

A review of the changes in the population and distribution of waterfowl and shorebirds over 44 years at Lake Illawarra, New South Wales.

Terrill Nordstrom & Andrew Walter, September 2026



Published by Illawarra Birders

Abstract

Lake Illawarra is a large coastal lagoon, and its foreshore and waters include several different bird habitats of regional importance. In 1982-83, a survey of waterfowl and shorebirds on Lake Illawarra was undertaken (Wood 1985) and in 2025-26, a replica survey was undertaken to enable a review of changes to the lake's bird populations (Nordstrom and Walter 2026).

Findings from a comparison of the results of the two surveys include:

- Overall, the populations of 34 shorebird and waterfowl species decreased from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey. Compared with the 1982-83 survey, six migratory shorebird species were not recorded in the 2025-26 survey and the populations of a further four species decreased markedly. Only Bar-tailed Godwit, Far Eastern Curlew and Pacific Golden Plover were regularly reported, albeit in low numbers.
- The total number of birds recorded decreased markedly from the 1982-83 survey (78,267 individuals) to the 2025-26 survey (17,403 individuals). Chestnut Teal and Grey Teal numbers decreased dramatically from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey, and Black Swan, Australian Pelican and three cormorant species have all showed a decrease in numbers.
- The populations of several shorebird and waterfowl species were found to have increased from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey, especially Pied Stilt and Pied Oystercatcher and to a lesser extent Double-banded Plover and Pied Cormorant. Australasian Darter, Maned Duck and Little Heron were regularly recorded in low numbers in the 2025-26 survey but not recorded in the 1982-83 survey.
- In the 44 years between the surveys, significant changes have occurred to the lake environs including the permanent opening of the lake entrance in 2007 allowing a tidal flow into the lake, and an increase in urbanisation of the near-lake environment. The lake is also an important recreational focus for the Illawarra region. Potential detrimental impacts on shorebirds and waterfowl in the lake include changes to the water level and tidal flow regimes, increased salinity of the lake, increased disturbance from human activities, increased foreshore rock wall construction, and changes to foreshore and in-lake vegetation.



A review of the changes in the population and distribution of waterfowl and shorebirds over 44 years at Lake Illawarra, New South Wales.

Terrill Nordstrom & Andrew Walter, September 2026.

Contents

Introduction	4
Description of Lake Illawarra.	4
A general description of each census site (A to L).	5
1982-83 Methodology.....	6
2025-26 Methodology.....	8
Results.....	8
Bird population changes per the 1982-83 and 2025-26 surveys	8
- an overview	8
- by species.....	10
- by site.....	11
Summary of the results of the 1982-83 and 2025-26 surveys	14
Conclusion.....	14
Discussion	15
Appendices	16
Appendix A. Survey durations for 2025-26.	16
Appendix B. Lake Illawarra weather and tide 2025- 26	17
Appendix C. Bird population decreases: 1982-83 census compared to 2025-26.....	17
Appendix D. Bird population increases: 1982-83 census compared to 2025-26.....	18
Appendix E. Species List	18
Appendix F. Total species area count	39
Appendix G. Species recorded in 1982-83 by K. Wood.	43
Appendix H. Species recorded in 2025-26.	45
Acknowledgements.	47
References.....	47

Introduction

A survey of the waterfowl and shorebirds of Lake Illawarra by Kevin Wood was published in April 1985 in the Journal of the NSW Field Ornithologists' Club (v 19, no.2). The survey conducted in 1982-83 aimed to determine the significance of Lake Illawarra as a drought refuge for waterfowl and as a northern hemisphere wintering area for migratory shorebirds. The lake margin was subdivided into twelve areas, and the ecological importance of each area was assessed at approximately monthly intervals for 12 months.

Over the past 44 years since the 1982-83 census, Lake Illawarra has changed significantly. These changes include increased recreational activities around and on the lake due to population growth, loss of natural foreshore, loss of saltmarsh habitat, water pollution, and the permanent opening of the lake to the sea in 2007, all impacting the birdlife on the lake. In 2025, it was decided to document the changes in the population and distribution of waterfowl and shorebird species on Lake Illawarra by conducting monthly surveys following the parameters of the 1985 report.

Although there have been numerous surveys on the birdlife of Lake Illawarra, this 2025-26 survey was intended to compare the bird species and populations described in the K. Wood 1985 report. The surveys were conducted by Terrill Nordstrom and Andrew Water from August 2025 to July 2026.

Description of Lake Illawarra.

Lake Illawarra is a coastal lagoon located about 100 km south of Sydney. The foreshore is managed by Shellharbour City Council (southern portion) and Wollongong City Council (the remaining areas), and activities on the lake are managed by NSW Transport (Marine). The lake has a catchment area of 238 square kilometres; it is 9.5 km long and 5.5 km wide, and has an area of 36 km², a maximum depth of 3.5 metres, and an average depth of 2 metres.

Macquarie Rivulet and Mullet Creek flow into the lake from the escarpment. Several islands are located around the lake: Hooka, Gooseberry, Bevans, Picnic, and Berageree Islands. Before 2007, a sand barrier often closed the lake, and heavy rain and high tides were required before it opened to the sea. In 2007, a permanent opening was constructed, allowing a tidal flow into the lake. The Lake is surrounded by residential suburbs, parklands and areas of natural bush.

Lake Illawarra and its foreshore include several different waterfowl and shorebird habitats of regional significance. Important natural habitat types include saltmarsh, intertidal mud and sand flats, sand islands, sea rush and casuarina margins, bushland margins and vegetated islands, and shallow and deeper open water. The lake floor includes large areas of seagrass beds.

A general description of each census site (A to L).

Area A. Purrah Bay, Kanahooka Point.

Purrah Bay is a shallow bay located on the western side of the lake. Mullet Creek is the northern boundary; the southern and western sides are mostly residential. Saltmarsh, sea rush and casuarinas line the foreshore with small remnants of woodlands.

Area B. Lakeside Reserve, Koonawarra Bay.

The northern edge of the bay has been modified with rock edges, walking tracks and picnic areas. The western edge is mostly natural and is surrounded by residential development. The southern edge is natural and surrounded by natural bushland.

Area C. Yallah Bay, Tallawarra foreshore.

Located on the western shore of the lake, this area is adjacent to the Tallawarra Power Station. The hot water outlet from the power station flows into a creek towards Wollungurri Point before it enters the lake. The area on the southern side of the bay is bushland with natural edges. Yallah Bay is a deeper bay with few muddy or sandy flats.

Area D. Haywards Bay.

Haywards Bay is a shallow bay with saltmarsh, sea rush and casuarinas growing along the edges, surrounded by bushland and open paddocks.

Area E. Horsley Inlet and Koon Bay.

Located on the south-western side of the lake, Koon Bay is a shallow area surrounded by urban development and picnic grounds. Several small, low-lying islands shelter waders and waterfowl at high tide, while at low tide, muddy areas around the islands provide feeding for numerous species of birds.

Area F. Central Park to Boonerah Point.

Located on the western shore, this area is bordered by Reddall Parade and housing. The shoreline is mostly natural; casuarinas and mowed parks line the shore. Several small bays provide shelter for waterfowl and waders.

Area G. Bevans Island.

Bevans Island is a small, vegetated island surrounded on the western side by sand and mudflats that are exposed at low tide. On the western shore grassy parkland with casuarinas grow along the natural shoreline. Mangroves have recently gradually colonized large areas of the mudflats and along the shoreline of the island.

Area H. Windang Foreshore Park.

This area is east of Windang Bridge; on the southern side are picnic areas next to the caravan park. Towards the entrance of the lake are areas of natural bushland growing on dunes. The eastern and southern shoreline consists of rocks that were used during the construction of the permanent opening of the lake.

Area I. Lake Illawarra Outlook.

This area overlooks Cudgeree Bay and is located next to the Jettys by the Lake retirement community. On the southern side, there are several sand islands exposed during high tide, providing roosting and feeding areas for several species of waders and waterfowl.

Area J. Griffins Bay, Purry Burry Point.

Located on the northeast corner of the lake, Griffins Bay is an open-water area surrounded by housing, commercial buildings, main roads and parks. There is a stormwater retention wetland on the northern corner that flows into the bay. Purry Burry Point is a shallow bay with a natural shoreline.

Area K. Berkeley Harbour.

Located on the north side of the lake, Berkeley Harbour is a man-made harbour and boat ramp protected by rock walls. A stormwater retention wetland provides habitat for numerous species of waterfowl and waders.

