

The BIRDER

The official magazine of Birds SA Summer 2019 No 252



Linking people with birds
in South Australia



In this Issue

Meetings will start, earlier,

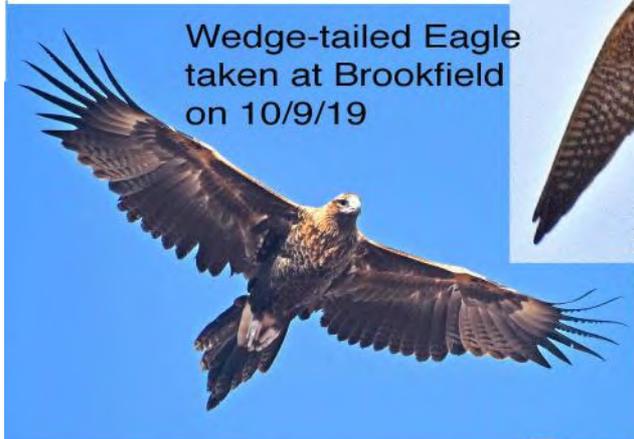
at 7.30pm

Page Historical Insert

We contribute to several events

Raptors in Flight

Peter Mckenzie took all these photographs



Wedge-tailed Eagle
taken at Brookfield
on 10/9/19

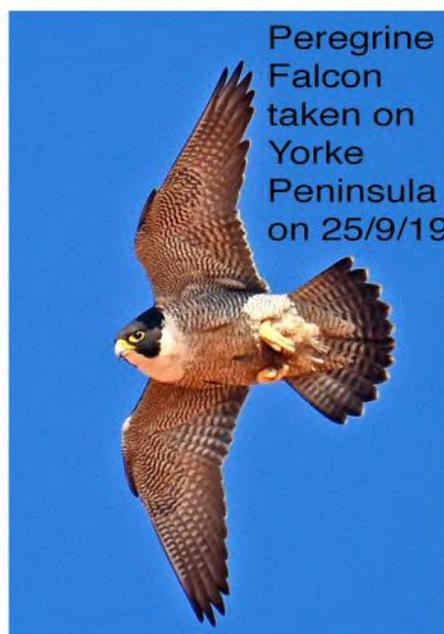


Australian Hobby taken at
the Arid Lands Botanic Garden,
Port Augusta on 15/9/19

Pacific Baza
taken at ETTY
Bay Qld
on 29/7/2019



Little Eagle taken
at Mt. Isa on
20/7/19



Peregrine
Falcon
taken on
Yorke
Peninsula
on 25/9/19

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CENTRE INSERT: SAOA HISTORICAL SERIES No: 70, THE SAOA SILVER CHALLENGE CUP

The cover photograph shows a Mistletoe Bird, photographed by Peter McKenzie in the Arid Lands Botanic Gardens, Port Augusta on June 7 2019. John Gitsham designed the cover of this magazine.

We welcome 30 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on p9.

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.

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'.

Sunday 1 December	Birds SA	Excursion to Cleland CP
Saturday 7 Dec.	FB	Excursion to Laratinga Wetlands
Sunday 8 Dec.	PA	Excursion to Arid Lands Botanic Gardens
Saturday 14 Dec.	Birds SA	Excursion Myponga Reservoir Reserve
Thursday 19 Dec.	Birds SA	Excursion to Kaiser Stuhl CP
Saturday 4 January	FB	Excursion Clayton Bay
Saturday 11 January	Birds SA	Excursion Onkapiringa Wetlands
Thursday 16 January	Birds SA	Excursion to Thompson Beach
Saturday 19 January	PA	Excursion to Baroota Reservoir
Friday 31 January	Birds SA	General Meeting
Saturday 1 February	FB	Excursion to Goolwa Barrage and Beacon
Sunday 2 February	Birds SA	Excursion to Paiwalla Wetlands
Saturday 8 February:	Birds SA	Excursion to Whites Rd. Wetlands
Sunday 9 February	PA	Excursion to Waroona Island and Pt. Pirie Wetland
Thursday 20 Feb	Birds SA	Excursion to Sandy Creek CP
Friday 28 February	Birds SA	General Meeting
Sunday 1 March	Birds SA	Excursion to Riverglades Wetlands, Murray Bridge
Saturday 7 March	FB	Excursion to Lawari CP etc.
Saturday 14 March	Birds SA	Excursion to Tolderol Game Reserve
Sunday 15 March	PA	Excursion to Wirrabara Forest
Thursday 19 March	Birds SA	
Friday 27 March	Birds SA	General Meeting
Sunday 29 March	Birds SA	Excursion to Glenthorne NP

BIRDS SA

Easter Campout 9 to 14 April: Cantara Homestead, Coorong National Park (Easy)

TRIP LEADER Lynton Huxley

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.

President's Message

HI ALL BIRDS SA MEMBERS,

Another year is coming to a close. We've had a tough dry year particularly in the outback areas of South Australia, since again, very little rain has fallen. The birds are becoming rather scarce and more difficult to find as the drought conditions kick in. Further south of the state has not been too bad, and some interesting sightings have been made over winter and spring. For example an Australian Bustard has been seen near Tolderol wetlands, Crimson Chats and White-winged Trillers seen near Murray Bridge (Kinchina CP).

Most of our wetlands along the Murray River and the Coorong need adequate natural flows so that they can function as true wetlands. They are all suffering, as flows are not forthcoming from interstate due to drought and illegal extractions of water for irrigating some large properties.

Many of our water birds and woodlands birds are under severe stress, and numbers of many species are starting to decline. More action by all levels of government is necessary.

Birds SA has enjoyed another very busy year. We have advocated for more control of four-wheel drive vehicles on our biodiversity-rich beaches, we continue to advocate for the end of duck and quail hunting in SA, to express our grievances about the state of the Coorong and other wetlands as well as loss of habitats for woodland birds. Our membership continues to grow at about 4% per year and we are now over 900 members strong. We enjoyed as one of our guest speakers the State Minister for the

Environment David Speirs MP. This was the first time a sitting Minister for the Environment had spoken at a Birds SA meeting.

The second Laratinga Birdfair was certainly a very successful occasion. It looks as if the Mt Barker Council will support another BirdFair in 2021. The BirdFair brings considerable awareness to the general public about the importance and joy that birds bring into our lives and how significant they are as environmental indicators of what is happening in the various habitats around South Australia.

I know that the massive increase in the last 5 years in birding and bird photography across Australia (including international birding visitors enjoying Avitourism around Australia) provides a huge contribution to our economy and to the various communities that birders visit throughout the year whatever the season; as well as the equipment they buy from local businesses and the support they provide to local communities as they travel around South Australia and the rest of Australia.

I know birders achieve great feelings of satisfaction and wellbeing together with increased mental and physical health by being in the open air and enjoying the environment with their friends, while birding or taking photographs. We leave only footprints behind. Enjoy the summer break, and the birds you'll see over summer (waders etc.). Drive carefully, have a great Christmas or whatever you celebrate, and a safe and healthy New Year. I hope to see you all back for 2020.

Cheers, John Gitsham



Birds SA and BirdLife Australia together at the Laratinga Birdfair, more details on p6

Laratinga Birdfair 2019

The second Laratinga Birdfair was once more a great success. The weather was perfect and the Mt. Barker Council, which sponsored the event, provided excellent facilities at the Laratinga wetlands. Emma and I estimated that about 500 patrons, encompassing both dedicated birders as well as people with a more general interest, visited the fair throughout the day and enjoyed themselves. There were many families, and a wide variety of activities were available for children. The event provided a good introduction to some of South Australia's bird life and a great promotion for Birds SA and BirdLife Australia who were next to our stand.

There were many bird-based and environmental stalls, as well as excellent speakers: including Tom Hunt (BioR), Paul Cullen (Bird photography),

Professor Chris Daniels and ever popular ABC Gardening Australia's Sophie Thomson. On the hour, every hour that the Birdfair was operating, Birds SA provided, for a gold coin donation guided bird walks for the general public. Our Birds SA stand and these walks raised over \$200 towards our Conservation Fund.

Everyone enjoyed a great day, and the Mt Barker Council is keen to run another Laratinga Birdfair in 2021. Hopefully this will become a regular biennial event.

John Gitsham



Our Contributions to a Variety of Events

MAGPIE FESTIVAL

Mungo the Magpie was the star attraction at the Cleland Wildlife Park's Magpie Festival held on 17th and 18th August. Mungo enjoyed the very limited sunshine on Saturday morning. The rest of the weekend was absolutely freezing. I would like to sincerely thank the very generous Birds SA volunteers, Merinda Hyland and Anna Lester who braved the conditions on Saturday to spend time on the Birds SA Stall. John Gitsham, our President, gave a very interesting presentation explaining the confusion between Mungo, Magpie Larks and our South Australian State emblem.

Sunday was even colder. The temperature was 4 degrees in the shelter of the shed where John repeated his presentation to a very small audience. Thank you also to Richard Woodland and Cynthia Pyle who were also prepared to give up their weekend.

Kate Buckley

TENNYSON DUNES OPEN DAY

Tennyson Dunes Open Day was held on Sunday 22 September 2019. The main Guest Presenter was Chris Daniels with his challenge to people to think before they simply kill insects and spiders, They DO have a role in our ecosystem.

Sophie Thompson, from the **Gardening Australia** programme and Neville Bonney of **Bush Tucker** fame also gave presentations.

Given that it was wet, cold and windy, and SANFL Grand Final day, attendance was reasonable.

Ali Ben Kahn conducted a Bird Walk for the early starters. People were thrilled to have an expert bird person on hand and Birds SA could well gain some members from this "identify the dune birds" experience.

Bronwyn Mart, a most generous Birds SA Member, again willingly gave up her Sunday morning to support the Birds SA stall. Bronwyn also used this opportunity to advertise the Laratinga Bird Fair.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Ali and Bronwyn for their support of Birds SA at this event.

Kate Buckley

BIRDS SA STALL AT SOPHIE'S PATCH

Sophie again held her November "Open Garden" across three days, 9-10-11. Birds SA welcomed a new volunteer to our stall management, Tina Miljanovic. Merinda Hyland and Tina managed a steady flow of enquiries on Saturday morning then Sue Gredley and Rose Slade took over on Saturday afternoon. Sophie made very positive comments about the enthusiasm these volunteers show when answering any questions relating to birds. Rose again had been very generous in making copies of the booklet: **Making a Wildlife Friendly Garden**, a very popular stall item at this event.



Mungo the Magpie

Sunday was a very busy day and we welcomed another new stall member, Anna Lester who gave her whole day. Alan Burns and Wendy Digby relieved for a couple of hours while I gave my "Is Your Garden Bird-Friendly?" presentation.

The wild hot, windy weather arrived on Monday with an extreme fire danger warning. I was very concerned for our volunteers and recommended that Bronwyn Mart, Sue Winwood and Katherine Moore stay at home. Birds SA were very grateful for their willingness to attend, but our volunteer's well-being comes first.

Sophie's daughters, Rose and Violet, had made a ceramic birdbath, which they raffled, with the proceeds going to the Birds SA Conservation Fund. It was beautifully made and a prize worth winning.

I would like to express my personal gratitude for all of those wonderful volunteers who give up their precious time to support Birds SA.

Kate Buckley

Conservation Sub-Committee

Off-road Vehicle Inquiry

As a result of the Birds SA submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry Into the Impact of off-road Vehicles, John Gitsham and I were invited to address the Natural Resources Committee of Parliament on September 26. This Committee consists of Members of Parliament and is chaired by Josh Teague, the Member for Heysen. Birds SA was asked to state the highest priority recommendations from the list of recommendations in our submission. We indicated that these were:

1. Identify key biodiversity areas in the State where off-road vehicles have a major impact on the native vegetation and wildlife and determine whether we should restrict or eliminate access to those areas.

2. Review the mechanisms used to police compliance with the various laws and directives relating to off-road vehicles because they are clearly not working at present.

The Birds SA submission to this inquiry is available in the **Policies and Statements** area of the Birds SA website.

Treasures not Targets Exhibition – Anti Duck and Quail Hunting Coalition

The Treasures not Targets exhibition of spectacular duck photographs had further successful showings at The Laratinga Birdfair on October 27 and the Uraidla Sustainability Fair on November 3. At both venues substantial numbers of people visiting the exhibition sat down and penned personal letters to Premier Marshall requesting a ban on the recreational hunting of native birds in South Australia. 34 letters were written at Laratinga and 37 at Uraidla.

The coalition of organisations opposed to hunting of native birds, of which Birds SA is a member, met Premier Marshall to discuss this issue on November 27. Susan Close MP has formally indicated that the Labor Party would support a Parliamentary Inquiry into the matter if Minister Speirs proposed it.

The Washpool - Aldinga

The Washpool is an ephemeral wetland located between Aldinga Scrub and Sellicks Beach and a very important bird habitat. Friends of Willunga Basin contacted David Hansman of Birds SA expressing their concern about a rumour that SA Water was proposing to sell part of the land it owns adjacent to the Washpool to private interests. The Department for Environment and Water and Natural Resources (DEW) confirmed that such a change could have a significant impact on the hydrology of the area and the dependent birdlife.

Birds SA contacted Minister Speirs by letter on October 6 expressing our concerns. Minister Speirs responded on October 7, saying “**I can confirm that**

there are no plans to see the Aldinga Washpool site diminished. In fact there are plans to enhance the area. it is my intention that this land be secured under one tenure in the medium term to ensure its protection for our environment.”

In a subsequent conversation with SA Water we learnt that it was their intention originally to sell the land but this is no longer the case.

SA Threatened Species Consultation

A response has been received from Peter Copley of DEW to the Birds SA submission on threatened species, prepared by Ali Ben Kahn. Slender-billed Thornbill will be retained as **Rare**. Brown Thornbill (MLR subspecies) and Thick-billed Grasswrens are high on the priority list for the next round of assessments.

Stubble Quail were listed as **Least Concern** when the regional assessments were conducted in 2009-2014, except for the AMLR region where it was assessed to be **Near Threatened**. DEW has acknowledged the lack of reliable recent data for many species, including Stubble Quail.

Birds Surveys – Bolivar Wastewater Treatment Plant



Australasian Shoveler – Treasures not Targets Exhibition, photographer Georgina Steytler

Throughout this year Bill Breed, with assistance from John Hatch, Colin Rogers and William Brooker, has been leading regular bird counts at Bolivar, with access to the site being delicately negotiated with SA Water by Bill Breed. The results of these surveys have been outstanding, particularly with respect to the numbers of ducks sighted.

Pink-eared Duck numbers have remained high for every survey. For other duck species the peak numbers have varied considerably. Of note were the large numbers of Blue-billed Ducks sighted. This bird is classified as **Rare in South Australia**. Also

More about Conservation

of note in recent surveys were small numbers of White-winged Fairy-wrens, which have had a large proportion of their habitat near Whites Road consumed by the construction of the Northern Connector freeway. Anecdotal reports however, indicate that their presence at Bolivar is not new.

Bill Breed will continue to nurture the relationship with SA Water in order to continue obtaining access to this important bird site.

Jeff Groves

BIRDS SA CONSERVATION FUND – DID YOU KNOW?

All donations received are deposited into our Conservation Fund, which is used to provide grants to assist research and conservation projects concerning our birds. Generally up to \$3,000 is provided per project, which can be particularly valuable for student projects. Occasionally larger projects are supported, such as the re-surveying of White-bellied Sea-eagle and Osprey territories across the state.

The following general guidelines provide applicants with information on projects that the Birds SA Conservation Fund is likely to support:

1. Projects that increase knowledge and understanding of birds and their habitats.
2. Projects relating to management and conservation of Australian bird species and their habitats.
3. Projects that investigate factors relating to declining or threatened species of birds.

Birds SA receives a steady stream of donations, which are tax deductible. To obtain this tax deductible status Birds SA must maintain a sound process for administering the fund and a small sub-committee exists for this purpose. The sub-committee assesses the applications that are received based on criteria including relevance to the aims of the Fund, the rigour of the proposed study methods and feasibility of the project. The outcomes of the assessment are forwarded to the General Committee.

At least a brief summary of the findings of each study is required, and we request all grant recipients to present their findings at a General meeting.

In recent years projects supported with a Birds SA conservation grant include:

- Assessment and mapping of habitat suitability for Southern Emu-wrens at Watchalunga, on the Finnis River
- Investigation into Malleefowl as ecosystem engineers and drivers of restoration in the Bookmark mallee
- Determination of habitat preferences and spatial characteristics of Little Penguin nesting sites across various offshore islands.

If you have any further queries there is more information on the website.

<https://birdssa.asn.au/get-involved/conservation-grants/>

Jody Gates

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following 30 new members, who have joined the Association in the past few months.

Barbara Brockhoff	Trinity Gardens
Ross and Jennifer Jones	Kapunda
Anita Smyth	Hawthorndene
Hugh Possingham	Sherwood QLD
Mark Gregerson and Margaret Pank	Kensington Gardens
Angelo and Dagmar Caon	Dernancourt
Benjamin Groves	OAKDEN
Karen and Spike Barrow	Stirling
Eddy Smith and Dr. Jenni Garden	Reynella East
Peter Doyle	Willunga
Philippa Mawby	Umu WA
Jane Symons	Marden
Chris, Jonathon and Jim Chittleborough	Middleton
Michael and Prue Bowman	Hahndorf
Lynnette Drabsch	Lower Mitcham
Robert and Sheryl Finder	Tennyson
Karen Holland	West Hindmarsh
Max and Lorelie Burr	Renmark
Aleisa Lamanna	Athelstone
Jan Finch	Richmond

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

Vale Rob Mousley

Rob Mousley was born in Thebarton on 6th August 1930.

He grew up in Adelaide and was schooled here. He rowed single skulls for his school in his teenage years.

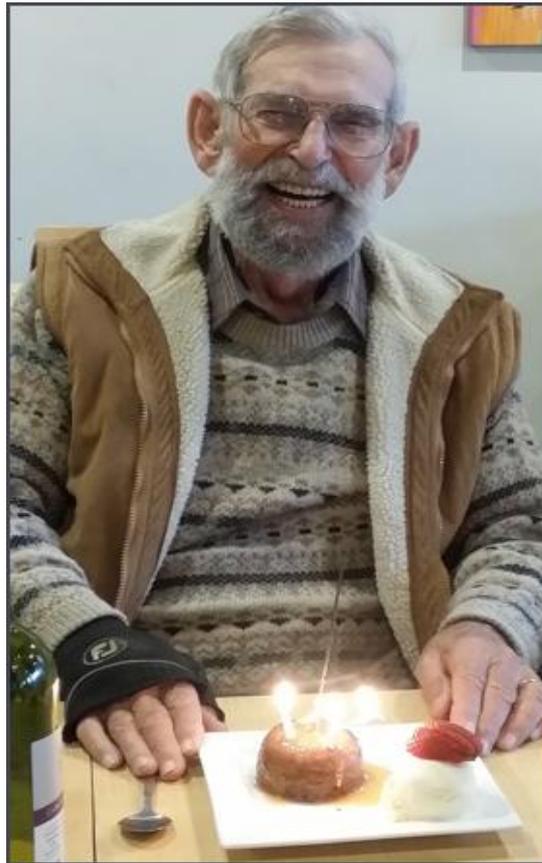
He had a very varied life and worked in many places in South Australia and New South Wales; variously as a jackaroo, station manager, insurance agent, real estate agent, builder, and handyman.

