



EUROBODALLA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Inc.

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April 2023

Leaden Flycatcher - *Myiagra rubecula* – (Latham 1801)

The Australian Bird Guide describes the genus *Myiagra* as a 'distinctive group of slender, smartly plumaged flycatchers'. The name *Myiagra* derives from two Ancient Greek words, 'muia' meaning fly, and 'agreo' meaning to seize.

Of the 22 species in the genus, six reside in or visit Australia. The Shining (*M. Alecto*), the Broad-billed (*M. ruficollis*) and the Paperbark Flycatcher (*M. nana*) are all confined to the north, their ranges overlapping from northern Western Australia to Queensland. In southern NSW, we see three species: the Restless (*M. inquieta*), the Satin (*M. cyanoleuca*) and the Leaden.

The Leaden Flycatcher's species name *rubecula* means red-breasted and is derived from the Latin for robin. The name was chosen by a nineteenth century ornithologist who saw a painting of a female.



Male Leaden Flycatcher
Photo G McVeigh

Currently, the species is further divided into six subspecies, four of which can be found in Australia: *M.r. concinna* in the north of WA and the Northern Territory and NW Queensland; *M.r. okyri* on Cape York; *M.r. yorki* in eastern Queensland and northeastern NSW. Only one, the nominate race, that is *M.r. rubecula*, reaches further south. It is a breeding migrant to eastern NSW and Victoria, travelling from Papua New Guinea or northern Queensland to arrive in the Eurobodalla in September/October, returning north in February/April.

The Leaden Flycatcher is a small bird, 14 – 16 cm long, larger in the south of its range, and weighing about 15g. The male is predominantly dark grey with a slight bluish shine and a white breast. There is a sharp border between the grey throat of the upper breast and the white of the lower underparts. The broad blue-black bill is surrounded by bristles, known as rictal bristles. The legs are dark grey to black, and the iris is dark brown. The female's plumage is paler grey, with orange-rufous from chin to upper breast merging into an off-white belly. She has a dark eye with a pale eye ring. Juveniles and immatures are like females but mottled buff across the upper breast.



Female Leaden Flycatcher
Photo S Benjamin

In the north of their range, female Leaden Flycatchers may be confused with female Broad-billed Flycatchers. In our area, the challenge is to distinguish both sexes of Leaden from Satin Flycatchers. Both male and female Leaden Flycatchers are paler than Satin Flycatchers and, as the names suggest, less glossy. In males, a distinguishing feature is the shape of the 'boundary' between white underparts and dark upperparts. The demarcation line of the male Leaden is described as a convex line or shallow 'U', meeting the dark wing at right angles. In the male Satin Flycatcher, this line curves in the other direction, that is, it looks like a shallow upside down 'U'. Females can be told

apart by the wing feathers, which in the Satin are edged in buff and in the Leaden are edged in silver-grey. Also, the undertail of the Leaden is paler than that of the Satin.

Leaden Flycatchers are usually found in sclerophyll forest and woodland. They are unlikely to be seen in thicker vegetation, though they may be found on the margins of rainforest. Feeding mainly on insects and spiders, they are inquisitive, active and noisy, flying around in the low to mid level of the canopy, catching insects in flight or collecting them from foliage. They shake or 'shiver' their tails constantly and raise their crests when singing or when alarmed. They have a few calls: a nasal, scolding 'bzzt', single or repeated; a whistling 'too-whit'; a musical whistled 'perwee perwee perwee' leading into a more sustained song which one guidebook describes as similar to that of the European Blackbird.

Breeding season is inconsistently reported but generally agreed to be between September and February. Both sexes participate in nest building, incubation and tending to nestlings. The nest is a cup of grass and bark held together by web and decorated with lichens and bark. It is placed on a small, shaded branch, from 3 to 25 metres above the ground. Clutch size is usually two to three. Eggs are white or faintly tinged with blue, with brown spots and blotches. Incubation lasts 14 to 16 days and fledging another 12 to 14 days. Only one brood is raised, and the success rate is low, with less than 25 percent of nests successfully fledging a chick. Four cuckoos parasitise Leaden Flycatcher nests: Shining and Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoos, and Pallid and Brush Cuckoos. Despite this, the bird's conservation status is Least Concern. Gillian Macnamara

A warm welcome to new members....

Bob Germanste, Narooma.

What's coming up.....

The ENHS website has been given a major overhaul and the new version should come online in the next couple of weeks. Hopefully members will not lose access to enhs.org.au for more than a few minutes during the transition process.

We'd like comments from members on whether the site meets their requirements – particularly whether there is anything important that we have overlooked or additional information that should be added. Comments can be emailed to webmaster@enhs.org.au

Saturday 15 April, 2pm, Jemisons Point. (3-4 km Grade 2) Meet next to the Rural Fire Shed on Potato Point Rd. Spotted Gum and Bangalay forest, Emu, Wonga Pigeon, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, New Holland Honeyeater, Red-necked Wallaby.

Sunday 30 April, 9am, North Durras. (2-3 km Grade 2) Meet at the NPWS pay station on North Durras Rd. Coastal forest with Rose Robin, Superb Lyrebird, White-naped Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Eastern Whipbird.

Saturday 13 May, 2pm, Mynora, Moruya. (1-2 km Grade 1) Meet at the car park outside the Eurobodalla Shire Council and the Library, off Vulcan Street, Moruya. Farmland on the Moruya River flats with a large area of saltmarsh. Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Nankeen Kestrel, Black-shouldered Kite, White-necked Heron, Intermediate Egret, Tree Martin, Straw-necked Ibis.

Sunday 28 May, 11am: Annual General Meeting. Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens, Princes Highway Batemans Bay. The meeting will be in the Spotted Gum Pavilion, which overlooks the grassy area in front of the visitor centre, at 11am. This will be followed by lunch (there are BBQ facilities) and then a walk through the gardens. Sacred Kingfisher, White-throated Treecreeper, Spotted Pardalote, Golden Whistler, Eastern Shrike-tit, Rose Robin.

A nomination form is on the last page of this newsletter.

