



April 2012

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



- **Thursday 12 April. Parawa (Private Property) Junction Parawa/ Range Roads Parawa. 35°33'39" S 138°21'41" E**
- **Saturday 21 April. Mt Billy CP, Hindmarsh Valley Tennis Courts, Hindmarsh Valley Rd. 35°29'49"S138°37'35"E**
- **Friday 11 May. General Meeting**
- **Sunday 13 May. Newland Head CP, Dennis Hut Campground. 35°37'39" S 138°29'59" E**
- **Wednesday 23 May. Onkaparinga Wetlands. Near the Institute, Old Noarlunga 35°10'53" S 138°30'12" E**
- **Saturday 16 June. Nurragi Reserve, Junction of Goolwa Strath Rd and Milang Rd Finniss 35°22'25"S 138°48'01"E**

Newsletter Contributions:
Please send all items for inclusion in future newsletters to :
fleurieubirds@gmail.com

Reminder - Campout 2012

October 12th, 13th and 14th.

Southern Yorke Peninsula

Leader: Teresa Jack



Brown Falcon
Strathalbyn
Photo:
Michelle Foster

REMINDER !

SUBS ARE NOW DUE

SEE PAGE 6 FOR DETAILS

Meetings: Anglican Church Hall, corner Crocker and Cadell Streets, Goolwa
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of odd months.

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

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Hindmarsh Island, 18 February 2012

It was a clear and sunny Saturday morning when ten Fleurieu birders met at the Ferryman Reserve on Hindmarsh Island to enjoy the birds of the wetlands and tidal waters of southern and eastern Hindmarsh Island. Denzel led our group as we first visited the wetlands adjacent to Denver Road and the Mundoo Channel. At these sites, we noted a small flock of Australian Shelducks, small numbers of other ducks (Pacific Black Duck, Hardhead and Grey Teal), Superb Fairy-wrens, Reed Warblers, Great Egrets and White-faced Herons. At the Mundoo Channel site, Golden-headed Cisticolas were displaying and the White-fronted Chats were also conspicuous. In the fields surrounding the wetlands, we were amazed at the numbers of Cape Barren Geese, together with White and Straw-necked Ibis, and overhead, raptors, including Nankeen Kestrels, Swamp Harriers, a Black-shouldered Kite, a Brown Falcon and a Whistling Kite were making their presence known. Several of us also saw a pair of Nankeen Night Herons and a Black-tailed Native Hen was also spotted.

Our next sites included the tidal flats inside the Murray Mouth. Here, large numbers of Crested Terns and Little Black Cormorants dominated the scene; however, amongst these flocks, we did observe Pied Oystercatchers, Royal Spoonbills, Banded Stilts and several Greenshanks. A number of Caspian Terns were patrolling the shallows, hunting for small fish. On walking back through the luxuriant samphire beds and sand dunes to the car park, we were rewarded seeing several Brown Quail and Rock Parrots.

As we made our way to the tidal flats of the southern part of the island, at Chappel Road and on the salt water side of the Goolwa Barrage, the numbers of small waders picked up, with Red-necked Stints and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers the two main species seen. Other waders included Curlew Sandpipers, Red-kneed Dotterels, Black-winged Stilts, Red-capped Plovers and Greenshanks. A Yellow-billed Spoonbill also caught our eyes, however, the most notable sighting for the morning was a Gull-billed Tern, perched on a partly submerged fence post in the tidal flats at Chappel Road.



As we reflected on our enjoyable visit to the Island over lunch at the scenic shelter at Ferryman Reserve, the group were pleased to have tallied up a total of 71 species, which we all agreed was a good number for this time of the year and for the habitats we visited. We thank Denzel for leading the group.

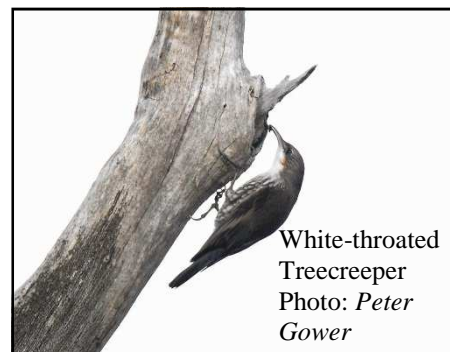
Keith Jones

Photo:
Richard Owen

Scott Conservation Park, 11 March 2012

Nine members met on Frome Rd on a cool sunny morning with hardly any breeze to walk around the park. We met up with another member at bird call and two other members did a walk in a different area altogether but we did not meet up with them. The birds were very quiet perhaps due to the very smoky atmosphere which was the result of a controlled burn-off closer to Adelaide. Without any real breeze to shift it, the smoke hung around quite a bit in a large area. We were welcomed by a White-plumed Honeyeater followed by Crescent Honeyeaters and these were very vocal, for once easy to see and one species we saw plenty of. Several Common Bronzewing were spotted mostly flying away from us but we also enjoyed good views of Golden Whistlers, Grey Fantail, White-throated and Brown Treecreepers, and a few Superb Fairy-wrens along with several groups of White-browed Babblers. Sadly missing from the list were birds of prey as we did not have any. A pleasant surprise was seeing a Scarlet Robin which has not been seen in the Park for a couple of years. Total count for an interesting outing was 37 species. Many thanks to Denzel for leading us.