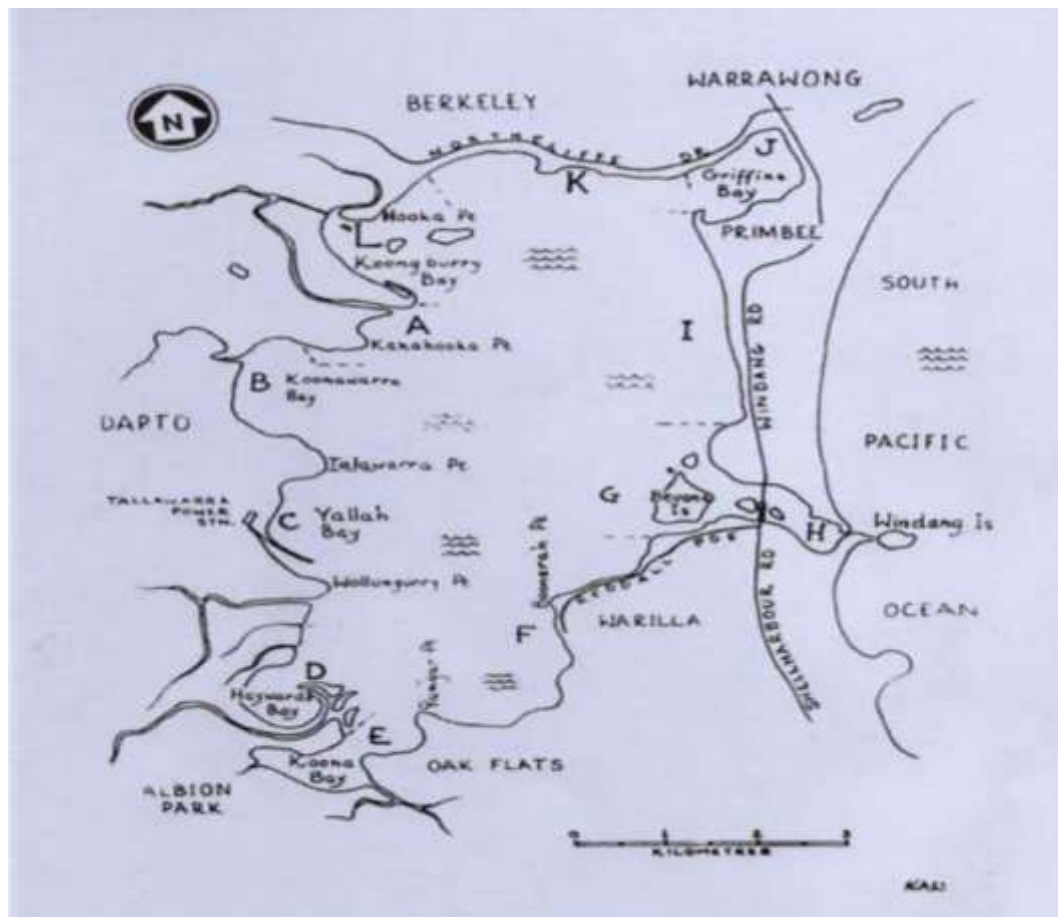
Area L. Hooka Point.

Hooka Point is located on the northwest side of the lake; it is a shallow bay with casuarinas and saltmarsh growing along its shoreline. The low-lying island that is found is a refuge for waders and waterfowl at high tide. Mullet and Hooka Creek flow into the lake at Hooka Point.

1982-83 Methodology.

The 1982-83 censuses were conducted between May 1982 and April 1983, on foot using a 17x60mm telescope and 8x40mm binoculars. The area of the lake surveyed extended to the high-water mark and the sandbar at the entrance. Mullet Creek, Macquarie Rivulet and Wollungurri Creek were not included in the survey. A map of Lake Illawarra was divided into 12 different census sites labelled A to L. At each site, the species and number of individual birds were recorded.

Figure 1. 1982-83 map of Lake Illawarra showing census locations A to L (from Wood, 1985).



The twelve survey dates were Wednesday, 5th May 1982; Saturday, 30th May; Tuesday, 3rd August; Wednesday, 15th September; Tuesday, 8th October; Saturday, 30th October; Friday, 17th December; Thursday, 10th February; Thursday, 10th March; Thursday, 1st April and Thursday, 28th April 1983. Although 12 surveys were conducted, they excluded January, June, July and November, with May, September, October and April each having two censuses. The report presented the results of twelve censuses, with notes on the different species recorded, and a focus on population levels, seasonal fluctuations, habitat preference, and distribution. The report had several limitations, including no details on the exact location of each site and the amount of time spent on each survey. There were no details on weather conditions or the water level in the lake for the twelve censuses.

The species recorded were from the orders Anseriformes (ducks and swans), Podicipediformes (grebes), Pelecaniformes (ibis, spoonbills, herons, egrets and pelicans), Suliformes (cormorants and darters), Gruiformes (rails and crakes), and Charadriiformes (shorebirds, gulls and allies).

2025-26 Methodology

Using the map from the 1985 report, the 2025-26 survey used the same twelve sites. The species and number of individual birds were recorded on eBird, applying the 2026 Avilist Australia taxonomy. The start and finish times were recorded along with the GPS location, weather and tide. All surveys were conducted on foot using 12x40 and 10x40 binoculars and two 20x60 spotting scopes. All surveys were conducted by two people except in May, when only one person conducted the survey.

Results

For the waterfowl and shorebird species recorded in the surveys, the following information was compiled: comments from the Wood (1985) report; a summary of the census results from the 1982-83 and the 2025-26 surveys; and a brief comparison between the results from the 1982-83 and the 2025-26 surveys (Appendix C).

Bird population changes per the 1982-83 and 2025-26 surveys

- an overview

The 1982-83 survey recorded 55 species, compared with 44 in the 2025-26 survey, a decrease of 20%. A total of sixty-two species were recorded between the two surveys.

The number of individual birds recorded in 1982-83 was 78,267, compared to 17,403 in 2025-26, a decrease of 77.76%.

In the 1982-83 survey, ten species had a census count exceeding 200 birds compared with three species in the 2025-26 survey.

During the 1982-83 survey, 22 species were recorded on every census, and 43 species were recorded two or more times, compared with the 2025-26 census when six species were recorded on every census and 25 species were recorded two or more times.

In the 1982-83 censuses, seven of the twelve areas tallied more than 30 species, whereas in the 2025-26 censuses no area tallied more than 30 species.

Figure 2. The number of individuals by month for Lake Illawarra, January to December, for the 1982-83 and 2025-26 surveys.

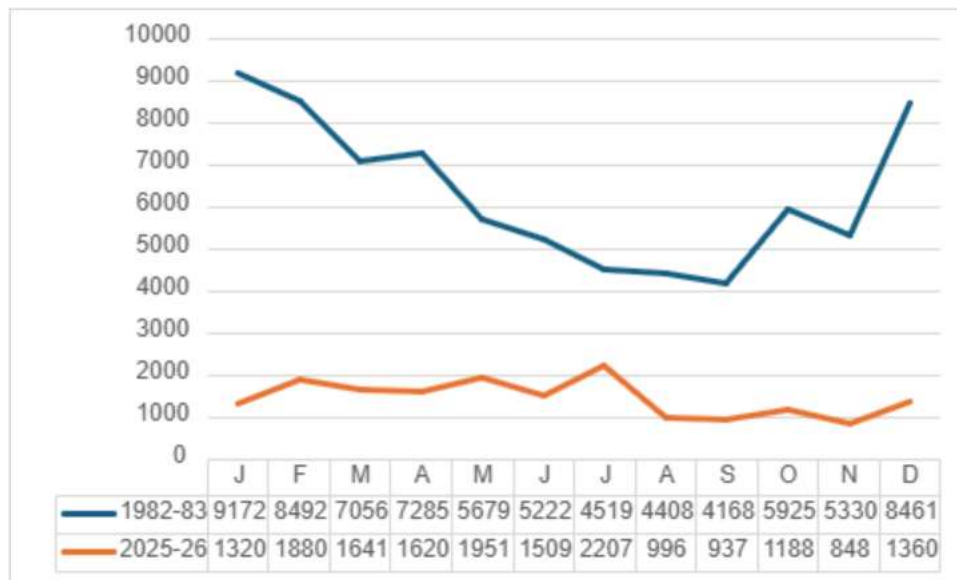


Figure 3. The number of species recorded at each site, A to L, in the 1982-83 and 2025-26 surveys.

