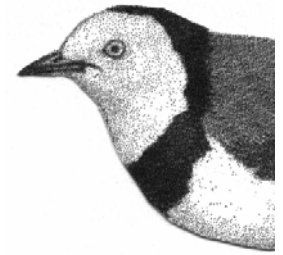


# The Chat

Newsletter of the East Gippsland  
Bird Observers Club



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## Climate Change and East Gippsland Birds

Separating the effects of long-term, progressive climate change from other short term fluctuations in environmental factors is fraught with difficulties. Studies of any environmental changes – whether natural, or affected by human activities – typically requires a combination of detailed observations over extended periods, complex statistical analysis and assessment of a range of possible explanatory models and theories.

Are our recent droughts, fires and floods due to climate change or within the 'normal' range of fluctuations in environmental conditions? Now that climate change has become such a hot issue, most of us have formed an opinion about the topic, and many are doing what they can limit humanity's adverse impact on climate change.

As a relatively new field of research, climate change is bringing together experts from a range of disciplines, from atmospheric to zoology, with a host of unlikely bedfellows in

between like glaciology, palaeontology, oceanography etc. Ornithology is also playing its part.

(Continued on page 3)



White-headed Pigeon, Wiseleigh, 5 May 2006. Now a regular on the East Gippsland bird list?. Photo: Freda Harvey

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## President's report ~ Ken Sherring

### East Gippsland Birding – What's going on?

In the last couple of months in a period of great birding in East Gippsland, I have taken particular note of these sightings: White-headed Pigeon (becoming more regular), Top-knot Pigeon (seen at Marlo, Lakes & Metung), Channel-billed Cuckoo (becoming regular), Figbird (becoming regular), Common Koel (Tambo Upper, Bairnsdale).

With the exception of the Top-knot Pigeon our field-guides do

not list these east-coast birds as far south as East Gippsland.

Sightings of birds from the north which are not listed in East Gippsland included: Black Kite (Swan Reach), Painted Honeyeater (Trident Arm), Little Corella and Crested Pigeon (both becoming established).

*What has caused the change?* Climate Change? Bushfires? Something else? All of these things together?

Or have there been no changes in the bird habits at all and it is only a matter of

better reporting?

**Finally – Don't forget these dates:**  
**Challenge Count:** Dec 3  
**Christmas Party:** Dec 10  
**Between the Mountains and the Sea:** March 7-10, 2008.  
Our club is hosting the BOCA weekend at Forestech

## From the Editor

This last issue for the year includes the meeting schedule for next year. Don't forget to give it pride of place when updating your fridge door come the New Year!

There is a veritable feast of birding reports in this issue, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Harvey Rodda to fully document our outings, and to gather together a wealth of information from other sources. As the President's Report and front page story suggest, the records we accumulate as a club and as individuals may be useful well beyond the birding fraternity.

I also thought that Harvey's report to the AGM in June was a masterly overview of the last twelve months up to that time, and deserving of being brought to the attention of all members of the club and readers of this newsletter, who were not able to attend the AGM.

Next year, I hope *The Chat* will be able to publish more articles by members. I also hope to be able to include updates on the progress of the club's project on monitoring the recovery of selected sites after the ferocious fires of last December-January.

Finally, thanks are due to all our regular contributors and to authors of articles, and to DSE for their continuing support for the production of the newsletter.

Remember that *The Chat* is now available in full colour on our website: [www.egboc.org.au](http://www.egboc.org.au)

*The Chat* is published three times a year by the East Gippsland Bird Observers Club, PO Box 825, Bairnsdale, Victoria 3875.

EGBOC is grateful to the Department of Sustainability and Environment for support in the production of the Newsletter.

The illustration of the White-fronted Chat on the cover is from *The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds* 1989.

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## Vale Dick Moline



It is with much sadness that EGBOC farewells Dick Moline, who passed away after a brave battle with cancer in early August. For several years our Conservation Officer, Dick was a valued and respected member of our club's Executive Committee. A keen observer of birds, Dick brought his early training as a scientist to his appreciation of birds, native plants and the environment in general. As Conservation Officer, Dick was diligent in ensur-

ing our club records of outings were forwarded with his characteristic attention to detail to the Victorian Atlas of Wildlife. In this he performed an important task in communicating the scientific value of our observations. The Atlas data base is widely used by DSE, Parks Victoria and other government agencies in policy, planning and resource management strategies.

A funeral ceremony in Bairns-

dale on 8 August saw Dick's life celebrated by his numerous friends in the local community, and the many organizations he supported, including EGBOC. The Club extends its deepest sympathies to Dick's wife Noel, and their family.

## BOCA workshop set for East Gippsland:

Members will no doubt have seen in BOCA's *The Bird Observer* the announcement of the proposed workshop for the Labor Day long weekend: **Between the Mountains and the Sea: Birding and Photography in Bairnsdale (and Beyond)**, March 7-10, 2008.

This follows BOCA's highly successful workshop on digital photography at Nhill in 2006.

BOCA executive invited EGBOC to host next year's event.

Planning is now well advanced. With a diverse program combining educational seminars and field excursions we will have something to offer both BOCA members and the general public. Special sessions on digital photography and wildlife art are a feature of the program, and will cater for experienced photographers and artists as well as those who are new to these exciting ways of extending our appreciation of birds.

Seminars will be held in the magnificent facilities at For-estech outside Lakes Entrance, with the opportunity for field excursions to put the classroom skills into practice!

Participants have the option to attend a dinner on the Saturday, with guest speaker Dr David Hollands. Also planned for the workshop are spotlighting for owls, a search for the Southern Emu Wren, and visits to Nyerimilang Park.

Check the October issue of *The Bird Observer* for details, including information on registration and costs. Further details will be published in *The Bird Observer* as they become available.

## Common Bronzewing's versatile underwing ~ Brian Bullivant

Being able to observe small groups of Common Bronzewing unobtrusively from close range while they are fossicking around the memorial garden - as I have decided to rename it - is an opportunity to study the uses to which they put their underwings.

First, there is defence. When menaced by another bird, usually while trying to get a feed from the feeding station, they turn partially on one side and flash a wing vertically to show the beautiful pink underwing. Besides having a shock effect, this also increases their apparent size. It depends on the aggressiveness of the attacking bird whether it's effective. Crimson Rosellas sometimes back off as do pigeons, but Rainbow Lorikeets and King Parrots stand their ground.

Second is attack. This often happens between two Bronzewings either vying for a mate or a spot in the sun. One of them shuffles forward with one wing held up; the other responds by also raising its wing. It's quite comical to see two birds jousting like this, shuffling backwards and forwards, until one gives up and retreats.

Then there is sunbathing. Patches of the memorial garden are covered in small peb-



Common Bronzewing. Photo: Ron Mackenzie

bles. These attract heat from the sun and get quite warm. They also attract Bronzewings, often two or three at a time, dozing in the sun. But that's not enough it seems. By lying on its side and raising one wing vertically the bird increases the area to warm. Bliss! After a spell on that side the bird turns around, lies on the other side and again raises the wing. Double bliss! This may also have the effect of discouraging parasites.

