



EUROBODALLA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Great Pied Cormorant - *Phalacrocorax varius* – (Gmelin 1789)

The Cormorant family comprises more than 40 species worldwide. Five occur in Australasia: the Great, Great Pied, Little Pied, and Little Black are found throughout mainland Australia apart from the driest areas of the interior. All except the Great Pied also occur in Tasmania. The Black-faced Cormorant is found along the southern coast from Western Australia to Eden and around the Tasmanian coast. It has very occasionally been reported in the Eurobodalla, with records from Potato Point in March 1992 and Mystery Bay in January 2000. Of the four species we see regularly in the Eurobodalla, the least common is the Great Pied Cormorant, although it is regularly reported in small numbers throughout the year, mainly in the estuaries and coastal lakes.

There are two subspecies: the nominate race, *P. v. varius* occurs in New Zealand and *P. v. hypoleucos* in Australia. It is moderately common in eastern Australia, more so in the south, where it can be seen on large inland wetlands as well as along the coast. It is abundant along the coasts of Western and South Australia, much less common in Victoria. Adult birds are sedentary but there is some dispersal of juveniles.



Photo R Soroka

The Great Pied Cormorant is a large bird, 65-85 cm long, with a wingspan of 110-130 cm. Its back and legs are glossy greenish black, and its large, webbed feet are black. Black plumage fades to dark brown outside the breeding season. The face is white, as are the underparts. Black stripes on the outer thighs are sometimes referred to as trousers. The throat skin is bare, the neck is long, legs and tail short, the bill is grey, long, and hooked. The eye is green with a blue eye ring and an orange/yellow patch between eye and bill. The female is smaller and has a shorter bill. Juveniles have dark brown upperparts and white underparts streaked brown/grey.

The only similar species in our area is the much smaller Little Pied Cormorant, which is 58-64 cm long, has a slight crest, a short yellowish bill and a proportionately longer tail; it also lacks the black 'trousers' of the Great Pied.

Great Pied Cormorants are weaker fliers than other Cormorant species, flying low over water with neck held in an S shape and head high. Both sexes are usually silent except in breeding colonies, when adult males call noisily - 'ark' and 'kerlik'. Females have a soft hissing call.

These are diurnal birds. Usually solitary during the day when not breeding, they may roost communally, often with other species. As many as 8,000 have been observed roosting at one site in Western Australia.

The Great Pied Cormorant's diet is about 10% shellfish, including prawns and molluscs, and 90% 'benthic' or 'ground' fish, that is, fish that live on the bottom. Adult birds eat up to 500 gm a day. They usually hunt alone,



Photo P Gatenby

diving from the water's surface to catch their prey, propelling themselves with their webbed feet and steering with partly opened wings. As with other cormorants, the feathers of the Great Pied are not well waterproofed; it is thought that this decreases buoyancy and so facilitates longer dives. The downside of this is the need to dry feathers after diving; we are all probably familiar with the sight of cormorants standing with wings held out to dry.

The breeding season varies across locations and from year to year, reported variously as 'most months' and 'commonly autumn and winter', and presumably affected by conditions. Pairs are monogamous, begin breeding at 2 years, and breed once a year. The breeding cycle takes about 6 months. Birds sometimes nest singly, but usually in colonies of 30 to 3,000 birds. They may nest with other cormorant species and with Australian Pelicans and spoonbills. Nests are close to water, usually in sheltered areas such as harbours and estuaries but occasionally at more exposed sites. They may be in trees or on the ground, but not on bare earth or rock.

Males choose the nest site and 'court' females with various displays, including wing waving and jumping in the air. They also collect most of the material for nests, which are large platforms about 80 cm across, made of sticks and foliage held together with droppings.

Clutch size is 2 to 5, most commonly 3. The incubation period is 25–33 days. Eggs are elliptical, with one more pointed end, and are matt, pale blue to greenish white, with a chalky coating. Parents share the care of eggs, nestlings and fledglings. Big feet come in handy when brooding young – like some penguin species, the adult balances the nestlings on his/her feet. Young are fed regurgitated, partially digested food. Chicks remain in the nest for 40 days. Once fledged, they sometimes form crèches on the ground. They are independent at about 3 months.

The IUCN lists Great Pied Cormorants of least concern. In the past, some commercial fishers shot them. They are still at some risk from fishing, becoming entangled in fishing nets and lines, and pierced by hooks. Gillian Macnamara

A warm welcome to new members

Peter Mesenberg and Meg Switzer, Bingie
Dr Sue Serjeantson, Batehaven.
Erzsebet De Saxe, Congo.

What's coming up.....

Saturday 11 October, 2pm Barlings Swamp and Bevia Road (2-3 km Grade 2) Meet at the corner of George Bass Drive and Bevia Road, next to Barlings Swamp. Rough track with some unmade sections. The swamp is home to a variety of duck and waterfowl species, including the possibility of Blue-billed Duck, Swamp Harrier Australian Hobby. Along Bevia Rd: Mistletoebird, various thornbills, Brown Gerygone, Varied Sittella.

Sunday 26 October, 9am Comerang Farm (3-4 km Grade 2) Meet opposite the Bodalla Police Station, corner of Princes Hwy and Eurobodalla Road, Bodalla. Julie and Peter Collett will lead a walk on their farm next to the Tuross River. Rufous Songlark, Stubble Quail, White-winged Triller, Whistling Kite, Brown Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Australasian Pipit, Eastern Rosella, ducks, waterfowl, heron and egret.