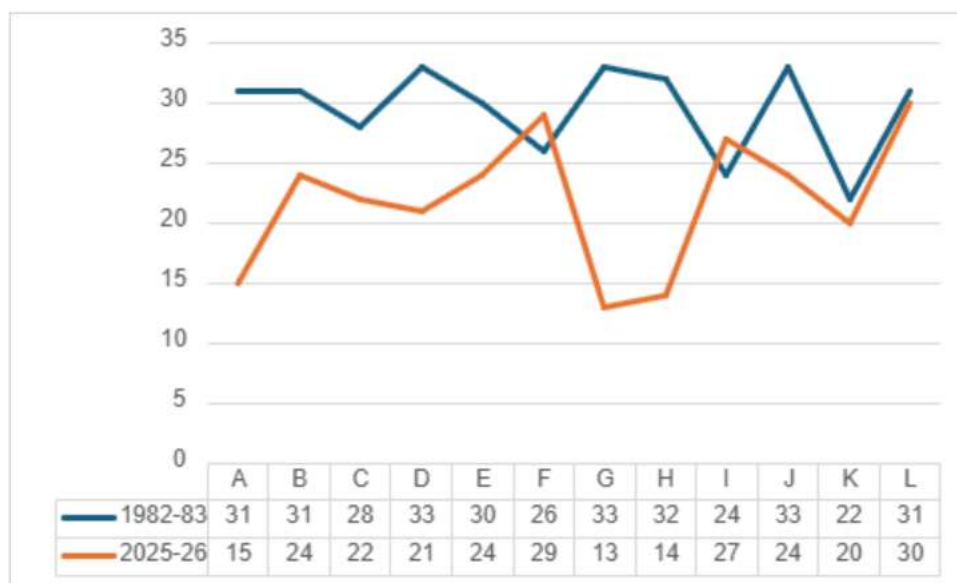
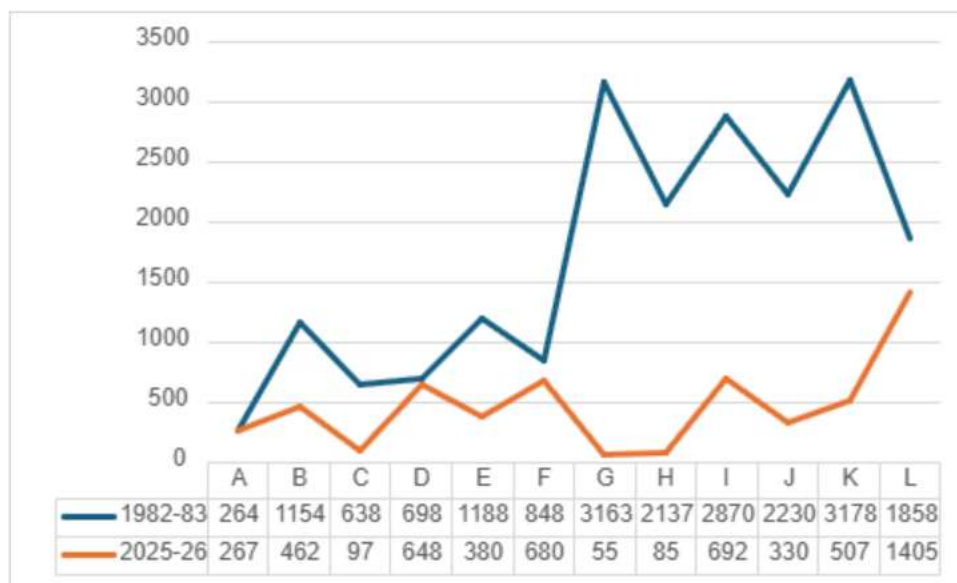


Figure 4. Maximum number of birds recorded for each site, A to L.



Bird population changes per the 1982-83 and 2025-26 surveys

- by species

34 species recorded a decrease in their populations between the two surveys, with 12 species increasing their population. Refer to Appendix C for detailed results; vagrant species and species with less than three records have been excluded.

Decreases in bird populations

Species reported in the 1982-83 survey, but not recorded in the 2025-26 survey:

Musk Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Eurasian Coot, Red-capped Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Red Knot, Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, and Little Tern

Species showing a decrease of more than 80% in the average number of birds recorded per census, 1982-83 to 2025-26:

Grey Teal (-99%) Chestnut Teal (-94%) Eastern Great Egret (-86%) Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (-99%) Silver Gull (-88%) Little Pied Cormorant (-84%) Hoary-headed Grebe (-94%) Pacific Golden Plover (-86%) Eastern Cattle Egret (-86%) Great Cormorant (-94%)

Species showing a decrease of between 80% and 0% in the average number of birds recorded per census, 1982-83 to 2025-26:

Bar-tailed Godwit (-78%) Little Egret (-64%) Australian Pelican (-47%) Caspian Tern (-73%) Royal Spoonbill (-60%) Greater Crested Tern (-35%) Australian White Ibis (-69%) Dusky Moorhen (-56%) Black Swan (-34%) Far Eastern Curlew (-67%) White-faced Heron (-56%) Little Black Cormorant (-17%)

Increases in bird populations.

Species recorded in the 2025-26 census, but not reported in the 1982-83 census:

Maned Duck, Buff-banded Rail, Sooty Oystercatcher, Eurasian Whimbrel, Australasian Darter, and Little Heron

Species showing an increase in the average number of birds recorded per census, 1982-83 to 2025-26:

Pied Stilt (+1850%), Double-banded Plover (+111%), Masked Lapwing (+80%), Pied Oystercatcher (+500%), Pied Cormorant (+90%), Pacific Black Duck (+67%).

Bird population changes per the 1982-83 and 2025-26 surveys

- by site

Area A

Purrah Bay, Kanahooka Point 34 30'06.4" S--- 150 49'52.1" E

Eighteen species were recorded in 1982-83 compared to 15 species in 2025-26, a 16.66% decrease between surveys. Great Egret, Royal Spoonbill, Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal, Ruddy Turnstone, Bar-tailed Godwit and Crested Tern were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Eastern Cattle Egret, Pacific Black Duck, Pied Oystercatcher, Dusky Moorhen and Caspian Tern were only recorded in the 2025-26 census. The maximum number of birds recorded increased by 51.13% from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey.

Area B

Lakeside Reserve, Koonawarra Bay 34 30'01.8" S---150 49'07.9" E

Thirty-one species were recorded in 1982-83 compared to 24 species in 2025-26, a 22.58% decrease between surveys. Musk Duck, Hardhead, Grey Teal, Red-capped Plover, Common Greenshank, Ruddy Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Great Crested Tern, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and Eastern Cattle Egret were not recorded in the 2025-26

censuses. Maned Duck, Pied Oystercatcher, Australasian Darter, Pied Cormorant, and Little Heron were not recorded in the 1982-83 censuses. The maximum number of birds recorded decreased by 56.95% from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey.

Area C

Yallah Bay, Tallawarra Foreshore. 34 31'29.2" S....150 48'30.6" E.

Twenty-eight species were recorded during 1982-83 compared to 22 species in 2025-26, a decrease of 21.42% between surveys. Grey Teal, Red-capped Plover, Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Ruddy Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint and Kelp Gull were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Maned Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Royal Spoonbill, Nankeen Night Heron and Little Heron were not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds recorded decreased by 85% from 1982-83 to 2025-26.

Area D Haywards Bay. 34. 32'46.3 S....150 47'47.2" E.

Thirty-three species were recorded in 1982-83, compared to 21 species in 2025-26, a decrease of 36.36% between surveys. Maned Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Pied Oystercatcher, Double-banded Plover, Red-capped Plover, Eastern Curlew, Common Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Pied Cormorant, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and Black Bittern were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Pied Stilt, Masked Lapwing, and Australasian Darter were not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds recorded decreased by 18% from 1982-83 to 2025-26.

Area E. Horsley Inlet and Koona Bay. 34 32'37.1" S....150 50'17.7" E.

Thirty species were recorded in Area E in 1982-83, compared to 24 species in 2025-26, a decrease of 20% between surveys. Australasian Shoveler, Pied Oystercatcher, Latham's Snipe, Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Pied Cormorant and Cattle Egret were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Hoary-headed Grebe, Buff-banded Rail, and Pied Stilt were not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds decreased by 68% from 1982-82 to 2025-26.

Area F Central Park, Oak Flats to Boonerah Point. 34 32'37.1" S....150 50'17.7" E

Twenty-six species were recorded in Area F in 1982-83 compared to 29 species in 2025-26, an increase of 11.53% between surveys. Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Ruddy Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Caspian Tern and Eastern Cattle Egret were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Pacific Black Duck, Buff-banded Rail, Pied Stilt, Sooty Oystercatcher, Pied Oystercatcher, Pacific Golden Plover, Australasian Darter, Straw-necked Ibis, Nankeen Night Heron and Little Heron were not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds recorded decreased by 69% from 1982-82 to 2025-26.

Area G Bevans Island. 34 32'03.2" S....150 51'27.4" E

Thirty-three species were recorded in Area G in 1982-83 compared to 13 species in 2025-26, a decrease of 60.60% between surveys. Musk Duck, Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Hoary-headed Grebe, Double-banded Plover, Red-capped Plover, Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Red Knot, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Little Tern, Whiskered Tern, Great Crested Tern, Great Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, and Pied Cormorant were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Pied Oystercatcher was not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds recorded decreased by 98% from 1982-83 to 2025-26.

Area H

Windang Foreshore Park. 34 32'25.5" S....150 52'20.0" E

Thirty-two species were recorded in Area H in 1982-83 compared to 14 species in 2025-26, a decrease of 56.25% between surveys. Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Pied Oystercatcher, Pacific Golden Plover, Double-banded Plover, Red-capped Plover, Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit, Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Red Knot, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Little Tern, Greater Crested Tern, Common Tern, White-fronted Tern, and Kelp Gull were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Sooty Oystercatcher, Masked Lapwing, Australasian Darter and Little Heron were not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds recorded decreased by 93% from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey.

Area I

Lake Illawarra Outlook. 34 31'31.3" S....150 52'10.2" E.

Twenty-four species were recorded in Area I in 1982-83 compared to 27 species in 2025-26, an increase of 12.5% between surveys. Australasian Shoveler, Hoary-headed Grebe, Australian Crake, Short-tailed Sandpiper, and Curlew Sandpiper were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Maned Duck, Pied Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Masked Lapwing, Double-banded Plover, Eastern Curlew, Kelp Gull, Pied Cormorant and Straw-necked Ibis were not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds decreased by 78% from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey.

