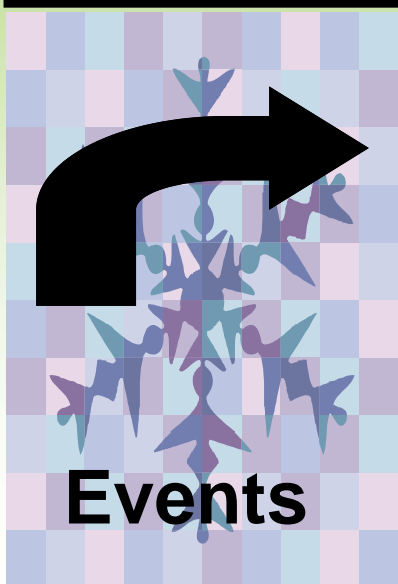




August 2015

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



Events

Saturday 15 August, Laratinga Wetlands Mt. Barker.

Car Park, Bald Hills Rd. Mt Barker.
35°4'20"S 138°53'11"E

Thursday 27 August, Inman Valley Cemetery/Keen Rd.

Cemetery, Prouse Rd. Inman Valley.
35°29'54"S 138°29'20"E

Friday 11 September, Meeting Goolwa (new church hall)

guest speaker—Sylvia Clark introducing "Citizen Science Bird Monitoring Program"
+ Neil Cheshire's birds.

Sunday 13 September, Bullock Hill CP.

