



December 2017

# Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc.

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## Christmas Break-up Victoria Hotel, Strathalbyn.

Meet for Lunch 12.00. Saturday 2 December.

RSVP to FBW via email

or phone Wendy 85550634 to book.

2 course Menu \$30/ head.



*Happy Christmas to all members.*

**Outings:** Meet 8.30 am. Bring lunch and a chair.

**Contacts:** fleurieubirds@gmail.com or phone Bob and Wendy 8555 0634

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

**Newsletter:** Contact email: fleurieubirds@gmail.com (until further notice.)

## Outing- Ingalalla Falls, Wednesday 11 October.



In spite of the dire weather forecast for strong winds and rain, six of us met at the car park near the falls. It proved to be a good decision as the creek valley was quite sheltered and the birds, taking advantage of this, were very active. As our group gathered, both Black and Wood ducks flew over and Kookaburras and Grey Shrike-thrushes were heard. Being a damp and well vegetated environment we expected Red-browed Finches, Superb Fairy-wrens, Crimson Rosellas and Golden Whistlers and were not disappointed. A couple of Striated Thornbills were seen in the

lower vegetation with a Wedge-tailed Eagle way above us. For me the highlight was the number of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters which escorted us up to the falls and back again without being hassled by the New Holland HEs. A close second was a well disguised Grey Fantail nest in a prickly bursaria bush, with one bird on the nest and the mate close by. A sighting of an Eastern Spinebill was also welcome. Considering such a short walk, the 22 species seen was very rewarding. With a few spots of rain as a warning, it was decided not to go onto the Springs Road site and as it turned out this was a wise decision. **Pat Uppill**



## BirdLife Aus. Oystercatcher Monitoring Workshops held in September 2017.

During September two workshops funded by the Adelaide Mt Lofty NRM Board and Birdlife Australia Beach Nesting Bird Group were held at Largs North and Goolwa. This was to raise public awareness for the need to monitor Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers in South Australia. The information collected from the monitoring programs for these two resident shorebirds will greatly assist in better understanding their conservation status. This program follows on from the current work done by many volunteers for Hooded and Red-capped Plovers along the Fleurieu coastline.

**Pied Oystercatchers** breed and rear their young between August and January in several southern Australian coastal habitats, including sand dunes close to ocean beaches and sand flats and samphire areas within sheltered bays. In contrast, "Sooties" tend to nest on rocky outcrops on offshore islands or amongst washed up seaweed on the more exposed and often less disturbed ocean beaches. Usually their nesting season is a couple of months later.

The workshops provided guidelines for monitoring the nesting success of these birds. During the rest of the season mixed species flocks of juveniles and adults often forage for pipis and beach worms and this is the time when volunteers should be able to do counts of population numbers as well as monitoring levels of human activity and the birds' natural predators. Workshop attendees were given a demonstration on how to enter their collected data onto the Beach Nesting Bird Portal.

After the workshops, we visited sites in the Port River and the Murray Mouth where we were able to observe both oystercatcher species. At the Murray Mouth there were also several large flocks of migratory Red-necked Stints with some still in their breeding plumage, as well as many species of Terns including Caspian, Crested, Fairy, Whiskered and Gull-billed Terns.

We thank Kasun Ekanayake from Birdlife Australia for organising and running the workshops. Those wanting more information or who would like to participate in the Oystercatcher monitoring program can visit Birdlife Australia website at: [www.birdlife.org.au/beach](http://www.birdlife.org.au/beach) . **Keith Jones**



