



# EUROBODALLA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Inc.

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## Satin Bowerbird - *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* - (Vieillot, 1816)

Some people regard Satin Bowerbirds as noisy, annoying birds and many fruit and vegetable growers regard them as pests. But, having observed them in our garden for several years, I find them fascinating.

The Satin Bowerbird is a member of the family *Ptilonorhynchidae*, which comprises 27 species in 8 genera distributed through Australia and New Guinea. Most live in the tropical north but some are found in central, western, and southeastern Australia. The only two members of the family seen in the Eurobodalla are the Green Catbird *Ailuroedus crassirostris* and the Satin Bowerbird, both of which are endemic to eastern Australia. There are two subspecies of Satin Bowerbird: *P. violaceus minor* is found in northeastern Queensland and *P. violaceus violaceus* from southeast Queensland to southern Victoria.

Satin Bowerbirds are mainly resident, preferring the edges of rainforest, tall wet sclerophyll forest, woodland and heathland. They are described as visiting more open habitats such as parks and gardens in winter, but we see them year-round in our gardens. Mature males are mostly solitary, but females and immature males are often seen in groups or flocks.

Their average lifespan is reported variously as around eight or nine years and at least 20–30 years. One banded wild bird has been recorded as 26 years old.

The Satin Bowerbird is a plump, medium-sized bird, about 27-33 cm long. Females and immature males are alike: plumage is olive-green-brown above and off-white with dark scalloping below; wings and tails are brown, as is the stout, slightly down-curved bill. Eyes are blue. Males do not begin to develop adult plumage until their fifth year, with variable amounts of black mixed with olive-green. At seven years, they are completely glossy black, appearing deep blue due to light being diffracted as it strikes the feathers. (A Google search for “light diffraction in birds’ plumage” provides more information.) Their bills are pale with a blue base; legs are usually pale, and eyes are vivid violet-blue.



Female Satin Bowerbird  
Photo R Soroka

The Green Catbird is somewhat like a female or immature male Satin Bowerbird but lacks the brown flight feathers and tail and the blue eye. An adult male Satin Bowerbird might be confused with a male Eastern Koel or Spangled Drongo, but his plump body shape, shorter tail, stout bill and violet eye are distinctive.

The breeding cycle takes several months. Males begin displaying at the bower around July in our area, earlier further north. Breeding takes place from late August/September to January/February, nesting occurs October-February and egg-laying peaks in November/December.

For years we have had a bower in our garden. When its builder disappeared, the bower was raided, then destroyed. This year we have a new resident adult male and a new bower at a different site, partially visible from our deck. Mature and immature males build bowers, usually at least 100 metres from any another bowers.

They maintain them all year and may use the same site for many years. Building begins with the bower 'floor' of fine sticks and straw. Into this, the bird places upright sticks to form two parallel walls that curve inward at the top, sometimes meeting to form an arch, and enclosing a short 'avenue'. He 'paints' the inner walls with a mixture of chewed vegetable matter and saliva and decorates the bower and its surrounds with objects, mostly blue but some yellow or shiny. Natural objects include berries, butterfly wings, feathers, flowers, fruits and seeds; artificial items include clothes pegs and marbles. Our resident likes the blue lids of yoghurt pots. Some items are quite large and unwieldy to carry: a few years ago, a bower in a neighbour's garden contained a pair of child's sunglasses. The bower owners regularly rearrange items. They also steal from other bowers and may even destroy a rival's bower.



Bower  
Photo G Macnamara

From August to October, the male spends most of his time near the bower. Our resident visits the bower several times a day, vocalising and rearranging his pot lids and clothes pegs. His vocal repertoire is extensive, and includes screeching, squawking, whistling, hissing, buzzing and rattling.

Females visit a selection of bowers, first when the males are absent, then when they are present and displaying. The females then build their nests and revisit several bowers, usually copulating with only one male. When a female visits in the male's presence, his display increases in intensity. He vocalises, struts and bows, opening and closing his wings and picking up his bower decorations. His vocalisation becomes more complex as he presents his nape to the female while holding one of his decorations in his bill. If the female is ready to mate, she moves into the bower 'avenue', where they copulate. The male's role in the reproductive process for that female is then over. He will mate with numerous females.

The female takes one to two weeks to build a nest, a shallow cup of twigs, lined with leaves. Nesting sites are often re-used by the same bird for several years and are usually quite high above ground in a bush or tree.

Eggs are cream, streaked with brown, and weigh about 19 grams, large for a bird of this size. Clutch size is one to three, usually two eggs. Probably laid on alternate days, they hatch together after an incubation of around 21 days. The young fledge after 17-21 days but remain dependent for another two months. Nestlings are fed mainly on beetles, grasshoppers and cicadas, with some small fruits, while fledglings are fed on insects and fruit.

Adult Satin Bowerbirds feed mostly on fruits, but also eat leaves, flowers, seeds and insects, foraging from canopy to ground level. They feed on native and exotic plants, including fruit and vegetable crops. Adult males apparently eat more insects during the breeding season. For the past few weeks, our resident male has also been eating dry dog food! He flies down at feeding time and takes a few pellets from the dog's bowl while the dog watches.



Male Satin Bowerbird  
Photo G Macnamara

In winter, large flocks may form to feed together on pastures, in orchards and in gardens, resulting in some birds being killed by professional growers. Conservation Status, however, is least concern. Much habitat has already been lost and some populations are isolated and/or in decline but they are common to abundant in their remaining habitat. Gillian Macnamara

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

**Saturday 14 October, 2pm, Broulee** (1-2 km Grade 1). Meet at the corner of George Bass Drive and Broulee Rd. Mainly flat, unsealed path through coastal sand Bangalay forest with a mix of honeyeaters, Sacred Kingfisher, Bar-shouldered Dove, Spotted Pardalote, Yellow-tailed and Glossy Black Cockatoo, Olive-backed Oriole.

**Sunday 29 October, 9am, To be advised.** Please note the trip to Belowra advertised in the program circulated with the last Newsletter will not go ahead. Members will receive an email in the week leading up to this field meeting which will outline the details of another venue.