Greenman Inn Car Park. Ashbourne.
35°17'16"S 138°45'57"E

Wednesday 23 September, Langhorne Creek and Tolderol

Frank Pott's Reserve. Langhorne Creek.
35°18'0"S 139°02'35"E

Friday to Monday 16-19 October, Campout Pt. Augusta

Details page 6

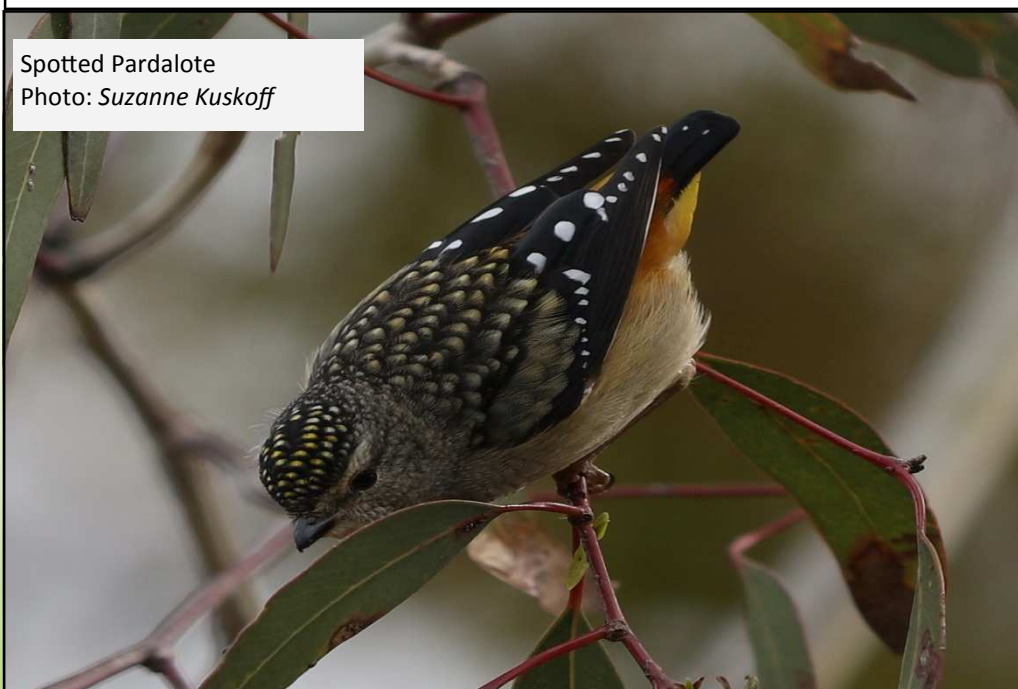
Reminders

20 year celebration!
Saturday 26 September
Lunch at the Victor
Hotel. See page 2

Aussie Backyard Bird
Count Event. Oct 19-25.
See Page 6

Ornithological
Conference at
Flinders University.
25-27 November.
See page 2

Spotted Pardalote
Photo: Suzanne Kuskoff



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

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

Newsletter: Contact email: fleurieubirds@gmail.com

Invitation to Party:
Celebrating 20 years of FBW achievements.
Lunch for current and past members.
Victor Hotel 12 midday, 26 September, 2015.
Cost \$32 for Hot Buffet 3 course meal.
RSVP by Friday 28 August.
Email FBW or phone Keith 0439295990



Spiny-cheeked H.E.
Photo: Bob Daly

Gluepot Education—Introduction to Bird Watching with John Gitsham 19-20 September. Contact Gluepot.

Bird Identification Workshop at Wyndgate, H.I. 7-8 November. To register email: Sylvia.Clark@sa.gov.au
Phone 8391 7500.

***A special welcome to our newest member
John Gitsham.***

Treasure Hunt for Nature—Sunday 16 August 10 am – 4 pm. (Nature Foundation)
A Treasure Hunt for Nature around the River Torrens for families. Walk, run or cycle.
Treasure hunters follow a map and solve the clues and discover the natural and cultural treasures of the City of Adelaide. A fun day for everyone. Many prizes to be won. Free activities for families in Elder Park.
Register at: naturefoundation.org.au

Birdlife Australia– Australasian Ornithological Conference at Flinders University
3 days 25-26-27 November plus 2 days of field trips 28-29 Nov.
Register with Eventbrite on line. Cost \$150 for a day or \$370 for the 3 days. Field trips and dinner extra with discounts for students and pensioners available.

A great opportunity for all keen birdwatchers to meet, share information and network.
Program soon to be announced. Contact: BirdLife Australia

Art Exhibition at Red Tail Gallery, Edenhope, 8-28 November.

Calling for artist to produce works relating to the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo to aid the recovery program in SE. S.A and SW. Vic. Any media accepted including photography.
For enquiries and submission forms contact Colin Kelly,
0438 899 863 or email :wvcas@yahoo.com.au

Last year 136 volunteers located over 1500 of these beautiful birds in the wild. Farmers and conservationist are planting Stringybarks and Bulokes to provide them with their favourite food into the future.



BASHAM'S BEACH – Wednesday 27 May

Thirteen enthusiasts enjoyed our outing at Basham's Beach, Port Elliot.

Denzel was our leader. He knows this area very well, has lived near here all his life and remembers when this was all dairy paddocks. The farm fences have been removed, the bitumen bike track goes through and the whole area has been planted with native shrubs and trees. It is now an ideal place to go birdwatching!

The weather was great with sunshine, a clear sky and a gentle breeze.

We walked from the car park, near the Port Elliot Caravan Park, towards Middleton for perhaps half an hour or so and then walked along the beach. Here we were hoping to see one or more Hooded Plovers, however they were not there at the time. We walked around the top of the cliffs via Crockery Bay where we saw a seal having a play. We then looped back through the trees and shrubs and sat under the shelter near the car park for lunch and bird count.

We totalled 36 species ranging from the local Silver Gulls to the more elusive small birds including: 2 Golden Whistler, 3 Fantail Cuckoo, 2 Mistletoe Bird, 2 Striated Pardalote, 2 Yellow Thornbill, 1 Eastern Spinebill, 3 Brown Quail, 3 Weebill, 30 Silver-eye, 3 White-plumed Honeyeater, 8 Little Pied Cormorant. *A wonderful outing.*

Elaine O'Shaughnessy



Little Pied Cormorants at Basham's Beach.

Sunday 12 July Outing— Cancelled due to extreme weather conditions.