Area J

Griffins Bay, Purry Burry Point. 34 29'54.6" S....150 52'27.3" E.

Thirty-three species were recorded in Area J in 1982-83, compared to 24 species in 2025-26, a decrease of 27.27% between surveys. Australasian Shoveler, Australian Crake, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Purple Swampphen, Pacific Golden Plover, Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Whiskered Tern and Kelp Gull were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Australasian Grebe, Pied Oystercatcher, Masked Lapwing, Australasian Darter, Pied Cormorant and Little Heron were not recorded in the

1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds decreased by 85% from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey.

Area K

Berkeley Harbour 34 29'00.2" S....150 51'06.2" E.

Twenty-two species were recorded in Area K in 1982-83, compared to 20 species in 2025-26, a decrease of 9% between surveys. Black Swan, Mallard, Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Great Cormorant, and Yellow-billed Spoonbill were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Eurasian Coot, Sooty Oystercatcher, Pied Oystercatcher, Masked Lapwing, Common Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Australasian Darter and Little Heron were not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds has decreased by 83% from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey.

Area L

Hooka Point, Berkeley. 34 29'15.0" S....150 50'07.0" E.

Thirty-one species were recorded in Area L in 1982-83, compared to 30 species in 2025-26, a decrease of 3% between surveys. Australasian Shoveler, Pacific Golden Plover, Double-banded Plover, Red-capped Plover, Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, and Red-necked Stint were not recorded in the 2025-26 census. Maned Duck, Pied Stilt, Eurasian Whimbrel, Australasian Darter, Little Heron and Cattle Egret were not recorded in the 1982-83 census. The maximum number of birds recorded declined by 15% from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey.

Summary of the results of the 1982-83 and 2025-26 surveys

The number of individual birds recorded in 1982-83 was 78,267, compared to 17,403 in 2025-26, a decrease of 77.76%. Twenty-two species recorded a decrease in their population between the two surveys, with six species increasing their population.

Twenty-two species were recorded on every census, and 43 were recorded two or more times during the 1982-83 survey, compared to six species on every census and twenty-five species recorded two or more times during the 2025-26 census. Ten species had populations exceeding 200 in 1982-83, compared to three species in 2025-26.

Area G had the greatest decrease in species - 60.60% - and the greatest decrease in the maximum number - 98%. Fifty-five species were recorded during the 1982-83 survey, compared to forty-four species during the 2025-26 survey, a decrease of 21.81%. A total of sixty-two species were recorded between the two surveys.

Two areas showed an increase in the species recorded between surveys: area F - 11.53% and I - 12.5%; only one area increased the maximum number of birds: area A - 51.13%. Area L had the lowest decrease in species 3% and the lowest decrease in the maximum number 15%.

Twelve species were recorded three or more times in the 1982-83 survey only, with four species recorded three or more times in the 2025-26 survey only. Areas B, D, E, G, H, J, and L recorded 30 or more species in 1982-83; all areas during the 2025-26 survey had fewer than 30 species except area L (30).

Areas G, I, K and J contained the largest number of individuals in 1982-83; areas D, F, I and L recorded the largest number of individuals in 2025-26. Area K recorded the lowest number of species in 1982-83; areas G and H recorded the lowest number of species and individual birds during the 2025-26 survey.

Conclusion

The 2025-26 survey identified a significant decrease in shorebird and waterfowl species diversity and abundance compared with the 1982-83 survey. The number of Northern Hemisphere migratory shorebird species that regularly utilised Lake Illawarra decreased from 10 species in 1982-83 to three species in 2025-26, and for these species (Bar-tailed Godwit, Far Eastern Curlew, Pacific Golden Plover), the populations decreased markedly. Low numbers of Bar-tailed Godwit and Far Eastern Curlew over-wintered, presumably juveniles.

Chestnut Teal and Grey Teal numbers decreased dramatically from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey. Pacific Black Duck and Maned Duck numbers increased from the 1982-83 surveys to the 2025-26 survey.

The populations of several non-migratory shorebirds were found to have increased from the 1982-83 survey to the 2025-26 survey, especially Pied Stilt and Pied Oystercatcher, and to a lesser extent, Double-banded Plover and Pied Cormorant. Australasian Darter, Maned Duck and Little Heron were regularly recorded in low numbers in the 2025-26 survey but not recorded in the 1982-83 survey.

Discussion

Wood (1985) states that “Lake Illawarra makes an important contribution to maintaining Palaearctic waders in south-eastern Australia, especially Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, and a significant number of waterfowl use the lake as a refuge in periods of drought in the interior”. He also wrote “The [lake] entrance shoals, Griffins Bay [area J] and Koongburry Bay [area L Hooka Point] are especially important when the number of individuals and species are considered together”. Considering the comments in Wood (1985), there has been a decrease in shorebird and

waterfowl species diversity and abundance. The reasons for these decreases are not straightforward. Potential explanations for the decline in the bird populations on the lake include:

- During the 1982-83 survey, large areas of NSW were suffering from a drought that went from April 1982 to March 1983, potentially resulting in large numbers of waterfowl migrating to coastal regions.
- On the East Asian – Australasian Flyway, the reclamation of large areas of coastal mudflats and saltmarshes over the past four decades have negatively affected populations of several shorebird species that utilised Lake Illawarra, including the Curlew Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Eastern Curlew, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Bar-tailed Godwit.
- Since the opening of the lake in 2007, the sand islands and shoals on the eastern side of Windang Bridge (area H) have been washed away by the surging tidal water that streams through the narrow channel each day. On the western side of the bridge, sand has been deposited, and mangroves are now growing in areas that were once open muddy flats. Other more subtle changes to the lake’s shoreline habitats have also occurred locally. The opening of the lake has increased the salinity of the lake water, altering the biota of sand and mud substrates in the lake, affecting potential food resources for the birdlife.
- Griffins Bay (area J), once an area with reed beds and a natural shoreline, now has large areas where the shore is concrete and stone. These modified edges are now found in several locations around the lake.
- Increased disturbance from various human activities, including boating and jet skis, affecting species such as Black Swans; poorly controlled dogs running through the water and chasing birds; and bait and shellfish collection on mud and sand flats, disturbing birds and affecting food resources for birdlife.
- Deterioration in the lake’s water quality arising from pollution and urban runoff.

The reasons for the declines in the bird population on the lake require further investigation.

Appendices

Appendix A. Survey durations for 2025-26.

The chart shows the duration of the surveys at each site over twelve months.

Survey	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total
Time hrs.	2.10	3.13	4.08	2.45	3.28	6.45	1.02	.49	3.13	3.58	2.40	9.40	41.51

Appendix B. Lake Illawarra weather and tide 2025- 26

Date	26/8	23/9	28/10	18/11	9/12	13/1	10/2	10/3	14/4	19/5	9/6	22/7
Weather	Cloud 15c to 20c NE 20km	Fine 14c to 16c SSW 33km	Fine 12c to 15c S 20km	Fine 22c to 22c W 13km	Fine 22c to 24c NNE 11km	Fine 22c to 25c NE 9km	Cloud 23c to 26c S 13km	Fine 22c to 25c SSW 15km	Fine 20c to 22c SSW 9km	Rain 19c to 17c Calm	Fine 17c to 18c N 15km	Fine 11c to 20c W 57km
Tide	High 7 am 1.2m Low 12.30 0.64m	Low 5.30 051m High 12pm 1.73m	High 10.14 1.28m Low 4.26pm 0.55m	High 8.15 1.25m Low 1.45 0.60m	Low 7.16 0.94m High 12.35 1.49m	Low 7.30 0.53m High 12.18 1.73m	High 7.35 1.75m Low 2.32 0.31m	High 9.42 2.0m Low 5.53 0.22m	High 8.24 1.23m Low 1.50 0.45m	High 8.05 1.41m Low 1.50 .05m	Low 8.47 0.5m High 3.14 1.4m	Low 8.49 0.64 High 2.47 1.5m

Appendix C. Bird population decreases: 1982-83 census compared to 2025-26

Species not recorded in the 2025-26 census but reported 3 or more times in the Wood 1982-83 census.	
Musk Duck	Ruddy Turnstone
Australasian Shoveler	Red Knot
Eurasian Coot	Curlew Sandpiper
Red-capped Plover	Red-necked Stint
Grey-tailed Tattler	Little Tern
Common Greenshank	Yellow-billed Spoonbill

Species showing a decrease in numbers from the 1985 census to the 2025- 26 census.	% decrease in maximum number of birds	% decrease in average number of birds
Black Swan	30	34
Chestnut Teal	90	94
Grey Teal	98	99
Hoary-headed Grebe	94	94
Dusky Moorhen	46	56
Pacific Golden Plover	83	86
Far Eastern Curlew	62	67
Bar-tailed Godwit	84	78
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	99	99
Caspian Tern	72	73

Greater Crested Tern	93	35
Silver Gull	82	88
Little Pied Cormorant	80	84
Great Cormorant	91	94
Little Black Cormorant	14	17
Royal Spoonbill	21	60
Australian White Ibis	59	69
Australian Pelican	37	47
White-faced Heron	53	56
Little Egret	24	64
Eastern Great Egret	83	86
Eastern Cattle Egret	86	86

Appendix D. Bird population increases: 1982-83 census compared to 2025-26

Species showing an increase in numbers from the Wood 1982-83 census to the 2025-26 census.	% increase in maximum number of birds	% increase in average number of birds
Pacific Black Duck	8	67
Pied Stilt	800	1850
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	175	500
Masked Lapwing	172	80
Double-banded Plover	4	111
Australian Pied Cormorant	83	90

Appendix E. Species List

Musk Duck *Biziura lobata*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Musk Ducks preferred the deeper water of Koonawarra and Haywards Bays.	Seen in five censuses, always in small numbers (max. 5); recorded in areas B and D.	Not recorded.	