Saturday 8 November, 2pm Batemans Bay Water Gardens (approx. 1 km Grade 1) Meet in the Museum carpark at 3 Museum Place, Batemans Bay. Grey-headed Flying Fox, White-headed Pigeon, Pacific Koel, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Buff-banded Rail, other rails and crakes, Australian Reed Warbler, Nankeen Night Heron, Azure Kingfisher.

Sunday 23 November, 9am Waders (2-4km Grade 2) The venue will depend on wader activity, weather and water levels in the estuaries. Depending on coastal conditions, this walk may be cancelled, and an alternative walk will be proposed. An email will be sent out beforehand, or you can call Julie or Annie for the venue.

Nature in Eurobodalla 39 will shortly be available to download from the Society's website (www.enhs.org.au). It provides a summary of the status of the fauna of the Eurobodalla Shire compiled from records submitted to the Eurobodalla Natural History Society during 2024.

Field Meeting - Bumbo Road - 27 July 2025

Bumbo Road, just north of Bodalla, is regularly on the field meeting program, and for good reason. It never fails to deliver a great range of species sightings. The Sunday outing in July this year was no exception.

Gathering at the intersection with the Princes Highway, we were greeted by our leader Julie Collett. The swamp beside the road was the first site to be surveyed. There is a nearby garden and a historic old shed to investigate, so the morning began with a range of water birds, as well as a very cooperative Grey Shrike-thrush.

Julie advised that some of the areas where we regularly park are quite muddy, so some carpooling was in order to reduce the number of vehicles.

Our next stop was beside the Tuross River, where it meets Bumbo Creek. A number of bush birds were added to our list of sightings, with some of us lucky enough to have good sightings of a male Rose Robin, always a crowd-pleaser at this time of year. A Golden Whistler was very keen to show himself off, flitting around in a nearby casuarina, and a large flock of about 80 Chestnut Teal took off in a loose formation.

A group of Nankeen Night Herons is regularly sighted across the creek just beyond the bridge. They are very loyal to this spot, and 4 were observed amongst the casuarina foliage. Numerous smaller bush birds were recorded, mostly from calls, but there were large flocks of both Red-browed finches and Yellow Thornbills observed.

Heading further west, we parked, again beside the creek, and completed the day on foot. At the swamp on the right-hand side of the road, which reputedly boasts a resident Grey Goshawk, there were very few birds to be seen. I have regularly sighted an Azure Kingfisher here, but not this time. However, those who ventured further along Bumbo Road were rewarded with a sighting of this little jewel of a bird. An additional special sighting was a small group of Varied Sitellas, fewer than on our previous visit, but always a pleasure to see.



Azure Kingfisher

Some members of the group had left early, so a depleted number of us gathered to help Julie fill out the observation sheet. As mentioned above, Bumbo Road never disappoints and our total of 59 species was a very satisfying result. Rob Clunes shared some of his wonderful photos on the Facebook page and agreed I could use some to accompany this report.

Our thanks to Julie Collett for doing the recce in advance of the outing, and for leading us on the day. Mandy Anderson



View across Bumbo Creek



Golden Whistler



Rose Robin

Field Meeting – Nerrigundah – 24 August 2025

On Sunday 24 August 2025, a group of 18 met up in Nerrigundah where Isis Joyce, a local resident, gave us an overview of what lay ahead for us. Despite being advised of the potential for ticks, leeches and mineshafts, we were in for a wonderful day as we explored some of the nearby trails. The scarred landscape surrounding the village served as a sad reminder of the tragic fire nearly 6 years ago, that destroyed most of the homes in the village and resulted in the loss of one life.

As we walked up towards the monument dedicated to Miles O’Grady, the 25-year-old policeman killed by bushrangers in 1866, we were greeted by the local Australian Wood Ducks that seemed quite accepting of our visit. It was here that we also saw some busy Superb Fairy-wrens. One of the day’s highlights was there to greet us as we approached the grounds of the Agricultural Bureau. For several minutes we got to look at a pair of Scarlet Robins, much to the delight of several people who commented that it was their first sighting of Scarlet Robins for about 5 years.

We continued on our walk further up the hill and saw glimpses of the colourful season ahead of us, with wildflowers starting to bloom. Some of the species observed were Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*) and Thyme Pink-bells (*Tetratea thymifolia*), and there were also some spiky Acacias flowering. One of these was the Juniper Wattle (*Acacia ulicifolia*), with the less common Heath Wattle (*Acacia brownii*) also present. The latter, pictured below, is also referred to as Prickly Moses.

The other plant of note was the large Smooth Barked Apple (*Angophora costata*). This tree is usually found on Hawkesbury Sandstone, however, it occurs along a belt of suitable soil derived from sandstone and shale in the Eurobodalla. Nerrigundah is close to the most southern extent of its natural occurrence in NSW. The Smooth Barked Apple could easily be mistaken for a Eucalyptus. Both are from the Myrtaceae family, however one way to distinguish an Angophora from a Eucalyptus species is to look at the leaves. The Angophora leaf stems are opposite whereas Eucalyptus have an alternate leaf arrangement.



Heath Wattle *Acacia brownii*
Photo J Morgan

Large mounds of dirt indicated the presence of mineshafts alongside the track as we returned along the top of the trail. These mineshafts were used during the goldrush that spread through the area following the discovery of alluvial gold in the nearby Gulph Creek in 1861. We were sensible enough not to explore behind these mounds of dirt, and later when observing that we seemed to have lost some people, a wisecrack suggested that maybe they had inadvertently visited the bottom of a mineshaft. Just to assure people, what actually happened was that some of our group who had to leave early walked directly back to the carpark, whilst most of the group explored other trails.

