

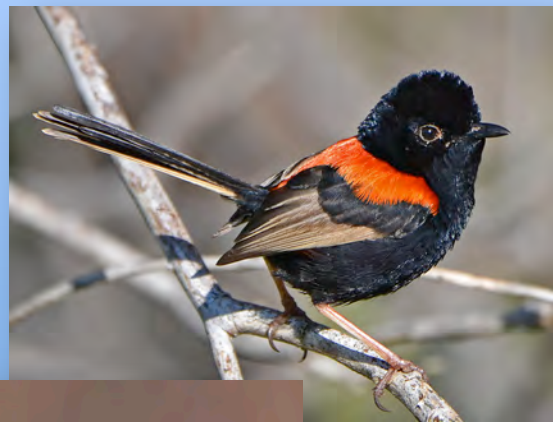
# Birds SA



# Newsletter

No 231

August 2014



**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.

# Letter-winged Kite Pair



Photographed by Paul Taylor near Port Wakefield on 08/06/2014  
See article on p5

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### CENTRE INSERT

SAOA HISTORICAL SERIES NUMBER 49,  
JOHN SUTTON PART 3

## SAOA COMMITTEE 2014 – 2015

President	David Paton	8344 8891
Vice President	John Hatch	8362 2820
Vice President	John Gitsham	0438900393
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Bird Record Secretary	Graham Carpenter	8297 5463
Membership Officer	<i>Vacant</i>	
Member	William Brooker	8381 8730
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.

Aug 31	Sunday	Excursion to Yankalilla	*****	
Sept 13	Saturday	Excursion to Laratinga Wetlands		
Sept 18	Thursday	Excursion to Charleston CP		
Sept 26	Friday	General Meeting		
Sept 28	Sunday	Excursion to Brookfield CP	*****	
October 3-6 Campout at Hiltaba Nature Reserve				
Oct 11	Saturday	Excursion to Scott Creek CP		
Oct 16	Thursday	Excursion to Onkaparinga Wetlands		
Oct 31	Friday	General Meeting	*****	
Nov 2	Sunday	Excursion to Clements Gap CP		
Nov 15	Saturday	Excursion to Browns Rd. Monarto		
Nov 20	Thursday	Excursion to Kaiser Stuhl CP		
Nov 28	Friday	General Meeting, Members' Night		
Nov 30	Sunday	Excursion to Horsnell Gully CP		

**Cover photo:** Superb Fairy-wren, photographed by Trevor Cox at Tumby Bay on 29/5/14, Red-backed Fairy-wren, photographed by Peter McKenzie at Gladstone, Queensland on 7/6/14, Variegated Fairy-wren photographed by Peter McKenzie at Broken Hill, NSW on 19/6/14

*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 12 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on p8.

## 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	Graham Bate	8270 3041
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 8555 2736  
Website: [www.Fleurieubirdwatchers.org](http://www.Fleurieubirdwatchers.org)

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

## 2014 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 November Newsletter is due by the October General Meeting (October 31). 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

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I should like to draw members' attention to five significant items: the SA bird atlas; ethical bird watching behaviour; strategic planning; Bird Week and the Australian Ornithological Congress.

## 1 The Bird Atlas

The bird atlas has been extended for a further six months and will stop on 31 December 2014. Please keep the records coming in. If you have the opportunity, please visit some of the poorly covered areas shown in the May Newsletter.

## 2 Ethical bird watching

While bird watching, we all need to behave in ways that minimise disturbing the birds. This is particularly true in the breeding season, and many birds have already started breeding. Ethical bird watching begins by first obtaining permission to be on a property and complying with any instructions from the owner or land manager. Once on the land and watching birds one should:

- (a) move away from any nests that are found;
- (b) refrain from playing recordings of bird calls to lure birds in;
- (c) limit the use of flash when taking pictures;
- (d) respond appropriately if the birds are giving distractive displays, by moving away and not returning to the same area;
- (e) not remove vegetation for a better view or photograph;
- (f) think about the consequences for the birds of passing on details of rarer species or species that are nesting.

All these actions are about protecting the habitats and welfare of individual birds.

## 3 Strategic Planning

Your Management Committee is in the initial stages of a strategic planning exercise that involves assessing what Birds SA is currently doing and discussing other activities that we could consider doing. The following provides a summary of this process to date. The first stage was to define a vision and the actions and

activities that would follow. Members are welcome to send me their comments.

### Vision statement

**With a large membership and a clear focus on birds, Birds SA should become the premier conservation NGO in South Australia, trusted by all as a source of information on South Australian birds and their conservation.**

### Actions that follow from the vision statement

1. Maintain and grow membership
2. Acquire and disseminate information
3. Engage in conservation programs

### Activities that will facilitate the above actions

#### *Maintain and grow membership*

- a. Provide opportunities for members to attend general meetings, field trips and field camps
- b. Provide bird and conservation news (newsletter, e-newsletter)
- c. Maintain an up-to-date web site
- d. Maintain a library and images for use by members
- e. Run and manage courses for new members
- f. Market Birds SA in the media
- g. Provide educational material and information when requested

#### *Acquire and disseminate information*

- a. Collect field observations from members and on field outings
- b. Provide summaries in the journal, meetings, newsletter
- c. Provide volunteers to other entities to conduct surveys
- d. Establish and maintain an effective data base that is up-to-date
- e. Publish the journal – focus on SA birds
- f. Replicate any dissemination of material electronically through web site

- g. Continue to fund research through the Conservation Fund

#### *Engage in conservation programs*

- h. Maintain a Conservation sub-committee
- i. Produce an annual conservation statement
- j. Provide support (financial, volunteer) for bird-related conservation and restoration works.

## 4 Bird Week 20-26 October 2014

National Bird Week is being resurrected by BirdLife Australia and runs from Monday 20 October to Sunday 26 October 2014. Birds SA is planning to launch a Conservation Statement during this week and there are likely to be other activities.

## 5 Australian Ornithological Congress (AOC) – advance notice

The biennial AOC will be in South Australia in 2015. The conference part of the AOC will be held at Flinders University from 2–4 December 2015 and field trips will run on 5-6 December. The conference usually attracts people, particularly research students, from around the country and New Zealand and there will be great diversity in the presentations on all aspects of bird life. Birds SA will be playing their part in the AOC by organising a variety of field trips to local and more distant places. Although this is 15 months away much of the planning for the field trips will be done in the next 3-4 months. Please contact me if you are interested in becoming involved.

### **David Paton**

david.paton@adelaide.edu.au

# Miscellaneous Items

## Raptors near Port Wakefield

*Paul Taylor sent the following records of his observations of the activities of raptors around Port Wakefield.*

On **6 May** 2014, I observed 7 Letter-winged Kites on a private property near Port Wakefield. A pair was breeding, with one bird sitting on a nest. Nine raptor species were within 500metres — 2 Black-shouldered Kites, 7 Letter-winged Kites, several Black Kites, 2 Whistling Kites, 1 Spotted Harrier, 2 Nankeen Kestrels, one Brown Falcon, 2 Black Falcons and one Peregrine Falcon. There was a mouse plague in the area at this time.

I returned on 25 May, to find that the same pair of Letter-winged Kites was still nesting.

On **8 June**, the 7 Letter-winged Kites were still present. The nesting pair had one bird sitting restlessly on the nest, perhaps indicating chicks. Its mate was perched nearby as usual, but appeared very thin. The other Letter-winged Kites frequently fly near the homestead, screeching loudly and chasing each other. The property owner said this occurs especially towards evening.

A pair of Black-shouldered Kites was twice observed mating. A pair of Spotted Harriers was present, with one bird sitting on a nest. 2 Nankeen Kestrels showed signs of breeding. A pair of Black Falcons was also present, with the larger female seen flying onto and perching on an old raven's nest. One Little Eagle flew overhead, but was quickly chased away by the harriers and Letter-winged Kites. Several Black Kites and a pair of Whistling Kites were still present.

Mouse numbers have reduced substantially, so this may affect breeding success of the Letter-winged Kites. There are, however, many rabbits nearby, including many small kittens, which would provide food for most of the raptors.

I visited the property again on **6 July** to find the nest of the breeding pair of Letter-winged Kites had been

dislodged and fallen about a metre into tree branches. This may have been due to storm damage as the nest was near the top of a tall eucalypt. The 2 kites were perched nearby and proceeded to mate. Following this, the female flew down to the ground, collected a stick and took it up to the battered nest. I saw 4 other Letter-winged Kites, including one sitting tight on another nest. Although not certain, I have suspicions about this incubating Letter-winged Kite. On my previous visit on 8 June, it appeared as if a male Black-shouldered Kite mated with a Letter-winged Kite. This was in the same tree as this Letter-winged Kite's nest. Today, a Black-shouldered Kite was perched close by in the same tree. I wonder if there have been any records of Letter-winged and Black-shouldered Kites interbreeding. As usual, other birds of prey were present. 2 pairs of Black Kites were nesting, Spotted Harriers were still on the nest, while Black Falcons were still present and possibly breeding. At least 5 Brown Falcons, a pair of kestrels, Whistling Kites and one Swamp Harrier flying past added considerable interest. The male often perches with tail cocked.

