

BIRD REPORT, 2003

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INTRODUCTION

This report highlights records from the calendar year 2003 for species listed with a rare or vagrant status in *A field list of the birds of South Australia* (hereafter referred to as the Field List; SAOA 1985a). No attempt is made to cover all species represented in the Field List and species for which there are no records in 2003 are not discussed. The status in the Field List is indicated by a code with each entry (see Key to Codes overleaf).

Records are provided by SAOA members in the monthly record books, from field trips or by direct report to the record secretary, as well as by visitors to the state who post reports on the Birding-Aus Mail List (www.cse.unsw.edu.au/birding-aus/). Comments, with suitable references, are made about identification, breeding, migration and other issues of interest. In many cases a Specified Region code is given to indicate the region of South Australia (SA) from which records occurred (see Key to Codes overleaf; see SAOA 1985a for a map of the regions). Brief reports on several threatened species are also included. Taxonomy follows Christidis and Boles (1994).

Climatic conditions in 2003 were somewhat more normal with rainfall charts showing no deficiencies relative to long-term averages for SA in the period 1 February 2003 to 31 January 2004 (Bureau of Meteorology 2004). Dry conditions (drought) continued until 20–23 February when 50 mm of rain fell in the MLR and 37 mm fell in the MM north of the River Murray at Gluepot Reserve, breaking the drought there (MacKenzie 2003). Most of the Black-tailed Native-hens *Gallinula ventralis* departed from southern regions around this time, as did many other waterfowl.

Highlights for the year were: the first SA record of Varied Lorikeet *Psitteuteles versicolor*; the second SA record of Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus*; Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina* in the SE proposed as a new addition to the Field List; Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* near Port

MacDonnell, SE; the discovery of Grey-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis* on a heritage block in the SE of SA. White-chinned *Procellaria aequinoctialis*, Soft-plumaged *Pterodroma mollis* and White-headed *P. lessonii* Petrels as well as Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria fusca* were recorded on pelagic trips in the SE. Notable reports were the return of the Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*, a single Little Curlew *Numenius minutus* at Tolderol GR, MM, and a flock of 400 Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa* on KI.

Observations of interest include the first record of Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes* for KI since 1966, an Orange Chat *Epthianura aurifrons* in the SE, two Western Gerygone *Gerygone fusca* on the Chowilla Floodplain, MM, and a Crested Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus* from Coffin Bay representing a new record for EP. Also of interest was the report by an experienced American birdwatcher of brief views of a Black-backed Wagtail *Motacilla lugens* at Adelaide Airport on 27 September. Subsequently others could not find the bird and the record is considered unconfirmed.

Of particular concern is the continuing decline in the number of Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea* in the Dry Creek (Penrice) saltfields, AP. The January–February 2000 wader surveys undertaken by Wilson (2000, p. 20) list a total of 800 for Dry Creek while the maximum count at Dry Creek for the second half of 2003 was 50, less than 10% of the Wilson count. To put these numbers into perspective, the average relevant monthly counts over the period February 1979–May 1981 by Close and McCrie (1986) range from a low of 760 in August to 2,700 in November, and a count by Close in February 2001 yielded 1,000 Curlew Sandpipers. There is growing concern about the decline in numbers of Curlew Sandpipers, particularly in southern Australia (see Wilson 2000, Figure 5, p. 70) and the situation in Gulf St Vincent seems to be particularly acute.

KEY TO CODES

Species Status	Observers*	Observers (continued)	Observers (continued)
Br Breeding recorded in SA in 2003	AB Andrew Black CB Chris Baxter	BG Bob Green CG Claire Gifford	TP Tommy Pedersen
Ex Extinct, SA or Specified Region	EB Esther Breed GB Gerry Bey	CGi Cathy Gilfedder DG D. Galpin	BR Bruce Riglin CR Colin Rogers
R Rare, SA or Specified Region	JB John Berggy JBo Jack Bourne	MG Mat Gilfedder	JR Julian Reid JRo Jeremy Robertson
Va Vagrant, SA or Specified Region	MB M. Black PB P. Barnett	BH Bryan Haywood CH Chris Hankel	TR Tania Rajic TRu Tony Russell
(S) Spring-Summer visitor to SA	PBa Peter Barrand PBo Pat Bourne	CHo Cathy Houston DH Doug Holly	V-JR Vicki-Jo Russell
(W) Autumn-Winter visitor to SA	PBw Pat Bowie RB Rhonda Barrand	FH F. Humphreys JH John Hatch	BSO Bob Sothman DS David Sando
Specified Regions in SA	SB Sue Black TB Tony Bainbridge WB William Breed	TH Toni Haywood THo T. Horn	DSt D. Stevens ES Ella Smith JS Jonathan Starks
AP Adelaide Plains	CC Colin Clark	MdJ Mark de Jong	LS Leigh Schmidt
EP Eyre Peninsula	CCo Chris Coleborn	BSJ Barbara St John	SS S. Shepard
FR Flinders Ranges	DC David Close	EL Elaine Lawson	SSm Sally Smith
KI Kangaroo Island	GC Graham Carpenter	FL Faye Lush	WS Win Syson
LN Lower North	HC Heather Cox	JL Jim Lord	FT Francis Taylor
MLR Mount Lofty Ranges	JC John Cox	RL Roly Lloyd	HT Hilary Thompson
MM Murray Mallee	MC Maureen Christie	IM Ian May	PT Paul Taylor
NE North East	TC Trevor Cowie	RM Rosemary Miller	BW Bill Wakefield
NW North West	TCr Tim Croft	RMo Robin Moorhouse	DW Darryl Wickham
SE South East	JD Judith Dyer	AN Alan Nield	DWa David Williamson
YP Yorke Peninsula	PD P. Doecke	VN Vicky Natt	JvW Jason van Weenen
Reserves	TD Terry Dennis	PP Penny Paton	JW Joyce West
CP Conservation Park	CE C. Elliot	PPe Peter Penney	KW Kevin Wilson
GR Game Reserve	DE David Edey	PPo P. Pontifex	NWi Nigel Willoughby
NFR Native Forest Reserve	RF Rob Farnes	MP Marcus Pickett	PW Peter Waanders
NP National Park			RW R.J. Whatmough
RP Recreation Park			GY Gwen Young

*Observers are alphabetised by last capital letter of code, then first.

