



BYRON BIRD BUDDIES

ANNUAL REPORT October 2013 – September 2014



Byron Bird Buddies (BBB) is a small, self-funded community education and conservation group focusing on the preservation of habitat for resident and migratory shorebird roosting, breeding and feeding areas. BBB's objective is to actively advocate for the conservation of bird habitat and to educate the community on the needs of all birds on the north coast of NSW.

In 2014 BBB has taken a break from the normal programming that we have pursued in previous years.

This is for various reasons and is in part due to the intensity of our work in previous years, which is difficult to maintain, and to health and family reasons. In May this year we also mourned the death of former BBB member Heather Harford after a long illness. Heather was a passionate advocate for bird conservation, and in short, gave it her all. We miss her passion dearly. In summary, in 2013/14 BBB conducted 28 monitoring events, 8 public presentations to various organisations and forums, conducted 2 sunset 'wine and cheese' walks at the West Byron Wetlands, made submissions on the effects of residential development on bird habitat, maintained our website and Twitter account with bird news from around the world, attended one conference which included a presentation by BBB, and participated in numerous local and regional agency meetings on bird and habitat conservation.

BBB maintains an up-to-date website at www.byronbirdbuddies.com.au and at Twitter:

twitter.com/BirdByron

BBB is an umbrella group of Brunswick Valley Landcare.



Recognition

BBB was recognised in this year's Byron Shire Council Australia Day Awards, as the winner of the Environmental Volunteer Group section. BBB thanked the many groups and individuals who support our work or benefit from it. BBB is proud of the significant quality and amount of resources it produces and projects it undertakes on behalf of our immediate and wider north coast community, and recognition for this work is much appreciated by BBB members.



Conservation

By working with a range of agencies and organisations, BBB aims to achieve a broader and more consistent range of conservation outcomes for shorebirds, waterbirds and bush birds across the north coast. During the past 12 months BBB has worked with the following groups:

- **Tweed Council and BirdLife Northern Rivers** – BBB has presented Tweed Council with the *Wild About Birds* program and delivered the first stage of a modified Wild About Birds schools program to Fingal Head Primary School.



Following the "Wild About Birds" presentation and under the guidance of Tweed Project Officer, Jude Mason, Fingal Head School celebrates "Saving our Beach-nesting Birds" where the students and all involved with the program (including BBB) were presented with "Certificates of Appreciation" from Tweed Shire Council

- **BirdLife Australia** – BBB undertakes the 2020 shorebird monitoring, information which is then uploaded into the national shorebird database, providing vital information for decision makers.
- **Belongil Shorebird Stakeholder Group** – a platform for driving the Belongil Estuary Seabird and Shorebird Management Plan and consisting of Byron Shire Council (BSC), Marine Parks Authority (MPA) and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).
- **Regional Shorebird Committee** – a platform for a consistent management of shorebirds, their habitat and threats in the Northern Rivers Area from Clarence River north to the Tweed River. The committee is chaired by NPWS and consists of community groups, NPWS rangers, and representatives from the MPA, Byron, Ballina, Tweed, Richmond Valley and Clarence Valley Shire Councils, Seabird Rescue and WetlandCare Australia, and shares information and development strategies on the on-going protection and monitoring of shorebird breeding areas at the Ballina, Tweed and Clarence estuaries, Flat Rock, Tallow Beach, Belongil Estuary, Tyagarah and Marshalls Creek/Brunswick River estuary.
- **National Parks and Wildlife Service (Byron Area)** – BBB member, Isabel Borelli is also a member of Byron Coast Area Management Committee providing local input into conservation issues and working with the Arakwal Community to conserve and educate the local community on the importance of Country.
- **National Parks and Wildlife Service (Richmond Valley Area)** – BBB provided funding for signage for the endangered coastal Emu in the Bungawalbin National Park and Yarringully Nature Reserve, following a request by NPWS for urgent assistance to provide funds for roadside signage in response to the sighting of newly hatched emu chicks.