I'm tempted to draw comparisons with pink young maidens sunbathing on a beach, turning this way and that, but won't. Watching Bronzewings is better.

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*"... pink young maidens sunbathing"*

*(Continued from page 1)*

Birds are good 'indicator' species of environmental health. They are more visible and easily identified than most other organisms, and therefore provide a good handle on the state of a whole host of environmental conditions that are themselves much less easily observed and measured but nonetheless critical for maintaining stable ecological communities.

Dr Lynda Chambers of the Bureau of Meteorology Research Centre, Melbourne, is compiling an ecological data-

base on all existing studies of Australian flora and fauna that look at abundance, timing of breeding and migration or flowering. Data on changes in distribution of birds, and timing of nesting and migration figure prominently in this research. Dr Chambers says that by documenting ecological data and encouraging people to look for climate change signals, we will be better placed to understand and manage the impacts of climate change over a wide range of species, ecosystems and regions.

In the EGBOC area birds once thought to be typical of the warmer, more northerly parts of Australia, such as the White-headed Pigeon, seem to be more common summer visitors in recent years (see President's Report). The numbers and dates of arrival and departure of common seasonal visitors, such as various cuckoos, Dollarbirds and Flame Robins may also be changing. Continuing drought in the Murray-Darling Basin may also be affecting the times and abundance of birds in our wetlands. Only by maintaining careful records over time, and making

them available, can we find out whether there are clear trends to these apparent changes, and whether they are related to changing climate.

## Challenge Count 2007 ~ Harvey Rodda

For the benefit of new members, the Challenge Count is run by BOCA, with all branches in Australia participating. Each branch has an area of a radius of 40 km and 24 hours to record the species seen in that time. EGBOC last year did two areas. One group with Johnsonville as their centre and the second group coordinated by Len Axen working in the Marlo area.

We break up into teams of about 3 or 4 and work a prescribed area. Results are transferred to your record sheet and brought to the Christmas Party or posted to me (Harvey - address on record sheet) as soon as possible.

The accompanying table shows a list of possible teams compiled from last years list and discussions with members. **This sheet is only a guide, so if anyone has made other team arrangements, or there are people I have not included, please let me know and we will make the appropriate adjustments.** Your teams

may choose the times and days to go out, as long as it is on the weekend of the 1-2 of December.

Please note that BOCA's rules apply - records must be confirmed by 2 people seeing a bird, or 3 people hearing a bird. These rules are to be upheld to keep our records honest and consistent.

### 2006 - CHALLENGE COUNT.

Our Bairnsdale group, for the first time ever, topped the count for Victorian teams with 171 species, just beating Werribee with 170. Other successful Victorian teams were Cohuna (157) Horsham (164) Portland (156) and Sunraysia (152). We also had better counts than NSW teams with their most successful being Griffith (133) and Murwillumbah (162). Queensland as always has by far the best counts, Townsville (217) Mackay (187) and Sun Coast BOG (173).

Len Axen assisted by Joy Johnstone participated with our group by doing the Canni

Creek count. Then again with the help of Joy, and his wife Jacquie, did the Marlo count and recorded 107 species, a great result.

The highest number of species were seen in Queensland (303) Melbourne (206) Victorian Country (283) New South Wales (248) and South Australia (98). Total species seen were (424) slightly down on the (431) count in 2005.

Several members have informed me that they will not be available for the Challenge Count because of other commitments, so the teams from

last year are in disarray. I will be in touch with all the members to confirm locations and members of each team.

Area	Leader	Team.
Canni Creek	Len	June
Paynesville	Rosemary	Peter
Lake Bunga	Ian Faulkner	Coral
Lake Tyers	Max	Jill
Picnic Point	Betty	Joan, Judith, Marg
Nyerimilang	Dot	Marj. Brian.
Raymond Island	Ron	Heinz, June
Mitchell, Jones Bay	Jose	Claire, Alan
Colquhoun	Ken	
Bruthen	Mandy	
Macleod Morass	Chris	Felicity

## Annual Christmas Party and Caption Competition

This year's **Christmas Party** will be held on **Monday 10 December**. 12 noon for 12.30 lunch. Margaret Hallett has kindly offered her home again for the event.

The address is 390 Bulumwaal Road, Mt Taylor. Please park in Lantinie Road. Bring your own chair.

And yes, the Great Caption Competition is on again this year, thanks to Ken's twitchy trigger finger.

A prize will be presented at the Christmas Party to the best original and amusing caption for the picture featured here.

Please make sure your entries reach The Editor of *The Chat* by 12 noon on 10 December.



## Recorder's Annual Report, June 2007 ~ Harvey Rodda

Once again it has been a very successful year for the East Gippsland Bird Observer's Club. We had 42 Monday excursions set down on the calendar, with two being cancelled: one at Sunset Cove due to inclement weather, and the first outing for 2007 at Nyerimilang, because of a Total Fire Ban.

The drought conditions continued on from last year, and bushfires burnt out well in excess of 1 million hectares of forest, burning from the start of December, through to February. It started in the west around the Woods Point area and burnt through the areas of Walhalla, several homes lost at Toongabbie, on to Licola, Lake Glenmaggie, Dargo, Waterholes area, and only improved weather conditions caused it to peter out as it reached the Omeo Highway. It seriously threatened all the communities along the southern side of the mountain range from Tyers-Glengarry through to Bruthen. Also threatened were the Brookville, Ensay and Swifts Creek areas. Unfortunately burnt some of the Ramrod/Monkey Creek area and also the Haunted Stream valley. The farming community at Tambo Crossing was badly effected with heavy stock and infrastructure losses. Our club is involved in monitoring some of the fire effected areas.

East Gippsland has had some good falls of rain since the fires, particularly in the last fortnight [in June], with some parts of East Gippsland having a fall of over 175 millimetres (7 inches) which has brought flooding.

We continue to have about twenty members attending most weeks, which helps in keeping our bird numbers up. We continued on from last year and again had 169 species sighted, which was a very good result. Some of the not often seen species, that were recorded during the year, were: Great-crested Grebe at Raymond Island, Scarlet Honeyeaters seen in many areas, also White-plumed

Honeyeaters, Red-knee Dotterel, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren at Canni, Black Falcon at the Glenaladale pumping station, and excellent birding results at Macleod Morass, due to the great work being done by the Water Trust staff at the Treatment Plant. The morass is in a very healthy condition, with bird numbers confirming this. Sightings this year included large numbers of Ducks including, Blue-billed, Musk, Shoveler, Pink-eared, Mallard and Hardhead and also the Baillon's Crake and Buff-banded Rail.

There were three camps set down for the year. For the first time in many years we had a winter camp. The venue was Marlo, and Len Axen the leader. A very busy week ensued with 107 species recorded. Additional species seen were, Black-browed Albatross, Eastern Reef Egret, Lewin's Rail, Red-necked Stint, Sooty Oystercatcher, Hooded Plover, Crested Pigeon, Rock Dove, and Peaceful Dove. The camp was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended, and we look forward to another winter camp in the future. A big thank you to Len Axen for the time and effort he put in. We then had a bush camp at Bentley Plains in October. Seventeen attended and had a great time. There were 46 species seen, with highlights being the Olive Whistlers, Flame and Rose Robins, Bassian Thrush and Southern Boobook. Unfortunately very strong winds caused dangerous conditions in the bush, and we all returned home early. Our third camp for the year was to be at Gelantipy. The date unfortunately clashed with other activities, and because of lack of numbers, the camp was cancelled.

