

# The BIRDER

The official magazine of Birds SA Autumn 2021 No 257



Linking people with birds  
in South Australia

## In this Issue

**Our new President, Steven Langley, outlines his vision  
for Birds SA**

**First General Meeting since February 2020**

# *A mantling Hobby*



**An Australian Hobby adopting a pose known as a mantling.**

*(Photographed by Colin Conor in the Kangaroo Island Raptor Domain, January 2021)*

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**There is no centre insert in this issue.**

**Cover image: A Hooded Plover** photographed by Davide Gaglio at Seacliff Beach, SA 2020. John Gitsham designed the cover.

**Graphic design:** Ingrid Grigg

**We welcome 29 new members** who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on page 35.

*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'.

## **Birds SA General Meetings have now resumed.**

Check the e-Newsletter for details of future meetings.

To comply with current COVID regulations, you will be required to register for these meetings.

If you have no access to a computer, you can phone Alan Burns on 0411 595 910.

Sunday 28 Feb	Birds SA	Excursion to Magazine Rd. Wetlands
Saturday 6 March	FB	Excursion to Langhorne Creek Cemetery and Dog Lake
Saturday 13 March	Birds SA	Excursion to Newland Head CP
Sunday 14 March	PA	Excursion to Mt. Gullet Beach
Thursday 18 March	Birds SA	Excursion to Barossa Goldfields
Friday 26 March	Birds SA	General Meeting
Thursday 1 April–Wednesday 7 April Birds SA Campout to Cantara Homestead, Coorong NP		
Saturday 3 April	FB	Excursion to Springs Rd. Native Forest Reserve
Thursday 15 April	Birds SA	Excursion to Kyeema CP
Friday 16 April–Sunday 18 April PA Excursion to Lake Gilles Conservation Park		
Friday 30 April	Birds SA	General meeting
Saturday 1 May	FB	Excursion to Randall's Vineyard, Currency Creek
Sunday 2 May	Birds SA	Excursion to Tolderol Game Reserve
Saturday 8 May	Birds SA	Excursion to Byards Rd. Wetlands, Reynella East
Sunday 16 May	PA	Excursion to Carriewerloo Station
Thursday 20 May	Birds SA	Excursion to Swan Reach CP
Friday 28 May	Birds SA	General Meeting
Sunday 30 May	Birds SA	Excursion to Nurragi CP
Saturday 5 June	FB	Excursion to Riverglades Wetlands
Saturday 12 June	Birds SA	<i>No Field trip—Long Weekend</i>
Thursday 17 June	Birds SA	Belair National Park

# President's Message

## Hi Everyone,

I'm very pleased to be writing to you in the capacity of your new President.

I would firstly like to extend our deep and sincere thanks to John Gitsham for the fantastic job that he has done over the past four years. These have included so many achievements, but especially the very important affiliation with BirdLife Australia, the significant increase in our membership and the overall expansion in our reach and activities. John's achievements mean that today we are a vibrant and healthy conservation organisation. What a great base for me to try and build on!

I've been a birdwatcher and conservationist since I was a child in rural UK. I was an active member of The Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) and of specialist raptor protection groups; focusing on Ospreys, Barn Owls and Montagu Harriers across England, Scotland and France. I moved to Adelaide in 2010 and joined Birds SA shortly afterwards. I have a Sales and Marketing background and currently have my own consultancy business, which allows me to juggle time to spend on this Birds SA role, which I'm very excited about.

As you know, we undertook a Members Survey late last year and that gave us two clear priorities from yourselves: undertake more effective conservation and become more vocal or activist, particularly in how we influence Government and generally raise our public voice.

The Management Committee has met for two strategy sessions discussing how we are going to deliver these priorities as part of our plans for 2021 and beyond. What is clear is that we are going to need help from you!

There are just 15 members on the committee and we're all volunteers — but there are nearly 1200 of you! That includes 900 Birds SA members and another 300 supporters.



So if we are going to make a difference then we are going to need you, our members, to step up as well and provide some active support. There are four main ways by which you can help:

1. Helping out by participating in the running of the Association, e.g. with our Conservation Subcommittee. Also by helping out on Open Days and Fundraisers etc.
2. Supporting our various campaigns by putting political pressure on government: e.g. writing to ministers and other members of Parliament, signing petitions, speaking to friends, writing to local papers, ringing radio shows etc. More ideas will be included in the next e-Newsletter.
3. Physically carrying out activities, such as leading a field trip, undertaking bird surveys or helping enhance partnership reserves, for example by planting trees, weeding, etc.
4. Finally, you could consider making a financial donation so we can do more.

