



October 2015

# Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



Events

## Reminders



### 19-25 October.

A 20 minute survey to count your birds in your yard.  
[aussiebirdcount.org.au](http://aussiebirdcount.org.au)

See page 4

**Ornithological  
Conference  
Flinders University.  
25-27 November.**

### Friday to Monday 16-19 October Port Augusta Campout.

(details last Newsletter.)

### Thursday 29 October Onkaparinga Gorge.

Gate 11, Piggott Range Rd.  
near junction with Upper Penny's Hill Rd.

35°8'45"S 138°34'41"E

### Friday 13 November General Meeting at Willunga Natural

Resource Centre. High Street Willunga.

### Sunday 15 November Mt. Magnificent CP.

Junction of Nangkita and  
Enterprise Roads Mt Compass.

35°20'20"S 138°39'28"E

### Wednesday 25 November Newland Head CP.

Dennis Hut Car Park.  
Waitpinga Beach 35°37'43"S 138°29'58"E

### Saturday 5 December 5pm Xmas Break-up Strathalbyn

Meet at carpark behind Strathalbyn Swimming Pool

35°15'29"S 138°53'25"E



Purple Swamphen at Laratinga  
Photo: Bob Daly

**Meetings:** Anglican Church Hall, corner Crocker and Cadell Streets, Goolwa.

7.30 pm 2nd Friday of March, May, September and November unless otherwise stated.

**Outings:** Meet 8.30 am. Bring lunch and a chair. See **Events** above

**Contacts:** [fleurieubirds@gmail.com](mailto:fleurieubirds@gmail.com) or phone 8555 0634

**Website:** [www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org](http://www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org)

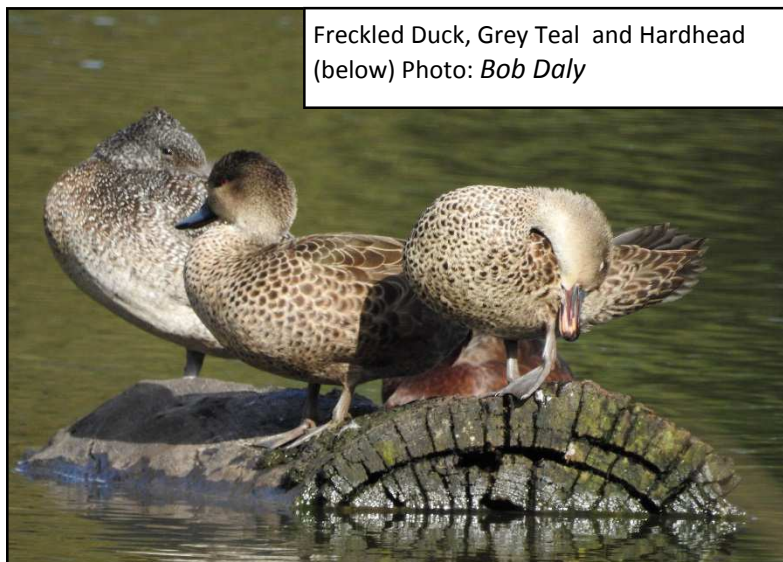
**Newsletter:** Contact email: [fleurieubirds@gmail.com](mailto:fleurieubirds@gmail.com)

## Laratinga, Mt. Barker - Saturday 14 August.

The weather was cold, overcast and dull, but no rain. 15 people attended.

The first pond gave us a taste of the day's sightings with 8 species of ducks including a pair of Chestnut Teal which were nicely colouring up. The only duck missing from that list was the Bluebill. Small numbers of Grebe were present but not the Great Crested. Water levels were up in several of the ponds and there was no opportunity for waders. Crakes and Rails were notable by their absence. A few Black-fronted Dotterels were sighted, but not the Red-kneed Dotterels. If only the sun would come out to help sight the birds, the photographers would have been pleased as well. In the trees there was an unusual sighting of two Little Corellas checking out a hollow. Where were their colleagues? We usually see them by the hundreds.

