

The Birder

No 238

May 2016



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Giving Them Wings

Update on the young
Waitpinga Sea Eagle

Good news about the Mount
Lofty Ranges Southern
Emu-wren

Activities at Tolderol

Tree planting day, 5th June.
Please come and help

July General Meeting

Members' Night. Please let
Daniel Rogers know if you
would like to give a short
presentation

Birds SA aims to:

- Promote the conservation of Australian birds and their habitats.
- Encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of, the birds of South Australia.
- Record the results of research into all aspects of bird life.
- Maintain a public fund called the "Birds SA Conservation Fund" for the specific purpose of supporting the Association's environmental objectives.

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Male Golden-headed Cisticola in breeding plumage, photographed by Peter Meckenzie at Tolderol on 16th January 2016

DIARY

The following is a list of Birds SA activities for the next few months. Further details of all these activities can be found later in 'The Birder'.

Sunday 29 May	Excursion to Swan Reach CP
Saturday 11 June	Excursion to Ridley CP
Thursday 16 June	Excursion to Charleston CP
Friday 24 June	General Meeting
Sunday 26 June	Excursion to Newland Head CP
Saturday 9 July	Excursion to Laratinga Wetlands
Thursday 21 July	Excursion to Brown's Rd. Monarto
Friday 29 July	General Meeting — Members' Night
Sunday 31 July	Excursion to Altona Landcare Reserve
Saturday 13 August	Excursion to Black Hill CP
Thursday 18 August	Excursion to Horsnell Gully CP
Friday 26 August	General Meeting
Sunday 28 August	Excursion to private bushland property

Cover photo: White-breasted Woodswallows, photographed by David Cox in Mutawintji National Park, NE of Broken Hill, on April 4th 2016.

New Members

We welcome 23 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on p 7.

President's Message

At the AGM in late April, John Spiers and William Brooker resigned from the Birds SA Management Committee. Both were thanked on your behalf for their contributions to the management of Birds SA. There are, however, still vacancies on the Management Committee so please consider making a contribution by joining the Committee.

Many of us are involved in, and gain great pleasure from, monitoring birds. Bird watchers have led the way with respect to engaging in citizen science. As far as the formal surveys are concerned two techniques are promoted. One involves assessing bird abundances and consists of tallying the birds seen in a pre-determined 2ha site in 20 minutes. This technique, for example, is used to assess abundances of woodland birds in the Mount Lofty Ranges, as well as in other parts of Australia. Another one involves making a list of species present at a site, and then repeating this process at many hundreds of sites spread over a region. This is often referred to as atlassing and is aimed at documenting the distribution of a species. So the two types of surveys are really documenting different things — one estimates abundance and the other distribution. When

species are declining, then either the abundance is declining, the distribution is declining or both. I am not keen on the 2ha x 20-minute surveys for the simple reason the survey area (2ha) is small compared to the home ranges of many species, particularly those species known to be declining. For example, a Restless Flycatcher or a group of Varied Sittellas have home ranges of about 200 hectares or more. All things being equal, a 2ha monitoring site searched for 20 minutes is only likely to detect a restless flycatcher once in a

hundred surveys. Thus, the 2ha plot is not likely to show a decline in a statistical sense. I recall being taught that a good rule of thumb is to have the sampling area large enough to have a reasonable prospect of detecting and counting the species you wished to monitor. For many of our birds, monitoring them on 2 hectares is too small to meet that recommendation. Be that as it may, simply monitoring birds on 2ha, or atlassing does not inform us about what the underlying causes are for any declines — we simply document the declines. Ultimately if we wish to reverse the declines of many of our birds, the monitoring programmes need to be expanded to include demographic studies that identify the mechanisms and causes of the decline. Without understanding the causes of decline we cannot easily manage or reverse them. This criticism is not aimed at dampening your enthusiasm for these surveys but aimed at making you consider what we need to know about the declines to allow us to recover distributions and abundances of birds, and whether we are collecting the information we need.

David Paton



Rainbow Bee-eaters, photographed by Peter McKenzie at Brown's Rd. Monarto on 16/16

Birds SA Notes & News

THE COORONG, LOWER LAKES AND MURRAY MOUTH COMMUNITY REVEGETATION PROJECT

The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Community Re-vegetation Project is part of a five-year adaptive management response plan established to rehabilitate Lake Alexandrina, Lake Albert and the Coorong Ramsar region. The project is part of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Recovery Project (CLLMM), funded by the South Australian Government's Murray Futures Program and the Australian Government.

The Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Association (GWLAP) is contracted by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources SA (DEWNR) to engage with the Lower Lakes and Coorong community to deliver the on-ground works for this project. Key on-ground services that GWLAP carries out include engaging the Community Nurseries Network to grow the required plants and contracting community groups to plant the seedlings.

This planting season (2016) 55 community groups will plant a further 230,000 plants. The groups undertaking the plantings come from a wide range of community sectors. Each group is paid per seedling planted. The money they raise will enable them to support their community group's cause.

Birds SA has placed an Expression of Interest to plant 1000 seedlings in the conservation areas of Tolderol Wetland near Langhorne Creek.

Several Birds SA members have volunteered to plant seedlings on our nominated planting day, which is Sunday 5th June. Birds SA will receive \$1.20 per plant in the ground. That will amount to about \$1,200 towards the Birds SA Conservation Fund. Planting should only take about half a day, so the rest of the day can be spent birdwatching at Tolderol.

If you have not yet volunteered, but would like to assist, please arrive at Tolderol at 9am. Bring your boots and gardening gloves, and don't forget your lunch.

Contact me for any further information —
mobile 0438 900 393

John Gitsham

CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE.

The focus of the Sub-committee in the first quarter of the year has been the question of duck and quail hunting. Hunting of duck and quail continues to be legal in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania although banned in other States. Towards the end of each year there is a meeting of the 'Duck and Quail Open Season Stakeholder' Panel. This Panel is charged with developing recommendations to the Environment Minister in regard to the hunting season for the coming year. These cover:

- whether there should be an open season, an open season with various levels of restrictions (bag size etc), or a closed season,
- if there is a season, when it should open and when it should close,
 - whether there should be additional restrictions placed on specific species of designated game birds.

Three Birds SA members: John Gitsham, Brian Blaylock and John Spiers, attended this meeting. Based on the information presented we expressed our belief that there should be no duck hunting in the 2016 season. However, the meeting wished to discuss whether there should be a

restricted season. After considerable advocacy from the hunters, who significantly outnumbered us, the sense of the meeting was that there should be Restricted Level 3 season for ducks with a start date set to coincide with the start of the hunting season in Victoria. A restricted hunting season was subsequently gazetted with the hunting season opening on the 19th March, 2016.

We expressed our disagreement with this decision to DEWNR and subsequently met them on 15 Feb 2016. A number of misunderstandings were cleared up but it became even clearer that the decision-making process regarding the hunting season is seriously flawed. We subsequently wrote to the Hon I K Hunter MP, Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation and informed him of our disagreement with his decision. The following is a quote from the final paragraph:

"It beggars belief that, knowing these facts, a hunting season has been declared. Part of the reason is that duck species are regarded as highly resilient, and they are. They are capable of flying hundreds of kilometres in a short space of time to



Birds SA Notes & News (cont.)

find suitable wetlands. They are highly fecund and capable of replacing their numbers in a short space of time if conditions are right. However, no species is infinitely resilient. The continual over-use of water and degradation of wetlands, particularly deep-water wetlands, which in earlier years provided refuge from drought, coupled with a highly variable climate has led to long-term declines in duck numbers. We need to be increasingly careful in how we try to manage duck numbers. There is much we don't know and conclusions reached in earlier studies on the effects of hunting may no longer be valid now that populations are significantly lower. The system currently used by DEWNR is indicative only, lacks a feedback mechanism and can be influenced by hunters and others with a vested interest in having hunting every season regardless of conditions. In order to determine future decisions, we need a system that assesses the effects on populations of multiple factors, including the level of hunting in the previous season. That is, an adaptive management harvest model, such as used in many other parts of the world, is required. Such a model requires continuous monitoring, which costs money to run, and the political will to abide by its dictates. Without such a system, maintenance of duck populations cannot be guaranteed. If your Government is unable or unwilling to support such a system, hunting in our view, should no longer be permitted."

