

# Birds SA

# Newsletter



No 233

February 2015



**Birds SA is the operating name of The South Australian Ornithological Association Inc.**

c/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide, SA 5000

The Aims of the Association are:

- To promote the conservation of Australian birds and their habitats.
- To encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of the birds of South Australia.
- To record the results of research in regard to all aspects of bird life.
- To maintain a public fund called the "Birds SA Conservation Fund" for the specific purpose of supporting the Association's environmental objectives.

# Breeding Plumage

Photographed by Peter McKenzie



**Cattle Egret — near Hervey Bay, Queensland. 30/01/15**



**Little Egret — Robe, 10/12/14**

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### CENTRE INSERT

SAOA HISTORICAL SERIES NUMBER 51,  
WALTER CAIN (FINAL)

## SAOA COMMITTEE 2014 – 2015

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Member	John Spiers	8333 0272
Member	Jody Gates	8391 6342
Member	Rebecca Zanker	0413426355

## DIARY

The following is a list of Birds SA activities for the next few months. Further details of all these activities are given later in the newsletter.

March 1 Sunday Excursion to Montacute CP

### March 14-15, Saturday & Sunday 'Wyndgate', Hindmarsh Island Bird Survey

Mar 19 Thursday Excursion to Magazine Rd. Wetlands

Mar 27 Friday General Meeting

Mar 29 Sunday Excursion to private bush-land

\*\*\*\*\*

### Friday 3 to Monday 6 April, Easter Campout

April 11 Saturday Excursion to Ridley C

April 16 Thursday Excursion to Kenneth Stirling CP

April 24 Friday General Meeting (AGM)

April 26 Sunday Excursion to Deep Creek CP

\*\*\*\*\*

May 16 Saturday Excursion to Anstey Hill CP

May 21 Thursday Excursion to Lowan CP

May 29 Friday General Meeting

May 31 Sunday Excursion to Aldinga Scrub CP

**Cover photo:** Tawny Frogmouth family, photographed by Jan Paterson in Deep Creek Conservation Park on 31 December 2014.

*General meetings are held in the Hawker Centre at the Waite Institute, Waite Road, Urrbrae at 7.45pm. Doors open at 7.00pm.*

*Committee meetings are held at the above venue on the second Monday of each month, starting at 7.30pm.*

**Donations to the Birds SA Conservation Fund are tax-deductible**

### New Members

We welcome 15 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on p18.

## FURTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Librarian	Karen Donkin	0402123960
Image Librarian	John Spiers	8333 0272
	email <a href="mailto:imagelibrarian@birdssa.asn.au">imagelibrarian@birdssa.asn.au</a>	
Campout Organiser	Lynton Huxley	7009 5038
Rare Birds Secretary	Colin Rogers	8336 3325

## RELATED ASSOCIATIONS

### BirdLife Southeast SA

Convenor, — Bob Green [shriketit@bigpond.com](mailto:shriketit@bigpond.com) 8725 0549

IBA Coordinator/Newsletter Editor — Bryan Haywood

[brytonwood@bigpond.com](mailto:brytonwood@bigpond.com) 8726 8112

### Fleurieu Birdwatchers

Contact person: Neil Cheshire 8552 7904

Website: [www.Fleurieubirdwatchers.org](http://www.Fleurieubirdwatchers.org)

### Port Augusta group

Contact people: Peter Langdon 8642 5723, Greg Bannon 8648 6630, Bernie Haase 0419 865 834

**WEBSITE:** [birdssa.asn.au](http://birdssa.asn.au)

## 2015 SAOA SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single membership \$50

Family/household membership \$60

Single concession\* \$45

Family/household concession\* \$55

Student members (full-time students under 25 years) \$10

\*Pensioners and people experiencing financial hardship can obtain concessions. Apply in writing to the Treasurer, Birds SA.

ABN 76 339 976 789

## ADVERTISING IN THE Birds SA NEWSLETTER

SAOA relies on the integrity of advertisers for the quality and nature of their products and services. We cannot guarantee them. Advertising is charged as follows: \$1.00 per line, up to \$40.00 per half page and 10c per inserted leaflet (single sheet). The committee reserves the right to lower or waive these fees.

### COPY DEADLINE

Copy for the May Newsletter is due by the April General Meeting (April 24). Contributions, 'Word' format preferred, can be recorded on a CD, emailed to either of my email addresses, or typed/handwritten neatly.

- [newslettereditor@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:newslettereditor@birdssa.asn.au)
- [cpy62284@bigpond.net.au](mailto:cpy62284@bigpond.net.au)

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# President's Letter/Birds SA Notes & News

## IT'S ALL ABOUT CONSERVATION! BIRDS SA CONSERVATION STATEMENT

During 2014 a sub-committee led by Graham Carpenter produced a Conservation Statement for Birds in South Australia. This has been reproduced in the following pages of this newsletter and is in keeping with your committee's desire that Birds SA contributes more substantially to conservation initiatives. As a general rule, like most conservation organisations, Birds SA reacts to the issues of the moment like most conservation organisations. There is, however, merit in reflecting on the breadth of the threats to birds so that these individual issues can be placed in perspective, and the key issues not forgotten and given greater focus and attention.

At the moment there is a parliamentary enquiry into biodiversity that is seeking submissions, by March 2<sup>nd</sup>, on the state of biodiversity in South Australia. Birds SA will put in a submission based on the Conservation Statement. I would encourage members to put in submissions as well — although by the time you read this there will be little time to do so.

## REMINDER ABOUT THE THIRD BIRD ATLAS

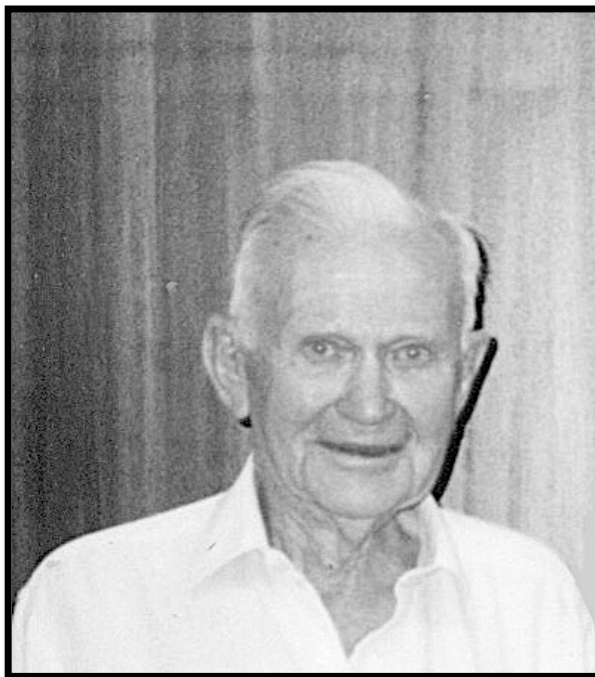
The third bird atlas of the Adelaide region (and Kangaroo Island) finished on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014. If you hold data collected between 1 July 2012 and 31 December 2014 that has not been submitted then it is not too late. I would welcome that information. If you require blank cards on which to submit these data then please contact me by email to [david.paton@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:david.paton@adelaide.edu.au) or text to mobile phone 0407 180 921, or collect some blank cards at the February or March general meetings

**David Paton**

## BIRDS SA NOTES & NEWS

### VALE BOB

Robert Frederick (Bob) Brown died in his sleep at home on Wednesday 28 January aged 94 years and 22 days. Most will remember him as an old and assertive man but with an eclectic understanding of birds. Some will know that he was also a major force for conservation who, in the early 1960s, was its single most influential advocate in South Australia.



Bob had many other interests and many enduring friendships. He gave generously to many conservation bodies and contributed directly towards the acquisition of the State's reserves system.

He would not allow a funeral of any kind but a memorial celebration was held on Sunday 22 February at 3.30pm.

**Andrew Black**

### THANK YOU, HELEN

For many years, Helen Monterola has been responsible for collecting and distributing the Association's publications — the Newsletter and the SA Ornithologist.

When you collect these publications

from your mailbox, do you think about how much effort has been involved in enabling you to receive them?

At least four times a year, Helen has collected three or four heavy boxes of documents from Abbott Printers in the city. She has brought to the general meeting enough boxes for the number of people expected to attend, and made sure they have all crossed their names of the list.

Then comes the major task — posting all the rest! 530 copies of each publication are printed and just over 100 people attend meetings. That leaves about 400 copies to place in envelopes and transport to the post office.

Helen has decided that, due to her other commitments, she will no longer be able to distribute our publications.

All members will express heartfelt thanks to Helen for her sterling efforts over the years.

Helen was also the Association's Assistant Secretary for several years. She was responsible, amongst other tasks, for the Committee Meeting minutes, which she always recorded succinctly and accurately.

In gratitude for the many years that Helen has undertaken the mailing task the Committee has decided to give her a 'Distinguished Service Award'.

I would like to add a big thank you to Barbara and Peter Bansemer for agreeing to take on this very important task.

**Cynthia Pyle**

### YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Please advise me of any changes to your name, address, email address or telephone number by emailing me at [membership@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:membership@birdssa.asn.au).

