



February 2015

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



Saturday 14 February, Hindmarsh Island, including Mundoo Island Tour
All meet at 8.30 at Ferryman's Reserve Car Park HI.

35°30'29" S 138°47'35" E

Friday 13 March AGM 7.30 pm at Anglican Church Hall, Goolwa.

Sunday 15 March Paiwalla Wetlands. Sunnyside Lookout, Burdett

35° 02' 04" S 139° 22' 18" E

Wednesday 25 March "Beyond" Wetlands and Stan Farquhar Reserve

"Beyond" Carpark, Ocean Rd. Hayborough

35° 31' 56" S 138° 39' 06" E

Thursday 9 April Nurragi Reserve , Milang

35°22'25"S 138°48'01"E

See 2015 outing program on page 5.

Reminders

Mundoo Island Tours

Sat 14 February.

1st tour starts 9am.

2nd tour starts 10.30

Cost \$30 each and pay cash to the Grundy's.

For enquiries

Contact Wendy

8555 0634

Paiwalla Outing 15th

March. \$10 donation

please. Money Box

on site for the maintenance of this reserve.



Glossy Ibis at Tolderol

Photo: Peter Gower

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 email: fleurieubirds@gmail.com

Cover photo Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

It has a worldwide distribution, with approximately 12% of the total population occurring within Australia. (Marchant and Higgins 1990)

Listed as rare and migratory in South Australia - Migrates in response to good rains, often moving north in autumn and south in spring and summer (Birds Australia 2010)

Hundreds nested in the Lower Lakes at Salt Lagoon until the 1960s but few if any have nested in the region since. (O'Connor *et al.* 2013)

Migratory waders flock to Tolderol Game Reserve.

On Sunday 18 January 2015 the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and the Goolwa to Wellington LAP welcomed the South Australian birding and hunting community to Tolderol Game Reserve. This meeting of the minds was arranged to discuss the upcoming duck hunting season, future on-ground works at Tolderol and the response by waterbirds to the environmental watering of the reserve.

Senior Ecologist Mike Greig from DEWNR led discussions around the duck hunting season which begins 14 February 2015 and goes till 28 June. He explained to the crowd of thirty how DEWNR staff ensure hunting is sustainable by analysing waterfowl surveys at a continental and state scale to determine bag limits and species exempt from hunting for a given season. In addition to this, he outlined the protocol that must be followed by hunters and fielded questions from birdwatchers and hunters alike.

Following the meeting, staff from Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin and the GWLAP led a waterbird survey. The low water level in the watered basins provided the ideal habitat for migratory waders, which turned out in force to forage upon the extensive mudflats.

Recorded on the day were [540 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers](#), [203 Curlew Sandpipers](#), [144 Red-necked Stints](#) as well as [a one Common Greenshank](#), [Long-toed Sandpiper](#) and [Wood Sandpiper](#). The number of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints observed were the highest since the watering commenced and is reflective of migratory wader numbers at Tolderol prior to the drought.

Furthermore, this may represent the greatest number of Curlew Sandpipers recorded at Tolderol, with a similar number observed on a Birds SA field trip in 2000.

In addition to the exceptional migratory wader numbers, the flock of **Glossy Ibis** which were first sighted foraging at Tolderol on 13 December 2014, continues to grow with 72 individuals observed.

This species is rare in South Australia and the count of 72 is a record not only for Tolderol, but all sites in the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region in recent years.

(Thanks to Regina Durbridge for supplying this article.)

Please Note: Birdwatchers take care!!

Duck Hunters allowed at Tolderol from 14 February till 28

June. Shooting is not permitted on the 3 Basins where Waders are present, but nearby in the Reserve.

Hunters allowed to shoot Pacific Black Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Wood Duck, Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal and

Australian Shelduck and bag 10 per day. DEWNR staff are expected to check and monitor the hunters.



Regina instructing volunteers
Photo: Wendy Phillips



Black-winged Stilts and Waders taking off
Photo: Regina Durbridge

If you would like to participate in further monthly surveys with DEWNR please contact Gareth or Regina
gareth.oerman@sa.gov.au
regina.durbridge@sa.gov.au

Wednesday 26 November 2014. Springs Road Reserve and Ingalalla Falls

Six members met at Ingalalla Falls with Nick Tebneff our leader. The weather was slightly overcast but it soon cleared and we were able to view the birds easily.

We drove straight to the Springs Road Reserve. I had never been there before. It proved to be a magic part of the world for 'birdos'. We walked along the forest road for quite a few kilometres and were well rewarded.

