



**EUROBODALLA  
NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY  
Inc.**

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**NEWSLETTER NUMBER 180**

**SUMMER 2019**

## Sea watching in the Eurobodalla

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### Introduction

The south east Pacific is one of the best places in the world for seabirds and in Australia we can see more than two hundred species. In south east Australia, sea watching is generally best in the winter months, when the more spectacular species can be seen. The best time to look for seabirds is when southerlies force the birds close to shore.

Identification of birds at a distance is obviously challenging. And it is very important to keep an open mind whilst sea watching as it is theoretically possible to see any seabird anywhere in the world. A good field guide will go a long way in helping you identify birds. A spotting scope and a camera with telephoto lens will assist greatly. Pelagic trips are the best way to see a variety of seabirds and so become adept at identification, but it is possible to watch from shore. This article introduces the more common pelagic species that can be seen from our shores during winter.

### Species Profiles

*Australasian Gannet (Morus serrator):* Familiarity with this common species is important, as it resembles other species, including Albatross and Petrels. Behaviour is the key. When fishing, Gannets fly high above the water and plunge-dive. They do also fly close to the water sometimes but will generally flap their wings far more often than petrels and albatross.

Petrel and albatross can fly for many hours without flapping their wings, using the wind's energy to keep them aloft and moving, thus conserving their own energy. This technique is known as dynamic soaring. (For an in-depth explanation, see: [http://college.wfu.edu/albatross/atwork/dynamic\\_soaring.htm](http://college.wfu.edu/albatross/atwork/dynamic_soaring.htm))



Australasian Gannet

Photo D Bertzeletos

### Albatross

About nine species of Albatross are regularly seen off our shores and, of these, five can be seen from shore. Albatross are huge; even the smallest, the Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, is a third larger than the Australasian Gannet, and this smallest of our Albatross visitors is only half the size of the Wandering Albatross. Albatross have correspondingly massive wingspans and are superb dynamic soarers. You will usually see them flying low over the water: look for very large birds that seldom flap their wings.

*Black-browed Albatross (Thalasarche melanophris)*

This is usually the most numerous albatross close to shore and is easily distinguished from other albatross by its 'messy' underwing. The underwing of a juvenile is nearly all dark. At close range, the orange beak should also be evident. All *Thalasarche* albatross have dark backs, which distinguishes them from the 'Great Albatross' *Diomedea* which have pale backs.



Black-browed Albatross

Photo D Bertzeletos

*Shy Albatross (T. cauta).*

The second most numerous albatross in our area, it is slightly bigger than the Black-browed Albatross and easily identified by the neat, narrow black margins to the underwing, which all ages possess. The beak is grey and yellow. Young birds have greyish heads and may be confused with rarer species.

*Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross (T. carteri)*

The smallest albatross species is a third smaller than the Black-browed Albatross. This and the Buller's Albatross can be identified from the two previous species by the dark wing tip and broader black trim to the leading edge of the underwing. At close range you can see that the beak is largely black.

*Buller's Albatross (T. bulleri)*

The rarest 'common' albatross that can be seen from shore, it is like the Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, but the dark grey head gives this species away. At close range the yellow and black beak can be seen. Note, however, that some immature Black-browed Albatross can have a similarly patterned beak.

*'Great Albatross' (Diomedea sp.)*

As the name suggests, this is the biggest albatross you will see here. The taxonomy in this group is highly complex and still much debated. Two species appear to be common off the NSW coast: Gibson's and Wandering Albatross (*D. antipodensis* and *D. exulans* respectively). There is much overlap in plumage across these two species, and identification is further complicated by the variation within each species depending on age and sex. The Wanderer is larger, though this difference is apparent only at very close range. Adult Wandering Albatross are whiter than adult Gibson's Albatross, but they are generally not separable at long range. Juveniles of both species are dark except for the face and underwing; this separates them from Giant Petrels.

*Giant Petrels (Macronectes sp.)*

Giant petrels fly like clumsy Albatross and are slightly smaller than Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross. The vultures of the sea, they are attracted to cetacean and seal carcasses. Nearly all the birds seen off our shores are juveniles, either Northern (*M. halli*) or Southern (*M. giganteus*). The only way to distinguish between them at this age is beak tip colour (orange for Northern and green for Southern), a feature that will be seen only at close range.

*Great-winged/Grey-faced Petrel (Pterodroma macroptera/ P. gouldi)*

Petrels fly like diminutive albatross. There are dozens of species, but most occur well out to sea. The two species listed here, both dark birds, are the most often observed from land, and then only during severe weather events, when specific identification is nearly always impossible.

*Prions (Pachyptila sp.)* A group of eighty very similar, plankton-feeding species, they are often encountered in loose, very large flocks, ducking and weaving between the waves. They are easily told from similarly-sized petrels and shearwaters by their pale plumage. Most prions seen from land will not be identifiable to species, though the commonest species off eastern Australia, and therefore the most likely, is the Fairy Prion (*P. turtur*).