If you think you can help in any way at all, even by just giving a few hours here and there, please contact [secretary@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:secretary@birdssa.asn.au)

## Use of our funds

We do have some reasonable financial reserves and we're planning to start spending some of that on carefully targeted conservation issues.

We don't think we want to buy any land at the moment because it's not only expensive but also comes with significant maintenance issues. So instead, we are looking to try to help other conservation Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to enhance their properties. For instance we might put bird hides on other organisations' reserves, or bird boxes or bird watering points, or help revegetate.

We will also try to work with local Councils to enhance some of their land for the benefit of nature, starting with Adelaide City Council in the Parklands.

So, exciting and challenging times ahead. Let's make a difference!

**Steven Langley**

**Red Knots** (Photographed by Paul Taylor at Bald Hill Beach, 4 February 2021)

The bird in the foreground was banded in Broome in July 2017, and is now at least 5 years old. Since banding, despite flying via Asia to and back from Siberia a couple of times, it has been reported only 3 times, all at Bald Hill Beach.

# Conservation Sub-committee

## Duck and Quail Hunting

On 21 December 2020 Birds SA participated in the Duck & Quail Open Season Stakeholder Reference Panel meeting conducted by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW). Birds SA members in attendance were Jeff Groves, David Andrewartha and William Brooker. Background information used to inform participants included the Eastern Australia Aerial Waterbird Survey 2020, conducted by the University of NSW (UNSW) and the Waterfowl, Environment and Climate Conditions Report compiled by DEW. The Reference Panel meeting outcomes are transmitted to

Minister Speirs who then decides on whether an Open Season will be declared and any restrictions that should be applied.

The UNSW Survey confirmed the continuing downward trend in waterbird numbers with the sixth lowest total recorded in the 38 years the study has been conducted.

The DEW survey, which has been conducted since 2003 in South Australia, revealed an alarming fall in duck numbers. Abundances recorded are shown in Table A below.

**Table A:** 2020 game duck abundances relative to long term averages

YEAR	Grey Teal	Chestnut Teal	Black Duck	Wood Duck	Aust Shelduck	Aust Shoveler	Hardhead	Pink-eared Duck	Total
2020	4,845	1,656	2,797	375	6,478	134	809	178	17,272
Long Term Average	44,316	3,856	2,780	795	4,769	1,663	5,076	4,384	67,637



**Probable Pacific Black Duck/Mallard Hybrid with young** (Photo by Jeff Groves on River Torrens, 17 January 2021)



## Conservation Sub-committee *(continued)*

On 14 January 2021 Minister Speirs announced that a restricted open season for ducks would occur in SA in 2021. Details are as follows:

- **Season Length:** 20 March–27 June inclusive
- **Species permitted to be shot:** Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Australian Shelduck, Australian Wood Duck
- **Bag Limit:** 4 ducks/hunter/day
- Hunting will not be permitted at Bool Lagoon.
- No open season has been declared or Stubble Quail in 2021

Since the Minister's announcement, the Treasures not Targets Coalition, of which Birds SA is a member, has been active in publicising its opposition to the declaration of an open season for ducks, citing both animal welfare and sustainability concerns. This has sparked considerable debate in the press and on ABC radio, where community support for the abolition of this archaic activity has been positive. Hunting of native birds is likely to become an issue in the next State Election should no actions to outlaw this activity be taken between now and then.

On 6 February 2021 Victoria announced a highly restricted 2021 duck season, which will run from 26 May until 14 June 2021. The bag limit has been set at 2 ducks/hunter/day. Because of the much longer SA

open season and the higher bag limit in SA it is likely that we will see an influx of Victorian shooters to South Australia.