**Saturday 11 November, 2pm Tuross/Coila Lake** (2-3 km Grade 2). Meet on Tuross Boulevard at the corner with Bridges Avenue, Tuross Head. A walk along the pathway alongside Coila Lake. Pied Oystercatcher and shorebirds, Caspian Tern, Australian Pelican, mix of bush birds, Eastern Whipbird, Wonga and Topknot Pigeon.

**Sunday 26 November, 9am Waders** (2-4 km Grade 2). The venue will depend on wader activity, weather and water levels in the estuaries. An email will be sent out beforehand, or you can check the Field Meetings page of the website or call Julie or Mandy for the venue.

### **What To Expect in November-December**

*Given we have so many new members, we thought we would raid the archive and republish some of the articles written a decade ago by Jill Whiter. Jill was one of the Society's founding members and a regular contributor to the Newsletter and other Society publications. We hope you enjoy reading her delightful prose.*

A seethe of breeding: hatchlings, fledglings, soft-feathered juveniles and scruffy immatures. Lace Monitors and all the other reptiles, frogs, butterflies and moths and voracious caterpillars, and creeping, crawling and flying insects. Summer and warmth and a plenitude of food for all. Northern hemisphere waders scouring the estuaries and mudflats, summer-breeding migrants claiming places in forest and woodland and Little Terns courting over their chosen mud islands and beaches. The Channel-billed Cuckoo's awful call, the Koel's maddening persistency and the small cuckoos' trills, ascending and descending whistles, often haunting and sometimes mournful. They are difficult to separate at first, for our memories are not infallible and we have not heard the calls for some months, specially the variations the breeding season brings forth. These small cuckoos are often fairly quiet in December; remember, they arrived quite early and have already deposited their unwelcome contributions in the favoured domed nests of thornbills and fairy-wrens, so their job is finished, as it were, and they are already preparing to depart, leaving the work to others.

Now the White-throated Needletails will be here, fresh from their breeding in Siberia, the Himalayas and Japan, hawking the insect-rich skies for the next four months. Look for them ahead of southerly fronts and approaching thunderstorms and don't just shrug and say 'Ah, swifts', instead grab your binoculars and scan the swirling mass; there just may be a few Fork-tailed in that flock. Yes. I know that counting swifts is a quick path to lunacy but do try to make an educated guess at the size of each flock, for it seems to me that the very large flocks we saw in years past are becoming increasingly rare. And we really should know how often Fork-tailed Swifts appear in our skies and how many are seen each summer if our records are to be a true reflection of their status in the Eurobodalla.

Gannets and White-fronted Terns will have departed to their breeding places and all the other winter-migrant seabirds will be away breeding or scouring the seas far offshore. A few whales can be seen moving south in November, but the main migration has already passed. There may be some early immature Silver Gulls and Crested Terns, perhaps an immature Caspian too. Roving bands of shearwaters might be seen from shore, more often the Wedge-tailed that feed in the warmer waters, though flocks of non-breeding Short-tailed will be trawling up and down offshore in the never-ending search for food. But most of our attention will be on the woodlands and forests, the estuaries, mudflats and lakeshores in these two months. All of nature has been preparing for the breeding season, so there are busy times ahead. Jill Whiter.

### **Field Meeting - Bumbo Road - 25 June 2023**

It was a perfect winter's day, sunny and still, for our walks along the Tuross River and Bumbo Creek, most ably led by Julie Collett. We were to visit the two farms at the end of the road, as previously, but the owners were away so Julie chose two spots to park and walk. This might have been fortuitous as we recorded a near record 61 species for the day.

First was Snake Flat near Mick's Bridge to do a circuit back along the river then return up the top road where we saw a small flock of Varied Sitella in angophoras. An interesting observation is that the Sitella climb down a tree trunk opposed to the Treecreeper that climbs up the trunk (thanks Mandy Anderson).

We then drove further along Bumbo Creek for a walk along the road where we spotted a Nankeen Night Heron lurking in a casuarina by the creek and then a Yellow-billed Spoonbill (a first for me) on a dead tree branch. Rose Robin were spotted along with a Little Eagle. A Pilotbird was also heard. There were some good photos taken too on two professional-looking cameras. Of course, many more species were seen and/or heard of the more usual- suspect variety to get to our total. Enthusiasm had not abated on the way out either as eagle-eyed observers saw and reported two more species to get to our grand total.

The 13 participants were most delighted by our success on the day, as with the usual convivial conversation along the way. Colin Morrison

### **Look out for Colour-banded Pelicans.**

Because 2021 and 2022 were extremely wet years, particularly in inland Australia, there was a huge influx in Pelican breeding both in their well-known breeding colonies and also in areas where they had previously not been known to breed. Several state and Commonwealth agencies decided to monitor this phenomenon by tracking movements of both adults and newly fledged young to ascertain their movements after they breed and to determine the range of dispersion and their fidelity to breeding sites. All banding sites have their own individual colour bands.

On 23 May this year at Preddy's wharf, at Moruya South Heads I was lucky enough to find and photograph one. It was banded on the left tarsus with a red band numbered 269 with the traditional metal identification band of the right tarsus.



The full details from the Australian Bird and Bat Banding scheme were that it was banded (No. 17027269) at North Arm, Gippsland Lakes Victoria on 7 February 2023 and was an adult female and had moved 290km in the 3 months and 16 days since its banding.

If you see a banded Pelican you can email your sighting to [abbbs@dceew.gov.au](mailto:abbbs@dceew.gov.au) Mike Crowley.

### **The amazing journey of Hoodie T-7**

During the 2022-23 shorebird breeding season, a pair of Hooded Plovers on 1080 Beach Mystery Bay successfully raised one of their three hatchlings to maturity. As a fledgling, it was captured by National Parks rangers and leg-tagged with the unique number T-7.

Seven months later, our local Shorebird Recovery Ranger, Kaitlyn O'Brien was contacted by members of the ABBBS (Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme), to inform her that T-7 had been spotted and identified at Evans Head, 850kms north of its birthplace. Kaitlyn said she was "over the moon" to receive the news.



