

REDHEAD VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

NO.41 AUGUST-OCTOBER 2023

SPRING TIDE

BY NIGEL WILLIAMS

Brother Sun drifts to the south,
while Sister Moon rides north.
Our planet spins on by God's hand,
while science rides the surf.
Our seasons do not change accord
the calendar nor clock.
But underneath the steady hand of
Mother Nature's watch.
Minute by minute days grow
longer, rolling into spring.
Birds begin to change the tunes, of
morning songs they sing.

Tiny insects Midge and Mozzy,
begin to make a show.
While snapping Honey Eaters, find
their protein ere they go.
Echidna puggles spike about and rip,
rip up the earth.
Sniffing ant and termite out and with
a long lounge slurp.
Watch out upon the walking trail,
Lazy Jacky lizard's out.
Basking in the warming sun,
springtime is here no doubt.

Western winds a whistling cold, drift
round to south and east.
Little birds now nesting, carry small
twigs in their beak.
Sea Eagle talons clutch whole branches,
snapping from tall trees.
To build a nest six feet across, on which
she rests in ease.
Gannet dives into the sea, while Humpback
whale drifts by.
North she goes to warm her calf, where
Albatross doth fly.

Tailor fish are on the run, while cooler seas suit squid.
Crocus Jonquil daffodil, lift blooms from where they hid.
Set foot if you're brave enough, upon the native trail.
There you'll find our inch long ants who'll make you jump
and wail.
Please don't hurt them with your big boots, crushing on
their skulls.
Your fault if you get bit, juice of Bracken Fern the
stinging dulls.

White Rice flower leads the way
of course, Tea Tree soon to
wallow.
Coastal Wattle blooms sun gold,
then floral rainbows follow.
Cascades red, and orange, yellow,
blue, purple, violet bright.
Fill the springtime fragrant air,
from within a heart of green
delight.
Little child may pick a flower and
give it up for mum.
But please don't pick them all, for
the flower it is not fun.

When all begin to drily fade and form
next season's seed.
Cicada starts to sing his song and to his
girlfriend plead.
Then Flannel flower rises up and lifts
her long-lived head.
As once again our lady Spring, will rest
and slumber in her garden bed.



*Nature's abundance
right on your doorstep*

I'm sure you know that Redhead is a special place full of amazing biodiversity. In minutes you can swim or surf in the ocean, climb hills to the bluff to marvel at the breaching whales, visit ducks at the pond, spy a bird or two in the Awabakal reserve, find solace to fish on Shelly beach, or sit with the saltbush on the sand dunes. We really are blessed that we can be right in there with nature, sand between our toes, salt spray in our hair, dirt under our fingernails.

This edition is dedicated to Redhead's beautiful natural wonders. May we be grateful for the incredible experiences they offer us and look after them for many years to come.

This issue includes:

- A celebratory poem about the sights, sounds and smells of spring
- Tips for bird spotting around Redhead
- The opening of the pump track
- Insight into local nature artist Dianne & her art class
- A fun kid's binocular craft activity
- Information about ways you can make your backyard bee friendly

A heartfelt thank you must go to the many local contributors to this edition. Your deep connection to nature is a pleasure to share.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

BY ISOBEL HUBBARD
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM STONE

Between October 16th and 22nd we're all invited to take part in **Birdlife Australia's Aussie Bird Count**. Once you have downloaded the app you record all the birds you see for just twenty minutes. From surveys like this, we can learn more about what birds live, visit and migrate through our area.

Even though we're city dwellers, we share our coastal village with so many varieties of birds. Much like us, some are locals, and some are frequent and/or seasonal visitors. Here are a few birds I've watched and a few you might be lucky to spot:



*Juvenile Spotted
Harrier*

If it hadn't been for Jim (bird photographer), I would never have known that this exquisitely beautiful bird of prey is a **Juvenile Spotted Harrier**.

Using Redhead as its eatery, it flew sorties across our village

numerous mornings and afternoons; practicing and refining its foraging skills. We knew when it was visiting by the frenetic activity and noise as other birds fearlessly defended their eggs and chicks from attack. Incredible to watch!




