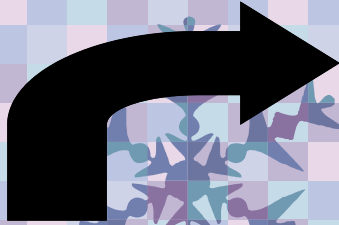




August 2014

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



Events

2014 Campout

17-20 Oct Waikerie.

Bookings:

waikeriecaravanpark.com.au

Enquiries to Teresa Jack

8381 3866

Wednesday 30 July Mt Billy Conservation Park

Hindmarsh Valley Hall, Hindmarsh Valley Rd

35°29'49"S 138°37'35"E

Saturday 16 August Nurragi Conservation Reserve

Cnr Goolwa-Strathalbyn Rd & Milang Rd, Finniss

35°22'25"S 138°48'01"E

Thursday 21 August Tolderol Monitoring day (see article page 3)

Thursday 28 August Cox Scrub/Coles Crossing

Cnr Nangkita Rd./Heifer Lane

35°21'4" S 138°42'16" E

Friday 12 September General Meeting

Sunday 14 September Hardy's Scrub/Gemtree Wetlands

Gate 14 Car Park Chapel Hill Rd

35°10'24"S 138°34'49"E

Wednesday 24 September Aldinga Scrub/Washpool

Cox Rd Aldinga near Aldinga Holiday Park

35°17'50"S 138°27'30"E

Members Night

September Friday 12

3 members presenting

Variegated Fairy-wren seen at

Langhorne Creek Cemetery

Photo by Peter Gower

Wanted:

Second-hand Scopes
and Binoculars.

Please Contact:

Wendy 8555 0634

Paiwalla visit

Re-scheduled for Sun-
day 16th November.

Hope to see you there!!



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: Neil Cheshire on 8552 7904 or fleurieubirds@gmail.com

Website: www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org

Newsletter: Contact fleurieubirds@gmail.com

OUTINGS

Saturday 14 June Parawa Private Property

Geoff (the leader) reported that no one showed up.

Thursday 26 June Onkaparinga River CP.

Only six people braved the weather. Early heavy fog and rain would have been a clue to it being a bad day out and the reason why some birdwatchers choose to stay home ... BUT ... not one drop of rain fell while we were out and light winds rewarded us to make it a pleasant outing in the bush.

As the fog lifted around 8.15 a.m. we saw Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Silvereyes and Crescent Honeyeaters against the grey sky. During the morning we passed the old shepherd's hut ruin near the waterfall and along the Echidna Track and saw many Echidna diggings. We also spotted 5 different species of native orchids and got great views of a Golden Whistler, Mistletoebird and Eastern Spinebill.

It was a pleasant walk along the Nature and Echidna Trails and back to the Sundews Lookout above the Onkaparinga River.

We saw a total of 19 bird species, plus a Koala and some friendly Wallabies. A week previous Keith had spotted a Peregrine Falcon near the Lookout, but we were not so lucky today.

Many thanks to Keith Jones and Liz Barry for leading the walk.

Jill McPherson

P.S. This just goes to show how the weather can change and even if there are not a lot of bird species, or they are hard to find, there is always something special in the Bush to see. (editor)



Committee Meeting 10 July: Items of Interest:

Four First Aid Kits to be purchased for regular leaders. Wendy (ex RN) to advise leaders on the contents. Membership and a small donation to Nature Foundation SA decided at \$40 membership and \$60 donation for this year for their bush regeneration work.

Exchange of FBW Newsletter to other Bird watch groups in SA via email.

Next Year's Campout will be at Pt. Augusta. To be organised by Win Syson and Neil Cheshire.

November Meeting: Rena Robinson to talk about bird rescue from Wildlife Rescue Inc. at Goolwa.

Opportunity for FBW members to educate Investigator students doing Certificate 2 in Conservation and Land Management at the Currency Creek Eco Centre next year after contact with teacher Natalie Gilbert.

Affiliation with Birdlife Aus. to be voted on at the September Meeting.

Photo board to be installed at the Goolwa Ponds bird hide and Council have been advised to check the photos and names of birds before finalising it.