The club was again involved in the BOCA Challenge Count in December. We had 35 members participate in the Bairnsdale Count, with Len Axen and Joy Johnstone also doing a count at Marlo with Len's wife Jacquie.

In the Bairnsdale Count there

were thirteen teams, and additional species seen were Black-faced Cormorant, White-necked Heron, Glossy Ibis, Collared Sparrowhawk, Marsh and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Avocet, Whiskered Tern, Brush Bronzewing, Little Lorikeet, Turquoise Parrot, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Striated Fieldwren, Painted Honeyeater, Black-faced Monarch, Satin Flycatcher, White-browed Woodswallow and Brown Songlark. This made the count 171 species. This is the highest tally ever for Bairnsdale. The previous best was 156 species in 2002.

Additional species for the Marlo team were Bar-tailed Godwit, Eastern Curlew, Ruddy Turnstone, Little and Fairy Terns, Topknot Pigeon and the Ground Parrot. The Marlo team had 107 species, up on the count of 97 the previous year. Thank you to everyone who participated, particularly the team captains for their lists.

There have been many other reported sightings in East Gippsland during the year, from within our club, and also the wider birding community. Some of these are unconfirmed, and include, from the far east, Mallacoota and Gypsy Point: Brown Quail, Spotless Crake, Great and Red Knot, Curlew Sandpiper, Grey Plover, Red-browed Tree-creeper, Eastern Bristlebird, Glossy Black Cockatoo, Pilotbird and Brown Cuckoo-Dove. From the area west of Bairnsdale, including Sale, Maffra, Heyfield, there was Black-tailed Nativehen, Blue-winged Parrot, Banded Lapwing, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, Magpie Goose and Freckled Duck. Ken Sherring found a beach washed Shy Albatross at Lake Tyers Beach. At Suggan Buggan Brown Treecreepers, Noisy Friarbirds, Diamond Firetails, and a bit further on, just over the border at Willis, Roger Bilney sighted a Barking Owl. I have included this in the report, as it is in the area where the club camps at Willis. Also an Australasian Bittern

and Painted Snipe at Macleod Morass and a Fiordland Penguin at Cape Conran.

Other sightings in the area have been: Double-banded Plover, White-headed Pigeon, Square-tailed Kite, Grey Goshawk, Cockatiel, Powerful and Sooty Owls, Common Koel, Rainbow Bee-eater, Dollarbird, Cicadabird, Figbird, Masked Woodswallow, Double-barred Finch, Beautiful Firetail, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and the Spangled Drongo.

Thank you to all the members who have passed on information of sightings they have had on occasions other than our Monday outings. I believe it is important to record this information. The total number of species reported this year is 249. Further information on these sightings is available in the Additional Species report.

One report that I believe warrants a special mention, is the sighting of the Painted Honeyeater, at the Trident Arm Track in the Lake Tyers Forest Park in October, by Max and Jill Markey. This species had not been recorded in the area previously, and to find it nesting, and also across the lake at Lonely Bay is significant.

Finally, thank you to those who have filled in for me and provided bird lists when I have been unable to attend our regular outings.

## Outings Report and Recent Sightings since May ~ Harvey Rodda

**4<sup>th</sup> June Macleod Morass.** Species 37 (1244 birds). Fine, sunny. Leader: Harvey Rodda. Attendance: 22. A beautiful sunny morning. The treatment plant is releasing water into areas of the upper Morass that had dried out during the drought. This has seen the return of good numbers of Swans, Ducks and Swallows. The group moved to the Port of Bairnsdale for lunch, where we were met by Jill Ploughright and Annette Cook from BOCA. Plans for the BOCA gathering, during Labor Day Weekend 2008 were discussed.

**11<sup>th</sup> June Healeys, Bellbird Road, Fairhope.** Species 44 (364 birds). Overcast, some light rain. Leader: Chris Healey. Attendance: 15. This is the first occasion for some time that the group has gone out on a Public Holiday. A good attendance but unfortunately not good weather. There was intermittent light rain which caused some of the group to go home after morning tea. Good numbers of Honeyeaters, Sitellas and Thornbills. Along with Scarlet Robins and 4 pair of Flame Robins on the fence at the rear of the house. A good winter count.

Birdline reports for this month are 3/6 Yellow-plumed Honeyeater in Box-Ironbark Forest at Lake Glenmaggie. Although rare in East Gippsland, this species has been reported previously in this district. 10/6. Spangled Drongo at Eagle Point Nature Reserve. This species is another that is rarely seen in this area, but Norma Earney and Gordon Wilson have seen the bird before at Eagle Point. 10/6. Brown Cuckoo-Dove at Gypsy Point, flushed from about 1.5 metres above ground in near fruiting Kangaroo Apple into rainforest canopy tree. Still there 40 minutes later. Also a short distance away a Rose Robin.

**18<sup>th</sup> June Lonely Bay, Lake Tyers Forest Park.** Species 41 (535 birds). Fine with cold SW wind. Leader: Len Axen. Attendance: 17. Some sun during the morning, but a very

cold south west wind. The Ironbark was in bloom and attracting large numbers of Wattle Birds, Honeyeaters, Spinebills and Lorikeets. Very few birds on the water.

**25<sup>th</sup> June Howitt Park.** Species 31 (191 birds). Fine. Leader: Ken Sherring. Attendance: 19. This was a short morning's birding prior to the Annual General Meeting held in the DSE offices, followed by lunch at Port of Bairnsdale.

**2<sup>nd</sup> July Nicholson Rail Trail.** Species 54 (412 birds). Fine. Leader: Chris Healey. Attendance: 10.

Once again a good lot of birds seen at Nicholson.

**9<sup>th</sup> July Lindenow Sewerage Ponds, Lindenow South Reserve, Gippsland Plains Nature Grassland Reserve, Corner of Fernbank Road and Buntine's Lane,** 2 km west of Lindenow South Reserve, **Amy Shand Park, Lindenow.** Species 52 (662 birds). Intermittent showers. Leader: Chris Healey. Attendance: 8. Overnight rain and continuing intermittent showers cast a doubt on today's outing, but 8 members braved the elements and made the trip to Lindenow. No rain at the Sewerage Ponds. The area has been absolutely soaked with rain and water is lying everywhere. Most of the birds were on a large sheet of water around the rear of the Ponds. Jill Markey observed a Yellow Thornbill come from a nesting hole in the bottom of an old Magpie's nest in a roadside tree, near the plant gate. We then took shelter at the Lindenow South Reserve for morning tea and then moved on to the Grassland Reserve. More rain here and a great deal of water over the track, restricting our access. An interesting spot that will be worthwhile re-visiting in better weather. We then returned to the Lindenow South Reserve, found a dead Whistling Kite at the south end of the oval and many thornbills on the move.