## Campout-Saturday 21 Oct. Appealinna Ruins, Brachina Gorge & Aroona Campground.

Twenty one of us assembled at 8.30am outside the Shearers Quarters at Willow Springs Station for the run into the Flinders Ranges National Park. It was a pleasant sunny day without a cloud in the sky and a predicted temperature of 28 degrees. We decided we should take morning tea with us and return to Willow Springs for a late lunch. Our first stop was along the road into Appealinna Ruins. The hillside on our right was considered to be a possible haunt for the Short-tailed Grasswren. We lined up and set off in a fairly straight line with our binoculars at the ready. One person was heard to say: *They're already over the other side of the hill.* The trudge up the hill and back yielded little other than kangaroos & wallabies. We resumed our drive to the ruins and along the road we saw some Australian Pipits and Magpies. Around the ruins themselves we saw Black-face Cuckoo-shrike, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Tree Martins, Little Corella and Yellow-throated Miners. An interesting find was a Grey Butcherbird busy feeding its young in a tree in the middle of the parking area. From here we drove on to Brachina Gorge. The area chosen for morning tea gave us room to park off the road and plenty of room to move about to look for birds. Here we saw Rainbow Bee-eaters, Striated Pardalotes, a Peaceful Dove, Variegated Fairy-wrens, White-plumed and Singing Honeyeaters and Wedge-tailed Eagles. Two very similar honeyeaters provoked an animated discussion as to whether they were Grey-fronted or Yellow-plumed. Along the creek line someone found a couple of White-faced Herons, which were a pleasant surprise.

Our next stop was the Aroona Campground. On the way we made another roadside stop and found Southern Whiteface, Black Kite and Emu. Aroona provided what was probably the find of the day, a Little Eagle soaring majestically along the cliff face to the north of the campground.

Other birds seen at a much lower level were Kookaburras, Red-capped Robins, Rufous Whistlers, Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Australian Ringnecks, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Australian Ravens, Grey-shrike Thrush and a Little Crow.

From here most of us took ourselves back to Willow Springs and a late lunch feeling quite content after a lovely drive and some good birding. **The evening bird call yielded 51 species.**

We finished the evening off with a series of pictorial presentations by some of the many photographers in the group. **Edith St George**

Campout Photos: **Bob Daly**



## Campout Flinders Ranges— Sunday 22 October.

It dawned a perfect birdwatching day. The skies were blue, temperature mild and there was no wind. At 8.30 a.m. a convoy of seven cars and 21 enthusiastic birdwatchers left the shearers quarters at Willow Springs. Several stops were planned for the morning and the first of these came soon after turning onto the main Wilpena to Blinman Rd when a family of Banded Plovers were spotted. A first for some of the group. Two Australian Pipits were also seen nearby.

Our second stop was at a patch of remnant Mallee scrub where several Weebills were heard and seen, along with Chestnut-rumped Thornbills a Grey Butcherbird and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters.

Further along the road Peter Owen drew our attention to an area of ecological interest. In 1985 a series of three modified fenced plots were constructed for a controlled experiment to show the impacts of rabbits and kangaroos grazing in the area. Interestingly the damage caused by both of these animals was similar. The destruction to plant life was clear for all to see as the third plot was well vegetated.

Our next stop caused great excitement for everyone and particularly the keen photographers as a Red-backed Kingfisher sat obligingly for photos against a blue sky (see page 5). A second bird was found in scrub a short distance away.

Driving further north-east towards Wilkawillina Gorge extensive erosion channels were the main feature of the landscape. With only a 5 inch rainfall over the last 12 months the land was pretty barren. As we all spread out to explore the spectacular Gorge, a small soak in the dry river bed became the focus

This tiny **soak** (right corner) near the bank was visited by so many small birds and kept us all amused as they came in to drink.



of attention for many birders. Peaceful Doves, Grey-fronted and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters all took timid advantage of the limited water supply. Rainbow Bee-eaters displayed their aerial skills while more Red-backed Kingfishers made the Gorge their home. Unfortunately our explorations of the Gorge were also being viewed by a number of feral goats which were seen watching us from the cliff tops. From here we all agreed to meet for lunch in Wilpena Pound, after which everyone dispersed to do their own birdwatching. At the end of a very interesting and enjoyable day the bird call resulted in a total of 54 birds. **Julie Kuchel**



(Left to right.)

**Peaceful Doves in the soak.**  
**The group at Wilkawillina Gorge.**  
**Masked Lapwing.**  
**Grey-fronted HE.**



## Art in Conservation Parks run by DEWNR.

With government funding the public were invited to join in with an Artist and create a work of art in the Park. A guest speaker then talked about the environment in the lunch break. The art has included, drawing, painting, jewellery making, and mosaicking. It is a first time this kind of event has been offered.