We have not yet had a reply.

Subsequently we have met Mark Parnell of the Australian Greens to discuss the possibility of getting hunting banned in South Australia. He reminded us that only a few years ago he had put forward a Private Member's Bill in an attempt to get hunting stopped in South Australia. He ended up being the only Member to support his Bill. All other Members of the Senate voted against it. A failure of this sort actually sets one's cause back and we need to be very careful about the tactics we use. Clearly the hunting lobby carries considerable sway amongst the Politicians. That may not be the case amongst the voting public. The challenge for us is to mobilise anti-shooting sentiment until it becomes a force that Politicians can no longer ignore.

John Spiers

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I wish to comment on the following statement made by the President, David Paton, in his President's message in the February, 2016 issue of *The Birder*: ".....Several Birds SA Members sit on the panel that reviews the status of South Australian birds. Unlike the Mt Lofty region near Adelaide most regions of the State are poorly known and so any assessments are at best based on hunches."

I disagree with this comment. Birdlife Australia has extensive Atlas coverage of all South Australia, as it has of all the other States and Territories of Australia. I, and many others, have carried out thousands of bird surveys in various locales in SA that are incorporated in the Australia-wide Atlas information at birdata.com.au.

It is a pity that Birds SA does not use the same survey methods as are used by all the other States when compiling Atlas records that show the distribution and frequency of occurrence, etc. of the birds of Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Doug Johnston, Birds SA member.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Michael & Joanne Louend	RENOWN PARK
Graham Field	
Alicia Zakarevicius	NORTH PLYMPTON
Brian Young	ABERFOYLE PARK
Abel Coelho	MAWSON LAKES
Wade Phillips	WARRADALE
Ven Thiru & Debi Swamidoss	LINDEN PARK
Alan Pettigrew	COROMANDEL VALLEY
Catherine Newton	NOARLUNGA DOWNS
Anna Woods	FULHAM GARDENS
Tamsyn Stephenson	CRAFERS
Jeanette & Heath Timberlake	BLACKWOOD
Graham Allen & Kay Rush	MELROSE PARK

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

Giving them wings

conserving threatened species

NEW PROGRAMME LAUNCHED: BECOME A CITIZEN SCIENTIST AND SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA'S WETLAND BIRDS AND THEIR PRECIOUS HABITATS

Wetlands form critical habitats for Australia's water birds, but they are under threat from reduced river flows and flooding, drought, climate change and land use changes.

We are asking everyday Australians to help turn the tide by simply collecting wetland bird feathers to help researchers create the first ever 'Feather Map of Australia' to show the health of our wetland birds nationally.

A joint research project between the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) and the University of NSW (UNSW) is enlisting 'citizen scientists' to gather bird feathers from wetlands.

Each feather will be analysed using nuclear techniques to understand the diet and other environmental conditions under which the feather grew.

Each bird feather is like a memory chip of where that bird has been. For example, a feather found in a wetland in NSW, once analysed using nuclear techniques, could reveal that the bird has been living in the Northern Territory.

Scientists will compare feathers from diverse parts of Australia, to identify differences and create a map to provide more information about these ecosystems.

"There are some big questions about water birds, that we are seeking to answer," said project leader Dr. Kate Brandis, an environmental researcher and water bird expert with ANSTO and UNSW.

"Colonies of birds come together in their thousands on flooded inland water systems to breed, then they disappear into much smaller groups and you may not see them for years.

"We would like to determine where they go, and where they come from, to find out which wetlands

are really important for certain species," explained Dr. Brandis.

The research team also includes Dr. Debashish Mazumder and Dr. Suzanne Hollins from ANSTO and Professor Richard Kingsford from UNSW's Centre for Ecosystem Science.

"We are primarily interested in inland wetlands where you find birds such as colonial Straw-necked and Glossy Ibis, as opposed to coastal estuarine wetlands," Dr. Brandis said.

"Wetlands around Australia are under threat from reduced river flows and flooding, drought, climate change and land use change.

"These are crucial habitats for Australia's water birds, providing places for nesting, feeding and roosting. If there are not flooded wetlands, the water birds are unable to breed.

"We are also hoping to determine whether the birds return to the wetlands where they hatched, to breed – there is some debate as to whether this idea of a 'natal site fidelity' exists," she said.

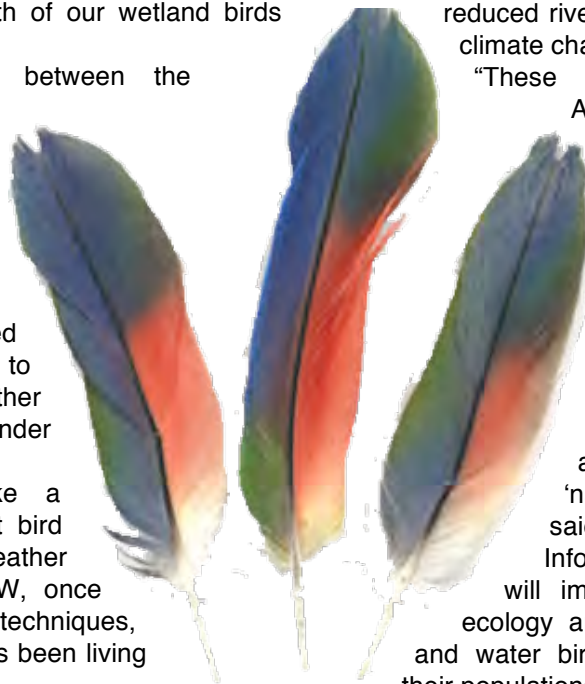
Information from the Feather Map will improve understanding of the ecology and life cycles of water birds and water bird populations, and ensuring their populations are maintained or increased.

"Everyone can take part, from school groups to birdwatchers – anyone wanting to help preserve our precious wetland ecosystems," said Dr. Brandis.

"The more feathers, the more complete the picture and the better the map we will have."

This unique project provides a non-invasive method of acquiring samples, and avoids welfare issues associated with tagging, tacking or capturing individual birds.

Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil all year round, or for just some of the time. Swamps, marshes, lakes, billabongs, lagoons, salt-marshes, mudflats, mangroves, dams and farm dams, rivers and creeks all qualify.



Giving them Wings (cont.)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Step one

Understand the scientific license or permit requirements for your state or territory. The Feather Map of Australia Project has obtained licenses from each State and Territory in order for members of the public to help us with this important research.

Each State or Territory has its own strict rules and regulations. Please check online for any permit details relevant to you.

Step two

Visit a local wetland in your region and collect feathers that you find on the ground. Please leave any feathers attached to birds in place!

Take a look around the wetland while you are there and write down the names of any bird species you recognise.

Please ensure you wash your hands thoroughly after touching the feathers, or wear gloves while collecting.

We also encourage everyone to take plenty of photos while collecting and add them to our Instagram page feathermapau.

Step three

Place the feathers in an envelope and include the following information:

- Date of collection
- Location of collection: preferably co-ordinate information (GPS location, latitude and longitude). This can be taken from smart phones or Google Maps
- A list of the birds using the wetland that you identified
- Type of bird feather if you know. It's OK if you don't. Remember to keep each feather **YOU recognise** separate, and tag it.
- Include your name and address: this is a condition of our scientific licences. The information will only be kept, or provided to the relevant government body, for this and no other purpose.

Step four

Send your feathers to help us complete our feather map!

Feathers collected in ACT, New South Wales Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland should be sent to:

The Feather Map of Australia Project
c/- Dr. Kate Brandis

Centre for Ecosystem Science
School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Room 508 D26

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, SYDNEY
NSW 2052

For information on the Feather Map of Australia Project, go to www.ansto.gov.au/feathermap

For more information on ANSTO, go to www.ansto.gov.au

Media Enquires:

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jane.howard@ansto.gov.au

ENDANGERED BIRDS SET UP HOME IN BRAND NEW HABITAT

Two endangered Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wrens have recently been sighted in a brand new habitat on the Finnis River, thanks to re-vegetation work in the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) area.

