

The BIRDER

The official magazine of Birds SA Winter 2019 No 250

In this Issue

Invitation to an exciting expedition

Fleurieu Birds KI campout plans

Snippets of interesting information



Linking people with birds
in South Australia

Come and
celebrate
our rich bird
diversity!



Bring your
Binoculars!
and a Gold
Coin Donation
for Birds SA

LARATINGA BIRDFAIR 2019



BIRD TALKS

BIRD EXPERTS

GUIDED
BIRD WALKS

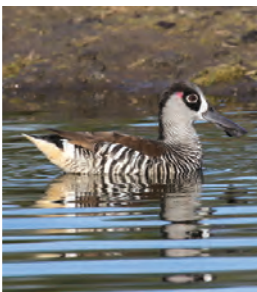
WORKSHOPS

BIRD
PHOTOGRAPHY

BIRD ID

NEST BOX
BUILDING

BIRD WATCHING
TECHNIQUES



SUNDAY 27th OCTOBER 10am - 4pm

Laratinga Wetlands
Bald Hills Road, Mount Barker

COMPETITIONS

MUSIC

GAMES AND
ACTIVITIES
FOR KIDS

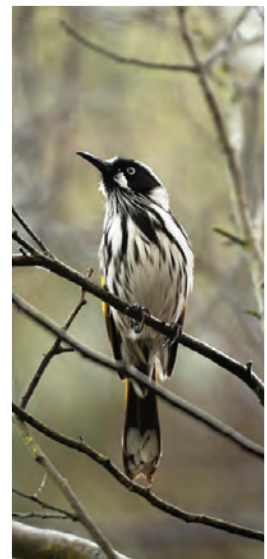
DISPLAYS

STALLS

FOOD AND
DRINKS



Program & speakers to be announced soon!



CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Diary of Events | 4 |
| President's Message | 5 |
| Birds SA Notes & News | 6 |
| Friends of the FAIBS | 8 |
| An invitation to an Exciting Expedition | 10 |
| A couple of Snippets | 12 |
| Birding Eyre Peninsula and the Nullabor | 13 |
| Past General Meetings | 16 |
| Future General Meetings | 21 |
| Past Excursions | 22 |
| Future Excursions | 31 |
| Bird Records | 34 |
| Bird of the Season | 37 |
| Birds SA Contact Details | 38 |
| New Members | 39 |
| A Newsworthy Bird | 40 |
| Members' photo Gallery | 41 |

CENTRE INSERT: SAOA HISTORICAL SERIES No: 68,
FRANK ELLIOT PARSONS, PART 1

The cover photograph, designed by John Gitsham, shows Silvereyes photographed by John at Bool Lagoon in January 2019.

We welcome 53 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on p32.

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.

Birds SA is the trading name of the South Australian Ornithological Association Inc. established in 1899. Birds SA affiliated with BirdLife Australia in March 2018. Birds SA is a non-government, non-profit organisation. It obtains its funding from memberships and donations from the public to run its programs and distribute its publications.

DIARY OF EVENTS

The following is a list the activities of **BIRDS SA**, **FLEURIEU BIRDERS (FB)** and **PORT AUGUSTA BIRDERS (THE BABBLERS) (PA)** for the next few months. Further details of all these activities can be found later in 'The Birder'.

| | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| Saturday 1 June | FB | Excursion to Scott CP |
| Sunday 2 June | Birds SA | Excursion to Sandy Creek |
| Saturday 15 June | Birds SA | Excursion to Brookfield CP |
| Sunday 16 June | PA | Excursion to Carriewerloo Station |
| Thursday 20 June | Birds SA | Excursion to Jenkins Scrub |
| Friday 28 June | Birds SA | General Meeting |
| Sunday 30 June | Birds SA | Excursion to White's Rd. Wetlands |
| Saturday 6 July | | |
| Saturday 6 July | FB | Excursion to Newland Head CP |
| Saturday 13 July | Birds SA | Excursion to Riverglades Wetlands, Murray Bridge |
| Saturday 13 July to Monday 15 July, PA, Campout at South Gap Station | | |
| Thursday 18 July | Birds SA | Excursion to Tangari Regional Park, Woodcroft |
| Friday 26 July | Birds SA | General Meeting |
| Sunday 28 July | Birds SA | Excursion to Cleland CP |
| Saturday 3 August | | |
| Saturday 3 August | FB | Excursion to Nurragi Reserve, Milang |
| Saturday 10 August | Birds SA | Excursion to Browns Rd. Monarto |
| Thursday 15 August | Birds SA | Excursion to Buckland Park, Port Gawler |
| Saturday 17 August to Monday 19 August, PA, Campout at Munyaroo CP | | |
| Friday 30 August | Birds SA | General Meeting |
| Saturday 7 Sept. | | |
| Saturday 7 Sept. | FB | TBA |
| Saturday 14 Sept. | Birds SA | Excursion to Tolderol Game Reserve |
| Sunday 15 Sept. | PA | Excursion to Bernie's Block |

Two Future Camppouts — Put these events in your diaries!!

Birds SA: Gluepot Reserve, 4 to 7 October

Fleurieu Birders: Kangaroo Island, 18 to 23 October

President's Message

Hi All Members,

It's been an extremely dry start to the year, the driest since 1888, as well as a dry autumn. Finally some good rains have fallen for the start of the coming winter. The birds have been reacting to these very dry conditions. Various species are moving around out of their normal range to look for water because their usual habitats have unfortunately been looking parched and have been struggling to provide their food needs. Hopefully with the rains, this will now change!

Now that the federal election is over, I hope the new government will act to change and improve the environmental laws to better protect our birds and their habitats, and ensure there is a fair and sensible balance between economic development and conservation. It is critical for the future health of our biodiversity; particularly as Australia's population increases and exerts more pressure on our limited natural resources and biodiversity.

It's interesting to see that the main stream media are finally picking up the story that 'walks in nature and bird watching' are good for your health. Many doctors are now prescribing a good dose of outdoor experience and recreation — something as birders we have known about for many years. The official condition of not connecting with nature is called "*Nature Deficit Disorder*" (NDD). Many adults and children particularly in the cities now suffer from it. In the UK, the official bird organisation the *Royal Society for the Protection of Birds* (RSPB) has been promoting birdwatching and nature walks as a way to decrease anxiety and depression. Many UK doctors have picked up on it, and now some doctors in Australia have also started to recognise this major health issue in modern societies. Many of our Australian children are suffering from *Nature Deficit Disorder* as they spend more time indoors on their computers. The modern house often lacks a backyard, and safety fears stop parents allowing children to go on adventures down to the local park or creek on their own (which we did when we were young).

I believe the resurgence in Birdwatching in SA and hence our massive growth in members (we've doubled our membership from about 400 five years ago, to over 970 today) is attributed to two things — the rise in digital photography, so that more people want to photograph birds and then want to know more about them; also people want to reconnect with nature. Watching birds is the easiest way to connect with nature. It is important that we connect our kids to nature or we will lose generations of future adults who care about birds, nature and our

biodiversity. This is already happening to some degree.

So, as members of Birds SA, if you have young kids, grandkids, nephews or nieces, please support them and encourage them to get involved with our "Fledglings" program, which is run by our dedicated volunteers. If that's not possible, at least take them for bird walks and show them how good birdwatching is as an outdoor activity. Through education, mentoring and the tactile experience of being in nature, we can promote and nurture conservation into the future.

Our kids are our future. Get behind them and help to raise a new generation of caring birders and nature lovers. Perhaps some of them will become ecologists and some might even become 'well informed' and caring conservation minded politicians, law makers and developers!!

Enjoy your winter birding and I'll see you out in nature.

John Gitsham

President Birds SA, May 2019



Read the next page if you don't recognise this person (he's not John)

Birds SA Notes & News

Sophie's Patch, Easter Weekend

Birds, bees and butterflies, as well as gardens, are always popular topics at Sophie's Patch — one particular "bee" was extremely popular.

Costa, from the ABC TV Programme, "Gardening Australia", arrived on Saturday 20th April, amidst a pall of dust. Over 3,000 people were attracted to Sophie's Patch on this day, so our volunteers, Barbara Wheaton, Merinda Hyland and Rose Slade were rushed off their feet at the Birds SA Stall.

On Easter Sunday the weather was better and many attendees lamented that they had been unable to come on the Saturday to see Costa, so when this amazing "bee" appeared smiles were everywhere. Again, our volunteers, Cynthia Pyle and Sue Gredley were kept busy answering questions about birds.

On Monday — though Costa had left, many people were still interested in Sophie's Patch, the birds, bees and butterflies. Alan Burns and Wendy Digby ably supplied information about birds and Birds SA.

Special thanks are offered to these wonderful Birds SA volunteers for giving up part of their Easter Weekend.

Kate Buckley.

Fledgling News

BioR and Birds SA combined to run a very successful "Fledglings" weekend on the 4th and 5th of May.

Thirty-eight children, accompanied by their Parents or Grandparents, attended one of the four different sessions. They enjoyed being able to look at our beautiful native birds at very close quarters.

David Paton spent time explaining the importance of habitat, protection and restoration, to the children and their family members. He also explained the value of banding the birds to gain knowledge relating to their habitat as well as their feeding and breeding cycles.

Fledglings were shown how to hold a bird correctly, and excited adults photographed their fledglings holding such gems as, Spotted Pardalote, Red-capped Robin, Varied Sitella, Southern White-face and a Hooded Robin. However, only the "experienced professionals" processed the Rosellas and the Butcherbird.

I should like to extend my appreciation to David and Penny Paton and all the BioR members for their assistance on Saturday and Sunday, and to Birds SA member, Jody Gates, for giving up his precious Saturday to support this important, educational event for the next generation.

Kate Buckley



Grace Hodder, BioR, explaining the differences between male and female Red-capped Robins



David Paton explaining the importance of maintaining and protecting habitat for these precious birds

Birds SA Notes & News (cont.)

CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE Treasures not Targets Exhibition

As previously reported, Birds SA has joined a coalition of organisations opposed to recreational hunting of native birds. Other members of this coalition include RSPCA SA, Fauna Rescue SA, Animal Justice Party and Animal Liberation SA. One strategy that the group is pursuing in its quest to have hunting of native birds banned in SA is to run a series of photographic exhibitions that highlight the wonderful appearance, diversity and behaviour of ducks found in our State. The images on display have been provided by some of Australia's finest wildlife photographers. The two photographs on this page form part of this exhibition. As well as the very positive photographs of ducks, the exhibition includes images of ducks that have been maimed by shooters as well as educational material on duck species and the impacts of hunting on ducks and quail.

Australian evidence suggests that between 26% and 45% of birds shot are wounded but not retrieved, often suffering a slow and painful death. The intention of the exhibition is to raise public awareness of this issue and to provide attendees with suggested actions that they can take to help end this cruel activity. A pamphlet has been produced that provides key points about duck and quail hunting and suggestions for individual actions.



Australian Wood Duck, photographed by Con Boekel

This pamphlet will be available at Birds SA General meetings.

A successful one-day version of the exhibition was displayed in the Armoury Building at the SA Museum on 15 March 2019 and another one-day showing took place in the RSPCA Advocacy Pavilion at The Million Paws Walk on 19 May 2019.

Next Showing: June 27, 28 & 29

Venue: The Joinery – 111 Franklin Street
Adelaide (entry from side street)

Time: 10.00am-6.00pm (June 27 & 28)
10.00am-4.00pm (June 29)

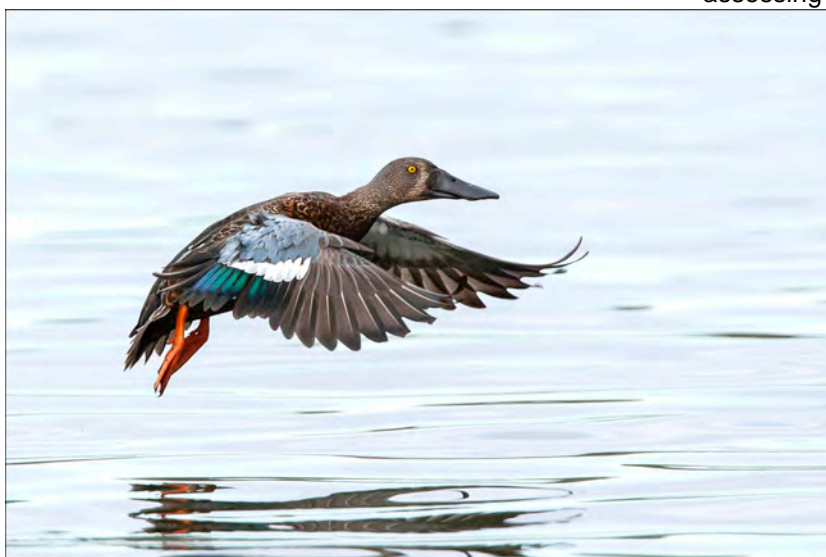
Other Activities

Other issues and activities currently being pursued by the Conservation Sub-Committee include:

- assessing the potential for reclamation of bird habitat adjacent to the River Murray at Mannum.
- supporting Coffin Bay members who are seeking to obtain better protection for shorebirds at Long Beach, Coffin Bay where there are large aggregations of Pied Oystercatchers.
- ongoing bird surveys at Bolivar Wastewater Treatment Plant, led by Bill Breed.

The Sub-Committee is always keen to hear of any bird-related issues that members become aware of, in which actions by Birds SA to address these issues could result in positive outcomes.

Jeff Groves



Australian Shoveler, photographed by Georgina Steytier

Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (FAIBS)



Pectoral Sandpiper(L) and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

During the past months, the Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary have been busy carrying out activities in the Sanctuary

In February we held a bird identification morning at St Kilda, where we discovered a great mix of migratory and resident shorebirds. In preparation for their upcoming departure to their northern hemisphere breeding grounds the migratory birds were colouring up and fattening up, looking plump and vital.

Amongst the Greenshanks and Banded Stilts an eagle-eyed observer spotted a Marsh Sandpiper; but the highlight of the day was a Pectoral Sandpiper standing next to a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper providing a great opportunity to determine the diagnostic difference between these similar species.

We find it most encouraging that new people continue to join our group activities. They hear the wonderful story of the migratory shorebirds that utilise the shores and habitat of the Gulf St Vincent as a terminal feeding area, before making the long return journey to their breeding grounds over 10,000km away.

On Sunday 17th March we visited Light Beach, a section of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary to which access is restricted, so is not often visited. Despite the low tide, we enjoyed viewing a few migratory shorebirds.

The species we spotted included: a lone Royal Spoonbill, Pied Oystercatchers, Banded Stilts, Pelicans, Australian

White Ibis, Eastern Great and Little Egrets, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red Capped Plovers, White Faced Herons, Pied Cormorants, Pacific and Silver Gulls, Red-necked Stints, Caspian Terns, Black Swans and Whistling Kites. The viewing session concluded with a visit by a large flock of over 30 Black Kites wheeling in the sky above the beach.

After our bird watching, we undertook a working bee that involved retrieving tree guards from prior plantings as well as rubbish collection.



Volunteers at Light Beach with part of their rubbish haul

Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (FAIBS) (cont.)

April saw FAIBS conducting maintenance at the Middle Beach boardwalk. This is one of the few areas where it is possible to catch a glimpse of the Samphire Thornbill. The tidal creeks, mudflats, mangroves and samphire provide an ideal habitat for these tiny birds and the boardwalk allows the public to get close to them without disturbing their environment or getting their feet wet and muddy.

Our volunteers spent time trimming back some of the overgrown sections of the trail, fixing the loose boards of the boardwalk and clearing up some of the debris brought in by recent storms, although the old TV we found probably required some human intervention to get there. We also took the opportunity to discuss plans for the future of this vital part of the sanctuary.

Upcoming FAIBS Planting Events in the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary:

If you would like to give back for your birding, consider joining us at the next FAIBS working bees, planting days supported by Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board and Adelaide Plains Council.

Sunday 16 June

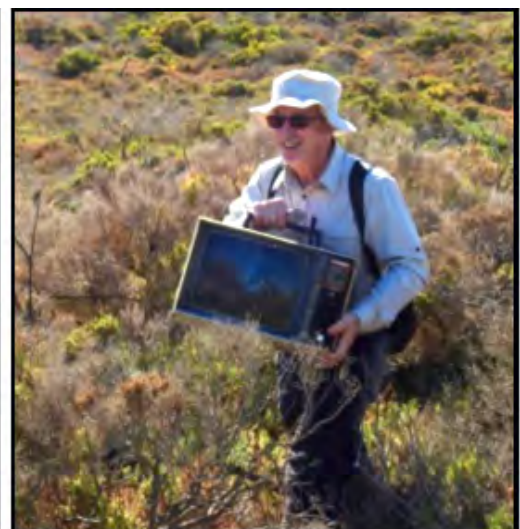
Port Gawler Mega Planting Day — 1,000 plants and a sausage sizzle lunch

Meet at 9 am in the car park near the off-road park

For further information on our activities contact FAIBS via email on faibssa@gmail.com



Middle Beach boardwalk



At work collecting rubbish and fixing fences at Middle Beach

An Invitation to Join An Exciting Expedition

An Expedition to the Islands that Darwin missed.

