

The Belongil Estuary Bird and Field Report – Jan Olley

Report: N08

Date: 01/12/04

Time of visit: 9.00 to 1300hrs

Dear Bird Buddies

I missed getting a report out for last week's visit, so this is a two in one report as well as comments on Xmas parties and project titles etc. Catherine, I was a little late on Thursday, sorry if you missed me. I will not be there this Thursday 9th though, but I will be there on the 16th if its not raining. Meet you between 8.30 and 9am for 3-4 hours.

Celebrations for me this week, as I saw the Little Terns at Belongil for the first time! About 60 of them, sitting at the waters edge and just as Paul described, pretty little things with wrap-around sun glasses. They fly off mostly moving as one unit, like a wave. No yellow beaks sighted (yellow beaks indicate breeding). They totally ignored the area behind the fence which was especially created for them even though they were constantly disturbed by beach goers. Some were out feeding.

Three dogs on the beach this week, two last week which were on leads, this week none were on leads, one coming from Byron end the rest from Sunrise.

Is it possible to close off the first exit from the Sunrise walking track? It seems people, who are not familiar with the Estuary, exit the track that takes them right through the fenced area. If it was closed they would exit on the outside of the fence.

Last week I spotted a Beach Stone-curlew in the sand dunes (confirmed by Paul in the afternoon) but didn't see it this week. The Golden Plovers appear to have adopted Belongil estuary as their preferred summer residence. Each week there has constantly been between 18-28 birds either feeding on the sand flat or resting in the dunes. These birds breed in Siberia and Alaska and hopefully we'll see them in their spectacular breeding colours before they leave in March or April.

Straying from the usual format – some BB business

Meeting 8th - No, I cannot be there so I apologise

Xmas Party 12th – Yes, I can be there wherever you decide – no preference.

Reid's DVD – Yes the library will accept the DVD's. The procedure is for someone to drop off three copies (ie one for Byron, Brunswick and Mullum if that is our preference) at either one of the libraries. The copies will then be sent to the master library in Goonellabah for cataloguing and then they will be forwarded to the nominated libraries and be available for loan.

Project Name – I like Kathleen's idea – but you also probably could say it's the BBB's Habitat Protection Strategy. (I'm guessing your talking about the BBB's activities) Adit; I also had an opportunity to speak to the Marine Park people a couple of weeks ago and they would be interested in putting up appropriate information signage on wader birds. I'll talk to them again if you think it's a good idea -That's if they don't get buried in Recreational Fisherman's submissions.

Marine Park submission - Did we get one in, as decided at last meeting?

The Echo ad – A good idea but I see this as a one off and probably would like to see something available like a brochure or Fact Sheet that explains the value and purpose of our strategy and that would be available in outlets all year. Ballina Shire and Tweed Shires have newly released bird trail brochures, something like this maybe

08-Report 01-12-04

beneficial especially if it is linking other bird sites in the Shire. On the negative it may also increase tourist numbers; at least they wouldn't have dogs. It's just another thought for the pot.

Bird Survey Sheets – from last meeting I said I'd look at a record sheet for recording bird sightings and I'd be keeping annual records. Due to different methods and reasons for keeping records, it's not so easy, especially when we (BBB) want to keep daily records. Monthly records are much easier. Anyway find attached two sheets of similar design, designed in EXCEL. One has a list of birds that you may see at the Estuary with a date column and next to it a column for details. If you don't want to get into details you could change the details column to a date column. The other is a blank sheet to use as you want and fill in your own birds or it can be used as an extra sheet. Feed back welcome or just start using it. You can send me your records on line or hand them to me at a meeting.

Here's my list of birds for 25th Nov. and 2nd Dec. 2004.

Beach

Seagulls

Crested Terns 86(25th) x 13 (3-4 inside fence)

Common Terns 18 (25th) x 15

Little Terns x 60

Mouth of Creek

Red-capped Plovers x 6 (both weeks) (includes two outside fence but fly into fenced area when disturbed)

Pacific-golden Plover x 18 (both weeks)

Common Sandpiper x 5 (25th) -10

Pelican x 1(both weeks)

Common Greenshank x 1 (both weeks)

Pied Oystercatchers x 3 (25th) – 2

Ruddy Turnstone x 1 (25th)

Sharp-tail Sandpiper x 6 (25th) - 5

White-faced Heron x 1

Gull-billed Tern

Beach Stone-curlew x 1 (25th)

Rainbow Beeeater x 1 (still visiting nest (both weeks))

Flying Over

Brahminy Kite 1 (25th) x 2

Welcome Swallow (both weeks)

Fairy Martin

Osprey x1 (25th)

Whistling Kite (25th)

Black Duck

Maned Duck

White-throated Needletail

Inner Creek

Black Cormorant

Pied Cormorants

Little Pied Cormorant x 1

Great Egret x 1

Sharp-tail Sandpiper x 5

Australian Darter

Surrounding Bush

(25th) Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Currawong, Torresian Crow.

(both weeks) Brush Wattlebird, Lewin's Honeyeater, Whipbird, Varied Triller,

(2nd) Silvereye, Sacred Kingfisher, Rufous Whistler

Regards Jan



Bar-tailed Godwit feeds in the inner creek