*Fluttering Shearwater (Puffinus gavia)*

This is the most numerous of the shearwaters to be seen off our coasts in winter. Large flocks fly low over the water, flashing their pale underparts as they turn. At close range the scarcer Hutton's Shearwater (*P. huttoni*) might be identifiable by its darker face and dusky flanks.

*Little Penguin (Eudyptula minor)*

This is the only common penguin in our area. It is generally unmistakable but beware of confusion with diving shearwaters. Feeding Little Penguin flocks are often followed by flocks of shearwaters, terns and gulls.

*Brown Skua (Stercorarius antarcticus)*

Skuas fly with powerful wingbeats, often high over the water. They harass other birds so that they regurgitate their food; they also kill and swallow whole prions and storm petrels. The only other bird with which the Brown Skua might be confused is a juvenile Pacific Gull. Look for the Skua's prominent white windows on the wing, which the gull lacks.



Fluttering Shearwater

Photo D Bertzeletos

*Pacific Gull (Larus pacificus)*

Juvenile Pacific Gulls regularly disperse up to our area. Their all brown plumage, huge beaks, large size and lazy flight readily identify them.

*White-fronted Tern (Sterna striata)*

A small white tern that visits our shores from its breeding grounds in New Zealand, it is about half the size of the Greater Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bergii*) and much paler. They are generally encountered in small flocks travelling up and down the coasts, though hundreds can be seen at feeding frenzies.

## What's coming up....

**Saturday April 13, 2pm: Mogo State Forest.** Meet at the car park near the toilet block just off Tomakin Rd near the corner with the Princes Hwy, Mogo. We will select a bush track based on flowering activity of the eucalypts, with the hope that Swift Parrot and unusual honeyeaters will be around.

**Sunday April 28, 9am: Deua National Park, German Creek.** Meet at the Tuross turnoff, corner of Princes Hwy and Hector McWilliam Drive. Wet eucalypt forest with Brown Barrel and Mountain Grey Gum, and cool temperate forest with Pinkwood. Olive Whistler, Superb Lyrebird, Flame and Scarlet Robin, Pilotbird.

**Saturday May 11, 2pm: Clouts Rd, Moruya.** Meet at the car park outside the Library and Council offices off Vulcan St, Moruya. Walk down Clouts Rd - bush and farmland areas should result in a wide variety of species. Australian Pipit, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Whistling Kite, Scarlet and Flame Robin.

**Sunday May 26, 11am: Annual General Meeting.** Venue: The Pavilion, Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens, Princes Highway Batemans Bay. Please ask at reception for directions. Meeting at 11am, followed by lunch (there are BBQ facilities) and then a walk through the gardens. Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Australasian Grebe, Rose Robin, Crested Shrike-tit, Bassian Thrush, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird. A nomination form is included with this newsletter.

**Saturday June 8, 2pm: Maloneys Beach.** Meet at the picnic shelter at the eastern end of the beach off Hibiscus Close, which runs off Maloneys Drive. Coastal forest and beach walk. White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Pied and Sooty Oystercatcher, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, New Holland Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater.

**Sunday 23 June, 9am: Bogola Head.** Meet at the Narooma Visitors' Centre, Princes Highway, Narooma. A spectacular view of Montagu Island, with sea birds including White-fronted Tern, Australasian Gannet, various albatross species as well as shorebirds, honeyeaters and various raptor species.

### **Correction to the field meeting program mailed with the last newsletter:**

Please note that there is an error in the 2019 field meeting program that was circulated with the last newsletter. The order of the Sunday field meetings in August and September needs to be changed. The Burrawang field meeting will be on August 25 and Mogendoura Farm field meeting on September 29.

For those with a printed copy, you may wish to correct this for yourself. A corrected field meeting program will be emailed to members with email addresses, and the field meeting program on the website has been updated.

### **A reminder that 2019 membership fees are now due**

If your membership hasn't been renewed, a reminder has been included with this newsletter. Single membership \$20, family \$30 and for under 18s \$5. There are a few copies of the 32<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Nature in Eurobodalla* still available - \$13 if picked up at a field meeting or \$15.50 if posted.

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

Daryl Hume-Cook, Sunshine Bay  
Robert Clunes, Surfside

## **Mystery Bay Field Meeting 24 February 2019**

Field meetings to Mystery Bay usually result in quite a good species list because there is a variety of habitats within close proximity. Within the area, visitors can see a sandspit and adjacent rock platform with views out to Montague Island, a remnant rainforest, a shallow section of Corunna Lake, open paddocks and eucalypt forest. My personal Mystery Bay bird list is over 150 species.