Web Stats: 94 visits to FBW site including 63 new visits in the month of June.

Welcome to new members: Jocelyn Preece, Marion Thompson, Claire Ralphs, Suzie Styles.
We now have 100 members all up!!

Tolderol is a game reserve situated on the north-western fringe of Lake Alexandrina, 13km northeast of Milang. The land is owned by the Dept. of Environment, Water, and Natural Resources and is a part of the internationally significant RAMSAR wetlands, the Lower Lakes, Coorong and Murray Mouth (1985 RAMSAR listing). Over 125 bird species have been recorded at Tolderol, along with 27 key RAMSAR species.

The reserve is a series of regulated artificial bays, channels and embankments which have been constructed and were used to provide a variety of habitats for waterbirds, particularly migratory birds. From the early 1980's to 2008, the water level management at Tolderol (via pumping) was predominantly undertaken by volunteers, most notably John Eckert.

A combination of extended drought conditions and extremely low flow conditions resulted in water levels in Lake Alexandrina declining to as low as 1.0 metre below sea level between 2007 and 2010. During this period it was no longer possible to deliver water to the wetland complex. Following the sad passing of John Eckert, the end of drought and a significant lack of funding no water level management has occurred at Tolderol in recent years.

In early 2014 a small amount of funds were secured to investigate making the pump operable again and undertake any preparation works to be able to deliver water to a small number of basins in spring 2014. This has included securing the pumps access to water (removal of sandbars and dense reeds), making sure flow paths for the outflow are clear .

Three photo points are being installed in clear viewing areas along the main levee, (should be in place by July) to allow for the community to take photos at the site, to help us monitor the changes that are occurring at Tolderol (instructions for use, and who to send the photos to will be clearly labelled on each photo point).

A regular monitoring day is scheduled on August 21st, which will be monitoring water quality and photo points at the site. Interested community members are more than welcome to join in the monitoring, and are able to get involved in any bird watching opportunities at the site, particularly following delivery of water in Spring. More information will be provided closer to the monitoring days.

Additionally, once the on-ground works have taken place, Natural Resources MDB (Murray Darling Basin) is encouraging community members to take part in monitoring activities outside the scheduled monitoring days. If people want to record a bird survey and send the results to myself (john.adams2@sa.gov.au) that would be most appreciated.

If you have any further questions please feel free to call or email myself.

John Adams | Wetlands Project Officer (Lower Murray)



Restoration of the Fleurieu Swamps:

John Gitsham from GWLAP was the guest speaker at the Hindmarsh Island Landcare AGM recently and gave a presentation on the extensive work being done in the Fleurieu area to restore and protect the vegetation around the swamps. By linking up with local farmers they have been able to fund the cost of fencing to close off the areas from cattle and plant indigenous species to improve the native vegetation. In time this will provide a corridor for the endangered Southern Emu-wren to move freely along the swamps.

The project covers the area of Myponga, Mt. Compass, Tooperang, Finnis and Currency Creek and includes education, weed control, pest eradication, e.g. fox baiting, as well as planting.

There are small pockets where the Southern Emu-wren is holding on. Given that they are such delicate flyers and the genetic gene pool is critically low for the species to be viable long term they are at significant risk of becoming extinct.

Lets hope we are NOT too late to save this species. They need all the help we can give them!

Want to see the Wrens? Two pairs are known to be in the Swamps around the Boardwalk on Arthur Road (opposite the Mt Compass Area School) which has been repaired this year and re-opened to the public. The gate is locked to prevent vandalism and unlocked during school time e.g. Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 4 pm.

A key can be accessed from the Mt. Compass Bakery on the weekends and in School Holidays.

The Shorebirds of the Middleton and Goolwa Ocean Beaches by Keith Jones.

Southern Australian ocean beaches are the natural feeding and nesting habitats for several of our resident shore-bird species, including Pied Oystercatchers, Red-capped and Hooded Plovers. At times Sooty Oystercatchers are also found on these beaches, although they more commonly occur on rocky outcrops and offshore islands. Over recent years the Goolwa – Middleton Beaches have seen steadily increasing human recreational activity, including the use of Off-Road Vehicles (ORV's), surfing schools, people exercising their dogs and the recreational harvesting of Pipis (Goolwa Cockles).