A 15 day cruise through the sub-Antarctic Islands of New Zealand and Macquarie Island

A once in a generation opportunity for bird enthusiasts including a scientific project involving 'food, faeces and feathers'!

29th December 2020 to January 13th 2021

Go boldly where few humans have been able to venture — to a geological 'Atlantis'; a biological and botanical 'Galapagos'.

Zealandia is the name given to a submerged micro-continent that holds New Zealand and its sub-Antarctic Islands, which constitute less than 10% of its full area. It is a large piece of continental crust that broke off from Australia some 80 million years ago, and then sank like its mythical counterpart Atlantis.

On this expedition we will travel through Zealandia's geological time, seeing the 100 million year old granites of the Snares and Auckland Islands, the ten million year old volcanics of the Auckland and Campbell Islands, and the younger basalts of the Antipodes at less than one million years old. The experience would not be complete without also visiting oceanic crust, helpfully raised up for us in the form of Macquarie Island, a biodiversity wonder of the world.

These islands have been designated UNESCO World Heritage sites because of their extraordinary and unique biodiversity.

This expedition will feature opportunities to explore, photograph and understand these wonderful places in the company of scientists Professor Phillip Weinstein from University of Adelaide and South Australian Museum, and Professor Steve Donnellan, the Museum's Chief Research Scientist and polymath extraordinaire

There will be many opportunities to leave the ship and land on the islands, as open sea passage-making will be limited to about three days. Every day of the program will involve wondrous attractions and

experiences, as well as the shipboard camaraderie that Waterhouse Club Expeditions are famous for.

Pinnipeds are in abundance on Enderby Island (Hookers Sea Lion), Macquarie Island (100,000

Elephant Seals and large Fur Seal colonies), Campbell Island (Sea Lions). We will see Hookers Sea Lion family life at close quarters as they play, nurture pups and settle territorial disputes. On Macquarie we will walk

through dense colonies of enormous Elephant Seals as they wallow contentedly between their deep-diving foraging expeditions.

Whale spotting is a good-natured competitive sport on Waterhouse Club expeditions. The seas between the islands are home to all the great whale species and Orcas, and many dolphins including the exquisite Hour Glass Dolphin likes to play around the bows of passing vessels.

Up close and personal with giant birds!

On Enderby Island the Southern Royal Albatross prepares a 30-metre landing strip for take offs and then after a gallop soars without a single flap. With their nesting sites a few metres from the boardwalk, you'll get a sense of just how big these birds are –like geese with wings that would do justice to a small glider.

The islands and oceans are a bird watcher's paradise. We will see Wandering, Royal, Black-browed, Light-Mantled

Sooty Albatross species, as well as having close encounters with Southern Royal Albatross on Enderby and the Shy Mollyhawk colony at South West Cape, Auckland Island. In between the islands photographers will find the ship is a perfect platform for capturing stunning seabird images as they follow in our wake.

Penguins are another feature of this expedition including Snares Crested and Yellow-eyed on the NZ islands. On Macquarie Island we will visit the vast colonies of Royal and King Penguins and become objects of curiosity ourselves as they waddle right up to us.



Southern Royal Albatross
Heritage Expeditions photograph

An Exciting Expedition (cont.)

Help collect wingless insects – how did they get there?

A special focus of the expedition will be non-flying insects. Led by Professor Phil Weinstein, we will collect insects for the Museum and test evolutionary questions with molecular techniques.

The Sub Antarctic Islands are home to a number of wingless insects; some have winged ancestors, like flies and wasps, but have lost their wings during millions of years of evolution in isolation on these islands. Others have always been unflighted, like springtails and fleas. We can guess that the ancestors of the former would have flown or blown in, but how the latter got there is less clear. By collecting specimens from different populations on different islands, we will be able to test hypotheses about dispersal, based on genetic studies that could show patterns consistent with windborne migration, rafting, or attachment to hosts like seabirds.

Expeditioners will be able to assist in the collection and classification of the insects, something that was a very popular part of the recent Nuyts Archipelago Insect Survey Expedition. Help us at the cutting edge of this relatively new science – phylogeography!

Food, faeces and feathers!

Many insects and mites live in birds' nest, both because they are warm, and because they contain an easily exploitable food supply. Bird mites suck blood from nestlings, and

some species of fly have nest-dwelling blood- and flesh-feeding maggots. These feeding behaviours can exact a heavy mortality on the nestlings. Less threatening are the detritus-feeders that capitalise on the food, feathers and faeces that trickle constantly into the fabric of the nest. In the Wandering Albatross nests of the subantarctic Marion Island, larvae of a flightless 'island adapted' moth capitalise both on the warmth and nutrient availability. Although some amazing insects and behaviours like these have been described, little is generally known about the community composition of invertebrates in albatross nests on subantarctic islands.

Capitalising on the opportunity of having both entomologists and ornithologists on board, we will collect insects from as many albatross nests as can be readily accessed without adversely affecting the birds. The collections will subsequently be analysed by staff at museums both in Australia and New

Zealand, with some specimens being forwarded to taxonomists who specialise in a particular group. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to both visit and contribute to research on one of the most remote and untouched wildernesses on the planet.

Walk through unique megaherbs!

Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, a great friend of Darwin, was overwhelmed by the experience of seeing these amazing plants when he visited the Auckland and Campbell Islands as botanist on the Ross Expedition to Antarctica (1839-43). He wrote that their bursting blooms were "second to none outside the tropics", and was the first to collect and describe several of the species scientifically. These herbaceous plants have evolved in extremely harsh environmental conditions, but in the absence of herbivores – thus, when rabbits, goats, and other herbivores were released onto the islands to provide food for shipwrecked sailors, megaherbs were eaten almost

to extinction. Thanks to the New Zealand Department of Conservation these introduced animals were recently eradicated from the islands, resulting in a rapid and impressive restoration of the megaherb ground cover to its former glory.

A similar program of pest eradication is now complete on Macquarie Island, and previous visitors to the island will be able to see the positive impacts of the program on the birds and



**Megaherbs of the NZ Subantarctic Islands
photographed by Cynthia Pyle**

plant species.

Shipboard life

The family operated *Spirit of Enderby* is a complete expedition vessel, renowned for its strength, manoeuvrability and small passenger numbers. Private facilities are available in most cabins and all cabins have windows or portholes. Australasian chefs provide international quality cuisine. The crew and officers are highly experienced and they are complemented by a passionate and knowledgeable expedition team.

Getting there

Expeditioners will be able to enjoy Christmas in Australia, arriving in Invercargill on 29th December 2020 departing Bluff on December 30th 2020.

Express interest by contacting Natalie at the Office email: WaterhouseClub@samuseum.sa.gov.au

You may direct any questions about the expedition to Expedition Leader Alastair Dow on adow@ozemail.com.au

A couple of Snippets

Who is that bird named after?

Compiled by John Gitsham

Latham's Snipe

Gallinago hardwickii

Latham's Snipe (or Japanese Snipe, because of where they breed during the Australian winter) is named after **Dr John Latham** (1740-1837) who was a British physician, naturalist and author. He played a leading role in the formation of the Linnean Society of London, in 1788, and was a Fellow of the Royal Society.

He wrote *General Synopsis of Birds* from 1781 to 1785, contributed the descriptions of birds in *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay*, in 1789, and wrote the *Index Ornithologicus*, in 1790 and the *General History of Birds* from 1821 to 1828, the last of which he started when he was 81 years old.

In his later books he provided the first published descriptions and scientific names to many Australian birds, including the Emu, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Superb Lyrebird, White Cockatoo and the Australian Magpie. He was known as the 'Grandfather' of Australian ornithology.

Reference source: Whose Bird? B Beolens & M Watkins Pub. 2003

MULTITUDES OF MIGRATING MARTINS

Recently, reports of vast numbers of Tree Martins roosting in street trees have emanated from Adelaide. Doubtless, with so many birds roosting together, the 'fallout' below has been fairly significant, leaving café owners whose premises are below the roost trees crying foul.

In many parts of southern Australia, the gathering of Tree Martins into large flocks is a time-honoured ritual in autumn as they prepare for their annual northward migration.

And the timing of this gathering of the martins in Adelaide certainly suggests that they had assembled into this huge flock as a prelude to their autumn migration to northern Australia or perhaps beyond. Similar flocks formed at many other places across the south of the continent.

Many species of birds exhibit what behavioural ecologists call Zugunruhe, or pre-migratory restlessness, where the birds change their behaviour to prepare for their imminent migratory flight. Like many species of swallows, the formation of large pre-migratory assemblages of Tree Martins is considered a classic example Zugunruhe.



When the birds were not roosting or loafing among the branches or along the powerlines, no doubt they were busy in pursuit of flying insects to fill up on food to fuel their impending journey to warmer climes. (Perhaps, as a result, there were fewer flies and mozzies to bother the cafés' clientele.)

And by the time you're reading this, the martins will have probably already flown away...

Extract from Birdlife Australia's May 2019 e-News



Tree Martins

From Birdlife Australia's May 2019 e-News

SAOA Historical Series No 68

Frank Elliot Parsons (1882 to 1968)

Part 1, by Penny Paton

Pterylography

Pterylography is the study of the feather tracts of birds. From the early 1940s, Frank turned his ornithological attention to publishing his book on pterylography: **Parsons (1968) Pterylography**. Since the early 1920s, he had been studying the feather tracts and wing shapes and sizes of a number of Australian bird species. Examples of his detailed sketches have been included throughout this article, as well as in the second part of his life story, which will be published with the Spring issue of 'The Birder'.

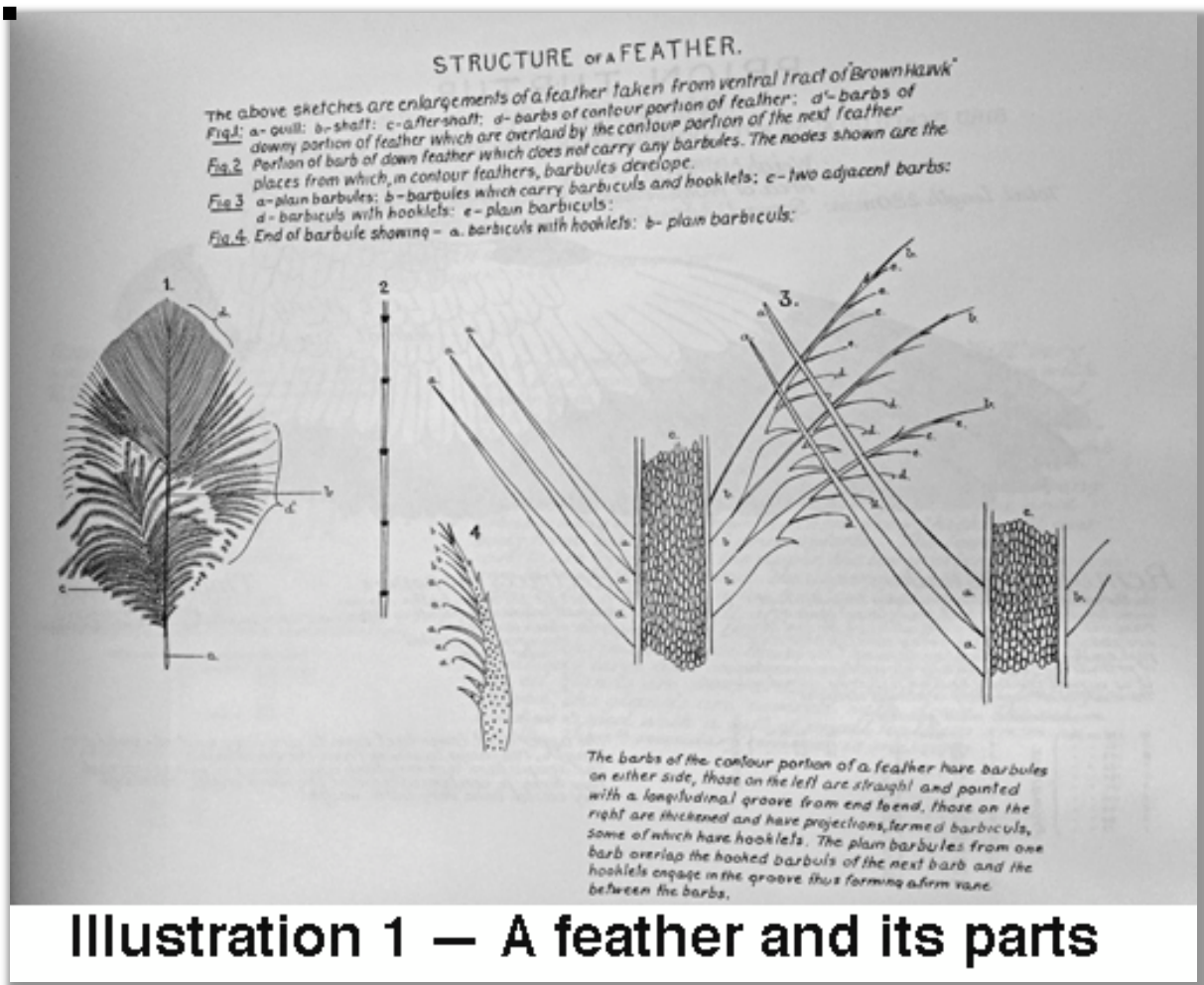


Illustration 1 – A feather and its parts

Family

Frank Elliot Parsons was the second eldest of ten children born to Stephen and Miriam Sarah 'Minnie' (née Trigg), and the eldest of seven sons. Stephen and Minnie were both born in the colony of South Australia; Stephen at Nairne in 1858 and Minnie at Port Elliot in 1857. Minnie's parents were Samuel Trigg (ca 1817-1883) and Sarah née Brown (1820-1881), who were married at Royston,

Cambridgeshire in 1845, and arrived in Adelaide with their eldest child, also Samuel, on the 'Royal George' on 25th May 1848. Samuel Senior was a builder and ran a successful business at Port Elliot for many years, aided by his son Samuel. Of their five subsequent children, three died in infancy, with just Arthur and Minnie surviving to adulthood. Samuel Junior died tragically in a boating accident in 1887.

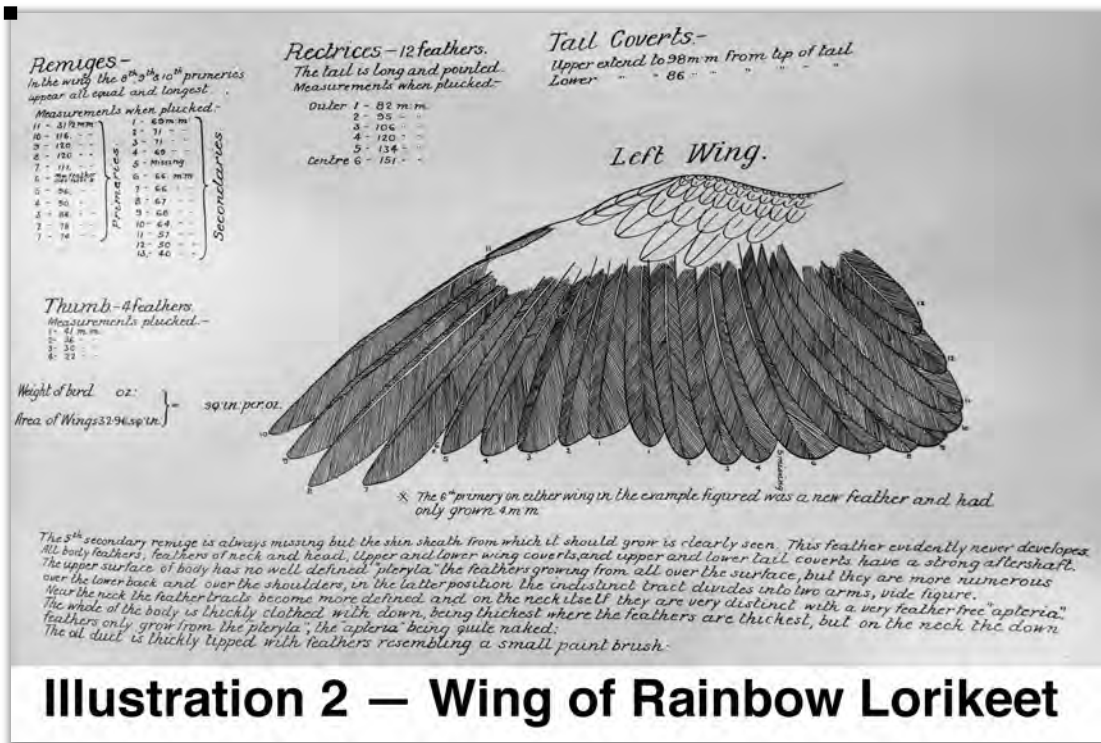


Illustration 2 – Wing of Rainbow Lorikeet

Several websites attribute Stephen Parson's naming of the Adelaide suburb Royston Park to his wife's schooling at Royston, **Yorkshire**. In fact his wife was born in Australia, and it was his father-in-law and mother-in-law who came from the Royston district in **Cambridgeshire** (yes, there are two Roystons), so this needs to be corrected in the on-line literature.