Alternatively, 'phone the Treasurer using the number on page 3.

**Brian Walker**

# *Birds SA Draft Conservation Statement*

## **OVERVIEW**

In 1983 the SAOA (Birds SA) produced a series of supplements in the SAOA Newsletter that addressed issues affecting conservation of South Australian birds. This was prompted by a concern that much of the Association's work on conservation issues had been fragmented and reactive, and that most members did not appreciate that the main long-term threat facing our birds is habitat change rather than loss of individuals due to pollution, hunting etc.

Conservation aims to minimise the detrimental effects on natural populations of human-induced changes to the environment. Birds SA believes that a primary conservation objective is the survival of all native bird species in South Australia. Although many species are more common or widely distributed interstate, their regional extinction would be a significant loss to South Australia, especially as many are represented here as outlying populations with local variation. Recent research has concluded that it is important to conserve species across their ranges, so we also advocate conservation of species at the regional level.

Given the alarming decline of our birdlife in recent years, the Birds SA Committee considers it expedient to review the conservation issues affecting South Australian birds.

### **Current status of our birdlife**

Our longer-term members have noticed significant changes to our birdlife over the last thirty years. This is supported by data collected by Birds SA members for various state and national projects. A quick comparison of the two national and two Adelaide region bird atlas surveys conducted during that period reveal changes in both distribution and abundance (reported numbers) of many species. The same trend is evident in our third Adelaide region atlas currently in progress. At the local level, most of our national parks no longer support the variety of birds they once did.

In the Adelaide–Mount Lofty Ranges region several woodland birds have

largely disappeared: namely Jacky Winter, Restless Flycatcher, Diamond Firetail, Hooded Robin, Zebra Finch, Brown Treecreeper, Black-chinned Honeyeater and Southern Whiteface. This rate of decline is most alarming. Thirty years ago, many of these birds were regarded as common. These losses are additional to earlier regional extinctions of Azure Kingfisher, Ground Parrot, King Quail, Regent Honeyeater, Little Lorikeet, Spotted Quailthrush and Rufous Fieldwren. This is the worst avian extinction rate of any region in Australia.

### **Conservation issues**

Human-induced changes to natural environments are many and varied, and can influence our birdlife directly and indirectly. The following discussion is in order of priority and focuses on our land birds because these have been most impacted. However, because we are now also witnessing severe declines in some of our water and seabirds, such as Fairy Tern and Little Penguin, their conservation issues will no doubt acquire greater priority in future.

### **Habitat loss and change**

Destruction and modification of habitat are universally regarded as the primary reasons for the decline of bird populations. Conservation of individual species depends on preserving the habitat of each species. Habitat is the environment that a species needs to survive and breed, which includes food, nesting sites and shelter. Clearance of native vegetation leads to a decrease in and loss of birds that live in natural habitats, especially our unique species. Contrary to popular belief, when an area is cleared, displaced birds are unable to simply move to a new area of similar habitat if adult birds of that species already saturate it. Ubiquitous birds adapted to open grasslands, such as Galahs, Magpies and Ravens, commonly colonise when an area is cleared. These are conspicuous species that leave the lay person with the impression that our birdlife is thriving.

Vegetation clearance and degradation can be obvious such as bulldozing for agriculture or housing

developments, or insidious such as removal of understorey plants by livestock, introduced animals (e.g. rabbits, feral deer) and weed invasion, or dieback of paddock trees through age and exposure.

Because most of the natural environments have been cleared in the southern part — the agricultural regions — of South Australia, loss of habitat has become a more critical issue here than in other states. The agricultural regions contain 90% of the State's native bird species, 28% exclusively. Within this region those environments most favoured for agriculture are those most impacted. Temperate woodlands have been most affected, with very little (<1%) remaining today. Research over the last thirty years has reinforced that many of our land birds move widely across the landscape in response to the seasonal availability of food. It has therefore become apparent that conservation of species requires that habitats be protected throughout a species' distribution. Recent studies on migratory waders have also emphasised the importance of protecting habitats throughout the whole of a species' range, even outside Australia.

Theory also predicts that a given area of remaining habitat can only support a certain number of species, so that future species loss without active management and revegetation programs is inevitable. For example, Ford & Howe (1980) predicted the loss of 35-50 breeding species from the Mount Lofty Ranges based on the amount of native vegetation that remained in 1980. Genetic research has also shown that bird populations that have become isolated within patches of native vegetation surrounded by cleared land are further endangered by the effects of inbreeding.

The devastating bushfires in South Australia in 1983 and subsequently in other States has also led to a public call for controlled burning of all native vegetation, particularly in areas reserved specifically for wildlife conservation. This burning has impacted on our birdlife and has encouraged the growth of exotic

# *Birds SA Draft Conservation Statement (cont)*

plants that are more flammable than the native plants they have replaced. Our waterbirds are also susceptible to habitat loss through lack of water, altered flooding regimes and increasing salinity. On a positive note, Greenfields at Salisbury and Laratinga at Mount Barker demonstrate that constructed wetlands can attract a variety of waterbirds.

In the northern pastoral districts loss of native vegetation is not as obvious or severe in the short term, but widespread grazing of domestic and introduced animals prevents the regeneration of the more palatable understorey plants and long-lived perennials.

Hence, a prerequisite for conserving birds in South Australia is therefore to slow down the rate of native vegetation clearance and degradation. In May 1983 the South Australian government led the nation by introducing controls to clearance of native vegetation. In 1985 this was replaced by the Native Vegetation Management Act (which enabled payments to landowners totalling \$100 million over six years for retaining areas uncleared) and in 1991 the Native Vegetation Act. The Native Vegetation Act allows an independent council (the Native Vegetation Council) to approve minor clearances subject to either the long-term conservation of alternative areas to provide a significant offset, or payment into an offset fund specifically for on ground works. Concurrent with the clearance controls is the Heritage Agreement scheme, which formally conserves native vegetation on private land through a contract between the landowner and Minister for Environment lodged with the land title. This Act has so far protected over 1537 areas totalling 63, 4242ha of native vegetation on private land across the State. (Feb 2014 figures)

While the public may generally believe that vegetation clearance in South Australia has ceased and is therefore no longer a conservation issue, the Native Vegetation Act applies only to direct clearance.

Significant loss of habitat continues through exemptions, such as for fire control, mining, housing subdivisions etc.

In 1999 the Commonwealth government also introduced the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act to protect birds of national significance and their habitats. While this Act has been applied to relatively few proposed developments in South Australia, it has provided an assessment independent of state bias.

It is imperative that the State Government maintains its support for the Native Vegetation Act to ensure that the Act is properly administered. It is also critical that the Heritage Agreement scheme be expanded to cover clearance offsets and revegetation areas to provide long-term protection of native vegetation on private land. It is also suggested that better use be made of the offset fund established under the Native Vegetation Act to purchase additional land for National Parks and to revegetate specific areas.

It is also imperative that the State Government specifies targets for its funding to National Parks and Wildlife agencies so that conservation management is not abandoned at the expense of indiscriminate recreation and fuel reduction programs.

### **Interspecific competition**

When a species colonises a new area the factors controlling its numbers (e.g. predators, disease) may be reduced or absent. Its numbers may then expand rapidly and impact on the wildlife that already occurs in the area. This often happens when an exotic species is introduced into Australia. For example, European Rabbits rapidly became abundant and widespread when introduced to Australia in the 1800s, with consequent loss of the understorey vegetation that provides habitat for many smaller land birds. The Red Fox is an abundant and indiscriminate predator of birds throughout southern Australia. Its proficiency as a predator in South

Australia is demonstrated by the parallel absence of some species of ground-nesting birds from the mainland (e.g. Bush Stone-curlew). The Common Starling and Feral Honeybee are well-known competitors for tree hollows needed as nesting sites for many species of native birds, especially in woodlands where habitat is already limited. Another consequence of exotic introductions is interbreeding between closely related species (e.g. Mallard and Pacific Black Duck), which may eliminate the native species as a genetic identity.

Given the widespread and significant impacts of foxes and rabbits it is imperative that State and Commonwealth Governments continue to support existing control programs and investigate additional possibilities.

It is hoped that careful monitoring, control and prohibition of new exotics by agricultural authorities will prevent introduced pests from becoming established in future. However in 1983 the Association notified wildlife authorities of a person buying Barbary Doves from pet shops and then releasing them in an attempt to establish a wild population. Barbary Doves are now widely distributed in Adelaide suburbs, with outlying reports from Coober Pedy and Murray Bridge. This dove can have five broods a year and has become widespread over much of Europe since the 1950s; so it has the potential to spread in South Australia. Past lessons have also not prevented the widespread liberation of various species of deer in recent years.

The problem of interspecific competition is not confined to exotic species. Native species have been released into regions where they did not naturally occur, sometimes for conservation reasons (e.g. on Kangaroo Island). Native species have also spread naturally into the new grassed habitats created following clearance of native vegetation, where they may compete for nesting sites with local species (e.g. Galah).

