



EUROBODALLA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Inc.

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The Freckled Duck (*Stictonetta naevosa*) – Gould 1841

Taxonomy and distribution

The genus *Stictonetta* is endemic to Australia and contains one monotypic species, the Freckled Duck. The species is a bit of a taxonomic mystery and may in fact be more closely related to swans than true ducks. The reasoning behind this stems primarily from their downy young, which, unlike all other ducks, do not have any patterning and are plain grey like young swans.

The species distribution is centred around the big wetlands of south east and south western Australia. However, in response to droughts and floods, the species can be found anywhere on the continent though generally they prefer deep, large wetlands.

Description and behaviour.

The Freckled Duck is medium sized and is generally slightly smaller than the Pacific Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*). The plumage of the species is unique, being finely freckled black and white all over. Only the underwing is silvery white, and the species lacks the speculum, the brightly coloured wing patch that most other duck species have. Males are slightly bigger than females and the soft parts of both sexes are black. However, in breeding condition the enlarged base of the beak in males turns bright red. At close range the species is unmistakable. At longer ranges the big triangular head and unique downcurved beak should aid in identification and the plumage will appear to be uniformly grey rather than brown.



Freckled Duck

Photo D Bertzeletos

Freckled Ducks are gregarious and can form flocks of thousands at favoured drought refuges. They will join mixed duck flocks but will generally always be outnumbered by other commoner species. They are particularly fond of loafing on logs and will spend a lot of time doing this if left undisturbed. The species is vocal, but most of the calls are soft hisses, clicks and laughs, barely audible to humans.

Diet and breeding

Freckled Ducks are omnivorous, feeding on a wide variety of plant matter and small invertebrates close to or just under the surface. For breeding the species needs deep water bodies with plenty of cover. Breeding can occur at any time

of the year if conditions are suitable. The male will find a receptive female and will defend her against other males. The male will also assist with nestbuilding but, once the female starts to lay, he will abandon her in search of another. The clutch of 4-14 eggs is incubated by the female alone for 26-28 days and the chicks are then looked after for another month or so.

Conservation and status in the Eurobodalla

Due to its very wide distribution, the Freckled Duck is considered by the IUCN to be of least concern. However, it is often considered to be one of the rarest ducks in the country and is listed as vulnerable to endangered in most states. Habitat destruction and illegal shooting in Victoria are threats, but the biggest threat facing the species, and indeed all our waterbirds, is drought driven by climate crisis.

In the Eurobodalla the species visits rarely, in small to medium sized flocks. Visits appear to be becoming more regular in recent years, probably due to droughts. It is unlikely that the species will be able to breed in our area as there are no large, deep, permanent swamps. Dimitris Bertzeletos

Do you enjoy a gokotta?

If you are a member of the Eurobodalla Natural History Society, then you probably do, without realising it. When correctly pronounced, the word “gokotta” is much prettier than it appears in print. The correct pronunciation is “djuh-koo-ta”. It is important to get this right. It is a Swedish word and has no direct English translation. It is a noun which describes the act of getting up early in the morning specifically to listen to birdsong and appreciate nature. It is not a gokotta if you get up early to drive to the airport, or to go to work, or because you forgot to put the garbage bin out the night before.

I don't know how or when the word ”gokotta” entered the English language, but when I was Googling it, I discovered that already it is being used incorrectly. For example there are Gokotta cafes in Central Melbourne and Sydney. The chances of hearing birdsong in Ultimo and Docklands are fairly remote, so you may have got up early to grab an early coffee in town, but this is not a gokotta because it is highly unlikely that you anticipated hearing birdsong – unless you then drove out into the forest with a takeaway.

Being members of the ENHS, we have the opportunity each month to enjoy a gokotta (remember, it's “djuh-koo-ta”) on our Sunday morning field meetings, not only listening to birdsong, but hopefully seeing a good number of birds as well. I look forward to seeing you on one of our forthcoming gokottas. Mandy Anderson
Reference: Ackerman, Jennifer, The genius of birds. (Scribe, 2016)

What's coming up....

Saturday July 13, 2pm: Moruya Heads/Toragy. Meet at the corner of Elizabeth Road and Coronation Drive, Moruya Heads South. Walk along the coastal track, White-fronted Tern, Albatross species, Eastern Reef Egret, Oystercatcher, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, seals, dolphin and whales.

Sunday July 28, 9am: Bimbimbie. Meet at the corner of Princes Hwy and Bimbimbie Rd, Bimbimbie. The track runs between Bimbimbie and Misons Rd. Spotted Gum forest and moist gullies. Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Brown Gerygone, Superb Lyrebird, White-eared Honeyeater.

Saturday August 10, 2pm: Bodalla State Forest. Meet opposite the Bodalla Police Station. A track will be chosen closer to the time with the hope that Swift Parrot and unusual honeyeater species will be passing through the area.

Sunday August 25, 9am: Burrawang, near Barlings Beach. Meet at corner of George Bass Drive and Bevan Rd south, near Barlings Swamp. A walk on private property with a variety of coastal habitats. A mix of honeyeaters and thornbills, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Red-browed Treecreeper.

Saturday September 14, 2pm: Jemisons Point, Potato Point. Meet next to the Rural Fire Shed on Potato Point Rd. A walk through Spotted Gum and Bangalay forest. Emu, Wonga Pigeon, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, New Holland Honeyeater, Red-necked Wallaby.

Sunday September 29, 9am: Mogendoura Farm, Moruya. Meet at the car park outside the Eurobodalla Shire Council and Library, Vulcan Street, Moruya. A walk on private property with open land and forested areas. Mistletoebird, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Flame and Scarlet Robin.