## Paul Taylor

*See p2 for Paul's photograph of the Letter-winged kite pair. Note the cocked tail of the male bird.*

## WHAT IS BOWERBIRD?

Have you wondered what this link on the Birds SA website is all about?

Information from the BowerBird web pages)

BowerBird is a social, web-based, biological sandpit – where everyone can come and play.

Add a sighting, see it be recognised, commented on and identified or that find that it contains unknown information about a species; and, then to see the sighting become part of a larger picture for a species or ecosystem and finally to have the sighting information integrated with national and international databases.

More formally, it is a socially networked, web-based, community, biodiversity workspace for Australia, although anyone is welcome to participate. We hope that it will be used by individuals, citizen scientists, amateur and professional science-based Organisations and Societies and Field Naturalists clubs. Its strength will be a single point of entry for biological communication and sharing.

The primary aims of BowerBird are:

To share and deliver biological sightings to a broad audience

To allow individuals, local, state or national groups to form, manage and develop their own workspaces

To encourage comment and forum discussions on sightings or topics

To aggregate a minimum dataset (eg. Name, location, latitude/longitude) that will allow sightings to be shared nationally and internationally (ALA, GBIF, EOL etc)

To become the community's eyes for Biosecurity that will detect or monitor invasive species.

We provide the workspace, the tools and the infrastructure to achieve these community and society based goals.

Have a look at the various projects and see the great photos people are uploading. For identification of almost anything in South Australia and elsewhere, visit the Bowerbird project site, WOMPA? — <http://bowerbird.org.au/projects/1>

## Brian Blaylock

## ERRATUM

The speaker at the March 28 General Meeting, who spoke about the birds of Sri Lanka, was Peter **Beer**, not Peter Bird, as given in the report of his presentation.



# Forum4Nature

**FORUM4NATURE – ADELAIDE  
26<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2014.**

**ROLLING BACK THE YEARS –  
REGRESSION IN  
COMMONWEALTH  
ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS.**

Forum4Nature was a meeting of conservation organisations held in Adelaide on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2014. The Conservation Council of South Australia set the meeting up. Its purpose was to discuss the changes that the Abbott Government has put in place since winning the election in September 2013. The keynote address, which is summarised here, was by Adjunct Professor Rob Fowler of the Law School, University of South Australia. Rob is a past president of the Conservation Council and a specialist in Environmental Law.

**A Brief Historical Perspective**

Over the past 40 years the Commonwealth has provided a level of leadership and objectivity in environmental assessment that is difficult to identify at the State level. The newly elected Commonwealth Government is intent on dismantling what has been erected behind the oft-repeated mantra of 'red tap/green tape' reduction. What is happening is not attracting the attention of ordinary people; but it is, in fact, a matter of the most profound importance and concern in terms of future protection of the Australian environment.

The Abbott Government argues that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures under the Environmental Protection and Bioiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act represent a duplication of state processes. In fact it was the Commonwealth that first adopted EIA legislation in the *Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974 (EPIP)*. It was the States and Territories that adopted similar legislation after 1974 and where this was done cooperative arrangements were put in place to avoid duplication of processes between the Commonwealth and State EIA systems.

**Commonwealth Constitutional  
Powers re the Environment**

It is clear from a series of High Court decisions ranging back to the *Tasmanian Dam Case (Tasmania vs The Commonwealth)* in 1982 that the Commonwealth has extensive power to legislate on environmental matters by making use of its authority under section 51 of the Constitution to make laws with respect to matters such as trade and commerce, corporations, external affairs, the peoples of any race and taxation. This capacity has been used in about 50 separate Acts including the Howard Government's *Water Act 2007 (Commonwealth)*. However, the Commonwealth government has rarely used this power to over-ride relevant state legislation.

Assertions of excessive Commonwealth 'green tape' have little foundation in reality but this has not discouraged the Abbott Government from making them.

**Cooperative Federalism – Forty  
Years of Steady Evolution**

The political practice of "cooperative federalism" with respect to environmental matters has extended over the past 40 years, well beyond legislative measures, to include a large range of strategies, policies and programmes that involve collaborative arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States. Negotiations were conducted within a long line of Councils, the most recent of which was the Standing Committee on Environment and Water (SCEW). These arrangements were abruptly brought to an end with an announcement on its website, in December 2013, that SCEW was no longer to continue.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) communique at the end of December 2013 stated that the Commonwealth respects that the States and Territories are sovereign in their own sphere and should be able to get on with delivering on their responsibilities without unnecessary interference from the Commonwealth. This supports the view within the Abbott

Government that environmental matters are a State responsibility. This is a restatement of what in the 1980s was commonly called 'States' rights' and which had ceased to have any real impact since the election of the Hawke government in 1983. There are indications that this retreat will extend to other matters such as health and education. Such a radical re-conceptualisation of the role of the Commonwealth government surely warrants a broader public debate.

**Recent Commonwealth Regression  
on Environmental Matters**

Here is a list of current environmental initiatives by the Abbott Government:

- Repeal of the carbon price legislation and replacement by a Direct Action programme;
- National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) to be sole assessor for environmental approval of offshore petroleum projects,
- 26 March 2014 designated as a repeal day for the purpose of repealing 1000 'redundant' federal laws and some 9500 regulations including measures relating to agricultural and veterinary medicines, regulation of ozone-depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases, permit and levy processes for sea installations, and repealing S255A of Water Act 2007 which relates to the assessment of mining operations in the Murray-Darling Basin.
- Review of Renewable Energy Targets and proposed abolition of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation,
- Attempt to have 70,000 hectares of Tasmanian World Heritage forest areas delisted by the World Heritage Committee,
- Refusal to include climate change on the agenda for the forthcoming G29 meeting in Brisbane,
- Review of Water Act 2007 announced,

# Forum & Nature (cont)

- Approval of extensive dumping of sediments in the Great Barrier Reef in connection with expansion of port facilities at Abbott Point,
- Abandonment of management plans for Commonwealth designated marine parks,
- Termination of National Wildlife Corridors initiative,
- Termination of funding for Environmental Defenders Offices,
- Termination of Federal Government funding for Environmental Non Government Organisations (ENGOS),
- Proposed extinguishment of a number of national bodies addressing environmental matters, including Climate Commission, National Water Commission and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency,
- Repeal of energy efficiency opportunities programme,
- Reduction of funding for Land Care by \$484 million, whilst allocating \$525 million to a new 'Green Army',
- Referral by Attorney General George Brandis to the Australian Law Reform Commission of a reference to enquire into the incursion into 'freedoms' (e.g. property rights) by particular types of laws, including environmental laws.

## **The One-Stop-Shop Initiative.**

The 'one-stop-shop' (OSS) initiative, which will ultimately see the transfer of Commonwealth approval powers under the EPBC Act to the States, involves three steps:

- Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with each State,
- Revision of existing assessment bilateral agreements, and
- Execution of approvals bilateral agreements with each State transferring approvals powers to the States under the EPBC Act.

The first stage was completed by December 2013, and the further steps are well advanced in Queensland and NSW.

It is the proposed abdication by the Commonwealth of any further role in relation to environmental approvals that has most concerned ENGOS.

## **Justifications Offered For The OSS Initiative**

### Avoidance of Duplication and Streamlining of Environmental Approval Processes

The resource sector and State Governments are the parties behind the 'green tape' argument. They argue that it is necessary to eliminate excessive 'green tape' and the duplication of functions already performed by the States so that the costs and delays experienced by their industries will be significantly reduced. The Abbott government has enthusiastically embraced this rhetoric in advancing its one-stop-shop initiative.

In practice the Commonwealth has pursued a highly coordinated and collaborative approach in this area. It has confined itself to addressing the listed matters of national significance and has left the States to address all other environmental aspects separately. Any lack of coordination could be addressed by means other than the complete withdrawal of the Commonwealth.

### Extensive Costs and Unnecessary Delays for Industry

In relation to the arguments of excessive costs and delays Prof Fowler notes that:

- Independent assessment has found that the allegations of excessive costs by the Business Council of Australia (BCA) in an April 2012 submission to COAG have been found to be spurious and greatly exaggerated,
- The level of costs genuinely occurred in complying with the EPBC Act represent only a small proportion of the overall development costs of most major resource projects,
- Delays have often been a result of State processes rather than Commonwealth processes and are often attributable to project proponents having failed to

produce adequate scientific analysis in their EISs.