Good News for Beach Nesting Birds:

Soft-jaw trapping was trialled on Victorian beaches late last year to protect nesting sites from foxes. 40 traps were set for a 7 day period along one area of beach. **They caught 12 foxes, 3 dogs and 9 cats.** They were set again for another 7 day period and were proved to be very successful with 21 foxes caught in total.



Hooded Plovers
Photo: Teresa Jack

Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary Ecology Summit—free event—13th, 14th August at St. Kilda.

The summit is aimed at understanding the ecology of the Bird Sanctuary through two streams; using story-telling to evaluate changes in ecology, local community sentiment and exploring current data being gathered to understand how we can best protect shorebirds and other important environmental components.

For enquiries please contact Erin Martin erin.martin2@sa.gov.au 0408 819 354.

Scott C.P.—Saturday 13 June.

Nine members met at the car park closest to Deep Creek Road. It was 11 degrees with almost full cloud cover and no wind. During the walk the temperature rose to 18 and bits of blue skies were visible.

Wendy led the walk down across the creek. As we walked up to the north-west corner a White-naped Honeyeater was seen and several Wood Ducks flew out of the trees just over the park's boundary.

We followed the fence southwards, walked in an easterly direction past some steeply eroded gullies, but there was not much activity there. When we joined the track we followed the calls of a Golden Whistler. Eventually we all managed spot the bird and then several more were sighted. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and Corellas were seen flying overhead. A walk to the dam outside the park revealed 2 Pacific Black Duck, 4 Grey Teal and a Little Pied Cormorant as well as a male Superb Fairy-wren with several immature and female wrens. As we walked along the road between the two car parks a number of Tree Martins were sighted. While we were having lunch and collating the list of birds a White-throated Treecreeper's call was heard and it was soon sighted in the tree right next to us. There were numerous Galahs looking at tree hollows for nesting sites as well as Rainbow Lorikeets and Adelaide Rosellas. Elegant Parrots were seen in various areas of the park and there were the usual New Holland Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds.

A total of 40 species were seen and 2 extra heard.

Wendy and Bob were thanked for leading the walk.

Elaine Dyson

Tree Martins



Wood Duck
Photo: J. Dyer



The power of people.

A music teacher discovered a pair of **Powerful Owls** near her Bayview home on Sydney's northern beach area. She spread the word by advertising in her local paper and got people interested in recording sightings of Powerful Owls around Sydney. This attracted a lot of attention and led to an Ecologist being financed by an Environmental Trust Grant to study the Owl's territories in the bushland around Sydney for 2 years.

Sixty nine volunteers assisted in the survey. They discovered that Powerful Owls who normally required 1000ha per breeding pair only required around 400ha near Sydney. At over 84 sites surveyed twenty pairs raised 29 chicks

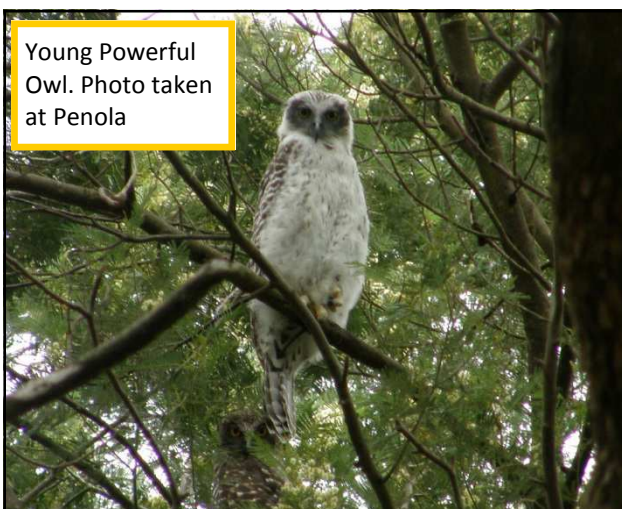
Two thirds of the owl's diet is Ringtail Possum with the other third being large birds, e.g. Rainbow Lorikeets, Cockatoos and even Channel-billed Cuckoos. They can catch and carry prey two thirds of their own body weight. However, being night feeders they are vulnerable to being hit by cars and there were 15 fatalities recorded in the two year study.

