, Comerang is a dairy farm with a mixed herd of about 500 Jerseys and Friesians. The tidal river, lined

with Blue Box (*Eucalyptus baueriana*), Southern Mahogany (*Eucalyptus botryoides*), Rough-barked Apple (*Angophora floribunda*) and *Casuarina sp.* winds around the paddocks.

Julie and Peter Collett welcomed us to their farm and Julie gave first-time visitors brief information about the farm's history, from the nineteenth century to more recent times, including the lucky escape of its current inhabitants when an enormous Bunya tree (*Araucaria bidwillii*) broke in a storm and demolished the shed at the rear of the farmhouse. Then, under Julie's guidance, the unwieldy mob straggled off across the fields. Herding cats came to my mind, as did the improbability of hearing bird calls over the hubbub of two dozen people enthusiastically 'catching up'. Of course, I was quite wrong to doubt the ability of my fellow birders to talk and listen simultaneously.



Willie Wagtail

Photo: Geoff McVeigh

Water is obviously an important feature of Comerang. After heavy rain upstream, the river floods its high banks and many of the paddocks disappear, presenting considerable challenges to the smooth running of the farm. In dry times, the river is low enough to wade across and swamps shrink alarmingly. Before our visit, a combination of low rainfall in the catchment area upriver, big seas and high tides, had pushed salt water up as far as Comerang. By the day of the field meeting, the sea was retreating downstream, but the water was still salty enough to attract a mob of Australian Pelican. Recent local rainfall had replenished the swamps, but the abundance of standing water on other properties around Comerang meant that many ducks and other water birds had dispersed.

I had hoped to see the pair of Striated Pardalote that has previously nested in a hollow in a tall Apple Gum near the farmhouse. The pair had not returned to this site but we did hear Striated Pardalote calling elsewhere. We did not see the hoped-for songlarks but Julie Morgan thought she heard a Brown Songlark and its presence was confirmed when Julie Collett heard and saw it the following day and then daily for five weeks.

As we meandered through the paddocks, a few of us heard a White-throated Gerygone calling from the trees by the river. Others saw an Australian Hobby. Two Black-fronted Dotterel fossicked on the edge of one of the swamps. Some saw, others heard, Rufous Whistler. We also had a good view of a Yellow-rumped Thornbill nest, a pendulous, rather shaggy structure of casuarina needles with a small hole to one side.

Julie Collett is very interested in insects as well as birds, and has learned much about the many and varied moths, beetles and so on that live on, or pass through, Comerang. She showed us the larvae of the Mealybug Ladybird or Mealybug Destroyer (*Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*). This beetle and its larvae predate other mealybugs and so are very useful garden visitors. We were also introduced to the Green Scarab Beetle (*Diphucephala sp.*) numbers of which were feasting on some small-leafed wattles.



Green Scarab Beetle

Photo: Julie Collett

We certainly saw and heard enough wildlife, avian and non-avian, to keep us all very happy. I was disappointed to miss the four Topknot Pigeons that flew over, as they disappeared from my own neighbourhood several years ago. My favourite sightings were the lovely Dollarbirds with their strange, grating call, the Whistling Kite on the nest, and – at the very end of the meeting – the Swamp Harrier overhead flashing its pale rump. I also had a brief glimpse of a startled Gippsland Water Dragon as it raced off, head high, towards the river.

According to our bird list, we saw or heard 55 species between us. And the non-avian list included a plethora of insects. Disappointingly for me, though maybe not for others, we didn't see a single snake. And, happily, nobody walked into an electric fence. Gillian Macnamara

Androcalva fraserii* formerly known as *Commersonia fraserii

Androcalva fraserii is a shrub or small tree growing to 8m high. Common names include Native Hemp, Black-fellows Hemp and Brush Kurrajong. It grows in moist gullies and creek sides on the edges of rainforests and wet sclerophyll forests on the coast and adjacent ranges of Victoria, NSW and southern Queensland.