ANNOTATED LIST

Br **Malleefowl** *Leipoa ocellata* R

One was at Gum Lagoon CP, SE, on 2 January [DS] and one was at Bangham CP, SE, on 23 April [CR]. One was at Stockyard Plains, Waikerie, MM, on 14 January [BH]. An unspecified number was reported from Maralinga, NW, in March [SS per AB]. Four were in Mt Scott CP, SE, during the Birds SE campout on 30 November [per BH]. One was observed working a mound in Gum Lagoon CP, SE, on 12 December [DS].

The Malleefowl is considered threatened across its range in SA, and is nationally Vulnerable. It has a severely reduced area of occupancy and apparently declining abundance within occupied remnants. Declines are expected to continue unless management of habitat and populations improves. Malleefowl occur in four relatively discreet areas in SA:

- Murraylands (MM) and Upper SE: bounded by Big Heath CP in the south, Ferries-

McDonald CP to the west, and Bookmark Biosphere Reserve to the north. Habitat includes patches of mallee or broombush of varying sizes and degrees of isolation.

- YP: now confined to the southern end, largely within Innes NP, Warrenben CP and local Heritage Agreement areas.
- EP and Far West: from as far south as Lincoln NP, up to Munyaroo CP on the east coast of EP, and in remnant patches through the central and northern EP region, extending westwards through the Gawler Ranges, with scattered sightings to the northern margins of the Nullarbor Plain.
- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands: occurring in mallee and desert mulga *Acacia minyura* habitat in the far NW; somewhat isolated by surrounding unsuitable habitats.

Clearance of vegetation for agriculture has been the major cause of decline in populations in

southern Australia. Other threats include: grazing by herbivores which reduce food availability; predation by foxes and cats; large-scale fires, as Malleefowl require long-unburnt mallee vegetation for nest-building; and climate change (Benshemesh 2005).

Since 1989, studies were instigated in SA to more accurately determine the distribution, status and threats to Malleefowl and how to best direct conservation efforts. Also a survey and monitoring program commenced in 1989, where mounds were located and mapped within permanently marked grids. These grids are throughout most of occupied habitats and help to indicate changes in breeding activity over time and assess management actions. They were established and are monitored largely through the contributions and enthusiasm of community groups and individuals.

In SA, mound monitoring has continued over many years, however, a lack of funds and coordination has led to sporadic monitoring in several grids; some inconsistencies in data collection; and lack of data transfer, analysis and subsequent reporting. Despite this, a strong body of data exists, and survey methods are being updated to reflect available GPS and hand-held computer (Palm Pilot) technology.

In the 2003–2004 breeding season, 10 of 36 established SA grids were monitored (Table 1). Of the 349 mounds monitored across all grids,

Table 1. Number of grids monitored in the 2003–2004 Malleefowl breeding season in each region in SA.

Region	Grids monitored	Total grids
Murraylands	4	28
EP	5	5
YP	0	1
SE	1	2
Totals	10	36

Table 2. Number of active and inactive mounds per region in SA, in the 2003–2004 Malleefowl breeding season.

Region	Inactive mounds	Active mounds	Total mounds
Murraylands	169	3	172
EP	154	18	172
YP	0	0	0
SE	2	3	5
Totals	325	24	349

325 were inactive and 24 active (Table 2).

The 2003–2004 monitoring season showed the number of active mounds remained stable on EP, but was very few in the MM. A contributing factor was likely poor rainfall [per Sharon Gillam].

Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora* R

Twelve were in Mary Seymour CP, SE, on 8 February [JBo]. One was at Canunda Flats, Canunda, SE, on 5 April and one was at the Salt Creek outlet, Coorong, SE, on 7 April [MdJ]. At least two were calling from thick dry grass near the boardwalk at Onkaparinga River RP, MLR, on 29 November [DC].

Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa* R

A flock of at least 20 was at Banrock Station Wetlands on the Murray River, MM, on 9 January [PT]. A flock of seven was at the Whyalla Wetlands, EP, on 11 January and six were still present on 13 January [ES]. A flock of nine was at the Laratinga Wetlands, Mt Barker, MLR, on 12 January and had been present at this location since September 2002 [SSm]. One was at Greenfields Wetlands, Magazine Road, AP, in early January and remained until 18 January [JC]. Of particular significance were two large flocks on Kangaroo Island—300 at Kingscote Sewage Ponds on 11 January that had increased to 400 on 9 February and 1,000 at Duck Lagoon, Cygnet River, on 10 February [CB]. A small number were at the Ramco Lagoon, Riverland, MM, on 27 January [PW]. Up to six were at Morgan CP, MM, on 9 February [PW]. Three were at the Whyalla Waste Water Treatment Plant lagoons, EP, on 25 February, while 15 were there on 25 March [ES]. Eighteen were on the Willunga Wetlands and associated ponds, MLR, on 19 March [TB]. Four were at Lake Merreti, Calperum, MM, on 30 March [PW]. Fifteen were at the Goolwa Sewage Ponds, MM, on 15 April [WS]. Twenty to thirty were at Cygnet River, KI, on 1 June [CH] and a flock estimated at 400 was at Duck Lagoon, near Cygnet River, KI, on 21 June [DE, V-JR].