Following the initial sighting of a male Southern Emu-wren in the area in late February, a female wren was spotted just before Easter, raising hopes that the birds could be a potential breeding pair.

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) CLLMM Vegetation Program Manager Hafiz Stewart said the birds were sighted on property revegetated as part of the CLLMM Recovery Project's revegetation program — one of the largest of its kind in Australia.

The CLLMM Recovery Project has sought to restore the area's environment, native vegetation, native fish and local communities since prolonged drought and water over-allocation across the Murray-Darling Basin left the wetlands on the brink of environmental collapse in 2010.

"The sighting of these endangered birds, in what is believed to be their most south easterly position, is a triumph for the staff and community members who braved all weather conditions to participate in planting programs to help revegetate the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth area," Mr. Stewart said.

"The sighting is particularly timely, given that the CLLMM Vegetation Program is nearing completion, and really cements the value of working with the community over the last five years.

"To see real proof of the success of our efforts to provide habitat for such an iconic South Australian species is the icing on the cake."

Giving them Wings (cont.)



Southern Emu-wren (male), photographed by Martin Stokes in the Coorong area early in 2016.

There is a photograph of the female on page 28

The CLLMM Vegetation Program has tackled the ecological problems of the region at a landscape scale by prioritising the vegetation communities to restore, and by determining where restoration activities should occur. Revegetation activities have increased the resilience and connectivity of native habitats, and provided valuable refuges for the region's native flora and fauna, such as the endangered Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wrens.

Degradation and disappearance of habitat have contributed to the decline of this distinct Mount Lofty Ranges subspecies of the Southern Emu-wren, with only a few hundred remaining in the region.

Project officer for the Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren and Fleurieu Peninsula Swamps Recovery Program, Tim Vale, said the appearance of the Southern Emu-wrens in the newly created habitat was very significant.

"There are believed to be a maximum of 300 individuals left across the Fleurieu, with the species still declining despite a long-term recovery plan," Mr. Vale said.

"This is the first time this bird has been spotted in an area of revegetated habitat, which is really heartening as the birds are quite specific in their habitat selection and use."

Goolwa/Wellington Local Action Planning Association (GWLAP) coordinated the property's revegetation schedule on behalf of DEWNR. GWLAP Re-vegetation Project Officer Kerri Bartley managed some of the onsite plantings and maintenance of the plants.

Kerri said that the property was historically grazed back to a bare paddock before teams of planters from local community groups moved in to plant more than 12,000 plants of 52 local native species.

"The property is now covered in plants and the program has created brand new habitat using seed sourced and grown locally," Ms. Bartley said.

"These sightings in newly planted habitat highlight the correct selection and placement of native plants appropriate for attracting native birds. This habitat will hopefully continue to attract other native fauna to the area in the future.

"The sighting of the female Emu-wren is particularly exciting news and we wait in hope that breeding occurs."

The South Australian Government's Murray Futures programme and the Australian Government funded the Coorong Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Recovery Project.

NEWS RELEASE

SIMONE TYSON, Senior Media Adviser, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources

Giving them Wings (cont.)



Juvenile White-bellied Sea Eagle, photographed at Waitpinga by Elizabeth Steele-Collins on 6th April 2016

WAITPINGA SEA EAGLE UPDATE

In the February edition of 'Birder' Terry Dennis and I reported a cause for real celebration out here on the windy cliffs at Waitpinga. The successful fledging of a Sea Eaglet mid January was only the second such occurrence on the Fleurieu Peninsula in 15 years, so I reckon we can be forgiven for being a bit over-excited about it all.

The young eagle has been christened 'Clew', named after one of the positive characters from the book 'Stoner Eagles' by William Horwood. Clew was 'late' coming to prominence in the story. Incidentally, Terry Dennis recommends this book highly.

After so many failed breeding attempts it has been a joy to observe the juvenile with his parents over these past months and learn more of their behaviour. It has been a real privilege and thrill to be able to observe young Clew's progress toward 'eagledom'. I've really enjoyed watching his 'flight training' and hunting exercises as mum and dad put him through his paces. It has been great to see how well Clew is mastering his manoeuvres and from my observations is quite independent now.

Although Clew is nearly 7 months old, he is still hanging out at home with Mum and Dad. While the group appear to be a cohesive family unit for the

time being, occasionally observed flying off together to roost for the night; it probably won't be long before young Clew is 'shown the door' by his parents who have already begun to display some courtship behaviour. Just last week I saw what looked like Clew being chased away from West Island by one of the adults. It looked like Mum or Dad might be giving Clew the nudge to leave home. Some teenagers don't want to give up the comfort and perks of home, hey?

While it is inevitable that Clew will eventually have to make his own way in the world, I have to say that I will feel a bit sad to see him go. Each sighting has been a highlight. It's been such a joy watching him grow and develop and learn all the new skills that will ensure his future as a strong and healthy adult Sea Eagle as he goes out to explore the world and eventually find a territory and mate of his own.

It is a privilege being able to daily monitor the movements of the White-bellied Sea Eagle pair. Let's hope there are no disturbances during this coming season and they successfully fledge young again. Stay tuned for the next exciting episode.

NB. Clew's gender is still unknown. I've used the masculine forms 'he' and 'his' for convenience sake.

Elizabeth Steele-Collins

Past General Meetings

FRIDAY JANUARY 29

Vice-president Dan Rogers introduced Tom Hunt, who is completing his PhD at The University of Adelaide. Tom gave an enthusiastic talk about the research he is undertaking for his PhD on **'Birds in Black Box. — The value of Murray River floodplains to woodland birds.'**

Black Box woodlands are found between the Mallee areas of the drier and higher elevations above the river and the River Red Gum woodlands fringing the river. The Black Box woodlands are found on the more elevated floodplains and as a result are flooded much less frequently, but they can survive for many decades without floodwater as long as groundwater is available or rainfall is sufficient.

The floodplain woodlands support a wide variety of woodland birds that include a number of bird species that are typically thought of as 'Mallee' species

Black Box woodlands are thought to act as 'refugia' for woodland bird species in the region because they provide a more productive, more mesic environment, especially during drought, or else they may be critical during certain seasons. However, very little is known about the exact role that Black Box plays for these bird communities.

The Murray-Darling Basin has undergone widespread alterations to its hydrology, to the point where floods now occur 1/3rd less frequently than they did historically, and even when there are sufficient flows, flood magnitude is also significantly reduced. As a result Red Gums die from a lack of flooding. Despite being hardy, Black Box trees still require a lens of freshwater in soil from which they take moisture. If floods or rainfall do not provide freshwater, it is sourced from groundwater. Due to increasing dryland salinity problems, groundwater can have toxic levels of salt. Without adequate flooding, Black Box trees are susceptible to damage and degradation from salinity. Because of this, we are seeing a widespread decline in the condition of these woodlands in South-eastern Australia, and as a result very little recruitment of seedlings has occurred in the last 50 years

Tom's PhD was driven by the following key questions:

- Are bird assemblages in Black Box woodland unique?
- Do different bird species use Black Box, Red Gum and mallee woodlands differently, and does this use change seasonally?
- If Black Box communities deteriorate, how will birds respond at a local scale and at a landscape scale?

- Will species be able to adapt, or even disappear from the landscape?

To answer these questions, Tom set up three sites to survey woodland birds. These sites were at Chowilla Game Reserve, Calperum Station and Katarapko (which is now part of Murray River National Park). Each location had survey sites in Red Gum, Mallee, and both healthy and degraded Black Box. This has allowed a comparison of the bird communities each habitat type supports. Birds are probably responding to both resources and structural habitat components and, unsurprisingly, as they degrade, there is a reduction in bird numbers and loss of a distinct bird community.

In 2014, surveys were also undertaken at sites along the Loxton riverfront, Rili Reach, Thiele Flat and 4 other locations on the Clarks Floodplain, which had been augmented with water. The most obvious outcome is that the watered sites had the highest bird diversity of any habitat category, even higher than healthy Black Box sites, whereas the diversities of all other sites were roughly the same.

