

From: **ABSA** absamailout@gmail.com
Subject: Fwd: ABSA - Newsletter 129 September 2017 pdf
Date: 25 October 2017 at 10:33 PM
To:

A

Newsletter of the Australian Bird Study Association

[View this email in your browser](#)

[HOME](#) [ABOUT ABSA](#) [OUR HISTORY](#) [CONTACT US](#)

NEWSLETTER 129

Editor: Stein Boddington
<info@absa.asn.au>

ISSN 2202-297X (Online)
September 2017

Contents

Editorial

[Gamba Grass in the NT](#)
[Cost of Colour in Superb Blue Wrens](#)
[Bird in the Hand Uploads](#)
[Carnaby's Cockatoo](#)
[Birdfair 2017](#)
[Straw-necked Ibis Satellite Tracking](#)
[Aussie Backyard Bird Count](#)
[Murray Darling Basin Plan](#)
[An Eye in the Sky](#)
[Maremma Dogs Arrive Too Late for Middle Island Penguins](#)
[ABSA, IBSA - No, it's RIO in Italy](#)
[APEEL and Environmental Law](#)
[Scheville National Park](#)

Editorial

At the recent Committee meeting, preliminary decisions were made about the next few year's ABSA Conferences. We intend holding the 2018 event somewhere on the north coast of NSW, depending on some local assistance. We made an 'in principle' decision to hold the event in Sydney every three years, and to spread the intervening events around the east coast of Australia. Unfortunately, logistics prevent us from holding it in Western Australia or Northern Territory, though we would love to.

The ABSA Mist Net Service has settled on a supplier for its mist nets. Ecotone has agreed for us to be the Australian supplier of their nets. The previously used Japanese nets are no longer available, and the interim Chinese supplier became more and more difficult.

As the Bird in the Hand project nears its end, we are interested in developing an app that will deliver information to researchers in the field quickly and accurately. If any members have these sorts of skills, we would love to hear from you.

We remind members that the ABSA Facebook page is a way to keep in touch with immediate news and events. Details of the banding days around Sydney are posted. Banders are invited to add their events as well. And we all enjoy other people's photos, so if you took a good one, share it with everyone!

Stein Boddington
Newsletter Editor

Gamba Grass in the NT

The spread of Gamba Grass in the Northern territory, following its introduction by cattlemen as a stock feed, is looking to be the latest in a long line of ecological disasters. It is now firmly established in areas south of Darwin.

It grows to 10 or 12 feet high, and burns with a fire so hot that it kills the native vegetation, which is not adapted to the hot fire. Its effect on bird life has not been studied. Take a look at a 20 minute video on this invader.

<https://www.territorynrm.org.au/single-post/2017/07/05/VIDEO-Gamba-grass--A-weed-thats-killing-country>

Cost of Colour in Superb Blue Wrens

An interesting discussion on "The Conversation" website on the cost of being brightly coloured for male wrens

Go to: <https://theconversation.com/it-isnt-easy-being-blue-the-cost-of-colour-in-fairy-wrens-80006>

Bird in the Hand Uploads

The following species sheets were added to the website.

A USB drive containing all of the 434 sheets currently published on the ABSA website is now available for a donation of \$25 to the Association. The donation will cover the cost of the memory stick, postage and handling. The memory stick version has all common names in the same alphabetical order as the ABBBS recommended band size list to facilitate easy reference if the sheets are loaded onto a smart phone or tablet.

Bitterns, Egrets and Herons

Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>
Nankeen Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>
Australasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>

Gulls and Terns

Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
Fairy Tern	<i>Sterna nereis</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>

Fairy Wrens

Superb Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i> (Revised)
-------------------	----------------------------------

Carnaby's Cockatoo

We have written previously on the plight of the Carnaby's Cockatoo in Western Australia, and the now defunct plan to clear 30,000 Hectares of their feeding habitat.

Birdlife have just released an update, telling of the success of the vigorous campaign to have this halted, and their plans to capitalise on this interest in the bird by holding further events.

Read about it [here](#)

Birdfair 2017

ABSA will have a stall at the Birdfair in November, and members are invited to drop in and have a chat with Committee members on site.

Here's the info:

When: Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th November, 2017

Where: Newington Armoury, Sydney Olympic Park. Access via Holker St, and then Jamieson St. See a map: [Map](#)

Website: birdfair.com.au

The 2017 Australasian Bird Fair and Wildlife Expo will be the greatest bird and wildlife related event in the Australasian/Pacific region, more than just a bird fair – a wildlife expo!

