

The Belongil Estuary Bird and Field Report – Jan Olley

Report No19

Date 12/5/05

Time of Visit 9.30am to 12.30pm

Dear Bird Buddies,

For the first time in months the Australasian Gannet can be seen feeding just off the beach. They move from the south and across from New Zealand to spend the winter months on this part of the coast. I love watching these birds as they glide and dive between the waves.

Only three Red-capped Plovers sighted at the water edge on Thursday last week but as it was wet and windy the others may have been huddled in a sand groove somewhere. This week, fine and sunny with a slight SW wind, there were little plovers running everywhere, making counting difficult. There were a couple of Lesser Sand-Plovers, at least 5 Double-banded Plovers and 16 Red-capped Plovers. The Double-banded Plovers visit our shores during the winter from NZ, where they breed. The three on the beach this morning were juveniles and one still retained faint breeding colours.

The Eastern Spinebill is back in town, and it's the first time I've seen them in the Belongil riparian strip. They spend the winter on the coast, down from the mountains. Also not seen in months was the Sacred Kingfisher, the bush was ringing with their constant calling and they are probably going north on their winter migration or maybe they will hang around Byron.

Last week the creek was running out at a great rate of knots, this week the mouth has closed off and the water backing up in the creek covering all the sand and mud bars. No resting-place for the waders but 60 Little Black Cormorants, operating as a fishing unit, were taking advantage of the fish trapped in the deepening waters.

Only dog footprints to report on the beach last week, but not so this week. I even had an opportunity to speak to a dog owner and was promptly told me that, yes, she did know it was a no-dog beach.

List of birds for 12th and 19th May 2005

Mouth of Creek and Beach

Red-capped Plovers x 16

Double-banded Plovers x 5

Lesser Sand Plover x 2

Crested Terns x 35

Common Tern x 1

Willy Wagtail

Seagulls

Osprey (I watched it catch a high mullet, so big it almost couldn't fly.)

Black Cormorants x 60,

Masked Lapwing x 1

Pelican x 8

Black-winged Stilt x 6

Little Egret

Flying Over

Tree Martins, Rainbow Lorikeets, Australasian Gannet, Welcome Swallows

Inner Creek – Lots of exposed sand/mud 12th – none on the 19th

Pied Oystercatchers x 2

Greenshank x 1

Great Egret, Australian White Ibis, Pied Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant

Striated Heron

Surrounding Bush

Lewin's Honeyeater, Grey Fantail, Whipbird, Variegated Wren, Silvereyes, Mistletoebird, Spangled Drongo, White-headed Pigeon, Eastern Spinebill, Sacred Kingfisher, Little Wattle Bird, Brown Honeyeater.

Regards Jan



A grey day at Belongil -

Sacred Kingfisher waits for a feed