- It is also arguable than when considering the costs of the EIA process one should also take into account the benefits of the process.

## **The Wider Agenda Beyond the OSS Initiative**

The resources industry has been waging a campaign against Commonwealth involvement in EIA since adoption of the EPIP Act in 1974. The current 'green tape' propaganda is simply the latest stanza. Underlying this campaign is the growing pressure to shift Australia's energy generation from fossil fuels to renewables in response to the challenge of climate change. The Abbott government has become the handmaiden of the fossil fuel industry and is vigorously promoting its cause.

The OSS agenda has found willing ears at the State level, where governments are keen to eliminate Commonwealth involvement in decision-making concerning large-scale resource projects that they wish to attract to their State. The South Australian Premier, Jay Weatherill, indicated as much in a recent letter to Professor Fowler. The Premier used a report by the Productivity Commission to justify his decision to negotiate an approval bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth. The report in fact recommended that bilateral agreements should only be proceeded with if five other conditions are satisfied.

## **Maintenance of High Environmental Standards Under the OSS System**

The Abbott Government has insisted that the handover of its approval powers to the States will only be pursued where the State systems offer equivalent standards of protection to those required under the EPBC Act.

# Forum & Nature (cont)

For this to happen there must be:

- **Legal equivalence** requiring substantial modification of most State environmental legislation. This could result in substantial delays in the implementation of the proposed handover of Commonwealth powers. The Abbott government is attempting to circumvent this by amendments to the EPBC Act.
- **Practical equivalence.** The principal argument against the OSS scheme is that the States are overly influenced by the economic benefits they expect from resource development. They do not take into account the needs of the whole of Australia in their decisions. There have been a number of cases where the Commonwealth has stepped in to prevent a State Government proceeding with an environmentally damaging project – sand mining on Fraser Island, the Franklin River dam, and the Traveston Crossing dam in Queensland.

There are checks on the misuse by the states of their newfound powers in the form of judicial review actions. Judicial review, however, is hard to secure unless some reasonably obvious flaw in the decision-making process is evident. The reduction of government resources in Canberra will greatly limit the practical ability of the Commonwealth to review State assessments.

## Other Arguments Against the OSS

- Elimination of the Commonwealth as an ‘honest broker’ is likely to result in a return to direct action protests, legal proceedings and the new tactic of discouraging financial investment in contentious projects.
- A likely outcome is more complexity and uncertainty for industry. In practice an ‘eight-stop-shop’ will develop, with differences in the detailed procedures and practices of the States and Territories.

## Conclusions and Future Directions

The OSS initiative may be no more than a cost shifting exercise rather than a red-tape reduction one. Staffing levels have already been reduced within the Commonwealth Environment Department. Most States, on the other hand, have made significant reductions within their own environment departments. It is difficult to see how they can effectively perform their new tasks at the same level as the commonwealth has done. Increased litigation against inadequate performance may cause them to seek handing back their powers to the Commonwealth.

### Where should we go from here?

The scale of the environmental challenges makes it difficult to understand the rationale for a withdrawal from the field of environmental management by the Commonwealth. Professor Fowler advocates:

- Establishment of a Commonwealth Environment Protection Authority to administer State of Environment Reporting, establish national standards for environmental quality, administer the EIA process, and replace the

Environment Minister in the performance of many biodiversity-related functions needing to be performed under the EPBC Act.

- A reversal of the OSS process so that the Commonwealth process prevails over State process in regards to matters of national environmental significance.

While it may be difficult to prevent the Abbott Government from transferring its responsibilities under the EPBC Act every effort should be made to do so, while looking forward to a next generation Commonwealth environmental law that could offer the possibility of truly effective protection for the Australian environment.

**John Spiers**

## NEW MEMBERS

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

Laurie Evans	CHANDLERS HILL
Claire Ralfs & Suzy Stiles	TORRENSVILLE
Patricia Leila Katnich & Barry Ronald Durman	NORTH ADELAIDE
Kelly Woolerton	NOVAR GARDENS
Tristan O'Brien	BELAIR
Lachlan Duncan	ONE TREE HILL
Donna Belder	CLAPHAM
Jeffrey S & Elspeth Robinson	STEPNEY
Mary-Ann van Trig	SEMAPHORE PARK

If your name has inadvertently been omitted from this list, please contact our treasurer. His ‘phone number is on p2.



# Past General Meetings

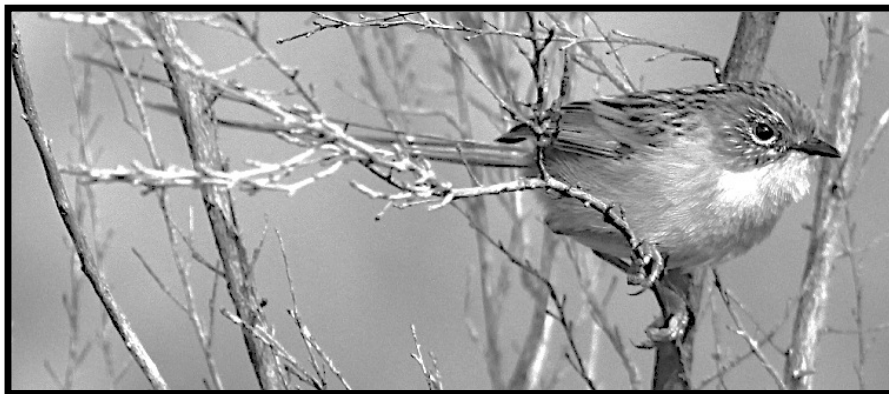
## FRIDAY JANUARY 31

Marcus Pickett described the Mount Lofty Ranges (MLR) Southern Emu-wren recovery efforts between 1993 and 2013. The Conservation Council of SA has hosted the MLR Southern Emu-wren Recovery Program since its inception in 1995. The Recovery Program followed a population and habitat survey in 1993 and preparation of the first recovery plan in 1994. Marcus has worked on the program since 1995, initially as a volunteer. His illustrated talk covered:

Species description.

- Habitat and general biology/ecology
- Distribution and abundance
- Conservation status, recent distribution/abundance changes and key threats
- Biological and ecological vulnerabilities relevant to threats
- Recovery program and strategy
- Major activities 1993–2013
- Key achievements and failures 1993–2013.
- Key working assumptions and challenges, and the realities affecting outcomes
- Future directional changes
- Expectations and major obstacles to recovery.

The MLR Southern Emu-wren, one of eight Southern Emu-wren subspecies, is endangered nationally and in SA. Prior to European settlement it probably occurred wherever suitable swamp or dry-heath habitat existed on the Fleurieu Peninsula. Widespread range contraction and fragmentation then occurred due to extensive clearance of native vegetation for agriculture and in 1993 there were 35 extant local populations comprising 400–800 individuals in total. Between 1993 and 2012 there was further range contraction and population isolation. In 2012 (the latest census year) the number of local populations and individuals had halved compared to 1993. Most local extinctions since 1993 were small populations — less than 5 pairs in swamps, but many



Male MLR Southern Emu-wren  
Photographed by Martin Stokes

populations that survived had decreased in size. Natural colonisation was very rare. Reasons for these recent local extinctions include one case of accidental fire and one of cattle grazing; but most, if not all other cases, were probably mainly due to the effects of small population size, isolation, or changes in habitat suitability. A succession of natural habitat change is probably the most significant current threat, because changes in habitat structure and floristic composition affect food, shelter and nesting resources. Key ecological vulnerabilities include:

- Nests near ground level, which are particularly vulnerable to trampling and disturbance by stock, which is mainly an issue in grazed swamp habitat
- These birds' sedentary habit and small home ranges of about 1ha. This results in impacts that are comparatively limited in time and space having a disproportionate impact on the population at a given site
- Very poor flight capability, which means Emu-wrens require corridors of dense vegetation resembling their normal habitat for movement between patches. Once a local population is lost, natural reoccupation of the site is dependent on dispersal from a connected population.

The broad recovery strategy involves threat abatement, habitat re-establishment and population

management. Major activities include research, monitoring, planning, management/policy advice, on-ground habitat works, stakeholder engagement, and formal protection of important habitat. Marcus provided detailed examples, including population studies, fencing to protect swamp habitat, new protected areas, habitat manipulation trials, and translocation.

Key achievements for 1993–2013 are:

- The two largest local populations persist.
- Positive and widespread stakeholder awareness, interest and participation.
- Swamp habitat listed as a threatened ecological community (EPBC Act).
- Important swamp and dry-heath habitat included in three new reserves.
- Substantial new ecological information.
- Translocation demonstrated as a practical option (reintroduction to Cox Scrub Conservation Park).
- Habitat manipulation trials using fire.