Turning now to Frank's father's family, Stephen Parsons (1858-1942) was the son of John William Parsons (1829-1900) and his first wife Martha née Haines (1831-1875). John and Martha were married in Wiltshire in 1850 and emigrated to South Australia in 1851 on the 'Navarino', preceded in 1850 on the 'Lysander' by some of Martha's brothers and the wives and children of the older siblings. Her parents, Thomas and Sophia (née Wise) and sister, Jane, married to Benjamin Pope, also arrived on the 'Navarino'. Sources differ, but probably three children were born to John and Martha in Adelaide, before the family moved to The Valleys near Nairne in the Adelaide Hills. Stephen Parsons was born in 1858

and had 10 siblings, although several died young, including his elder sister Mary Sophia and younger twin brothers, Charles and Frederick, born in 1867 but surviving just a few weeks.

Two years after Martha's death in 1875, John William Parsons, variously described as a storekeeper, farmer and estate agent, married Jane Whinham at Hindmarsh. By the early 1880s he was living and working in Adelaide as an agent of the Temperance and General Mutual Life Insurance Company. Both John William and Stephen Parsons (Frank's grandfather and father) were associated with Prince Alfred College and the school's Wesleyan Methodist Church nearby, so it is no surprise that Stephen's seven sons attended the College.

Stephen married Minnie Trigg (1857-1929) in 1880 at the home of her parents at Port Elliot and after their marriage they lived in Adelaide at various locations including Glenelg,

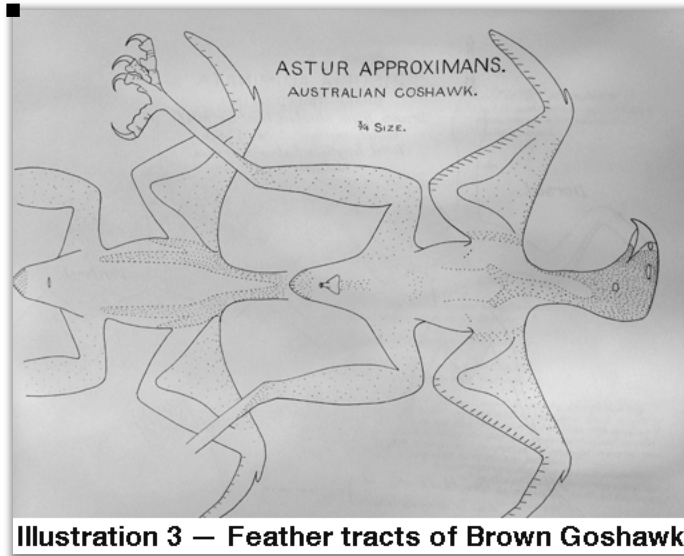


Illustration 3 – Feather tracts of Brown Goshawk

Prospect and Wayville. Stephen was for a time secretary of the Temperance and General Mutual Life Insurance Company, a licensed surveyor, a JP

and a member of the Board of Examiners for Surveyors. He died in 1942 aged 84, while Minnie, aged 71, died in 1929. Their ten children included engineer and teacher Rex Whaddon Parsons, who was awarded an OBE in 1953 for services to technical education, and Harold Parsons, who won a cello scholarship to the Elder Conservatorium and studied music overseas.

Frank Elliot Parsons – the early years

There was a family tradition of associations between family and place names, as instanced above with the naming of Royston Park by Stephen Parsons. I believe that Frank's second name was bestowed in deference to the birthplace of his mother, Minnie, who grew up in Port Elliot. Frank was born at Prospect on 6th August 1882, educated at Prince Alfred College and attended the Adelaide School of Mines and Industries, where he studied metallurgy in the early 1900s. Pursuing this career he went to Kalgoorlie in 1902 for practical experience, where he married Ethel Janet Kimber on 22nd January 1908. Their first daughter was born at the end of this year and in about 1910 they moved back to Adelaide, to the suburb of Glenelg (Horton *et al.* 2018). Five more daughters were born between 1912 and 1924, with the second to last dying as a baby (Horton *et al.* 2018).

Frank became a surveyor and joined his father and several brothers in a firm of surveyors, land agents

and auctioneers (Ragless 1969). His interest in ornithology had been sparked by this time and the opportunities offered by surveying regional areas of the state allowed this interest to flourish (Reid 2000).

Frank Elliot Parsons – the ornithologist

Frank joined the South Australian Ornithological Association (SAOA) on 29th March 1912 and served as Vice President in 1922, 1928, 1932 and 1938 and was President in each succeeding year. The Association honoured him with Honorary Life Membership on 29th March 1957 (Reid 2000). Between 1917 and 1939 he published a number of papers and notes in the *South Australian Ornithologist* and contributed one paper to *Emu* with J.N. McGilp, on the status and identity of two often confused species, the Gilbert's and Red-lored Whistlers (Parsons and McGilp 1935).

Several references attest to his skill and expertise as a collector of birds and taxidermist, and his collection of 1068 bird skins was purchased by the South Australian Museum, Adelaide (SAMA) in 1941 (Horton *et al.* 2018). This added to 112 skins donated to SAMA by Parsons in 1922 when Dr. Morgan selected skins to round out the Museum's collection. In 1941 Parsons also sold his unbound copy of Mathews' *The Birds of Australia* to SAMA and the volumes, later bound in black leather, still form part of the Museum's library (Horton *et al.* 2018). The Parsons Egg Collection was donated to



Illustration 4 – Wing of Brown Goshawk

SAMA in 1937. This collection comprised about 300 clutches collected between 1888 and 1925 and represented all states of Australia and many collectors, so Parsons swapped clutches with other ornithologists.

Parsons was a contemporary of the early greats of South Australian ornithology – Captain S.A. White, J.W. Mellor, Dr Morgan, John Sutton, Frank Angel, Edwin Ashby, A.H.C. Zietz and his son F.R. Zietz, J.Neil McGilp, A. G. Edquist and the Crompton brothers, to name the most important. He partnered Dr Morgan, John Sutton, J.N. McGilp and, later, H. T. Condon, on many field trips, both within South Australia but also further afield in Western Australia and Queensland (Whittell 1954).

Along with many Australian collectors, Parsons contributed bird skins to Gregory Mathews for his epic work, *The Birds of Australia* (Mathews 1910-1927). Mathews published a description of *Pomatostomus ruficeps parsonsi* in Volume 38 of the Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club in 1918, based on one specimen collected by Parsons at Pungonda in September 1917, and this information was repeated in *The Birds of Australia* (Mathews 1922). The latter description is based on two birds now in the American Museum of Natural History, a male and a female, both collected by Parsons at Pungonda in September 1917 and now designated as the lectotype and the paralectotype (LeCroy 2005). The Mathews Collection was purchased by Lord Rothschild for his museum at Tring and eventually found its way in the 1930s to the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Currently there are no recognised subspecies of the Chestnut-crowned Babbler, nor any geographical variation (Higgins and Peter 2002).

Two other subspecies of birds were named after Frank Parsons, including *Climacteris erythroptus parsonsi*, which was described by Mellor (1919) from birds taken by him at Pungonda on the River Murray. Mellor states:

"I propose to designate the bird ... as *Climacteris erythroptus parsonsi*, in honour of Mr. Frank E. Parsons, of Adelaide, whose energy as a young ornithologist I wish to recognise, and through whose valuable information concerning the country I was

enabled to secure the specimens described."

This bird is now considered *Climacteris affinis*, the White-browed Treecreeper, and the subspecies is no longer recognised.

The other subspecies named after Parsons, *Calamanthus fuliginosus parsonsi*, (Ragless 1969) has likewise disappeared. This subspecies does not appear in Ashby's article on the genus *Calamanthus*, which resulted from the perusal by Ashby and Parsons of the skins in their collections and that of the South Australian Museum in the early 1920s (Ashby 1924). Condon (1968) described six subspecies of fieldwren in South Australia, including this one, which is now considered a synonym. The taxonomy of the fieldwrens has long been the subject of much debate, which continues to this day.

Still recognised today however, is the one taxon described by Parsons (1920), the Kangaroo Island population of Southern Emuwren (*Stipiturus malachurus halmaturinus*). This followed a trip to the Island with J.N. McGilp when a number of specimens were obtained of this taxon described as having "a 'washed-out' appearance with light brown crowns, light grey and very dark grey backs." Parson also noted that the habitats where they found the birds were not the expected cool, damp gullies but rather dry, flat-topped hills supporting grass-trees *Xanthorrhoea semiplana*, bull oaks *Allocasuarina* spp and broom-bush *Melaleuca* spp. Interestingly Baxter (2015) does not mention either grass-trees or bull oaks as expected habitat for this species on the Island.

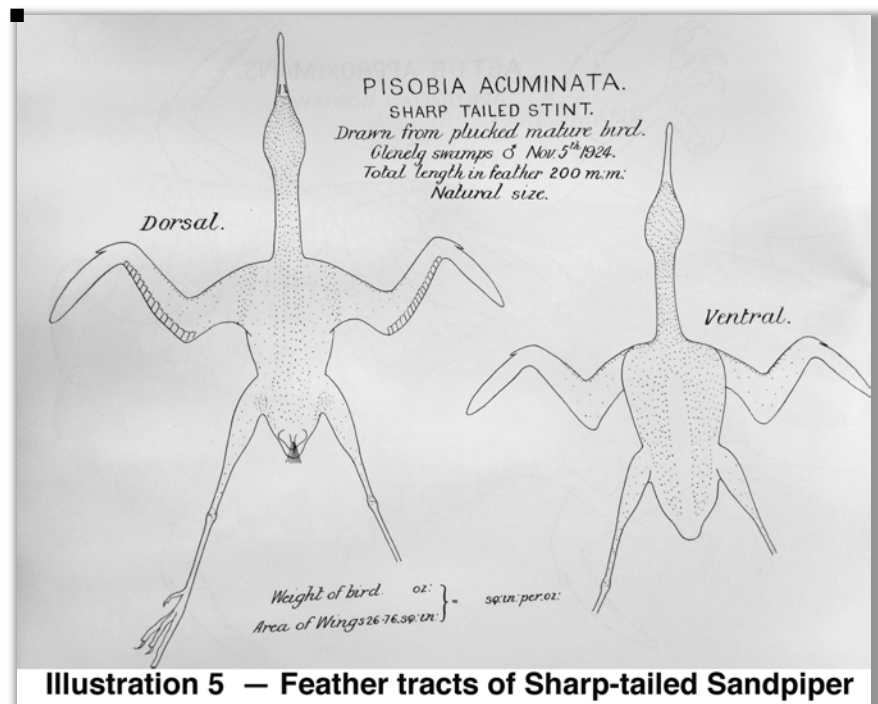


Illustration 5 – Feather tracts of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Birding Eyre Peninsula and the Nullarbor

...or Go west young man (or even not so young)

Because of the vast distances involved and our previously restricted time, we had never been further west in our State than Port Lincoln. Retirement, plus the fairly recent splits of three species gave us both the time and motivation to go west. The recently split species were two quail-thrushes, **Copper-backed Quail-thrush** *Cinclosoma clarum*, which occurs west of the Flinders Ranges, split from Chestnut Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma castanotum*, **Nullarbor Quail-thrush** *Cinclosoma alisteri*, which occurs on the Nullarbor Plain, were split from Cinammon Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma cinnamomeum*. In addition, a parrot, **Naretha Blue Bonnet** *Northiella narethae*, confined to arid woodlands on the fringes of the Nullarbor Plain, was split from Bluebonnet *Northiella haematogaster*. We were also keen to look for other species that occur only in the west of the State: Western



Black-Eared Cuckoo (Gilles CP)

Grasswren, Western Yellow Robin, Western Whipbird ssp *leucogaster*, Blue-breasted Fairywren, Rufous Treecreeper and the *pedleri* ssp. of Short-tailed Grasswren.

We decided to go as far as the Nullarbor Roadhouse, and use it as a base to go further west in search of the Naretha Bluebonnet, while not actually crossing into WA. Booking more than one day at the Roadhouse seemed an unusual thing to do judging by the reaction of the staff, but it left us well placed in prime habitat for the Nullarbor Quail-thrush and within a hundred km of good Naretha Bluebonnet habitat.

We headed first to Whyalla and reached the Whyalla Conservation Park around mid-afternoon, not a promising time for birds, so we were delighted

to easily find two Western Grasswrens by the toilets at the foot of Wild Dog Hill. This is an arid CP with mallee, Myall trees, bluebush and samphire, where we also picked up White-browed Babbler, Slender-billed and Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, White-winged and Purple-backed fairywrens, Nankeen Kestrel and Welcome Swallow. On the way out we watched a raven chasing a large raptor — a Little Eagle, which was a great way to end the day's birding.

The next day we headed for Port Lincoln, stopping at Gilles CP, where we battled the extremely windy conditions that were to dog us for most of the trip. However, we did pick up Black-eared Cuckoo, which we think was attracted by our strenuous pishing in an effort to get a glimpse of Blue-breasted Fairywren. It seemed puzzled to find us stumbling



**Short-tailed Grasswren
Mt. Ive Station**



Western Yellow Robin, Linclon NP

Birding Eyre Peninsula and the Nullarbor (cont.)

around in the bluebush and sat contemplating this strange sight long enough to give us great views, in mutual regret at the lack of Fairywrens! We also saw Mallee Ringneck and Mulga Parrot, Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, White-eared and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and in the large eucalypts. At the edge of the salt lake, Lake Gilles, we saw a couple of Rufous Treecreepers with their call sounding so faint compared to the loud, piercing call of our familiar White-throated Treecreeper.

Next morning we were up before dawn to look for Western Whipbird in Port Lincoln CP. This is a beautiful, coastal reserve with great camping facilities and varied habitat.

It was a still morning at first, and getting out of the car at a likely clearing there was a lovely bird chorus dominated by the loud, constant call of a Southern Scrub-Robin perched at the top of the highest tree. Later we were to see several of these birds in their more familiar setting, foraging on the ground, but despite our best efforts, no sight or sound of a Whipbird. The dominant species in the park was New Holland Honeyeater, which were everywhere, along with Red Wattlebird. We did discover a family of Blue-breasted Fairywren feeding with Silvereye and Scrubwren. The wind was becoming stronger by the minute along with showers so we headed out of the park, and, running across the road in front of the car — little more than a fleeting, black shape, was a Whipbird. We have seen them before on Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island, so we recognised it, but as a sighting it left a lot to be desired.

On the way to Ceduna next day we visited Coffin Bay NP, another wonderful coastal reserve with huge swathes of heathland where we saw Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and Rufous Fieldwren. On a windy headland with very open clifftop heath, samphire and spectacular, blooming Cocky's Tongue there were thirty Rock Parrots fluttering about from one feeding spot to the next while an Osprey flew to and fro and Western Grey Kangaroos watched with their ears pricked. Just after the exit as we were leaving, we saw two Painted Button-quail at

the side of the road so we stopped the car. They chose to walk alongside the car and finally cross the road in front of us. This event provided us with a good, long look at a species we usually see as they flush and disappear and enabled us to easily see the difference between the male and the female.

Then we set off for Ceduna via Elliston and Streaky Bay, a beautiful drive through surprisingly lush country with enormous salt lakes filled with water.

We set off early next morning from Ceduna to search for a long shot, Scarlet-chested Parrot. As usual it was very windy. We drove north to the Dog Fence then into some dense mallee along a track to Inila Rock Hole, all the time looking out for Quail-thrush but with no luck. These granite rock holes are interesting as the deep crevices hold water for so long after everything else has dried up. Two Wedge-tailed Eagles flew off as we arrived, indicating a popular drinking spot! The dominant species was Red Wattlebird. There were also Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Common Bronzewing, Red-capped Robin and White-winged Fairywren.

We headed further north on a much narrower, winding track for another six km to Yumbarra Rock Hole where one pool of water was left, attracting mainly Yellow-plumed Honeyeater. The wind was ferocious by this time but we decided to take one more look around the periphery. We could hardly believe our luck in spotting a parrot grimly clinging onto a low branch 3m away. With a brilliant scarlet chest and blue head, it was a male Scarlet-chested Parrot! It perched for ten minutes and allowed us to approach even closer before flying off straight and low with its

golden belly shining like a small sun against the grey-green mulga. After that we explored the area further and found large trees with good breeding hollows. We caught up several times with the male and, on returning to the rock hole, we saw both male and female feeding on bushes around the edge. The drive back was at walking pace as the wind had blown down branches and was whipping the mallee around across the track, but it had been well worth it to see that glorious bird.