As we descended the hill through a recently formed track, we came across some of the leeches we were forewarned about. Defying gravity these leeches were seemingly standing upright, as if they were Dugites ready to strike. As far as I know, they weren’t successful in attaching to any of us. However, most of us have probably had the unfortunate experience of not discovering a leech’s success until returning home and only observing its blood-filled body when removing our socks. To switch our mind away from the leeches, we came across some Lewin’s, White-checked and White-eared Honeyeaters. Later, we were lucky enough to see a pair of Golden Whistlers. The male sat up obligingly on exposed branches for quite a while, enabling most of us to get a really good view of its wonderful colours.

By the end of the trip, we had observed 37 species of birds, as well as having the opportunity to explore a part of the region that many of us had not been before. Highlights, in terms of birds we don’t usually see, were Buff-rumped Thornbill, Scarlet Robin, White-eared Honeyeater and Grey Currawong. As we made our way down the mountain towards Bodalla we encountered rain. It seemed like it was just waiting for us to finish enjoying our morning, not wanting to inconvenience our wonderful experience on the trails around Nerrigundah. Thank you, Isis, for enabling many of us to explore some new territory. Bob Germantse

Frauds, imposters, femme-fatales and villains

The world of the insects and spiders includes imposters and frauds at every turn, all looking to benefit from subterfuge and villainy. Mimics are everywhere – species that exist by pretending to be something they are not.

Millions of years of evolution have crafted these mimics for various reasons. In some cases, it is for defence or for concealment. In other cases, it is an aggressive strategy to secure a meal. In most cases, the mimicry is so sophisticated and complete that everyone is easily fooled: predators, victims and even human observers.

There are mimics that pretend to be inanimate objects for concealment, insects pretending to be other insects, spiders pretending to be insects. Predators will go to great lengths to dupe their victims, even by pretending to be females of the target species to lure an amorous male to his demise – true femme-fatales!

Batesian Mimics

When a harmless species mimics a more dangerous species to deter would-be predators, that is termed “Batesian” mimicry. A good example is to be found in the lycid beetles (Figure 1) and the insects that mimic them. The body fluids and the wing covers of lycid beetles contain a



Figure 1 Long-nosed Lycid Beetle, *Porrostoma rhipidius*, at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens

nauseating chemical called lycidic acid. This makes them very unpalatable to predators such as birds and spiders. As a further layer of defence, the lycids also secrete pyrazines, olfactory warning chemicals, to give advance notice that they are not edible. So effective is this defence, that multiple harmless species have evolved to mimic the lycids such as the lycid-mimicking belid beetle (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Lycid-mimicking belid beetle, *Rhinitia venusta* at Broulee.

Wasps are formidable creatures of the insect world, and their presence usually causes potential predators to keep a low profile. Wasps can often be seen strutting boldly across the leaves of a plant, waving their antennae in front, looking for suitable prey to parasitise or take back to a nest. An example is the ichneumon wasp in Figure 3. Ichneumon wasp species are found throughout Australia, many with white markings on the antennae like the one depicted.



Figure 3 Ichneumon Wasp at Ulladulla, NSW

The insect in Figure 4 behaves in just the same way; it boldly strides across the leaves of plants waving what appear to be white-marked antennae, in front of it. This insect is not a wasp though, it is a relatively harmless stilt-legged fly in the family Micropezidae, which is found in Eastern Australia and the Northern Australia. In lieu of antennae, it is holding its forelegs aloft, in a convincing performance as a parasitic



Figure 4 Wasp-mimicking stilt-legged fly at Darwin, NT

wasp looking for prey! Its mimicry of a parasitic wasp appears to be a successful strategy in fending off would-be predators.

Müllerian mimics

Sometimes different insects that have well developed defences share the same appearance which is referred to as Müllerian mimicry. Would-be predators are warned off by aposematic, or warning, colouration. The colour formula is often shared across multiple families and even more than one insect order. An example is in the many species of wasps, sawflies and bees that have a shared warning of lateral abdominal stripes in black and yellow/orange. Figures 5 and 6 show a nomia bee and a weevil wasp that share this familiar abdominal pattern.



Figure 5 Weevil wasp, *Cerceris antipodes* at the South Pacific Heathland Reserve, Ulladulla



Figure 6 Nomia bee, *Nomia aurantifer* at South Heads Moruya, NSW

Camouflage mimicry or homotypy

Arthropods often mimic inanimate objects as a camouflage tactic. The spider *Arkys curtulus* gives a very convincing impersonation of a lump of bird droppings (Figure 7). Clearly this makes it an unappealing lunch!



Figure 7 Bird Dropping Spider, *Arkys curtulus* at Ulladulla Wildflower Gardens



Figure 8 Children's stick insect, *Tropidoderus childrenii* in Batemans Bay

Other masters of the camouflage defensive mimicry include the much-loved children's stick insect, *Tropidoderus childrenii* (Figure 8) which is normally all-but-invisible when it remains stationary amongst green plant material and resembles a green twig. In this photograph, it is unusually noticeable, having wandered onto the silver-coloured leaves of an emu bush.

Aggressive or Peckhamian mimicry

Sometimes predatory insects carry out mimicry of their intended prey to get within striking distance without being detected. This is termed aggressive or Peckhamian mimicry.

