

AROUND THE PARK.

The main birdwatching event at present is the Great (south-eastern) Honeyeater¹ Migration. In April to May each year many thousands of small to medium-sized woodland birds can be seen flitting and twittering near treetop level on their autumnal migration north, from as far south as Tasmania and Victoria to warmer locations in NSW and Queensland for winter.

Honeyeater (Google search) refers to a large and diverse family, *Meliphagidae*, including the Australian chats, myzomelas, friarbirds, wattlebirds, miners and melidectes. So this bird migration isn't only referring to 50+ species named 'honeyeater'². Many other small species (eg. thornbills, silvereyes, fantails) join in the exodus north, and to different destinations.

In the southern hemisphere this migratory behaviour³ has evolved over at least 55 million years. It's just one of Australia's great migration events. There are also over 50 species of shorebirds in Australia⁴; most of them are migratory. Some species fly 25,000km from Australia to the Arctic and back each year. To know more, check out Jackie and Milly's book, or her Youtube interview⁵ on her passion for shorebirds. In 2023 she flew through the Hunter on her round-Australia ultralight flight to raise awareness of the plight (and rapid decline in number) of shorebirds migrating through Asia.

Photographed during BWSP volunteers' clearing of the Wildflower Walk today (Tuesday) is this Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*. We only need add (from Morcombe & Stewart's eGuide): Probably the best known Australian nocturnal bird; occasionally seen in camouflage pose on an exposed limb, stiffly posed to mimic a broken branch.

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30 April24



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<https://www.australiaswonderfulbirds.com.au/honeyeaters#:~:text=Large%20flocks%20of%20Yellow%2Dface%20d,mangroves%20of%20the%20far%20north>

² Michael Morcombe & David Stewart *eGuideto Australian Birds v1.5*.

³ *Flying Monsters*. David Attenborough. 13jun2022.

⁴ Jackie Kerin and Milly Formby. *A shorebird Flying Adventure*. CSIRO Publishing. 2022.

⁵ Milly Formby interview. WingThreads: an Australian Science Adventure
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0E1W4f4ZKMY&t=106s>