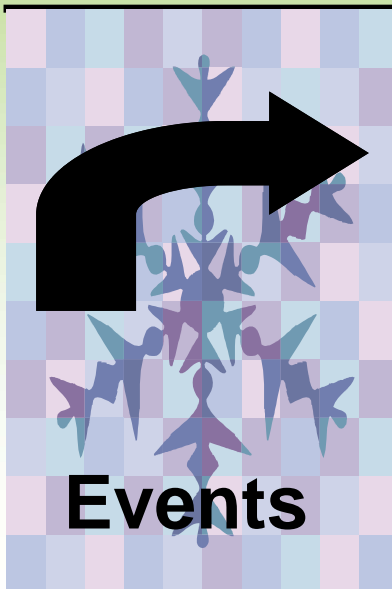




April 2015

# Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



## Thursday 9 April, Nurragi Reserve , Milang

Cnr Strath/Goolwa Rd, Milang/Finniss Rd  
35°22'25"S 138°48'01"E

## Saturday 18 April, Onkaparinga River, Old Noarlunga

Near the Institute, Old Noarlunga 35°10'53" S 138°30'12" E

## Friday 15 May General Meeting, Willunga Resource Centre, High Street Willunga.

## Sunday 17 May, Stipiturus Conservation Park

Strawberry Farm Car Park  
35°20'09"S 138°35'35"E

## Wednesday 27 May, Basham Beach Reserve, near caravan park Port Elliot 35°31'41"S 138°41'23"E

## Saturday 13 June, Scott Conservation Park

1st car park, closest to Deep Creek Rd, 35°24'01"S 138°43'45"E

## Reminders

Subscriptions due  
see page 6



A stunning day on Mundoo Island.  
Photo: **Sally Grundy**

**Meetings:** Anglican Church Hall, corner Crocker and Cadell Streets, Goolwa  
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of March, May, September and November

**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](http://www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org)

**Newsletter:** Contact email: fleurieubirds@gmail.com

## MUNDOO ISLAND/HINDMARSH ISLAND Saturday 28 February.

This outing attracted great enthusiasm with 24 members booked at the cost of \$30 for a guided tour across the restricted Mundoo Barrage with tour operator, Sally Grundy. The Grundy's are 4th generation farmers on the island and also offer tours around their farm. As we requested a Birdwatching Tour we stayed close to the Coorong and viewed the birds mostly on the salt water side of the barrages.

We divided into two tours, one at 9.00 am and the other at 10.30 am and travelled in their 12 seater bus. 53 species were recorded with numbers between 1500 Eurasian Coots down to 1 Reed Warbler. There were about 100 Cape Barren Geese grazing on summer holiday amongst the cattle, 200 Black Swan, 100 Pelican, in two fishing circles, 300 Grey Teal, 90 Chestnut Teal, 40 Shelduck, 150 Crested Tern, 80 Silver Gull, 25 Masked Lapwing, 25 Bar-tailed Godwit, 20 Greenshank, 20 Royal Spoonbill, 20 White-faced Heron, 20 Black-winged Stilt, 50 Little Black Cormorant, 200 Great Cormorant, 50 Welcome Swallow.

Other birds in smaller numbers were: Swamp Harrier, Whistling Kite, Brown Falcon, Black-shouldered Kite, Nankeen Kestrel, Nankeen Night Heron, Great and Little Egret, White Ibis, Red-capped Plover, Great Crested Grebe, Magpie, Magpie Lark, Willy Wagtail, Australian Pipit.

Bird call was at a private revegetation property owned by Karen & Chris Laine on Hindmarsh Island who specialise in understory plants, with its concomitant butterfly show. They have planted 30,000 on their property over the last 4 years and explained their method of planting in the rain and NOT watering them. Some plants are the host plants for butterflies and last year they had an open day for butterfly enthusiasts. While one tour was on, the alternating group visited Hindmarsh Island vantage points, finding 44 species in the first hour and a half. Although the weather got hot and windy by lunch time it was an enjoyable outing.

