

Book Review:

Australian Good Birding Guide NSW-ACT

Ted and Alex Wnorowski. Self-published April 2017

Ian Bailey

This 512 page guide to the best sites for birdwatchers to visit, represents an outstanding effort in travel, researching and writing that is surely the most comprehensive reference for local and visiting tourists to New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

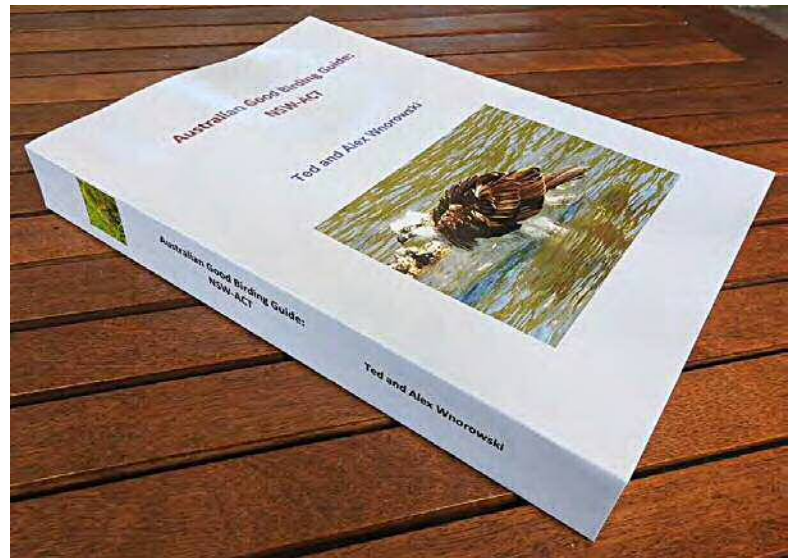
The details and information provided for each location where a plentiful list of birds may be observed is amazing and must have been the result of many hours, months and years of personal travel and recording. The Wnorowskis have visited, recorded the bird species seen, and checked travel and facility conditions for around 550 places in NSW and the ACT. All locations are well described geographically and the level of comfort some people would require is often indicated. Bird lists have been checked against recognised references.

Essentially, regions of the state are divided into three. Sydney Basin, ACT and all the rest. Where many spots have been surveyed in a concentrated area, they are listed in a close scale of being within a short drive of each other or within a day's visiting time. The broader country regions cover some hundreds of square kilometres, so obviously each birding locality is distant from others and will take longer travel time and better planning. Much of the advice and information to plan those trips is provided. Sydney, for example, is divided into four, with 31 localities and 77 "hotspots" to visit. The ACT has 11 localities and 18 "hotspots".

The layout of this book is easy to follow but could be more helpful to those visitors who do not know their way around at all. I am talking about tourists who will become an increasingly important sector of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) now and into the future.

It needs a State map showing the 17 mapped areas as a whole overlaid against the major cities and towns. Like a street directory, so strangers can more easily decide where they can reach, or have the time to explore.

The Bird Index is useful but fails to direct the reader to, say, the top five spots to find a species, especially uncommon or rare birds. Many birders these days are "twitchers" which is a valuable survey method (providing sightings are recorded in a scientifically authentic database) and these folk want to know the best place and how long it will take to get there.



However, the electronic version of the book (ebook) is heavily hyperlinked to facilitate navigation to specific birding sites. External hyperlinks to site maps are also provided. The search function enables quick browsing through all instances of the search term in the text. This way, for example, the desired rare species will show at a glance at all sites it has been mentioned.

The Site Index is also handy but made redundant by the complete Table of Contents running to 15 pages at the front of the book. This list contains Mapped Areas-17, Localities-211 and Hotspots-554 and shows the page number for each.

Some statistics are provided enabling the reader to use this book as a work of useful bio-geographic evidence to claim the existence of important bird species in a locale considered for development or clearing. It is another environmental protection tool.

This book should be an essential reference on the shelves of organisations such as libraries, tourist centres, travel agents, hotels and motels, council customer centres and museums.

It is easy-to-read everyday vocabulary with the occasional birder jargon which will not phase even the very casual birdwatcher. It is especially recommended for the beginner and schools, as well as the visitor from other regions.

The book is available in print or digital form by visiting the author's website at <https://www.australian-good-birding-guide.com/> or by contacting Alex on 0432 422 862.