- **Submissions** – BBB tabled a submission to NSW Department of Planning and Environment on the impacts of planning decisions made in relation to the proposed West Byron Development, on bird habitat.
- **Representation on Committees** – BBB members Jan Olley and Isabel Borrelli continue to sit on a variety of boards and committees concerned with raising the profile of wildlife habitat and sustainability needs across the region and in developing consistent strategies:
 - Regional Shorebird Management Committee
 - Byron Coast NPWS Committee of Management
 - Gondwana Rainforest World Heritage Community Advisory Committee
 - National Parks of NSW – Northern Rivers Region Community Advisory Committee
 - Ballina 2020 Shorebird Monitoring Group
 - BSC Koala Plan of Management Project Reference Group
 - Beach-nesting Birds on Tweed Coast Public Lands Committee

Bird Monitoring

BBB continues to undertake paid and voluntary monitoring and reporting activities on behalf of organisations.

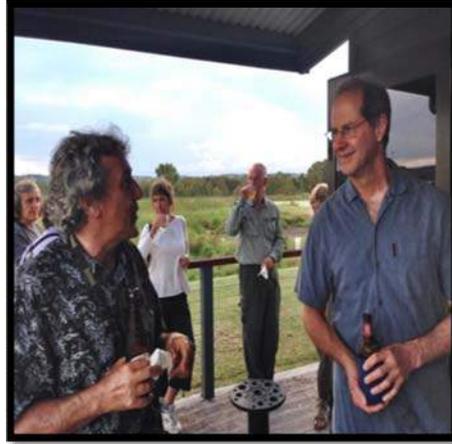
- Byron Shire Council – West Byron Wetlands and Valances Road STP- with the 2013 report completed.
 - Wetland Care Australia – Brunswick Heads Saltmarsh.
 - Birdlife Australia Shorebird 2020 – undertake voluntary monthly counts of shorebirds in five different locations.
- **Byron Eco Tours** – a mutually beneficial partnership between Byron Eco Tours and BBB enables the local tour operator (an environmental scientist) to collect bird species numbers which are then handed to BBB for entry into our database, thus amalgamating this data with other data we collect, providing a whole-of-river/estuary picture of bird populations.
 - **Bird Life Australia** – BBB provides critical information on bird numbers and, habitat use and condition, for use both within the region and by avian peak bodies. BBB also undertakes voluntary monitoring activities where information is collated and reported to Bird Life Australia as part of an Australia-wide Atlassing program. BBB also conducts free guided bird monitoring walks where participants learn how to monitor and classify birds.



BBB continues to monitor and support the protection of threatened species such as the Beach Stone-curlew

Community education

BBB continues to be committed to an on-going community education program which seeks to educate the wider community on the beautiful birds which inhabit the Northern Rivers region, as well as engaging people in conservation activities either in their own backyards or beyond. Although BBB is a very small group of passionate volunteers, each year a comprehensive community education strategy is developed which can be achieved within our limited resources and, mostly, with little or no funding. In 2013/14 we introduced a new program which aims to open up the Byron Wetlands to bird lovers at dusk. Combined with light refreshments and cheese, this event has proved very popular, most particularly because of the variety of birds which can be seen at these 'after hours' times.



Cheese and light refreshments at the Wetlands

- **Website and Twitter** – BBB continues to promote a range of environmental events and talks on our website. The Twitter account is a quick method of providing bird lovers with snippets of bird news from around the world.
- **Guided bird walks and Public Talks** – BBB has led over 30 hours of free guided bird walks and talks during 2013/14. This provides an opportunity to promote biodiversity and conservation values for all fauna.



Raising funds at the Byron Markets

- **Signage** – Each year, BBB prepares a signage strategy to ensure that adequate information is provided in key bird breeding and feeding areas which are also high human impact areas during the migratory shorebird season.

Conclusion

Last year, from our monitoring results, we have determined that bird diversity at Byron Wetlands and Vallances Road sites are generally consistent with the previous year's results and from the breeding grounds of the Belongil and Brunswick Estuaries one beach Stone-curlew and seven Pied Oystercatcher chicks fledged, which is a fantastic result. One Pied Oystercatcher nest, at Belongil, was lost because of human disturbance.

BBB would like to thank all members and friends who participate in our projects and support our efforts.