This year we are expecting in excess of 100 exhibitors including:

- A complete range of optical and photographic equipment to suit any budget with hands on experience and experts on hand to provide guidance.
- Travel and tourism operators from local to across the globe with packages including local tours as well overseas from polar to tropic and everything between.
- Book sellers
- Clothing and accessories
- Garden/wildlife accessories
- Organisations, charities and trusts
- Bird clubs
- Artworks in a historic gallery setting
- Photographic competition and exhibit

Buy your tickets now to secure your spot at The 2017 Australasian Bird Fair and Wildlife Expo!

Ticket Pricing:

1 Day Pass (online) - \$10.00

3 Day Pass (online) - \$20.00

FREE ENTRY FOR ALL KIDS UNDER 16!

1 Day Pass (at the gate) - \$15.00

3 Day Pass (at the gate) - \$30.00

Straw-necked Ibis Satellite Tracking

More interesting tracking data, this time for Straw-necked Ibis. This from the CSIRO website:

<https://research.csiro.au/ewkrwaterbirds/satellite-tracking/>

Aussie Backyard Bird Count

Birdlife Australia's backyard bird count is on in October this year. From 21 to 29 October, you can conduct surveys in your backyard, and submit the counts through the website www.aussiebirdcount.org.au or through the app Aussie Bird Count, which you can download.

Murray Darling Basin Plan

The recent Four Corners program on the water problems of the Murray Darling Basin are disturbing for those who thought progress was being made in returning the river system to a semblance of health.

Early September there are several information evenings held by Birdlife Australia:

Broken Hill - Thursday 7th September

5pm-7pm Musician's Club, 276 Crystal St

Menindee - Friday 8th September

5pm-7pm CWA Hall, Perry St

Register by clicking on [this link](#).

An Eye in the Sky

Since a bushfire in November 2016 burnt a major proportion of our banding site in a remnant patch of Cumberland Plain Woodland at Wianamatta Nature Reserve, we have continued our monthly visits to study the post-fire bird assemblage. Shortly after the fire, team members walked around the track network in the site and made an initial assessment of the burn, including taking photographs. In general, the fire removed the dense ground and shrub layer and scorched the canopy in places. There was a sharp demarcation between burnt and unburnt vegetation on either side of some of the tracks. Plant regeneration was evident within a few weeks following the fire and has progressed steadily.

We wanted to better understand how patchy the burn may have been within its overall boundary, so (after obtaining permission from the National Parks and Wildlife Service) we flew a drone with a camera attached to obtain images of the site from the air.

View from the drone looking south-east over Wianamatta Nature Reserve banding site. Unburnt woodland is visible in the foreground, with burnt sections of the site beyond.

Many images taken from directly above the site from the drone were stitched together into geographically true composite images using computer software. We aim to monitor regeneration of the vegetation at the site using this and other methods and relate the changes to anticipated changes in the bird assemblage.

In this composite image, unburnt woodland (to the left of the track) contrasts with the burnt area (on the right), where vegetation starting to regenerate from the fire that occurred three months ago can be seen.

Michael Franklin
Cumberland Plain Avian Research Team

Addendum: At Wianamatta Nature Reserve on 4th June Tony Hunt found an orchid next to his banding station, in the burnt area that turned out to be *Pterostylis acuminata*. After a search I found around 400 plants with 30 in flower. This is the first record for the reserve and only the second record for Penrith LGA, the other being from Mulgoa. *P. acuminata* is common in sclerophyll forest and heathland of coastal districts. Darryl McKay

Maremma Dogs Arrive Too Late for Middle Island Penguins

The annual placement of Maremma dogs on Middle Island, off the coast at Warrnambool, Victoria, came a couple of days too late this year, and a fox killed 70 penguins in a night of carnage in early August. Bad weather and high tides made it impossible to install the dogs earlier. The dogs have now been transferred to the island, so the remainder of the colony is safe. The story of the Middle Island penguins, and their canine guardians was told in the 2015 film "Oddball", which told how the Maremma dogs came to the island to protect the penguins. It all started when a local chicken farmer, Swampy Marsh, suggested Maremma guardian dogs could be used to protect the penguins. Swampy had successfully used Maremmas to help protect his free range chickens. In a world-first, Maremma dogs were trained and placed on Middle Island to protect the penguins from foxes during the breeding season. Go to www.warrnamboolpenguins.com.au for more info.

