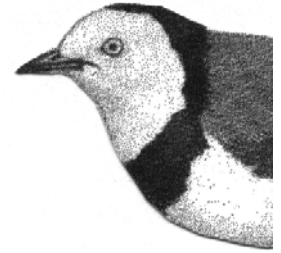


The Chat

Newsletter of the East Gippsland
Bird Observers Club



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What happens to our EGBOC records?

EGBOC has been keeping records of observations since the club began back in 1982. It is a testament to the energy and diligence of members that we have now amassed an impressive body of material.

Looking back through past copies of *The Chat* one can get a good idea of the range and depth of information on bird distributions, numbers, dates of arrival and departure, and behaviour for a great number of species and birding sites.

Our records relate to over 60 different sites throughout the East Gippsland area, with particular focus in the Bairnsdale and Gippsland Lakes areas. So far our club records of birding outings run to over 1000 pages!

We are fortunate indeed that our club officers took the time to make clear and detailed records, and to ensure that they have been neatly filed. Until recently, these records have been written by hand or on a (now old fashioned) type-

writer.

For the last few years, our current Recorder, Harvey Rodda, has been entering our regular outings records onto computerised data sheets, using the Microsoft Excel program. This has facilitated the standardisation of records, and makes editing, storage and sharing of information so much easier. Anyone with access to a computer and the internet can now obtain a copy of weekly records on request, and print out their own copies if desired.

Digital records can also be shared with a wide range of organisations with an interest in birds in our region, on a regular basis or in response to requests for particular information. For example, EGBOC has been supplying DSE's Atlas of Victorian Wildlife project with regular results of outings, and has assisted Birds Australia with data on wetlands sites in support of their Important Bird Area project.

Recently, Harvey began the enormous task of converting older hard-copy paper records to digital format. This will make our records even more valuable, as computerised records will be able to be securely stored, shared, printed, sorted, and analysed.

BOCA has no current guidelines for digital record keeping. However, *The Chat* recently spoke to BOCA CEO, Richard Hunter, who advises that BOCA is currently exploring with Birds Australia and other organisations protocols for digital recording of data that would facilitate sharing of information.

President's report ~ Ken Sherring

A busy General Meeting at Nyerimilang

It was good to have so many members present at Nyerimilang Park to be able to contribute to this important meeting on the first day of our 2008 Monday outings.

Important outcomes of the General Meeting:

- A letter to be sent to BOCA regarding BOCA's

postponement and possible change of date of their "Between the Mountains and the Sea" education program at Bairnsdale.

- Max and Jill Markey to lead the Camp starting 14 April, which will now be at **Mallacoota**.
- Changing two of our Monday Outings to Sundays in the hope of attracting some new people who

would not be able to attend on Mondays:

Sunday June 1 at 2 pm - Nyerimilang Park.

Sunday August 10 at 2 pm - Mitchell River Walking Track

From the Editor

Welcome to the first issue of *The Chat* for the year. What a different start to the birding year from last year! This issue brings you some of Ken's birding highlights over the holiday period from around his Swan Reach home. Also, there is an interim report on the first year of the Bushfire Recovery project undertaken by EGBOC members.

Some general club news:

BOCA Educational Event:

EGBOC received official notification from BOCA early in February that the BOCA event scheduled for the Labor Day

Weekend (March 7-10) on the theme *Between the Mountains and the Sea: Birding and Photography in Bairnsdale and Beyond* has been cancelled. The BOCA organising committee of the event hopes to re-schedule the event for a later date, with some possible modifications to the programme on offer. Check your copy of *The Bird Observer* or the BOCA website (www.boca.org.au) for updates.

Field Guide to Australian Birdsong:

The club has purchased the full set of 10 CDs of BOCA's Field Guide to Australian Bird-

song, compiled by Howard Plowright. This is an excellent reference collection with recordings of hundreds of species. The collection is available to members for loan from the EGBOC library, as a full set, rather than as individual disks.

Finally, don't forget that *The Chat* welcomes your articles on any aspect of birds and birding in East Gippsland!

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.