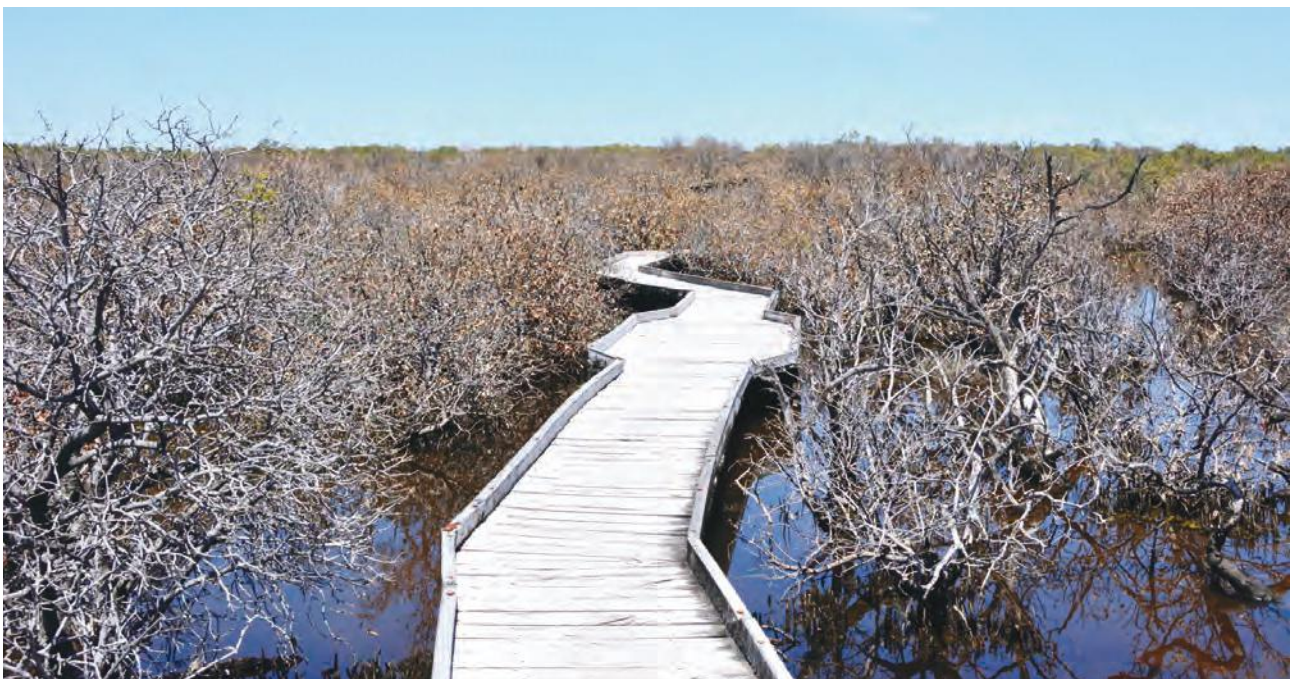
### **Destruction of Mangroves and Saltmarsh at St Kilda**

Towards the latter part of 2020 St Kilda residents raised the alarm that mangroves and saltmarsh vegetation adjacent to the boardwalk at St Kilda were dying. Additionally, trees and shrubs along Mangrove Street in St Kilda were dying.

Strong evidence for this destruction pointed to leakage of hyper-saline brine from an adjacent pond in the saltfields, which, until recently, had been dry following the de-commissioning of salt production in 2014.

The fact that this damage occurred and the slow response from both Government agencies and the Leaseholder (Buckland Dry Creek Ltd) have led to the formation of an alliance of concerned organisations, coordinated by Conservation Council SA, to place pressure on both the leaseholder and the SA Government to urgently address the matter. Birds SA and BirdLife Australia have joined this Alliance.

The Alliance was publicly launched on 23 January at St Kilda with a number of demands, targeted at both the State Government and the leaseholder. The first demand was to immediately remove the hyper-saline brine from the ponds south of St Kilda Road.



**Dead mangroves — St Kilda Boardwalk** *(Photo by Jeff Groves, 31 December 2020)*

## Conservation Sub-committee *(continued)*



### Hyper-saline Brine Pond—St Kilda

*(Photo by Jeff Groves, 31 December 2020)*

In the words of **Craig Wilkins**, Chief Executive of the Conservation Council of SA on January 23:

*“The problem is not fixed and damage is still occurring. The public has lost confidence in the ability of the leaseholder (Buckland Dry Creek Ltd) and the Department for Energy and Mining to respond with the urgency required to turn it around.”*

**Peri Coleman**, Principal Consultant at Delta Environmental Consulting and an expert on the St Kilda Saltfields stated:

*“A month after the company was issued with a clear direction to immediately remove the hyper-saline brine causing the damage, the brine is still present and seeping out.*