One example of aggressive mimicry can be found among fireflies. Despite their misleading common name, these light-generating insects are in fact beetles in the family Lampyridae. Australia is home to 25 species of fireflies, with Macquarie Pass and the Blue Mountains being the nearest populations to the Eurobodalla. At night, the fireflies attract mates by flashing a code using bioluminescence. However, some species in the genus *Photuris* are predatory and mimic the flashing code of females of other species. When the males respond to the signal, they are attacked by the predatory beetles – true femme-fatales!

These beetles are not alone in employing the pheromones of their prey as an aggressive strategy. The magnificent bolas spider uses the chemical cues used by female moths to lure male moths in to their demise.

The bolas spider's sticky silk is thought to contain sex pheromones of female moths in the family Noctuidae. The scent lures male moths that are nearby. The spider senses the vibrations from the moth wingbeats, and as the moth approaches, the spider begins swinging a thread with a pheromone-laced sticky globule at the end. The moth eventually gets close enough to be hit by the swinging globule and becomes trapped by its stickiness.

The spider then draws up the strand, before biting and immobilising the moth. The moth is either eaten immediately or wrapped in silk to be eaten later.



Figure 9 The characteristic egg sacs of the magnificent bolas spider, *Ordgarius magnificus*, at Batemans Bay Water Gardens

The spiders usually stay well hidden in a web retreat until nighttime when moth prey emerge. However, their characteristic egg sacs are usually very visible, giving away their presence in daytime (Figure 9).

Aggressive mimicry can also be seen amongst the robber flies of the family Asilidae. The subfamily of Laphriinae comprises more than 110 genera of bee-mimic robber flies. They are predators of bees and other insects, practising aggressive mimicry by fooling bees into allowing them to get close enough to attack, without themselves being the subject of their target's defenses. Some are known to be brood parasites that lay their eggs in the cells of solitary bees such as *Xylocopa*, carpenter bees.

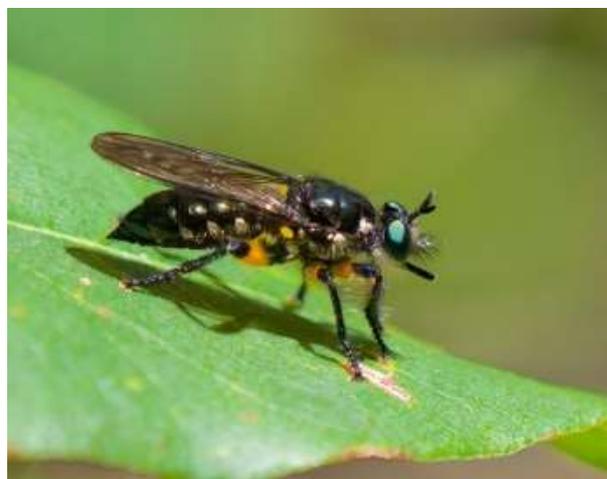


Figure 10 Bee-mimicking robber fly *Laphria rufifemorata* at Ulladulla Wildflower Reserve

Figure 10 shows *Laphria rufifemorata*, one such bee mimic. The white and black patterned abdomen is reminiscent of a bee. The orange-colored bands on the femora resemble the pollen-bearing scopae of bees that have been visiting flowers. The abdomen is 'bee shaped' rather than the long thin abdomen of other subfamilies of robbers.

Wassmanian Mimicry

Ants and termites are among the targets for insects that seek to live commensally within colonies. This is called Wassmanian mimicry and mainly benefits the intruders, often with minimal impact on the hosts. The mimics live undetected in the colony, sharing their food and shelter with reduced risk of predation. A remarkable case of this was discovered only recently in the Northern Territory, by scientists from the University of Sao Paulo. It was an incredible species of rove beetle, *Austrospirachtha carrijoii*, that carries a replica of a termite on its back as a membranous abdominal enlargement, a form of morphological development called physogastry. (Figure 11).



Figure 11 *Austrospirachtha carrijoii* termite mimicking Rove beetle

Conclusion

The world of insects and spiders is full of mimics. The extent and sophistication of the mimicry is an endless source of fascination and amazement. There is much that we don't yet know – and so much more to discover. Phil Warburton

Footnote: all photographs are by Phil Warburton, apart from Figure 11 which is credited to the scientists from Sao Paulo University, *Bruno Zilberman & Carlos Pires-Silva*

Bodalla Pomaderris – an uncommon local hiding in plain sight

The diversity of Australia's biota means that you never know what you might meet on a walk. It also means it's important to always ask questions. Differences between species in the same genus can be highly nuanced and this is the case also for many rare species. Threatened plants don't come with neon signs and this can make finding and conserving them difficult. At the field meeting to Bumbo Road in July, we wandered past a rather nondescript shrub which some thought/hoped was *Bodalla Pomaderris*. This is a relatively rare species in our area so a small group of us undertook to do some further research. Here's what we discovered.

Pomaderris is a genus of approximately 70 shrub species; 65 of these are found only in Australia and 5 in New Zealand. The Australian species occur mainly across south-eastern Australia. Many have a restricted distribution and comprise small disjunct (separate) populations. Eleven are listed as rare or endangered under Commonwealth and State legislation; for a genus with such a small number of species, the number listed as threatened is surprising.



Photo J Morgan

The *Bodalla Pomaderris* (*Pomaderris bodalla*) is endemic to NSW and is currently known to occur on the south coast between Batemans Bay and Merimbula, and in the upper Hunter Valley near Muswellbrook. The species was first formally described in 1997 by Neville G Walsh and Fiona Coates of the National Herbarium of Victoria and the description was published in the journal *Muelleria* from specimens collected by Walsh near Tilba Tilba in 1995.