The French naturalist, Jacques Gay, was the first to name the species in 1823. The genus name is after another French naturalist from the Bougainville expedition, Philibert Commerson. The species name is after Charles Fraser, the first official superintendent of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. Revision of the genus in 2011 created a new genus, *Androcalva*, into which were placed 22 *Commersonia* species, including *fraserii*, and 4 *Rulingia* species. Another change has been at the family level. The genus was originally placed in the Sterculiaceae family which also included genera such as *Brachychiton*, *Lasiopetalum* and *Rulingia*. All members of this family have now been placed in the Malvaceae family which includes genera such as *Hibiscus*, *Gossypium hirsutum* (cotton), and *Gossypium sturtianum*, Sturt's Desert Rose, the floral emblem of the Northern Territory.



Androcalva fraserii

Photo: ERBG

The bark of *Androcalva fraserii* is brown and very fibrous, timber is soft, and young stems and branches are hairy. Leaves may be 3 lobed; they are soft, thin, irregularly toothed, 5-12cm long and up to 12cm wide with a long (4cm) hairy petiole. Juvenile leaves can be up to 30cm long. The upper leaf surface is a dull mid green and the lower surface is a pale whitish grey-green, covered with a felt-like layer of fine hairs. Main veins are clearly visible on both surfaces and raised on the lower surface. Tertiary veins are irregular, not directly joining the secondary veins. The plant usually has a straggly appearance because the leaves often have many holes caused by insects and tend to wilt in hot, dry weather. Flowers are white or pink, 1cm in diameter and found in massed clusters towards the ends of the branches. They have 5 long, ribbon-like

petals and 5 triangular sepals about the same length. There are 3 erect staminodes (sterile stamens) which are as long as the petals. Flowers are honey-scented and occur in spring and summer. Fruit is a brown capsule 15-25mm in diameter, covered in soft or sometimes brittle bristles 5-10mm long. There are 5 distinct valves that form a star shape at the end of the capsule (similar in appearance to that of the Kurrajong).

Commersonia fraserii has been in cultivation for over 50 years. It is not widely grown, although it is a very useful plant. In the garden, it makes a good screen or hedge as it is fast growing and will grow from suckers. It is frost tolerant and grows in semi-shade, or full sun if watered during dry periods. Flowers attract butterflies and can last for months. Straight stems can be used as garden stakes. Because it is fast growing, it is used in revegetation projects. It can quickly colonise disturbed areas and help with erosion control and is also used as a replacement for species such as Privet. The inner bark was used by Aboriginal people as a source of fibre for nets and rope; stems were used to make fishing spears. The appearance of flowers indicated that Wonga Pigeons were beginning to nest and the search for their eggs would begin. Fran Anderson



Flowers of *Androcalva fraserii*

Photo: ERBG

Wallaby Days Part 3

This is the third part of the article which began in the Summer edition of the newsletter and was followed by Part 2 in the Winter edition. It charts the progress of a group of wallabies who visit Michael and Sarah Guppy's 20-hectare property near Moruya. As you will read, the Guppys have come to know each individual well enough to give them all a name and observe their behaviour.

A lot has happened since we submitted Part 2, so we thought it would be useful to update the Timeline, originally part of Part 1.

May 2015: It all started, when Fats was recognized as an individual, and as a regular visitor.

July 2015: Mrs seen with Albertine in and out of the pouch.

October 2015: Mrs seen with Albertine as an independent joey.

February 2016: Mrs seen with a new joey sticking its head out of the pouch. This joey disappeared and was not seen again.

September 2016: Junior's head sticking out of the pouch.

November 2016: Junior out of the pouch.

January 2017: Junior still suckling from Mrs, but Mrs has Tuppence as a slight bulge in the pouch. We decide Junior is a female due to the shape of the head, and the absence of obvious testicles.

May 2017: Tuppence doing a lot of moving in the pouch. By this stage Mrs does not tolerate Junior coming near her.

August 2017: The nose of Tuppence is seen poking out the pouch.

October 2017: Tuppence out of the pouch, Fats getting interested in Mrs again.

December 2017: Mrs has Threepence as a bulge in the pouch.

January 2018: Big Al appears on the scene, appears to be displacing Fats, and is following Junior around with an erect penis. This confirms our thoughts that Junior is a female. Big Al is surprisingly tame for a new arrival. This is puzzling.

November 2018: As we write:

- Fats has disappeared. He was around when we left on an overseas trip on August 25, but has not been seen since we returned on September 30.

- Threepence came out of the pouch in June, and is still around.