*We need far greater transparency from the company and the regulators. There is an enormous amount of local, community and scientific expertise that has so far been ignored or downplayed. As a result, poor decision-making has only made the damage worse.*

*We also need work to start now on a longer-term solution for this coastline that protects the habitat values and removes the risk of damage occurring in the future.”*

Birds SA has conducted initial discussions with BirdLife Australia to arrive at consensus on our role in this matter. Both organisations will take an active part in developing recommendations for the future end use of the ponds north and south of St Kilda Road that are on Crown land. This will cover rehabilitation actions for ponds and restoration of surrounding tidal wetlands. We will take full account of the advice provided by Peri Coleman from Delta Consulting and Chris Purnell from BirdLife Australia who have detailed knowledge of the saltfields ecology. We will also call upon the many decades of experience of the saltfields and its birdlife from Birds SA members John Hatch, Colin Rogers and William Brooker.

New members are continuing to join the Alliance. A Vigil with many organisations represented took place on the steps of Parliament House on February 2.





## Conservation Sub-committee *(continued)*

### Changes to the Act Covering Pastoral Lands in SA

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA late last year requested comments on the draft of a new Bill entitled Pastoral Lands Bill 2020. The new legislation is proposed to cover the management of approximately 39 million hectares of SA pastoral land and would supersede the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989*.

**The draft Bill has caused alarm amongst many organisations and individuals. Major issues of concern include:**

- The focus on the primacy of pastoral grazing and the near-removal of conservation and protection of the environment requirements.
- The removal of stock maxima from leasing conditions.
- Provision to farm goats, camels and other stock types with the potential for hugely adverse long term damage to the vegetation and soil of these public lands.
- The potential that properties operated largely for conservation purposes could be in breach of the Act (and may be currently). This would cover properties such as Witchelina and Hiltaba (Nature Foundation) and Bon Bon and Boolcoommatta (Bush Heritage); and possibly even Gluepot. This is because there could be an obligation to raise livestock on all leases.
- The extension of maximum lease terms from 42 years to 100 years – effectively granting freehold with resultant loss of control by the public, including the Government.
- The composition of the Pastoral Board, where the requirement to have at least one member with knowledge and experience with conservation has been removed. A member with conservation knowledge is not the same as a member with conservation values.

The Native Vegetation Council (NVC) submitted a detailed response to the draft Bill. This is highly recommended reading and can be found on the NVC website: [Department for Environment and Water/Native Vegetation Council](#)

Several Birds SA members have submitted personal responses to the draft Bill. A reply to one of these communications has been received from the responsible Minister, David Basham, continuing to argue strongly for the proposed changes.

Highly respected former CEO of the State Environment Department, Allan Holmes, has recently distributed a letter and background information to State Parliamentarians expressing opposition to the proposed changes to the management of pastoral leases. The letter was countersigned by a list of eminent persons with impeccable credentials in the management and administration of SA's pastoral lands.

Minister Basham, in an interview on ABC radio on 8 December 2020, indicated that a team is working on re-drafting the proposed new Bill to address some of the issues raised by both pastoralists and conservation organisations.

Birds SA will continue to maintain close consultation with Conservation Council SA to keep abreast of developments in relation to the Pastoral Act changes. Craig Wilkins from the Conservation Council addressed the Birds SA members night on January 29 on this issue. This is an incredibly important matter and the potential impacts on birdlife are profound.

### Off-road Vehicles

As previously reported in *The Birder*, the outcomes of the Inquiry into the Use of Off-Road Vehicles were presented to State Parliament in early June 2020. On 1 August 2020 Birds SA wrote to Minister Speirs requesting advice on which of the recommendations from the Inquiry will be acted upon, by whom and when. Despite several follow-ups, at the current date (12 February 2021), we have yet to receive a response. This is extremely disappointing and sends a clear message that the Minister does not wish to correspond with Birds SA on this issue. The lack of Government response and action, such a long time after the Inquiry was first announced, is effectively telling those Councils and non-Government organisations who made submissions to the Inquiry, (including Birds SA and BirdLife Australia), that they cannot expect to see any leadership from the SA Government on these issues.