Fortunately, Sydney's unlogged steep gullies have retained trees with hollows suitable for Powerful Owl nesting and there is enough prey to sustain them.

(Australian Geographic 2013)

It goes to show it only takes ONE person to take some action and motivate people to get involved! (editor)

Young Powerful Owl. Photo taken at Penola



Range Road West, Willunga Hill – Thursday 25 June

A total of six over-wintering FBW members met our leader, Nick Tebneff at the Range Rd West turn-off at the top the Willunga Hill on a drizzly, cool but calm morning. The plan for the outing was to walk along the Range Rd West to Wakefield Rd, visiting several adjacent properties on the way. Fortunately, at the commencement of our walk the rain stopped and for the rest of the morning we enjoyed the wintery sun as well as the superb views both north and south of the road. Along the edges of the road, the habitat consisted of stands of mature Pink and Stringy Bark gums with an understory of grass (*Xanthorrhoea*) trees. Some of the gums were flowering, bringing in the Rainbow Lorikeets. As we walked along the road, many Crimson Rosellas and Superb Fairy-wrens accompanied us and in the fields alongside, Grey Currawongs attracted our attention with a range of different calls. At a distance, some of us thought the white blobs in the fields were White Ibis, however, getting closer, the “blobs” were transformed into young lambs!

Several White-throated Treecreepers were observed amongst the Brown Stringy Barks, a solitary non-calling male Golden Whistler was seen as well as several families of Yellow Thornbills and Crescent Honeyeaters. Closer to habitation, a couple of Laughing Kookaburras performed for us. We ended up the outing at Nick and Di’s house, where we saw and heard Eastern Spinebills and a very vocal Brown Thornbill.

The bird count resulted in 28 bird species seen and one heard (Grey Fantail), which we considered a good number for this time of the year. We thanked Nick for his leadership, as well as imparting his great knowledge of the area.

Keith Jones



Nick the Monitor
Photo: Peter Gower

Urrbrae Wetland visit- Tuesday 30 June.

24 FBW members were warmly welcomed by the Friends of Urrbrae Wetland and shown around the facility. This property of about 4.5 hectares started as open farmland and the ponds were constructed in 1996, at a cost of \$1.2million, to manage the storm water that was causing flooding to nearby residential buildings. The ponds, one permanent and 2 sedimentation, have storm water filter traps and trucks have access to remove debris to prevent the rubbish entering the other ponds.

Karen Lane supplied many water-filtering plant species and the vegetation surrounding the ponds has now grown to provide a wonderful habitat for native fauna. The clean water at the western end then flows into Brown Hill Creek and ends in the Patawalonga River which then flows out to sea at Glenelg. Urrbrae Wetland was Australia’s first **teaching** facility for wetland management used by both Urrbrae Agricultural High School and TAFE. Each year 6000 students visit the wetlands. Fifty eight species of birds have been recorded and many have made it their permanent home. Nankeen Night Herons roost in the large pine trees alongside Cross Rd. and feed on yabbies in the ponds. Spotted Crake have been sighted wading in the fringes and ducks, grebes, coots, swamp hens, herons and ibis all flourish here.

A number of birds have nested and successfully raised their young and been filmed in the process. We enjoyed the slide show of them while having a cuppa.

Thank you to Robyn Barratt and Karen Lane for allowing us to visit and Friends of the Wetland for the morning tea.

Wendy Phillips



Part of the group enjoying the outing, Photo: Bob Daly

Campout details:

Friday 16th to Monday 19th October

Friday 16th Travel to Port Augusta. Win suggests the Shoreline Caravan Park. It's cheaper and they have a good camp kitchen. After lunch we can do a walk around the caravan park and surrounding area.

Saturday 17th In the morning a visit to the Arid Lands Botanic Gardens which is always good for a few dry land birds, and they also have good coffee. We can then move on to Yorkie's Crossing which is at the very top of the Gulf. This is via a dirt road and the idea is just to stop at interesting spots along the road when birds are observed.

