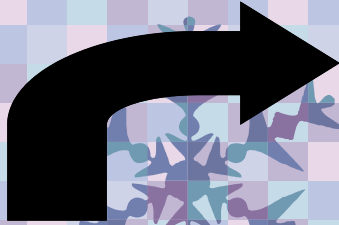




June 2014

# Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



## Events

**LAST  
REMINDER  
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE  
YET TO PAY  
THEIR SUBS !!!!**

**Saturday 14 June Parawa (Private Property)**

Corner of Range Rd / Parawa Rd,

35°33'39" S 138°21'41" E

**Thursday 26 June Onkaparinga River Gorge**

Gate 11, Piggott Range Road,

35° 8' 43" S 138° 34' 45" E

**Sunday 13 July Paiwalla Wetlands, Burdett**

Sunnyside Car Park, Burdett

35° 02' 04" S 139° 22' 18" E

**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 & Main Rd,

35°22'25" S 138°48'01" E

### WANTED!

2-3 MEMBERS TO PRESENT AT  
OUR NEXT GENERAL MEET-  
ING FRIDAY 12 SEPTEMBER.

PLEASE CONTACT  
NEIL CHESHIRE

**(NO MEETING IN JULY)**



White-faced Heron with a baby snake and we thought it was a frog! said Ann.  
Photo: *Ann Houghton* (Near Beacon 19 Goolwa)

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

**Newsletter:** Contact fleurieubirds@gmail.com

# OUTINGS

## Goolwa Barrage and Murray Mouth, Wednesday 26 March 2014

Six Fleurieu Birders met at the Barrage car park on an almost calm, mild and clear morning. Soon after arrival an impressive flock of about 450 Little Black Cormorants flew downstream in a straggling line with most settling on the eastern side of the Barrage, joining about 60 Pied Cormorants and 50 Great Cormorants. Win who arrived later was fortunate to see a Grey Butcherbird just inside the Barrage grounds and a Sacred Kingfisher was seen nearby. Between the Barrage and Beacon 19 there was not a great diversity of waders but the Red-necked Stint count was 350 and about 120 Red-necked Avocet were feeding. Only four Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and two Curlew Sandpipers were located with most of the population of these species now on their way north. A single Banded Stilt was seen at Beacon 19.

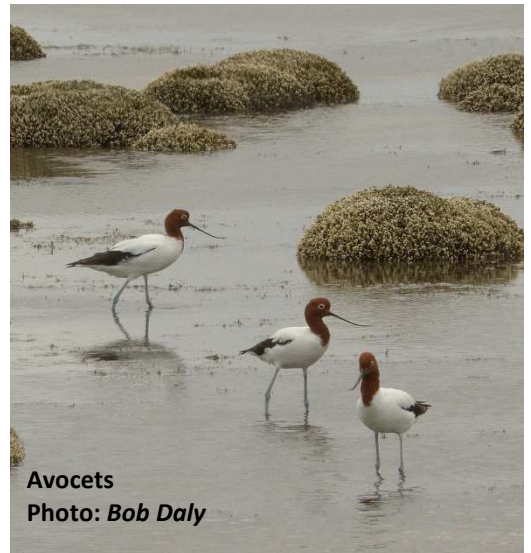
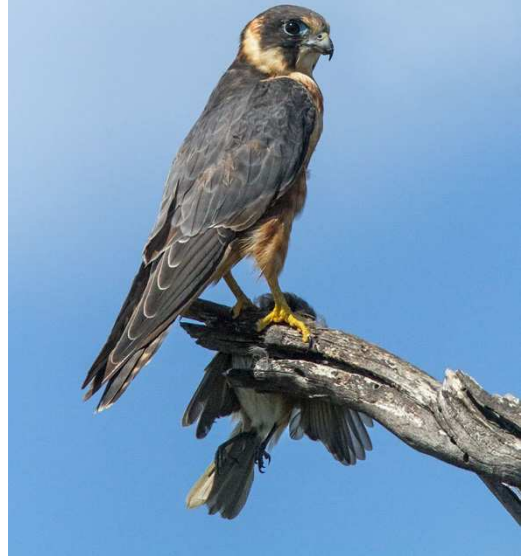
We drove to the Hindmarsh Island housing development and accessed the eastern end of the Barrage and nearby mudflats, adding to our tally of waterbirds. From there we went to the Sugars Beach/Murray Mouth lookout and were rewarded with 60+ Cape Barren Geese feeding in a paddock close to the road near the Mundoo turn-off. At Sugars Beach/Murray Mouth we added 19 Pied and 21 Sooty Oystercatchers to the list. Lunch was taken at the picnic table at the lookout.

