



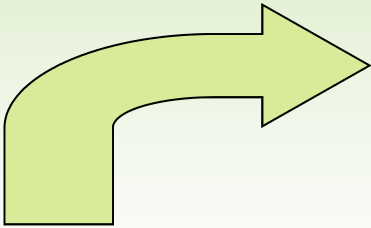
October 2016

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc.

ISSN 2206-4761

Outings



Reminders

**"Flourishing on the Fleurieu"
Event at Signal Point.**

Wed 9 Oct. 10am to 2.30pm.

Come along and see what is available for retirees. The Fleurieu Birdwatchers will have a stand and would like your participation.

LARATINGA BIRDFAIR

SUNDAY 23 OCTOBER 2016.

BALD HILLS RD. MT. BARKER.

**10AM-5PM. BIRD WALKS ETC. IF
YOU ARE NOT AT THE CAMPOUT**

The Annual Campout

Program page 4.

Please print your copy.

Saturday 8 October, Hindmarsh River Estuary, Victor Harbor

Cnr Hindmarsh Road and Wattle Avenue, VH

35°32'39" S 138°37'39" E

Friday 11 November, General Meeting 7.30pm

Goolwa Anglican Church Hall

Guest Speaker: Peter Maxwell—Antarctica

Sunday 13 November, Scott C.P Currency Creek.

Gould's Rd. 1st Car Park, off Deep Creek Rd.

35°24'22" S 138°44'17" E

Wednesday 23 November. Granite Island and the Bluff.

Causeway entrance, Victor Harbor.

35°33'24" S 138°37'29" E

Sat. 3 December. Oscar W Trip, Goolwa Wharf.

4.15pm for 4.30pm Departure - return 6.30pm

Bookings essential. Phone 85550634 or email FBW



Jacky Winter at Brown's Rd. Monarto
Photo: *Jennifer Hiscock*

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 or phone 8555 0634

Website: www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org

Newsletter: Contact email: fleurieubirds@gmail.com


Outing— Private Property at Currency Creek— Sat. 13 August.

Twelve members met at Myrtlegrove Rd, Currency Creek on a cool but mainly sunny morning. We were looking forward to visiting the private property originally known as “Jarnu” and now owned by Steve Gilbert and his family. The good winter rains had brought on flowering of some of the gums and lower shrubs enhancing prospects for a good birding morning. At the beginning of our walk through the more vegetated part of the property the photographers in our group took several photos of a couple of Elegant Parrots and a pair of very vocal Rufous Whistlers. There was a lot of Mistletoe growing on the gum trees and we were pleased to find a number of Mistletoebirds present. On the fence line we saw Hooded Robins, 2 males and a female and a couple of Dusky Woodswallows flying overhead. The


lower ground cover included Flame Heath, Correas and several species of Orchids were flowering, as were several Xanthorrhoeas (Grass trees) attracting the New Holland Honeyeaters.

Near the completion of our walk Steve the owner met up with us and discussed his program for further re-vegetation of the property. Other birds that came to our notice included Tree Martins, Red-browed Finches, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Yellow-rumped and Yellow Thornbills, Superb Fairy-wrens and a couple of Striated Pardalotes. Overhead were flocks of Galahs, White and Straw-necked Ibis and a Brown Falcon and Nankeen Kestrel. We finished with lunch at the Currency Creek Lions Club reserve. The bird-count resulted in a total 37 species with 2 heard.

We thanked **Steve Gilbert** for allowing us to visit his property and Wendy for leading the outing. **Keith Jones**



Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo
Photo: *Bob Daly*



Brown Falcon
Photo: *Bob Daly*

Photos and bird records taken on the day were sent to Steve and we have been invited back for further surveys next year.

Hindmarsh Island Landcare Birdlife Australia Grant.

The 19th Beacon site was the location for a \$5,000 grant which we called :


“Improving the Biodiversity for OBPs at the 19th Beacon site, Sir Richard Peninsula, River Murray Estuary.”

The Green Army put in 2,500 plants of 5 species early March and when they monitored the survival rate of these plantings in late May they found that some had been drowned by the high tides. Water-logging had occurred several times since they planted them between March – May 2016.

Unfortunately since then there has been several more serious inundations of the site and the barrages have been open, which probably means that survival rates are even lower than we thought earlier in the year.

HILG will replant these areas next year and hope that the flooding will not be as severe as it was this year.

