

Birds and Gardens and Birdwatching



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Hunter Bird
Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

Birds and Gardens and Birdwatching

- What do birdwatchers do?
- How? Where? Why?
- Gardens for birds
- Some birds of the Wyong district
 - Postcode 2259: 430 species
- Some FAQs
- Q & A



Eastern Spinebill



Grey Butcherbird



Eastern Rosella

What do birdwatchers do?

Objectives of Hunter Bird Observers Club

- Encourage birdwatching as a leisure-time activity
- Encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian native birds and their habitat

Leisure Activities

- Individual and group /Club outings and camps to known and new locations
- Birdwatching route brochures
- Photography
- Sharing the pleasure with others (e.g. internet, Club meetings)
- Sometimes ... an element of competition

Study and Conservation

- Regular surveys at key locations
- Analyse data and share with stakeholders
- Identify threats and work with stakeholders to resolve them



Lake Macquarie birding routes

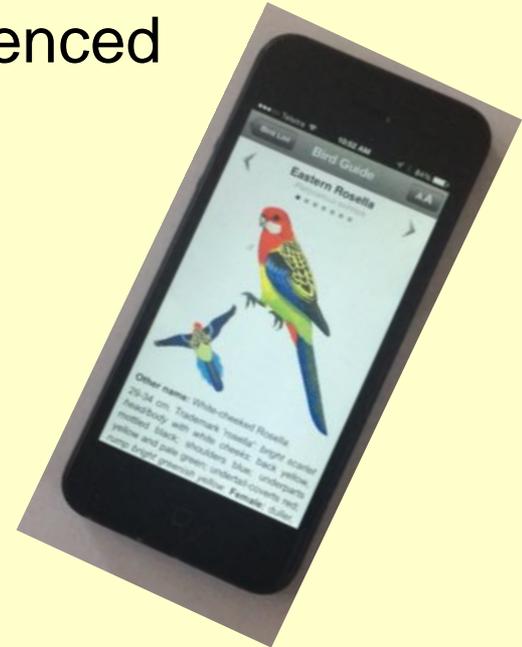
What equipment is needed?

- A pair of binoculars
- A notebook and pen/pencil
- Good shoes



Optional extras

- A field guide or an app (or an experienced birdwatcher for company)
 - Differentiating between species takes time to learn
 - Learning the calls of birds takes even longer
- A camera
- A telescope and tripod (mainly for shorebirds)



How? Where? Why?

- **Fast or slow recce of an area:**
 - A “casual” stroll (with long looks at the birds found), or
 - A focussed survey (short looks; some birds only from their call)
- **Anywhere (and everywhere)**
 - Bushland, rainforests, mudflats, at sea,
 - At home, private properties, national parks, roadsides, ...
- **Birds offer something for everybody**
 - Enjoying their beauty and/or personality and/or behaviour
 - Communing with nature
 - Visiting new areas
 - Bird clubs: introduce a social aspect
 - For many ... it is a non-invasive form of hunting!

HBOC activities: outings and camps

- 2 x half-day outings per month
- Camp-outs on long weekends
- Regular surveys of important areas



HBOC activities: monthly meetings

- Guest speaker
- “Bird of the Evening”
- Observations
 - What people have been seeing recently
- Supper
 - With much talking about birds!



HBOC activities: community events

- **Education & promotion**
 - For birds and for birdwatching
 - Display stalls at community functions, etc
 - Talks to the community
- **HBOC Grants for research projects** (e.g. PhD projects)



What makes a good bird garden?

- **Mature indigenous trees**
 - Nesting sites (including hollows)
 - Night roosts
 - Flowers for nectar
 - Insects (on leaves, bark, blossom)
- **Middle and ground level shrubs**
 - Thick under-storey of ferns, tall grasses and shrubs from 0-2m height
 - Security for small birds e.g. thornbills and fairy-wrens
- **“Open Woodland” is the natural habitat of Noisy Miners and Magpies**



Aust. King-Parrot



Superb Fairy-wren



Noisy Miner

What makes a good bird garden?