With Spring just around the corner, the male Superb Fairy-wren were just getting into colour and a solitary Silver Gull was seen with nesting material. We wended our way past the Settling Ponds and scrambled up the bank to peer through the fenced off sewerage area. Once again there was a reasonable number of species of duck.



Freckled Duck, Grey Teal and Hardhead  
(below) Photo: Bob Daly



Female Australasian Shoveler.  
Photo: Bob Daly

A few of the group chose to take the long way (well only 100mtrs or so extra). They were rewarded with a pair of Tree Martins nesting in a hollow. Back and forth the Martins went, paying scant attention to us birders.

A few paces on, a Crested Shrike-tit, hiding himself so well in a Casuarina took the group some minutes to positively identify it. Thus the group were overdue at the lunch spot for the bird call!

Birds generally about but not

seen today would be Egrets, Ibis, Spoonbills, Raptors, Treecreepers, Pardalotes, Weebills, Thornbills, additional Honeyeaters, Grey Fantails, Wood Swallows, Currawongs & Silvereyes.

This made our total of 44 species seen, even better. Lunch was taken in a first rate shelter.

*Next Laratinga walk come on over, with more birders & slightly sunnier weather we will get 50+species.*

Thanks to Neil Cheshire for leading us as this is always an interesting site.

**Nick Tebneff.**



Tree Martin in hollow.  
Photo: Nick Tebneff

### Latham Snipe Survey.

Dr Bridget Hansen reported: 12 Wetlands in Victoria were surveyed last year and the total count for ONE day was 348 Latham Snipe. Of these 95% were found in just 3 urban Wetlands, at Pt. Fairy, Allansford and Peterborough in Victoria.

The surveys will be conducted again this year as the Snipe arrive from Japan. The numbers are expected to be much lower due to dryer conditions and a new housing development at Pt. Fairy close to one of the sites. If you are interested in assisting she can be contacted

[b.hansen@federation.edu.au](mailto:b.hansen@federation.edu.au)

***If you have sightings in SA please let her know.***



## Inman Valley—Thursday 27 August

Wisps of fog settled on the hills and frost melted in the gullies as fourteen Fleurieu Birdwatchers gathered in the five degree morning at Inman Cemetery.

Cemeteries often protect vestiges of native vegetation and Inman did not disappoint.

A total of 23 bird species were recorded (21 seen, 2 H) *Australian Wood Duck, Brown Goshawk (juvenile), Wedge-tailed Eagle, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Crimson (Adelaide) Rosella, Spotted and Striated Pardalote, Striated Thornbill, Red Wattlebird, Crescent, New-Holland and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebill, Grey Fantail, Magpie, Grey Currawong, Little Raven, Superb Fairy-wren, and Silvereye. Grey Shrike-thrush and Kookaburra (H).*

**Fun in the rain!**  
Jude and Rob



A short drive up the hill along Prouse Road to Hancock Road brought us to our next stop at Robinson Hill which is a part of the Heysen Trail. Fortunately a section of native vegetation has been spared in the Second Valley Forest Reserve. Binoculars, cameras and bodies were sheltered beneath coats and trees as a heavy rain shower tracked across the hill. This soon cleared and the sightings resume giving us a total of 24 bird species (21 seen 3 heard ).

Other species not seen earlier: *Nankeen Kestrel, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, Fantail Cuckoo (H), White-throated Treecreeper, Brown-headed Honeyeater (H), Scarlet Robin (2 males, 1 female), Golden Whistler, Welcome Swallow and a Common Blackbird.*

Robinson Hill provided a beautiful (if windy and cold) lunch spot complete with a water tank, benches and a toilet. Thanks to Heysen Trail volunteers. As another grey cloud and rain approached across the valley we packed up on a great morning of birding in extremely pleasant company.

Personally I added three honeyeaters to my 'firsts' list in my field guide to birds of the Mallee to Limestone Coast. However, more importantly I was reacquainted with the sociability of birding in a friendly group. Thanks Fleurieu Birdwatchers and especially Keith who led and recorded.