Since June, 2011 I've been regularly monitoring the numbers of shorebirds (especially oyster-catchers) as well as the levels of human activity at 9 sites along these beaches. Some of the results of this monitoring show:

The numbers of Pied Oystercatchers fluctuates seasonally with higher numbers during winter and spring, compared with summer and autumn. There has been a general decrease in numbers along the Middleton and Goolwa Beaches, but an increase in numbers inside the Murray Mouth. Movements of Pied Oystercatchers remains unclear, however, during the summer of 2012/13, several banded birds were seen at the Murray Mouth and Goolwa Beach, that had reportedly originated from Victoria (Port Phillip Bay and Corner Inlet).

Numbers of Sooty Oystercatchers are highest during autumn with low numbers during summer. There has been little change in their numbers along the Goolwa Beach, but they have increased in numbers inside the Murray Mouth.

Both Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers feed on pipis and beach worms.

Numbers of other resident shore birds are very low, but some Hooded and Red-capped Plovers have been observed during winter months.

No nesting of any of these species has been observed along these ocean beaches.



*****Spotted** out planting in the Stipiturus C.P. amongst 80 + people at Mt. Compass recently were 5 enthusiastic FBW's, who helped put 3,500 native plants in the ground. Well done Nick, Angela, Julie, Wendy and Bob.***



Double-banded Plover.

Photo: Faye Lush taken on Yorke Peninsula.

These little birds are found in small groups along tidal mudflats, beaches, exposed reefs, salt marshes and fresh water wetlands. They migrate from the South Island of New Zealand to the S.E of Aust. during Autumn to Spring .

BIRDING IN DARWIN AND SURROUNDS.....Jill McPherson

On the 6th of June. Liz Barry met me in Darwin. The weather was warm and humid and around 30 degrees and so different to Winter in South Australia.

On a huge paper bark tree adjacent to the house where I was staying were a number of Northern birds to see including, Bar-shouldered Dove, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Spangled Drongo, Red-winged Parrot, Red-browed Pardalote, Varied Triller, Olive-backed Oriole, Fig Bird, White-cheeked H/E, White-throated H/E, Double-barred Finch, Blue-faced H/E, Little Friar Bird.

We had six days and set off to Howard Springs close to Darwin for an afternoon's outing. There were mainly Fig Birds in the Ficus type trees and it was rather quiet in the Rain Forest with no sighting of the hit list bird, the RAINBOW PITTA! There were unknown calls in the high branches of the trees and we found the actual Springs and mozzies also.

A trip to Fogg Dam was a picture. There were Herons, Spoonbills, Cattle Egrets, Straw-necked Ibis, Jabiru, Pied Magpie Goose, Jacanas, Whistling Kites, Black Kites, Sacred Kingfishers, Bee Eaters, Crimson Finches.

On to the Corroboree Billabong. We talked the Wetland Cruise Guide into including us on a 2 ½ hour tour with those already booked. Floating amongst the water lilies on a sunny afternoon we saw the mandatory crocodiles, but more important we got great sightings of White Necked and Pied Herons, Egrets (Little, Intermediate and Great), Spoonbills, Ibis, Whistling Duck, Wandering Duck, Shelduck, Green Pygmy-goose, White-breasted Sea Eagle, Osprey circling close overhead, Jabiru, Burdekin Duck & many others and luckily we spied a pair of Brolgas on the way back to base. What a great day!

Over the next 2 days we visited Litchfield NP and Berry Springs. There were many birds sighted on our short walks including, Forest Kingfisher, Lemon-bellied Flycatchers, Common Koel, Northern Fantail, Shining Flycatcher (M&F), Restless Flycatcher, Leaden Flycatcher, but still no Pitta bird!

While we needed to see some of Darwin we visited East Point and followed the Mangrove Walk. The tide was out and we spotted 2 other birds on the hit list, a Red-headed H/E and a Mangrove Robin, but still no Pitta!