Hooded Plover – Photo Ann Christiansen

Hooded Plovers are critically endangered in New South Wales, with a current estimated population of around 65 individuals. Furthermore, they are rarely found north of Sydney, and the longest previously recorded trip for a Hoodie was 375kms.

It is almost certain that T-7 was the only Hooded Plover in his new setting and he would therefore have no chance of finding a mate and breeding.

Imagine Kaitlyn's delight and amazement then, when 5 weeks later she was contacted by some very alert bird watchers who had identified T-7 at Wallaga Lake, back in his home territory. At less than 12 months of age, T-7 had flown a round trip more than 1700kms.

Hooded Plovers are not migratory birds, and one can only wonder why this gutsy little traveller chose to make this long journey.

Since sighting my first local Hooded Plover on Mystery Bay beach in about 2014, I have been absolutely captivated by this pretty little shorebird. Several pairs have been successful breeders in our local area and hopefully they are adding to their very precarious total.

Hooded Plovers, like all shorebirds which nest on our beaches, need all the help they can get, being vulnerable to so many threats and challenges, most of which involve humans. Keeping dogs on leashes and well away from dunes during the nesting season is a major factor. Riding horses or driving vehicles on beaches severely impact the survival of these special birds. There are sufficient natural predators, such as ravens and gulls for them to contend with, not to mention foxes and cats and inundation of their nest sites. They do not need us adding to the uncertainty of their survival.

Everyone must play their part by sharing the shoreline in a responsible manner, and by encouraging others to do the same. Mandy Anderson

### **A visit to Mallacoota, Tarra-Bulga and Venus Bay.**

For some time, I had wanted to visit Tarra-Bulga National Park in north-eastern Victoria, particularly to see Pilotbirds, but also because I just love wet rainforests. Having lived on an acreage in Wilton for some years – a property which backed onto the Nepean Gorge and was bordered on the south by many square kilometres of water catchment land – I was accustomed to the call of the Pilotbird. They are known to travel with Lyrebirds as they take advantage of the Lyrebirds' scratching around in the forest floor and share their meals.

Lyn put together a short itinerary which included a first night at Mallacoota. Our first stop was at Bega cheese centre, where there were many waterfowl including a small group of Pink-eared Ducks and a jewel-like Azure Kingfisher. Passing through the town, we next paused at Glebe Park wetlands, which is a reliable site for Nankeen Night-herons and both species of spoonbills. We ticked these species and also saw a few more Pink-eared Ducks. We are finding that this species, my favourite duck, is far more widespread than we had believed. It often takes perseverance and the use of a scope to track them down, but it's always worth the effort.

Heading south again, we made a brief stop in Eden and then on into Victoria, where the bushfire devastation is still evident in the northern region. There is much regenerating undergrowth, but many of the trees have been burnt beyond their ability to re-grow. However, Victoria has since seen lots of rain, and the greenness of the country was so refreshing after our many months of almost no rainfall.

Heading into Mallacoota, we stopped at several waterholes, adding each time to our list of waterfowl as well as the occasional raptor. Mallacoota itself offers a wide variety of habitats particularly within Croajingalong National Park and at Gypsy Point. A favourite and very reliable spot is the vicinity of the airport, where the colour of the Flame Robins was startling in the afternoon sun, and the Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters darted amongst the heath plants. The Epacris were in full bloom in a variety of colours, providing a healthy source of nectar.



Black Swan and company  
Photo M Anderson

Moving down to the shoreline, we were delighted with the variety of species on the sand-flats, particularly the Double-banded Plovers in full breeding plumage, a Whimbrel, and numerous oystercatchers and terns, including a number of Caspian.

At the end of our first day, our species list had reached a healthy total of 90. As Lyn commented, we have paid a lot of money to professional guides for a smaller total! We celebrated with an obligatory meal at Lucy's Dumpling House.

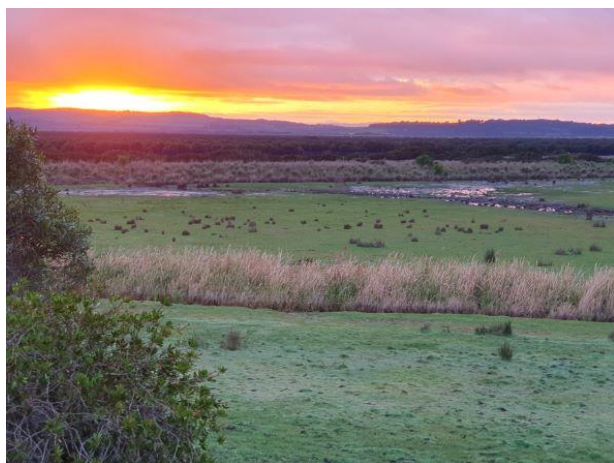
Next morning, we headed for Traralgon which was to be our base for the next three nights. A drive and walk through Cabbage Tree rainforest in extremely muddy conditions gave us good views of a Bassian Thrush, as well as Large-billed Scrubwrens to add to our list.

As we enjoyed a waterside lunch at Marlo, we were entertained by a playful seal who seemed to be waving at us.

On our third day, we drove to our target site, Tarra-Bulga National Park. The weather had taken a bit of a turn for the worse, with high winds and a few light showers of rain. I had forgotten how notoriously difficult rainforests are for birding. The birds did not cooperate, so we could not tick the Pilotbird. In fact, we didn't even hear its call. But we did get the best view ever of a Lyrebird, which strode towards us on our path and didn't even seem to be aware of us until he almost bumped into us.

A second walk, a short circuit to a small waterfall, Cyathea Falls along the Tarra River, was not very productive bird-wise, a Grey Currawong being the exception, but the forest itself was stunningly beautiful, reminiscent of Lamington National Park around Binna Burra. I was very excited to see some beautiful specimens of Antarctic Beech trees, some up to a thousand years old.