*Geoff Evans*



A small group of Cape Barren Geese on Mundoo Island. Photo: Bob Daly



Royal Spoonbills with one White Ibis. Photo: Bob Daly

### Watchalunga Nature Reserve.

This is the most recent property purchased by **Nature Foundation S.A.** and is located 2 kms from the Finniss General Store and 3 kms from the Currency Creek Winery on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

The 92 hectares of land has significant Swamp Vegetation and has the critically endangered Southern Emu-wren and the rare Southern Bell Frog. Weed control, planting and fencing has commenced with help from the Ngarrindgeri Regional Authority and the Goolwa to Wellington LAP. The Conservation Council will continue to coordinate the research and management with other key stakeholders for conservation gains.

**The official Opening Day is Saturday 21 March 10-11.30 am and will be launched by Mr. Ian Hunter, the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation.**

If you wish to attend RSVP to Nature Foundation phone **8340 2880**.

This property provides an extension to the 500 ha of remaining Swampland in the Mt. Compass, Finniss area and will be available for FBW members to visit on occasions.

FBWs are members of the **Nature Foundation S.A.** and you are all invited to attend.

## NEWS from BirdLife Australia:

The Mallee Emu-wren is a little bird with a big problem. It is now confined to a small area of spinifex mallee in north-western Victoria and is under constant threat from bushfires.

BirdLife Australia welcomes the announcement yesterday that the Federal Government will fund a program to prevent extinction after wildfires burnt out the remaining population in S.A. last year.

### **Another extensive bushfire could wipe out the whole population of these birds as this species only exists in a very small area.**

*Mr Hunt's announcement to fund a program to create an insurance population could be a life-saver, said Dr. Jenny Lau (Conservation Manager for Birdlife Australia).*

Program partners include *BirdLife Australia, LaTrobe University, the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, the South Australian Department of the Environment, Water and Natural Resources and Zoos South Australia.*

The Mallee Emu-wren is smaller than the Southern Emu-wren and has a shorter tail. It is a weak flyer and darts through the spinifex. It is thought to need vegetation that has not been burnt for 10-15 years to survive and is in great danger of fire occurring in the few remaining Mallee Conservation Parks in Victoria.



Mallee Emu-wren

© Jon Tringleton

## Completion of the Bird Hide at Kessell Road, Goolwa.

Thanks to Shen Mann (Environmental Officer for Alexandrina Council) for co-ordinating the signage for the bird hide with the assistance of Dave Hayes (graphic designer). Water birds were chosen and the photos supplied by FBW members. Inside the hide are photos of ducks and birds you are **likely** to see and ducks and birds that you **may** see there. A map of the Council Depot and grounds has been installed on the opposite side wall explaining the storm water storage system.

We have requested signage to the entrance to the Ponds to be installed on the *western end* of Kessell Road and the parking area be increased by moving the large stones currently blocking it and making reversing difficult. The seating inside the hide was constructed last year under our recommendation and now you can sit in comfort to view the bird life on the ponds.

We plan to have an official opening with Alexandrina Council staff and Fleurieu Birdwatchers later in the year as some council staff have not visited the area. The Green Army team will be working on weed control and maintenance of the vegetation in April.

I hope you all get to see the improvements and enjoy it. The ducks come and go and there is always something special to see. Watch out for the little crakes and rails hiding in the reeds and the Black-fronted and Red-kneed Dotterels feeding around the edges of the ponds.

*Wendy Phillips*



## Tolderol Update 9/2/2015

from Regina Durbridge.

We wish to thank everyone who has been involved or visited Tolderol Game Reserve Wetlands to date, particularly those who have submitted their bird sightings for inclusion in the monitoring program. There have been some fantastic results and sightings, some of which would not have been picked up during our monitoring events if not for people sharing their observations.

### Water Delivery and Operations:

As of late, low lake levels and a struggling supply channel has been making delivering water at Tolderol challenging. We would not have seen the fantastic bird response were it not for Chris Eckert's efforts in maintaining the pump and handling the day-to-day operations to keep it going. This watering trial is helping to highlight and prioritise what works need to be done to continue delivering water to Tolderol, particularly when working with limited and time-bound funding, as we are now. At present, improving the water delivery mechanisms at the site is the first priority. The small amount of funding that was secured for this trial will help begin to tackle these within this financial year. To date, basins 5, 6 and 7 have received water. Prior to watering, basins 6 and 7 were ploughed to reduce the dense plant and weed growth. A full summary of the monitoring results will be produced and distributed at the end of the trial. If you would like further information on the monitoring results please contact Gareth Oerman on 08 8532 9146 or email [gareth.oerman@sa.gov.au](mailto:gareth.oerman@sa.gov.au)