Scarlet-chested Parrot
Yumbarra CP, north of Ceduna

Birding Eyre Peninsula and the Nullarbor (cont.)

The next day we travelled to the Nullarbor Roadhouse, stopping at beautiful Head of Bight where the outback abruptly and dramatically meets the ocean, to see the whales and their calves which shelter there on their way to Antarctica.

At the roadhouse we were in the middle of prime Nullarbor Quail-thrush habitat, consisting of bluebush and saltbush. As we drove around the tracks we did see a couple running across, but the fierce winds didn't incline them to perch and give good views. We searched on foot next morning for several hours and flushed a couple, but they immediately disappeared into the vast sea of saltbush, so we decided to head west down the highway to try for Naretha Bluebonnet, passing a dingo trotting unhurriedly along the road with what appeared to be the whole leg of a calf. Of course, two Quail-thrush flew across, never to be seen again!

A hundred kilometres on we turned north off the highway on an unsealed, bumpy track to the abandoned Koonalda Homestead, which was used to service vehicles crossing the Nullarbor. The stacks of rusty, ancient vehicles are witness to the many that didn't make it across. The track was lined with lush vegetation and quite large trees, reinforcing our opinion that the Nullarbor is wrongly named.

The actual homestead site is dominated by aggressive Yellow-throated Miners which love cleared areas with sparse trees, so that only a couple of Grey Butcherbirds dared compete for the available water which would normally attract a variety of species. We drove along the tracks searching for parrots and saw mulgas, Galahs, babblers, an amazing number of Pallid Cuckoos and at last two Bluebonnets which flew over and perched. We were out of the car in a flash and just about to film when the aggressive miners swooped in and the parrots were gone!!

We continued to look for them on foot, which is when we saw a Ground Cuckoo-shrike fly over and perch. Then there were four, flying back and forth with contact calls similar to small raptors and resembling raptors in their elegant swooping flight. Even better, three landed on the ground and walked about feeding, undisturbed by our presence as we followed a couple of metres behind. It was interesting to observe their feeding behaviour which consisted of a sudden flurried pounce as they found some small insect. It was a great treat to see this as we have so rarely seen this species. We also flushed two Little Button-Quail.

Another search for the Quail-thrush next morning yielded nothing but frozen hands so it was time to return eastwards, on the inland route this time, to the



Pallid Cuckoo, Mt. Ive Station



Crested Bellbird

Gawler Ranges, near Lake Gairdner

Gawler Ranges. We stayed at Mount Ive Station and were up at dawn to search for the ssp *pedleri* of Short-tailed Grasswren. At last we had a still morning, an absolute necessity in finding grasswrens. We drove to the foot of a hill with good habitat, old spinifex, and climbed up, listening carefully. We were halfway down the other side before we heard the call and were provided with superb views of these charismatic, hardy little birds. <https://bit.ly/2P9C63t> is a two-minute film of our sighting.

Going down the hill felt so much easier after that experience and the drive back gave us good views of Mulga Parrot, Bluebonnet, Mallee Ringneck, Common Bronzewing, Red-capped and Hooded Robins, White-browed Babbler, Southern Whiteface, Grey Shrike-thrush, Australian Raven, Currawong, Striated Pardalote, Collared Sparrowhawk, White-winged and Splendid Fairywren, Crested Pigeon, Dusky Woodswallow, Emu, Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo and yet more Pallid Cuckoos, invariably with a fat caterpillar dangling from their beaks. What a difference a still morning makes!

In the afternoon we drove out to Lake Gairdner, a huge dry salt lake where the land speed record had been attempted. For the first time in our trip it was warm and plenty of birds were about. Two pairs of Crested Bellbird were having some sort of dispute, with the males running over the ground, crests raised and uttering short, sharp calls so unlike their usual musical chimes. A large raptor flew over with a long, yellow snake dangling from its beak. Black-faced and Little Woodswallows were flying around with Rufous Whistler and Brown Falcon and so many Emus and Kangaroos that we had to play dodgem cars on the track.

After that it was time to head home with 4,300kms on the clock and some wonderful memories of the far west.

Alana and Greg Dare

Photographs taken by Greg Dare between 10th September and 20th September 2018

Past General Meetings

Friday February 24

John Hatch, Birding in Central and S. America

Jeff Groves introduced the Guest Speaker, John Hatch who, with Jeremy Robertson, took a trip to South and Central America and the West Indies. John Hatch has been with Birds SA for 52 years and needs no introduction. John stated that, while he would be giving the presentation, which would be solely about birds, he wished to acknowledge that Jeremy Robertson had taken all the photographs used.



Hoatzin

The trip was based on Jeremy's target of seeing representatives of all bird families existing in the search area. Some families consist of only 1 species in the area, whilst others contain hundreds. Jeremy had 10 target species, whilst John had only 1 — the 'Bee Hummingbird' — the smallest bird in the world. They visited 8 countries, took 15 flights from 12 airports, and had to carry 4 Field Guides to cover the countries they were planning to visit. John displayed a map of the West Indies, explaining the archipelagos within the major archipelago. The places they visited were marked on the map. These were Cuba, Dominican Republic, Peudarico Chile, Ecuador, and Panama.

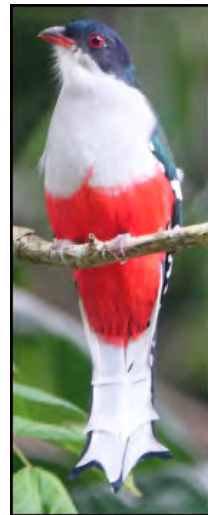
Jeremy needed to go to as many Islands as possible in order to see the endemics within the region. They spent 10 days in Ecuador and 6 in Panama preparing. The birds seen included: Crested Owl with young, Wire-tailed Manakin, Rufous-Bellied

Seedsnipe with amazing camouflage. Five species of this bird exist, and they are confined to South America. Another interesting bird was the Andean Cock-of-the-rock, which is very difficult to see as it remains deep in the trees. The males exist in two different colours, orange and red. Females select the male that they find most attractive.

It is interesting how many of the birds in the Andes and West Indies demonstrate lekking behaviour, which involves a communal display by the males in the breeding season. The areas on which the birds display are called lekking grounds. This behaviour occurs in species such as Birds of Paradise, Bowerbirds, Grouse, Hummingbirds, Manakins and Ruffs. Communal male mating grounds form a polygyny. The males of these species do nothing but display and mate. This necessitates the female being able to rear the young alone. This is possible because of one or more of the following factors,

- Precocial — the offspring leave the nest very young
- Small broods – e.g., humming birds lay only 2 eggs
- Abundant food – which is more likely to exist in a tropical environment
- Parasitic behaviour — eggs are laid in the nests of other species.

The Oilbird is an unusual species that they saw. These birds live in caves, are capable of echolocation, and have a very strong sense of smell. They eat fruit, and as they are nocturnal, John and Jeremy did not see them fly.



Cuban Trogon

When they do come out of their caves, hawks pick them off. However, thousands of them exist. They are about 30cm long and their bodies are full of oil, hence the name. Trinidad is the centre of the Giant Antipitta, which is quite large and is endangered. It creeps around in the bottom of wet forests. There is also a Chestnut-crowned Antipitta. The Dark-backed Wood Quail came out on the edge of forest. The chances of seeing them without a local guide would be very low. They saw White-tailed Trogon and a Hoatzin,

which is a very primitive bird, about the size of a turkey. It retains the "elbow" for 50-70 days beyond the embryo stage. It is a cuckoo or a game bird, a herbage eater with a huge foregut (ruminant like – slow digestion). Leaves make up 80% of its diet. It nests over water and the nestlings can swim. It is a highly social bird but cannot walk very well. It can

Past General Meetings (cont.)



Bee Hummingbird



Yellow Warbler

hop a little but can't fly very well. There were many Honeycreepers in Ecuador. John had elected to show photographs of mainly male birds because of their distinctive colours.

The national bird of Cuba is the Cuban Trogon with a very exotic tail. We saw the Zapata Sparrow, very dull, plain bird, which is confined to an enormous swamp that is about 55km wide. They saw the Cuban Pygmy Owl, which is only 17cm long. The Hispaniolan Trogon is the national bird of Haiti. They did manage to see the very rare bird, Ridgway's Hawk, which is confined entirely to the Dominican Republic. Some of the other birds they saw were, Yellow Warbler, Roseate Spoonbill and Greater Flamingo.

The Bee Hummingbird, which breeds between March and June, weighs the same as a 5-cent piece (1.5g) and is about 4cm long. It looks like an insect. The Palm Chat is the national bird of the Dominican Republic. Costa Rica has 1400 species of birds. Because we had "target species" rather than large number of different species, it made the trip more enjoyable and the Bird Guides were also more interested in our special request, rather than the usual request "you must show me everything".

Friday March 29

Bill Breed, the life of Dr David Lack

John Hatch introduced the Guest Speaker, Dr. Bill Breed, School of Biological Sciences, University of Adelaide, with his presentation on "The Life of Dr David Lack – A summary of his major contributions to Ornithology",

Dr David Lack was born in 1910 and was a Graduate in Zoology at Cambridge University in 1932, he was the Director of The Edward Grey Institute for Field Ornithology, Oxford University, and undertook trips to the Arctic, in particular, Norway and Greenland.

He was a schoolmaster at Dartington Hall in Devon between 1934 and 1938. He had a very casual approach to teaching and incorporated a lot of bird watching rather than teaching.

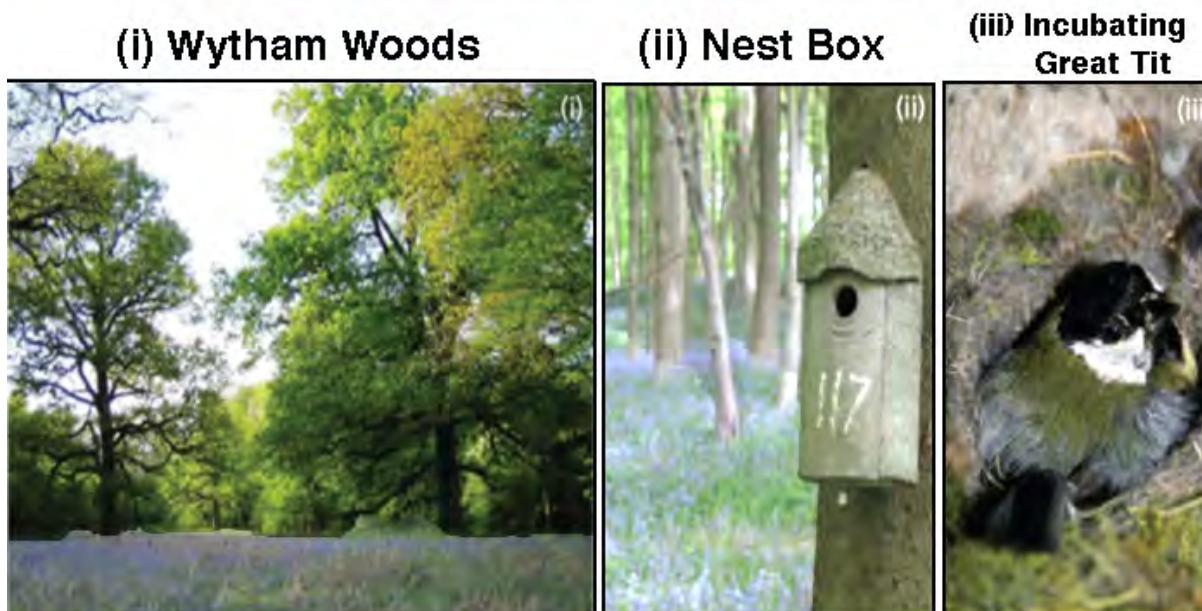
In 1938 and 1939 he studied Darwin's Finches on the Galapagos Islands and tried to take the finches to the United Kingdom. The birds got sick, so instead he took them to San Francisco where he studied them for 5 months. He wrote a well-known book on Darwin's Finches.

From 1939 to 1944, during World War 2, he joined the Army Operational Research Unit, working on radar in the Orkney Islands, off the coast of Scotland. He used this opportunity to study birds and bird migration, utilising the radar.

He had three main interests: Taxonomy, Feeding Ecology, Adaptive Radiation and Speciation of Darwin's Finches. He was especially interested in 'population ecology', in the local woods around where he worked in Oxford, studying Great Blue Tits and Swifts.

Past General Meetings (cont.)

The Great Tit Study



Nearly all breeding Great Tits used nest boxes, so the whole population could be monitored. There were about 3 nest boxes per hectare. About 40 PhD studies have been carried out on this species.

Once he became the Director of Edward Grey Institute (EGI), he focused on population ecology, the life history strategies. He became known as the 'Father of Evolutionary Ecology'. He was very much a 'Field Ornithologist', as opposed to a taxonomist and systematist. He built up a team of PhD students and attracted various overseas workers. The EGI became a critically important centre for ornithological research in the UK between the 1940 and the 1960s. He changed the nature of much of the ornithological work in the UK from descriptive taxonomy to testing of hypotheses on ecological and evolutionary questions. Between 1947 and 1973 he appointed young field assistants every year to aid in his field research. Bill was one of them in 1961.

He also introduced annual student conferences on various bird biology topics, such as population ecology, bird migration and bird behaviour. During this period, he was really perceptive when it came to interesting young people in ornithology.

David Lack wrote 13 books including The Life of The Robin, Darwin's Finches, and Swifts in the Tower. Life of the Robin 1943, was based on 4 years of study in Devon, where he colour-banded about 160 of the local Robins to study how long they lived, and he was particularly interested in territorial behaviour, because at certain times of the year females defended territory as much as the males. The

purpose of territory, he decided was, 'mate, acquisition and food to feed the chicks'. He constructed a couple of aviaries to further study the reason for their red breast and decided it was for defending territory. He was also interested in the song of the Robin. He looked at the female-male interactions — how do females select males and feed chicks, and the survival of offspring after they had left the nest. He found that over 50% would die within a couple of months of fledging from the nest, and many migrated to Europe. This was his first thorough study of a species in the UK, but the problem with this study was that he found it difficult to find the nests of the Robins that he had colour banded.

His book, Natural History of Darwin's Finches 1938-39 was the result of 4 months in the Galapagos. There are four major groups of finches, they don't look terribly different, but the shape of the beak is dramatically different. He gave English names to these birds and tried to work out how many species were there at that time.

He studied the taxonomy of finches and decided that they had evolved from the Tanager family, and there were 4 genera, 6 subgenera and 14 species, which include ground, cactus, warbler, woodpecker, tree (vegetarian fruit eater) and cocos.

Past General Meetings (cont.)

Variation in beak morphology between different species



- A Woodpecker Finch
- B Cactus Finch sp 1
- C Vegetarian Finch
- D Warbler Finch
- E Insect eating tree finches
- F Ground seed finches
- G Cactus Finch sp2

Conclusion

Species with different bill sizes occurred in different locations and ate different foods

The plumage of these birds is not very exciting, but the shape of the beaks is very distinctive and very different. Ground finches have large beaks, while tree and warbler finches have small beaks. Peter and Rosemary Grant looked at this in more detail and support David Lack's conclusions.

The Woodpecker Finch is the only species that uses a tool to prise insects out of holes in trees – it is a tool user.

Summarising the relationship between these species – different ecological niches exist, and ecological divergence has resulted in speciation. Hence the different species have evolved.

How did they evolve, what was the early ancestor and how closely are the different species related?

The data supports Lack's original theory that the original passerine bird from which the Galapagos birds radiated probably belonged to the Tanager family. Similarities between members of the Tanager family and the Galapagos Finches indicate that, allowing for a mutation that may have occurred at approximately 2.3 million years ago, the two groups are genetically closely related.

Lack wrote two books on the Galapagos finches. In the first he argued that differences in bills size are

due to genetic drift. The second edition of his book concluded from data that the bill size differences are due to natural selection, competition and adaptations to different feeding niches. Ecological differences are therefore important in driving speciation.

Friday April 26

Chris Daniels, John Gitsham introduced the Guest Speaker, Professor Chris Daniels, Director of Cleland Wildlife Park, a multi-talented person, well known throughout South Australia and Australia. His topic was: **the Future of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves**

Chris stated that he is an Ecologist, a name for an array for different sorts of activities. He had been an academic, talking about the decline of the world for a long time, and he had wanted to try something different. He wanted to actually go out and do something myself. He is the first Director of Cleland Conservation Park (Cleland CP), which is 52 years old. Cleland CP has been poorly staffed and underfunded. It has deteriorated and become outmoded. Cleland CP does have Koalas but the story of the Koalas is very complicated. They were introduced to South Australia, they have diseases and this creates

Past General Meetings (cont.)

challenges. They are very inbred with a genetic variation of 2 individuals.

Chris's plan for the future of Cleland CP is based around the view that Parks, Wildlife Parks, are about education, not just entertainment. Conservation parks and zoos should display the benefits of biodiversity. They should offer more than just a day out for tourists.