Contact The Editor at the above address, or:
110 Bellbird Road, Clifton Creek 3875
Or e-mail: editor@egboc.org.au

Vale Avril Yates

Avril Yates passed away after being ill for nearly three months following a Gall Bladder operation at Latrobe Valley Hospital.

For the birding community in East Gippsland it is a great loss.

Avril joined BOCA in May 1983 and was the East Gippsland Bird Observers inaugural Secretary and held that position for 11 years, fulfilling that role with distinction. From the very beginning Avril worked tirelessly to form the club as we know it today, building membership, spreading the word on birds and birding as a guest speaker to a wide variety of organisations, on the radio and in print in the local "Bairnsdale Advertiser" and in the Bird Observer. She also was the Newsletter Editor from 1988 to 1994.

Avril travelled the three plus hours to Melbourne to attend meetings and represent EGBOC at BOCA gatherings. She attended BOCA camps, meetings and outings and organised and hosted return visits by BOCA members to East Gippsland. Avril was a people person, finding it easy to talk

to people, listen to what others had to say and organise people in a warm and friendly manner. EGBOC's strongest feature is that from its very beginning its members meet for an outing every week – it may be the only BOCA Branch to do so, and that is a legacy from our founding members of whom Avril was a major influence. Avril was well known and respected in the East Gippsland community and had a network of contacts in the wider birding community as well. In recognition of her commitment to birding, EGBOC and BOCA, Avril received an inaugural "Bird Observers Club of Australia Distinguished Service Award" in May, 2005.

Avril had many other interests, she loved to travel and most years saw her planning a trip over seas – mostly to the more adventurous places such as Yemen, Belize, Budapest South America especially Chile, Morocco, Timbuctoo and the Silk Road to mention only a few. Many of Avril's trips were nature tours and with each trip she returned home with more interesting tales, experiences and sightings to add to her excellent and wide

range of knowledge.

Avril was also President of the Bairnsdale U3A and involved in the Field Naturalists both in Bairnsdale and Ringwood. Her knowledge of native plants and animals was as extensive as her knowledge of our bird life. As a tutor for U3A she ran a very interesting Armchair Travel on a weekly basis.

Avril had an intelligent and inquiring mind, was quiet in manner and a true gentle-

woman. Her passing is a terrible loss and she will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Nancy Taylor



A little more on Ravens ~ Ken Sherring

(Nonsense on an unworthy bird)

In issue 33 of "The Chat" Chris Healey wrote an in-depth article on Ravens. To be able to do this I found remarkable because lets face it, all Ravens (Crows, Cravens or what ever you choose to call them) are the most boring, unexciting birds on this earth. Although there are several species of Ravens, I think it almost impossible to tell one from another by sight alone.

There have been a few hanging around home recently which I have been trying to ignore without success be-

cause their wailing squarks irritate me. But then I had a brain wave. I'll listen to BOCA's Birdsong CD on Ravens and identify them. Not so easy, because even their noise is not clear-cut to me. Having listened several times, I think I have come up with the correct identification. **Little Ravens** but with an element of doubt. This is rather interesting because up till now I assumed without much thought the crows flying around home were actually **Australian Ravens**, but that all changed when Max Markey joined our ranks. Not long after moving to Lakes Entrance he discovered that the **Forest Raven** was quite common in

that area (which I think was a first for East Gippsland) and can also quite casually tell one raven from another by it's call alone.

But it doesn't really matter because after all *they are only crows*.

Rewards on a very hot day ~ Ken Sherring

January 11, was one of those very hot days that approached 40 degrees. About midday I dragged myself out of the chair to go and check the water in the bird bath and was surprised by what I saw. A Brown Thornbill flock were at the bath having a jolly good time. Not far above in the wattle tree

were two Gang Gangs. So naturally I dived inside and grabbed the camera. In the next half hour I saw Gang Gangs, Spinebills, Striated and Yellow Thornbills, Rufous Whistlers, Magpie Larks, Grey Fantails and Grey Shrike-thrush all wanting a drink and freshen up. Some useful snaps were

my reward.