Black-winged Stilts at Tolderol  
Photo: *Bob Daly*

**The water has been stopped a month early as most of the waders have gone. DEWNR are still continuing their monitoring program during the year.**

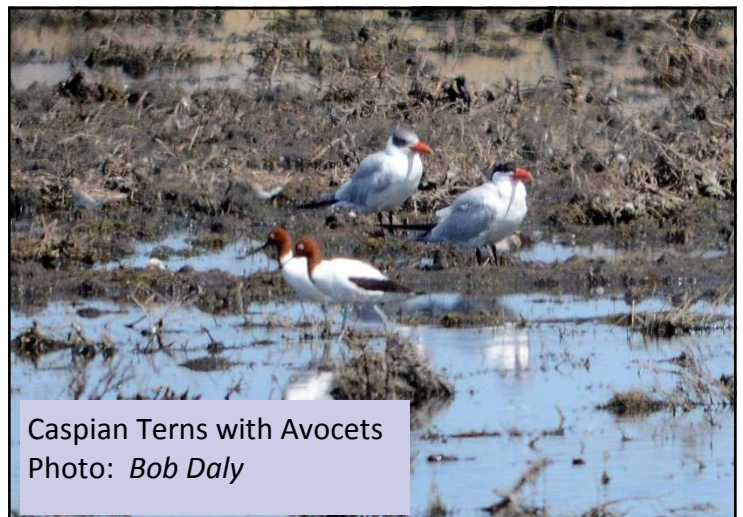
A Latham's Snipe was observed in the unploughed basin (basin 5) in late January 2015. Although this basin has not attracted the large numbers of migratory waders that basins 6 and 7 have, the Latham's Snipe is often known to utilise the shelter of low vegetation. The vegetation in basin 5 is similar to that at Milang Snipe Sanctuary which attracts small numbers of snipe each year.

If you have seen Latham Snipe recently Brigita Hansen is doing research on them and would like any information sent on. Please Email [b.hansen@federation.edu.au](mailto:b.hansen@federation.edu.au)

Next step for DEWNR?

Once the basins are dry, earthworks and infrastructure repairs will be undertaken by Natural Resources SAMDB with funding support from the Australian Government. This will allow additional basins to be watered in spring 2015 and will start to deliver greater flexibility in how water is delivered. After Spring it will be worth visiting again.

**Next Bird survey meet at the Tolderol Gate at 8 am Wednesday, 18th March.**



Caspian Terns with Avocets  
Photo: *Bob Daly*

## Educating the young ones.

The Yacca Club is a group of students from Tatachilla School and Willunga Primary and High School who are interested in the Environment. They meet after school once a week at the Willunga Resource Centre and we recently gave a talk on bird watching, with a presentation on identification of water birds and how to do surveys. We hope that they can come along on a bird outing in the future with their parents or teacher to practice their bird watching skills.

This is the beginning of more links we hope to establish this year.

Investigator College at Goolwa have also requested our assistance as they are establishing a Certificate 2 in Environmental Studies and to date have little knowledge of birds. They wish to do bird surveys on their land at Currency Creek where they have been establishing a re-vegetation program at their Eco Centre.

This encounter gives us an opportunity to pass on our bird watching skills and knowledge to the younger generation who will drive environmental outcomes in the future.

## Annual General Meeting, Friday 13th March 2015.

### Items of Interest:

17 Members and 4 visitors attended. 14 apologies were received. Treasurer's Report has been audited with a drop in funds recorded. A vote was taken at the meeting to increase the subscription by \$5 and passed by 1 vote. Chairman's Report was tabled. Neil Cheshire resigned as Chairperson. Wendy Phillips was nominated by Jenny Fontanot and as no other nominations were received was accepted.

The request for an extra Committee Member failed.

The current Committee members are Pat Uppill, Win Syson, Yrena Mountford, Keith Jones, Bob Daly and Wendy Phillips

**If anyone would like to join the Committee please contact us ASAP as more active people are needed.**



## Have you heard of "Bimblebox: Art- Science-Nature Exhibition"?

This exhibition is now on at **Goolwa Regional Art Centre** and is touring Australia.