- We noticed that Albertine had a joey in July. It is now just exploring out of the pouch.

- In October we saw that both Junior and Mrs had joeys.

The usual state of affairs is the presence of Big Al, Mrs (with Fourpence in the pouch), Threepence, Junior (with a joey that has left the pouch a couple of times), Albertine with an exploring joey, and sometimes an unknown but quite tame wallaby that might be Tuppence. Mrs is now intolerant of Threepence.

Now on to Part 3:

The wallabies are plagued by two sorts of biting flies. The large and small March-flies, (Tabanidae) concentrate on the tail. If you look at a wallaby during the March-fly season, it is constantly moving its back end, which turns out to be a result of it switching the tail to dislodge the March-flies. We used to see this happening out in the bush, but didn't realize what it implied until we had the wallabies feeding close up. They are unable to tell the difference between a March-fly landing and drops of water falling on their tails, so when it is lightly raining, they also switch the tail constantly. They are also covered in Hippoboscids flies, which are blood suckers, very flat flies, and found also in the feathers of birds. (Stephen, Sarah's father, used to call them B-flats/Bee flats!) We estimate that Fats would have had 50-100 of these insects on him; they were constantly flying out of his fur and back in again. He appeared to be more heavily infested than the others, but the whole group is infested to varying degrees. Twice we have given Fats a quick and light spray with permethrin. We spray it above him so that a light spray falls onto his back, which causes pandemonium amongst the Hippoboscids; they rush about and fall off into the grass below him. We collected these and sent them to The Museum of Victoria to be identified. They confirmed that they are in the family Hippoboscidae. We did the experiment twice (March and April 2017) in case there were different instars at different times of the year, but there were no obvious differences. They were all adults (last instar) and some were full of blood. The wallabies also have ticks on them in various places, but we have not seen more than two on one animal. The identity of these ticks is unknown, but using binoculars to get a close-up view, the colour and shape suggest the paralysis tick (*Ixodes holocyclus*).

One behaviour that may be related to the March-fly problem, is sitting on the tail. This involves the animal sitting back on the hind legs, then lifting one of the legs and moving its tail around from the back, under the uplifted leg, until the tail is lying straight out in front of the animal. The animal then straightens out the back legs, and hunches down and over the outstretched back legs and tail. This is usually done when the animal has some sort of back rest. Fats used to do this often, but we have seen Tuppence do it as well. Fats appeared to be comfortable and relaxed in this position, with his front paws on the outstretched tail. We have speculated as to whether the function of this position is to enable the animal to protect the tail from Tabanids during rest periods. Fats also used to lie partly on his side (like a Kangaroo), and appeared to sleep for short periods with his chin resting on the ground or on his paws. But his most common resting position was the tail forward position.

We have now observed two joeys from when they first became evident in the pouch until they were at least 4 months old. When they first come out of the pouch, they seem to have only two speeds, full and stop, and the full is very fast! What took us by surprise with Junior, the first joey we experienced, was the seemingly total lack of communication between Mrs and Junior. Junior would occasionally nibble at Mrs's back or neck, but she showed an almost complete lack of awareness of the existence of her joey. As stated above, Junior will take food from Mrs's mouth and she will simply find another piece as if she never had the first piece. She would jump the fence to get into our feeding area, and leave Junior, unable to jump the fence, stranded on the other side, without a glance. We finally realized that Junior had found a hole further down the fence and would eventually appear. But more surprisingly, most often in the first months of Junior's independence, Mrs would appear without Junior, for several days in a row. The first time this happened we were convinced Junior had been killed, but she reappeared after a few days. This scenario happened repeatedly. The only explanation we can think of is that she was parked somewhere while Mrs fed. But parking a very active, newly emerged joey still seems unlikely to us. Tuppence was different in that this joey was as active as Junior when it first emerged but was always with Mrs when she was around the house. But demonstrative awareness, and any sort of physical care of a joey, seems to be completely lacking in this species. Mrs tolerated Junior for about three months, but became intolerant after that, a behaviour presumably related to the age of the pouched Tuppence. The same was true for Tuppence: this joey was not tolerated after about 3 months, when Mrs had Threepence in the pouch.

