



December 2012

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



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

**CAMPOUT PHOTOS
WOULD BE APPRECIATED
FOR USE ON FBW
WEBSITE
(Details of Location
Required)
Please email photos
to Verle Wood at
verlew@bigpond.net.au
WEBSITE STATISTICS
(For the last month)
76 Visits, 55 new
Australia 70, UK 2,
Poland 2, France 1, US 1**

TWILIGHT WALK
Friday 11th January 6.30 pm

Clayton Bay
(Meet at Sails Restaurant)

OPTION:
Meet at Sails Café for a meal at 5.30pm
Bookings: 8537 0177

AGM—Friday 8th March 2013



Campout Highlight—Rufous Fieldwren at Innes NP
Photo: *Teresa Jack*

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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Campout Marion Bay

Marion Bay Campout, October 12 – 15, 2012

Friday Teresa led a group of 8 early arrivals on a short morning walk to Royston Head within the Innes National Park. The walk passes through low gum and heath vegetation growing amongst sheets of surface limestone. Much of the heath vegetation was in flower. We were on the look-out for the icon bird species of the park, the Western Whipbird. Most of the group heard more than one of these secretive birds, and two members were lucky to see one as it dashed across the path into low vegetation. Other birds seen on this part of the walk included Singing Honeyeaters, Grey Fantails, Common Bronzewing, Red Wattlebirds, Emus, Silvereyes and Grey Currawongs. A couple of kangaroos were also noticed. We arrived at the spectacular coastal cliffs, with Nankeen Kestrels patrolling this area. Along the seaward edge of the cliffs, we saw Sooty Oystercatchers, Pied Cormorants and Silver Gulls. Returning to the parking area, we had lunch, and then dispersed to other parts of the park. The bird count for this walk was 45.

Later in the afternoon, most members had arrived at the Marion Bay Caravan Park, and Teresa again led our now expanded group of 27 members for a coastal beach and town walk through Marion Bay. We were pleased to see a pair of Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes tending their nest in the hollow of a dead tree on the edge of the town. On the beach

we noted Fairy and Crested Terns, Pacific and Silver Gulls, Pelicans and a Sooty Oystercatcher. Within the town, Rainbow Lorikeets were conspicuous amongst the flowering gums, as were Red Wattlebirds, Crested Pigeons, Grey Currawongs and New Holland Honeyeaters. A total of 35 bird species were recorded.

In the evening at the Camp Kitchen, after the welcome and bird counts, Teresa entertained us with a very interesting talk about her family involvement with the southern Yorke Peninsula and more specifically, the Innes National Park. Her knowledge of the area and the birds will certainly put our group in good stead over the next few days. Also, the very favourable weather forecast for the weekend would ensure that the next few days were going to be most enjoyable.

Keith Jones



Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike on nest
Photo: *Teresa Jack*

Saturday The first day of our campout looked promising with a red sunrise across the gulf at dawn. We met at eight for our first walk along the Thomson-Pfizer Plaster Trail which connects the old township of Inneston with Stenhouse Bay. Numerous Silvereyes, Variegated Wrens, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and White-browed Scrubwrens shared the scrub. A good sighting was the Swamp Harrier soaring above but perhaps the best was the Mallee Fowl which crossed the track in front of some lucky people.

Our second stop was at the old single men's quarters in Innes National Park. Numerous bush birds inhabit the surrounding scrub, including Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Scarlet Robins, Dusky Woodswallows, White-browed Babblers and a nesting Willy Wagtail. At this stage we were fortunate in having Kent Treloar, a local expert, join us. He and his wife, Marie, also spent Saturday night at the park with us and Kent joined us again next day.

Lunch was at Cape Spencer Light-house where we enjoyed spectacular views and some were lucky enough to see and photograph a Rufous Fieldwren.