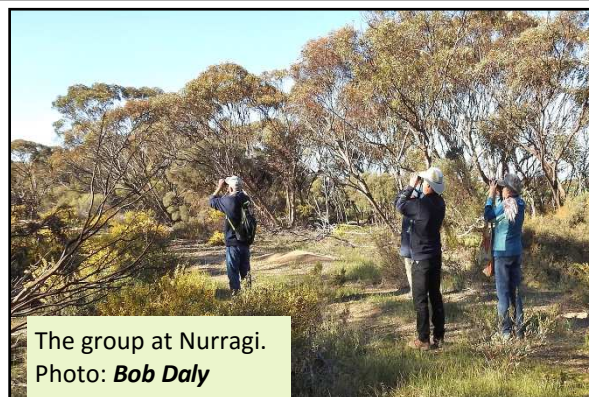
Richard Owen



Swans amongst the plantings at Beacon 19. Photo from *Richard Owen*

Outing—Nurragi Reserve Thursday 25 August.

Eight members started the morning at the John Eckert re-vegetation area on the Nurragi Road. The weather was clear and sunny with blue sky and light cloud, but quite chilly. There was not a breath of wind and we soon warmed up as we started our walk in the direction of Milang. The old railway line, now a re-vegetated corridor of native flora connecting Milang to Sandergrove was in great colour with abundant small wattle bushes flowering in bright yellow and some of the gum trees were in full bloom, attracting a variety of birds. Quite a few other smaller native plants were also thriving with good rainfalls early in the season.



The group at Nurragi.
Photo: **Bob Daly**



Singing Honeyeater
Photo: **Russell Creed**

One of our early sightings was a Brown Falcon flying low and soon we noticed a variety of Thornbills and Honeyeaters. Other birds easily seen were Crimson Rosella, Musk Lorikeet, and Silvereye. We dispersed a little as we quietly wandered along giving an opportunity to step off the main pathway to see small areas of re-vegetation along the way. As we retraced our way back we came across another member who had missed the start, but had followed in the correct direction to find the main group. Returning to the John Eckert area we utilized the two wooden park benches that provided seating for our morning coffee. The bird count came to 25 sighted and 2 heard. Some of us then left for home while the remainder went on to Milang for lunch.

*Thanks to Wendy for leading us on the day. **Russell Creed.***

Outing— Brown's Road, Monarto Sunday 11 September.

On a still and fine sunny morning five members met at the new carpark along Browns Rd. As we began our walk we were welcomed by a Hooded Robin and a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater that were perched on a dead tree, but they left before we could get a photo.

There were four Choughs and the regular New Holland Honeyeaters and Wattlebirds.

Some highlights include the four nesting Choughs in different places, four Jacky Winters that obligingly hung around so we could all get photos and Purple-crowned Lorikeets feeding young and a pair of Mallee Ringnecks.

The real bonus of the morning was seeing four Diamond Firetails feeding on the ground. A first for three members and a bonus for the rest.

Total for the day was 36 species.

As we sat down for lunch with all the mozzies, a party of horse riders arrived, then a bicycle race passed through the park, so we were lucky to get our bird watching in early. *Yrena Mountford.*

Photo of Diamond Firetails by: G. Mountford.

Photos of Jacky Winters taken at Monarto were queried for their ID as it was thought they might be female Hooded Robins but jury was undecided.



Bookings for the Oscar W trip planned for our end of the year break-up on Saturday 3 Dec. will be taken shortly. You can invite friends to come along too.

The cost for the private charter will be approx. \$30 each if we get 27 people attending. If we get more it reduces. The boat can take 45 people. FBW will provide meat and members to provide either a salad or desert to share. Register by email FBW or phone Wendy 85550634.

Please send an email or phone 85550634 if you intend going but you only pay on the day.



Brolgas at Piccaninnie Swamp.
Photo Bob Daly

Campout Plans. 21—24 October.

Friday—Meet at the Kywong Caravan Park at 3 pm for a local walk along the Glenelg River. After dinner meet at 7pm in the Community Hall for an informal session and members get-together. The hall is adjacent to the Nelson Information Centre and we have hired it for both Friday and Saturday nights.

Saturday— 8.30am Meet at Discovery Bay by the Estuary Beach for the 2.5 km loop walk

around Livingston Island. This short easy walk takes in views of the river estuary. Allow 2-3 hours bird watching in the area including Nelson township. After an early lunch meet at 1pm and drive to Princess Margaret Rose Caves.

Option of a 30 minute cave tour for anyone who would like a guided tour—cost \$17 or \$15.50 for group 10. Several easy bush walks can be taken from here with views of the Glenelg River for the rest of the group. If time allows there is an option of a short drive to the Penambol C.P. and Caroline Sinkhole where you may see Wombats. [We did.]