The unnatural situation around our house brings the wallabies and various species of birds (King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, Common Bronzewing, Wonga Pigeon, White-headed Pigeon, Red-browed Finch and Superb Fairy-wren) together daily. There is food at various heights and also on the ground. The wallabies and birds tolerate each other very well, to the extent that the King Parrots and pigeons will sit on the tails of the wallabies while feeding. The wallabies pay the birds no attention but, perhaps more interestingly, the small birds such as the finches, appear to 'know' that the wallabies are not a threat, and will feed within 10 cm of the head of a wallaby. The wallabies regularly drink from the bird baths. They can drink for a relatively long period, perhaps a minute. Junior (but none of the others) jumps up onto one of the more robust bird baths and sits in the water on a hot day.

While Fats was still present, Big Al was seen irregularly. He was sexually interested in Junior. There was very little interaction between him and Fats, but it was obvious that Big Al was the dominant male. For a while, Fats was relegated to unusual parts of our house yard, such as the parking area near the carport. At other times, both males would be within sight of each other, within 3m of each other, without any indication that either wallaby was at all concerned about the other. Only once did we see Big Al obviously chasing Fats, and they usually kept at least 20m apart. But by June 2018, they had come to accept one another and would feed together. Michael and Sarah Guppy

Baffling bats

We frequently sit on our veranda surveying our lovely environment and, if we are fortunate, see small bats flying around. On occasions, we have also found them nestling in our outdoor umbrella, where the attached photo was taken. Having recently listened to a podcast on echolocation, I decided to do some research on the subject, which I now know has fascinated natural historians for centuries.



Lesser Long-eared Bat

Photo: David Kay

Echolocation is defined by the Cambridge English Dictionary as the process by which animals such as bats find their way in the dark by producing sound waves that echo when they are reflected off an object, such as a small insect. It enables them to determine the position of their prey. Other animals, such as dolphins, use echolocation rather than sight to explore their environment.

This phenomenon has fascinated natural historians since the early 18th century. In 1790, an Italian scientist set up a series of rather gruesome experiments that isolated the bats' abilities to see, smell, and hear. He discovered that they could still navigate without the use of vision or smell, whilst those with one or both ears plugged could not. However, it was not till the 1930s when an American scientist, Donald Griffin, using microphones, determined that the bats were emitting a series of very high-pitched clicks that increased as they approached prey. He also found that bats of different species use different kinds of signals and pitches. With technological advances in ultrasonic microphones and sonar, the field has grown enormously, but there remains much to be learned. One initiative is Bat Detective, a world-wide citizen science project which encourages people to record and submit bat sounds. For the poddies amongst us, you can find the podcast on echolocation at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b6hr13> Helen Kay



ENHS members have many stories to tell about their observations of nature. 'My Patch' is a forum where these stories can be shared with others and will be published both in the newsletter and on the website. Photos are welcome. Please send your contributions to mypatch@enhs.org.au

Logo design by Trevor King

Death Adder – a rare sighting

On the way down to our vegetable garden, we noticed a bit of a kerfuffle from two Yellow Robins, two Superb Fairy-wrens and one Grey Fantail. They were all in the same area and kept looking down. When we got closer, we saw the cause of the concern, a Common Death Adder (*Acanthophis antarcticus*). It did not move while we looked and took pictures. This is typical apparently; they spend their time lying still and attracting prey by wagging the end of the tail. They are dangerously venomous, with long, hollow fangs, and are easily trodden on as they do not move when approached. Unless the snake we saw was moving previously, we have no idea how the birds knew it was there. We have never seen one before. Sarah and Michael Guppy



Highlights from ENHS records - Spring 2018

Avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Emu	1	Whittakers Ck	MA	New location for this species.
Black Swan	250	Brou L	FM	
Hardhead	14, 9, 8	T'bella/Com/MO	MA/JC/NM	
Australasian Grebe	7, 2, 1	Com/Kelly's L/MO	JC/DHK/NM	
Hoary-headed Grebe	14, 8	MO/Kelly's L	NM/DHK	Few records
White-headed Pigeon	Up to 6	MKS	SMG	Adults with young at Surfside DB
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	10, 8	MKS/Lilli Pilli	SMG/IAG	
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	BBWG/Broulee	NC/JM	First report at Broulee
Peaceful Dove	Calling	Com	JC	
Topknot Pigeon	18, 17, 12, 7, 4	MO/PS/MHS/Gulaga/Com	NM/JM/FM	More reports than usual
Tawny Frogmouth	3 or calls	MO/PS/Deua R	NM/JM/RS/	AR
White-throated Nightjar	4 to 5	PS	JM	First return on Oct 27 th