Saturday 10 June, 2pm, Ringlands, Narooma. (1-2 km Grade 2). Meet at the end of Flying Fox Road, Ringlands Estate, Narooma. The rainforest is home to Topknot Pigeon, Brown Gerygone, Superb Lyrebird, Large-billed Scrubwren, Wonga Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo Dove, Powerful Owl and Grey-headed Flying-fox.

Sunday 25 June, 9am, Bumbo Road. (1-2 km Grade 1) Meet at the corner of Bumbo Road and the Princes Highway, Trunketabella. Drive along Bumbo Road with stops along the way by the edge of the Tuross River and Bumbo Creek. White-eared Honeyeater, Rose Robin, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and other raptors, Darter, cormorants, ducks, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Azure Kingfisher.

Saturday 8 July, 2pm, Cloutts Road, Moruya. (2-3 km Grade 2) Meet at the car park outside the Eurobodalla Shire Council and the Library, off Vulcan Street, Moruya. Walk along a rural road with bush and farmland areas. Australasian Pipit, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Whistling Kite, Scarlet and Flame Robin, Jacky Winter, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Little Raven.

Would you like to get more involved with ENHS?

Our AGM is coming up on 28 May and we are looking for volunteers to join the Committee and especially for someone to take on the role of Secretary. The Committee usually meets twice a year to organise the field meeting program and plan for the Annual General Meeting. The main roles of the Secretary are organising our AGM and Committee meetings and answering any enquiries that may come through our website. If you would like to help, please let us know; there will be plenty of support. If you'd like more information, please call Julie Morgan on 0457 637 227 or David Kay on 02 4474 5619.

Field Meeting – Mystery Bay – 26 February 2023

Twelve members met at 9 am just outside the Campground at Mystery Bay. The weather was a mixture of overcast and bright sun, reasonable conditions for a birding walk. The campground was packed so we elected to explore the woodland on the other side of the road where there is a beautiful patch of council-owned Spotted Gum woodland with well-developed understorey. We followed a path maintained by local residents up a gentle slope and returned the same way. It was quiet at first, but the birds soon appeared. Up in the canopy were King Parrots, Kookaburras, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Pied Currawongs, while down in the shrubbery appeared Variegated and Superb Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwrens, Brown Gerygones, Eastern Yellow Robins, Brown and Striated Thornbills, a Red-browed Finch and Eastern Whipbirds, several heard and one ultimately seen. This was the first time the group had birded this area and all agreed it had lived up to expectations.



Pacific Golden Plover
Photo R Soroka

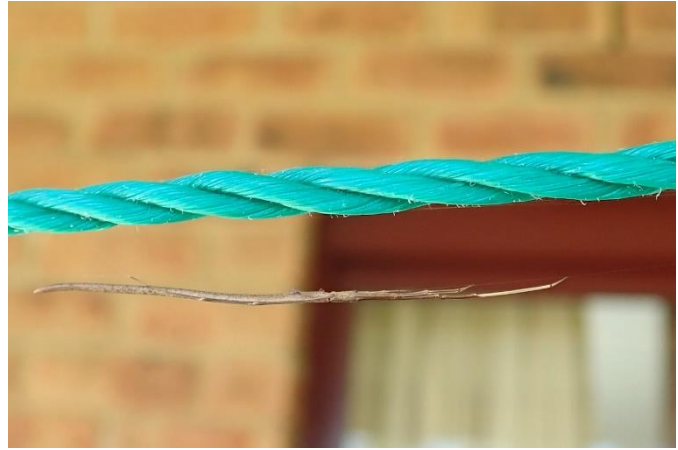
It was then off to the spit at Mystery Beach to check a report of an immature Pacific Gull and Pacific Golden Plovers. Three of the latter were seen, but only Silver Gulls together with a couple of Greater Crested Terns, Great Cormorants and two White-bellied Sea Eagles out over the ocean.

We then drove to Corunna Point, observing Purple Swamphens, Crested Pigeons, Masked Lapwings and Australian Magpies on the way. At the car-park there were Willie Wagtails, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, New Holland Honeyeaters and Little Wattlebirds. Down on the beach, we saw Red-capped Plovers, Sooty Oystercatchers (on the sand, a surprise), White-faced Herons, Little Pied Cormorants and a flock of Black Swans. A walk towards the point was pretty quiet and getting quite hot, rewarded only with a few New Holland Honeyeaters.

It was now 12 noon and, after a bird-call producing a list of 43 species, the group dispersed. Paul Gatenby

Whip or Stick Spiders

“What am I looking at?” This was a common response to my enthusiastic offer to show friends my new discovery on the clothesline, which hangs from the rafters of my balcony. I understood their question as it took me a while to pay attention to this unusual creature, and eventually put a name to it.



Whip Spider on clothesline

I first noticed something that resembled a small twig hanging from my clothesline in early summer and after observing that it had moved a couple of times, I investigated more closely. I watched it for a few days and concluded it must be a spider from the way it held its legs and the fine web that seemed to suspend it from the clothesline. I did some research and discovered it was a Whip Spider *Ariamnes colubrinus*. Apparently, it is quite common in the bush and in gardens, but easily overlooked, which I imagine would not surprise anyone. It is found along the east coast of Australia.

The Whip or Stick Spider is part of the Theridiidae group which are also known as comb-footed spiders. They make a simple trap consisting of three or four silken threads which is held in the tarsi. The Whip Spider sits and waits for prey and uses the toothed bristles at the end of its legs to comb out swathes of sticky web from its spinnerets. The prey is quickly entangled and cannot escape. They feed on small insects and other spiders. I had noticed small spiders take up residence on the clothesline and apparently the Whip Spider did too! One day, I watched the spider spin a silken thread to retrieve a small spider from the clothesline.



Whip Spider with egg sac

Ariamnes colubrinus has a smooth, elongate abdomen which can be brown, green or cream in colour. The male is smaller and thinner than the female and is about 13mm in length while the female is around 22mm. It was a female that first made her home on the clothesline and one day she was joined by a male. Within a few days, she had moved to a nearby rafter and created 2 egg sacs. The egg sacs are suspended by a stiffened thread and are tiny, generally measuring 4x3mm. The egg sac is cream in colour and is oval shaped with a small lip at the bottom. The female spider stays with the eggs and tends them from time to time. The male disappeared.