In the second half of the year, three were at Buckland Park Lake, AP, on 10 September [TC, CR] and one at Onkaparinga River RP, MLR, on 28 September [WB]. Five were on Hacks Lagoon CP, SE, on 27 September [JBo, CE]; eight were in Bool Lagoon GR, SE, on 18 October [JB, PBw]; 50 were at Balmer Swamp, SE, on 20 October [JBo]; up to 30 were still in Bool Lagoon GR, SE, on 9 November [per BH] and up to 100 were at Greenrise Lake, near Penola, SE, on 10 November

[JB]. An unspecified number were at Disher Creek, near Renmark, MM, on 29 August [CGI, MG]. Seven were on a lake near Meadows, MLR, on 26 and 29 November [WB, EB]. One was at Buckland Park Lake, AP, on 5 November [AB].

Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora* Va

Two adults were seen in association with a trawler on the pelagic trip from Robe, SE, on 25 May [JH]. One was a 'Southern Royal Albatross' *D.e. epomophora* and the other a 'Northern Royal Albatross' *D.e. sanfordi*. Two, a 'Northern Royal Albatross' at 38°08'S, 140°24'E (water depth 720 m) and a 'Southern Royal Albatross' at 38°23'S, 140°41'E (water depth 1,400 m), were recorded on the pelagic trip from Port MacDonnell, SE, on 7 September [CR]. One, an adult 'Northern Royal Albatross', was recorded on the pelagic trip from Port MacDonnell, SE, at 38°23'S, 140°35'E on 9 November [CR].

Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria fusca* R

One, possibly a juvenile, approached the boat on a pelagic trip off Robe, SE, on 25 May [JH]. No obvious white quills to the primaries were visible but a pale *sulcus* was noted. Photographs were taken [WB].

Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata* Va

A beached-washed specimen was recovered from Canunda beach, SE, on 5 March [MC].

Kerguelen Petrel *Lugensa brevirostris* R

One landed in the suburb of Modbury, AP, on 15 August [KW]. Fauna rescue was unable to save it and it later died. Photographs were taken [KW].

Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* Va

Two approached the vessel during a pelagic trip from Port MacDonnell, SE, on 9 November. One was at 38°23'S, 140°35'E (water depth 548 m), and the second at 38°32'S, 140°28'E (water depth 1,200 m) [CR]. These are the first records of Soft-plumaged Petrel from a pelagic trip out of southern ports in SA. See Table 2 in Hatch and Cheshire (2001). Previous records have been beach-washed derelicts or records from vessels well beyond the continental shelf. Carpenter *et al.* (2003, p. 103) report Cheshire's (1986) sighting of one White-chinned Petrel in an area centred on 156 nm SSW of Port MacDonnell. Reid *et al.* (2002) have two records near the continental shelf off SA in the period February to March (exact dates not

provided). Reid *et al.* (2002) also have records for single birds, widely dispersed over their atlas area off south-eastern Australia, for all months from September to April, except November. The November records presented here fill that gap.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* Va

Three approached the vessel during a pelagic trip from Port MacDonnell, SE, on 9 November [CR]. Two records were in positions with a water depth exceeding 500 m and one was at c. 2,000 m depth. Records of White-chinned Petrel off SA near the continental shelf have been infrequent. Hatch and Cheshire (2001, Table 2) report none on 37 pelagic trips over the period 1982 to 1998. The most recent record near the continental shelf was on a pelagic trip at 48 km WSW of Beachport, SE (Close 1982).

One reason for the lack of records during the period 1982–1998 was perhaps the inability to reach deep water (>200 m) out of Robe from where most pelagic trips originated during this period. White-chinned Petrel clearly prefers deep water (Reid *et al.* 2002, p. 54).

Moreover, Cheshire (1986, p. 16) notes that White-chinned Petrel was the most common bird seen around the ship over the period 15 to 23 November 1984 in a one degree area centred on 156 nm SSW of Port MacDonnell. Also, Reid *et al.* (2002) have at least 10 sightings, some of multiple birds, near the continental shelf off SA. In view of these records it seems that the 'vagrant' status for *P. aequinoctialis* in the Field List should be reviewed.

Grey-backed Storm-Petrel *Garrodia nereis* R

Two were feeding with Wilson's Storm Petrels *Oceanites oceanicus* during the pelagic trip off Robe, SE, on 25 May [JH].

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* R

One was at Fox Lake, near Robe, SE on 2 March [BG]. One was on the beach at Piccaninnie Ponds, CP, SE, on 29 June [BG].

Square-tailed Kite *Lophoictinia isura* R (S)

A possible sighting near Sandy Creek CP, MLR, on 19 May [WB] would be unusual for the time of year as most records of Square-tailed Kite near Adelaide occur during September to February. One, an adult, was near Old Kersbrook Forest, MLR, on 23 December [HT].

Grey Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae* Va

A visiting birdwatcher reported a goshawk thought to be this species near the south entrance to Ngarkat CP, MM, on 13 October [TP].

Grey Falcon *Falco hypoleucos* R

One was seen in flight near the Sturt Gorge Containment Dam, MLR, on 7 February [PBw]. One, an adult, attacked a flock of waders at Tolderol GR, MM, on 6 December [CR, JC]. One was near Innamincka, NE, in September [CCo].

Brolga *Grus rubicunda* R

All reports were from the SE. Fifty were at Magpie Swamp Road, Mingbool on 1 January [JB]. Three were at Avondale Road, Dismal Swamp on 15 April [RF]. Two were along Tri Hi Road, Kalangadoo on 30 April [SB]. Along the Border Track there were 36 on 3 May [WB, EB], two on 14 June [JB] and two (at Mingbool) on 22 August [JB]. Two were in Penola CP on 28 August during a Birds SE outing [per BH]. Two were at Hodges Red Gums, Mingbool on 12 November [BH]. A pair was in Naracoorte Creek, Naracoorte on 26 December [RM].

Lewin's Rail *Rallus pectoralis* R

One was at Piccaninnie Ponds CP, SE, on 22 May [BH].

Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* R (MLR, AP, KI, EP, LN)

One arrived at Greenfields Wetlands, AP, on 31 March [JC] and four birds were at Greenfields Wetlands, AP, over winter [JC]. One was in Piccaninnie Ponds CP, SE, on 18 May [BG] and again on 22 May [BH]. One was in the Lake Edward area, Glencoe, SE, on 6 September [SB]. One was at Bool Lagoon GR, on 18 October [JBo, PBo] and up to three were there on the Birds SE outing on 9 November [per BH]. One was at Tolderol GR, MM, on 4 November [CR].

Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis* R (W, not KI)

Five, in groups of two and three, were seen in open grazing land interspersed with mallee woodland 15 km NE of Wirrulla near Wallala Hill, EP, in January [DW, per TCr]. One was at the One Hill Site (formally BHP) on the northern outskirts of Whyalla, EP, on 16 January [AN per ES]. Records maintained by Ella Smith at Whyalla include only one previous report of Australian Bustard near Whyalla on 13 June 1993. Two were

reported from Jamestown, LN, on 10 March [observer not recorded]. An unspecified number were reported from Maralinga, NW, in March [SS per AB]. One was 7 km E of Pedirka, north of Oodnadatta, NE, on 19 May [RW].

Plains-wanderer *Pedionomus torquatus* R

One was observed 14 km SW of Yorketown, YP, on 13 November [CG, FT]. This is an unusual record for the area but the Unusual Record Report Form and sketch submitted to Birds Australia and SAOA suggest Plains-wanderer rather than Stubble Quail *Coturnix pectoralis* or other *Coturnix* or *Turnix* species.

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica* Va (4th record)

One was roosting with 11 Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* and one Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 6 March [CR]. This is probably the same bird that was present in late summer 2002. It was identified as a female with heavy barring on flanks and undertail coverts and was seen repeatedly after this date roosting with Black-tailed Godwit. It was last seen with 105 Black-tailed Godwit in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 6 April [JH].

In the second half of the year one, in basic plumage, was with a flock of c. 60 Black-tailed Godwit in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 1 November [CR]. It was later observed with a flock of Black-tailed Godwit and other waders in Buckland Park Lake through November and early December. It seems probable that this is the same bird as that reported in autumn 2001 and 2002.

Little Curlew *Numenius minutus* R (S)

One was at Tolderol GR, MM, on 10 March [WS].

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* R (S)

Four were at Stony Point, near Port MacDonnell, SE, on 2 January and remained over summer [JB]. Two were at French Point, near Port MacDonnell, SE, on 8 April [JB] and one was present at the same location on 26 April [JB, CR]. One was at Clinton CP, YP, on 18 January [JC, CR]. One was roosting in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 19 January and again on 22 January [CR]. Eight were recorded in a partial count of the Smoky Bay area, EP, during 24–31 January [CR, DC, IM]. Six were roosting in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 6 April [JH].

In the second half of the year two were at

French Point, near Port MacDonnell, SE, on 28 September [JB] and through the summer single birds were seen either at French Point or Stony Point, near Port MacDonnell. One was at Douglas Point CP, SE, on 2 November [BH, TH]. Five were at Price Saltfields, YP, on 12 November [CR].

Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* R (S)

A group of four was at Stony Point, near Port MacDonnell, SE, on 17 January and had been present along this stretch of coast throughout the summer [JB]. A group of c. 50 was at Clinton CP, YP, on 18 January [JC, CR]. A group of 39 was roosting in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 19 January and again on 22 January [CR]. Twenty-nine were recorded in a partial count of the Smoky Bay area, EP, during 24–31 January [CR, DC, IM]. One was at Cape Jaffa, SE, on 17 January [VN, EL] and 45 were roosting on Section Bank B, Outer Harbour, AP, on 22 February [DC], but only eight were roosting in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 6 April [JH].

In the second half of the year 13 were in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 10 September and 26 were there on 26 October [CR]. Eight were in Price Saltfields, YP, on 12 November [CR].

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* Va

One was reported from the beach at Eight Mile Creek, near Port MacDonnell, SE, on 5 April [JL]. The Birds Australia Rarities Committee rejected the record (submission number 386) on the grounds outlined below, although it seems probable that the bird was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

The details are brief but do describe a sandpiper similar in size to a Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* and certainly larger than Red-necked Stint *C. ruficollis* or Double-banded Plover *Charadrius bicinctus* with a more upright stance and shorter tail. The plumage characteristics were distinctive. To quote the submission:

‘a buff head and breast, dark markings on the wing and back on a buff background, no obvious markings on the head, bill black – shorter than Curlew Sandpiper, straight – longer than Ruddy Turnstone and Double-banded Plover but finer. Eye black, very prominent in buff head. Legs yellow but not bright. A juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was considered however this bird had: no white eyebrow, no white under the bill, too dominant a buff colour and a very distinct black eye’.

Committee members struggled with the brevity of

the report, commenting that it is difficult to rule out an aberrant individual of another species, flight details and age characteristics were not available and there is an absence of photographs or field notes from additional observers to help support the claim. That said there is nothing in the submission to rule out Buff-breasted Sandpiper conclusively. In fact the prominent black eye, buff face and breast and bare part colouration is highly suggestive and furthermore Sharp-tailed Sandpipers would have moulted out of juvenile plumage long before this date. This resulted in a split decision among members with four voting in favour of acceptance and four against. Those voting against conceded that Buff-breasted Sandpiper was certainly the most likely.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* R (S)

One was at the Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 22 January [CR] and two were present on 13 February [CC]. Three were at Price Saltfields, YP, on 8 March [CR, JC]. One was at Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 17 April [CR].

In the second half of the year the first for the season was at Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 4 October. It was subsequently seen regularly until the end of December although two were present on 27 November [JH]. One was at Price Saltfields, YP, on 12 October [CR, JC] and the number had increased to five by 12 November [RL, BSo].

Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes* R (S)

Up to 10 were at Stony Point, near Port MacDonnell, SE, on 17 January [JB]. Six were recorded in a partial wader count of the Smoky Bay area, EP, during 24–31 January [CR, DC, IM]. In the second half of the year one was seen feeding in the freshwater drain near the bridges in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 23 November [TC].

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* R (S)

One was at Greenfields Wetlands, Magazine Road, AP, on 18 January [JC] and was the only record from there for the first part of the year. In the second part of the year the first record for the season was one at Greenfields Wetlands, Magazine Road, AP, on 24 October, with numbers increasing to three by 4 November [JC]. One was at Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 1 November [CR, BG] and photographed on 4 November [WB].

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* R (S)

The bird first observed in December 2002 was still present at Greenfields Wetlands, Magazine

Road, AP, on 11 January [CR, JC]. In the second half of the year the first for the season was at Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 16 October [CR, JRo]. Two were at Buckland Park Lake, AP, on 29 November [JC, CR]. One was at Tolderol GR, MM, on 28 December [BSO] and one was at Buckland Park Lake, AP, on 31 December [JC].

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* R (S)

One was at Stony Point, SE, on 6 February [JB].

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* R (S)

The Reeve located in December 2002 was still present at Greenfields Wetlands, Magazine Road, AP, on 11 January and was last recorded in late January [CR, JC]. In the second half of the year a Ruff was at Dry Creek Saltfields, AP, on 2 November [CR]. This bird associated with a flock of Black-tailed Godwit feeding in Buckland Park during November and December. A Reeve was at Tolderol GR, MM, on 28–31 December [BSO].

Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* R

One male was at the Onkaparinga River RP, MLR, on 16 November [RL].

^{Br}Bush Stone-curlew *Burhinus grallarius* R

Two were on a common at Bordertown, SE, on 22 April and 20 June [CR]. Calling was reported 4 km upstream of Chowilla Homestead, MM, on 21 April [DWA]. Up to 24 bred on Boston Island, near Port Lincoln, YP, in the second half of the year [per GB]. Eight were in the Mundulla–Bordertown area, upper SE, on 19 December [BH].

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* R (S)

Seven were recorded during a partial count of waders in the Smoky Bay area, EP, during 24–31 January [CR, DC, IM]. One was in a roadside pond 96 km N of Marree on the Birdsville Track, NE, on 5 October [TP]. Two were on Thompson Beach, AP, on 14 December [CR, JC].

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* R (S)

Three were at Clinton CP, YP, on 18 January [JC, CR]. Twenty were recorded during a partial count of the Smoky Bay area, EP, during 24–31 January [CR, DC, IM]. Five were on Thompson Beach, AP, on 14 December [CR, JC].

Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus* R (S)

One, a juvenile, was on the beach at Port Prime,

AP, on 14 December [CR, JC].

^{Br}Hooded Plover *Thinornis rubricollis* R

Two were SW of Middleton, MLR, on 7 January and two were on Waitpinga beach, MLR, on 28 January [JD]. One was west of the Hindmarsh River mouth, Victor Harbor, MLR, on 9 January [WS]. Two were on the reef near the Onkaparinga River mouth, MLR, on 19 March and had been present for the previous two months [TB]. One was at Brown Beach, near Port MacDonnell, SE, on 22 January [JB]. One was on the beach at Piccaninnie Ponds CP, SE, on 4 May [BH] and again on 29 June [BG]. Two were at Lighthouse Bay, Carpenter Rocks, SE, on 17 August [SB]. Two adults and one non-flying young were on Parsons Beach, MLR, on 18 October [BSJ]. One was at Orwell Rocks, SE, on 5 November [PG]. Two were in Brown Bay, Port MacDonnell, SE, during November and December [JB]. Two were at Blackfellows Cave, SE, on 23 December [SB].

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* R

Two were at Green Point, Port MacDonnell, SE, on 12 April [BG, GY]. Four, two adults and two third-year birds, were at the mouth of Eight Mile Creek, Brown Beach, SE, on 26 April [CR, JB]. Eight were on the beach at Piccaninnie Ponds CP, SE, on 22 May [BH]. Twenty-seven, twelve adults and the rest juveniles and immature birds of various ages, were on the coast between Piccaninnie Ponds CP and the Glenelg River mouth, SE, on 29 June and 14 were present on 20 July [BG]. Two were at Port MacDonnell, SE, on 31 August [BG]; and were at French Point, Port MacDonnell, SE, on 28 September [JB].

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* Va

Three flew near the vessel on a pelagic trip off Port MacDonnell, SE, on 9 November [CR].

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* R (S)

Seven were at the Murray Mouth, MM, on 12 February [CR]. One was at American River, KI, on 22 February [JC]. One was at the Murray Mouth on 12 December [CR].

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* R

Eight were at Danger Point, Port MacDonnell, SE, on 2 January [JB, PPe].

Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes* R or Va (KI)

One was on a foreshore lawn, with coastal mallee scrub on nearby cliff top, at Kingscote, KI,

on 24 February [CB]. This was the first record for KI since 1966.