The species is listed as "vulnerable" under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. According to the NSW Threatened Species website there are ten populations of *Bodalla Pomaderris* currently known, and specimens were also collected from another two imprecisely described locations approximately 40 years ago. Most populations are small, with seven of them estimated to be of less than a hundred plants each. All populations have locally restricted distributions and the total population size of *P. bodalla* is estimated to be between 1,082 and 4,325 individuals.

The species occurs in moist open forest along sheltered gullies or stream banks. It is between 2 and 4 metres high. The young stems have spreading rusty simple hairs and dense greyish stellate hairs (though you need a hand lens to see the detail). The leaves are alternating, elliptic, broad-elliptic, broad-obovate to rhombic, mostly 2-3 cm long and 12-15 mm wide. The upper leaf surface is dark green and hairless, and the lower surface has sparse spreading rusty hairs above short greyish stellate hairs. The flowers are cream and display in loose, irregular clusters. *P. bodalla* is readily distinguishable from co-occurring *Pomaderris* species based on the presence of rusty stellate hairs on stems and new growth of mature plants and seedlings.



Photo F Vaughan

P. bodalla typically flowers in spring. Insects are believed to be the primary pollinators for *Pomaderris* species but there is limited information about which insects. The seeds of *P. bodalla* are small (<6 mm and 0.6 g). *Pomaderris* species generally tend to be poor dispersers, relying on gravity and ants, with an average seed dispersal distance of 1 m. *P. bodalla* seems to follow this trend. The association of known populations with riparian areas and drainage lines suggests that secondary dispersal via water is possible, but the significance of this is unknown. The short-range dispersal of seeds by gravity and

ants suggests the species is susceptible to fragmentation. Secondary dispersal via streams and rivers may offset this, at least along rivers if not across catchments.

Most seeds are physically dormant and require high, fire-induced soil temperatures (c. 100–120°C) to break dormancy. However, around 17% are non-dormant and may germinate in response to other disturbance events such as flooding. It is unknown how long the seeds of *P. bodalla* remain viable in the soil but in other *Pomaderris* species, seeds are suspected to remain so for at least 20 years.

The Australian National Botanic Gardens has been leading a collaborative partnership of government bodies, research institutions, National Parks, private land managers, traditional custodians and other botanic gardens as part of a *Pomaderris* conservation project which involves the collection and analysis of seed and cutting material from *Pomaderris* populations across NSW and the ACT in order to better understand the genetics and ecology of the species and devise effective recovery actions to conserve it.

We wouldn't have found that occurrence of *Bodalla Pomaderris* that day without stopping and asking. The benefits of group walks, in terms of 'having someone to ask' and harnessing collective knowledge and experience cannot be understated. Conservation takes a village! Helen Kay with assistance from many others.

Noisy Pittas in our patch

I subscribe to an online monthly newsletter called *Budawangia*, which presents articles about the botanical features and bushland of the Illawarra and South Coast. It is written and compiled by Dr Kevin Mills, a Jamberoo-based botanist. Many of us will have attended Kevin's presentations at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens most recently for his talk about the rainforests of the south coast.

In response to articles submitted to *Budawangia* by readers, a new feature called Fauna Corner has recently been included.

I read with great interest an article in the April edition about the southerly range extension of the Noisy Pitta. This bird is a particular favourite of mine because of its startling colours and its distinctive call. The call is unmistakable, interpreted as "walk-to-work". Noisy Pittas are much more regularly heard than seen.

The original article in Fauna Corner was submitted by Garry Daley, who has heard and seen Noisy Pittas on his property at Tapitallee, 15kms north-east of Nowra. His first observation was in January 2003, and this was the first record for the Shoalhaven LGA. Since then, he and his partner have recorded one or two birds on 22 occasions. A young bird was seen in March this year, confirming that the Noisy Pitta is breeding in the Shoalhaven.

In response to Garry Daley's article, I submitted a short item describing the momentous occasion in July 2014 when 3 Noisy Pittas appeared in the littoral rainforest beside the track leading to Murunna Point, Wallaga Lake. I was alerted to the Pittas' visit via the Eremaea website. A number of bird enthusiasts from Mystery Bay drove down optimistically, and some of us were rewarded with very successful sightings. Whilst observing two adult birds foraging in the leaf litter close to the path, we heard the distinctive call of a third bird nearby.

Mystery Bay resident Ann Christiansen took this outstanding photo of a young Pitta, confirming that breeding was taking place locally. Observations of Noisy Pitta have occasionally been recorded on the slopes of Gulaga Mount Dromedary. This area, Gulaga-Wallaga Lake, provides the most southern location of the species.



Alerted to the recent increase in Noisy Pittas observations, Kevin Mills did a review of all sightings south of Sydney. Formerly, all observations south of Port Macquarie, of which there have been many, had been considered vagrants. The most surprising was of a single bird seen on Barunguba (Montague Island) in 1876. It was taken as a specimen and is now displayed in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology.

Analysing the data, Kevin concluded that there is a clear “upsurge in records in the last 10 to 15 years. This may indicate an increase in the number of bird observers, an expansion of range southwards and/or the establishment of local populations.”

An additional sighting in the Eurobodalla occurred at Burrewarra Point in 2018, and there was an unconfirmed sighting at Potato Point in 2015.