The icing on the cake of an excellent morning birding was being startled by two Australian Hobbies swooping low over our heads. They settled nearby and Peter was able to photograph one holding its prey which appeared to be a Singing Honeyeater.

In all 54 species were recorded, a good result considering we had not sought out small bush birds.

*Neil Cheshire*

Hobby with Singing Honeyeater  
Photo: Peter Gower



Avocets  
Photo: Bob Daly

## Hindmarsh River Estuary Thursday 10 April 2014

Only 6 members arrived at Wattle Avenue Victor Harbor for the walk. We were expecting rain to come as it had been forecast each day for the last three days. It managed to keep a few members away, but it ended up dry for the whole morning.

We enjoyed a leisurely stroll along the Hindmarsh River to the beach, where we spotted a few ducks and coots and the usual gulls on the beach.

We walked up the side of the Primary School then headed off in our cars to the far end of Wattle Drive and followed the river to the back of Greenhill Adventure Park. This is a beautiful spot with large River Red Gums. Here we found a Great Egret and a few Cormorants resting on dead branches. The usual "pretty" birds were absent, but there was enough to keep us interested with lots of birds heard calling and we were surprised the total species count came to 38. Thanks to Neil for leading the walk.

*Wendy Phillips*



Photo: Wendy Phillips

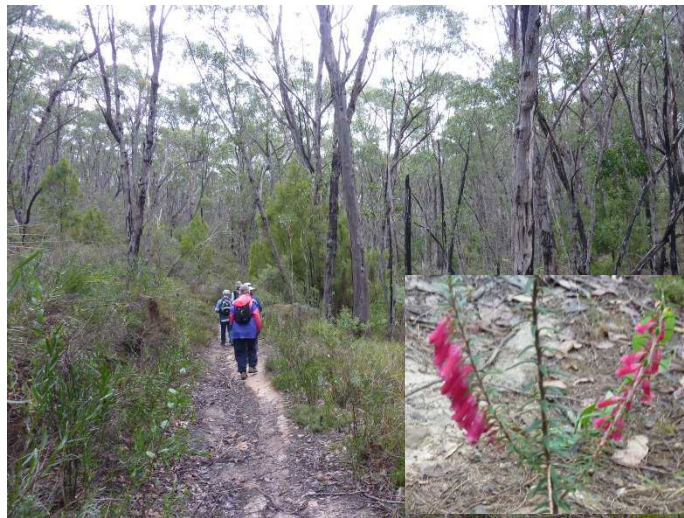
## Kyeema Conservation Park, Saturday 26 April

It looked like the start of a perfect day for birding, sunny with blue skies and hardly a breeze, as ten members met at Kyeema Conservation Park led by Nick Tebneff on a circuit through the park.

There was very little bird activity, possibly due to lack of flowers in the area with an occasional native orchid and a touch of pink heath starting to show through. Early sightings were White-throated Treecreeper, Grey Shrike-thrush, Brown-headed Honeyeater and Crescent Honeyeater. Some Striated Thornbills kept us busy at several places on our walk, as did the Grey Fantails. Moving further into the park we could hear and eventually saw, the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. We were treated with good views of a Golden Whistler and noted he was not calling. A steady light rain began to fall and the few birds that were there headed for cover. However, we still had some good sightings, including Superb Blue Wren, Crimson Rosella and a Scarlet Robin sitting on a fence near the dam. A fox was sighted leaving the dam and consequently there were no ducks or water birds to be found.

Our birdcall was a hurried event in the rain and even though it had been hard work finding the birds we all enjoyed the day. A total of 18 species was sighted.

Thanks to Nick for leading the walk. *Margaret Dreyer*



## Browns Road, Monarto, Sunday 11 May

Ten members and one visitor met Peter Gower, our outing leader, at the Corner of Browns Road / Highland Road, Monarto. It was a crisp, calm and sunny Mothers Day morning and perfect for bird watching.