# *Birds SA Draft Conservation Statement (cont)*

## **INTERACTIONS WITH HUMANS**

### **a. Pests**

Several Australian birds have become significant agricultural pests (e.g. Adelaide Rosellas, Rainbow and Musk Lorikeets), especially to the fruit-growing and viticultural industries. Numbers of Little Corellas have also increased greatly in southern regions over the last 20 years, causing substantial damage to municipal trees and infrastructure. Birds may also be a hazard to aircraft at airports. Short-term control (e.g. shooting) has proved ineffective and has been largely replaced by netting, decoy crops and scaring devices. Scientific research has also provided innovative solutions.

### **b. Hunting**

Recreational hunting of native species has been considered acceptable provided the game species can sustain harvesting and other species are not impacted. In South Australia several duck species and Stubble Quail are hunted, with seasons and bag limits managed under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. Hunters and conservationists have many aims in common, including the protection of nesting and feeding wetland habitat for both game and off-target species. Birds SA has adopted a policy that opposes hunting of native species, largely due to concerns over animal welfare and inadequate monitoring of game species.

### **c. Trapping**

The trapping and trafficking of birds and eggs occur on an international scale and focus on the rarest species, such as black-cockatoos. At the local level some species have been trapped for the aviculture trade. In general, however, aviculture (the keeping of birds in cages and aviaries) is positive for bird conservation because it provides opportunities for people to enjoy and study birds at close range. Good co-operation between aviculture associations and wildlife authorities has been achieved but relies upon properly funded and skilled enforcement staff authorised under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. This Act controls

the keeping of native species but does not apply to exotics. The keeping of exotics has several inherent threats to native species, namely competition or hybridisation with natives by escapees, and introduction of diseases and parasites.

Better controls on the keeping and sale of exotic birds in South Australia are required.

### **d. Recreation**

Increased leisure time has led to inadvertent impacts on birdlife. Birds that feed or nest on the ground (e.g. Hooded Plover and Fairy Tern on beaches, White-bellied Sea-eagle on cliffs) are disturbed by increasing numbers of walkers, dogs, off-road vehicles, boats etc. Disturbance reduces the time that birds are able to feed and incubate.

Increased recreation promoted in our national parks needs to be re-assessed so that park assets, such as birds and native vegetation are not degraded.

### **e. Accidents**

Every year large numbers of birds are killed or injured on our roads. This problem is exacerbated because our road reserves support the only remnant native vegetation in many districts.

Collisions with windfarm turbines and powerlines have also been documented as an important conservation issue overseas, particular with raptors. Unfortunately monitoring and reporting is not obligatory in South Australia, so the extent of the problem here is unknown. Planning authorities should therefore require that the effects of windfarms and other developments on birds are properly studied.

Incidental drowning of seabirds by long-line fishing methods has caused recent dramatic declines in albatross populations.

### **f. Collecting for scientific purposes**

Conservation is based on the correct identification and thorough understanding of the biology of a species. Collecting specimens may occasionally be needed as part of a scientific study, and requires a permit under the National Parks and

Wildlife Act. Specimens collected must be lodged at an institution such as the South Australian Museum, where they are available for study by researchers throughout the world.

Because our knowledge of taxonomy is relatively thorough, few birds are now collected for scientific purposes. However in order to supplement collections, members are encouraged to retrieve any dead birds they may find and forward them, with details (date, locality etc.), to the South Australian Museum. It is surprising how many common species are poorly represented.

### **g. Disease**

Because of its isolation and strict quarantine regulations, Australia has avoided many serious diseases that affect wildlife overseas (e.g. rabies). Some diseases and parasites found in birds in captivity, both native and exotic, have the potential to affect wild birds.

### **g. Pollution**

Birds may be impacted through human use of chemicals that pollute the natural environment. Fortunately Australia has escaped many of the pollutants that have impacted on birds in other countries. For example, use of DDT pesticides up to the 1980s caused thinning of eggshells in raptors, thus reducing nesting success. Since DDT pesticides were banned in Australia chemical pollution is no longer a significant issue, although ongoing monitoring is needed to detect future problems that may arise with other agricultural chemicals.

Extensive industrial use and limited water circulation within the South Australian gulfs renders them susceptible to the accumulation of oil and other pollutants. Spills in the gulfs have the potential to kill large numbers of migratory and other waterbirds that feed on the intertidal flats or breed in the surrounding mangroves. It is therefore important that a government strategy is developed and, in the event of a spill, properly trained and skilled personnel are on hand.

Marine environments are also accumulating plastics that are frequently ingested by seabirds.

## ***Birds SA Draft Conservation Statement (cont)***

Their impact on seabird numbers is uncertain and requires further research.

### **h. Climate change**

Climate change resulting from carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere has become a global issue over the last thirty years. Although the potential impacts on local climate and native vegetation are unclear, wildlife populations isolated within wetter areas have been identified as most at risk. In South Australia this applies to birds isolated within native vegetation in the Mount Lofty Ranges, parts of the Flinders Ranges and on southern Eyre Peninsula.

Wildlife corridors have been proposed to mitigate loss of species, although it is likely that habitats will continue to be severely degraded unless atmospheric carbon dioxide is significantly reduced.

### **SUMMARY**

South Australia is losing much of its bird diversity, particularly among land birds in the agricultural regions. Our national parks have proven inadequate to conserve our birds and government funding for our wildlife agencies continues to decline. The Adelaide-Mount Lofty Ranges region has the worst avian extinction record of any region in Australia, with no signs of improvement in the near future. We owe it to our future members and the public generally to reverse this trend and provide the same opportunity to gain pleasure from watching our birdlife as we have enjoyed.

Habitat loss and degradation remain the greatest conservation issues facing our birdlife. Bird populations much reduced by loss and degradation of habitat are further at risk from secondary factors such as introduced predators, competition with new species, etc.

It is our responsibility to ensure that governments adequately fund our National Parks and Wildlife agencies, and that their conservation policies are based on facts rather than emotion. Our Conservation Subcommittee spends a great deal of time lobbying governments on issues

such as vegetation clearance, threatened species, hunting etc. and associated legislation that is based on rigorous scientific data on our birds. Members are kept informed of these activities through the Newsletter, but it is difficult to ensure that the general public is aware of or understands the need for effective wildlife legislation. It is all very well to have wildlife conservation legislation, but it is useless unless it is properly administered. Most of our members are well aware of environmental issues. Hopefully, with the aid of this document, they will share their knowledge with the less well informed.

Local councils are increasingly involved with land management decisions, so conservation effort at this level from associations such as Birds SA can also play an important part. Local councillors are often ignorant of environmental issues rather than unsympathetic. They need information presented factually and logically to aid them in making decisions.

Birds SA members can assist our conservation aims by collecting, recording and publishing information on all aspects of bird biology such as diet, nesting and habitat use. These can either be part of organised projects (e.g. Newsletter bird notes, Adelaide region bird atlas) or individual studies. The *South Australian Ornithologist* provides a medium for publishing research, and the Committee provides encouragement and support to members to report their studies.

Non-government agencies are also becoming increasingly involved in land conservation, and Birds SA has recently provided significant funds to help

purchase land at Buckland Park. It anticipates becoming more actively involved in such management in future.

### **Birds SA Committee**

### **Reference:**

Ford, H. A. & Howe, R. W. (1980). The future of birds in the Mount Lofty Ranges. *South Australian Ornithologist* **28**, 85-89.

### **N.B.**

***The Committee is seeking written comments on this draft document from all members of the Association.***

***Email your comments to [birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au) or post them to the President at the Association's address, which is on page 1 of this Newsletter.***



**Magpie-lark after Bath  
photographed by Greg Blackman  
at Ingle Farm on 20/12/2014**



# Past General Meetings

## FRIDAY OCTOBER 31

John Hatch introduced John Spiers, who talked about the African Penguin.

The African, or Jackass, Penguin was first named by Linnaeus as *Diomedea demersa* in 1758. Today it is one of four species in the genus *Spheniscus* — African Penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), Humbolt Penguin (*Spheniscus humboldti*), Magellanic Penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) and Galapagos Penguin (*Spheniscus mendiculus*).

Compared to the Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) the African Penguin is 55-65cm in length (LP = 40-45cm) and weighs 2.9-3.5kg (LP = 0.5-2.1kg). The sexes are alike but the male is larger in both species.

The African Penguin is an endangered species. In 1930 there was an estimated 1,000,000 breeding pairs. This number had decreased to 141,000 breeding pairs in 1956; 69,000 in 1980; 57,000 in 2005 and 22,683 in 2012.

The breeding season extends from January to August with the peak during April and May. The birds spend at least 35 days at sea pre-moult feeding from September to November. Moulting takes place between November and December including three weeks on land. Post-moult feeding takes place from December to February. African Penguins have a clutch size of 1-3 with an incubation period of 38-42 days. Fledging time is 64-86 days for a single chick and 64-105 days for 2 chicks. The young retain their downy plumage for 2-3 months and reach sexual maturity in 4-6 years. The maximum known longevity in the wild is 27 years 4 months.

