

# The BIRDER

The official magazine of Birds SA Spring 2020 No 255



## In this Issue

Vale Kent Treloar

October Campout

What's happening to  
Adelaide's trees?



Linking people with birds  
in South Australia

*A Colourful Pair*



**A Rainbow Lorikeet pair** (Photographed by Jeff Groves on River Torrens Linear Park, June 2020)

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**CENTRE INSERT: SAOA HISTORICAL SERIES No: 73,**  
EDWIN ASHBY, PART 2

**The cover photograph** shows a Fan-tailed Cuckoo, photographed by Davide Gaglio at Cox Scrub in July 2020. John Gitsham designed the cover.

**Magazine layout:** Designed by Ingrid Grigg

**We welcome 28 new members** who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on page 6.

*Birds SA is the trading name of the South Australian Ornithological Association Inc. which was 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.*

## **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.

# Calendar of Events

The following is a list of 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'.

**Due to Covid-19 restrictions, Birds SA General meetings have been cancelled until further notice. Check the e-Newsletter for details of future meetings and webinars.**

Saturday 5 Sept.	FB	Excursion to Pangarinda Arboretum, Wellington
Saturday 12 Sept.	Birds SA	Excursion 'Cowirra', near Mannum
Sunday 13 Sept.	PA	Excursion to Bernie's Block
Thursday 17 Sept.	Birds SA	Excursion to Tangari Regional Park
Sunday 27 Sept.	Birds SA	Excursion to White's Rd. Wetlands
Saturday 3 October	FB	Excursion to Vineyard at Currency Creek
2 — 6 October	Birds SA	Long weekend campout at Lawari Conservation Park
Saturday 10 October	Birds SA	Excursion to Sandy Creek
Sunday 11 October	PA	Excursion to Telowie Gorge and Nelshaby Reservoir
Thursday 15 October	Birds SA	Excursion to Belair National Park
Sunday 1 November	PA	Excursion to Chinaman's Creek, Mt. Granger
Sunday 1 November	Birds SA	Excursion to Tolderol Game Reserve
Saturday 7 Nov.	FB	Excursion, destination TBC
Saturday 14 Nov.	Birds SA	Excursion to Aldinga Scrub CP
Thursday 19 Nov.	Birds SA	Excursion to Magazine Rd. Wetlands
Sunday 29 Nov.	Birds SA	Excursion to Riverglades Wetlands
Saturday 5 Dec.	FB	Excursion to Beyond water ponds, Hayborough
Saturday 12 Dec.	Birds SA	Excursion to Tolderol Game Reserve
Sunday 13 Dec.	PA	Excursion to Arid Lands Botanic Gardens
Thursday 17 Dec.	Birds SA	Excursion to Laratinga Wetlands, Mt Barker

## BIRDS SA

October Long Weekend Campout, 2 to 6 November: Lawari Conservation Park, Hindmarsh Island  
| Easy | **TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

# President's Message

**Hi Everyone,**

As the Covid-19 virus continues to disrupt our lives, particularly with the new outbreaks in Victoria and New South Wales, we wonder if life will ever get back to some kind of normal. Birds SA has carried out some Field Trips, but no General meetings recently.

We are hoping to have General meetings as soon as possible, depending on Covid restrictions. Although, on a positive note, we have enjoyed a very successful run of Zoom Webinars brilliantly organised by committee member Steve Langley, well done Steve. We are planning to produce more very soon, stay tuned

I think we are having an early spring, with warm days, Magpies carolling all night long, Grey Shrike-thrushes whistling constantly, honeyeaters chasing each other incessantly, Stumpy lizards moving around, it's all happening a bit early I think. Anyway enjoy the action and I hope we get some late winter to early spring rain.



Sadly we lost another one of our long-time Birds SA members and a brilliant birder, Kent Treloar, who passed away in late July after a long illness. Kent was a retired farmer, birder, ornithologist, conservationist and a keen educator of the communities on Yorke Peninsula. I was privileged to work with him when I was a Senior Ranger based at Innes National Park in the mid 2000s. He was enthusiastic and was always passing on his knowledge of birds to anyone who would listen. He was very keen on Shorebirds and of late protecting the declining Ospreys of SA. He will be sadly missed from the SA birding community.

Losing older Birds SA members is sad and tragic (as some are not that old) to everyone. But, it started me thinking about the amazing birding knowledge that is lost when these wonderful older members pass away. The answer is 'Mentoring'. I believe it is critical to our Association's knowledge bank and history. I encourage all members, particularly the older, more experienced longer serving members, to actively mentor a young member or a new older member. Openly share your wealth of knowledge about birds, ecology, memories of good birding locations, as well as notebooks of your birding activities. It's so important to pass on knowledge to the next generations. Fortunately some of the professional ornithologists within the Association have produced wonderful books about their research and a plethora of scientific papers in our journals. However, verbal history is just as important.

So, please take a younger birder or two "under your wing" and share your knowledge before it's too late.

Well, everyone enjoy this spring Issue of the Birder and the start of another season of birding and I hope things get back to "normal" soon so that we can once more enjoy our regular general meetings and field trips.

**John Gitsham**

## **Southern Boobook**

*(Photographed by Colin Conor in Porter St. Unley, June 2020)*

## Birds SA

# *Volunteers Appreciated*

The Festival of Nature is looking for groups, like ours, to organise an event/s during the period from 25th September to 4th of October. Nature-focussed events will be taking place across South Australia during these dates, (similar to the collective arts program of SALA), which will be promoted to encourage South Australians to get out into and amongst Nature.

Birds SA committee is looking for Expressions of Interest from members to assist with guided bird walks either along the Torrens Linear Park or in the Mt Lofty area. Birds SA volunteers will be required to lead a one-hour bird walk and assist members of the public to identify the birds they see. Birds SA will supply binoculars and relevant bird information. We will need two volunteers to guide the walk and one person to remain at the meeting point to welcome latecomers and assist them to sign the forms to borrow our binoculars and understand our OHS requirements. At this stage the location and dates can be flexible depending on the volunteers. However it would be good to have at least 3 guided walks organised. Birds SA committee will be able to organise binoculars, resources and the publicity necessary to promote the success of the events.

As part of the networked program for the Festival of Nature, The Gums at Tranmere has asked our organisation to operate an information stall and to provide a talk and guided walk as part of their event. This event will be on Saturday 26th September from 10am to 3pm. Alan Burns will be providing the walk and talk. However we do need additional volunteers to be present on the stand between 10 am and 3pm (or any parts thereof!).

I am a great believer in 'if we all just make one contribution a year'; together we will produce great achievements! If you want to go down on the 'one thing a year list' and be a much-valued part of the big picture, please let me know!

If you would be available to participate in this community event, please contact me on 0419 447 982 or [loujayleigh@gmail.com](mailto:loujayleigh@gmail.com)

Thank you everyone and happy Spring Birding!

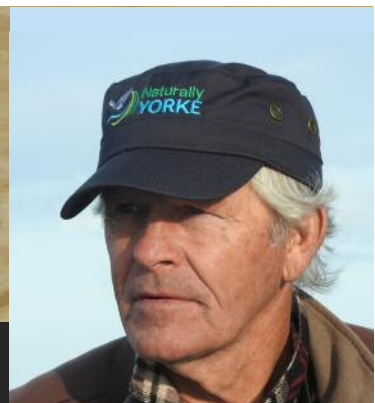
**Lou Jayleigh,**  
*Assistant Secretary*

# New Members

***We welcome the following 28 new members who have joined the Association in the past few months.***

Melissa Greenslade..... Kilburn  
Chris Purnell ..... Heidelberg Hgts (Vic)  
Angus Droogan-Turniski and  
Phoebe Hunter ..... Meningie  
Sarah Stewart ..... Alberton  
Rozanne Kerr ..... Crafers  
Heather Head ..... Craighburn Farm  
Deirdrie Schmidt ..... Sheidow Park  
Zoe Beer ..... Tanunda  
Michael Aird ..... Port Lincoln  
Sara and Andre Laubscher ..... McLaren Vale  
Kylie Ritter ..... Seaford  
Angus Tuck and Helen Cox ..... Clarendon  
Yahna Pal ..... Valley View  
Vanessa White ..... Adelaide  
Pamela Gillen..... Meningie  
Randall Bates and Diane Fury..... Hallett Cove  
Mark and Debra Richards..... Victor Harbor  
John Hill and Andrea Dale ..... Goodwood  
Greg Johnston ..... Belair  
Alan Sizer ..... Darlington  
Meagan Daniel..... Kadina  
Jonothan Sims..... Gawler

If your name has inadvertently been omitted from this list, please contact our Membership Officer, Alan Burns. His mobile number is 0411 595 910.



**Kent Treloar** (Photo: Lee Heard)

### ... from Terry Dennis

Vale Kent Treloar. On the 28th July, 2020, we shared in the farewell to Kent at Minlaton. It was a large gathering and there were many moving tributes detailing his life-long commitment to his community and to conservation issues in the Yorke Peninsula (YP) region. From the over-flowing chapel venue and from the number of tributes given, it was so obvious that both he and his family were widely known and respected. Among the formal tributes, the profile of him that appeared in the Australian Birdlife magazine last year was read out in full ... what a legacy!

It was always going to be tough to confine my own recollections of conversations and times spent birding with Kent to just a few sentences, and birds are only part of the story.

I first became aware of Kent as the 'go-to' person for anything to do with birds on YP in the 1980s while living on Kangaroo Island. We corresponded regarding our common Atlas Survey regional coordinator roles in SA and swapped notes about Hooded Plovers and coastal raptors for many years before finally meeting in person in the early 2000s. My first birding foray with him back then, was in the Heritage Area scrub on his property. My vivid memory from that day was his passionate concern

for several declining bush-bird species and I learnt that the Southern Scrub Robin had already demised from YP. Later, I accompanied him on several shorebird survey excursions and coastal raptor surveys on YP and adjacent islands. Another example of his long-term awareness of environmental change as well as habitat degradation and loss in the region, came up in a recent conversation as he lamented not recording the Striped Honeyeater on upper YP in recent decades...

With Kent's passing we all have lost another 'rare species' — one of those gifted observers of the natural world and of birds in particular who are innately more aware and see and understand more than most of us about the behaviours and interactions that occur within a species, and sometimes more subtly, between species. Many of us in Birds SA and in BirdLife Australia will greatly miss Kent's ability to recall these often unique observation context details, garnered and accumulated over a lifetime on his beloved YP, and for him to share these gems in his signature understated, modest manner, with quiet confidence and wisdom. If there was ever to be an 'ornithological hall of fame', he would surely be remembered in it.

**Terry Dennis**



**Kent with Ian Falkenberg on an offshore island coastal raptor survey** (Photo: Lee Heard)

### ... from Ian Falkenberg

Kent Treloar will be remembered for his outstanding ornithological knowledge and experience. I first met Kent in 2001 when he was a member of the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), Northern and Yorke Consultative Committee. I very quickly came to appreciate Kent's extraordinary knowledge of birds. What impressed me was his detailed knowledge of a broad range of bird groups including migratory shorebirds, waterbirds, woodland birds, raptors, etc. In addition to his knowledge of birds, Kent was able to articulate his knowledge of important land management issues as they related to the management of National and Conservation Parks on Yorke Peninsula.

## Tributes to Kent Treloar *(continued)*

Whilst Kent was a quiet and softly spoken person, he was a great advocate for bird conservation and sustainable land management practices. He was able to articulate key issues and relevant discussion points to other members of the committee and government representatives when it really counts.

Kent was also an active member of the DEW Northern and Yorke Declining Woodland Birds Recovery Team. He made significant contributions towards understanding the status of woodland birds on YP. His knowledge of the little known remnant blocks of native vegetation in his area and which birds would be found in a particular habitat was particularly valuable. Recently through a Federal Government Landcare grant, Kent instigated an Osprey Recovery and Conservation project on Yorke Peninsula as part of his leadership role on the Southern Yorke Peninsula Landcare Group. One example of Kent's concern for this species centred on an Osprey nest built on a navigation marker in Upper St Vincent Gulf, which was likely to be removed during maintenance of the navigation light. Realising the urgency of the situation, Kent contacted Sharie Detmar and in a combined effort constructed a temporary artificial nest platform at a more protected location. Using timber supports and a plastic pallet salvaged from one of his sheds on the farm, the platform sat perched precariously on top of a mangrove tree ...but the birds liked it and last year produced two young at this site!

Kent was a true quiet achiever and simply got things done. He was highly respected and admired for his dedication and commitment to the preservation of birds in the wild and was always willing to impart knowledge to those keen to learn. We have indeed lost one of nature's true gentlemen.

**Ian Falkenberg**

*... from Lee Heard, Northern & Yorke Regional Ecologist 2013-2017*

While Kent was quietly spoken, when he spoke you listened. His words were considered, thoughtful, wise and his information was like striking gold. He had tremendous bird knowledge and expertise, which he humbly downplayed but his contribution was so important to our understanding of the birdlife of Yorke Peninsula and beyond. He was a passionate advocate for birdlife, for conservation and landcare work on Yorke Peninsula. I had the good fortune and privilege to meet him, learn gems of bird and natural history knowledge from him and to experience Kent's dry sense

of humour. A few memories of time spent in the field with Kent spring to mind, these are some of him:

*... being constrained to birding in a 2ha survey area required for the southern YP bird monitoring project and being teased by all the bird calls that were happening beyond the sampling area!*

*... helping to solve many mystery bird sightings in his thoughtful considered way,*

*... generously letting you in on exciting bird sighting locations for Diamond Firetails, Shy Heathwrens, the spot to stop near Warrenben CP to hear the Western Whipbird early in the morning,*

*... musing over his 40+ years of careful observations of the osprey nesting at Innes,*

*... capably helping staff to sort out trailer & quad bike issues to get out birding,*

*... pointing out the subtle features of thornbills on southern Yorke Peninsula,*

*... spying different wader species from afar and drifting away for the group to solve that mystery,*

*... eagle-eyed spotting of different raptor and seabird species while helping on boat-based monitoring programs,*

*... being disappointed and saddened at the continued loss of precious mallees and habitat on Yorke Peninsula, and*

*... quietly and subtly suggesting that "you might want to revisit that bird photo id"!*

May Kent stride off across the landscape, with scope, binos and camera in hand, to enjoy those birdcalls and sightings wherever he may be and forever more. Thank you Kent.