The next couple of days were spent exploring various sites around the Traralgon area. One highlight was the number of Freckled Ducks in Lake Guyatt in the middle of Sale township. We counted more than 50, mostly huddled among the roots of the willows. The small town of Meeniyan provides an excellent bird hide. There were some great waterfowl, including Shelducks and Shovelers. In the trees nearby, there were also large numbers of White-eared Honeyeaters, one of my favourites. Many of the Superb Fairywrens were already in breeding plumage, and we were delighted to witness on two occasions, a male present a yellow petal to a female, which she gratefully accepted in her bill. I've never seen this before in fairywrens.



Sunrise at Liptrap Coastal Reserve  
Photo M Anderson

We had been offered free accommodation at a cottage at Venus Bay on the south coast. This opened up a whole new set of habitats, with the major feature being Liptrap Coastal Reserve. This is a huge expanse of wet coastal plains, wetlands and sand forests, as well as shorelines to explore. In this area there were many hundreds of waterfowl, including large flocks of Black Swans, more than a hundred Royal Spoonbills near the house, a few Pink-eared Ducks, and the piece de resistance, Cape Barren Geese. A pair of Brush Bronzewings surprised us in the sand forest. I had forgotten how huge Pacific Gulls are in relation to their Silver cousins. They are quite numerous along this part of the coast.

On our final day, we drove north to Wonthaggi to check out a bird hide that held great promise. And it seemed that we did leave the best (well, one of the best) until last. There were 5 male Blue-billed Ducks quite close to us. The bill is such a beautiful, vivid blue, an unmistakable treat.

The final tally for our 6-day trip was 131 species, with my final bird, a Brown Falcon, perched in a dead tree near Eden, and Lyn caught sight of a Buff-Banded Rail in a puddle beside the Highway. No lifers on this trip, but as I often comment, it's always great to get into some new territory to enjoy what is on offer. Mandy Anderson

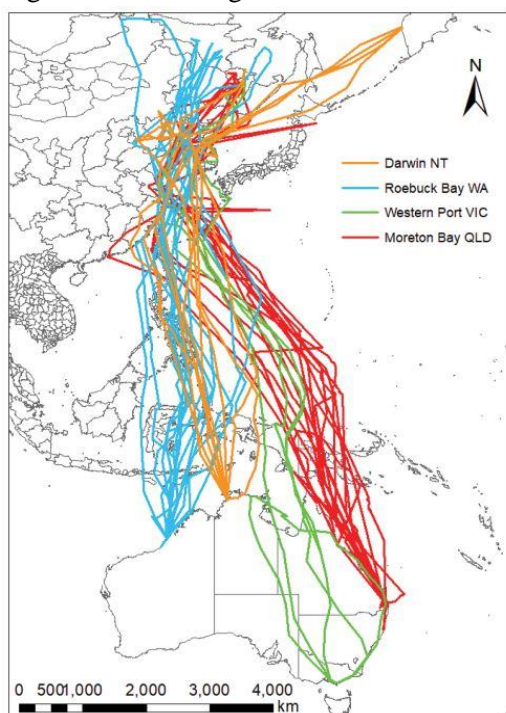
## Some interesting facts about the Far Eastern Curlew

The Far Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*) is the largest migratory shorebird in the world. It has a long neck, long legs and a distinctive very long (nearly half the length of its body) down-curved bill. Its wingspan is just over 1m and it weighs around 1 kilogram. Both sexes have similar dark streaked plumage, but the female is slightly larger than the male and has a noticeably longer bill, which results in sexual differences in both diet and foraging behaviour.

The Far Eastern Curlew is endemic to the East Asian – Australian Flyway. It breeds in Russia, Mongolia and north-eastern China during the northern hemisphere summer and most birds (73%) migrate through China, Japan, Korea and Indonesia to Australia in the non-breeding season (our summer). The rest over-winter in the Phillipines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. The birds move south by day and night at varying altitudes. The final leg of their migration from the Yellow Sea in China to Australia is undertaken in a single direct flight. At least some birds stopover in northern Australia or Papua New Guinea before moving on to their feeding grounds in southern Australia, either in a series of short flights or one long flight. Birds arriving in eastern Australia move down the coast from north Queensland.



Far Eastern Curlew



Annual migration routes of tracked birds to 4 feeding grounds in Australia.

The Far Eastern Curlew breeds in bogs and marshes in subarctic central-eastern Asia where they mainly feed on wild berries. However, during the non-breeding season in Australia, the species has an exclusively coastal distribution and is found in sheltered estuaries, bays, inlets and lagoons with large intertidal mudflats or sandflats. Occasionally birds occur on ocean beaches near estuaries, as well as rock platforms, but they are more often recorded in saltmarsh and around fringing mangroves (e.g. Moruya South Head). During this time the birds are carnivorous, feeding on crustaceans (crabs, shrimps and prawns), small molluscs and some insects. They are both diurnal and nocturnal with feeding and roosting cycles determined by the tide. They find prey by sight during the day or in bright moonlight, but they can also locate it by touch.

Far Eastern Curlew are generally solitary, but can also congregate in small flocks (e.g. a flock of 30 plus birds has been seen at Moruya South Head). Often a single bird will be seen at the edge of larger flocks of mixed waders. They are extremely wary and are much quicker to take flight if disturbed compared to other shorebirds.

Far Eastern Curlew arrive in Australia between late July and August and move southward up to mid February. Late arrivals are probably juveniles. Most birds depart for the northern hemisphere between late February and March-April. Like other migratory shorebirds, juveniles spend at least their first and second winters in Australia before undertaking their epic northward migration to the breeding grounds. It is thought that they may have a longer delayed maturity than any other migratory shorebirds, with many not migrating north until their third, or even fourth year. The generation time for this species is 10 years with a longevity record of just over 19 years. Far Eastern Curlew are listed as endangered internationally (IUCN Red List) and as critically endangered at the national level in



Far Eastern Curlew eating soldier crab

Australia (EPBC Act) because they have suffered a severe population decline of over 80% during the last 3 decades. They are also listed as threatened in a number of Australian states and territories, but not in NSW. In 2016 there were estimated to be 35,000 birds in total in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway with the estimated Australian population being 22,500 individuals in 2020. Habitat destruction and the reclamation of tidal mudflats are the biggest threat to the Far Eastern Curlew and many other migratory shorebirds across their range, but the species is also threatened by hunting, pollution, changes to water regimes, disturbance and of course climate change. In eastern and southern Australia the birds are threatened by human disturbance, habitat loss due to coastal development and rising sea levels as well as habitat degradation resulting from pollution, invasive plant species and altered hydrological processes.