**Mosaic Artist—Alison Mugford** from Strathalbyn has created two beautiful bird designs for the concrete picnic tables at Tolderol and a few beginners with a couple of more experienced helpers attended the session on Sunday, 5 November. John Gitsham (Birds SA) and Regina Durbridge (GWLAP) talked about their involvement in restoring Tolderol Reserve. Peter Koch and Chris Eckert were thanked for all the ground work they have undertaken to turn Tolderol into a wonderful habitat for so many birds. They have spent many hours cutting the grass to enable visitors to drive around freely. There is 17 KMs of track around the ponds that can take most cars with clearance while you view the birds. The birds keep on coming as the ponds have been filled to provide maximum food for all the different species.

**If you visit Tolderol make sure you have a look at the tables near the Lake and camping area!!**

**New signage is now in place and bookings for camping required through NRM.**

**Hopefully there will be a toilet on site in the near future too.. Wendy Phillips**



Snipe Table



Preparation

## Outing- Tolderol - Sunday 12 November.

12 people including 3 new members met on a warm cloudy morning with no breeze. Win led the outing taking us around the ponds in our cars, stopping at places along the way.

We saw huge numbers of some species like Whiskered Terns and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. The highlight for everyone was sighting 3 Bitterns, a Royal Spoonbill and a single immature Banded Stilt in the middle of a group of Black-winged Stilts.



Australasian Bittern at Tolderol  
Photo: Bob Daly



Curlew Sandpiper

We saw a single Curlew Sandpiper in amongst the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and one intrepid member saw a Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo. A total 47 species were recorded on the beautiful spring day.

**Graeme and Yrena Mountford**



Yellow-throated Miner chicks.  
Photo: Julie Kuchel

Flinders Ranges Campout Photos



Red-backed Kingfisher.  
Photo: Bob Daly

## General Meeting —Friday 17 November at Goolwa. Items of Interest:

26 Members and 2 Visitors attended and there were 10 apologies received.

**Financial Report** Keith Jones gave us a balance of \$2000 approx. with some cost expected before end of the year leaving a total of \$1500.

Three potential new members were welcomed and subs withheld until FBW decision known.

A request to visit a private property near Clayton - a possibility for next year.

Invitation received to attend WWO official opening of the new Bird Rescue Centre. Wendy represented FBW and many organisations and generous donors were thanked for their contribution.

Invitation to attend a social gathering from South Coast Environment Centre passed on to David Thorne but advised the event was cancelled.

Campout at Willow Springs successful and Peter Owen thanked for his leadership. Peter kindly offered to lead the next one in 2018.

Christmas Break-up Lunch arranged.

Presentation for 20 year service to FBW given to Ann Turner.

**Guest Speaker:** John Gitsham President of Birds SA talked about the logistics of forming a sub-group of their organisation and was able to answer questions from the members present.

Wendy proposed ***“That we close FBW Inc. and support joining Birds SA as individual members and that we continue further discussions with them to guide us in formulating a sub-group of their organisation”***

A vote was taken and supported **100%**.

**A special general meeting planned for end of January to dissolve FBW and move onto the next phase.**

**President’s Report** read by Wendy highlighted the last few years activities and showed how active FBW’s have been. It was a good reminder that it would be very hard to just give it all away.

**Bird Call:** Buff Banded Rails have been seen by Peter Gower trying to cross the road near Mitre 10 in Pt Elliot. Ann Houghton has had Purple-crowned Lorikeets in her garden. Andrew Jeffery has seen a Black-backed Magpie in Victor Harbor and Kookaburras fighting over nesting sites. Denzel Murfet and Ann Turner have seen a Shining Bronze Cuckoo on Hindmarsh Island. Judith Dyer has seen the Sea Eagle over Goolwa Beach. Neil Cheshire and Marion have seen a Ground Cuckoo-shrike near Quorn. Baillon’s Crake has been seen at the Stan Farquhar Reserve also nesting Fairy Martins in large numbers. Theresa has seen Latham’s Snipe at Blockers Rd Myponga and Painted Snipe at Whites Rd Globe Derby. Brown Quail and Buff-banded Rails have been seen near the Barrage at Goolwa. Hooded Plover around our coast have had mixed breeding success. Peter Owen has seen 7 Spotted Crakes at the Wash-pool Aldinga and a Dollar Bird has been photographed at Kapunda.