It was this latter skill that led to him working as the set-designer and armourer for the movies 'Captain Lightfoot' and 'Robbery under Arms', the latter starring Sam Neil.

He grew grapes, made wine and sold it under his own brand name. He also was a wood turner and made and sold pens and pencils for charity.

In his spare time he became an international target shooter and represented Australia here and overseas. He kept this up until a few weeks ago.

Shortly before he retired he joined BIRDS SA in April 1990



Rob Mousley
photographed by Kerren
Neale, his daughter

and was coming up to 30 years membership. Bird watching served a dual purpose. He kept one eye open for the birds and another for wood that he could use in his workshop.

His knowledge of South Australia was invaluable to me whilst I was Campout Organiser. He and Claudia, Minnie and I spent many days over the years exploring South Australia, investigating possible sites for the Easter, October and Christmas Camp Outs. It was his idea to have a champagne and pancake brunch on Sunday at camp. On New Years' Eves he and Burt May kept us enlivened until midnight with his stories of the bush. We will miss him.

David Robertson

Who is that bird named after?

Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx basalis (Horsfield 1821)

Dr Thomas Horsfield (1773-1859) was an American naturalist. He was trained as a doctor but became an explorer and prolific collector of plants and animals. He began his career in Java while it was under Dutch rule, but then Napoleon Bonaparte annexed Holland. This enabled the British East India company to take control over the island in 1811.

In 1819 Horsfield's poor health made him seek other employment and he was moved by the company to continue his research under their direction, in London, as Curator and then Keeper of the India House Museum. Whilst in Java he became good friends of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles.

His work *Zoological Research in Java and the Neighbouring Islands* was published in 1824.

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

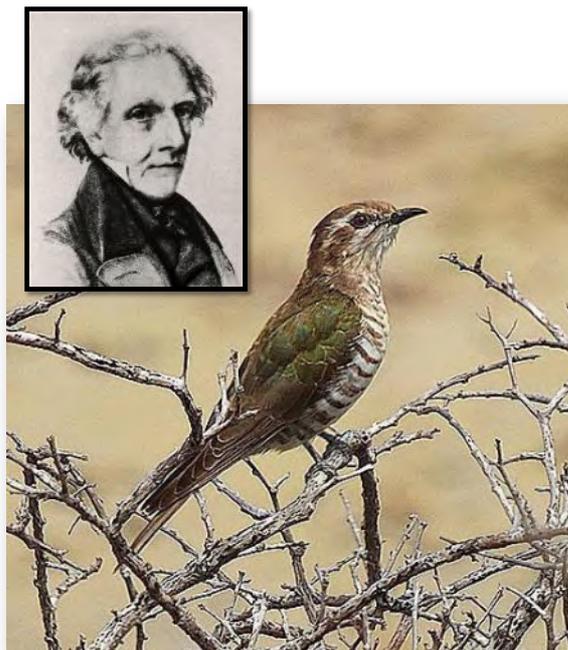


Photo by Teresa Jack from BirdsSA Photo Library

Check out our Website

WHAT BIRDS CAN YOU FIND IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND WHERE DO YOU EXPECT TO SEE THEM?

While most members will know where to find their favourite birds, there is information on the Association's website that may be helpful when travelling further afield in South Australia. First, there are the lists for [places](#) that are visited frequently by birders, but two additional resources are now available. The [Field List of the Birds of South Australia](#) 5th edition revised (2017) names every species reliably reported in the State to that time, the regions from which they have been reported, and a guide to the likelihood of encountering the bird in suitable habitat. The list can be downloaded to form a small booklet. Most recently, the long awaited distributional maps have started to appear, beginning with the [passerines](#). We expect to post the non-passerines early next year. These maps show the known distribution of each bird, and outlying records are shown only if found in one of the source databases and supported by corroborative information. The approach differs from that of *Birddata* and of the *Atlas of Living Australia*. In the former, the maps may include records that have been considered doubtful or erroneous during the

vetting process. In the latter, large numbers of unvetted records are incorporated so that distributional limits are blurred, and at times they can be seriously misleading. Our maps are designed to make clear not only where a particular bird has been reliably recorded but also where it has not and is therefore less likely to be found there. This means if you have seen a bird from beyond its distribution as shown on the map, you have made an observation that can contribute to our understanding of bird distribution.

The [Birds Records Secretary](#) would welcome any such observation.

On the Birds SA website, the above information can be found at:

Places to visit — <https://birdssa.asn.au/gobirding/where-to-go/>

Field List — https://birdssa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/FieldList_5.1.pdf

Distribution maps — <https://birdssa.asn.au/birding-info/distribution-maps/>

The Bird Records Secretary can be contacted at:

birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au

Andrew Black, Philippa Horton, Graham Carpenter and Brian Blaylock, October 2019.



Red-backed Kingfisher
photographed by Gordon Pateman at Kinchina CP
(Previously Rocky Gully).on 26/10/2019

FAIBS Springs Into Action



Paul Thorpe from York, UK, joined the **'Welcome to Waders'** viewing at Thompson Beach

Spring has sprung into action and so have Friends of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (FAIBS). Winter revegetation and cleanup efforts along the coastline are now merging with the excitement of viewing, monitoring and flagging **migratory birds** as they start to arrive back along the Spencer Gulf and Sanctuary shores.

On October 20th FAIBS held their **'Welcome the Waders'** morning, keenly anticipating viewing some of the newly arrived migrants at Thompson Beach. Twenty-three people took to the scopes with support from FAIBS birding guides, looking across the wetlands behind the dunes to begin with, and then out to sea as the coastal tides receded. At this event it was a special pleasure to host bird enthusiast Paul Thorpe and his wife Elaine, visiting from York, UK.

Thrilling moments came with the identification of migratory Common Greenshanks, Red-necked Stints, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Curlew Sandpipers, and a suspected Bar-tailed Godwit that frustratingly kept bobbing off behind mangrove tufts defying ID confirmation. Among

resident shorebirds seen were Whiskered and Crested Terns, Pied Cormorants, Red-necked Avocets, Pied and Banded Stilts, a couple of Pacific Gulls and the inevitable assortment of Ducks and Silver Gulls. Participants also reported seeing a number of Eastern Curlews along the Gulf foreshores during the previous week.

During October, FAIBS also responded to a number of invitations to be part of various community events. These included setting up a birding observation post for children near the St Kilda playground as part of the **Salisbury Nature Plays** activity day on Sunday, October 13th. It's always energising to share the excitement of young ones peering through scopes for their first ever close-up view of our very special birds and hearing about some of their incredible capacities.

On another October occasion, twenty-two members of **Friends of Belair National Park** were hosted by FAIBS for a 'get to know the Sanctuary' experience at St Kilda. Time was spent learning about the importance of this coastline, viewing shorebirds, and then walking the mangrove trail with ecologist Joan Gibbs and UniSA students. Despite some blustery weather, the visitors were able to enjoy the 'wow factor' of scope viewing as a range of resident and migratory birds became visible in all their magnified glory.



FAIBS birding guide Joe Dafoe talks with a family attending Nature Play at St. Kilda

More FAIBS Activities



FAIBS members, Mary-Ann, Anna and Bev with their lanterns at the Oz Asia Festival

A group of red-attired FAIBS members then joined the BirdLife Australia section of the lantern parade at the **Oz Asia Festival**, some helping to carry the huge and beautiful Moon Bird lantern portraying a giant Red Knot. Others carried their own handmade lanterns decorated with various interpretations of the



Red Knot Lantern in the Oz Asia festival

International Flyway. The event was spectacular, with thousands of people filling Elder Park; enchanted, as FAIBS members were, by the beauty of hundreds of glowing lanterns passing by.

At the end of the month, FAIBS set up a stall at the **Laratinga BirdFair**, meeting, greeting and talking about the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary with passers-by. Considerable interest was shown in FAIBS commitment to the habitat and birds of the area, with some new sign-ups to our Contact list and purchases of our fund-raising bird tote bags.

November featured the **Shorebird and Dolphin Festival**, set up by ParksSA. It amalgamated the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary and the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary as Park of the Month. A wonderful array of activities for individuals and families was offered, most being free. Ranger walks at St Kilda and Thompson Beach were supported by FAIBS with scopes available for bird viewing.

This year, in addition to submitting articles about our activities to local newspapers, FAIBS has also started contributing to an on-line publication put together by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, based in Korea. We have appreciated this opportunity to go global with our news.

FAIBS' final event for 2019 will be their **AGM** to be held on Sunday, December 8th at the St Kilda Community Hall, from 10am to 12pm. Jennifer Hiscock is the guest speaker, and through her talk and video will present the story of a successful citizen science intervention for shorebirds in the South-East of SA. Morning tea is included, and all comers are welcome.

As 2019 draws to a close, the FAIBS Committee would like offer **Season's Greetings and sincere thanks** to all who have supported the endeavours of FAIBS this year, including BirdsSA. Volunteering is essential to FAIBS' existence, and vital to its mandate to contribute to the stewardship of this very special coastline. A recent tally of FAIBS volunteer time related to the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (AIBS) over the past twelve months came to 852 hours – this being apart from FAIBS volunteer administration time. With statistics like this, along with the quality of effort and support, FAIBS is looking very optimistically to continued involvement with local and migratory birds and their habitat in FAIBS in 2020. Our New Year program starts in February with event information published on the Facebook site 'Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary'.

Anna Woods

Long Beach, Coffin Bay and Pied Oystercatchers



A 4WD vehicle approaching Pied Oystercatchers on Long Beach at Coffin Bay

I refer to the articles on pages 9 & 14 of the Spring 2019 "Birder" magazine regarding the off-road vehicle Inquiry and Long Beach, Coffin Bay. The beach is 2.2km long, and is all under the jurisdiction of the Department for Environment and Water and (DEW), with about two thirds falling within the Coffin Bay National Park.

My involvement with Long Beach began in 2006 at the beginning of the Shorebirds 2020 Programme. Because of the dramatic decline in shorebird numbers, BirdLife Australia initiated this programme to try and reverse this trend on Australian beaches. A vital component was the training of volunteers in the difficult task of identifying the various species and their habits. Training sessions were set up under the joint auspices of BirdLife and the Department for the Environment (as it was then). Having completed the course, we were allocated beaches to survey; one of mine being Long Beach, Coffin Bay. Little did I know then how important this beach would turn out to be.

For the first few years I did relatively few surveys, but after learning more about the birds and with the acquisition of a scope my interest became more of a passion. I undertook many hundreds of surveys over the next eight years. It usually takes an hour and a half to walk all the way along the beach, scoping and recording as I go. But bird magic often compels longer stops. Finding a Double-banded Plover just returned from New Zealand feeding among the Red-necked Stints; Banded Stilts on a still evening crimsoned by the setting sun; a mixed flock of Red and Great Knots, their breeding plumage prominent, round and fat, all fuelled up and fresh feathered. Their long flight north was imminent.

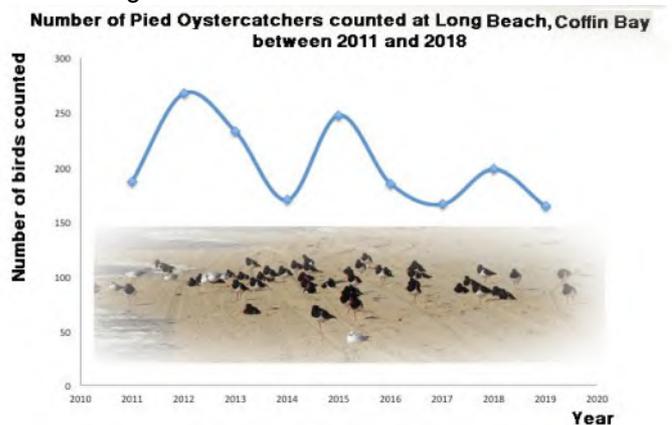
After a while, I discovered annual trends in the shorebirds' comings and goings. Every October, two Pacific Golden Plovers roost and feed in the samphire at the far end of the beach and depart in April; early each autumn a small flock of Fairy Terns roosts on exposed tidal sand spits, the adults diving in the shallows and feeding tiny fish to their newly

fledged young. However, the most exciting discovery was the flock of Pied Oystercatchers.

From late summer through autumn, Long Beach annually holds more than 1%, and in some years, over 2% of the estimated world population. Yearly peak numbers counted have been:

- 9/3/11 – 187
- 12 & 17/3/12 – 267 13/3/13 – 232
- 20/3/14 – 170 21/2/15 – 247
- 22/4/16 – 185 1/3/17 – 166
- 17/3/18 – 198 25/2/19 – 164.

The graph below shows that, allowing for fluctuations, numbers have steadily declined since the highest counts in 2012.



I undertook very few surveys in 2011 and at that stage was unaware that the highest tides after the full and new moons were the most likely times to find the biggest populations.

Item 6 of the internationally recognised Ramsar Convention, to which Australia is a signatory, states: "A wetland should be considered of international importance if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of a waterbird". Long Beach appears to hold one of the biggest populations of Australian Pied Oystercatchers throughout their range.

More research needs to be done, but I believe the high numbers counted comprise almost the entire population of the Coffin Bay waterways and

Long Beach, Coffin Bay and Pied Oystercatchers (cont)

surrounding ocean beaches. Pied Oystercatchers' lives are dictated by the tides. On the ebb, they disperse to feed over the exposed tidal flats, and they flock when the rising tide becomes too deep for them to access food in the sand bed. Groups of birds have been observed flying towards Long Beach from Point Longnose and Kelledie, Dutton & Yangie Bays.

One can only conjecture why Long Beach is the chosen site to roost. Geographic reasons such as the shallowness of the tidal drop-off and some shelter from the prevailing winds seem obvious factors. Pied Oystercatchers are monogamous. Perhaps the beach is a traditional meeting place for young birds to find their life-long mates. The beach gives an annual indication of how many birds are in our area and whether over time there is an increasing, stable or decreasing trend in their numbers. We can estimate at least the minimum number of birds successfully reared each year by counting the number of fledglings in the flock.

However, what is happening at Long Beach is a microcosm of why our shorebirds are in rapid decline.

After each autumn equinox with the bigger tides, there is only a narrow strip of loose sand to accommodate both vehicles and roosting birds over the high tide period. The yearly warm weather re-growth of dune base vegetation is annually crushed, keeping the dunes continually destabilised.

In the warmer months especially, 4x4 drivers continue to venture deep into the inter-tidal zone, compacting and compromising the feeding grounds of the shorebirds. A species of cockle, *Anapella cycladea*, which inhabits the upper tidal zone is particularly vulnerable. The Oystercatchers feed on these when higher tides render inaccessible the richer pickings further out. Long weekends, Easter and summer holidays leave the beach looking like a ploughed paddock more than 100m into the intertidal zone.

There are also the "hoon" activities. Speeding, wheelies and driving up the dune face continue to be regular events. The samphire area at the end of the beach has been badly damaged a number of times. This is where the Oystercatchers occasionally feed and also shelter during prolonged storms. A local resident has a view of the beach from his house. At night he occasionally witnesses revving engines and gyrating headlights — activities that would be particularly disturbing and disorientating for the birds.

Uncontrolled dogs in the National Park section of the beach regularly harass the birds. Some dogs run amok while their owners are driving. On some

occasions the birds are hounded so much they completely fly away from the beach.

My reason for first enrolling as a volunteer was in an effort to turn around the shorebird decline. Over the thirteen years that I have been involved, my initial enthusiasm has soured; through disappointment to disillusionment and now, I am sorry to say, cynicism. Many volunteers have come and gone over this period. Those I have spoken to share my emotions. My long experience with the DEWNR has led me to believe that possibly protection and preservation of our threatened species are not significant to their priorities.

Perhaps my cynicism can be encapsulated in excerpts from two letters received from (DEWNR) in 2016:

From the West Coast Regional Director on 17th March – "Long Beach meets accepted criteria as a site of international importance for Australian pied oystercatchers".

From the Manager, Southern & Eastern District, Eyre Peninsula on 6th April – "Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula (NREP) support the views and research findings that vehicles impact on beaches. However, NREP does not have sufficient evidence to confirm that the level of impact alone or otherwise is having a serious deleterious impact on the Long Beach ecology or shorebird populations".

Eighteen months ago, I posted my Long Beach field records to Birds SA in the hope of obtaining some help in securing adequate protection for these birds. The wonderful response and dedicated people I met and whose company I very much enjoyed exceeded all my expectations. Secretary Kate Buckley spent several days transposing the written notes into computer format, and was responsible for urging Birds SA to action. Vice President Jeff Groves followed on with still continuing intense and incisive correspondence with DEWNR. A big thank you to Birds SA, especially Kate and Jeff — a cause becomes easier to fight with such staunch allies.

Let us hope that the current Parliamentary Inquiry into off-road vehicles will finally bring some sanity to the protection of our beaches and our threatened shorebirds.

Doug Clarke, Coffin Bay November 2019



Double-banded Plovers in wheel tracks

Plovers back in the hood

See p13 of the Spring Birder

We recently reported that Sandy, the Hooded Plover hatched at Seacliff had been sighted 20km north at Semaphore, indicating that last season's chicks were on the move.

We're pleased to bring news that Sandy was again spotted at Semaphore in August and then in early September at Silver Sands 50 km south.

At only eight months old, Sandy is too young to pair up and start breeding but we'll certainly be watching with anticipation in the years to come.

However, the new breeding season is well underway with birds nesting at Seacliff, Myponga Beach, Ochre Cove, Port Willunga, Sellicks, Sheepies, Moana, Carrickalinga, Yilki, Inman River, Watsons Gap, Bashams Beach, Parsons Beach, Middleton, and a brand new nest site at the River Torrens West Beach.

If you're a beachgoer in the Adelaide region, you can do your bit to help protect Hooded Plovers and their nests this summer by looking out for signs and fencing indicating 'Hoodies' are breeding on the beach. Avoid lingering near the fence, keep your dog on a leash, and only walk, ride or drive below the high tide mark to give the birds and their chicks plenty of space.

If you'd like to learn more about these endangered birds and how you can help, [check](#) out NRM's Hooded Plover webpage.



Hooded Plover
nesting at Middleton
photographed by Leanne Barnes

This project is jointly funded through the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board and the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and supported by Bird Life Australia and council.

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A photograph of two Blue-billed ducks in a body of water. In the foreground, a male duck with a dark head and a bright blue bill is swimming. Behind it, a female duck with a mottled brown head and a greyish bill is swimming. The water is calm, and the ducks are reflected in the surface.

Blue-billed duck
Malacorhynchus membranaceus

Size: 39 - 42cm

*A uncommon dark stiffed tailed diving duck with a blue bill (males only). Female plumage plain mottled brown and often mistaken for a Musk Duck, the male is golden brown in colouring a with dark head.

This duck species is found mostly in the South Eastern wetlands of Australia and WA and occasionally found in inland wetlands throughout Australia.

A male Blue-billed Duck and female (behind) photographed by John Gitsham at Bool Lagoon, Naracoorte SE.

