



June 2015

# Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



### Saturday 13 June, Scott Conservation Park.

Gould Rd. 1st car park, closest to Deep Creek Rd,  
35°24'16" S 138°44'13" E

### Thursday 25 June, Willunga. Private Property.

Corner of Range Rd West and Victor Harbor Rd. (top of Willunga Hill)  
35°17'37" S 138°34'41" E

### Sunday 12 July, Ironbarks Forest Reserve.

Old Stage-coach Lane off Dashwood Gully Rd. Kangarilla.  
35°10'9" S 138°42'41" E

### Wednesday 29 July, Nixon-Skinner and Springmount CP.

Myponga Reservoir Carpark.  
35°24'40" S 138°26'16" E

### Saturday 15 August, Laratinga Wetlands Mt. Barker.

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

### Port Augusta Campout—Friday to Monday 16-19 October

## Reminders

### Stipiturus CP Planting Day Sunday 28 June, 9.30am.

Phone Jodie 8550 3426 @  
DEWNR if you are attending  
as lunch is provided.

*A great day out and a plus  
for the environment!*

### Have you paid your subs?

See previous newsletter  
for details.



A rare find! Baillon's Crake  
Photo: by Peter Owen taken at Mt Compass

**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:** fleurieubirds@gmail.com or phone 8555 0634

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

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

## Paiwalla Wetlands, Murray Bridge - Sunday 15 March.

Our long awaited visit to Paiwalla took place in mid March. Seventeen people attended, including one experienced bird watcher from NSW. We arrived to a very cold wind, but it warmed once the clouds cleared and the sun came out. The bird sightings started when a Little Eagle was spotted roosting in a river gum just below us at our Sunnyside meeting place.

Soon after starting our walk around the perimeter of the wetlands, we saw a Butcherbird. It was decided that it was a female or juvenile Pied Butcherbird, this species having extended its range further south. The duck species were numerous and included Australian Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler, Grey and Chestnut Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Hardhead, Pacific Black and Musk Duck. Black-fronted Dotterels were the only wading birds seen. Bush birds included Superb Fairy-wren and large numbers of Tree and Fairy Martins. The cliff face area revealed the two resident Peregrine Falcons. At lunch we were intrigued to witness our leader, Peter Koch, whistle in three Crested Shrike-tits.

Peter also talked about other aspects of the ecology of the wetlands, naming many of the plants for us. Most interesting were the nest boxes for Peron's Tree Frog and his discovery that echidnas are responsible for eating the eggs of many of the freshwater turtles.

In all fifty eight species were recorded.

*Pat Uppill*



Crested Shrike-tit  
Photo: *Bob Daly*



Black-fronted Dotterel  
Photo: *Peter Gower*

## Nurragi Conservation Park - Thursday 9 April.

The morning was an overcast one as eight members arrived at the Park. We were joined a bit later by another one who got lost en-route. Keith Jones was our leader and did a great job of trying to ensure everyone saw as many species as possible.

The Park is a 14 km. stretch of old railway line, which went between Milang and Sandergrove. Although it is not very wide it hosts a small variety of habitat and several eucalypts were flowering. There seemed to be Red Wattlebirds everywhere we looked, and we found the smaller birds were in little "pockets" of activity.

Of the 25 species we saw, birds of note were:

Spiny-cheeked H.E., Eastern Spinebill, White-browed Babbler and Rufous Whistler.

We then drove to Clayton and walked around the wetlands before eating lunch in the BBQ area.

*A pleasant way to finish the mornings birding.*

*June Fennell*



White-browed Babbler  
Photo: *Peter Gower*

**Can you help? Request from Bob Green  
(project manager for OBPs)**

**2015 OBP Surveys—May 16/17, July 25/26 and Sept. 12/13  
to register your interest email: [shrike-tit@bigpond.com](mailto:shrike-tit@bigpond.com)**

**Orange-bellied Parrot News from the May Survey:**

Neophemas were absent till finally they found some Blue-winged Parrots near Policeman's Point. The water level in the Coorong Lagoon was very high and there were not many birds to be seen, apart from ducks, cormorants and pelicans etc. The lakes further south were nearly dry.

