

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF BIRDS SA**  
held on Friday November 29th, 2019  
at the  
**CHARLES HAWKER CONFERENCE CENTRE, WAITE ROAD, URRBRAE**

**1. Welcome address:**

Jeff Groves (Vice President) opened the meeting at 7.47pm.

**2. Apologies:** John Gitsham (President), G Carpenter, A Black, B Rogers, E Dahl.

**2.1 Members Present – 119**

**3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Birds SA General Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019,**  
as posted on the web site and notice board.

Moved by D Robertson

Seconded by A Lester

CARRIED

**4. New Members**

Barbara Brockhoff	Trinity Gardens	SA
Ross & Jennifer Jones	Kapunda	SA
Anita Smyth	Hawthorndene	SA
Hugh Possingham	Sherwood	QLD
Mark Gregerson & Margaret Pank	Kensington Gardens	SA
Angelo & Dagmar Caon	Dernancourt	SA
Benjamin Groves	Oakden	SA
Karen & Spike Barrow	Stirling	SA
Eddy Smith & Dr Jenni Garden	Reynella East	SA

**5. Announcements – J Groves**

**5.1** Open Day Tolderol Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 11am. We hope that Birds SA will be well represented at this event.

**6. Guest Presenter - John Hatch** introduced the following Speakers:-

**Mike Ashton**, whose topic was “Birding Ashmore Reef, November 2018”. Mike undertook a 9 day trip which was primarily a pelagic trip, starting in Broome. (Map shown). The “Reef” is made up of four islands, with West Island being the main one where most of the birding activity takes place. The “Reef” is 35 hectares in area. The Blue Whale was among the 9 different species seen. The birds included, Wilson Storm Petrel, Sooty Terns, Bridal Terns, Roseate Terns, many species of Petrel and Shearwater. Greater and Lesser Frigate Birds were nesting on East Island. Masked Booby, Brown Booby and many small shorebirds and waders.

Vagrants show up at Ashmore Reef but nobody know which way they are travelling. The Eastern Yellow Wagtail and Eurasian Tree Sparrow were also sighted.

The trip Guides have been recording every bird that they have seen in this area for about the last 30 years. They record species, numbers and where they have been seen and the GPS location. It is basically a scientific trip and fee-paying passengers help cover the cost.

A total of 78 birds seen, with 56 on Ashmore Reef.

**Richard Woodland**. Richard’s topic was “Clinton Conservation Park” - Richard commented that many will be familiar with the excellent birding that you can see at Pt Clinton but few undertake the tough walk into Clinton Conservation Park. Richard was approached by Chris Purnell, BirdLife, to ask if he would undertake the 2020 Shorebird count in Clinton CP – so for the past 3-4 years it has become his “patch”. Richard does both the summer and winter shorebird surveys and goes to the Clinton CP at other times just for the pleasure of watching the numerous birds. The Conservation Park is very hot during the summer months and the clay soil at the Park can be treacherous during the winter. No vehicles are permitted to enter the park, you have to undertake all survey work on foot – but the pleasure is in seeing 50-60 Red-neck Stint fly over as you are walking, or Grey Plover. There are extensive mud flats, Mangroves, samphire, and nitre-bush. Richard has undertaken 22 surveys since Dec 2017. Total species 91 comprising of shorebirds 22, water/coastal birds 27, land birds 42. Average distance walked per visit is 11km (242 km so far). Migratory Waders seen include, Eastern Curlew, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Terek Sandpipers, Grey Plover. 30-35 Eastern Curlew did over winter this year, even though they showed some breeding plumage.

Many raptors frequent the area, Whistling and Black Kites included. Terns include, Australian Gull-billed, Caspian, and Common gull-billed (affinis) and a Red-capped Plover nest was found in October 2019. But the most amazing find to date, I believe that on my most recent survey I saw a Grey Falcon. This has been reported to the Rare Bird Committee.

**Merilyn Browne.** Merilyn focussed on “Birds and their bills” with her presentation showing delightful shots of birds from around the world. The Australian Pelican has the biggest bill of all followed by the Toco Toucan, Yellow-throated Toucan, and the Oriental Pied Hornbill which can hold delicate morsels in its large beak. The Scale-throated Hermit has a long bill. The Sword-bill Hummingbird has a beak that is longer than the bird itself. Fishing Birds have a streamlined beak except for the Puffin and Osprey, they have a very different shaped beak. Kingfishers have long beaks. The Boat-billed Heron is a sweeping or scooping feeder rather than a stabbing feeder, then there is the “duck bill” shape, whereas the Merganser has a different shape, though it is considered to be a duck. Spoonbill is as the name suggests, and the Lesser Flamingo holds its head upside down to feed. The Eurasian Curlew is a large billed Wader then there is the small bill of the Red-necked Stint. The Avocet has the up-turned bill, while the Scimita, a South American woodcreeper, has a curved bill. The Spinebill has a curved bill to get into flowers. The Chough has a curved beak for digging. Seabirds – Albatross do a bill-clap as recognition to its mate. The Waved Albatross also does a bill clapping whilst the Fulmar has a distinct tube on top of the bill. Hooked bills occur in a range of sizes and species, the Macaw bill is huge, then the Long-billed Corella, down to the Lorikeet and Parrotlet, a South American Bird. Raptors have a hooked bill. Owls have hooked bills too, like the Southern Boobook. The Butcherbird has a fine point. The Slaty Flowerpiercer has a bill hook to pierce the base of tubular flowers to get to the nectar. Chunky Bills – woodpeckers, Crimson-crested, Little Woodpecker, White-barred Piculet and the Tawny Frogmouth who feeds at night on insects.