Aust Owllet-nightjar	1 or calls	PS/Com	JM/JC	
White-throated Needletail	100, 30, 20	Bodalla/Malua Bay /PS	P Gatenby/ MW/JM	First return Oct 21 st
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	1	Sth DS	JCof	Beachcast
Short-tailed Shearwater	40	Off MO	NM	
Australasian Gannet	30	Brou L	FM	Off the coast
Australasian Darter	1	Sth DS/Coila Ck Rd/Com	JCof/FM/JC	
Great Cormorant	Up to 200	Com	JC	Large numbers due to salty conditions in the river.
Pied Cormorant	7, 4, 1	MO/CO/Coila Ck	NM/MA/FM	
Australian Pelican	Up to 35	Com	JC	Large numbers due to salty conditions in the river.
Eastern Great Egret	Up to 4	MB	MA	
Intermediate Egret	1	Deua R	RS/AR	First sighting at this location.
Cattle Egret	20, 19, 10	Bergalia/Com/ MYA	DHK/JC/JM	In breeding plumage on Oct 5 th in MYA
Little Egret	2	MYA/Brou L	FM	
Eastern Reef Egret	2, 1	MO/MB/Sth DS/ Mullimburra Pt	NM/MA/ JCof/DHK	
Nankeen Night Heron	2, 1	BBWG/Com	NC/JC	
Royal Spoonbill	15, 14	MHS/T'bella	JM/MA	
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2, 1	Bingie/T'bella/ Com	MA/JC	Reported more regularly this year
Eastern Osprey	3, 2, 1	BB/MHS/DY	GLM/JM/ MA	Nesting continues at BB with 3 birds in attendance.
Square-tailed Kite	1 or 2	MHS/PS/MO/MB/ Gulaga/WL	JM/NM/MA/ FM/DO	
Whistling Kite	3	MYA/Com	TA Ross/JC	Two young in nest at MYA, one young at Com
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	MO	NM	
Grey Goshawk	2	PS	JM	Raiding nests of Noisy Friarbird and Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike
Australian Hobby	2	Malua Bay/Com	MW/JC	Nesting at Com
Peregrine Falcon	1	MO/Com	NM/JC	
Buff-banded Rail	1	Com	JC	
Baillon's Crake	2	BBWG	NC	
Aust Pied Oystercatcher	9, 8, 4	Brou L/ Sth DS/CO	DB/FM/JCof /TA Ross	Nest with eggs and then 2 young Sth DS; 2 adults with 2 chicks at CO; one young at Brou L.
Sooty Oystercatcher	6, 3, 2	MB/Candlagan Ck/ Broulee/MHS	MA/HR/ GLM/JM	
Black-winged Stilt	Up to 7	Com	JC	Immature on Nov 14 th
Pacific Golden Plover	2, 1	MB/CO	MA/NC	Oct-Nov.
Red-capped Plover	More than 10	Brou L	MA	Nesting at MO, nest in Oct and young in Nov.
Double-banded Plover	2	Brou L	NC	
Lesser Sand Plover	1	Brou L	FM	In Nov.
Black-fronted Dotterel	5, 2	Com/MO/Kelly's L/Brou L	JC/NM/DHK /FM	Nesting at Com in Oct and Nov, young in Nov.
Hooded Plover	1	MB	MA	
Red-kneed Dotterel	1	MO	NM	In Sep-Oct.
Latham's Snipe	3, 2	BBWG/MO/Com/ Bergalia/Belowra	NC/NM/JC/ DHK	More widely reported than in previous years.
Bar-tailed Godwit	2 to 200	NA	DO/MA/NC	Numbers building up over spring
Whimbrel	1	BB	KD	
Eastern Curlew	15, 5, 2, 1	TS/BB/WL/MHS	M Craig/KD/ MA/JM	