As we returned home along the Lindenow Road, we found Max and Jill stopped near Ray Bertino's farmhouse. They

had seen a Black Falcon scatter a flock of Starlings, and the bird was about 150 yards away, perched high in a gum tree, in clear view. Then to everyone's delight, it took flight and came directly above us, a very dark coloured bird. It flew on towards the S/W climbing. It was last seen circling high above Hillside.

Recent Birdline reports: Duncan Fraser and Peter Ware report a large strung out flock of approximately 400-500 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos in the Pine Forest area at Giffard on 16 June,

David Bullock reports 12 Bar-tailed Godwits at Mallacoota. They were near the entrance at high tide on 4 July. Michael Ramsey reports a beach washed Yellow-nosed Albatross at Cape Conran on 6 July, possible victim of recent wild weather. Michael also reports the sighting of 3 Diamond Firetails on the roadside near Swifts Creek on 7 July.

**16<sup>th</sup> July Nyerimilang.** Species 60 (958 birds). Fine. Leader: Len Axen. Attendance: 14. Recent Birdline reports: 8 Cape Barren Geese in farm driveway on the Orbst-Marlo Road by Luke Dwyer, 10 July (report from Len Axen). 1 very wet White-headed Pigeon at Mallacoota at a private house in Karbethong Road by Tony Bushell 10 July. 2 Banded Lapwing in a waterlogged paddock along the Hollands Land-ing Road about 2km S/E of Meerlieu by Andrew McCutcheon 11 July.

**23<sup>rd</sup> July Lake Tyers Beach, Fisherman's Landing.** Species 58 (403 birds). Fine. Leader: Len Axen. Attendance: 16. **30<sup>th</sup> July Jones Bay, Crooke Street Swamp, River Road East.** Species: 55 (1792 birds). Fine. Leader: Ken Sherring. Attendance: 18.

Interesting reports from members: Camilla Manvell reports 300+ Crested Terns at Marley Point over the weekend, Sue Welte has 12 King Parrots that have moved into her garden this week. Female or juvenile birds. Re-

turning home from church yesterday Betty Norris had to stop near her home in Williams Parade, and give way to 2 adult Masked Lapwing with four very small chicks.

**6<sup>th</sup> August Blond Bay State Game Reserve, Wetland, Cnr Wattle Point and Waddy Point Roads.**

Species: 59 (526 birds). Fine, with W wind. Leader: Ken Sherring. Attendance: 16. First visit to this site by the club for some time. A few 'mossies' about, but not too bad. The main thing, there were a good few birds. Stopped at the big waterhole at the Waddy Point turn off. Ducks, an Australasian Grebe and a couple of Swans on the water. Cockatoos very vocal along with Noisy Miners and Ravens. Ian pick up a White-plumed Honeyeater in the bush for all to see. The group then moved on to Blond Bay. Adjacent to the gate Skylarks could be heard, and as we walked about that area there were many of this species, also a raft of Grebes on Steel Bay along with Cormorants and Swans. Red-capped plovers. Herons and ducks were along the drain coming from Patterson's Swamp. We then travelled along the track to the vicinity of Scott's Gate and the along Grass Tree Track. Highlight was an excellent site of the Mistletobird.

Before returning home some members checked out, Patterson's, Middle and Waddy Point Swamps.

Birds seen were more Red-capped Plover and Hoary-headed Grebe, a Great Egret, Shoveller, Grey and Chestnut Teal, several Tree Martins, Chats, Golden Whistler, Masked Lapwing and a Common Greenshank.

Ken Sherring reports there have been up to 40 Cattle Egret on the Tambo Flats at Swan Reach over the last week.

**13<sup>th</sup> August Mitchell River Walk, Picnic Point, Mitchell River Walk, Port of Bairnsdale.** Species: 51 (817 birds). Fine. Leader: Joan Graves. Attendance: 12. Many Cattle Egret feeding on the river flats and the Night Herons were camped in an old Pine tree. Joan Graves has seen a Night Heron in this tree on many occa-

sions, when on her morning walk, but never the numbers that were seen this morning.

Coming to birds today Ken Sherring and Harvey Rodda sighted two Wood Duck on the roof of the old Commercial Bank building in Main Street (now occupied by Leading Edge Computers). They seemed very inquisitive as though looking for a nesting site.

Betty Norris reports that son Ken has located a new active Wedge-tailed Eagles nest on his property at Mt Taylor, with fox and rabbit skulls in the refuse under the nest. Last weekend Betty's granddaughter Jeanie, sighted two Tawny Frogmouths on Raymond Island.

Yesterday Ken Sherring sighted an Emu with very young chicks on South Boundary Track in the Colquhoun Forest.

Birdline report from Rohan Bilney of many Glossy Black Cockatoos in the Lake Tyers area. "Have been seeing and hearing them from several locations over the past 2 - 3 weeks. Including bottom end of Rules Road, along Petman's and Tyers House Roads. Yesterday there were several along Tyers House Road south of Reedy Arm No. 2, and three were seen towards the eastern end of Morass Break Road".

Duncan Fraser's blog reports that on 12 August he went with Peter Ware and Ian ? to Lake Guyatt, Flooding Creek, Sale, and sighted a pair of Magpie Geese in the creek behind the industrial sheds.

They then moved to Heart Morass where they saw big numbers of Swan and Superb Fairy Wrens along with Musk duck displaying in the morass. Then to Marlay Point where they sighted 100 Crested Tern, with other unidentified terns. Photo taken of these birds and enquiries continuing as to which species.

They then moved to the wetland on the southern side of Sale where there were huge numbers of Chestnut Teal, many thousands, along with 2 Pink-eared Duck and a small group of Hardhead.

**20<sup>th</sup> August Bullumwaal, Rifle**

**Range Road, Boggy Creek.**

Species 41 (316 birds). Fine, sunny. Leader: Chris Healey. Attendance: 20. Unfortunately the group got split for a while, but a good time was had by all. Highlights of the morning were the finding of an Emu carcass at Rifle Range Road, along with the Wedge-tailed eagles and good numbers of Honeyeaters. At Bullumwaal near the hall, Parrots, Wonga Pigeons, a very vocal Lyrebird, Pardalotes and Thornbills, Honeyeaters and Bowerbirds. At Boggy Creek were good numbers of Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, Wattlebirds, Whipbirds, Bowerbirds including 1 adult male and 3 very vocal White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike.

Report from Birdline 12 Aug: 8 Whiskered Tern seen at Marlay Point by Duncan Fraser. Report from Mike Carter. On the same day Ken Sherring checked out his atlas site at the Quarry on Mississippi Creek in the Colquhoun Forest. Among other species seen were 4 Rose Robins. On Monday the 13 Aug Chris and Felicity Healey were with their daughter at Corringe Beach opposite Marlo, and saw a pair of Hooded Plover on the ocean beach, and 4 Pied Oystercatchers inside on the estuary. On the 18 Aug Max and Jill Markey had a White-plumed Honeyeater in their Wiseleigh garden. Max Nicholson reports 2 Channel-billed Cuckoos have arrived in his Nungurner garden (very early this year) and he also has his pair of Sea Eagles nesting on the property. Report from Sue Welte.