Photos from left: Striated Thornbill, Eastern Spinebill, Grey Fantail, Gang Gang Cockatoo



The 2006-07 Bushfire Recovery Survey: Interim Report

INTRODUCTION

It is now just over a year since the widespread fires of last summer were declared 'contained'. Shortly thereafter, EGBOC initiated a bushfire recovery project, to monitor the longer term effects of fires on birdlife. Three sites were selected for regular surveys for an initial period of 12 months. Surveys began with an initial visit to Fairy Dell by Ken Sherring on 25 January, and the survey team as a whole commenced surveys at Monkey Creek on 26 February 2007. The team has now completed the first phase of the recovery project.

Assessment of the impact of fires at the three sites owes much to the efforts of EGBOC members in past years, and the records that the club has built up from repeat visits to Fairy Dell and Monkey Creek since 1984. While previous visits to these sites have been predominantly in winter and spring months, they nonetheless provide the best baseline data so far available with which we may compare the results of the bushfire recovery surveys.

THE SITES

The survey team decided that for practical reasons, regular monthly surveys should be confined to two sites: Monkey Creek and Fairy Dell. Waterholes was a third site to be surveyed once every three months. Twelve surveys have now been completed at Monkey Creek, 11 at Fairy Dell (the survey in June was cancelled due to heavy rain), and three at Waterholes.

All three sites are in forested country, but with varied characteristics and experience of the fires. Fairy Dell did not suffer directly from fire, although drier forest nearby was burnt in low to medium intensity fire. However, the reserve suffered from prolonged drought with evidence of die-back of some mature trees and extensive areas of ferny understory. Monkey Creek

was burnt in patches by medium intensity fire, including backburning which marked a containment line at the south eastern limit of the fire. Waterholes was at the centre of intense wildfire, that particularly ravaged extensive stands of mature eucalypt forest on upper slopes, although the immediate surroundings of the guesthouse were not badly burnt.

SURVEY METHODS

Surveys were conducted along regular walking routes at each site. Identifications and numbers are based on sightings as well as calls. Survey teams mostly consisted of from two to five members with recording beginning at around 0900 at Monkey Creek and Fairy Dell, and about 0930 at Waterholes, lasting for between two to three hours.

REGENERATION OF VEGETATION

Box, stringybark and ironbark eucalypts responded rapidly to the fire, with good growth of epicormic shoots and lignotubers noted within the first few weeks. Wattles and the grassy understory at Monkey Creek are only now beginning to regenerate 12 months after the fires. Late summer regrowth is now waist to shoulder height. Patches of mixed species forest at Monkey Creek remain relatively open, with many standing dead trees. Heavy rain and recurrent high winds since mid 2007 have caused windfalls of large trees at Monkey Creek (especially Boys Camp Track) and at Fairy Dell, which has opened up additional patches of previously closed forest canopy.

Regeneration of vegetation appears to have been less vigorous on burnt areas close to Waterholes guesthouse. Young Gippsland Grey Gums close to the river appear to have been more adversely affected by fire than mixed eucalypt forest on the upper slopes which were subjected to intense wildfire. While

many trees on the upper slopes appear to have died, numerous others are now well covered by epicormic shoots.

Much of the dense scrub of wattles along the gravel banks of the Nicholson River at Waterholes died in the fires.

THE BIRDS

The three sites have similar bird lists. Information remains preliminary at this stage, with a number of gaps yet to be filled in our knowledge of local bird lists. During surveys we recorded a total of 81 species at Monkey Creek, 68 at Fairy Dell and 62 at Waterholes. EGBOC records for Monkey Creek and Fairy Dell go back to the 1980s, and Kaye Munro of Waterholes Guesthouse provided us with a composite bird list for 1977-2005, that also includes results of occasional surveys by Jenny Edwards in bushland near the property. On information collated to date, the total bird list for Monkey Creek is 101 species, for Fairy Dell 80 species, and for Waterholes 123 species

Looking at the proportion of the species encountered during surveys as a percentage of the total so far known for each site gives a first approximation of the possible impact of fires. Thus, we recorded 50% of all species at Waterholes, 80% at Monkey Creek and 85% at Fairy Dell.