Grey-tailed Tattler	1	MB	MA	
Red Knot	10, 2	Brou L/CO	DB/NC	
Red-necked Stint	Up to 20	Brou L	DB/FM	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	150	Brou L	DB	140 were juvenile birds
Curlew Sandpiper	1	Brou L	TA Ross	Banded bird, tagged in Vic.
Little Tern	More than 60	Brou L	MA/DB/FM	Colony established in Oct but abandoned Nov 4 th
Fairy Tern	4	Brou L	DB	Nov 3 rd
White-fronted Tern	1	Sth DS	JCof	Sep 20 th
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	Bimbimbee/MKS/DeuaR/PS/Belowra	DB/SMG/RS/AR/JM/JC	Dependent young at PS from Nov.
Gang-Gang Cockatoo	4	Sth DS	JCof	
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Calls	Brou L	FM	Possible
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Calls	Bimbimbee	DB	Probable but difficult to confirm
Swift Parrot	1	Cullendulla Ck	DB	Sep 16 th
Eastern Koel	1	Sth DS	JCof	First return Sep 22 nd
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	BB	DB	First return Sep 8 th
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	1	PS	JM	First return Sep 11 th
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	MO	NM	First return Oct 14 th
Pallid Cuckoo	1 to 2	Com	JC	First return Sep 20 th
Brush Cuckoo	1	PS	JM	First return Sep 19 th
Powerful Owl	1, call	MO/PS	NM/JM	Seen at MO Ck
Sooty Owl	Call	PS	JM	Sep and Nov.
Eastern Barn Owl	2	Surfside	DB	Sep.
Sacred Kingfisher	Up to 4	Com	JC	First return Sep 7 th PS.
Forest Kingfisher	1, call	Broulee/PS	I Jamieson/JM	Not confirmed but 2 possible reports in Oct is worth noting.
Dollarbird	Up to 9	Com	JC	First return Oct 9 th , displaying in Oct and nest in Nov.
Noisy Pitta	1	BP	Via DB	Photos confirm adult bird.
Red-browed Treecreeper	1	ERBG	NC	
Green Catbird	2	Tilba	MA	
Southern Emu-Wren	Up to 4, call	Broulee/Bimbimbee	GLM/DB	
Large-billed Scrubwren	Call	Gulaga NP	FM	
White-throated Gerygone	Up to 4	Com/Belowra	JC	First return at Com Sep 22 nd
Striated Pardalote	1 or 2	Broulee/MYA/Com/Belowra	GLM/FM/JC	
White-eared Honeyeater	1	MO/Bergalia	NM/DHK	Last record Oct 18 th
Fuscous Honeyeater	6	Broulee	GLM	
Painted Honeyeater	1	Bimbimbee	Via DB	On flowering ironbark
White-fronted Chat	1	Sth DS	JCof	First record at this location
Scarlet Honeyeater	Up to 20, 12, 10	MO/Broulee/Malua Bay/Com	NM/GLM/MW/JC	Widespread reports with fewer at other locations
Varied Sittella	6, 4, 3	PS/Com/Belowra/MO	JM/JC/NM	
Cicadabird	5, 1, call	PS/MO/Malua Bay	JM/NM/MW	First return Oct 21 st
Crested Shrike-tit	2	MO	NM	Sep.
Rufous Whistler	6	MO/Com/Belowra	NM/JC	First return Sep 19 th at PS
Australasian Figbird	6, 1	MYA/BBWG	JM/R Soroka	
White-breasted Woodswallow	4, 3	PS/Coila Ck Rd	JM/FM	First return Nov 10 th
White-browed Woodswallow	Flock, 1	Surfside/PS	DB/JM	Sep 11 th and 15 th