Over time, I found another two female Whip Spiders on my balcony, and they also have eggs. I am patiently waiting for the spiderlings to hatch but do wonder if I will be able to see them at all! Julie Morgan

Rediscovering our long-lost Insects

As naturalists, we are fortunate to live in the Eurobodalla, because the South Coast is home, not only to a wide variety of plant, bird, mammal, reptile, and other species, but also to several rarely observed insects.

Some of those insects have recently been ‘rediscovered’, having not been seen for many years. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, there was a boom period for discovering and recording Australian insect species. I can only imagine that there were a lot of people dressed in safari suits, wielding nets to catch insect specimens! These were meticulously pinned and preserved then catalogued in museum collections, by some incredibly dedicated people.

Several decades followed when many of those newly discovered species were simply not reported again. Maybe chasing insects with nets became less popular than TV or Nintendo game consoles! It is likely though, that many of those species became extinct, probably due to human development. However, in recent years, a

few of those ‘lost’ species are being re-found. We are in a new era of discovery, where hi-res digital cameras have replaced some of the capture nets and the internet has facilitated identification of obscure species.

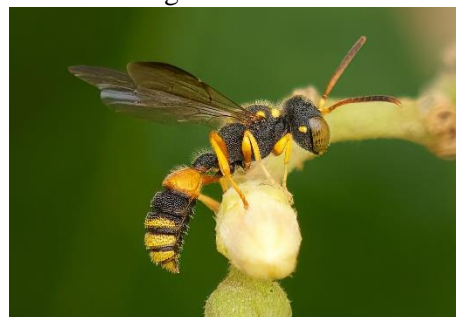
I have been fortunate enough to have helped rediscover some of those species and establish photographic records of them. In this endeavour, I have had the generous assistance of some of Australia’s insect experts, as well as entomologists at museums and universities as far away as Oxford, Milan, Rome and New York. These specialists have helped turn photos of unidentified insects into the reference photos for species where previously we only had pinned specimens.

The Wasps

Wasps seem to be amongst our least-loved insects. There is no good reason for this; most of them are solitary creatures with no malevolent intent as far as humans are concerned. They provide a vital control on the population of other insects and spiders. Without wasps, caterpillars would devour our forests and farm crops, beetles would be everywhere, and spiders might decide to finally make their putsch for world domination! Wasps are also pollinators and one of several insect groups that have been vital for pollinating our native plants for aeons.

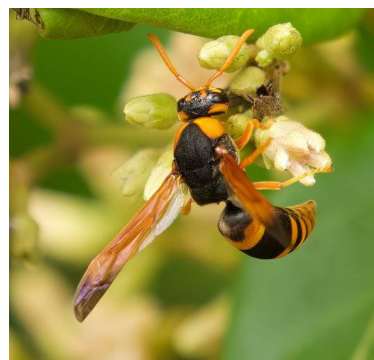
Wasps are surprisingly intelligent. It has been shown that some species remember human faces. For example, once they determine that you are not a threat to their nest, *Polistes* paper wasps will let you go about your business unchallenged. But when a new human face appears, they are back on their guard.

When species go ‘missing-in-action’, it is a concern. And lots of our wasps are currently MIA, having not been seen for years. One surprisingly ‘lost’ species was the Australian Weevil Wasp, *Cerceris australis*. As the common name implies, it is a predator of weevils and other beetles. There were no good photographic records for the live insect on the Australian wildlife databases, just some pinned specimens in museums dating back to early last century. However, a couple of individuals were recently photographed just north of Batemans Bay, on the flowers of *Parsonia straminea*, the Silk Pod Vine.



Cerceris australis
The Australian Weevil Wasp

Finding the insect – and even getting multiple, high-quality photographs – is the easy part though. There are plenty of photos of “Weevil Wasps” on the internet, but most haven’t been identified to species level. The hard part is getting a credible, corroborated ID from those photographs. If there are no reliable reference photos, you must refer to the original identification ‘keys’ in scientific papers or refer to the pinned specimen, then get the ID corroborated by relevant experts. In this case it took 12 months to go through that process.



Anterhynchium tamarinum,
Anterhynchium Potter Wasp

Another unusual wasp was found near Dolphin Point: a splendid potter wasp, also feeding on *Parsonia straminea*. No doubt many people have seen this species and mistaken it for one of the relatively common, *Abispa* potter wasps. (Believe me, it is easy to misidentify insects!) However, the correct ID was offered by Marco Sellis, a researcher at the University of Rome, who placed it in the genus *Anterhynchium*. After another 12 months of exchanges with experts, digging through the old keys for the species, and reviewing pinned specimens from 1957, it was eventually identified as *Anterhynchium tamarinum*, with the help of Marco and hymenopteran entomologist, Brian Dagley in New York. Once again, there were no reliable reference photos for the species so this picture (below) became the reference photo for *Anterhynchium tamarinum* on iNaturalist and the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA).



Pentazeleboria janeta
A Thynnid Flower Wasp

Last year, I came across an unusual Thynnid Flower wasp in local bushland that had been badly burned in the fires of 2019/2020. Dr Graham Brown, a well known scientist and specialist in Australian wasps, identified it as *Pentazeleboria janeta*. This was a rare species, and one of our native pollinators, that he had referred to in his 1983 paper defining this genus.

According to the ALA, there had been no accredited sightings since 1943. It is particularly pleasing to find that it survived the fires.

The Bees

The introduced European Honeybee gets plenty of good press for its work in pollinating our crops and gardens. The unsung heroes, though, are the hundreds of species of native solitary bees, which have co-evolved with our native plants, and have been doing this job for millions of years. And yet some of the species that were catalogued by those early entomologists are now hard to find.

At South Durras a couple of years ago I photographed one of the Masked Bees in the Colletidae family. This would be easy to mistake for one of the many other Masked Bee species. However, this one turned out to be an uncommon species, *Hylaeus turgicollaris*. This bee was another that hadn't previously been photographed in the wild, according to the ALA and iNaturalist databases.



Hylaeus turgicollaris,
A Masked Bee feeding on the flowers of a
Snake Vine, *Hibbertia* sp.