FOREST AND WOODLAND BIRDS

Bird species most likely to have been directly impacted by fires and/or drought at all three sites are forest and woodland species. Forest and woodland birds include resident or sedentary species (such as Kookaburra, Lyrebird and Brown Thornbill) and migratory species (such as Fantailed Cuckoo, Crescent Honeyeater and Rufous Fantail), as well as partial migrants or nomads, which may be present all year round, but in highly variable numbers (such as Red Wattlebird and several other species of Honeyeater).

Forest and woodland species predominate at all three sites. Figures for the number of forest and woodland species present at each site, and the corresponding proportion of the total bird list for each site, are as follows:

Monkey Creek: 62 species (61.4%)
Fairy Dell: 64 species (80%)
Waterholes: 76 species (61.8%).

Figures for forest and woodland species actually recorded during surveys, as a gross number, and as a proportion of all forest and woodland species ever recorded at each site:

Monkey Creek: 59 species (95.2% of possible total noted above)
Fairy Dell: 61 species (95.3%)
Waterholes: 44 species (57.9%).

These figures suggest that few forest and woodland species known to occur at Monkey Creek and Fairy Dell failed to be recorded during the bushfire survey. On the other hand, over a third of all forest and woodland birds known to occur at Waterholes were not recorded during surveys.

Provisionally, this suggests that Waterholes was most seriously affected by fire/drought and Fairy Dell least affected. However, these figures are likely to change with further analysis of data, and therefore it is too early to attempt to draw firm conclusions.

Sedentary forest and woodland species are likely to be highly affected by adverse local conditions, including fire and drought. At each site a similar, but not identical suite of species was recorded on each survey visit. The number of species recorded every visit as a proportion of all forest and woodland species known for each site was similar across all sites, ranging from about one sixth to one fifth of species known to be present at some time:

Monkey Creek: 10 species or 16.1% of all known forest and woodland species:
Laughing Kookaburra
White-throated Treecreeper



Boys Camp Track, left, one month after fires on 26 February 2007, and the same spot one year later (right) on 18 February 2008.
Photos: Chris Healey

Superb Fairy Wren
White-browed Scrubwren
Brown Thornbill
Eastern Yellow Robin
Golden Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Grey Fantail
Pied Currawong

Fairy Dell: 11 species, or
17.2% of all known forest and
woodland species:

Wonga Pigeon
Crimson Rosella
Laughing Kookaburra
White-throated Treecreeper
White-browed Scrubwren
Brown Thornbill
Lewins Honeyeater
Eastern Spinebill
Eastern Yellow Robin
Golden Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush

Waterholes: 15 species, or
19.7% of all known forest and
woodland species:

Wonga Pigeon
Crimson Rosella
Laughing Kookaburra
Superb Lyrebird
White-throated Treecreeper
Superb Fairy Wren
Spotted Pardalote
Brown Thornbill
Eastern Spinebill
Eastern Yellow Robin
Golden Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Grey Fantail
Pied Currawong
Satin Bowerbird

Six species, all sedentary or
permanent residents, were
recorded at all three sites:
Laughing Kookaburra
White-throated Treecreeper
Brown Thornbill
Eastern Yellow Robin
Golden Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush.

A comparison of numbers of
birds recorded in the pre- and
post-fire periods allows for a
first estimate of the possible
impact of the fires on bird
populations and numbers at
our selected sites. Table 1
shows the average number of
individuals of the ten species
recorded each post-fire visit at
Monkey Creek and the eleven
species recorded each post-
fire visit at Fairy Dell, a total of
14 species. The table also
shows average numbers re-
corded for 14 pre-fire visits to
Monkey Creek since September
1984 and 12 pre-fire visits to
Fairy Dell from January 1985.

Figures in the table indicate
that the average numbers of
most frequently encountered
species at Monkey Creek *in-*
creased in the post-fire survey
period for all species. The
same trend is evident for most
species at Fairy Dell, though
increasing numbers are less
marked. Only the Superb Fairy
Wren showed no increase in
numbers pre- and post-fire,
while Pied Currawong numbers

decreased slightly. Data on
numbers of birds recorded at
Waterholes prior to the fires
are insufficient to attempt the
same exercise for that site.

