

# birdwatch



APRIL 1997

newsletter of the southcoast birdwatchers

## editorial

Those of us with delicate tumms were relieved when the river trip on March 23rd with Jack Miller was cancelled due to the extremely windy conditions! It was also, of course, a great disappointment. I, for one, had been counting the days. However, it is only postponed - till the waders have returned, and the water is like a mill-pond! Refunds are included with this newsletter.

One good result of the cooler weather is that more members may feel like taking advantage of the great Outings that have been arranged for us by our **Working Group**. This is new name of the group replacing the Steering Committee that has been guiding the Club for the last two years. Makes us sound permanent, doesn't it? Members of the Working Group are: *Judith Dyer, Kate Bruce, Denzel Murfet, Chris Wastell, Ann Turner, Gaynor Jones and Judy Jones*. Congratulations, and a big "Thank you!" to all of them.

We are sorry to hear that *Jim Baron* is unwell, and wish him a full and speedy recovery.

***This Newsletter has been delayed until we could tell you about our new venue for Meetings. From Friday, May 9th, our meetings will be at Glendale Christian School in Goolwa.***

## committee

As noted above, we have had to change our Meeting venue. This is because the Anglican Church has advised that the use of their Hall requires that a certificate of Public Liability insurance be shown. We have been grateful to have had the use of the Church Hall, but it is obviously time to move on!

A sub-committee of *Judith, Gaynor and Judy* has started work on an Information Pamphlet, and it is hoped to have a draft ready for the next meeting.

*Chris* is looking into the possibility of producing a Home Page for the Internet.

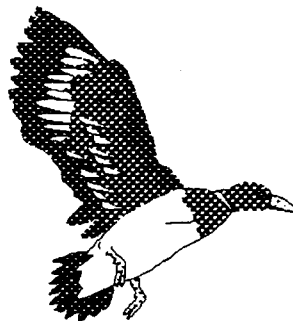
*Ann* has agreed to take responsibility for distributing our information to various news outlets in the area.

Our effective balance at the bank is \$382.40

The next Committee Meeting is on Friday, May 16th, at the Dyer residence.

## for your diary

- SAT, APRIL 26. **GILBERT'S SIDING.** Lunch by the Finnis. Meet corner Strathalbyn and Gilbert's Siding Rds.
- SAT, MAY 3. **SCOTT CS, NORTHERN ENTRANCE.** Meet at park entrance.
- **FRIDAY MAY 9. MEETING. 7.30PM AT GLENDALE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GOOLWA.** (see Editorial). Video of 'Birds of Kakadu'.
- SUN, MAY 11. **BLACKFELLOW'S CREEK, NEAR MT MAGNIFICENT.** Meet corner of Nankita and Enterprise Rds, Nankita.
- WEDS, MAY 14. **COLE'S CROSSING RD, NANKITA.** Meet corner Nankita/ Cole's Crossing Roads.
- SAT, JUNE 7. **MUNTIRI SCRUB, MILANG PROPERTY OF Dr A BLACK.**
- WEDS, JUNE 18. **'WOODCONE' MOUNT COMPASS.**
- SAT, JUNE 28, **NEWLAND HEAD.**



**OUTINGS: MEET AT 8.30AM.  
BRING LUNCH AND CHAIR**

## outings

BLACK SWAMP, 1ST FEB (upstream from Winery Rd to the railway line, on the Tonkin property, Currency Creek.)

The morning started quite cool and overcast with light levels a little difficult for easy viewing. Distractions were the order of the day, mosquitoes making their presence felt - ooch! and slow progress at first as members were waylaid by blackberries to feast. Yum! However, eight members and two potential members enjoyed a very fruitful(!) morning of birdwatching with 29 species sighted/heard. Noteworthy sightings were the Clamorous Reed Warbler, Mistletoebird, a Wedgetailed Eagle soaring above, a Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and of course the Superb Fairy Wren. A few days earlier Judith, Kate, Denzel and friend reconnoitered the winery property on both sides of the road seeing many of the same birds plus a few others. As a result we have sent a letter of thanks to the Tonkin family for permission to enter their property, and have given them a bird list of 37 species seen by our group to date. We will update this for them as time goes by as it is our intention to visit this property again, as seasonal changes could lead to quite an extensive species list  
(*Judith Dyer*)

BULLOCK HILL, ASHBOURNE, FEB 15TH

Eleven members and friends attended on a lovely day, warm and sunny with a cooling breeze.