Again, to firm up the ID, we had to refer to pinned specimens. Fortunately, we had the help of bee expert, Dr Michael Batley, and local Eurobodalla resident and bee book author, Peter Abbott. (Peter's book 'Spotters guide to Native Bees of the ACT and South Coast' is one of the most useful in my little library). The photo shows the swollen or 'turgid' yellow collar that gives the bee its species name.



Trichocolletes orientalis,
A Plasterer Bee feeding on
Hardenbergia violacea

One of my favourite places to photograph insects is the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens (ERBG). Although it too was very badly damaged by the fires of 2019/2020, the insect life is slowly returning. It was pleasing to get a photograph there of a seldom-recorded member of the Colletidae bee family, *Trichocolletes orientalis*. Once again, Michael Batley and Peter Abbott were instrumental in narrowing down the ID and confirming the species.

The Flies

Our flies are another group of insects that have an undeserved reputation. They have several very vital roles in the environment. One of those is as pollinators.

At the ERBG, a stunning member of the hoverfly family, Syphidae, was found feeding on *Pomaderris discolor* flowers. *Odyneromyia iridescens* is a bright red hoverfly with white spots that was first described in a 1926 paper. The ALA has recorded only six sightings of this hoverfly; the most recent were pinned specimens from 1985. It is good to get the first recorded, and identified, photograph in the wild for our own ERBG.

The *Pomaderris discolor* is a bush that grows in the sort of marshy ground favoured by hoverflies. Unsurprisingly therefore, the bush was frequented by at least four other hoverfly species that were busy offering their pollinating services in exchange for nectar. No doubt this relationship between plant and hoverflies is millions of years old. At least we now know that one 'lost' species is still hard at work at this ancient task.



Odyneromyia iridescens,
White-spotted Red Hoverfly

By sharing a few of these examples, I hope to show that we have a wealth of natural history in the region. Any of us could come across a species that hasn't been well documented. It is very possible to get the first photograph, in the wild, of some of those species. And, once an accredited photographic record is established, it becomes easier for subsequent observations to be added to the records.

The only thing to be aware of is that getting a firm ID can be quite hard. It can take a lot of effort and the cooperation of knowledgeable people. And, in some cases, an ID from a photograph is simply impossible – especially if you lack multiple images from different angles. However, there are some excellent online

resources now to ease the process. iNaturalist is a wonderful resource to tap into and it gets better as more people add their observations. Phil Warburton

Home-range sizes of some of the common birds.

Many of you are familiar with the study we carried out on the bird community at Maulbrooks Road from 2007 to 2015. This project produced a mountain of information, which we are still analysing and writing up for publication. To date we have published twelve papers based on the study. We have two more in the pipeline and we think that these two will signal the end of the information that can be wrung out of the study.

The latest publication concerns the sizes of the home-ranges of some of the species on our study site, and there is a link to this paper on the website (www.enhs.org.au). We define a home-range simply as the area over which we sight a particular bird. We have written about these data previously in the newsletter, when our analysis was just beginning. We had many of the individuals on the site colour-banded during the study, and we were on the site for 2-3 hours each day from August-February inclusive. Each time we saw a banded bird we would record its position to the nearest intersection on the grid on the study site. So, as you can imagine, we ended up with a lot of bird sightings after the eight seasons of the study, and it seemed like the perfect opportunity to produce some solid estimates of the sizes of home-ranges of at least some of the species and individuals on the site.

The data we used was from 490 individuals, both males and females of 11 species, with between 40 and 966 sightings per species. The 11 species represented nine genera and five families, and a range of different diets and nesting strategies. For the data to be included, the bird had to be colour-banded, its sex had to be known, and it had to be associated, that season, with a nest that progressed to at least one egg.

We developed a new, simple and objective method of determining both home-range size for individuals, and the position of each home-range on the site. There were some differences in home-range sizes, between species, but this mostly reflected three species (White-throated Treecreeper, Variegated Fairy-wren and Lewin's Honeyeater) having large home-ranges compared to the remaining species. The remaining eight species had similar, but variable home-ranges. Species accounted for 26% of the variation in home-range sizes. Breeding season (as indicated by year), sex and number of pairs also had significant effects on home-range sizes, but together only accounted for 4% of the variation. The Southern Oscillation Index (a measure of the El Niño Southern Oscillation, a major climate factor which is related to rainfall in eastern Australia) was not a significant predictor. The high residual (unexplained) variation (70%) indicated that each species had inherently variable home-range sizes. Microhabitat on the site did not explain the within-species variation, but unexpectedly, there were large differences in home-range sizes for the same individual over different seasons. These differences occurred despite the fact that the home-ranges for the individual concerned were in the same position on the site in the different seasons. Home-range sizes on our site were generally dissimilar (both lower and higher) to those for the same species in the literature, on different sites, but are consistent with sizes reported by Stephen Marchant for his study on the same site between 1975 and 1984. We suggest that the large variations in home-range sizes of species is the result of both between-site habitat variation, and individual variations over different seasons.

We leave you with an interesting conundrum. The difficulty with conceiving a mechanism that explains the differences in the sizes of home-ranges is strikingly demonstrated by the two *Malurus* wren species. These birds are in the same genus, are similar in size, breed in groups rather than in simple pairs, hunt in similar ways in similar habitats, eat similar prey, and build similar-looking nests in similar places, yet, their average home range sizes differ by a factor of 3.8. Home range sizes are the result of complex, interactive, and unknown factors. Michael and Sarah Guppy

New Books

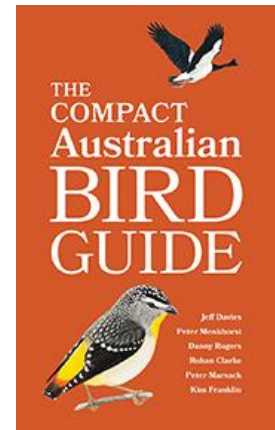
Books about the natural world are now huge sellers – not a week goes by without a new major title arriving in our bookshops. Janice Sagar, from Moruya Books told me that books about nature are amongst her biggest sellers, and in particular, Australian books. There has been much speculation about this phenomenon. Is society searching for new ways of living or is it a way for our increasingly urban society to connect with nature? Are we looking for more meaningful ways of living? Has Covid and the hassle of overseas travel lead us to explore our local environment? Whatever the reason, this is a boon for those of us with an interest in natural history.