This year's visit, attended by 17 members, was no exception. We met at the campground entrance, and whilst waiting for the group to gather, I was thrilled to see a group of 4 Gang-gang Cockatoos; exciting for me because they seem to have been absent from our "patch" for quite some time. Because the tide was low, it was decided that the sandspit would be the first site visited. And we were well rewarded, with great views of 4 Pacific Golden Plovers amongst the rocks. There were at least 120 Crested Terns but Oyster-catchers were in short supply, with only a single Sooty sighted. But we did see several of the resident cormorants, Great, Little Pied and Little Black.

Next, we headed to Corunna Point, which is part of the very fragmented Eurobodalla National Park, where we were able to observe several bush birds amongst the banksia and casuarina trees. But it was on the sandflat where debate hotted up as we sighted two very small shore birds. Both plovers was the decision, but it took a very close look, along with the help of two of our photographic experts, Roman and Geoff, to determine that one was a Red-capped, and the other a Double-banded. Four birds were spotted high in a dead tree, providing another



Pacific Golden Plover

Photo R Soroka



opportunity for speculation, with the final identification being two Figbirds, an Olive-backed Oriole and a Grey Butcherbird.

Back at the camping area, we ventured into a small patch of rainforest, where the highlight was a Black-faced Monarch. Further into the eucalypt stand, one large Spotted Gum was providing feed for a great variety of small bush birds. Most of us had wonderful views of a female Leaden Flycatcher.

The plan had originally been to continue on to Billy's Beach, but hunger began to take precedence, so we met up at the National Park rotunda at the southern end of the beach where the bird list was compiled, giving a total of 64 species, despite the surprising absence of quite a number of Mystery Bay's very common species, such as King Parrot, the rosellas and Australasian Pipit.

For those who are unaware, Mystery Bay takes its name from the unsolved disappearance of a group of 5 men who left the Montreal gold fields (Bermagui) by boat during the gold rush of the 1860's. Their boat was found washed up near what is now known as Mystery Bay beach. There was no sign of any of the men, but the boat had been holed from the inside. More information is available on-line, and in the book Five men vanished, by the renowned Australian historian Cyril Pearl. Mandy Anderson

### **Dodonaea – inconspicuous, but very interesting.**

It is easy to overlook Dodonaea. For much of the year, they are inconspicuous, almost nondescript shrubs with small flowers. But once the fruit capsules emerge, they show their true beauty.

Dodonaea is a genus of the soapberry (Sapindaceae) family, named after Rembert Dodoens, a sixteenth century Flemish botanist. The name Sapindaceae is derived from the Latin word meaning soap: saponin is a glycoside which forms as a soapy substance in the leaves, roots and seeds of some plants in this family.

The Australian Plant Name Index lists 68 species worldwide, growing in tropical and temperate Africa, Australia and the Pacific. We believe there are 61 species in Australia, 59 of which are endemic, but as the genus is undergoing reclassification, the exact number is unclear.

The common name for Dodonaea is hopbush, as early European settlers substituted the fruit of some species for hops in brewing. Indigenous people used the chewed leaves as a painkiller for toothache and for treating stonefish and stingray wounds.

Dodonaea can be found in many habitats e.g. rocky ridges, forests, mallee, woodland and shrubland and close to waterways such as creeks and rivers. Most are small shrubs 1-2m in height; two species are prostrate. Characteristics of the genus are the small, inconspicuous unisexual flowers, mainly dioecious (i.e. the flowers are male or female and usually occur on separate plants) and the conspicuous fruiting capsules.

The best time to look for Dodonaea is in summer, when female flowers produce masses of these bright, winged capsules, approximately 2 cm, usually green or red, hardening to papery light brown. Fertilised capsules can take 11 months to mature; unfertilised capsules mature faster but will either be seedless or contain non-viable seed.

In the Eurobodalla, the most common species is *Dodonaea viscosa*, or 'sticky hop bush'. It occurs naturally in arid regions, particularly in rocky areas, and is primarily found in central Australia. It is an erect shrub growing to 6m, with shiny light green sticky foliage. The leaves are larger than some other species growing to 3-8 cm, with conspicuous lateral veins. The flowers are less than a centimetre and have no petals.



*Dodonaea viscosa*

Photo ERBG



*Dodonaea triquetra*

Photo ERBG

river banks in dry sclerophyll forests. It is smaller, growing to 1.5 m, and is quite different in appearance, with hairy branchlets and leaves alternating up the stems. Flowers form in branched clusters and the seed cases have three wings.

*Dodonaea triquetra*, also known as common hop bush or large leaf hop bush, is common in coastal forest and heath in most of our area. The name *triquetra* is from the Latin for three cornered, referring to the fruit. It is a small leafy shrub, 2 to 4 m, with straight and often reddish stems. Like others in this genus, male and female flowers are borne on separate plants. Male flowers are greenish-yellow and 2cm across. They have 8 (or rarely 10) spreading stamens arranged like spokes. Female flowers are green with red tips and are borne in filament-like clusters in the leaf axils.