**27<sup>th</sup> Aug** Chinaman's Creek, Metung, Nungurner Jetty. Species 62 (565 birds). Sunny, calm. Leader: Dot Owen. Attendance: 17. On the afternoon of 27 Aug. Len Axen heard a Shining-Bronze Cuckoo calling from the forest surrounding the Newmerella Reserve. First of the returning cuckoos to be noted this year. Also that afternoon, Fan-tailed Cuckoos were seen and heard in a number of gardens in Marlo. Observations are some 2 - 3 weeks earlier than in recent years. Report from Jac-

quie and Len Axen.

Ran into Norm Elliott last week, and asked if he had any birdlife on his swamp off Mitton's Lane, as our club used to visit this site, back when there was much more water about. He informed me that at present he has Grey and Chestnut Teal along with Black and Wood Duck all with young on the swamp. He also said that on Wednesday the 22 of August he was on Macleod Morass checking nesting boxes. Many of the boxes containing this seasons eggs but no birds. He explained that the ducks were nesting prior to the floods, and the birds were forced from their nests when the boxes went under water, hence the abandoned eggs. During the day they sighted in excess of 2,000 Hardhead on Brownlow's Waterhole on the Morass, 60 Hardhead at the north end near the Sewerage Works and 1000 mixed ducks at the south end of the morass of which he estimates 50% were Hardhead. On the 28 of August he checked the nesting boxes on the wetland adjacent to Mullet Bay on Jim Stephenson's property at Nicholson. Similar situation of abandoned eggs there. Good numbers of Grey and Chestnut Teal along with Black Duck breeding at that location.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sept Raymond Island.** Species 54 (835 birds). Fine, sunny with cold SW breeze. Leader: Ron Mackenzie. Attendance: 13. A very pleasant day if you kept out of the wind. Ron informs us that the Sea Eagles nest on Raymond Island is active this year. With spring in the air many species very active with some indications of breeding.

Norma Earney reports that over the last week in Eagle Point Bay in front of her home, there have been 150 Hoary headed Grebe and 30 Great-crested Grebe. Both Ron Mackenzie and Chris Healey report that over the past week or ten days the Southern Boobook has been frequently calling of a night near their homes. Ken Sherring reports that on his Hooded Plover check at Lake Tyers beach on

25 Aug, no Hooded Plovers but 6 Royal Spoonbills, 1 yellow-billed Spoonbill and 1 Little Egret. These birds were again seen on the 28 Aug. Ken also went to Reynolds Road on 2 Sept. No birds. He then moved on to Rough Road and saw Chestnut Teal, Black Duck and 2 Australasian Shovelers. Also Black-fronted and Red-kneed Dotterels, Swans and Purple Swamphens with young, and Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo calling constantly. Ken then moved to the Cliffs area on the Tambo and found Fairy Martins nest building near the Peregrine Falcon nesting site.

**10 Sept Tambo Cliffs, Rough Road.** Species 71 (578 birds). Overcast, some light rain.

Leader: Ken Sherring Attendance: 19. Harvey Rodda reports that on 5 Sept at Nicholson he sighted a flock of 70 Little Corella, and also heard his first Pallid Cuckoo call for the season. Later while working in the garden he heard the call of a raptor, and looked up to see two Swamp Harriers put on a magnificent aerial display over Bosse's Swamp. Also that day, as he sat talking on the phone and looking into his front garden,, he saw a Stubble Quail casually walking through the plants, no more that 20 feet away. He immediately told Margaret, and she replied, "Is that what it is. I have seen that bird two or three times over the past couple of days, and wondered what it was." On 11 Sept 1 Nankeen Kestrel at Angus Vale and 5 Dusky Wood Swallows (First sighting for him for the year) seen at Tabberabbera, and on 12 Sept 1 Yellow-billed Spoonbill, 1 Great Egret, 11 Chough and 17 Emu at Wairewa.eH

From Suggan Buggan, Chris Hodge reports that two weeks ago he went down onto the Snowy River on Sandy Flat Track near Willis and found there 200+ Flame Robins. (This is the area our club members had good sightings of the Red-capped Robin on trips in the past) I have since been talking to Clive Richardson at Suggan Buggan who said there are many Flame Robins in his area at present, but not in the num-

bers Chris saw. Clive said prior to the fires it was not uncommon to see Flame Robins in those numbers in the district. He also reports some slight improvement in Honeyeater numbers since the fires. Several recent sightings of Brown-headed, Fuscous, Yellow-tufted and White-Cheeked. Other recent sightings area, Crested-Shrike-tit, both Jan Davies and Clive have Hooded Robins near their homes, Jan had had the White-winged Trillers arrive back in the last week, a month later than last year. Jan also has a pair of Yellow-rumped Thornbills nesting near her back door and a short distance away a pair of Restless Flycatchers also nesting. Clive has not seen the Triller at his place yet. Clive has a Brown Falcon on his property he is monitoring. He believes it is nesting in a large hollow in a gum, but has not confirmed this as yet. A highlight for Clive was two weeks ago, he was travelling on the track between his water tank and the house (a distance of about 1km) when a bird ran in front of him, it then stopped, and Clive was able to get a very good sighting. He returned home and after checking all his bird books he has no doubt he saw a Grey-crowned Babbler. Barry Waddell, manager at the Bairnsdale Sewerage Treatment Plant, confirms that over the past few weeks, Hardhead numbers on Macleod Morass have been in the thousands, but they have now gone. Julie Hollingsworth reports that from time to time over the past 12 months, she has seen a raptor flying low over the trees near her home, but she has never been able to get a good look at it. Last week her husband Bob, was able to photograph this bird. It has since been identified by Rohan Billeen and David Hollands as a Square-tailed Kite. Julie also reports that the Sooty Owls bred this year in her tree at Old Man Hill. Unfortunately a fortnight ago on 26 Aug, the very strong winds flattened the tree. The male bird has since been seen roosting nearby, but the female and chick

(which was due to fledge) have not been seen. There have been no signs to indicate these two birds came to harm and Julie has high hopes that they have survived. Julie informs me that during their owling this season there have been indications of Masked Owls at Cape Conran and Lonely Bay, and that last Xmas a tree that had breeding Sooty Owls in it, was burnt and lost in the back burn at Monkey Creek.

On 10 Sept Duncan Fraser went with the Heyfield Bird Group to Swallow Lagoon NCR and among the birds seen were, 1 Crested Shrike-tit and 3 Scarlet Robins. Then on to The Den of Nargun where they saw, a Golden Whistler, Lewin's and Crescent Honeyeaters, Brown Gerygone's and White-browed Scrubwrens. On 14 Sept Duncan went with Peter Ware to Jack Smith Lake and among the 57 varieties of bird, mammal and orchid seen were, 7 Blue-winged Parrot, 2 Red Capped-Dotterel, 1 Musk duck, 1 Pied Cormorant (the first Duncan has had at that site), numerous White-fronted Chats, including a nest with 3 eggs, 2 Stubble Quail, 1 Calamantus, several Dusky Woodswallows, 3 Latham's Snipe, 3 Pacific Golden Plover, 2 Caspian Tern, a pair of Shelduck with 14 dependant young, 1 Double-banded Plover along with Wedge-tailed Eagles, Sea-Eagles, Brown Goshawk, Brown Falcon and Kestrel. Later that day at the Giffard Flora Reserve they saw the White-winged Triller.