**Lee Heard**



**Kent checking out a distant bird** (Photo: Lee Heard)



## Tributes to Kent Treloar *(continued)*

... from **Teresa Jack** a fellow birder from YP who had regularly assisted Kent with shorebird surveys in particular.

With much sadness I talk of knowing Kent Treloar, late of Minlaton: farmer, quietly spoken, a carer for his environment, family and friends. Years ago I was excited when I learned that Kent was a Bird man of some note, as I had known of him from teenage years when he and his brother played football. We often talked about the birds found in our much loved homeland of Southern Yorke Peninsula. The Shorebird 2020 program was very much enjoyed. Mention a bird and Kent always had a story to tell. Like the phone call he had from a bloke with a Little Bittern in his chook shed. In his spare time he would head off to check a bird or a location. Studying the Banded Stilts on a Lake near Yorketown: looking for a bird with a leg band that had fledged from Lake Eyre, being annoyed at the clearing of trees and habitat. Every bird came to his attention and received his care. The last message I received from him was to say he had a new 'tick'. Over the fence from the house where they lived during his cancer treatment in Adelaide he photographed a female Californian Quail!!

**Teresa Jack**



**Kent on the cliffs in Innes National Park, Althorpe and Kangaroo Island in the distance**

*(Photo: Teresa Jack)*



**Kent in the shearing shed** *(Photo: Teresa Jack)*

## ...from **Kate Buckley**

Kent Treloar impressed all who met him with his humility and unassuming manner with regards to his incredible knowledge of Migratory Waders.

Kent, a busy farmer from Minlaton on the Yorke Peninsula, spent any spare hours he had observing and noting the complexities involved with migratory wader behaviour and identification.

Kent's respectful manner ensured that he was always welcome to undertake migratory wader survey work on private property: namely, Price Saltfields, where Colin Rogers and Teresa Jack often accompanied him. Over the 40 years that Kent devoted to the study of migratory waders he displayed expert skills in identifying the ever-so-slight differences in often hard to identify birds, such as the Great Knot and Red Knot.

All who knew him will sadly miss Kent, especially the Migratory Wader Survey Team.

To quote Chris Purnell from BirdLife Australia, "A fantastic, humble and generous man who will not be forgotten."

**Kate Buckley**

## Inquiry into the use of Off-road Vehicles

In early June 2020 the final report on the Inquiry into the use of Off-road Vehicles in SA, conducted by the Natural Resources Committee of Parliament, was tabled in Parliament. As previously reported, Birds SA made a submission to this Inquiry, as did BirdLife Australia. These submissions contained graphic evidence of damage caused by off-road vehicles to critical bird habitats. Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, David Speirs had initiated the Inquiry.

The recommendations in the final report were as follows:

The Natural Resources Committee recommends that the South Australian Government:

1. Encourages the development of appropriate infrastructure to support off-road vehicle use in South Australia, such as public-private sector partnerships in dedicated four-wheel drive parks.
2. Develops a code of practice in partnership with local governments, relevant statutory authorities, First Nations stakeholders, Landscape Boards and stakeholders, that would apply state-wide to set standards for off-road vehicle use in South Australia and explain the importance of protecting locally significant places.



Recent 4WD incident at Coffin Bay (Photo: Doug Clarke)

## Conservation Sub-committee *(continued)*

3. Implements education and monitoring of the requirement, notwithstanding applicable speed limits, for vehicles driving off-road to travel safely according to all of the prevailing conditions.
4. Reviews the application and interaction of the road rules framework to the use of off-road vehicles on beaches.
5. Further investigates the introduction of a permit system for off-road vehicle use in South Australia, such as exists in other states.
6. Undertakes an inventory in partnership with local government to identify areas which should be prohibited either seasonally or permanently, areas which could be opened for limited use, and areas where environmental impacts are likely to be lowest.
7. Supports local governments and relevant authorities in accessing and applying funding for place-specific initiatives such as increased signage and remediation projects.

The final report contained several significant errors, causing one to question the level of diligence applied to the task. The Committee findings and final recommendations were little different from previous research and inquiries on off-road vehicles reported in 2011 and 2012. This just-completed Inquiry did however enable a more recent update on off-road vehicle issues, confirming that they were becoming more pervasive throughout the State. Many of the submissions to the latest Inquiry focused on coastal areas. The Birds SA submission detailed the devastation caused by off-road vehicles to Long Beach at Coffin Bay and the disruption to the significant Pied Oystercatcher population there. The final report can be found by going to: <https://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/Committees/Committees-Detail> and searching for the Natural Resources Committee — Completed Inquiries.

Birds SA has written to Minister Speirs, asking which recommendations will be acted upon, by whom and when. The Association also requested that recommendations 5 and 6 should be afforded high priority. The Birds SA communication also emphasised the point that the recently completed Inquiry made no attempt to address the irresponsible behaviour exhibited in environmentally sensitive areas by a proportion of off-road vehicle users.

In the meantime, Birds SA has initiated a project, strongly supported by BirdLife Australia, to produce a high-quality documentary video highlighting the issues associated with off-road vehicles in coastal areas. Birds SA Committee member, Davide Gaglio will lead the production. He has an impressive track record with productions of this kind. The Association's intention is to broadcast this information widely through social media and traditional media channels to garner public support for the changes needed to address irresponsible use of off-road vehicles.

## Duck and Quail Hunting

The *Treasures not Targets* coalition (TnT), of which Birds SA is a member, has written to Premier Marshall advising him of the key findings of the ReachTEL poll conducted in March 2020 which sought to quantify public attitudes to the hunting of native ducks and quail. The communication to the Premier requested an update on commitments he made when the TnT coalition met with him in November 2019. The TnT communication highlighted the rapid expansion of avitourism as a more acceptable activity and the fact that birdwatching was already specifically mentioned in the Tourism Plan for SA.

Birds SA has committed to participating in a scheduled review of the Terms of Reference for the Open Season Stakeholder Reference Panel Meeting. This is the meeting conducted by DEW, typically held in December, which discusses the conditions under which hunting of native ducks and quail is permitted in the following year. Following this meeting, DEW formulates recommendations, which go to the Minister for consideration. Participation in the Reference Panel Meeting is a vexed issue for Birds SA because of our policy, which opposes the recreational hunting of native birds. The meeting does however enable us to argue for restrictions where these can be justified using objective data for bird populations, distribution, climatic and vegetation conditions.

**Jeff Groves**

Conservation Sub-Committee

## Foreword to Craig Wilkins' article

### *"What's Happening to Adelaide's Trees?"*

Birds SA members are acutely aware of the importance of trees for bird conservation and the continual battle to save our stately, ancient trees in the face of infrastructure developments, often linked to human population increases.

Two recent examples of tree removal at Mount Barker, to make way for a sporting complex and at Golden Grove for the upgrading of Golden Grove Road have brought into sharp focus the need for vigilance on the part of our members in recognising potential threats to all trees upon which birds depend and ensuring that every effort is made to influence decision makers to retain our trees, particularly the magnificent significant and regulated trees.

We thank Kate Buckley for representing Birds SA on these matters at a Conservation Council of SA meeting in November 2019. We also thank Birds SA Committee member and Membership Officer, Alan Burns, for his continued strong advocacy for the protection of trees.

Following is an article from Craig Wilkins, CE of the Conservation Council of SA, which highlights the benefits and the threats for trees in Adelaide and provides practical recommendations for actions that are urgently needed.



**Rainbow Lorikeet** (Photographed by Jeff Groves in Torrens Linear Park)



**This is what's happening  
to Adelaide's trees**

Photographer unknown

## What's happening to Adelaide's Trees?

***No poet or artist can truly capture the beauty and power of big trees.***

These gentle giants send their mighty roots deep into the earth and stretch their branches high into the sky.

Trees form the backdrop to our lives. They mark our crossroads, home our birds and wildlife, shade our children and cool our air. They outgrow us in height and age and are witnesses of events centuries before our time. Trees increase walkability, improve our mood, reduce our power bills and increase the value of our houses.

In a warming climate, they are the single best investment we can make in keeping our cities cool, beautiful and liveable.

Despite all that our trees give and do for us, we are cutting down more trees across Adelaide's suburbs than we are replacing. We must turn this around – and quickly.

When European colonists arrived at the Adelaide Plains in 1836, they found ancient and dense woodlands



**White-breasted Woodswallow cock**  
(Photo: Kevin Williams)



**Crimson Rosella pair** (Photo: Kevin Williams)

interspersed with open, grassy plains: the result of hundreds of generations of skilful Kurna land management.

The suburb we now call Blackforest was so named because the woodland was so dense the sun could not be seen at midday.

Since then, we have been progressively removing Adelaide's trees and ignoring people's pleas to stop this for more than a century.

The *Unley Register* from 1911 records this plaintive request from one local resident:

*"Spare those trees! It would not cost a great deal to secure ... a few allotments on which some of these kings of the old forest are growing: but it must be done soon or never."*

It could have been written yesterday.

Late last year the growing community concern for our trees became headline news after the Mt Barker Council cut down several centuries' old River Red Gums.

The destruction of the trees themselves, unfortunately was not particularly newsworthy; although deeply distressing. We are losing these gentle elders everyday across the city and hills. What upset many, however, was the way the Council tried to spin as a positive the re-location of the now dead trees to create new 'habitat'. An Orwellian line had been crossed. Social media exploded, led by wonderful gardening identity Sophie Thomson, and the call for action grew.

In response, we drew together a fantastic group of community campaigners from across Adelaide to fight back.

## What's happening to Adelaide's Trees? *(continued)*



**Spotted Pardalote cock** *(Photo: Kevin Williams)*



**Purple Crowned Lorikeet**  
*(Photo: Bernadette Vogelzang)*



**Tree Martin** *(Photo: Kevin Williams)*

Our first task was to highlight what was going on. Working with a range of groups and individuals we published a report — *What's Happening to Adelaide's Trees?* — which captures the latest data, explains why trees are so valuable and explores how we can stop the decline in urban tree canopy cover.

A city-wide, comprehensive snapshot was impossible to obtain. Apart from some notable instances of the state transport department destroying giant trees on roadside verges, most of the damage is caused through incremental loss on private land. It is death by a thousand cuts, hidden in private backyards.

The data that does exist, however, are alarming.

Adelaide is losing its significant, regulated and mature trees at an unsustainable rate.

This trend is completely at odds with local and State government targets which are looking to increase tree canopy cover, and with very good reason.

***There is a mountain of evidence to show how valuable trees are:***

Trees play a vital role in reducing urban heat build-up and protecting us from the increasing temperatures. Newly published research from Adelaide's western suburbs shows that urban trees can lower land temperatures by up to six degrees.

## What's happening to Adelaide's Trees? *(continued)*

Cutting down big trees ahead of climate change is like destroying respirators ahead of a pandemic. They are our city's lungs.

Many historic buildings, streetscapes and landscapes owe much of their character and charm to trees. For the Kurna people, trees are an essential part of the relationship with their country.

Trees help people live longer, healthier, happier lives, improving both physical and mental health. They prevent flooding and are essential for regulating water capture and storage.

Of course, urban trees provide food for our birds and animals, creating essential habitat and movement corridors. Old trees in particular are vital. It takes 80 to-100 years to form hollows for wildlife. Birdboxes are useful but are no substitute for natural hollow loss as living trees provide thermal insulation and other unique features species need to survive.

And money actually does grow on trees: they increase property values (some studies say by up to 20%), encourage more spending, reduce business operating costs and increased worker productivity.

Not surprisingly, councils and governments are working hard to plant new trees. But there is not enough available space on public land to replace what we are losing from people's backyards.



**Magpie-lark nest** *(Photo: Kevin Williams)*



**Musk Lorikeets hollow** *(Photo: Kevin Williams)*

Also, it will take many years for a newly planted tree to provide similar benefits to one that is mature. Now that we have highlighted the problem, it's time for action.

You may have seen banners attached to big trees across the city asking, 'How Many More, Premier?' We are working hard to draw attention to trees at risk before they are cut down.

We've held forums with experts to identify potential solutions. We have commissioned research to identify how much water we need to keep our city green and our trees hydrated.

Potential solutions include planning law reform, better valuation and incentives, improved assessment practices involving arborists, and stronger reinforcement of the community's love of big trees.

We need to act — and act quickly — before it's too late. There is a long way to go but it's exciting to see so many people embracing their inner 'Lorax' and be willing to speak for the trees. In fact, for many of us it's a sacred duty.

***"I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees. I speak for the trees for the trees have no tongues."***

— Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

If you want to find out more and get involved in the campaign to protect Adelaide's big trees, visit: [conservation.sa.gov.au/trees2020](http://conservation.sa.gov.au/trees2020)

**Craig Wilkins,**

Chief Executive, Conservation SA



With some Covid-19 restrictions still in place, organised activity in the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary has been limited to small numbers of nevertheless keen volunteers contributing to habitat restoration. Over June and July, nearly 1000 seedlings were planted in the hinterland and dunes around Middle Beach and Thompson Beach. The Middle Beach plantings contributed to extending bird corridors in the area. On subsequent planting days it was very satisfying to see almost all plants surviving and looking full of promise.

At Thompson Beach, with the second planting day's jobs completed, the group gathered for a cuppa and a bit of birding with sightings including babblers, honeyeaters, pelicans, cormorants and ducks. A swirling flock of 12 Black Kites provided a spectacle during the homeward drive along the seafront.

As follow up to the stricter Covid-19 isolation, it was great to be out in the Sanctuary again and active under those gently sunny skies, albeit with the necessary



**FAIBS member Warwick Barnes with a volunteer** (Photo: Ian Forsyth)

social distancing. Being together in those conditions and contributing to the landscape doesn't get too much better than that for the volunteers.

Thanks to the volunteers, Warrick Barnes, Erik Dahl (DEW), the Adelaide Plains Council and Green Adelaide for enabling these events to occur.

Those currently keen to venture into the Sanctuary area may be interested to know that a Common Sandpiper was recently sighted at Bald Hill with evidence of being a migratory returnee. Closer to home, the Barker Inlet area has been reconstructed into walking and biking paths around bird-friendly waters, all now open to the public. The site is well worth a visit.