- **Permanent water supply**

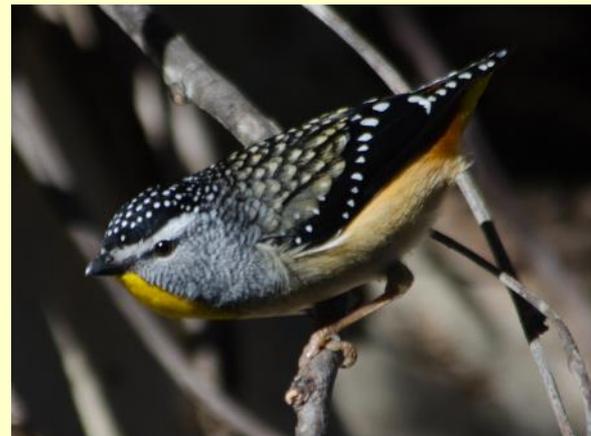
- Bird bath(s) do not need to be fancy but they do need to be kept filled
- Positioned such that small birds can quickly flee to nearby cover. Out of the reach of cats!
- Dappled shade. Having a branch nearby also helps
- Ponds: Place a branch in the water and/or a large rock



Eastern Yellow Robin

- **Proximity to more good habitat**

- It helps to be near a patch of natural bushland
- Encourage your neighbours to co-create habitat
- Encourage your Council to co-create habitat



Spotted
Pardalote

Some useful plants

- **Shelter for small birds** (scrubwrens, fairy-wrens, thornbills)
 - Prickly dense shrubs (hakea, acacia, sweet bursaria, burgan, leptospermum)
- **Shelter for bigger birds** (magpies, owls, parrots, ...)
 - Tall trees (eucalypts, casuarina, banksia, acacia)
- **Insect hosts** (robins, wrens, treecreepers, ...)
 - Acacia, bursaria, correa, hardenbergia, melaleuca



Brown Thornbill



Eastern
Whipbird

Some useful plants



Scaly-breasted Lorikeet

- **Nectar** (honeyeaters, lorikeets)
 - Eucalypts, correas, epacris, grevilleas, mistletoes, xanthorrhoea
- **Seeds** (cockatoos, finches, pigeons)
 - Acacia, casuarina, native grasses, sedges
- **Multi-purpose**
 - Acacia, banksia, eucalypts, grevillea, hakea, leptospermum, melaleuca



Rainbow Lorikeet



Red-browed Finch

Some FAQs

- **Should I feed birds?**

- Many people enjoy doing it ... but:
- Birds can become over-reliant on an artificial food source
- Natural diversity can be affected
- Large clusters of birds helps spread disease
- Feeding stations become a target for cats, foxes, birds of prey
- It's healthier to create bird habitat via a garden



Galah

- **Snail baits and other garden poisons?**

- Avoiding their use can increase the numbers of insects available to birds

Some FAQs

- **Keeping birds away from fruit trees?**
 - Try hanging a hawk shape above the tree
 - Install netting (or a cage)
 - Pick your fruit early
- **What do I do with sick or baby birds?**
 - Leave baby birds where you find them (or thereabouts)
 - If necessary, move them out of reach of cats
 - Their parents will usually continue to feed them.
 - Sick or injured birds: call your local WIRES/NATF agent
 - It's very hard for them to deal with baby birds



Silvereye



Magpie-lark

Some FAQs

- **Birds flying into windows?**
 - Attaching hawk shapes can help
 - Don't clean your windows!
 - Place screening plants in front of the flight path
- **Should I put up a nest box?**
 - Yes ...
 - Different species need different dimensions
 - Face it away from prevailing winds (north-east, out of the midday sun)
 - Place tree guards on branches near the nest box
 - They require regular maintenance
 - Be prepared to deal with invaders (e.g. bees, possums, Starlings, Common Mynas)



Crested Pigeon



Common Myna

How to find out more

Birds

www.hboc.org.au

www.birdingnsw.org.au

www.birdlife.org.au

Birds and Gardens

www.birdsinbackyards.net

www.floraforfauna.com.au



White-cheeked Honeyeater

Books

Birds In Your Garden (Ellen McCulloch, Hyland House Publishing)

The Australian Bird-Garden: Creating Havens for Native Birds (Graham Pizzey, Harper Collins)

Any questions?