*Reference: Slaters Field Guide to Australian Birds

Past General Meetings

Friday August 30

John Hatch introduced the guest speaker, John Gitsham and thanked John for stepping in to take up the task after the late cancellation of the planned Guest Speaker from BirdLife Australia, Chris Purnell. Chris had withdrawn as guest speaker due to ill health.

John's first topic was **Laratinga Wetland** — The role of artificial wetlands as bird habitat in an urbanised environment.

By default Laratinga has become a hotspot for birds and the wetland attracts a huge range of bird species. It is the natural section of a wastewater treatment facility that was originally constructed on a 50ha site in Mt Barker. 10.7ha of the site are aquatic.



Then and now Really the same place?

Excess water from this area used to be pumped up to the mine at Kanmantoo, as a method of dust control. That is no longer possible, and nutrient levels are too high for the water to be pumped into Mt. Barker Creek. Hence water levels at Laratinga are now higher than they have been in the past. New mud flats are therefore being created to absorb the extra water as well as to create an area for those birds that prefer mud and shallow water. Because of the rapid population growth of Mt Barker, the Council will have to build additional infrastructure to manage this water level increase.

Laratinga used to be pasture paddocks containing plants and weeds. Established trees in the area have been left in place and habitat restoration started in 1990s. This has provided ideal habitat for a range of resident, migratory and nomadic bird species.

Laratinga Reserve is an environmental and recreational success story. Water levels can be manipulated throughout the 10.7ha wetland that

contains 3 basins. Bird habitats include: open deep water, mudflats, dense reed beds, shallow water, low close native forest, mixed emergent reeds, rushes and grassland. Nine species of duck can be seen, including Freckled Duck.

Birds SA has enjoyed a good relationship with Laratinga and the Mt. Barker District Council. For over six years, we have participated in an ongoing collaborative relationship overseeing the water management of the various bays, to suit the needs of the different bird species. Birds SA has supplied reference material, including photographs for the interpretive signs, of the birds that can be seen at Laratinga; as well as “Please do not feed the birds”, signs. The Mt Barker Council, in conjunction with Birds SA, has produced a booklet that can be used by both adults and children.

The first Laratinga Bird Fair was held in 2016 and it was a huge success. The Mt Barker Council funded this event and any money raised went to the Birds SA Conservation Fund. John asked members to support the next Laratinga Bird Fair to be held on 27th October 2019, 10-4pm.

160 species of bird have been recorded at Laratinga – usually 60 species can be seen on any visit. Rare species, such as Latham's Snipe, Buff-banded Rail, and Freckled Duck can be found there, along with 5 migratory bird species, 19 State threatened bird species, and 17 bird species considered threatened, at a regional level in the Mt Lofty Ranges.

John's second topic was **Finding the Bunyip** — surveying for Australasian Bitterns in South Australia.

The Australasian Bittern, a partially nocturnal heron, is endangered. Rice fields form its favoured habitat. The hot spots for Bitterns in South Australia are Bool Lagoon and Pick Swamp. These birds are quite nomadic, cryptic and hard



Australasian Bittern

to see. They frequent reedbeds and other vegetation in water, such as cumbungi, lignum and sedges. During spring and summer, the males utter a distinctive, eerie, resonant bass booming call, which is said to have been the origin of the Aboriginal and colonialist myth of the Bunyip. Bitterns breed between October and January, and the male's

Past General Meetings (cont.)

calling to attract the female is usually heard at the beginning of the season.

Knowledge of their distribution and ecology is scarce. The Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) coordinated State-wide surveys in Spring/Summer 2017-18 to improve our knowledge, including to help understand the significance of natural and artificial wetlands for this species. Surveys were also undertaken between 1981 and 2000, 2001 and 2010 and from 2011 to 2018. Fewer bitterns were sighted as the surveys progressed, signifying a huge decline in numbers. Males have been heard booming at Tolderol, one bird was flushed at Greenfields Wetlands, but booming is difficult to hear over the traffic noise at this wetland.

Further surveys are needed to improve contemporary distributional information. Volunteer capacity in South Australia is being increased by providing survey training for volunteers at Tolderol. So far 31 volunteers have been trained. The 2018 surveys over 29 Wetlands detected 39 Australasian Bitterns across 10 sites.

Challenges for the future include a need for refinement of method, improved knowledge of habitat requirements, undertaking satellite tracking to improve understanding of basic movement patterns in SA, improved management of natural and modified wetland habitats in South Australia and consultation with Local Councils on future stormwater wetlands designed to increase bittern habitat.

Friday September 27

John Hatch introduced guest speaker, Greg Sara, whose topic was **A Birding Trip to Northern Sulawesi, October 2017**, with photographs taken by Judy Sara.

Greg was inspired to visit this part of the world after having read the book by Peter Raby: Alfred Russell Wallace. A Life. Alfred Russell Wallace visited Sulawesi in the 1850s and described the Crested Black Macaque. He thought that he was looking at a Baboon. There are 7 species or sub-species of this primate.

The landscape consists of jungle-clad volcanoes and black sandy beaches. We did have a guide. The jungle was not typical but fairly open forest so it was easier to see the birds. Apart from marsupials and primates, the forest supports pythons, flying lizards, millipedes, toads and amazing Insects, including butterflies, beetles and moths.

Sulawesi has some endemic birds, such as Sulawesi Lilac Kingfisher, Sulawesi Dwarf Kingfisher, Green-



Knobbed Hornbills

**Photographed by Judy Sara in 2017
in Tankoko Nature Reserve, North Sulawesi**

backed Kingfisher and Scaly Kingfisher. Another endemic bird is the very beautiful Silver-tipped Imperial Pigeon.

Sixteen owl species are scattered throughout Indonesia. There are miners, such as the White-necked Myna, which are communal birds that behave like Noisy Miners. They have long tails.

The bird that everybody wants to see is the Knobbed Hornbill. Its call is like a dog barking and its loud wing flapping can be heard from a distance. They can aggregate in flocks of up to 100 birds. The Helmeted Hornbill is the biggest of the group. The Sulawesi Flycatcher is a very pretty bird. The 'megapode' that digs burrows on the beaches and is smaller than a Mallee Fowl is under threat due to egg collectors and habitat destruction.

Interestingly some birds are very similar to Australian birds. For example, the Sulawesi endemic Grey-sided Flowerpecker is in the same genus as the Australian Mistletoebird and looks something like it. Woodswallows are also found. Twenty species of Spangled Drongos exist across Indonesia.

In the Gunung Ambung National Park we saw 106 species of birds, 65 of which are endemic.

Past General Meetings (cont.)

As we were walking through this national park we found logging and timber preparation occurring within the actual borders of the Park. The timber is being used for building houses.

Unfortunately, butchering of both native animals and pet animals occurs across Indonesia.

Friday October 25

John Hatch introduced the guest speaker, Luke Ireland, who had agreed on short notice after a late cancellation to give a presentation on the Mallee Emu-wren's (MEW) return to South

Australia. Luke has a varied work history having worked in Scotland and on the rock wallabies. There has been a concerted effort to re-establish the Mallee Emu-wren in SA. Luke is now the Project Coordinator responsible for this task

The Mallee Emu-wren is a very small bird weighing only 5g — about the weight of a 10cent coin. Its tail is 1.5 times the length of its body. It is an insectivore that prefers dense habitat and is extremely quiet and secretive. Its typical habitat is mallee over *Triodia*/*spinifex*, with a few shrubs dispersed in-between. The birds were known to use heath *Triodia*, low structure *Triodia* in Ngarkat. Mallee Emu-wrens nest in *Triodia*. They like to forage in these plants and use them for protection and shelter. They require dense habitat. They are real habitat specialists. They still occur in Victoria, where they are listed as endangered. Their range has always been restricted.

In the early 1900s large areas of land were cleared for agriculture, starting their decline — an extinction debt that we are paying for now! They still have suitable habitat only in a series of National Parks, but there are no links between these parks. Drought between the 1990s and mid 2000s saw a decline in numbers and the current drought has also caused further decline in the last 2 years.

Small fragmented parks with inappropriate fire regimes and wildfires, have seen the Mallee Emu-wren disappear from Billiat and then Ngarkat in 2014. Since they are habitat specialists, needing dense habitat, destruction of their existing habitat left them nothing to occupy.

Many partners held an emergency summit in Melbourne. The partners included Zoos SA, BirdLife Australia, The University of Adelaide, and the South Australian Government. A Conservation Action Plan was developed with an option to reintroduce the Mallee Emu-wren to South Australia. These birds



Sahui Pitta
Photographed in 2017 by Judy Sara
in Tambun Malaeo
Sanctuary, North Sulawesi

can still be seen at Murray Sunset National Park (NP), Wyperfield NP and Hatah-Kulkyne. The plan was to take healthy birds from this area and reintroduce them back into Ngarkat. No reintroduction had previously been carried out on this scale. The decision was made to see if there was a suitable surrogate species upon which to undertake trial planning. The closely related but smaller, Rufous-crowned Emu-



**Male Mallee Emu-wren released
at Ngarkat Conservation Park
Photographed by Tom Hunt**

wren from Central Australia (Northern Territory) was used, where trapping methodologies and husbandry techniques were refined. These birds are very small so 3 layers of mist net had to be used to catch them. Consideration then had to be given on how to store and house them. Four pairs of these birds were caught, housed and then moved to Monarto Zoo. This became the first captive breeding programme for any Emu-wren. They are in specially built aviaries and we are trying to understand more about their breeding biology, but they still have not bred. The next step was to apply what we had learned to the re-introduction of the Mallee Emu-wren. It was really difficult, and most reintroductions were known to fail. We hoped that we could learn and if we failed then we could improve on our technique next time. We were trialling the following variations:

- catches in April or August
- same day catch and release or could we store them overnight
- familiar, keep them in groups, if we caught them in a group and they stay in that group, compared with unfamiliar

Past General Meetings (cont.)

We really don't know how far they can move. To undertake this testing you have to mark the birds. We tried tail marking in April, then a metal band in August. The tail markings were difficult to see in the field.

A good deal of research was done at the proposed relocation sites in Ngarkat to ensure that the habitat was suitable to reintroduce the birds. Amazing volunteers helped us with the release, which was very structured. We camped out for 6-7 days. There were three catch teams: a processing team that took birds back to process, a release team in vehicles to drive birds to sites, then people at the sites to monitor the birds once released.

Teams of 3-5 people would search for the birds very early in the morning.

It is difficult to find the birds in the hummocks so we found it was best to just throw the net over the hummock. Birds were then placed in a transport box, specially designed. At the process centre they were weighed, a feather sample was taken for DNA purposes and their lengths were measured. They were then marked and put back in a transport

box. Meal worms and crickets were fed to the captured birds. Zoos SA were very supportive by supplying the crickets, which were kept warm in their own tent with solar panels providing the heating. The birds were housed overnight in the Lameroo Office and released into Ngarkat the next morning. All boxes were carried out to the chosen site, and the birds released in pairs or groups, after letting the birds settle for about 30 minutes before opening the box door. The birds came out in their own time.

The release team spent a good deal of time following the birds using GPS. We carried out some post-release monitoring for 2 weeks following each release, then 8 weeks later for further monitoring. On subsequent trips, we decided to expand our areas.

Our findings

Of the 40 birds released in April half were familiar and half unfamiliar. These flocks were looser and moved around a lot more than the August birds. Same day release of the birds was not logistically possible. All the releases undertaken

were overnight releases. August was found to be better for release. The August birds set up territories straight away and some were seen carrying around bits of nesting material.

Familiarity did not make much difference. In familiarity pairings — birds caught and released together — some stayed together and others did not. Familiarity did not seem to make much difference.

Colour bands worked better than tail colour because of the way the bird holds its tail. They can travel much further than we thought. We did not detect too many big movements, but one bird travelled about 2km south, found a new partner, successfully fledged some young, then travelled 5-6 km north of that site. Consequently we had to expand our search

area. The April birds dispersed at least 1km from where they were released, but August birds stayed within a few 100m from their release location. If pairs did split, it was more likely that the male would stay where he was released and the female would seek a partner elsewhere. Two males and one female fledged three chicks from a nest in Triodia. The chicks are just little fluff-balls, with plain buff-



**Release of Mallee Emu-wrens at Nargkat
Photographed by Tom Hunt**

looking downy feathers and no tails. We were interested to note the cooperative breeding, both males feeding the young and feeding the female. This was the only group seen to fledge more than two chicks. The nest was woven grass adorned with spider's egg sacks.

Where do we proceed from here? We have been doing extensive monitoring — as time progressed the birds were getting harder and harder to find. It does appear that following breeding they disperse. We are hoping that there are still some birds out there.

It is an important time for us to re-evaluate the whole project. Where do you put our efforts next time? Seventy-eight birds are not enough to make a re-introduction. Do we focus on the existing population, try to protect and conserve? From here we are going to re-evaluate the project and hopefully report back some more positive information.

Luke expressed his thanks to all the amazing volunteers who had supported this project in any way.

Future General Meetings/Past Excursions

FUTURE GENERAL MEETINGS

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

N.B.

From the beginning of 2020, meetings will start 15 minutes earlier.

The doors will be opened at 7.00pm and meetings will start at 7.30pm.

We must vacate the premises by 10.00pm.

Friday January 31

Chris Purnell, will talk about Shorebird Surveys. This presentation has been postponed from August 2019. It will, of course, be even more topical, being right at the height of the Shorebird season.

Friday February 28 TBA

PAST EXCURSIONS

BIRDS SA

15 AUGUST: BUCKLAND PARK

Sixteen people braved a chilly start to the day when we met at the Applebee Road dam with its freshwater birds. Continuing on to Buckland Park, we were lucky to have fair weather for our morning there, with stiff breezes blowing up as our time in that area drew to a close. We took our cars through the Port Gawler Road gate and followed the dry track towards the lake, before continuing on foot to find good spots to view the birds. A scope and binoculars were used near the lake shore to find wetland birds and waders, while a somewhat mud-laden trek around the edge to the casuarinas and water pools on the western side enabled a focus on bush birds. En route, and as we headed back to the cars later on, we also kept an eye out to the skies and across the samphire for sightings specific to those areas.

While first impressions suggested a paucity of birds, in all, 37 species were seen in Buckland Park. Highlights included 6 White-winged Fairywrens (one in its blue splendour), 6 White-fronted Chats, a flock of 2-300 Red-necked Stints, probably recently returned from the northern hemisphere, 7 Black-

headed Cuckoo shrikes, a Brown Quail, and around 30 Red-capped Plovers. Among the raptors were a Wedge-tailed Eagle, a Swamp Harrier, a Whistling Kite, 2 Nankeen Kestrels and a Brown Falcon. Other birds noted were Crested Pigeons (6), Rainbow Lorikeet (1), Superb Fairywrens (2), Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters (4), Singing Honeyeaters (3), White-browed Scrubwrens (4), a Grey Butcherbird, an Australian Golden Whistler, Willie Wagtails (3), Grey Fantails (12), a Eurasian Skylark, Little Ravens (12), a Common Blackbird, Common Starlings (6), Magpie Lark (2, one on nest), Welcome Swallows (6), and Brown Songlarks (2). Two Grey Shrikethrushes were heard calling to each other. In and around the waters were the inevitable Silver Gulls (100), but also sighted were Australian Shelducks (4), Chestnut Teals (5), Australian White Ibis (2), a Great Egret, White-faced Herons (2), a Little Pied Cormorant and a Crested Tern. Also contributing to the count were 2 Hoary-headed Grebes and 1 Little Black Cormorant, but it appeared that these belonged to the neighbouring salt fields, rather than Buckland Park. A quick visit to the tidal river at the end of the Port Gawler Road brought brisk winds and denied birding rewards, so we rounded off the day by retreating to the Two Wells Lions Park for warming drinks, lunch, a shared tasty lemon slice and the bird count.

Anna Woods

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS) AUGUST 2019 THREE-DAY CAMPOUT MUNYAROO CONSERVATION PARK

Saturday 17 August

The weekend started early. We arrived at the Whyalla Wetlands at sunrise to do a spot of birding there, with a walk around for about an hour or so. Two birders met there, one from Adelaide and the other from Whyalla for the trip down to Munyaroo. Among the birds we found were Red-kneed Dotterels and Chestnut Teal.

We met a third person from Port Neill at the Moonabie turn-off, and the three of us decided to survey the nearby area at Hurrells Gap. The habitat looked very healthy here, and we saw Banded Lapwings, Pied Honeyeaters, a Gilbert's Whistler and a Redthroat. Moving into the Conservation Park, we pulled up at a beach setting. There was not much there, just a single Pied Oystercatcher and Singing Honeyeaters were calling from the scrub. As we drove away from the beach we saw a Nankeen Kestrel and Port Lincoln Parrots. The next beach area, a little further south, proved to be a bit more fruitful — revealing Sooty Oystercatchers, Pacific Gulls, a White-faced Heron and Australian Pelicans huddled on a distant sand spit. Looking around the Bluebush nearby we saw White-fronted Chats and Splendid Fairywrens while White-fronted

Past Excursions (cont.)

Honeyeaters were calling all around. At this stage we decided to break for lunch in the sheds. After lunch the search for birds continued with high numbers of Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters. There were also Variegated Fairywrens, Red Wattlebirds busily moving through the blossom, and a single Purple-crowned Lorikeet flying overhead. Moving through the bush we stopped at a promising site where we heard Grey Currawongs and a Southern Scrub-robin. After a short search we caught up with the Scrub-robin. In this area there were also Spotted Pardalotes and Yellow-rumped Thornbills.

Driving toward the northern boundary of the park, we looked for a campsite for the night. There was nothing suitable there so going back into the Mallee seemed a better option. We passed a Grey Butcherbird and White-browed Babblers on the way. While we were setting up our camp, we saw a Black Falcon fly over and White-eared Honeyeaters calling from the Mallee. The Black Falcon was our bird of the day.

Sunday 18 August

Crested Bellbirds, Grey Shrikethrushes and Grey Currawongs broke the Sunday morning silence with the morning chorus. After breakfast we decided to walk around the camp area, moving in a westerly direction. We saw Weebills and Red Wattlebirds. It became bit quiet for birds so we backtracked and took a southerly direction. Again the Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters were abundant. Inland Thornbills were in the area. White-browed Babblers were heard, but they were rather elusive as not many were seen. We broke camp and started driving south.

A pair of wrens flew across in front of us, and stopping to pursue them proved to be a lengthy process to identify them. The birds being rather shy they eventually revealed themselves enough to be Blue-breasted Fairywrens.

Driving on towards the west boundary we found breeding Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, some Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and Port Lincoln Parrots were flying through the Mallee. We stopped for lunch in the south-east corner of the park.

A beach was a stone's throw away so after lunch we went to have a look. A Hoary-headed Grebe was dabbling at the water's edge, while Crested Terns and Silver Gulls were resting lazily on the beach. The weather decided to take a turn for the worse. It becomes windy and started to rain, so we sat it out in the cars for around 30 minutes.

When the weather cleared we drove north, passing on old Malleefowl's mound on the way. The surrounding bush was not in very good condition and not many birds were around so we returned to the

beach area and set up camp. Before tea we decided to walk the beach again, braving the freezing wind. White-browed Scrubwrens scolded us from the scrub, while the beach revealed some good birds: Caspian Terns and Sooty Oystercatchers flew in to roost while Pied Cormorants flew over in formation. Red-necked Stints huddled out of the wind. The bird of the day was the Blue-breasted Fairywren.