In the evening a get together over a BBQ with a show and tell type event. Peter Langdon from the Pt. Augusta Birdlife group may come and talk to us. He is also a well known local bird artist.

Sunday 18th Travel to Mambray Creek to Bernie's Block, Bernie is another member of the Pt. Augusta group and when Win last visited he observed 61 species. In the afternoon we could look around Shack Rd. and El Alamein Rd. Port Augusta.

Monday 19th. Make own arrangements to travel home and view birds along the way.

Win Syson (leader) **Win requests you contact FBW or phone Wendy 85550634 for attendance numbers.**

To Book accommodation Contact Shoreline Caravan Park.

email: info@shorlinecaravanpark.com.au or phone 86422965

Aussie Backyard Bird Count: October 19-25 2015.

Encourage your family, friends, neighbours to join in the fun.

BirdLife Australia conducts the survey on line to:

1. Monitor the changes in distribution and abundance of birds that live where people live.
2. Encourage people to take notice of what birds are around them and to connect with local wildlife.

Book your local Library or Environmental Resource Centre to display educational material to promote the event. If you can assist please contact BirdLife Australia. Goolwa Library booked.

Wyndgate News:

OBP and Neophema ID education session by Bob Green from Mt. Gambier was attended by 15 people at Wyndgate on 27 June. 40 Elegant Parrots were seen that afternoon in the samphire area nearby. Unfortunately the numbers of OBPs has been so low that only around 50 remain in the wild. News that they have feather and beak disease in this population does not give much hope to save the species.

Mark Phillips (Project Manager for Wyndgate) requested FBW apply to be part of a community working group to plan Wyndgate land use. This property is approx. one third of the Island and purchased by the government 15 years ago. Hindmarsh Island Landcare have planted thousands of seedlings over the last 10 years and some areas are leased for cattle grazing. When it is finally declared a Conservation Park certain areas will be open to the public. An application for me to represent our group on this committee has now been officially accepted. There will be monthly meetings and workshops to formulate the plan which will be completed by June 2016. My involvement will be to promote and liaise with others in the group to include bird watching facilities as an essential part of the plan. If you have particular ideas you would like me to take to this working group please contact me so I can suggest FBWs views. **Wendy Phillips** (not related to Mark)

Contact: **Mark Phillips** 0427 192 060 for more information or email: Mark.Phillips4@sa.gov.au

Investigator College Birdwatching Excursion- Friday 3rd July.

Four FBW members shared their birdwatching skills with Natalie the teacher and her Environmental students from Investigator College on the property known to us previously as Jarnu. We found lots of new birds for them and even had good sightings of 2 Wedge-tailed Eagles in one tree. The students were introduced to the smaller colourful bush birds and found Mistletoe Birds and Golden Whistlers along with Elegant Parrots, a female Hooded Robin and Dusky Woodswallows.

Young Riley found a Spotted Pardalote for us all to see. (front page photo)

Though there has been a lot of damaged in the banksia area caused by cattle and feral deer the owners have put in hundreds of local plant species all guarded and are working at restoring the vegetation.

FBWs will be allowed to visit with permission from the owners and we will schedule a planned visit next year. We sighted 24 species and there were no sparrows or starlings amongst them.

Wendy Phillips



After all that hard work a welcome cuppa at bird count!



Giant Petrel Attack as told by Jacqui Showell of Goolwa.

This is the story of a 'Big Angry Bird', a Southern Giant Petrel that attacked our group of intrepid 'all year round swimmers' at Horseshoe Bay in June.

Towards the end of our swim across the bay this huge bird, with an amazing 2 metre wingspan, flew down out of nowhere and bit the foot of one of the swimmers - left only a dent as he is a tough skinned one. We then forgot about it as we decided to swim to the rocks called the 'Sisters' which are between the shore and Pullen Island. We were playing in the waves when suddenly there it was, sitting next to us on the water. It began flying at us and attacking by pecking at anything it could reach but mainly our faces. We pushed it away with our hands and feet as it came at us but it kept on attacking us.