We are all biologists and are all committed to saving biodiversity. Biodiversity increases the stability and resilience of ecosystems providing them with more strength to recover after unfavourable incidents.

We are looking at a dramatic worldwide decline in biodiversity. Why is the decline happening? Humans are responsible for the extinction crisis. The world's human population is 7.5 billion. Hunting and habitat destruction have resulted in not just reduction, but disappearance of the animals on the planet. There was a 40% decline in the number of individual animals between 1970 and 2016. Actual animal numbers, as well as species are declining. There has been a major disappearance of insects — a massive insect decline, which threatens the collapse of nature. River systems have been dramatically affected, for example by the disappearance of invertebrates, which have really important roles as pollinators and food for other species.

Production of meat —terrestrial vertebrate biomass — is also affecting the earth. If the rise of domestic animals and humans continues at its current rate, by 2050 no wild animals will be left on the planet. There will be more tonnes of human meat on the planet than there was 10,000 years ago. We are replacing wild animals with the small number of animal species that suit human needs. We can reverse this if we can engage the community, but unfortunately communities like ours are more and more detached from the natural environment. There are more and more indoor kids, having less and less time outside. There is a rise of communities that are devoid of trees. There has been a disappearance of habitat with the disappearance of backyards. Many people don't want backyards.

Another significant factor is ignorance, or 'nature deficit disorder'. You cannot protect something you don't love. How can you love something that you have never experienced? People need nature for their own sense of health and wellbeing. It is very important for our mental wellbeing — nature helps to manage anxiety. The 'culture of fear' that has been promulgated by some nature TV programmes continues to grow, particularly in Australia — Box-jellyfish, White-pointer Sharks, deadly spiders. The message is — 'wildlife is bad. The environment should be kept away from us'.

Wild animals do not hurt many people. In 2008, horses, cattle and animal transport hurt 201777 people. Other farm animals, including sheep, hurt 60 people, and dogs hurt 22 people.

On the other hand, sharks hurt 26 people and snakes hurt 23 people. In fact, it is domestic animals, and bees that injure most people.

The Mt Lofty Ranges (MLR) are very important. Adelaide is a little microcosm. The MLR is a green island, a little biodiversity hot spot. It contains creeks and streams. In 1836 there were 6 significant eco types in Adelaide MLR. These were: open woodland, reed beds, samphire swamps, creeks, streams, sand dunes and mallee, grasslands and mangroves in low lying areas. These different ec-systems in conjunction with different locations, contain 30% of the States' plants, 60% of the States' birds, 20% of the state's reptiles, in an area that is only 0.15% of the total land area of the State. Less than 8% of the vegetation remains. Most of it now supports different forms of agriculture and fruit growing. With a population of 1.2 million people in Adelaide, the MLR has been trapped into multiple uses. This is a good example of what is happening across the entire planet. There has not only been the demise of State's native species, but an influx of 1500 introduced plants — for agriculture and for decorative purposes. The whole nature of the area has changed. Pests, such as, rabbits, foxes, cats and two species of deer and a whole lot of invertebrates have been deliberately introduced. Colonial Ants, Fire Ants and Electric Ants, will absolutely devastate ground dwelling birds.

Cleland Wildlife Park (CWP) should tell the story of the importance of biodiversity to the world's Health. Developing a role and function for CWP has commenced with a new organisation structure. CWP should go from simply a tourist facility to having a role in conserving biodiversity. Consultation has started in this very interesting process. Patterns in the answers of all stakeholders have been tracked. Innovation should be part of the consultation process.

We are situated in a complex environment. CWP is located within a government department, under the control of the Minister. It is important to consider what you want the organisation to do — What is Cleland Wildlife Park's higher purpose and what is its point of difference?

It aims to provide world-class direct nature experiences that connect visitors and communities to South Australian wildlife by creating and supporting a love of nature. **'Engage — Learn — Conserve'**.

Experiential engagement with animals enables people to learn something about the animals with

Past General Meetings (cont.)/Future General Meetings

which they come into contact. Conserve – the desired outcome is conservation.

It is essential to provide enthusiastic and articulate staff and volunteers to share information, context and care for wildlife and nature directly and through engagement with animals. For example — how should you hold a Koala? Koalas become very stressed if they are inappropriately held. Keepers spend a lot of time becoming familiar with their Koalas. Only 7 animals out of the 50 at Cleland are 'holding' Koalas. This experience is not just about exposing people to wildlife. The learning part is incredibly important. Exposing visitors to well-trained, articulate, enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff and volunteers ensures that they will learn from this experience. It is the staff that make that impact, rather than the animals. In wildlife parks people absolutely accept the experience of the ranger. A ranger is doing something that is so different – so that he or she completely captivates visitors. The rangers' stories become learning experiences for their listeners. Wildlife Parks must lead to good biodiversity outcomes. "Rewilding" is a process by which some biodiversity can be conserved. It must begin with passive rewilding – rewilding of landscapes. The role of zoos is therefore to provide breeding centres from which animals can be released into rewilded landscapes. Cleland Wildlife Park will be about research, education and communicating the message of **Engage – Learn – Conserve**. We need to approach conservation with

creativity, optimism, and passion. Optimism is essential.

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 7.15pm and meetings start at 7.45pm.

Friday, June 28

Our President, John Gitsham will be the speaker. His topic will be: "Impressions of Gluepot: my 18 years involvement with the Bird Reserve".

Friday, July 26 — Members' Night

John Hatch already has three speakers, but he would welcome a few more presentations, about 15 minutes long, to enable him to balance the different topics. In some cases he may defer some presentations to the November members' night.

The talks will be preceded and followed by drinks and nibbles, so please bring a plate of food to share.

Friday August 30

TBA

Cartoon supplied by Alan Burns



Past Excursions

14 FEBRUARY: BROWNS ROAD, MONARTO:

Twenty three members met along Browns Road for the outing, and at about 8.45am we moved from there to the new parking area. It was good to welcome one visitor and several new members. The temperature was a cool 18° at the start of the walk and only increased to mid-twenties by noon.

Part of the fence along Browns Rd has fallen (or been knocked?) over and the gate at the old entrance has been removed. The watering and feeding infrastructure, which was part of a Diamond Firetail research project, was still intact but had no water or seed. Diamond Firetail were nowhere to be seen during the morning. There were a good number of new nesting boxes spread over some areas in the park.

We set off as one group but, as is usual for this site, by mid-morning we had split into a few groups, each of which went its own way.

Altogether we saw 34 species and heard two, which were Striated Pardalote and Grey Currawong. We recorded a total of 204 birds. Most commonly seen were White-winged Chough (50), New Holland Honeyeater (20) Peaceful Dove (10) Adelaide Rosella (10) and Purple-backed Fairy-wren (10). Rainbow Bee-eaters were seen and heard the entire morning and we recorded 12 individuals although

there were probably more than that around. Robins were scarce. We saw only one Hooded and three Red-capped. The easily identifiable call of a Restless Flycatcher attracted our attention and we saw two individuals. We saw one nesting Common Bronzewing. A few in the group were a little more persistent when we visited the traditional Owlet Nightjar area, and were rewarded by seeing one bird.

Just after midday we met at the parking area, had lunch and made the bird call. The total number of species seen was recorded at 33 but later in the day I received a photo of a Yellow-plumed Honeyeater that was taken by a member who left before lunch, and I have now included this in the count for the outing.

Rod Tetlow

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS)

17 FEBRUARY: BOWMAN PARK

It was a fine day when 6 birders met at the Crystal Brook information park. Two were from Pt. Augusta and 1 each from Whyalla, Wilmington, Koolunga and Mambray Creek. We then drove about 5km to Bowman Park at the southern end of the Flinders Ranges. It is nestled in a valley with Crystal Brook creek passing through it. The creek is lined by Red



The Port Augusta Babblers enjoying their field trip to Bowman Park on Sunday 17th February 2019

Past Excursions (cont.)

gums and there are Mallee trees and other planted trees throughout the area. There are also some buildings and an oval, which had some sprinklers running on it. On the oval we found Red-rumped Parrots, Flinders Ranges Crimson Rosellas, Peaceful Doves, Magpie Larks, Crested Pigeons, Willie Wagtails, Grey Shrike Thrush, Blackbirds and 14 Diamond Firetails all feeding or enjoying the sprinklers. In the trees around the oval there were White-plumed and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Yellow-throated Miners, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Kookaburras, Silvereyes, Galahs, Mallee Ringnecks, Dusky Woodswallows and Red Wattlebirds. Darting about above the oval area there were Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins. That wasn't bad birding in the first minutes of our visit and still where we had parked. We then walked along the creek bank and around the area that was once a reptile park. Here we searched for and found a Crested Shrike-tit, which gave us some photo opportunities and stiff necks as we watched it high in the trees. As we circled the old reptile park area Purple-backed Fairywrens, a Brown Goshawk and a resident Peacock were added to our bird list. After a leisurely smoko we headed off along a track that followed the creek and then circled back along the opposite side through Mallee and planted trees, both native and exotics. In the creek area we found more Diamond Firetails, Grey Currawongs, Striated Pardalotes, Singing and New Holland Honeyeaters, Magpies and Sparrows, all in the vicinity of a water hole left in the dry creek bed. As we followed the track around above the creek area, Common Bronzewing, Brown Treecreeper and Sacred Kingfisher expanded our bird list. The temperature was rising but it was still pleasant in the shade under the trees as we made our bird call and enjoyed our lunch before we left. We saw a total of 37 bird species, and the birds of the day would have to be the Crested Shrike-tit and the 26 Diamond Firetails, some of which were very young birds.

Bernie Haase

24 FEBRUARY: WHITES ROAD WETLANDS
Excursion cancelled due to hot weather protocol.



Crested Shrike-tit
photographed by Bernie Haase at Bowman Park on 17 February 2019



Diamond Firetail
photographed by Bernie Haase at Bowman Park on 17 February 2019

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

2 MARCH: ONKAPARINGA RIVER

This walk was cancelled due to extreme heat.

9 MARCH: "ANACOTILLA SPRINGS", SECOND VALLEY

Despite the prolonged dry spell our fifth visit to Anacotilla provided 30 species on a very pleasant birding day for the 11 members present. It was also pleasing to have a young lady celebrating her 20th birthday attending with her family.

The species sighted this visit included 2 each of Australian Wood and Pacific Black Ducks, 1 White-faced Heron and throughout our stay three Wedge-tailed Eagle were observed flying overhead. Other species recorded were 2 Laughing Kookaburra, 30 Galah, 5 Little Corella, 10 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, 20 Crimson Rosella, 12 Rainbow Lorikeet, 20 Superb Fairywren, 1 White-naped Honeyeater, 10 New Holland Honeyeater, 3 Red Wattlebird, 2 Striated Pardalote, 2 White-browed Scrubwren, 5 each of Striated and Yellow-rumped Thornbill, 15 Australian Magpie, 2 Black-faced Cuckooshrike, 10 Grey Shrikethrush, 1 each of Mistletoebird, Red-browed Finch and Australian Golden Whistler, 15 Grey Fantail, 2 Magpie Lark, 25 Little Raven, 30 Common Starling and 10 European Goldfinch.

Pamela and Rob were again on hand to guide us around and thanks to recently completed bridging

Past Excursions (cont.)

over some sections of the Anacotilla River we had access further up the gully from their residence. It is great to see the progress being made to improve the habitat of their property.

I will schedule another visit for mid spring to see what species are present then.

Lynton Huxley

21 MARCH: BUSHLAND PARK, LOBETHAL

The forecast sunny 26°C day did not appear possible for the 19 members arriving at Lobethal in fog and drizzling rain. Few had prepared for this weather so rain jackets and warmer clothing were shared as evenly as possible. This was our first excursion requiring members to complete the Field Trip Indemnity Form and proved a quite painless duty, so after signing on and studying the information board at the rotunda we set off on a track that would take us around the two dams. The temperature was now about 15°C and while still gloomy the light rain ceased for the day.

When we had our lunch and undertook the bird call, conditions were more as predicted, sunny with a temperature of 26°C. It was an interesting day with an overall species count of 41 (including one Sulphur-crested Cockatoo heard). Thirty Striated Thornbill, twenty each of Crimson Rosella, Crescent Honeyeater and Grey Fantail, twelve Eurasian Coot and ten each of Yellow Thornbill and Dusky Woodswallow were the predominant species recorded. Some other species seen included Wedge-tailed Eagle (3), Scarlet Robin (2), White-browed Scrubwren (2), Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (4) and White-throated Treecreeper (3).

Lynton Huxley

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS) 24th MARCH: CHINAMAN'S CREEK

It was a calm but overcast day when 5 keen bird watchers met at the start of the road to Chinaman's Creek. Two were from Pt. Augusta and one each from Koolunga, Weeroona island and Mambray Creek. As we slowly drove along the road looking across the dry bush and bare paddocks we found Rufous Fieldwrens, White-winged Fairywrens, Pipits,

Chirruping Wedgebills, Orange Chats, Grey Butcherbirds, White-browed Babblers, Southern Whiteface and Singing Honeyeaters in the scrub and Magpies, Little and Australian Ravens on the paddocks, while Kestrels and Elegant Parrots flew overhead. In a patch of Mallee trees at the start of the conservation park there were Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Galahs, Starlings and Yellow-throated Miners. At the Chinamans Creek beach area we saw White-fronted Chats, Crested Pigeons, a Grey Shrike-thrush, Babblers, Singing Honeyeaters, Pipits and a Redthroat near the carpark. On the beach flocks of Silver Gulls, Pacific Gulls, Crested Terns, Pelicans, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, White Ibis, Caspian Terns and two Asian Gull-billed Terns were resting on the shore while Pied and Little Black Cormorants and a Common Tern sat on the submerging mangroves. Feeding along the shore flocks of Red-necked Stints, Red-capped Plovers, Great and Little Egrets, White-faced Heron, Grey Teal, a Greenshank and Curlew Sandpipers, two that had orange flags on their legs. We moved on to the launching ramp area and added Welcome Swallows, Tree Martins, Variegated Fairy-wrens, Banded Stilts, a Swamp Harrier, Willie Wagtail and Magpie. A strong wind had suddenly come in from the north as we headed back along the road passing some Black-faced Woodswallows. We turned off the road onto a track that leads to Mt. Grainger and passed some Emus on the way. On the beach below the hill we saw Red-necked Stints, White-faced Heron and Silver Gulls. It was decided to climb up the Mallee covered hill and flushed out a Spotted Nightjar and saw Grey Butcherbirds, Variegated Fairy-wrens, Redthroats, Welcome Swallows, Magpies, Galahs, Australian Ravens and a Whistling Kite. The wind and the very dry conditions reduced the amount of birds from the number we would usually see here. Fifty three species were found on the day and the birds of the day were the Asian Gull-billed and Common? Terns,, Swamp Harrier and Spotted Nightjar. A special mention also for the two flagged Curlew Sandpipers.

Bernie Haase.



Asian Gull-billed Terns

Photographed by Bernie Haase at Chinaman's Creek on 24 March 2019

Past Excursions (cont.)

31 MARCH: COWIRRA

A private property adjacent to the River Murray, Mannum:

To our relief, forecast showers headed elsewhere, and 26 members and friends arrived at this former dairy farm to a pleasant mixture of intermittent sunshine and temperatures heading towards 22°. The property we walked over was originally part of a World War 1 soldier resettlement program located where the River Murray diverges into billabongs, which had been drained to create flood-irrigated dairy pastures. Over the last 15 years, our host, Ben, has also been progressively re-vegetating 2 areas of the former dairy lands, planting over 600 seedlings with a mixture of drip-irrigated local and introduced trees and shrubs, many of which he has propagated himself.

During the leisurely wander through the various sections of the property, we saw 54 different species of birds. Ben was keen to have birds identified and counted at this earlier stage of his plantings, with a view to seeing how the avian populations developed as his plants matured.

An absolute highlight of the morning was the moment when a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater not only flew onto Brian Walker's shoulder, but sat there while we all gasped, grabbed for cameras, took their shots and marvelled at the unique audacity of this wild bird, which, in its surprisingly total absence of fear, forged an extended and eternally special symbiotic experience between bird and human, to the astonishment and delight of both Brian and the onlookers.

Post walk, relaxing on the riverside lawns in the shade of a mighty river red gum, Lynton valiantly struggled to keep his counters focussed, as the horizontal and vertical panoramas were a constant distraction to birders' sharp eyes and ears, such were the attractions of the constantly varying winged water and tree visitors!

Recent conditions have been so dry that Ben was concerned there wouldn't be enough birds to keep the walkers interested. Needless to say their expertise soon allayed all such fears, with the property list including many species of water birds, such as Australian Wood Duck (20), Pacific Black Duck (4), Hybrid Black/Mallard ducks (6), Australian Shelduck (6),

Australian White Ibis (14), Straw-necked ibis (100), Royal Spoonbill (1), Yellow-billed Spoonbill (1), White-faced heron (2), Australian Pelican (2), Great Cormorant (1), Pied Cormorant (1), Australian Darter (16), Eurasian Coot (3), Australian Crake (3), Dusky Moorhen (2), Caspian Tern (1), Black Swans (2), and numerous silver gulls.