In the evening Deb Furbank, Liaison Officer from the Innes National Park office, spoke to us about her work in the park. It was a most successful day spent with people, birds and surrounded by interesting plants, many in flower at the moment. *Pat Uppill*



Photo: *Bob Daly*



Photo: *Bob Daly*

Sunday Most of the 29 participants assembled by 8.30am in the car park at Pondalowie Bay. The day was clear & sunny but there was quite a stiff breeze to contend with. Two particular species were in our sights, Rock parrots & Osprey. Most of us made our way out to the rocky overhang with advice not to get too close to the edge ringing in our ears. Looking to the north we could quite clearly see the Osprey & its nest on the high cliffs of the island. Meanwhile out to our right excited spotters had found a number of Rock Parrots. A few of these were carefully photographed & examined through binos. A walk along the beach revealed Chestnut Teal & Grey Teal in reasonably large numbers. Some Pelicans, a Reef Egret, Cormorants, White-faced Heron, Red-necked Stints, Caspian Terns, Fairy Terns and Silver Gulls were also there. The find of the day must have been a single Ruddy Turnstone spotted by a very keen eyed observer as it foraged in the cast up seaweed on the curve of the beach accompanied by some Sooty Oystercatchers. We then made our way inland along the track through the fishing shacks & it was here that we saw Common Bronzewing, Variegated Fairy-wren, Galah, Striated Pardalotes, White-browed Scrubwren, Rufous Fieldwren, Red Wattlebird, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike & Magpie. After morning tea the group split up & people went in various directions to pursue particular birds. Some spotters were lucky & saw a Mallard wander across the road. Others got a wonderful sighting of a White-bellied Sea-Eagle at Dolphin Beach, Hooded Plovers with a nest & Masked Lapwing with young at Deep Lake. The wind made spotting smaller bush birds quite difficult but a walk around the Inneston township provided spotters with Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Striated Pardalote, Weebills, Purple-gaped Honeyeaters, a Golden Whistler, a Shrike-thrush, Grey Currawong, Silvereyes & some White-browed Babblers. The only non native birds we saw were Starlings. As people tired of the conditions & the difficulties associated with birding in them they made their way back to the caravan park. Later we gathered for a bird call & as we exchanged findings we found that we had reached a total of 63 species for the day.

Edith St George.



Rock Parrot Photo: Peter Gower



Osprey Photo: Peter Gower

Monday The last outing for the 2012 Fleurieu Birdwatchers Campout on Monday 15th October was a trip to Gleasons Landing. There were only 17 members left to enjoy this. However there was still some excitement to be had. Joyce, Fay and Kathy observed a flock of Budgerigars on the way, and with the help of Fay's telescope we viewed some 8 Ruddy Turnstones.

Also on the beach at regular intervals as if guarding their own territory were at least 8 White-faced Herons. There were also Red-capped Plovers, Red-necked Stints, and Masked Lapwings. However, Nick caught sight of 2 Pied Oystercatchers with a small chick, of which they were very protective.

In the distance could be seen an Osprey nest. On closer inspection there was a nesting Sooty Oystercatcher! Pied Cormorants were also there, and Fairy Terns were chattering and swooping nearby. Teresa implored the Gannets to make an appearance but they must have been busy elsewhere! Many thanks to Teresa for a great weekend – well done!

Geoff & I stopped for lunch at Teresa's 'forgotten' Minlaton Lake where there was one White-faced Heron on duty and a lone Black-winged Stilt looking for lunch. However, keeping them company were at least 500 Grey Teal all sitting together enjoying the sunny afternoon! Also there I saw the grandest Bird Hide yet!

