

## 2013 Bird Calendar

*Cover – Red-tailed Tropic Bird, Lord Howe Island*

Taken from the north cliffs at Lord Howe. The bird came in close to a nest site where a chick was waiting to be fed. It made a couple of passes and I took this shot as it came into land. In general I like backlit shots like this one. Here, in addition, it reveals the black wing patches that are normally hidden from view.

*January – Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Caloundra, Queensland*

This picture was taken in parkland in Caloundra during an early evening walk. A group of Noisy Miners was aggressively harassing this pair of Blue-faced Honeyeaters but they refused to give ground. This shot stands out from several others as it's the only one in which the birds look relaxed. Which shows how images can sometimes be misleading.

*February – White Eye, Lord Howe Island*

A small flock of White Eyes was working the dense shrubbery along the edge of the island's lagoon where their calls could be heard quite clearly. I noticed a group heading in a particular direction and placed myself close to where I thought they'd pass. Sure enough about a dozen came right by me and I took this shot just after one passed by. Fill-in flash was used to moderate the pattern of light and shade.

*March – Southern Cassowary, Lone Pine Sanctuary, Brisbane*

This bird is a long time resident of the sanctuary where it occupies a large enclosed area well shielded from passers by. There are a few spots, however, where it can be glimpsed. I took the close-up from one of these and the long shot from another as the bird rested by its private pool.

*April – White Terns, Lord Howe Island*

These two birds were resting close to the settlement road on Lord Howe. I took up a position close by and simply waited to see what would happen. Of several excellent shots this is the one I like best. If you look closely you can see that both have raised their left foot a little as they extend their wings just before taking off.

*May – Welcome Swallows, Bruny Island, Tasmania*

We had mostly poor weather during our trip to Bruny Island. But on the last day, on our way back to the ferry, we stopped for a final coffee. Behind the cabin was this nest with three lively chicks. The parents were obviously used to people and undisturbed by our presence. It took me about 20 minutes to obtain images of the chicks with their mouths open in unison as a parent bird approached.

*June – Royal Albatross, Kaikoura, New Zealand*

Kaikoura is albatross heaven and our trip there was one of the highlights of our time in New Zealand. Having arisen before dawn we were out on the ocean as the sun came up. This Royal Albatross spent some time around the boat and I took the shot as it headed off again. Note the very low angle of the light.

*July – Rainbow Lorikeets, Mount Tamborine, Queensland*

Rainbow Lorikeets are very common in Queensland but there are a few places where they are found in greater than usual numbers. One of these is a café atop Mount Tamborine. Here the birds are tame and, given half a chance, will steal biscuits, cakes and the small tubes of sugar

meant for humans. This group had gathered together near the terrace and I was able to capture three of them looking very much as though they were deciding which table to raid next!

*August – Australasian Gannet, Cape Kidnappers, New Zealand*

Gannets are easy to see in many places but it is rare to find a breeding colony anywhere on the mainland. An exception is Cape Kidnappers, near Napier on the North Island of New Zealand. Here it's possible to access an established colony via 4WD and first class qualified guides. The day we made the trip was far from ideal as it was overcast and there were frequent showers. So I was not able to get the 'white against blue' effects I'd hoped for. Instead I found myself shooting through light rain, often toward a grey sky and at higher ISO settings than usual. Still, I was able to get some nice shots of the adult birds coming into land. Two things appeal to me about this shot. One is the overall symmetry of the wings; the other is the way the body and extended wing shape form two intersecting curves.

*September – New Holland Honeyeaters, Conondale, Queensland*

I spent the best part of two days around this Honey Gem Grevillea at a friend's farm. This shot, however, was one of several taken over a period of no more than a few seconds. During this brief time these two birds faced each other, touched feet and appeared to exchange greetings. The bird nearest the camera then turned to feed on the adjacent flowers - giving me a brief chance to capture this image.

*October – Eastern Spinebill, Port Arthur, Tasmania*

Like most other people we travelled to Port Arthur for reasons other than birding. Of course I took my camera. But when I spotted an Eastern Spinebill feeding on a vine near one of the buildings I knew they were in the area and so prepared for the next opportunity. That came when we were walking through the formal garden area. Another Spinebill landed near us. But unfortunately it was flushed by an inconsiderate tourist who rushed at it with a point and shoot camera before walking away. I followed the bird's flight, however, and saw it land nearby. So I took up a new position and waited again. By then it was late afternoon and the light was fading. Still, I was rewarded with several visits by different birds, one of which is shown here.

*November – Strong-billed Honeyeater, Bruny Island, Tasmania*

Many birders have no doubt stayed at Inala on South Bruny Island as we did. Many might have had better weather! But during a break in the rain one afternoon I set up near a shallow pond where our host had told us forest birds sometimes visited. I was rewarded by this unusual honeyeater who posed nicely for me and showed no fear of a human sitting in the open nearby.

*December – Jacana, Yellow Waters, Kakadu National Park*

Kakadu National Park is one of the world's natural wonders and Yellow Waters is perhaps one of its most precious jewels. This picture was taken from a regular tour boat and shows the bird in its natural habitat, along with the long-toed adaptation that allows it to inhabit a floating lily pad world so confidently.

Finally, I hope you enjoy these pictures as much as I've enjoyed taking them and preparing this calendar.

Richard Slaughter, Foresight International, PO Box 793, Indooroopilly, Queensland 4068

For a sample of other work a couple of bird galleries can be found at:

[http://richardslaughter.com.au/?page\\_id=21](http://richardslaughter.com.au/?page_id=21)

More serious stuff at: <http://www.foresightinternational.com.au/>