Threats to African Penguins include human predation and egg collecting, guano collecting, competition for fish from humans, predation and competition for nest sites from the Cape Fur Seal and oil pollution. On Dassen Island alone just under 50% of the 300,000 eggs laid were collected. Egg collection stopped as recently as 1969. The main prey species for the penguins used to be

Sardine, South African Anchovy and Chokka Squid, but catches of all these species have declined due to overfishing. Now the penguins have to rely on junk food, such as Bearded Goby.

The South African National Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) was started in 1968 following the grounding of the *Essen Esso* off Cape Point and subsequent oil spill. It has been built up over four decades to a world-class facility and the recognised leader in treating oil-damaged birds. SANCCOB is a charity and relies on public donations and corporate sponsorship.

On 23 June 2000 the bulk ore carrier *MV Treasure* sank off western South Africa between Dassen and Robben Islands, which had, respectively, the largest and third largest colonies of African Penguins. 19,506 penguins were caught and relocated to Port Elizabeth, 800km to the east, to remove them from waters affected by the oil. Most of the relocated birds had returned to their islands by 31 July. 18,841 oiled adult penguins were cleaned by SANCCOB and 3350 chicks were collected for artificial rearing. Of all the penguins caught, less than 10% died within the first month. An estimated 4,000 chicks died before rescue. Evaluation of long-term effects showed that life expectancy was good but subsequent breeding success was badly affected. Other seabirds affected by this spill were Bank Cormorant, Cape Cormorant, Crowned Cormorant, White-breasted Cormorant, Kelp Gull, Hartlaub's Gull and Greater Crested Tern.

As well as rescuing birds, SANCCOB is responsible for the African Penguin Chick Bolstering Project; works closely with the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology and the Animal Demography Unit; education, advocacy, fundraising and training. Concluding his talk John posed the following questions that are relevant to Australia:

- Have we taken the continued existence of our Little Penguins too much for granted?
- How will we cope if there is a major oil spill affecting, say Phillip Island?

## FRIDAY NOVEMBER 28 — MEMBERS' NIGHT

John Hatch said that it was good to see so many members there and there was a motley crew of speakers for Members' Night.

Speakers and their topics for the night were:

Robert Rowland — Bird Flu

Merilyn Browne — Bellbirds

Ann Houghton — Christmas Island Bird Week 2014

Rodney Attwood — The Hoopoe

### Dr. Robert Rowland presented a talk on Bird Flu.

Influenza viruses infect many species e.g. humans, wild birds, ducks, chickens, pigs, horses, cats and ferrets. Human flu is highly infectious and is aerosol spread. Human flu can be associated with fever, aches and pains or urti. Most people recover but complications are more common in very young or very old people. The flu virus is an orthomyxovirus. Simply it is an envelope with a central core of RNA (ribonucleic acid). This envelope contains the surface antigens haemagglutinin and neuraminidase.

Bird Flu is usually a gastrointestinal illness in birds. It may be severe but often low grade. Birds with mild infection can fly and migrating birds shed the virus. Birds appear healthy enough for human consumption. In 2005 a major outbreak occurred at Lake Qinghai in central China where over six thousand birds died. Infected birds migrated to India, Egypt and Europe. In the period 2003-2013 bird flu H5N1 was diagnosed in 648 humans with 394 deaths in 15 countries.

Wild water birds such as ducks and other birds are natural reservoirs of bird flu, which spreads to domestic birds. Humans acquire bird flu from blood, feathers and faeces of infected

# Past General Meetings (cont)

birds. Live bird markets have a high potential for distributing the virus. Bird flu cases show a low human to human infectivity but carry a high mortality e.g. there was a 33% mortality in the 1997 Hong Kong flu H3N9 outbreak.

Flu viruses continually undergo minor changes where the RNA virus replication is not accurate. This is the reason why a new flu shot is required annually. The process is known as antigenic drift.

Pigs are susceptible to both human flu and bird flu virus. In pigs a human virus strand can acquire a bird flu segment = antigenic shift/re-assortment. The behavior of this new variant is unknown. The main concern is that this new virus is highly infectious by aerosol spread with the high mortality in humans due to bird flu.

H1N1 was the commonest cause of human bird flu in 2009. It was the result of re-assortment of human/pig/bird strains. It was dubbed the Swine Flu Pandemic.

In 2013 144 cases and 46 deaths resulted from the H7N9 virus (Hong Kong Bird Flu). It originated in live bird markets. There were no sustained human to human transmissions.

In 1918 the Influenza Pandemic killed 50 million people. Young adults were affected and it had a higher mortality rate than the 2.5% caused by typical flu. Rapid death was due to cytokine storm. This flu virus has only been recently characterised using tissues retrieved from flu victims buried in permafrost since 1918, tissues from formalin fixed tissues from museum bird specimens collected in 1918 and samples taken from Sir Mark Sykes, a diplomat and politician who died of flu in 1919 after his lead coffin had been exhumed. The test results revealed that the 1918 flu virus probably came from American domestic and wild birds (Nature, February 2014). Other studies have suggested swine origin or possibly bird derived.

Laboratory research in the Netherlands involved modifying the lethal bird flu virus H5N1 making the virus infectious between ferrets breathing the same air. There are risks to the community from this research and the escape of organisms from the laboratory. In 2014 both H5N1 and anthrax escaped from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. In October 2014 the US Government temporarily stopped funding for new research that makes certain viruses more deadly or more transmissible.

## **Merilyn Browne's topic was "Bellbirds"**

Her talk arose after she discovered all the different species around the world called "bellbirds". Merilyn showed photos of both sexes, together with distribution maps of each species as well as playing their calls.

The Bellbird is found on all three islands (North, South and Stewart) of New Zealand. It is a member of the Honeyeater family (*Meliphagidae*) as is the Bell Miner from eastern Australia (Victoria to southern Queensland). The Crested Bellbird is found throughout inland Australia. The last group of "bellbirds" is in the genus *Procnia* (*Cotingidae*) from South and Central America. There are four species – Bare-throated, Bearded, Three-wattled and White Bellbird. The male Bearded Bellbird is unmistakable with its "beard" protruding from under its bill. The Three-wattled Bellbird possesses three wattles, while the White Bellbird has a single wattle. Merilyn's talk concluded with a video of the Three-wattled Bellbird.

## **Ann Houghton talked about Christmas Island Bird Week, September 2014**

Ann talked about and showed photos of birds seen on both Christmas Island and on Cocos (Keeling) Islands). Participants were shown how Dr. Janos Hennicke bands Abbott's Boobies and fits them with G.P.S. loggers and depth recorders. He initiated the Christmas Island

Seabird Project in 2004 to investigate the biology and ecology of several highly threatened seabird species of Christmas Island (CI) in the eastern Indian Ocean: Christmas Island Frigatebird, Abbott's Booby and Red-tailed Tropicbird. Along with her photographs Ann explained how Mark Holdsworth used a teddy bear to catch the Christmas Island Goshawk.

As part of her talk Ann showed photographs of Abbott's Booby, Christmas Island Goshawk, Red-tailed Tropicbird, Gold Bosunbird (White-tailed Tropicbird), Red-footed Booby, Christmas Island Thrush, Brown Booby, Frigatebird, Christmas Island Imperial Pigeon. From Cocos she showed photos of the Green Jungle fowl, White-breasted Waterhen, White Tern, and Reef Egret.

Bridges have been built across roads for the Red Crab Migration. As well as birds there was a photo of a Yellow Cricket and the rare Blue-tailed Skink.

## **Rodney Attwood gave a short talk about the European Hoopoe and his encounters with it.**

His first encounter with the Hoopoe was in a book "Bird book for the pocket", treating all the major British species, with coloured plates to scale and an illustrated chapter on eggs by Edmund Sandars given to him by an uncle when he was young.

There have been over 20 sightings in England and there are two records from NW Australia. He has seen the Hoopoe in France, South Africa and India. His most recent sighting was in Montenegro. The Hoopoe is very distinctive in flight.

In his Letter XI, The Natural History of Selborne, Gilbert White details his sighting of the Hoopoe in 1767.

# Future General Meetings/Past Excursions

## FUTURE GENERAL MEETINGS

General meetings are held in the Charles Hawker building of the Waite Institute on Waite Road Urrbrae on the last Friday of every month except December, public holidays or prior to a long weekend.

The doors are opened at 7pm and meetings start at 7.45pm.

### FRIDAY MARCH 27

Kieren Mitchell: Kiwi Origins and Taxonomy.

### FRIDAY APRIL 24

#### A.G.M.

Ian Falkenberg: Persecution of Wildlife including Birds.

## AGM AGENDA

The agenda for the Annual General Meeting on Friday 24 April 2015 is:

1. Apologies
2. Confirmation of the minutes of the AGM held on 2 May 2014
3. Presentation of the Annual Report for 2014.
4. Presentation of the Financial Report for 2014.
5. Election of the Management Committee for 2015/2016  
President  
Two Vice Presidents  
Secretary  
Assistant Secretary  
Treasurer  
Field Program Coordinator  
Newsletter Editor  
Journal Editor  
Bird Records Secretary  
Membership Officer and  
Not fewer than three nor more than five ordinary Committee Members
6. Appointment of an auditor
7. Any other business of which notice in writing has been given by two members at a preceding meeting

### FRIDAY MAY 29

Marina Louter: Thick-billed Grasswren Nesting Biology in Zones of Human Impact.