*Teresa Jack*

**OBP Identification session at Wyndgate, Denver Rd. Hindmarsh Island,  
10am-12.30 Saturday 27th June followed by a walk to look for Neophemas.  
Please contact Bob Green 0407 649 909 or email [shrike-tit@bigpond.com](mailto:shrike-tit@bigpond.com)**

Rock Parrot  
(coastal Neophema)  
Photo: Bob Daly



**Web Stats: for April**

**Total Visits: 306 New Visits: 256 from 8 different Countries**

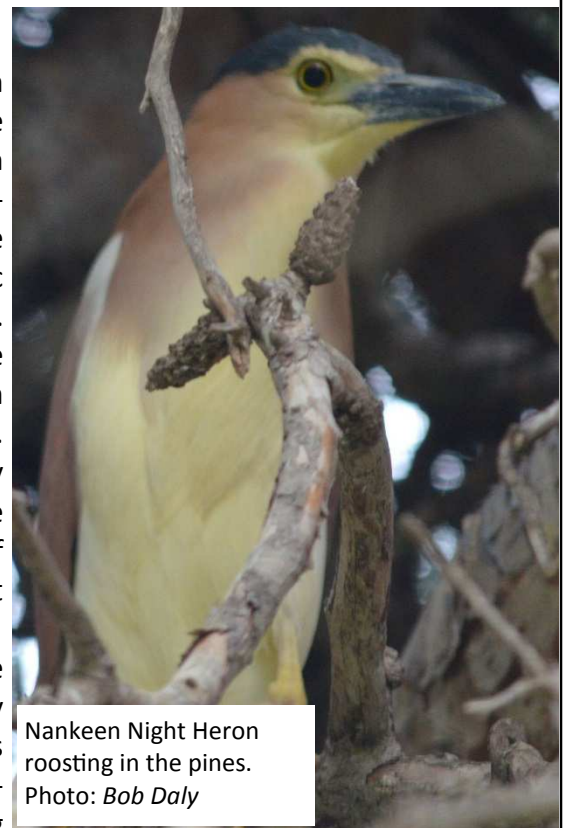
**Onkaparinga River, Old Noarlunga Saturday- 18 April**

A group of 14 members met at the Institute, Old Noarlunga on an overcast, cool morning. A cold front was forecast for later in the day. The area near the Institute had a lot of bird activity, with over 100 Little Corellas flying and calling, as well as Rainbow Lorikeets, Eastern Rosellas and White-plumed Honeyeaters. On the banks of the Onkarparinga River were Wood Duck and Pacific Black Duck. Flights of Pelicans and White Ibis passed overhead. We checked that the Nankeen Night Herons were still in residence and three were seen. We proceeded to the river and the cliffs on the southern side, but there was no sign of the Peregrine Falcon. We walked along the river and found a Pied Cormorant, a Dusky Moorhen and more ducks as well as Crimson Rosellas, Magpie Larks, Red Wattlebirds. We then moved to the Church on top of the hill as we heard that the Falcons might be nesting there, but unfortunately, there was no sign of them.

Our next move was to Perry's Bend, Onkaparinga Park, where we enjoyed our walk around the short loop. The area was still very dry. Again, there were lots of Pelicans in flight. The Little Ravens were the most common. We had good views of Superb Fairywrens and Red-browed Finches. Red Wattlebirds were enjoying the flowering gum trees as were the New Holland and White-plumed Honeyeaters. On our return walk along the river we saw White Ibis, Black-winged Stilts, a Common Greenshank, Masked Lapwings, White-faced Herons, and a Little Black Cormorant. As the weather deteriorated and it started to rain, we decided to have a slightly early lunch and birdcall.

Birdcall revealed 33 Species seen at Old Noarlunga and 25 Species at Perry's Bend, Onkaparinga Park. We thought this was a good number considering the conditions. Thanks to Keith for leading the walk.

**Margaret Dreyer**



Nankeen Night Heron  
roosting in the pines.  
Photo: Bob Daly

## National Beach-nesting Birds Conference, Port Nepean, Victoria

Over the long-weekend of May 14 – 17, more than 100 birding volunteers and researchers from most southern Australian states attended the **Beach-nesting Bird Conference** at Port Nepean, Victoria, located near the entrance to Port Phillip Bay.