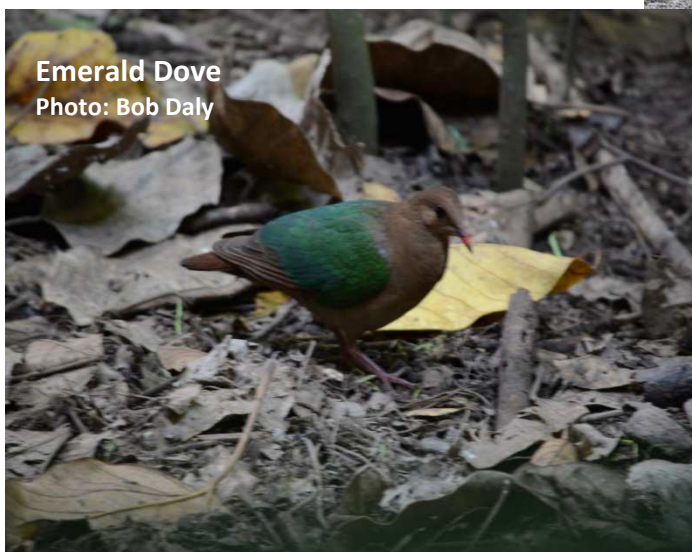
Last chance to sight this dam bird. We walked in the East Point Reserve and found some other birds and decided to

head back when Liz spotted a Bar-shouldered Dove fossicking only to see in her binos a HUGE Python with the dove in its sight. A quick look and we bolted giving up on OUR bird. We were nearly out of the forest when AT LAST a Rainbow Pitta! We had magic views for 10 mins. YEAH! Then to top it all Liz spotted an Emerald Dove, a very beautiful bird. We left happy little Birdos.

The overall bird count was 83 species. A wonderful 6 days shared by 2 "old" friends.



Rainbow Pitta
Photo by Peter Owen



Emerald Dove
Photo: Bob Daly



Double-barred Finch
Photo: Bob Daly

Interested in Birding up North? See Birdlife Magazine for great Tours of the Top End.

NATURE FOUNDATION S.A. Inc.

What is it?

NFSA is the third largest owner of privately-owned conservation land in Australia after Bush Heritage Australia and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. It was formed in 1982 when only a small amount of land was preserved in National Parks in S.A. and has linked with National Parks to generate interest in Conservation through public campaigns and education.

It has grown enormously in the last 30 years and attracted donations from businesses and private individuals to provide ongoing acquisition of land across the State to preserve a variety of habitat for wildlife and conservation from the North of the State of SA to the South and including Kangaroo Island.

It has provided funds for research projects for over 300 SA University graduates and students.

It has bought large stations e.g. Witchelina (North of Lyndhurst) 421,000 hectares and Hiltaba (Gawler Ranges) 162,00 hectares and contributed to many others for restoration and revegetation.

The latest property purchased is at Finniss and will link with the re-vegetation program that GWLAP is currently working on to link the Swamps across the Fleurieu district and hopefully improve the chance of the Southern Emu-wren's survival.

It has acquired Environmental Offsets from Beach Energy and Santos, who have contributed to the ongoing financial support to Witchelina and Hiltaba.

These Reserves have been aerial baited to remove foxes with assistance from the Arid Lands Bite-back program and de-stocking of cattle and sheep has allowed the vegetation to regenerate naturally.

Funds have been provided for an eradication program to remove feral goats and cats from these properties and 770 goats were eradicated this year alone bringing the total to over 8,000 so far.

The Port Augusta Bird Watchers Club spent 3 days this year surveying birds at Witchelina and recorded 74 species of the 160 recorded so far. This property is looking at eco-tourism to commence shortly.

The Foundation is seeking donations to support their Vital Work programs to continue to manage their properties for research and development here in South Australia.

With the severe slashing of Government funding for Conservation, more people are realising the importance of donating money to private organisations through annual membership, donations and bequests.

Nature Foundation SA has proved it is able to benefit all South Australians by continuing their work all over the State from the desert to the South East and Kangaroo Island.



The Foundation can be contacted by email:

naturefoundationsa@nfsa.org.au

**Nature Foundation SA
Inc. P.O. Box 448,
Hindmarsh SA, 5007**

Phone: 1300 366 191.

Wendy Phillips