A warm welcome to new members...

Nerida Bourke, Broulee
Margaret and Mark Craig, Tuross Head
Adrian Cram and Wendy Jones, Kiora
Annie Johnsen, Broulee
Karen McCann, Catalina

The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Eurobodalla Natural History Society was held at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens on Sunday 26th May 2019 with 18 members in attendance. The minutes from the 2018 AGM were circulated and taken as read.

Business Arising: (1) A letter to Council concerning the Rural Lands Strategy was sent and receipt of letter was acknowledged. (2) The purchase of a new computer and printer which had been approved at last AGM was completed.

Chair's Report: Julie expressed her delight that thirty-three years after the ENHS was started, the Society continues to flourish. She thanked the committee for their commitment to the society, in particular Lyn Burden for her work as Secretary, Malcolm Griggs for continuing as Treasurer, and Lucy Gibson, who is retiring from the committee. The Society's publications, *Nature in Eurobodalla* and the newsletter, provide connection with members and Julie thanked David Kay for his commitment to NIE and Helen and David Kay who have taken on the coordination and publication of the newsletter. Members of the Society who suggested and led Field Meetings were acknowledged. ENHS members continue to participate in Swift Parrot/Regent Honeyeater surveys and in the Shorebird Recovery program.

Secretary's Report: Lyn reported that membership continues to be around ninety, with field meeting attendances around 12-25 members. Visitors are regularly welcomed. The Mallacoota Out of Shire trip was successful though wet and windy for many of the days. The committee is in the process of editing a Bird Trails Guide for the Eurobodalla.

Treasurer's Report: Malcolm presented his report and indicated that there has been a small loss for the year of \$465.96 as a result of the purchase of the new computer and printer. Income for the year was \$2870; expenditure \$3335.96; the bank balance was \$2766.25; and the ANZ term deposit \$7837.46.

Election of Office Bearers: With the exception of Lucy Gibson, who was resigning, all office bearers declared their willingness to continue in their current positions. John Gordon had also nominated as a committee member. The following were therefore elected unopposed:

Chair: Julie Morgan, **Secretary:** Lyn Burden, **Treasurer:** Malcolm Griggs, **Recorder:** Julie Morgan, **Committee Members:** Mandy Anderson, Fran Anderson, David Kay, Gillian Macnamara, John Gordon and Steven Benjamin.

General business: Julie Morgan suggested the purchase of a second printer for printing of species sheets and other forms. It was agreed that the Committee would consider the options and decide on the final purchase. Malcolm Fyfe asked about the funding for the Bird Trails brochure. The issue has not yet been finalised, but Council will be approached and there are a few other possibilities to be explored. Julie Collett asked for members to be alert to the possibility of new venues for the Field Meetings. She encouraged us to think about alternatives. Peter Collett expressed his thanks to the Field Meeting leaders, especially for the time they took to research their walks and review tracks before the meeting day. Lyn Burden.

Field meeting – Eder's Farm 28 April 2019

Our field meeting on 28 April was another reminder of the joys and benefits of ENHS membership. The original plan had been a trip to German Creek, but we were advised that the road had deteriorated as a result of heavy traffic over the school holiday/Easter period. A change of plan was needed at short notice and once again, Peter and Julie Collett came to the rescue – through their contacts we were all invited to visit Eder's Farm, a dairy farm owned by Robert and Barbara Eder. The farm is situated at the end of Bumbo Rd in a valley alongside Bumbo Creek.

Once we'd all arrived at the farm, our Society historian, Peter Collett, briefly outlined the history of the property. The farm was once part of the 56,000-acre Bodalla Estate, owned by Thomas Sutcliffe Mort. It was sold in 1921 to the Crapp family and then in 2005 to the Eders who are dairy farmers from the US. During our walk Peter pointed out the route of the old inland road from Bodalla to Moruya. Mort favoured driving his

cattle along the inland road as it avoided the treacherous Tuross river crossing, where, in the past, many people had drowned. The old road had also been used to shift gold from Nerrigundah.



Elkhorn

Photo A Marsh

As we headed off towards Lorrigans Swamp our interest then moved from cultural to natural history. Within a stand of flowering Spotted Gum we could see Rainbow Lorikeets and hear the calls of Musk Lorikeets. There was also a number of Red Wattlebird migrating northwards. Closer to the creek there was more excitement when a Swift Parrot flew off, calling distinctively. Shortly afterwards we spotted an enormous Elkhorn Fern (*Platycerium bifurcatum*) attached to a very spindly casuarina and wondered how such a frail looking tree could support the weight of this huge fern.

Along the creek side a pair of Restless Flycatchers was sighted, and then as we climbed a hill along the bank of the creek, a Rose Robin called and we got a good view of the colourful handsome male and also heard a second call.

Lorrigans swamp was full of casuarinas and the scene of much activity. There was a variety of ducks, Eurasian Coots and Black Swans on the swamp, as well as an Australasian Darter and a couple of Little Pied Cormorants. Overhead, raptors were circling, and we watched a Swamp Harrier in hot pursuit of a Wedge-tailed Eagle while a Brown Goshawk flew by. Many Pied Currawongs were moving through the property and among them, 3 Grey Currawongs making their distinctive “chinking” call.

We trudged up the hill in glorious autumn sunshine and reflected on several unusual sightings for the day: Dusky Woodswallows, Grey Currawongs and a Swift Parrot, which are rarely seen on our walks. It was also a grand day for raptors, capped off by the sight of a Hobby flying directly overhead as we were doing the bird list.