What really rubs salt into the wounds of those seeking better management of off-road vehicle activities is the recent SA Tourism Commission advertisement promoting SA as a "Great State in Summer". This advertisement promotes two of the irresponsible

## Conservation Sub-committee *(continued)*

behaviours that Birds SA and others highlighted in their submissions to the Inquiry, namely trail bikes and 4WD vehicles tearing up coastal sand dunes.

The advertisement can be viewed on YouTube by searching "South Australia – A Great State in Summer".

### One has to ask:

- Is the State Environment Department so powerless that it cannot stop these messages being promoted?
- Does the Marshall Government genuinely care about the birds of South Australia?



### Bogged 4WD — Thompson Beach North

*(Photo by Jeff Groves, 26 January 2021)*

Given the absence of any communication from the Minister's office on this issue, Birds SA will press on with completing and disseminating a documentary video that highlights these issues.

Birds SA has been communicating with the Northern and Yorke office of DEW on the issues at Thompson Beach. There have been some positive developments and we will see whether focussing more on developing relationships such as this, including with local Councils, will ultimately be more productive. Irresponsible off-road vehicle use is a State-wide issue however and requires far more resources to be brought to bear than individual Councils and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) can muster.

## A Common Theme

It needs to be highlighted that there is a common element in all the major issues outlined in the foregoing. That common element is the SA Government. It is clear the Marshall Government is not handling environmental issues well in areas that impact birdlife. There have been some positive changes, but the benefits are minimal. We know that knowledgeable and committed personnel staff the relevant Government Departments, so there is clearly a leadership issue and a communication issue. Environment matters are not receiving the high priority and resources they deserve. Birds SA will work with other non-government organisations to ensure that the environment is given maximum priority in the lead-up to the next State election.

## We Need Your Assistance

One of the Recommendations coming from the Inquiry into the use of Off-Road Vehicles was:

*The South Australian Government undertakes an inventory in partnership with local government to identify areas that should be prohibited either seasonally or permanently, areas that could be opened for limited use, and areas where environmental impacts are likely to be lowest.*

Birds SA, in its submission to the Inquiry, argued for something similar. There has been no response from the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) at all to the outcomes of the Inquiry.

If you are aware of sensitive bird locations where you believe off-road vehicles should be banned completely or only allowed on a restricted basis, we would like to hear from you.

With a database of such sites, we can then go back to DEW and negotiate with them and local councils on implementing and policing these restrictions.

### Criteria for selection of sites:

- The area contains birds that are listed as Rare, Vulnerable or Endangered under the SA National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Act 1972 (see Schedules 7, 8 & 9 in the Act)
- The area contains birds that are listed as Near Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered under **International Union for Conservation of Nature** (IUCN) criteria.

## Conservation Sub-committee *(continued)*

- The area is an important feeding, roosting or nesting site for birds that are considered of conservation significance. (This will be a somewhat subjective assessment.)
- The area contains habitat that now supports or in the recent past has supported Rare, Vulnerable or Endangered species (SA NPWS Act).

There is bound to be some subjectivity in the selection of sites, but we need to make a start. It is likely that many sites will be in coastal areas, but we should consider sites anywhere in SA. Please submit suggestions in line with the format below:

Location
Bird Species Impacted
Potential impacts of Off-road Vehicles
Are off-road vehicles currently seen at this site?
Recommendation. Complete ban or Restricted use?

We need to consider high priority locations only at this stage.

Forward your recommendations to:

**Richard Woodland**  
[pandion7691@gmail.com](mailto:pandion7691@gmail.com)

**Jeff Groves**

## *Footnote* *from our President*

### **Your support is needed to address all these Issues.**

It is now clear that for Birds SA to have a more effective environmental outcome in this State, we will need to become more activist.

Politely meeting and communicating with ministers has frankly achieved very little — they have very consistently ignored us!

So, for this to change this means that we will be asking you, our members and supporters, to become more vocal. For example, we need you to write to your MPs about the Pastoral Bill; write to Ministers and encourage your friends and contacts to do likewise. We will be communicating with you in more detail via the e-Newsletter.

**Steven Langley**



### **Male and Female Freckled Ducks and a Hoary-headed Grebe**

*(Photographed by Peter Haines around a lagoon situated on Maize Island near Waikerie, January 2021)*



# Birds SA Notes & News

## The Amazing Migratory Waders



**A group of Red Knot – where is the red?**

(Photograph: P. Taylor)

### Red-necked Stint

– again, where is the “red” and isn’t this the same bird anyway?