To further test pre- and post-
fire abundance, Table 2 looks
at a further five species which
are common and easily heard
or seen at both sites, though
not encountered in every
month of the post-fire surveys.
Sulfur-crested Cockatoos de-
creased in abundance at Mon-
key Creek but increased at
Fairy Dell. Red Wattlebirds
increased markedly at Monkey
Creek (an influx of large num-
bers in April skews the fig-
ures), but decreased margin-
ally at Fairy Dell. Numbers of
Satin Bowerbirds decreased
markedly at Fairy Dell, but rose
moderately at Monkey Creek.

Some of the differences be-
tween pre- and post-fire re-
cords are attributable to varia-
tions in survey techniques and
possibly the reliability of some
earlier records. Further analy-
sis of records and compari-
sons with other sites is re-
quired. However, it seems
probable that increases in
post-fire numbers are some-
what less than the tables sug-
gest, but also that any de-
creases in the post-fire period
are likely to be greater than
the tables suggests.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS

Seasonal and longer-term
changes in availability of food
and other resources is a fea-
ture of the Australian bush,
with marked influence on
abundance of birds, migration
and breeding. Summer mi-
grants are well represented by
such species as cuckoos, Sa-
cred Kingfisher, Dollarbird,
Scarlet Honeyeater and Ru-
fous Fantail, which began to
be recorded at Monkey Creek
and Fairy Dell from spring
months at about the same
time as their appearance else-
where in the region. Several
species showed different pat-
terns of incidence between
Monkey Creek and Fairy Dell
that suggest variations in local
factors rather than seasonal
differences. In particular, a
number of Honeyeaters
showed dissimilar fluctu-
ations in their presence and abun-
dances that may reflect local
differences in availability of
food.

Broadly, however, the number
of species present by month,
as a percentage of the total
number of species recorded at
each site, follows a similar
pattern for the survey sites.
Figure 1 shows that more spe-
cies were encountered in
spring and early summer, with
least species encountered in
winter. Though yet to be ana-
lysed in more detail, this pat-
tern seems comparable to that

in other, unburnt areas. A particular point to note is that the number of species recorded at the beginning of the surveys immediately after the fires was the same as one year later (January 2008) at Monkey Creek, suggesting the immediate effect of fire was negligible in the immediate vicinity of the site. However, the actual mix of species, rather than crude numbers as a proportion of the total bird list, is yet to be looked at in detail. Species richness at Fairy Dell was somewhat lower at the start of surveys than 12 months later. This may have been an effect of drought.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to make direct comparisons of pre- and post-fire bird lists because of different recording conventions. In particular, data on the number of birds recorded by earlier EGBOC visits is unlikely to be directly comparable with post-fire survey results. However,

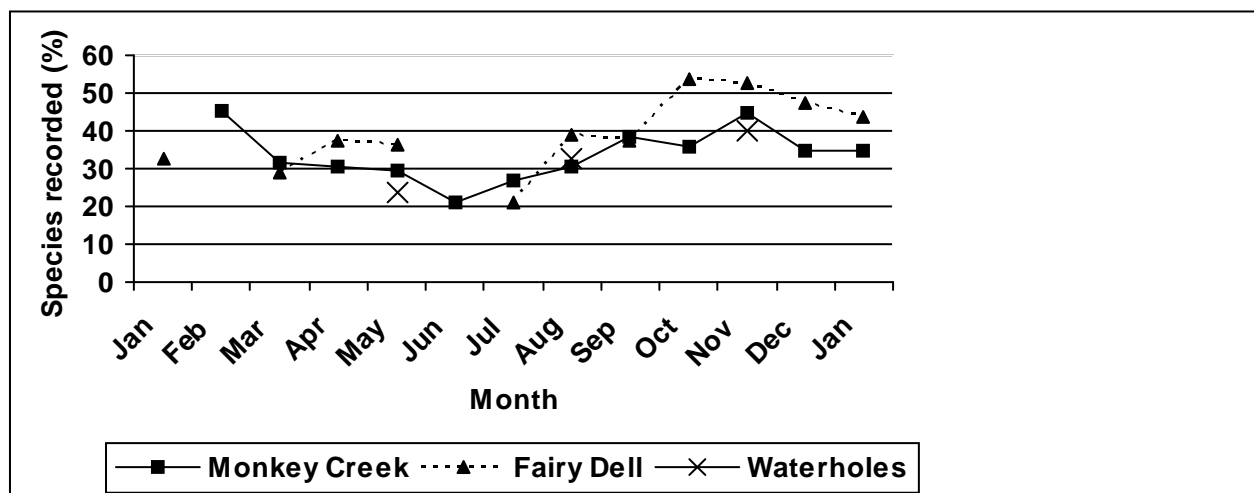
Table 1: Average number of birds per visit: Most commonly recorded species