Thirty-seven species were identified, including a Wedge-tailed Eagle, a family of Golden Whistlers (mum, dad, and young begging for food), Striated and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, and two Southern Whitefaces.

Of particular interest was a group of Rainbow Bee-eaters, including some immatures, with their iridescent colours and flashing flight. For much of the morning the sky was alive with Dusky Woodswallows and Tree Martins whirling about, making counting them a job for an expert! Lunch was eaten under the trees, and then the bird-call was interrupted by a lively party of Scarlet Robins to finish off a very enjoyable outing. (*Rosalie Sharpe*)

SCOTT SOUTHERN BOUNDARY, 12TH MARCH

Yours truly was the only starter for this overcast morning, so I didn't have to say 'shush!' on any occasion! !\* \* I spent an hour and a half, first wandering around the boundary track, then coming back along the lower track bordering the farmland. The boundary track was true to form with little seen except the prolific 'guess what' - can't say how many, as Paula wasn't there to keep count! A party of White-browed Babblers crossed my path, together with a few Fairy Wrens and Rosellas. A female Golden Whistler was seen. However, the lower track proved more worth-while, the highlights being the male Golden Whistler, a lovely male Scarlet Robin and a pair of Crested Shrike-tits who sat in the branches above my head for several minutes chattering away in their scolding manner. My tally: 20 species. (*Judith*)

EFFLUENT PONDS, GOOLWA, 5th APRIL

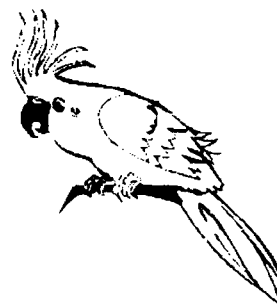
Eight members met at the ponds, with three members on their first Field Trip. What a day we had! The weather stayed fine for us. We saw six Raptors: Whistling Kites, Brown Falcon, Nankeen (Australian) Kestrel, Black-shouldered Kite, Marsh Harrier, and finally a Little Eagle which flew nearly over our heads to give us an excellent view of its under-wings. We saw two Yellow-billed Spoonbills, both Grey and Chestnut Teals, Shovellers and Mountain Duck -making a total of 48 species. Two African Lovebirds were included in our total, but were obviously aviary escapees. Six of us moved on to the cemetery, but only four species were seen, with one more added to our list - a Yellow or Little Thornbill. Four of us went on to Boettcher Rd where after lunch we walked through a good selection of scrub, but due to the strong wind and time of day we added only Striated Thornbill to our list. This made a total of 50 species for the day - well done, everybody! (*Ann*)

BAHLOO GLEN RD, MOUNT COMPASS, 9th APRIL

Six members met at Roadmans Reserve at Mount Compass on a near perfect morning. We didn't get away to our intended location for some half-hour because of the bird interest at the Reserve! A pair of Scarlet Robins was unperturbed by our presence, as was a Grey Fantail. There were many birds aloft including the Grey Currawong.

Most of our time was spent on the property of Gerry and Julie Moller near the far eastern end of Bahloo Glen Rd. This property has a range of habitat including sedge and peat swampland, and low Cup-gum scrub. Our tally was 26 species, including: Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Crescent Honeyeater, Red-browed Firetails, Scarlet Robin, Silveryeye and Yellow Thornbill.

For our lunch-break we returned to the western end of Bahloo Glen Rd to the property of Gael and Terry Maloney. This is four acres of planted garden not yet eight years old, and filled with many varieties of plants, shrubs and trees, some already 20ft high, all designed to attract birds. Gael joined us for lunch and proudly showed us around this piece of Paradise!

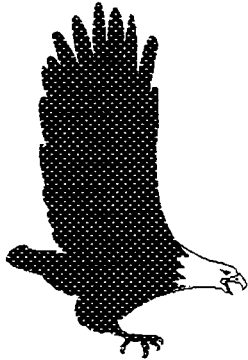


# meeting report

On our Meeting on March 21st, John Gilliland, Senior Consultation Officer with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources told us about the Coorong and Lower Lakes Ramsar Management Plan. This is based on the agreements in an international treaty that recognised the value of wetlands, particularly as waterbird habitats, and aims to protect these areas. Australia is a signatory to the treaty, and thus has a responsibility in law to protect identified wetland habitats. Coorong and the Lower Lakes were recognised as listed wetlands in 1985.

Technical Working Groups are producing Issue Papers on management, and groups like our Birdwatchers are encouraged to have an input. A group already working and concerned especially with bird welfare includes John Eckert, John Carpenter, and David Paton.