## FRIDAY JUNE 26

### MEMBERS' NIGHT.

Please submit offers to present short talks and other items to John Hatch or the new organiser before mid-June so that the whole programme can be arranged. These nights have proved very popular so keep supporting them with your contributions.

**John Hatch.**

## PAST EXCURSIONS

### Clements Gap Conservation Park 2 November

The weather was kind to the five members who attended, with cool to warm breezes and sunshine. Flies were about but not bothersome enough for the birders to wear fly nets. Numerous trees were in bloom, as were some bushes with berries and three Quondong trees with ripe fruit. Dependent young of Dusky Woodswallows, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrikes and Spotted Pardalotes were included in the 33 bird species that we saw.

The park is adjacent to the Soldiers' Memorial Methodist Church and an outdoor memorial to the Clements Gap School that celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 15th October 1979. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, Fort Devens, Massachusetts USA used the school en-route to Brisbane from Adelaide between May and July 1942. The division continued on to New Guinea on 5th September 1942. The presence of American troops and the families of old scholars are remembered in and around the two shelters with ageing historic documents and numerous and quirky pieces of memorabilia.

**Liz Carpenter**

### Brown's Road, Monarto 15 November

A mild and overcast morning saw 24 members assemble for the Brown's Road Field Trip. The group split into several sub-groups, giving a good coverage of the park. Whilst, at times, it seemed that birds were a bit thin on the ground the bird call, conducted with his usual wit and

charm by Trevor Cowie, resulted in 56 species being recorded.

Breeding activity was recorded for four species: Rufous Whistler had a nest with young and Common Starling, Restless Flycatcher and White-winged Chough were all observed to have active nests. One juvenile Dusky Woodswallow was also seen.

An unusual sighting for the park was the flyover of seven Straw-necked Ibis. Red Wattlebird was the most commonly recorded species (50) followed by New Holland Honeyeater and White-winged Chough (40 of each species). The final tally included four species of raptor, seven of cockatoos and parrots and six species of honeyeater. Everyone enjoyed a pleasant morning. The weather remained fine apart from about ten drops of rain just as the bird call was about to commence.

**Brian Walker**

### Kaiser Stuhl Conservation Park 20 November

Eighteen members met at the gate on a cool, drizzly morning. The drizzle developed into light rain during the short walk and when we got back to the cars at about 11.00am some of the group were damper than they had been at the beginning.

The low level of light made observations difficult, and the colours of even the most eye-catching birds such as Rainbow Bee-eaters were difficult to distinguish. We saw 32 species altogether, but overall numbers were low. Crimson Rosella, New Holland Honeyeater, Buff-rumped Thornbill, Superb Fairy-wren, Tree Martin and White-naped Honeyeater were the most common species. Nothing out of the ordinary was seen and the highlight was the three Rainbow Bee-eaters. No raptors were seen and no breeding activity was evident.

We then moved to the Bethany picnic spot where we had lunch and made our bird call. By this time it was raining quite heavily and it was decided not to proceed to the Tanunda sewerage ponds, which is customary after a visit to Kaiser Stuhl.

**Rod Tetlow**

# Past Excursions (cont)

## **Horsnell Gully Conservation Park 30 November**

Much of the 4km walk was in the shade of the woods and therefore comfortable. A regular hiker/birder in the area stopped to chat with the group and suggested which path to take — not the steep climb! We discovered a very pleasant shady spot for lunch, next to the car park. It also provided good birding. While there was no trip leader the eight members present (including one new and a first timer for an outing) all pitched in and we enjoyed a pleasant morning. We saw 22 species altogether.

**Dorothy Fitzgerald**

## **Dry Creek Salt Fields 13 December**

There was a good high tide and the weather was warm with only a light wind. A total of 21 cars was rationalised down to ten for the drive into the salt field area, but it was still rather awkward for the 26 members in attendance. Brown Quail was I think the best bird of the 71 species observed. Such are the salt fields now that the waders' count was rather poor in both species and numbers.

**John Hatch**

## **Nurragi Conservation Reserve 18 December**

This linear 65ha conservation reserve was once the route of the Sandergrove to Milang railway, which operated between 1884 and 1970. After the closure of the railway, local volunteers lobbied for it to be made a reserve and a Friends Group in partnership with the National Trust now manages it.

Eight members and friends attended the excursion on a day of variable weather. We set off from the meeting place on Nurragi Road in a south-easterly direction and walked along the narrow corridor of vegetation, which was very different to the bush block type areas we usually visit. However, it was interesting to see how this sort of corridor acts as a conduit for birds and animals (including ferals, alas) in a landscape

otherwise largely cleared for agriculture.

We saw 2 raptors, a Brown Falcon and a Brown Goshawk and felt that they were probably 'regulars' insofar as the narrow corridor was surely a good place to lurk looking for birds and animals passing along or sheltering within it. We also saw six honeyeater species: New Holland, Spiny-cheeked, Singing, Brown-headed, White-plumed and Red Wattlebird.

Willie-wagtails patrolled the fence lines, Common Bronzewing whirred away as we approached and White-browed Babblers flitted about in the bushes. Superb Fairy-wrens were also busy in the undergrowth as were Silvereyes, Grey Fantails and Yellow-rumped Thornbills. In the adjacent more open areas, we saw Galahs and, near the starting point, several Elegant Parrots. The nearby paddocks seemed to be alive with the calls of Skylarks and there were at least two families of Magpies poking around on the stubble. A Straw-necked Ibis and a Black-faced Cuckoo shrike were seen flying overhead.

We had to stop and shelter from the rain a couple of times as squalls passed over but we were relatively fortunate, given the louring sky, and fully expected to get much wetter than we did. However, we decided not to push our luck and went to Milang for lunch where we were able to find shelter from passing showers and have a look at the Lake. The bird count for the day was 28 species.

**Ali Ben Kahn**

## **Thompson Beach 10 January**

Sometimes there is a silver lining! The prior cancellation of the proposed trip to the Dry Creek Salt fields was timely, as it would have been automatically cancelled due to the rain.

With the long-range forecast of heavy rain, it was pleasing that 10 members had looked at the updated forecast and arrived for the outing. I had almost expected to be the sole person and given that I had left my

tripod at home, I would have had a challenging time by myself.

There were only a few light showers, not enough to deter us from the survey. It was disappointing not to see any Knots, Godwits or Eastern Curlews, but several members were delighted with their first sightings of three Lesser Sand Plovers.

Only ten species of shorebirds were observed for the morning with Banded Stilt being the most common (200). Numbers of Red-necked Stint (50) and Red-capped Plover (30) were surprisingly low, although it was nice to see 30 Ruddy Turnstones and 10 Grey Plovers.

The impact of the weather probably reduced the overall species count to 39, and few species were present in large numbers. Nevertheless the members taking part enjoyed a pleasant morning.

**Brian Walker**

## **Tolderol Game Reserve 22 January**

This reserve of approximately 450ha borders the western shores of Lake Alexandrina, which is formed by the River Murray as it spreads out before reaching the sea. Water is again being pumped into the series of shallow lagoons excavated in the low swampy samphire flats of Tolderol Point. These lagoons provide a wonderful habitat for a variety of bird species. Bulrushes follow the waterways and shrubs of lignum form a tangled haven for Grassbirds, Cisticolas and Reed Warblers.

A total of 49 species were seen including: Baillon's Crake; Marsh Sandpiper and Curlew Sandpiper; The most abundant species included: Whiskered Tern (600); Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (400); Common Starling (300); Black-winged Stilt (200); Glossy Ibis (70); Black Swan (50) and White-fronted Chat (40). The variety of raptor species included: Black-shouldered Kite, Swamp Harrier, Whistling Kite, Nankeen Kestrel, Brown Falcon and Australian Hobby. Elegant Parrots provided fly-bys throughout the morning to distract some members

# Past Excursions (cont)/Future Excursions

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from the fluttering Superb Fairy-wrens.

It was a beautiful sunny day for the 32 members present. The temperature remained in the mid to high 20s. We all express our thanks to the experienced Peter Gower for leading the group.

**Lynton Huxley**

## Whites Road Wetlands

### 1 February

On a mild and overcast morning, it was pleasing that 32 members and guests assembled for the outing to Whites Road Wetlands. The weather remained overcast and fine for the duration of the outing. Following heavy rains in January the ponds were all at fairly high levels and this would have had an impact on the presence of several species as no observer located any crakes. Nevertheless, a diligent effort by all resulted in the recording of 57 species for the morning.

The high water levels had provided a haven for Chestnut Teal, with 150 being recorded. Smaller numbers of Grey Teal, Hardhead, Pacific Black Duck and Maned Duck were also recorded. With only two Royal Spoonbills recorded this species was well down on numbers compared to recent sightings. Raptors, although not in high numbers, included Collared Sparrowhawk, Brown Goshawk, Whistling Kite, Nankeen Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon.

Only three species of shorebirds were present — Black-winged Stilt, Black-fronted Dotterel and Masked Lapwing. Surprisingly only a single Silver Gull was sighted. Six species of cockatoo and parrot were recorded with only Galah being in significant numbers (24 individuals). A small number of members saw a single Sacred Kingfisher.