Recent rains had revived the Reserve and a few of the Mallee gums were flowering. At the commencement of the walk we heard and saw Weebills, White-Browed Babblers, Crimson (Adelaide) Rosellas and Grey Shrike-thrush. We walked along the track through the park, and wandered off in small groups when the call or sighting of an interesting bird caught our attention. Here we found Brown Treecreepers, a Golden Whistler and an Owlet-nightjar. Further along the track, we noticed families of White-winged Choughs and several beautiful examples of their well constructed mud nests on lower tree branches. Arriving at the eastern side of the park along Browns Road we sighted Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Yellow and Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Southern Whiteface.

In the farmland across the road we observed another family of White-browed Babblers and a beautiful Red-Capped Robin.

We then followed the track around the perimeter of the woodland and were rewarded with sightings of a pair of Tawny Frogmouths, Variegated Fairy-wrens and Chestnut-rumped Thornbills. A group of us aroused a Southern Boobook, which glared back down at us from a pine tree. On returning to the car-park several of us found a pair of Hooded Robins. One of our early leaving members drove back to report a male Rufous Whistler near the entrance to add to the list.

At lunch our bird count resulted in a total 41 species, 3 of which were heard only (Diamond Fire-tails, Spotted Pardalotes and Purple-crowned Lorikeets). Peter said this tally was very similar to one done about a month previously by Birds SA. We thanked Peter for leading a most enjoyable and rewarding outing.

*Keith Jones*



Red-capped Robin  
Photo: *Wikipedia*



Owlet-nightjar  
Photo: *Peter Gower*

## Bird Counts at the Kessell Rd Ponds, Goolwa. By Keith Jones

Good habitat for nesting, feeding and/or shelter has long been recognised as a prerequisite for healthy bird numbers. The Kessell Rd Ponds, which are used to store treated storm water from the surrounding district, have been expanded since 2011 with new ponds as well as re-vegetation with native reeds, Melaleucas, Acacias, small Eucalypts and Casuarinas around the ponds. Since June 2011 I've been regularly monitoring the seasonal changes in numbers of birds and their associated habitats, including pond water levels and the amount of surrounding vegetation. The counts include those taken in several months during FBW outings and when FBW members Nick Tebneff and Peter Owen have accompanied me. Some of the results of the monitoring include:

The number of bird species identified each year has steadily increased from 51 in 2011, 71 in 2012, and 84 in 2013.

Since beginning the counts in 2011, a total of 97 bird species have been recorded.

Both "water-dependent" birds (ducks, spoonbills, grebes, crakes and waders) and "land-based" birds (honey-eaters, raptors, white-browed babblers, superb fairy wrens, striated pardalotes and yellow-rumped thornbills) have increased to 47 and 50 species, respectively (see below).

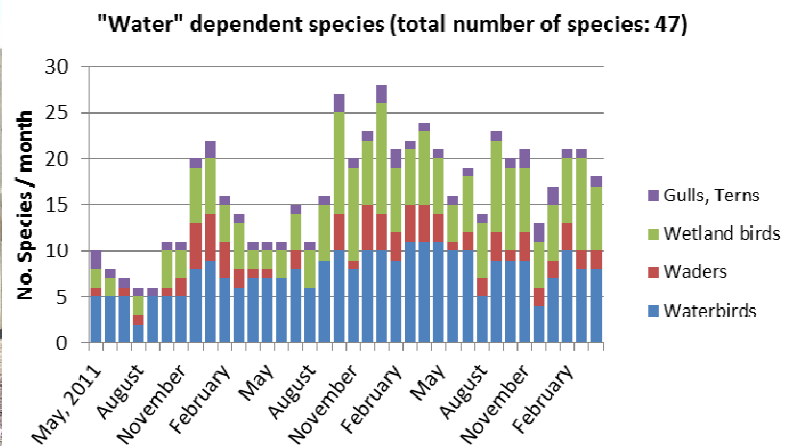
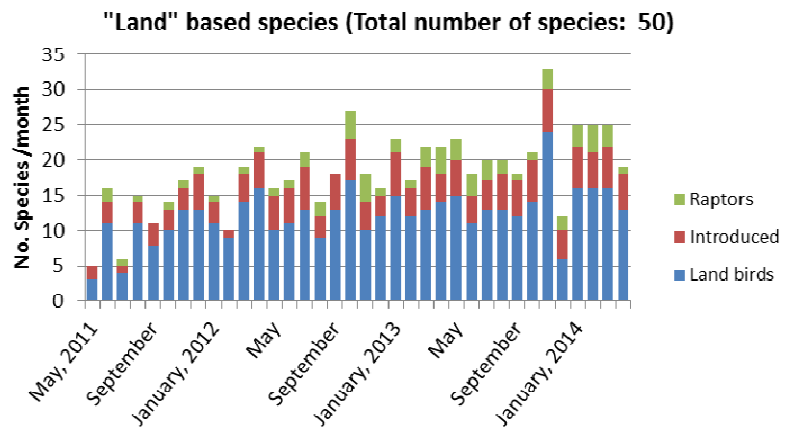
The improved numbers appear to be due to both more vegetation around the ponds, as well as the two most recent wetter winters, resulting in significant refuge areas for many of the water-birds later in the year.