ABSA, IBSA - No, its RIO in Italy

Publishing ornithological studies has its ups and downs. None more so than the chequered history since 1911 of the Rivista Italiana di Ornitologia:

"The scientific journal Rivista Italiana di Ornitologia - Research in Ornithology (RIO) publishes original articles and short notes covering all major topics of ornithology twice yearly.

The RIO was founded in 1911 by Ettore Arrigoni degli Oddi (1867–1942), Filippo Cavazza (1886–1953), Francesco Chigi (1881–1953), Alessandro Ghigi (1875–1970), Giacinto Martorelli (1855–1917) and Tommaso Salvadori (1835–1923). The first series ended its publication run in 1925, but the journal was revived as a second series in 1931, under the directorship of Arrigoni degli Oddi. In 1933, Edgardo Moltoni (1896–1980) took over as RIO Editor and became its owner and publisher up to his death. The Italian Society of Natural Sciences (Società Italiana di Scienze Naturali) then took over ownership of the RIO in 1981, publishing it in collaboration with the Museum of Natural History of Milan (Museo di Storia Naturale di Milano).

The Rivista Italiana di Ornitologia is available as library exchange: C.MSNMbiblioteca@comune.milano.it "

From: <http://sisa.pagepress.org/rio/>

APEEL and Environmental Law

The Australian Panel of Experts on Environmental Law (APEEL) is comprised of experts with extensive knowledge of, and experience in, environmental law. Its membership includes environmental law practitioners, academics with international standing and a retired judge of the Federal Court. APEEL has developed a blueprint for the next generation of Australian environmental laws with the aim of ensuring a healthy, functioning and resilient environment for generations to come. APEEL's proposals are for environmental laws that are as transparent, efficient, effective and participatory as possible. A series of technical discussion papers focus on the following themes:

1. The foundations of environmental law
2. Environmental governance
3. Terrestrial biodiversity conservation and natural resources management
4. Marine and coastal issues
5. Climate law
6. Energy regulation
7. The private sector, business law and environmental performance
8. Democracy and the environment

For more details, and to download their discussion papers, go to: <http://apeel.org.au/papers>

Scheyville National Park

50+ years of banding at Scheyville National Park – a brief history.

In 1965 Ray Lonnon commenced a bird banding study in dry sclerophyll woodland on leased Crown Land at Scheyville, near Windsor in the outer north-western suburbs of Sydney. The original banding location along Longneck Creek was reserved in 1971 as part of Longneck Lagoon Wildlife Refuge and then as a Crown Reserve in 1987. Later, in recognition of its diverse birds and plants, it was declared a national park, in 1996.

Ray was joined at the cooperative banding station through the late 1960s and early 70s by many of the well known banders of the day, such as Bill Lane, Alan Morris, Arthur Gwynn, Win Filewood and Alan Leishman in pursuit of some of the species that were very rare in western Sydney with some mainly occurring west of the Blue Mountains.

These included: Brown Treecreeper, Diamond Firetail, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Speckled Warbler, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Red-capped Robin, Hooded Robin, Zebra Finch, Black-eared Cuckoo, Scarlet Robin and Flame Robin.

Bill Lane took over coordination of the locality in the early 70s and moved the primary banding site about 1½ km east of the creek to near Scheyville Road to improve vehicle access.

This area became a very important training area for new banders including Darryl Smedley, Graham and Annette Cam and Jeff Hardy and was visited intermittently until the early 1980s when Win Filewood and Jeff Hardy commenced netting along Longneck Creek where the study has continued to this day.

In the late 1980s a new team including John Farrell, Keith Egan and David Pepper-Edwards took over co-ordination of the site and set about documenting the avian fauna from the start of banding in 1965. The results were published in Egan, Farrell and Pepper-Edwards (1997).

Early in the 1990s a proposal was broached by the state government to rezone the area of Crown Land adjacent to Longneck Lagoon Nature Reserve and turn it over to developers for residential housing. At this stage the banding team decided to better sample the variety of habitats under threat and get a better grip on the avian faunas residing there and to monitor any changes if development went ahead.