One male Scarlet Robin was very obliging. The Grey Shrike-thrush were there in numbers, not only did they entertain us with their songs, but they appeared very interested in us. One of them completely encircled the six of us, just chatting happily. A little later on, on our way back along the track two of us were resting on a log when another friendly bird sat close to us on the adjoining log! Luckily there were two of us, as I think it would be hard to convince people that this was true!

However, the highlight of the day was the viewing of the Bassian Thrush. I understand from my companions how marvellous it is to see these birds and looking in the bird book I can see that they are not very plentiful in South Australia. We had wonderful viewing of them for quite a while. They were in showing off mood.

After a while we moved back to Ingalalla Falls and enjoyed our time there. The highlight there for me was the Eastern Spinebill, which met us on arrival.

Other birds sighted during our outing: Grey Fantail, White-throated Treecreeper, Laughing Kookaburra, Striated Thornbill, Yellow-faced, White-naped and Crescent Honeyeaters, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, and Red-browed Finch.

In all 36 species were sighted. A wonderful morning of bird-watching! *Elaine O'Shaunessey*



Bassian Thrush
Photo: *Teresa Jack*

Christmas Break-up Nangawooka Flora Reserve, Saturday 6 December.

The Reserve has never looked better with its beautiful Native plants and well defined pathways.

The new bird hide has a sign "Don Overall" above the doorway. It was built last year by the Rotary and Lions Clubs from the Victor Harbor area celebrating Don's volunteer commitment to the Park. A permanent watering trough has been installed and you can sit quietly in comfort to watch the birds come in to drink and bathe. The Park has some very old Eucalypts and old dead trees with hollows for nesting parrots and galahs. Don Overall gave us the history of Nangawooka since it began in 1982. It has grown and developed over the years with help from the "Friends of Nangawooka" and the last few years the Victor Harbor Council Town and Gardens Manager has assisted with the maintenance. Working Bees are held regularly in the Park and a few Plant Sales Days during the year. Many of the native plants are labelled and there is always something flowering. Wrens are constantly hopping in the low shrubbery.

25 members met in the Rotunda to celebrate the end of the year. Unseasonable weather kept a few away as it was 12-14 degrees. After a friendly chat and a walk around the park we all enjoyed an evening meal of cold meats and salads, delicious sweets and a few drinks.

Plans for 2015 were announced and people booked for the dinner in January and the Mundoo Tour in February.

Many thanks to all who participated in making it a successful event and a busy year of birding. *Wendy Phillips*

Web Stats:

226 visits in November with 82% new visitors.

114 looking at Bird Sites. *Verle Wood*



What a strange Bird!!

The Kakapo parrot was heading for extinction in New Zealand by the mid 20th Century and was just saved in time when a small population was found in the South West of the South Island deep in the Fiord-land. The large flightless bird, known as 'night parrot' by the Maoris, hides under logs and grass tussocks during the day and forages at night. It has an owl like face and very soft feathers which were used by the Maoris for coats and head-dresses. After European settlement the decline was very rapid. The introduction of cats, rats, weasels, ferrets and stoats plus the loss of habitat with land clearing left only a few remaining by the 1970's.



The first attempt to protect the species was in 1890 when 700 birds were put on Resolution Island, but it failed as the stoats and weasels swam the short distance from the Mainland and wiped them out.

Codfish Island which lies south west of Stewart Island has been set up for the "Recovery of the Kakapo" and in the 1980's scientists, rangers and volunteers monitored and recorded the birds movements using electronic trackers. They now have an intensive breeding program and even use artificial insemination to improve their chance of reproducing. They have discovered that the females require a diet of Rimu fruit which is very nutritious and if the harvest is poor the chicks don't survive. This is thought to be the reason why Kakapo have irregular breeding as they depend on the availability of the fruiting Rimu tree.

Kakapos can live up to 90 years of age. They have a strange breeding habit know as a 'Lek Breeding'. The male digs a hollow on the ground and performs an elaborate courtship ritual to attract the female to his 'Lek' and booms out a mating call amplified through two air sacks. Unlike other parrots the female will mate with several males. The female sits on three to four eggs for 30 days till the chicks hatch and then protects them for another 30 days leaving them alone when she goes off to feed at night.

To prevent inbreeding some birds have been introduced to a couple of other "safe" islands. They have also been given supplementary food to increase their chances of better egg production.

It has taken 20 years to increase the population from 51 to 124 birds even with all the efforts of the Recovery team. While progress has been slow the research has provided information for other conservation managers around the world.