Lorrigans Swamp

Photo A Marsh

The total bird count for the day was 65 species; 60 at the farm and 5 others on the drive in. Thanks to the following people for such a rewarding day – the Eders for allowing us to visit at such short notice and, of course, Peter and Julie Collett for taking the time to tell us about the property’s history. Helen Kay

Seen From Afar

Telopea is a genus in the family *Proteaceae*. It was first described by Robert Brown in 1810 from a specimen collected in the Blue Mountains. There are 5 different species and many cultivars, all endemic to the south eastern states of Australia. The genus name is from the Greek *telopos*, seen from afar, referring to the conspicuous red flowers. The common name for all species is Waratah, which is the Aboriginal name, meaning a tree with red flowers. Waratahs are large shrubs to small trees with spirally arranged leaves. They usually have many stems which grow from a woody base (lignotuber), from which they can resprout after fire. They are easily recognised by their distinctive red flowerheads consisting of up to 250 individual flowers. They also usually have a basal ring of coloured bracts and are pollinated by birds. The fruit is a boat-shaped, leathery follicle, splitting to release many winged seeds. They appear in a circular arrangement like the spokes on a wheel. Many species have been cultivated in the UK since the early 1900s.

Telopea speciosissima - NSW Waratah

This is the most well known species and was proclaimed the state emblem of NSW in 1962. The species name is from the Latin *speciosus*, meaning showy or splendid and *issimus*, meaning much or most, referring to the flowers. It was also known as Tulip Tree in the early days of settlement. It grows in dry sclerophyll forests

from sea level to 1,000 m, restricted to an area within about 200km from Sydney. This was the first Australian plant to be collected for cultivation in Europe (1789). It is also now grown commercially in NZ, Israel and Hawaii.

It is an upright shrub to 3m in height. The dark green leaves are about 250mm long and 65mm wide, usually irregularly serrated, and have conspicuous veins. Usually between Aug and Nov, flowerheads appear at the ends of the erect stems and can be up to 150mm in diameter with 90-250 individual flowers. Bracts are the same colour as the flowers. The follicles are 80-150mm long and the seeds are released in early winter.

A white flowered variety was discovered in 1970 in a water catchment area near Robertson, NSW. Cuttings were brought into cultivation at the Wirrimbirra Environment Centre near Bargo and the variety was named 'Wirrimbirra White'.

Telopea mongaensis - Monga Waratah

This is the only naturally occurring species in our region. It was first collected in 1947 on Sugarloaf Mt near Braidwood in the Monga NP. The term *ensis* at the end of the species name refers to its geographical location. It grows in dry sclerophyll forest and fringes of temperate rainforest at altitudes of 540-760m, from Monga to Barren Grounds and Fitzroy Falls. This species can grow up to 6m in height. The leaves are shorter (50-160mm) than *T. speciosissima* and they are not serrated. The flowerheads appear between Oct and Dec, are also terminal, but slightly flattened and less compact, with up to 65 individual red flowers. The fruit is also smaller, 40-60mm long. This is a hardy species, generally easily grown and suitable for semi-shade or sun. The cultivar 'Braidwood Brilliant' is a hybrid between this species (female parent) and *T. speciosissima* (male parent). It was developed in 1962 and registered in 1975. It is one of the most frost tolerant cultivars.



Monga Waratah

Photo B Waters

Telopea oreades - Victorian or Gippsland Waratah

The species name is from the Greek *oros*, a mountain, referring to its habitat. It grows in wet sclerophyll forest and temperate rainforest in mountainous country at altitudes of 200-1100m in the Southern Tablelands, south from Monga NP to Victoria. In the Monga area, it appears with *T. mongaensis* and some hybrids have been observed. It is a tall shrub, up to 3m high but in sheltered sites may reach up to 10m. The leaves are a dull dark green, 110-280mm long, mostly pointed at the tip, with entire margins and obscure veins on the upper surface. Flowerheads are terminal, with 36-60 flowers, and appear between Aug and Nov. The fruit is 50-70mm long. It tolerates shade and was used to develop the cultivar *Telopea* 'Shady Lady' which is also shade tolerant. A white flowered form grows in the Errinundra Plateau.

Telopea truncata - Tasmanian Waratah

The species name is from the Latin *truncatus*, ending abruptly, referring to the wing on the seed. It is endemic to Tasmania, and is found at altitudes of 600-1200m in sub-alpine shrub lands and wet sclerophyll forest. It is usually a shrub to 3m, rarely a small tree to 10m. The leaves are up to 100mm long and usually entire. Flowerheads appear between Nov and Feb, are about 60mm in diameter, with only 10-20 red flowers. The inconspicuous bracts are covered with rusty hairs. The fruit is about 50mm long. A yellow form is also known, originally discovered on the Mt Wellington Range. This is the species which thrives best in the UK. It is a good garden plant, especially in frost prone areas.

Telopea aspera - Gibraltar Range Waratah

The species name is from the Latin *asper*, rough, relating to the leaves. It grows on sandy soils in dry sclerophyll forests in the New England Region. It is listed as a threatened species and was split off as a separate species from *Telopea speciosissima* by botanists Crisp and Weston in the 1900s. Generally a shrub to 3m, its leaves are similar to *T.s* except for being more leathery, rougher and more coarsely toothed. They also show various shades of red, orange and brown before dropping. Flowers and fruit are also similar, but appear about one month later.