Three survey sites were established and other banders were recruited for the study. Six separate teams were formed and these rotated from site to site each month. They included: Rudy and Rebecca Jacobs; Wyn Filewood and Debbie Sanders; John Farrell and Rebecca Irvine; Jeff Hardy, Ken Gover and Francoise Matter; Keith Egan and Darryl McKay and David Pepper-Edwards and Amy Dolstra. This study has recently been written up and was accepted for publication (Farrell, Hardy and Smith (in press)). The accumulated data were submitted to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service when the reserve and adjacent government land were being considered by the then Minister for the Environment for placement in a national park.

The submission of bird data, combined with others pertaining to the environment, were enough for a positive decision to be made in gazetting the whole area as Scheyville National Park. Unfortunately these bird data document the demise of some of the species that made this particular site so special. The last published sightings are listed below:

- Red-capped Robin – 1953,
- Hooded Robin – 1973,

- Zebra Finch – 1975,
- Diamond Firetail – 1977,
- Flame Robin – 1978,
- Scarlet Robin – 1980,
- Black-eared Cuckoo – 1987,
- Black-chinned Honeyeater – 1992,
- Brown Treecreeper – 1993,
- Yellow-rumped Thornbill – 1994,
- Speckled Warbler – 2004.

The Cumberland Bird Observers Club has for many years been collecting presence/absence data on birds across the Cumberland Plain but there were no data on abundance of species. As an extension of the study at Scheyville it was decided in 1998 to sample other areas across the N-W sector of the Cumberland Plain to record their faunas and so be able to document any changes due to encroaching urbanisation. Five additional sites were chosen: Agnes Banks Nature Reserve, Nurragingy Reserve, Prospect Nature Reserve, Windsor Downs Nature Reserve, and Wianamatta Nature Reserve.

These reserves were chosen so that future monitoring of the birds could continue without the threat of the sample areas being rezoned for development. Banding was carried out at each additional site for approximately 3 years to collect baseline data and then all were visited for a succession of one-year periods on a rotational basis. This large project would not have been possible but for the assistance from our many trainees and visitors. Reports on Agnes Banks, Nurragingy and Prospect have already been published in *Corella* with an update on Scheyville in preparation. This latter report will document the bird assemblages during 2007-8, 2011-12 and 2015-16.

Unfortunately all is not well at Scheyville. Territorial Bell Miners have gradually taken over the site with the reduction in the numbers of many honeyeater and leaf-gleaning species. This is exemplified by the Fuscous Honeyeater which was once the most predominant honeyeater species and could be sighted and caught on every visit but during 2015-16 was rarely trapped or recorded.