After much yelling, screaming and splashing we became quite scared and eventually, when we began getting cold and tired of staying afloat while dealing with the bird and huge waves at the same time, we decided to put our heads down and try swimming to shore. I took off first and the others watched as it flew down onto my head where it sat pecking, looking like it was trying to drown me. I came up and pushed it off retrieving my bathing cap but not my goggles from its beak. (I escaped with only a scratch to my hand.)

As my eyes were now vulnerable without goggles, the other two swimmers decided that I should go to shore while they dealt with the bird. So I swam for it.

There was no getting away for them. One swimmer got it in a stranglehold and slowly, with one arm swimming and the other clutching the bird, came to shore. In the meantime the swimmer of the pecked foot got a surf life-saving board and swam out to help.

We sent it to a wildlife protection organisation, which identified the bird as a juvenile Southern Giant Petrel, but we later found out that it would have been better to have called the local Parks and Wildlife.

The photo does not do the bird justice. It looked big and chunky on the water, sort of elegant and disdainful but was beautiful as it flew.



Big angry bird on the beach following the attack. A juvenile Southern Giant Petrel. J. Showell

The need for recording birds in your own area.

Reading the old FBW Newsletters I've noticed the changes in some of the **local** bird species regularly seen in the past 10-15 years that we rarely see now. This appears to be a sad fact echoed around the country. (See the State of Australian Birds. BirdLife Aus.)

For the last 3 years I have been surveying and entering the bird data for Hindmarsh Island Landcare on Ferryman's Reserve. This entails a slow walk around the Reserve for about an hour at 9am on the first Tuesday of the month. The best counts on one day totalled 18 species and the average is around 11. I do not record the water birds on the River or flying overhead as I am only looking at the Reserve to see if there is an increase in the smaller bird species as the new vegetation grows.

The highlights birds have been: Peaceful Dove, Golden Whistler, Grey Fantail, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Grey Shrike-thrush, Elegant Parrot, Richard's Pipit and Superb Fairy-wren to name a few.

The Purple Swampheens have been flying up onto the reserve from the water's edge and feeding close to the bank. An occasional Large Egret wanders in and a few Brown Quail have hurried by. I have noticed flocks of European Goldfinch feeding on the Scabiosa seeds in the neighbouring paddock and may be responsible for spreading this weed. While the non-indigenous eucalypts that the H.I. Marina planted along the boundary fence some years ago do attract a lot of parrots and lorikeets as well as honeyeaters when in flower. In time there will be a larger variety of food supply for them on the Reserve that will provide nectar over a much longer period.

The 3 year survey shows a lack of tiny bush birds like Thornbills, Silvereyes, Pardalotes and Scrubwrens, but hopefully this will improve as the vegetation matures and there is more connectivity with the other plantings across the Island.

The work on Ferryman's Reserve has been mainly due to Nic and Angela's dedication, hard work and vision in developing it into a notable Arboretum of indigenous plant species for us all to enjoy. It is open to the public and contains many pathways to make walking easy. You are welcome to join in the monthly bird survey if you wish.

Wendy Phillips



WANTED: Contributions to the Newsletter from Members.

Send them in any time as they can be saved for later. Many thanks for your outing reports.



Noisy Pitta.
Photo: Peter Owen

A message from an avid traveller:

I have been at O'Reilly's Wilderness Resort for the last few days- birding central for King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, Satin and Regent Bowerbirds, Albert's Lyrebird, Eastern Whipbirds, White-browed and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens. All (except the Lyrebird) are very tame and will take raisins and crushed walnuts from your hand! The Noisy Pitta was also quite friendly and I managed to get the attached photo. **Peter Owen**

Please Note:

If you cannot make it to the next General Meeting then let us know if you would like the November Meeting to be held at **Willunga Resource Centre** as we will take a vote on it. Also send us your suggestions for outings next year and for the Campout Oct. 2016.