Moving across the lower and upper dryland areas we spotted Swamp Harrier (1), Black Kite (2), Whistling Kite (1), Peaceful Dove (10), Spotted Dove (2), Crested Pigeon (6), Nankeen Kestrel (1), Little Corella (100), Galah (50), Musk Lorikeet (10), Rainbow Lorikeet (2), Red-rumped Parrot (5), Adelaide Rosella (6), Yellow Rosella (2), Superb Fairywren (10), New Holland Honeyeater (20), Singing Honeyeater (20), Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (4), White-plumed Honeyeater (10), Noisy Miner (12), Spotted Pardalote (2), Yellow Thornbill (6), Weebill (10), White-browed Babbler (12), Australian Magpie (6), Grey Shrikethrush (2), Magpielark (2), Little Raven (20), Silvereye (4), Tree Martin (10), Welcome Swallow (10), Australian Reed Warbler (6), Common Blackbird (10), Common Starling (20), and House Sparrow (20).

On the upper drylands, a flurry of wings brought a surge of excitement when 5 Brown Quail rose and headed for — and hid in — the patches of mounded saltbush, much to the frustration of observers

Once the official property count was over, a dozen or so birders followed a walking trail to the wetlands south of the ferry landing, able then to include in their lists a flock of Australian White Ibis, a White-breasted Woodswallow, multiple Superb Fairywrens, Royal Spoonbill, Great Egret, Black-faced Cuckooshrike, Red Wattlebird, Pied Butcherbird, Straw-necked Ibis, Brown Treecreeper, Willie Wagtails, a Collared Sparrowhawk, Yellow Rosellas, Kookaburra, an intact dead Boobook Owl, and the usual flocks of various ducks, Little Corellas and Galahs.

Not only was owner Ben grateful to have so many species confirmed on his property, but also more than happy to hear, as birders departed, enthusiastic suggestions of 'Let's do this again in Spring!' Special thanks to Ben for hosting us and to Lynton for his event organisation and jolly yet capable leadership!

Anna Woods



**The Bird-whisperer, alias Brian Walker
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, photographed
by Rose Slade near Mannum on 31/3/19**

Past Excursions (cont.)

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

6 APRIL: STIPITURUS CP

22 people, including 2 children, met at the Strawberry farm just outside Mt. Compass township at 8.30 am on a perfect autumn weather day. We were so lucky as the day before was 34 degrees with horrendous winds and thick dust swirling across the State.

I gave a brief history of the park before we headed off, 6km down the road, to the entrance to Stipiturus CP. This Conservation Park was declared in December 2006. Known as the Glenshera Swamp consisting of 68ha it was purchased with funds from the Natural Heritage Trust and Nature Foundation Inc. It was previously drained for agriculture and was a Dairy and Cattle property. It has the largest **Peat** swampland in the Fleurieu.

It is now a **closed** conservation park with a locked gate and permission to visit with a group must be obtained from the Ranger at Willunga office of Natural Resources Management (NRM). As people walked through the gate we sprayed their shoes with methylated Spirits to prevent the spread of *Phytophthora* before entering the park, a requirement of the Natural Resources Management Department (NRM).

Instantly we had a beautiful view of a couple of Striated Pardalotes. Honeyeaters were calling amongst the Stringybarks. Throughout the park we found Brown-headed, Crescent, New Holland, Singing, White-naped, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebird, and a few White-fronted Chats.

The smaller birds were plentiful too, with White-browed Scrubwrens, Superb Fairy-wrens, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill and Red-browed Finches present.

Did we find the elusive, secretive, Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren?

Well, Denzel Murfett offered to walk through the difficult terrain and take just a few people with him to try and find them. The rest of the group stayed on the main track and walked through the re-veg sites looking for other birds. And **yes** they did. They found three birds in what is now dry swampland with a

couple heard in another area, but no photos to prove it.

As we headed up the hill there were Crimson Rosellas, Elegant Parrots, many Grey Shrikethrushes, Grey Fantails, a few Willie Wagtails, Golden Whistlers and Scarlet Robins heard and later sighted.

The birds of prey were scarce, but a Peregrine Falcon circling above us caused a stir! The group finally decided they were 80% sure it was and Bob's photo proved it. A couple of Wedge-tailed Eagles and a Brown Goshawk flew over, too.

At lunch we recorded 35 species, which was a fantastic result — especially as it is so dry with **no** water in the creeks or Swamp. The two young girls



Fleurieu Birders looking for Emu-wrens in the swamp

present discovered a number of new birds to add to their list so they were happy too.

It turned out to be a fabulous day and some of the group ventured out after lunch to make the most of their privilege to visit this **special** Conservation Park. A few more birds were spotted, including a Crested Shriketit, and Yellow-rumped, and Buff-rumped Thornbills that would then bring the total to 38. **Wendy Phillips**



Elegant Parrot
Photographed by Bob Daly
in Stipiturus CP on 6 April 2019

13 APRIL: KENNETH STIRLING (WOTTON SCRUB) CP

Sixteen people gathered for the excursion including quite a few new faces, which is always good to see. The weather was still, the sky completely overcast and the area was clearly suffering from the very dry

conditions that we have been experiencing. During the walk there were a few spits of rain but certainly nothing to help break the dry spell. The vegetation of the area is mainly Messmate

Past Excursions (cont.)

Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) with a bracken and sclerophyll shrub understorey.

Our walk commenced on Gum Flat Rd at Gate 2 and we decided to attempt a complete loop of this relatively small 82ha section of Kenneth Stirling CP. We headed off in a clockwise direction along Wotton's Track and then turned left onto Gahnia Track to Gate 3 from where we went south along the Eastern Ridge Track to the southern boundary of the park.

Along the way we regularly saw and/or heard Crescent Honeyeaters (10), Grey Fantails (15), White-throated Treecreepers (15), Striated Pardalotes (10), Adelaide Rosellas (12), Kookaburras (4) and Superb Fairywrens (10). As we neared the creek in the lower part of the park we encountered a group of noisy Sulphur-crested Cockatoos (10 seen in total) and at one stage saw a tree containing several Cockies, 3 Little Corellas and several Galahs (10 seen in total). We also heard a lone Grey Shrike-thrush calling in the distance. Other parrots included Rainbow Lorikeets (4) and Elegant Parrots (2 which were heard passing overhead). We also encountered a couple of groups of Striated Thornbills (15) as well as Brown Thornbill (1), Buff-rumped Thornbill (1), Weebill (2), Red Wattlebirds (2) and New Holland Honeyeaters (6).

Once we reached the southern boundary of the park, we had to briefly stray onto private land before re-entering the park and doing a bit of bush bashing in order to re-join Wotton's Track. We were then rewarded by good views of a male Golden Whistler and a male and female Scarlet Robin. We then headed northwards back towards our starting point at Gate 2. A Magpie Lark was heard calling in the distance and several Australian Magpies (3), Little Ravens (4), Yellow-faced Honeyeaters (2) and Grey Currawongs (6) were also recorded.

Although we didn't see a great many birds we definitely had a good walk. The walk information provided by one of Adelaide's walking organisations said the loop would be 3.6km but it turned out to be 6.1km! A leisurely lunch break was therefore enthusiastically embraced — we stayed where we were, (rather than going on to Mt George) before the birdcall where we recorded a total of 27 species.

Ali Ben Kahn

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS)

13 APRIL

Koolunga

It was a calm but overcast day when 6 birders met at the Bunyip reserve in Koolunga. Two were from Pt. Augusta and one each from Koolunga, Pt. Pirie, Arno Bay and Mambray Creek. We started looking at

the birds in the reserve picnic area and nearby residential area finding the usual feral birds like Starlings, Blackbirds, Spotted Doves, Rock Doves and Sparrows. In the tall trees there were many Red Wattlebirds and also Galahs and Mallee Ringnecks looking and squabbling over hollows. As we walked along a path that followed the Broughton River, there were many Silvereyes and some Variegated Fairywrens, Grey Fantails, Peaceful Doves, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Yellow-throated Miners, Weebills, Rufous Whistlers, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and some inquisitive Yellow Thornbills plus other more common birds. We drove further around the town following the river, stopping to look at a waterhole and finding some Black Ducks and a Little Pied Cormorant with a Whistling Kite, Kestrel, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes and Musk Lorikeets flying past. As we passed the oval about a 100 Galahs and some Crested Pigeons were feeding on the ground.

Pedlers Scrub

We drove on about 5km. NE of Koolunga to Pedlers scrub block, crossing a stubble-covered paddock on the way. We drove over the paddock in an extended line of vehicles, flushing out a Stubble Quail and some Pipits and Horsfields Bushlarks. We stopped in a patch of Mallee scrub that has been made a nature reserve by the Pedler family. It was the driest it has been in living memory but we still found a Wedge-tailed Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel, Brown Falcons, Elegant Parrots, Brown Treecreeper, Striated Pardalotes, Dusky Woodswallows and the ever present White-plumed Honeyeaters, Yellow-throated Miners, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Magpies, Willie Wagtails and Little Ravens.

White Cliffs

We moved on about 3km south to the Broughton River and White Cliffs area. Our lunch stop was on private property on the banks of the river with a reed-lined water hole. On the water there was a Great Cormorant, Coots, Grey Teal and Australian Grebes, while in the reed beds there were White-faced Heron, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Little Grassbird and Spotless Crakes. In the trees were Little Ravens, Singing and White-plumed Honeyeaters, Peaceful Doves, Galahs and Welcome Swallows above. After our lunch we drove on to the White Cliffs and Red Bank water holes on private property. This is where we would set up our camp and we walked along the river from here. We disturbed flocks of Grey Teal, Wood duck, Black Duck and Little Black Cormorants from the ponds while in the reeds there were more Coots, Dusky Moorhens, Purple Swamphens, Little Grassbirds and Spotless Crakes, which allowed us to get some

Past Excursions (cont.)

photos of them. The area was revegetated over the years with a variety of native trees from other regions in Australia, which added to the local trees and produced an altered seasonal flowering regime. This provided food for some New Holland Honeyeaters, Yellow-throated Miners and other Honeyeaters and Musk Lorikeets. The Trees and shrubs along the riverbanks were home to Mallee Ringnecks, Red-rumped and Elegant Parrots, Galahs, Dusky Woodswallows, Silvereyes, Grey Shrike-thrush, Common Bronzewing, Grey Fantails, Variegated Fairy-wrens, White-browed Babbler, Willie Wagtails, Magpie Larks, a Collared Sparrowhawk and a Golden Whistler. The surrounding open paddock areas were home to Magpies, Little Ravens, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Crested Pigeons and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes. In the sky overhead there were Whistling Kites, Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins. The usual feral birds were also present. We camped on the riverbank and our local host cooked a camp oven roast of lamb and venison for us. Yum Yum! A total of 59 bird species were found for the day, with the birds of the day being the Yellow Thornbills, Stubble Quail, Brown Treecreeper, Spotless Crake and Golden Whistler.

14 APRIL

Bundaleer Reservoir

We drove to Bundaleer reservoir via some back roads and met the SA Water Reservoir Keeper at the gate. After filling out some forms and doing a site induction we drove down to near the water in the reservoir. Another birder joined us from Whyalla as we looked at the mass of water birds on the water and on the shore. There were thousands of Grey Teal with hundreds of Blue-billed and Pink-eared Ducks along with Hoary-headed Grebes. There were also many Australian Shelduck, Wood Duck and Coots and smaller numbers of Black Ducks, Shovelers, Freckled Duck, Masked Lapwings, Pelicans, Great and Little Black Cormorants and a few Black Swans, Hardhead, Chestnut Teal, Musk Duck, Crested Grebes, Black-tailed native-hen, Black-winged Stilts, Red-capped Plovers, Black-fronted Dotterels, White-faced Heron and a Darter. A Kestrel, Little Ravens, Whistling Kite, Magpie Larks, Rock Doves and Galahs were also seen. After having a long look at the waterbirds we headed off to the extensive tree plantation area where groups of different, mostly native, trees have been planted for revegetation and plant suitability trials. Here we stopped for lunch and walked around in the plantation. The first bird we found was a Diamond Firetail and more were seen later. Some of the trees

were flowering, attracting Yellow-throated miners, New Holland and White-plumed Honeyeaters. In the forest canopy we found Dusky Woodswallows, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Red-rumped Parrots, Rufous Whistler, Grey Fantails, a Grey Currawong and Flinders Ranges Crimson Rosellas. On the forest floor were Willie Wagtails, Grey Shrike-thrush, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Common Bronzewing. After we had driven around the plantation tracks we headed out onto the open, very dry, grassland area. Here there were Pipits and Horsfields Bushlark. Some areas here have been revegetated with native trees and shrubs and we added Striated Pardalotes, Mallee Ringnecks, Crested Pigeons and Singing Honeyeaters to our bird list. We said our goodbyes at the main gate and thanked the reservoir keeper for allowing us to access the site. We saw 53 bird species on the day and the birds of the day were the Freckled Duck, Crested Grebes, Darter, Grey Currawong and Diamond Firetails. We had seen grand total of 80 bird species over the weekend.

Bernie Haase.

18 TO 23 APRIL: EASTER CAMPOUT

MARY SEYMOUR CONSERVATION PARK:

After an absence of 6 years we returned to Mary Seymour Conservation Park, a familiar and favourite campsite for many of us. Members expressed their appreciation for the work undertaken by dedicated ranger staff in preparing vehicle access, walking tracks and a large campsite area that made for very pleasant camping conditions (thanks for your assistance Brian Robins). The weather also played its part with great camping and birdwatching conditions apart from a light drizzle on Sunday morning and a few cooler evenings.

There are three principal reasons why Birds SA runs campouts:

- Enjoyment of members, guests and friends – interacting with like-minded people;
- Encouraging participation and interaction between members state wide; and
- Adding to ornithological knowledge.

Each of the above aims was achieved for the 29 members who attended and made this not only a fun event, but equally a valuable update on our bird survey contribution for this State.

Mention must also be made of the traditional feast of bacon, eggs, tomatoes, mushrooms, toast and pancakes cooked by John Gitsham, Graham Gould and myself under the supervision of Master Chef, Graham Pascoe. It was pleasing that no food poisoning was recorded as a result of the gluttony that occurred. Thanks also to Ann Houghton for her

Past Excursions (cont.)

beautiful handmade basket (containing a chocolate egg) for all to savour and cherish.

Our total species count for the weekend was 123 plus the call of a Tawny Frogmouth heard most nights but never sighted. A breakdown of total species seen and some highlights at local sites visited are:

Mary Seymour Conservation Park – 86 (Southern Emu Wren; Flame Robin; Brown Quail and Painted Buttonquail)

Big Heath Conservation Park – 47 (Rose Robin)

Goose; Australian Shelduck)

Nangwarry Tower Road – 16 (Crimson Rosella)

The feedback from participants was very positive with regards to the two port-a-loo toilets, the traditional Sunday brunch barbeque and a visit to the nearby Bourne Bird Room, which was founded by Jack and Pat Bourne.

Situated 10km west of Bool Lagoon, Bourne's Birds is a fantastic exhibit. The Bird Room contains a display of mounted birds, nests and mammals as well as the Reg Attiwill collection of local birds' eggs.



Members birding at the 2019 Easter Campout

Penola Conservation Park – 33 (Eastern Yellow Robin; Spotted Pardalote)

Bool Lagoon Game Reserve – 64 (Brolga; Magpie

Included in the collection are more than 300 bird species, together with bearded dragons, goannas, frogs, tortoises, echidnas, wombats, and a koala with young. Possums, bats, dunnarts, sugar gliders, bush rats, antechinus, snakeskins and countless skulls, skins and nests are stored in drawers. There are also numerous bird prints and cards.

Jack Bourne made his collection from powerline kills, animals colliding with windows, and from Bool Lagoon after a duck shoot. He showed how the animals were prepared for display. It took about 6 hours to prepare a Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Jack and Pat's daughter, Marion, now runs the enterprise, while Marion's four year old grandson, Max, ensures that the Bourne dynasty is safe. Our President, John Gitsham, presented Max with a copy of 'The Birder' as a 'thank you' gift, in appreciation of the great welcome extended to our campers.

Members are now encouraged to mark their 2020 Diaries for the Easter campout at Cantara



Jack and Pat Bourne's great-grandson Max, with his grandmother Marion, accepts a 'thank you'

Past Excursions (cont.)

Homestead in the Coorong. There will be limited accommodation available at the Homestead for those that cannot camp!