Monday 19 August

This morning the weather was very cold but settled. An Owlet Nightjar was around and Mulga Parrots were spotted. Around the shed area there were again Restless Flycatchers, and a Spotted Harrier was seen swooping low over the bluebush.

Moving up to the northeast corner of the park we heard a Little Crow, and Splendid Fairywrens were also in the area. The bird of the day was the Spotted Harrier.

Larry Gruitt

BIRDS SA

1 SEPTEMBER: MANNING FLORA & FAUNA RESERVE, MCLAREN FLAT



Keen birdwatchers on the Manning Flora and Fauna excursion, September 1 2019. Photographed by Stephen Ramm

On a cloudy Father's Day morning, 13 keen birders met at the gate to Manning Flora and Fauna Reserve, 45 ha of dense natural vegetation near McLaren Vale that is owned by the Field Naturalists Society of South Australia. Like a postage stamp of remnant bush in the middle of all the vineyards, it is a great and special place to go birding.

This was their first Birds SA field trip for some of the group. One lady was from America and seemed very pleased to be out with us to look for the beautiful birds that South Australia offers. After a quick introduction, the group left the car park, and headed up the hill that is the central feature of the park. Several Mistletoebirds were calling around the car park, with one particularly photogenic individual being considerate enough to perch on a branch only

Past Excursions (cont.)

metres away, providing spectacular views and photographs. Striated Pardalotes were also fairly abundant around that area, with around 30 seen on the walk. Groups of Crimson and Eastern Rosellas were feeding on the flowering Golden Wattle, along with Silvereyes, a Grey Shrike-thrush, Superb Fairywrens, and New Holland Honeyeaters.

Tree Martins and Welcome Swallows were a pleasing sight, gliding on the thermals above, in search of flying insects. Small flocks of Galahs, Musk Lorikeets, and Rainbow Lorikeets also darted over our heads, and a breeding pair of Elegant Parrots was found nesting inside a tree hollow. Male and female Golden Whistlers added a bright touch of colour to the birdlife observed, and inquisitive Grey Fantails were quite entertaining.

After reaching the bottom of the hill, the group decided that we should take the path to the right, head up the boundary of the reserve along the main road towards McLaren Flat, then take another track back up and over the hill to the cars for lunch. With everyone in agreement, we continued along this track, adding Eastern Spinebill, Brown Thornbill, Weebill, Common Starling, Willie Wagtail, and Grey Currawong to our list. We arrived back at the cars about 10:30am, hungry and possibly a little more exhausted than we were expecting to be. While doing the bird call, a dark bird of prey flew over us, and after much consideration, it was identified and agreed to be a Brown Goshawk. We all said our farewells, and headed home, having recorded a total bird count of 30 species.

Miles Ramm

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

7 SEPTEMBER: MUNTIRI ECO-LODGE SCRUB

Eleven members braved the cool, cloudy and breezy conditions to wander through this private property



Jacky Winter

photographed by Bob Daly on 31 August
in Muntiri Eco-lodge Scrub

Heritage Agreement area situated between Lake Alexandrina and the Finniss River and approximately 5km north of Clayton Bay.

We met at the junction of Finniss-Clayton Road and Kindaruar Road and proceeded along Kindaruar Road to the entrance of the property where we all parked inside the gate and on the track between the cropping area and the scrub. Our leader, Wendy Phillips, gave us an introduction to the area as we were greeted by the sight of a pair of Australian Shelducks out in the adjacent cereal crop and a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles soaring in the distance. Our first walk was through the scrub and along the western boundary fence. There were pockets of dense *Acacia paradoxa* where we were able to see several groups of White-browed Babbler, White-browed Scrubwren (heard only) and Superb Fairywren. In the eucalypt woodland, and out of the



Fleurieu Birders at Muntiri Eco-lodge Scrub on 7/9/2019. Photographed by Wendy Phillips

Past Excursions (cont.)

wind, were mixed groups of Thornbills (Yellow-rumped, Yellow, Striated), Honeyeaters (New Holland, Spiny-cheeked, White-plumed and Brown-headed) Grey Fantails, Rufous Whistlers, Weebills, Varied Sitellas, Grey Shrikethrush and Silvereyes. As we made our way back to the cars and near the accommodation (B and B), we had good views of Hooded Robins, Jacky Winters and a single male Mistletoebird. It was an excellent opportunity to compare the Jacky Winter with the female Hooded Robin. Also recorded were several pairs of Mallee Ringnecks and about 10 Elegant Parrots.

We then drove to the eastern boundary of the property and walked along the sandy track. Here we saw several more Hooded Robins and the comment was that this was the biggest number of this species (about 10 in total) that those members present had ever seen in one place.

After retracing our steps to the cars, we ate lunch and a birdcall. During lunch, we were able to observe several flocks of Straw-necked Ibis and 3 Australian White Ibis flying overhead as well as 5 Australian Pelicans and a Brown Goshawk high in the sky.

Two breeding records for the day were a Brown-headed Honeyeater feeding fledged young in the scrub and a Yellow-rumped Thornbill carrying food to a nest in roadside vegetation at our initial meeting place.

It was an enjoyable and productive excursion with a total 40 species recorded. Almost all of us were having our first visit to the property and were impressed with the conservation efforts by the owners, past and present, of this important remnant habitat.

Richard Smyth

BIRDS SA

14 SEPTEMBER: TOLDEROL GAME RESERVE, LAKE ALEXANDRINA

On the city side of the Mount Lofty Ranges it was a bright, sunny and cloudless spring morning; crossing over and down into Angas Plains with Lake Alexandrina in the distance, the clouds had massed and the sky was grey and a little foreboding. By the time 32 keen birders met at the information display board in Tolderol Game Reserve, the clouds had almost disappeared and the sky returned to blue. Everyone was ready for a fine day of birdwatching, keen to find out which of the migratory waders were already back for the summer.

We split up into three separate groups, so that we would all cover different parts of Tolderol at different times. I am writing this report mostly from the experiences of our group, but I will still refer to the birds seen by other groups.

First, we checked Bay 17, which is always – no matter the season – rich with birding opportunities. It is also a place where stopping, setting up and taking your time can be really rewarding. There can be a rare bird mingling in the mass; or, when you wait for things to settle, it's then that you see how much action there is on the ground, as tiny birds scuttle about in search of whatever they seek. And then, a raptor may ease in overhead, circle high above and then seemingly as soon as it swoops it is spotted, the alarm goes out and the flocks rise and either disperse and flee or mass and do their sky-dance murmuration. This is what happened, and was for most birders the highlight of the day, when a dark falcon flew over the bay, and performed a spectacular diving flight, with its prey being a Curlew Sandpiper. It was quickly identified as a Black Falcon, which was a new bird for many people in the group. Other than this falcon being something of an uncommon bird, what was perhaps more rewarding was the spectacle of its relentless and ultimately successful pursuit of the sandpiper. It was probably not for as long as it seemed, but it felt as if the hunt was drawn out for minutes as the birds darted, dropped, swooped, and swerved. In the end, it was sandpiper for the falcon's breakfast.

As the morning passed and we eased our way around we saw 3 Swamp Harriers, 5 Purple Swamphens, 2 Masked Lapwings, 6 Red-capped Plovers, 3 Red-necked Stints, 50 Curlew Sandpipers (some in partial breeding plumage), 75 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and 5 Australian Pelicans. Ten Straw-necked Ibis, 2 White-faced Herons, 2 Little Pied Cormorants, 10 Pied Stilts, 100 Whiskered Terns, 30 Caspian Terns, 4 Crested Terns, Singing Honeyeaters, White-fronted Chats, Superb Fairywrens, Fairy Martins, Welcome Swallows, Reed-Warblers, Little Grassbirds and Golden-headed Cisticolas.

Continuing across the Lake Alexandrina feeder channel to Bay 4, we saw more migratory waders, as well as 2 Great Egrets. Next, we headed to Bays 5, 6, and 7, which were mostly dry. With no bird action here, we decided to head across to Bays 8, 9 and 10. Here, we saw many White-fronted Chats, Silvereyes, Superb Fairywrens, Black Swans, and Red-capped Plovers. A large flock of very photogenic Red-kneed Dotterels was seen posing and parading in one of the Bays' cracked beds, which kept us busy for around half an hour.

It was beginning to get warmer, and our group agreed to head back to the information board, stopping to look at any interesting birds along the way. All three groups met at roughly the same time, and after having a chat and some lunch, we proceeded to do the birdcall. Birds seen by the other

Past Excursions (cont.)

groups included Australian Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Glossy Ibis, Yellow-billed and Royal Spoonbill, Pacific Golden Plover, Marsh Sandpiper, Spotted Harrier, Black-tailed Native-hen, Australian Spotted Crake, Wood Sandpiper, Australian Hobby, and Elegant Parrot.

One bird that sparked the interest of the groups was the account of a fleeting glimpse of 2 Crimson Chats near Bay 7. This is a species that has exploded in numbers around central Victoria but has also begun to make its way into South Australia. After giving our farewells, some members of the group chose to go in search of the Crimson Chats, but unfortunately, they were not re-sighted. An enjoyable day was had by all, with a total bird count of 50 species, with the birds of the day being the Black Falcon and the Crimson Chat.

Miles Ramm

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS) 15 SEPTEMBER: BERNIE'S BLOCK, MAMBRAY CREEK



Rufous Songlark

**photographed by Bernie Haase on 15/9/2109
on Bernie's Block, Mambray Creek**

It was a sunny and calm day when 8 birders met in the highway-parking bay at Mambray Creek. Three of the birders were from Pt. Augusta and Mambray Creek and 1 each came from Whyalla and Weeroona Island. We then drove towards the hills and turned into Bernie's block, a private nature reserve. We parked our vehicles in front of the house yard as Little Corellas, Little Ravens, Galahs and Welcome Swallows flew past. Willie Wagtails, Spiny-cheeked and Singing Honeyeaters were



White-fronted Chats

**photographed by Bernie Haase on 15/9/2019
on Bernie's Block, Mambray Creek**

moving about in the garden. As we walked across an open, revegetated, old paddock area towards the Red Gum tree lined creek, a Grey Butcherbird, Yellow-throated Miners, Magpie Larks and Mallee Ringnecks were seen in the trees. We followed a track along and across the creek and added Crested Pigeons, Australian Ravens, Magpies, Kestrels and Black Kites (15) to our bird list. As the track meandered along the creek a Hobby sat quietly watching us from the top of a Red gum, allowing the photographers with longrange lenses to get some shots of it. Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Dusky Woodswallows, Weebills, Red Wattlebirds and Striated Pardalotes nesting in a hollow lengthened the list. The wind was starting to blow and it was time for morning smoko so we walked back to the house as a Little Eagle was being harassed by Little Ravens. After smoko we headed off behind the house block into the native pine woodland where Peaceful Doves, White-browed Babblers and loudly singing Rufous Songlarks greeted us. The Rufous Songlarks have been absent from the area for a few years and have returned because of the good rain that fell in May and June allowing the undergrowth to grow. As we walked along the tracks in the woodland Black-faced Cuckooshrikes, many White-winged trillers (18), Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, Variegated Fairywrens, Whistling Kite, Red-rumped Parrots, Flinders Ranges Crimson Rosellas, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, House Sparrows, Starlings and an Emu were added to our bird sightings. We returned towards the house via the open old paddock area and found White-winged Fairywrens and White-fronted Chats nesting in the Black Bluebush. A pair of Crimson Chats was also seen. This is the first time they have been found on

Past Excursions (cont.)

the block. Back at the house it was lunchtime and we made our bird call as a Spotted Harrier glided past. After lunch we looked at bird photos from my recent trip to Cape York. It had been an enjoyable day and as everyone was leaving a Kookaburra was seen flying through the gum trees. We had found a total of 42 bird species, with the birds of the day being the Hobby, nesting Striated Pardalotes and White-fronted Chats and the new addition to the Bernie's Block bird list: the Crimson Chats.

B. Haase



Striated Pardalote

photographed by Bernie Haase on 15/9/2019
on Bernie's Block, Mambray Creek

BIRDS SA 15 SEPTEMBER: SHEPHERD'S HILL RECREATION PARK

We looked for birds around the Grey Box loop walk and then found a comfortable log where some of the experienced members conducted the Bird Count. We saw only 19 species but hundreds of birds, particularly Rainbow Lorikeets. We did see a Kookaburra dive into the grass to collect a spider to eat. We also spotted one koala. One of the more experienced members said we didn't see a good variety of birds because the birds we did see were "alpha" birds, which would discourage other birds.

Anne Kirk

BIRDS SA

29 SEPTEMBER: LARATINGA WETLANDS, MT BARKER

27 Birds SA members, together with 3 or 4 non-members arrived at Laratinga wetlands on a pleasant calm and sunny morning. The group was so large that I led most of the newer members or birders who had not been to Laratinga before. The remainder splintered off into small groups for the morning taking their own directions around the wetland.



Inverted duck – name its species

Photographed by Greg Blackman at Laratinga on 13 November 2019

The water level in most of the ponds is very high at the moment, restricting the habitat for some of the crakes, rails and dotterels, although Australian Spotted Crakes, Spotless Crakes and a Baillon's Crake were seen here and there. Nine species of ducks were spotted. The presence of more than 7 Freckled Ducks was a highlight for some newer birders.

The air was filled with the sounds of Eastern Banjo Frogs, Spotted Marsh Frogs, Little Grassbirds, Red Wattlebirds and Australian Reed Warblers. Everybody had an enjoyable morning, seeing a total of 61 species of birds. Of the species seen, 41 were non-passerines and 20 were passerine species.

John Gitsham



Superb Fairywren
photographed by Greg Blackman
at Laratinga on 13 November 2019

Past Excursions (cont.)

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

**SATURDAY 5 OCTOBER:
WATKIN'S VINEYARD,
CURRENCY CREEK
(GWLAP) REVEGETATION
AREA.**

This is the first time we have been able to access this wonderful property. The government funding following the post-millennium drought, injected a large sum of money to restore the wetlands around the Lower Lakes, Coorong and Murray Mouth 2011- 2016.

Goolwa, Wellington, Local Action Planning Association (GWLAP) have been restoring the vegetation around the Tookayerta Creek, which flows into the Finniss River then into Lake Alexandrina. Over 153,000 seedlings have been planted on this site around the important Swampland that supports a small population of endangered Southern Emu-wrens.

11 members met at the old Currency Creek Winery car park and drove 5 km down the road to the entrance, only to find the gate locked. Fortunately, I was able to ring the manager and he was close enough to let us in. The vineyard covers approximately 800ha and its grapes are sold to other wineries. There are some remnant stands of trees and the empty paddocks are full of veldt grass, the only grazing animals are kangaroos and, unfortunately, a few wild deer.

We car- shared down to 3 vehicles and stopped at 3 different habitat sites spending about 45 minutes at each location. *The property is so large it would need all day to survey it!*

We immediately spotted Woodswallows gliding through the air and landing in the eucalypt trees. We discovered one nest, which created interest. The most photogenic and the most numerous birds, were the White-browed Woodswallows, of which between 50 and 60 were seen on the property. Only 2 Dusky and about 10 Masked Woodswallows were amongst them. Honeyeaters were in short supply, even though the Pink Gum was flowering. The most common honeyeater was the White-plumed, but otherwise, we only found a couple of New Holland Honeyeaters, and 1 Little Wattlebird.

Crimson Rosellas were around, and 2 Musk and 2 Purple-crowned Lorikeets were heard. A couple of



**White-browed
Woodswallow**



**Masked
Woodswallow**



**Dusky
Woods-
wallow**

Bob Daly photographed all these woodswallows that were flying around together at Watkins Vineyard, GWLAP Revegetation Area, Currency Creek on 5 October, 2019

Red-rumped Parrots were sighted just before they flew off.

We drove over the hill to obtain a good view of the swampland, hoping to sight the Wrens. I set up the scope just in case!! Superb Fairywrens were hopping in a dead bush in easy sight. We could hear the Reed Warblers and a couple of Little Grassbirds calling. The view was stunning across the valley and farmland on the other side, but no Emu-wrens were seen.

Straw-necked Ibis were flying in groups of 10-15 at a time, totalling about 60, but there was only one White Ibis. One Swamp Harrier and one Brown Falcon were the only raptors we saw. We picked up a few small bush birds in the vegetation walking back to the cars including a Grey Fantail and a Yellow Thornbill.

At the next site the Tree Martins were found nesting in hollows. Mistletoe hung in clumps on the eucalyptus trees and the Mistletoebirds were easy to find. A large group of kangaroos scampered off and while there is obvious damage to the bushes, most of the revegetation appears to be surviving. We have been privileged to visit and conduct the bird survey for GWLAP and hope to do it again.

We drove on to Wally's Landing nearby for lunch and the bird count came to 44 species.

Wendy Phillips

Past Excursions (cont.)

BIRDS SA

LONG WEEKEND (6–8 OCTOBER) 2019 CAMPOUT

We were privileged to enjoy our campout in Gluepot Reserve, which is a 54,390 ha property purchased by Birdlife Australia in 1997. Gluepot is part of the largest block of intact Mallee left in Australia. Six nationally threatened bird species can be found on Gluepot Reserve and a further 17 regionally threatened bird species call this most special of places their home. In all, 190 bird species have been recorded in the reserve to date.

Starting on Friday 4th October and officially ending on Monday 7th October, the long-weekend Campout offered a wealth of birding opportunities to the many people who made the trek up into the Riverland and out to the far side of Waikerie. It was great to see a range of both seasoned campout attendees and first timers take their time to explore the possibilities on offer.

Because Gluepot contains five bird hides and a range of established walks, attendees were spoilt for choice of what they wanted to do and when. Everyone received a map and a booklet describing the available walks. Members made up their own groups; some choosing to focus on target birds, others settling in to the hides to watch as the numerous species came in for relief. Others went on organised walks led by my Dad (Stephen) and me to get a feel

for the place and the different habitats and birds to be found. As the group went to different places at different times, the daily birdcall became a record of the birds that had been seen across the day rather than those seen at specific sites.

Day 1

The first organised walk took place on Friday afternoon to the Airstrip Loop, which is a short 1km walk, with the main habitats being Emu Bush and Prickly Acacia. We started the walk in the midst of the afternoon heat, but we still managed to see 11 species as the sun began to set and the shadows lengthened. The highlights were Crested Bellbird, Purple-backed Fairywren, and Hooded Robin. Other birds encountered included Jacky Winter, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Weebill, Southern Whiteface,

Striated Pardalote, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, and Inland Thornbill. After completing the walk, we headed to Froggy Hide. All of Gluepot's Hides are elevated about 1 metre off the ground, with a water trough stationed in front of the hide. Having added Red Wattlebird, White-fronted Honeyeater, and White-eared Honeyeater to our list, we decided to head back to Bellbird Campsite for dinner and the birdcall.