(Extract from Australian Geographic no. 115)

Google KAKAPO for more information and see a video clip of some very strange behaviour. It is good for a laugh, but it just goes to show how too much interference from man can change wild animal behaviour.

Wendy Phillips

History repeats itself!

For those who attended the Camp based at Marion Bay a few years ago you might remember we found a Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike nesting along the road towards the Jetty. This season I found another one nesting on the very same branch. *Teresa Jack*

Bird Observation.

A "non-birdo" recently reported seeing a Black-chinned Honeyeater in their garden at Victor and watched it collecting a grub to take to feed it's young. She was wildly excited about the experience and I now think she has transformed into a "bird-lover."

Proposed Outing Schedule for 2015- Please check Newsletter for any changes

Day	Date	Venue	Meeting Point & GPS
Sat	Feb-14	Hindmarsh & Mundoo Islands	Ferryman's Reserve Car Park, Hindmarsh Island 35°30'30"S 138°47'36"
Sun	Mar-15	Paiwalla Wetlands	Sunnyside Lookout, Burdett 35°02'04"S 139°22'18"E
Wed	Mar-25	Beyond Wetlands/Stan Farquhar Park	Entrance to 'Beyond' Ocean Rd Hayborough
Thu	Apr-09	Nurragi Conservation Park	Cnr Strathalbyn/Goolwa and Milang Rds, Finniss. 35°22'25"S, 138°48'01"E
Sat	Apr-18	Onkaparinga River Estuary	Old Noarlunga Town Car Park 35°10'51"S 138°30'09"E
Sun	May-17	Stipiturus Conservation Park	Strawberry Farm Car Park 35°20'09"S 138°35'35"E
Wed	May-27	Basham Beach Reserve	Car park near entrance to Pt. Elliot Caravan Park 35°31'41"S 138°41'23"E
Sat	Jun-13	Scott Conservation Park (nth)	1 st car park, closest to Deep Creek Rd, 35°24'01"S 138°43'45"E
Thu	Jun-25	Private Property, Willunga - Range Rd (West)	Corner of Range Rd West/Victor Harbor Rd (A13) Top of Willunga Hill
Sun	Jul-12	Ironbarks Forest Reserve	Carpark, Old Coach Rd off Wicks Rd ,Kangarilla 35°10'19"S 138°42'23"E
Wed	Jul-29	Nixon-Skinner and Springmount Conservation Parks	Myponga Reservoir Carpark 35°24'40"S 138°26'16"E
Sat	Aug-16	Laratinga Wetlands	Laratinga Car Park, Bald Hills Rd, Mt Barker 35°04'23"S 138°53'10"E
Thu	Aug-27	Inman Valley Cemetery/Hancock Rd/ Robinson Hill	Inman Valley Cemetery, Proust Rd, Inman Valley 35°29'53"S 138°29'18"E
Sun	Sep-13	Bullock Hill CP	Greenman Inn Car Park, Ashbourne. 35°17'17"S, 138°45'58"E
Wed	Sep-23	Langhorne Creek Cemetery / Tolderol Game Reserve	Frank Potts Reserve, Langhorne Creek 35°18'31"S 139°08'28"E
Fri - Mon	Oct 16 – 19	Campout Pt. Augusta	Dates and meeting points to be confirmed
Thu	Oct-29	Onkaparinga Gorge	Gate 11, Piggott Range Rd 35°8'43"S 138°34'45"E
Sun	Nov-15	Mt Magnificent CP	Cnr Nangkita and Enterprise Rds 35°19'18"S 138°40'4"E
Wed	Nov-25	Newland Head CP	Dennis Hut Car Park 35°37'39"S, 138°48'18"E
Sat	Dec-05	Strathalbyn – Angas River walk	Swimming Pool Carpark, Colman Tce. Strathalbyn

Friday 16 January Twilight Outing Mt. Compass Sam Court Wetland and School Swamp Boardwalk.

The year's activities began with 34 members and visitors arriving at the recently developed Mt Compass Wetlands on a pleasant and breezy afternoon, with Wendy leading us. We began with a relaxing stroll around the newly constructed board walk that circled the ponds, which had a healthy growth of rushes around their edges. In the ponds we noted Australasian Grebes, Dusky Moorhens, Eurasian Coot and a solitary Pacific Black Duck. The Australian Reed Warblers and a Spotted Crake were active amongst the rushes. Overhead we noticed a flock of Galahs, several Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and a pair of Black-shouldered Kites. On the land adjacent to the wetlands, we saw Australian Wood Ducks and European Goldfinches. A male Golden-headed Cisticola caught our attention with its displaying calls from the elevated stems of rushes. Overall, a total of 16 species were recorded. We look forward to returning to the area when the vegetation around the wetlands improves resulting in a greater diversity of birds.