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Black Swans were consistently recorded in good numbers in all seagrass areas, but most preferred the large delta barrier shelf (Areas G and I).	Recorded in all areas except area H. The maximum count was 750 birds (7 April 1983), with an average count of 438 birds.	Recorded all months and in all areas except area H. Highest concentrations of birds in areas C-144, G-385, I-524, J-312 and L-125. Maximum count: 528, March 2026; average count: 287.	30% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 34% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Birds were seen elsewhere on separate occasions after heavy rain in the catchment area.	The species was recorded only once: 5 birds, October 1982, area D.	Recorded on seven occasions in areas B, C, I and L. Maximum number 20, average number 5.	

Hardhead *Aythya australis*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Hardhead was recorded only once, 10 birds on 30 th May 1983	Recorded in area K	Not recorded.	

Australasian Shoveler *Spatula rhynchotis*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
20-30 Shovelers were present May to October 1982, mostly in Griffins Bay. Their presence was also no doubt drought-induced, since their preference is normally for freshwater swamps. (Gibson 1977, Frith 1982).	Recorded in areas D, E, I, J and L; maximum number: 31 birds, with an average of 7 birds.	Not recorded.	

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025- 26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Pacific Black Duck did not appear to favour any particular Area and were recorded in all but three Areas (A, C and F).	Pacific Black Duck was observed on nine censuses but in relatively small numbers (Maximum count: 26 birds; average count: 6 birds).	Pacific Black Ducks recorded in all months except August and September, in all survey areas except G and H. Maximum count 28 birds, March 2026; average count 10 birds.	8% increase in the maximum number of birds recorded. 67% increase in the average number of birds recorded.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
One record: 2 birds, 30th April 1982.	Recorded in area K	Not recorded	

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
The less common Chestnut Teal was found in greatest numbers in Areas D and E. Most were feeding. The aquatic plants <i>Ruppia</i> and <i>Lamprothamnium</i> predominate in Area I, and <i>Gracilaria</i> in Areas D and E (Anon 1976). The species' preference for the <i>Gracilaria</i> -rich Areas D and E during my survey suggests that this plant may also be an important food for Chestnut Teal at Lake Illawarra. Unlike the Grey Teal, numbers of Chestnut Teal did not markedly decrease after the rains of 19 and 20 March 1983,	Recorded in all surveys and all areas except H. The maximum number of birds was 368, the average number of birds was 240.	Chestnut Teal were recorded all months except November, and in all areas except A, G and H. The maximum recorded was 35 birds; the average was 14 birds.	90% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 94% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

which is consistent with the view that the Chestnut Teal is a sedentary species showing little dispersal associated with rainfall.			
--	--	--	--

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
The Grey Teal was by far the most common duck. In the first ten counts, the maximum number of birds was 2820, but on the last two censuses numbers had dropped dramatically following good rains in the Murray-Darling region on 19 and 20 March 1983. Approximately half of the Grey Teal censused were resting on mud and sand banks along margins with extensive growth of common reed <i>Phragmites</i> sp. The remainder were either loafing or feeding in shallow water; areas G, I and K often contained large numbers. My survey was conducted during a period of severe drought over much of inland Australia.	Recorded in all censuses and in all areas, with an average count of 1,788 birds in 1982-83.	Grey Teal were recorded in nine surveys from November 2025 to July 2026 in areas D, E, F, I, J, K and L. The maximum number of birds recorded was 49, with an average of 10 birds.	98% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 99% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Australasian Grebe *Podiceps novaehollandiae*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
It occurs only rarely: I know of no [Lake Illawarra] sightings between June 1979 and May 1984.	No records during the 1982-83 survey.	One record of a single bird on the 23rd of September in Area J.	

Hoary-headed Grebe *Podiceps poliocephalus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Hoary-headed Grebes were common all year, favouring the western edge of the delta barrier shelf (Area H). Rafts often contained 300+ birds feeding actively in association with Silver Gulls.	Recorded in all surveys at six sites: B, D, F, G, I, and J. Maximum number: 950 birds in May 1982, with an average of 358 birds.	Hoary-headed Grebes were recorded in eight surveys at six sites, B, D, E, F, I and L. The maximum number of birds recorded was 56, with an average of 21 birds.	94% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 94% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Great Crested Grebes were present in deeper waters of Koonawarra Bay during May 1982, when lake salinity was average and stable. Subsequent to the survey, a flock of 39 birds was recorded in the same area on 25 August 1984 (L E Smith, pers comm.).	Two records: two birds, 5th May; and three birds, 30th of May, all in area B.	One record of two birds on 28th August in area B.	

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Seen during February 1985, foraging among rotting Zostera near Hooka Park (Area F); maximum of six birds. When disturbed they took cover in adjacent rushes.	Not recorded	Three records at two sites, areas E and F. 2 birds in September 2025; 1 bird in June 2026; 1 bird in July 2026.	

Australian Crane (formerly Australian Spotted Crane) *Porzana fluminea*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with reported 1985 results.
Australian Crane is seen only when the water level is low, in late afternoon or on overcast days, but it is certainly locally more common than previously thought (Gibson 1977, and Morris, McGill & Holmes 1981).	Single birds recorded in Areas I and J, February 1983.	Not recorded.	

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
The presence of three juvenile Dusky Moorhens in company with adult birds on 17th December 1982, and markedly lower counts in October (presumably due to adults being hidden at nests) indicates that this species successfully bred in the reeds in late 1982.	Dusky Moorhens were recorded in every census, only in area J, with a maximum of 13 birds and an average of 8 birds.	Dusky Moorhens were recorded in each census at two areas, A and K. The maximum number was 7 birds, with an average of 3.5 birds.	46% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 56% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Eurasian Coots fed in shallow water close to the eastern shore.	Eurasian Coots were seen on every census in consistent numbers, only in area J, with a maximum of 70 birds and an average of 34 birds.	Not recorded.	

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
The sighting of a lone Purple Swamphen in Griffens Bay (Area J), coincided with the drying up of nearby Coomaditchy Lagoon, which normally supports a small resident population.	Single bird seen in Area J, February 1983.	Not recorded.	

Pied Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Pied Stilts seen in low numbers when salinity was lower than normal. They preferred the foreshore of Windang Road and Griffins Bay, areas G, I and J.	Pied Stilt was found in small numbers (maximum 8 birds; average 2 birds) in six censuses.	Pied Stilts were recorded in all censuses in five areas, E, F, I, J and L. The maximum number counted was 72 birds, with an average of 39 birds.	800% increase in the maximum number of birds recorded. 1850% increase in the average number of birds recorded.

Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus fuliginosus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
I am aware of only one record of Sooty Oystercatcher on the lake (R.N. Imisides, pers comm).	Not recorded.	Sooty Oystercatchers were recorded on four occasions in areas K, H, and F. The maximum number recorded was 2 birds.	Maximum number of birds recorded: 2, with an average of 1.

Australian Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Pied Oystercatchers were present, always in small numbers and usually on the estuary shoals east of Windang bridge and the western foreshores around Hooka Point, Tallawarra Point, Macquarie Rivulet Delta and Koon Bay.	Recorded in areas C, D, E, H and L in eight censuses with a maximum of 4 birds and an average of 1 bird.	Pied Oystercatchers were recorded in all censuses in five areas, E, F, I, J and L. The maximum number was 11 birds, with an average of 6 birds.	175% increase in the maximum number of birds recorded. 500% increase in the average number of birds recorded.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
The Grey Plover, though rare in NSW, has been seen twice on the entrance shoals.	Not recorded.	A single bird was observed feeding on sand flats in area I on 13th January 2026.	

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Some 30-35 Golden Plovers were present between October 1982 and March 1983, preferring the samphire flats at the north-western end of Koon Bay, where 20-30 birds were regularly seen.	Pacific Golden Plovers were recorded during 6 censuses in four areas, E, H, J and L, with a maximum count of 60 birds on 10th March 1983 and an average count of 14 birds.	Pacific Golden Plovers were recorded in 5 censuses and 2 areas, E and F, with a maximum number of 7 birds and an average of 2 birds.	88% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 86% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Masked Lapwings breed and feed on open fields nearby and were commonly seen loafing or preening on the lake.	Masked Lapwings were recorded in all censuses in all areas except area H, with a maximum of 32 birds and an average of 15 birds.	Masked Lapwings were recorded in all censuses and in all areas, with a maximum number of 87 birds and an average of 27 birds.	172% increase in the maximum number of birds recorded. 80% increase in the average number of birds recorded.

