

birdwatch



AUGUST 1997

newsletter of the southcoast birdwatchers

editorial

Cold weather has prevented some members (including me) from attending Outings, although when I receive the Outings Reports I always regret my cowardice! What great birding spots are being found for us. We have to thank Dr and Mrs Black (Muntiri) and Chris Farquhar (Woodcone) for their kindness in providing access to their properties. A glance at the Reports will show just how fruitful ('birdful'?) these sites have been for brave members during the last month. The Working Group is always keen to get suggestions for more areas from members, so have a think about this. It is also proving most valuable to revisit sites at different times of the year to begin to build up extensive records for our area.

The Sept Campout at Eremophila Park promises to be great fun! Please see last page for details



working group

The Working Group met on Friday, July 18th Chris Wastell submitted a structured document for the Effluent Ponds project. Craig Mordaunt accepted an invitation to help on a sub-committee, and both he and Kate have made contributions. This project is being actively pursued.

Birdwatch Medal of the Month goes to Hilary Klompenhouwer for offering to take responsibility for the provision of supper requirements for our meetings, (see Meeting Report, later).

A booking has been made to go to 'Eremophila Park' near Waikerie on the weekend of Sept 20th/21st. Anyone attending doesn't need to confine their stay to those dates but may go earlier and stay later if desired. **This booking must be confirmed, so that members need to make a firm commitment to attend, and please to re-confirm your intention. PHONE ASAP 8555 2736**

Judith will be there Thursday afternoon until probably the next Tuesday. She hopes to fix a trip to Monash CP, and will ask Bob Goodfellow to lead it.

for your diary

SAT, AUGUST 2. **ASHBOURNE AREA.** Meet near the phone box at Ashbourne.

WEDS, AUGUST 13. **HINDMARSH FALLS.** Meet at the Falls in the picnic ground car-park.

SAT, AUGUST 23. **SCOTT CONSERVATION PARK.** Meet in Park on Northern boundary.

FRI, SEPT 12. **MEETING. QUIZ NIGHT.**

SUN, SEPT 14. **PRIVATE PROPERTY AT PARAWA.** Meet by the Community Notice Board at crossing of Range Rd and Parawa and Tunkhead Rds (see attached map).

WEDS, SEPT 24. No outing because of Camp-out.

SAT, OCT 4. **NURRAGI CONSERVATION RESERVE.** Meet at the Milang/Clayton turnoff on the Strathalbyn Rd.

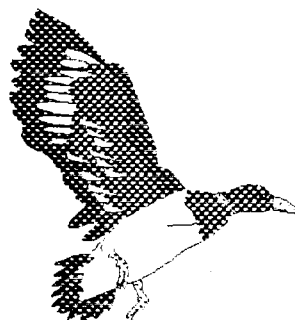
WEDS, OCT 15. **WINERY RD, CURRENCY CREEK.** Meet at Canoe tree.

SAT, OCT 25. **HINDMARSH ISLAND.** Meet on causeway after ferry crossing.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: Fri, at 7.30pm. How about at Eremophila Park?

OUTINGS: MEET AT 8.30AM. BRING LUNCH AND CHAIR

MEETINGS: GLENDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL, GOOLWA, 7.30 pm.



outings

MUNTIRI SCRUB, JUNE 7.

Eleven members experienced a morning of variable weather, but the 40 species sighted made it worthwhile.

Two Blue Bonnet Parrots were seen on the road to the Scrub, and two Mallee Ring-necks were seen later. A single Red-capped Robin gave us a good view of his brilliant plumage, as did two Diamond Firetails perched on a fence. A flock of 10 Australian Shelducks flew overhead, and the sighting of two Black Falcons was a highlight. Purple-crowned Lorikeets were numerous. Five different Honeyeaters were seen including the Yellow-plumed once again.

Elegant Parrots, a Whistling Kite and a solitary Mistletoe Bird were further sightings on an enjoyable morning.

Dianne Shearer

'WOODCONE', JUNE 18

Three hardy souls braved the cold but clear dry morning to be greeted by the sight of a Whitefaced Heron sitting in a tree on the dam on which was a boat, Pacific Black Duck and a Little Pied Cormorant. Very noisy on the bank were Masked Lapwing and Maned Duck. Walking to the other dam higher up we saw Crescent and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, only three New Holland Honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebill, Superb Wrens and a Scarlet Robin.

On the dam an Australian Grebe stayed under water so long we thought we had imagined it. Eventually it turned up again just long enough to confirm the sighting. A Grey Shrike-thrush followed us around calling, but it wasn't until we were having lunch that we saw it. Brown and Striated Thornbills, Golden Whistler and a Wedgetailed Eagle helped make up a total of 34 species. Another satisfactory outing!

Ann Turner

NEULAND HEAD CONSERVATION PARK, JUNE 28.

Ten members met at Dennis Hut at 8.30 am. The air was chilly but the sun was shining. Our aim was to reach the cliff top and look for sea-birds. Before we had gone far we were stopped by many Honeyeaters in the Pink Gums. We spotted seven different species here, with good views of Brown-headed, Yellow-plumed (still in our area), Crescent, and of course New Hollands!

We finally saw the sea after an hour and a half of bird-watching! With the breeze in our faces we searched the sea for the elusive ocean birds. 'Is it a gannet?' goes the cry. Yes! Gannets! We spotted two flying/gliding side by side, a first for a few members. We also managed to make a dot into a Black-faced Cormorant, and some flying white things into Silver Gulls and Terns. It's very difficult to be sure of what's flying past until there is a distinctive flash of some distinguishing feature- which all happens so quickly I often just wonder! 39 species and a very

pleasant park.