Notable highlights include regular sightings of Freckled and Pink-eared Ducks and Australasian Shoveler, the occasional sightings of Blue-billed Ducks, Red-browed Finches, Spotted and Spotless Crakes, a Spotted Harrier, and finally, the successful nesting of Black Swans and rearing of 4 young in the winter/spring of 2013.

It is hoped that the recently renovated bird hide, that overlooks the new ponds and the large central pond, together with interpretative signage will provide improved educative opportunities for visitors to these ponds.



Kessell Rd Bird Hide



Photos by Bob Daly

## 'Flourishing on the Fleurieu'

Many thanks to Neil Cheshire and Verle Wood for setting up the FBW display board and tablet showing our beautiful bird photos at the Victor Harbor Council for this event. The local visitors were given information about the Club and advice on bird watching in the area.

This promotion material will be used again on World Environment Day on the 5th June from 6-8pm at the Goolwa Centenary Hall for the launch of the Alexandrina Council Environmental Action Plan.



### Waikerie Campout 17 – 20 Oct 2014. Waikerie Caravan Park.

Email <http://www.waikeriecaravanpark.com.au/> for bookings

Please note, for those booking a Cabin, they are only available until the Monday am.

#### The Plan so far:

Friday meet at 4 p.m. for a walk to the Bird Hide at Hart Lagoon.

Saturday meet at 8 a.m. for a Car convoy to Gluepot Reserve. (Car pooling would be helpful)

Saturday evening 5pm, join together for a BBQ in the Camp Kitchen. (We have the use of the Camp Kitchen each evening.)

Sunday TBA, waiting for advice re outings. Winter rains and water levels will determine where we can have access.

Monday TBA.

I have booked into the Caravan Park arriving Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Oct.

**Contact Teresa Jack for further information.**

<teresajack57@yahoo.com>

0429695249

### Painted Button-quail

We had a huge Almond tree branch that was encroaching into other trees, so I asked Les to remove it, he did so and left it in pieces beneath the tree. A couple of days later he decided to mulch as much of it as he could and as he approached the pile four birds scurried out and over a steep bank. He thought they were quail and came to tell me. Thinking they could still be around we both grabbed cameras, and an iPod touch with Morecombe app. on it, and a Bluetooth speaker. I set the speaker up and looked up quail on the iPod - but which one? I decided to go through the listing playing each in turn but with no response. Then I selected Painted Button-quail, which normally I am unable to hear, but the speaker made it audible, and lo and behold two little heads popped up over the bank and the two quail then settled by the pile of branches. We took photos for identification, but they were still a distance away, so I played the call a second time. They both came nearer then went under a Melaleuca bush and strutted around in circles beneath it, then casually walked right in front of us to go beneath some flowering lavender bushes. Our mission accomplished we left them there in peace, and here is one of the photos for proof.



*Ann Houghton*

# Shorebirds of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth

Over 50 people including a number of our FBW members attended the workshop at Milang presented by Dan Weller and Meg Cullen from BirdLife Australia.

The aim of the workshop was to improve identification skills and raise awareness of the decline in wader bird populations with an urgent need to establish new data for future planning.