Double-banded Plover *Anarhynchus bicinctus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Approximately 20 Double-banded Plovers were found regularly from April to September, mostly either at the Hooka Point sandbar or the eastern entrance shoal (areas H and L).	Recorded in areas D, G, H and L in 9 censuses, with a maximum of 25 birds and an average of 9 birds.	Recorded in area I on two occasions, 9th June and 22nd July 2026. The maximum number of birds was 26, with an average of 19 birds.	4% increase in the maximum number of birds recorded. 111% increase in the average number of birds recorded.

Red-capped Plover *Anarhynchus ruficapillus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Red-capped Plovers were found in only two areas - the entrance shoals east of Windang Bridge and the sand bar off Hooka Point (Areas H and L).	Red-capped Plovers were recorded during all censuses, with a maximum of 22 birds and an average count of 12.	Not recorded.	

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
I know of only one previous record, in 1955 (McGill and Lane 1955). This species prefers mangrove mud flats and rocky platforms and shores in coastal New South Wales and there is little suitable habitat at Lake Illawarra.	Not recorded.	Whimbrels were recorded on five occasions, all in area L: September, December, January, February and March. All records were of single birds except January, when there were 3 birds observed.	

Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Far Eastern Curlews were recorded on every census, even during the (austral) winter. Numbers of Greenshanks and Bar-tailed Godwits were markedly higher in spring than at other times but counts of Far Eastern Curlews were much more stable throughout the Year.	Far Eastern Curlew were recorded on every census with an average count of 12 birds and a range of 1-32 birds.	Far Eastern Curlews were recorded in areas B, E, F, G, H, I, and L and in all censuses except April and May. The maximum number of birds recorded was 12 with an average of 4 birds.	62% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 67% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits overwintered; that this is a regular occurrence is indicated by my sightings of 75 plus birds off Hooka Point throughout July and August 1981 during my preliminary work at the lake.	Recorded in all Areas, and in all censuses with a maximum of 182 and an average of 96 birds during 1982-83.	Bar-tailed Godwits were recorded in areas B, D, E, F, G, I, and L, in all censuses. Maximum number recorded was 29 with an average of 21.	84% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 78% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
A lone Black-tailed Godwit was seen on seven occasions during April and May 1983, mainly on the entrance shoals east of Windang Bridge.	A single bird was seen on two censuses in Area H.	Not recorded.	

Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
A single bird was flushed at the north-western end of Koon Bay on 8 October 1982.	Recorded in area E	Not recorded.	

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
	Not recorded.	One bird recorded in area K, feeding along exposed sand, next to rock wall on the 28th of October 2025.	

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Grey-tailed Tattler showed a distinct preference for feeding and loafing on the southern flats on Picnic and Berageree Islands.	Grey-tailed Tattler was present in low numbers on most censuses. The maximum count was 10 birds. Recorded in areas C, E, F, G, H, and J.	Not recorded.	

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
A total of 61 Greenshanks, an unusually large number, was seen on 10 February 1983, when the lake was lower than normal; 55 of these were scattered around the south and west margins of Bevans Island, feeding actively on a dense congregation of aquatic insects. In general, the waders showed no obvious preference for one area over another.	The maximum number of birds recorded was 61, with an average of 18. Recorded in all areas except A.	Not recorded.	

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
A flock of 16 birds was found on rocks at Kanahooka Point in September 1982; four birds were recorded during the census of 30 October 1982, and eight were seen in September 1982 at Boonarah Point.	The maximum number of birds recorded was 16, with an average of 2. Recorded in areas A, B, C, and F.	Not recorded.	

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Red Knots were found only during September and October 1982, and in relatively small numbers. In addition to the sightings on census days, I found 10 birds on 4 October and 22 birds on 13 October 1982.	The maximum number of birds recorded was 19, with an average of 3. Recorded in areas G and H.	Not recorded.	

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was the fifth most numerous species overall. They were found all around the lake during the summer months, but concentrations formed in some localities depending on water level (and therefore food supply). Together with Curlew Sandpipers, they were often found feeding amongst rotting seagrass on sandy flats in the east entrance, south of Picnic Island, north-west of Bevans Island, at Hooka sand bar and Koonawarra Bay.	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was recorded in 7 censuses and in all areas except area A. The maximum number of birds was 782, with an average of 160 birds. Recorded in all areas except A.	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was recorded in 4 censuses in areas E and L. The maximum number recorded was 11 birds, with an average of 2 birds.	99% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 99% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
They were often found feeding amongst rotting seagrass on sandy flats at the Entrance (near the northern bank protected by Phragmites), south of Picnic Island, north-west of Bevans Island at Hooka Point sandbar, and at Koonawarra Bay.	The maximum number of birds recorded was 170, with an average of 28. Recorded in areas B, C, D, E, G, I, J, K, and L.	Not recorded.	

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Although some Red-necked Stints were associated with Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Curlew Sandpipers all around the lake, most preferred the sandy, less weedy, estuarine shoals to the east of Windang Bridge.	The maximum number of birds recorded was 190, with an average of 41. Recorded in areas B, C, E, F, G, H, and L.	Not recorded.	

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Little Terns were found in reasonable numbers throughout the summer, with a distinct peak in December 1982. Little Terns were found only in Area H (the east entrance), with two exceptions: 100 birds were found on the sand bar to the north-east of Bevans Island on Saturday, 30 October 1982 and on Saturday, 30 May 1982. I attribute this to the extremely high level of human recreational activity at the most easterly entrance shoals on weekends.	The maximum number of birds recorded was 210, with an average of 62. Recorded in areas G and H.	Not recorded.	

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Caspian Terns were present on all counts in small numbers	The Caspian Tern maximum count was 43 birds, and the average	Caspian Terns were recorded in all areas	72% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded.

showing a preference for the Entrance and western foreshores. Unusually high numbers occurred during April 1983 (about 30-43 birds).	count was 15 birds. Recorded in all areas except A and K.	except H and in all censuses. The maximum number of birds recorded was 12, with an average of 4 birds.	73% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.
--	---	--	---

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
One record of 33 birds resting on weed in Griffins Bay on 30 October 1982	Recorded in areas G and J.	Not recorded.	

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
900 Greater Crested Terns were counted on 8 October 1982 on sand flats near the mouth of the lake.	Greater Crested Terns were found on all censuses. Numbers were relatively stable (average count 20, range 30-60). Recorded in areas A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and L.	Greater Crested Terns were recorded in areas C, D, E, F, H, I, J, and L and in all censuses. The maximum number recorded was 66 birds, with an average of 13 birds.	93% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 35% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Common Tern was recorded once: two birds on the east entrance shoals in February 1983.	Recorded in area H.	Not recorded.	

White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
White-fronted Tern was recorded twice on the east entrance shoals (7 birds on 1st September, and 100 birds on 8th October 1982).	Recorded in area H.	Not recorded.	

Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Silver Gulls: counts were below 2250 until December 1982. Counts of 4000 were between February and April 1983, mainly comprising adults and immatures at rest along the north-western foreshores.	Silver Gulls were recorded in all areas and censuses, with a maximum of 4406 birds and an average of 2156 birds.	Silver Gulls were recorded in all areas and censuses. The maximum number recorded was 800 birds, with an average of 255 birds.	82% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 88% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey Compared with the reported 1985 results.
Kelp Gull was found on seven censuses in small numbers (maximum 8 birds, average 2 birds).	Recorded in areas H, C and J.	Single birds were recorded on two occasions in areas I and L.	

Australasian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
The species is rare on the lake, generally preferring freshwater.	Two Australasian Darters were seen in area C on 3 August 1982.	Recorded in 8 survey areas: B, C, D, F, H, J, K, and L. Maximum number was 7, with an average of 2 birds.	

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
Four species of cormorants occur regularly on the lake. Preferred roosts were sand flats in Areas G and H, and trees on Picnic and Bevans Islands. Little Pied Cormorants were easily the most numerous.	Little Pied Cormorants were recorded in all areas in all censuses, with a maximum number of 600 birds and an average of 334 birds.	Little Pied Cormorants were recorded in all areas in all censuses, with a maximum number of 119 birds and an average of 53 birds.	80% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 84% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
Great Cormorant counts generally ranged between 20-60, but 268 were recorded in early August 1982.	Recorded in all areas with an average of 71 birds.	Great Cormorants were recorded in all areas except K, with a maximum number of 23 birds and an average of 4 birds.	91% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 94% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
Little Black Cormorants were common.	Recorded in all areas in all censuses, with a maximum number of 312 birds and an average of 140 birds.	Little Black Cormorants were recorded in all areas in all censuses, with a maximum number of 267 birds and an average of 116 birds.	14% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 17% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Australian Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
Pied Cormorants were least numerous and preferred more remote locations such as the sand bank north-west of Bevans Island, rocks off Hooka Point and Gooseberry Islands, and tree roots debris in the Macquarie Rivulet delta.	Recorded in all areas except A, I, and J, with a maximum of 29 birds and an average of 10 birds.	Australian Pied Cormorants were recorded in all areas except D, E, G, and K, and in all censuses, with a maximum of 53 birds and an average of 19 birds.	83% increase in the maximum number of birds recorded. 90% increase in the average number of birds recorded.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
Yellow-billed Spoonbills were seen on five censuses but in very low numbers.	Recorded in areas B, D and L, with a maximum of 4 birds.	Not recorded.	