Telopea species, especially *T. speciosissima*, are popular as ornamental garden plants and cut flowers. Harvested flower stems are marketed worldwide. Breeding programs have produced many cultivars with features specifically suited to the cut flower industry. They are also valuable wildlife habitat as most flowers produce abundant nectar for nectar feeding birds and insects. The timber has a grain typical of the Proteaceae family and similar to *Grevillea robusta*. It is used in woodworking and for cabinet-making and picture frames. Aboriginal people would make sweet drinks by soaking the flowers in water and use the seeds as a source of food. They also sipped the dew from the leaves in the early morning, which was believed to bring courage.

Phytophthora cinnamomic or Cinnamon Fungus can be a major problem. *Telopeas* have a root system susceptible to attack. This is more likely to occur if plants are growing in poorly drained soil. Fran Anderson

The Annual Montagu Island Shearwater Census, 2019

In March, Montagu Island Partners carried out the 60th annual census of shearwaters. This survey is now the longest running, continuous seabird survey in the world. Prior to 1959 it was thought that only Short-tailed Shearwaters bred on the island, but in that year two other species, Wedge-tailed and Sooty Shearwaters, were recorded, thus raising questions regarding the dynamics of this mixed colony. This long-term study measures the breeding success of each species by counting the number of chicks, measuring their weight and assessing the burrow occupancy within three fixed-area plots. The census also records changes in the island's vegetation as well as noting other species found on the island.



Shearwater chick at its burrow Photo M Crowley

This year all species recorded better than average numbers of chicks. Also, weights and burrow occupancy were high, indicating a very successful breeding season.

Since the eradication of mice in the winter of 2007 some new species have begun to breed. White-faced Storm Petrels, *Pelagodroma marina*, previously unknown on Montagu, started to establish a colony and the breeding population is now in excess of 300 individuals.



Gould's Petrel chick

Photo H Perkins



Spotted Harrier.

Photo Peter Fullagar

The rare Gould's Petrel, *Pterodroma leucoptera*, was first noted in 2012; there are now sixty known nest sites throughout the island. The 2018 – 2019 survey found 40 nests containing eggs, from which 25 chicks hatched.

Most other birds recorded during the survey were resident species or frequent visitors to the island. They include Sooty Oystercatchers, cormorants, Buff-banded Rails, Welcome Swallows and Golden-headed Cisticolas. There are always quite a few birds of prey, including Swamp Harriers, White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Peregrine Falcons; this year a Spotted Harrier was present throughout our stay.

The full report of the 2019 shearwater census will be published in this year's Nature in Eurobodalla. Mike Crowley

Our Garden

Recently, as I watched three Eastern Whipbird fossicking in the leaf litter close to our back door, I reflected on how things have changed since I stood in roughly the same spot in 2011, surveying bare earth.

In 2008, my partner and I bought a dilapidated fibro shack on a long, narrow block in Tuross Head. As soon as we saw it, we liked the peaceful location. We could not see the ocean but just metres to the north of our boundary were the tall trees of Chatham Park, a remnant of coastal rainforest.



The Shack

Photo G Macnamara

Many years earlier, a culvert had been dug through the gardens in our street, to carry stormwater to the ocean. This ditch ran across our block and had become a steep-sided mini-ravine, choked with vegetation. The accessible part of the property was lawn, decorated with an ancient Hills hoist; the section beyond the culvert was overgrown and strewn with bricks and scraps of carpet. Neighbours had ‘borrowed’ the far end of the garden and planted several trees, including a mulberry, some figs and a sadly misplaced oak.

In 2011, having had the shack knocked down and a house built, we called in experts to help with the garden. We wanted natives, local species if possible. For quite some time we had bare earth. A photo from this time shows a Kookaburra perched on a stationary digger, keeping an eye out for whatever the earthworks had disturbed. Predictably, most of our earliest birds were, like the Kookaburra, large or bossy or both: Pied Currawong, Australian Magpie, Grey Butcherbird and Rainbow Lorikeet, with an occasional Red or Little Wattlebird and, once only, a White-faced Heron investigating the soggy ravine. Non-avian species included Echidna, Red-necked Wallaby and Grey Kangaroo. And, in the very early garden-building days, we watched as a fox carried in one of the neighbour’s chickens and buried it in a pile of topsoil.



Garden Layout

Photo G Macnamara

The culvert - renamed an ‘ephemeral watercourse’ by the landscape designer - was widened to slow the water flow and aid absorption. One huge truckload of big stones was thrown in, and grasses were planted to stabilise the banks: lomandra, dianella, poa and pennisetum sp. In the bottom of the watercourse we planted restio, isolepsis and juncus sp.

While our attention was elsewhere, the digger operator, used to digging farm dams, hollowed out a very steep-sided, two-metre deep pond. Worried about drownings, we chucked in yet more rocks before wedging in several containers of water plants.

Our garden’s first summer was horribly wet, and many plants turned up their toes. All the Chef’s Cap Correa succumbed, as did the *Leptospermum laevigatum* and several grevillea. Somewhat daunted, we spent yet more money on plants. Some of the original species flourished but were straggly, so we eschewed species purity and added many more cultivars. We are learning what survives, though this is a continuing challenge given the strange weather. A hot, dry period saw off some westringia and groundcover grevillea.

We put in several bird baths. At first, they were all just a metre off the ground. But, once we acquired a long-legged dog who chases anything that moves, the baths had to be relocated: now they are on two-metre poles, much trickier to fill, but well above Labradoodle height.