*Dodonaea multijuga* is common in areas north of Moruya, on sandstone and sandy soils near creek and

Some species can be cultivated. Propagation from cuttings is relatively easy, but it is important to derive material from both male and female plants if seed set is needed. Growing from seed is less successful. The Dodonaea Study group was formed in 1983 to study the cultivation and propagation of the genus. Before it closed in 1995, it produced regular newsletters, many of which can be downloaded from <http://anpsa.org.au/dodonaea.html>. Helen Kay and Fran Anderson

### A new frog for Eurobodalla?

On 16 December at Tuross Head, Ben Asbury heard and subsequently found a large green frog that was identified as a Green Tree Frog, *Litoria caerulea*. This, I think, is the first definite record of this species in the Shire. While it may have been transported into Tuross, Eurobodalla Shire is only just outside the normal range for this frog. It is likely to be a range extension, given that another species, *Litoria fallax* has recently been recorded in the Shire.

It was first described by John White who joined the First Fleet as the surgeon on the convict transport "Charlotte" and was later appointed Surgeon-General of New South Wales. He was interested in the native flora and fauna of the new colony, and in 1790, wrote

A Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales which included 65 plates and descriptions of the local flora and fauna. Among them was the Green Tree Frog which was originally called the Blue Frog or White's Tree Frog. It was called the "blue frog" despite its green colour because the preservative in which it was stored damaged the skin colour and turned it blue. The specimen was sent to England where it was formally named *Litoria caerulea*, caerulea being Latin for blue. It was the first Australian frog to be scientifically described. The original specimen found its way into the collection of Sir Joseph Banks and then to the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in London. The specimen, as well as the museum, was destroyed in 1944 during the blitz. Mike Crowley



*Litoria caerulea*.

Photo M Crowley



## THE RUFOUS FANTAIL *Rhipidura rufifrons*

On 3 January, I was exploring the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens looking for birds, animals or insects. The Gardens are a beautiful place to find such things, as well as enjoy the forests and display areas.

Over the time that I have been visiting the Gardens I have seen Lyrebirds, Scarlet Honeyeaters, a Diamond Python, Baillon's Crake, Goannas, Bower Birds, Echidnas, Spotted Quail-thrushes, Yellow Robins, a Black Snake catching a frog, Blue Wrens, Eastern Dwarf Frogs, Black-faced Monarchs, an Antechinus, Golden Whistlers and Whipbirds.

One of the hardest birds to photograph is the Rufous Fantail. It feeds on insects and is very active when feeding. When I saw not only one but two, I decided to get some photos. Being a little slow, I did not realise the significance of them flying in and out of a bush. It usually means nest building or feeding young. It seemed late in the season, but they were making a nest close to the track.

The nest is a small cup of grasses and/or wood with the bottom drawn out into a long stem. When finished, it looks like a wine glass. Both sexes build, sit on the nest and feed the chicks. The nest appears to be the same as that of the Grey Fantail. On 3 January, the nest was just the stem of the wine glass.



1

Photo G McVeigh



2

Photo G McVeigh

Pic 1 - On 8 January the shaping of the nest was complete but there were gaps. The birds were working on the interior design. They put in what appeared to be thin grass or bottle brush "petals". They then squashed this down by assuming various sitting poses. It is not a large nest and I was surprised that an adult fitted into it. I visited the nest five times in the next three weeks and there was a lot of sitting. At that time, I had taken 145 photos.

Pic 2 - On 1 February 2019, I first saw two chicks; they were featherless, and their eyes were not open. However, their beaks were open, and the parents were dropping insects down their throats. It was great to see the chicks. I could not believe that they swallowed insects whole. One chick had an insect wing sticking out of its beak and the adult removed the insect and shoved it in properly.



3 Photo G McVeigh



4

Photo G McVeigh

Pic 3 - On 8 February 2019, the two chicks were feathered, and they almost jumped out of the nest. When I went back on 10 February, they had left the nest.

Pic 4 - I have found a second nest in the ERBG where the parents are still sitting. I will watch it as well. In addition, I have seen three Rufous Fantails from the bridge at the entry of the Gardens.

In winter the birds move north and so are not in the Gardens. The Rufous Fantail is found in eastern coastal Australia but is more common in the north. It occurs in New Guinea, Guam, Sulawesi and the Solomons. I also recently photographed a Rufous Fantail at Tidbinbilla. Geoff McVeigh

### **Grey-headed Flying Fox spend the 2018-19 summer at Moruya Heads**

Up to 100,000 Grey-headed Flying Fox moved into their regular camp at Moruya Heads over summer, attracted by the flowering of three species of eucalypts: Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*), Red Ironbark (*E. fibrosa*) and Apple-topped Box (*E. angophoroides*).