### **Jude Meacham**



Yellow-faced Honeyeater.  
Photo: **Rob Fairweather**



Female Scarlet Robin.  
Photo: **Rob Fairweather**

## Bullock C.P. Ashbourne—Sunday 13 September.

Eight members arrived at Bullock Hill CP in beautiful weather for a pleasant morning of birdwatching amongst rolling green hills and spring bushland. We parked at the second car park on Haines Rd. and led by Keith walked the sandy, sometimes boggy road towards the creek crossing.

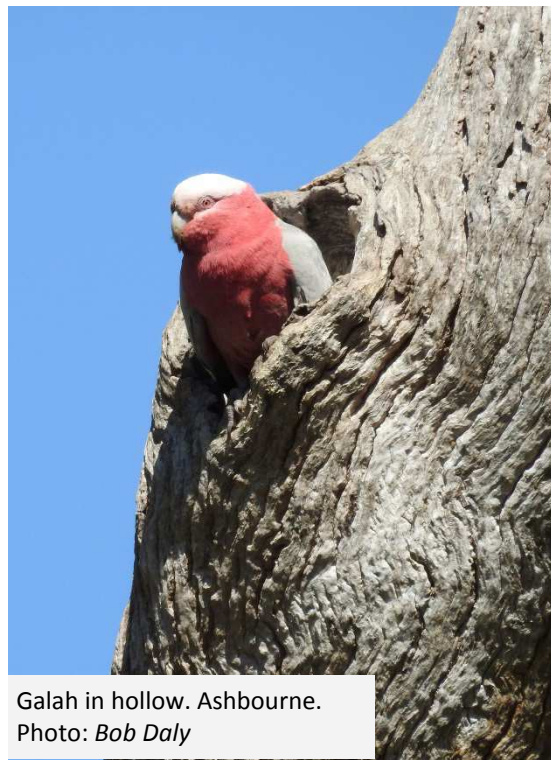
Acacia Paradoxa was in full bloom everywhere and well inhabited with Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Brown Thornbills, New Holland Honeyeaters and Superb Fairy-wrens. A Grey Shrike-thrush could be heard (and later spotted) seemingly following us and maybe seeing us off from its nesting territory.

As the gums grew taller Tree Martins abounded. Musk Lorikeets and Red-rumped Parrots were around and a female Fantail Cuckoo heard. Near the creek were frogs calling and we heard a Kookaburra. Peter led us towards the neighbours dam and where the highlight of the morning was the viewing a pair of Elegant Parrots. One had a distinct orange spot on its front (*not a common sighting apparently.*)

Four Rufous Whistlers high on a gum tree, a lonely White-faced Heron, Silvereye, White-naped & Brown-headed Honeyeaters were seen on the way back. Donkey Orchids, Sun Orchids, Goodenia, Fringe Lily and Boronia took our attention on the ground.

Back to Green Road for a brief walk we found a Galah minding its nesting hollow in a huge old gum tree. Sitting in a green patch for lunch a female or juvenile Golden Whistler or was it a Rufous Whistler was spotted nearby? Total count 41 species.

**Pat Simpson**



Galah in hollow. Ashbourne.  
Photo: Bob Daly



### BirdLife Australia News:

The [Aussie Backyard Bird Count](#) is back with the aim to spot a million birds in seven days!

The birds — and their counters (that's you!) — came out in record numbers for the first Count in 2014, with more than 800,000 birds spotted and many different species seen in backyards across the country. Colourful Rainbow Lorikeets led

the national tally, being spotted most often in NSW, WA, SA and Queensland, while the Australian Magpie led the flock in Victoria and the ACT. In the NT, the Budgerigar was the most commonly seen bird, and the House Sparrow led in Tasmania.