Our convoy of cars then moved to the Mt Compass School Swamp on Arthur Road. This swamp is part of a critically endangered vegetation community on the Fleurieu Peninsula and is the habitat of the endangered Southern Emu-wren. The local school takes an active interest in monitoring the environmental health of the swamp. During our short walk around the newly restored boardwalk we unfortunately didn't find any Southern Emu-wrens however, we saw several families of Superb Fairy-wrens, New Holland Honeyeaters, Willie Wagtails and a number of Little Corellas. A total of six species were identified.

By this time, our hunger pangs were beginning to be felt so we adjourned to the nearby Mt Compass Golf Course restaurant for a very enjoyable meal. The restaurant overlooks the golf course and during our meal, we had good views of kangaroos on the fairways as well as a large flock of Galahs. During the dinner, we had a "Bird" quiz, which Elaine organised. The well thought out questions catered for all groups, ranging from people who knew the scientific names of birds, through to those members with an interest in AFL footy. Kate Crawford won 1st prize and Don Overall 2nd prize of wine and chocolates.

The evening was a great opportunity for members to catch up with old friends and meet new members and visitors and it was a great way to begin the New Year for Fleurieu Birdwatchers. Our appreciation goes to Wendy for organising the outing and meal bookings and to Elaine for her wonderful quiz.

Keith Jones

Please note:

The key for the School Swamp Boardwalk is available at the local Bakery during school holidays and on weekends. Extensive work to repair the boards and the swamp vegetation was done by the GWLAP via the Swamps Project Manager John Gitsham.



Sam Court Wetland
Photo: Les Houghton



Dining at Mt. Compass Golf Club
Photo: Peter Gower

CHRISTMAS ISLAND BIRD AND NATURE WEEK August 2014 by ANN HOUGHTON

On arrival at Christmas Island we were greeted, given a 'goodie bag' and a coach was waiting to take us to our hotel. Once settled we were given an orientation tour of the area. A welcome dinner awaited us at the Golden Bosun Tavern that evening. We had breakfast each morning there overlooking the water with fantastic views of all the Frigatebirds, Boobies and Tropicbirds which were constantly flying past. Each evening we dined at a different restaurant with a presentation talk, some with a slide show, and even a book launch on the Island of Tim Lows' latest book called "Where song began". All groups met up for lunch each day which was always at a different location.

We were divided into 4 groups and each group went off in the hire cars with their specialist leader to various parts of the Island.

Our first day was with Janos Hennicke who came from the University of Hamburg in Germany every year especially for his work on the rarest booby in the world - the Abbott's Booby. Off into the jungle where Janos had two assistants waiting for us, Niki from Germany and Michelle from Singapore, both young ladies were invaluable to his work, they used the machete to cut the track to the trees with a nest. Once they confirm the nest is active, they prepare the ropes for Janos to climb the tree - a 30metre climb. Janos takes the bird sitting there and places it in a bag which he then lowers to the girls. If there is a chick in the nest he weighs it. Once lowered to the girls they remove it from the bag and place microelectronic transmitters and data loggers on the bird, then another instrument which measures the depth that the bird dives to, then they colour the underside of the tail with green dye (as used on sheep etc.). The dye wears off in time but is an indicator that bird has been caught and it also enables Janos to recover his valuable equipment. It is then replaced into the bag and sent back up the tree to Janos. We had been warned not to move about or talk during this procedure to ensure the bird remained calm - which it did. Amazing to watch!



The next day our leader was Nic Dunlop a adjunct senior lecturer at Murdoch University. Nic took us to a spot on the coast and walked through some vegetation and the rocks to see the Red-tailed Tropicbird. The object was to band and record some. The birds nest straight on the ground amongst the rocks and low shrubs, they were not bothered by people and you can just walk up to them and pick them up, both the parents and chicks. All the time we were there the Tropicbirds and others were flying around us so close yet from the road you would not know the 'nests' were there. The rocks are very sharp and care was needed to walk between them. Nic then took us to the Christmas Island Resort where we were given permission to go down to the swimming pool - sounds odd - but - all around were hundreds of the 3 different types of Frigatebirds flying over our heads and swooping down to the pool continuously taking a drink whilst in flight from the chlorinated water. These birds do not land in the water or make any mess - the place was pristine, but I would not care to be swimming in the pool with these huge birds swooping down around you. Frigatebirds are the pirates of the sea, they do not have webbed feet, and they lack waterproof plumage and snatch their food from the surface of the sea or as we observed they hassle the other birds especially the Boobies to make them disgorge their food and catch it as it falls.