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksii* R

The following records are from the SE and refer to the nationally endangered 'South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo' *C.b. graptogyne*. Four were feeding on buloke 5 km N of Kybybolite on 6 January [per TR]. Twelve were at Tower Road, Nangwarry (Penola Forest Reserve), on 13 January [PB] and 30 January [per TR]. Twelve were 2 km ESE of Hynam on 10 February [per TR]. Twenty-three were at the junction of Hawkins and Wireless Roads, Mt Gambier, on 10 March [BG]. Seven were seen feeding on buloke alongside Cadgee Road, north-east of Naracoorte, on 11 March; 23 were on the outskirts of Mt Gambier (East) on 12 March; eight were at a drinking trough near the intersection of Stewarts Range and Lucindale Roads on 12 March; 12 were at Lake Mundi (on the SA/Victoria border between Penola and Casterton) on 13 March; 30 were feeding on stringybark near Lucindale on 19 March; and 35 were near Lucindale on 7 April [per TR]. Three were 8 km E of Lucindale on 12 April [JBo, PBo]. Nine were along the My Mi Mi Road about 8 km from the Bordertown–Naracoorte Road (north-west of Frances) on 14 April and three were at the southern outskirts of Naracoorte on 16 April [per TR]. Nine were in Big Heath CP on 18 April [PBo, JBo] and 23 were at The Heath NFR on 20 April [RF]. Six were at Phillips Road, Wattle Range, on 21 April [RM, PBo, JBo] and nine were in Bangham CP on 23 April [CR]. Six were at Lucindale on 4 May [THo], while 20 were at Three Chain Road, Dismal Swamp, on 5 May [DSt]. Sixty were at Donegal, near Telford Scrub CP, on 6 May [BH] and were roosting on private property adjacent Telford Scrub CP on 11 May [per TR]. Twenty-five were at Telford Scrub CP on 12 May [BH]. Twenty-three were at Deadmans Swamp on 2 June [THo] and 15 June [BG]. Twenty-three were along the Penola–Casterton Road on 20 June [BH, DG] and six were along the same road, Penola, on 8 August [PPo]. Fifteen were at Frances on 19 August [BH] and at least 10 were just north of Frances on 7 September [CHo]. Thirty-five were at Boyanton Scrub, 2 km N of Naracoorte, on 9 September [BH]. Twenty-six, including four juveniles, were at Deadmans Swamp (north of Glen Roy CP) on 15 June and 10 were at Hacket Hill NFR, near Mt Gambier, on 22 September [per TR].

An estimated 1,000 'South-eastern Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo' remain across their habitat range, which includes SE SA and south-western Victoria. The ongoing recovery program is addressing the key issues of feeding habitat (brown stringybark *Eucalyptus arenacea* and *E. baxteri*, and buloke *Allocasuarina luehmannii*) and, in the longer term, loss of nesting habitat. In 2003, legislative protection of dead trees with hollows was introduced in the SE to protect Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo nesting habitat.

Prescribed burns and wildfires affect feeding habitat by substantially reducing seed availability in stringybarks for at least nine years, with some effects persisting for more than 11 years after fire (Koch 2003). Prescribed burning for fuel-reduction comprises about half the areas burnt less than nine years ago. In these areas reducing fire frequency may not be possible but reduced fire intensity through 'cool burns' which minimize canopy scorch is being implemented. This allows for quicker recovery to full seed production. Also, prescribed burns are timed to avoid years in which a given block of woodland has a newly matured seed crop (Commonwealth of Australia 2005). A seed crop assessment methodology has been developed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment in Victoria and is being trialed in both Victoria and South Australia.

The recovery team receives sightings via a 1800 information line, and an annual count is held every April/May. The 2003 count was on 5 April and 785 birds (72 in SA and 713 in Victoria) were recorded from 20 sightings [per Tania Rajic].

Glossy Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami* R

Four were at American River, KI, on 3 October [TP].

Varied Lorikeet *Psitteuteles versicolor* [Va] (1st record)

Several flocks of 6–15 birds were found at a waterhole on the Diamantina River, NE, between 29 January and 4 February [JR]. Weather conditions were extremely hot, with a maximum of 48°C recorded in deep shade on 29 January. It is thought that the severe drought conditions had forced the birds further south in search of food. Birds were observed feeding on flowering coolibahs *Eucalyptus coolabah* (Reid in prep.).

Little Lorikeet *Glossopsitta pusilla* R

Two were at Worrolong, near Mt Gambier, SE,

on 20 April [JB] and two were in Mt Gambier, SE, on 23 June [BG].

Regent Parrot *Polytelis anthopeplus* R

Twelve were at Peake on the Mallee Highway, MM, on 4 February [JC, HC]. They were reported regularly from the Waikerie area, MM [PW].

Orange-bellied Parrot *Neophema chrysogaster* R (W)

Two were reported from the southern end of Coorong NP, SE, on the national count held on 26–27 July [per JS].

Scarlet-chested Parrot *Neophema splendida* R

One, a female, was south of Maralinga, NW, on 25 April [AB].

Barking Owl *Ninox connivens* R (NE), Va (SE, MM, MLR, AP, LN)

Three were at Cowarry Homestead, Killanoola, SE, on 2 April [RMO]. Two were present on 3 June, 1 July, and 26 September [RMO]. Barking Owl has been established in the area since at least 1999 (see Rogers 2000). Calling was reported from Alligator Gorge, Mt Remarkable NP, FR, on 5 July [BW]. Two were in Big Heath CP, SE, on 1 December, Birds SE campout [per BH]. Several unsubstantiated reports were received of Barking Owl calling in the Adelaide suburbs along the hills face, MLR.

Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea* R (SE–Glenelg River), Ex (MLR)

One was 500 m upstream from Donovans Landing, Glenelg River, SE, on 12 October [PBA, RB]; and again on 13 November [JB]. These are the first records from there for almost two years.

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* Va

Two were at the Army Range, south of Port Wakefield, AP, during December [per TC].