Lynton Huxley

28 APRIL: BYARDS ROAD WETLANDS, REYNELLA EAST AND TANGARI REGIONAL PARK, WOODCROFT:

Both these sites were new to our field trip itinerary and it was pleasing that 25 members attended. The wetland area is a relatively new development covering about 21ha. As it relies on rainfall runoff, all but one pond was dry. The park contains a combination of paved and good gravel walking tracks with a mix of open and vegetated areas well suited to a variety of bird species. It really is a very good wetlands area to visit in the southern suburbs and will be included in future excursions particularly after some good rainfall.

We were fortunate that Heather Connolly a local Birds SA member was able to guide and inform us on the wetland features. Species recorded included Australian Wood Duck (10), Pacific Black Duck (30), Grey Teal (4), Australian White Ibis (4), Royal Spoonbill (1), Masked Lapwing (2), Black-fronted Dotterel (2), Spotted Dove (20), Common Bronzewing (6), Crested Pigeon (40), Galah (12) and a flyover by a Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. Thanks to some investigative work by Enid Pascoe who was drawn to a rowdy group of Noisy Miners on the fringe of a casuarina forest many members saw a Southern Boobook.

Our birdcall for this wetland revealed a total of 39 species, which should be easily exceeded after prolonged rainfall allows the ponds to fill.

Despite limited time, members agreed to move onto the nearby Tangari Regional Park for a quick survey of about an hour before adjourning for a later lunch. The highlights here were the range of parrot species. A total of 23 species in our short survey of a small section of the Park provides plenty of justification for a future visit.

A special thank you to Heather Connolly for recommending the visit to Tangari Regional Park, which is an

important grey box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) woodland of 82ha.

Lynton Huxley

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

4 MAY: BULLOCK HILL CP

17 Birders met at Ashbourne in the Greenman car park. We then drove in convoy to Bullock Hill CP. The weather was partly cloudy with light winds so it suited for our outing well. To start with, the leader decided to take the group eastwards along the southern boundary of the park. The first sighting we all enjoyed was a Brush Bronzewing out in the open paddock next to the park. The rest of the track east proved hard birding with only squabbling New Holland Honeyeaters to the fore. They were our most common species with over 100 counted. One Eastern Spinebill showed itself to a few people at the front. Heading into the park proper, where the open woodland meets the dense prickly Acacia brought more birds for us to see. Elegant Parrots were a highlight with 20 recorded. As we headed further up the hills to the Northern boundary of this more open section some more interesting birds were recorded. These were: Southern Whiteface 1, Hooded Robins 2, Peaceful Doves 3 and Red-browed Finches 20.

Our walk took just over 3 hours to complete and our final tally was 34 species. We recorded only one raptor, which was a Brown Falcon gliding high above us. Three people, who left the group early, recorded the only Golden Whistler, and they relayed the message to the leader. We enjoyed a variety of other interesting sightings including the unusual sighting of only a single White-browed Babbler.

Denzel Murfet

Fledglings Field Trip, July 2019, School Holidays



Do you have a young family member who is interested in learning more about Australian Native Birds?

Birds SA are organising a "Field Trip" for young bird enthusiasts during the July school holidays.

There is no charge, but we do require a responsible adult to accompany your "Fledgling" throughout the entire event, which will start at 9.00am and finish at 10.30am.

Bookings are essential

Please register your interest via email to: general@birdssa.asn.au

Future Excursions

Field Program and campout Co-ordinator (FGC)
Lynton Huxley
Phone: 0498 466 092 or 08 7009 5038
Email: fieldtrips@birdssa.asn.au
Or lyntonhuxley@gmail.com

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 Coordinator, should include the number of attendees, highlights **only** of the birds seen or heard, the weather and any other interesting events on the day.

Photographs for The Birder, taken by any member of the group, are always welcome.

The duties of the leader and scribe may be shared on the day.

The length of the report should not exceed 500 words.

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).

Excursion Terrain Difficulty Ratings:

- Easy — generally flat terrain
- Moderate — may include some short undulating gradients
- Difficult — may include some continuous or steep gradients

What to Bring:

Sun protection cream and a hat

- Wear sturdy footwear and long pants (think snake protection)
- Drinking water
- Binoculars and or camera
- A chair/stool and your lunch to enjoy our bird call at the end of the walk

HOT WEATHER PROTOCOL — If a fire ban is in effect or the forecast temperature is above 36C in the area of a scheduled walk, the walk is automatically cancelled.

BIRDS SA SUB-GROUP 'FLEURIEU BIRDERS'
Contacts: Wendy Phillips/Bob Daly 8555 0634 or 0421376016 or <mailto:fleurieubirds@gmail.com>

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS)
Contact, Bernie Haase, 0419863834,
b.haase@telstra.com

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

SATURDAY 1 JUNE: SCOTT CP.

Meet at 8.30am at the first entrance to the park on Gould Rd, as you come off Deep Creek Rd., Currency Creek.

BIRDS SA

SUNDAY 2 JUNE: SANDY CREEK CP: (MLR) 52KM

(Moderate) Meet at 8.30am at the northern car park located at the end of Conservation Road, which is on the right, off the Gawler to Lyndoch Road about 10km east of Gawler.

TRIP LEADER: Ali Ben Kahn

BIRDS SA

SATURDAY 15 JUNE: BROOKFIELD CP (MM) 123KM.

(Easy) 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.

TRIP LEADER: Stephen Ramm

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS)

SUNDAY 16 JUNE: CARRIEWERLOO STATION

Meet at 8.00am at start of Stuart Highway

Contact Bernie Haase

BIRDS SA

THURSDAY 20 JUNE: JENKINS SCRUB (MLR) 61KM.

(Moderate) Travel about 10km from Williamstown towards Springton, then turn right onto Mount Road. Meet at 8.30am at the entrance to the scrub on the left, opposite Murray Vale Road.

TRIP LEADER: Martyn Price

BIRDS SA

SUNDAY 30 JUNE: WHITES RD. WETLANDS (AP) 16KM.

(Easy) Meet at 8.30am. Head north on the Port Wakefield Road. At 1.5km after passing the Salisbury Highway Bridge, turn left into Globe Derby Drive and continue on this road until it meets Whites Road. Turn right and continue to the end. The Park entrance is on the left.

TRIP LEADER: Rod Tetlow

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

SATURDAY 6 JULY: NEWLAND HEAD C.P.

Meet at 8.30am in the Dennis Hut area.

BIRDS SA

Future Excursions (cont.)

SATURDAY 13 JULY: RIVERGLADES WETLANDS MURRAY BRIDGE (MM) 80KM.

(Easy) Meet at 8.30am in the boat ramp car park at Avoca Dell. Drive to Murray Bridge. Cross the bridge to the eastern side of the river and take the fifth turning left into Mitchell Ave. After 3.35km turn left into Murray Drive. At the foot of hill turn right and you will see the carpark ahead.

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS) SATURDAY 13 JULY TO MONDAY 15 JULY: CAMPOUT AT SOUTH GAP STATION

Meet at 8.00am at the start of the Stuart Hwy. (Campout — facilities available)

Contact Bernie Haase

BIRDS SA

THURSDAY 18 JULY: TANGARI REGIONAL PARK WOODCROFT (MM) 23 KM.

(Moderate) Meet in the car park on Pine Road at 8.30am. This reserve at Woodcroft is bounded by Reynell Road, Pine Road, Pimpala Road and partially by Riddoch Crescent/Chappell Hill Road/Nyrang Circuit. Public transport is available on Bus Route 600 or 601 (M-F only) Marion Centre Interchange to Old Reynella Interchange and alight at Stop 64 on Reynell Road. From Adelaide catch the Belair train to Blackwood and connect with the bus there.

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

BIRDS SA

SUNDAY 28 JULY: CLELAND CONSERVATION PARK (MLR) 20KM.

(Difficult) Meet at 8.30am in the Cleland Wildlife Park car park located at 365 Mount Lofty Summit Road, Crafers.

TRIP LEADER: Stephen Ramm

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

SATURDAY 3 AUGUST: NURRAGI RESERVE, MILANG.

Meet at 8.30am in the Punkulde, Car Park, on the Finnis to Milang Rd.

BIRDS SA

SATURDAY 10 AUGUST: BROWNS ROAD, MONARTO (MLR) 60KM.

(Easy) 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: Lynton Huxley

BIRDS SA

THURSDAY 15 AUGUST: BUCKLAND PARK, PORT GAWLER, (AP) 45KM.

(Easy) Meet at 8.30am at the corner of Port Gawler and Applebee Roads at Port Gawler. From the City head towards Two Wells on the Port Wakefield Road and turn left onto Port Gawler Road (it is about 4km before you reach Two Wells).

TRIP LEADER: Anna Woods

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS) SATURDAY 17 AUGUST TO MONDAY 19 AUGUST: CAMPOUT AT MUNYAROO CP

Meet at the Whyalla Wetlands at 8.30am (No facilities available)

Contact Bernie Haase

BIRDS SA

SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER: MANNING FLORA & FAUNA RESERVE, MCLAREN FLAT (MLR) 32KM.

(Easy) Meet at 8.30am at the Manning Reserve track entrance located off Kays Road about 500meters from the junction with Whiting Road.

TRIP LEADER: Stephen Ramm

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER, TBA.

BIRDS SA

SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER: TOLDEROL GAME RESERVE, LAKE ALEXANDRINA (LA) 85KM.

(Easy) Meet at 8.30am. Take the road from Langhorne Creek to Wellington for approximately 5km and turn right into Dog Lake Road. Continue over a cross road, past a farm on the left hand side, pass through a gate, turn left on reaching the T-junction. Leave gates as you find them please.

TRIP LEADER: Stephen Ramm

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS) SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15: BERNIE'S BLOCK

8:00 am – 1:00 pm

Meet at 8.00am at Mambray Creek Parking Bay.

Contact Bernie Haase

THE OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND CAMPOUT (from 4th to 7th) will be held at Gluepot Reserve in SA's Riverland region (approx. 230km from Adelaide). Further details on arrangements and the campsite will be provided in the spring issue of The Birder magazine.

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

Future Excursions (cont.)

FLEURIEU BIRDERS 2019 ANNUAL CAMPOUT

Friday 18th to Wednesday 23rd October, 2019

Fleurieu Birders plan to visit Kangaroo Island for their annual campout in October. To do justice to the island's diversity of birds and their associated habitats, we'll extend our campout from our traditional three nights to five nights. On the first 3 nights we will stay at the Kingscote Tourist Park and on the last two at Western KI Caravan Park. From Kingscote, shorter trips to Murray Lagoon, Reeves Point Bird Hide, American River and D'Estrees Bay are envisaged. For the last two days, we'll stay at Western KI Caravan Park. This site is adjacent to Flinders Chase National Park, which incidentally, will be celebrating its centenary of proclamation in 1919. There are a number of short bushland and coastal walks available for us in this park as well the nearby Kelly Hills Conservation Park. Day passes within the National Park will need to be paid (\$11 per adult). Both the Kingscote and Western KI Caravan Parks have cabins, powered and unpowered sites, as well as camp kitchens and meeting areas.

All cabins at the Western KI caravan park have now been fully booked, but powered and unpowered sites are still available. If any new person is interested in joining us and still wishes to still stay in cabins, they should make their own accommodation arrangements at alternate places, such as Parndarna, Vivonne Bay or Hanson Bay. There is

also heritage accommodation within the Flinders Chase National Park.

For the entire campout, including return ferry trips and accommodation, the costs per car/person are estimated at \$550 and a little more for those planning to take their caravans/trailers.

If anyone else plans to join us, please contact me as soon as possible, with the number of people in your party, and your preferred accommodation (cabins or powered sites). Please note, you'll need to make your own ferry and accommodation bookings. You'll need to book early as both sites will fill quickly and we need to secure enough cabins for our group in plenty of time. At Kingscote there are a number of holiday units (no caravans) near to the Tourist Park, but not near Western KI CP. Food and beverage shops and fuel are available at Kingscote, but there is only limited food available for purchase at the western part of the Island. You are more than free to extend your stay on the Island outside our campout dates.

Please contact Campout Organiser, **KEITH JONES** (mob: 0439 295 990, email: docjones@bigpond.net.au) to provide your expression of interest and further details.

Keith Jones



**Flocking Pied Oystercatchers at Reeves Point, Kingscote
Photographed by Keith Jones about 2017**

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

Fewer reports in recent years.

14, 9/2/2019 and 7, 15/3/2019. Corny Point, YP.
Feeding among seaweed on beach.

Spry, K.

4, 31/3/2019. East of Mannum, MM.

Birds SA

Blue-billed Duck

1+4 young, 14/2/2019. Millicent, Lake MacIntyre, SE.

Boyle, S.

300, 5/3/2019. Bolivar Sewage Works, AP.

Breed, W. *et al.*

270, 14/4/2019. Bundaleer Reservoir, FR.

Haase, B. *et al.*

Large numbers for this species, reflecting dry conditions throughout south-eastern Australia.

Freckled Duck

1, 8/2/2019. Wilmington Sewage Works, FR.

Wright, G.

45, 14/2/2019. Millicent, Lake MacIntyre, SE.

Boyle, S.

3, 16/2/2019. Nildottie, Greenway wetlands, MM.

Kelertas, R.

8, 14/4/2019. Bundaleer Reservoir, FR.

Haase, B. *et al.*

Little Pied Cormorant

1, 17/4/2019. Colonel Light Gardens, AP. Perched on TV antenna.

Kirk, A.

Royal Spoonbill

5, 17/2/2019. Lochiel Park wetland, AP.

Hyland, M.

Fork-tailed Swift

Numerous reports but mostly in low numbers including:

10, 16/2/2019. Victor Harbor, MLR.

Carpenter, G.

Several, 17/2/2019. Padthaway, SE.

Leddy, L.

20, 24/2/2019. Island Beach, KI

Potter, D. & Turner, J.

100, 27/3/2019. Port Gawler, AP.

Rapley, S.

20, 16/4/2019. Newland Head CP, MLR.

Syson, W.

5, 17/4/2019. Whyalla, EP.

Harper, D.

15, 17/4/2019. Lochiel, 6km SE, LN.

Harper, D.

5, 17/4/2019. Whyalla, EP.

Harper, D.

20, 20/4/2019. Point Sturt Peninsula, MM.

Doecke, M.

40, 20/4/2019. Macs Beach, YP.

McKenzie, P. & Tiller, K.

50, 20/4/2019. Victor Harbor, MLR.

Carpenter, G.

Australasian Bittern

1, 5/2/2019. Milang, 1km E, MM.

Jack, T.

1, 21/2/2019. Thorndon Park Reservoir, MLR.

Vickers, B.

Previously reported at this locality in May 1991.

Glossy Ibis

131, 20/1/2019. Lake Hawdon South, SE.

Campbell, J. & Christie, M.

Straw-necked Ibis

1, 27/2/2019. Fulham, Breakout Creek, AP.

Edey, D.

14 overhead, 22/3/2019. Lockleys, AP.

Edey, D.

6, March 2019. Morphett Vale, MLR.

Connelly, H.

Not common in the Adelaide area.

Square-tailed Kite

1, 16/2/2019. Rostrevor, AP.

Mitchell, P. & Corcoran, P.

Bird Records (cont.)

White-bellied Sea-eagle

1, 3/2/2019. Tolderol Game Reserve, MM.
Macllwain, E.

1 immature, 26/3/2019. Outer Harbour, Bird Island, AP.
van Trigt, M.-A. & Dafoe, J.

1 immature, 27/3/2019. Sugarshack Wetlands, MM.
Gitsham, J.

1 immature, 8/4/2019. Outer Harbour breakwater, AP.
Sharp, S.

Whistling Kite

1 over, 30/1/2019. Brooklyn Park, AP.
Lawrence, R.

Few reports in Adelaide in recent years.

1, 23/2/2019. Eden Hills RS, MLR.
Ramm, M.

1, 20/3/2019. Blakeview, Craigmore Rd, AP.
Krieg, J.

Baillon's Crake

Calling overnight, 25/1/2019. Cuttlefish Bay, Snapper Point, KI.
Souter, W.

This species very occasionally nests on Kangaroo Island. Of particular interest was the report of several at the Cape Willoughby lighthouse in September 1999 (SA Ornithologist 34:292), apparently attracted to the light during their nocturnal migration. Overseas populations (e.g. Europe to Africa) have large migrations but little is known of their movements in Australia.

Birds in SA are generally fairly quiet, but I don't know if they call more at night.

Lesser Sand Plover

1, 14/4/2019. Bald Hill Beach, AP.
Taylor, P.W.

Few reports of this wader in recent years.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

16430, 20/1/2019. Lake Hawdon South, SE.
Campbell, J. & Christie, M.

A very large group indicating the importance of this seasonal site.

Long-toed Stint

4, 12/4/2019. Tolderol Game Reserve, MM.
Koch, P.

Australian Bustard

Many reports from the agricultural regions including:
1, 10/3/2019. Tanunda, Rifle Range Rd, MLR.

Rolton, B.

1, 17/3/2019. Adelaide Airport, AP.
Barron, P.

1, 30/3/2019. Kepa, MM. Drinking at leaking pipe.
Marshall, T.