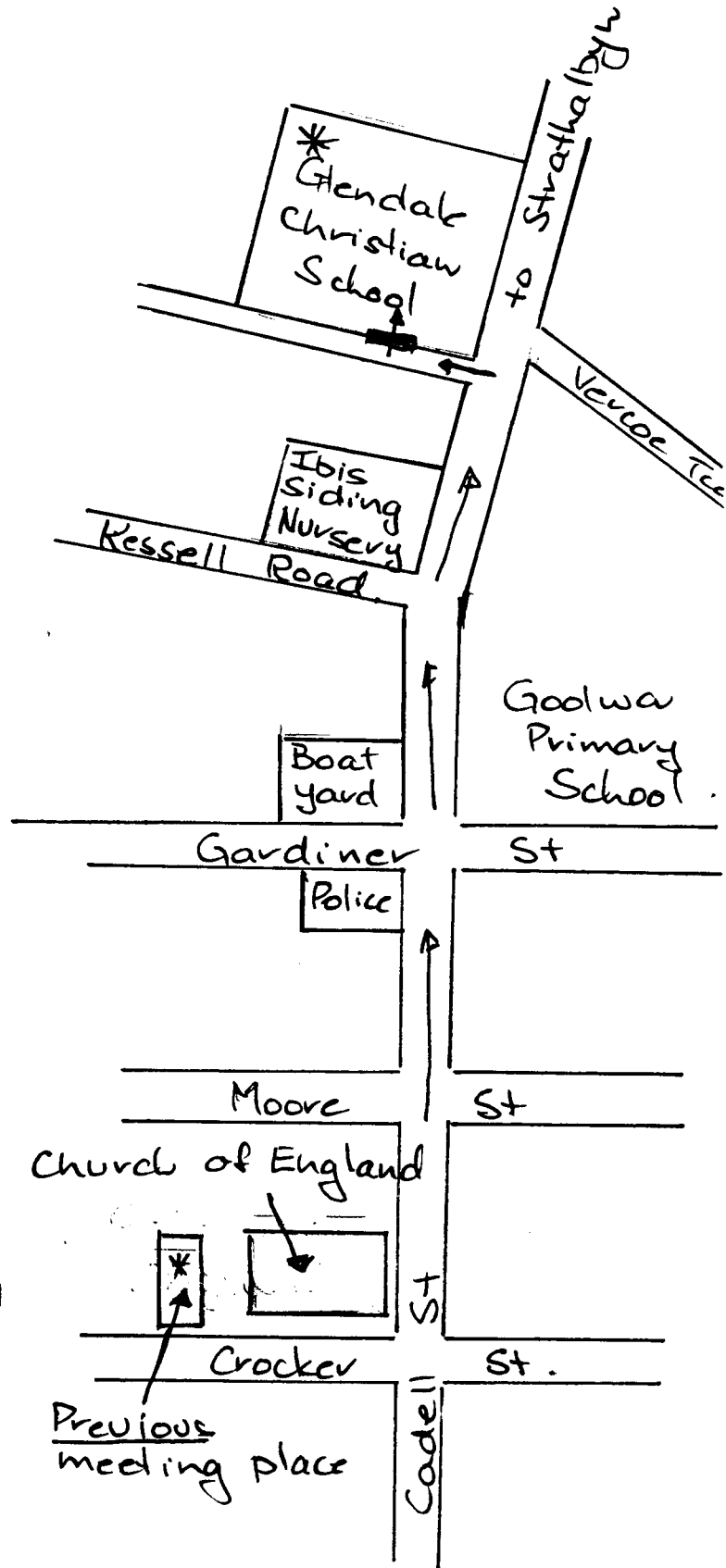
Other areas of concern to the Management Group are Tourism, Water Management, Aboriginal interests, Fishing and Recreational Boating. Advice from all these area is being sought, and every two months a paper will be released on a specific issue. John Gilliland has put our Group down to receive issues relevant to bird welfare. Eventually a management plan for the area will be drawn up and submitted to the State Government.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS, CRAIG MORDAUNT, AND VERLE AND COLLIN WOOD.

A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR FIRST JUNIOR MEMBER, DANIEL KENNEDY. WE HOPE YOU WILL VISIT US OFTEN, DANIEL, WHEN YOU ARE HOLIDAYING IN OUR AREA WITH YOUR GRAND-MOTHER, ANN TURNER.