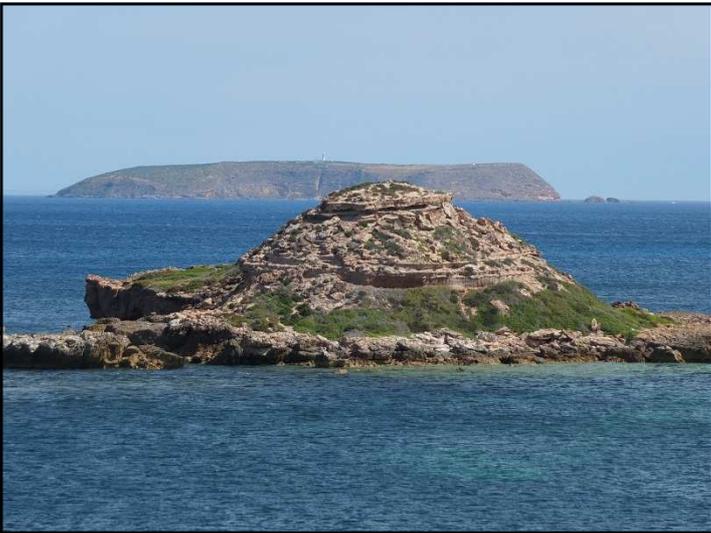
Colleen Evans.



Red-necked Stints
Photo: Teresa Jack

MORE CAMPOUT PHOTOS

(Supplied by members)



O U T I N G S

Goolwa Ponds/Wetlands 20 Oct

Eleven of us, on a glorious fine morning, started 1km west down Kessel Rd, at the old Goolwa cemetery; a new site. It is being renovated by the Bush for Life Group and is well worth a 40 minute visit. We started with Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo, finished with a Brown Falcon and saw 25 species. Then on to the renovated Goolwa Ponds, with walkways, bridges, road-side moat, car park and a new bird hide. And the birds have returned, 52 of them. Even the Little Grassbird was seen twice. A pair of swans with one signet. A host of ducks and grebes. With the morning light behind us, the white tail tufts of the Hardheads and the blue of the Blue-billed Ducks, stood out. Coots, Dusky Moorhens, Purple Swamphens, Black-tailed Native-hen, Black-fronted Dotterels, Avocets, Royal Spoonbill, Great Egret, Ibis and Whiskered Tern. Overhead we had Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Black-shouldered Kite and Little Eagle. With not much walking entailed, we spent 30 minutes before lunch sea-side of the barrage, with another 32 species. At the bird call a family of Little Raven bombed us right by their name on the record sheet! What a day, and so soon after the camp-out at Innes NP.

Geoffrey Evans.



Black-tailed Native-hens Photo: Peter Gower



Blue-billed Duck
Photo: Bob Daly

Lower Hindmarsh River and estuary

Sunday 11 November

With the promise of a warm day we set out first towards the estuary via the lagoon. This was sickly green but that didn't deter a couple of ducks and a Great Egret, caught in a stretch and squawk pose. Over the dunes we searched in vain for the Hooded Plover recently reported nesting near the estuary.

The small group then shared cars to drive further upstream to a shady park opposite Greenhills Adventure Park. Overhanging the pool there a Magpie-lark perched on the edge of a nest in some dead timber, though we couldn't be sure whether the nest was actually in use.

We moved from shade to shade down the riverside track with sightings of a good number of small birds, including Red-browed Finches a few waterbirds and the only raptor of the day, a Collared Sparrowhawk.

The morning had warmed considerably by the time we had returned to Wattle Avenue and ferried



Magpie Lark on nest
Photo: Verle Wood

members back to the park. We were glad of the generous shade for lunch and bird call, and to end the morning, grateful for a visit from a colourful Kingfisher to take our tally to 58 species. Being spring, of course, a number of records were of breeding or dependent young. Verle Wood



Great Egret
'Stretch and Squawk'
Photo: Verle Wood

Currency Creek—'Jarnu' Thursday 22 November

Ten members met at the Lions Park at Currency Creek. From there we progressed to 'Jarnu'. It was a beautiful morning, clear sky, top temperature expected was 22 degrees, just perfect for birding.

