



Where good things just come naturally...



Autumn Birding Report 2007

Time passes quickly on the mountain, and when I recently saw several of our regular Bird Week faces turn out for Autumn Birding 2007 I thought another eight months had slipped past without me noticing! As it turns out that wasn't the case, but it seems that perhaps the birds were fooled as well, as the activity and species count of 171 was more reminiscent of their November breeding season than the supposedly quieter autumn period. Some that tend to go quiet after breeding and become relatively difficult to locate, such as Noisy Pitta, Paradise Riflebird and Albert's Lyrebird, all put in appearances. And despite the program not taking in any dedicated wader destinations, our tally was comparable with what was recorded at the November event. Ironically it was our target group, the little brown birds, that let us down this time, missing what would normally be considered three certain species. One of these was Weebill, sadly missed due to the fact that a fantastic area of dry forest habitat in Kerry Valley has been recently cleared. This was also our reliable spot for Speckled Warbler, and 2007 marks the first year these two species were not seen in AB.

We welcomed the return of sound-man and exaggerator extraordinaire Dave Stewart. Dave's world travels have prevented him from coming to the mountain in recent times, and it was great to share in his experience and knowledge again. But it wasn't Dave doing *all* the spotting – the sharp eyes of our participants are what sent this tally to its great heights. Marie Higgs was on the ball as always, and she was close to again being named as the prestigious *AB Spotter of the Week*. But this year the honour deservedly went to Sue Rixon, whose incredible sighting of an Azure Kingfisher down a steep bank from a moving bus got her over the line. This award will now be known as the Barry Bucholtz award, in honour of our great friend, AB regular and great spotter (and twitcher!) Barry who sadly passed away last year. His humour and enthusiasm was missed by all in 2007. The other award presented on our last evening was the *Spirit of AB* award, which was given to Lionel Findlay for his continual good cheer and enthusiasm, even though he wasn't always feeling 100%. Good on you Lionel!

So that was AB 2007. Sure, we didn't always keep to the program. Sure there were moments of chatting and laughter when we should've been looking at birds. But above we had a lot of fun watching some great birds in great company at a lovely time of the year. Roll on 2008!

Tim O'Reilly