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Redhead Locals

Our noisiest locals are the **Plovers** (Masked Lapwing) and **Noisy Miners**. Many Redhead streets have at least one resident pair of plovers. Because they nest on the ground, they're vulnerable to attack from cats and foxes; and day or night, they'll defend by making lots of noise! They rarely attack because they risk breaking their wings. The Noisy Miners, as their name implies, use the same tactic; and when they recruit all their relatives, they're impossible to miss! If you hear Noisy Miners, Plovers, **Magpies**, **Currawongs** and whoever else making lots of noise, it's always worth taking a look; because, chances are, they're defending their family from snakes, cats or birds of prey.

Other, less noisy locals, include the **Fairy Wrens**, **Eastern Spinebills**, **White-faced Herons**, **Red-browed Finches**, **Dusky Moorhens** and **White-bellied Sea Eagles**! All these birds can be spotted near and around the boardwalk. With most birds, recognising their calls is useful, as it increases your chance of seeing them. For example, when on the boardwalk, you'll certainly hear Fairy Wrens; and, if you stay still for a little while, you'll eventually see them; and, if you hear the strange "bark" of the White-faced Heron, chances are you'll see it fly gracefully past.



Variegated Fairy Wren

One local, who sometimes lives near the boardwalk, loves blue; a particular type of blue! The **Satin Bower** bird's name refers to the bowers that the shiny, blue-black male birds, build. These special constructions are artfully decorated with blue objects, like pegs, biros or milk-bottle lids. If you see a collection of blue things on the ground and close to an exquisitely built, upside-down archway, then you've most certainly found a Bower bird's bower. Although not a nest, the male bird is very particular about how it looks, because, you see, if his ladies don't like his bower, then they won't like him! That's why he takes time, skill and effort in building and maintaining his bower. So please, if you see one, leave well alone!



White-faced Heron



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

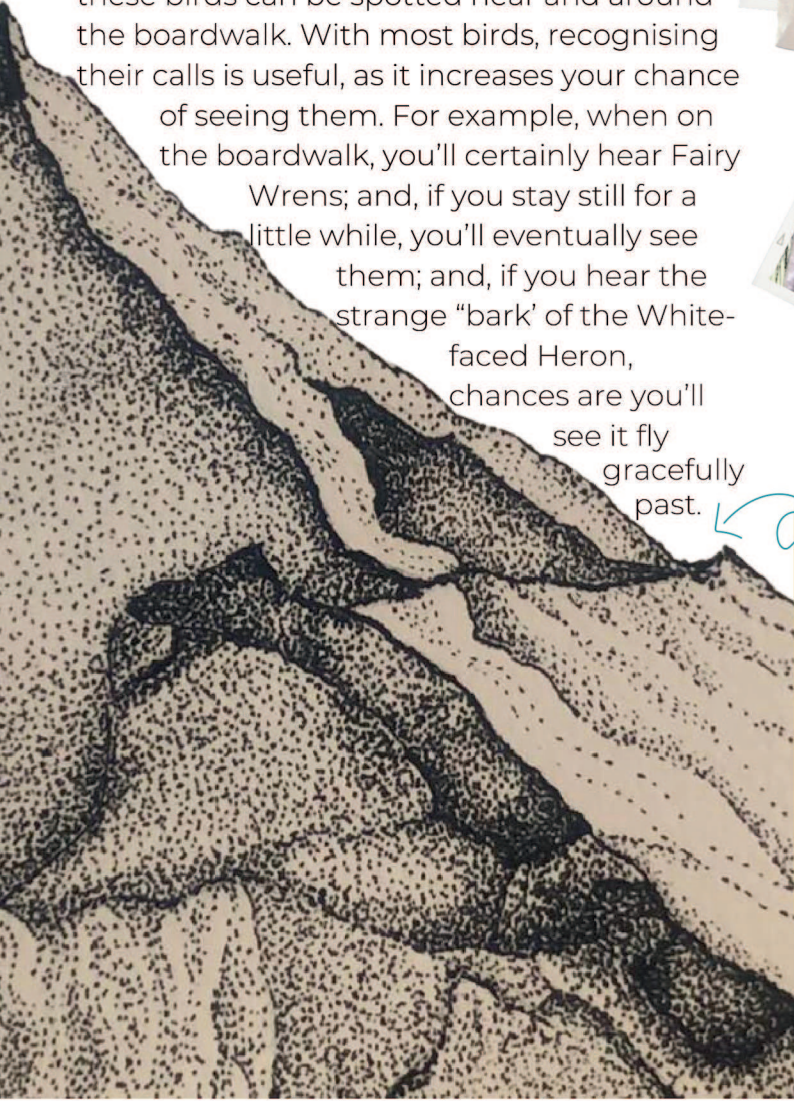
Frequent or Seasonal Visitors

Perhaps our most frequent visitors are the parrots. This year, a family of **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos**, with their plaintive calls, generously pruned the Banksia at our back fence, leaving nature's detritus all over our campervan roof! They have such a slow, relaxed flight. Others include **Yellow-crested White Cockatoos**, **Galahs**, **Eastern Rosellas**, **Scaly-breasted Lorikeets** and the always-in-a-hurry **Rainbow Lorikeets**! Funny really – Black Cockatoos seem so chilled and laid-back, whereas Lorikeets seem so anxiously rushing to get wherever it is they're going!