While events for the rest of this year cannot yet be confirmed, anyone interested in joining the FAIBS group for future birding or habitat restoration activities can contact FAIBS at [faibssa@gmail.com](mailto:faibssa@gmail.com). Event information can also be found on the Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary website. We are staying optimistic that bird viewing excursions will be possible soon, especially as the migratory birds' mass return becomes imminent.



**Chris Braham planting seedlings**  
(Photo: Anna Woods)

**Anna Woods**



## Your *HELP* is Still Needed!

### Help wanted from photographers of SA Bar-tailed Godwit and Red Knot

Exactly which sub-species of both Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit occur in South Australia is unknown.

Basically the sub-species of both species divide along east/west lines, with a large gap with very limited numbers along the southern coast of Australia between Queenscliff and the Northern lagoon of the Coorong (to be honest I'm not sure of the section between the Murray Mouth and Adelaide).

Those that have been banded in the SE have been juveniles en-route to New Zealand, and assumed to be individuals of the eastern sub-species.

Increasing evidence is appearing that for both species there is a mix of both sub-species in South Australia.

With improved cameras, and more people taking photos of waders, we can learn a lot. I am hoping that I can entice people who are confined to home to check their files and share relevant photos.

#### What do we need in a photo?

- **Red Knot** — breeding plumage.
- **Bar-tailed Godwit** — views of their rump. Photos of godwit in flight are particularly useful. Not only can the sub-species be determined but such photos can also give some indication of the ratio of each.

Your photos must have been taken in South Australia. We will need the name of the photographer, as well as the date and the location where the photos were taken.

My end of the bargain will be to organise an expert to check the photos out. The photographer will be given feedback, even if it is just to say that a decision on the sub-species could not be made! And no photo will be used in a publication without prior consultation with the photographer! (I hope that covers everything.)

I recently received an email with attachments totalling 26MB. There probably needs to be a limit of something like 10MB per photo so that I can send it on. I don't know my computer's limit...

Please send this information to anyone you think might be interested in helping with this investigation.

Hopefully we will make some progress in solving this puzzle.

**Maureen Christie**

08 87380014; 0427 380014

[twinpeppercorns@gmail.com](mailto:twinpeppercorns@gmail.com)

\* See the next page for photos of the two species.

## Little Willy

Early in May, a Willie Wagtail took a shine to us. I don't know if it's male or female, but let's call her a she. It took a few weeks to get acquainted, but we've sort of worked out a routine now.

She twitters her presence with ascending volume outside our glass sliding door until she is let in. First, she flies to the cutting board, chittering impatiently until some cheese has been finely diced. Then there is an inspection flight around the rooms; a daddy-long-legs hunt in between short roosts on cupboards, ceiling fan blades, curtain pelmet and my head. There are a few little deposits to clean up after; but well – it's not like letting the chooks in is it!

Next, she follows me into the garden, hopping and flying half a step behind. She waits alongside or on my hand as I roll over the stones bordering the drive. Earwigs are her particular delicacies. The small earwigs are dispatched whole and the larger get belted over a stone until they have been mangled enough to swallow. Once, before I could stop her, a small skink went down the red lane.

It's rather special to have gained the trust of a tiny wild creature.

**Doug Clarke**

*Coffin Bay*



**Little Willy makes herself at home**

*(Photo: Doug Clarke)*

Your **HELP** is Still Needed! *(continued)*

To assist  
your search,  
photos of the  
knots and  
godwits



Two sub-species of Red Knots — *Calidris canutus rogersi* and *Calidris canutus piersmai*  
Looking at the photo, the **rogersi** is on the left. *(Photographed by Paul Taylor at Bald Hill on 20 May 2020)*



Two sub-species of Bar-tailed Godwits — *Limosa lapponica menzbieri* on left and *Limosa lapponica baueri* on right. *(Photographed by Sally Grundy on 6 October, 2014 at Mundoo, Northern Lagoon, Coorong)*

# BIRD WATCHING IS BIG BUSINESS, worth billions overseas and seeing almost one million take flight in 2019

Extract from the Ballarat Courier, JULY 17 2020, written by GREG GLIDDON

VICTORIA'S western district has an untapped potential to grow a domestic tourism market say animal experts.

As the country grapples with a 100 per cent drop in international tourism for the foreseeable future, Victoria's natural wetlands and reserves should provide an opportunity for bird enthusiasts to add some much needed boost to flagging tourist economies.

Tourism Australia's national visitor survey, to the year ending 2019, has for the first time included bird watching as part of its data.

Remarkably, it shows there were greater numbers who travelled for bird watching purposes than visited the Great Barrier Reef. The statistics indicate that 886,000 domestic tourists went bird watching in 2019, many including overnight stays in their itineraries. Kerrie Allen from lobby group 'Regional Victorian's Opposed

to Duck Shooting' said it was just another example of how important bird life can be to an economy.

"The number of domestic bird watching tourists presents a huge opportunity to places around Ballarat like Lake Burrumbeet which are blessed with stunning native waterbirds, many unique to our country," Ms. Allen said.

"The fact they are duck shooting areas for a handful of recreational native bird shooters hasn't helped." This tourism data is more strong evidence that change is in regional Victoria's best interests. "When COVID-19 restrictions ease, our regional economies will particularly welcome tourism. There is little if any infrastructure needed to attract a steady portion of the bird watching community. The assets are already here."

In the United States, bird watching is a \$41 billion industry. The Courier's nature writer Roger Thomas agrees, saying Ballarat is well positioned to be a central point to many of Victoria's most scenic bird watching regions.

"It's a fairly big industry, particularly for retirees," Mr. Thomas said. "And what we are seeing is an increasing interest as people have been locked down, particularly taking up bird watching from their own backyard."

"Then you've also got a huge industry for binoculars, telescopes, and obviously there's now the fitness side of it as well as people are looking to get out and about." Mr. Thomas said while Ballarat's Lake Wendouree was locally the most popular spot, there were plenty of other unique areas across the region, all within a short drive.

"Melbourne people certainly come here to the lake and a few other places," he said. "But you can also go north to Clunes and Maryborough, just over the dividing range and the habitat is quite different, and attracts different types of birds. "Another different habitat all together is the Wombat Forest and then you've also got the western plains, people love to see the brolgas in Victoria and that is their habitat."

"Australia is incredibly blessed by the variety of birdlife we have."

**Extract supplied by Jeff Groves**

<https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/6837543/the-big-business-of-bird-watching-is-taking-flight/?cs=12&fbclid=IwAR3HJK1CBizlnfKvRCyBf28iJDw39XSRpzNELfhsbyIBs8XW1JzQKxhHx>



BIRD WATCHING

## Short-tailed Shearwaters in Trouble



**Short-tailed Shearwater**  
(Photo: Brian Saunders)

I was going to write about Grey Fantails, but then in early May along came a storm.....

Short-tailed Shearwaters (STS's) are brown-black seabirds about the size of a magpie, surface feeding or diving for small marine life such as fish, crabs and prawns. They nest on islands along much of the south coast of Australia. Around late November, one egg is laid in a grass/leaf-lined nest at the end of a burrow, which can be up to two metres long. In April, the chicks, having been fed prodigiously and weighing more than their parents, are abandoned. The mature birds head to Antarctica where they feed to regain condition. On return, they pick up the young birds, which have fledged in their absence, to begin an annual 15,000km clockwise migration loop around the Pacific rim to California and back across the ocean to their breeding grounds.

In 1798 while in Bass Strait, Matthew Flinders noted in his diary "There was a stream of (STS's) from fifty to eighty yards in depth, and of three hundred yards or more in breadth; the birds were not scattered but flying as compactly as a free movement of their wings seemed to allow; and during a full hour and a half this stream continued to pass without interruption..... the number could not have been less than a hundred millions."!!!

Then sealers, having almost exterminated the seal population, turned their attention to these birds, especially on the Bass Strait islands. Huge numbers of adults, chicks and eggs were harvested yearly. A sailor,

apparently partial to the flesh, termed them flying sheep; hence the alternative name - Mutton Birds. Today, under control, only the hatchlings (known as squabs) are taken. The estimated population now stands at 20 million birds.

During our storm in early May, a flock of more than 300 STS's were seen over the bay from Long Beach at Coffin Bay, flying with fast wheeling glides and bursts of wingbeats. However, the more I observed, my initial exhilaration faded to concern. A number of the birds, apparently exhausted, were crash landing into the sea, but that gave them no respite. Their feathers must have become waterlogged as they struggled to keep their heads above water. Some succumbed to the huge effort to become airborne again. About 50 birds were washed up along the beach.

Two survivors, which were ambulated to Rob and Jo Smith for rehabilitation, didn't make it. However, another



**Shearwater in trouble** (Photo: Brian Saunders)

## Short-tailed Shearwaters in Trouble *(continued)*

patient last year thrived on a diet of pilchards and Pal dog food! This “greedy pig” knew he was on a good wicket and took some persuasion to be returned to the wild.

For much of this article I am indebted to Peter Barrand, President of BirdLife Warrnambool, who kindly added much to my very limited knowledge of seabirds. He confirmed that our Coffin Bay flock was almost certainly newly fledged birds and were probably in very poor condition. Storms drive the weaker seabirds to shore and if they are malnourished or ill, their chances of survival are slim. He goes on:

“The breeding season at Griffiths Island off Port Fairy was not great. Autopsies on adult birds revealed that they perished on arrival; too weak to manage a proper landing and plunged head first into the ground. Less than 50% of the 30 to 40,000 colony attempted to breed and only a few pairs completed their breeding cycle. The chicks appeared underweight.”

The Shearwaters’ plight appears to have originated last year in the Arctic Sea between Siberia and Alaska. Here, in normal years, vast numbers of krill feed on species of algae only found in the high latitudes. The birds, in turn, gorge on the krill. However, last year the ocean temperature here was unusually warm and again a chain reaction; no algae, no krill and starving birds. Thousands of birds were found washed up on beaches. It is thought this was just the tip of the



**Exhausted Shearwater roosting, with nictitating membrane closed**

*(Photo: Brian Saunders)*

iceberg as most of the area is uninhabited by humans. The birds that were autopsied showed no sign of illness — just starvation. Bird researchers are waiting with concern to monitor what happens in the Arctic this year.

Many thanks also for help from Tania Henriksen, Brian Saunders (also for the pictures), Rob & Jo Smith and Alan Tingay.

**Doug Clarke**

*Coffin Bay, May 2020*



**Shearwaters in a storm over Pt Douglas Bay**

*(Photo: Brian Saunders)*



**Shearwater struggling to take off**

*(Photo: Brian Saunders)*

## Larry's Birding Trips

### Another Social Distancing Bird Outing

IRONSTONE HILL CONSERVATION PARK  
Friday 29.05.2020

Due to the Corona virus restrictions the scheduled trip to Ironstone Hill CP was cancelled, so I decided to go there myself to see what birds were there.

The day started cold and clear. Driving down the Lincoln Hwy the first birds to appear were a handful of Australian Ravens, probably looking for road kill.

I stopped at the junction of the Hwy to Middleback Road to watch the sunrise from the Bluebush and I could hear the first calls of a Rufous Fieldwren and a distant Crested Bellbird. A single Welcome Swallow flew high overhead then a small group of White-fronted Chats came down to feed. Arriving at the entrance to Ironstone Hill CP the temperature was a measly 3° not much birdlife around yet, but after walking for a bit things started to liven up. White-eared Honeyeaters called from the treetops, Weebills and Brown-headed Honeyeaters dashed through the trees busily feeding. Moving on I saw a Grey Butcherbird, Common Bronzewing and a Golden Whistler. White-fronted Honeyeaters were calling with their familiar metallic sound. Driving through the park I'm working hard to find the birds (the birds definitely know how to social distance from us!) Arriving near a sunken area, which did hold water years ago I get some good looks at Splendid Fairy-wrens and a few Inland Thornbills.

Further along the track I decide to stop and target the Shy Heathwren. I came up lucky, keeping one interested for a while to allow me to take a couple of photos.

Later on Varied Sittellas raced across the Mallee, not stopping to allow me a better look.

So I stop to look around, Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens nervously peer at me from the bushes

A single Port Lincoln Parrot flies through as a Fan-tailed Cuckoo calls out from afar, so I track his call finding him sitting in a tree still calling as I get there.

After driving about 13km into the park I stop. Tree Martins are circling above and White-browed Babblers scatter as I approach.

I call it a day now after spending about 5 ½ hours here.

**Larry Gruitt**



**Grey Butcherbird** (Photo: Larry Gruitt)



**Shy Heathwren** (Photo: Larry Gruitt)



**Splendid Fairy-wren** (Photo: Larry Gruitt)

# Historical Series No 73.

## Edwin Ashby (1861-1941)

### Quaker, Naturalist and Plant Enthusiast.

### Part 2 by Penny Paton

Part 1 detailed Edwin Ashby's family background and explored his contribution to Australian ornithology, particularly his work in Western Australia and New South Wales. Here I describe his ornithological fieldwork in Victoria and South Australia.

I have already mentioned an early trip to Victoria in 1886, and Ashby continued to visit that state on many occasions. At Mount Dandenong in October 1914 he saw Superb Lyrebirds, described other birds not found in his home state and took a specimen of a breeding male Rose Robin that was in female plumage (Ashby 1915b). Thirty-four years after his first visit to Gippsland, Ashby returned in the first week of April 1920 (Ashby 1920b). He bemoaned the vegetation clearance that had taken place around Yinnar in the intervening years, with "miles and miles of rung timber", referring to the ring-barked eucalypts. As brown coal had been mined in Gippsland since the 1880s, it seems likely that the 1920 visit was in relation to a mining venture. Ashby noted the disappearance of two species seen in 1886, namely the Large-billed Scrubwren and the Pink Robin, but went on to list some of the birds that could still be seen in the vicinity.

Probably on the same trip in 1920, was an Easter visit to the fern gullies, presumably near Melbourne, with some friends in search of what must have been one of Ashby's favourite birds, the Superb Lyrebird (Ashby 1920c). They stalked a calling bird for some time in the pouring rain, removing their mackintoshes to avoid the swishing noise that they were making in case it disturbed the lyrebird. They were treated to an amazing performance when they

finally caught up with this bird. They recognised the calls of at least eleven bird species, including two species of cockatoo, Eastern Whipbird, Grey Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Golden Whistler and Grey Shrikethrush.