Given the dynamic nature of these bird populations, if Black Box woodlands continue to decline — and under the current MDB scheme they probably will — the decline will threaten not only the bird community that uses them, but potentially the diversity and abundance of other woodland bird communities on a regional scale.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 26

Vice-president Dan Rogers introduced the speaker Grace Hodder, who is a PhD candidate at The University of Adelaide. Grace gave a talk entitled **'Diamonds Aren't Forever: The Ecology of the Diamond Firetail in the Mount Lofty Ranges'**.

Diamond Firetails (DFT) are small *Estrildid* finches weighing about 17g. The name is due to the white diamonds on flanks. They are seed eaters, foraging mainly on the ground, taking seeds from the surface and straight from grasses or forbs. They occur in small flocks through most of the year; but in pairs or singly during breeding season, which is typically September to March. They are endemic to woodlands and open forests of temperate, semi-arid areas of SE Australia.

In the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 they are listed in Schedule 8 as a vulnerable species. Diamond Firetails are contracting from southern areas and are now in highly fragmented sub-populations throughout eastern flanks and northern Mount Lofty Ranges.

Why are Diamond Firetails declining?

Past General Meetings (cont.)

- Habitat clearance is widely accepted as having a major role in this species' decline
- However, the specific processes affecting the ongoing survival of DFTs remain unknown
- Being predominantly ground-foragers, they are particularly susceptible to disturbances in the ground-layer
- Invasive weeds, changes in the composition of grass and forb communities, and altered grazing regimes can affect the distribution and abundance of food resources for ground-foragers
- Diamond Firetails also have a history of being trapped as aviary pets, which contributed to their initial population decline.

'What is contributing to their ongoing decline?' and 'how can their habitat best be managed?' are two questions that Grace is trying to answer. Her six study areas range from Milang up to Mount Karinya in the Barossa Valley. Each of the study areas is at least 16km from all the others, so that the chance of sub-populations mixing between areas is very low. Within each study area Grace has three separate sites at which she is monitoring DFTs and their food resources.

Mist-nets were set up around the troughs, feeders and in higher traffic areas. Birds were colour banded and motion sensor cameras allowed colour-tagged individuals visiting the resource points to be identified, and their survival to be followed through the year and subsequent monitoring years. Some preliminary statistics on Grace's survival studies show a huge difference in winter survival in a supplemented compared with a non-supplemented population. The low survival at Rockleigh could indicate mortality of individuals during winter, or greater dispersal of birds going in search of seed elsewhere. It is also noteworthy that this site has an understory dominated by exotic grasses.

Grace has found that survival is far higher in supplemented populations. Survival is low in non-

supplemented populations. Is DFT mortality higher during winter or do the birds have to disperse elsewhere in search of food? There are many signs of breeding and of young birds, particularly at supplemented sites. Sightings of juveniles, immature birds and sub-adults in spring and summer provide evidence to suggest that the main issue is **not** nest predation or nestling health and survival. There is no evidence of predation or competition at resource points.

From past studies it is known that DFT eat seeds from a range of native grasses but their diet in the MLR is made up from 80% of weedy non-native species. Most of the native grass species in the

understory are perennials, whilst most of the weed species are annuals.

Native perennial grasses produce seed for a larger part of the year with seed heads in many different stages on the one plant. There are some ripe seeds whilst others are just ripening. On the other hand, introduced grasses generally produce all their seeds at once.

Grace has also found that Drooping She-oaks might be very important for DFT. They eat the seeds that are produced during the winter months when grass seeds are scarce and also use them for nesting sites. The She-oaks have suffered contractions in their range throughout

the Mount Lofty Ranges (MLR) that are similar to those of the DFTs.

Where supplementary seed is provided, each individual DFT visiting a feeder is recorded, together with the time each bird spends at feeders throughout the course of a day. This allows Grace to calculate their total daily intake at the feeder, and then compare this monthly. She can also compare their daily feeder intakes to their expected total daily caloric requirements, and she assumes that they are procuring the remainder of their needs from natural food sources. This then gives Grace an indication of the extent to which individuals are relying on the



Grace Hodder, speaker 26/2/2016

Past General Meetings (cont.)

supplementary feed at different times of the year; and it is a vicarious measure of the amount of natural seed that might be available at any given point in time.

Management implications:

- Food resources need to be actively managed. They should be given priority over predation controls and risks
- Rotational grazing might be important to keep grass from becoming thatchy as well as to keep ground-layer density down
- Farmland in the north of the State, which uses rotational grazing, is reasonably productive and diverse grassland with many DFTs.
- Grazing in remnant grassland from kangaroos/rabbits may be detrimental to seed supply. This matter was beyond the scope of Grace's PhD and needs to be looked at further
- In areas where food resources are clearly scarce during winter and DFTs struggling to survive, perhaps we need to actively supply supplement seed until a better natural resource base can be established.

To help DFT populations Grace made the following suggestions:

- Reinstate native grassland — but don't remove all weeds!
- Keep oats or veldt from becoming thatchy
- Plant she-oaks and protect seedlings from kangaroos.



Amy Slender, speaker 1/4/2016

FRIDAY APRIL 1

Vice-President Dan Rogers introduced the speaker Amy Slender, a PhD student from Flinders University. Prior to starting her current project Amy's research had been in the medical field. Her talk for the evening was '**Unique populations need unique conservation strategies**' dealing mainly with the Thick-billed Grasswren (TBGW).

The TBGW is a member of the *Maluridae* family, weighing about 20g. It is a ground-dwelling bird and difficult to see. It inhabits chenopod (saltbush)

shrubland and gibber plains. Seven subspecies have been described, of which two are extinct.

Amy gave her audience a brief outline of the differences between species and subspecies. An example of the biological species concept is the horse and the donkey. Their offspring is the mule, which is infertile. Subspecies are geographically isolated but they can interbreed and they might become new species.

Over the past 100 years the range of the TBGW has contracted considerably. TBGW (*Amytornis modestus*) are registered on the EPBC list as vulnerable. Arrium Mining operates an iron ore mine very near some TBGWs and provided money towards a Biodiversity Offset that was managed by

Nature Foundation SA on behalf of Arrium. This project was then contracted to the Birdlab, Flinders University in order to learn more about the TBGW and so assist with their conservation. There is some contention about whether there are actually so many subspecies and Amy is interested in how we can define groups based on genetics.

She described the genetic work she was carrying out with two TBGW subspecies (*A. m. indulkanna* and *A. m. raglessi*). Targeted mist netting was carried out and blood samples were collected from 237 birds for extraction of DNA. Results have shown that these two TBGW subspecies are genetically distinct and should be recognised as populations that have a

potential to become different species.

Amy acknowledged help with her project from the following organisations — Nature Foundation SA, Flinders University, SA Museum, Birds SA, Nature Conservation Society of SA, BirdLife Australia, Royal Society of SA and the Field Naturalists Society of SA.

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 JUNE 24

'The Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary – How far have we come, and where are we going?'
Representatives of The Collective and DEWNR staff who are involved in the development of this initiative will make the presentation.

FRIDAY JULY 29

Mid-winter Members' Night

Please submit offers of short talks or other items to Daniel Rogers before mid-July so that the whole evening's programme can be arranged.
A supper of delicious soups, with rolls, will be provided before the meeting.

FRIDAY AUGUST 26

Chris Hedger (DEWNR) will talk about the status of threatened Mallee birds.



Masked Woodswallows,
photographed by Bryan Haywood
at Geegeela CP in October 2015

THE BABBLER, BIRD WATCHING FIELD TRIPS OF THE PORT AUGUSTA GROUP
PROGRAMME JUNE to AUGUST 2016

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>MEET AT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
Sunday 19 th . June	-- Boolcunda Creek	-- Quorn pool	8:30 am
Sunday 17 th . July	-- Telowie Gorge	-- Hiway1, Pt. Germein Gorge turn off	8:00 am
Sunday 28 th . August	-- Bernies Block	-- Mambray Creek parking bay	8:00 am

Please bring Sturdy Footwear, Hat, Sun Protection, Morning Tea, Lunch if staying longer and Binoculars.