Southern Emu-wren *Stipiturus malachurus* R (MLR, EP)

The threatened Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren *S.m. intermedius* has been the focus of a recovery program since 1995 (Littlely and Cutten 1994; MLR Southern Emu-wren Recovery Team 1998). It was recorded at 23 sites in 2003—13 swamp and 10 dry-heath—and its broad distribution was essentially the same as in 1993. Thirteen local extinctions were recorded during 1993–2003. Following local extinction due to fire in 1983, it

was reintroduced by translocation to Cox Scrub CP in 2001–2002. Elsewhere, no successful natural reoccupation of its former range was recorded during 1993–2003 and the emu-wren remained absent from the extreme north, i.e. Yundi (SAOA 1925; original published observation) and parts of the south, i.e. Inman Valley–Back Valley–Hindmarsh Valley region. It also remained absent from specific sites adjacent to extant populations in both the north and south of its present range. All local extinctions recorded during 1993–2003 were of very small populations in swamps—eight of size class ≤ 1 pair and five of size class 2–4 pairs (i.e. probable maximum population size 1993–2003). Reasons for these extinctions were mostly unknown—accidental fire in one case and probably population size/isolation and/or poor, insufficient and/or changed habitat in most if not all other cases. Intensive monitoring of the reintroduced population at Cox Scrub CP concluded in 2003 with disappointing results. Monitoring during the first two breeding seasons revealed short-term success, with the establishment of breeding pairs and successful reproduction, and evidence of production of up to 26 young by founder-group birds and their progeny. However, in the 2003–2004 spring–summer breeding season, only four pairs were positively identified and there was evidence of breeding by only two of these. Only a few ‘floating’ unpaired individuals were detected. Of the original birds transferred from Deep Creek CP, four colour-banded individuals, all transferred in 2001, were recorded—all in their previous range areas, with one pair being of the same composition as in 2001–2002 and 2002–2003. The population may be larger than the number of birds detected, but a decline was clearly evident. Drought stressed habitat during 2002–2003 may have contributed to the decline, however definite contributing factors could not be determined. A program of annual surveys is planned to monitor for ongoing presence. The recovery program was administered by the Conservation Council of SA and funded primarily by State and Commonwealth government environment departments [per Marcus Pickett].

Western Gerygone *Gerygone fusca* (not listed in the Field List for MM)

Two were reported from the Chowilla Floodplain, MM, on 16 September by Kevin Smith [per DH]. Western Gerygone is infrequently reported outside of the NW or the southern tip of EP where it is a breeding resident.

Chestnut-breasted Whiteface *Aphelocephala pectoralis* R

Several small flocks were recorded in the Mt Lyndhurst area, NE, on 13 July [JD]. Two were near Mt Lyndhurst, NE, on 5 October [TP].

Black-eared Miner *Manorina melanotis* R (MM)

Extensive surveys by the Black-eared Miner Recovery Program during 1997–2003 indicate at least 3,750 pure Black-eared Miners in 500 colonies in Bookmark Biosphere Reserve, MM. Translocations from Bookmark began in 2000, and eventually four colonies of 91 birds were translocated to boost dwindling colonies in Murray-Sunset NP, Victoria. These birds bred spectacularly successfully and exchanged birds with resident colonies. Monitoring in 2003 indicated that the goal of establishing a self-sustaining population within Murray-Sunset NP had been achieved.

Black-eared Miners require large areas of old growth mallee which have not been burnt for 40 years or longer. The 180,000 ha fire in Big Desert-Wyperfeld NP, Victoria, and three smaller (<1,000 ha) fires in Bookmark in 2002, were potent reminders of the need for fire management action. In 2003 the Department for Environment and Heritage employed a project officer and vital fire planning work for Bookmark Biosphere Reserve was undertaken [per David Baker-Gabb].

Noisy Friarbird *Philemon corniculatus* Va (2nd record)

One was feeding on SA blue gum *Eucalyptus leucoxydon* blossom with Red Wattlebirds *Anthochaera carunculata* in Scott CP, MLR, on 5 October [TD]. It was last reported on 12 October. The first record for SA occurred along the River Murray at Woolpunda, MM, on 1 September 1966, Glover (1968, p. 44). An irruption of Noisy Friarbirds during the winter was reported from the Ballarat region of Victoria [per RF].

Brown Honeyeater *Lichmera indistincta* R (S)

At least five were at Sentinel Hill, Anangu-Pitjantjatjara Lands, NW, on 9 September [JvW].

Fuscous Honeyeater *Lichenostomus fuscus* R (W)

One was in Telford Scrub CP, SE, on 31 January [JB].

Black-chinned Honeyeater *Melithreptus gularis* R

Five were at Victor Harbor sewage ponds, MLR, on 19 January [JC]. Two were at 6 Gregory Street, Port Elliot, MLR, on 2 March [WS]. Two were at Cowarry Homestead, SE, on 29 March [RMo] and at least six were in Glen Roy CP, SE, on 24 April [GC]. Five were at Funda Court, Christies Beach, MLR, in May [TB]. Two were in Scott CP, MLR, on 9 May [CR]. Four were at Cowarry Homestead, Killanoola, SE, on 24 May and the number had increased to seven by 22 June [RM]. Three were 15 km SSW of Mundulla, SE, on 19 June and two were in Bangham CP, SE, on 20 June [CHo]. Three were in Bangham CP, SE on 15 June [BH] and three were along My Mi Mi Road, west of Bangham CP, SE, on 20 June [CR], while frequent calling was noted at this location on 6 September [CHo]. Two were in a garden near the corner of Franklin Parade and Jagger Road, 4 km SE of Victor Harbor, MLR, on 21 July and up to five were at Nangawooka Flora Reserve, 3 km NNE of Victor Harbour, MLR, on 2 August [DE, V-JR]. One was at McLaren Vale, Woodley Grove, MLR, from 13 August to 2 September [FL, JW]. Up to three were at Bell Scrub, Padthaway, SE, on 19 September [BH]. One was at Point Sturt, MM, between 25 September and 18 October [PD]. One was in Telford Scrub SP, SE, on 5 October [BG]; as many as 10 were in Geegeela CP, SE, during the Birds SA campout on 11 October; and up to 30 were counted at Bangham CP, SE, on 12 October by the Birds SE group [per BH]. Four were at Cowarry Homestead, Killanoola, SE, on 12 October and two were present on 14 December [RM]. Two were in Penola CP, SE, on 30 October [PG]; and single birds were in the SE at Hodges Redgums, Mingbool, on 12 November, Mt Scott CP on 30 November, Big Heath CP on 1 December, and Boston Reserve, Naracoorte, on 14 December [per BH].