It sends a very strong Environmental message as Artists came together to camp at the Nature Reserve in the Galilee Basin in central western Queensland 1,000 kms from Brisbane to produce art works to raise awareness of the destructiveness of Coal Mining.

10 years ago a small group of people purchased the 8,000 hectare property "Bimblebox" with government assistance to save the forest from being cleared. The government gave assurance that it would be protected in perpetuity for a Native Refuge and the property that consists of tall eucalypt trees and spinifex grasses has been restored and managed for that reason.

### **153 Bird species have been recorded there along with abundant flora and fauna.**

It is valued for its biodiversity and scientific research and education for future generations.

**No one thought it could be mined!** The Queensland Government and the Federal Government have declared it does NOT give the Reserve protection from **mining**.

It can be totally destroyed and used for an open-cut coal mine.

Bob Brown (ex-senator) states: *Bimblebox is a beautiful cameo of the Australia that occupies so much of our imagination, our folklore and our pride in place. If we can't keep Bimblebox we can't keep anything.*

For the full story *google 'Bimblebox' or Come and see the exhibition at Goolwa.*

**Birdlife Warrnambool** have extended an invitation to join their members on a trip to Christmas and Cocos Keeling Islands this year from Monday 23 November to Monday 7 December. Further details phone Peter and Rhonda Barrand- 03 5527 1712 in Victoria.

# Annual Subscriptions for 2015 are now Due

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

**Single \$25**

**Family \$30** (2 or more people at the same address)

*Please forward this **slip**, together with your **payment**,  
to the Treasurer, Keith Jones, 25 Coppin St. Glengowrie SA 5044*

Name ..... Amount enclosed \$.....

NB To save postage, receipts will be forwarded with snail-mail 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.

∅ Bank SA's BSB number is 105-160 (or 105160 if the hyphen cannot be entered)

∅ Our account number is 015551140.

∅ 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 \*\*\**

## *“They Went On A Dawn Walk.” January 1966.*

*It was very early this week and time was ticking by unnoticed. Everything was quiet and peaceful in the Legacy camp for junior girls at Clarendon. But as the big hand crept towards 5 O'clock the canvas town came suddenly to life as figures scuttled here and there in readiness for the **bird-watching** expedition.*

*The expedition, under the direction of the president of the SA Ornithological Association, Mr Frank Chapman, was a highlight of the annual camp.*

*Mr. Chapman led his eager, young charges, armed with notepads, 1 1/2 miles upstream along the Onkaparinga River.*

*By listening to calls and sighting various birds, the party identified about 25 species. Of these, the most unusual were the tree climber (White-throated Treecreeper) and scissor-grinder (Restless Flycatcher).*

*When the girls returned to their tents, which incidentally were named after birds, they were invited to enter a special competition and write an essay on their three hour “dawn walk”.*

*The winners were awarded a book prize “Bird Wonders of Australia” by A.H. Chisholm.*



White-throated Treecreeper  
Photo: Peter Gower

## **16 year old Jill Schrader won first prize for her essay 49 years ago.**

Jill gave me a copy of her hand written essay last week and she remembers every detail about the experience! It was beautifully written and she deserved to win.

Frank Chapman has left a legacy for the passion he had for birds and the position he held in the Ornithological Assoc. for many years.

Wendy Phillips

## Coorong Shorebird Survey - by Peter Gower.

After last year's survey didn't take place, Birdlife Australia organised this years event on the Thursday and Friday, 5th and 6th March. Ideally it would have been better to take place in early February, but better held **late** than not at all.

Five Birdlife members from Melbourne led by Dan Weller, joined eight surveyors from SA (most with previous experience). Fleurieu Birdwatchers were represented by Keith Jones and myself. This was my fourth Coorong survey. We all stayed in a house on the street behind the Salt Creek Roadhouse. An ideal place which is being developed for visitors to the area. Caravans and campers are also catered for.

The combination of land, water and sky seems to be in just the right proportions to make the Coorong a magical place. The more you visit the better it gets. Reading about it and seeing photos is not enough, it must be visited to be appreciated. The weather was kind to us with the usual south-westerly blowing a bit stronger on the second day, which was mainly a boat survey in the Northern Lagoon of the Coorong.