To me the Noisy Pitta is a very special bird. Visually, it is probably no more spectacular than a Rainbow Lorikeet, which we take for granted because it is so common, visiting our gardens regularly, and it is usually amongst the top 10 most common birds every year in the Great Aussie Bird Count. It's the rarity of the Pitta that makes it such an exciting find. I will be delighted if its numbers increase in our area and I get to see and hear them more regularly. Mandy Anderson

STOP PRESS - On Sunday 17 August, Julie Morgan reported hearing the unmistakable call of a Noisy Pitta in thick vegetation beside the river on Eurobodalla Road, quite close to Tyron Bridge. For anyone who is not familiar with the call, it would be a great idea to have a listen on an app or on the Internet so that perhaps more records can be added to our data.



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. Please send your contributions to mypatch@enhs.org.au

Logo design by Trevor King



Lewins Honeyeater nest

Lewin's Honeyeater nesting site

Mystery Bay where I live, is surrounded by bush and farmland and national park. My own back yard is virtually a jungle. Why then would a Lewin's Honeyeater choose to build her nest in the Rhapsis Palm which I brush past every time I use my front door?

She began work on the nest last summer, when she constructed some basic foundation strands, but then appeared to desert it. However, in the past month, there has been some frantic work on completing the job, as she regularly flew in carrying small pieces of spider web and other unidentifiable grasses and small pieces of vegetation., weaving everything carefully into a cup-shaped “nursery”. She sat in the nest a couple of times, and I cooperatively used the back door so as not to disturb her.

But once again, the bird seems to have deserted her beautifully constructed nest. Apparently, little is known about the nesting habits of some honeyeaters, including the Lewin's. I will continue to monitor the site, in the hope of seeing a clutch of eggs, and eventually a brood of chicks. I can watch the progress through my lounge-room window without intruding. Mandy Anderson

Have you spotted Gang-gang cockatoos exhibiting breeding behaviour in spring or summer?

Researchers at the Australian National University (ANU) want to hear from you!

Despite how iconic Gang-gang cockatoos are, surprisingly little is known about their breeding ecology and distribution. The ANU Difficult Bird Research Group is working with the community and government to close these knowledge gaps to improve conservation outcomes.

What the research is focusing on this year:

- locating breeding habitat and monitoring nesting success (by deploying remote cameras and accessing nests)
- trialling GPS transmitters to track the movements of breeding adults.
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Why this matters:

We know of very few breeding sites outside urban Canberra. Finding and monitoring nests is critical to:

- identify breeding habitat gang-gangs rely on
- protect important breeding areas now and into the future
- measure breeding success and identify key threats to the species.
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How you can help:

From mid-late September, keep an eye out for breeding behaviour such as:

- pairs chewing bark around the entrance to hollows
- repeated visits to a hollow by a pair
- gang-gangs defending a hollow from other birds
- adults feeding very young juveniles (December–January).

If you have observed any of these behaviours in the south coast, please contact ganggangfarsouthcoast@gmail.com, or upload your records from outside the south coast to NatureMapr. You can also help by collecting shed Gang-gang cockatoo feathers you find on the ground. These can provide valuable genetic material and will support better understanding the population genetics of this species. Check out our feather ID guide for identification and storage tips.



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Image: Larissa Dann



Image: Stacey Taylor

Highlights from ENHS records - Winter 2025

Avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Emu	2	Bodalla	MA	
Plumed Whistling-Duck	2	Com	JC	In August
Blue-billed Duck	8	Barlings Swamp	MA	
Musk Duck	More than 20	Tilba L	MA	In June
Freckled Duck	Up to 12	Newstead Pond	S Heyward/ MA	In June-July
Australian Shelduck	2	Com	JC	In July-August
Hardhead	40	Com	JC	In August
Australasian Shoveler	2	Com	JC	In July
Australasian Grebe	15, 12, 11	PS/Eurobodalla Rd/Bingie	JM/DHK	