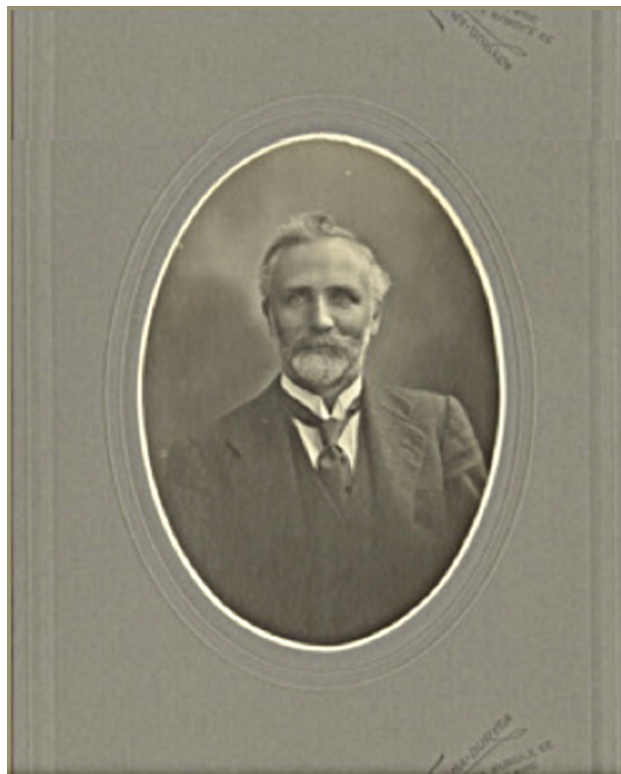


Photo 3 – Edwin Ashby in about 1925, aged in his mid-sixties, from the Thelma-Duryea photographic studio (courtesy State Library of South Australia B70984/4)

The 24<sup>th</sup> RAOU Congress, held in Melbourne in September 1925, was the first one in that city for eleven years due to the Great War (1914-18) during which none were held. Ashby was not present at the Congress but other members read two papers by him on silvereyes and currawongs. (Dickison 1926). However, Ashby did join the Campout held at Murrayville, in the Big Desert region of Victoria, although he wrongly gave the date as 1924 in a note to *Emu* on the occurrence there of the Inland Thornbill, based on a specimen he collected and compared with examples in the H. L. White Collection in the Melbourne Museum (Ashby 1927c). Photo 3 is a portrait of Ashby at about this time, when he was in his mid-sixties.

Only a year later Ashby was back in Victoria, visiting the Short-tailed Shearwater rookery at Cape Woolamai, on Phillip Island, with that noted Victorian ornithologist and oologist, A.J. Campbell (Ashby 1928b). The skipper of the ketch which transported them, John Burgess, was able to provide additional information on birds that traverse Bass Strait, as well as giving them information on the many seabird rookeries on the Bass Strait islands, including small islands off King and Flinders Islands and those near Wilson's Promontory and near the Tasmanian coast.

A fortnight in the Grampians in mid-October 1925, based at Hall's Gap, allowed Ashby to explore not

just the avifauna but also the botany of this unique and spectacular area (Ashby 1927d). His collecting was limited by the conditions of his permit to examples of four bird genera and only two pairs of each, so he spent much of his time collecting plants instead which he sent to a friend, Dr A. B. Rendle, Keeper of Botany at the British Museum (Natural History) from 1906 to 1930. Ashby listed all the species of birds seen and gave details of the few specimens of *Acanthiza* (thornbill), *Sericornis* (scrubwren) and *Strepera* (currawong) taken. The local Grey Currawongs were disliked by landowners due to their depredations on fowl eggs and fruit in the orchards.

In February 1927, Ashby paid a visit to the South East of South Australia and continued on to Western Victoria (Ashby 1927e). As is typical for this time of year, the weather was extremely hot but, despite this, on arriving at Nelson on the Glenelg River, Ashby went for a long walk and, in company with Mr Simson, searching for the Ground Parrot, without success. They were welcomed by Mr Donovan who lived on the three mile stretch of the river on the SA side of the border at Donovan's Landing, and who showed them hospitality as well as a mounted specimen of a Ground Parrot. They spent a few days around Port Fairy and Warrnambool before returning to South Australia on the homeward leg.

Naturally most of Ashby's travels and birdwatching were in his home state and no doubt not all were written up and published. Mention has been made of early visits to the tip of Yorke Peninsula and the plains west of Adelaide in 1886, but published accounts include trips to Kangaroo Island, the River Murray, Port Willunga, Mount Compass, Cape Jervis, the mid-North, the mallee near Pungonda and mallee east of Adelaide in the vicinity of Chaunceys Line.

Ashby paid several visits to the mid-North, the first documented visit was in November 1900, when he was on the eastern side of the Flinders Ranges about 35 miles east of Peterborough (which at that time was called Petersburg), where he encountered the White-winged Fairywren (Ashby 1917c). Then in September 1916 he journeyed to Port Germein in company with Frank Parsons and Maurice Edward Saunders, the son of his cousin Ernest (Ashby 1917c). Maurice, who was born in 1888, joined the RAOU in 1916 and probably worked with his father in the company Saunders and Ashby, as his address was the company's Adelaide address. They were searching for what we now know as Splendid Fairywren, that Ashby said was 'only met with in a narrow strip of salt-bush country between the Flinders Ranges and Spencer Gulf ... between Port Germein and Port Augusta' (see below). Ashby (1917c) provided notes on other bird species seen and collected in the vicinity of Clare, Nackara, Crystal Brook and Port Pirie. The party also visited Wirrabara, as Ashby wrote a paper on the vexed

taxonomy of the Crimson Rosella and documented shooting two adult Yellow Rosellas from a flock at Wirrabara in September 1916 (Ashby 1917d). In this paper Ashby described *Platycercus elegans fleurieuensis*, the Fleurieu Peninsula population of the Adelaide Rosella, which is still recognised today (Horton *et al.* 2018).

The taxonomy of the Splendid Fairywren *Malurus splendens* was in a very confused state at this time and Ashby (1917c) only muddied the waters further. On this trip Ashby and his party collected one coloured male of what he called *Malurus melanotus whitei*, originally described as *Malurus whitei* by Campbell (1902). However, a footnote to Ashby's (1917c) article states that on comparing this specimen with seven specimens of *Malurus callainus* (then considered a full species – the Turquoise Wren), he thought that Campbell's *M. whitei* should be regarded as a synonym of *M. callainus*. Unbeknownst to Ashby, *M. whitei* was based on specimens from central New South Wales (Longmore 1991), not 'Interior South Australia' as stated by Mathews (1912), and is now regarded as a synonym of Black-backed Fairywren *M. splendens melanotus*, which subspecies in South Australia occurs east of the Mount Lofty and Flinders Ranges. The population around Port Germein had in fact been described by Mathews (1912) as *M. germaini* but, because of cumulative errors in the literature, the name 'whitei' stuck for this population for decades, for example in the paper on the limits of subspecies of *M. splendens* in South Australia by Reid *et al.* (1977). *Malurus germaini* is now regarded as a synonym of *M. splendens callainus* (which occurs west of the Flinders Ranges), although there remain questions as to the exact identity of this population (P. Horton pers. comm.).

Ashby published a paper on some of the bird species seen and collected on two trips to Kangaroo Island in 1905 (Ashby 1926b). The first trip was in March of that year and the second was in October as part of the Campout following the AOU's Congress held in Adelaide. The Campout occupied ten days, under the leadership of J. W. Mellor, with the travellers embarking on the steamer *Governor Musgrave* at Henley Beach on the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> October, and not arriving at Snelling Beach near Middle River on Kangaroo Island until after dark (Australasian Ornithologists' Union 1906).

Excursions were made to Stokes Bay, Western River, the upper reaches of the Cygnet River and Cape Borda and 70 bird species were recorded over the ten days (Campbell 1906). Ashby does not record the reason for his March 1905 trip to the Island, but it is possible he was scouting for places to take the AOU members later in the year. In March he visited Middle River and Stokes Bay and met with Mr H. George Bell, who provided advice to the organisers and a house for the members' use in October (Australasian Ornithologists' Union 1906).



Very little ornithological work had been carried out on the Island by the early years of the twentieth century, and in March Ashby (1926b) collected the first examples of the Glossy Black Cockatoo for South Australia and documented the first record of the Southern Emu-wren from Kangaroo Island, a bird killed by Mr Bell's dog at Stokes Bay.

An intriguing photo (Photo 4) taken on the AOU Campout in October 1905 shows five women outside a tent and, by cross-referencing the women present on the camp (Australasian Ornithologists' Union 1906), we can deduce that the two older women are Mrs A.J. Campbell and Miss Margaret Ashby (Edwin's older sister) and that the three younger women are from the group of four young women attending — Miss Ellie Campbell, the Misses Barbara and Winifred Mellor (sisters of J. W. Mellor) and Miss A. Dethbridge. Mr and Mrs A.J. Campbell's son, A.G. Campbell, was also a member of the party and we can assume that Miss Dethbridge is Amy, who married A.G. Campbell on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1907.

Other short ornithological trips within South Australia included two to Schwetze's (*sic*) Landing on the River Murray in January 1911 and January 1912 (Ashby 1912a, Ashby 1912b). Schuetze Landing is north-east of Mannum and Ashby investigated the mallee about 5 miles east of the River, where he described some of the bird species met with (Ashby 1912b) and the collection of a Black-eared Miner in the mallee and a Noisy Miner along the River in 1912 (Ashby 1912a). A short note documented a brief visit to Port Willunga in April 1914 (Ashby 1914a). An Easter 1917 visit to Cape Jervis with Frank Parsons contributed to Ashby's research into the Crimson/Adelaide Rosella complex (Ashby 1917d). Later that year in September, Ashby was again in the mallee, but this time at Pungonda near the Victorian border with Frank Parsons and his cousin's son, Maurice Saunders. Ashby wrote two short papers on this trip, the first listed most of the 70 bird species seen and gave some breeding records and the specimens secured (Ashby 1918a). Ashby (1918b) gave more details of a few of the bird species that the party saw and a briefer description of the soils and habitat of the area.



**Photo 4 - Women attending AOU Campout  
October 1905, Middle River, Kangaroo Island  
(courtesy State Library of South Australia B57823/11)**

A day trip along Chance's Line (now known as Chauncey's Line Road) with Frank Parsons and J. Neil McGilp in September 1919 gives a glimpse of this area from one hundred years ago (Ashby 1920d). Within a mile of Woodchester the party met with mallee that continued for some miles along the road that was "metalled 40 to 60 years ago, with the intention of its becoming the main coach road to Melbourne, via Wellington". Ashby described this patch of mallee as large and suggested that several square miles of this vegetation should be preserved by the government, which did eventuate many years later, in 1983, with the proclamation of the 240 ha Ferries McDonald Conservation Park. Many of the bird species encountered were described and Ashby was particularly interested in specimens of the Elegant and the Blue-winged Parrot from the same vicinity.

Just after Christmas 1919, Ashby, Parsons and McGilp spent two days in the Mount Compass district, a place Ashby had longed to spend more time in than the occasional hour when *en route* to Victor Harbor (Ashby 1920e). The group of ornithologists were particularly interested in the Mount Compass area due to the rare bird species that had been sent from there to the South Australian Museum more than thirty years previously. I surmise that Ashby was referring to specimens collected at least in part by F. W. Andrews, the topic of four Historical Series (Carpenter 2012 a,b,c; Carpenter 2013). Andrews was living in the Mount Compass area in the time leading up to his death in 1884 (Carpenter 2012a) and his specimens in the South Australian Museum, Adelaide (SAMA) from Mount Compass include Flame Robin, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Varied

Sittella and Southern Emuwren (P. Horton pers. comm.).

Amongst other species seen and collected by Ashby and his friends, they located the Southern Emuwren, the first time that any of the observers had seen this bird on the mainland of South Australia (Ashby 1920e). Ever the alert observer, Ashby was convinced that the skins of emuwrens from Mt Compass were different in colouration from those from Victoria, Tasmania and Kangaroo Island and he named this bird *Stipiturus malachurus intermedius* (Ashby 1920e), today a recognised subspecies that is listed as Critically Endangered.

Some small quails that were flushed were considered to be King Quails, a species that Ashby had never seen in South Australia and in which state it is now considered extinct. Locals told them that this species came into their gardens later in the season and promised to send word when they returned. Word came in February 1920 that the King Quails were about and the group of three men returned, only to find that the birds had not been seen in the gardens but rather in a swamp close by. Despite finding them hard to flush, two specimens of male King Quails were collected and several females were seen. Ashby showed skins of several rare birds, including the Ground Parrot, to their local informants, who said that the parrot had not been seen for many years (Ashby 1920e).

For a week in February 1927 Ashby repeated a trip taken by other members of the SAOA in the previous spring to the South East of South Australia (Ashby 1927f). He went to Waltowa Swamp and made brief stops at Chinamans Well on the Coorong, at Kingston, Robe and near Beachport. After several days in adjacent Victoria, Ashby returned to Adelaide via Port MacDonnell, Naracoorte, Robe and Woods Well. The extremely hot weather and the time of year worked against seeing the numbers and richness of birds seen by the group in 1926, but Ashby was pleased to collect two specimens of the Grey-crowned Babbler near Kingston and to find a dead corvid near Naracoorte. While he was skinning the corvid in a hotel in Naracoorte (which shows how times have changed in nearly one hundred years!) he was approached by a young kangaroo shooter who told him that there were two species of corvid in the district, a smaller one that lived in the "scrub", while the other one inhabited the open river red gum country. The young man also told him that the small one was much less common than the other and had a different call — "more squeaky and without the croak of the ordinary Crow." It is likely that these observations relate to the Forest Raven (the larger bird with the more croaky call) and the Little Raven (the smaller bird), which was not recognised until 1970 (Higgins *et al.* 2006).

In addition to his own fieldwork, Ashby corresponded with and received specimens from C.E. May, a collector of skins and eggs, who lived in the Northern

Territory from the 1880s to about 1920 (Horton *et al.* 2018). Born in Adelaide in 1856, May worked in the mining and pearl fishing industries and collected natural history specimens, including bird skins and egg clutches during 1891-1916, mainly in the vicinity of Darwin and Port Keats, for SAMA (*ibid.*). May sent specimens to Ashby from the Pine Creek area in the Northern Territory in about 1914 (Ashby 1914b, Ashby 1915c), from which Ashby described several new subspecies, although all are now synonyms (*ibid.*). It is also likely that the specimens that Ashby sent to Mathews for his *Birds of Australia* volumes (1910-27) from the Port Keats area were collected by May. Ashby (1906) wrote a note for *Emu*, detailing field notes written by May from Port Keats, where he was living at the time.