Denzel Murfet

TONKINS WINERY, CURRENCY CREEK, JULY 13
A crisp but sunny morning greeted eight members and two visitors who showed up *en masse* at 8.30 am.

At our parking spot we were greeted by eight Noisy Miners which was the start of a good morning's sightings of 56 species.

The area had a good-sized swamp, and it was pleasing to see it had more water than was expected with the recent dry weather. We recorded a number of birds that had not been seen during previous visits. On or near the water we saw: Australasian Grebe, Maned Duck, Australian Ibis, Masked Lapwing and Golden-headed Cisticola. The scattered trees had plenty of new birds for us, with a male Golden Whistler happy to watch us watching him. We also saw Purple-crowned and Musk Lorikeets, and the Marsh Harrier, Australian Kestrel and Black-shouldered Kite. We saw more than 30 Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters, and it will be interesting to see if they stay or return north to breed in Spring.

Our two most pleasing birds were one Crested Shrike-tit, and the Restless Flycatcher which was heard but not seen. The day was enjoyed by all, and it was pleasing to have such a good day of birds for our visitors' first outing.

PS Judith and Ann stayed on after lunch and wandered downstream for an hour. Four more species, not seen in the morning, were added, including the Varied Sitella. Sixty species in total! Wow!

Chris Wastell

NURRAGI CONSERVATION RESERVE, JULY 23.

Four members and one visitor attended. The weather was cool with just a very light drizzle mid-morning. After leaving one car at the Nurragi road end of the most easterly section of the corridor we proceeded towards Milang, parking other cars where the corridor crosses the Milang/Finniss Rd. Before we crossed the stile into the fenced area we had recorded 18 species. On alighting from our cars we were greeted by the persistent calling of a Pallid Cuckoo. It's easy to understand why it's called the 'Brain-fever Bird'! This was followed by the call of the Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo. This call was repeated during the first half of our wandering along the old railway embankment. Was it the same bird following us, or were there a number in the area? Nine species of Honeyeater were seen including numerous Yellow-plumed still in the area, and the White-fronted, which is also a drier-country bird. Has it appeared for the same reasons as the Yellow-plumed, is food short out further forcing them into our area?

We also recorded a Black-chinned Honeyeater which I think was an Immature as its colouring and markings were less distinct. Two banded Plovers chased a flock of small birds overhead before returning to foraging in the

adjoining farmland.

Two Diamond Firetails, a flock of Zebra Finches, and a Southern Whiteface were recorded. Lorikeets were very busy and noisy flying over, - and, as Rosalie so rightly pointed out, it is the Purple-crowned that has the red armpits!

A wonderful morning with a tally of 40 species.

Judith Dyer



meeting report

MONTHLY MEETING, GLENDALE, JULY 11.

Seventeen members and two visitors (Kathy Scott and Franek Savarton) attended, and there were apologies from Kate, Dianne and Maria.

We heard that there had been a good response to the appeal for bird pictures. Gail Moloney's excellent and informative brochure for tourists was shown in mock-up stage, and ways to finance its publication were discussed since our bid for a grant was unsuccessful. If anyone has good ideas on this, please share them!

Judith visited the south-east, and was enthusiastic about a display near Bool Lagoon called 'Bourne's Birds', run by Jack and Pat Bourne in a room on their farm. They show not only mounted birds (about 300!), but also a great egg collection. Please ask Judith for details. Judith also wanted to know if anyone else would like to be included on the mailing list for papers from the Coorong and Lower Lakes Ramsar Management Plan?

Our speaker for the evening was John Eckert, who began by showing superb photographs of local birds from Maurice Street's collection of photos. He then displayed an astounding group of bird skins which he had prepared, pointing out subtle differences between all the local Honeyeaters. One of the most useful aspects for me was the chance to compare sizes of species. I hadn't realised this was so useful in recognition.

Then came the torture session - an exam on recognising bird-skins. We were told that John had included a ring-in, but I didn't take a chance. I labelled all the skins 'Willow Warbler', quite sure that would fix him!. My score was zero. Oh well! (Denzel won the prize - 4/8!)

A fascinating evening. Thanks, John.

SEPTEMBER CAMPOUT

EREMPOPHILA PARK

Our group will have exclusive use of the facilities on the weekend 19 to 22 September. **This booking must be confirmed by 14 August, or sooner.**

please let Judith know NOW!

It is 1 000 acres of privately-owned mallee scrub on Wunkar Rd, Low-banks. Wunkar Rd turns right (south) from the Stuart Highway east of Waikerie, and is posted with a brown Tourist sign. The camping area is about 8km along the right-hand side, and we will sign-post the entrance.

There are abundant level camp sites, two toilets and two showers. Hot water is heated by wood (supplied). There is rainwater, and river water. There are several outdoor cooking stoves (wood supplied).

There is a Birdos hut of three rooms. There are two bedrooms, one double, and the other has two singles and a double bunk. The living room is 24' x 20' with a folding bed. Blowup mattresses could be used here. Hut - users need to bring linen, blankets and food. Crockery and pots are supplied, and there is a kero. frig.

TARIFF:

CAMPING: \$4 PERSON PER NIGHT

HUT: \$30 FOR UP TO 6 PEOPLE

\$4 PER EXTRA PERSON

PHONE JUDITH ASAP 8555 2736