

SOUTHCOAST BIRDWATCH JUNE 1996

Meetings: Anglican Church Hall, Goolwa, begins 7.30pm.

Outings: Meet at 8.30 am. Bring lunch and chairs.

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P.O. Box 403, Goolwa

Report on Meeting, 10th May, 1996, Anglican Church Hall

See the attached report by Kate on the workshop which was in place of our last meeting.

Outings Reports.

Sat, April 13th, Goolwa Effluent Ponds (Bruce).

Fine and calm but threatening weather resulted in only eight members having an enjoyable morning with 29 species sighted. It was also an opportunity to upgrade ideas for our proposal for birdwatching facilities at the site (see separate report). Sightings of note included White-fronted Chat, Goldfinch, Superb Fairy-wren, Black-fronted and Red-kneed Dotterel, Blue-billed and Pink-eared Duck, and a Brown Falcon.

We made it down the road to the Old Goolwa Cemetery before the squall, where we had an excellent sighting of a Barn Owl to complete our day.

Sat. April 27th, Inman River (Rosalie)

A great itinerary and 54 species sighted. Starting at the bridge, then around to the beach by the Caravan Park. Species in those areas included Yellow-rumped Thornbills, a Pacific Gull, Hooded and Red-capped Plovers. We then moved up-river on the town side to the draught-horse paddock, over the foot-bridge and a beautiful walk among the trees and bushes on the river flat behind the Golf Course. A Little Grassbird, Black-chinned Honeyeater and both the Striated and Spotted (Yellow-rumped) Pardalotes were heard. Plenty of Fairy-wrens and Silvereyes; a good sighting of Grey Shrike-thrush and 4 Crested Shrike-tits were the highlights. A brief stop outside the Sewage Works included close-ups of Red-browed Finches (Firetails) then up the road for a wind-up at the Cemetery where the Black-chinned Honeyeater was heard again and the Grey Fantail, White-naped and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Kookaburra and Grey Currawong were added to the list. Thank you Rosalie for the homework that you had very obviously done to make this a most rewarding and enjoyable outing.

Goolwa Effluent Ponds Project

Further progress has been made with the preparation of a rough survey plan of the site, as no plans were available from Council. Our proposal will include an open-fronted viewing shelter on the existing mound and two viewing platforms along the western fence raised approximately 600mm (2ft.); improved Car-parking and all weather access to viewing locations including a pathway along the western fence. Additional screening vegetation and revegetation of the swamp with local species; signage and viewing information.

A submission to Council is now being prepared seeking their agreement in principle and advice on funding and implementation.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions fell due in March and there are a few still outstanding. They remain at \$10 for a single sub. or \$15 for family (2 or more people at the same address). This will be your last copy of 'Birdwatch' unless payment is received soon.

Other Sightings.

Because of the Workshop in place of the last meeting we haven't any sightings to report on except that myself and himself have been hearing Fantail Cuckoos calling consistently in the South Lakes area over the last two weeks and on one occasion had three birds in sight.

Committee Report.

With Denzel away in Borroloola and Chris and Bronwyn house-bound with no front or back door during extensive renovation to their home our committee just managed a quorum for it's last meeting on the 17th. May. Matters discussed were as follows:

- Danggali Camp-out: Several members have indicated that they are interested in a weekend visit (2-4 Days) to Danggali from 27-30th September as reported in our April 'Birdwatch'. We should firm up the list by our July meeting so that the accommodation booking can be confirmed. Ring Bruce (552736) if you want more information.
- Nesting Records: Joan Paton left with us a copy of a 'Nest Record' form with the request that members keep records of any nesting activities that they observe. We suggest that you take several photo-copies of the form attached and submit them at meetings to Denzel who is our Bird Records officer. He will forward them on.
- Publicity: Judith has been asked by Barry Griffin to consider doing a spot on Encounter FM Radio re our group. Tune into 89.3 on Thursday 6th June at 9.30am to hear all about us!! Kate has suggested a publicity board to be used at schools, local exhibitions, public functions etc. to publicise and promote our group. We need a small working party to collect photos, produce relative art work and set a board up. Have we any volunteers for this task??? Contact Kate.
- Resource material: We will endeavour to get a listing of all relevant books, videos and tapes that are available from our local libraries. This will then be tabled at our meetings for your information.
- Thanks: The committee wish to express, on behalf of us all, our thanks to Gaynor for providing accommodation and meals for Joan during the Workshop. Thanks also to EWS for access to the Victor Sewage works.
- Weekday outings: Some members have expressed a wish to resume weekday outings. We would like an indication at the next meeting of how many members would support this.