Other birds seen in the reserve during the day were: Emu, Brown Goshawk, Common Bronzewing,

Rainbow Bee-eater, Brown Falcon, Mulga Parrot, Australian Ringneck, Brown and nesting White-browed Treecreepers, Splendid Fairywren, Orange Chat, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, White-browed Babbler, Grey Butcherbird, Grey Currawong, White-winged Triller, Varied Sittella, Crested Bellbird, Grey Shrike-thrush, Rufous Whistler, Australian Raven, Red-capped Robin, Mistletoebird, and Australian Pipit.

As we were making the birdcall, a large mixed flock of White-browed and Masked Woodswallows flew overhead. A total of 42 bird species was seen for the day. Some of us thought that it would be worth going spotlighting that night, so that we did. The only night birds we encountered were Spotted Nightjars, but with it being the first warm night in the

reserve this year, we also saw a wide variety of rare reptile species.

Day 2

Having woken up to the beautiful dawn chorus, the group was ready and raring to go birding. The plan was to follow the Whistler Walk, which started and ended at the Gluepot Homestead. The 6km walk passes through a variety of different habitats, including Black Oak woodland, Mallee, and Triodia, providing some great birding opportunities. Along this walk we recorded 21 bird species, with the highlights being Striped Honeyeater, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, and Wedge-tailed Eagle. Crested Bellbirds were heard calling for the duration of the



**White-throated Treecreeper
photographed by Miles Ramm in
Gluepot Reserve in October 2019**

Past Excursions (cont.)

walk, and some very approachable White-eared Honeyeaters provided good photos.

At the Whistler Bird hide, which marked the middle of the walk, birds of several species were arriving to quench their thirsts in the heat of the day. Another large flock of White-browed and Masked Woodswallows were soaring on the thermals above. After finishing the walk, hot and exhausted, the group headed back to our campsite, to relax during the mid-day heat.

In the afternoon, a small group of us went to the Old Gluepot Hide, which proved to be abundant with many and various birds. Six species of honeyeaters were seen, with the standout species being 4 female Pied Honeyeaters that came into drink. This is a very rare species in the reserve and is normally found in the more inland parts of Australia. However, because of the harsh and dry conditions inland, the birds have apparently been forced to move closer towards the coast. Next, we headed to the nearby Emu Hide, where we were lucky enough to watch 2 Collared

Sparrowhawks come in and drink. As it was getting late, we drove back to the campsite for the birdcall. Other interesting birds or sightings on the Saturday included 55 Common Bronzewing, Black Kite, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Galah, White-winged Fairywren, Yellow-throated Miner, Shy Heathwren, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Australian Magpie, Dusky Woodswallow, Gilbert's Whistler, and Southern Scrub-Robin.

Day 3

Another beautiful morning greeted us as Sunday began its life, and a group of us set out early to the Gypsum Lunette Walk, which is a 5.5km loop passing through a large area of mallee and triodia. We saw only 7 species of bird along this walk, but the highlight was an Australian Owlet-nightjar which we accidentally flushed from its daytime roost into a nearby tree. This provided some superb photographic opportunities and some very satisfied birders, for whom this was a welcome and significant tick. While not much else of note was seen along this walk, this did little to detract from the shared enthusiasm of just being out and about in such

beautiful habitat. On our way back to camp, we took a detour out to the Emu and Froggy Hides.

At the Froggy Hide, we found a Major Mitchell's Cockatoo wing feather, which was an interesting find. In the afternoon, there was no scheduled walk, so most people just visited the different bird hides scattered around the reserve. At the birdcall that night, new additions to the list were Willie Wagtail, and Chestnut-crowned Babbler.



Striated Pardalote
photographed by Miles Ramm
in Gluepot Reserve in October 2019

Day 4

No walk was scheduled for the final official day of the campout, so most people either packed up and left or visited more bird hides. Many of the now familiar species were seen, with the only new addition being 2 Red-lored Whistlers. A total of 52 bird species was seen on the trip.

It had been a pleasure and a privilege not only to be at Gluepot, but to share the experience with a bunch of interesting and enthusiastic birders. Thank you to everyone who came along, but most thanks should go to Lynton Huxley, who had carried out all the pre-camp planning and logistics.

Without the time and effort he and Karen invest, the field trips and campouts would not be the pleasure they are to lead and participate in.

Miles Ramm

BIRDS SA

12 OCTOBER: 'COWIRRA', A PRIVATE PROPERTY NEAR MANNUM

This excursion was a follow up to the Birds SA visit last autumn, with the purpose of re-viewing and reviewing the bird population on this former soldier settler dairy farm being progressively re vegetated by Ben, grandson of the original owner.

By the time the 11 visiting birders gathered, the morning mists had dispersed and the skies were abundantly and beautifully blue, with temperatures heading towards 20°. After a brief introduction to the history of the property by Ben, we wandered through the flatter section featuring mainly eucalyptus and melaleuca plantings and a reed bed, before heading up the track into the more diversely planted section in the foothills. Noticeable among the plants being nurtured in these areas were boxthorns and other

Past Excursions (cont.)

invasive species, which the owners acknowledged are challenging.

The thirty-four species seen on this walk repeated those we'd seen last time. Stating first the number seen in autumn and secondly the number seen this time we recorded: Black Kite (2-6), Whistling Kite (1-2), Peaceful Dove (10-2), Spotted Dove (2-2), Crested Pigeon (6-6), Little Corella (100-12), Galah (50-6), Rainbow Lorikeet (2-3), Adelaide Rosella (6-6), Yellow Rosella (2-2), Superb Fairywren (10-10), New Holland Honeyeater (20-2), White-plumed Honeyeater (10-20), Noisy Miner (12-10), Yellow-rumped Thornbill (6-4), Weebill (10-4), White-browed Babbler (12-6), Australian Magpie (6-6), Grey Shrike-thrush (2-1), Magpie Lark (2-6), Little Raven (20-6), Tree Martin (10-8), Welcome Swallow (10-5), Australian Reed Warbler (6-8), Common Starling (20-20), and House Sparrow (20-10). Among the water birds and waders we saw Pacific Black Duck (4-2), Australian White Ibis (14-30), Australian Pelican (2-3), Great Cormorant (1-2), Eurasian Coot (3-13), and Dusky Moorhen (2-1).

While we did not have a memorable 'perch on the shoulder' experience with a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater like our previous visit, and previous favourites such as the Brown Quail, Spotted Pardalote and Silvereye did not appear to be around, we did see, unlike in the autumn: Common Bronzewing (1), Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo (1), Australian Ringneck (1), Eastern Rosella (2), White-fronted Chat (6), Red Wattlebird (2), Buff-rumped Thornbill (6), Black-faced Cuckooshrike (1), Grey Fantail (1), Willie Wagtail (1), Little Grassbird (3), Masked Lapwing (2) and Australian Swamphen (1).

We were particularly thrilled when a Reed Warbler uncharacteristically perched atop a reed for what felt like unending minutes, allowing us to relax into ID details and fiddle with cameras for the ideal shot rather than just point and shoot.

Seated overlooking the picturesque river setting, our total spring count at Cowirra came to 47 species, which, considering our focus areas were on the off-river side of the property mainly featuring bush birds, compared rather favourably with our autumn visit when 19 of the 54 species seen then were on or near the river. Before wending our way home, we thanked Ben and his family for the opportunity to visit this property, and look forward to checking out how the bird list evolves into the future as Ben's plantings expand and mature.

Anna Woods

BIRDS SA

17 OCTOBER: BYARDS ROAD WETLAND, REYNELLA EAST

Eleven people gathered for another visit to this excellent wetland in Reynella East. The weather was pleasant and we traversed the wetland in an anticlockwise direction along the main walking trail with regular side trips along the tracks that either cross the ponds or allow access for closer views.

There were the usual waterfowl, many with young, including Eurasian Coots (30), Grey Teal (6), Wood Ducks (25) and Pacific Black Ducks (40). The juvenile Eurasian Coots showed off their reddish punk hairdos and we enjoyed the sight of quite a few ducklings — always a pleasure to behold. A White-faced Heron and an Australian Pelican stood placidly by their respective ponds while 2 Little Pied Cormorants and 2 Hoary-headed Grebes searched for food. We also saw 3 Dusky Moorhens, 1 Black-tailed Nativehen and 2 Australasian Swamphens. Among the reeds and along the edges of the ponds there were Reed Warblers (8) and a Black-fronted Dotterel.

Numerous other birds appeared during our walk including Common Bronzewing (6), Tree Martins (2), Welcome Swallows (10), Magpie Larks (10), Willy Wagtails (3), Silvereye (1), Superb Fairywrens (3), Red Wattlebirds (20) including a nest possibly with eggs, Australian Magpies (10), Crested Pigeons (15) with a nest possibly containing eggs. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos (20), Little Corella (1), Galahs (10), Adelaide Rosellas (4), Rainbow Lorikeets (30) and Little Ravens (8) were flying overhead. We also saw an Eastern Rosella on the ground down beyond the end of the ponds and further along several Musk Lorikeets (6) in some low trees. Honeyeaters present were New Holland (40), White-plumed (6), Red Wattlebirds (30) and Noisy Miners (50). Also present were several Australian Magpies (10). A birder who initially entered the area from a different direction observed 4 Tawny Frogmouths.

The only feral species seen or heard were 4 Common Blackbirds. After the walk we gathered across the road to take advantage of some shade and had lunch and did the bird call. A total of 37 species were recorded for the day.

Ali Ben Kahn

Past Excursions (cont.)

FLEURIEU BIRDERS CAMPOUT TO KANGAROO ISLAND (KI), 17 – 23 OCTOBER 2019



Fleurieu Birders at D'Estrees Bay, photographed by Joyce West

Thursday, October 17. Penneshaw to Kingscote

Several members made an early start to our campout, taking a calm crossing over Backstairs Passage to Penneshaw. A small aggregation of Australasian Gannets kept our interest during the crossing; and on arrival, we immediately drove to the adjacent Hogg Bay beach, where we saw a pair of Hooded Plovers, one sitting on its nest amongst the dunes with its sentinel foraging nearby. We then made our way to the Sheoak dominated Baudin Conservation Park, where we expected to see the Island's iconic Glossy Black Cockatoo, but alas, despite observing the tell-tale "chewings" of Sheoak cones, it wasn't to be. However, we saw Grey Currawong parents feeding a young bird, as well as male and female Scarlet Robins, Silvereyes, and numerous Superb Fairywrens. We then drove to Kingscote, visiting the bird-hide at Reeves Point Spit on the Bay of Shoals, an important high tidal shorebird roosting site. We were greeted with a large aggregation of several species of Cormorants, Pied Oystercatchers, Grey Teal, Black Swans, Greater Crested Terns and 5 Far Eastern Curlews. **Total Bird Species: 39**

Friday, October 18. Salt Lagoon, Duck Lagoon, Brownlow Beach, Reeves Point

Salt Lagoon on the Emu Bay Road was our first site for the day, where we saw a tight but sometimes flighty flock of more than 100 Banded Stilts. Australian Shelducks were loafing on the distant shore of the lagoon. The nearby Duck Lagoon, part of the Cygnet River, was our next destination. Here, we saw water birds, including Grey and Chestnut Teal, Australasian Shovelers, Black Swans, and

Hoary-headed Grebes, as well as Crimson Rosellas, White-naped Honeyeaters and Grey Fantails. A highlight was the sighting of a Restless Flycatcher. Returning to our campsite at Kingscote, newly arrived members joined us, and we then took a stroll along the bush and beach walking tracks at Brownlow Beach. Crescent Honeyeaters, Grey Fantails, Silvereyes and Striated Pardalotes were heard, with Little Pied and Pied Cormorants seen at the beach. In the late afternoon, the newly arrived members then visited the Reeves Point Bird hide where, in addition to the birds seen on the previous evening, we observed White-faced Herons, Great and Little Egrets as well as Red-browed Finches foraging amongst the grass. At night, we heard Bush Stone-curlews. **Total Bird Species: 55.**

Saturday, October 19. Murray Lagoon, D'Estrees Bay

From our base at Kingscote, we drove to the Curley Creek walking trail, adjacent to Murray Lagoon, the largest expanse of inland water on Kangaroo Island. Due to poorer than average winter rains, the lower water level in the lagoon meant that we had to detour off the walking track to observe the water birds and migratory waders. Many Cape Barren Geese, Grey and Chestnut Teal and Pacific Black Ducks, Eurasian Coots, Black Swans with cygnets and Red-capped Plovers were seen, as well as migratory Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints. Back on the bush-lined walk, we saw Grey Fantails, Striated Pardalotes and in the more open areas, male and female White-fronted Chats.

Past Excursions (cont.)

We lunched at the start of the Timber Creek walk, where a mother and young Koala entertained us. On the drive to D'Estrees Bay, we saw a wheeling and diving flock of Whiskered Terns feeding on flying insects above farmland. Despite a westerly gale, the several eastward-facing embayments provided us with sheltered views of migratory and resident shorebirds, including Ruddy Turnstones, Red-necked Stints, pairs of Pied Oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers. Parents that were feeding a very young bird occupied the Osprey nest at Point Tinline. Also, we were excited to see a White-bellied Sea Eagle carrying a recently preyed-upon bird in its talons. Returning to Kingscote, we saw Brush and Common Bronzewing. **Total Bird Species: 48.**

Sunday, October 20. Nepean Bay, American River, Pelican Lagoon, Island Beach, Pennington Bay.

By Sunday the weather had started to improve, providing calmer and sunnier conditions. We drove from Kingscote along the Min-Oil Rd, stopping to watch a large flock of Australian Shelducks in a recently mown hayfield. We sighted several pairs of Pied Oystercatchers on the adjacent beach at Nepean Bay. Arriving at the American River township, we craned our necks to see 4 Nankeen Night Herons, well camouflaged and high up in the pine trees adjacent to the Fire Station. The Glossy Black Cockatoos still eluded us at the Cannery walking trail; however, this was compensated by the marvelous sighting of a pair of adult White-bellied Sea Eagles majestically soaring above our heads. We lunched at the Independence Point Lookout on Pelican Lagoon, where families of Musk Ducks and Hoary-headed Grebes kept us entertained. In the afternoon, we drove to the eastern side of Pelican Lagoon to Strawbridge Point. Two local shorebird-monitoring volunteers, Dave Potter and Jean Turner joined us. They enthusiastically discussed their ongoing studies on Pied Oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers on Island Beach. They showed us a pair of Pied Oystercatchers and accompanying chick that was being fed by its parents. The monitors are collecting data on the breeding success of Pied Oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers as part of a larger monitoring program throughout South-Eastern Australia, managed by the Beach-nesting Team at Birdlife Australia. Finally, we visited Pennington Bay, walking through low heath vegetation near the coast. We managed to disturb Brush Bronze-wings and New Holland Honeyeaters, but apart from these, the birdlife was very quiet. **Total Bird Species: 45.**



**Crimson Rosella
at Duck Lagoon KI
(Photo: Ann Houghton)**

Monday, October 21. Duck Lagoon, Stokes Bay Bush Garden, Becky's Lagoon.

Our visit to the eastern part of Kangaroo Island had now drawn to an end, and today, most of us drove westwards to Flinders Chase. Initially, we returned to Duck Lagoon to show newly arrived members the site. Most of the birds seen on our first visit were re-sighted, and we were again pleased to see the family of Australian Shelducks, with five fluffy chicks. We then quickly stopped near the Kingscote Airport to inspect Glossy Black Cockatoo nesting boxes; still no evidence of birds, so we drove on to the Stokes Bay Bush Garden, near the north coast of the island. This is a privately owned garden, where many native Australian plants, including endemic Kangaroo Island ones have been established over the past 30 years. New Holland Honeyeaters were the dominant birds; however we also observed Brown-headed and Crescent Honeyeaters, Scarlet Robins, Golden Whistlers and Purple-crowned and Rainbow Lorikeets. The highlight was sighting of Beautiful Firetail. We lunched on the coast at Stokes Bay and then headed to the south-western end of the Island. A brief stop at Kelly Hill Conservation Park was rewarded by a sighting of Eastern Spinebills. For the

Past Excursions (cont.)

next 2 nights most of us stayed at Western KI Caravan Park (WKICP), while another group stayed at Karatta, and another at Vivonne Bay. At Karatta, Crescent Honeyeaters, White-browed Scrubwrens and Brown Thornbills were attracted to a birdbath. At WKICP, the walk around Becky's Lagoon was rewarding, with sightings of many water birds, including Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Dusky Moorhens, Cape Barren Geese, Musk Ducks and Black Swans. Black-faced Cuckoo Shrikes, Crimson Rosellas, Australian Ravens and a "gobbling" flock of domesticated turkeys were also noted. **Total Bird Species; 59**

Tuesday, October 22. Flinders Chase. Cape du Couedic, Rocky River.

Weather-wise, this turned out to be the calmest and warmest day of our campout. After meeting at the Flinders Chase National Park Information Centre, we drove to the Cape du Couedic Lighthouse. With clear conditions, we were able to see Cape Barren Geese grazing on the nearby Casuarina Islets, as well as adult Pacific Gulls. Caspian, Greater Crested Terns and a solitary Fairy Tern were seen flying near Admiral's Arch. We then drove to Weir Cove, where Tree Martins and Welcome Swallows were flying along the edge of the cliffs. Down below, on the rock platforms, a colony of mostly young Long-nosed Fur Seals frolicked in the rock pools. Amongst the low shrubs, Purple-gaped Honeyeaters were heard, and Silvereyes were seen. We returned to the Rocky River Camping Ground where we lunched before taking the short Woodland Walking Trail at Rocky River. Eastern Spinebills, Striated Pardalotes and a Rosenberg's Goanna were the main sightings on this trail. We celebrated the completion of the warm day, with ice creams at

the Visitors Information Centre. This also completed



Glossy Black Cockatoos at Baudin Conservation Park KI (Photo: Katherine Moore)

the end of the campout, and over the next few days, members made their way back to the mainland.

Total Bird Species: 31.

Before making the ferry crossing at Penneshaw, several groups stopped off at the Baudin Conservation Park and were rewarded by seeing a number of both male and female Glossy Black Cockatoos. Some were resting amongst the Blue Gums, while others were chewing on the Sheoak cones. So many members had achieved their aim of the campout, which was to see this iconic and endangered bird species. Finally, Fleurieu Birders would like to thank local KI birders, Dave Potter and Jean Turner for sharing their local knowledge of the birds. **Total Bird Species for the Campout: 106.**

Keith Jones



Flock of Whiskered Terns, foraging for flying insects over farmland Saegers Rd, near Murray Lagoon. (Photo: Katherine Moore)

Past Excursions (cont.)