Some waders had obviously left to travel north, but Red-necked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers were flocking in their changing colours for the long migration north. Small numbers of Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Greenshank, Eastern Curlew and Red Knot were also seen. Total numbers and species will not be available until all the information is combined from the various teams.

After Keith and I finished our morning count on the first morning we had plenty of time to visit the Malleefowl on the Old Loop Road close to Salt Creek. We were fortunate to see him for a few minutes making some finishing touches near the top of his mound. Another highlight was hearing Rufous Bristlebird along the Younghusband Peninsula from the boat.



Curlew Sandpipers  
Photo: Peter Gower



Malleefowl mound in action.  
Photo: Peter Gower

### Invitations:

**Are** you interested in visiting Urrbrae Wetland? I am planning a tour with "Friends of the Wetland" group on Tuesday 12th May with Karen Laine. This is to look at what has been achieved on a busy city corner of Cross Road and Fullarton Rd.

**Are** you interested in visiting Mundoo Island in Winter when there is more surface water? Some people did not fit into the recent Bird Watching Tour as it booked out early and we are planning another one.

**For more information and to book, email FBW or ring Wendy Phillips on 8555 0634.**

**Researchers** from La Trobe University have found that the lyrebird's foraging reduces forest fuel loads, which in turn can reduce the risk of life-threatening fires.

Lyrebirds are like garden rakes and have an appetite for worms and bugs that live in the soil. They sift the forest floor, burying the leaf litter, thereby speeding up leaf decomposition and reducing the amount of fuel for bushfires. Does our Malleefowl do the same?

## Talk by Greg Murray on Eyre Bird Observatory:

Greg and his wife Wendy took up voluntary management of the Observatory for 3 months when they first retired from work in Canberra.

They did not know a lot about birds but thought they would like the challenge. They learnt on the job and from other visitors calling in to camp for a few days as they passed through to or from WA. It was a 7-day week job looking after the facility, including the cooking, cleaning, and recording the weather, seeing to visitors, doing bird counts and many other things. Once a week it was an hour drive along the dirt track to Cocklebiddy to shop and collect the stores.

### History

The original buildings were erected in 1897 for a telegraph station to relay messages by Morse code from Albany to Adelaide along the coast. It was closed down when a new Telegraph line was erected alongside the Trans-Continental Railway line. The buildings were empty for years and became derelict. Later when a West Australian ornithologist visited he saw the potential and joined forces with the Telegraph Historical Society to restore the buildings and develop the Bird Observatory. The work was all done by volunteers and is self-efficient with power and water.

The property covers 6252 square kilometres and lies east of Esperance along a 500 km strip of coast line towards SA border. It consists of Blue brush, grass land, Mallee trees and scrub, down to coastal vegetation. It is the most isolated research station in Australia.

It is popular for birdos and has abundant wild life including snakes and lizards. Water is provided for the birds and animals and you can watch them come in to drink and bathe at several watering points near the homestead. This makes it great for photographing birds close up. One of the major attractions is the Major Mitchell's Cockatoo. There are lots of New Holland Honeyeaters, Silvereyes, birds of prey, sea birds, and shore birds like Red-capped Plovers, Hooded Plovers and Oystercatchers.

Greg recommends the Photography course and the next one is due in September with Keith Lightbody.

**You can register or find out more detail on the website for Eyre Bird Observatory.**



### Local Bird Call:

Win recorded approx. 2,500 birds between Beacon 19 and the Murray Mouth while doing the wader survey.

Peter and Keith took part in the same survey down near Salt Creek and are awaiting the final results.

David said 26 Hooded Plovers have been watched and surveyed around our coast from Pt. Noarlunga to Goolwa with 6 present on Basham's Beach recently.

Denzel found a pair of Southern Emu-wren in Cox's Scrub.

They were thought to be extinct after the severe bush fire 2 years ago. He also saw 2 Rainbow Bee-eaters there.

Wendy found a male, female and juvenile Mistletoebird in her front garden at Goolwa Beach.



Bird life around the Murray Mouth

Photo: Bob Daly



Male Mistletoebird Photo: Teresa Jack

### Other News:

*Jarnu* property has been sold and FBW members are likely to be able to visit again.

*Wyndgate* on HI is being surveyed by Birds SA group to record species on the property. This property is waiting to be declared a Conservation Park and should be available to visit for bird watching in the future.