For further information contact:-

Peter - 86425723 / 0457708859 or Greg - 86486630 / 0459088052
or Bernie - 0419863834

Past Excursions

Magazine Road and Barker Inlet Wetlands Dry Creek – 13 February

Twenty-six members of Birds SA gathered for a walk around Stage 3 of the Greenfields Wetlands. From recent visits by others we knew that the pond in front of the hide was dry, and the water level in the pond nearest the car park was high, so we would minimise our shorter than usual attention of the two ponds near the car park and then check out the adjacent Barker Inlet Wetlands. We split into two groups, one walking along the west bank toward the hide and the other the track between the ponds. Only one migratory wader species was observed, three Wood Sandpipers, but Black-fronted Dotterel, including young adults, were numerous. A single Red-capped Plover was also noted. Apart from the expected mix of water birds the main highlights were, Nankeen Night Heron, Royal Spoonbill and several Long-billed Corellas (in addition to Little Corellas) flying overhead. The pond immediately in front of the hide was bone dry but did yield numerous White-fronted Chats. A total of 44 species was recorded.

We proceeded to the Barker Inlet Wetlands later in the morning in the hope of seeing some migratory waders. Due to time constraints we limited our walk to the main track proceeding as far as the little rise overlooking the area at the start of South Road. We were rewarded with sightings of several Common Greenshanks and small groups of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. Seven species of duck were seen including Freckled and Pink-eared, Shoveler and Shelduck and both Grey and Chestnut Teal. White-winged Fairy-wrens were abundant. Another Royal Spoonbill was counted amongst a large group of Pelicans. This area would be a good location for a full mornings visit. Coincidentally we also recorded 44 species here some of which differed from those seen at our first location.

We all enjoyed a pleasant morning during which a total of 57 species was recorded.

Martyn Price

Scott Creek Conservation Park – 18 February

A happy gathering of 24 Birds SA members attended the Scott Creek excursion, which was led by Graham Bates who knows the area well. The weather was perfect and while the birds were relatively quiet we did manage to see a total of 35 species during the morning.

Unfortunately, I shredded the bird list before writing up this report so I am most grateful to those who contributed their lists of species seen to enable a reconstruction to be carried out. I therefore will not

indicate numbers of the species we saw. These included Collared Sparrowhawk, Dusky Moorhen, Fan-tailed and Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Galah, Rainbow Lorikeet, Adelaide Rosella, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb Fairy-wren, Eastern Spinebill, Red Wattlebird, Crescent Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Grey Currawong, Australian Magpie, Australian Golden Whistler, Grey Fantail, Magpie-lark, Little Raven, White-winged Chough, Scarlet Robin, Silvereye, Common Starling, Mistletoebird, Red-browed Finch and European Goldfinch.

It is always pleasing to get up close to a Koala, and members were treated to such an encounter during lunch with an obliging head-height encounter. There were about half a dozen other sightings of Koalas with quite a few quite close to the ground.

Lynton Huxley

Thompson Beach – 28 February

A fine and mild morning saw 36 members and guests, including 12 Riverland Field Naturalists, assemble for an 8:00 am start at Thompson Beach. As our walk coincided with a BirdLife Australia event there were people everywhere. A little forward planning meant that we managed to not get in each other's way. With a high tide of 2.2 metres just before 8:00 am we were able to start at the northern end of the beach before moving to the extreme southern end to continue our visit.

With the tide receding slowly we managed good sightings of Red Knots, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and a large number of Red-necked Stints to start the day. These birds were joined by a group of Grey Plovers towards the end of our stay at the northern end of the beach. As usual there was a good number of Ruddy Turnstones and Pacific Gulls, including several immature birds.

At the southern end of the beach, several roosting areas provided good views of around 4,000 Banded Stilts and good numbers of Red-necked Stints (~1,000), Pied Oystercatchers (70), Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (90) and Pied Cormorants (200). A flock of ~2,000 Little Black Cormorants was also observed flying past. Further Red Knots were also observed at the southern end of the beach, along with 50 Curlew Sandpipers. The sighting of Curlew Sandpipers was especially pleasing as numbers have been generally low in recent years. The surprising sighting was a solitary Fairy Tern.

Past Excursions (cont.)

The final tally for the day was 42 species, including 14 species of shorebirds.

It was pleasing to see so many members and guests at this field trip and I hope that all had a rewarding morning.

Brian Walker

Riverglades and Rocky Gully Wetlands Murray Bridge – 12 March

A public holiday long weekend on the Murray River was never going to provide a totally peaceful setting, or so that appeared, as our small group of 15 members met at the car park along with about 60 ski-boat revellers. However, we were lucky. The Princess Paddle steamer glided past at the start of our walk and this majestic old-timer appeared to calm those new sleek ski toys and our circuit of the Riverglades Wetlands was very peaceful. The weather was also very kind with a cooling breeze and some cloud cover.

A total of 54 species was recorded here including sightings of Black Swan (20), Pacific Black Duck (20), Australasian Shoveler (14), Grey Teal (40), Australasian Grebe (14), Australasian Darter (10), Cormorants included Little Pied (15); Little Black (2) and Great (4), Australian Pelican (30), White-faced Heron (2), Australian White Ibis (5), Royal Spoonbill (1), Whistling Kite (6), Spotless Crake (4), Eurasian Coot (400), Wood Sandpiper (1), White-headed Stilt (10), Red-kneed Dotterel (4), Little Corella (1000+), Purple-crowned Lorikeet (2), Rainbow Lorikeet (6), Red-rumped Parrot (6), Superb Fairy-wren (20), White-plumed Honeyeater (10), New Holland Honeyeater (20), Welcome Swallow (30), Tree Martin (6), Australian Reed-Warbler (6) and Little Grassbird (6).

After lunch a smaller group of about 10 members drove to the Rocky Gully Wetlands site with this walk providing a total of 30 species including 5 – Chestnut Teal (30), Black Kite (1), Nankeen Kestrel (2), Weebill (5), White-browed Babbler (4) – that had not been recorded during our morning visit to Riverglades. Also worthy of mention is that over 100 Straw-necked Ibises were seen grazing here where only a single bird had been observed at Riverglades.

Lynton Huxley

Hindmarsh River & Estuary – 17 March

Fifteen people gathered for this excursion, which started from the car park on Bridge Road in Victor Harbor. It was a warm to hot and rather humid day, fine at first and then with scattered clouds. It began quite still but a breeze with occasional stronger gusts sprang up later in the morning, which was rather a relief.

Neil Cheshire from Fleurieu Birdwatchers kindly agreed to meet us and direct us to the best sites.

We first visited the coastal lagoon via the Lagoon Trail where we saw White-faced Heron (1), Crested Tern (1), Dusky Moorhen (2) and Eurasian Coot (1). It was fairly quiet along the boardwalk and the most numerous birds encountered were, unfortunately, Common Starlings (10) and House Sparrows (30). However, it was an interesting area and we enjoyed a close up view of several White-browed Scrubwren (6) that were hanging about along a section of the boardwalk through the trees.

We then drove north along the river to the start of the McCracken Trail off Wattle Drive. We walked north-east along the McCracken Trail to just past the McCracken Playground and Picnic area. This area was very popular with the local honeyeaters and we saw Red Wattlebird (15), Little Wattlebird (1), Singing HE (12), White-plumed HE (12), White-naped HE (2), New Holland HE (25) and Eastern Spinebill (2). Grey Fantail (3), Willy Wagtail (2), Superb Fairy-wren (12) and Welcome Swallow (30) flitted about energetically and we also saw a Dusky Woodswallow and a Brown Goshawk passing overhead.

Two species we particularly wanted to see also put in an appearance. A Spotted Pardalote was found in one of those 'hotspots' one often encounters after seeing no birds for a while. In this 'busy' area we also saw or heard Silvereye (3), Striated Thornbill (5), Red-browed Finch (2) and Weebill (4).

We had almost given up on Crested Shrike-tit when one member of the group announced that, after consulting her field-guide, she thought she had seen one a short time before but was not sure, at the time, what it was. This elicited a mixture of excitement and chagrin and a bit of cheerful teasing as to who had finally seen (or not as the case might be) the most sought after bird of the day! Luckily however, a Crested Shrike-tit (possibly the same one?) soon appeared and everyone managed to get a look.