There are a number of sites across Australia that are recognised as important internationally (support 1% of the Flyway population) and nationally (support 0.1% of the Flyway population) for the species. Moruya with a record of 37 birds is listed in the Australian National Directory of Important Migratory Shorebird Habitat 2020 as a nationally important site. So next time you visit Moruya Heads, keep an eye out for Far Eastern Curlew roosting on Shelly Beach or feeding on the mudflats around Quandolo Island. Count the number of birds you see, take some photos and upload the information to iNaturalist and/or a bird databases such as Birdline, NSW Bird Atlassers, Ebird or Bionet. Deb Stevenson



*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. Photos are welcome. Please send your contributions to [mypatch@enhs.org.au](mailto:mypatch@enhs.org.au)*

*Logo design by Trevor King*

### **17-year-old Striated Thornbill**

As most of you know, we studied the bird community on our property between 2006 and 2015. Part of this study involved banding 11 of the 44 species that bred on the site. The birds would receive a metal, numbered, unique-identifier band, and a set of colour bands that enabled us to identify the birds from a distance. When we started the study, we didn't yet have all the permissions required to colour-band all 11 species. So, some birds, when initially caught in the mist nets, would receive a metal band only. The Striated Thornbill was one of these species.



very popular waterbath

We have a permanent movement camera set up on a waterbath at our house. The pictures are checked about every two months to see what has come to this (inexplicably) very popular waterbath. On 30 June this year, a Striated Thornbill with the colour-bands White on Light Green was photographed at the waterbath.

This bird was first caught in October 2006 and banded (sex unknown) with a metal band only. But it was trapped again in November 2008, and received its colour bands. We subsequently decided it was a male as it was seen to be paired with a known (brood patch) female. The bird was an adult (so at least 1 year old) when caught in 2006, so at the end of June 2023 it was at least 17 years and 8 months old! This bird may be older than some of the younger members of ENHS.

These are one of the smallest birds we have around here. Small, delicate and vulnerable. Yet it has survived for all that time, despite all the winters, all those nesting/brooding/fledgling-feeding periods, predators, sickness and accidents. Imagine how much it knows about our study site. We wish we could talk to it. Sarah and Michael Guppy



## An unusual record for Eurobodalla shire – A Rose-crowned Fruit Dove

On Saturday 10 July Michele Somers of South Heads, Moruya heard a collision between one of her windows and a small green, pigeon-like bird. The bird was not seriously injured but was 'stunned' long enough to be observed and photographed and turned out to be a juvenile Rose-crowned Fruit Dove, *Ptilinopus regina*.

They are mainly found in the monsoon tropical forests of south-east Asia northern Australia. Occasionally vagrants, particularly juveniles stray much further south, usually in winter, some often reaching Victoria.

ENHS has had previous records of this species, but they are rare. A great record for the society from Michele Somers. Mike Crowley



## Pacific Baza visits Bergalia

The first thing I do in the morning is make myself a double shot espresso: gazing out the window while waiting for my first caffeine hit. Much to my surprise I saw a Pacific Baza perching in a tree near our vegetable patch – so much excitement in the Kay household and numerous poor attempts at getting a decent photo.

We've been fortunate to see many of these striking birds in our travels up north, but never one so close to home. They are very distinctive and easily recognisable: they have two notable features, a prominent crest on the rear of the neck and dark bands across the chest.

The Pacific Baza (*Aviceda subcrista*) is usually found in tropical and subtropical forest and woodland in northern and eastern Australia, but rarely south of Sydney. It is also found in the Indo-Malayan peninsula, most of mainland New Guinea and nearby islands and the Solomon Islands. Its habitats are subtropical and tropical forests, dry savannahs and bodies of freshwater, including wetlands, streams and rivers. Little is known of their seasonal movements; they are considered sedentary in some regions and dispersive or migratory in others.

A check of our records revealed that they have been seen in the Eurobodalla in recent years: one at Bumbo Road in February 2020 and two at North Durras in February 2022. Perhaps not as rare as I thought. Helen Kay

## Southern Marbled Gecko, *Christinus marmoratus* – A New Species for Eurobodalla?

Recently I had a second sighting of the Southern Marbled Gecko, *Christinus marmoratus* in my back yard (The first, a freshly killed specimen in April 2022 and more recently a live specimen in April 2023). It is the first time I have seen a gecko of any kind in Eurobodalla shire.

Having checked with some other keen herpetologists and iNaturalist, there have been several records over the past two years along the coast – Eden, Merimbula, Tura Beach and Bega, so it seems that this is a species expanding its range into the south coast and Eurobodalla Shire.



Marbled Gecko *Christinus marmoratus*

Its previous range extended across all south-western NSW. It is the most common gecko found in the ACT and these sightings are probably accidental introductions from the ACT rather than a natural range extension. Nevertheless, the species seems to have established itself as breeding resident in this region. We may have to add it to the faunal list for the Eurobodalla area. Mike Crowley

## Another long-haul flight for a shorebird

As a volunteer member of the Shorebird Recovery team, I regularly visit several of our local beaches, in particular 1080 Beach, Corunna Point and Brou Lake to survey beach-nesting shorebirds, keeping track of any nesting activity, identifying any threats, and attempting to locate any birds with leg tags.

Recently on 1080 Beach in the Mystery Bay section of Eurobodalla National Park, I was delighted to observe a Pied Oystercatcher wearing a red leg tag with the identifying code C4. I alerted ranger Kaitlyn, who suggested reporting the bird to the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS). I filled in their online form with as much information as I could provide and submitted the form. I was pleasantly surprised to receive a very prompt response, with a comprehensive outline of C4's banding history.

C4 was tagged at Stockyard Point, Lang Lang, Westonport in Victoria in 2005. The banders somehow knew that it was a 3 year old bird, meaning that he/she is currently 21 years old. ABBBS was unable to determine its gender. It has flown 465km to arrive here on 1080 Beach in far south New South Wales.