This is the first time I have been to this location. The local mosquitos and flies must have known that we were coming, so they all came out to welcome us and stayed with us for the duration! The vegetation is perennial veldt, which was at least a metre high. Various eucalypts, melaleuca uncinata and others were ideal for our local Fleurieu birds.

We found Rufous Whistlers, Elegant Parrots, White-fronted Chats, Grey Shrike-thrush, White-browed Babblers, Spotted Pardalote, Superb Wren and Hooded Robin. We saw a total of 36 species, with some special sightings.

The male Rufous Whistler was in full song for quite awhile. We couldn't believe he could perform so enthusiastically, with us so close. The absolute highlight of my birding year occurred today when Peter & Nick found a Dusky Woodswallow sitting on its nest. The bird was not disturbed by us and just sat comfortably, but wary and patiently waited until its mate came and took over, with food for the babies. The sunshine picked up the beautiful blue on the bird's bill, just exquisite! Four of us enjoyed this scene for quite a long time.

We enjoyed the bird count under the shade of the melaleuca uncinatas alongside the roadway.

Elaine O'Shaughnessy



Hooded Robin
Photo: *Nick Tebneff*



Dusky Woodswallow
Photo: *Nick Tebneff*



White-fronted Chat
Photo: *Peter Gower*

Recent Observations

Paiwalla—Laratinga Wetlands



Peregrine Falcons chicks ready to leave their nesting site at Paiwalla
Photo: *Peter Koch*



A young cuckoo spied at Laratinga Wetlands on Friday, 9th November. (Merinda Hyland & I heard much carrying on from what we thought was a young Superb Fairy-wren. It turned out to be an immature cuckoo being fed by its Superb Fairy-wren host parents. This young bird was almost twice the size of its 'parents'.) We believe it to be an immature Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo.

Photo: Michelle Foster

Meeting 9 November 2012

Items of Interest: 17 members present, Apologies from Colin Rogers Guest Speaker. Neil Cheshire gave a presentation on birds of Southern and Indian Ocean Islands: Amsterdam, Crozet and Kerguelen and Heard Islands 4000km SW of Perth.

David Thorn reported on the Hooded Plovers around the Hindmarsh River outlet. He believes the last eggs were taken by seagulls exacerbated by people feeding the gulls in that area.

A thankyou was sent to Teresa Jack for leading such a successful campout to lower Yorke peninsula. 76 species were recorded over the weekend.

Birdcall: There are water birds in very large numbers in areas around Goolwa and Hindmarsh Island. Curlew Sandpipers, two banded, seen at the island below the barrage, Fairy Terns with possibly an immature bird, Latham Snipe at the bird hide and large numbers of Whiskered Tern, Shelduck, Little Black and Great Cormorants. Also Red-kneed Dotterels, Great Crested Grebes, Royal Spoonbills and a Grey Plover was seen near the Murray Mouth. A Painted Snipe was seen at Laratinga. A Tawny Frogmouth pair has raised one young near Victor Harbor and the Black-chinned Honeyeaters have returned to Encounter Bay. A Triller was seen at Myponga.

Fairy Tern Monitoring 2012-2013

Thank you to everyone who attended the **Fairy Tern Induction Training / Workshop** last week at Milang and Sugars Beach Lookout, it was great to see some familiar faces and a few new ones too. We have now received our 'Research Permit' approval to conduct 'official' monitoring activities of the '**Endangered Fairy Tern**' in the **Northern Lagoon of the Coorong and Murray Mouth region**.

For those of you who are interested in being involved again this year and haven't yet filled out the '**Volunteer Registration Form**' please do so and return to me at **PO Box 29, PORT ELLIOT, SA, 5212**. I have some extra 'hard copy' forms and I am happy to send them out if you give me your mailing address. I will also include a pack of Monitoring Data Sheets (or print your own from the attachment above) and Bird Identification Cards.