Species	Monkey Creek		Fairy Dell	
	Pre-fire	Post-fire	Pre-fire	Post-fire
Wonga Pigeon	1.0	1.8	1.5	4.2
Crimson Rosella	1.6	5.2	1.2	3.3
Laughing Kookaburra	2.2	3.1	2.7	3.0
White-throated Treecreeper	1.4	6.4	1.9	5.0
Superb Fairy Wren	2.6	9.7	3.8	3.8
White-browed Scrubwren	0.9	4.6	1.2	5.2
Brown Thornbill	3.3	9.9	2.0	6.6
Lewins Honeyeater	na	0.3	1.8	5.6
Eastern Spinebill	2.0	5.8	1.3	4.2
Eastern Yellow Robin	1.4	4.1	2.7	4.0
Golden Whistler	1.5	4.8	2.4	5.4
Grey Shrike-thrush	1.8	4.3	1.7	4.1
Grey Fantail	2.6	5.8	1.8	1.2
Pied Currawong	1.9	4.2	1.8	1.2

Table 2: Average number of birds per visit: Selected other common species

Species	Monkey Creek		Fairy Dell	
	Pre-fire	Post-fire	Pre-fire	Post-fire
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	6.6	4.3	1.7	5.5
Superb Lyrebird	1.5	2.6	1.0	1.3
Spotted Pardalote	1.0	4.6	0.4	3.2
Red Wattlebird	2.1	9.8	1.8	1.1

Figure 1: Seasonal variation in bird numbers, Jan 2007-Jan 2008



we now have a substantial body of data on birds of the three survey sites, and further analysis may enable us to make a more informed assessment of the possible impact of the 2006-07 fires on bird populations.

The essential provisional conclusion to be drawn so far is that the fires had minimal adverse impact on birds *in the survey sites*. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that birds may have even become more abundant at Monkey Creek and Fairy Dell in the post fire period. If this is true, it remains unclear whether this might be a direct effect of fire and resulting regrowth of vegetation, or a consequence of recovery of the forest after a long period of drought.

It is important to stress that Monkey Creek and Fairy Dell were on or near the margins of fire, while Waterholes was effectively an oasis within an extensive tract of burnt-out country. Each site thus provided at least some degree of refuge for birds in more severely burnt nearby areas. As such, they may have actually

attracted some species, especially in the early post-fire period when extensive tracts of forest were no longer hospitable habitat for many species.

How birds have fared in areas that suffered extreme wildfire remains uncertain.

Hopefully, continued monitoring of our survey sites on a regular basis may help provide answers to a number of outstanding questions.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to Kaye and Robert Munro for permission to conduct surveys at Waterholes.

(Chris Healey, on behalf of Bushfire Recovery Survey Team)

Outings Report ~ Harvey Rodda

4th February Nyerimilang.

Species: 44. Fine. Leader: Ken Sherring. Attendance: 20. On the road for another year. We did not meet until the afternoon, very little birding done, but a committee meeting held, and then a very enjoyable barbeque for those that stayed. One significant recording for the day was that Ian Faulkner picked up the call of the Common Koel, which was not known to most of those with him. The local Ranger Joe Stephens came for a short while, to discuss the placement of the tree, to be planted at Nyerimilang by the club, in memory of Joy Johnstone. Camilla Manvell reports the Channel-billed Cuckoo is still about Metung. She last heard it calling at her home yesterday.

day.

11th February Hollands Land- ing.