Unfortunately, however, it is not a story of overall success, and major offsetting failures include ongoing decline in MLR Southern Emu-wren distribution and abundance, no meaningful (functional) increases in habitat extent, quality and connectivity, and ongoing

# Past General Meetings (cont)

uncertainty regarding declines in small populations.

Marcus spoke at length about some of the assumptions and challenges of recovery, and the numerous realities that have affected (generally negatively) outcomes to date. Future strategic changes include:

- A change from a traditional vision of widespread recovery to focussing more on preventing further decline and maintaining the remaining population.
- A shift in focus from whole-of-range recovery to concentrating effort on core populations.
- More focus on improving habitat values of existing vegetation rather than on increasing vegetation extent.
- Intensifying development and trials of management tools, particularly habitat-manipulation and translocation.
- Exploring opportunities to learn, such as captive holding and breeding trials, using other Southern Emu-wren subspecies.

Marcus concluded the talk with a list of major obstacles to recovery. Most of these relate to funding restrictions, but also include limitations with the remaining population and habitat—and a reminder to the audience that there are no guarantees of recovery progress, even with a focussed program and a highly dedicated team, as the past 20 years of MLR Southern Emu-wren recovery effort clearly demonstrates.

## FRIDAY MAY 2

John Hatch introduced Professor Sonia Kleindorfer from Flinders University who presented the research results of two PhD students Simone Dalgairns and Brendan Meulders working on Bird Fire Ecology.

The study had three main objectives:

- Avian survey: how do birds respond to fire? Eyre Peninsula; Mallee habitat
- Invertebrate sampling: how does avian prey respond to fire? Pitfall and sweep net samples

- Do sedentary birds show a strong response? Blue-breasted Fairywren and Inland Thornbill

The study was carried out on Eyre Peninsula at Pinkawillinie Conservation Park, Hambidge CP, Heggarton CP and Hincks CP. Two replicate 'Burn Ages' were identified at each site. These were:

Burnt – 0-5 years after fire;  
Regenerating – 8-15 years after fire;

Mature – 30+ years after fire.

Simone's Avian Survey found that 11 bird species showed fire response. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Blue-breasted Fairywren, Inland Thornbill and Shy Heathwren were most abundant ~7 years after a fire. White-eared Honeyeater, Weebill and White-browed Babbler were most abundant after ~7 years and 20+ years, respectively. Western Yellow Robin, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Golden Whistler and Southern Scrub Robin were the most abundant species after 20+ years.

At Burnt sites there were more granivorous birds and more open-cup nesting species whereas at Regenerating and Mature sites insectivorous birds and dome-nesting species dominated.

Simone counted over 90,000 invertebrates during the study. There was no overall difference across Burn Ages but Hymenoptera (Formicidae) were more abundant ~10 years post fire.

The foraging techniques of Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens differed over the Burn Ages:

Burnt ~3 years – pick;

Regenerating ~10 years – glean and Mature

30+ years – probe.

Measurements of the birds' bills provided evidence that selection favoured small bills in the burnt sites, but favoured large bills in mature sites. Simone also radio-tracked the fairy-wrens to show the changes in territory size and composition.

Brendan Meulders working on the Inland Thornbill, found that there was no difference in morphology or foraging between each of the Burnt Ages. Measurements of 'mature'

specialists showed that canopy foraging birds had a shorter tarsus length than shrub foraging birds that had a long tarsus length. The canopy specialists also had a smaller bill-head length than the shrub foraging specialists.

Inland Thornbills colonise a burnt area two years after a fire. Foraging generalists had a bigger home range than foraging specialists.

The study showed that fire clearly has an effect on birds and there is a need to manage a range of Burn Ages to promote avian diversity.

## FRIDAY MAY 30

John Hatch introduced the first guest speaker, Dr. Diane Colombelli-Négre from the School of Biological Science, Flinders University, Penguin Ecologist for Gulf St Vincent. She spoke on the decline of the Fairy, or Little Penguin.

Data was gathered from Granite Island, Kangaroo Island, Troubridge Island and Althorpe Island. The decline on Granite Island has been dramatic. Diane's team has been looking at nest predation and nestling learning calls, but she focussed on loss and predation.

The decline in Little Penguin population has been observed not only on Granite Island, Kangaroo Island has also suffered a 20-30% decrease.

Fur Seal numbers have increased, but predators on the land are numerous: foxes, cats, dogs and goannas. Pollution is also having an impact along with parasites and a decrease in food supplies.

We need to identify if the decline is due to:- reproductive failure, adult mortality or migration. Reproductive failure means that eggs fail to hatch or the chick dies. Do the chicks die from starvation or parasites, (these two can work together). Are predators eating the eggs?

In the big colonies of 200 breeding pairs there are 80 fledglings = 40% success rate

Small colonies may have 10 breeding pairs with 8 fledglings = 80% success rate.

# Past & Future General Meetings

So the smaller colonies are doing better.

A Granite Island graph showed the following numbers:

2001 over 1500, 2012 only 26, 2013 38. This increase in 2013 appears to be a positive sign, but more research is necessary. Breeding success has increased and predation has been reduced.

On Kangaroo Island cats, black rats and goannas are the main predators, whilst on Granite Island they are water rats, black rats and brush tail possums. Tracking tunnels were used to obtain this data. Rat predation is at its peak during June and July when the penguins breed. But it is not at the egg stage, but rather the chick stage.

Blood samples were taken from 104 individual birds and 30% were found to be infected with parasites. These parasites were generally found in the male birds.

It is apparent that different factors affect different populations of Fairy Penguins.

Fur Seal numbers have increased and they are having an impact on the penguins, but the seals are indigenous to this area.

Humans do have an impact on the penguins by harassment, careless discarding of fishing line and from domestic cats.

The decline is a complex problem requiring multiple approaches, because not all colonies are facing the same threat. Therefore long term annual monitoring to determine which is the greater, adult mortality or chick mortality is most important.

The second Guest Speaker was Brian Furby, now resident on Magnetic Island. Brian showed numerous interesting photographs of this peaceful setting including birds such as the Beach Stone Curlew, Figbird, Pied Pigeon, Dollarbird and the Channel-billed Cuckoo. Brian said that the Island is very quiet and visited by few tourists. Brian has 'self-published' a book Brian's entitled 'Tall Stories and True –The Adventures of a Nature Lover', which describes some of his

activities when he was involved with the Association. The book contains over 200 pages and more than 500 good colour photos. He donated a copy of his book to the Birds SA Library.

## FRIDAY JUNE 27

John Hatch introduced Jeremy Robertson, past President of the Association. Jeremy said that he was asked if he would lead a group of university students to South Africa over 12 months ago by the International Students Volunteers organisation. The group was based at Masebe Nature Reserve in Limpopo Province. The students carried out plant, bird and herpetology surveys and he found them to be very enthusiastic.

Wildlife conservation in South Africa is radically different to the rest of Africa. The reserves are all fenced to keep people out. Whilst the students went to look at some of the larger reserves Jeremy hired a bird guide Casper Badenhorst from Birding Limpopo. They visited North Kruger National Park, Entambeni Forest, Hoedspruit, Marieskop, Southern Kruger N.P., Swaziland, Ndumo Game Reserve, Ithala G.R. and Wakkerstroom.

Jeremy showed many photographs of the birds seen and some of the other wildlife. During the whole trip from late January to mid February 2014 he saw 412 bird species and

photographed 179. He also photographed 29 of the 39 mammals and reptiles observed. Some of the bird species shown were Crested Barbet, Gorgeous Bushshrike, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Black-bellied Bustard, Yellow-billed Duck, African Finfoot, African Pygmy Kingfisher, Blue Korhaan, Speckled Mousebird, African Paradise Flycatcher, Red-billed Oxpecker, Yellow-billed Oxpecker and White-backed Vulture.

The main field guides available are Sasol Birds of Southern Africa, Newman's Birds of Southern Africa,

and Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa. Roberts' VII Multimedia Birds of Southern Africa HD is an excellent application for iPhone and iPad but it takes up almost 1 GB.

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## 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 SEPTEMBER 26

Jean Turner and Aleisa Lemanna: 'Samphire Coast Icon Project — Conservation Outcomes for Shorebirds'.

## FRIDAY OCTOBER 31

John Spiers, The African Penguin.

## FRIDAY NOVEMBER 28

Pre-Christmas Members' Night. Please submit offers to present short talks and other items to John Hatch before mid-November so that the whole programme can be arranged. The talks will be preceded and followed by drinks and nibbles, so please bring a plate of food to share.