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dianne Taylor is drawn to nature and the patterns in the natural environment.

She loves to draw scientific illustrations using pen and ink to show the colours and intricacies of her subjects.



The calls of two seasonal visitors herald spring, and both are imposters! It's not that they don't belong here, it's what they do when they get here! They're both cuckoos – birds that lay their strategically camouflaged eggs in the nests of other birds, and then fly away, leaving others to do the parenting! The calls of the **Pacific Koels** and **Channel-billed Cuckoos** don't sound like the word "cuckoo", but they can be annoyingly loud, especially first thing in the morning! There are other, much quieter seasonally migrating visitors, for example, the **Needletails** and **Shearwaters**. They're not so much visiting, as flying by, on the way to their preferred destinations. As David Attenborough observed, by doing this, some of our migratory visitors manage to experience summer all year round.



Our Responsibility

It's a special privilege living in Redhead, but with privilege comes responsibility. As custodians of our homes and gardens, it's important we're considerate of the birds in Redhead. For example, (as Jim posted when the Harrier was visiting,) it's a reminder to not use poisons around our properties. Let's do our best to ensure that today's birds are still around for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

*Bird Life Australia's
Aussie Bird Count*

16-22 October

Visit the website
to find
instructions and
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app to take part.



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Make your own bird counting binoculars

You'll need:

- two recycled toilet rolls
- glue or a stapler
- scissors
- hole punch
- string/yarn/wool
- decorations of your choice e.g. stickers, paint, wool, pom poms, leaves, dried flowers. Anything goes!



KIDS CRAFT

Follow the steps:

1. Line your toilet rolls up alongside each other with the long edges touching.
2. Glue or staple the long edges together.
3. Using your hole punch, punch one hole on the outside edge of each toilet roll at around the same spot. It is best to do this towards one end of each roll.
4. Measure a piece of string, yarn or wool around your neck to where you'd like the binoculars to sit on your chest. Make sure to leave an extra 4 inches to allow for tying. Cut!
5. Loop each end of the strings through your punched holes and tie, so now your string is attached to your binoculars.
6. Decorate and go bird counting!!



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REDHEAD PUMP TRACK IS PUMPING

BY LINDSAY BLACK

Even before the construction fencing had been removed, local kids were enjoying first rides on the bike track which was finished by the start of the July school holidays and opened by our Mayor, Kay Fraser, on the following Saturday. The ribbon was cut and the kids got pumping. They are there from dawn till dark, some riding from Belmont and Adamstown to have a go. It is a wonderful community facility to have in our village.

Ms Fraser thanked Councillors and staff involved in building the bike track, but we in Redhead should also specially thank Redhead residents Dave Doggett, Craig Blatchford and Dianna King, members of the "Bike Track Committee", who took up the cause of young



Mayor Kay Fraser and bike riders at the bike track opening

local bike riders in 2020 COVID, after Council rangers had persisted in bulldozing their informal bike track in the bush at the end of Cain Street.

It was the committee's ongoing commitment and strong advocacy for a local bike track, including community meetings and protests over many months, that ultimately led to Council's decision to build the bike track next to the Beach carpark in Beach Road.

ART FOR ALL

BY REBECCA HEATH

If you've never practiced art before, it can be daunting. You might have thoughts like, "I'm not creative enough" or "I don't have the right equipment". For Dianne Taylor, artist and teacher of the Tuesday Art Class running at Sunny Souled (Scout Hall), this is exactly the problem she seeks to tackle.

Di's class is all about giving people the freedom to express themselves in a supportive environment where no experience is needed. For her, the joy comes in building the confidence of those who come. She invites her members to have a go at practicing with various mediums including watercolours, pencils, inks and gouache. As well as play around with shading, shapes and using colours, creating a "wonderful, peaceful and therapeutic past time" says Mary-Jane Polson.