The Forest Red Gum began flowering in the Eurobodalla in November and, by December, a number of trees in Moruya Heads and along Congo Road were full of blossom. A few hundred Grey-headed Flying Fox were seen over Moruya Heads on December 5, and, by the end of the month, numbers had built up to 5,000. Red Ironbark and Apple-topped Box flowered profusely from mid-December and the numbers of flying fox steadily increased to 20,000 by mid-January. On January 23, 100,000 were counted as they left their camp and moved north, west and south. Numbers remained high until mid- February when the flowering waned and the flying fox moved on to new feeding grounds.

There was much talk among the residents of Moruya Heads and Moruya, who were amazed by the mass movement of these creatures against the sky at sunset. I could see the flying fox that moved to the south but had many reports from residents of Moruya Heads who were seeing the northern departure and from people in Moruya who watched as they crossed the Princes Highway and moved west along the Moruya River.

The main camp of the Grey-headed Flying Fox on the south coast of NSW is in South Brooman forest, which is just north of the Eurobodalla shire. They move out of this camp and set up smaller camps closer to their food source. In past years, we've had up to 160,000 at the Moruya Heads camp and more than 300,000 at Batemans Bay. The larger numbers usually coincide with Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) flowering events. Julie Morgan

### **Mallacoota out of shire trip November 2018**

Mallacoota is a small town about 40 kilometres south of the NSW/Victoria border, on the mouth of Mallacoota Inlet and surrounded by Croajingalong National Park. The area is beautiful, with white beaches, offshore islands, extensive waterways and forest. It is a popular holiday destination, and, during the peak summer holiday season, the large town campsite is packed with visitors. It is also a great area for birdwatching; the different habitats offer a corresponding variety of birdlife. In November 2018, ten birders from Canberra and the coast gathered there for a few days of birding.

Rain was forecast, so we were not surprised to spend the first couple of days dodging showers. We were lucky to have a dry start for our boat trip on the inlet and enjoyed disembarking in the rainforest for morning tea. Then the rain set in. John Gordon did a great job as our skipper, steadfast at the helm, while some (the shorter people) huddled in the low-ceilinged cabin and the rest (rather taller) perched behind John, pretending to be hardy. Bird



Then the rain set in.

Photo M Anderson



sightings were understandably scarce. I think I remember peering through rain-streaked glasses at some cormorants. And, as we returned, by consensus, early to port, we saw two koalas high in the trees.

Luckily, we all had warm, comfortable accommodation, most at Shady Gully Caravan Park, some at Melaleuca Grove Cabins, with bush around and plenty of birds. Our leader, Lyn Burden, stayed snug in her tent, resisting offers of a bed with a solid roof overhead. Gillian had been given a palatial unit, into which we could all fit for the daily bird count.

Koala sightings were one of the most memorable aspects of the trip. Lyn spotted a male in a gum tree in the middle of the town campground. We could see a bloody gash on his flank and reported this to the information centre staff. They assured us that the animal was being monitored but that capturing him for treatment was not really an option. Returning to the same spot the next day, we did not see the male again but were rewarded with great views of a mother and joey.

Our visit to the sewage treatment plant proved very productive, as STP's regularly are. We saw a myriad of ducks and other waterfowl, with the highlights being Australian Shelduck, Pink-eared Duck and Hardhead. The bird names committee would do well to reconsider two of these names. The pink ear is not the most prominent of features, barely visible at a distance, unlike the zebra stripes and the distinctive bill; and White-eyed Duck seems kinder and more appropriate than Hardhead.

We lingered for quite a while looking at a small wader on a stone wall next to the ponds, before deciding that it was a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. A far distant flock of these birds had been seen on a previous beachside outing, and we had spent an extremely long time attempting to identify the hazy images provided by spotting scopes and telephoto lenses. You would have thought, then, after such lengthy scrutiny, that a single, much closer bird would have been easy to identify. Obviously, shorebird identification was not our strong point.

Probably the most dramatic sighting was a Wedge-tailed Eagle, perched on a low post less than twenty metres from our path, near the airport. Another eagle flew nearby while Australian Magpies repeatedly dive-bombed the perching bird. Annoyingly, nobody was carrying a camera so a couple of us hurried back to the cars to fetch ours. The eagle soon tired of being attacked and took off just as we made it back within range. So, no photo, but a very clear memory of a magnificent bird, with its shaggily feathered, russet head. Also, near the airport, we found a group of Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters: Lyn's local knowledge proved invaluable once again.

This was another thoroughly enjoyable trip, with convivial company, spectacular scenery and wonderful wildlife. The total species count for the week: 113 birds, five mammals, two reptiles, including the Eastern long-necked turtle, one butterfly and a Giant Gippsland earthworm. Mandy Anderson and Gillian Macnamara



*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](mailto:mypatch@enhs.org.au)  
Logo design by Trevor King*

### **Beautiful firetail**

My partner, Allan Rees and I have a block of land in the Deua River Valley west of Moruya which we have visited regularly since 1980. While not birders of the calibre of many in ENHS, we have been keeping records of the birds we have seen and identified there since 1993. Each month we log the regulars that are there all year round and note the migrants that come and go with the seasons. Occasionally we see something unusual.