1, March 2019. Booleroo Centre, LN.
McKernan, W.

1, 8/4/2019. Horrocks Pass, FR.
Purcell, K.

1, 27/4/2019. Port Germein, LN.
Gordon, S.

1, April 2019. Pekina, LN.
McKernan, W.

Sanderling

1, 14/4/2019. Bald Hill Beach, AP.
Taylor, P.W.

See also report in last magazine from northern Gulf St Vincent.

Broad-billed Sandpiper

1, 24/3/2019. Clinton CP, AP.
Woodland, R.

1, 26/3/2019. Outer Harbour, Bird Island, AP.
van Trigt, M.-A. & Dafoe, J.

Whimbrel

10, 9/3/2019. Price Saltfields, YP.
Jack, T.

1, 26/3/2019. Outer Harbour, Bird Island, AP.
van Trigt, M.-A. & Dafoe, J.

Wood Sandpiper

1, 3/2/2019. Reynella East, Byards Wetlands, MLR.
Smith, Ed

Oriental Pratincole

Additional records include:

1 br plumage, 15/3/2019. Tolderol Game Reserve, MM.

Rogers, C. & Fennel, J.

2 br plumage, 28/3/2019. Tolderol Game Reserve, MM.

Rogers, C. & Fennel, J.

White-winged Black Tern

2, 22/3/2019 and 6, 23/3/2019. Tolderol Game Reserve, MM.

Koch, P. & Rogers, C.

Bird Records (cont.)

Common Tern

8, 23/3/2019. Tolderol Game Reserve, MM.
Rogers, C.
1, 24/3/2019. Chinaman's Creek, LN.
Haase, B. *et al.*

Elegant Parrot

36, 28/4/2019. Corny Point, YP.
Spry, K.

Blue-winged Parrot

10, 9/4/2019. Near Bowmans, AP.
Taylor, P.W.
This species migrates through the Adelaide region into north-eastern SA during winter, although it is not known from where they originate.

Rock Parrot

17, 26/3/2019. Outer Harbour, Bird Island, AP.
van Trigt, M.-A. & Dafoe, J.

Laughing Kookaburra

Pair + immature, 22/2/2019. Lockleys, Mellor Park, AP.
Edey, D.

Brown Treecreeper

1, 24/3/2019. Scott Creek CP, MLR.
Fletcher, R.
1, 12/4/2019. Upper Sturt, Sturt Creek, MLR.
Carpenter, G. & Bradley, T.
Now rarely reported from the Mount Lofty Ranges.

Eastern Spinebill

1, 1/3/2019. Moorak, SE.
Haywood, B.
Unusually few records from the SE.

Black-chinned Honeyeater

1, 14/2/2019. Lewiston, AP.
Merigot, L.
1, 19/3/2019. Port Elliott, Gregory St, MLR.
Syson, W.
1, 26/4/2019. Happy Valley, MLR.
Brooker, W.
Few recent reports in the Morphett Vale – Happy Valley area.

White-browed Babbler

5, 7/3/2019. McLaren Vale, Hardy's vineyard, MLR.
Carpenter, G.

Crested Shriketit

1, 17/2/2019. Crystal Brook, Bowman's Park, LN.
Haase, B. *et al.*
1 juvenile, 4/4/2019. Port Elliott, Sturt St, MLR.
Berry, M. & J.

Dusky Woodswallow

12, 24/4/2019. Goolwa Beach, MM. First report from area for many years.
Phillips, W.

Pied Butcherbird

More reports from lower MM and MLR
Adult, 16/2/2019. Tolderol, MM.
Koch, P.
Adult, Feb 2019, Blackwood, MLR. In home garden.
Breed, M.

Rose Robin

1 or 2 immature males, 20/4/2019. Big Heath CP, S boundary, SE. Grey-brown birds with patchy rose breasts and double wing bars.
Gitsham, J. *et al.*

Tree Martin

2000, 7/2/2019. St Kilda Saltfields, S of St Kilda, AP.
Carpenter, G.
2500, 12/2/2019. Bolivar Sewage Works, AP.
Breed, W. *et al.*
c.5000, 4/2019. Adelaide Railway Stn, AP. Roosting in plane tree on North Tce.
Carpenter, G.

Beautiful Firetail

1, 3/4/2019. Hindmarsh Island, Lawari CP, MM. In planted sheoaks in 5 year-old revegetation area.
Phillips, W.
This and other recent reports suggest a link between populations in the Coorong and MLR regions.

More Snippets

Bird of the Season

Australasian Bittern

Botaurus poiciloptilus

A rare (endangered species) visitor/resident to the SE Australian wetlands, a cryptic bird, more often heard than seen. The low 'Booming' call at sunrise or sunset during breeding season (Sept to Jan) has given it the mythical "Bunyip" reputation.

This bird is related to the Heron family, if and when it is seen, it's often sitting amongst the reeds with its head upwards, trying to blend. On occasion during winter they can be seen walking in the open.

Tolderol and Bool Lagoon (SE) are good places to find one or two.

Nest: Shallow saucer in platform of trampled water plants over water in reeds.

Eggs: 4-6 Greenish Brown

Height: 66-76cm

Wing Span: 1-1.2m

Food: Frogs, Yabbies, Shrimps, Small birds and Mice

Information source: The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, by Pizzey and Knight, Ninth Edition



A Tolderol Australasian Bittern. Photo by John Gitsham



Open by appointment

Call Marion:
0400 252 085



Bourne's Bird Museum, created by the famous taxidermist Jack Bourne, has been renamed 'The Bird Room'

His daughter Marion now manages it.

Please support this fine collection of Australian birds by paying a visit when you are in the SE.

It is next to Bool Lagoon, south of Naracoorte.

It is open by appointment only.

Call Marion on 0400 252 085



Birds SA Contact Details

General Meetings are held in the Hawker Centre at the Waite Institute, Waite Road, Urrbrae at 7.45pm.
Doors open at 7.15pm.

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

BIRDS SA COMMITTEE 2019 – 2020

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| President | John Gitsham | 0438900393 |
| Vice President | John Hatch | 8362 2820 |
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| Librarian & eNews Editor | Karen Donkin | 8379 1173 |
| Member | Stephen Ramm | 0405282336 |
| Member | Beatrice Rogers | 0423241856 |

COMMITTEE EMAIL CONTACTS

If you wish to contact any committee member by email, use the email address below:

general@birdssa.asn.au and indicate which committee member you wish to contact.

Your message will be forwarded to that person.

FURTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

| | | |
|--|----------------|------------|
| Librarian | Karen Donkin | 0402123960 |
| Image Librarian | John Spiers | 8333 0272 |
| email imagelibrarian@birdssa.asn.au | | |
| Campout Organiser | Lynton Huxley | 7009 5038 |
| Rare Birds Secretary, | Brian Blaylock | 0448822374 |

Conservation Sub-committee members

Jeff Groves (Chair), William Brooker, Phil Cole, Bill Breed, David Andrewartha, David Hansman, Rodney Attwood, Nigel Gammon

SA Rarities & Distribution (SARDS) Members

Andrew Black (Chair), Brian Blaylock (Secretary), Graham Carpenter, John Fennell, Bob Green, John Hatch, Lyn Pedler, Colin Rogers

Port Augusta Birders (The Babblers)

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

BirdLife South East SA

Convener: Bob Green 0407649909

Email: shriketit@bigpond.com

Fleurieu Birders, a sub-group of Birds SA

Contact: Wendy Phillips 85550634 or 0414248648

Neil Cheshire 85527904

Email: fleurieubirders@gmail.com

COPY DEADLINE

Copy for the SPRING 'Birder' is due by the July General Meeting (July 26). Contributions, 'Word' format preferred, can be recorded on a CD or a USB stick, emailed to the email address below, or typed/handwritten neatly.

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BIRDS SA SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2019

The annual subscriptions are:

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|--------------------|---------|
| Individual member | \$45.00 |
| Family Member | \$55.00 |
| Full-time Student | \$10.00 |
| No age restriction | |

All members receive a digital copy of both the magazine and journal. We also offer printed copies for an additional yearly fee of \$20.00.

The Birder is produced every three months and includes general news, conservation updates, bird sightings, and details of past and future meetings and excursions.

The 'South Australian Ornithologist' is Birds SA's scientific journal.

Members paying by credit card will be charged \$1.50 per transaction.

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Birds SA 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.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following 53 new members, who have joined the Association in the past few months.

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Bonny Vogelzang | ADELAIDE | Verity Sanders | MAGILL |
| Simon Delaine | ADELAIDE | Peter Rutter | EDEN HILLS |
| Chris Attwood-Mitchell and Amy Bollard | BERRI | John and Sue Nettlefold | BELAIR |
| Ingrida Runcis | ROSTREVOR | Jason Jeffery | ROSE PARK |
| Tony Veinberg | ONKAPARINGA HILLS | Val Adamson | GOLDEN GROVE |
| Maryann and Dala Thompson | MACCLESFIELD | June Sielaff | WEST CROYDON |
| Graham and Jan Smith | ASHFORD | Liam Bosecke | CLOVELLY PARK |
| Doon Hayman | ROSSLYN PARK | Jasmine Maftai | MODBURY NORTH |
| Gillian Rayment | CLARENDON | John Bojczuk | BELAIR |
| Tony and Janet Bird | HOVE | Evelyn Poole | PORT LINCOLN |
| Angelique Roebers and Han, Sanne, and Thomas Baltussen | HECTORVILLE | Karen Francis and David Box | NAIRNE |
| Cherie Cmrlec | BALAKLAVA | Imogen Marshall | GLENELG NORTH |
| Jack McAuliffe | GLENUNGA | Joshua Lang | OAKLANDS PARK |
| Annette Willis | MILLSWOOD | Lukas Egloff | BROADVIEW |
| Melissa Lea | ADELAIDE | Justin Jay | UPPER STURT |
| Pamela Monk | ROSTREVOR | Tim Hicks | MT BARKER |
| Bill Scutchings | LANGHORNE CREEK | Holly Whittenbury | ELIZABETH SOUTH |
| Andrew Boorman and Maureen Graney | PARKSIDE | Robert Hall and Anne Kemp | WOODSIDE |
| Helen Griffin | TRANMERE | Erik Dahl | KERSBROOK |
| Betty Brezovskis | MAGILL | Peter Rutter | EDEN HILLS |
| Tim Hicks | MT BARKER | Hugh Greville and Patricia Roche | NORWOOD |

If your name has inadvertently been omitted from this list, please contact our Membership Officer, Alan Burns. His phone number is 8381 2708.



Line of Mistletoebird droppings carefully placed along a car park fence.
photographed by Brian Haywood in Trepalina Gorge, NT (near Alice Springs) in September 2019

A Newsworthy Bird

Most famous frequent flyer in for free lunch

BRAD CROUCH

HE'S back! (we think). Go-Go godwit, the nation's greatest frequent flyer, has reportedly been spotted on a northern Adelaide beach lunching on worms and bugs in preparation for his annual trip to China, Russia and the Arctic for some loving.

This photo by David Donovan posted on social media showing Go-Go at Thompson Beach is sending birdwatchers into a twitcher frenzy.

The male bar-tailed godwit was last spotted in Nanpu on Bohai Bay in China last year after not having been seen for three years.

Wildlife photographer Adrian Boyle took a mobile phone photo through a telescope to confirm his unique yellow tag.

Mr Boyle, originally from Millicent and now based in Perth, has seen the latest photo and is delighted the plucky bird is still flying.



TRAVELLER: Go-Go pictured at Thompson Beach.

Go-Go – more formally known as AKK – was tagged by volunteers in 2012 and leaves in autumn on an incredible journey north to breeding grounds in the Arctic Circle.

Godwits, weighing 250g to 450g, undertake the longest non-stop flight of any bird, with one satellite-tracked bird from New Zealand making a non-stop flight of more than 11,000km in just nine days.

Godwits fly up to 26,000km on their migratory round trips from Adelaide to the Arctic via China, and could clock up 800,000km in their lifespan – a return trip to the moon.

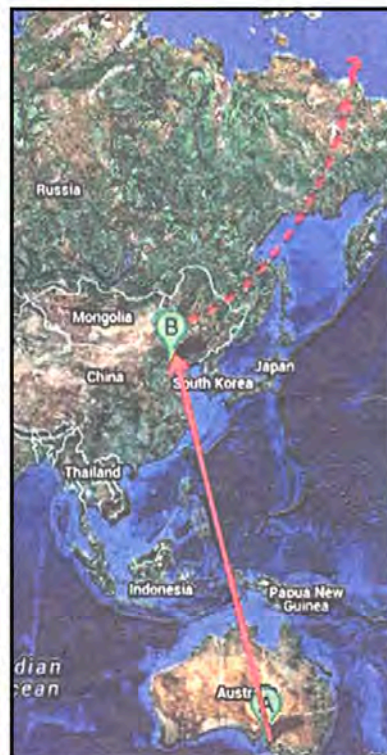
The waders are believed to take the longest non-stop journey of any animal without pausing to feed.

Adelaide's northern coastline is a haven for migratory birds and the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary, Winaityinaityi Pangkara, was established in 2016 to protect shorebirds and their habitat.

About 27,000 birds call the area home each summer and many make the journey from as far away as northern Asia and Alaska to rest and feed.

A 2014 report showed some bar-tailed godwits were spotted more than 18 years after they were banded.

Thousands of birds normally arrive at the salt marshes, mangroves and mudflats along Adelaide's northern coast as part of their annual migration in September. The godwits fuel up on worms, insects and bugs in mudflats before heading north.



YOU GO: Go-Go's route – bar-tailed godwits travel from Adelaide via China to the Arctic Circle. Picture: SUPPLIED

**From the Advertiser,
Friday March 15, 2019**

**Supplied by
David Robertson**

Members Photo Gallery

A Page of Hunters



Mary-Ann van Trigt photographed this contretemps between a Swamp Harrier and a Sooty Oystercatcher at St Kilda on 23 February 2019.

The Harrier chased the Oystercatcher and made several attempts to attack it once it was on the ground, doubling back and making at least three attempts to capture the bird. These two photos show the second diving attack.

The final outcome was success, and life, for the Oystercatcher!



A rare sighting of a barn owl in flight
Taken by Bob Daly on 1 April 2019 in Lawari CP Hindmarsh Island



Common Gull-Billed Tern
photographed by Mary-Ann van Trigt
at Middle Beach in Jan and Feb 2019



Southern Boobook Owls, adult and immature
Photographed by Peter McKenzie at Mt. Barker In January 2018

An array of fascinating small birds



Male Mistletoebird

photographed by Brian Haywood in Trepina Gorge, NT,
(near Alice Springs) in September 2019



Chestnut-rumped Heathwren

photographed by Brian Haywood in Bangham CP in 2018



Crested Bellbird

photographed by Trevor Cox
at Lake Gilles on 19/11/2018



White-plumed Honeyeater
photographed by Peter McKenzie
at Laratinga on 12/8/18



Arctic Warbler

photographed by Mike Ashton on West Island, Ashmore Reef in November 2018

Birds from near and far



Noisy Friarbird

Photographed by David Cox at Cooyal (near Mudgee) NSW, on 28/12/2018



Orange-bellied Parrot
photographed by Mike Ashton
Melaleuca, Tasmania, in March 2015



Black-faced Cormorant

photographed by Gordon Pateman in the Port River in April 2019



Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu

photographed by Colin Conor in Ethiopia
near the Blue Nile Falls in 1/10/2018.



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| SEP | Grey Falcon & Letter-w'd Kites | 6 days |
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| OCT | Six Grasswrens | 7 days |
| NOV | Western SA Splits & Specialties | 7 days |
| NOV | Kangaroo Island birds & wildlife | 4 days |
| DEC | South-west WA Endemics | 7 days |
| 2020 | | |
| FEB | Magical Malaysia bird photo tour | 8 days |
| FEB | Dubai Area short tour | 4 days |
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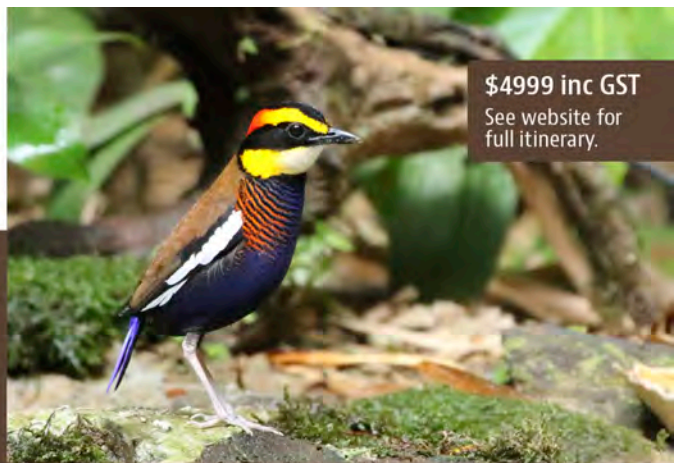
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