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS) 19 OCTOBER:

WHYALLA EFFLUENT PONDS

On a pleasant day with a slight breeze and some distant clouds building three birders met at the Whyalla wetlands car park, one each from Whyalla, Pt. Augusta and Mambray Creek. After waiting for a short while for any others to join us we drove off to the Whyalla effluent ponds. We had a key to open the gate from SA Water who kindly gave us permission to go birding around the ponds system. As we entered the site the first stop was next to a salt lake containing an island that was covered with birds. These included hundreds of Pink-eared Ducks and many Grey Teal, plus some Silver Gulls, Red-capped Plovers, Hardheads, Red-necked Avocets, Masked Lapwings, Caspian and Terns. Around the shore of the lake we found Common Greenshanks, Wood Sandpipers, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints, Black-winged Stilts and on the water Black Swans, Hoary-headed Grebes, Coots and a Musk Duck. On the land around us were samphire and Nitre Bush which were home to White-winged Fairywrens, White-fronted Chats, Silvereyes, Little Grassbirds and Black-tailed Nativehens. We drove on along a track that skirted the lake and entered the treatment ponds area. We stopped where we could see over the pond system as well as the salt lake. There were more Little Grassbirds in the Nitre Bush, as well as Australian Spotted Crakes, Variegated Fairywrens and on the lake shore there was a Red-kneed Dotterel. Over the ponds a flock of Whiskered Terns and Silver Gulls were feeding on insects and anything they could find in the water. Australian Ravens, Crested Pigeons, Starlings and Welcome Swallows were also flying past. Pelicans, Sharp-



**Baillon's Crake Photographed by Bernie Haase
at Whyalla Effluent Ponds on 19/10/2019**

tailed Sandpipers, Greenshanks, a Great Cormorant, a Freckled Duck, Black Ducks, a hundred Hoary-headed Grebes and more of the previously mentioned birds were moving about in the ponds. We drove on to the other side of the pond system and walked into the centre of the ponds to gain a better look at the Whiskered Terns. We disturbed an Elegant Parrot out of the vegetation that lined the ponds and also saw more Little Grassbirds. Chestnut Teal, White-faced Herons and Purple Swampheens were added to the bird list. Driving on to where an outlet channel flows out of the area we found more Wood Sandpipers, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Australasian Pipits and best of all a Baillon's Crake. A single Little Black Cormorant, a Swamp Harrier and a Magpie as well as some Tree Martins and Magpie Larks flew overhead. It was past our lunchtime so we headed out and went back to the Whyalla wetlands for lunch. We saw a total of 47 bird species at the effluent ponds.

WHYALLA WETLANDS

After we had enjoyed our lunch we walked around the wetlands paths with the wind blowing and storm clouds building overhead. In the trees and shrubs around the first ponds were Red Wattlebirds, New Holland Honeyeaters and Magpies, while on the low level water there were Chestnut Teal, Hoary-headed Grebes and Grey Teal. The pond shores contained Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Black-winged Stilts, Red-necked Avocets, Red-kneed Dotterels, a Common Sandpiper and Masked Lapwings and in the air were Whiskered Terns, Silver Gulls, Welcome Swallows and some passing Galahs. As we moved around the path system the cold wind was picking up and the clouds were getting darker. Crested Pigeons, Magpie Larks, Rock Doves, Starlings and Fairy Martins flew past as we came to the pond containing the freshest water in it but its level was very low. Black Ducks, Coots, Black-tailed Native Hens,



**Little Grassbird photographed by Bernie Haase
at Whyalla Effluent Ponds on 19/10/2019**

Past Excursions (cont.)

Hardheads, Little Black Cormorants, Purple Swamphens, Dusky Moorhens, White-faced Herons and domestic ducks and geese were on the pond, while Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, White-winged Fairywrens, Australian Ravens and House Sparrows were in the surrounding gardens. It was threatening to rain so we headed back to the car park passing another pond where Spotted Crake and Black Swans lengthened our bird list. 37 bird species were found at the wetlands. A total of 57 species were seen on the day, including the domestic ducks and geese. The birds of the day would have to be the Baillon's Crake and Freckled Duck, with the Swamp Harrier and Dusky Moorhens being on the edge of their usual range.

B. Haase

BIRDS SA

26 OCTOBER: ANACOTILLA SPRINGS, SECOND VALLEY

Six members attended this walk on a pleasant day for birding. The property has an exposed hill at the start of the walk and the wind was quite strong until we descended into the Anacotilla creek with its large gum trees. Along the way we saw Eurasian Skylark (6), Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (4), Little Corella (3), and local Wedge tailed Eagle (3) soaring overhead. At the weir dam we saw five Pacific Black duck with 5 young, Little Black Cormorant and an Australian



White-headed Stilt

photographed by Bob Daly on November 2 2019
at Stan Farquar Reserve

White Ibis. At other locations along the Anacotilla creek the main species we saw included 2 Laughing Kookaburra, 20 Galah, 20 Crimson Rosella, 8 Rainbow Lorikeet, 20 Superb Fairywren, 3 Yellow faced Honeyeater, 12 New Holland Honeyeater, 3 Red Wattlebird, 4 Striated Pardalote, 2 White Browed Scrubwren, 3 Yellow-rumped Thornbill, 15 Australian Magpie, 8 Black-faced Cuckooshrike, 6 Grey Shrikethrush, 10 Grey Fantail, 30 Little Raven, 10 Welcome Swallow, 6 Tree Martin, 30 Common Starling, 20 House Sparrow and 4 European Goldfinch.

It was a pleasure to have the owners Pamela and Rob guiding us around their property and also joining us for lunch and the birdcall. We enjoyed a great day and recorded a total of 30 species.

Lynton Huxley

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

2 NOVEMBER: STAN FARQUAR AND NANGAWOOKA RESERVE, VICTOR HARBOR

It was an overcast and cool morning when 11 bird enthusiasts met at the Stan Farquar Reserve for a walk and bird watch. Our route took us around the northern side of the ponds as far as Ocean Road to the east, before turning back along the southern side of the water.

The ponds were full so the usual feeding areas for crakes were covered and we were not fortunate enough to see any. Although there were not large numbers of waterbirds, the species list was good. We suspected that a pair of stilts had a nest amongst the reeds as they became quite agitated by our presence. In all 42 species were sighted, a mixture of water residents and bush birds which were happy with the amount of flowering eucalypts.

Our second walk was through the Nangawooka native plant park. It was hard not to get distracted by the plants, most of which have survived the harsh summer and winter conditions of 2019. Of the 25 bird species, at least three were breeding. This included a Little Raven on its nest, a Magpie Lark feeding young in its mud nest and a late starting Brown-headed Honeyeater collecting paperbark for nest building.

It was a most successful day with plenty of bird activity and perfect weather.

Pat Uphill

BIRDS SA

3 NOVEMBER: BUSHLAND PARK, LOBETHAL

Two local members, Rose and James, spoiled us by sharing the duties involved in leading our 11 members on this walk. The chosen tracks enabled us to traverse the varied habitat of this park.

Highlight species on and around the lakes included one Pacific Black Duck with 5 young, six Eurasian Coot with one young, Australian White Ibis (4), one each of White-faced Heron, Little Pied

Past Excursions (cont.)

Cormorant and Australasian Darter. The stringy bark woodland species included Shining Bronze Cuckoo, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra (3), Galah (6) and Little Corella (6). We also enjoyed great views of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (6) and a Sacred Kingfisher. Superb Fairywren (40), Crescent Honeyeater (20), New Holland Honeyeater (15), Grey Fantail (20), Striated Thornbill (12) including a young bird on the nest being feed, were the species predominately recorded. Some other species seen included Red-browed Finch, Scarlet Robin (2), and White-throated Treecreeper (6).

Thanks to Rose and James, our walk enabled us to record an overall count of 47 species.

Lynton Huxley



Crimson Chat, photographed by Gordon Pateman at Kinchla CP (Previously Rocky Gully) on 18/9/2019

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS) 17 NOVEMBER: QUORN AREA

The morning was quite cool and clear when eight birders gathered at the Quorn pool. While we were greeting each other, large flocks of Galahs and Little Corellas were flying about and feeding on the ground around us. One of our group members from Quorn was going to lead us and it was decided to have a look at the Richman Valley area because they had some received rain earlier in the year and had even harvested their crops. We drove along the Richman Valley Road finding flocks of Australian and Little Ravens feeding with Australian Magpies in the paddocks. A family of Wood Ducks as living in a small dam containing a little water and a flock of Apostlebirds entertained us for a while. Near the end of the road we turned into a track which led to a private camping area and found more Apostlebirds as well as Red-rumped Parrots, Yellow-throated Miners, Spiny-cheeked and White-plumed Honeyeaters, Crested Pigeons, Peaceful Doves,

White-browed Babblers, Willie Wagtails, Magpie Larks, Weebills, Masked Woodswallows, a Kookaburra, a Brown Treecreeper and some very vocal Rufous Whistlers and Grey Shrikethrushes. Jacky Winters were feeding their fledglings and a Brown Falcon glided past. We enjoyed a relaxing smoko, then drove to the dry Waukarie Falls and added a Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Kestrels, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Black-faced Cuckooshrike, Red-capped Robin and Australasian Pipits enroute. At the Falls Grey Butcherbirds were feeding young while a Striated Pardalote, Red Wattlebirds and Flinders Rosellas moved about in the trees. We drove back along the valley road and turned off to pass over the Richman Range, through the Richman Gap track and joined the Gunyah road. Birds were scarce with only Singing Honeyeaters and Mallee Ringnecks seen. Along the Gunyah road Australasian Pipits and Australian Magpies were in the paddocks. Our next stop was at the Quorn wastewater ponds and we found White-winged Fairy-wrens, Chirruping Wedgebills, Sparrows and Zebra Finches in the bushes around the ponds while Welcome Swallows and a Tree Martin flew around us. On and around the pond banks we found Pink-eared, Black, Hardhead and Wood Ducks, Grey Teal, Hoary-headed and Australian Grebes, Coots, Masked Lapwings, Black-tailed Nativehens, Black-fronted Dotterels, Magpie Larks and a White-fronted Chat. This was not a bad list of birds for a small pond area. Our next stop was at the Powell Gardens in Quorn for a late lunch and some more birding.

During our lunch Red Wattlebirds and Australian Magpies were feeding their fledglings in the trees around us. We then walked through the gardens where some of the trees were flowering and had attracted White-plumed, Spiny-cheeked, Singing and White-fronted Honeyeaters and Rainbow Lorikeets. Other birds we found in the garden were Apostlebirds, Willie Wagtails, House Sparrows, Purple-backed Fairywrens, Crested Pigeons, Magpie Larks, Blackbirds, Black-faced Woodswallows and Rock Doves. A Red Gum-lined creek borders the garden area and was home to many Galahs with young, as well as Crimson Rosellas with young, Mallee Ringnecks and Red-rumped Parrots. A total of 54 bird species was found for the day and the birds of the day would be the Rainbow Lorikeets, Chirruping Wedgebills and Brown Treecreeper because they are on the edge of their range, as are the entertaining Apostlebirds.

B. Haase

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 the scribe may be shared on the day.

Reports should not exceed 500 words in length.

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 for 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](mailto:Bernie_Haase@telstra.com), 0419863834, b.haase@telstra.com

BIRDS SA
Sunday 1 December: Thompson Beach (Easy) (AP) 61km.

This excursion will commence at 8.00am (the high tide of approx. 2.59m is at 7.05am).

Travel north on the Port Wakefield Road to the Thompson Beach turnoff, on your left as you reach Dublin. Follow this road for about 10km and meet by the toilet facilities at Thompson Beach.

TRIP LEADER: Brian Walker

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

Saturday 7 December, Laratinga Wetlands, Mt Barker

Meet at **4pm** at the main car park Bald Hills Rd., Mt Barker

Note: After walk there will be a picnic tea.

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS)

Sunday 8 December, Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens

Meet at the car park at 7.30am,

Note: Christmas Lunch in Cafe and showing of the year's best birding photos!

TRIP LEADER: Bernie Haase

BIRDS SA

Saturday 14 December: Myponga Reservoir Reserve (Easy) (MLR) 60km. Meet at 8.30am in the carpark off Hansen Street, Myponga (the Myponga Memorial Hall and public toilets are on this corner). The Myponga Reservoir Reserve is near the township of Myponga on the Fleurieu Peninsula about one hours drive south of Adelaide via Main South Road.

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

BIRDS SA

Thursday 19 December: Kaiser Stuhl CP (Moderate) (MLR) 60km.

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

TRIP LEADER: Rod Tetlow

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

Saturday 4 January: Clayton Bay (Moderate)

Meet at 8am at Sails Cafe

BIRDS SA

Saturday 11 January: Onkaparinga Wetlands (Easy) (MLR) 32km

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

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

Future Excursions (cont.)

BIRDS SA

Thursday 16 January: Thompson Beach (Easy) (AP) 61km

This excursion will commence at 8.00am to coincide with the high tide. Travel north on the Port Wakefield Road to the Thompson Beach turnoff, which is on your left as you reach Dublin. Follow this road for about 10km to its end and meet at the toilet facilities at Thompson Beach. It is planned to move to Dublin for the birdcall and lunch where there is more shelter/shade.

TRIP LEADER: Brian Walker

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS)

Sunday 19 January: Baroota Reservoir

Meet at 8.00am at Mambray Creek parking bay.

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

Saturday 1 February: Goowa Barrage and Beacon 19 (Easy)

Meet at 8.30 in the car park of the Aquatic Centre, Barrage Rd.

BIRDS SA

Sunday 2 February: Paiwalla Wetlands (Easy) (MM) 90km.

Meet at the Sunnyside Lookout at 8.30am. Take the Murray Bridge to Mannum Road on the eastern side of the river from Murray Bridge. Stay on this road until just past the turnoff to Bowhill on the right. Take the next turning left to Sunnyside Lookout car park.

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

BIRDS SA

Saturday 8 February: Whites Road Wetlands (Easy) (AP) 16km

Meet at 8.30am. Drive 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

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS)

Sunday 9 February: Weroona Island and Port Pirie Wetland

Meet at 7.30 at W.I. Highway turn-off.

BIRDS SA

Thursday 20 February: Sandy Creek CP: (Medium) (MLR) 52km

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: to be advised

BIRDS SA

Sunday 1 March: Riverglades Wetlands Murray Bridge (Easy) (MM) 80km

Meet at 8.30am in the boat ramp car park at Avoca Dell. Drive to Murray Bridge town. 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 car park ahead.

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

FLEURIEU BIRDERS

Saturday 7 March: Lawari C.P and revegetated areas on private properties (easy)

Meet at 8.30 at Ferryman's Reserve.

BIRDS SA

Saturday 14 March: Tolderol Game Reserve, Lake Alexandrina (Easy) (LA) 85km

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 and turn left on reaching the T-junction. Leave gates as you find them please.

TRIP LEADER: Miles Ramm

PORT AUGUSTA BIRD GROUP (THE BABBLERS)

Sunday 15 March: Wirrabara Forest and Block 9 Road

Meet at 8.30am at Wirrabara Pub

BIRDS SA

Thursday 19 March: Altona CSR Landcare Reserve (Medium) (MLR) 55km

Meet at 8.30am. The Reserve is off Altona Road and only 2km NE of Lyndoch. Parking is available at the entrance gate.

TRIP LEADER: Ali Ben Kahn

BIRDS SA

Sunday 29 March: Glenthorne National Park (Medium) (AP) 17km.

Meet at 8.30am at the Ranger Station on Major's Road, O'Halloran Hill. This is on the south side of Majors Road, between Main South Road and the Southern Expressway. The property is 3km long from north to south and up to 2.5 km wide, so it will be a long walk if we include the full property.

TRIP LEADER Alan Burns

BIRDS SA

Easter Campout 9 to 14 April: Cantara Homestead, Coorong National Park (Easy)

Advance notice for your 2020 diary – The homestead has a kitchen, a bathroom and drop toilets plus heaps of tent and caravan places. Limited bunk accommodation is also available. Further details will be provided in the New Year but if you would like more information, please contact me lyntonhuxley@gmail.com or 0498466092.

TRIP LEADER: Lynton Huxley

Bird Records

Collated by Graham Carpenter

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

Please send all reports to the Bird Records Secretary at birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au or phone 8297 5463. Note that the list includes reports of rare or vagrant species to South Australia that may yet to have been submitted or formally accepted by the Birds SA Rarities Committee (SARC). Members are encouraged to submit records of rare and vagrant species in SA to the Committee (refer to list of species and information on the Birds SA website).

Freckled Duck

40, 26/8/2019. Port Elliott sewage works, MLR.
Syson, W.

Northern Rockhopper Penguin

1 immature, 16/7/2019. Port MacDonnell, Umpherstone Bay, SE. Sheltering on track in coastal dunes.
New, D. & Campbell, R. & J.

Buller's Albatross

1, 25/8/2019. Sea off Port MacDonnell, MO.
Rogers, C. *et al.*

Kerguelen Petrel

1, 12/8/2019. Middleton Beach, MM. Found exhausted, taken for rehabilitation.

per Rogers, C.

Normally associated with the deep oceans, this species is known for its 'wrecks' when groups of birds become stranded and exhausted along the coast. This occurred in SA in Sept 1973 (Gulf St Vincent), Aug-Sept 1981 (Coorong ocean beach, Coffin Bay, Gulf St Vincent), with only isolated rare reports of beach-washed birds since.

Blue Petrel

1, 25/8/2019. Sea off Port MacDonnell, MO.
Rogers, C.

Australasian Darter

1, 20/9/2019. Cheltenham, St Clair wetlands, AP.
Blaylock, B.

Nankeen Night Heron

1 juvenile, 9/9/2019. Tranmere, Gum Reserve, AP.
Anon.
1 juvenile, 27/9/2019. Myponga, Blockers Rd, MLR.
Jack, T.

1 juvenile, 29/9/2019. Hindmarsh River, Victor Harbor, MLR.
Steeles, C.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill

1, 24/8/2019. Saint Kilda, AP. On tidal flats with 134 Royal Spoonbills.
Merchant, M.

Royal Spoonbill

1, 25/9/2019. Salisbury Wetlands, AP.
Harding, F.

White-bellied Sea Eagle

1, 26/7/2019. Coorong, Lake Cantara South, SE.
Green, B.
1, 23/9/2019. Bool Lagoon, SE.
Syson, W.

Square-tailed Kite

1, 1/9/2019. Williamstown, Coppermine Rd, MLR.
Pearce, A.
2, 5/9/2019. Belair NP, MLR.
Fluin, J.

Australian Bustard

1, 15/8/2019. Tolderol, Dog Lake Rd, MM.
Fennel, J.
1, 15/9/2019. Salter's Springs, MLR.
Taylor, P.W.
1, 21/9/2019 Salter's Springs, MLR.
Smyth, J.

Lesser Sand Plover

1, 22/6/2019. Port MacDonnell, French Point, SE
Campbell, J. & S.
1, 29/8/2019. Bald Hill Beach, AP.
Taylor, P.W.

Hooded Plover

Nest + 3eggs, 23/8/2019. Seacliff, MLR.
van-Trigt, M.-A.

Long-toed Stint

1, 29/8/2019. Tolderol GR, MM.
Rogers, C.

Gull-billed Tern

1 *affinis*, 29/9/2019. Bald Hill Beach, AP.
Taylor, P.W.
*It has been proposed that the Gull-billed Terns be split into separate species, the Australian Gull-billed Tern *Geochelidon macrotarsa* and the Common Gull-billed Tern *G. nilotica*. The latter is a migratory species that occurs throughout much of the world, with the Asian subspecies *G. n. affinis* occurring as a non-breeding summer visitor to Australia.*

Bird Records (cont.)

Tawny Frogmouth

Pair + 4 juveniles, 27/9/2019. Athelstone, Torrens Linear Park, MLR.

Cellier, G.

Fork-tailed Swift

First reports for the season:

20, 5/10/2019. Saint Kilda, AP.