Species: 54. Fine. Leader: Harvey Rodda. Attendance: 12. A great day out with many birds. Silver Gulls, Pelicans and Swans in good numbers. Also good numbers of Stilts and Red-capped Plover. Good sighting of a pair of Great-crested Grebe with a juvenile bird with them, also 11 Little Egrets in breeding plumage. Raptors in good numbers with a particularly good sighting of a Brown Falcon on a roadside post. Green-shank seen at two sites, very actively feeding. Chats in very big numbers, several moving from near our feet, with the injured bird act. One nest with eggs seen. Four Dusky Woodswallow seen

perched very close together.

Ken tried to get a photo of this, but unable to do so. A great day out.

On Friday the 8th February 2008 17 Noisy Friarbirds seen in the Grevillia and Gums at Markey's home at Wiseleigh. Have also been seen each day since.

Saturday the 9th. 53 White-throated Needletails seen this morning at Markeys at Wiseleigh. A further 26 seen in the afternoon.

Just after dark Max and Jill heard the call of a Nankeen Night Heron from their home at Wiseleigh. Sunday the 10th February 2008. 30 Pied Oystercatchers seen at Lake Tyers Beach by Ian Faulkner. Later that day 2 immature White-bellied Sea-Eagles seen at Lake Bunga by Ian Faulkner.

18th February Ramrod / Monkey Creek. Species: 37. Fine. Leader: Chris Healey. Attendance: 17. The early arrivals at the rendezvous point at Bruthen near the bakery, were treated to a great sighting of two very vocal Australian Hobby. A beautiful sunny morning at Ramrod enjoyed by all that attended.

25th February Eastern Beach, Lakes Entrance. Species: 48. Fine. Leader: Max Markey. Attendance: 16. Visitor, Rita Beeck from Wy Yung. Good weather prevailed at Lakes after a great deal of very strong wind. Highlights of the day were the sighting of a Buff-banded Rail, which flew over the water just above the Eastern Beach Road, landed on the

opposite bank for about two seconds, and then flew back. Possibly the same bird was seen flying over the water again about an hour later. Three Little Egrets in breeding plumage, and 3 Royal Spoonbills, and adult Sea-Eagle and a juvenile bird. 6 Pied Oystercatchers. Len Axen and Harvey Rodda were the last to leave after the lunchtime barbecue. As they were moving to the vehicles, they heard, and then had an excellent sighting of a pair of Satin Flycatchers. Len Axen reports that on the 15 February a party of 9 White-

headed Pigeons were observed flying over his house in the evening. This is the largest single sighting since they were first recorded in Marlo during 2002.

23 February Duncan Fraser and Peter Ware report the sighting of a pair of Satin Flycatchers near the riverside track between Moroka Horseyards and Morgans Gully, about 48 kilometres north of Maffra.

24 February Harvey Rodda reports 16 Yellow-billed Spoonbill and 1 Great Egret on Bosses Swamp at Nicholson of

the past four days.

Norma Earney reports that over the past couple of days she has a pair of Black-shouldered Kite at the slit jet-ties. This is the first sighting of that species at this location for several years.

Max Markey reports that last Friday 22 February, as a storm was approaching he sighted 73 White-throated Needletails at Wiseleigh.

On Sunday 24th Feb Max and Jill Markey saw a bird land on a post in their garden in Wiseleigh. They were unable to identify the bird but then with

the benefit of binoculars could see that it was a female Common Koel. Photos taken.

CHANGES TO EGBOC OUTINGS AND CAMP SCHEDULE

A number of changes have been made to the previously advertised schedule. Note that these changes are not reflected in the forthcoming edition of BOCA's *Bird Observer* magazine.

The **April Camp** this year has been changed from the Buchan location to MALLACOOTA.

Location of camp: Mallacoota Shady Gully Caravan Park
Lot 5, Genoa Road, Mallacoota
Phone: (03) 5158 0362

The caravan park has a range of accommodation available from luxury Cabins to unpowered camping sites.