After this satisfactory outcome we returned to where we had parked our cars and had lunch beneath some shady trees. We were unable to proceed to the Nangawooka Flora Reserve as originally intended due to road-works on the road into Victor. However, this area is well worth a visit if you like both birds and native plants.

The final total for the day was 38 species. Thanks to Neil Cheshire for his assistance in visiting this pleasant and interesting area.

Ali Ben Kahn

Past Excursions (cont.)



Enjoying the Easter Campout

BIRDS SA EASTER CAMPOUT 25-28 MARCH

All 35 attendees enjoyed a very successful Easter Campout this year. While a few members stayed at the local hotel, most enjoyed the excellent facilities of the Keith Caravan Park. Many people spent a couple of extra days to take in local attractions as well as doing some serious birding.

One of the main campout aims was to conduct an Upper Southeast bird survey of nearby scrub and Conservation Parks to update our knowledge and records. This meant that some extra driving was required, but with the expert local knowledge of David Sando (our resident Birds SA member) as a guide, we were able to more easily access the District's birding hot spots. David also enlisted the support of Jenny McInerney to assist our group with her local knowledge of the Mount Monster area survey that we carried out on Saturday morning. Their contribution to our campout was of great value and much appreciated.

Another aim of this campout was to socialise and have fun and I believe this was also a success with the daily happy hour and our Sunday barbeque lunch getting new and regular attendees talking about all manner of things. Some members have partners who are not 'birders' and it was great to see them join in. A special thank you is extended to Enid's hubby Graeme who toiled on the barbeque cooking a seemingly endless supply of bacon and eggs.

Our bird survey work this campout was a little different in that we undertook to also complete atlas cards for each of the dozen or so sites visited. This involved collecting statistics on presence of birds, abundance, breeding status etc. and I am most grateful for the work done by all attendees in collecting that data. In particular I acknowledge the monumental effort of Kate Buckley for skilfully

consolidating and collating the data onto a single site-, date- and time-specific card.

Altogether we identified 85 species during the course of the Campout, with many Members getting excellent views and photos of Malleefowl. Ted Hudson took some excellent photos of a Southern Emu-wren in Gum Lagoon Conservation Park, but unfortunately most people failed to see that species on this trip.

Members' binoculars and cameras saw plenty of action with Australian Golden Whistlers, Fan-tailed Cuckoos, White-fronted Chats, Australian Owlet-nightjars, Jacky Winters, Purple-crowned and Musk Lorikeets allowing close quarter viewing. It was pleasing that we saw over 30 species at the caravan park!

On behalf of all who attended this campout, I again wish to extend our thanks to David Sando for his enthusiastic support with planning and leading our daily surveys and for sharing his considerable knowledge of local birding areas.

Lynton Huxley

P.S. Don't miss out on attending the Birds SA October Long Weekend Campout from 1st to 3rd of October. We are scheduled to continue our Southeast bird mapping with a visit to Conservation Parks and forest reserves around the Kingston and Robe area. Information about this event will be published in the August Newsletter.

Whites Road Wetlands – 9 April

Sixteen members met at the venue on a fine autumn morning. It was good to welcome some new, and some relatively new members to the walk. The overall number however was disappointing bearing in mind the short distance of this wetland from the city.

Past Excursions (cont.)

The March rainfall of about 40mm provided reasonable water levels in some of the ponds, but others had not benefitted at all and were bone dry. The mosquitoes have apparently also enjoyed the recent rain and the group had to apply insect repellent before setting off.

The large middle pond was about 40% full of water and had the highest number of birds. We did spend some time on the back track looking for White-winged Fairy-wren for a few who had not seen them at this site, but to no avail.

In all we saw 46 species and recorded a total of 810 birds.

This included one of each of four raptors, Whistling Kite, Black-shouldered Kite, Nankeen Kestrel and Collared Sparrowhawk. Of the ducks Chestnut Teal were most abundant and we counted 163, there were 79 Grey Teal and 53 Pacific Black. We also saw 2 Australasian Shovelers and 8 Pink-eared Ducks. Shorebirds were scarce with only 8 Black-fronted Dotterels, 3 Red-kneed Dotterels, 1 Masked Lapwing and no Black-winged Stilts

There were only a few each of Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen and Eurasian Coot. Of the eight Australasian Grebes seen, three were well-developed juveniles.

Further along the bitumen track we counted 102 Rainbow Lorikeets, some of which appeared to be busy examining hollows, and 8 Musk Lorikeets. Other high counts were New Holland Honeyeater, Red Wattlebird, Welcome Swallow, Crested Pigeon and Superb Fairy-wren.

There is some major earthworks/construction in progress adjacent to wetland but no one knew what it could be.



**Purple Swamphen, photographed by Barbara Bansemer
Tamar Island Wetland, Launceston on 1.3.16**

The walk ended at about noon and we gathered at the nearest pond to eat our lunch and carry out our bird call.

Rod Tetlow

Montacute Conservation Park – 21 April

Sometimes members are not able to attend outings on the other side of town because of the 8.30am start time and busy traffic conditions (I have used that excuse too). To show us a good example, one of our attendees today drove the 450km round trip from Keith just to go on our Montacute excursion!

Well-done

David Sando!
The threat of a possible light shower did not materialise and conditions were ideal for the sixteen members who assembled at the end of a narrow, windy road ready for the steady gradients of Montacute.

A total of 29 species were seen on the day including Wedge-tailed Eagle (2), Brown Goshawk (1), Laughing

Kookaburra (1), Yellow-tailed and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (2 & 20), Galah (10), Rainbow Lorikeet (60), Musk Lorikeet (6), Adelaide Rosella (20), White-throated Treecreeper (6), New Holland Honeyeater (20), Crescent Honeyeater (2), White-naped Honeyeater (8), Red Wattlebird (4), Yellow-faced Honeyeater (4), Spotted Pardalote (2), Striated Pardalote (60), White-browed Scrubwren (2), Australian Magpie (6), Grey Currawong (8), Varied Sittella (6), Australian Golden Whistler (3), Grey Fantail (6), Little Raven (6), Tree Martin (2), Silveryeye (2), Red-browed Finch (6), Superb Fairywren (10), White-winged Chough (4) and undetermined Woodswallows (6).

Lynton Huxley

Future Excursions

Field Trip and campout Co-ordinator, Lynton Huxley

Phone: 0498 466 092 or 08 7009 5038

Email: fieldtrips@birdssa.asn.au

huxley@adam.com.au

or

A leader has been appointed for each excursion, but another person might like to write a report of the excursion. The report, submitted to the Field Trip Co-ordinator, must include the number of attendees, birds seen or heard, the weather and any other interesting events on the day.

Please inform the FGC if you have not yet led an excursion, but are willing to lead one in the future. Your assistance to the Association in this role will be greatly appreciated.

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

Sunday 29 May: Swan Reach Conservation Park (MM) (113km).

This Park is approximately 16km east of Sedan on the road to Swan Reach. Meet at the entrance into the Park, which is on the right, opposite the road to Yookamurra, at 8.30am.

TRIP LEADER: Brian Walker

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

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

TRIP LEADER: Brian Walker

Thursday 16 June:

Charleston Conservation Park (MLR) (38km)

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

TRIP LEADER: Rod Tetlow

Sunday 26 June: Newland Head Conservation Park (MLR) (120km)

Meet at 8.30am in the car park/camping area by the old house. Travel to Victor Harbor and then head west towards Waitpinga, Two km beyond Waitpinga, turn left to Waitpinga Beach. As you descend to the beach, the park is on the left-hand side.

TRIP LEADER: Wyn Syson

Saturday 9 July: Laratinga Wetlands, Mt Barker (MLR) (34km)

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

TRIP LEADER: John Gitsham

Thursday 21 July: Browns Road, Monarto (MLR) (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.

TRIP LEADER: Martyn Pryce

Sunday 31 July: Altona CSR Landcare Reserve (MLR) (55km)

Meet at 8.30am at the reserve entrance at the top of Altona Road. Travel through Lyndoch towards Tanunda. As you leave Lyndoch town centre take the first turning left into Altona Road. This is just past the 100km/h speed limit sign.