The national focus on birds is extremely important, as data shows Australian backyards have been shrinking since the 1990s, and populations of some of our most familiar birds, such as *Australian Magpies* and *Laughing Kookaburras*, have also declined. With growing national and international concern for the welfare of these iconic birds, we are calling on all Australians to take time this October to participate in the **second** Aussie Backyard Bird Count. [aussiebirdcount.org.au](http://aussiebirdcount.org.au)

**Web Stats for August:    Number of Visits: 184, Page Views: 398**  
**New Visitors: 162 from 9 Countries including Russia and Brazil**





Photo: **Teresa Jack**

### **What is it?**

This seagull caused a stir at the Bluff, Victor Harbor recently.

Some thought it was a Melanistic bird and others thought it was vandalised with paint.

The bird stayed around for a while.

*Lets hope it survived and is a lesson to us all to watch out and do all we can to protect them.*

## **General Meeting Friday 11 September at Goolwa.**

16 members attended and 8 apologies.

Lunch bookings for the 20 year celebration to be held on the Saturday 26 September at Victor Hotel confirmed with 30-40 people booked.

Informal affair planned with a speech from Judith Dyer on the history of the FBW Club.

Win highlighted the Campout plans for the 18 October at Pt. Augusta and currently over 30 people have indicated they will be going. It is not *too* late if anyone else wants to come along.

*Birds in Backyard* promotion material received from BirdLife and Wendy has booked the Alexandrina Council Library to display it on the 5-9 October with Bird Site Brochures of Victor and Alexandrina Council Areas. Goolwa Primary School approached to educate year 5,6,7 on birds in their back yard and to get them interested in nature. Bob and Wendy to present a slide show for the students showing local common birds. A sub-committee formed to organise Outings for next year. Keith to lead the group and present the plan for publication ready for the February Newsletter.

Christmas Break-up to be held at Strathalbyn in December and local members to assist with catering.

Suggestions for the Twilight Outing in January made. TBC later.

Next Meeting in November to be at Willunga Natural Resource Centre. With only 4 General Meetings per year this will be a trial to see if we continue to split the 2 venues equally as many members find Goolwa a long way to travel.

Win talked about the success of Tolderol and the plans to increase delivery of water to more basins this coming season. Their recent open day attracted over 70 people. **Birds SA. donated \$1000 towards the project. Bird surveys will continue and FBW members invited to partake.**

### **Presentations:**

Sylvia Clark Project Officer for DEWNR on Community Monitoring and Citizen Science. *Sylvia outlined the NRM project to encourage people to use the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin (SAMDB) monitoring portal for recording bird surveys. This database allows anyone easy access to all data entered by all users of the system. This, it is hoped, will aid in the Citizen Science use of bird data in the same way that water quality data has been collected and used over the last twenty years. A similar system has also been set up for bat data.*

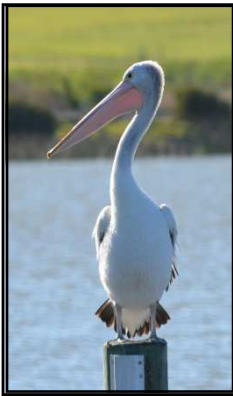
Neil Cheshire talked about Donald Trounson who died at the age of 103 and left his large collection of 40+ bird books to the Victor Harbor Library who no longer want them. These books are available for members free of charge. Please ring Neil 8552 7904.

Neil then showed us his recent birding trip in Southern India with it's most beautiful coloured and varied birds.

Supper supplied by Yrena and some books were distributed.



Bustards on the Nullarbor.  
Photo: **Graham Mountford**



## Fleurieu Birdwatchers

John Smith

### New design for name badges.

If you would like a new badge please email FBW or phone 8555 0634 and Bob can print it for you. You can reuse the old plastic holder or order a new one.

### Recent Sightings:

*The Waders are arriving.*

32 Eastern Curlews sighted by Teresa on York Peninsular with one lone Whimbrel. (photo) Denzel noted two Black-chinned Honeyeaters in Port Elliot. A single White-necked Heron was seen at Dunn's Lagoon, Currency Creek and one at Meadows. Two Fairy Terns and a Darter at the Hindmarsh River Estuary and 11 Cape Barren Geese over Willunga. Two Peregrine Falcons at Kings Beach Victor Harbor. Peter Gower reported a Grey Shrike-thrush nesting on a cupboard right by his back door.