Our favourite bird watching spot is sitting with a coffee in our comfy chairs under our silky oak, near a kangaroo apple, looking down towards the river. While sitting and sipping last 23 December, Al drew my attention to a bird in the kangaroo apple tree just a few metres away. It was obviously a finch but not the red-browed firetail we were used to seeing in flocks of 5-40 birds.

This bird was dull brown above with black and white barring below and a red rump. We watched it without binoculars for about 5 minutes before it flew off. There was only the one bird in the tree, it was a bright sunny day and we were quite close to it.

We didn't know what type of finch it was, so we checked our reference books immediately and the only finch that fitted in terms of its visual appearance and location was the Beautiful Firetail, *Emblema bellum*. Great – a new bird for us and the first one we'd seen in the valley.

At home I checked the ENHS website and its list of birds in Eurobodalla and found no mention of the Beautiful Firetail – curious! Later we sent our list for December to Julie Morgan and were very surprised when she told us it was the first sighting in Eurobodalla reported to ENHS.

Our immediate thought was – have we made a mistake? So, it was back to reference books, but they still confirmed our original identification. Other finches suggested had spots not barring and were not listed as occurring in Eurobodalla.

Having had this special privilege, we resolved to take detailed notes of any unusual or unknown bird we see in future; but this may well be our one moment of modest birding fame. Robyne Stacey

### Highlights from ENHS records - Summer 2019

Avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Stubble Quail	Up to 20	Com	JC	
Brown Quail	2	Com	JC	
Black Swan	Up to 300	TS	GM	In Jan.
Hoary-headed Grebe	5	MO	NM	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	8, 4	MKS/LP	SMG/ IAG	
Topknot Pigeon	50, 15, 14	MO/MHS/PS	NM/JM	Dec.
White-throated Nightjar	5, 1	PS/MYA/ Surfside	JM/JS/DB	First record at Surfside.
White-throated Needletail	100, 65, 50	Surfside/MO/PS /Bergalia/MHS	NM/JM/ DHK	Widespread.
Fork-tailed Swift	Flock, 5	Surfside/TS/PS	RSor/M Craig /JM	
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	200, 12, 3	MHS/MB/Sth DS	DB/JM/FM/ JCof	
Short-tailed Shearwater	50	MHS	DB/JM	
Fluttering Shearwater	5	MHS	DB/JM	
Little Penguin	2	MHS	JM	2 found dead on the beach.
Australasian Gannet	4, 2	MO/MB/MHS	NM/FM/JM	
Pied Cormorant	4	Sth DS/TS	JCof/GM	
Intermediate Egret	1	MYA/Com	JC	Feb.
Striated Heron	2, 1	NA/Broulee	MA/GLM	
Little Egret	10, 4	MB/TS	MA/GM	
Eastern Reef Egret	1	MO/Bingie Pt/ Mullimburra Pt /MB	NM/DHK/ MA	
Nankeen Night-Heron	1	BBWG/Sth DS	RSor/M Burk/ JCof	
Eastern Osprey	1	MHS/MB	JM/MA	
Square-tailed Kite	2, 1	PS/Broulee/ MKS/MB/ Surfside	JM/SMG/ MA/RSor/ I Jamieson	Immature at Bimbimbee.
Brown Goshawk	2	Com	JC	One dependent young.
Swamp Harrier	1	MO/MYA/Com	NM/JC	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Up to 3	PS	JM	Including 2 juveniles.
Australian Hobby	1	MB	MA	
Peregrine Falcon	1	PS/MYA/Com	JM/JS/JC	