Gradually the bare garden has become a bushy place – ‘jungly’ according to one recent visitor – and more birds have found their way in. Hosts of Red and Little Wattlebird and Rainbow Lorikeet continue to visit, but regulars now include King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Eastern Whipbird and Eastern Spinebill. Less frequent are

Silvereye, Brown Thornbill, Superb and Variegated Fairy-Wren, White-browed Scrubwren and Red-browed Finch. A Crescent Honeyeater was a ‘one-off’ and I’m not sure if I should count the young Collared Sparrowhawk that sat for days in a tree just beyond the back fence.

In the summer of 2017/2018, when nearby gums flowered poorly, we had daily visits from Scarlet Honeyeater. Luckily for them but unluckily for us, food has been more plentiful this year and so we have heard them in the tall trees of Chatham Park rather than seeing them on our Grevillea.

In the summer of 2018/2019 Buff-banded Rail nested in the dense grasses bordering the culvert and produced two broods. They travelled between

several gardens, crossing the very quiet road, causing concern to birds and humans when they found themselves stuck at fences. Several times I watched as an adult sat on a fence, flapping and calling, while four or five small black chicks ran about, searching for a gap in the palings. Obviously, Buff-banded Rail evolved in a pre-fence era. It has been months since we heard the piercing ‘peep’ of a rail. But I’ve been told that, across the road, in a garden with ducks as well as a pond, four Buff-banded Rail queue for handouts of duck food.

The water in our own pond is now barely visible beneath various water plants, escaped from their pots and forming dense cover. Frog visitors to date have included *Crinia signifera*, *Limnodynastes peronii* and *Litoria dentata*. They in turn have attracted the occasional Red-bellied Black Snake.

We still see far fewer species at our place than many ENHS members observe in their gardens, but there has been a significant increase since the early ‘bare earth’ days. And I am hoping that the Spotted Pardalote, Golden Whistler and Eastern Yellow Robin seen and heard in Chatham Park will hop the fence before too long. Gillian Macnamara



Garden now

Photo G Macnamara

A Regent Honeyeater at Burrewarra Point

On March 19, David and Marilyn Clark and Lance Brown found a Regent Honeyeater at Burrewarra Point, feeding on the Coastal Banksia, *Banksia integrifolia*. With an estimated 300 birds remaining in Australia, the visit of a Regent Honeyeater to the Eurobodalla attracted much interest, and over the next three weeks a number of people visited the site and were rewarded with excellent views, as the many photos on our Facebook page show.



Regent Honeyeater

Photo A Nicol

The bird was on its own and, without another Regent Honeyeater, displayed some unusual behaviours. Regent Honeyeaters are usually shy and tend to avoid areas dominated by the larger nectar feeders. There were hundreds of Rainbow Lorikeet, Red and Little Wattlebird feeding on the Coastal Banksia at Burrewarra Point. Rather than shying away from the lorikeets and wattlebirds, this Regent appeared confident around these more boisterous birds. Little Wattlebird aggression towards the Regent Honeyeater was observed but, despite that, the Regent always returned to the same group of trees to feed. The banksias it preferred were situated next to the track and it fed high and low in these trees. The importance of banksia flowers

to its diet has been noted by BirdLife Australia's Mick Roderick.

The Regent Honeyeater did not make its own call very often and many observers heard it mimic the calls of its companions. Its mimicry of Little Wattlebird calls was excellent and extensive, and it went so far as to adopt the pose of the Little Wattlebird as it called. It was also heard to mimic the calls of Red Wattlebird, Olive-backed Oriole, Grey Butcherbird and Noisy Friarbird. The Regent Honeyeater also showed signs of courting behaviour as it relentlessly pursued a Little Wattlebird from tree to tree, singing and gesturing all the while.

It's been a few years since we've recorded a Regent Honeyeater. Our most recent record prior to this was in 2016 in Boyne State Forest where two birds were calling. In 2010, a pair of Regent Honeyeaters successfully raised young at Congo. Julie Morgan

Summary of the 2018/19 shorebird breeding season

Taken from the NSW Far South Coast Region, Threatened Species Recovery Program Newsletter

Hooded Plover

The 2018/19 season was fairly good for Hooded Plovers on the NSW Far South Coast (an area that extends from Batemans Bay to the border) with 11 chicks fledging from 12 breeding pairs.

In the Eurobodalla, a pair at Wallaga Lake fledged two chicks after dodging attempts by foxes and ravens to steal the eggs. They later defended their territory against Little Terns and a vicious attack was launched by the Hooded Plovers on a nesting Little Tern, driving the pair away from the site. The Hooded Plovers were forced to share the site with a successful pair of Pied Oystercatchers (probably too big to tackle!).

Pied Oystercatcher

Twenty-six breeding pairs were monitored on the Far South Coast and 17 chicks were known to survive. Many threats were present including ravens, goannas, feral cats and foxes. Inundation of nests and human disturbance also influenced the success of breeding on the south coast.

In the Eurobodalla, successful nesting sites included Congo, which produced two fledges after careful nurturing by the Congo volunteers. The electric fences worked well and kept the foxes at bay.

The Tuross volunteers kept a careful eye on numerous islands within Tuross Lake with a lot of fishing activity and tourists throughout the season. At South Tuross Beach, two eggs were unfortunately lost and Western Isle produced five chicks although only one fledge survived. At Rocky Isle, two chicks survived and at Long Spit one fledgling was spotted. At Corner Isle, one chick was lost and on Eastern Isle, three chicks were unfortunately lost. New signs were installed asking people to keep off the sand flats throughout the Tuross Estuary. Signs were also put up this year at Coila Beach to try to minimize dogs on the lakeside, which is a good foraging area with potential nesting sites.