Eastern Curlew (large bird)  
Whimbrel (small bird)  
Photo: Teresa Jack



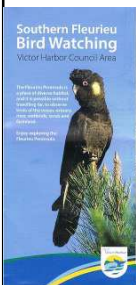
### New Birding Brochure.

**Alexandrina Council** has just published their new brochure on Bird Trails for their district.

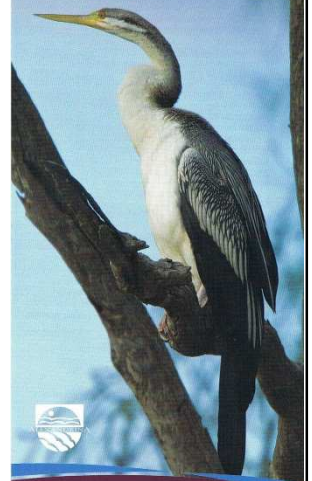
It includes Wetland and Bushland Trails with a colour coded map covering the area from Goolwa, Strathalbyn, Milang, Hindmarsh Island, Mt. Compass and Langhorne Creek. They are available for tourists to pick up from the Information Centres and we have some to distribute through our members.

**Victor Harbor Council Birding** brochures are also available in local Information Centres and very popular with visitors. *It is a way of promoting Birdwatching Tourism for the Fleurieu region.*

It is possible to travel 50-60 kms and experience a large range of habitats covering the coast, river, estuaries, wetlands, bushland and farmland with a number of Conservation Parks and Reserves along the way.



#### Alexandrina Bird Trails



[www.visitalexandrina.com](http://www.visitalexandrina.com)

A Collared Sparrowhawk attacking a Starling at a garden in McLaren Vale.

*It flew off 15 minutes later still holding the dead bird.*

*One down and thousands more to go!*

*Thanks to Fay and Joyce for this great photo and the good news of their nesting box being used by the Eastern Rosellas again this season after chasing the Starlings out.*





## Langhorne Creek and Tolderol Wednesday 23 September.

On a cool sunny morning 11 members met at the Frank Potts Reserve Langhorne Creek. This Reserve is studded with mature eucalypts and is a favourite free overnight camping site. After a brief outline of the morning's planned activities, we travelled in convoy to the nearby Langhorne Creek cemetery which is fringed by a small band of natural bush. From the start we were bombarded by dozens of large mosquitoes, so there was much waving and swatting during the rest of the visit! The bird life was active and we recorded 31 species including Variegated Fairywren, Rufous Whistler and White-browed Babbler.



After morning tea Keith led the group to the Tolderol Game Reserve, a protected area on the north-western side of Lake Alexandrina about 11 km south-east of Langhorne Creek. The game reserve was proclaimed in 1970 "as an experimental area for growing a variety of waterfowl food crops, in particular three-cornered bulrush" with duck shooting permitted during open seasons.

Once inside the Reserve we downsized to 4 vehicles to traverse the narrow interconnecting paths between the waterways. At stops along the route we saw many water birds including Whiskered Terns, Hardheads and Pacific Black Ducks and a large flock of Straw-necked Ibis. Amongst the lignum were several Golden-headed Cisticolas including a male in breeding plumage. (A first for me).

The group identified 3 Great Crested Grebes on Lake Alexandria, when 2 kayaks appeared out of nowhere. The two occupants had been kayaking from the Victorian border for the previous 23 days! They were keen to find the nearest town and we told them Milang was 10km away so they kept on going.

It was a successful day with 38 species counted. Just before returning to the main Langhorne Creek road, a sleepy Lizard and a frisky Brown Snake were basking on the dirt road, a sign of the warmer weather to come.

*Lynn Maxwell*



This one had us all guessing!