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, report 1985	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
Royal Spoonbills were evenly distributed and nearly constant in numbers.	Recorded in all areas except C, and in all censuses except February 1983, with a maximum number of 39 birds and an average count of 20 birds.	Royal Spoonbills were recorded in all censuses and in all areas except A and H, with the maximum number of 31 birds and an average of 8 birds.	21% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 60% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
Australian White Ibis were evenly distributed and nearly constant in numbers.	Recorded in all areas and all censuses, with a maximum number of 78 birds and an average count of 49 birds.	Australian White Ibis were recorded in all areas and all censuses, with a maximum number of 32 birds and an average of 15 birds.	59% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 69% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
Straw-necked Ibis seen only once, resting on the sandbar off Hooka Point.		Straw-necked Ibis were observed flying over the lake on three occasions, 4 birds 26/8/25, 3 birds 18/11/25 and 1 bird 13/01/26.	

Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with reported 1985 results.
The population was evenly distributed and stable during the survey. Birds usually rested on favoured banks remote from disturbance.	Australian Pelicans were recorded in all censuses and in all areas, with a maximum number of 286 birds and an average of 190 birds.	Australian Pelicans were recorded in all censuses and in all areas, with a maximum number of 180 birds and an average of 105 birds.	37% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 47% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Black Bittern *Botaurus flavicollis*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with the reported 1985 results.

Black Bittern has been recorded only occasionally at Macquarie Rivulet delta, which supports a relatively large stand of swamp oak <i>Casuarina glauca</i> .	One bird seen on 10th March 1983.	Not recorded.	
--	-----------------------------------	---------------	--

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with the reported 1985 results.
White-faced Heron counts typically ranged from about 20-30 birds. 75 birds were counted in early September 1982 when water level was very low after protracted dry weather; most were foraging in shallow sea-grass beds around Cudgerie and Bevans Islands.	White-faced Herons were recorded in all censuses and in all areas, with an average of 32 birds.	White-faced Herons were recorded in all censuses and all areas, with a maximum of 35 birds and an average of 14 birds.	53% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 56% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with the reported 1985 results.
Little Egrets were almost as common as Great Egrets.	Little Egrets were recorded in all censuses and in all areas, with a maximum count of 21 birds and an average count of 11 birds.	Little Egrets were recorded in all censuses and in all areas except H, with a maximum number of 16 birds and an average of 4 birds.	24% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 64% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Nankeen Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with the reported 1985 results.
Rufous Night Herons noted on 19th March 1983. About six Rufous Night Herons roost daily in <i>Pinus insignis</i> trees at Primbee and fly out at dusk each night to feed, usually northwards towards Griffin Bay but sometimes southwards towards Korrongulla Swamp (R. N. Imisides pers. comm).	Not recorded on any census.	Single Nankeen Night Heron was recorded in areas C and F, on 13th of January 2026.	

Little Heron (formerly Striated Heron), *Butorides atricapilla*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with the reported 1985 results.
	Not recorded.	Little Heron recorded in areas B, C, F, H, I, J, K, and L and in all censuses. The maximum number recorded was 3 birds, with an average of 2 birds.	

Eastern Great Egret *Ardea alba*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with the reported 1985 results.
There was no marked fluctuation in numbers of either Little or Great Egrets.	Great Egrets were recorded in all censuses and in all areas, with a maximum number of 24 birds and an average count of 14 birds.	Great Egrets were recorded in all censuses and in all areas except G and H, with a maximum number of 4 birds and an average of 2 birds.	83% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 86% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Ardea coromanda*

K. Wood, 1985 report Direct extract	K. Wood, 1985 report	2025-26 survey	2025-26 survey results compared with the reported 1985 results.
Cattle Egret were recorded in small numbers.	Cattle Egrets were recorded in five censuses and in areas B, D, E, F, H, and J; with a maximum of 65 birds and an average of 7 birds.	Cattle Egrets were recorded in three Censuses, in areas A, and L; with a maximum of 9 birds and an average of 1 bird.	86% decrease in the maximum number of birds recorded. 86% decrease in the average number of birds recorded.

Appendix F. Total species area count

Average counts (total recorded during censuses, divided by 12 = rounded to the nearest whole number). 1982-83 and 2025-26.

Species	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Musk Duck 1982-83 2025-26		3					1					
Black Swan 1982-83 2025-26	21 106	25 52	144 20	53 265	15 95	56 146	385		524 133	312 123	62	125 140
Maned Duck 1982-83 2025-26		8	8	5					8			2
Hardhead 1982-83 2025-26		10										
Australasian Shoveler 1982-83 2025-26				8	2				6	31		8
Pacific Black Duck 1982-83 2025-26	5	2 3	3	15 2	1 4	2	10	6	6 5	6 2	2 6	8 15
Mallard 1982-83 2025-26											2	
Chestnut Teal 1982-83 2025-26	6	52 1	21 11	128 8	163 24	49 16	44		78 9	59 1	114 3	10 6
Grey Teal 1982-83 2025-26	55	220	150	152 17	314 8	211 14	640	44	950 4	702 7	447 2	183 30

Australasian Grebe 1982-83 2025-26										1		
Hoary-headed Grebe 1982-83 2025-26		51 26		5 46	26	25 20	200		900	35 46		25
Great Crested Grebe 1982-83 2025-26		3 2										
Buff-banded Rail 1982-83 2025-26					2	1						
Australian Crane 1982-83 2025-26									1	1		
Dusky Moorhen 1982-83 2025-26	6									13	4	
Eurasian Coot 1982-83 2025-26										76		
Purple Swamphen 1982-83 2025-26										1		
Pied Stilt 1982-83 2025-26				4	43	5	5 5		6 9	5 2		45
Sooty Oystercatcher 1982-83 2025-26						2		2			1	
Pied Oystercatcher 1982-83 2025-26	2	4	2 3	4	2	11	2	2	7	2	2	2 3
Grey Plover 1982-83 2025-26									1			
Pacific Golden Plover 1982-83 2025-26					35 7	1		7		3		21
Masked Lapwing 1982-83 2025-26	2 14	2 8	5 2	17	5 8	2 18	12 5	2	4	6	2	16 87
Double-banded Plover 1982-83 2025-26				2			1	22	26			14
Red-capped Plover 1982-83 2025-26		2	2	5			2	12				16

Eurasian Whimbrel 1982-83 2025-26												3
Eastern Curlew 1982-83 2025-26		1 1	1	2	2 1	3 4	18	3	12	1	2	6 2
Bar-tailed Godwit 1982-83 2025-26	20	41 1	12	10 4	15 29	18 22	95 5	55	12 22	5	30	13 19
Black-tailed Godwit 1982-83 2025-26								1				
Latham's Snipe 1982-83 2025-26					1							
Common Sandpiper 1982-83 2025-26											1	
Grey-tailed Tattler 1982-83 2025-26			2		4	1	9	6		1		
Common Greenshank 1982-83 2025-26		5	1	1	2	3	55	6	3	5	1	2
Ruddy Turnstone 1982-83 2025-26	16	2	1			1						
Red Knot 1982-83 2025-26							10	19				
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 1982-83 2025-26		270	20	21	75 11	45	330	8	30	22	36	60 9
Curlew Sandpiper 1982-83 2025-26		29	40	4	74		129		1	5	9	35
Red-necked Stint 1982-83 2025-26		10	6		20	5	25	150				45
Little Tern 1982-83 2025-26							100	210				
Caspian Tern 1982-83 2025-26	2	2 1	13 1	15 1	2 4	1	25 2	21 5	1 12	1 1	1	14 4
Whiskered Tern 1982-83 2025-26							3			30		
Crested Tern 1982-83 2025-26	1	4	8 1	5 2	1 3	2 8	4	900 1		2		3 1

Common Tern 1982-83 2025-26								2				
White-fronted Tern 1982-83 2025-26								100				
Silver Gull 1982-83 2025-26	56 30	270 300	75 2	70 12	280 25	160 120	280 17	450 25	220 25	750 80	2200 320	1010 800
Kelp Gull 1982-83 2025-26			2					8	1	2		
Australasian Darter 1982-83 2025-26		1	2 3	3		9		1		1	2	4
Little Pied Cormorant 1982-83 2025-26	32 1	39 8	36 7	70 36	29 9	81 67	250 1	26 11	33 42	62 16	93 4	55 5
Great Cormorant 1982-83 2025-26	9 1	10 1	12 1	31 2	7 2	74 16	25	10 2	9 20	4 1	115	56 3
Little Black Cormorant 1982-83 2025-26	11 1	31 3	26 10	104 150	15 16	9 95	200	15 5	11 200	8 3	9 85	48 26
Pied Cormorant 1982-83 2025-26	5 5		8 1	12	6	2 17	8	1 17			10	12 22
Yellow-billed Spoonbill 1982-83 2025-26		4		5								3
Royal Spoonbill 1982-83 2025-26	1	19 1		5 10	8 31	1 1	21 2	4	4 1	14 6	1 1	15 11
Australian White Ibis 1982-83 2025-26	9 3	10 5	2 2	27 18	5 20	10 17	34 4	12 2	12 1	11 7	15 6	10 32
Straw-necked Ibis 1982-83 2025-26						1			3			7 4
Australian Pelican 1982-83 2025-26	16 85	24 24	40 8	18 6	46 2	63 55	75 4	32 10	40 45	45 10	15 60	65 60
Black Bittern 1982-83 2025-26				1								
White-faced Heron 1982-83 2025-26	1 2	5 4	2 4	3 35	3 4	4 5	45 6	2 1	15 3	4 6	6 3	4 26

Little Egret 1982-83 2025-26	2 1	4 3	1 2	4 6	3 4	5 3	11 1	1	6 16	4 3	1 1	2 4
Nankeen Night Heron 1982-83 2025-26			1			1						
Little Heron 1982-83 2025-26		1	2			1		1		1	2	3
Great Egret 1982-83 2025-26	1	1 3	3 2	2 4	3 2	2 2	15 1	1	12 1	3 2	1 1	1 4
Eastern Cattle Egret 1982-83 2025-26	3	3		6	50	15		1		1		9

Appendix G. Species recorded in 1982-83 by K. Wood.