**17 Sept Macleod Morass.** Species 42 (4398 birds). Fine at first, then frequent squalls with cold SW wind. Leader Harvey Rodda. Attendance: 14. Barry was waiting at the treatment plant gate when we arrived, and suggested we park our cars near the office, and set the telescope up on the verandah in front of the office block, so we would be out of the weather. This offer was gratefully received. Blue-billed, Shoveler, and Musk Duck along with other species seen from this spot. We moved to the main distribution channel track be-

low the Saleyards for morning tea. This saw the arrival of the rain, and the day became very cold and miserable. Most members went home at this stage, but of those remaining, some checked the ponds, and others made the long walk out to the Ibis breeding rookery, at the end of the channel in Kloppe's paddock. Very difficult to estimate the Ibis numbers, but it is certainly in the thousands. On this walk, several pairs of Black Duck disturbed from the channel, along with several Swans with Cygnets. Clamorous Reed-warblers very vocal along with the Little Grassbird. Barry Waddell reports that he has seen a Musk Duck with 1 juvenile bird on the No. 2 Pond at the Treatment Plant over the past week.

**24 Sept Sarsfield.** Species 65 (291 birds). Fine. Leader: Chris Healey. Attendance: 17. Good mornings birding around the Sarsfield area. Chris took us along Harveys Track to a gully on Stony Creek. An excellent site. Cuckoos, Thrush, Oriole, Kingfisher, Pardalotes, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Whipbird and Lyrebird all very vocal. Then to our old haunt along the river at Hatt's. and some good birding there. Last week Rex and Nancy Taylor made a rush visit to Bairnsdale. Some of our members were able to catch up for a natter over lunch at the Bowling Club. They are both keeping good health, and send their warmest regards to their friends in EGBOC.

Sue Welte reports that on 11 of Sept she and David saw a Black-tailed Native hen at Rough Road.

Ken Sherring reports that last Saturday he went to Lake Tyers Beach and sighted 3 Hooded Plovers. Ian Faulkner visited the same sight the next day, and with the use of a boat, in the area from the ocean beach back to the Little Tern nesting island he saw 5 Hooded Plover, a pair of Double-banded Plover in breeding plumage, 1 Ruddy Turnstone, a flock of Red-necked Stints, and several Pied Oystercatchers with one nesting. Len Axen reports 3 Pair of Hooded Plover at Marlo, plus

one immature bird from last season.

**1 Oct Trestle Bridge, Colquhoun State Forest.** Species 39 (165 birds). Clearing to fine sunny day. Leader Ken Sherring. Attendance: 13. An enjoyable day at the Trestle Bridge, with the highlights being, a pair of White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrikes (dark morph) going to their nest, and a pair of Yellow Robins at their nest at the car park.

Harvey Rodda spent some time at Angusvale during the first week in October. Species recorded were: 3 Wood Duck, 1 Wedge-tailed Eagle, 1 Kestrel, 2 Wonga Pigeon, 14 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, 2 Gang Gang, 6 Galah, 1 Pallid Cuckoo, 5 Fan-tailed Cuckoo, 4 Shining Bronze Cuckoo, 2 Southern Boobook, 9 Kookaburra, 1 Sacred Kingfisher, 6 Superb Fairy Wren, 4 Brown Thornbill, 3 Red Wattlebird, 16 Bell Miner, 5 Yellow-faced Honeyeater, 2 Whipbird, 3 Golden Whistler, 2 Grey Shrike Thrush, 3 Grey Fantail, 1 Butcherbird, 4 Magpie, 7 Pied Currawong, 6 Aust. Raven, 7 Pipit, 4 Welcome Swallow, 6 Oriole and 2 Blackbird.

**8 Oct Nyerimilang.** Species 79 (899 birds). Fine, sunny. Leader: Chris Healey. Attendance: 21.

A beautiful sunny morning with great birding. Cuckoos particularly vocal along with Wonga Pigeon, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Whipbird, Grey Currawong and Bell Miner. Some members also had good sightings of an Echidna and a large Black Snake sunning himself. Camilla Manvell reports that the Channel-billed Cuckoo was back at Mairburn Avenue at Metung this morning. Very vocal. Report from Freda Harvey that she had a White-headed Pigeon in her garden last week. Len Axen reports that 3 White-headed Pigeon were sighted at Jarramond last week, and one at Ted Potter's in Orbost. Max and Jill Markey report that they sighted a Noisy Friarbird at Bruthen last Saturday.

**15 Oct Canni Creek.** Species 53 (384 birds). Fine, NE wind. Leader Harvey Rodda. Attendance: 16. A beautiful sunny

morning, but unfortunately as the morning went on, the wind got stronger. Just the one Hooded Robin seen and one Emu-wren. Great interest in the White-browed Woodswallows, and a pair of Scarlet Robins feeding a fledged youngster. Cuckoos all very vocal as well as the Rufous Songlark.

Freda Harvey has a Grey Shrike thrush nesting in her garage at the moment. Camilla Manvell reports the Channel-billed Cuckoo was again very vocal in Mairburn Avenue this morning. Camilla with Max and Jill Markey were at Mallacoota last weekend and report seeing a Figbird in the town area, 56 White-browed Woodswallows, 26 Albatross offshore, 1 Little or Fairy Tern amongst the Caspian and Crested Tern on the sand-spit at the foreshore, they also heard the Scarlet Honeyeaters and Cicadabird and sighted a Sacred Kingfisher. Len and Jacquie Axen went to the Cabbage Tree Palms Reserve on Sunday and saw 6 Black-faced Monarch and a Large-billed Scrubwren. Joan Graves reports that last Wednesday on her Picnic Point walk she saw 3 White-winged Trillers (2 Male and 1 female). On 13 Sept the group doing the bushfire recovery survey at Monkey Creek sighted 7 Rose Robins.

Birdline reports: 1 Glossy Ibis seen at the BREC wetlands in McKean Street by Ivan Traverso on 6 October. 1 Large-billed Scrubwren and a Rose Robin feeding among Paperbarks in Healeys Road Marlo by Len Axen on 7 Oct. 1 Noisy Friarbird in Main Street Bruthen feeding in Bottlebrush with Musk Lorikeets. Raucous feast in centre of town seen by Ivan Traverso 7 Oct. 1 White-headed pigeon at bird feeder at Ken Sherring's at Swan Reach 9 Oct. Stayed ten minutes. Breast tinged with grey, possibly an immature bird. 4 Little Tern at the Snowy River mouth, eastern side 9 Oct. Two weeks earlier than in previous years. Also of interest, 9 Hooded Plover (1 pair nesting, with eggs) 1 pair of Eastern Curlew, 1 Double-banded

Plover, 1 Pacific Golden Plover, and 1 Ruddy Turnstone. All seen by Len Axen. 1 Dollarbird 10 Oct at Fairhope flying resolutely from forest along the Nicholson River over open paddocks. First record for season in this area, and about a month earlier than usual. 10 Oct Duncan Fraser and Peter Ware went to Sale Common the check out the report of thousands of Hardhead. The birds were certainly there, but took off as soon as we approached the hide. No chance of a decent photo, but what a sight. Thousands of ducks in the sky, with their rapid flight and white underwings, defining the species perfectly. On 13 October Harvey Rodda drove through Moormung from Redcourt Lane to the aerodrome. Among the species seen were, 2 Cough families of 8 and 9 and 37 Noisy Miner. 14 Oct Cicadabird heard briefly by Felicity Healey at Fairhope in Stringybark, Box-Ironbark forest. First for the season, and about two weeks earlier than last year.