**Presentation:** Neil Cheshire showed us photos of his trip along the Amazon with beautiful coloured birds.

**Keep on hanging in there until we get it sorted!**

**Next year will be slightly different and may be challenging for us, BUT We will try to make it work for you!**



Tawny family at Glenalta. Photo: J Kuchel.

## As a member of Birds SA you will receive:

- A copy of South Australian Ornithologist
- Our quarterly Birds SA Newsletter
- Our monthly e-Newsletter
- Access to our general gatherings  
3 Field trips a month of your choice.

### SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL 2018

To pay your subscription —Please note that we have had to increase rates to offset rises in printing, postage etc. *However, if you are prepared to accept electronic versions of the newsletter and journal, discounted rates are available as set out below.*

**Please pay your subs by 31st December, 2017 if possible.**

Subscriptions can be paid by logging on in the membership section of the Birds SA website.

If you do not wish to renew, please let us know by post or email to [membership@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:membership@birdssa.asn.au).

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Normal (Print + Electronic copies)	Discount (Electronic only)
Single membership	\$60.00	\$50.00
Family/household membership	\$70.00	\$60.00

#### Concessional rates: (Current student or Seniors/health care card)

Single	\$55.00	\$45.00
Family/household	\$65.00	\$55.00
Student (full-time students under 25 years of age)	\$20.00	\$10.00

You can download and complete our [membership application form](#) from the website and either return the form at a general meeting or email it to [membership@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:membership@birdssa.asn.au) or post it.

**Payment may be made by cash (at a General Meeting) or by electronic transfer to our account (see membership form for details) or by sending a cheque or money order to:**

*The Treasurer, Birds SA.  
c/- South Australian Museum  
North Terrace  
Adelaide, SA, 5000*

***For Fleurieu Birdwatchers to become a Sub-group of Birds SA—individual members need to join them and pay their annual fees to be covered by their insurance. A number of our members are already registered with them and also with Birdlife Australia. **There will no longer be a subscription for FBW.** Other details of the merge will be confirmed early next year following our Committee Meeting. Contact Wendy or Bob for any further explanation by phone 85550634 or email FBW.***



Southern Whiteface.



Rainbow Bee-eater.

### **OUTING Bullock Hill Conservation Park—Wednesday 22 November.**

We met at the Greenman Inn at Ashbourne and drove to the end of Haines Road (off Signal Flat Road), Ashbourne to start the walk.

Vegetation is mainly pink and cup gum with a dense understorey of acacia and mixed heath.

It was a hot and windy day when **five** inspired members followed the fence line to an artificial dam on the eastern side of the park and walked uphill along a fire trail to return to the starting point.

The birds wisely remained in the dense understorey, but we still managed to record **34 species**.

Highlights included a solitary Bee-eater, a brown Treecreeper at nest, one single wailing Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo and a pair of Southern Whiteface at the dam.

Non- bird species included a mob of Western Grey Kangaroos, a sleepy Lizard and a small grey snake (or was it a legless lizard?)

Hot and sweaty, but well pleased with our perseverance, we admired the view across farm land to Lake Albert and Lake Alexandrina while conducting the final bird call for 2017.

**Jude Meacham**

### **Next Tolderol Bird Monitoring dates with NRM:**

Meet at 8am by the information sign.

Monday 27 November, and Tuesday 19 December,  
Morning Tea provided.

**Contact Regina Durbridge to attend, email:**

regina.durbridge@gwlap.org.au Or phone 0427364551

*Invitation to a special Open Day Sunday 3 December with tours of the Wetland included.*

***It is worth the drive to see Tolderol at it's best!***

*Photo taken at Tolderol of breeding Royal Spoonbill by Bob Daly.*



LAST NEWSLETTER for FBW Inc.  
Farewell from Bob and Wendy