Buff-banded Rail	6	TS	GM	Five dependent young.
Aust Pied Oystercatcher	20, 15, 8, 6, 4	TS/Kianga/Brou L/Sth DS/CO	GM/T&ARoss/DB/JCof/JM	2 young at Sth DS and CO, 1 at Brou L.
Sooty Oystercatcher	6, 4	Broulee/Sth DS/MB	GLM/JCof/MA	
Pacific Golden Plover	4	MB	FM	
Red-capped Plover	10, 9	Brou L/Sth DS	DB/JCof	With young.
Double-banded Plover	1	NA/MB	MA/JMG	First on Feb 10.
Lesser Sand Plover	1	Brou L	DB	Dec.
Black-fronted Dotterel	6, 2	Com/MO/Bingie	JC/NM/DHK	Dependant young at Com.
Hooded Plover	Up to 7	NA	JMG	Handkerchief Beach.
Latham's Snipe	4	Com	JC	
Bar-tailed Godwit	100	NA	MA	
Whimbrel	15	MHS	M Griffith	
Eastern Curlew	6, 5, 3	MHS/NA/BI	M Griffith/MA	
Common Greenshank	1	Com	JC	Dec.
Ruddy Turnstone	2	Brou L/Coila L	DB	
Great Knot	8	Brou L	DB	Including juveniles.
Red Knot	5	Brou L	DB	2 juveniles.
Red-necked Stint	20, 10	Brou L/Coila L	DB	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	100, 1	Brou L/Com	DB/JC	
Painted Button-quail	1	Malua Bay	MW	
Little Tern	Up to 100	Brou L	DB	Nesting with runners in Feb.
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	MHS/PS	JM	With dependent young.
Gang-Gang Cockatoo	6, 4	NA/Broulee/MB	MA/GLM/FM	
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	2 to 4	PS	JM	Feeding on Red Ironbark with other lorikeets.
Eastern Koel	Up to 6	Broulee	GLM	Young being fed by Red and Little Wattlebird.
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	PS	JM	2 young being fed by a Pied Currawong.
Pallid Cuckoo	Call	Cool	DO	
Powerful Owl	3, 2	PS/MO	JM/NM	
Barking Owl	1	Deua R/Pedro	RS/AR/S Doyle	
Masked Owl	1	MYA	JS	
Azure Kingfisher	1	Com/Deua R/MO	JC/RS/AR/NM	
Sacred Kingfisher	2	Deua R/Com	RS/AR/JC	Carrying food at Com.
Dollarbird	Up to 9	Com	JC	Nesting with young in Jan.
Green Catbird	2	NA	JMG/MA	
Southern Emu-wren	Up to 8	Candlagan Ck	GLM	
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	2	NA	JMG/MA	
Striated Pardalote	2, 1	Cool/MO	DO/NM	
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	4	MB	FM	
Fuscous Honeyeater	1	Broulee	FM	
Painted Honeyeater	Call	Brou L	DB	
Scarlet Honeyeater	25, 20	MO/PS/Com	NM/JM/JC	
Little Friarbird	1	Broulee	MA	Immature.
Varied Sittella	4	PS/MO	JM/NM	
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1 or call	PS/MKS	JM/SMG	
Cicadabird	4, 1, call	PS/MB/MKS	JM/MA/SMG	
Crested Shrike-tit	1	Deua R/MO	RS/AR/NM	Dec and Jan.
Australasian Figbird	5, 3 or call	MYA/MB/TS	JM/FM/GM	
Dusky Woodswallow	8, 3, 1	Bergalia/Com/Deua R	DHK/JC/RS/AR	



Rufous Fantail	Up to 6, 2	ERBG/NA	GLM/JMG	2 nests at ERBG.
Little Raven	1	Deua R	RS/AR	Unusual at this time of year.
Leaden Flycatcher	2, 1 or call	PS/MO/MB/ MKS	JM/NM/MA/ SMG	Fewer than usual.
Satin Flycatcher	1 or call	PS/CO	JM/M Griffith	Male at CO.
Black-faced Monarch	2	NA/MB	MA	Singles elsewhere.
Golden-headed Cisticola	Up to 10	Com	JC	Carrying food.
Aust Reed Warbler	4, call	Com/PS/MO	JC/JM/NM	
Mistletoebird	2 or calls	PS/Com	JM/JC	
Double-barred Finch	6	NA	JMG/MA	At water in Feb, Tebbs Rd. First record since Mar 2012.
Beautiful Firetail	1	Deua R	RS/AR	First record for the shire.

Non-avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Common Wombat	1	Deua R/Cool	RS/AR/DO	
Short-beaked Echidna	2, 1	PS/Sth DS/MHS /TS/MB	JM/JCof/DB/GM/ MA	
Common Dunnart	1	Broulee	MF	
Sugar Glider	Calls	Deua R/PS	RS/AR/JM	
Common Brushtail Possum	Up to 6, 1	Com/LP/Deua R/TS/Cool	JC/IAG/RS/AR/ GM/DO	
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	53, 33	Sth DS/Cool	JCof/DO	
Red-necked Wallaby	5, 4, 2	Cool/Deua R/TS	DO/RS/AR/GM	
Grey-headed Flying Fox	500 to 100,000	MHS/PS/MYA	JM and various observers	In their usual camp at MHS.
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	12, 6	Sth DS/MHS	JCof/JM	
Snake-necked Turtle	5, 3	Com/Mossy Pt	JC/HR	
Yellow-bellied Water-skink	3	Com	JC	
Eastern Water-skink	3, 1	LP/Sth DS	IAG/JCof	
Jacky Lizard	3, 2, 1	PS/ Cool/Mossy Pt/Broulee	JM/DO/HR/MF	
Gippsland Water Dragon	10, 2, 1	Com/Malua Bay /Deua R	JC/MW/RS/AR	
Lace Monitor	1 or 2	LP/Deua R/PS/ Com/Cool	IAG/RS/AR/JM/ JC/DO	
Diamond Python	1	Com	JC	
Mustard-bellied Snake	1	Sth DS	JCof	
Death Adder		Eurobodalla Rd	JC	A number reported.