Hoary-headed Grebe	18, 8, 2, 1	PS/MYA/MHS/ MB	JM/DHK/MA	
Greater Crested Grebe	1	Deep Ck Dam	GC	In August
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	10, 6, 2	MKS/Cool/Tilba	SMG/DO/MA	
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	Broulee	GH	
Topknot Pigeon	2	Sth DS	V Howard	In August
Tawny Frogmouth	2	MB	MA	
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	MB	MA	First return August 31
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1 or 2 or calls	Across shire	Various	From mid-July
Brush Cuckoo	1	MB	MA	First return August 31
Buff-banded Rail	1	NA	A Christensen	In June
Spotless Crake	1	BBWG	DB	In June
Dusky Moorhen	4, 2, 1	BBWG/Bumbo Rd/Com	MA/FM/JC	
Southern Giant Petrel	1	BP	NC	Juvenile in July
Royal Spoonbill	17, 14, 12	NA/BBWG/ Nangudga	MA/DB	
Nankeen Night Heron	7, 3, 1	Bumbo Rd/ MHS/MYA	JM/MA/DHK	
Cattle Egret	50, 30	MYA/Com	JM/JC	
White-necked Heron	1	MYA/Bergalia/ Com/ Eurobodalla Rd/ Nerrigundah	JM/DHK/JC/IJ	
Intermediate Egret	1	Com/NA	JC/MA	
Little Egret	Up to 4	MB	MA	
Eastern Reef Egret	2 at BI, singles elsewhere	Sth DS/LP/ Broulee/MO/ Mullimburra Pt/ MB/BI	JCof/AL/GLM /DHK/MA/DO	
Australasian Gannet	6, 4, 1	BP/MB/Sth DS/ Brou L/Bengello	FM/MA/JCof	
Great Cormorant	Up to 250	Bumbo Rd	FM/JM	In July and August
Great Pied Cormorant	4	Broulee	GLM	
Australasian Darter	1	MYA/Bumbo Rd/NA	DHK/FM/JM/ MA	
Aust Pied Oystercatcher	Up to 10	NA	MA	
Sooty Oystercatcher	Up to 12	MB	MA	
Pied Stilt	2	Com	JC	In June
Red-capped Plover	Up to 20	MB	MA	
Double-banded Plover	1	Sth DS/MB	R Clunes/MA	In June
Hooded Plover	1 or 2	MB	MA	
Black-fronted Dotterel	3, 2, 1	Bingie/MO	DHK/NM	
Far Eastern Curlew	1	NA	MA	In August
Bar-tailed Godwit	21, 15, 14	TS/NA/Brou L	M Craig/MA	Recorded throughout winter
Caspian Tern	4, 2, 1	Sth DS/NA/BP	JCof/MA/FM	
Greater Crested Tern	200 to more than 500	MB	MA	
Greater Sooty Owl	Call	Tilba	MA	In June
Powerful Owl	2	PS	JM	Pair calling
Southern Boobook	1	Broulee/PS/ Bergalia/MO/TS	GLM/JM/DHK /NM/GM	Including some daytime sightings
Osprey	3, 2, 1	NA/TS/ Cullendulla	T&A Ross/ MA/M Craig /RSor	Nesting at NA with dependent young
Square-tailed Kite	2, 1	PS/MB/Tilba	JM/MA	Pair displaying at PS in August
Little Eagle	1	Runnyford Rd	N Hordern	In June

Swamp Harrier	1	MYA/PS/MO/ Bumbo Rd/ Eurobodalla Rd/ MB/Tilba	FM/JM/MA	
Grey Goshawk	2, 1	Tilba//Broulee/ Cullendulla/ MKS/PS/MB	FM/GLM/ RSor/SMG/JM /MA	
Brown Goshawk	1	Bergalia/ Nerrigundah	DHK/FM	
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	PS	JM	
Azure Kingfisher	2	Bumbo Rd	FM	
Sacred Kingfisher	1	Broulee	GLM	In July
Australian Hobby	2, 1	PS/Pedro	JM/JS	Pair displaying at PS in June
Brown Falcon	1	MYA/Bergalia/ Com/MB	JM/DHK/JC/ MA	
Peregrine Falcon	2, 1	Tilba/PS/MB	T&A Ross/JM/ MA	
Glossy Black Cockatoo	3, 1	PS/Pedro/Cool	JM/JS/DO	
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	39, 27, 20	PS/Nerrigundah/ MB	JM/IJ/MA	
Gang-Gang Cockatoo	20, 12, 8, 4	MYA/MB/ Broulee/LP	S Jameson/MA /GH/GLM/ J Mather	
Eastern Rosella	8, 5, 2	Com/MB/MYA/ Bergalia/ Belowra/MB	JC/MA/DHK	More reports this year
Musk Lorikeet	4, 2, call	Gulaga/Tilba/ MB	FM/MA	
Noisy Pitta	Calling	Eurobodalla Rd	JM	In August
Superb Lyrebird	2, 1 or calls	Widespread	Various	
Southern Emu-wren	5	Broulee	GLM	
Crescent Honeyeater	5, 2	Deua NP/Cool/ Nerrigundah	JM/DO/IJ	
White-cheeked Honeyeater	2	Deua NP	JM	Oulla Ck Firetrail and Donald's Ck Rd
White-naped Honeyeater	40, 16, 8, 6, 4, 3	PS/Deua NP/ MO/Gulaga/Ner rigundah/ Tilba	JM/NM/FM/ IJ/MA	
Brown-headed Honeyeater	15, 5, call	PS/Com/Bumbo Rd	JM/JC/FM	
White-eared Honeyeater	8, 3, 1	PS/Deua NP Broulee/MKS/M O/Nerrigundah	JM/GH/SMG/ NM/IJ	
Scarlet Honeyeater	2	MB	MA	First return August 31
Fuscous Honeyeater	2	PS	JM	In June-July
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	4	Deua NP	JM	
Striated Pardalote	6, 2, 1	PS/Com/MO/ MB	JM/JC/NM/ MA	Nesting at Com in July- August
Pilotbird	Calls	Gulaga/Tilba	JM/MA	
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Calling	Deua NP	JM	Oulla Ck Firetrail and Donald's Ck Rd
Large-billed Scrubwren	2 or calls	Deua NP/ Gulaga	JM/FM	
Buff-rumped Thornbill	8	Nerrigundah	FM/JM	
Varied Sittella	8, 4, 3, 2	PS/Deua NP/ Bumbo Rd/MO	JM/FM/NM	
Olive-backed Oriole	2 or call	PS/Cool/Brou L	JM/DO/MA	June and August
Rufous Whistler	1	Cool	DO	First return on August 2