New protection by Eurobodalla Shire prohibiting dogs, campers and motorbikes certainly helped at Lewis Island, which produced two early fledglings in December. Mill Bay Island in Wagonga Inlet was looked after by ranger, Lucy, and produced one fledgling. A surprise chick was found at 1080 beach by ranger, Kathryn, but no further sightings were made. The Wallaga Lake birds successfully raised two chicks.

Little Terns

Little Terns established three nesting colonies on the Far South Coast this season: Tuross Head, Mogareeka and Wallagoot Lake. Tuross Lake was the preferred nesting site with the number of Little Terns building up to approximately 40 pairs in January.

The Little Terns first arrived in early November, when the site was fenced and signage installed by the dedicated Tuross volunteers. The site was extensive at this point with some low-lying nests at risk of inundation. In late November, fences had to be moved due to king tides and high ocean swells. In December, new nests appeared but strong winds caused sand inundation and eggs losses. New nests appeared yet again and, in late December, some nests had to be raised while others needed to be barricaded with driftwood.

The first near fledges were sighted in late December and then, in early January, there were more king tides and water ran through the site. In January, the volunteers experimented with chick shelters made from old plastic real estate signs. The volunteers were very creative and glued sand on top to make them less visible to predators from above.

The final fledgling numbers was 39 fledges from 111 nests. Of the 209 eggs laid, 160 were lost due to adverse weather conditions, so the predation level was low.



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

Ghost Fungus

Wow it's glowing! And it's huge. The bioluminescent fungus on a sawn-off tree stump in our backyard in Broulee once again showed its true night colours. This is the second appearance of our "ghost fungus", possibly *Omphalotus nidiformis*. Last year it not only glowed... it pulsed at us as we moved closer.

This year we first noticed it on Good Friday then went away for Easter so were relieved to see it glowing when we returned on Easter Monday night. And just as well we invited our neighbours Geoff and Lynne McVeigh and some other friends with young children for a glowing view on the Tuesday because by Wednesday it had started to wither and had faded to almost nothing.



Ghost Fungus

Photo Geoff McVeigh

It was so wonderful to see this recent report on the ABC: <https://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-29/growing-glowing-ghost-mushrooms-at-home/11048958?pfmredir=sm> giving us some much needed info on our garden friends.



Ghost Fungus

Photo Geoff McVeigh

The pictures (thanks to Geoff McVeigh) shows our ghost fungus in the day. It proved too difficult to capture it in its glowing glory at night. We'll be on the lookout for it next autumn but encourage all to follow instructions in the attached article to try to locate them after rain in your local bush area then revisit at night ... without a torch. We've also seen them at our local Botanic Gardens along the Rees Creek track and on the bush track behind Captain Oldrey Park in Broulee.

Happy hunting Marie Zuvich and Bill Nagle

Highlights from ENHS records for Autumn 2019

Avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Stubble Quail	Up to 20	Com	JC	
Brown Quail	2	MYA	FM	Clouett's Rd
Musk Duck	2	Tilba Lake	MA	
Freckled Duck	Up to 100	MHS	A Nicol/ JM/DB	On Newstead Pond. The largest number recorded in the Shire.
Black Swan	Up to 200	MHS/MB	JM/MA	
Australasian Shoveler	37, 5	Bevian Rd/ MYA	DB/JC	
Hardhead	10, 1	Coila L/Com	FM/JC	
Australasian Grebe	4, 1	MB/Com/ Bergalia	MA/JC/ DHK	
Hoary-headed Grebe	6 to 11	Bingie	DHK	Kelly's Lake
White-headed Pigeon	Up to 20	TS	JH/GM	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	4, 2	MKS/LP/ Sth DS	SMG/IAG/ JCof	
Peaceful Dove	4, call	MB/Com	MA/JC	
Bar-shouldered Dove	1 to 2	BP	JM	
Tawny Frogmouth	2, 1	Com/MHS	JC/JM	
White-throated Nightjar	1	Surfside	DB	Last record 1 st March
Aust Owllet-nightjar	1	Com/MB	JC/MA	
White-throated Needletail	6, 1	PS/Sth DS	JM/JCof	Last record 15 th March
Australasian Gannet	10, 4	MB/Sth DS/ Coila L	MA/JCof/ FM	
Australasian Darter	1	Bumbo Rd/ Com/BI	FM/JC/DO	
Intermediate Egret	1	MYA/Com	JC	At Mynora in MYA
Cattle Egret	60	MYA	JC	At Mynora.
Striated Heron	2	NA	MA	
Eastern Reef Egret	2, 1	MB/Pedro Pt/ Sth DS	MA/JM/ JCof	
Straw-necked Ibis	Over 300	MB	MA	
Royal Spoonbill	12, 10, 2	MB/Bumbo Rd/Com	MA/JC	
Eastern Osprey	1 or 2	MHS/Coila L/ Bingie	JM/NC/AM/ I Jamieson	Nesting building at MHS. Fishing over Coila Lake.
Square-tailed Kite	1	Broulee/MB	GLM/MA	March and May records.
Pacific Baza	1	CO	D&M Clark/ V Brown	March 19 th near campground.
Spotted Harrier	1	Kianga	T&A Ross	Carter's beach.
Little Eagle	1	WL	T&A Ross	In May
Peregrine Falcon	1	Bumbo Rd/ Com/MB	FM/JC/MA	
Buff-banded Rail	2	Com	JC	
Spotless Crake	1	Bevian Rd	NC	In May.
Eurasian Coot	110, 30	Bingie/Bumbo Rd	DHK/FM	Kelly's L and Eder's Farm.
Aust Pied Oystercatcher	24	Coila L	FM	
Sooty Oystercatcher	8	Candlagan Ck/ MB	HR/MA	
Black-winged Stilt	Up to 10	Com	JC	In March and May.
Pacific Golden Plover	4	MB	MA	In full breeding plumage in March.
Red-capped Plover	10, 7	Sth DS/MHS	JCof/JM	
Double-banded Plover	6, 5, 2	MHS/Sth DS/ Bogola Head	JM/J Cof/ MA	