I have observed C4 on two occasions and on the second sighting s/he appeared to have paired up with a second Pied Oystercatcher, presumably with the intention of breeding, nesting and raising young. I later learnt that my neighbour Bronwen Harvey had photographed C4 on Mystery Bay beach in May this year.



Pied Oystercatcher C4  
Photo B Harvey

National Parks ranger Kaitlyn is always keen to welcome new volunteers to the Shorebird Recovery Program. She can be contacted at [Kaitlyn.O'Brien@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Kaitlyn.O'Brien@environment.nsw.gov.au) Mandy Anderson

## Bergalia, Meringo, Bingie - a new book by Shirley Jurman

This new book by Shirley Jurmann explores the rich history of farming communities around the village of Bergalia since the 1830s and includes sections on individual properties and the families that lived there. Shirley Jurmann née Louttit grew up in Moruya. Her family settled there in the 1860s. Her parents ran the Moruya Advertiser weekly newspaper for many years. Shirley has written other books too including the very interesting *Who's been living in my Moruya Street?* which details many of the old houses in Moruya.

As a resident of Bergalia I was intrigued to discover that Bergalia was once a thriving community with its own school, post office, butchers shop, cheese factory, School of Arts and bakery. It even had its own licensed tavern, known as the Land of the West. The only building that now remains is the post office.

Each of the properties in the district is described and illustrated with captivating photos of the original buildings and the families who lived there. The community activities and major events affecting the area are described in detail.

The book is available at the Moruya library and can be purchased from the Moruya Historical Society. A hardcopy is \$35 and a downloadable pdf is \$25 and can be order from [https://mdhs.org.au/Publication\\_Details.html#Bergalia](https://mdhs.org.au/Publication_Details.html#Bergalia) Helen Kay

## Highlights from ENHS records - Winter 2023

| Avian species           | Number      | Place                                     | Observer               | Comments  |
|-------------------------|-------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Brown Quail             | 6, 4        | Com/<br>Nerringundah                      | JC/GC                  |   |
| Australian Shelduck     | 2           | Com                                       | JC                     | In July   |
| Hardhead                | 3           | Com                                       | JC                     | In June   |
| Australasian Shoveler   | 6           | Com                                       | JC                     | In June   |
| Australasian Grebe      | Up to 40    | Com                                       | JC                     | Numerous sightings across the shire   |
| Hoary-headed Grebe      | 4,1         | MO/Eurobodalla Rd                         | NM/FM                  |   |
| Peaceful Dove           | 1           | Belowra                                   | JC                     |   |
| Bar-shouldered Dove     | 3, 1        | Bingie/MO/MB                              | DHK/NM/MA              |   |
| Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove | 1           | MHS                                       | M Somers               | Juvenile found after flying into a window. First record since 2016 of this species. |
| Topknot Pigeon          | 12          | Ringlands, NA                             | MA                     | In June   |
| Tawny Frogmouth         | 2 or call   | Broulee/MB                                | GLM/MA                 |   |
| White-throated Nightjar | Call        | Surfide                                   | DB                     | August 30. Early return.  |
| Australasian Nightjar   | Call        | PS  | JM                     |   |
| Shining Bronze-Cuckoo   | 1           | MO  | NM                     | In July.  |
| Dusky Moorhen           | 3, 1        | Com/MO/<br>Bumbo Rd                       | JC/NM/MA               |   |
| Yellow-billed Spoonbill | 1           | Bumbo Rd/<br>Coila L                      | FM/M Craig             | June/July   |
| Nankeen Night-Heron     | 2           | Bumbo Rd                                  | FM/MA                  | June/July   |
| Striated Heron          | 1           | Broulee/MB/DY                             | GLM/MA/<br>T&A Ross    |   |
| Cattle Egret            | 120, 40     | Eurobodalla Rd/<br>MYA                    | FM/JM                  |   |
| White-necked Heron      | 1           | MYA/Bergalia/<br>Bumbo Rd/<br>Com/Belowra | FM/DHK/MA/<br>JC       |   |
| Intermediate Egret      | 1           | NA  | MA                     |   |
| Little Egret            | 8, 6, 1     | NA/MB/Broulee                             | MA/GLM                 |   |
| Eastern Reef Egret      | 1           | Sth DS/Broulee/<br>Bingie Pt/MO<br>/NA    | JCof/GLM/<br>DHK/NM/MA |   |
| Australasian Gannet     | 10, 4       | Broulee/MO/<br>MB                         | GLM/NM/MA              |   |
| Great Pied Cormorant    | 1           | Broulee                                   | GLM                    |   |
| Australasian Darter     | 2, 1        | Sth DS/MYA/<br>DY                         | JCof/DHK/MA            |   |
| Beach Stone-Curlew      | 1           | Lilli Pilli                               | M Fleming              | At Circuit Beach in August  |
| Aust Pied Oystercatcher | 12          | NA  | MA                     | Fewer elsewhere   |
| Sooty Oystercatcher     | 7           | MB/1080 Beach                             | MA                     | Fewer elsewhere   |
| Pied Stilt              | 6, 3        | Com/Bumbo Rd                              | JC/FM                  |   |
| Red-capped Plover       | 15, 6, 5, 2 | NA/MB/Sth DS/<br>DY                       | MA/JCof/T&A<br>Ross    |   |
| Hooded Plover           | 2           | Bingie/NA                                 | MA/AM                  |   |
| Black-fronted Dotterel  | 8, 3        | Com/<br>Eurobodalla Rd                    | JC/FM                  |   |
| Far Eastern Curlew      | 3 or call   | NA/MHS                                    | MA/JM                  | August  |
| Bar-tailed Godwit       | 9           | NA  | MA                     |   |
| Painted Button-quail    | 1           | PS  | JM                     |   |
| Pacific Gull            | 1           | NA  | MA                     | In June   |