Meet at 5.30 pm for BBQ tea [BYO] at the new picnic area by the Info Centre then onto the hall for our guest speaker Bob Green from Mt. Gambier. He will talk about Conservation Projects in the local district.

Sunday—8.30 am. Meet at the Info Centre and drive to Pick Swamp. Bob Green will unlock the gate for us. Picaninnie Swamp is flooded out and may not be accessible. We will drive on to Port McDonald and Cape Northumberland for coastal birds and scenery. After lunch at Pt. Mac. we can do a short bush walk/bird watch in the Germein Reserve opposite Adam Lindsey Gordon's Cottage.

Meet at 5.20pm [Vic time] for the Boat Cruise on the Glenelg River which includes our dinner.

The area around Nelson has a lot of places to visit and it will be worthwhile staying an extra day or two longer to appreciate the river, coast and bush. A trip to the Gannet Rookery at Portland is worthwhile and can include Cape Bridgewater and Lakes. We discovered Mt. Richmond half way to Portland is well worth a visit for a short walk in the pristine native forest. No set plan for Monday as some will be driving back home. Others can choose a location. Bool Lagoon is full this year and could be visited on the way there or back.



All plans are flexible and it is up to individuals to set their limit. We hope you enjoy the area.

For enquiries contact :

Bob 0421376016

Wendy 0414248648

or email FBW.

Extract from the AGE Newspaper.

The elusive Night Parrot had laid 2 eggs in a ground nest but a few days later scientist discovered it had been raided. Thinking it could be a fox or a wild cat they sent off remains from an egg shell for forensic testing. It was discovered the culprit was a natural predator, a King Brown Snake. A satellite tracker on one of the birds revealed it travelled 40 kms at night to feed. Scientists are now trying to work out how best to protect this almost 'extinct' bird in it's own habitat. Until further studies are done on it's behaviour and food requirements it may be hard to determine the best option...

Meeting— Friday 9 September at Goolwa Church Hall— Items of interest:

20 members attended and a few apologies received.

Treasurers report showed we have a balance of just over \$3,000 with minor expenses this year.

FBW's have been successful in their application to **Flourishing on the Fleurieu Event** to be held at Signal Point-Goolwa on Wednesday 19 Oct. from 10am to 2.30pm to show case what retirees can do in the area. Neil, Wendy and Bob will set up our display for all to see.

Birds SA Bird Fair at Laratinga Sunday 23 October will be attended by Win Syson who can represent FBW on the day as other members will be at the Campout on that date. [Next year we will try NOT to clash].

Campout program will be published in the next Newsletter. Around 30 people have registered to attend. It is not too late if you are still interested in booking. Contact Wendy 85550634 or email FBW.

Donation to Tolderol for it's maintenance. It has been suggested by Wendy we donate \$500 of our funds to support their ongoing ground work. Members showed hands to support this.

The Xmas breakup trip on the Oscar W was popular with the members present. [See note on page 3]

Twilight outing for January suggestions were Scott CP, Beyond Wetlands and Watson's Gap-to be decided. Photograph Workshop at Gluepot 8-9 Oct has vacancies if anyone interested. Contact Gluepot direct.

Teresa Jack said the new **Bird Atlas Portal** for reporting Bird sightings with Birdlife Aus. is user friendly.

A request was made to the Secretary to write to the Alexandrina Council on the **poor state of the Kessel Rd.**

Ponds. The area looks very neglected and no water has been released into the main pond all Winter.

Presentation by Bob Green [former employee of Salisbury Council] on the development of the Salisbury Wetlands. Bob gave an interesting talk on the hydrology of the Adelaide Plains. He stressed the importance of planting the right species in suitable soil types in the areas of wetland. This is to clean and filter the storm water and slow the rush of water into the ponds before it is discharged into the sea. The ecologically sensitive area of the Mangrove habitat is so important for the breeding of fish and crustacean species.

This project has required extensive engineering with

46 sites in the Salisbury Council area using storm water retention dams, weirs, sacrificial ponds and swales etc. to reduce the flow. The water has to be stored over a 10 day period before it can be released as *Clean Water* and used for public parks and other irrigating projects.

The bird life has benefited from the newly created habitats and people have taken advantage of the numerous walking trails around the ponds. The Council gets revenue for the sale of the water to commercial businesses in the area. All up a winning solution for all, saving wasted water that previously flowed out to sea.

The Salisbury Council has been educating other international and interstate officials of their approach to managing STORM WATER in an environmental way.