Black-fronted Dotterel	4, 2	Bingie/Bumbo Rd/Com	DHK/MA/JC	
Hooded Plover	Up to 7	NA	JMG/MA	Handkerchief Beach
Latham's Snipe	1	Surfside	DB	Heading north on 1 st March
Bar-tailed Godwit	13, 6	NA/TS	MA/JH/GM	
Eastern Curlew	3	NA	MA	
Caspian Tern	4, 2	NA/Coila L	MA/FM	
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3, 2	PS/Bergalia	JM/DHK	
Gang-Gang Cockatoo	4, 3	MB/Cool/NA	MA/DO/JMG	Juvenile begging at NA in March.
Rainbow Lorikeet	Hundreds	MB	MA	
Musk Lorikeet	100 plus	MB	MA	
Little Lorikeet	20	PS	JM	
Australian King Parrot	20	Com	JC	
Swift Parrot	12, 6, 3, 2, 1	MHS/BB/PS/Bimbimbie/Bumbo Rd/MB	JM/DB/AM/FM/A Christiansen	In areas with flowering Spotted Gum. 50 reported at WL in April on Birdline.
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	Com	JC	April
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1 or call	Malua Bay/PS/MKS/Com	MW/JM/SMG/JC	More vocal than usual at this time of year.
Powerful Owl	1	Com	JC	April
Sooty Owl	Call	PS	JM	May
Sacred Kingfisher	1	PS/MB	JM/MA	March records.
Red-browed Treecreeper	2, 1	PS/Sth DS	JM/FM	
Green Catbird	1	NA	JMG	At bird bath.
Southern Emu-wren	2 to 9	Candlagan Ck	GLM	
Large-billed Scrubwren	Call	Sth DS	FM	
White-throated Gerygone	1	Bumbo Rd	FM	Immature in April. Late record for this species.
Striated Pardalote	1 or call	ERBG/PS/Com	FM/JM/JC	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Up to 100	Com	JC	Smaller groups moving through PS and BB.
White-eared Honeyeater	15, 1, calls	PS/Malua Bay/MYA/Bergalia	JM/MW/FM/DHK	
Fuscous Honeyeater	12, 2, 1	PS/ERBG/MB	JM/FM/MA	Migrating with Yellow-faced Honeyeater at BB.
White-plumed Honeyeater	1	LP	IAG	
Regent Honeyeater	1	BP	Various	First seen by D&M Clark and V Brown on March 19 th
Red Wattlebird	70, 50	Com/PS	JC/JM	Migrating north. Fewer than in past years.
Scarlet Honeyeater	20, 10	NA/PS	JM/AM	Unusual presence in May; feeding in flowering Spotted Gum.
Noisy Friarbird	More than 50	MB	MA	Present through autumn; feeding on Spotted Gum.
Spotted Quail-thrush	1 or call	Mogo SF/Bumbo Rd	AM/JM/FM	
Varied Sittella	8, 7	Malua Bay/Com	MW/JC	
Cicadabird	Calls	PS/MKS	JM/SMG	Last record April 29 th
Rufous Whistler	3, 2, 1	Com/PS/Malua Bay	JC/JM/MW	Present in March and April.
White-breasted Woodswallow	26, 6	MHS/PS	JM	In March
Dusky Woodswallow	20	Bumbo Rd	FM	Eder's Farm

Grey Currawong	3, call	Bumbo Rd/ Com	FM/JC	Eder's Farm
Rufous Fantail	1 or 2	NA/Malua Bay	JMG/MW	March/April
Leaden Flycatcher	1	Bergalia	DHK	Last record March 3 rd
Black-faced Monarch	1	MB/NA	MA/JMG	Last seen in March.
Scarlet Robin	1 or 2	Surfside/ Bergalia	RSor/DHK	Immature male at Surfside, male and female at Bergalia.
Flame Robin	2	MYA	FM	Cloutt's Rd.
Rose Robin	3, 2, 1	Sth DS/Bumbo Rd/NA/Com	FM/JMG/ JC	Fewer reports.
Golden-headed Cisticola	6	Com	JC	
Australian Reed Warbler	4	Com	JC	March
Silvereye	70, 50	Sth DS/PS	JCof/JM	Smaller numbers reported this year.
Tree Martin	70, 10, 2	Com/Sth DS/ Bumbo Rd	JC/JCof/FM	
Mistletoebird	1 or 2	Sth DS/PS/ Coila L/ Bumbo Rd	FM/JM	
Australasian Pipit	10, 3	Com/MYA/ Bingie Pt	JC/FM/DHK	Cloutt's Rd in MYA.