Ann Turner



White-throated
Treecreeper
Photo: *Peter Gower*

Laratinga Wetlands, Mt Barker, 21 March 2012

Fifteen bird watchers led by Neil Cheshire met at Laratinga Wetlands on a lovely cool morning, a blessing after the heat of the past few days. Leisurely strolling and bird watching over the next three hours resulted in a tally of 54 species. There may have been more if we hadn't lingered in patches of warming sunlight- oh! and also if the water levels in the ponds weren't so high.

Only one lone raptor was spotted, a Black-shouldered Kite near the sewerage ponds. Surprisingly few New Holland Honeyeaters were spied but bravely recovering from the shock we found 8 Pink-eared Ducks to include in the count. Crakes proved elusive with only three Spotted making an appearance. All in all, a lovely morning's bird watching in pleasant company and lovely weather.

Michelle Foster



Pink-eared Duck Photo: *Peter Gower*



Spotted Crake Photo: *Judith Dyer*

Fairy Tern Update—Report from Clare Manning, DENR

The third and final count is to be conducted on March 31st. Some FBW's have assisted DENR staff to survey the Coorong. Nesting occurred on unnamed islands in the centre of the South Lagoon this year as reported in our last Newsletter. Professor David Paton reported that 93 adults and 124 young chicks were banded this year in the Coorong. He discovered one tern was previously banded in the Gippsland Lakes Victoria and 5 others from Beachport. One tern was 14 years old and 5 were 13 years old.

Total count in February 2012 was 331 Fairy Terns.

A final report for 2012 will be presented by Clare Manning at a date to be confirmed.

Thanks to FBW members who have volunteered their time to assist with these surveys.

Pacific Gull research takes flight

Researcher Dr Bruce Robertson said Pacific Gull numbers are falling in parts of Australia. Now a local banding project is hoping to uncover information about the unique South Australian populations. As part of a nation-wide study, he said bird watchers on the Eyre Peninsula are being asked to record sightings of young Pacific Gulls. He said immature gulls have a brown appearance, and are sometimes described as mallee (sic) hawks or mistaken for being young albatrosses. Dr Robertson said he has been working with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), banding chicks on offshore islands in the Venus Bay area. The project has already revealed unexpectedly extensive movement of the region's Pacific Gulls. He said while the average movement of Pacific Gulls is about 40km, one public sighting revealed a local bird had travelled more than 400km. "He packed his suitcase and went a long way and we don't know why". Katrina Pobke, DENR threatened species officer, said public observation helped piece together the intriguing facts surrounding this species. "Bird enthusiasts and members of the public can report sightings with details including sighting date and location, plus the leg-band number (binoculars or a telescope will be required to read tiny band numbers)".

Clear photos of sighted banded Pacific Gulls can be sent to Dr Robertson at brobson@dcsi.net.au.

Sheep Dogs, Gannets and Penguins

While some of the FBW's subscribe to Australian Birdlife Magazine and may have read it, others may have missed the article on the Maremma Sheep Dogs written by **John Peter**.

These dogs have been a "lifesaver" for the Little Penguins that were nesting on Middle Island just off Warrnambool in south west Victoria. They had been ravaged by foxes that managed to cross over to the tiny island at low tide . In 1970 there were at least a thousand penguins recorded and 600 were still there in the year 2000. 6 years later only 4 remained. In one single night 100 penguins were killed. The Council tried to trap, shoot and fumigate their dens to no avail.

The Maremma Dogs were successfully protecting free range chickens on a farm near Warrnambool and someone thought they could be trialled on the Middle Island to protect the Penguins. As soon as the dogs were installed in 2007 the fox activity stopped immediately.

This was a first for these dogs and slowly the penguins numbers increased and in 2011 volunteers counted 180 adult birds. The Shearwaters who shared the same island also returned to breed. The dogs remain on guard 24 hours a day. They are attended by their handlers, fed and watered and given shelter there.

With this success it was decided to use the Maremma dogs to try to protect the only on-shore Gannet rookery in Australia at Point Danger near Portland. The colony had grown to nearly 1000 Gannets but were not successfully breeding due to foxes getting through the 'vermin-proof' fence and eating the eggs each breeding season.

After the introduction of the dogs in 2009 no birds or eggs have been lost to foxes and the Gannets have gone from strength to strength. Gannet chicks fledged for the first time and the Shearwaters increased also. The dogs preyed on the rabbits in the area and with that effect the vegetation improved and the bush birds also benefitted.

Conservationists working with these beautiful dogs are to be congratulated as we see more positive outcomes for our bird life here in Australia.