TRIP LEADER: Rod Tetlow

Saturday 13 August: Black Hill Conservation Park (MLR) (12km)

Meet at 8.30am at the Addison Ave, Athelstone Entrance. Unfortunately, parking spaces near the start are limited. We start with quite a climb but it is worthwhile. We will take it at a gentle pace.

TRIP LEADER: Martyn Price

Thursday 18 August: 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.

TRIP LEADER: Martyn Price

Sunday 28 August: 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. Enter through the gate on the left and follow the track to the car park area. Meet at 8.30am.

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

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 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).

Brown Quail

5, 14/2/2016. Thompson Beach, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

1, 18/2/2016. Flinders University, Native Flora Park, MLR.

Pfeiffer, P.

2, 21/2/2016. Weroona Island, LN.

Haase, B.

1, Feb 2016. Port Augusta Arid Lands Botanic Garden, NW.

Langdon, P.

6, 27/4/2016. Craighburn Farm, MLR.

Gates, J.

Also ongoing reports from scattered localities.

Blue-billed Duck

80, 21/3/2016. Happy Valley Reservoir, MLR.

Paton, P.

Groups often occur on reservoirs and sewage works lagoons at this time of year.

Australian Shelduck

70, 10/4/2016. Ardrossan, YP. Roosting along shore and in sea.

Taylor, P.W.

Peaceful Dove

1, 26/3/2016. Bedford Park, Riverside Reserve, AP.

Stead, M.

Peaceful Doves were relatively common and breeding around Adelaide until the end of the 1930s. This coincides with the accidental release of Spotted Doves in 1931.

Spotted Nightjar

1, 8/4/2016. ENE of Maitland, YP.

Randall, L. & Jack, T.

Rarely reported from Yorke Peninsula.

Fork-tailed Swift

Several reports of low numbers on 8-9 March 50+, 8/3/2016. Whyalla, EP.

Smith, E. and Harper, D.

4, 8/3/2016. Bald Hill Beach, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

30, 9/3/2016. 10 km S Pimba, NW.

Also 200, 25 km NW Port Augusta and 20, Port Augusta West.

Pedler, R.

Australasian Darter

1, 21/3/2016. Happy Valley Reservoir, MLR.

Paton, P.

1, 24/4/2016. Balaklava racecourse ponds, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

Australian White Ibis

227, 8/2/2016. Port Wakefield, AP. Feeding in stony paddock. Increasing numbers seen in this district.

Taylor, P.W.

White-bellied Sea Eagle

Adult, 17 and 27/1/2016. Whyalla, EP.

Smith, E.

1 immature, 8/3/2016. Bald Hill Beach, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

2, 16/4/2016. St. Kilda, AP.

McCreadie, D.

Osprey

1, 6/3/2016. Cape Douglas, SE.

Humphreys, K. & J.

Very rarely reported from SE, with one previous report from Lake Batty, Robe, by E. Lawson and V. Natt on 14/1/1990 (SAOA Newsletter 134).

Grey Falcon

1, 27/3/2016. Strzelecki Track, N of Merty Merty HS, NE.

Pedler, R.

Black Falcon

7, 8/3/2016. 4 km E Port Wakefield, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

Australian Bustard

1, 5/4/2016. Brookfield CP, MM. Photograph supplied.

Facelli, J.

First report for this park.

Sooty Oystercatcher

several, 17/4/2016. Port Stanvac jetty, MLR.

Bainbridge, A.

Bird Records (cont.)

Bush Stone-curlew

1, April 2016. Newland Head CP, MLR.

Paton, D.

One bird was also reported in the Waitpinga district in the 1990s suggesting that there is some dispersal from Kangaroo Island where, in the absence of foxes, the species is relatively common.

Double-banded Plover

19, 9/4/2016. Bald Hill Beach, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

Oriental Plover

3, 19/12/2015. Thompson Beach, AP.

Brooker, W.

Most coastal reports of this species are on very hot days.

American Golden Plover

1, 5/3/2016. Tolderol Game Reserve, MM.

Stokes, M.

Seen again on 6/3/2016.

Rogers, C.; Stokes, M. *et al.*

A second report for SA. The first was at Dry Creek Saltfields in November 2006. A detailed report has been submitted to National and State Rarities Committees. Field notes and photos show features that differ from the Pacific Golden Plover, which is regularly seen in this area. These include relatively long wings, heavier bill and browner plumage.

Hooded Plover

Pair + 2 juveniles, February 2016. Carrickalinga, MLR.

Moore, M.

Red Knot

250, 8/3/2016. Bald Hill Beach, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

Other interesting wader reports at this locality include:

Black-tailed Godwit

1, 22/3/2016.

Taylor, P.W.

Whimbrel

1, 13/3/2016.

Taylor, P.W.

Marsh Sandpiper

1, 29/3/2016. Port Clinton, YP.

Taylor, P.W.

Gull-billed Tern

2, 1/3/2016. Port Clinton, YP.

Taylor, P.W.

1, 8/2/2016. Port Arthur, YP.

Alcorn, M. and Taylor, P.W.

1, 1/3/2016. Onkaparinga wetlands, MLR.

Sparks, K.

Fairy Tern

100, 29/3/2016. Port Clinton, YP.

Taylor, P.W.

A large group of this now rare species.

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

1, 3/4/2016. Near Minlaton, YP.

Randall, L. & Jack, T.

Presumably the same individual reported near Minlaton in the last NL.

300, 19/4/2016. Woodcroft, over Education Rd, MLR.

Brooker, W.

Bourke's Parrot

6 + 4, 13/3/2016. Wilkatanna Stn, west part, NW.

Langdon, P.

Pied Honeyeater

Male, 9/1/2016. Whyalla, Mullaquana, EP. Bathing under sprinkler.

Smith, E.

Grey Fantail

1, 29/3/2016. Klemzig, Swan Ave, AP.

Buckley, K.

Hooded Robin

Female, 20/3/2016. 15 km SW Balaklava, AP.

Now rarely reported in this district.

Taylor, P.W.

White-backed Swallow

4, 18/4/2016. Moonta Bay, YP.

Also 3 at Moonta mines and 2 at Point Hughes.

Whatmough, R.

Red-whiskered Bulbul

2, Feb 2016. Houghton, MLR

3, Feb 2016. Mount Torrens, MLR. Feeding in town gardens.

Bird, P.

Biosecurity SA are interested in all sightings of this species, as well as of the Common (Indian) Mynah.

From the Library



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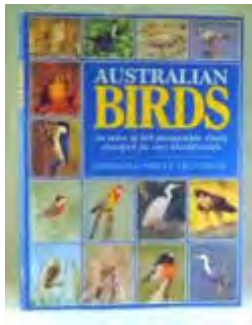
Hill, Robin

Australian Birds 2nd Ed.

Melbourne, Vic.: Thomas Nelson, 1976

ISBN 0170050777

Although published in 1976, this title contains beautiful illustrations and informative text on the birds of Australia, including vagrants and their habitats.



598.0994 TROb

Trounson, Donald

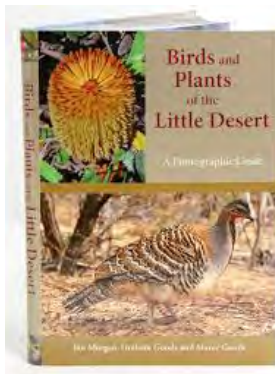
Australian Birds 2nd Ed.

Forest, NSW: PR Books, 1989

ISBN1875113193

This book is arranged in 2 parts. The 1st part covers land birds and the 2nd water birds.

The 864 photographs plus 115 illustrated plates assist the reader in identifying the 677 birds species recorded in this publication. Each species is matched with text and a distribution map on the opposing page.



598.29945 MOR

Morgan, Ian

Birds and Plants of the Little Desert: a photographic guide

Horsham, Vic.: I.L.Morgan, G.T. & I.M.Goods, 2014

ISBN 9780646914237

This book is illustrated with over 950 photographs, depicting more than 200 birds and 430 plants that live in the Little Desert. The majority of these photographs have been taken close enough to show the finer details of the individual birds and plants. Other photographs depict the general vegetation and various habitats.