Although 20 Superb Fairy-wrens were recorded we did not see any White-winged Fairy-wrens although this is a usual species for this location. Six species of honeyeater were recorded with Little Wattlebirds giving a wonderful display when hawking insects over one pond.

Both Fairy and Tree Martins were recorded in similar numbers with

only a small number of Welcome Swallows.

Overall, it was a very rewarding outing and I am sure that this will not be the last visit to the site for some that had not previously visited it.

**Brian Walker**

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## FUTURE EXCURSIONS

**Contact:** Lynton Huxley

Field Trip Co-ordinator

**Phone:** 0498 466 092 or 08 7009 5038

**Email:** fieldtrips@birdssa.asn.au or huxley@adam.com.au

**If you are prepared to lead one or more of the trips listed below, please will you notify the Field Trip Coordinator (FTC) before the date/s of those trip/s. Your leadership will enhance the experience of members participating in the trip/s and assist the FTC with updating our extensive records of past excursions. On some occasions, it may be necessary for members attending a field trip to appoint a leader to guide the group and a scribe to write a report of the excursion. The report, submitted to the FTC, must include the number of attendees, birds seen or heard, the weather and any other interesting events on the day. Both leadership and scribe duties can be shared.**

**HOT WEATHER PROTOCOL – Members are reminded of the following summer protocol: if a fire ban is in effect or the temperature is 36C or above in the area of a scheduled walk, the walk is automatically cancelled. This will not affect trips for Laratinga-type sites in towns. These excursions may proceed.**

**Information including Google Map, GPS location details and a bird species list for each excursion site is available from the Birds SA website (see Go Birding).**

**Sunday, 1 March: Montacute Conservation Park (MLR) (20km)**

Meet at the entrance to the park at the end of Valley Road, Montacute at 8.30am

**Saturday and Sunday, 14-15 March: ‘Wyndgate’, Hindmarsh Island bird survey.**

Meet on Saturday at 9.00am on the corner of Randell and Semaschko Roads, Hindmarsh Island. If you plan to arrive later that day or on Sunday, please proceed to the homestead off Denver Road.

The South Australian Government with help from the National Reserve System purchased ‘Wyndgate’ a property of 1,081 hectares in 2001. The property takes in most of the southeast part of Hindmarsh Island (almost 25% of the total area) and was purchased to preserve the summer feeding areas for Cape Barren Geese. The property was previously cropped and grazed. Thousands of trees and shrubs have since been planted. Cattle are still grazed to control the grasslands.

‘Wyndgate’ is not open to the public and this will be an opportunity to survey the birds of the area. Surveys during autumn, winter and spring are proposed for 2015 to provide a baseline of the birds in the area.

The first survey will take place on 14-15 March 2015. Camping will be allowed and the use of the kitchen, toilets and showers in the ‘Wyndgate’ homestead. Thanks to Stuart Hicks, Senior Ranger/District Officer, Ranges to River District, Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin for allowing access for Birds SA to ‘Wyndgate’.

**Thursday, 19 March: Magazine Road Wetlands, Dry Creek (AP) 10km.**

Meet in the Car park area at 8.30am. If you are travelling northwards on South Road, continue onto Salisbury Highway heading east. The road bends to the north and there is one road off to the left. This is Magazine Rd. From the city, take Port Wakefield Road north, turning left up onto the Salisbury Highway heading to Port Adelaide. Once you are on the Salisbury Highway, you need to

# Future Excursions (cont)/Bird Records

move over to the right hand lane so you are ready to turn right into Magazine Road Wetlands.

**Sunday, 29 March: Private bushland property of Chris and John Boland near Murray Bridge approx. 76 km southeast of Adelaide.**

At the first set of lights into Murray Bridge, turn left into Maurice Road and travel 4km until the end of the bitumen. Go in the gate on the left and follow the track to the car park area. Meet at 8.30am.

**Easter Campout — Friday, 3 to Monday, 6 April** (*I am awaiting confirmation of availability from the property owners*). Information on the campout will be provided ASAP via email newsletter.

**Saturday, 11 April: Ridley Conservation Park (MM) (126km)**

Head towards Swan Reach via Sedan, turning right to-wards Mannum at the ETSA Substation (just prior to where the road starts dipping down to the river). Travel along this road about 5km. Meet at 8.30am at the northern end of the CP, which starts on the right.

**Thursday, 16 April: Kenneth Stirling (Wotton Scrub) Conservation Park & Mt George Conservation Park (MLR) (27km)** Meet at 8.30am. Take the SE Freeway and leave it at the Bridgewater exit. Turn left towards Carey Gully, travel about 3km and turn right into Gum Flat Road. Travel about 1.6km to gate 2 on the right. We will move onto Mt George CP for Lunch.

**Sunday, 26 April: Deep Creek Conservation Park (Stringybark Camp) (MLR) (100km).** The easiest way to get there is to travel along Main South Road to Myponga, then onto Normanville, Second Valley, past the Rapid Bay turn off, until you reach the little settlement of Delamere. Immediately after the store at Delamere, turn left. This sealed

road leads to Victor Harbor, but the unsealed roads to Deep Creek Conservation Park and the camping grounds are clearly marked. Meet at the Stringybark camp area at 8.30am.

**Saturday, 16 May: Anstey Hill Conservation Park (MLR) (18km)** Meet at 8.30am at Gate 3 on Perseverance Road, Tea Tree Gully (approximately 0.8km from the North East Road end). After lunch, a visit to the nearby **Angove Conservation Park** has been planned. Access to Angove CP is via Bowen Road, Tee Tree Gully.

**Thursday, 21 May: Lowan Conservation Park (MM) (130km)** Travel to Mannum. Cross on the ferry and follow the road to Purnong. About 29km along this road is a crossroad (the left turn being to Bowhill). Meet at this cross road at 8.30am. The group will then head south for about 13km turning left at a multiple road junction.

**Sunday, 31 May: Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park (MLR) (46km)** Meet at 8.30am at the reserve entrance on Cox Road, opposite Aldinga Holiday Park.

## PORT AUGUSTA GROUP

See p18 for details of Port Augusta Group excursions.

## BIRD RECORDS

*Collated by Graham Carpenter*

*Records included here are of species listed as rarely observed or unrecorded in the regions listed in the Field List of the Birds of South Australia. Also included are interesting breeding or ecological notes, new records for a well-known locality or first of the season reports of migratory species.*

*Please send all reports to the Bird Records Secretary at [birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au) or phone 8297 5463.*

*Note that the list includes reports of rare or vagrant species to South Australia that may yet to have been submitted or formally accepted by the Birds SA Rarities Committee (SARC). Members are encouraged to submit records of rare and vagrant species in SA to the Committee (refer to list of species and information on the website).*

## BREEDING GROUNDS?

*In the Bird Notes of the August 2014 Newsletter I stated that no breeding colonies of the Great Egret were known near Adelaide. I have since been advised that 6 nests of Great Egrets were found in mangroves adjacent to a tidal channel near Outer Harbour by David Vincent on 25 Jan 1988 (Newsletter 125), 8 nests at Torrens Island on 15 Dec 1989 (David Vincent and Joan Paton, NL 133) and 13 nests at the same locality on 11 December 1990 (Bob Brown and David Vincent, NL 137). Eggshells gathered from beneath the latter colony were lodged at the SA Museum and confirmed as Great Egrets.*

*Little Egrets, Nankeen Night Herons and Little Pied Cormorants were also nesting in the same area.*

*Members are encouraged to visit the mangrove channels around Outer Harbour (accessible only by boat) during the summer period to determine if these colonies are still active.*

**Graham Carpenter**

# Bird Records (cont)

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## Brown Quail

1, 31/10/2014. Mount Gambier, Valley Lake, SE.

Bigg, W.

Several, 13/11/2014. Hansborough, River Light, MLR

Allen, J.

1 + 2 juv, 21/11/2014. Goolwa, Barrage Rd, MM.

Brooker, W.

2, 2/11/2014. Glencoe, Pasture Strip, SE.

Green, B.

1, 19/12/2014. Butcher's Gap CP, SE.

Johnstone, D.

Several, 23/12/2014. Rocks Reserve, 10 km E Balaklava, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

## Pink-eared Duck

1, 27/1/2015. Adelaide, Bonython Park, AP.

Burns, A.

*One reported at Rymill Park in May – June 2013.*

## Blue-billed Duck

6, 17/8/2014. Pt Macdonnell, opposite Woolwash Caravan Park, SE.

Haywood, B.

6, 4/10/2014. Bordertown Wetlands, SE.

Hunt, K.

8, 18/1/2015. Baroota Reservoir, FR. Pt Augusta Birders

## Freckled Duck

*Reports of large numbers in SE including:*

200, 17/8/2014. Pt. Macdonnell, opposite Woolwash Caravan Park, SE.

Haywood, B.

1020, 11/10/2014. Robe Sewage Works, SE.

Haywood, B. & Wilson, C.

## Spotted Nightjar

2, 2/8/2014. Mingbool, Dismal Swamp Rd, SE.

Bigg, W.