### Spotting Scope for Sale

Kowa TS-2 Spotting Scope, 25x, 60mm, with additional 25-50x zoom eyepiece, tripod and photo adapter.

All in good condition. \$180.

Frank Day on 82585438 or [fagday@bigpond.com](mailto:fagday@bigpond.com)

# Past Excursions

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## **Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park 20 March**

A warm and rather muggy day saw 25 members and friends gather for the excursion, which commenced at the Cox Rd gate. The action started early with a Crested Shrike-tit and several Mistletoebirds clearly visible in trees adjoining the car park. This was a bonus for early arrivals.

The walk started off heading west along the track where it was encouraging to see the scrub in good condition, having recovered well from all those dry years not so long ago. Mistletoebirds were seen at regular intervals, as well as Red Wattlebirds, several lorikeets and honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebills, rosellas (Crimson and Eastern), a Rufous Whistler and assorted other species. Female Golden Whistlers were also active along the track.

We continued up through the scrub to an entrance on the western boundary and, after a short diversion to view the Coral Ferns in their special enclosure, headed north and then east. Silvereyes, which always seem to be active in this location, were duly noted as well as Grey Shrike-thrush and Magpie Lark.

At the corner, we were able to observe the proliferation of housing along the northern edge of the reserve and the landscaping that is being done. Several conservation organisations lobbied government years ago when the development was first announced for a much wider buffer zone between the housing development and the Conservation Park. Unfortunately, we ended up with only the barest minimum! Several dead trees along this boundary had colonies of House Sparrows.

Kookaburras were hunting along the fenceline and we soon started seeing various waterbirds including some not strictly within the boundary of the reserve. A Dusky Woodswallow was seen in a tree on the edge of the reserve as well as a noisy group of Weebills.

Some of the group then diverted to a waterhole that had dried out enough to allow access. Black-winged Stilts, Purple Swampheens, Little Pied Cormorants, White-faced Herons and Black-fronted Dotterels were observed. Naturally, we were all hoping to see the Painted Snipe, which had been recorded there just days earlier; but no luck despite determined scrutiny of the reeds along the edge. However, as if to make up for this no-show of Painted Snipe, we were instead treated to excellent views of a Peregrine Falcon circling above the waterhole. The only other raptor seen during the day was a Brown Falcon.

On the way back to the car park, several flowering banksias were encountered, each seeming to have its own Little Wattlebird in attendance. Overall, a total of 59 species was recorded for the day.

**Ali Ben Kahn**

## **Browns Road Reserve, Monarto 12 April**

Nineteen members and friends recorded 43 species at the Browns Road Reserve excursion.

The weather, although overcast, was kind with a light breeze and mild temperature. There was not a lot of bird activity, and with limited trees flowering, Lorikeets and Honeyeaters were relatively quiet and not in the big numbers sometimes seen here.

Interesting sightings included twelve Diamond Firetails, spread throughout the area, a Fan-tailed Cuckoo and several groups of White-browed Babblers amounting to about 40 birds altogether. It was also pleasing to record seven Hooded Robins.

**Peter Gower**

## **Hindmarsh River Estuary, Victor Harbor 17 May**

A mild, overcast morning greeted nine members to the excursion at the Hindmarsh River in Victor Harbor. Firstly, a walk down to the beach along the Tea Tree boardwalk

produced a limited number of species. It was obvious that Silvereyes were on the move with almost every bush containing several. We crossed the river from the primary school, back to the cars. Then a stop at Wattle Reserve found some gum trees with blossom. Large numbers of New Holland Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds found these attractive, to the detriment of other species.

A further short drive to the northern end of Wattle Drive, then a walk along the track through the tall gums next to the river produced some Kookaburras, but no sighting of the Crested Shrike-tits that could be clearly heard the other side of the river.

Following lunch, a quick last look at the swampy area next to the track produced a Eurasian Coot, a Little Grassbird and a Grey Shrike-thrush to bring the total to 52 species.

**Peter Gower**

## **Anstey Hill 22 May**

A fine mild morning saw 18 members assemble for a survey of Anstey Hill. The group initially split into two, with the more athletically inclined taking the steeper route. This group ultimately split into two groups to handle the descent. This arrangement provided fairly good coverage of the park.

Overcast skies did not provide ideal conditions for birding, but persistence paid off with 33 species recorded for the morning.

The dominant species were Red Wattlebird (150) and New Holland Honeyeater (100), but the total included a pair of Peregrine Falcons and two Common Bronzewing Pigeons. Superb Fairy-wrens were reasonably common with 40 observed. Surprisingly one Striated Thornbill but no other Thornbills were seen. Despite a search of the normal roosting site the Tawny Frogmouths could not be located.

Other honeyeaters observed included Noisy Miner (4), Yellow-faced (18)

# Past Excursions (cont)

Crescent (10) and Eastern Spinebill (7).

**Brian Walker**

## **Newland Head Conservation Park Sunday 1 June**

Five members and one visitor attended the Newland Head excursion. The morning was cool and overcast with a light wind.

Birds were active around the car park and up the hill as everyone started the walk. Unfortunately, a dark cloud came up from the southwest with a dampening shower, lasting about fifteen minutes, but once it had passed there was no more rain.

Interesting sightings included Brush Bronzewing, Elegant Parrot, both Red and Little Wattlebirds along with plenty of Superb Fairy-wrens on most tracks.

A visit to the beach added a good range of water birds with at least 500 Crested Terns roosting on the beach. The total count amounted to 48 species.

**Peter Gower**

## **Bakara Conservation Park 14 June**

Seven intrepid birdwatchers left home in atrocious weather for a long drive into the Mallee, hoping it would be fine by 8.30am. Luckily, the rain kept off until we were putting our chairs and eskies back into our cars. Birds seemed to be scarce, but eventually 31 species were seen.

Highlights included about six Red-capped Robins and six Jacky Winters, several Splendid Fairy-wrens including a male in full colour, and a few Variegated Fairy-wrens. Silveryeyes were abundant, and at least some of these were the Tasmanian sub-species with cinnamon flanks, presumably on a holiday in warmer climes. There were also Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Brown Treecreepers, both Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, two Golden Whistlers, Galahs and Australian Ravens.

None of us saw a Singing Honeyeater, a Hooded Robin, or a

raptor, all of which could be reasonably expected, and the closest we got to an Emu was a set of recent footprints. Overall, it was a pleasant morning, worth the long drive.

**Barbara Bansemer**

## **Magazine Road Wetlands Dry Creek: 19 June**

Twenty-three people from Birds SA gathered for a leisurely walk around Stage 3 (Magazine Road) of Greenfields Wetland, from the car park, along the path through the wetland and back via the western embankment. Water levels were high in all ponds, especially the pond in front of the hide. Consequently, no over-wintering waders or resident dotterels and plovers, or crakes were observed. However, Eurasian Coots, Hoary-headed and Australian Grebes, Grey Teal and Australian Pelicans were quite numerous. Black Swans were abundant and at least three nesting birds were observed, with one nest appearing to have eggs.

A large congregation of Purple Swamphens was seen in the drier section. Herons and egrets were scarce. Raptors included the usual Black-shouldered Kite, Swamp Harrier, Nankeen Kestrel and Whistling Kite. Little Grassbirds were observed but were generally silent. No Reed-Warblers were seen or heard. Singing, New Holland and White-plumed Honeyeaters were seen along the western embankment and around the car park. A cold wind developed late in the morning and the sky, being overcast, threatened rain, which luckily did not eventuate. We enjoyed our lunch in the shelter of the trees at the roadside. In all we recorded 43 species.

**Martyn Price**

## **Bullock Hill Conservation Park 29 June**

Four intrepid birdwatchers arrived for this excursion in a close approximation of Antarctic conditions. However, despite the cold and threatening sky, we were lucky and managed to avoid rain until just after the end of the walk.

We first traversed the edge of the park where we spotted Little Ravens, Crimson Rosellas, New Holland Honeyeaters and Superb Fairy-wrens, as well as a flock of about 50 Red-browed Finches with the occasional European Goldfinch, Silvereye and Yellow-rumped Thornbill keeping them company. We also heard and saw Elegant Parrots flying over and observed a pair of Musk Lorikeets examining hollows in a distant eucalypt. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos wheeled about overhead and Grey Shrike-thrushes, White-Browed Scrubwrens, Striated Thornbills and Grey Fantails were busy in the bush beside the track. We were rather surprised that, despite plenty of mistletoe, we saw only one Mistletoebird. However the sudden appearance of a single White-naped Honeyeater and a pair of Golden Whistlers kept us busy.