Three new books of interest to our members are:

The Compact Australian Bird Guide (CSIRO Publishing)

This 252-page book, by the same authors as ‘The Australian Bird Guide’, is what it says, compact. It has used the same artwork as the original book but has eliminated most of the text. Many of the bird portraits vary in size from the original text, but they retain the clear images required for rapid ID. The distribution maps are also very clear.

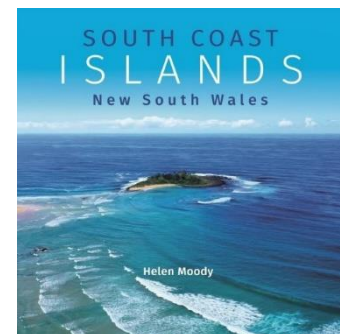
As in the original book, the birds are divided into three categories: Marine and Coastal Birds, Freshwater Birds and Land Birds with a visual quick reference in the front of the book. An alphabetical index to bird groups is included. The index at the back includes both scientific and common (English) names. They are in alphabetical order according to genus. The species names are then grouped together, e.g., Falcon is found under “F”, Black, Brown, Grey, Peregrine. Some will find this easier to use than the index in the original book where they are listed according to species name and you have to look for Black and Brown under “B”, Grey under “G” and Peregrine under “P”. The compact edition does not replace the original publication, but it is an ideal book to keep in the car glove box or your daypack for a quick reference. Copies are available at Moruya Books for \$35.00.



South Coast Island by Helen Moody and Mike Jefferis

For three years Helen Moody and Mike Jefferis led walks and kayak trips to, past or around the 61 islands of the NSW south coast. There are 20 coastal islands and 41 in the estuaries, rivers and lakes open to the ocean. You have likely never heard many of their names before or even been aware of their existence.

Nearly all the islands are small and uninhabited; some are mere specks on a map. Yet each has something special about it. Several are wildlife havens with significant biodiversity values. Some have ancient and ongoing spiritual significance to First Nations people. Some have fascinating connections to early explorers and settlers. A handful are privately owned. One has a superb native garden.

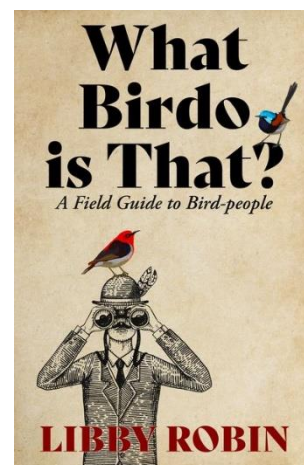


The book is more than a travel guide. It tells of Aboriginal connections to the islands, the history of south coast exploration, and the arrival of settlers and convicts. It covers the geology, flora, lighthouses, shipwrecks, bird life and environmental values of the islands. A number of the ENHS members were involved in providing photographs and other input.

To purchase a book, email southcoastislandsbook@gmail.com The sale price will be \$50 with any profits going to environmental charities.

What Birdo is that? Libby Robin

The idea that a bird is good news and needs all our support is probably the only thing amateur birders, professional zoologists and 'birdscapers'-people who redesign their gardens to support birdlife have in common. But together they form a conservation community that cares about the future of birds and their habitats, who are working to heal the damage wrought by those who don't notice birds. *What Birdo is That?* reveals how bird-people in Australia have gone about their craft across the years. Its stories come from wild places - at sea as well as on the land - from dusty archives, from restoration projects, gardens and urban wastelands. They are human stories, but the birds themselves interject and interrupt any self-important anthropocentrism. They educate.. They turn up in unexpected places, giving surprise and joy. This field guide to Australia's bird-people provides a basis for understanding the complex relationship between people and birds in a land of extremes at the forefront of changing climate and habitats.



Libby Robin is an independent non-fiction writer and prize-winning author whose work explores museums and environmental ideas. She works with museums in Australia, Germany, Estonia and Norway. Copies will be available in May at Moruya Books for \$40.00

Have you read a book lately that broadened your understanding of our natural world? The editorial committee would love to hear your suggestions. A short blurb about the book would be grand too. Helen Kay

Norfolk - History, scenery, birds

Norfolk Island bird week is traditionally held in November each year, the best time to see pelagic birds nesting. The species list is not impressive - it's difficult to reach a total in excess of 50, but what the island lacks in species variety it compensates for with richness in numbers and novelty. Bird Week offers a package consisting of flights, accommodation and a rental car, as well as 4 guided bird walks, 3 dinners and irresistible options such as a pelagic trip along the coast to watch the magnificent ocean birds in flight and on their nests.

Who wouldn't love watching the exquisitely pretty White Tern feeding fish to its chick as they both appear comfortable on a bare branch, which is what passes for a nest? Or the elegant and graceful White-capped Noddy, looking much more secure in its substantial nest amongst the branchlets of the abundant Norfolk Pines?



Emily Bay Norfolk Island

Red-tailed Tropicbirds wheel above the cliffs in their hundreds, preferring to nest on the ground, a precarious habit in view of the numbers of rats and cats that still inhabit the island, despite the desperate efforts of many dedicated residents.

Our tour offered the opportunity to see Masked Boobies at very close range in a private garden, as well as a number of Great Frigatebirds nesting on offshore rocky platforms. The holy grail of birds on Norfolk is no doubt the Norfolk Green Parrakeet, a bird whose numbers had reached precarious levels, but a concentrated breeding program, as well as an assault on the rodent population, has brought about a dramatic increase in their numbers. We became familiar with the call, and heard quite a number, but on one occasion, at a reliable site known as Palm Glen, we managed to get wonderful photos of these now iconic birds. Unfortunately, the introduced Crimson Rosella is considered a major pest because it competes with the Parrakeet for nesting sites and is also apparently responsible for trashing Parrakeet nests and eggs.



White Tern with chick

For me, the other major highlight was excellent views of the Norfolk Morepork. Its numbers had plummeted to a single female bird. Dedicated rangers and environmental ‘warriors’ brought the genetically similar Boobook from New Zealand, and breeding was very successful. Thanks to the local ‘owl whisperer’, we were able to see this pretty bird, again at Palm Glen, on an evening tour. On this same tour, we were shown large rafts of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters which congregate on the ocean at sunset, and then return to their nesting hollows in the ground, crashing through the foliage and amazingly locating their own hollows, where they spend the night.