The Fleurieu region of SA was well represented, with several Fleurieu Birdwatchers members, Adelaide – Mt Lofty NRM Hooded Plover program coordinators and other Victor Harbor volunteers taking part. Much of Friday was allotted to presentations on research and monitoring programs on Hooded Plovers, Red-capped Plovers and Oystercatchers, as well as on nest habitat selection, dogs and off-road vehicles on beaches, flight initiation distances and marine debris. A comparison between the November, 2014 and previous shorebird surveys gave us a good overview of status of many of our beach-nesting birds along the southern Australian mainland coast. Several of the species remain at low numbers, and only just holding their own. The next day involved workshops on bird photography, shorebird identification and behaviour, and education for primary and secondary school students. Finally, field trips around the Mornington Peninsula ocean beaches were organised to view Hooded Plovers and Oystercatchers. The presentations at the conference are currently being collated and will be available shortly on the Birdlife Australia website. ([birdlife.org.au](http://birdlife.org.au)).

Overall, the conference was a highly stimulating and well organised one and provided another great example, where community science can effectively be used to monitor the conservation status of birds. Several of the Fleurieu representatives were funded by the Adelaide-Mt. Lofty NRM Board to attend and participate at the conference, and we acknowledge the Board's contribution.

**Keith Jones**



**Beach nest**  
Photo:  
*Judith Dyer*

## Stipiturus Conservation Park, Mount Compass - Sunday 17 May.

The weather was near perfect, sunshine and a temperature about 20°C. We assembled at the Strawberry Farm car park. There were 27 participants made up of club members and visitors. Steve Johnson the ranger in charge of the park led us along a network of dirt roads to the park entrance. After parking and having our boots washed to prevent the spread of phytophthera, Steve gave us a talk on the origins of the park, its reason for being and how it is managed. Having given each of those interested a map we set off. Those who wanted could follow Steve or split from the main group and wander, thus giving a good coverage of the park. The park features stands of Stringybark forest and significant swamp vegetation. Weed control, planting and some excision fencing has been undertaken in the last couple of years. It is home to the Southern Emu-wren, but it was not a bird that anyone spotted on this outing. A lot of the walking was through areas with no clear defined paths, hence we spent a lot of time looking down and this may explain why we saw so few raptors, just two Wedge-tailed Eagles and a Brown Goshawk. New Hollands H.E. and Superb Fairy-wrens were the most prominent species followed by Red Wattlebirds and Silvereyes.

It did seem at times that birds were a bit thin on the ground. However, in the Stringybarks we identified at least three male Golden Whistlers and a female; what a treat! We also heard an Eastern Spinebill, a Blackbird and a Fantail Cuckoo. I'm sure everyone enjoyed a pleasant morning. After lunch the bird call was conducted in the usual lively way by Peter Gower. A total of 30 species was recorded with one more added as we were leaving.

**Edith St George**



**Fan-tailed Cuckoo**  
Photo: *Nick Tebneff*

## Watchalunga Nature Reserve

On a beautiful Saturday morning in March, the Finniss River wetlands opened its arms to city and country visitors attending the launch of the recently purchased Watchalunga Nature Reserve. The land has been owned by the Poyntz family for many years, and used for light grazing by cattle. Hundreds of trees have been planted by the family on the property, to enhance the natural beauty and increase the wildlife on the site. In late 2012, an agreement was reached between the Nature Foundation SA (NFSA) and the owners, to subdivide and transfer the important swampland portion of the property to the Nature Foundation. The wetland contains two confirmed Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation listed species, the Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren (endangered) and the Southern Bell Frog (vulnerable).

The Hon Ian Hunter MLC, Minister for Sustainability, Environment & Conservation officially 'launched' the Reserve, with speeches also by members of the Nature Foundation, and Mayor of Alexandrina Council, Keith Parkes. Several members of the Nature Foundation spoke with smaller groups, about specifics of the wetlands and future opportunities. About 200 folk from 19 environmental groups attended the launch and were invited to partake in morning coffee before the proceedings, and a sausage sizzle afterwards!

The Reserve is situated on Ngarrindjeri land, and respect is given to the traditional custodians. The Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority's Aboriginal Learning on Country Team has been involved in the clearing of weeds, fencing, and other revegetation work. NFSA will be working with the indigenous custodians to manage Aboriginal heritage areas. (Some of you may be aware of the several canoe trees located on Winery Road adjacent to Watchalunga Nature Reserve). NFSA will commence plans for long term conservation management. More information on this process can be found at: [www.naturefoundation.org.au](http://www.naturefoundation.org.au). It is planned to open the property up to volunteer events supporting conservation work.