Pied Honeyeater *Certhionyx variegatus* R (S)

One, a male, was in the Smoky Bay Caravan Park, EP, on 28 January [DC]. Fifteen, three males and 12 brown birds, were in mulga *Acacia aneura* and other acacia shrubs north of Wynbring, Yellabinna Regional Reserve, NW, on 21 April and two males were in the company of Black-faced Woodswallows *Artamus cinereus* and Crimson Chats *Epthianura tricolor*, 15 km N of Watson, NW, on 29 April [AB, MB].

Orange Chat *Epthianura aurifrons* (not listed in Field List for SE) (2004).

One was at Lake Hawdon South, near Robe, SE, on 26 June [MC]. This was an interesting southerly record. The *Atlas of Australian birds* (Blakers, Davies and Reilly 1984, p. 570) has a breeding record not far to the north west of this record, while the new atlas (Barrett *et al.* 2003, p. 514) has a coastal record well to the south in Victoria.

Yellow Chat *Epthianura crocea* R

A female was in the Coongie Lakes district, NE, in late January [JR]. This is the first record for the region in over 20 years.

Rose Robin *Petroica rosea* R (W)

An adult male was mist-netted in Scott CP, MLR, in early April (photographs provided) [NWi]. A brown bird was at Happy Valley Reservoir, MLR on 6 May [PP].

Pink Robin *Petroica rodinogaster* Va

One, a brown bird, was just north of Little Dip CP, SE, on 18 April [TRu].

Crested Shrike-tit *Falcunculus frontatus* (not listed in Field List for EP)

One at Coffin Bay in June would represent a new record for EP [per TRu]. There are no records in either atlas (Blakers *et al.* 1984; Barrett *et al.* 2003) of Crested Shrike-tit west of Adelaide.

Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca* R (S)

At least three were at Telford Scrub CP, SE, on 2 January [JB, PPe]. Two were in Telford Scrub CP, SE, on 16 February [BG, GY]. Two were reported from the same location on 19 January [BG]. The first record for spring was also in Telford Scrub, CP, SE, on 11 October [BG]. An unidentified *Myiagra* flycatcher was heard calling at Saddle Hill Road in Belair NP, MLR, on 10 May [DE, V-JR].

^{Br}**White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina papuensis* R (S)

Three were in Telford Scrub CP, SE, on 19 January and an attempt at breeding was observed [BG]. Two were on the western boundary of Glen Roy CP, SE, on 8 April [GC]. One was at Boston Reserve, Naracoorte, SE, on 15 July [BH]. Two were in Telford Scrub CP, SE, on 11 October [BG]. For further details on White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike in Telford Scrub CP, see Green

Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus* R

Two were on the western boundary of Glen Roy CP, SE, on 8 April [GC]. Two were on the Border Track, near Mt Gambier, SE, on 25 August [JB]. One, possibly a female, was at Hardy's Scrub, MLR, on 13 November [LS].

Grey-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis* R (NW), Ex (SE)

One 'Red-breasted Babbler' *Pt. rubecula* was calling along the Hamilton River, NE of Oodnadatta, NE, on 19 May [RW].

Four *Pt. temporalis* were found on a Heritage Agreement block near Robe, SE, over the period 12–16 August [MdJ]. *Pt. temporalis* was last recorded in the SE near Bangham in 1981 (Houston 1981) and until this recent record was thought to be extinct in SA.

Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina* [R (W)]

One was at Worrolong, SE, on 25 March and the number had increased to four on 31 March [JB]; up to 14 were at the same location on 6 May [JB, DE]. Two were in Penambol CP, SE, on 3 May [GY, FH]. One was heard calling just west of Telford Scrub CP, SE, with Grey Currawongs *S. versicolor* also present, and a flock of 50 was in Penambol CP, SE, on 21 June [CR]. At least 25 were present at the same location on 10 July [BH] and recordings of the call were taken [BH, PPe]. Up to 30 were in the Lower Glenelg River CP, SE, on 16 August [BH, PH]. Up to 10 were in Penambol CP, SE, on 9 October [BH]. One flew across the Glenelg River from the Dry Creek NFR, SE, on 12 October [PBa, RB]. Two were on the Honeysuckle Track, Caroline Forest, SE, on 13 November [JB]. One was in Dry Creek NFR, SE, on 6 December [BG, PPe] and up to 10 were in Penambol CP, SE, on the same date [BH]. For a discussion of the status of this species in the SE see Berggy (2004b).

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* Va

A bird in breeding plumage was at Stony Point, Port MacDonnell, SE, on 22 May [JB]. For a description and complete report see Berggy (2004a).

^{Br}**Painted Finch** *Emblema pictum* R

Twenty were drinking at a waterhole in the northern Flinders Ranges on 13 July [JD, DH]. At least three nests were located in the vicinity of

Hermit Hill, Oodnadatta track, NE, during September. Kovac and Niejalke (2004) report a possible colony at this location.

Spinifexbird *Eremiornis carteri* R

One was located in triodia on a rocky hillside in the central Flinders Ranges in October [GC]. This is a significant record as Spinifexbird has only recently been recorded in the NW part of SA (see Hopton *et al.* 1999; Gole 2002; Carpenter, Pedler and Preu 2006).

Bassian Thrush *Zoothra lunulata* R

Two were at Hindmarsh Valley, Mt Billy CP, MLR, on 5 April [JD]. One was in Telford Scrub CP, SE, on 25 April [BG] and again on 27 May [JB]. One was near Spring Mount CP, MLR, on 24 May [BR]. One was at Gum Tree Gully, near Springmount Road, 6 km ESE of Myponga, on 17 July [DE, MP]. Two were on the Honeysuckle Track, Caroline Forest, SE, on 13 November [JB] and two were in Telford Scrub CP, SE, on 13 December [BG].

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