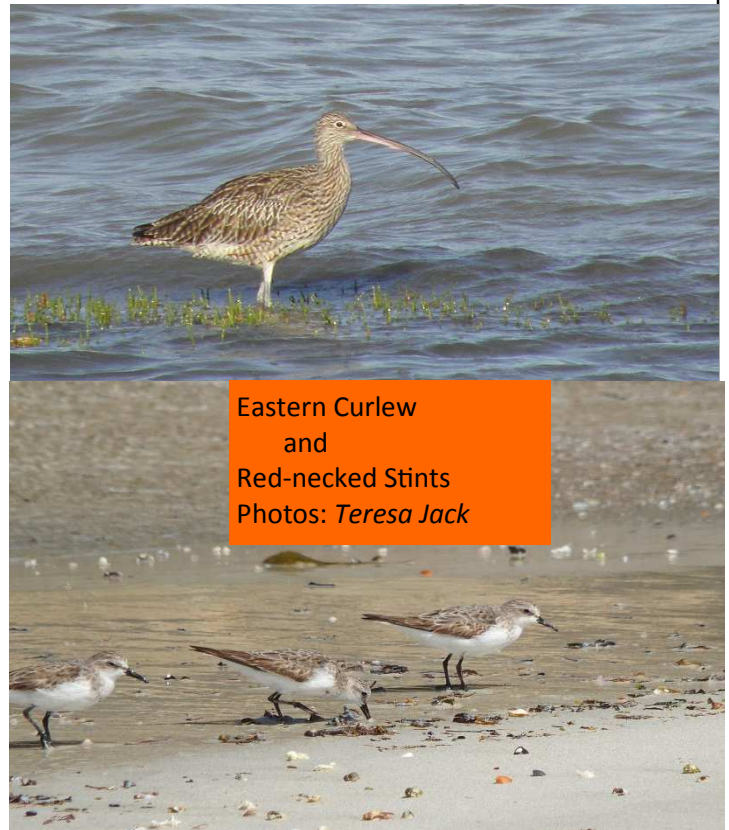
The 2020 Wader Count will assist in acquiring more accurate data, but more volunteers are needed to survey the large areas down the Coorong and along our local beaches and wetlands. If you would like to contribute with this task you can contact [shorebirds@birdlife.org.au](mailto:shorebirds@birdlife.org.au)

Shorebird monitoring commenced in 1981 with the formation of the Australasian Wader Studies Group. The data collected over four years prompted the government to fund the restoration of wetlands and gave important information on the distribution of waders in our country. Since then it has been mainly up to volunteers to provide this survey information to Government. With the loss of habitat around the East-Asian/Australasian Flyway the decline in populations has been rapid, particularly since the 33 km Sea Wall was built on the West Coast of South Korea closing the flow of water to the mud flats, one of the main feeding grounds stop-over en route to Siberia. There are also other problems with the ongoing reclamation in the Yellow Sea for industry and housing development. Some Wader species have suffered a 50-75% loss of population in the last 25 years prompting urgent action to conserve what we have left.

By studying the migration movements and monitoring the numbers here in Australia it will give a better view of what will be required to protect these species into the future.

Thanks went to Dan and Meg for their excellent presentations and to Karen from Milang OSH for providing the venue. We all enjoyed the day which finished at the Mouth of the River looking for shorebirds. About 70 Red-capped Plovers, 1 Red Knott, 5 Black-tailed Godwits and a few Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers were sighted there.

*Wendy Phillips*



## Interesting Bird Facts:

Did you know that our smallest migratory shorebird, the Red-necked Stint, is about the same size as a sparrow and weighs only as much as two 50c coins? Yet each year, they manage to fly 10,000 km or more to their breeding grounds in Siberia — and then back again to Australia, including to the shores of Gulf St Vincent!

Great Knots eat so much they almost double their body weight and look like “footballs with legs” when departing on their amazing long-haul flight to Siberia.

Or that the facial markings on Ruddy Turnstones are always different and unique to each individual bird, just like our fingerprints?