8, 5/10/2019. Thompson Beach, AP.

Gordon, S.

van-Trigt, M.-A.

Little Lorikeet

2, 12/8/2019. Balhannah, Grasby Park, MLR. In flowering ornamental gums with other lorikeets.

Foster, R.

Few reports from the Adelaide region in recent years.

Blue-winged Parrot

1, 4/10/2019. Kinchina CP, MM.

Pawelski, G. *et al.*

Eastern Koel

1 calling, 30/8/2019. Milang, MM. Still present 7/9 Selker, C.

First report away from the Adelaide suburbs.

1 male, 28/9/2019. Prospect, AP.

Christy, P.

Red-backed Kingfisher

1, 5/10/2019. Roseworthy, Pengilly Scrub, AP.

Tracey, K.

Pied Honeyeater

1 female, 27/9/2019. Gluepot Reserve, MM.

Brooker, W.

1 male, 30/9/2019. Para Wirra NP, MLR.

Halliday, M.

White-fronted Honeyeater

1, 1/10/2019. Near Balaklava, AP. Feeding on flowers of roadside *Eremophila longifolia*.

Taylor, P.W.

Crimson Chat

September has seen an influx into southern regions, which has not occurred on this scale since spring 1983 and previously in 1968.

1, 14/8/2019. Tolderol GR, MM.

Rogers, C. *et al.*

Also 2 on 14/9/2019. Birds SA.

3, 10/9/2019. 5km E Port Wakefield, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

1, 18/9/2019. Kinchina CP, MM.

Pateman, G.

Subsequently seen by numerous observers, including:

10, 27/9/2019. Kinchina CP, MM.

Williams, R.

8, 15/9/2019. Hoyleton, MN.

Milde, S.

Several, 20/9/2019, Near Balaklava, AP. Observed with nesting material.

Taylor, P.W.

Several, 25/9/2019. Whyte Yarcowie, MN.

Barnes, N.

2+, 15/9/2019. Rockleigh, MLR.

Yeend, R.

Also 3 on 25/9/2019.

Modbury, U3A

2, 16/9/2019. Pinkerton Plains, Light River, AP.

Milde, S.

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater

Additional reports from the northern MLR.

4, 16/8/2019. Hale CP, MLR.

Merchant, M.

2, 5/9/2019. Para Wirra NP, MLR.

Gordon, S.

Black-chinned Honeyeater

1, 21/9/2019. Happy Valley, MLR.

Matthews, S.

Formerly bred in the southern suburbs but few recent records.

Little Friarbird

1, 23/9/2019. Gluepot Reserve, Old Gluepot Hide, MM.

Edwards, N.

Normally associated with Red Gum and box woodlands along the Murray River, but occasionally seen further afield.

Common Myna

1, 12/8/2019. Adelaide, Elder Park, AP. Reported to Biosecurity SA.

Anon.

Crested Shriketit

1, 23/9/2019. Goolwa South, Beach Rd. MM

Simon, B.

Dusky Woodswallow

12, 3/9/2019. Frewville, AP.

Fahey-Sparks, S.

Bird Records (cont.)

White-winged Triller

Widespread reports from southern regions, including:

- 5, 17/8/2019. Eudunda, MN. Bradbrook, R.
 5, 17/8/2019. Roseworthy, AP. Rodda, B.
 1, 25/8/2019. Macs Beach, YP. Tiller, K.
 2, 1/9/2019. Rockleigh, MLR. Bansemer, P. & B.
 Several, 5/9/2019. Para Wirra NP, MLR. Gordon, S.
 2, 24/9/2019. Klemzig, Swan Ave, AP. Buckley, K.
 2, 25/9/2019. Finniss, MM. Patterson, D.
 30, 25/9/2019. Rockleigh, MLR. Modbury, U3A.
 1, 28/9/2019. West Richmond, AP. Hall, R.
 Several, 30/9/2019. Para Wirra NP, MLR. Halliday, M.
 6, 5/10/2019. Kalangadoo, SE. Winser, P.
 35-37, October 2019, Southern Suburbs Ringlind, B

Masked and White-browed Woodswallows

20+, 26/9/2019. Belair NP, Melville Track, MLR. High overhead.

- 100s, 30/9/2019. Para Wirra NP, MLR. Smith, G.
 Halliday, M.

Restless Flycatcher

1, 8/8/2019. Athelstone, Wadmore Park, MLR. Video footage taken.

- Lawrence, R.
Few reports from near Adelaide in recent years (see also report in last Magazine).

White-winged Chough

- 4 + nest, 1/9/2019. Rockleigh, MLR. Bansemer, P. & B.

Apostlebird

3, 11/8/2019. Redhill, LN. In Aleppo Pines at petrol station.

- Carpenter, G.

Jacky Winter

- 1, 30/9/2019. Para Wirra NP, MLR. Halliday, M.
 Pair + nest, 3/10/2019. Near Balaklava, AP. In Native Pine. Taylor, P.W.

Diamond Firetail

12, 23/8/2019. Sandy Creek, Gawler Golf Course, MLR.

- 2, 30/8/2019. Cox Scrub CP, MLR. Huntley, T.
 Field, G.

Zebra Finch

- 2, 28/9/2019. Kinchina CP, MM. Hall, T.

Also seen on 1/10/2019 B. Rodda.
Formerly common along the lower part of the Murray River but few reports in recent years.



Squatter Pigeon
 photographed by Peter Mckenzie at
 Cumberland Dam, Qld on 26/7/2019

SAOA Historical Series No 70

The SAOA Silver Challenge Cup

by Philippa Horton

The Cup Rediscovered after 80 years

Penny Paton's (2019) Historical Series article on Alfred George Edquist (1873-1966) in *The Birder* of Autumn 2019 provided details about Edquist's involvement with the School Bird Protection Clubs, inaugurated in 1910. Clubs could participate annually in a competition with birds and plants as the theme, and members of the SA Ornithological Association provided a cup for the school of the first-prize winners (Photo 4 in Paton 2019). The last reference to the competition that Penny could find was in January 1937, and she noted that the current location of the cup was unknown; in effect, the cup was lost.

In May 2019, during sorting and reorganisation of artefacts at the SA Museum's off-site store at Netley, a box containing a trophy cup was brought to the Museum's Archives section in town. Lea Gardam, Archives Collection Manager, contacted me, and I was astonished to see that it was the very cup as shown in Penny's article. A printed card inside the box had on its reverse side a handwritten note: "This cup has been deposited in the Museum (for care) by the S.A. Ornith. Association". The card is undated but the printing style is old, probably from the 1920s or 30s. The Museum has fulfilled its duties, after a fashion, in caring for the cup but, in my 34½ years working in the Bird Section in town, I was unaware of its existence.

Bird Protection Clubs & the Gould League

Realising the value of Arbor Day in schools, when many trees and shrubs were planted, the Australasian Ornithologists' Union encouraged education authorities in Victoria to establish a Bird Day. Accordingly, the first Bird Day was held in all schools throughout Victoria in October 1909. At the same time, the establishment of the "Gould League of Bird-Lovers" was proposed and approved (Wilson 1910). South Australians made simultaneous plans, following an international movement to protect the world's birds, and in 1910 the first Bird Protection Clubs were set up in public schools across SA (Edquist 1910, 1922). At the March 1911 meeting of the South Australian Ornithological Association

(SAOA) Edquist spoke about forming the clubs into a league, to be known as the "Gould League for the Protection of Birds" (*The Advertiser* 6 March 1911: 8). The Victorian League rules were considered "far too drastic" and changes were proposed for the SA branch, whose executive members were all members of the SAOA (Truran 2000). Edquist also announced that Arbor Day would become Bird and Arbor Day in SA; it was also known variously as Bird and Tree Day or Tree and Bird Day. Arbor Day had first been held in SA in June 1889 (*SA Register* 20 June 1889: 4).

Gould League members were able to purchase certificates (Photo 3 in Paton 2019), initially costing one penny, then twopence from 1921. The number of clubs and members grew steadily; some figures are given in Table 1 and it is remarkable to see how many clubs and therefore public schools there were in SA: more than 600 by 1936. According to the Australian Schools Directory there are currently 785 schools in SA, both public and private combined (www.australianschoolsdirectory.com.au), reflecting a much smaller number of much larger schools per head of population.

Table 1. Numbers of school Bird Protection Clubs in SA in various years, with overall numbers of members for some of those years. Information sourced from *The Education Gazette*.

Year	No. of Clubs	No. of members
1911	179	5,150
1912	285	8,250
1913	322	Nearly 10,000
1917	429	14,000
1918	448	
1919	471	> 25,000
1920	481	Nearly 30,000
1921	489	
1922	497	
1924	512	
1926	535	30,000
1927	539	
1934	588	
1936	>600	

The Competition

The SA Education Department's monthly publication *The Education Gazette* provides information on the schools' competition established in 1911 by Edquist. He believed that an annual competition would help to sustain the enthusiasm displayed by young bird observers since the inauguration of the school Bird Protection Clubs. The competition was open to members of school clubs that were affiliated with the Gould League. Initially there was no age limit but from 1913 the competition was restricted to children attending primary schools. In 1937 an additional senior competition was conducted for the first and only time.

From 1911 to 1923 teams of six children from each school club competed, then from 1924 onwards any club members could compete individually. The competition was held in May (1911-1915), April (1916-1928, 1931), March (1929-1930), September (1932-1939), or November (1940). Each competitor selected one species of wild bird and one kind of tree found in their district, to study during the year, and during the month of competition wrote an essay on each at school, with two hours allowed per essay. The school teacher selected the best pair of essays to submit to Edquist, in his position as secretary of the Gould League, with both essays being the work of the same child; essays from each school were then judged. In 1918 the essays were replaced by drawings, and in 1919 by poems, again one on a bird and one on a tree, but for the next 10 years the competition reverted to essays.

As the years passed it appears that the judges became concerned about the nature of the competition. In 1926 they questioned the amount of real observation, noting that most of the information could have been absorbed without personal observation, and in 1928 they emphasised that accurate personal observation was most desired. Unlike today when we find sketches of birds helpful in identification, the judges were focused on literary competence, stating that "sketches and attempts at artistic representation do not help materially" (*The Education Gazette* V.44 No.504, 14 July 1928: 223). Improvements were made in 1930 when the competition was changed to submission of notebooks of observations written during the year, half on native birds of the school district and the other half on trees of the neighbourhood. The observations could be on any aspect of the bird and tree's biology such as feeding habits, nesting notes, or flowering times. Marks were awarded for originality and accuracy of observations, number and thought content of observations, dating of observations, and correct naming of birds and trees.

An indication of the proportion of Bird Protection Clubs (and therefore schools) participating in the competition is given by a report of 216 entries in the 1917 competition (*The Observer* 11 August 1917: 29), and as these were teams of six from each school, they represent 36 clubs in a year when there were 429 in the state. In 1922 there were 78 entries, representing 13 clubs (*The Register* 21 July 1922: 9), when there were 497 clubs overall (Table 1). It seems likely that in other years the proportion of clubs competing was similarly low, possibly dependent on the circumstances and enthusiasm of the teachers.

Judges were selected by the committee of the Gould League and included William John Sowden (a journalist, knighted in 1918) and SAOA founding member Edwin Ashby, both judging at least for the 1920-1929 competitions; a note in *The Education Gazette* of 1921 indicated that the former judged literary aspects while the latter judged knowledge of natural history (*The Education Gazette* V.37 No. 419, 15 June 1921: 127). Capt. S. A. White, also an SAOA founding member, was a judge at least for the 1916 competition.

In 1928 a photographic competition was introduced for any member of a school Bird Protection Club, although from 1937 competitors were restricted to 14 years and under. The judge for the first year was Mr Gray, a photographer of Gawler Place, Adelaide, and he reported that for an initial attempt the photographs were decidedly good, although in some cases the effect was spoiled by the choice of an unsuitable background (*The Education Gazette* V.44 No.504, 14 July 1928: 223). Given that the children would probably have used Box Brownies or fold-up cameras with no zoom lenses, and finite reels of film that precluded taking multiple photos, they must have been capable photographers indeed.

For all competitions from 1911 to 1938, Edquist was the coordinator. Following his retirement from the Education Department on 23 December 1938 (*Vox* 1938), Mr J. E. Machell of the Teachers' College, Adelaide, became the coordinator for 1939-1940. However, despite details of and rules for the 1939 and 1940 competitions being published in *The Education Gazette*, there is no indication that they were actually held and no information on winners either in *The Education Gazette* or in newspaper articles.

The winners and prizes

Table 2, on the next two pages, shows the winners of first and second places in the competition, where known, together with their schools.

Table 2. First and second place winners in the SA Schools' Bird and Tree Day Competition. Most of the information is from *The Education Gazette*, with a few additional details from newspaper articles accessed on Trove <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/search?adv=y>. Each school, where first listed, is annotated according to the region of SA in which it is located; the regions follow Blaylock et al. (2017). AP=Adelaide Plains, FR=Flinders Ranges, MLR=Mount Lofty Ranges, MM=Murray Mallee, MN=Mid-North, SE=South East, YP=Yorke Peninsula.

Year	Place	School Bird Protection Club	Student
1911	1	Narridy School (MN)	Patrick Sylvester Browne
	2	Meningie School (MM)	Gertrude F. Wright
1912	1	Wilkawatt School (MM)	Arthur Sumsion
	2	Prospect Hill School (MLR)	Stanley Rogers
1913	1	Lower Light School (AP)	Hubert John Quigley
	2	Burrungull [sic] School (SE)	Kitty O'Connor
1914	1	Mosquito Creek School (MM)	Margaret Annie Gardner
	2	Banbury School (MN)	Kimberley Tiver
1915	1	Lower Light School	George Quigley
1916	1	Kilkerran School (YP)	Kathleen Moody
	2	Fullerville School (FR)	Millicent Heddle
1917	1	Prospect Hill School	Mabel Doris Connor
	2	Angas Plains School (MM)	
1918	1	Lower Light School	Marjorie Tucker
	2	Angas Plains School	Effie Butler
1919	1	Booborowie North School (MN)	Albert F. Giles
	2	Wonoka School (FR)	Doreen Carn
1920	1	Hindmarsh Valley School (MLR)	Arthur T. Quinn
	2	Uraidla School (MLR)	Nellie Hawke
1921	1	Uraidla School	Marwood Mules
	2	Angas Plains School	
1922	1	Kangaroo Flat School (AP)	Tom Mitchell
	2	Angas Plains School	Nellie Mathieson
1923	1	Angas Plains School	Kenneth Giles
	2	Monteith School (MM)	Peter Howard
1924	1	Angas Plains School	Kenneth Giles
	2	Stanley Flat School (MN)	Laurel Ragless
1925	1	Angas Plains School	Keith Gilbert
	2	Kangaroo Flat School	Winifred Nottle
1926	1	Angas Plains School	Alistair Matheson
	2	Allandale [sic] East School (SE)	Carrie Kennedy
1927	1	Sandy Creek School (MLR)	Thomas Clive Tuckwell
	2	Ardrossan School (YP)	Leonard Young
1928	Essays 1	Sandy Creek School	Elsie Jean Springbett
	2	Allandale East School	Carrie Kennedy
	Photos 1	Glencoe School (SE)	Audrey McCarthy
	2	Warnertown School (MN)	Edward Brus
1929	Essays 1	Sandy Creek School	Allan S. Lawes
	2	Bethany School (MLR)	Sylvia Linder
1930	Notebook 1	Kangaroo Flat School	Frederick Arthur Mitchell
1931	Notebook 1	Kangaroo Flat School	Frederick Arthur Mitchell
	2	Kangaroo Flat School	Joyce Mary Modra

Table 1 Continued

Year	Place	School Bird Protection Club	Student
1932	Notebook 1	Allandale East School	Ray Jones
1933	Notebook 1	Woodside School (MLR)	Willie Horne
1934	Notebook 1 2 Photos 1	Lyndoch School (MLR) Correspondence School Woodside School	Ernst A. Boehm Nancy Follett William Horne
1935	Notebook 1 2 Photos 1	Correspondence School Correspondence School Korunye School (AP)	Nancy Follett Elizabeth (Betty) Cullen Gordon Pratt
1936	Notebook 1 2 Photos 1	Correspondence School Correspondence School Correspondence School	Nancy Follett Barbara Stevens Betty Cullen
1937	Notebook 1 2 Photos 1 Senior Notebook 1	St Morris School (Adelaide) Millbrook School (MLR) St Morris School Correspondence School	Stanley E. Rowe Anthony Welsh Stanley Rowe Nancy Follett
1938	Notebook 1 Photos 1	Millbrook School St Morris School	Anthony Welsh Stanley Rowe



Figure 1. Members of the Lower Light School Bird Protection Club, winners of the 1913 Bird and Tree Day Competition. Hubert John Quigley, writer of the first-prize essays, is standing behind the cup. Taken from *Education Gazette* V.30 No.333, 12 May 1914: 220. Original photo: W. Jarmyn.

Figure 1 shows the team of children from the Lower Light School Bird Protection Club who won in 1913. A photo of the inaugural winners in 1911, from Narridy School near Crystal Brook, is shown in Truran (2000). With the sole exception of Stanley Rowe of St Morris School in the Adelaide suburbs (1937, 1938), all the winners were from rural schools. The familiarity of country children with their environment, and their access to a wider variety of birds and trees, would have enhanced their chances in the competition. Prizes were distributed on Bird and Tree Day; in South Australian schools, Arbor Day and then Bird and Tree Day was observed during June, July or August on a day fixed by the teacher (*The Chronicle* 5 August 1911: 40). From later newspaper reports this continued to be the case, despite Edquist's repeated advice in *The Education Gazette* that autumn was the best season to plant trees, once sufficient rain had fallen.

I have found little information on the winning essays themselves, but Kenneth Giles of Angas Plains School (SW of Langhorne Creek) who won the competition in 1923 and 1924, had both his bird essays published in the *South Australian Ornithologist* (Giles 1924, 1925). The first was on "The Minah", clearly the Noisy Miner, and while fanciful in parts, it did describe the pugnacious nature of the species. His second essay, on the Murray Magpie [Magpielark], was more mature, with more detailed observations. From the *Education Gazette* we learn that the 1929 winner Allan Lawes wrote on the fantail pigeon [probably Crested Pigeon] and the sheoak, while Sylvia Linder (second) wrote on the magpie and wattle. Newspapers occasionally published details: the 1916 winner Kathleen Moody wrote on the grass parrot [Red-rumped Parrot] and sheoak (*The Daily Herald*, Adelaide 17 June 1916: 4); in 1922 Thomas Mitchell wrote on the White-browed Babbler and native pine (*The Bunyip*, Gawler 21 July 1922: 1); and in 1927 Thomas Tuckwell wrote on the magpie and wattle while Leonard Young's subjects were the magpie and teatree (*The Observer*, Adelaide 29 November 1927: 63). In the SAOA correspondence there is a record of Elsie Jean Springbett having written on the Kookaburra in 1928 (P. Paton, pers. comm.).

Competition prizes were determined by the executive committee of the Gould League, and proceeds from the sale of League certificates were put towards their purchase. In the early years each member of the winning team was presented with a photograph of the trophy; later, only the winning member of the team was given a photo, and by 1928 none was given. Initially only first and second place-getters were awarded prizes, but by 1924 third place was included, together with merit certificates for other competitors.