As we have seen Ashby was a keen collector of bird skins but the extent of his skin collection will never be known. After deciding by 1920 to donate his skin collection to SAMA and only weeks before the handover, a bushfire in March 1934 destroyed his home and most of his collections (Horton *et al.* 2018). Fortunately his chiton collection and some bird skins had already been donated to SAMA, he had sent skins to Gregory Mathews for his *Birds of Australia*, had presented over 400 bird specimens to the American Museum of Natural History in 1920 and 1923 and exchanged specimens with other museums (*ibid.*) and probably other collectors also. Both the H.L. White and the S.A. White Collections contain specimens collected by Ashby, as do the Western Australia Museum and the British Museum of Natural History. Ashby is represented in the SAMA collection by about 377 study skins, a few skeletons, nests and mounted birds, and six egg clutches. There are 16 egg clutches derived from C.E. May in the SAOA Egg Collection that went to SAMA in 1932 and these probably came via Edwin Ashby.

Two suitcases containing over 200 specimens from Ashby's skin collection are in the possession of a family member. These include birds collected by C. E. May, J. Sharp and Edwin's son, Keith Ashby, but most were probably collected by Edwin. The birds were collected from all Australian states and the Northern Territory, from 1889 until 1936, with the majority from South Australia. There are also some specimens from Central and South America, including about 25 hummingbirds, which Ashby was particularly interested in.

Ashby described many birds which are detailed in Horton *et al.* (2018), but only three are currently recognised today — the Fleurieu Peninsula population of the Adelaide Rosella, the Mt. Lofty Ranges population of the Southern Emuwren and the Gibberbird *Ashbyia lovensis* (*ibid.*).

*Edwin Ashby part 3 will be published in the Summer edition of The Birder.*

Larry's Birding trips (continued)

## Birding in the Bendleby Ranges

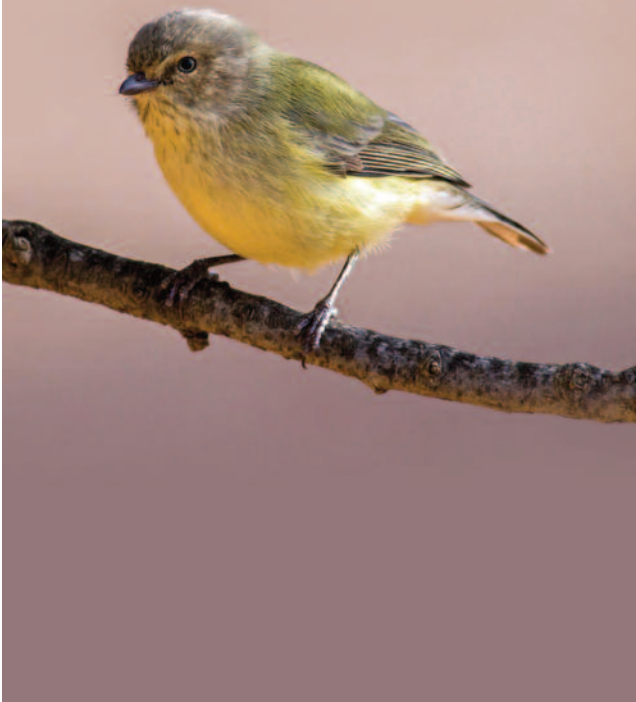
Julia and I have just returned from a trip to Bendleby Ranges, in the southern Flinders Ranges. We were there about 6 days and did a bit of birding mainly in the vicinity of the Homestead, Gum Dale and the Hidden Valley road.

Here are a few photos showing some of the birds we saw during our stay. Email me at [lazzag@LIVE.COM](mailto:lazzag@LIVE.COM) if you would like see a complete bird list for our trip

We managed to pick up 40 species. We had some really good looks at Chestnut-crowned Babblers. They were breeding and we managed to witness the communal feeding of the fledglings.

There were some very cold early mornings, but the days were clear, (except Saturday, which was windy and raining).

**Larry Gruitt**



Photos by Larry Gruitt, From top to bottom:

**Chestnut-crowned Babbler**

**Mallee Ringneck**

**Pied Cormorant**

**Mulga Parrot**

Left:

**Weebill**

(Photo: Larry Gruitt)

## A bird trip with a difference

### Birding in PNG — not for the faint-hearted, or the unfit.

This article differs from most bird trip reports in that it concentrates on my experiences as a 'generalist' birder, who is not overly concerned about whether or not the birds she sees are rare or endemic. I find all birds interesting, especially those that are new to me, but I was happy to see familiar friends, notably the abundant Willie Wagtails, on this trip. The following paragraphs will not contain a list of the rare, endemic, or just plain common, birds I saw, but on my personal experiences on the trip.

In September 2019, I joined a 'Gentle New Guinea' tour run by Sicklebill Safaris. My principal objective was to delete a significant item — to see Birds of Paradise — from my Bucket List. Our very competent and helpful leader was Phil Gregory, one of the owners of Sicklebill Safaris. The rest of the group consisted of Scott Baker, a trainee guide, and six birders including me. Several local guides always accompanied us on our walks.

The travel brochures inform the keen but unwary birder that New Guinea's avifauna is one of the most exciting in the world. The island of New Guinea contains more endemics than any other country (400+) and is home to some of the world's most exotic and sought-after birds, the family *Paradisaeidae*, or Birds of Paradise. This family contains about 43 members, 36 of which can be found in Papua New Guinea. However, many of these birds are restricted to very limited areas and some are extremely hard to see. The brochures inform you that special expeditions are needed to find them.

What the brochures do not tell unwary birders is why the birds in PNG are extremely hard to see. All animal life in PNG has been, and is still being, very severely hunted, not just for decoration, but also for food. Phil told us that PNG is the most difficult place in the world for birding.

On our first forest walk, I was very surprised to see that Phil and our guides were carrying telescopes. However, I soon saw why telescopes are absolutely essential for



**Brown Sicklebill, female plumaged**

(Photo: Cynthia Pyle)



**King-of-Saxony Bird of Paradise**

(Photo: Scott Baker)

PNG birding. Firstly the much-hunted birds are very cautious. Secondly, the forests are very dense and the trees are very tall. We really appreciated the telescopes.

Two of our birding locations were in the mountains. The steep 'ups' and 'downs' were not confined to our bird walks in the forests. At the lodge on Rondon Ridge, I had to climb 40 steps from my room to the dining area.

Our other highland lodge, Kumul Lodge, really spoils both birds and birders by providing a feeding table for the birds. We sat on comfortable chairs and didn't need a telescope to enjoy watching the birds' activities. One, or perhaps two, Yellow-faced Mynas provided a novel source of entertainment. These birds can change the colours of their faces. They are usually yellow, but they can change to red when the birds are agitated.

Even there, the birds were much more wary than those that visit feeding tables at home. We could understand why when we were told that the beautiful adult male who had been there for some years was hit by a Western Highlander with a catapult in 2014 and has now disappeared. A young male takes up to 7 years for develop his full adult plumage. We did see several Brown Sicklebills, but they were all female-plumaged.

One aspect of the behaviour of male Birds of Paradise transformed our task of finding them from impossible to comparatively easy — but you must know the right people! Birds of Paradise tend to perch in the same spot at the same time every day and call to attract the females. Landowners know the habits of their resident Birds of Paradise. Nowadays, this knowledge is fortunate for both birders and landowners, and especially for the birds. They unknowingly protect themselves by providing the landowners with a source of income.

## A bird trip with a difference *(continued)*

When we reached the appropriate locations at the times appointed by the birds, our guides set up the telescopes, and we were able to obtain good long distance views these beautiful birds. If a female had responded, the male would have put on a spectacular display. Unfortunately we did not see any displays.

Unfortunately for birders, some of the Birds of Paradise insisted on arriving at their display area so early in the morning, that we half-awake birders had to set out from our comfortable lodges and travel some distances while it was still dark. For our trip on the Fly River, we walked down the riverbank in the dark, aided only by our guides and their torches. It was daylight when we reached the location of our 'target' bird. Happily, we had excellent views of him perching in a tree on the far side of the river.

From the lodge on Rondon Ridge, we made a pre-dawn start to climb through an initially dark forest to the top of a very steep ridge. We had some excellent views of the King-of-Saxony Bird of Paradise. Unlike the other Birds of Paradise we saw, this bird's head is adorned, rather than its tail. We had a very special treat that morning, which compensated for the early start and the steep climb. A member of the hotel staff carried our very welcome breakfasts on his back to the top of the ridge. There was even hot water for our tea!

The final destination of our trip was quite different from all our other locations. It was in New Britain, a long way from the highlands. We were at sea level, and the surrounding countryside was quite flat. It contains intensive beef cattle farming, together with large palm oil plantations. Birding was much easier there, especially in the grounds of our resort.

The birds of New Britain are very different from those of mainland New Guinea, with no Birds of Paradise; but we saw some great kingfishers as well as colourful pigeons and parrots.

To remind us of home, large numbers of Willie Wagtails frequented these gardens. One of their very original, and safe, nest locations, was surrounded by shallow water at all stages of the tide



### **Willie wagtail nest over water grounds of Walandi Resort**

*(Photo:  
Cynthia Pyle)*



### **Blue Bird of Paradise** *(Photo: Anuradha Chatterjee)*

The Golden Masked Owl is a barn owl endemic to the island of New Britain. It was important for us to see this bird, as we would obviously never see it anywhere else. After dinner on the last two evenings of our tour, we climbed into our bus, binoculars and cameras in our hands, to search for one of these birds. On our first search, we must have driven through every bumpy track in the extensive palm plantations without even a glimpse of our target. Eventually we returned to our resort and fell into bed. The next evening, our final night in PNG, we repeated the activity. This time we did actually see the owl, but it didn't hang around!

Although I didn't find the trip easy, as far as getting around or spotting birds was concerned, I found it to be an enlightening and fulfilling experience. I am especially grateful to the PNG guides at the different locations who ensured that I coped with steep slopes and uneven steps, and didn't trip over the tree roots that constantly crossed the paths in the forests.

I highly recommend Sicklebill Safaris. Both Phil and Scott were knowledgeable and helpful and my tour companions were very pleasant and friendly. I extend special thanks to my Indian roommate, Anu, and for permission to use her beautiful photographs.

Phil's trip report lists the names of 232 bird species, of which 17 species were Birds of Paradise, that were seen or heard on the trip.

Apart from my memory, sources of information I used for this article were the Itinerary provided by Sicklebill Safaris together with Phil's report from the trip.

**Cynthia Pyle**

## Past Excursions

### Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 6th June

#### Scott C.P. Currency Creek

WOW what a beautiful day!!

This was the first time we could restart after Covid 19. Eighteen adults and 2 children came out to enjoy the birds and the park in perfect clear, calm, and sunny weather. We split the group and wandered slowly into the park. Bob one way and I the other.

As soon as you hopped out the car there were birdcalls all around you. A mob of Galahs (100) or so was feeding in the paddock across the road where a new crop had been planted. The parrots and lorikeets were busy in the old eucalypt trees, seeking their hollows for pairing up and breeding. Musk Lorikeets and Purple-crowned Lorikeets were in similar numbers and could be seen all over the park. Elegant Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, and a few Red-rumped Parrots were amongst them. A Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo was calling and glided into view with its slow iconic wing flight that makes you relax instantly and forget all the world's troubles! My idea of a great escape!

Ducks in the trees! Two Shelducks took off and flew overhead. Wood Ducks were nearby in another tree. Honeyeaters abounded, including a couple of Crescent Honeyeaters and plenty of New Holland Honeyeaters. We also saw a few Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Brown-headed Honeyeaters. Striated Pardalotes were common and one Spotted Pardalote was found near the end of the walk. Our group sighted both White-fronted Treecreepers and Brown Treecreepers not far from the little dam. They were calling loudly. Babblers were hiding in the low vegetation and scattering out of sight quickly, as were the Superb Fairywrens.

We heard a Kookaburra and an Owlet-nightjar, and we saw one Brush Bronzewing, a Weebill, Golden Whistlers and several different thornbills.

Scott Conservation Park remains such a gem to visit in winter and early spring because of all the bird activity. The orchids, and bush flowers become more prolific later in season. The ground and steep creek banks need to be navigated with great care due to the heavy clay surface, particularly after rain and a walking pole is handy for this.

Bird count came to 45 species, due to some expert birders amongst us, together with the perfect calm weather to enjoy it all. I hope the rest of June is just as good for the other bird outings.

**Wendy Phillips**

### Birds SA

Saturday 13th June

#### Barossa Goldfields

As this was the first excursion after Coronavirus restrictions started to ease, there was the possibility that almost too many people would turn up, as we have all been keen to get out and about. Then some rather dire weather transformed this into a concern that no one would show up, leaving the leader alone and forlorn! However, despite the forecast, nine people gathered and luckily the rain held off until after our walk. There were three new people including a local couple who were happy just to come along for the walk.

We traversed the Phoenix Trail in a clockwise direction starting from Bowden Cottage at the corner of Allandale and Para Wirra Rds. There are several walks in the area, which is in the northern section of Para Wirra Conservation Park. Interesting mining relics are scattered about and it's a pleasant place to visit with picnic tables and a toilet at the Cottage.

One lucky person spotted a Brown Quail running across the road near the Cottage and we soon started to encounter Little Ravens (10), Grey Currawongs (10) and Australian Magpies (20). A group of White-winged Choughs (15) were seen fossicking on the ground and Galahs (6), Musk Lorikeets (25) and Adelaide Rosellas (15) were spotted either in the trees or flying overhead. One Common Bronzewing and two Crested Pigeons were also seen. Striated Pardalotes (5) chip-chipped in the trees above and Superb Fairywren (2) flitted about in the undergrowth.