We were unable to cross the creek due to the recent rains, so we retraced our steps a short distance and proceeded through the centre of the scrub. There we had a good sighting of a Brown Falcon that, after being flushed, settled in a tree further along the track. We also saw a group of about 6 Purple-crowned Lorikeets queuing up to enjoy some vigorous bathing in a water-filled hollow some 10m above the ground in a tall eucalypt. It must have been a large hollow as the birds emerged quite soaked and we marvelled at why this seemed such an attractive pastime on a very glacial day.

The rain held off until we sat down to lunch and, just as the heavens opened, we were joined by several 4WDs obviously wanting to take advantage of the weather and already parlous state of the tracks to do more damage and generally enjoy playing in the mud. Naturally, this sort of activity is not allowed within or around the edge of the Conservation Park but this area is clearly a favourite with those wishing to prove how tough they and their vehicles are!

# Past Excursions (cont)

After the rain began in earnest, we beat a hasty retreat to Ashbourne Oval where we had lunch in the shelter shed and made the bird count. A total of 36 species was recorded for the day.

**Ali Ben Kahn**

## Porter Scrub Conservation Park

**12 July**

Seven members set out on a cold, but sunny, 4° morning. The park is in very good condition and has obviously received a fair amount of rain. There were pools of water throughout and some parts of the track resembled mini creeks.

Twenty-nine species were observed, plus two heard only. There were good sightings of Scarlet Robins, both male and female, and the most abundant species were Crimson Rosella, Silvereye, Superb Fairy-wren and White-throated Treecreeper. We disturbed a pair of Australian Shelducks that appeared to be nesting high up in a hollow in a tall dead tree; and they circled the area until we had moved on.

In all 155 birds were seen. There was one particular hot spot where there was a great deal of activity but just too far away for species and numbers to be clearly seen and recorded. The walk finished at about 11.30am by which time we had picked up a straggler. As we approached the cars, the clouds that had been gathering for the past hour opened up and we decided to head for the shelter of Bushland Park where the now enlarged group of eight had lunch and made the bird call. A couple of members then decided to have a quick look around Bushland Park after lunch.

**Rod Tetlow**

## Jenkins Scrub

**17 July**

Six dedicated members arrived for this outing but the weather was appalling. It was cold, foggy and although initially dry, by 10am it was

raining heavily. The trip was abandoned but we had managed to make a complete circuit of the park. Birds were few and far between. Only a few were seen while a few others were only heard. Highlights were Crescent and New Holland Honeyeaters, a single male Scarlet Robin and a single female Golden Whistler. We also saw small groups of Brown, Striated and Buff-rumped Thornbills. In all only 16 species were counted. Unable to have lunch at the park without getting wet, we adjourned to Williamstown and had lunch at the bakery — nice and warm!

**Martyn Price**



**Double-banded Plovers in Breeding and Non-breeding Plumage. Photographed by Peter McKenzie at Black Point SA on 27/7/14**

## Scott Conservation Park

**27 July**

A cool and overcast morning saw 13 members assemble for a survey of Scott Conservation Park. The cool weather presented an ideal opportunity to do a complete circumnavigation of the park, whilst giving everyone a good morning's exercise.

Forty-three species were recorded for the morning, with a good variety of species. Wet conditions prior to the visit meant that the record included 3 species of duck (Australian Shelduck, Australian Wood Duck and Pacific Black Duck) along with a

single White-faced Heron and six Straw-necked Ibis.

Three species of raptor were observed with a juvenile Collared Sparrowhawk perching close to the lunch area just after the formal count had concluded.

The most abundant species observed was Tree Martin (50), with 7 species of parrot, including 10 Elegant Parrots. All members had good views of White-throated Treecreeper. Three species of Thornbill were recorded: Buff-rumped, Yellow-rumped and Striated. We saw six species of honeyeaters, included two Eastern Spinebills.

**Brian Walker**

## Cox Scrub Conservation Park — 9 August

A mild, but overcast morning saw 9 members gather for a survey of Cox Scrub Conservation Park.

The meeting area held much promise for bird numbers, but occasional winds and a scarcity of birds in burnt areas provided challenging conditions for some areas of the park. There was some regrowth of vegetation in burnt areas, but insufficient in heavily burnt areas to entice much birdlife.

Thirty-five species were recorded for the trip, with Golden Whistlers (15) only being outnumbered by New Holland Honeyeaters (50) and

Galahs (20). A detour by Bill Alcock resulted in the sighting of a Brush Bronzewing on a nest with young. Six species of parrot were recorded with Elegant Parrot (12) being the second most common.

Everyone achieved good sightings of two Fan-tailed Cuckoos, and a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo was heard calling. Both Spotted and Striated Pardalotes were observed. Only five species of honeyeaters were recorded, with Brown-headed and Crescent Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebird and Eastern Spinebill in addition to the New Holland Honeyeaters.

**Brian Walker**



# Future Excursions

**Contact:** Lynton Huxley  
Field Program Co-ordinator  
**Phone:** 0498 466 092  
or 08 7009 5038  
**Email:**  
fieldtrips@birdssa.asn.au

**Note:**

Lists of the species recorded at field trip locations can be reviewed at [www.birdpedia.com](http://www.birdpedia.com)

To assist the Field Trip Coordinator (FTC) with updating our extensive records of past excursions, and for the convenience of members attending future field trips, it would be appreciated if prior notification of your interest in leading one or more of the trip/s listed could be provided to the FTC prior to the date/s of those trip/s. On some occasions, it may be necessary for members attending a field trip to appoint a leader to guide the group and a scribe. The scribe will provide a brief report to the FTC including 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. An SAOA Bird Record Form available from the FTC, or from the Birds SA website, should also be completed for each trip and accompany the trip report. Trip Reports need to be forwarded to the FTC as soon as possible for the information of all Birds SA members.

**Saturday 13 September:  
Laratinga Wetlands Mt. Barker  
(MLR) (34km)**

Meet at 8.30am in the dirt car park on Bald Hills Road, Mt. Barker.

**Thursday 18 September:  
Charleston Conservation Park  
(MLR) (38km)**

Meet at 8.30am by the tennis courts in Newman Road, Charleston. We will move on to the CP from the meeting point.

**Sunday 28 September: Brookfield  
Conservation Park (MM)  
(123km)**

Meet at 8.30am just inside the gate, approximately 35km east of Truro. The entrance is 2km past '8 mile corner' at a gentle left bend on an otherwise straight road.

**OCTOBER CAMPOUT**

Friday – Monday, 3 – 6 October 2014

Nature Foundation SA, Hiltaba Nature Reserve

The October Long Weekend Campout will be held at the Shearers' Quarters, Hiltaba Nature Reserve at the western end of the Gawler Ranges. Limited accommodation is available as well as a fully equipped kitchen, showers and toilets.

From Port Augusta two routes are available — via Eyre Highway to Wurrulla (c. 440 km) (Google Maps <http://goo.gl/maps/Wka0h>) or through the Gawler Ranges (c. 310 km) (Google Maps <http://goo.gl/maps/dHB15>). Note that there is no fuel available until Mt Ive Station on the shorter route.

The main aim of the weekend will be to locate populations of the Short-billed Grasswren.

There will be a charge of \$50.00 per person for the weekend, which will support the great work Nature Foundation SA has been doing to restore the buildings and the environment at Hiltaba.

More information can be found about Hiltaba at <http://www.naturefoundation.org.au/our-work/hiltaba/>

Should you require any further information please contact me via email: [secretary@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:secretary@birdssa.asn.au) or phone H: 83703349, M: 0448822374

**Brian Blaylock**

**Saturday 11 October: Scott Creek  
Conservation Park (MLR)  
(28km)**

Meet at 8.30am at the Almanda Mine Site car park area on Dorset Vale Road. Take the SE Freeway and leave it at the Stirling exit. At the roundabout, turn right to Longwood. After approx. 2.5 to 3

km turn right towards Cherry Gardens, turning left into Dorset Vale Road approx. 2km before reaching Cherry Gardens.

**Thursday 16 October:  
Onkaparinga Wetlands (MLR)  
(32km)**

Meet at 8.30am at Port Noarlunga Oval Car Park off Britain Drive.

**Sunday 2 November: Clements  
Gap Conservation Park (MN)  
(185km)**

Meet at 8.30am. Head north through Port Wakefield to Redhill. Make a left hand turn onto a dirt road about 3km north of Redhill and drive about 8km turn left onto Bitumen for 3km. The Park camping area is on the right and opposite a Church. Camping is permissible in the open area behind the pine fence. Toilets are available, but no water. You can arrive any time on the Saturday if you plan to camp.