For Your Diary

If you cannot attend an outing, an apology is the next best thing and would be appreciated.

Sat. June 29th. (Outing)

Hindmarsh Falls. Turn off the Victor Harbor/Adelaide road into the road to Myponga. Meet at the Church hall which is just a couple of hundred metres on. The Falls turn-off is a further 8kms.

Frid. July 12th. (Meeting)

Jim Robinson. Volunteer with the Monarto Fauna Complex will talk on "Birds of Prey". He will be accompanied by Stephen Harper, Officer in Charge of the Complex. (Stephen is the son of our members Lillian and Bob). The Fauna Complex handles all the customs confiscated contraband birds, animals and reptiles and rehabilitates and relocates them. Jim uses Falconry techniques to retain and prepare birds of prey for release back into the wild. It is hoped that he will have two live birds to bring to our meeting.

Sun. July 14th (Outing)

Monarto Fauna Complex. Stephen Harper will give us a talk on the activities of the complex followed by a tour of the establishment. Bring morning tea and/or lunch; while we are in the area so far away from home, it will be an opportunity to do some birdwatching at the Monarto and Ferries McDonald Conservation Parks on the way home. We will depart Goolwa at 8.00am, leaving from the main street in the vicinity of the Anglican Church. For those coming from other areas or those wishing to travel independently the instructions are as follows:

Travel through Strathalbyn and along the Callington Road, turning right at Woodchester and towards the freeway. After crossing the freeway keep straight on for about 2 kms (don't go onto the freeway) and turn right into the Old Princes Highway. (towards Murray Bridge). We will meet at 9.15am immediately before the second railway crossing. Please note this is not the entrance to the Zoo but a private entrance and we will need to be there to proceed the remainder of the way together.

This is a rare opportunity as the Complex is not normally open to the public. Please give us your support and make it a good day.

Sat. Aug. 3rd. (Outing) Details on the back of Kate's report.

Sat. Aug. 3rd. (Outing) Leader: Tanya Littlely and Denzel

Emu-wren Search. Meet at the corner of the Nankita road and Swampy Crescent which is about 1km. in from the Ashbourne road at 8.30am. Bring morning tea/lunch as Tanya will give us a talk about her activities at break time.

Tanya has been involved in studies of Emu-wren in the Nankita/Mt. Compass area for some time and has offered to lead an outing into known sites for this species. This will not be an outing for the faint-hearted as we will be going into swampy areas of sedge and reeds and Wellingtons or very sturdy footwear is required. Old clothes are recommended of the jeans type rather than track material which can attract any prickly vegetation and a change of footwear for after is recommended.

It is hoped to arrange an indoor fall back position if the weather is very poor and Tanya will bring slides and give us a talk. Members not able to undertake the outing will be very welcome to join us at lunch (or earlier if extremely wet) and we will give full details of this at the July meeting or you can check by ringing Judith or Kate prior to the day.

Below is a copy of an article published in the 'Star' on 28th May.

Emu wren volunteer call

Up and coming events in the Mount Lofty Ranges southern emu-wren recovery program include the big emu-wren hunt planned for October.

Teams of people, led by experienced emu-wren searchers, will be combing the Mount Compass/Nankita area for color-banded emu-wrens, subject to landholder approval.

Anyone interested in participating needs no prior emu-wrenning experience, and all help will be appreciated.

A small scale biological survey will be carried out in five to 10 swamps on the Fleurieu Peninsula to gain information on mammals, reptiles, frogs, birds, insects and plants.

The survey will be carried out by the Nature Conservation Society which is funded by the Australian Heritage Commission's National Estate grants program.

The emu-wren project is seeking teams of volunteers who are interested in helping out for the entire week of the survey.

Although the date is yet to be confirmed it is expected to be carried out in November/early December.

The Mount Lofty Ranges Southern emu-wren is a local endangered

species and the recovery program is funded by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency and run through the Conservation Council of SA.