The next day we went on walks to Dolly Beach and Hosnie Springs then onto a picnic lunch at the Pink House. Afterwards we were given a guided walk through the reptile house where they are breeding the stunning tiny blue-tailed skink. Later we were taken to the National Parks Office for a presentation and then were shown the birds that had been rescued after an earlier cyclone. Amongst the birds were the stunning Golden Bosun, Frigatebirds, Boobies and their first ever Hawk Owl they were trying to hand rear, they fed the birds whilst we were there with fish.

Tim Low (one of our guides) took us out the following day to a beach with the only access being a boardwalk and a ladder down to the beach which consisted mainly of broken coral. This beach seems to be the one on the Island where the majority of rubbish from the sea gets washed ashore - mainly from Indonesia. Most of the rubbish was rubber thongs, plastic bottles of every conceivable size shape and colour, toothbrushes, fishing gear, bamboo, seeds of many sorts and even children's little plastic toys. This rubbish gets collected frequently but it builds up again very quickly, some of it gets caught quite high up on the rocks in rough weather.

(continued)

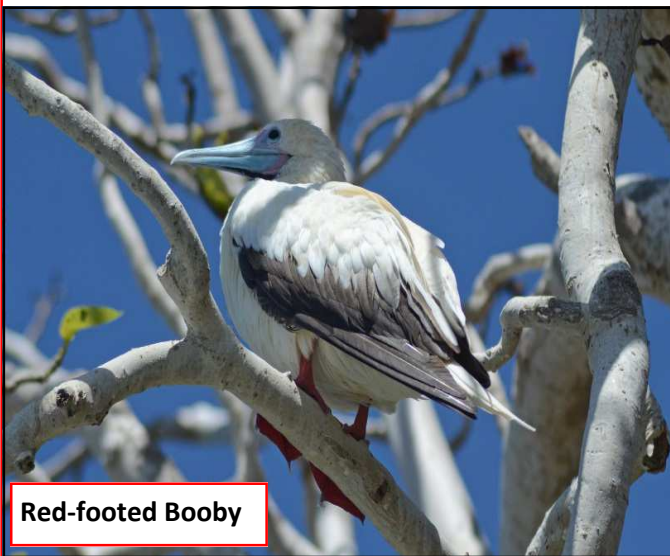
The next day we went a hunting - with a teddy bear..... Who would have thought it, poor teddy had his arm amputated, then it was attached to a cable tie and a very long fishing line. A tray-top ute with 3 rear-facing seats was used to slowly drag the teddy's arm which resembled a rat some distance behind the vehicle. The Island Goshawk would swoop on its prey. The vehicle stopped and Mark Holdsworth our guide and noted wildlife biologist would then get out a long pole with a 'noose' on the end. The bird is usually in a tree watching and Mark would gently prod one leg with the loop. The bird lifts its leg and the loop is then closed around the leg and the bird lowered to the ground. Only birds without banding were caught - then it had the band placed on its leg, and weighed. Once released the bird would fly up to a branch again and just sit there and watch us. Sometimes the same bird would again swoop on the 'rat'. Mark is from Tasmania and says it does not work with the Goshawks on Tassie.

There were many other visits to places and birds along the way and even a night outing to spot the Hawk Owl which Lisa (our organiser) was able to call in and kept calling to it - we called her an owl whisperer as she was so good at mimicking its call before putting the spotlight on it.

The trip was well organised with some top specialist guides, we saw all the listed birds and the many crabs that are endemic to the Island.

We would highly recommend the Bird and Nature week on Christmas Island in the first week of September.

We left Christmas Island well satisfied for Cocos Island - and that in itself is another story.....



Red-footed Booby



Red-tailed Tropicbird

Tawny Frogmouths

"I headed for a particular area near McLaren Vale looking for Tawny Frogmouths a few months ago. Great success, a male sitting on a nest. A few weeks later and finally I could see a little fluffy golf-ball sized chick, (one egg had fallen out of the nest). They do not build a very substantial nest at all!! The female sits on the nest or with the chick at night time and the parents share the feeding. It has been a pleasure to watch this chick grow. She has been off the nest for a few weeks now, father still sits with her during the day with mother arriving after dusk to help. Baby is flying very well now and following them around begging for food. Three months of patience and dedication for raise their young. " **Teresa Jack.**

PS. Also a family of Tawny's raised at Victor Golf Club.