**Saturday 15 November: Browns  
Road, Monarto (MM) (60km)**

Meet at 8.30am at Browns Road, Monarto, just off the old Murray Bridge Road. Leave the SE Freeway at the Callington exit. Drive through Callington and turn right onto the old Murray Bridge road. The junction is on the left at the top of the hill.

**Thursday 20 November: Kaiser  
Stuhl Conservation Park (MLR)  
(60km)**

Meet at 8.30am at the Tanunda Creek Road CP gate. The Park is located 12Km southeast of Tanunda in the Barossa Valley. From Tanunda take the main Tanunda to Angaston Road (Mengler Hill Road) for 8km to the southerly turn off onto Tanunda Creek Road. The Park is approximately 4km along this road.

**Sunday 30 November: Horsnell  
Gully Conservation Park (MLR)  
(12km)**

Meet at 8.30am. Travel up the Old Norton Summit Road and turn right into Horsnell Gully Road this leads to a quarry gate just prior to which, on the right, is a track leading into the park.

# 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).

## **Ostrich**

1, 12/7/2014, Clayton Stn, NE.

McMahon, K. & Gleeson, J.

1, 28/7/2014, Dulkaninna Stn, Birdsville Track, NE. Tame bird (probably the same as above), presumed domestic escapee.

Young, R. *et al.*

## **Brown Quail**

30-40, 17/5/2014, Granite Island, MLR.

Zanker, R.

6, 20/5/2014, Cobbler Creek RP, MLR.

Zanker, R.

3, 30/6/2014, Black Point, YP.

Lush, F. & West, J.

## **Grey Teal**

2000, 20/7/2014, Robertstown Lagoon, LN.

Smyth, J.

## **Tawny Frogmouth**

1, 12/7/2014, Campbelltown, Torrens Linear Park, AP.

Donkin, K.

## **Australasian Shoveler**

3, 12/6/2014, Port Augusta, Lake Dempsey, NW. With 100 Hardhead, 20 Musk Duck, 110 Black Swan, 20 Blue-billed Duck and 500 Eurasian Coot.

Langdon, P.

## **Musk Duck**

34, 27/6/2014. Kingston boat ramp, SE. In sea.

Miller, R.

## **Pink-eared Duck**

Heard, 3 & 10/7/2014. Fullarton, AP. Identified by call while flying over during evening.

Horton, P.

## **Blue-billed Duck**

2 pairs, 2/7/2014. Clare, Lake Inchiquin, LN.

Sparks, K.

## **Freckled Duck**

25, 3/7/2014. Mount Barker, Laratinga Wetlands, MLR.

Williams, K.

90, 2/8/2014. Duck Lagoon, Cygnet River, KI.

Baxter, C.

2, 24/7/2014. Modbury, AP.

Zanker, R.

## **Sooty Albatross**

2, 25/5/2014. Off Port Macdonnell, MO.

Rogers, C. *et al.*

## **Great Egret**

82, 18/7/2014. Thompson Beach, AP.

Dafoe, J.

*A large group, although no breeding colonies are known near Adelaide.*

## **Cattle Egret**

2, 30/5/2014. 3 km SE Finniss, MM.

Edey, D.

1, 7/7/2014, 2 km S Milang, MM.

Bainbridge, T.

2, 21/7/2014. Hindmarsh Island, Mundoo Rd, MM.

Syson, W.

*Up to 100 seen each winter near Mount Compass up until the 1980s, but no recent records.*

## **White-necked Heron**

*Many reports near Adelaide during winter including:*

2, 20/7/2014. Onkaparinga Wetlands, MLR.

Brooker, W.

1, 22/7/2014, White Rd wetlands, AP.

Tetlow, R.

1, July/2014. Macclesfield, MLR.

Gould, L. & T.

1, 1/8/2014, Apoinga Lagoon, LN.

Smyth, J.

## **Nankeen Night Heron**

23, 25/6/2014. Prince Alfred College, Adelaide, AP. Seen on oval in car headlights.

Sparks, K.

## **Letter-winged Kite**

2, 31/7/2014. 3 km NE Port Wakefield, LN.

Riglin, B.

*Reported from the same site last year.*

## **White-bellied Sea-Eagle**

*Several reports away from usual breeding areas, including:*

1, 10/5/2014. Port Augusta West, NW.

Langdon, P.

1, 17/6/2014. Whyalla, EP.

Smith, E.

1, 2/7/2014. Poltalloch, MM.

Chinta, S.

## **Eastern Osprey**

1, 17/6/2014. Price, YP.

Dennis, T.

## **Black Falcon**

2, 4/6/2014, Encounter Bay, MLR. In Norfolk Island Pines along foreshore.

Cheshire, N.

# Bird Records (cont)

## Grey Currawong

1, 22/7/2014. Malvern, AP.

Nairn, V.

2, 31/7/2014. Hyde Park, AP.

Riglin, B.

*See comments in recent Newsletters regarding the colonisation of currawongs in the suburbs.*

## Bush Stone-curlew

1, 2/8/2014. Prince Alfred College oval, AP. Presumed escapee from Adelaide Zoo.

Fahey-Sparks, D.

## Sooty Oystercatcher

1, 24/5/2014. Breakout Creek mouth, Henley Beach South, AP.

Edey, D.

## Red-necked Avocet

*Several southerly reports of this species, including some of large numbers.*

356, 1/6/2014, Port Augusta, Pink Lake, NW.

Langdon, P.

15, 12/6/2014, Port Augusta, Lake Dempsey, NW.

Langdon, P.

200, 1/7/2014, 11 km E Langhorne Creek, MM.

Edey, D.

900, 1/7/2014, 20 km E Langhorne Creek, Flagstaff Rd, MM.

Edey, D.

1 dead, 20/7/2014. Adelaide University, Kintore Ave, AP.

Gackle, A.

100, 29/7/2014. Sarnia Swamp, 4km W Naracoorte, SE.

Miller, R.

## Black-fronted Dotterel

36, 2/8/2014. Grassdale Lagoon, Kelly Hill CP, KI.

Baxter, C.

*A large number for this species, which is usually in pairs or small groups.*

## Black-tailed Godwit

3, 1/7/2014. 20 km E Langhorne Creek, Flagstaff Rd, MM.

Edey, D.

## Terek Sandpiper

1, 30/5/2014. Black Point, YP.

Tiller, M.

*Few winter records of this species.*

## Brown Skua

2, 29/6/2014. The Bluff, Encounter Bay, MLR.

Carpenter, G.

3, 2/8/2014. Newland Head CP, MLR.

Allen, J.

*Flying offshore during south-westerly blows, along with small numbers of albatrosses and giant-petrels.*

## Little Corella

1000, 12/5/2014, Urrbrae, AP.

Carpenter, G

2000, 3/7/2014. Fullarton, AP. Flying south.

Horton, P.

*This seems to be the first winter that Little Corellas have remained around Adelaide.*

## Elegant Parrot

50, 18/5/2014. Horseshoe Range, LN.

Langdon, P.

## Regent Parrot

3, 14/7/2014. 4 km S Bower, MM.

Doecke, N.

## Rainbow Lorikeet

3, 25/4/2014. Whyalla, EP.

Smith, E.

*Rarely reported from Whyalla.*

## Laughing Kookaburra

1, 16/7/2014. Lockleys, Mellor Park, AP. First time recorded in this area.

Edey, D.

## Superb Fairy-wren

1, 26/5/2014. Henley Beach, Apex Park wetlands, AP.

Edey, D.

*Previously reported at this location in February.*

## Pied Honeyeater

1, 15/6/2014. Cariewerloo Woolshed, NW.

Langdon, P. *et al.*

## Black-chinned Honeyeater

4, 13/7/2014. Clayton Bay caravan park, MM.

Tiller, M. *et al.*

1, 22/7/2014. Willaston oval, AP. Lone bird attacking reflection in car mirror.

Dennis, T.

## White-browed Babbler

1, 23/5/2014. Macclesfield, MLR. Lone bird in township.

Gitsham, J.

## White-winged Triller

Male, 2/8/2014. Newland Head CP, MLR.

Allen, J.

*An unusual southerly winter record.*

## Red-lored Whistler

1, 3/7/2014. 3 km SE Ashbourne, MLR. Uncoloured immature bird feeding on ground and in low shrubs (revegetation area) adjacent patch of Pink Gum woodland.

Carpenter, G.

*John Gould collected this species near Adelaide in June-July 1839, noting in his Handbook of Australian Birds (1865) that 'it was usually met with only one at a time, hopping about on the ground in the thinly-timbered forest which surrounds the city of Adelaide.' It has subsequently proven to be a rare winter visitor to the districts nearer Adelaide away from its breeding areas in the Murray Mallee (see Parker (1984) SA Ornithologist 29: 109-112).*

## Grey Fantail

1, 11/5/2014. Henley Beach, Apex Park wetlands, AP.