(Photograph: P. Corcoran)



Would you like to learn more about our amazing Migratory Waders? Please contact Kate Buckley [buckleyk1@bigpond.com](mailto:buckleyk1@bigpond.com)

It will be assumed that your interest means that you are willing to undertake training in identifying Migratory Waders, so that you can assist with the important Birds SA survey work involving these birds.

Look forward to hearing from you.

**Kate Buckley**

## An Apology ... and some interesting information

The photograph on page 2 of the Summer Birder was not taken in Wirrabara Forest. It was taken in Belair National Park.

The unusual behaviour noted by Trevor Cox in relation to his photo of rosellas at Belair was successful solicitation of feeding, made by the juvenile Eastern Rosella to the adult Adelaide Rosellas. This would be expected if one of the latter was a parent, which seems possible. The juvenile’s green plumage is not the shade of the Eastern Rosella and there is no yellow in it. Apart from its white cheeks it closely resembles a fledgling Adelaide Rosella and could well be a hybrid. Graham Carpenter notes that such hybrids have been seen in Belair National Park.

**Andrew Black**

## Bird records and the Bird Records Committee

We encourage all birders to forward any South Australian bird record of interest to the Association, even if it has been incorporated in another database or reported elsewhere.

The Association has long documented the distribution of South Australia’s birds, producing annual and quarterly bird reports and field lists, and maintaining historical data, initially with a card index and more recently in an electronic database managed by former Secretary Brian Blaylock.

The Bird Records Secretary gathers reports of interest from members and from other birders.

Since 2004, following the conduct of two Australian and two Adelaide region bird atlases, a Bird Records Committee has overseen the vetting of distributional records for Birds SA and has provided vetting services to the State’s Environment Department and for Birdlife Australia.

In collaboration with the South Australian Museum, goals of the committee have included producing reliable distributional data and maps for the Census of South Australian Vertebrates and an updated edition of the Field List, now available and downloadable online. A revised Annotated List of the Birds of South Australia is also published, and maps of both passerines (2019) and non-passerines (2020) are posted on the Association’s website. It is intended that these be amended from time to time because we are aware of omissions, chiefly related to incomplete documentation. If anyone has details of important records missing, including observer, locality and date, or if you believe that records shown on the map are erroneous, please report them to me.

The Bird Records Committee comprises: Andrew Black (chair), Graham Carpenter (bird records), Brian Blaylock (database manager), Philippa Horton (SA Museum), Lynn Pedler, Bob Green and Julian Reid.

**Andrew Black**

[abblack@bigpond.com](mailto:abblack@bigpond.com)

**Annotated List of the Birds of South Australia:**

<https://birdssa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/ALBSA-5.1-Sep-2020.pdf>

**A Field List of the Birds of South Australia:**

[https://birdssa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/FieldList\\_5.1.pdf](https://birdssa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/FieldList_5.1.pdf)

**Distribution Maps:**

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



**BirdLife Australia birding guide Aleisa Lamanna (at left) and FAIBS participant Janine Clipstone brave the inclement weather.**

Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (FAIBS) are back in action and recently held the first of their 2021 'Birds 'n Bickies' shorebird ID days at Thompson Beach.

In spite of rain showers, participants, some of whom were visitors from Birds SA, were treated to a wonderful array of shorebirds. These included many migratory birds, with scopes enabling plenty of close up views and weather conditions becoming a mere aside.

Migratory Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints, Ruddy Turnstones, Red Knots, and Grey Plovers were all busily fattening up for their return journey to Siberia in autumn, while among the resident birds were Red-capped Plovers, Great and Little Egrets, various terns, Pacific Gulls, Silver Gulls, Pelicans and Pied Oystercatchers.



**Ruddy Turnstones** (Photographed by Anna Woods at Thompson Beach, January 2021)



## Friends of Adelaide International Birds Sanctuary *(continued)*

In all, it was an exceptional bird display, with more to be seen and enjoyed through binoculars and scopes at FAIBS events in February and March. During this time, the migratory birds will start colouring up with breeding plumage, adding an extra treat to sightings.

COVID requirements mean that intending participants in these events must register with FAIBS prior to the viewing day. There are still vacancies for the March 21st Birds 'n Bickies event along with another bird viewing day organised by FAIBS on February 28th, both to be held in the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary.