Compiled by Wendy Phillips

Gannet Photo: Peter Fitzgerald



Birdcall:

A report from the ranger at the Victor Harbor DENR office said that the Tern population on West Island was healthy. Rock Parrots and Brown Quail were seen there and two Sea Eagles, one adult and one juvenile.

Two Sacred Kingfishers and a Cockatiel were seen at Victor Harbor recently. Eastern Spinebill and four Black-chinned Honeyeaters were also seen at Victor Harbor. A Great Northern Petrel was seen at Goolwa Beach and washed up dead on the beach at Victor Harbor were some Fluttering Shearwaters. A young Kookaburra was sighted in Goolwa Beach and along the Coorong were Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints, Curlew sandpipers, Greenshanks, Eastern Curlew and five Sea Eagles. Two Hooded Plovers appeared briefly at the Hindmarsh River mouth. 26 species were recently reported from the Goolwa Ponds.

General Meeting & AGM News, 9 March 2012

Keith Jones was elected to the Committee. All other committee members were re-elected unopposed.

Denzel Murfet gave an interesting talk on the methods he uses to record consistent bird sightings over long periods on his walks around the Port Elliot local area.

ADVANCE NOTICE

The OSCAR "W" Paddle Steamer has been booked for the Christmas Breakup, Saturday 1 December for a two hour return trip from Goolwa to Clayton.

Cost for chartering the Oscar "W" will be \$30 per head. Confirmation of numbers will be required at a later date.

Wendy Phillips



A visit to Tolderol by Teresa Jack and Peter Gower (as reported to Birdpedia)

Date: Thursday, 5 January, 2012

Time: 8.30am

Location: Tolderol Game Reserve. (SA)

Observation:

Some water in some of the channels, 38 variety seen today. Many Raptors.

Highlights:

Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) (10) Pacific Golden Plovers found in an area of dirt clods on the land side of the track 150 metres before the Picnic table near the Lake.

Rock Parrot (*Neophema petrophila*) (10) Initially one bird seen near the track, then 9 flew over head, later 6 found resting in the dead Lignum, all in the same vicinity as the PG Plovers.

Golden-headed Cisticola (*Cisticola exilis*) (40) We have never seen so many Cisticolas in one location, scattered all of the way from the Gate to the Picnic table and very vocal.

Pacific Golden Plover Photo: Peter Gower



Rock Parrot Photo: Peter Gower



Golden-headed Cisticola Photo: Peter Gower



Malleefowl Survey Ferries-McDonald CP, Monarto.

Date: 14-15 April 2012

Start Time: Meet 0830 for 0900 start

Location: 716 Ferries McDonald Road, Monarto.

You may camp on our place if required, portable loo on site.

The survey will be on private Heritage Listed land near Monarto Conservation Park.

Contact: Dr Rachel Westcott <homecarevet2pet@internode.on.net>



Photo: Val Laird

Annual Subscriptions for 2012 are now Due

Membership year is from 1 April to 31 March of following year.

Single \$20 **Family \$25** (2 or more people at the same address) **Junior \$12**

*Please forward this **slip**, together with your **payment**,
to the Treasurer, 30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa, 5214*

Name Amount enclosed \$.....

NB To save postage, receipts will be forwarded with snailmail newsletters, or by hand at meetings and outings where possible. Please enclose a SSAE if you need a receipt mailed to you.

If paying by EFT please follow the instructions below.

To pay subscriptions by EFT

The following information is needed to make an EFT payment.

- Ø Our financial institution is Bank SA
- Ø Bank SA's BSB number is 105-160 (or 105160 if the hyphen cannot be entered)
- Ø Our account number is 015551140.
- Ø The organisation's name is Fleurieu Birdwatchers Incorporated (abbreviate or truncate if necessary).

Important: In the Reference Box on the Transfer Screen, please enter your name (abbreviate if necessary).

If there is a box on the screen to send an email notification to the payee, please check this box and enter **fleurieubirds@gmail.com** or send an email direct to this address notifying us of your payment (or do both)

**** Failure to do this will mean we do not know, when checking the bank statement, who has made the payment ****

GLUEPOT RESERVE:

Members Nick Tebneff and Ann Turner will be camping at Gluepot Reserve for 1 week from Wednesday 11th April
If any members wish to join them please phone Nick Tebneff on 8556 1236

Photography Workshop at Gluepot Reserve

Dates: Thursday 26 April to Saturday 28 April 2012

Camping fees are \$10 per vehicle per night.

Join us for 3 days of photography, birding and camaraderie.

The Gluepot committee can supply dinner on Friday and Saturday:

Friday 27th: Main Course: Marinated chicken breast BBQ

Sweets: Tiramisu and Fruit Platter

Saturday 28th: Main Course: Saltbush Mutton Chops and Patties.

Sweets: Chocolate Cake with Strawberries and Cream and fresh fruit platter

Both evenings the meals are provided with a selection of home made salads.

The cost per meal per member is \$30 per head

Email Hannah Busch to register hjbuschy@hotmail.com - fees to be paid on arrival at Gluepot