Honeyeaters observed included Crescent (10), New Holland (10), White-plumed (1), Yellow-faced (10) and Little Wattlebird (1). Throughout the walk and particularly on the return leg towards the Cottage, Red Wattlebirds (100) seemed to be everywhere! Grey Fantail (1) and Willy Wagtail (1) and a lone Silveryeye were also recorded. There were several groups of White-browed Babblers (15) encountered at various spots along the trail.

The species total for the day was 22, which rather surprised us on account of the weather. However, despite the rather trying conditions, everyone enjoyed the walk and being able to go birding again with the group.

**Ali Ben Kahn**

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Port Augusta Bird Group (the Babblers)

13th and 14th June

#### Catninga Station

##### *Saturday 13th June*

It was a very windy and cloudy day when 2 birders met at the Stirling North pub carpark. They were from Pt. Augusta and Mambray Creek. The weather conditions and the corona isolation factors seem to have kept other birders away. We drove along the old Wilmington road and turned off to Catninga, which is about 12km from Stirling North and is located on the western foothills of Mt. Brown. We met the landowners at the homestead and they showed us our camping site at the old shearing shed. Another member of our birding group, from Pt. Pirie, was already there and waiting for us. The area overlooks the top of the St. Vincent Gulf and provides some excellent views of the surrounding area. There are River Red Gum lined creeks, Bluebush plains, Mallee covered slopes, hills and gullies — all overlooked by Mt. Brown.

The wind was blowing strongly and rain was threatening but we decided to walk around the homestead area. Galahs flew past while Australian Magpies and Mallee Ringnecks watched us from some trees and a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles soared high above the hills. A pair of Wood Ducks floated on the water in a small dam as we walked towards the nearest hill via a gum-lined creek. Striated Pardalotes called from the gums and Grey Fantails flitted about in the trees on the hill. The wind was blowing very strongly as we climbed the sheltered side of the rocky hill, following the sound of birds that turned out to be Yellow Thornbills. Near the top of the hill White-fronted Honeyeaters were feeding on flowering mallee trees. As we descended the hill Little Ravens flew past and Tree Martins glided overhead. In the scrub Singing Honeyeaters and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters were having territorial disputes. Mistletoebirds fed on the mistletoe berries in the trees under which White-browed Babblers were rummaging around. Back at the shed a flock of House Sparrows were feeding on seeds in the straw that was for the horses. It had been raining for a while and we dried off while we had some lunch. When the weather improved we decided to drive into the mallee area along a slippery track. At a deep creek crossing it became too slippery to continue in the vehicles so we walked on further. A flock of Dusky Woodswallows and a Nankeen Kestrel perched in the trees watching us while Willie Wagtails hawked for

insects on the ground. As we walked through the Mallee, we saw Grey Shrike-thrushes, Grey Butcherbirds, Red Wattlebirds and Weebills. In an open bluebush area Southern Whitefaces, White-winged Fairy-wrens, Pipits and Yellow-rumped Thornbills were feeding on the ground. Back in amongst the mallee a flock of about 12 Striated Pardalotes was noisily feeding and display wing flicking to each other but they would not stay still long enough to provide a photo opportunity. A young Grey-fronted Honeyeater was constantly calling for a feed from only one adult that we saw. We headed back to the vehicles finding Elegant Parrots, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills and Inland Thornbills, and a pair of very pale coloured Rufous Whistlers, a Kookaburra, a Mulga Parrot, Crested Pigeons, and Black-faced Cuckooshrike. As we drove back to camp we saw a flock of a dozen Black-capped Sittellas. We had found 37 bird species, which was good considering the weather conditions.

##### *Saturday 14th June*

It was a calm, cold and clear morning on which we were joined by another birder from Pt. Augusta. The 4 of us walked through some scrub near our camp to look for Redthroats that could be heard calling. We found 4 and took some photos, as well as Red-capped Robins, Purple-backed Fairywrens, Magpie Larks, Australian Ravens, a Pallid Cuckoo and Rock Doves. After an informative talk with the landowners we decided to have a look at the Woolundunga springs area, about 4km south of the homestead. Permanent water is there, and it was the first water supply for Pt. Augusta. On the way we crossed a River Red Gum creek with Galahs and Elegant Parrots in the trees and then drove over an extensive Bluebush plain. Here we found White-fronted Chats, Pipits, White-winged Fairywrens, White-backed Swallows and a Whistling Kite. As we neared the springs we followed another River Red Gum lined creek and saw a Brown Falcon, Black-faced Woodswallows, a murmuration of Common Starlings, a Wedge-tailed Eagle, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and Singing Honeyeaters, Tree Martins, Southern Whitefaces, Striated Pardalotes, Little Ravens, a Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, Galahs, more Elegant Parrots and Mallee Ringnecks looking into nesting hollows. Near the Woolundunga springs we enjoyed our lunch and we then walked along the creek to the springs. White-browed Babblers and Purple-backed Fairywrens moved about in the thick scrub while in the trees there were Grey Fantails, Willie Wagtails, a Grey Butcherbird, Grey Shrike-thrush, a Fan-tailed Cuckoo, a Blackbird, Weebills, Mistletoebirds, Silvereyes, Inland

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

Thornbills, Peaceful Dove, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. There were no water birds and no reeds in the creek but there are some ponds of water. After we had looked at the stone weir and ruins it was time to head back. On the return trip we added Yellow-throated Miners, Australian Magpies and Crested Pigeons.

Fifty-seven bird species had been found over the weekend with the Grey-fronted Honeyeater feeding young, the flocks of Black-capped Sittellas and Striated Pardalotes and the Redthroats being the highlights. The 17 Elegant Parrots seen over the weekend are also worth a mention.

**Bernie Haase**

## Birds SA

Thursday 18th June

### Deep Creek Conservation Park

The weather was great for this location at this time of the year with a sunny sky and a gentle breeze for the 17 members who attended. Our leisurely walk commenced at the Stringybark Campground and followed most of the Spring Wildflower Walk before we retraced our steps back to the vehicles for a pleasant lunch and the birdcall, which revealed our total sightings of only 17 species!

Despite the low numbers we were constantly entertained by local Laughing Kookaburra and Australian Magpie species, which were obviously used to obtaining food from campers. Crimson Rosella (12), Striated Thornbill (12), Scarlet Robin (6) and Superb Fairywren (20) were regularly sighted during our walk. A highlight for most occurred whilst investigating a small flock of Red-browed Finches when a pair of Australian Golden Whistlers flew in and the male sat quietly in the sun for excellent views and photos.

After lunch most members agreed to drive to Fishery Beach (near Cape Jervis) to investigate the old Casuarina plantings in case any Glossy Back Cockatoos had flown over from Kangaroo Island following the devastating fires there earlier in the year. Regrettably there were no sightings of that species but we did record another eight new birds for the day including Australasian Gannet, Pied Cormorant and Australian Pipit for this interesting location with its splendid views of KI and the treacherous waters of Backstairs Passage.

**Lynton Huxley**

## Birds SA

Sunday 28th June

### Browns Road, Monarto

Being one of the first Birds SA field trips since the Covid-19 restrictions ended in South Australia, and given that the weather was forecast to be good on the other side of the Mount Lofty Ranges, we were expecting a big turnout, but nowhere near the 50+ people that turned up. Parking was an issue, but eventually we sorted it all out.



**Southern Whiteface** (Photo: Rose Slade)



**Southern Whiteface gathering nesting material**  
(Photo: Rose Slade)



## Past Excursions *(continued)*



**Southern Boobook at Browns Road** (Photo: Miles Ramm)

Every participant confirmed that they were showing no symptoms of Covid-19 and registered their details on the paperwork. After securing a couple of volunteers to help lead we split up into three groups and commenced the walk.

In the area of Casuarinas near the car park, we saw a Southern Boobook, Little Ravens, Crimson Rosellas, New Holland Honeyeaters, White-plumed Honeyeaters and Yellow Thornbills. Around the bird feeder in the open grassy area, there were Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Weebills, Willie Wagtails, Hooded Robins, Red-capped Robins, Starlings, Diamond Firetails, Elegant Parrots and Australian Ringnecks. A Fan-tailed Cuckoo could also be heard calling in the distance.

We then made our way about one hundred metres into the woodland scrub; we saw White-browed Babblers, Grey Butcherbirds, Brown-headed, Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Grey Fantails, White-winged

Choughs, a Golden Whistler, and a Grey Shrikethrush. Looping our way back to the car park, we came across a pair of Varied Sittellas building a nest, which was very interesting to watch, as well as some Brown Treecreepers.

Some different birds that other groups saw seen during the day included Painted Button-Quail, Purple-backed Fairywren, Southern Whiteface, Silvereye, Common Bronzewing, Peaceful Dove, Purple-crowned Lorikeet and Rufous Whistler. At the birdcall, we counted a total of 44 species.

Later, some people headed to Monarto Conservation Park, and saw Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Tree Martin, and a brief view of a Shy Heathwren. Also of interest at Monarto Conservation Park was the sighting of some native orchids.

***Miles Ramm***

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Fleurieu Birders

#### Saturday 4th July Hardy's Scrub

Hardy's Scrub Conservation Park is a patch of protected bushland located just south of the Onkaparinga Gorge. On the cool and fine drizzly morning of July 4th, 22 enthusiastic birders met at Gate 16 of the park on the Chapel Hill Road. We followed the 4 km, well sign-posted and moderately graded track meandering through stands of Pink Gums, Grey Box and native pines with an often dense understory of acacias and heaths, some of which were flowering. Our group split into two, with each half following the circular track, respectively, in clockwise and anticlockwise directions. In the higher levels of the park, Crescent and New Holland Honeyeaters, as well as Rainbow Lorikeets were calling. Silvereyes and Striated Thornbills were active amongst the understory. A single raptor, a Nankeen Kestrel was sighted overhead. Small numbers of Grey Currawongs, Australian Magpies, Little Ravens and Adelaide Rosellas were also observed throughout this part of the walk. The bird life was quite patchy; one group saw several Fantail Cuckoos, whereas despite searching by the other group, these birds remained elusive. However, both groups found "hot spots" of bird species. This was especially apparent as we dropped down into the lower parts of the park, near the creek. Also, about this time the weather began to improve, with sunny conditions prevailing for the rest of the hike. One group saw Red-browed Finches along the edge of the track, while Golden Whistlers, Eastern Spinebills, Striated Pardalotes, a White-browed Scrubwren and a Buff-rumped Thornbill were seen amongst the trees and understory. The other group had good views of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, and a female Golden Whistler Grey Fantails and Mistletoebirds. Both female and male Superb Fairywrens were seen and heard throughout the park by both groups.

This track is also popular with fitness runners, hikers and natural bush enthusiasts, some of whom we met during the outing. These included Native Orchid photographers. Everyone finished up at the lunch site amongst the Native Pines near the car park, exchanging stories about the birds they had seen. The final bird count totalled 35 species, with highlights for some, the Fantailed Cuckoos, and for the other group, the Red-browed Finches were very special.

**Keith Jones**



**Female Golden Whistler** (Photo: Bob Daly)



**Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** (Photo: Bob Daly)



**Our group having lunch and doing the bird count**  
(Photo: Bob Daly)

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Port Augusta Bird Group (the Babblers)

#### Sunday 12th July Horseshoe range

It was a cold and wet morning when 7 birders came together at the Wilmington pub. Three were from Pt. Augusta and one each was from Koolunga, Pt. Pirie, Whyalla and Mambray Creek. We asked some locals if the road to the Horseshoe Range was passable for average cars after the rain we had just received, and they said it was. We drove north east of Wilmington to Hammond and the road was only damp but the countryside was bare and still in the grip of drought. The turnoff to the Horseshoe Range is about 11km



**Apostlebird** (Photo: Bernie Haase)

past Hammond and then 5km to the edge of the ring of hills that form the Horseshoe Range pound. The cold wind had picked up and rain threatened when we stopped next to a River Red Gum lined creek in the middle of the pound, which was looking very drought and grazing ravaged. A flock of Galahs greeted us and in the trees there were Red-rumped Parrots, Mallee Ringnecks, Elegant Parrots, Weebills, Striated Pardalotes and many vocal Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters. In the open scrub around us were Emus, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, a Common Bronzewing, White-fronted and Singing Honeyeaters, Southern Whitefaces, Australian Magpies, White-browed Babblers and noisy Apostlebirds. A few Little Ravens and a Collared Sparrowhawk glided past overhead, while two Black-eared Cuckoos checked us out and provided us with some photo opportunities. On we drove and turned onto a track that leads up to Mookkra tower, which is a rock formation that looks like a fortress tower on top of the ranges. Here we stopped to have lunch at the start of a four-wheel drive track that goes to the tower and beyond. The area is on the edge of bare paddocks and a range of wooded hills. We saw more Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Striated Pardalotes, White-browed Babblers, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Galahs, Elegant Parrots and Little Ravens moving about in the trees and scrub. We also added to our modest bird list: Yellow-throated Miners, Grey Shrikethrushes, Inland and Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, Red-capped Robins and Grey Fantails. Some of us decided to climb part way up the walking track to the tower despite the cold wind and threatening rain. The birds were quiet and sheltering from the wind as a Wedge-tailed Eagle soared past high overhead. We turned back and followed a creek on the sheltered side of the hills, disturbing some Redthroats that scolded us for being



**A flock of Apostle birds in front of approaching vehicles** (Photo: Bernie Haase)

## Past Excursions *(continued)*



**Galah** *(Photo: Col Elliot)*



**Elegant Parrot** *(Photo: Col Elliot)*



**Common Bronzewing**  
*(Photo: Col Elliot)*



**Black-eared Cuckoo** *(Photo: Judy Owen)*



**Red-capped Robin** *(Photo: Judy Owen)*

in their patch and saw a Grey Butcherbird. On the way, we looked at a couple of old Emu nests that were hidden away in the scrub and sheltered by the hills. We had a bit of fun assisting one of the vehicles to cross a small creek on the way back to the main road. Just out of the hills a couple of Wood Ducks sat on a small dam that had a little water in it from the recent rain and some Pipits, a White-fronted Chat, Magpies and Australian Ravens, were in the open paddock areas. We followed a creek line with Red Gums and Native Pines in it and stopped to look at more Red-capped Robins, Red-rumped Parrots and Weebills, also adding a pair of Rufous Whistlers and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes to our list. We heard Apostlebirds nearby and waited for them to come closer. At first there was a small group noisily fossicking about next to us and as we watched them, more and more came along the creek line towards us, until we were surrounded by 70 or more noisy, inquisitive birds who were human watching just as we were birdwatching. It was time to head back home with one more stop at the pound entrance but when we arrived there it began to rain quite heavily and the dirt road became slippery with sticky clay. We abandoned the area and went back to the better dirt road home.