Further details can be found on the Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary Facebook page. Community and Birds SA members are very welcome, and anyone wishing to join in will need to email [faibssa@gmail.com](mailto:faibssa@gmail.com) to register. The same email address can be used for general enquiries.

Also on the FAIBS Facebook page is information about the devastating dieback of the mangroves around the St Kilda boardwalk. An Alliance Group of local organisations has been formed to play a role in action critically needed to halt the destruction of this habitat so essential to fish, birds and key vegetation. This Alliance Group will also provide feedback on future plans to



### Juvenile Pacific Gull and Silver Gull

*(Photographed by Anna Woods at Thompson Beach, January 2021)*

rehabilitate and sustainably care for the area. FAIBS concerns are represented in this group.

At the December FAIBS AGM, Executive Officers were confirmed as Mary-Ann van Trigt, Anna Woods and Kirsty Darlaston as President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively, while Jennifer McKay was voted in as Vice-President. Jenny Hiscock will continue as Membership Officer. An additional 5 Committee members support this group.

We all optimistically look forward to sharing shorebirding in AIBS with you in the coming year.

**Anna Woods**

## Leaving home

*This nesting box was built by Jim Marsh, (Barrage Manager at the Goolwa Barrage) many years ago and sits high up in the big green shed. It is still used by the Nankeen Kestrels and has a solid landing base for the adult birds to enter into the shed to raise their young (see right).*

*Photos taken by Wendy Phillips on 2nd December 2020. The birds flew a few days after the photos were taken.*



***We feel at home here  
... but we're almost ready to leave!***



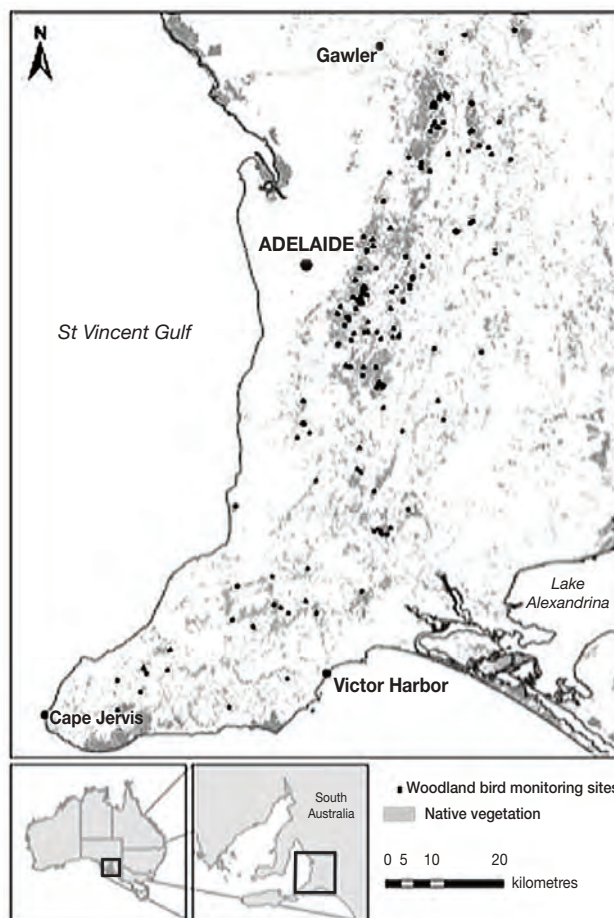
## Declining Woodland Birds

**The number of woodland birds in the Mount Lofty Ranges has declined by 45% over 20 years.**

The Mount Lofty Ranges Woodland Birds Monitoring Project managed by the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia and the University of Adelaide is a long-term stratified annual multi-species bird survey. Every year, since 2001, 165 two-hectare sites have been surveyed for 20 minutes three times a year using the standard BirdLife Australia method (<https://ebird.org/australia/news/birdlife-surveys/>). Almost all the sites are either stringybark or blue/pink gum woodland, they were picked to be typical of relatively intact vegetation in the MLR (Figure 1)