Non-avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Short-beaked Echidna	1	LP/TS	IAG/GM	March sightings
Spotted-tailed Quoll	Scats	PS	JM	In April
Agile Antechinus	1	Mossy Pt	HR	
Common Wombat	Signs	Cool	DO	New burrows at Com.
Brown Antechinus	1	LP	IAG	
Long-nosed Bandicoot	Signs	Mossy Pt	HR	
Yellow-bellied Glider	1	Mossy Pt	HR	
Sugar Glider	Calls	Mossy Pt	HR	
Common Ringtail Possum	1	LP/Broulee	IAG/GLM	
Common Brushtail Possum	6, 2, 1	TS	GM	
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	Up to 98	Cool	DO	
Red-necked Wallaby	8, 6, 2	MYA/Cool/TS	FM/DO/GM	
Grey-headed Flying Fox	Camp	WL	DO	3,000 to 5,000. Also seen in smaller numbers throughout shire.
Bottlenose Dolphin	6, 5	Sth DS/MHS	JCof/JM	
Australian Fur Seal	1	MHS	JM	Surfing the waves on the beach!
Snake-necked Turtle	5	Com	JC	
Yellow-bellied Water Skink	3	Com	JC	March/April
Eastern Water-Skink	1	LP	IAG	March/April
Dark-flecked Sunskink	1 to 4	Mossy Pt	HR	
Eastern Blue-tongue	2	Com	JC	
Eastern Water Dragon	1	Sth DS	FM	
Gippsland Water Dragon	10, 2	Com/Malua Bay	JC/MW	Young at Malua Bay
Jacky Lizard	1 to 2	Widespread	Various	Last record at Mossy Pt in May.
Lace Monitor	1	Cool	DO	Last record in March.
Diamond Python	1	Com/Cool	JC/DO	
Eastern Brown Snake	1	MHS	S Lynch	Near the surf club. Unusual east of the highway.

Frogs JC/GM/JM/DO/ HR/FM	Common Eastern Froglet, Brown Striped Frog, Haswell's Froglet, Brown and Tyler's Toadlet; tree frogs: Brown, Eastern Sedgefrog, Jervis Bay, Keferstein's, Peron's, Southern Sedgefrog, Tyler's, Verreaux's
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Moths DB/JC/JM	Varied Fraus, Bardi Grub, Variable Oxycanus, Geranium Plume, Meal, Eggfruit Caterpillar, Mahogany Bark, Clara Satin, Bracken, Acute Point, Neat Epidesmia, Red-lined Geometrid, Twin Emerald, Cream Wave, Plantain, Mecynata, Vicissata Carpet, White-stemmed Gum, White stemmed Wattle, Sparshalli, White Cedar, Browntail Gum, White Tussock, Banded and Spotted Lichen, Variable Halone, Alternating Footman, Lichen-eating Caterpillar, Heliotrope, Tiger, Crimson Tiger, Mistletoe, Semi Looper, Black Noctuid, Green-blotched, Tobacco and Variable Cutworm, Native Budworm.
Butterflies JC/JM/FM/ A Nicol	Splendid Ochre, Narrow-brand Grass-dart, Macleay's Swallowtail, Blue Triangle, Orchard Swallowtail, Lemon Migrant (needs confirmation), Imperial and Black Jezebel, Cabbage White, Dusky Knight, Brown Ringlet, Varied Sword-grass Brown, Common Brown, Tailed Emperor, Varied Eggfly, Meadow Argus, Australian Painted Lady, Varied Dusky Blue, Saltbush, Samphire and Plumbago Blue, Common Grass Blue.
Dragon and Damselflies JC/JM/FM	Common Bluetail, Wandering, Black-faced and Scarlet Percher, Blue Skimmer, Australian and Tau Emerald.
Beetles JC/FM	Acacia Leaf, Argentinian and Green Scarab, Three-lined Potato, Dung, Plague Soldier, Net Winged, Click, Banded Pumpkin. Ladybirds: 26 Spotted, Striped, Fungus-eating.
Bugs JC	Bronze Orange, Green Vegetable, Harlequin, Assassin, Water Strider, Water Boatman.
Bees/Wasps JC/GLM/JM/FM	Bees: Blue-banded, Masked. Wasps: Common Paper, Blue Flower, Mason, Orange Caterpillar Parasite, White-faced Brown Paper.
Spiders JC/JM	Spiny, Golden Orb, Leaf-curling, Daddy Long-legs, Black House, White-tailed, Huntsman, Jumping, Water, Orb-weaving Garden, Wolf.

RAINFALL (mm). March: 92 at LP, 140.5 at Com, 95.5 at Cool. **April:** 9 at LP, 15 at MKS, 36 at Bergalia, 12 at Com, 38.75 at Cool. **May:** 10 at LP, 20 at Bergalia, 20 at Com, 18.5 at Cool.

Contributors

MA	M Anderson, MB	GM	G Macnamara, TS		V Brown, ACT
DB	D Bertzeletos, Surfside	AM	A Marsh, Bingie		A Christiansen, MB
NC	N Clark, Surfbeach	GLM	G&L McVeigh, Broulee		D&M Clark, ACT
JCof	J Coffey, Sth DS	JM	J Morgan, PS		M Craig, TS
JC	J&P Collett, Com	DO	D Ondinea, Cool		A Cram, Deua R
JMG	J&M Gordon, NA	HR	H Ransom, Mossy Pt		I Jamieson, Broulee
IAG	I&A Grant, LP	RSor	R Soroka, Surfside		S Lynch, MHS
SMG	S&M Guppy, MKS	MW	M Wilkinson, Malua Bay		A Nicol, MHS
JH	J Houghton, TS	FM	Field Meeting		T&A Ross, Kianga
DHK	D&H Kay, Bergalia				
Places					
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		

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