**22 Oct Trident Arm, Lake Tyers State Park, Glass House, Lake Tyers State Park.** Species 69 (776 birds). Fine. Leader: Max and Jill Markey. Attendance: 21. A great day out. While waiting at Nowa Nowa for all the group to arrive, species sighted near the wetland opposite were, 6 Little Pied Cormorant, 1 Little Black Cormorant, 4 Masked Lapwing, 2 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, 1 Great Egret and 2 Latham's Snipe.

Norma Earney reports one Royal Spoonbill at the boat ramp at the silt jetties this morning. On 21 Oct about 9am Len Axen sighted a mix lot of about 500 White-browed, 200 Masked and 50 Dusky Woodswallows flying near his home. The same day Ken Sherring sighted about 100 Masked and White-browed Woodswallows from his garden. While attempting to photograph these birds Ken had a phone call from Rohan Bilney, to say the Masked and White-browed Woodswallows were in the Bilney orchard, and Rohan had been able to take good photos. On Sunday Max and

Jill Markey together with Peter and Merrin Cannon walked along the rail trail from Wiseleigh to Bruthen and sighted 1 Cisticola and a Brown Songlark. Max Markey took his visitors to Nyerimilang on Saturday and the highlight there was 16 Topknot Pigeons flying over the homestead. On 15 Oct 1 White-necked Heron along Princes Highway at Orbst, foraging along a drainage channel on agricultural land early this morning. First sighting for the season. Len Axen. On 17 Oct at Lake Reeve 1st causeway, 16 Caspian Tern. Main Causeway, 19 Little Egret, some with head ribbons and breeding plumage, and to the west, well over 500 Whiskered Tern, these also in breeding plumage with their black bellies, and with them several Little Tern, plus waders, Red-necked Stints, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers. From Duncan Fraser, Birdline. Duncan has photos of the two species in breeding plumage on his Ben Cruachen Blog site. 20 Oct on Raymond Island Ron Mackenzie sighted 1 White-headed Pigeon, 2 Gang Gang and at least 3 pairs of Wood Duck each with several young. **5 Nov 'Greenhills' Mt Taylor.** Species 51 (321 birds). Cloudy with the odd very light shower. Leader Betty Norris. Attendance: 16. After the good weather at the Marlo Camp, those that attended, arrived home on the Friday. Then the weather set in. From Bairnsdale to Lakes Entrance and the surrounding districts from 3 to 5 inches of rain was had over the weekend. Fortunately it had cleared up by Monday morning and very little rain fell at Mt Taylor. Not much sun about, and although our bird numbers were down on other years, a great day was still had. Of the highlights were, long and close viewing of the White-throated Gerygone. The first sighting for some members, and the best sighting for several others. At the same time White-winged Trillers gave excellent sightings. At the big dam an Australian Grebe had two young with her as she swam about. A Dusky Moorhen went to her nest, and

close by 12 Buff-rumped Thornbills feeding young came to within a few feet and were in no hurry to move on. Sittellas were seen at two locations and a White-bellied Cuckoo Shrike was sighted, along with many Dusky Woodswallows, Mistletoebird and the Rufous Songlark was in good voice. Ken Norris informed us that the Buff-rumped Thornbill is a common sight about the farm. They nest in the house yard and are regularly seen. He also drew our attention to the Stubble Quail calling in the paddock in front of the house. Max Markey sighted a White-necked Heron at Wiseleigh 4 Nov. Len Axen reports that 8 Scarlet Honeyeaters and 10 White-headed Pigeons have been coming to a feeding table at Jarrahmond over the past week.

Birdline reports: 3 Nov 10 Topknot Pigeon seen flying around Metung and a Channel-billed Cuckoo trying to hide from the rain in the fig tree at Metung by Chris Lester. 5 Nov a pair of Figbird seen flying near the school in Mallacoota and a Ground Parrot flushed from the heathland walk at Shipwreck Creek by Chris Lester. 6 Nov 5 Freckled Duck roosting at Lake Guyatt at Sale. Seen by Chris Lester.

Harvey Rodda reports that during the week of 9 Oct he and Margaret were at Bemm River with Mike and Kaye Traynor from Anglesea and Chris and Joy Hodge from Orbst. 77 species seen including 24 Royal Spoonbill, 12 Black-winged Stilt, a Crested Shrike-tit, a flock of 31 Little Corella, a Wedge-tailed Eagle, 4 White-bellied Sea Eagles and two nests, a Brush Cuckoo, 2 Black-faced Monarch, and 2 Figbirds. Report from Chris Healey of Stubble Quail, Rufous Songlarks and Woodswallows at their home at Fairhope. The Stubble Quail have reappeared in our paddocks. In last 2 years recorded in all months except June, but none this year since Jan to 4 Oct with 3 more on 22 Oct. Rufous Songlark in garden and orchard since 22 Oct. Mixed flock of 150+ Woodswallows late morning 21 Oct travelling

from the east. Only Dusky identified.

24 Oct in the wetland between the Latrobe River and Longford township, 29 Great Egret, 7 Pacific Heron, and Yellow-billed and Royal Spoonbills. Feeding in optimum conditions resulting from the July floods. The Great Egret count has been as high as 50. Per Duncan Fraser. 25 Oct 517 Whiskered Tern seen on Snipe Point at Hollands Landing. Most in full breeding plumage. From Faye Bedford. 26 Oct 6 Weebill and 2 White winged Trillers seen at Swallow Lagoon NCR. By Duncan Fraser and Peter Ware during their quarterly survey. The Weebills a rare sighting in this part of Gippsland. 29 Oct 1 Black Kite spotted circling high above the trees about 6pm at Swan Reach. Chased off by Ravens. Report from Ken Sherring. 29 Oct 1 Dollarbird seen perched in a large eucalypt along the Tambo River off Rodwell Road, Tambo Upper by Faye Bedford.