Bob has given us some pamphlets on the St. Kilda Mangrove Trail, The Paddocks Wetlands, Hills and Gullies of the Para Escarpment, Dry Creek Linear Park, Greenfields Wetlands and Stormwater Management. Let us know if you would like any of this information or if you would like to visit the area.



Please report the sighting of leg-flagged Latham's Snipes.

Wild Bird Society of Japan (WBSJ) and Birdlife International launched a project to study Latham's Snipe's migratory route and identify their important stopover and wintering sites for their conservation.

Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) is one of waders breeding mainly in Hokkaido in Japan. The males perform a unique display flight making sounds like thunder with beating their tail feathers. They migrate to eastern Australia and stay there during their non-breeding season, but little is known about their migration routes. To reveal where Latham's Snipe fly through and stop and to identify important sites for conservation of the species, we placed metal rings and leg-flags to 102 individuals of Latham's Snipe at Yufutsu plain during July 2016. We also attached platform transmitter terminals (PTTs) for satellite tracking to 5 Latham's Snipes.

We are seeking reports on sightings of flagged Latham's Snipes. Combination of flags and metal band as below:
Right tarsus (lower right leg): 2 blue flags (some birds are bearing engraved leg flags)
Left tarsus (lower left leg): metal band.

If you spot a Latham's Snipe with leg-flags, please report the following information to us.

Wild Bird Society of Japan (WBSJ)

Maruwa Bld. 3-9-23 Nishi-Gotanda Shinagawa Tokyo,
Japan 141-0011

Fax: +81-3-5436-263 with

Your name address and e-mail contact,

Date and Time,

Location, lat. / long., Environment,

Position and colour of flags.

Characters on the flag (if they are marked, they should be 0M-9M, 0N-9N, 0L-9L or 0P-9P in white)

Photographs (if you have any)



Latham's Snipe photo by **Peter Gower**

Regular Snipe counts are being conducted. If you would like to assist please contact: **Richard Chamberlain**, email : thechad_022@hotmail.com

Glossy Black-Cockatoo Annual Census.

If you would like to help count Glossies on Kangaroo Island the dates and locations for this year are as follows:

6th Oct – De Mole river region

7th Oct – Middle River

8th Oct – Stokes Bay

9th Oct – American River and Penneshaw

Please join us from 3pm till dusk on any of the above evenings to count Glossy-Black Cockatoos and help find out how many young are out there from this breeding season.

You can bring your own transport, otherwise we will have car-pooling options from Kingscote.

No experience required.

Please contact me by **Friday 30 September** if you would like to participate and I'll get all the details to you, and feel free to forward this on to anyone you think would be interested. **Would love to see you there!** ☺

Karleah Berris (DEWNR) email Karleah.Berris@sa.gov.au or phone **85534438**



Winter Shorebirds at the Murray Mouth and adjacent Goolwa and Middleton Ocean Beaches. Report by *Keith Jones*.

We've all just experienced some very wet and windy winter months here in SA. How have the shorebirds fared at the Murray Mouth over this time ?

Many of the migratory waders that we see in the Coorong during our summer months have left to breed in the Northern Hemisphere's summer in the tundra of Siberia and Alaska. However, this last winter, a small flock of about 20 Bar-tailed Godwits have been seen at the edge of the sand bank adjacent to Bird Island (between Hindmarsh and Mundoo Islands) as well as on the sand banks in the Goolwa Channel, immediately to the west of the Murray Mouth. In years when their food supply is insufficient, these normally migratory birds don't gain enough body fat to attempt their massive migration, and so, they over-winter in our sheltered waters such as the Coorong Lagoon. During this time, other resident shorebirds conserve their energy by forming roosting flocks at the Mouth. For example, we've seen up to 60 Pied Oystercatchers resting at low tide in the same areas where we saw the Bar-tailed Godwits. However, by early September, many of the Pied Oystercatchers had left these sand banks, probably to find nesting areas in other parts of the Coorong Lagoon. A couple of adult pairs remained around Bird Island, a reported nesting area for them. Earlier during the winter, inter-mingled with the Pied Oystercatchers were a couple of Sooty Oystercatchers; however, they were more commonly found along the Goolwa and Middleton Beaches, in small flocks of up to 10 birds. Often, they were well camouflaged amongst the washed up seaweed. Small numbers of Red-capped Plovers and a flock of about 30 Red-necked Avocets also overwintered on the sand flats inside the Murray Mouth. The other seabirds commonly seen on the flats have been large roosting flocks of non-breeding Crested and Caspian Terns.