Grey Ternlets, Black-winged Petrels, Little Shearwaters can all be readily observed from any of the pelagic boat trips that are offered.

And then there are the shorebirds. A visit to the Kingston reef at low tide can provide sightings of Ruddy Turnstones, Wandering Tattlers, Pacific Golden Plovers and Bar-tailed Godwits. One of the most outstanding sights for me was the group of almost 200 Pacific Golden Plovers which daily spread out along the number 2 runway at the international airport. This runway is rarely used because of more favourable winds on the alternative strip. There were also a few Ruddy Turnstones amongst this inexplicable gathering. None of the locals could tell us why!

Norfolk has a number of other endemic birds in addition to the Parrakeet and the Morepork. There is the Slender-billed White-eye, an endemic Grey Fantail, Gerygone, Scarlet Robin and Golden Whistler.

The birding tours were held early in the week, meaning that we all became familiar with the best locations to revisit, as well as having a bit of an idea of roads and routes. There was a welcome dinner, an evening with park rangers and a farewell dinner.

If you get tired of birding, which I didn’t, there is any number of other options to participate in, ranging from the pretty silly, such as dressing up as a convict for the evening, to garden, cultural, gastronomic and historical tours. A week is certainly not enough time to spend on this rich, diverse, fascinating and extremely friendly jewel in the middle of Pacific.

Norfolk’s scenery is spectacular. Everywhere you look is a post card. The ecological footprint has nothing in common with Australia’s natural ecosystems but is more closely related to New Caledonia and New Zealand. Norfolk pines dominate the coastal vistas, and the native forests are diverse and spectacular.



Norfolk Green Parrakeet

The historical richness of Norfolk is a whole extra element which is such an important part of Australia’s past. I had known that I had a First Fleet ancestor but was amazed to learn at the Sirius Museum that he had been on board the Sirius when it was wrecked on Norfolk in 1790.

Living on Norfolk would take a bit of getting used to for a newcomer. Empty shelves in the supermarket were reminiscent of the worst of the Covid days. Meals are prepared around what is available. But it’s not impossible. Our meals were all fresh and delicious. Credit card receipts could not be printed because the ink hadn’t arrived. Paper bags were similarly delayed. We were told that parcels were still expected which had been posted many months before. The locals seem to accept all of this as a normal fact of life. Petrol is \$2.97 a litre. The roads are dreadful, absolutely dotted with potholes. This is resolved by painting a white circle around each - much cheaper than repairs. And with a speed limit of 50kms per hour outside the built-up areas, there is little damage done to vehicles’ suspension.

Coffee shops are numerous and delightful, social life is simple. I watched a high school triathlon one Sunday, with the swimming leg taking place in the waters of the spectacularly beautiful Emily Bay. There is a movie shown once a week. ‘Elvis’ was screening during our visit. There are bowls, golf, tennis, a gun club (not to mention the unofficial shooting of chickens which are everywhere and are considered a threat to the ground-dwelling native birds.)

Norfolk has a bit of everything, but almost no crime. The climate is temperate, and November weather for me was perfect, reaching a maximum of 25 degrees.

And then there are the birds ... Mandy Anderson

Highlights from ENHS records - Summer 2022-23

Avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Emu	2	Brou L	MA	
Brown Quail	Up to 4	Com/Cool	JC/DO	
Stubble Quail	20	Com	JC	
Musk Duck	1	Brou L	H Watson	
Grey Teal	Up to 20	Com	JC	6 young in Dec.
Australasian Grebe	8, 1	Com/Sth DS	JC/JCof	
White-headed Pigeon	Up to 17	TS	MA/GM	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	6, 1	MKS/Sth DS/PS/TS/Cool	SMG/JCof/JM/GM/DO	
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	MB	MA	First record from here
Topknot Pigeon	150, 100	MO/Cullendulla Ck	NM/DB	Flocks of 30-40 flying north at MO in Dec.
White-throated Nightjar	2 or calls	PS	JM	
White-throated Needletail	Large swarm	Surf Beach	NC	Smaller numbers elsewhere
Eastern Koel	1 or 2	Widespread		
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1 or 2	Widespread		Dependent young at Cool in Dec.
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Calls	PS/Donald's Ck /Com	JM/JC	In December
Brush Cuckoo	Calls	MKS/PS/Com	SMG/JM/JC	Until January
Pallid Cuckoo	2 or calls	Com/Belowra	JC	
Eurasian Coot	Up to 23	Com	JC	
Black-browed Albatross	4	Sth DS	JCof	February
Shearwater sp	4	Off MB	MA	
Royal Spoonbill	40, 12, 10	Bumbo Rd/NA/Com	MA/JC	
Striated Heron	1	MYA	DHK	
Great Egret	8	Bumbo Rd	MA	
Eastern Reef Egret	2, 1	Bingie Pt/ NA/ Broulee/MO	DHK/MA/GLM/NM	
Australasian Gannet	2, 1	MB/Long Beach	MA/FM	
Great Pied Cormorant	2, 1	CO/Corunna/SthDS/ Brou L	JM/FM/JCof/NC	
Aust Pied Oystercatcher	21, 15	Long Beach/NA	FM/MA	Immatures at NA and Brou L
Sooty Oystercatcher	9, 6, 4, 3	CO/MB/Broulee/MB/BI/ Candlagan Ck	JM/MA/GLM/HR	Fewer elsewhere
Grey Plover	1	Brou L	NC	
Pacific Golden Plover	13, 3	Tilba L/MB	MA	
Red-capped Plover	More than 80	Brou L	NC	Immatures at MB