**12 Nov Point Fullarton, Sunset Cover, Paynesville.** Species 52 (1643 birds). Fine, sunny. Leader Ron Mackenzie. Attendance: 20. An enjoyable days outing with a barbeque lunch. Report of White-necked Heron at Jarvis' Swamp opposite the Swan Reach Store during the week (from Ken Sherring). 5 Nov Common Koel at Tambo River at Tambo Upper. This single birds distinctive call was heard at 0740 from a distance. Tracked bird to a large Eucalypt along Tambo River (Rodwells Road). Observed perching and flying along canopy of tree tops. Flew off in an easterly direction (Faye Bedford and Mike Bramwell). 9 Nov: 4 Hooded Plover on Rigby Island at Lakes Entrance. 4 adult birds seen scampering over sandy shell mounds on Rigby Island. No bands. Faye Bedford. (Photo). 10 Nov. Yesterday and today Father John O'Kelly and Maurice Roberts have heard this strange bird call in Bairnsdale. They followed the call until it led them to Jose Hicklings. With Jose they saw the bird,. black with a red eye and a strange beak. Jose also heard the call. They have identified the bird as a

male Common Koel. Going to birds today at Paynesville Ken Sherring and Harvey Rodda sighted a Black-shouldered Kite at Helmers, corner at Broadlands going and a White-necked Heron on Bosses Swamp on the way back. Sue Welte reports that yesterday evening 11Nov a Powerful Owl heard calling at her home at Metung.

Chris Healey reports the Boobook Owl calling each night at his home at Fairhope, also a Brush Cuckoo heard there 11 Nov. Peter and Rosemary Edwards report a Nankeen Night Heron on their jetty at Newlands Arm this morning and a Great-crested Grebe then seen out in the lake. Max and Jill Markey report hearing a Cicadabird when on White Rocks Track yesterday 11 Nov (off the Omeo Road to the right just beyond Ramrod Ck). Prior to the flooding rain the weekend before last, Duncan Fraser sighted up to 10 White-necked Herons on the wetland at Longford between the Latrobe River and the Longford township. Since the rain they have disappeared. On Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nov. Duncan was at Bellbird Corner at Maffra mowing the grass, and sighted 3 White-necked Herons there.

## 2008 SCHEDULE

### NO OUTINGS ON DAYS OF TOTAL FIREBAN

Date	VENUE	LEADER	Date	VENUE	LEADER
<b>FEB</b>	4 Nyerimilang: Walk 2pm, OGM 3pm, BBQ 6pm	Ken - 5156 4413	14	Cherry Tree	Ken - 5156 4413
	11 Hollands Landing/Victoria Lagoon	Harvey - 5156 8245	21	Tambo Upper/Bruthen	TBA
	18 Monkey/Ramrod Creeks	Chris - 5157 9036	28	Jones Bay/Riverbank Rd	TBA
	25 Eastern Beach - <b>BBQ lunch</b>	Max - 5157 5206	<b>AUG</b>	4 Maffra	TBA
<b>MAR</b>	3 Glenaladale	TBA	11	Macleod Morass	TBA
	10 BOCA Labor Weekend	Forestech	18	Fairy Dell/Wiseleigh	Freda - 5157 5316
	17 Lake Bunga	Ian - 5155 3377	25	Waterholes	Chris - 5157 9036
	24 <b>Easter</b>	<b>No outing</b>	<b>SEP</b>	1 Picnic Point	Joan - 5152 4327
	31 Ellasville-Stephenson's	Harvey - 5156 8245	8	Banksia Peninsula	TBA
<b>APR</b>	7 Macleod Morass	Ken - 5156 4413	15	Lake Tyers	Ken - 5156 4413
	14 <b>Camp - Buchan</b>		22	Rough Rd/Tambo R	Ken - 5156 4413
	21 Canni Creek (D)	Harvey - 5156 8245	29	Raymond Island	Ron - 5156 7773
	28 Lonely Bay	Len - 5154 8417	<b>OCT</b>	6 Trident Arm	Max - 5157 5206
<b>MAY</b>	5 Trestle Bridge/Nowa Nowa	Max - 5157 5206	13	Nyerimilang	Claire - 5152 3729
	12 Silt Jetties/Old Eagle Pt Rd	Norma - 5156 6835	20	<b>Camp -TBA</b>	
	19 Mississippi Ck/Log Crossing	Ken - 5156 4413	27	Canni Creek	TBA
	26 Sale Common	TBA	<b>NOV</b>	3 'Greenhills' Mt Taylor	Betty - 5153 2053
<b>JUNE</b>	2 Nyerimilang	Harvey - 5156 8245	10	Macleods Morass	TBA
	9 Bellbird Rd-Healeys'	Chris - 51579036	17	Nicholson <b>BBQ lunch</b>	Harvey - 5156 8245
	16 Metung/Nungurner	Dot - 5156 3284	27	Angus Vale	Ken - 5156 4413
	23 <b>AGM (at DSE)</b> preceded by Howitt Park	Ken - 5156 4413	<b>DEC</b>	1 <b>CHALLENGE COUNT</b>	
	30 Blonde Bay	Ken - 5156 441	8	<b>CHRISTMAS PARTY</b>	
<b>JULY</b>	7 Sarsfield	Chris - 5156 9036			

**MEET:** at corner of Pinnock and McCulloch Streets, Bairnsdale (5152 6594 - Jose)

**TIME:** 8:50 am for a 9:00 am departure

**BRING:** Morning Tea, Lunch, a folding chair and binoculars.

(D) - indicates a distant site - prepare accordingly.

**INQUIRIES: Ken Sherring - 5156 4413.**

Schedule updated - Wednesday, November 21, 2007

It is a good idea to PHONE the leader to make other arrangements if not meeting at Pinnock St and to check what arrangements the leader has made for the day's activities. Do not assume the meeting place will be the same as last time!

## Tail feathers:

### Bird-brained?

Next time you are tempted to brand someone as a 'bird brained' idiot, take a moment to reflect upon Alex the African Grey Parrot. Alex was given a university education in Dr Irene Pepperberg's lab at Brandeis University, USA, in a research project on avian cognition and learning.

Though assumed to be of average intelligence, Alex showed astonishing intellectual capacities. Not only did he acquire a substantial vocabulary, but he learned to

apply it in ways that seem to go beyond merely 'parroting' human speech.

Alex could name in English speech up to 50 different objects, 7 colours, 5 shapes, and numbers up to 6, and showed he understood such concepts as bigger-smaller, same-different, present-absent.

More than that, Alex used his vocabulary to create sentences in which he identified, requested, refused or categorized more than 100 different items. Lacking lips, he had some trouble articulating some words,

but would add a pause in his speech to stand for the missing sound he couldn't make, but realised should be there! Alex showed the emotional equivalent of a 2 year-old child and intellectual equivalent of a 5 year-old.

Alex's intellectual achievements are considerably better than tests on such super-smart dogs as Poodles and Border Collies, and are thought to be superior to that of all other mammals (other than adult humans), including chimps and dolphins. Not bad for an ordinary parrot.

Sadly, Alex recently died at the advanced age of 31 years. Dr Pepperberg's research on avian intelligence continues with the next generation of African Greys.

How will our Aussie parrots compare?

### *The Chat*

If undeliverable, please return to:  
Chris Healey, The Editor  
East Gippsland Bird Observers Club  
PO Box 825 Bairnsdale, Vic 3875

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On the web at  
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**NEXT NEWSLETTER: February 2008**