Off-peak tariffs per night:
Luxury cabin: \$110
Ensuite cabins: from \$50-60
Cabins (no ensuite): \$45
Ensuite powered site: \$27
Powered site: \$22
Unpowered site: \$18

Regular Monday outings scheduled for 2 June and 11 August have been rescheduled for the preceding Sunday, with a view to attracting visitors and potential new members:

Sunday June 1 at 2 pm - Nyerimilang Park.

Sunday August 10 at 2 pm - Mitchell River Walking Track

An outing will also be held on Monday March 10 (Labor Day holiday) at Nyerimilang.

2008 SCHEDULE

NO OUTINGS ON DAYS OF TOTAL FIREBAN

Date	VENUE	LEADER	Date	VENUE	LEADER
FEB	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	
	18 Monkey/Ramrod Creeks	Chris - 5157 9036		28 Jones Bay/Riverbank Rd	
	25 Eastern Beach - BBQ lunch	Max - 5157 5206	AUG	4 Maffra	
MAR	3 Glenaladale			10 <i>Mitchell River Walking Track 2pm start</i>	
	10 Nyerimilang			18 Fairy Dell/Wiseleigh	Freda - 5157 5316
	17 Lake Bunga	Ian - 5155 3377		25 Waterholes	Chris - 5157 9036
	24 Easter	No outing	SEP	1 Picnic Point	Joan - 5152 4327
	31 Ellasville-Stephenson's	Harvey - 5156 8245		8 Banksia Peninsula	
APR	7 Macleod Morass	Ken - 5156 4413		15 Lake Tyers	Ken - 5156 4413
	14 Camp - Mallacoota			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	OCT	6 Trident Arm	Max - 5157 5206
MAY	5 Trestle Bridge/Nowa Nowa	Max - 5157 5206		13 Nyerimilang	Claire - 5152 3729
	12 Silt Jetties/Old Eagle Pt Rd	Norma - 5156 6835		20 Camp -TBA	TBA
	19 Mississippi Ck/Log Crossing	Ken - 5156 4413		27 Canni Creek	
	26 Sale Common	TBA	NOV	3 'Greenhills' Mt Taylor	Betty - 5153 2053
JUNE	1 <i>Nyerimilang 2pm</i>	Harvey - 5156 8245		10 Macleods Morass	
	9 Bellbird Rd-Healeys'	Chris - 51579036		17 Nicholson BBQ lunch	Harvey - 5156 8245
	16 Metung/Nungurner	Dot - 5156 3284		27 Angus Vale	Ken - 5156 4413
	23 AGM (at DSE) preceded by Howitt Park	Ken - 5156 4413	DEC	1 CHALLENGE COUNT	
	30 Blonde Bay	Ken - 5156 441		8 CHRISTMAS PARTY	
JULY	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 - Monday, 17 March 2008

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:

Dangerous birds:

I used to dread those moments in school when called upon to speak about hobbies. Why couldn't I just pretend that my hobby was bungee-jumping, or even collecting swap cards of rugby heroes, instead of being honest and admitting it was 'birdwatching'? That always prompted some thickhead (no offence to Whistlers, aka Pachycephalidae or Thickheads!) to declare 'Yeah, I like birds, too', then demonstrate his profound ignorance of comparative anatomy by

adding, 'the two legged kind. Haw, haw!'

If I knew then what I know now, my hobby might have sounded a lot more exciting and dangerous.

I could have told my classmates about the perils of messing with *Aiolornis incredibilis*, the Incredible Teratorn. An inhabitant of North America, this is the largest known flying carnivore with a wingspan of up to 6 metres!

Or I could have regaled them with tales of the terrifying *Teratornis*, another North American

giant raptor; or the huge 3 metre plus, half tonne Elephant Birds of Madagascar, or the gigantic Moa of New Zealand, standing up to 4 metres high!

I could even have heightened the sense of danger involved in birdwatching by neglecting to mention that these are all extinct (though they were known to early humans, in the case of the moa, maybe even as late as the 1800s!).

Alas, I did not know these things.

I did not even know about the

poisonous birds still living in the rainforests of New Guinea, which I have since encountered – but that is another story.

One thing is certain, birdwatching is not for sissies squealing on the sidelines!

The Chat

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

On the web at
www.egboc.org.au

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