Dusky Woodswallow	7, 4, 2, 1	Belowra/Brou L/ MHN/Com	JC/FM/JM	
Rufous Fantail	1	Lilli Pilli/PS	IAG/JM	Fewer records this season.
Restless Flycatcher	4, 2	Com/Belowra	JC/FM	Nesting at Belowra and Com in Oct. Two young at Com in Nov.
Leaden Flycatcher	1 or 2	MKS/PS/MO/ Brou L	SMG/JM/ NM/FM	First return Oct 19 th
Black-faced Monarch	3	MO	NM	First return Oct 21 st at PS.
Golden-headed Cisticola	Up to 6	Com	JC	
Australian Reed-Warbler	1	MO	NM	First return Nov 5 th
Brown Songlark	1	Com	JC/FM	First seen Oct 28 th , displaying
Fairy Martin	1	Tilba	FM	
Common Blackbird	1 or 2	Malua Bay/Lilli Pilli/Deua R/Com /Tilba	MW/IAG/RS /AR	First sighting at Deua R. More records than in recent times.
Mistletoebird	1 or 2	Gulaga/PS/Com	FM/JM/JC	Fewer records this year.
Australian Pipit	10, 2, 1	Com/Bingie Pt/MB /Belowra/Sth DS	JC/DHK/MA /JCof	
European Goldfinch	4	Com	JC	Sep.

Non-avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Short-beaked Echidna	2, 1	PS/Sth DS/Deua R/MB/Cool	MA/JCof/ JM/RS/AR/ DO/MB	
Common Wombat	3, 1	Cool/Deua R	DO/RS/AR	
Sugar Glider	1, calls	Mossy Pt/ Deua R/PS/Com	HR/RS/AR/ JM/JC	
Yellow-bellied Glider	1	Mossy Pt	HR	Sep
Common Ringtail Possum	drey	Mossy Pt	HR	
Common Brushtail Possum	5, 2	Com/Lilli Pilli /Mossy Pt/Cool	JC/IAG/HR/ DO	Adult with young at Lilli Pilli
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	Up to 92	Cool	DO	
Red-necked Wallaby	5, 2	Deua R/Cool/ Mossy Pt	RS/AR/DO/ HR	
Swamp Wallaby	Up to 16	MB	MA	
Grey-headed Flying-fox	1 or 2	Mossy Pt/PS	HR/JM	Sep and Nov.
Microbat sp	1	Deua R	RS/AR	Hawking for insects at nightfall.
Pig		West Flat	JC	
Fallow Deer		West Flat	JC	
Snake-necked Turtle	Up to 10	Com	JC	
Yellow-bellied Water-skink	2 or 3	Com	JC	Out in Sep.
Dark-flecked Garden Sunskink	Up to 5	Mossy Pt	HR	
Pale-flecked Garden Sunskink	2	Mossy Pt	HR	
Eastern Blue Tongue	1 or 2	Mossy Pt/Com	HR/JC	
Jacky Lizard	5, 3, 2, 1	Mossy Pt/PS/ Cool/Broulee	HR/JM/DO/ GLM	
Gippsland Water Dragon	Up to 10, 2	Com/Malua Bay/Deua R	JC/MW/RS/ AR	First record at Malua Bay, adult and juvenile on a dam wall.
Lace Monitor	2, 1	PS/Lilli Pilli/ Deua R/Cool	JM/IAG/RS/ AR/JC/DO	
Diamond Python	4, 3, 1	Tilba/PS/Deua R	AM/A Cram	Four intertwined at Tilba
Common Death Adder	1	MKS/Deua R	SMG/ACram	First record at MKS
Red-bellied Black Snake	1 or 2	Com/PS/BI/Cool	JC/JM/DO	
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	6	Sth DS/MHS	JCof/JM	