This winter brought extremely high tides to the Murray Mouth estuary, with water often encroaching into the sand dunes and samphire vegetation at Hindmarsh and Bird Islands. How did the shorebirds cope with these extreme conditions? By observing their tracks, it appeared that birds such as Pied Oystercatchers moved up to the edges of the sand dunes and the muddy areas of the samphire beds to roost. However, we also noted the tracks of foxes in these areas, too, suggesting potentially higher vulnerability of these birds to this type of predation at this time of the year.

The other factor that probably influences where and when shorebirds occur at the Murray Mouth is the amount of freshwater (i.e. environmental flow) passing through the Barrages. This winter, with the heavy rains over much of the Murray-Darling catchment area, we've seen some of the Barrages opened up for the first time in about 3 years. This resulting freshwater in the Murray estuary combined with the exceptionally high tides has dramatically altered the shape and size of the sand flats inside the Mouth. In years of low flows through the Barrages, (such as in 2013 – 15), these sand flats became very extensive, resulting in large areas available for roosting and feeding for resident shore birds, such as Pied Oystercatchers. However, in 2011 and 2012, when high environmental flows passed through the Barrages, the sand flats were flooded, and greater numbers of Pied Oystercatchers were seen along the Middleton and Goolwa Ocean Beaches.

This interchange of the shore birds between the inside waters of the Murray Mouth and the adjacent ocean beaches is fascinating to observe over the long term. Also, it shows how important it is to protect both estuaries and ocean beach habitats for these birds. The effect of steadily increasing human disturbance, such as the increased recreational harvesting of Goolwa Pipis (cockles), off-road vehicles (ORVs) and generally, more usage of the beaches, on the feeding, roosting and nesting areas of our shorebirds should not be under-estimated. Further reading about the Oystercatcher movements on our southern Fleurieu coast can be found at : <http://aws.org.au/Stilt-68>, p. 31 – 39.



Pied Oystercatchers on the sand flats near Bird Island, Murray Mouth, July, 2016 *K. Jones*



Pied Oystercatcher Photo: *A Houghton*



Sooty Oystercatchers Photo *K. Jones*

Peter and Annie Owen's trip up North Queensland to the Iron Range, Aug 2016.

The Iron Range. It's a name I kept hearing about. Some out of the way place up Cape York way that was full of rare and exotic birds. The lure was too strong to resist and in mid August Annie and I found ourselves at Laura the last of the blacktop on the Cape York road.

On paper we only had some 550 km's to our destination, but we kept hearing horror stories of the road conditions that proved correct. We started bumping our way north spending as much time in the adjacent storm water gutter rather than putting up with the corrugations on the road.

Our first stop was Artemis Station—a reliable place to find the Golden Shouldered Parrot. Thanks to owner Sue Shepherd we found a dozen the next morning at a small dam. They left soon after and Sue was able to find them about 1Km away feeding on the ground. Sue is a real bushie. Born at Ravenshoe in the Atherton Tablelands she has never been to Brisbane. She reckons that Cairns is bad enough for her!

Last overnight stop before Iron Range was at the Archer River Roadhouse where Diesel was only \$2 a litre!

All was forgiven the next morning when I awoke to find a pair of strange birds in a tree 50 meters from the van. I was ecstatic to find my number one target the **Palm Cockatoo**.

The next day after even more corrugations and creek crossings we arrived in Iron Range. Annie and I were joined by friends Paul and Jenny from the Sunshine Coast. We were met by a mountain of bird calls while we were setting up which didn't stop while we were there. What I didn't realise was that the rainforest canopy was so dense seeing them was almost impossible. We kept hearing the Magnificent Riflebirds and **Yellow-billed Kingfishers** for a week without seeing them.



Other birds like the Green-backed Honeyeater, Yellow-legged Flycatcher, White-faced Robin, Varied Honeyeater, Frilled Monarch and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird all kindly presented themselves for photographing. We were there for a week of hard birding and sore necks. Fortunately Paul knew the location of a nesting tree for the Eclectus Parrot which provided good views of the female with her head sticking out the nest and glimpses of male visitors. We got lucky on our last day when bird guide David (Chook) Crawford pulled up with a carload of birders. At the same moment we heard the Yellow-billed Kingfisher calling again. Ten pairs of eyes staring at the spot but no sighting. Chook hit the bird call button and lo and behold there was the Kingfisher rocketing over to the other side of the campsite. This time we saw it land and had ample opportunity for photos and a good look through the scope. A lovely bird to bring our week to an end.

Trying not to think of the corrugations ahead we turned the car south and 4,350 Km's later found ourselves home again.



Green-backed Honeyeater and Yellow-billed Kingfisher
Photos : **Peter Owen**