*Verle Wood*

## TOLDEROL RESERVE

**DEWNR are planning to repair the pump to restore water to the basins and hopefully provide an ideal environment for water birds. Funding has been provided for 12 months and bird and plant monitoring is being undertaken. Photo points are being set up. (see more next Newsletter).**

## Proposed affiliation with Birdlife Australia

The committee is giving consideration to affiliation with Birdlife Australia. Members at the General Meeting on 9th May were broadly supportive. The principles underpinning any agreement and the scope of any agreement are described in the Birdlife Australia document below. We see no conflict in affiliation with the objects of the Club as described in the Constitution. It is proposed to hold a vote of members at the General Meeting to be held on Friday September 12th at the usual venue, the Anglican Church Hall, cnr Croker and Cadell Streets, Goolwa. At a General Meeting 15% of financial members of the Club form a quorum.

### PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE AGREEMENT

The agreement *with Affiliated Groups* will be based on the following principles for cooperation:

- regular two-way communication between BirdLife Australia and Affiliated Groups;
- cooperation in matters of national conservation and advocacy, where policies are aligned;
- share data, information and expertise for research and conservation purposes; and
- participate in and, where agreed, deliver field activities and projects in support of BirdLife Australia's programs.

### SCOPE OF THE AGREEMENT

The Parties wish to cooperate across the following activities, subject to the resources available for their implementation:

- share information on activities and maintain a calendar of activities and events, or links, on the BirdLife Australia website;
- share contact details of the Affiliated Group, BirdLife Australia National Office and local branches to encourage regional and national cooperation;
- members of Affiliated Groups are encouraged to become non-financial supporters of BirdLife Australia, which includes a free e-newsletter to share national information;
- extend invitations to attend events, where appropriate;
- share bird data for bona fide projects involving bird and/or habitat conservation (subject to data privacy provisions);
- advocate jointly on conservation issues, where there is agreement on policy and outcomes;
- share materials developed for promotional, educational and conservation purposes;
- provide reasonable access to library resources for non BirdLife Australia members (by prior arrangement);
- agree to develop a common code of ethics for birding;
- share learning on initiatives such as bird watching and conservation; and
- recognition as an "Affiliated Group of BirdLife Australia" as articulated under the constitution (note: use of the BirdLife Australia or Affiliated Group logo requires written approval).

## General Meeting Friday 9 May 2014 Items of Interest:

The possible affiliation with Birdlife Australia was discussed with a need for further investigation into the benefits, to be decided at a later meeting (see previous page)

Communication with Ben Simon from GWLAP re developing facilities for bird watching in the Tokuremoar Reserve at Goolwa Beach/Middleton to be continued with Alexandrina Council involvement.

Invitation to join with Alice Springs bird watchers if visiting from the Fleurieu passed on by Peter Gower.

Guidelines for Outings accepted by the members. (See previous Newsletter)

First Aid Kits to be purchased for Leaders.

Guest speakers for meetings, suggestions were Bird Rescue, Penguin and Dolphin specialist.

Signage at Kessell Ponds not yet installed. Wendy to follow up with Council.

Bird Records from our outings to be uploaded direct into Birds SA data base. Neil to learn the process.

Presentation on "Sea Birds around Fiji" given by Neil Cheshire our sea bird expert!

## Bullock Hill Outing Wednesday 28 May

On Wednesday 5 members met at the Greenman Inn at Ashbourne & proceeded to the park entrance where we enjoyed looking for birds in mainly fine conditions after good rain the previous day.

Thirty one species were recorded and the sightings of most interest were:

Several flocks of Red-browed Finches; we were able to see some birds very clearly as they sat for a while in low, dead shrubs.

Groups of White-browed Babblers that were busily chatting to one another & in one area they were repairing a nest.

Two male Golden Whistlers and they are always a delight to see.

As we were having lunch 3 Hooded Robins came along a fence line and we were able to get a really good view.

In some parts of the Park the New Holland Honeyeaters were prolific, particularly where the blue gums were flowering.

*Chris Thompson*



Red-browed Finch Photo: *Peter Gower*



White-browed Babbler Photo: *Peter Gower*

**STOP PRESS !!**

### **Southern Emu-wren at Mt Compass**

"After four plus years of searching I felt like I had found the Holy Grail last Wednesday. It was located at The Mt Compass Boardwalk and took the shape of a female Southern Emu-wren. Talk about excited!

I managed to get a few shots as she busied herself in the bushes looking for insects, however only one shot showed the tail and is attached."

*Peter Owen*