Species recorded from 05/05 1982 to 28/4 1983.	05/5	30/5	03/8	01/9	15/9	8/10	30/10	17/12	10/2	10/3	1/4	28/4
Great Crested Grebe	2	3										
Hoary-headed Grebe	226	950	368	204	205	160	127	641	280	296	198	645
Australian Pelican	211	177	222	195	164	163	224	162	139	145	176	286
Australasian Darter			2									
Great Cormorant	45	25	268	45	62	60	35	43	34	65	58	113
Pied Cormorant	27	2		9	5		14	24	22	8	9	6
Little Black Cormorant	138	165	231	95	129	162	150	205	110	33	94	178
Little Pied Cormorant	276	324	533	194	216	309	288	350	310	465	477	265
White-faced Heron	22	12	36	75	60	17	18	16	50	37	30	8
Cattle Egret	65	3	1								7	4
Great Egret	4	11	17	16	12	7	22	9	11	24	22	13
Little Egret	7	6	10	6	20	8	9	13	4	21	17	10
Australian White Ibis	52	35	70	57	63	2	62	55	55	43	78	11
Straw-necked Ibis									7			

Species recorded from 5/5/82 to 28/4/83	05/5	30/5	03/8	01/9	15/9	8/10	30/10	17/12	10/2	10/3	1/4	28/4
Royal Spoonbill	2	25	20	37	26	7	28	5		25	39	21
Yellow-billed Spoonbill				3			3	1		1	4	
Black Swan	405	270	540	180	210	175	143	600	605	675	750	705
Pacific Black Duck	2	26	8		19	1	2			3	15	
Mallard		2										
Grey Teal	1710	1860	1750	2380	1990	2820	2420	2500	1910	1480	405	230
Chestnut Teal	330	174	255	368	205	205	163	320	303	248	190	126
Australasian Shoveler	25	31	19			10	1					
Hardhead		10										
Maned Duck						5						
Musk Duck	1	5	1						5		4	
Spotted Crake									2			
Dusky Moorhen	13	10	8	9	5	4	2	9	10	11	10	7
Purple Swamphen										1		
Eurasian Coot	18	45	55	35	23	20	25	11	21	9	70	76
Pied Oystercatcher		2	5			1		4	4	3	2	2
Masked Lapwing	27	4	30	7	9	10	13	11	32	15	11	11
Golden Plover						1	35	35	27	60	6	
Double-banded Plover	1	20	25	1	1				3	15	22	24
Red-capped Plover	2	6	16	18	9	11	11	17	13	18	7	22

White-headed Stilt		3			5	6	8			6		1
Ruddy Turnstone					16		4					
Eastern Curlew	4	1	11	15	16	9	17	16	32	18	3	7
Grey-tailed Tattler			2	2	1	1	4	10	3	1	6	9
Greenshank	1	2	1	4	7	25	32	18	61	24	30	5
Latham's Snipe						1						
Black-tailed Godwit												1
Bar-tailed Godwit	31	14	36	114	102	174	157	182	133	125	57	29
Red Knot				10		19	8					
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper				6	154	165	459	782	266	85		

Red-necked Stint		10	4	4		7	75	135	190	52		17
Curlew Sandpiper					10	65	56	170	25	3	10	
Silver Gull	2004	937	2250	281	376	254	555	1903	4406	4385	4140	4385
Kelp Gull	8		2	3					2	3	4	5
Whiskered Tern							33					
Caspian Tern	17	26	28	10	4	6	14	3	2	1	43	31
Common Tern									2			
White-fronted Tern				7		100						
Little Tern						35	100	200	210	160	41	
Crested Tern	3	6	21	20	60	900	13	11	23	8	23	36

Appendix H. Species recorded in 2025-26.

Birds listed as per 1982-83 list.

Species recorded from 26/8/25 to 22/7/26	26/8	23/9	28/10	18/11	9/12	13/1	10/2	10/3	14/4	19/5	9/6	22/7
Great Crested Grebe	2											
Hoary-headed Grebe	46	7	2	20					56	46	27	50
Australian Pelican	126	94	81	78	71	72	150	113	180	163	111	88
Australasian Darter	2	2			7	2	4	3	1	6	4	3
Great Cormorant	3	12	8	7	23	3	5	10	9	13	15	8
Pied Cormorant	32	5	8	11	9	7	7	17	26	53	32	30
Little Black Cormorant	134	17	231	18	216	39	90	17	106	141	267	177
Little Pied Cormorant	50	41	30	26	36	34	97	69	58	78	119	98
White-faced Heron	24	23	12	27	47	38	83	35	21	10	51	33
Cattle Egret			9						4		3	
Great Egret	5	8	4	10	10	8	9	15	6	8	9	9
Little Egret	7	6	13	7	13	8	33	20	9	7	6	10
Australian White Ibis	35	14	22	22	50	26	61	28	11	23	47	38
Straw-necked Ibis	4			3		1						
Royal Spoonbill	2	42	5	4	1	1	6	25	7	19	26	17
Yellow-billed Spoonbill												

Black Swan	83	276	252	286	373	407	411	528	282	283	119	145
Pacific Black Duck			8	3	7	3	14	28	16	19	13	7
Mallard												
Grey Teal				1	2	10	16	7	4	49	10	24
Chestnut Teal	4	10	5		2	2	20	35	21	20	21	35
Australasian Shoveler												
Hardhead												
Maned Duck		2				16	8	5		20	7	2
Musk Duck												
Spotted Crake												
Dusky Moorhen	3	7	6	2	3	4	1	3	7	3		3
Purple Swamphen												
Eurasian Coot												
Pied Oystercatcher	15	8	16	11	9	14	13	14	6	11	10	2
Masked Lapwing	13	6	19	19	25	108	102	103	35	44	69	30
Pacific Golden Plover		3	2	6			7				1	
Double-banded Plover											26	12
Red-capped Plover												
Pied Stilt	26	12	57	46	23	49	43	72	13	52	30	46
Ruddy Turnstone												
Eastern Curlew	4	3	2	11	17	11	6	7			1	1
Grey-tailed Tattler												
Greenshank												
Latham's Snipe												
Black-tailed Godwit												
Bar-tailed Godwit	27	22	41	18	35	59	38	33	52	30	28	42
Red Knot												
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper			1		1	9	11					
Red-necked Stint												
Curlew Sandpiper												
Silver Gull	382	307	341	185	312	343	624	444	656	828	431	1209
Kelp Gull	1				1							
Whiskered Tern												
Caspian Tern	9	1	6	2	17	16	3	1	8	7	4	8
Common Tern												
White-fronted Tern												

Little Tern												
Crested Tern	1	1	1	3	1	15	12	6	22	12	13	67
Additional species recorded in 2025- 2026.												
Little Heron	1	3	3	1	4		1	2	1	1	2	4
Sooty Oystercatcher	1									2	2	1
Buff-banded Rail		2									1	2
Australasian Grebe		1										
Whimbrel		1			1	3	1	1				
Common Sandpiper			1									
Nankeen Night-Heron						1						
Grey Plover						1						

Acknowledgements.

Special thanks to Chris Brandis for reviewing this report. Thanks to Brian Deans for his assistance in one of the surveys and to Martin Potter for formatting the report. Thanks also to Tony Palliser and Ralph Stadus.

References.

AviList Australia 2025.

Brandis, C. P. & Chafer, C. J. *A Handbook of Birds found in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Adjacent Tablelands, second edition.*

Brandis, C. P. & Chafer, C. J. *Changes in the waterbird community of the Lake Illawarra estuary: 20 years of research.*

Chafer, C. J. & Whelan, R. J. *The Avifauna of Lake Illawarra, New South Wales.*

Lindsey, Terence R. *The Seabirds of Australia.*

Nordstrom, T. *A guide to the birdlife of the Illawarra region of NSW.*

Wood, K. 1985. *A survey of the waterfowl of Lake Illawarra, New South Wales.*