598.29946 LLO

Lloyd, Sarah

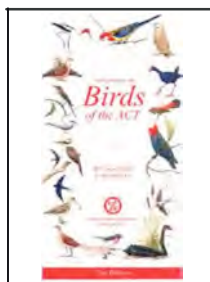
The Feathered Tribes of Van Diemen's land

Birrale, Tasmania: Tympanocryptis Press, 2015.

ISBN 9780646944142

This book presents an introduction to the birds of Tasmania, including helpful tips on their habitats and where to find them. This is not a field guide, but it could be used as such, since it includes colour photographs of most forest birds found in Tasmania. The book is broken into sections to cover different types of habitats and lists the species of birds most likely to be encountered, such as garden birds, bush birds, birds on farms and birds of sea and shore.

From the Library {cont.}



598.29947 TAY.2

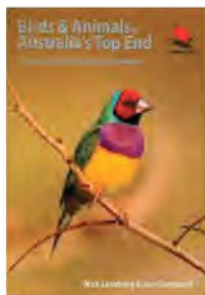
Taylor, McComas

Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT 2nd Ed.

Fyshwick, ACT: National Parks Association of the ACT Inc., 2013

ISBN 9780980285475

This revised edition of the Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT illustrates in colour 217 birds likely to be seen in and near the ACT. It has easy to follow descriptions in a compact format.



598.299429 LES

Leseberg, Nick

Birds and Animals of Australia's Top End: Darwin, Kakadu, Katherine and Kununurra

New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015

ISBN 9780691161464

This Field Guide features hundreds of stunning color photographs and includes concise information on identification and preferred habitat for each species. It provides a summary of each species' life history, including interesting habits, and suggestions on where to see it. Valuable tips are offered on searching for wildlife in the Top End. This book will enhance your appreciation of the region's remarkable wildlife, from Darwin south to Katherine and Kununurra, including Kakadu, Litchfield, Nitmiluk and Gregory National Parks.

Details of Photographs on pages 24 to 28

No:	Species	Photographer	Location	Date
1	Red-rumped Parrot	Peter McKenzie	Mannum	22/01/2016
2	Turquoise Parrot	Kay Parkin	Warby-Ovens NP (Vic)	July 2015
3	Gang-gang Cockatoo	Kay Parkin	Port Lincoln	July 2015
4	Laughing Kookaburra	Judy Thies		
5	Black Swan	Barbara Bansemer	Tamar Island Wetland, Launceston (Tas)	01/03/2016
6	Common Sandpiper	Peter McKenzie	Laratinga Wetlands	19/01/2016
7	Great Egret (facial breeding flush)	Peter McKenzie	Goolwa	16/01/2016
8	Tasmanian Nativehen	Barbara Bansemer	Tamar Island Wetland, Launceston (Tas)	01/03/2016
9	Blue-billed Duck	Peter McKenzie	Ballarat	18/02/2016
10	Golden-headed Cisticola	Kay Parkin	Tolderol	March 2016
11	Dusky Woodswallow	Bryan Haywood	Mingbool	19/10/2015
12	White-brewed Babbler	Peter McKenzie	Pine Point	26/12/2-15
13	Brown Treecreeper	Peter McKenzie	Mannum	22/01/2106
14	Singing Honeyeater	Barbara Bansemer	Robe	22/02/2105
15	White-brewed Woodswallow	Bryan Haywood	Eaglehawk Waterhole	25/11/2014
16	Crested Shriketit	Kay Parkin	Chiltern-Mt Pilot NP (Vic)	March 2016
17	Rainbow Bee-eater	Kay Parkin	Altona Landcare Reserve	March 2016
18	Southern Emu-wren (female)	Peter Owen	Coorong region	March/April 2016
19	Mallee Emu-wren	Kay Parkin	Hattah-Kulkyne NP (Vic)	March 2016
20	Bell Miner	Peter McKenzie	Melbourne	17/02/2016

About our Association

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 7.40pm.

Donations to the Birds SA Conservation Fund are tax-deductible

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Contact people: Peter Langdon 8642 5723,
Greg Bannon 8648 6630, Bernie Haase 0419 863 834

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Single concession*	\$45
Family/household concession*	\$55
Full-time students under 25 years)	\$10

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

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COPY DEADLINE

Copy for the August Newsletter is due by the July General Meeting (July 29). Contributions, 'Word' format preferred, can be recorded on a CD, emailed to either of my email addresses, or typed/handwritten neatly.

D newslettereditor@birdssa.asn.au

D cpy62284@bigpond.net.au

ABN 76 339 976 789

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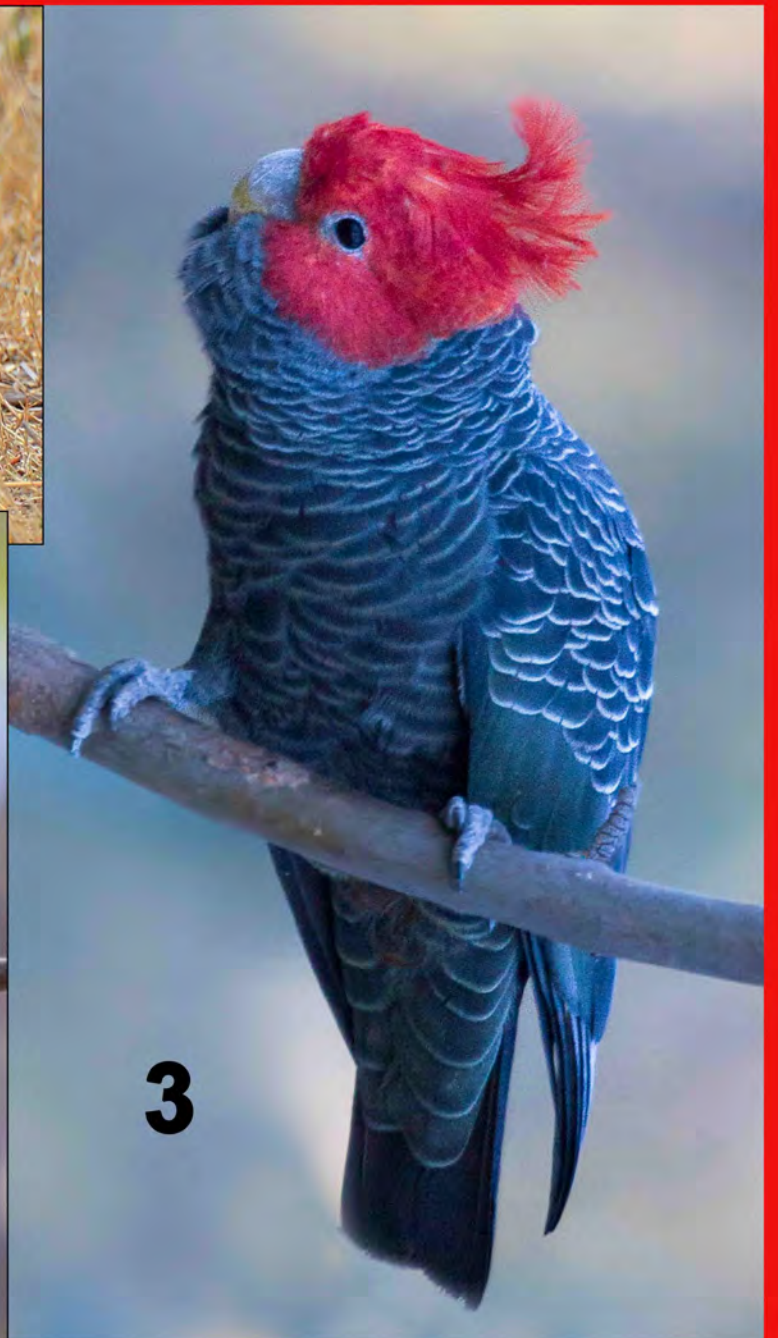
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Photos from Members and Friends

Details of the photos on the following pages can be found on page 22

A Page of Colourful Parrots



Brunch Time!

4



Various Water Birds



Brown(ish) Bush Birds



So Many Different Colours!