We had found a modest total of 34 bird species, with the birds of the day being the Black-eared Cuckoos, Redthroats and the big mob of Apostlebirds.

**Bernie Haase**

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Fleurieu Birders

#### 1st August Stipiturus C.P.

Only 9 people arrived at the meeting point at Mt. Compass "Harvest the Fleurieu" car park to head off for the 10-minute drive along country roads on the western side of Mt. Compass to Stipiturus Conservation Park.

The weather was perfect and after spraying our boots and unlocking the gate we headed up the main entrance and could hear several small birds calling amongst the Stringybark trees. Grey Fantails, Crescent Honeyeaters and Superb Fairywrens were most common.

This "Closed to the Public" Conservation Park has undergone an enormous restoration of the Glenshera Swampland and now has many large enclosures to protect the re-vegetation that has occurred over the last 10 years. The vegetation has been restored for the benefit of the endangered Southern Emu-wren.

We headed down to the swamp area, across the creek, which Glenelg Nature Trust, Water Ecologist, Mark Bachman built to alter the old drainage system when it was part of a dairy farm. This has worked well in re-flooding the swampland. Since it was winter, we found it was too wet for us to walk towards the main swamp and the birds were rather quiet, so we headed up the main tracks, weaving between the many enclosures protecting the re-vegetation. By the tree-lined creek-bed, Bob accidentally spooked a kangaroo that was unfortunately locked inside the enclosure.



**Some of our group crossing the creek**  
*(Photo: Wendy Phillips)*



**Scarlet Robin** *(Photo: Bob Phillips)*

The birds were unexpectedly quiet. The New Holland Honeyeaters were feeding in the banksias and there were many more wrens about, but no "Stipies"\* were sighted looking across the main swamp.

However, a sight of a Wedge-tailed Eagle being chased by a Raven and an Australian Magpie in the distance was good to see, while a Nankeen Kestrel, and 2 White-faced Herons flew over. We walked up the hill towards the eastern boundary and thought we may be able to cross the creek lower down but it was too deep and we retraced our steps looking for small bush birds.

Heading back towards the main entrance, we decided to walk towards the western boundary of the park and here we found a pair of Scarlet Robins that entertained us and made our day!

They were busy looking for food, flying from their favourite perch in a Stringybark tree near the track, landing on the fence then down onto the ground inside the enclosure and back again.

Lunching by the entrance we managed to see a few more birds nearby including a Yellow-rumped Thornbill, a Brown Thornbill, a Golden Whistler and more Scarlet Robins.

The total count was only 23 species, but despite the low numbers we all enjoyed the day and it was wonderful to see the results of previous plantings surviving and growing. Three of us present today have been involved in the Department of Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) Community planting days on the property

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

where approx. 100 people show up annually to give their support in this massive re-vegetation project. The survey results will go to the Willunga Natural Resources Management (NRM) office as well as to Birds SA and the BirdLife Data base.

**Wendy Phillips**

\* "Stipies" Stipiturus is the Scientific name for Emuwren, therefore "Stipie" for short

Saturday 11 July

### Scott Creek Conservation Park

**CANCELLED** – requirement to register for COVID safe procedures for field trips

Thursday 16 July

### Laratinga Wetlands, Mount Barker

**CANCELLED** – requirement to register for COVID safe procedures for field trips

## Future Excursions

### Contact: Lynton Huxley

*Field Program Co-ordinator and Campout Organiser*

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

**Email:** fieldtrips@birdssa.asn.au or  
lyntonhuxley@gmail.com

Since the recent relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions in South Australia we have resumed field trips. We will continue to monitor government constraints and keep you informed via eNews.

Given Birds SA duty of care obligation to you, our members, we do ask that:

- Members attend future field trips only if they are well and have no cold or flu-like symptoms;
- Members attending future field trips observe and comply with the COVID Safe Procedures implemented for our Field Trips including all relevant social distance restrictions.
- Members attending future field trips consider bringing personal hand sanitiser and a facemask for added personal protection.

If you have any queries or require further information please contact the Field Trip Co-ordinator Lynton Huxley on 0498466092 or lyntonhuxley@gmail.com.

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

- Personal hand sanitiser (face mask optional)
- Sun protection cream and a hat
- Wear sturdy footwear and long pants
- Drinking water
- Binoculars and or camera
- A chair/stool and your lunch for our birdcall at the end of the walk

### FLEURIEU BIRDERS

Saturday 5th September

#### Pangarinda Arboretum, Wellington

Meet 8.30am at the entrance to the park on Pangarinda Drive, Wellington East.

**TRIP LEADERS:** *Wendy and Bob*

| Easy walk |

This is a new site to visit.

### BIRDS SA

Saturday 12 September: 'Cowirra', a private property adjacent to the River Murray, Mannum (MM) 100km (Easy). There are two options to get to this property located at 10374 Hunter Road Cowirra. Option 1: take the Freeway to Murray Bridge and cross the River Murray at Murray Bridge. Take the Karoonda road out of Murray Bridge and travel on the eastern side of the river to Mannum. Option 2: Via Gumeracha, Birdwood, Palmer, and Mannum Ferry, turn left as you leave the ferry and the family house is just past the houseboat builder, approximately 100m from the ferry landing. Park on the roadside please. Allow about 1 to 1.5 hours travel time from Adelaide city to the property with the usual meeting start time of 8.30am.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Anna Woods*

## Future Excursions *(continued)*

### PORT AUGUSTA GROUP (The Babblers)

#### Sunday 13th September Bernie's Block

Meet at 8am at Mambray Creek Parking Bay

### BIRDS SA

Thursday 17 September: Tangari Regional Park Woodcroft (MM) 23km (Moderate). Meet in the car park on Pine Road at 8.30am. This reserve at Woodcroft is bounded by Reynell Road, Pine Road, Pimpala Road and partially by Riddoch Crescent/Chappell Hill Road/Nyrang Circuit. Public transport is available on Bus Route 600 or 601 (M-F only) Marion Centre Interchange to Old Reynella Interchange and alight at Stop 64 on Reynell Road. From Adelaide catch the Belair train to Blackwood and connect with the bus there.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

### BIRDS SA

Sunday 27 September: Whites Road Wetlands (AP) 16 kms (Easy). Meet at 8.30am. Head north on the Port Wakefield Road. At 1.5km after passing the Salisbury Highway Bridge, turn left into Globe Derby Drive and continue on this road until it meets Whites Road. Turn right and continue to the end. The Park entrance is on the left.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Rod Tetlow*

### FLEURIEU BIRDERS

#### Saturday 3rd October Vineyard at Currency Creek

Meet 8.30am at the One Paddock Winery, Currency Creek Rd. car park. | Easy walk |

**TRIP LEADERS:** *Bob and Wendy*

### BIRDS SA

#### 2-6 October Long Weekend – Campout

See details on page 35

### BIRDS SA

#### Saturday 10 October Sandy Creek: (MLR) 52km | Moderate |

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

**TRIP LEADER:** *Ali Ben Kahn*

### PORT AUGUSTA GROUP (The Babblers)

#### Sunday 11th October Telowie Gorge and Nelshaby Reservoir

Meet at 8am at Telowie Gorge

### BIRDS SA

Thursday 15 October: Belair National Park (MLR) (13km) (Moderate). Meet at the car park inside the main gate off Upper Sturt Road, Belair at 8.30am. Note car parking spaces are limited so an alternative may be to park at the golf club and walk through to the meeting spot.

**TRIP LEADERS:** *David Williams / Lynton Huxley*

### PORT AUGUSTA GROUP (The Babblers)

#### Sunday 1st November Chinaman's Creek Mt. Grainger

Meet at 7.30am at Chinaman's Highway Turnoff. Wear beach-walking footwear.

### BIRDS SA

#### Sunday 1 November Tolderol Game Reserve, Lake Alexandrina (LA) 85km

| Easy walk |

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

**TRIP LEADERS:** *Miles and Stephen Ramm*

### FLEURIEU BIRDERS

#### Saturday 7th November

To be confirmed

#### Saturday 14 November Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park (MLR) 46km

Meet at 8.30am at the reserve entrance on Cox Road, opposite Aldinga Holiday Park. | Easy walk |

**TRIP LEADER:** *Alan Burns*

#### Thursday 19 November Magazine Road Wetlands, Dry Creek (AP) 10km

Meet in the car park area at 8.30am. If you are travelling northwards on South Road, continue onto Salisbury Highway heading east. The road bends to the north and

## Future Excursions *(continued)*

there is one road off to the left. This is Magazine Rd. From the city, take Port Wakefield Road north, turning left up onto the Salisbury Highway heading to Port Adelaide. Once you are on the Salisbury Highway, you will need to move over to the right hand lane so you are ready to turn right into Magazine Road Wetlands.

| Easy walk |

**TRIP LEADER:** *Ali Ben Kahn*

### Sunday 29 November

#### Riverglades Wetlands Murray Bridge (MM) (80km)

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

**TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

### FLEURIEU BIRDERS

### Saturday 5th December

#### Beyond water ponds, Hayborough

Meet at 4pm at the Aquatic Centre Car Park on Waterport Road. Hayborough (near Victor Harbor). Followed by a BYO BBQ near the Aquatic Centre afterwards for a Christmas celebration

### BIRDS SA

### Saturday 12 December

#### Cleland Conservation Park (MLR) 20km | **Difficult** |

Meet at 8.30am in the Cleland Wildlife Park carpark located at 365 Mount Lofty Summit Road, Crafrers.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Miles and Stephen Ramm*

### PORT AUGUSTA GROUP (The Babblers)

### Sunday 13th December

#### Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden

Meet in the car park at 7.30am

Christmas lunch in café and showing of year's best birding photos

### BIRDS SA

### Thursday 17 December

#### Laratinga Wetlands, Mt Barker (MLR) (34km)

| Easy walk |

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

**TRIP LEADER:** *Kate Buckley*



**Musk Lorikeet** (Photographed by Peter McKenzie at Victor Harbor, January 2020)



**Common Greenshank** (Photographed by Peter McKenzie at Pine Point, January 2020)



If the current level of Covid-19 restrictions in South Australia is maintained we are planning to proceed with the October long weekend campout, provided we remain confident it is safe for all members attending and we can comply with our COVID safe plan registered with SA Health. Obviously things could change, so to maintain communication regarding this event **it will be necessary for all participants to pre-register with the Campout Organiser - via email: [lyntonhuxley@gmail.com](mailto:lyntonhuxley@gmail.com) to secure your attendance.**

Given Birds SA's duty of care obligation to you, our members, we do ask that:

- Members attend the campout only if they are well and have no cold or flu-like symptoms;
- Members attending observe and comply with our COVID Safe Procedures including all relevant social distance restrictions;
- Members attending consider bringing personal hand sanitiser and a facemask for added personal protection.

The October long weekend Campout this year will be at **Lawari Conservation Park located at the eastern end of Hindmarsh Island, near the Murray Mouth at Goolwa.** Just 100km south from Adelaide this location will enable most members to also participate on a day excursion basis if they wish (if choosing this option please arrange to be at the homestead by 8.30am on your chosen day). To get there cross over the bridge onto the island at Goolwa and stay on Randell Road for

about 8km then turn right at Semaschko Road and continue on for about 1km where you need to turn left onto Denver Road. Continue on for approx. 4km and our base for the camp 'Wyndgate Homestead' will be on your left.

The Homestead has a shower, two toilets, a fully equipped kitchen and some rooms that can be used for limited numbers to stay in communal accommodation (please make your dormitory bookings through the camp leader ASAP). There are plenty of campsites for those wishing to use tents, caravans or motorhomes. Alternatively you may choose to book accommodation at nearby places, such as Goolwa.

Camp access for Birds SA will be from noon on Friday 2nd to noon on Tuesday 6th October and a fee of \$20 per person for the weekend will be collected from those staying on the property (to cover some costs and to boost our Birds SA Conservation Fund). The Campout Organiser will issue a receipt for all fees collected.

If possible please bring a handheld UHF radio or vehicle mounted unit as we will use UHF Channel 14 for our Birds SA communication over the weekend. Mobile phones should work around this location, so if you arrive late call Lynton on 0498466092 for directions to our current birding location.

Our resident Fleurieu Birders, will assist with guiding and sharing their best birding spots at this location with us. I encourage new and younger members to join us at this fun event to improve both your bird watching skills and knowledge.

**Lynton Huxley**  
Campout Organiser



# Bird Records

## Collated by Graham Carpenter

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

[birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au) or phone 8297 5463.

Note that the list includes reports of rare or vagrant species to South Australia that may not have been submitted yet, 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).

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### Ostrich

1, 3/8/2020. Yorkey's Crossing, NW. Lynn, C.

*Ostriches were farmed in the area north of Port Augusta for their plumes in the late 1800s to early 1900s.*

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### Malleefowl

Active mound, 2/8/2020. Monarto CP, MM. Edey, D. et al.

---

### Brown Quail

3, 4/6/2020. Garden Island, AP. Carter, D. & P.  
1, 4/6/2020. West Beach, AP. Allen, D.

---

### Tawny Frogmouth

1, 29/6/2020. Salisbury East, Tyndale School, AP. Potter, M.

---

### Blue Petrel

1 storm-blown, 12/7/2020. Vivonne Bay, KI. Tydeman, C.

---

### Australasian Bittern

12, 15/5/2020. Picks Swamp, SE. Green, B.

---

### Royal Spoonbill

1, 1/7/2020. Kingoonya, NW. Photographed walking along the main street. Kingoonya Hotel staff

---

### White-bellied Sea Eagle

Adult, 20/5/2020. Morgan CP, MM. Sothman, B. & Lloyd, R.  
2, 13/6/2020. Port Broughton, Shag Island, YP. Copley, P.

1 immature, 22/7/2020. Port Broughton, YP.

*Found hanging by fishing line from a tree with a squid jag in its neck.* Tod, J. per Copley, P.

---

### Eastern Osprey

1, 29 and 31/7/2020. Barmera, Lake Bonney, MM. Flying over. Dennis, K.