Part of the crowd of 200 attending the opening day of NFSA newest reserve. Photo: Jill Masters

## Bird Recording Forms—Neil Cheshire

We are now lodging Fleurieu Birdwatchers bird surveys directly with BirdLife Australia, Birddata Atlas scheme. This database holds all our historical records of 316 surveys at 156 sites and 253 species recorded to date. The Bird Recording Forms will be modified slightly to conform to Birddata requirements. In the meantime it would be appreciated if the recorders include the following information:-

**Name of recorder with phone number or email address.** ( I can then contact you if there are any queries. This information does not go to the database.)

**Number of observers taking part in the survey.**

**Precise locality of the survey.** In addition a GPS reading is useful but not essential.

**Start time and Finish time of survey.**

**List type of search :-** Only Options are: **2 hectare search**

**Area search within 500 m of a point**

**Area search within 5 km of a point**

**Fixed route (for repeat surveys only)**

**(note: 2 hectares is 20,000 square metres or 100m x 200m )**

**Record number of each species seen** (including common species.)

**Record any breeding activity** of any species.

Completed forms should be scanned and emailed to Neil Cheshire at [diomedea1@bigpond.com](mailto:diomedea1@bigpond.com)

Or posted to him at: **P.O.Box 417, Victor Harbor, SA 5211.**

## Welcome to New Members and

*Happy Birdwatching !*

*Sally Grundy, June Fennell, Marion Mackenzie, Robert Burdon, Greg and Julie Blackman and Gavin Wright*



**Banded Lapwing protecting young chicks on Mundoo Island.**

Photos by : *Sally Grundy*



### Eastern Rosellas:

The nesting DVD produced by Faye Lush and Joyce West and shown at the Willunga Meeting revealed some interesting facts:

Egg-laying took 14 days, 1 egg every other day, 7 eggs in total.

Incubation (by the female) started after the 4<sup>th</sup> egg was laid.

The first three chicks hatched 19 days after incubation started, the other 3 chicks hatched over the next 3 days. One egg did not hatch and we removed it.

For the first 10 days after hatching, the female sat on the chicks to keep them warm – after that she and the male only visited the box to feed the chicks.

The female did all the incubating and also fed the chicks for the first 10 days. Then the male also became involved in feeding.

The male fed the female during incubation and after hatching. He usually called the female out of the nest box and they flew off for 3-5 minutes before she returned to the box.

It was 32 days from the first hatching to the first chick leaving.

They bought their nest box from Faunature which is based at Magill. Their Web site is <http://faunature.com.au/> and phone number is 0406 400 933.

State Flora Nursery at Belair National Park also have a range of nest boxes for sale in their shop.



### Building a Nest Box?

#### *Things to consider:*

1. The type of bird you want to attract. Different species require different tree hollows and size entrances that you need to imitate, e.g. a Pardalote likes a piece of PVC piping at the entrance to run through a tunnel.
2. Use untreated timber 15mm thick and protect it with Linseed Oil, drill holes in the bottom for drainage.
3. Slope the roof and attach wire on the inside panels for the babies to climb out.
4. Face it away from the prevailing wind and attach securely to the branch.

Nest box **plans** are available on line from "Birds in Backyards" web site.

However, they need maintenance and you need to watch and evict unwanted species of birds and watch out for bees too!

***Faye and Joyce's nest box provided home to six Eastern Rosella chicks this last season.***

***This proves they do work!***

## Annual Wader Count in the Goolwa Channel.

Early in February each year for the past decade the Australasian Wader Studies Group (of Birdlife Australia) has carried out a bird count, predominantly in the Coorong. Local commercial fishermen have provided their boats to take bird observers and recorders through the length and breadth of the Coorong to see how bird populations are faring in this part of the country. During all of that time migratory waders have been on a very serious decline, as have many other species too, due in large part to the over-extraction of water and the Millenium drought starving the Coorong of fresh water. However since October 2010 there has been freshwater through most of the Lakes system, and particularly the northern end of the Coorong.

**2015 results are in for the section that I have been involved from the Barrage to the Mouth of the River.**

**In 2013 the overall numbers were the largest we have ever counted, some 12,998 birds of 43 different species. 8,766 were waders and 4,232 were waterbirds.**

In 2014 no survey was undertaken

**In 2015 there were 3,699 birds of 33 species. 1,025 were waders and 2,674 were waterbirds.**

**If we concentrate on some particular species over the last 3 surveys:**

Red-necked Stint:	1286	2733	767
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper :	449	954	10
Eurasian Coot:	nil	3284	134
Red-necked Avocet:	nil	181	1
Black Swan:	24	487	670
Cape Barren Goose:	108	258	30
Grey Teal:	463	2807	732

We saw no Whiskered Terns or Red-kneed Dotterels, only 3 Curlew Sandpipers and 1 Avocet.

