

Inside BOCA



Superb Fairy-wren.
Photo: John Barkla



Richard Hunter
Chief Executive Officer

Victorian bushfires

Since our last issue, Victoria has seen the most devastating fires in its history. The loss of life and property is both well documented and utterly appalling. A number of BOCA people, and others well known in the conservation movement, have suffered personally and our sympathy goes out to them.

In addition to the great human tragedy there has, of course, been major damage to wildlife and habitat. Affected areas will take many years to recover. Inevitably, there will be calls for large scale clearing and fuel reduction burning which would further reduce habitat. BOCA and other environmental organisations will need to be particularly active to ensure a balanced debate. BOCA branches and members will also be involved in the very necessary monitoring of recovering areas.

Annual Report

This issue has an insert, BOCA's *Annual Report* for the 2008 year. The report goes in to some detail reviewing the year and some of the difficulties we face in the immediate future.

Members are asked to read the report and to raise any issues of concern either directly with National Office or at the AGM on 9th May. As always, the exchange of views between members, Board and this office is an important part of BOCA's governance.



Early BOCA Meeting Room at Yellingbo Reserve.
Photo: Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater

Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater

We congratulate the Friends Group on reaching twenty years of very active work to save the Helmeted Honeyeater. BOCA is proud to have been instrumental in the establishment of the recovery project and the Friends Group and to have the Group as an affiliated organisation.

A comprehensive article covering the first twenty years appears later in this edition.

BOCA Branches

A new regional branch in the Southern Highlands of NSW has been approved by the Board. Efforts by local member, Col Kohlhagen, President Tony Stanton and the group has led to the establishment of Southern Highboca, which is already very active. Members visiting from other areas are welcome.



Birdwatching in the Southern Highlands.
Photo: Col Kohlhagen

The Board has also approved the establishment of the special interest group, Photoboca, which will provide a focus for members from all areas interested in bird photography. Photoboca has provided us with an article which appears on the next page.

In the Wagga Wagga area, BOCA members, Bob and Penne Carr have been very active in raising local interest in birding and again, visitors are encouraged to make contact and join outings. We look forward to Bob and Penne's efforts bearing fruit with yet another BOCA Branch.

BOCA Certificates of Appreciation

The Board has approved guidelines for the awarding of Certificates of Appreciation to people who have contributed significantly to BOCA's work. Copies of the guidelines are available from National Office. This presents an opportunity to acknowledge those who merit recognition, but don't fit other award criteria.

30 year plus members

BOCA is continuing its update of membership records. Members of over 30 years who have not already done so, are asked to notify National Office of their date or year of joining.

Richard Hunter
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Photoboca Steering Committee

Register your interest in bird photography with Photoboca

At the November Executive Meeting, an exciting decision was finally approved – members interested in bird photography will have their own branch to be known as **Photoboca**. It will be open to any BOCA member who is interested in photographing birds, regardless of where they live, and whether they are currently active in a branch or not. Belonging to the group would be in addition to belonging to your local group, if you have one.

Photoboca is for all BOCA members interested in photography. Photoboca will ensure that its activities cater for all levels of expertise and equipment. While some members may have 'professional equipment', the majority of members of the existing special interest photography groups are using compact digital cameras or amateur level DSLRs.

A steering committee has been formed, consisting of Bob Young, President, and nominated members from interested branches. These are Bellboca – Rob Cowdell, Brisboca - tba, MELBOCA – John Stirling and Sonja Ross, and Trboc – Ian Boyd and Mark Horvath. Meetings will take place using Skype technology so that no travel is necessary.

Our first priority, once the committee is in place, is to find out which BOCA members would like to be involved in Photoboca. A survey will be conducted, either by email from the BOCA site, or from **the registration form included in this edition of *The Bird Observer***. This will give us an idea of our membership and be used to establish a data base of members' details. This register will enable us to keep you informed of educational programs, outings, competitions etc which are taking place throughout Australia, as well as in your local region. Currently, email contact can be made using: photoboca@optusnet.com.au. Emails sent here will be redirected to the appropriate person(s) once our roles in the committee are decided.

A second priority will be to liaise with the Education people at National Office and Branches, to find out what projects are planned and what photographic material would be useful for BOCA fact sheets and brochures, as well as *The Bird Observer* and other publications. This will enable us to share the information with Photoboca members so that they can try to capture specific images that can be used, as well as more general images of birds. DVDs of study nights etc can be shared too.

As a member of Photoboca, you will be able to show off your images by uploading them onto the BOCA website photo gallery. In the near future we hope that this will be extended to allow photographers to seek help in identifying the bird(s) in their photo or to add comments or advice etc. It also has the program for the year, which currently, is basically a Victorian one. This year, for the first time, various local branches have become involved in the Photography Group program, and it is expected this can be continued in the future. One of the planned events for this year is a weekend at Chiltern (Vic) in October, and it is hoped that BOCA members from outside Melbourne might take the chance to join us there. Further information will be available later, but the date is 17 and 18 October. It is also planned to have a photographic weekend along the lines of the



Top: Crimson Rosella. Photo: P. Rogers **Above:** White-naped Honeyeaters enjoying my bird bath at Clematis. Photo: Arthur Carew

previously successful "Photography in the Bush" and "Between the Mountains and the Sea" events, every second year, with support from National Office. Watch for details in "The Bird Observer Calendar".

If you plan to join the group and have any ideas you want the committee to consider, please put the information either on your registration form or email us. This is **your** chance to have input into the way the group operates, so please take it!

Bob Young & Sonja Ross

Forthcoming activities

25 April. Geelong Wetlands photography outing hosted by the Bellarine (Bellboca) Photography Group. Further details will be emailed in the next few weeks. As numbers may need to be limited, please advise Rob Cowdell if you are interested in attending, email: robmarineowl@bigpond.com

20 June. 1.30 – 4.00pm at BOCA National Office. Photofinishing and production of DVDs for slide shows and PowerPoint presentations. Presented by John Stirling together with members of the Education Committee. To book please email: bob.young@optusnet.com.au

17 -18 October. Beechworth/Chiltern area. The current Victorian Photography Group is planning a weekend at Chiltern during the weekend of 17 to 18 October this year. To help with planning I am keen to have some idea of numbers. If you think you would/might be interested would you please email me by the end of April. I would also like to know what type of accommodation you would prefer (i.e. camping or motel), as we would prefer that we are all close enough for an evening BBQ or other social activities.

Email Sonja Ross: bagpipe@bigpond.net.au