<b>Frogs</b> JC/MC/JM/HR/ DO	Common Eastern Froglet, Brown Striped Grass Frog, Tyler's Toadlet; tree frogs: Green, Eastern Sedgefrog, Jervis Bay, Keferstein's, Peron's, Tyler's, Verreaux's.
<b>Moths</b> DB/JCof/JC/ KMD/MF/JM/ GLM	Splendid Ghost, Elhamma, Plume, Pecan Stem Girdler, Meal, Mahogany Bark, Cream Wave, Plantain, Neat Epidesmia, Helena Gum, Convolvulus, Triangle and Coprosma Hawk, Processionary Caterpillar, Banded & Lydia Lichen, Lichen-eating, Variable Halone, Magpie, Tiger, Dark-spotted and Crimson Tiger, Heliotrope, Sparshalli, Northern Old Lady, Whistling, Mistletoe, Triangle Owlet, Black Noctuid, Native Budworm.
<b>Butterflies</b> MA/DB/S Bond/ JC/MF/GLM/JM/ DO/JS/FM	Splendid Ochre, Barred Skipper, Lilac & Banded Grass-skipper, Spotted Sedge-skipper, Narrow-brand & Greenish Grass-dart, Blue Triangle, Orchard & Dainty Swallowtail, Small Grass Yellow, Yellow-spotted, Imperial & Black Jezebel, Caper & Cabbage White, Dusky Knight, Brown Ringlet, Varied Sword-grass Brown, Marbled Xenica, Common Brown, Varied Eggfly, Meadow Argus, Aust Painted Lady, Yellow Admiral, Common Crow, Monarch, Imperial Hairstreak, Varied & Blotched Dusky-blue, Two-spotted Line-blue, Cycad & Samphire Blue, Common Grass Blue.
<b>Dragon &amp; Damselflies</b> JC/MF/JM/RSor	Common Bluetail, Red and Blue Damsel, Blue-spotted Hawker, Black-faced, Wandering & Scarlet Percher, Blue Skimmer, Common Glider, Tau & Australian Emerald, Graphic Flutterer, Common Flatwing.

<b>Beetles</b> JC/MF/JM	Net-winged, Tricolour Soldier, Pintail, Repsimus, Christmas, Dotted Paropsine & Small Blue Leaf, Dung, Argentinian and Green Scarab, Banded Pumpkin, Click, Metallic Green Acacia, Three-lined Potato, Tortoise, Honeybrown, Belid & Botany Bay Weevil; Ladybirds: Transverse, 26, 28, Orange & Common Spotted, White collared, Striped, Fungus-eating, Mealybug, Steel Blue.
<b>Bugs</b> JC/MF/JM	Water Strider, Water Boatman, Bronze Orange, Harlequin, Assassin, Metallic Shield, Pale Cottonstainer, Green Vegetable. Cicadas: Double-spotted, Black Prince, Greengrocer, Razor Grinder, Double Drummer.
<b>Other insects</b> JCof/JC/MF/JM/ RSor	Blue Banded and Masked Bee. Yellow-winged Locust. Vegetable Grasshopper. Common Garden Katydid. Mole Cricket. Wasps: Common Paper, White-faced Brown Paper, Blue Flower, Mason, Orange Caterpillar Parasite, Cuckoo, Bembix Sand. Fly: Boatman, Green Long-legged, Robber, Giant & Giant Blue Robber, Beefly, Snail Parasite Blowfly, Grey Flesh, Native Drone.
<b>Spiders</b> JC/MF/JM	Spiny, Two-spined, White-spotted Swift, Black House, Leaf-curling, Jumping, Huntsman, Net Casting, Water, Daddy Long Legs, Golden Orb, House Hopper, White Porch.

**RAINFALL (mm). December:** 66 at LP, 116 at MKS, 114 at Bergalia, 135 at Com, 119 at MB, 124.5 at Cool. **January:** 43 at LP, 81 at MKS, 99 at Bergalia, 73 at Com, 76 at Cool. **February:** 16 at LP, 40 at MKS, 34 at Com, 89 at Cool.

### Contributors

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

### ENHS Committee and Contact Details

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**Eurobodalla Natural History Society: Annual General Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**Nomination form for election of Office Bearers and the Committee**

**Chair**..... Nominated by.....

Consent of Candidate..... Seconded by.....

**Secretary**..... Nominated by.....

Consent of Candidate..... Seconded by.....

**Treasurer**..... Nominated by.....

Consent of Candidate..... Seconded by.....

**Recorder**..... Nominated by.....

Consent of Candidate..... Seconded by.....

**Committee member**..... Nominated by.....

Consent of Candidate..... Seconded by.....

**Committee member**..... Nominated by.....

Consent of Candidate..... Seconded by.....

**Please return to the Secretary, ENHS, P.O. Box 888 Moruya, NSW, 2537 by 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019**