*What do you think it is?*



**T-Shirt Designs** If you would like some really stunning bird T-shirts for summer or other products featuring wildlife, check out Alison Green Designs. [alisongreendesigns.com.au](http://alisongreendesigns.com.au) Alison's range are genuine handmade Australian products from 100% Australian cotton or ethically grown imported organic cotton. All the wildlife designs are Alison's own work, and her birds are quite unique and special. She is about to create new designs featuring endangered wildlife and \$5 from each sale will go to wildlife organisations. The Hooded Plover is the first of the endangered bird series and I have the first of the line.  
*Verle Wood*

## 20 year Celebration of the FBW Club - Saturday 26 September at Victor Hotel.

### HOW IT ALL BEGAN:

The South Coast Birdwatchers (later to be the Fleurieu Birdwatchers) formed in early 1995 after an interest meeting called on 13<sup>th</sup> January of that year. Twenty-five people attended with 11 apologies. A Steering committee was formed comprising Bruce and Judith Dyer, Denzel Murfet, Pam Crancher, Rosalie Sharpe and Kate Bruce.

A schedule of meetings and field outings, very similar to that used today was established. Pam Crancher meticulously recorded our activities as the first Editor of 'birdwatch'. By years end we had 35 members with 27 newsletters being distributed in January 1996. Members listed in 1995 that many present day members may remember were Paula Rawson, Kit Smith, Rosalie Sharpe, Anna Markey, Don Overall, Jim and Maria Marsh, Dick and Jill Doyle, Gaynor Jones and Judy Jones.



In early 1996 we were joined by Ann Turner, who was our Publicity Officer extraordinaire for quite a few years. 1997 saw Jenny Fontenot, Verle and Collin Wood and Liz Barry. Marg Kitto and Mary Haywood from Clayton joined us - Mary established our presence on the web in early 2002. In 1998 Verle took over as editor of 'birdwatch' and continued in this role until Bob and Wendy took over in 2011. During 1998 we were joined by Edith St George and Jean Boomer, Mark and Belinda Filkin and Sarah (our first junior member) and Brian Ginno who served on our committee and as President, Treasurer and committee person over a number of years.



1999 brought Geoff and Colleen Evan, Bruce Riglin and Elizabeth Wilson, Phyl & John Whellam and Elaine and Peter O'Shaunessy. 2000+ brought the Gilberts, Jefferys, Ashfields, Dreyers, Mountfords Fay Lush and Joyce West - all of whom are still members today. It also brought Ray and Val Laird who as President and Secretary of our group for several years made an enormous contribution to the group.

Some of the activities of the early years included involvement in the Goolwa Xmas Pageant, a weekend seminar with Joan Paton OAM, the development of the original Goolwa Effluent Ponds birdwatching facilities, our Xmas BBQs at the Goolwa barrage and a birding trip across the Barrages (the latter two by courtesy of Jim Marsh), several boat trips

down the Coorong, 2 bus trips to the St Kilda Salt Fields, a trip to Monarto Zoo, the development of our display boards and our brochure "Birdwatching on the Southern Fleurieu" which was launched in 1999 and the Fleurieu Encounter seminar organised by Ray & Val. And what about those annual dinners with Elaine's Quiz?

Campouts have always been a major event each year, introducing members to birds not seen in our own area with the first at Dangalli CP in 1996. In 1997 we camped at Eremophila Park near Wai-kerie visiting Banrock Station and Calperum CP. In 1998 Naracoorte (the Caves, Bool Lagoon and Bourne's Birds) followed by Blanchetown, Burra, Morgan, and Tanunda.

Our group was a very vibrant group in those earlier years and remains so to this very day. It has grown and evolved over the years. People have come to our group and stayed, many have contributed greatly to the organisation of the group, many have left much richer for the experience with a new knowledge and



understanding of the wonder, the beauty and the diversity of our bird life and their needs. For me it has been an enriching experience, an enormous learning curve with many wonderful relationships formed along the way. It has been a very rewarding and wonderful 20 years. I wish the group many more successful years and I thank you all for your friendship.



*Judith Dyer*

**All Photos : Chris Wastell**