A fine line and watercolour specialist, Di believes creativity is not about the outcome but the process and her way of guiding her members is what keeps them coming back. According to one group member Diane-

"It came at a really hard time in my personal life last year. When I started I had no real art skills at all but Di, with her patience and encouragement, got me to relax and just enjoy the experience."

What goes around comes around for Di, who is very much inspired by the natural world of Redhead and her fellow artists. Her artwork featured on pages 2 and 3 is based on a photograph taken by John Berthold, who was her third grade primary school teacher and then one of her lecturers at teachers college. Roslyn, one of her members, taught Di at Sunday School at the Redhead Presbyterian Church. Di returned the favour by teaching Ros' daughter at Charlestown South Primary School. While Ros' 8 year old granddaughter can't wait for her art themed birthday party planned to be run by Di.

Most of all, Di's class is about friendship, connection and welcoming one and all. Her class runs on a **Tuesday 9.30-11.30am @ Sunny Souled**. Just turn up!



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HOW TO MAKE YOUR GARDEN NATIVE BEE FRIENDLY

BY BEN FITZPATRICK

Go native for pest control

Most of our native bees are 'generalist' foragers, which means they will collect pollen and nectar from a variety of flowers. However, it is best to incorporate a mix of native plants into your garden. Native plants not only attract bees, they attract other beneficial insects such as predators and parasitoids who hunt, eat or lay their eggs inside pest insects such as aphids and caterpillars. The balance between beneficial and pest insects is delicate, but if we provide the ideal habitat garden for the beneficial insect, the balance will swing more toward controlling the pests.



Plant in patches

Some native bees have evolved so closely with their host-plant that they emerge from their nest at the same time of year that the flowers open. These native bees have specialised characteristics to help them better access the pollen and nectar, while pollinating the flower. Such bees include the Persoonia bee, a species of Leioproctus, and it's almost guaranteed to be found on Persoonia flowers. Plant in patches or 'swathes', at least 1 metre across. Native bees are more attracted to large areas of flowering plants and will cross pollinate flowers within the same species, thus producing seed. These can be collected and used to propagate more plants.



Add some exotic plants

There are many exotic plants that also attract native bees and other pollinators, as well as providing good quality pollen and nectar. Long-tongued bees, such as blue-banded and carpenter bees, are especially attracted to flowers with long, tubular shaped petals, such as Correa or Lavenders. While short-tongued bees, such as Lasioglossum and Homalictus species, prefer to forage on shallow, compound flowers such as daisies. Other native bees such as resin and leaf-cutter bees favour pea flowers and have specially adapted hairs under their abdomens, to collect the difficult-to-access pollen.



Photos by
Aussie Bee

Ben is a Redhead Resident & Chairperson, Hunter Branch, Australian Native Bee Association.



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RIGHT IN YOUR BACKYARD

Ways you can immerse yourself in Redhead's wonderful natural environment this Spring.



Keep Australia Beautiful Week 16-22 August

"Take 3 for the Sea" - and pick up 3 pieces of rubbish each time you visit Redhead beach.

Give your garden a Spring clean by tidying up the weeds & giving it some fertiliser.

National Biodiversity Month 1-30 September

Take a walk to Redhead Bluff to see the wildflowers in bloom.

Sign up to Lake Mac Council's Backyard Habitat for Wildlife. You get two free natives and discounts on native plants.

Look out for humpback cows and their calves migrating.

National Threatened Species Day 7 September

Volunteer for the Cain Street Landcare (8-11am, last Sunday of the month, meet at Landcare Shed on Cain St, opposite Wood St) and remove noxious weeds from our beautiful wetlands.

Add bee friendly plants to your garden or build a bug hotel.

National Organic Week 20-26 September

Collect coffee grounds from one of our coffee shops and add to your garden.

Redhead Men's Shed

Open Day on Saturday, September 9th 2023

10am to 2pm

Historic tours of the Lambton Colliery Heritage Buildings
with Ed Tonks

Projects, toys and tools on sale
Redhead Public School activity

Sausage sizzle
Fire Truck visit

1 Geraldton Drive, Redhead

in conjunction with Lake Macquarie City Council's
"History Illuminated"



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"To celebrate and sustain our coastal village community, its assets, and our beautiful natural environment for all to enjoy."

Have a passion for the environment, community and sustainability? Contact us! New members are always welcome!

You can find us @:



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