*Few reports from lower SE.*

## Sooty Oystercatcher

2, 11/1/2015. Port Arthur, YP. Not previously seen so far north in the gulf.

Taylor, P.W.

## Australasian Darter

1, 14/1/2015. Baroota Reservoir, FR. Pt. Augusta Birders

## White-necked Heron

1, 14/11/2014. 3km W Point Pass, LN.

Allen, J.

1, 14/11/2014. Ngapala, LN.

Allen, J.

1, 14/12/2014. Highland Valley, MLR.

Watkins, A.

## Eastern Reef Egret

1, 25/11/2014 to 28/1/2015. Black Point, YP.

Tiller, M.

## Australian Little Bittern

1, 30/10/2014. Paiwalla Wetlands, MM. Photographed with remote camera.

Koch, P.

## Glossy Ibis

58, 30/12/2014. Tolderol GR, MM. Winwood, S. & Moxon, M. *A large group, although up to 500 were reported from the Langhorne Creek area in the 1960s.*

## White-bellied Sea-eagle

1 immature, 4/9/2014. Globe Derby Park, White Rd Wetland, AP.

Carter, D.

1 immature, 23/10/2014. Beachport, Wooley Lake, SE.

Trudgen, W. & D.

1, 23/11/2014. Carickalinga, MLR. Photo provided.

Arthurs, B. per J. West

## Square-tailed Kite

*Single birds flying over at various sites in the western hills.*

1, 15/10/2014. Anstey Hill CP, MLR. Pascoe, E.

1, 23/11/2014. Hawthorndene, MLR. Schmidt, L.

1, Jan 2015. Morialta CP, MLR. Rogers, C.

## Black Falcon

1, 12/1/2015. Thompson Beach, AP. *Observed in same area were 7 Black-shouldered Kites, 4 Whistling Kites and 1 Swamp Harrier.*

Buckley, K.

## Lewin's Rail

6, 17/12/2014. Currency Creek Winery, MLR. Calling throughout reed-bed along Tookayerta Creek.

Jaensch, T.

## Baillon's Crake

1, 4/11/2014. Mallala, Light River, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

## Spotless Crake

Adult +3 juveniles, 12/1/2015. Second Valley creek, MLR.

Jaffer, G.

## Semipalmated Plover

1, 4/11/2014. Carpenter Rocks, Livingstone Bay, SE

Christie, M. & Vaughan, H.

*Subsequently seen by various observers from Livingstone Bay to Pelican Point until 2/12/2014.*

*A new record for South Australia, with previous reports from northern Australia, the first in 2010. Similar to Ringed and Little Ringed Plover, both of which have been reported from SA as vagrants.*

## Australian Painted Snipe

1, 2/12/2014. Globe Derby Park, White Rd Wetland, AP.

Brittain, R. & Diment, J.

## Pectoral Sandpiper

1, 28/11/2014. Greenfields Wetlands, Magazine Rd, AP.

Allen, J. & R.

Also on 30/11/2014. Brooker, W.

1, 7/12/2014. Goolwa, Barrage Rd, MM.

Stokes, M.

1, 22/12/2014. Goolwa, Beacon 19, MM.

Johnstone, D.

3, 1/12/2014, Magazine Road Wetlands, AP

Winwood, S., Moxon, M & Bates-Brownsword, C.

# Bird Records (cont)

## Long-toed Stint

1, 17/11/2014. Laratinga Wetlands, MLR. First record for area.

Williams, K.

3, 1/12/2014, Magazine Road Wetlands AP

Winwood, S., Moxon, M & Bates-Brownsword, C.

## Latham's Snipe

70, 3/9/2014. Robe, Fox Lake, SE.

Graff, P.

*A large group for this species. A flock of about 200 was reported near Milang, MM, in December 1982.*

## Eastern Curlew

3, 28/12/2014. Bald Hill Beach, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

1, 6/1/2015. Mawson Lakes, AP.

Turvey, D.

## Wood Sandpiper

1, 31/10/2014. Whyalla CP dam, EP.

Pascoe, E.

2, 25/1/2015. Balaklava Sewage Works, AP. Also one Marsh Sandpiper present.

Taylor, P.W.

## Terek Sandpiper

1, 31/12/2014. Goolwa Channel, MM.

Brooker, W.

## Little Corella

40, 26/9/2014. Eight Mile Creek, SE.

Young, G.

*This species has now been reported from all parts of southern SA.*

## Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

1, 27/11/2014. Dernancourt, AP.

Pyle, C.

A few groups, Nov 2014. St Peters, AP.

Bansemmer, B.

4, 17/12/2014. Black Forest, AP.

Carpenter, G.

*Reported from AP in November – December in recent years, generally flying back to the hills each evening.*

## Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo

12 immatures, 6/11/2014. Globe Derby Park, White Rd Wetland, AP.

Carter, D.

*A unusual grouping of immature birds, presumably flocking prior to following adults on migration.*

## White-throated Gerygone

1, 26/10/2014. Yahl, SE.

Davies, J.

## Blue-faced Honeyeater

Adult, Sept 2014, West Lakes, AP.

per Buckley, K.

*Previously reported in this area in Feb 2014.*

## Black-chinned Honeyeater

Pair+2 juveniles, 16/1/2015.

Hayborough, Mentone Rd, MLR.

Jaensch, T.

1 or 2, 24/1/2015. Willaston,

Robinson Rd, AP.

Dennis, T.

## New Holland Honeyeater

Several, 15/11/2014. Port Germein, LN.

Langdon, P.

*This species is common in gardens at Whyalla and Port Pirie but interestingly it does not occur at Port Augusta.*

## Crested Shrike-tit

1, 29/9/2014. Swanport Wetlands, MM.

Schmidt, L.

## Olive-backed Oriole

1, 16/1/2015. Lyndoch, Kings

Cutting Rd, MLR.

Dennis, T.

## Black-faced Woodswallow

1, 26/11/2014. Vale Park, Fife St, AP. Reported from same area in early 2014.

Buckley, K.

*Few other reports from AP.*

## Pied Butcherbird

Pair + immature, 21/12/2014. Marne River CP, MM.

Allen, J.

*See SA Ornithologist 35:52-56 for information on the southern spread of this species.*

## Grey Currawong

Adult +2 juveniles, 30/11/2014. Fullarton, Cremorne St, AP.

Horton, P.

*Several reports from the suburbs in recent years, although this is the first evidence of breeding.*

## Hooded Robin

Pair + juvenile, 2/11/2014.

Balaklava, 7km SW, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

## Bassian Thrush

1, 6/10/2014. Belair NP, Karka Pavillion, MLR.

Schmidt, L.

## Diamond Firetail

3, 7/12/2014. Halbury, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

*Now rarely reported from AP.*

## Common Greenfinch

Pair + 4 young, 23/11/2014. O'Halloran Hill RP, MLR.

Burns, A.

*This species has declined in the AP and MLR regions in recent years, with few records of nesting.*



**Sand Goanna,**  
photographed by Peter  
Pfeiffer at Lyrup flats,  
near Renmark on 17/01/15



# From the Library



598.2994 CAM  
Campbell, Ian  
Birds of Australia: a photographic guide  
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2104

Birds of Australia covers all 714 species of resident birds and regularly occurring migrants. It features more than 1,100 stunning color photos and includes facing-page species accounts, habitat descriptions, and distribution maps.

The text relies on the latest IOC taxonomy and the distribution maps incorporate the most current mapping data, making this the most up-to-date guide to Australian birds.



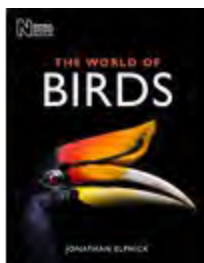
598.2995 PRA  
Pratt, Thane K  
Birds of New Guinea  
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014  
ISBN 9780691095639

This is the completely revised edition of the field guide to the birds of New Guinea. The world's largest tropical island, New Guinea boasts a spectacular avifauna characterized by cassowaries, megapodes, pigeons, parrots, cuckoos, kingfishers, and owlet-nightjars, as well as an exceptionally diverse assemblage of songbirds such as the iconic birds of paradise and bowerbirds. Birds of New Guinea covers all 780 bird species reported in the area, including 366 endemics. Expanding its coverage with 111 vibrant color plates — twice as many as the first edition, and the addition of 635 range maps, the book also contains updated species accounts with new information about identification, voice, habits, and range.



598.014 LED  
Lederer, Roger J.  
Latin for Bird Lovers: 3000 bird names explored and explained  
Portland, Oregon: Oregon Timber Press, 2014

Latin for Bird Lovers is an accessible, informative, and beautifully illustrated guide to the mysteries of ornithological Latin. It reveals the meaning, origin, and pronunciation of Latin binomials, helping readers to come to grips with the highly useful information that these names contain, and also to communicate more effectively with other birders. The book features 'Bird Profile' pages, which look in depth at specific genera. Its 'Great Ornithologist' spreads reveal the fascinating stories of the men and women who found and named many of the birds we love; its 'Latin in Action' feature boxes provide tips that will help readers apply the lore of Latin names to their own birding.