|                                 |             |  |                           |  |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Caspian Tern                    | 10, 7, 2, 1 | Sth DS/MB/<br>NA/MO                      | MA/JCof/DHK               |  |
| Greater Sooty Owl               | Call        | PS/MB                                    | JM/MA                     |  |
| Masked Owl                      | 1 or 2      | Pedro                                    | JS                        |  |
| Barn Owl                        | 1           | BP/Com                                   | GLM/JC                    | On rocks at BP   |
| Powerful Owl                    | Call        | PS                                       | JM                        |  |
| Osprey                          | 2           | MHS/NA                                   | JM/MA/T&A<br>Ross         | Nesting at MHS and NA                                    |
| Square-tailed Kite              | 2, 1        | MB/Benandarah<br>SF/MKS/PS               | MA/FM/SMG/<br>JM          | First return August 20 <sup>th</sup>                     |
| Pacific Baza                    | 1           | Bergalia                                 | DHK                       | In July  |
| Little Eagle                    | 1           | Bumbo Rd                                 | FM                        |  |
| Grey Goshawk                    | 1           | Broulee                                  | DHK                       |  |
| Brown Goshawk                   | 1           | MO/Belowra/<br>MB                        | NM/JC/MA                  |  |
| Azure Kingfisher                | 1           | Sth DS/Bumbo<br>Rd                       | JCof/MA                   |  |
| Brown Falcon                    | 1           | Com                                      | JC                        |  |
| Peregrine Falcon                | 1           | MO/Com                                   | NM/JC                     |  |
| Glossy Black Cockatoo           | 8, 4, 3, 2  | Pedro/PS/<br>Bergalia/<br>Broulee/Sth DS | JS/JM/DHK/<br>GLM/GH/JCof |  |
| Yellow-tailed Black<br>Cockatoo | 30, 20      | MO/MB                                    | NM/MA                     | Fewer elsewhere  |
| Gang-Gang Cockatoo              | 7, 5, 4, 2  | Broulee/MO/<br>MKS/Sth DS                | GH/GLM/NM/<br>SMG/JCof    |  |
| Eastern Rosella                 | 16, 14, 8   | Com/Belowra/<br>Bumbo Rd                 | JC/FM                     |  |
| Musk Lorikeet                   | 6           | PS                                       | JM                        |  |
| Little Lorikeet                 | 6, 4        | ERBG/PS                                  | MA/JM                     |  |
| Superb Lyrebird                 | 4           | Belowra/MB                               | JC/MA                     | Single sighted at Broulee –<br>unusual for this location |
| Green Catbird                   | 2           | Tilba                                    | MA                        |  |
| Southern Emu-wren               | 9           | Broulee                                  | GLM                       |  |
| Crescent Honeyeater             | 2, 1        | Reedy Ck Rd/<br>MO                       | FM/NM                     |  |
| White-cheeked<br>Honeyeater     | 1           | Bogola Head/<br>Benandarah SF            | MA/FM                     |  |
| White-naped<br>Honeyeater       | 30, 22      | Reedy Ck Rd/<br>Belowra                  | FM/JC                     |  |
| Brown-headed<br>Honeyeater      | 15, 6, call | PS/Com/<br>Belowra                       | JM/JC                     |  |
| White-eared Honeyeater          | 2, 1        | Reedy Ck Rd/<br>PS/MO/Bumbo<br>Rd/MB     | FM/JM/NM/<br>MA           |  |
| Noisy Friarbird                 | 1           | PS/Benandarah<br>SF                      | JM/FM                     | First return August 22                                   |
| Scarlet Honeyeater              | 4, 1        | MB/PS/<br>Benandarah SF                  | MA/JM/FM                  |  |
| White-plumed<br>Honeyeater      | 1           | PS                                       | JM                        |  |
| Fuscous Honeyeater              | 10          | PS                                       | JM                        |  |
| Yellow-tufted<br>Honeyeater     | 2           | Tilba                                    | MA                        |  |
| Striated Pardalote              | 2           | Com/PS/Bumbo<br>Rd                       | JC/JM/MA                  | Nesting at Com   |
| Pilotbird                       | Call        | Bumbo Rd                                 | FM                        |  |
| Large-billed Scrubwren          | 4, 2        | Ringlands NA/<br>Benandarah SF           | MA/FM                     |  |

|                             |                      |  |                        |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Varied Sittella             | 12, 8                | Bumbo Rd/<br>Belowra                       | FM/JC                  |                                  |
| Australasian Figbird        | 20                   | Broulee                                    | GH                     | Unusual number for this location |
| Olive-backed Oriole         | 1 or 2               | MKS/PS/Com/<br>Cool                        | SMG/JM/JC/<br>DO       | In August                        |
| Spotted Quail-thrush        | 5, 1                 | Deua NP/Reedy<br>Ck Rd                     | L Hansch/<br>GLM       | Donald's Ck Rd in the Deua       |
| Eastern Shrike-tit          | 1                    | MO   | NM                     |                                  |
| Olive Whistler              | 1                    | MO   | NM                     | Unusual this close to the coast  |
| White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike | 1                    | PS/Corunna                                 | JM/MA                  |                                  |
| Grey Currawong              | 1                    | Reedy Ck Rd/<br>Belowra/NA/<br>MB          | FM/JC/MA               | More sightings this year         |
| Dusky Woodswallow           | 18                   | Belowra                                    | JC                     |                                  |
| Restless Flycatcher         | 2, 1                 | Eurobodalla Rd/<br>Belowra/Com/<br>MYA     | FM/JC                  |                                  |
| Little Raven                | 60, 15, 4            | Com/MO/MB                                  | JC/NM/MA               |                                  |
| White-winged Chough         | 9, 6                 | MKS/PS/CO/<br>Com                          | SMG/JM/DHK<br>/JC      |                                  |
| Rose Robin                  | 3, 2, 1, or<br>calls | Bumbo Rd/MO/<br>ERBG/Reedy<br>Ck Rd/PS/Com | MA/NM/GLM<br>/FM/JM/JC | Calls at other locations         |
| Flame Robin                 | 3                    | Belowra                                    | JC                     |                                  |
| Scarlet Robin               | 9, 3                 | Belowra/Reedy<br>Ck Rd                     | JC/FM                  |                                  |
| Golden-headed Cisticola     | 1                    | Com  | JC                     |                                  |
| Fairy Martin                | 1                    | MYA  | FM                     |                                  |
| Tree Martin                 | 20, 10, 5            | Reedy Ck Rd/<br>Com/MO                     | FM/JC/NM               |                                  |
| Silvereye                   | Small flocks         | Across shire                               |                        |                                  |
| Bassian Thrush              | 1                    | Surfside                                   | R Soroka               |                                  |
| Mistletoebird               | 2, 1                 | PS/Reedy Ck Rd                             | JM/FM                  |                                  |
| Diamond Firetail            | 3                    | Belowra                                    | JC                     |                                  |