Hooded Plover	3	MB	MA	Including immature
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	MO/Com	DHK/NM/JC	
Far Eastern Curlew	20, 5, 4, 1	MHS/Brou L/NA/TS	JM/MA/NC/M Craig	
Bar-tailed Godwit	25, 5, 4	NA/Brou L/TS	MA/NC/M Craig	
Curlew Sandpiper	1	Brou L	M Philip	
Red-necked Stint	4	Brou L	NC	
Pacific Gull	1	MB/TS	MA/M Craig	Immature
Caspian Tern	7, 2	Sth DS/Brou L	JCof/NC	
White-fronted Tern	5	MB	MA	
Greater Sooty Owl	Call	MB	MA	
Masked Owl	3	Pedro	JS/JM	One immature
Powerful Owl	3, 1	MO/Pedro	NM/JS	One young bird being fed a Greater Glider by female adult.
Southern Boobook	3	MB	MA	One immature
Osprey	1	PS/Tomago R/NA	JM/GH/MA	
Square-tailed Kite	1	PS/Surfside/MB/MO	JM/DB/MA/NM	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	4, 3	PS/MKS/Cool	JM/SMG/DO	Adults with 2 juveniles at PS
Swamp Harrier	2, 1	MB/MO	MA/NM	
Grey Goshawk	2, 1	TS/PS/Bingie Pt/Com	GM/JM/DHK/JC	
Brown Goshawk	1	MKS/MO/Com	SMG/NM/JC	
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	MO	NM	
Oriental Dollarbird	11	Surfside	DB	2 nests
Azure Kingfisher	1	Com	JC	
Sacred Kingfisher	3, 2, 1	Sth DS/PS/Com/MO/Belowra/Bergalia	JCof/JM/JC/DHK/NM	Departed by January
Australian Hobby	1	PS	JM	
Brown Falcon	2, 1	Com/Belowra/Bergalia	JC/DHK	
Peregrine Falcon	1	PS/Com	JM/JC	
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	6, 5, 4, 3	MYA/PS/Broulee/Sth DS/MO/MB	L Dann/JM/GLM/GH/JCof/NM/MA	
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Up to 60	MB	MA	
Gang-gang Cockatoo	4, 3	Sth DS/Broulee/Cool/MB	M Burk/JCof/GH GLM/DO/MA	2 young at Sth DS
Eastern Rosella	12, 2	Com/Bergalia/Cool	JC/DHK/DO	1 young at Com
Musk Lorikeet	7, 6	Com/PS	JC/JM	
Little Lorikeet	6	PS	JM	
Superb Lyrebird	Calls	MKS/Mungerarie Fire Trail/Tilba	SMG/JM/MA	
Green Catbird	2, 1	Tilba/MB	MA	
Red-browed Treecreeper	1	Broulee/MO	GLM/NM	
Southern Emu-wren	3	Broulee	GLM/GH	
Brown-headed Honeyeater	6, 2 or call	Com/MB/PS	JC/MA/JM	
Little Friarbird	1	Mungerarie FT	JM	In December

Noisy Friarbird	15, 5, 3	PS/Bergalia/Cool	JM/DHK/DO	Breeding at PS and Com
Scarlet Honeyeater	4, 3, 1 or calls	Long Beach/MO/Broulee/PS/TS/Com	JM/NM/L Hansch /JM/GM/JC	
Striated Pardalote	2 or call	Com/MB	JC/MA	Breeding at Com
Pilotbird	Call	Mungerarie FT	JM	
Buff-rumped Thornbill	6, 3	Mungerarie FT /MB	JM/MA	
Varied Sittella	4, 1	Mungerarie FT /MO/Sth DS	JM/NM/JCof	
Eastern Shrike-tit	1	MO	NM	
Rufous Whistler	8, 6, 5	Belowra/PS/Com	JC/JM	
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	2	PS	JM	
Common Cicadabird	4, 1, call	PS/ Mungerarie FT/MKS	JM/SMG	
Dusky Woodswallow	4, 2, 1	Mungerarie FT/ Cool Donald's Ck/ MO/ Broulee	NM/JM/DO/GH	
White-breasted Woodswallow	7, 1, calls	MB/Broulee/PS	MA/PG/JM	First record at MB
Rufous Fantail	1	Broulee/Long Beach/ PS/MO/MB	L Hansch/JM/ NM/MA	
Spangled Drongo	1	Cool	DO	In February
Leaden Flycatcher	4, 2, 1, call	PS/Brou L/MKS Bergalia	MA/JM/SMG/ DHK	Fewer reports than usual
Restless Flycatcher	2	Tilba	MA	
Black-faced Monarch	2, 1	MB/PS/Broulee/Donald's Ck/Com/Long Bch	MA/JM/L Hansch /JC	
Little Raven	20, 2	Com/MB	JC/MA	
White-winged Chough	15, 9, 8, 7	PS/MB/MKS/Com	JM/MA/SMG/JC	Immatures at Com and PS
Rose Robin	1	Mungerarie FT	JM	
Scarlet Robin	1	Belowra	JC	December
Golden-headed Cisticola	6	Com	JC	
Aust Reed Warbler	2, 1	MB/MO	MA/NM	
Tree Martin	1	PS	JM	
Mistletoebird	4, 2, 1	PS/Cool/MYA/ Bodalla	JM/DO/H Watson	Juveniles at PS and Bodalla
Australasian Pipit	4, 2, 1	Belowra/Com/Bingie Pt	JC/DHK	

Non-avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Common Wombat	1 or signs	Cool/Com	DO/JC	
Short-beaked Echidna	1 or 2	Sth DS/PS/MB/Cool	JCof/JM/MA/DO	
Antechinus sp.	1	Mossy Pt	HR	
Long-nosed Bandicoot	1 or signs	Sth DS/Mossy Pt	JCof/HR	
Sugar Glider	2 or calls	Pedro/PS/Com/MB	JM/KC/MA	
Feathertail Glider	1	Sth DS	JCof	
Dingo	6	Belowra	Reported to JC	With pups
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	48, 33	Sth DS/Cool	JCof/DO	
Red-necked Wallaby	4, 1	Cool/PS	DO/JM	
Grey-headed Flying Fox	20, 2	PS/Mossy Pt	JM/HR	
Sambar Deer	2	Cool	DO	
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	6	Sth DS	JCof	
Snake-necked Turtle	6, 2	Com/Mossy Pt	JC/HR	