SOME SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE OVERDUE.  
PLEASE CHECK!



## **My First Solo Jaunt.**

**Judith Dyer**

With my little wagon and camper trailer I set off on the Wednesday morning prior to Easter, first stop Pt Broughton. This was just an overnight stop and a tester for me on how well I could manage my new (to me) set up. I found a drive-through site at the Caravan Park so I reneged on the one area I had least faith in myself eg backing the trailer !!?? Thursday I travelled on to Stirling North and out to Mundallio Station situated at the foothills of the Flinders Ranges adjacent to the Picchi Ricchi Pass. Here I joined with members of the SAOA (SA Ornithological Assoc.) for their annual Easter Campout. We were camped 8 km from the black strip and 4 km past the Homestead. The 8 km took 30 mins. to negotiate with the camper on behind. It was a very rubbly and rough and crossed several dry stony creek beds. Our campsite was along side of a wide creek bed at the very base of the hills presenting a range of habitat for birdwatching, salt and blue bush on the plains and dry scrubland on the foothills. It was a wonderful relaxing weekend with lots of good company and lots of birdwatching. My personal tally was 53 species for Mundallio, and 21 species on a day trip to Mt. Brown CP near Quorn.

An afternoon trip into Pt. Augusta was a highlight, visiting the Arid Lands Gardens. Only 11 species sighted but it was mid afternoon. I suspect there is potential for many more. I recommend it as a stopping off place to stretch the legs if you're travelling through.

The highlight of Mundallio for me was the Chirruping Wedgebill, another ✓!?. Bruce and I had seen the Chiming Wedgebill in WA . Although very similar in appearance the call was quite different and is regarded as a separate species. Some other birds seen, that we do not see in our area, were the White-winged Fairywren, Red-capped Robin, Rufous Fieldwren (*Calamanthus*) and a White-fronted Honeyeater. 'Guess what' I thought I was seeing. !!\*\*?? Champagne and Pancake breakfast on Sunday and a 'Toasted Hot Cross Bun' Luncheon on Monday added to the fun as did sitting around a large campfire every evening for Bird call and other discussions.

The camp broke up on Tuesday AM and I headed across country towards Eremophila Park at Lowbanks just beyond Waikerie. Enroute I stopped off at Orroroo where the Lions Park is set on a creek leading from the town reservoir. The Lions Club has established a walking trail of nearly 3 km along the creek gorge and then up to the dam wall and returning on the alternate side of the creek. My hour long walk produced 17 species of birds including Grey Teal with ducklings on the reservoir, Peaceful Doves cooing, and Spiny-cheeked honeyeaters and Grey Shrike-thrush calling frequently.

After an overnight stay at Burra (where I had to back the Trailer ??) and lunch on the banks of the Murray at Morgan I arrived at Eremophila Park mid-afternoon and was greeted by the owner Stella Mack. The property is 1,000 acres of natural Mallee scrubland. Set deep in the Mallee is a Birdo's Hut which will accommodate 6 to 8 people (or more) and plenty of camping sites close around and some further out. There are toilet and shower facilities and a bush boiler to stoke up with wood to heat the water. Both river and rain water are available. I spent 3 nights camped out there alone about 5 km from Stella's homestead. My friend from Renmark joined me for one day and Stella called a couple of times a day and went out birdwatching with me on one morning. I tallied 32 species for my 3 very peaceful and relaxing days. The highlight was the pair of Malleefowl working their nest. My friend Rubes and I had lunch within 100m of the mound and watch their diligent working of the nest for a couple of hours. I went within 4m of the mound to photograph them in action and they were quite unperturbed by my presence. Stella has since rung me to say she disturbed a chick (about 2 days old) near the nest. It took off vertically like a helicopter and flew away over the tops of the mallee. A noisy flock of Choughs came into the camp to a watering point on several occasions as did Variegated Fairywren, Yellow-plumed, Spiny-cheeked and White-eared Honeyeaters. Many Brown Treecreepers were calling as were the Jacky Winters. I have never seen so many of these little brown birds together, their "peter, peter" call was one of the most prevalent calls that I heard.

I hope I have whetted your appetite for this little patch of scrub as I would like to arrange a Campout for our group there later this year, maybe late Winter of Early Spring. At the next meeting I will call for expressions of interest and ideas on possible timing so that we can book the area exclusively for us for perhaps 3 to 4 days. From there we could possibly do a day trip into the Monash CP which I believe is very rich in Birdlife. How about it !!??\*\* who's with me?