| <b>Non-avian species</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Place</b>                  | <b>Observer</b> | <b>Comments</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Common Wombat            | 1 or signs    | Com/Cool                      | JC/DO           |                 |
| Short-beaked Echidna     | 1             | PS/MB/Cool                    | JM/MA/DO        |                 |
| Dusky Antechinus         | 1             | Broulee                       | GLM             |                 |
| Long-nosed Bandicoot     | Signs         | Mossy Pt                      | HR              |                 |
| Sugar Glider             | 1             | Cool                          | DO              |                 |
| Feathertail Glider       | 1             | Mossy Pt                      | HR              |                 |
| Common Ringtail Possum   | 1             | Broulee                       | GLM             |                 |
| Brushtail Possum         | 2, 1          | Broulee/Com/<br>Mossy Pt/Cool | GLM/JC/HR/DO    |                 |
| Eastern Grey Kangaroo    | Up to 41      | Cool                          | DO              |                 |
| Red-necked Wallaby       | 5, 2          | Cool/PS                       | DO/JM           |                 |
| Swamp Wallaby            | Up to 5       | PS                            | JM              |                 |
| Dingo                    | Calls         | Com/Belowra                   | JC              |                 |
| Seal sp.                 | 10            | MB                            | MA              |                 |
| Southern Right Whale     | 1             | BI                            | T&A Ross        |                 |
| Humpback Whale           | Numerous      | Off Kianga/MB                 | T&A Ross/MA     | Moving south    |

|                            |   |              |          |        |
|----------------------------|---|--------------|----------|--------|
| Yellow-bellied Water-Skink | 1 | ERBG         | GC       | August |
| Eastern Blue-tongue        | 1 | Broulee/Com  | GLM/JC   | August |
| Lace Monitor               | 1 | PS           | JM       | August |
| Diamond Python             | 1 | Com/Cool     | JC/DO    |        |
| Red-bellied Black Snake    | 1 | PS/ Com/Cool | JM/JC/DO |        |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Frogs</b><br>JC/JM/HR/DO   | Common Eastern Froglet, Brown-striped Frog,; tree frogs: Screaming, Brown, Eastern Sedgefrog, Jervis Bay, Peron's, Verreaux's. |
| <b>Moths</b><br>JC/JM         | Pale Oxycanus, Sinister, Cream Wave, Mecynata, Subidaria, Perfect Tussock, Green-blotched.                                     |
| <b>Butterflies</b> JC/JM      | Black Jezebel, Cabbage White, Varied Dusky-blue, Common Grass Blue.  |
| <b>Bugs (JC)</b>              | Red Green Spined Stink Bug, Black and White Seed Bug.  |
| <b>Beetle (JC)</b>            | Mealybug Ladybird, Striped Ladybird, Common Spotted Ladybird   |
| <b>Other insects</b><br>JC/FM | Sawfly Larvae, Beefly.   |
| <b>Spiders</b> JC/JM          | Black House, Leaf-curling, Jumping, Lucrida Jumping, Huntsman, Daddy Long Legs, Flat Rock.                                     |

**RAINFALL (mm).** **June:** 6 at Bergalia, 4 at Com, 10.5 at MB, 7.5 at Cool. **July:** 1 at MKS, 1 at Bergalia, 0 at Com, 0.75 at Cool. **August:** 13 at MKS, 46 at Bergalia, 11.5 at Com, 40 at MB, 19.5 at Cool.

#### Contributors

|               |                            |      |                             |         |                        |
|---------------|----------------------------|------|-----------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| MA            | M Anderson, MB             | GLM  | G&L McVeigh, Broulee        | FM      | Field Meeting          |
| DB            | D Bertzeletos, Surfside    | AM   | A Marsh, Bingie             | Others: | M Craig, TS            |
| GC            | G Clark, ACT               | NM   | N Montgomery, MO            |         | M Fleming, Lilli Pilli |
| JCof          | J Coffey, DS               | JM   | J Morgan, PS                |         | L Hansch, Sunshine Bay |
| JC            | J&P Collett, Com           | DO   | D Ondinea, Cool             |         | T&A Ross, Kianga       |
| SMG           | S&M Guppy, MKS             | HR   | H Ransom, Mossy Pt          |         | M Somers, MHS          |
| GH            | G Hounsell, Broulee        | JS   | J Sagar, Pedro              |         | R Soroka, Surfside     |
| DHK           | D&H Kay, Bergalia          |      |                             |         |                        |
|               |                            |      |                             |         |                        |
| <b>Places</b> |                            |      |                             |         |                        |
| BB            | Batemans Bay               | ERBG | Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens | PDD     | Percy Davis Drive, MYA |
| BBWG          | Batemans Bay Water Gardens | LP   | Lilli Pilli                 | PS      | Pedro Swamp            |
| BI            | Bermagui                   | MKS  | Maulbrooks Rd S, MYA        | PP      | Potato Point           |
| BP            | Burrewarra Point           | MO   | Meringo                     | SB      | Surf Beach             |
| Cool          | Coolagolite                | MYA  | Moruya                      | SF      | State Forest           |
| Com           | Comerang                   | MH   | Moruya Heads, N&S           | T'bella | Trunketabella          |
| CO            | Congo                      | MB   | Mystery Bay                 | TN      | Tomakin                |
| DS            | Durras                     | NA   | Narooma                     | TS      | Tuross                 |
| DY            | Dalmeny                    | NP   | National Park               | WL      | Wallaga Lake           |

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