The drop in Coot and Grey Teal numbers may be related to the lack of fresh water here now, and the decline in Whiskered Terns due to the lateness of the survey timing as they are migratory.

Undoubtedly too will be the impacts in the northern hemisphere part of the flyway, where the loss of habitat in both Korea and China is having a severe impact on refuelling stops in the South China Sea region.

We need to make sure that Australia is doing the best it can to maintain numbers, expand good habitat for all of these birds species and particularly the international migrants!

**Richard Owen**



**Waders waiting to be counted!**  
**Photos: Sally Grundy**



**Murray Mouth Habitat**

## Birdlife Australia News on Shorebirds from Fiona Blandford.

*Sadly their numbers are revealing they are on a slippery slope to extinction.*

*The Threatened Species Committee has reclassified , the Eastern Curlew and Curlew Sandpiper to Critically Endangered, Great Knot, Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit to Endangered, the Red-necked Stint, Near Threatened, and the Terek Sandpiper to Vulnerable. This is because the annual decrease in numbers is around 6%.*

## Bird Call:

Win Syson reported seeing a Great-winged Petrel off Pt Elliot after recent wild weather brought them close to the shoreline. He also reported a Crested Shrike-tit and a Black-chinned Honeyeater at Pt Elliot.

Large flocks of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos have been seen at both McLaren vale and Goolwa lately.



One strange Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. Photo: Ann Houghton



When things aren't going right even the birds feel it!  
Female Mistletoebird. Photo: Bob Daly

## A Hooded Plover's award?

News from Elizabeth Steele-Collins from Waitpinga.

*I said if DK succeeded in getting his 4th chick through that he deserved a medal... but I couldn't find a medal with his name on it so we made him a certificate instead! I presented DK with his award end of April and at the time his latest fledged chick 'HT' was still at home with Mum and Dad! Really, all the Hoodies this season deserve an award for their amazing perseverance in the face of so many challenges.*

*10 chicks successfully fledged on the Fleurieu this season with Tunkalilla Beach the most successful with less disturbance by humans and dogs.*



DK from Tunkalilla 'Heysen East' has every right to be proud. At two years old and in his first breeding year, DK and his missus have raised and successfully fledged four chicks during the 2014/15 season. In October, the pair's first chicks were all eaten by foxes soon after hatching, but with their next brood, all three chicks made it to fledging late December. Not satisfied with this effort, they had another go, successfully fledging one more chick in late March. This last chick was captured and banded at 33 days and flagged 'HT'. DK certainly has put in his work for the survival of the species. What a champion! Congratulations to DK and his partner for seeing four of their kids through flight training against so many odds.

## Meeting Friday 15 May at Willunga Resource Centre.

20 members plus 10 visitors attended from the local area. 5 apologies received.

The new Victor Harbor Council brochures on "Birding in the Southern Fleurieu" were distributed on the night and sent out to Local information Centres. It is an excellent production and the Committee contributed to the planning with graphic designer Dave Hayes from Encounter Bay.

Names taken for a visit to the Urrbrae Wetland planned for the end of June with 15 people showing an interest. Details to be emailed out shortly.

Win spoke of the October Campout and will confirm the dates and plan later. He is hoping to link with the Port Augusta Birdlife Branch for one or two of the days and include a visit to the Desert Park.

Shen Mann from Alexandrina Council wants to organise a staff visit to the Kessell Road Ponds and would like FBW to assist with scopes and binoculars. September has been a suggested date.

Natalie Gilbert (teacher from Investigator College at Goolwa) requests assistance with teaching students about bird watching.

The video of nesting Eastern Rosellas was well received. Presentations from Ann Houghton on birds of Christmas and Cocos-Keeling Islands was very entertaining.

Peter Owen showed amazing top quality photos of birds from NSW, Queensland and SA.

Supper followed and gave everyone a chance to chat and meet the visitors.

**STOP PRESS! Dates for Campout are confirmed as Friday October 16 to Monday October 19 2015**