Edquist asked members of the SAOA to help purchase a Silver Challenge Cup as the major prize for the winning school, and they responded immediately by contributing the full sum required (Truran 2000). The cup, also known as the Schools' Competition Cup, was held by the school of the winning pupil for 12 months from when it was awarded on Bird and Tree Day. Other prizes, to individual students and to their school libraries, usually consisted of books on natural history. From about 1924 S.A. White funded a gold medal for the winning student each year to keep, and Dr R.H. Pulleine, also an SAOA member, likewise funded a silver medal for the second-placed student. Two medals, one gold and one silver (Figure 2), each about the size of a 20c piece and apparently never awarded, are held in the SAOA archive in the State Library of SA (SRG 652/9).

Donors of prizes are listed in Table 3 and include other notable ornithologists such as J.B. Cleland and G. M. Mathews.



Figure 2 — Capt. S. A. White gold medal and R. H. Pulleine silver medal for first and second prizewinners in the Schools' Bird and Tree Day Competition. The medals are held in the State Library of SA (SRG 652/9). Photo: P. Horton

Table 3. Donors of prizes for the SA Schools' Bird and Tree Day Competition. Information is from *The Education Gazette*.

Donor	Prizes	Years
SA Ornithological Association	Silver Challenge Cup to school of 1 st prize winner	1911-1940
Captain S. A. White	Book to 1 st prize winning pupil Gold medal to 1 st prize winner	1913 1924 -1940
Mr A. Williams (Director of Education)	Books to 2 nd prize winning pupil	1911
Mr M. M. Maughan (Director of Education, President of Gould League, SA)	One guinea's worth of books to 2 nd prize winning pupil	1913-1919
Mr Gregory M. Mathews	10s. 6d. to winner of the Cup	1914
Sir G. J. R. Murray (Chief Justice of SA, Patron of SAOA)	Book to 1 st prize winning pupil	1916
Sir William J. Sowden	Unknown prize to 1 st prize winner	1918
Mr W. T. McCoy (Director of Education, President of Gould League, SA)	Books for prize winners	1920-1928
Sir Langdon Bonython	One guinea's worth of books to 1 st prize winning pupil	1921
Dr R. H. Pulleine (presented by Mrs Pulleine from 1936)	Nature Books to 1 st prize winner Silver medal to 2 nd prize winner	1922 1925-1940
Prof. J. B. Cleland	Unknown prize to 1 st prize winner	1923
Mr C. C. Charlton (Deputy Director of Education, Vice-President of Gould League, SA)	Books for prize winners	1927
Director of Education	Books for third prize winner	1935-1940
Anonymous donor, through SAOA	Inlaid jewel casket for winner of Senior Notebook Competition	1937
Mr William Coward (engraver), for the photographic competition	Silver vase to 1 st prize winner Challenge shield to school of 1 st prize winner & miniature shield for student	1928 1932-1940

The cup

Today the cup is somewhat tarnished but is still a magnificent piece, as shown by Figure 3 on the next page. It consists of a wooden base painted black, the cup itself with a lid, both silver-plate, and a moulded metal emu to sit on top; currently this has become unsoldered from the lid. The cup is inscribed:

**BIRD AND ARBOR DAY COMPETITION
CHALLENGE CUP TROPHY
Presented by
Members of
S. A. ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
1911**

The underside of the bottom of the cup is stamped with: "MANUFACTURED AND GUARANTEED BY KNICKERBOCKER SILVER CO." (this in a circle, surrounding a man's head wearing a tricorner hat) "230 HIGH GRADE METAL" (with an outline of an arm holding a hammer). Internet sources tell us that the Knickerbocker Silver Company of Port Jervis, New York, was in business 1894-1962; they made only silver-plated goods, not sterling silver. The wooden base has 28 little silver plate shields attached around it in two rows, each with the name and year of the winning school engraved on it.



Figure 3 — The Silver Challenge Cup, or Schools' Competition Cup, currently stored at the South Australian Museum. Photo: P. Horton

Why the cup was ‘lost’

We can only guess at the sequence of events leading to this neglect. The last inscription on the cup was in 1938. Edquist appears to have been the driving force behind the competition, so when he retired from the Education Department in December 1938, the impetus to continue running it was probably lost, as Penny speculated. In addition, the stand on which the cup sits is completely covered with shields inscribed with the names of the winning schools, one added per year, so there was no room for future winners; a new base would have been required. The threat of world war may also have contributed to the decision to abandon the competition. The cup, formerly held for a year by the winning school, now needed a home. John Sutton, late Honorary Curator of Ornithology, had died in November 1938 (Horton 2014), leaving Herb Condon to run the Bird Section on his own. As SAOA Secretary, he was probably handed the cup a year or two later to store at the Museum, but he soon departed for military service in 1942-1945 (Horton *et al.* 2018). Some of the Museum’s collections were taken away for safe storage during the Second World War and the cup may well have gone with them. By the end of the War the cup was probably separated from the bird collection, forgotten by Condon and other SAOA members alike, and thereafter shifted with mountains of Museum miscellany to successive stores until its final transfer to Netley more than 20 years ago. It is now housed in the Bird Section at the South Australian Museum, as the State Library of SA is unable to accept it for inclusion in the SAOA archive due to storage restrictions.

Legacy of the Bird Protection Clubs

We have no measure of the influence of the clubs and the competition on South Australian bird life, but it can only have been for the better. Their inauguration came at a time when the western world was increasingly aware of the appalling slaughter of birds for the millinery trade, with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds established in Britain in 1889 (Edquist 1910) and its South Australian branch 1894 (Truran 2000). Edquist (1910) noted that far-reaching reform must begin with the education of children, hence his untiring efforts to see bird protection clubs set up in as many schools as possible. By 1922 he noted that native birds were more numerous in the Adelaide area than a few years previously, “when the shanghai was as much a part of the schoolboy’s outfit as was his pencil-case” (Edquist 1922). He added that more than one ornithologist had remarked on “the reappearance of

certain birds in our parks” and “increased numbers of other species which were not entirely driven away.” At the very least, it is likely that the winners of the competition retained a life-long interest in birds and may have instilled conservation values in their own children.

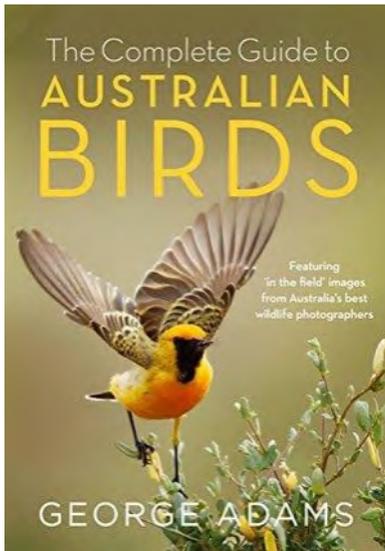
Acknowledgement

Thanks to Penny Paton for checking SAOA correspondence for essay details, and for commenting on an earlier draft of this article.

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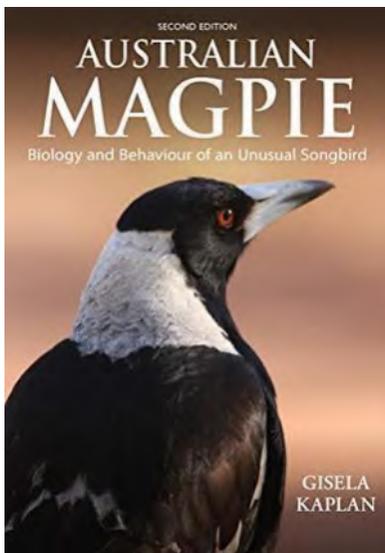
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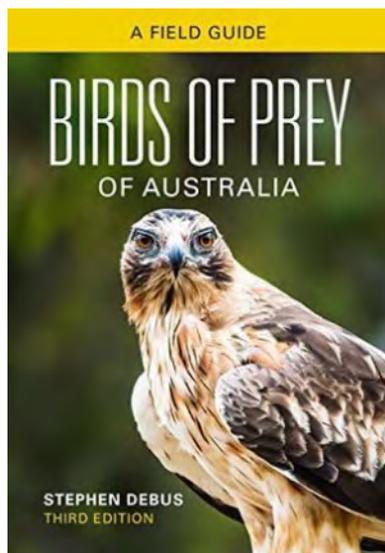
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Melbourne: Vikin, 2018
ISBN 978143787082

This book is the most up-to-date guide to Australian birds available. Written in everyday language, with crisp, brilliant digital images taken in the wild. It is divided into 27 chapters, and each chapter opens with fascinating background information. The easily accessible information on each bird includes: common and scientific names, size, description, behaviour, preferred habitat, feeding habits, voice, status and breeding. Distribution maps are arranged next to the photographic illustrations of the bird. A binocular icon indicates 'hot spots' to find particular birds. All wild birds that have been regularly recorded on the Australian mainland, Tasmania and offshore continental islands and oceans, including subspecies where the differences are recognisable in the field, have been included and photographed. The book features over 1400 photographs by some of Australia's best wildlife photographers.



598.8640994 KAP.2.
Kaplan, Gisela
Australian Magpie: biology and behaviour of an unusual songbird
Clayton South, Victoria: CSIRO Publishing,
ISBN 9781486307241

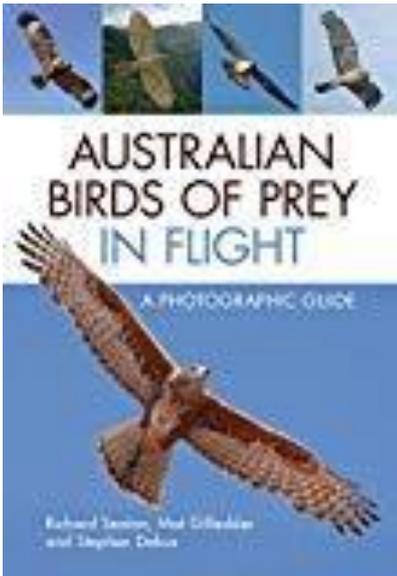
The warbling and carolling of the Australian Magpie are iconic, yet few of us recognise that this bird ranks among the foremost songbirds of the world. Its impressive vocal abilities, its propensity to play and clown, and its willingness to interact with people make the magpie one of our most popular birds. This second edition presents a fully updated and easy-to-read account of the behaviour of these birds. With new chapters on classification, cognition and caring for young, the book reveals the extraordinary capabilities of the magpie, including its complex social behaviour.



598.910994 DEB.3
Debus, Stephen
Birds of Prey of Australia: a field guide
Clayton South, Victoria: CSIRO Publishing, 2019.
ISBN 9781486311118

Raptors are popular and iconic birds, and are important ecologically, with some species listed as threatened. Yet they are among the most difficult birds to identify. This fully updated Third Edition of the popular field guide Birds of Prey of Australia contains two sections: a field guide with distribution maps, detailed illustrations and information on identification; and a handbook which includes an overview of current knowledge about raptors, including their biology, ecology and behaviour. An illustrated section on difficult-to-distinguish species pairs is also included, along with new photographs.

From the Library (cont.)



598.910994 SEA

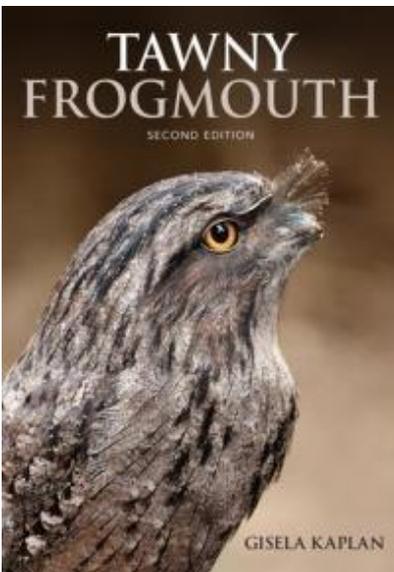
Seaton, Richard

Australian birds of prey in flight: a photographic guide

Clayton South, VIC: CSIRO Publishing, 2019.

ISBN 9781486308668

Birds of prey spend most of their time in flight and, when viewed from the ground, they are notoriously hard to identify. This is a photographic guide to the eagles, hawks, kites and falcons flying high above you. Individual species profiles describe distinguishing features and the text is supported by detailed images showing the birds at six different angles and poses, using photographs from many of Australia's leading bird photographers. Annotated multi-species comparison plates highlight key features that can help with differentiating birds of prey in flight. This book will be of value to anyone who wants to learn more about Australia's birds of prey, and will provide a useful reference for identifying soaring birds in the field, also while trying to identify images from your own camera.



598.99 KAP.2

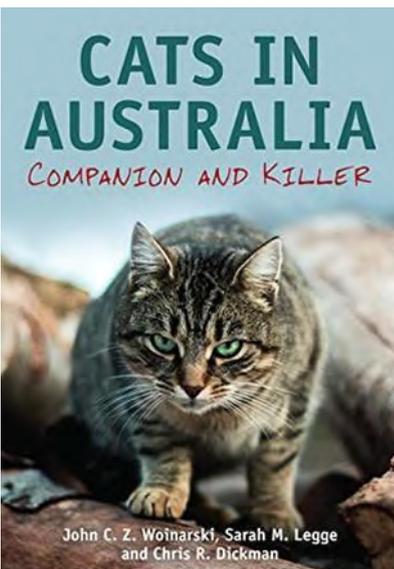
Kaplan, Gisela

Tawny Frogmouth

Clayton South, VIC: CSIRO Publishing, 2018

ISBN 978148630816

The tawny frogmouth is one of Australia's most intriguing and endearing birds. This second edition of Tawny Frogmouth presents an easy-to-read account of these unique nocturnal birds, which can be found across almost the entire continent. Fully revised and updated throughout, this book combines 20 years of systematic observation with published research and information from regional surveys; and represents the most comprehensive single study ever conducted on tawny frogmouths.



636.800994 WOI

Woinarski, John

Cats in Australia : companion and killer

Clayton South, VIC : CSIRO Publishing, 2019.

ISBN 9781486308439

Across the world, cats are loved as pets or are kept and tolerated for their role in controlling some animal pests. But cats, both pets and feral, also kill many native animals and this toll can be enormous. Cats have been remarkably successful in Australia, spreading pervasively across the continent and many islands, occurring in all environments, and proving to be adept and adaptable hunters. A large proportion of Australia's distinctive fauna is threatened, and recent research highlights the significant role that cats play in the decline and extinction of native species.

WANTED

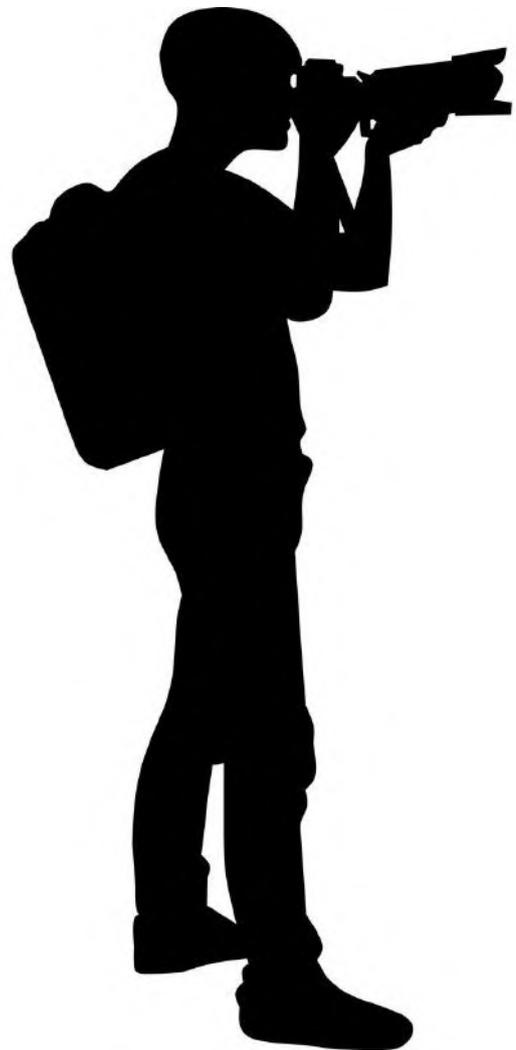
Bird Photography Camera Kit

Our son Miles wants to get serious with his bird photography. He's committed to his birds and birding, so we'll do what we can to support him with this passion of his. Our current gear, it's not up to scratch – the lens is too short and thus the images of the birds are too small. We figure that if we are going to spend serious money on this, and given that we don't know much about cameras and lenses, it might be smart to try and source some gear from the expert members out there in the BirdsSA community who do know a thing or two. So, if you have recently upgraded your kit, or if you have surplus gear gathering dust, we would be very keen to hear from you. Pentax? Sony? Nikon? We're not fussed. Miles can develop brand-loyalty and go all high-end technical when he's old enough to buy this stuff for himself. Until then, basically, we want to kit him out with a quality camera housing and a serious lens. A **big**, serious, lens! Not so that he can make great art; more so that he can capture the images and memories that matter to him.

Thus, if you have a camera and a big, serious lens that you are willing to sell as a package, please send an email to the address below letting us know what you have and how much you are willing to accept for such. We will NOT try and negotiate a better price; in this circumstance, that's just rude and ungrateful. Thank you for your consideration.

Stephen and Perdita Ramm

stephen.ramm@bigpond.com



Birds SA Contact Details

Future General Meetings will be held in the Hawker Centre at the Waite Institute, Waite Road, Urrbrae at 7.30pm. Doors open at 7.00pm.

Committee Meetings are held at the above venue on the second Monday of each month, starting at 7.40pm. Donations to the Birds SA Conservation Fund are tax-deductible

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

Your message will be forwarded to that person.

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The annual subscriptions are:

Individual Member	\$45.00
Family Membership	\$55.00
Full-time Student (no age restriction)	\$10.00

All members receive a digital copy of both the Magazine and Journal. We also offer printed copies for an additional annual 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 \$80.00 per full page and 10c per inserted leaflet (single sheet). The Committee reserves the right to lower or waive these fees.

Members' photo Gallery



Mistletoe Birds

(plus potential mistletoe bush)

Photographed by Bob Daly on Saturday 5th October
at Watkins Vineyard, GWLAP Revegetation Area, Currency Creek



Common Sandpiper

Photographed by Bob Daly at Goolwa Barrage on 28/10/2019



Major Mitchell Cockatoo

Photographed by Alan Pettigrew in Newhaven Sanctuary NT, on 22/7/2019



Hooded Crow

photographed by
Greg Blackman
in Vienna
on 24th July 2019.



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DOWNLOAD THIS FREE APP

- Includes tours, guides, information and offers
- Free to download via your favourite app store
- No in-app costs



DISCOVER THE
FLINDERS RANGES



This free, self-drive and walk tour app is for the general public visiting the Ikara-Flinders Ranges NP and vicinity, probably for the first time. It provides a user-friendly way to unlock the secrets of the park, using photos, text and narration, assisted by maps, which show each point-of-interest relative to your current location, and alert you as you approach. A key feature is that an active Internet connection is not needed when using the app, provided you have already downloaded the tours that interest you, before leaving home.



Presented by Friends of Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park