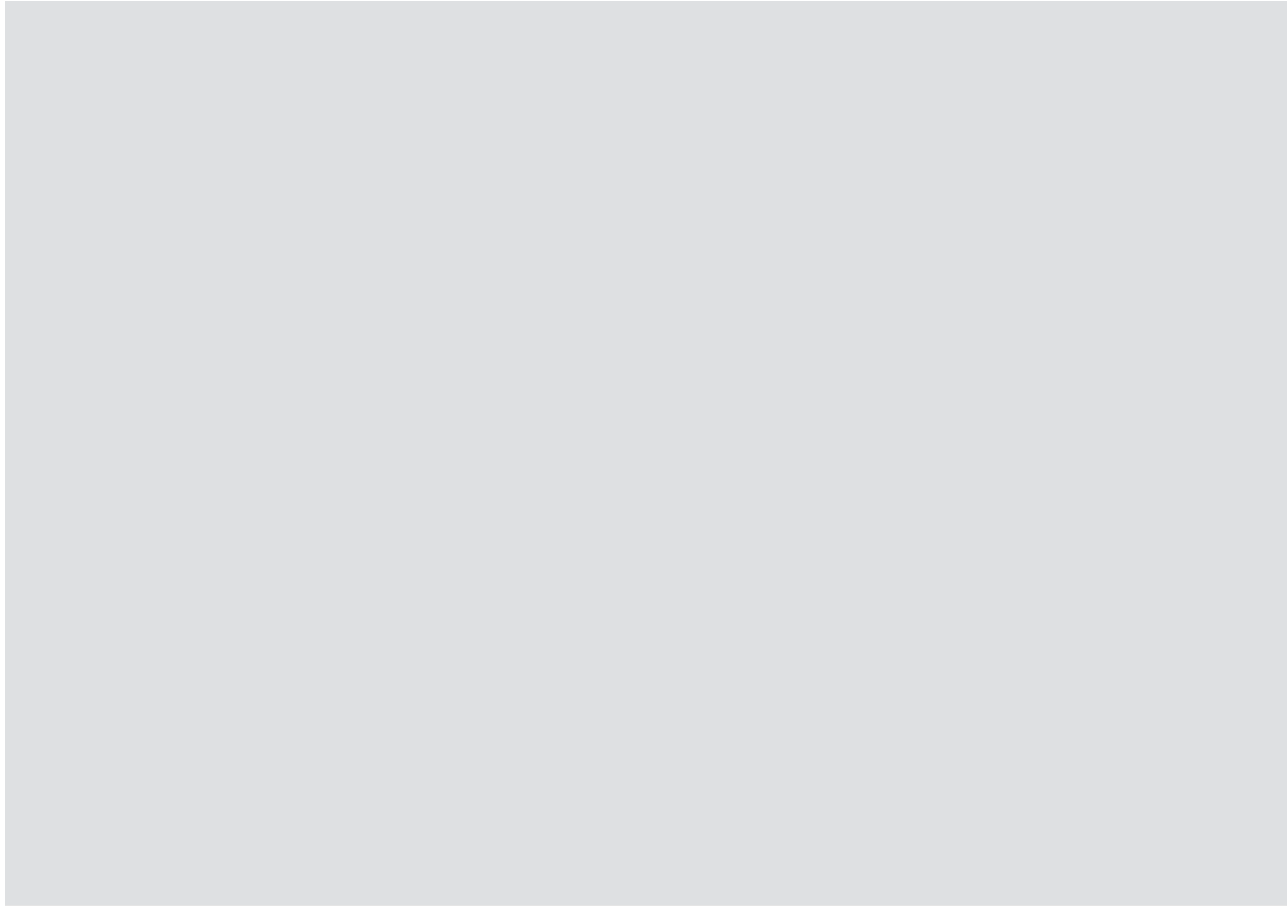
This is a major problem! Not only has this site seen a drastic fall in diversity during the late 20th century due to grazing and the introduction of feral animals it is now faced with a disastrous two-pronged problem. Bird diversity is being reduced by the extremely aggressive Bell Miner colony and 'Bell Miner associated eucalyptus dieback' is causing the defoliation and death of many of the trees and so reducing other birds' feeding and nesting resources. It has been noted that many species, although in decline, are still present in small numbers at the site and in adjacent bushland so all is not lost.

National Parks and Wildlife, in conjunction with some members of our banding group, is at present developing a management program to reduce the impact of this Bell Miner invasion and hopefully this will allow other species to recolonise this remarkable site.

Egan, K.H., Farrell, J.R. and Pepper-Edwards, D.L. (1997). Historical and seasonal changes in the community of forest birds at Longneck Lagoon Nature Reserve, Scheyville, New South Wales. *Corella* 21: 1–16.
 Farrell, J.R., Hardy, J.W., McKay, D. and Gover, K. (2012). Banding Report No. 1 Agnes Banks Nature Reserve, New South Wales. *Corella* 36: 55–56. (Abridged version). Full Report: <http://www.absa.asn.au/publication-category/aactt-full-bandings-reports/>
 Farrell, J.R., Hardy, J.W., McKay, D., Gover, K. and Pepper-Edwards, D.L. (2015). Banding Report No. 4 Nurragingy Reserve, New South Wales. *Corella* 39: 93-95 (Abridged version). Full Report: <http://www.absa.asn.au/publication-category/aactt-full-bandings-reports/>
 Farrell, J., Hardy, J. and Smith, P. (in press). An historical snapshot of avian assemblages occupying three threatened forest and woodland communities within Scheyville National Park, New South Wales. *Corella*
 Mowat, E., Farrell, J. R., Hardy, J. W., McKay, D. and Gover, K. (2017). Banding Report No. 5. Prospect Nature Reserve, New South Wales. b: 48–52. (Abridged version). Full Report: <http://www.absa.asn.au/publication-category/aactt-full-bandings-reports/>

John Farrell and Jeff Hardy

Note: We handed over coordination of this site and operation of the Cumberland Plain Project to Tony Hunt as from 1 July 2017.



This email was sent to steinbod@pnc.com.au

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

The Australian Bird Study Association Inc. · PO Box 1867 · Penrith BC, New South Wales 2751 · Australia