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	3, 1	PS/Bumbo Rd	JM	
Grey Currawong	1	BBWG/ Nerrigundah Rd	DB/FM	With Pied Currawong at BBWG
Dusky Woodswallow	10	Nerrigundah	IJ	
White-breasted Woodswallow	2	MO	NM	First return August 31, an early arrival
Spangled Drongo	1	Surfside/BBWG	DB	In June
Restless Flycatcher	2, 1	MB/Com/ Eurobodalla Rd /Gulaga	MA/JC/JM/FM	
Little Raven	30, 4	Com/MB	JC/MA	
White-winged Chough	17, 9	PS/MKS	JM/SMG	
Rose Robin	2, 1	PS/Com/Bumbo Rd/Nerrigundah/ Sth DS/Brou L/ MB	JM/JC/FM/IJ/ JCof/MA	
Flame Robin	1	Nerrigundah	IJ	
Scarlet Robin	4, 1	Nerrigundah/ Pedro/Bergalia/ MO/MB	FM/IJ/JS/DHK /NM/MA	More reports this year
Tree Martin	12, 10, 6	MB/Com/MO	MA/JC/NM	
Silvereye	40, 20, 10	PS/Com/Gulaga/ MB	JM/JC/FM/MA	Fewer elsewhere
Common Blackbird	1	NA/Tilba	MA/FM	
Mistletoebird	6, 4, 1	Deua NP/ Bumbo Rd/PS/ Com/Gulaga	JM/FM/JC	On flowering Mistletoe in Deua NP and along Bumbo Rd, June-July
Australasian Pipit	8, 2	Tilba/Bingie Pt/ MYA/Com/MB	FM/DHK/JC/ MA	

Non-avian species	Number	Place	Observer	Comments
Common Wombat	1 or signs	Broulee/Bumbo Rd/Com/Nerrigundah/Cool/Tilba	GLM/FM/JC/ IJ/DO/MA	
Short-beaked Echidna	1	BP/PS/Pedro Pt /MB/Cool	FM/JM/MA/ DO	
Long-nosed Bandicoot	Signs	PS/Nerrigundah/ MB	JM/FM/MA	Increased activity reported compared to previous years
Sugar Glider	Calls	PS/Tilba	JM/MA	
Common Brushtail Possum	2, 1	Com/Nerrigundah/ Broulee	JC/IJ/GLM	
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	100	Bodalla	JC	
Red-necked Wallaby	7, 5	Nerrigundah/ Pedro/Cool	IJ/JS/DO	
Swamp Wallaby	8, 4, 2, 1	Pedro/PS/Nerrigundah/Com/Cool	JS/JM/IJ/JC/ DO	
House Mouse	1	Nerrigundah	IJ	In June
Bush Rat	1	Nerrigundah	IJ	In June
Black Rat	1	Nerrigundah	IJ	In June
Sambar Deer	2	Cool	DO	
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	6	Sth DS	JCof	
Australian Fur Seal	3	MYA	DHK	At Riverside Park
Humpback Whale	25	Off BP	FM	Moving north in June
Snake-necked Turtle	3, 1	Nerrigundah/ Eurobodalla Rd	IJ/JM	July-August
Lace Monitor	1	PS	JM	In August
Common (Green) Tree Snake	1	Brou Lake	A Brennan	In August; not often reported in the Eurobodalla

Red-bellied Black Snake	2, 1	PS/Pedro/Com/ Nerrigundah/MB	JM/JS/JC/IJ/ MA	
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Frogs JC/GH/JM/DO	Common Eastern Froglet, Brown-striped Frog, Tyler's Toadlet; tree frogs: Screaming, Brown, Jervis Bay, Peron's, Tyler's, Verreaux's.
Moths MA/JC/JM	Pale Oxycanus, Scat, Concealer, Small Tabby, Ragged Geometrid, Black Geometrid, Long-fringed Bark, Fallen Bark Looper, Golden-fringed Emerald, Cream Wave, Mecynata, Apple Looper, Iropoca, Pink Browntail, Tobacco Looper, Cycota Tuft, Green-blotched, Common, Brown and Variable Cutworm, Native Budworm.
Butterflies JC/JM/FM	Black Jezebel, Cabbage White, Brown Ringlet, Australian Painted Lady, Varied Dusky-blue, Blotched Blue, Common Grass Blue.
Beetles (JC)	Ladybirds: Striped, Steel Blue, <i>Orcus bilunulatis</i> .
Other insects JC/JM	Australian Emerald Dragonfly, Australian Wood Cockroach, Orange Caterpillar Parasite Wasp.
Spiders JC/JM	Black House, Leaf-curling, Jumping, Huntsman, Daddy Long Legs, Flat Rock, Whip, White Porch, Two Tailed, Spotted and Orange-legged Swift.

RAINFALL (mm). June: 5 at Bergalia, 6.5 at Cool. **July:** 162.5 at MKS (to the 27th), 208 at Bergalia, 158 at Com, 165.25 at Cool. **August:** 136 at Bergalia, 80 at Com, 87.75 at Cool.

Contributors

MA	M Anderson, MB	DHK	D&H Kay, Bergalia	Others:	A Brennan, MB
DB	D Bertzeletos, Surfside	AL	A Loveband, LP		R Clunes, Surfside
GC	G Clark, ACT	GLM	G&L McVeigh, Broulee		M Craig, TS
NC	N Clark, Broulee	GM	G Macnamara, TS		A Christensen, MB
JCof	J Coffey, DS	NM	N Montgomery, MO		S Heyward, MHS
JC	J&P Collett, Com	JM	J Morgan, PS		N Hordern, MYA
SMG	S&M Guppy, MKS	JS	J Sagar, Pedro		V Howard, DS
GH	G Hounsell, Broulee	RSor	R Soroka, Surfside		J Mather, LP
IJ	I Joyce, Nerrigundah	DO	D Ondinea, Cool		S Jameson, MYA
		FM	Field Meeting		T&A Ross, Kianga
Places					
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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