Humpback Whale	10, 2	MHS/BP	JM/NC	Mother and calf at both locations
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Frogs JC/MF/GLM/JM/DO/HR	Common Eastern Froglet, Brown Striped Frog, Brown and Tyler's Toadlet; tree frogs: Jervis Bay, Keferstein's, Peron's, Tyler's, Verreaux's, Eastern Sedgefrog.
Moths JC/KD/MF/JM/GLM	Banded Concealer, Light Brown Apple, Plume, Meal, Diamondback, Asian Corn Borer, Black Geometrid, Bracken, Spring and Oval-spot Taxeotis, Neat Epidesmia, Red-lined Geometrid, Cream Wave, Plantain, Flecked and Purple Wave, Mecynata, Finely-lined Carpet, Subidaria, She-oak, Gum Snout, Banded Porela, White-stemmed Wattle, Common and Eye-spot Anthelid, Banded Lichen, Crossed Footman, Variable Halone, Crimson Tiger, Tiger, Tobacco Looper, Whistling, Green Blotched, Bogong, Native Budworm.
Bugs JC/KD/MF	Metallic Shield, Bronze Orange, Harlequin, Green Vegetable, Water Strider. Cicada: Double Drummer, Greengrocer.
Butterflies JC/MF/GLM/JM/FM	Narrow-brand Grass-dart, Orchard Swallowtail, Spotted Jezebel, Cabbage White, Dusky Knight, Brown Ringlet, Varied Sword-grass Brown, Forest and Common Brown, Meadow Argus, Australian Painted Lady, Yellow Admiral, Varied Dusky-blue, Cycad Blue, Common Grass Blue.
Beetles JC/MF/JM	Christmas, Dung, Argentinian and Green Scarab, Net-winged, Click, Acacia, Metallic Green, Dotted Paropsine and Small Blue Leaf, Three-lined Potato, Pintail, Banded Pumpkin, Plague Soldier, Belid Weevil. Ladybirds: Striped, Common, Orange and 26 Spotted, Mealybug, Transverse, White-collared, Variable, Fungus eating, Steel Blue.
Dragon/Damsel flies JM/JC/MF	Common Bluetail, Wandering Percher, Tau and Australian Emerald, Blue Skimmer.
Spiders JC/MF/JM	Leaf-curling, Daddy Long Legs, Black House, Huntsman, Lucrida Jumping, Striped Saitis, Spiny, Two Spined, White-tailed, Comb Footed, Two-tailed, White-spotted Swift, House Hopper, Garden Wolf, White Porch.

RAINFALL (mm). **September:** 25 at Lilli Pilli, 12.5 at Com, 23.5 at Cool. **October:** 33 at Lilli Pilli, 96 at Bergalia, 85 at Com, 110.5 at MB, 87.25 at Cool. **November:** 69 at Lilli Pilli, 91 at MKS, 120 at Com, 153.5 at MB, 142.75 at Cool.

Contributors

MA	M Anderson, MB	SMG	S&M Guppy, MKS	RS/AR	R Stacey & A Rees, MYA
DB	D Bertzeletos, Surfside	DHK	D&H Kay, Bergalia	MW	M Wilkinson, Malua Bay
NC	N Clark, Surf Beach	GLM	G&L McVeigh, Broulee	FM	Field Meeting
JCof	J Coffey, DS	AM	A Marsh, Bingie		M Craig, TS
JC	J&P Collett, Com	NM	N Montgomery, MO		A Cram, Deua R
KD	K Dawes, Surfside	JM	J Morgan, PS		P Gatenby, Broulee
MF	M Fyfe, Broulee	DO	D Ondinea, Cool		I Jamieson, Broulee
IAG	I&A Grant, Lilli Pilli	HR	H Ransom, Mossy Pt		TA Ross, Kianga
					R Soroka, Surfside
Places					
BB	Batemans Bay	ERBG	Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens	PS	Pedro Swamp
BBWG	Batemans Bay Water Gardens	MKS	Maulbrooks Rd S, MYA	PP	Potato Point
BI	Bermagui	MO	Meringo	SB	Surf Beach
BP	Burrewarra Point	MYA	Moruya	SF	State Forest
Cool	Coolagolite	MH	Moruya Heads, N&S	T'bella	Trunketabella
Com	Comerang	MB	Mystery Bay	TN	Tomakin
CO	Congo	NA	Narooma	TS	Tuross
DS	Durras	NP	National Park	WL	Wallaga Lake

ENHS Committee and Contact Details

Chair/Recorder	Julie Morgan	0457 637 227	chair@enhs.org.au
Secretary	Lyn Burden	0408 183 510	secretary@enhs.org.au
Treasurer	Malcolm Griggs	4472 4150	treasurer@enhs.org.au
Committee	Fran Anderson, Mandy Anderson, Steven Benjamin, Lucy Gibson, David Kay, Gillian Macnamara		
Public Officer and Membership	Malcolm Griggs	4472 4150	treasurer@enhs.org.au
Minutes Secretary	Mandy Anderson	4473 7651	
Editorial Team	Mandy Anderson, Lucy Gibson, David Kay, Helen Kay, Julie Morgan		
Website Team	Amanda Marsh, Julie Morgan, Roman Soroka		
			chair@enhs.org.au

All mail correspondence to P.O. Box 888, Moruya, NSW, 2537.

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