598 ELP  
Elphick, Johnathon  
The World of Birds  
London: The Natural History Museum, 2014  
ISBN 9780565092375

The World of Birds is a guide to every aspect of bird life and a complete survey of the world's orders and families of birds. The book begins by examining the evolution of birds since the age of the dinosaurs. It then explores in greater detail each of the significant elements of bird life: bird biology including anatomy, physiology, the brain and senses, plumage, calls and songs, flight techniques and styles, food and feeding, bird lifestyles and social relationships; breeding, growth and development, bird geography and habitats and migration

**BIRD WATCHING FIELD TRIPS OF THE BIRDLIFE AUSTRALIA  
CLUB, PORT AUGUSTA GROUP**

**PROGRAM MARCH TO MAY 2015**

<u>TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>MEET AT</u>
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> .	March 2015	-- Weroona Island,	-- Mambray Creek parking bay 7:30am
		Pt. Pirie Wetlands, Nelshaby reservoir	-- or Weroona Island info. Bay. 8:00am
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> .	\		
Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> .	April 2015	-- Bon Bon Station	-- Glendambo Pub 11:00am
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> .	/	( Camp out - Some accommodation available )	
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> .			
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> .	May 2015	-- Buckaringa Gorge	-- Quorn Pool 8:00am

Please bring Sturdy footwear, Hat, Sun protection, Morning tea, Lunch if staying longer and Binoculars.

For further information contact:

Peter - 86425723 or Greg - 86486630 or Bernie - 0419863834

**NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome the following new members, who have joined the Association in the past few months:

Mark, Alexandra & Lauren Ward	HAWTHORNDENE	Ben & Luke Barnes	GAWLER
Elen Shute	HAWTHORN	Peter Gordon Haines	WAIKERIE
Paul & Tanya Raynham	WALKLEY HEIGHTS	Robyn Denise Starr	WYNN VALE
Anna Dutkiewicz	HAWTHORNDENE	Matilda Wren Backhouse	MAGILL
John Selby	MOUNT BARKER	Noel Christophersen	NURIOOTPA
Marg Rowntree & Ron Lisle	McLAREN VALE		

If your name has inadvertently been omitted from this list, please contact our treasurer. His 'phone number is on p3.

**ERRATA**

The editor apologises for the following errors on p22 of the November 2014 Newsletter:

Photograph 12, the Citrine Wagtail, was taken by Kay Parkin.

On the last line of the page, replace the name Denny by Snell.

# Members' Photographs

## All at Sea

Kay Parkin took these photos at Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania, in August 2014.



White-headed Petrel



Blue Petrel

Kay Parkin took these photos at Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania, in August 2014.



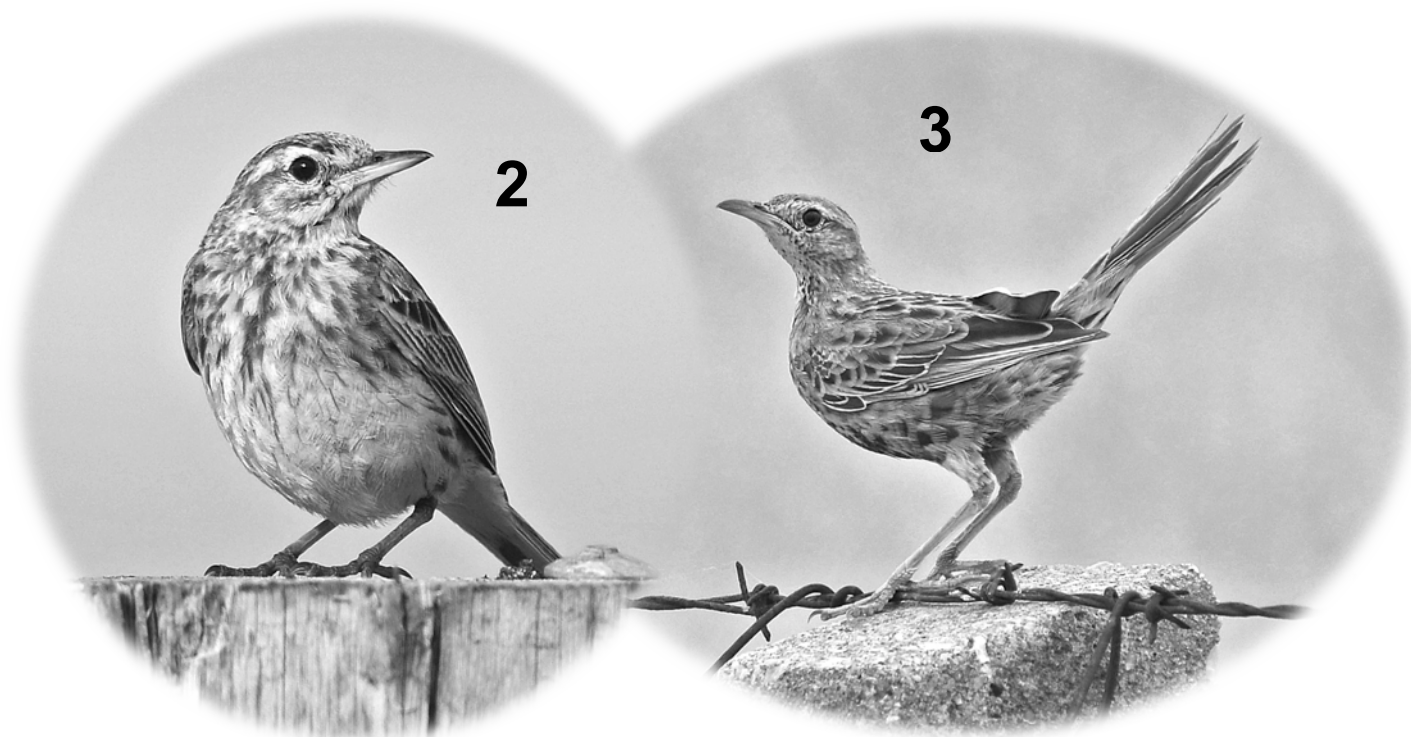
White-chinned Petrel

# Lunch for the Kids



**A parent of the bird shown on page 22**

# Two Grassland Birds



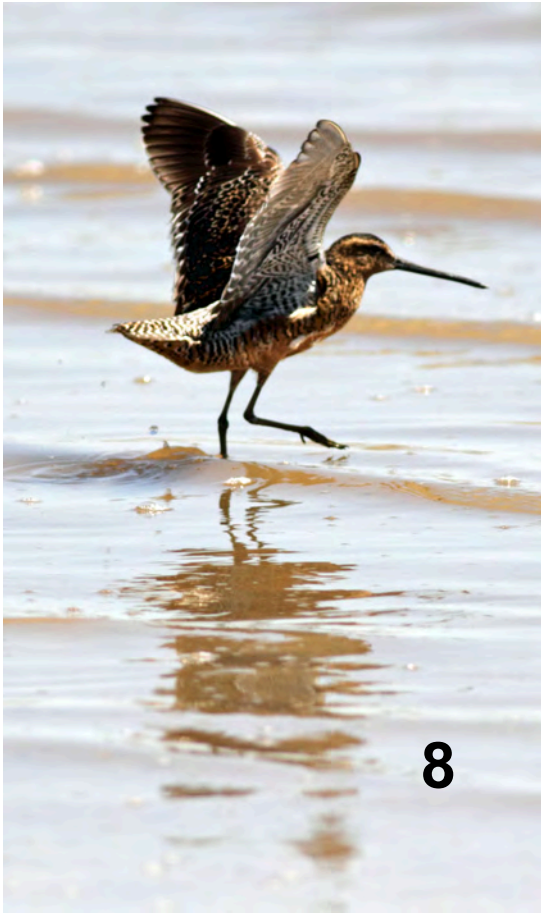
## Details of Members' Photographs

No:	Species	Photographer	Location	Date
1	Brown Goshawk	Rodney Attwood	Tea Tree Gully	January 2015
2	Australasian Pipit	Peter McKenzie	Robe	10/12/2014
3	Brown Songlark	Peter McKenzie	Tolderol	25/11/14
4	Grey Butcherbird	Peter Pfeiffer	Lyrup Flats	24/01/2015
5	Dusky Woodswallow	Peter Pfeiffer	Lyrup Flats	17/01/2015
6	Nankeen Night-Heron	William Brooker	Old Noarlunga	17/12/2014
7	Brown Goshawk	Rodney Attwood	Tea Tree Gully	January 2015
8	Long Billed Dowitcher	William Brooker	Kerang Lakes, Victoria	01/12/2014
9	Silver Gull & Pacific Gull	Greg Blackman	Petrel Cove, Victor Harbor	August 2014
10	Beach Stone-curlews	Peter McKenzie	Agnes Water, Qld.	09/06/2014
11	Magnificent Riflebird	Peter McKenzie	Morton, Qld.	26/10/2014
12	Latham's Snipe	Peter McKenzie	Robe	10/12/2014
13	European Goldfinch	Peter McKenzie	Apollo Bay, Victoria	05/12/2014
14	Pied Heron	Peter Mckenzie	Lotus Bird Lodge, QLD	21/10/2014

# The Younger Generation



# By the Water



# A Dash of Colour