For further information contact project officers Tanya Littlely and Joanne Cutten on (08)223-5155.

Carcases wanted
Fox and cat carcases (fresh if possible) from properties near emu-wren study sites which include Nankita, Cleland Gully, Mount Compass, Yundi, Springmount Road, Willow Creek, Parawa, Finnis, Deep Creek and Illawong Road are needed.

Animals from properties possessing swamps, or adjacent to swamps are particularly important.

The stomach contents of these animals will be examined for remains of emu-wrens including little colored bands that have been around some of the birds' legs.

If you have a carcase, please ring Tanya Littlely or Joanne Cutten on (08)223-5155 or (08)204-2756 and

they will arrange to pick it up. If you are really enthused, remove the stomach and place in a container in the freezer - you may be helping to save an endangered species.

08 223 5155 - 10PM 24H

SOUTHCOAST BIRDWATCHERS Workshop Report 10-11TH MAY

Tutor: Joan Paton AM

Friday evening started with a full house of 21 people and Joan kept our attention with information on how to identify birds with her collection of wings, feet, bills and stuffed birds and also gave us useful information in recording, use of field guides and binoculars. The evening ended with supper and a selection of Joan's wonderful slides of birds.

Armed with the knowledge of why water birds have legs set well back, how the wing, beak and claw shapes differ and fit the lifestyles of various species, advice never to rely on bird-calls alone for identification as birds mimic others, and not all birds fly but must have feathers to be a bird, we looked forward to the following days field trip with great anticipation despite the threat of showers.

Saturday saw most of us gathered at the Aquatic Club car park at 8am eager to be off despite the light showers that quickly cleared.

First stop the Goolwa bird hide and some coaching on how to use binoculars and spot birds so we were off to a good start. Next stop was the Barrage and over 30 species of birds were seen here including a Red-necked Avocet, Masked Lapwing, Black-fronted Plover, Royal Spoonbill, Great Egret, Sacred Ibis, Black-shouldered Kite and Marsh Harrier. While crossing the Barrage we observed a Pelican on it's own with a very distinctive fishing style. On closer examination it was seen to swim up to the pylons on the salt water side of the Barrage and with it's head slightly on the side plunge it's bill into the water filling it's gular pouch, then shutting it's bill and slowly paddling backwards draining it's pouch, lifting and swallowing. As we couldn't see the usual fish we assumed it had missed it's mark until an excited Silver Gull started busying itself picking something out of the side of the Pelicans bill. It was then that we noticed many tiny tails poking out of the pelicans bill. This was not a tired, sick or lazy Pelican but a clever move to adapt it's own fishing style to harvest the myriad of tiny fish - possibly Australian smelt or Salmon trout - that were massed against the Barrage. It was fascinating to watch and was one of the high-lights of the day - but read on for more.

Next stop was Victor Harbor effluent ponds, and no, they weren't yukky but really quite picturesque with two main lakes and many mature trees in a well attended and landscaped area. This was a good site to brush up on duck identification with Grey and Chesnut Teal, Hoary-headed and Australasian Grebe, Australasian Shoveller, Pacific Black Duck, Hard-head, Mallard and Mallard cross all together. The best sighting was in the bushland on the edge of the ponds where we had a close look at a Golden Whistler, a Yellow-rumped Thornbill, and four male Superb Fairy-wrens behaving like real show-offs.

Much discussion on birds went on while having lunch at the Inman Foreshore picnic area and off we went to Goolwa effluent ponds. Not the prettiest spot but always good sightings and by the time Bruce has finished his landscaping project it will be the "Prettiest Stink Pond in the South". Here we were greeted by a Brown Falcon posing in a dead tree and a Whistling Kite overhead. Also spotted were several White-fronted Chats sitting patiently on a fence for us to study.

It was getting cold by the time we reached the mouth of the Inman River but with the aid of Bruce's telescope we were kept busy watching Hood Plover, Red-capped Plover and Black-fronted Plover.

Finally back to the hall, we gathered for a hot cup of tea and the bird count and to our amazement and delight we listed 73 species. All who attended the workshop declared it to be a wonderful success and a vote of thanks was given to Joan for sharing her knowledge with us. Her love of her subject showed in her ability to entertain and educate and we were indeed fortunate to be her pupils.

Kate.