Wyn Syson has offered to conduct Fairy Tern monitoring sessions on Thursdays from the Murray Mouth lookout at Sugars from now on and I will be heading out on Saturday this weekend. Brenton from 'Canoe the Coorong' will be out and about in the Coorong most weekends. If you could let me know which days you intend to conduct your monitoring session, I will compile a roster so we know who is out and when, so we don't 'double up' on monitoring sessions and I can record who is in the field. It would be great to have at least **4 days monitoring sessions per week**.

It is important to be registered first so you are covered by **DEWNR Volunteer Insurance**.

I will be compiling the data sheets at the end of each month, so you will only need to send them in to me once at the end of each month.

Kerri Bartley

Fairy Tern Monitoring Volunteer Coordinator

PO Box 29

PORT ELLIOT, SA, 5212

Ph: 0407 325 130

A New Book "Fleurieu Birds".

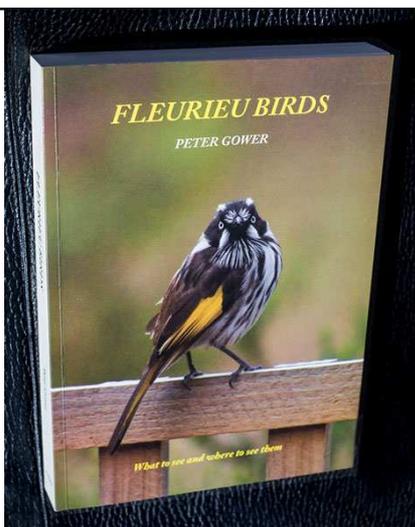
"Fleurieu Birds" by Peter Gower is a 280 page guide to all the birds of the region. It has a full page each devoted to 231 species, with several photos of most species showing various plumages.

There is also a directory of 42 parks and reserves throughout the region plus a cross reference to the species seen in each park.

The book will retail at \$40, and will be available from the first week in December. Orders made before 18 Dec will be sent without an extra postage charge.

Available from Peter Gower

Email: gowerphotos@gmail.com or PO Box 290 Macclesfield 5153.



FBW Questionnaire Recommendations

1. That weekday outings during winter remain part of the FBW birding calendar, and that Wednesday and Thursday remain the preferred outing days;
2. Saturdays and Sundays for weekend outings should remain;
3. All outings to begin at 8:30am, although earlier times during summer should be considered;
4. The committee should review the choice of sites and seasonal timing of outings to a) maximise the potential numbers of bird species to be seen; and b) combine several locations per outing. NB: The long-term data set on outing locations and bird counts kept by FBW, could be used to assist in placing the outings.
5. At this stage, weekend (2 day) outings are not recommended.
6. Annual campouts should be maintained. (NB: A healthy proportion of members who hadn't attended recent general meetings and outings did attend this latest campout at Innes National Park).
7. GPS coordinates for outings could still be included for those who choose to use them.
8. Provide a set of guidelines for each outing leader, including a) prior information about the site and bird species, b) encouragement of newcomers, c) minimise time allocated to the bird call at the end of the outing, and d) provide contact details for those who wish to utilise car pools / home pick-ups.
9. Explore additional ways to publicise the outing program (eg local newspapers, Council Chambers notice boards, shopping notice boards);
10. Promote the use of car pooling / home pickups, to improve opportunities for those members who do not drive or only wish to travel short distances from their home;
11. The current format of the FBW newsletter be maintained, however, if, necessary, increase it's size depending on the availability of sufficient information.
12. Regularly review the outing program, by undertaking a similar survey every 5 years.

Following the recent survey of members views, these recommendations were presented to the Committee by Keith Jones who analysed the responses we received. Thanks to all those members who responded.

LATEST PHOTOS From Nick Tebneff



Rufous Whistler



Spotted Pardalote



Silver Gull and Hooded Plover Confrontation



Well camouflaged
Pied Oystercatcher chick



Protective parent



Eastern Reef Egret