Cross bills – they are seed eaters such as the Cactus Finch a large ground Finch with a very solid bill. Other Finches have finer bills. Then there are the small bills such as the Spotted Pardalote and Superb Fairywren. (All birds described where shown in glorious photographs)

**David Robertson** – David’s topic was “Skulkers” – meaning, the birds that you work so hard to see and often miss. Having travelled to Scotland to see the Capercaillie David discovered that it is only possible to see this bird in the open at a certain time of the year. Travelling in West Papua, rowing a little canoe with 1 driver and 1 passenger David paddled across a river and sat through to nearly midnight, in an attempt to see the Malacun Scrub Fowl which follows its ancestors, the turtle, and digs a hole and drops its eggs into the hole. As David left the area around midnight and returned to the opposite bank, his wife Minnie was rowed across second – Minnie had to admit to David that the bird appeared just after he had left - and she did get to see it!

David and Minnie have travelled to New Zealand three times in an attempt to see the Kiwi – first on the South Island – second time on the North Island and the third time on their way back from the Cook Islands, when they hired a car and drove to the tip of the North Island where a small island is connected with a little isthmus. David said, “we could hear it – but unless it walked across the path you would never see it”. They stayed the night in a chalet and found the next morning they could see evidence of where the Kiwi had been feeding right outside their chalet. Apart from being elusive, what these birds have in common – they are all ground dwelling birds.

**Neil Cheshire** travelled to Yorkshire to see the “Cliff Nesting Seabirds” at Bempton in July and August 2019. These cliffs are visited by multi species of cliff-nesting seabirds. The area is an RSPB reserve. 400,000 sea birds nest there in about 30 ks of cliff face with most concentrated in a 6 kilometre area. The cliffs are 110 metres tall. The Reserve is very well run with an Information Centre, a Café and platforms on promontories on the cliff’s edge, so you can look back to see the birds. You can also take 2-3 hours boat trip along the cliffs with a good commentary from the tour guide. The Northern Gannet now numbers 14,000 pairs with its numbers much lower in 1969 when the Reserve was first set up. The Atlantic Puffin numbers 1500 pairs and are seen from April to July. It nests in fissures and burrows. It is not a cliff nester. There 20,000 pair of Razor bills. Most of their young have left the cliffs by mid-July. The Gillimot is an interesting bird. It lays eggs at the end of April. There is a 28 day incubation period. When the young are 3 weeks old, they jump from cliff into the sea, 60-80 meters below. They are not even fledged. They are fed at sea by the male.

The Kittiwake was sighted, and it also nest on buildings and we noted that Tree Sparrows are now very reduced in the UK.

## 7. Conservation (Jeff Groves).

### Anti-Duck & Quail Hunting Coalition

Earlier this week the “Coalition” met with Premier Marshall to present our case regarding Duck and Quail hunting. He was receptive. We pushed for there to be a closed season in 2020 because of the drought. A decision will be made on this on 9th December. The long-term goal of banning duck and quail hunting altogether, Premier Marshall said would be a very long process. It would be very useful for him to have some survey data on how the South Australian Public feel about this issue. In 2011 83% of respondents were opposed.

## 8. Bird Call - Brian Blaylock (Graham Carpenter away overseas).

White-winged Trillers have been heard and seen over many suburbs, including Salisbury, Klemzig, Malvern and Norwood. A Kookaburra fledged at Felixstow. Two Common Sandpipers at the boat ramp at the Murray Mouth. Straw-necked Ibis at Rockleigh. 25 Great Crested Grebe at Point Sturt.

Red-tailed Black Cockatoo reported at Athelstone with 1 young. (must be noted as rare but no photograph for proof).

Stubble Quail heard at Marion Bay October 2019, Stenhouse Bay, also Aldinga Washpool and Hindmarsh Island. 2 Latham Snipe Myponga. Blue-bonnets at Tikara.

Just to note that the Yorketown bush fire travelled 18ks from Yorketown to Troubridge and 8 ks to the back of Edithburg. Teresa Jack’s current bird list for this area is 83 birds. The fire burnt over 5000 hectares. Teresa Jack will monitor this area as regeneration occurs.

## 9 Field Trips – Lynton Huxley

Thank You to everyone for bringing along food tonight. A most enjoyable evening.

The excursions list on the board with Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December being Thompson Beach led by Brian Walker with an 8am start. Another visit to Thompson Beach will be held in February 2020. The field trip on 14<sup>th</sup> December will be to Myponga Reservoir, this is the first time Birds SA have visited this site. Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December, Kaiser Stuhl CP is the last field trip for the year.

The 2020 Easter Campout will be held at Kantara Homestead Coorong. Accommodation is available for those who do not wish to camp.

## 10 Any Other Business

### AUCTION

G. J. Broinowski Prints x 2 – sold \$40 the pair, Di Wiskich, 59 Park Road, Kensington Park.

Oil Painting “Emu-Wren” – sold \$40 to Miles Ramm.

Reserve price on book \$350 was passed in with no offers.

**Next General Meeting will be held on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 at 7.30pm**

**Closed 9.40pm**

Signed..... Date.....