Edey, D.

*Few recent reports from the Adelaide suburbs, mostly in winter and near the coast.*

# Bird Records (cont)

## Restless Flycatcher

1, 13/7/2014. 3 km E Salters Springs, LN. First report in area for over 20 years.

Smyth, R.

## Jacky Winter

1, 5/6/2014. 6 km NW Finniss, MLR. In open Pink Gum woodland.

Carpenter, G.

1, 3/7/2014. 1 km W Ashbourne, MLR. In scattered Red and Manna Gums along roadside.

Carpenter, G.

*Few recent reports of this species in the hills, formerly common in woodlands.*

## Scarlet Robin

Male, 23/7/2014. Unley, Edmond Ave, AP.

Abbot, J.

*Formerly a regular non-breeding winter visitor to the Adelaide Plains, now very rarely reported.*

## Rufous Songlark

1, 1/6/2014. 5 km N Laura, LN,

Bosch, S.

1, 2/6/2014. Port Augusta West, NW.

Langdon, P.

*Unusual southerly winter records.*

## Little Grassbird

Adult + juvenile, 6/6/2014. Port Augusta, Lake Dempsey, NW.

Langdon, P.

*There have been reports of many species breeding this autumn, presumably due to warmer than usual conditions.*

## Bassian Thrush

1, 3/8/2014. Mount Crawford Forest, Simmonds Hill, MLR. Gathering worms from floor of pine forest.

Smith, A.

## Beautiful Firetail

1, 30/5/2014. Cox Scrub CP, south part, MLR.

Edey, D.

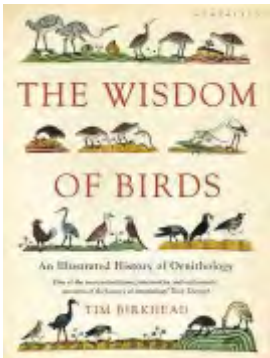
*Few reports from this location in recent years, with probably the only reasonable population remaining in the hills now at Deep Creek CP.*



**New Holland Honeyeater, photographed by Greg Blackman at Ingle Farm in May 2014**



# From the Library



**598 BIR**

Birkhead, Tim

**The wisdom of birds**

London: Bloomsbury, 2008.

ISBN 978074759263

In *The Wisdom of Birds*, Birkhead takes the reader on a journey that not only tells us about the extraordinary lives of birds: from conception and egg, through territory and song, to migration and fully fledged breeder, but also shows how, over centuries, we have overcome superstition and untested 'truths' to know what we know, and how recent some of that knowledge is.



**598.0994 CLI**

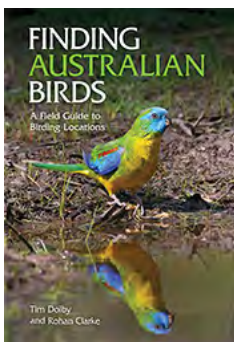
**Climate change adaptation plan for Australian birds** /edited by Stephen Garnett and Donald Franklin

Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO Publishing, 2014.

ISBN 9780643108028

This is the first climate change adaptation plan produced for a national faunal group anywhere in the world. It outlines the nature of threats related to climate change for the Australian bird taxa most likely to be affected by climate change, and provides recommendations on what might be done to assist them and an

approximate cost of doing so. It also features an analysis of how climate change will affect all Australian birds, explains why some species are likely to be more exposed or sensitive to it than others, and explores the theory and practice of conservation management under the realities of a changing climate.



**598.2994 DOL**

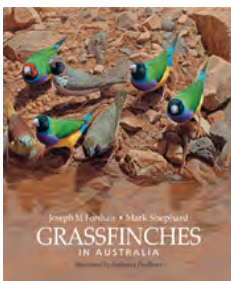
Dolby, Tim

**Finding Australian birds: a field guide to birding in Australia**

Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO Publishing, 2014.

ISBN 9780643097667

This book covers over 400 Australian bird-watching sites conveniently grouped into the best birding areas, from one end of the country to the other. Each chapter begins with a brief description of the location, followed by a section on where to find the birds, which describes specific bird-watching sites within the location's boundaries, and information on accommodation and facilities.



**598.880994 FOR**

Forshaw, Joseph M.

**Grassfinches in Australia**

Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO Publishing, 2012

ISBN 9780643096349

The only up-to-date, fully illustrated book on all Australian species of grassfinches. The combination of superb artwork and scientifically accurate text ensures that this volume will become the standard reference work on Australian grassfinches.



# From the Library (cont)



**598.138 PIC**

Pickrell, John

**Flying dinosaurs : how fearsome reptiles became birds**

Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2014.

ISBN 9781742233666

The discovery of the first feathered dinosaur in China in 1996 sent shockwaves through the palaeontological world. Were the feathers part of a complex mating ritual, or a stepping stone in the evolution of flight? And just how closely related is T. Rex to a chicken? Journalist John Pickrell reveals how dinosaurs developed flight and became the birds in our backyards. He delves into the latest discoveries in China, the US and Europe.



**598.910994 OLSj**

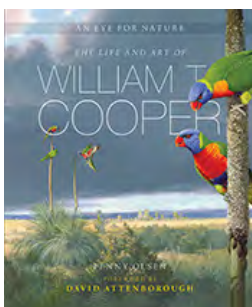
Olsen, Jerry

**Australian high country raptors**

Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO Publishing, 2014

ISBN 9780643109162

Australian High Country Raptors covers raptor species that regularly breed in the high country above 600 metres from Goulburn in New South Wales down to the hills outside Melbourne, Victoria. Author Jerry Olsen explores the nature of these striking animals that are classified as Accipitriformes (diurnal hawks, falcons, kites and eagles), Falconiformes and Strigiformes (nocturnal owls). The book begins with a description of habitats and vegetation types in the high country, and which raptors are likely to be seen in each habitat type. It continues with sections on finding and watching raptors, raptor identification, hunting styles, food breeding and behaviour and conservation.



**758.3092 OLS**

Olsen, Penny

**An eye for nature: the life and art of William T. Cooper**

Canberra, ACT: National Library of Australia, 2014.

ISBN 9780642278463

In this biography, Penny Olsen traces the path of Cooper's life and art—from his childhood spent in the bush, to his teenage years as an apprentice taxidermist at Carey Bay Zoo and, later, to his work as a window dresser and landscape artist. The intricate bird portraits reveal Cooper's close observation not only of his subjects' appearance, but their habits, poses and behaviour.



# Members' Photographs

## Details of the Photographs on Pages 21 to 24

No:	Species	Photographer	Location	Date
1	White-fronted Chat	Kay Parkin	Winninowie	July 2014
2	Owlet-nightjar	Jeff Groves	Brown's Rd. Monarto	3/7/14
3	Painted Button-quail	Trevor Cox	Stokes EP	10/6/14
4	Stubble Quail	Teresa Jack	Minlaton, YP	16/3/14
5	Brown Quail	Kay Parkin	Victor Harbor	June 2014
6	White-fronted Honeyeater	Trevor Cox	Muyaroo CP, EP	24/04/14
7	Scarlet Honeyeater	Peter Mckenzie	Gladstone, Qld.	10/6/14
8	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Trevor Cox	Stokes, EP	26/6/14
9	Yellow-throated Honeyeater	Merilyn Browne	Tasmania	
10	Crescent Honeyeater	Kay Parkin	Kyeema CP	July 2014
11	Singing Honeyeater	Peter Mckenzie	Pine Point, SA	26/7/4
12	Yellow-throated Miner	Teresa Jack	Port Augusta Arid Lands Garden	21/4/14
13	Rufous Whistler	Trevor Cox	Stoked EP	3/6/14
14	Orange-bellied Parrot	Merilyn Browne	Tasmania	
15	Giant Pitta Bird (F)	Bev Harman	Sabah, Borneo	24/7/14
16	Golden Whistler	Trevor Cox	Stokes, EP	26/6/14/
17	Eastern Yellow Robin	Teresa Jack	Princess Margaret Rose Cave, Vic.	23/4/14
18	Red-capped Robin	Kay Parkin	Gluepot MM	July 2014
19	Spotted Pardalote	Trevor Cox	Muyaroo CP, EP	26/4/14.

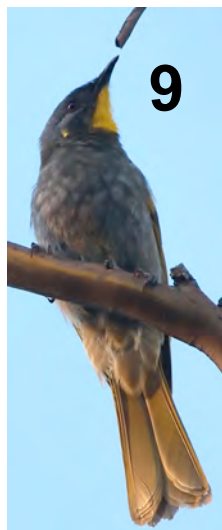


# Zuails and Button-Zuails





# Honeyeaters & their ilk





# *A Riot of Colour*