Yellow-bellied Water-skink	3	Com	JC	
Weasel Skink	1	Mossy Pt	HR	
Bar-sided Skink	1	Mossy Pt/PS	HR/JM	
Eastern Blue-tongue	5, 2, 1	Broulee/Com/ Mossy Pt/Cool	GLM/JC/HR/DO	Immatures at Broulee in Dec
Jacky Lizard	3, 2, 1	Mossy Pt/PS/Cool/ Sth DS	HR/JM/DO/JCof	
Eastern Water Dragon	1	Cool	DO	
Gippsland Water Dragon	Up to 10	Com	JC	
Lace Monitor	3, 2, 1	Brou L/Cool/PS /Com/Sth DS/MB	NC/DO/JM/JC/ JCof/MA	Raiding a Little Wattlebird nest at Sth DS
Diamond Python	1	MB	MA	
Mustard-bellied Snake	1	Sth DS	JCof	
Red-bellied Black Snake	3, 2	Com/Cool	JC/DO	

Frogs JC/JM/HR/DO	Common Eastern Froglet, Brown Striped Frog, Tyler's Toadlet; tree frogs: Eastern Sedgefrog, Screaming, Peron's, Tyler's, Verreaux's.
Moths JC/JM/S Pearson/ H Perkins/HR	Plume, Forrester's, Meal, White Rush, Beet Webworm, Pink Arhodia, Plain Heath, Red-lined Geometrid, Cream Wave, Plantain, Apple Looper, Convolvulus, Coprosma and Double-headed Hawk, Spotted & Lydia Lichen, Reticulated Footman, Magpie, Dark-spotted Tiger, Crimson Tiger, Tiger, Triangle Owlet, Black Noctuid, Green-blotched, Native Budworm.
Butterflies MA/DB/JC/GLM/ JM/FM	Splendid Ochre, Barred Skipper, Lilac Grass-skipper, Painted Sedge-skipper, Narrow-brand Grass-dart, Greenish Darter, Macleay's Swallowtail, Blue Triangle, Orchard Swallowtail, Black Jezebel, Caper White, Cabbage White, Dusky Knight, Brown Ringlelet, Varied Sword-grass Brown, Wonder and Common Brown, Meadow Argus, Australian Painted Lady, Yellow Admiral, Monarch, Varied Dusky-blue, Common Grass Blue.
Dragon & Damselflies JC/JM	Wandering Ringtail, Common Bluetail, Common Flatwing, Blue-spotted Hawker, Wandering & Black-faced Percher, Blue Skimmer, Tau & Australian Emerald, Graphic Flutterer.
Beetles JC/JM/FM	Net-winged, Plague Soldier, Small Blue Leaf, Acacia Leaf, Argentinian & Green Scarab, Banded Pumpkin, Cowboy, Pintail, Metallic Green Acacia, Honeybrown, Dung, Giant and Tiger Longicorn; Ladybirds: Transverse, 26 Spotted, Striped, Variable, Fungus-eating, Steel Blue
Bugs JC/JM	Bronze Orange, Horehound, Green Vegetable, Water Boatman. Cicadas: Beach Squeaker, Greengrocer, Razor Grinder, Double-spotted, Black Prince, Silver Princess, Alarm Clock Squeaker.
Other insects JC/GLM/JM	Bee: Blue Banded, Masked. Wasps: Common Paper, Blue Flower, Mason, Orange Caterpillar Parasite, Mud Dauber. Fly: Green Long-legged, Native Dronefly, March. Cockroach: Beautiful, Golden, Australian Wood. Olive-green Coastal Katydid. Red Triangle Slug.
Spiders MA/JC/JM	Spiny, Whip, White-spotted Swift, Black House, Leaf-curling, Jumping, Huntsman, Daddy Long Legs, White-tailed, St Andrew's Cross, Flat Rock, Garden Orb Weaving

RAINFALL (mm). December: 62.5 at MKS, 44 at Bergalia, 37.5 at Com, 29.5 at MB, 29.25 at Cool.

January: 92.5 at MKS, 80 at Bergalia, 106.5 at Com, 91.25 at Cool. **February:** 92 at MKS, 80 at Bergalia, 76 at Com, 106.25 at Cool.

Contributors

MA	M Anderson, MB	DHK	D&H Kay, Bergalia	FM	Field Meeting
DB	D Bertzeletos, Surfside	GLM	G&L McVeigh, Broulee		
GC	G Clark, ACT	GM	G Macnamara, TS		M Burk, DS
NC	N Clark, Surfbeach	NM	N Montgomery, MO		M Craig, TS
JCof	J Coffey, Sth DS	JM	J Morgan, PS		L Dann, MYA
JC	J&P Collett, Com	DO	D Ondinea, Cool		L Hansch, Sunshine Bay
PG	P Gatenby, Broulee	HR	H Ransom, Mossy Pt		S Pearson, NA
SMG	S&M Guppy, MKS	JS	J Sagar, Pedro		M Philip
GH	G Hounsell, Broulee	RS	R Soroka, Surfside		H Watson, NA
Places		DY	Dalmeny	NP	National Park
BB	Batemans Bay	ERBG	Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens	PDD	Percy Davis Drive, MYA
BBWG	Batemans Bay Water Gardens	FT	Firetrail	PS	Pedro Swamp
BI	Bermagui	MKS	Maulbrooks Rd S, MYA	PP	Potato Point
BP	Burrewarra Point	MO	Meringo	SB	Surf Beach
Cool	Coolagolite	MYA	Moruya	SF	State Forest
Com	Comerang	MH	Moruya Heads, N&S	TN	Tomakin
CO	Congo	MB	Mystery Bay	TS	Tuross
DS	Durras	NA	Narooma	WL	Wallaga Lake

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Anyone can write an article for the newsletter, and it would be great to see some new contributors.

Please think about writing an article if you:

- have discovered a new birding spot in our local area
- would like to let others know about the birding happenings in your garden or suburb
- have learnt something interesting about wildlife that you would like to share
- have taken an interesting photo that would add to the quality of the newsletter
- have been on a holiday where you saw some interesting birds

If you feel that you can contribute in any way to the newsletter, we'd love to hear from you. The newsletter team is a collaborative friendly group who would be happy to support you in any way.

Email editor@enhs.org.au

Eurobodalla Natural History Society: Annual General Meeting 28th May 2023

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.org.au or Secretary, ENHS, P.O. Box 888 Moruya, NSW, 2537 by
22nd May 2022**