*Occasional reports along the River Murray with nesting reported at Nildottie in the 1980s. Members are also encouraged to forward any reports from this region to raptor researcher, Terry Dennis, [osprey842@gmail.com](mailto:osprey842@gmail.com)*

---

### Lewin's Rail

1 calling, 8/6/2020. Aldinga, Hart Rd wetland, MLR. Ed Smith

---

### Bush Stonecurlew

Heard around 10pm, 30/7/2020. Hay Flat, MLR. Probably displaced from Kangaroo Island following summer fires. Fahey-Sparks, S.

---

### Sooty Oystercatcher

21, 1/5/2020. Tennyson, AP. Donovan, D.

---

### Inland Dotterel

3, 5/8/2020. 4km WNW Bruce, FR. Wright, G.

---

### Hooded Plover

18, 3/6/2020. Tennyson Beach, AP. Van Trig, M.-A.

---

### Sanderling

3, 3/6/2020. Tennyson Beach, AP. Van Trig, M.-A.  
50, 4/6/2020. Almonta Beach, EP. Stracey, K.

---

### Black-tailed Godwit

6, 10/5/2020. St Kilda, AP. Including one in breeding plumage. Reid, I.

---

### Grey-tailed Tattler

*Unusual over-wintering reports:*

1, 13/5/2020. Coobowie, YP. Halliday, M.  
2, 16/5/2020. French Point, SE. Green, B.  
1, 3/6/2020. Port Clinton, YP. Taylor, P.W.

---

### Common Redshank

1, 21/7/2020. Whyalla Saltfields, EP. In breeding plumage, photos supplied. Port Augusta Bird Group  
*Previous reports in SA from St Kilda saltfields in May 1983 and Jan 1984 (Day SA Ornithologist 29: 115-117) and at Bool Lagoon (2 birds) in Feb 1993.*

## Bird Records *(continued)*

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### Brown Skua

6, 30/6/2020. Port Neill, YP. Feeding on offal offshore.  
Cox, T.  
1, 13/7/2020. 1 km offshore from Seaford, MLR.  
Attracted to fishing boat. Bainbridge, T.

---

### Blue-winged Parrot

136, 15/5/2020. Picks Swamp, SE. Green, B.

---

### Bourke's Parrot

30, 18/7/2020. Challenger Goldmine, NW. Feeding  
among patch of Sturt Pea in an otherwise very dry  
district. Carpenter, G.

---

### Shining Bronze Cuckoo

1, 5/8/2020. Cudlee Creek, MLR. Moore, G.

---

### Black-eared Cuckoo

1, 2/8/2020. Kinchina, MM. O'Neil, B.  
Also seen and photographed by various observers on  
3/8.

---

### Barking Owl

Heard, 25/5/2020. Loch Luna, MM. Pike, S.

---

### Short-tailed Grasswren

2, 8/7/2020. Holowiliena Stn, FR. In dead Triodia.  
Wilson, G.

*Very few reports of this species in the Flinders Ranges in  
recent years.*

*Several reports of honeyeaters from outside normal  
distributions or in regions where they are scarce:*

---

### Eastern Spinebill

1, 5/7/2020. Monarto, Browns Rd, MM. Gordon, S.  
6, 28/7/2020. Glen Roy CP, SE. Possingham, H.

---

### Yellow-faced Honeyeater

1, 11/6/2020. Maize Island CP, MM. Williams, R.

---

### White-naped Honeyeater

2, 5/7/2020. Monarto, Browns Rd, MM. Gordon, S.

---

### White-fronted Honeyeater

1, 28/6/2020. Para Wirra NP, quarry track, MLR.  
Harper, D. & S.

---

### Lewin's Honeyeater

1, 18/5/2020. Mount George, MLR. In suburban gardens  
and visiting bird bath. Reported in area since August  
2019. Milne, P. & M. et al.

*Not previously reported from SA. Although possibly  
displaced from its normal distribution by recent fires along  
the Great Dividing Range. Some doubt has been raised that  
this was a wild bird, following investigations that some are  
kept in captivity in the MLR.*

---

### White-winged Triller

*A few very early reports from southern districts:*

1 male eclipse, 28/6/2020. 3 km E Salter Springs, MLR.  
Smyth, R.  
5, 2/8/2020. Kinchina, MM. Gordon, S.

---

### Pied Butcherbird

1 adult, 5/8/2020. Mannum, MM. Rodda, B.

---

### Flame Robin

1, 20/5/2020. Callington, MM. Aubert, L.

---

### Australian Reedwarbler

1, 31/7/2020. Botanic Park, AP. Possingham, H.

---

### Painted Finch

3, 24/7/2020. Arkaroola, Bararranna Gorge, FR.  
Allen, J.  
*The status of this species in SA is poorly understood.*

---

### Diamond Firetail

4, 8/6/2020. Para Wirra NP, Lizard Rock trail, MLR.  
Jermakow, A.  
19, 3/8/2020. Barossa Golf Course, MLR.  
Kretschmer, G.

---

### Zebra Finch

18, 3/8/2020. Tanunda, Stonewell Rd, MLR. In vineyard.  
Kretschmer, G.  
*Few reports from near Adelaide in recent years.*

## Photo-Finish

### Southern Emuwren

It is difficult to describe your feeling when the bird species that you have been dreaming of photographing appears in your viewfinder. It is even more difficult when that bird is perched there, singing his high-pitched trill, illuminated by a beautiful warm winter light! Suddenly (and sadly) the fast clicking of my camera ruins this fairy tale moment by drawing my thoughts to the dramatic moment that will come an instant later — are the photos out of focus, blurred or overexposed!?

While bird-photography is a challenging activity, it can also be full of satisfactions. It is a hobby for some and a full-time job for a lucky few others. Bird photography can not only help birders to identify the bird species they are observing; often it can also provide a glimpse of a rare event or of previously unknown behaviours.

After a chat with John Gitsham, President of Birds SA, I became curious about and keen to visit the Mt Compass School Swamp that John had mentioned as a location on the Fleurieu Peninsula where it is possible to observe (and photograph) the Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emuwren (*Stipiturus malachurus intermedius*). This tiny and elusive bird is a subspecies of the Southern Emu-wren *S. malachurus*, and like all emuwrens it has a spectacular long tail of six emu-like feathers. The subspecies is critically endangered, with current data suggesting that less than 500 adults remain. This species most commonly occurs in swamps on the Fleurieu Peninsula, where they hop through the swamps' dense vegetation foraging for insects and spiders and they breed in spring/summer. Unfortunately, these swamps, which also provide a home for a number of other endangered plants and animals, are threatened by habitat clearance and fragmentation.

When I arrived at the Mt Compass School Swamp I was surprised by its location! How and why did a swamp come to be situated in the middle of a country town? The question could, perhaps, be better put: how and why was the construction of infrastructure and the clearing of such unique and fragile habitat allowed to impact so dramatically on such a precious resource? Nevertheless, it was heartening to see that what was before me appeared well protected and maintained and tended with love by its community. This is a place that deserves more awareness of its special and precious significance.

When I entered the swamp, I embarked on a pleasant walk along and around the elevated boardwalk, and while wandering around I was hoping to come upon the body of water that I figured would be the best place to sit and wait for birds to come into my view. I soon realised that a swamp doesn't really have an open body of water, as the whole area is, in effect, alive on a bed of boggy water! The swamp is a very peculiar and rare habitat — one that hosts highly specialised species of flora and fauna. Once I realised that my plan was unlikely to come to fruition, I decided simply to sit quietly on a section of the boardwalk and wait.

My wait was not too long. Within minutes, a little bird started hopping through the dense vegetation and approached his new guest, curious of such a presence on this cold and wintry day. As soon as the bird started to sing — even though it was not clearly visible — I soon realised that it was not what I was hoping for, although the singing of a Superb Fairywren is always a welcome pleasure.

The windless day draped the swamp in a calm stillness and any little movements were immediately noticeable. I was in no hurry and decided to extend my wait, pleased to be enjoying a bit more sun. A few minutes later I noticed a subtle movement indicating a bird far off in the bush; I thought it was the fairywren again, wanting to play another trick on me. But I was wrong! Peering through the lens of my camera, I spotted a pinch of blue coloration on the chest of the bird. Yes. Yes, it was a male Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emuwren! I got very excited and the excitement increased when I noted that the individual stood on top of a plant, singing his song. With the slowest movement I could manage in my excitement, I reached for my camera and tried to take my picture, but the bird had disappeared! Game over, I thought.

I knew that another opportunity like this would be unlikely to present itself again so easily any time in the near future, so I waited. Patiently. Quietly. The wait paid off! The bird eventually reappeared on the top of another plant, one that was relatively close to me, to again sing his song. The shutter whirred as my finger remained pressed on the button, my Canon 7D MII firing off shots at 7 frames per second. My adrenaline surged, and only once the bird flew away did a breath or relief ease through my body. I quickly turned to the viewscreen of my camera and happily realised that there, among the few 'out of focus' images that I had frantically shot, was one that was sharp, remarkable and unforgettable.

**Daive Gaglio**



**Southern Emuwren** (Photographed by David Gaglio on 4th June 2020 in Mt. Compass School Swamp)

We would like to include a **'Photo-Finish'** article towards the end of future issues of The Birder. This will consist of 1 or 2 pages containing for example a stunning photo of a bird and a text relevant to that image. The content can vary: perhaps the narrative of the moment when the photo was captured, or a specific insight into the species photographed or even some technical photographic suggestion — how you can obtain that kind of photo.

**Please send me your contributions to 'Photo-Finish', using the email address:  
magazine editor@birdssa.asn.au**



**Due to Covid-19 restrictions, General meetings have been suspended until further notice.**

Committee meetings are usually held in the Hawker Centre of the Waite Institute on the second Monday of each month, starting at 7.30pm.

### BIRDS SA COMMITTEE UNTIL 2020 AGM

President .....	John Gitsham .....	0438 900 393
Vice President .....	John Hatch.....	0401 082 489
Vice President .....	Jeff Groves.....	0401 125 510
Secretary .....	Jim Spiker .....	0430 247 705
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Member.....	Richard Woodland....	0488 229 394
Member.....	Davide Gaglio.....	0421 569 136

### COMMITTEE EMAIL CONTACTS

If you wish to contact any committee member by email, use the email address below: [general@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:general@birdssa.asn.au) and indicate which committee member you wish to contact. Your message will be forwarded to that person.

### FURTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Librarian, Karen Donkin .....0402123960  
Campout Organiser, Lynton Huxley.....7009 5038  
Rare Birds Secretary, Brian Blaylock ....0448822374

### Conservation Sub-committee members

Jeff Groves (Chair), William Brooker, Phil Cole, Bill Breed, David Andrewartha, David Hansman, Rodney Attwood, Ali Ben Kahn

### SA Rarities Committee (SARC) Members

Colin Rogers (Chair), John Fennell, Bob Green, John Hatch, Graham Carpenter, David Harper, Marilyn Browne, Sam Gordon and Ian Reid.

### SA Bird Records Committee Members (New Committee)

John Spiers (Chair), Andrew Black, Bob Green, Brian Blaylock, Graham Carpenter, Philippa Horton and Julian Reid.

### Port Augusta Birders (The Babblers)

Contact people: Peter Langdon 0457 708 859  
Greg Bannon 8648 6630, Bernie Haase 0419 863 834

### BirdLife South East SA

Convener: Bob Green 0407649909  
Email: [shriketit@bigpond.com](mailto:shriketit@bigpond.com)

### Fleurieu Birders, a sub-group of Birds SA

Contact: Wendy Phillips 85550634 or 0414248648  
Neil Cheshire 85527904  
Email: [fleurieubirders@gmail.com](mailto:fleurieubirders@gmail.com)

### POSTAL ADDRESS

c/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, ADELAIDE 5000

### COPY DEADLINE

Copy for the SUMMER 'Birder' is due by the presumed date of the November General Meeting (Friday 6 November). Contributions, 'Word' format preferred, can be recorded on a CD or a USB stick, emailed to the email address below, or typed/handwritten neatly.

[magazineeditor@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:magazineeditor@birdssa.asn.au)

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The annual subscriptions are:

- Individual Member .....\$45.00
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All members receive a digital copy of both the magazine and Journal. We also offer printed copies of both publications 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.

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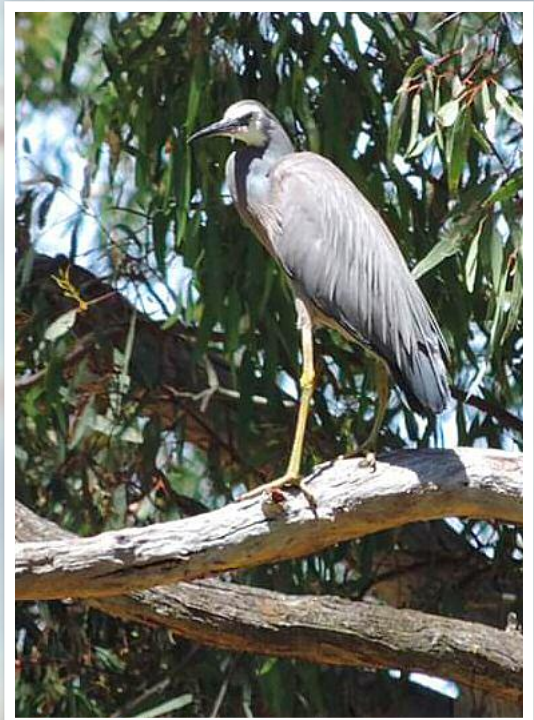
# *These Birds Like the Water*



**Immature Crested Tern** (Photographed by Peter McKenzie)



**Pink-eared Ducks and a Grey Teal**  
(Photographed by Wendy Digby at Glenthorne)



**White-faced Heron**  
(Photographed by Wendy Digby at Glenthorne)

# *Small Birds in the Bush*



**Scarlet Robin**

*(Photographed by Alan Burns  
at the Stipiturus Conservation Park,  
August 2020)*

**Zebra Finches**

*(Photographed by Anne Kirk  
in Gammon Creek, Northern  
Flinders Ranges, July 2020)*



**Grey Fantail**

*(Photographed by Alan Burns at Glenthorne)*



**Mistletoebird**

*(Photographed in 2019 by  
Bob Daly near Sugars Beach,  
Hindmarsh Island. An unusual  
location for this species)*