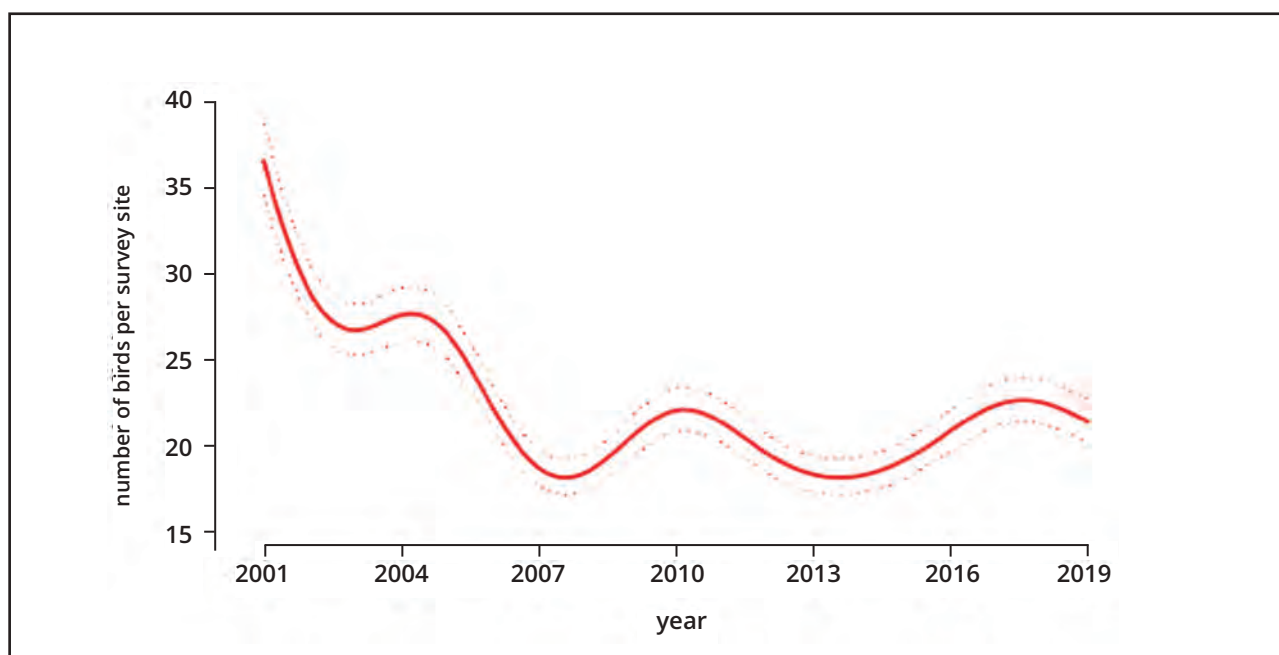
Hugh Possingham, Drew Tyre and Scott Field established the monitoring project to detect trends in woodland birds in response to anticipated climate change, the extinction debt and management of habitat by land-owners and regional bodies. The monitoring has relied on a huge amount of volunteer time with funding support from a wide variety of sources, including the Australian Research Council (initially), the state government, donors, and the NRM boards. This is one of the very few systematically designed long-term regional surveys of biodiversity in Australia where all the data is freely available.

The most significant result is the overall decline in the abundance and diversity of birds, especially small woodland birds (Figure 2, Prowse *et al.* 2020). A second important result is the substantial negative impact of prescribed fires (Prowse *et al.* 2017). The data is accessible to everyone and has been part of several important global analyses of the impacts of habitat fragmentation on biodiversity (e.g. Betts *et al.* 2019; Watling *et al.* 2020)



**Figure 1:** Locations of the Study Region and the two-hectare Study Sites (Prowse *et al.* 2020)

**Figure 2:** Decline in the Abundance and Diversity of Birds (Prowse *et al.* 2020)



## Declining Woodland Birds *(continued)*

Not only has the number of birds declined, the assemblage of species is changing. There has been an increase in some large, generalist, native bird species but decreases in many small-bodied woodland specialist species. More than half of all species (38/65) have declined, while 11 species have significantly increased.

Table 1, at the end of this article, provides details of the 65 terrestrial bird species for which trends were analysed. Each species had a total count of more than 20 individuals between 2001 and 2016, as enumerated by the Mount Lofty Ranges woodland bird-monitoring program.

### Figure 3: Mistletoebird

One of the 38 species that are declining.

(Photographed by Peter Day)



### Why are birds declining?

Declines in woodland bird species and changes in assemblages are believed to be driven by the ongoing degradation and loss of habitat, threats such as feral predators, as well as climate change. Concerningly, these changes are also accelerated by recent fire regimes—increased frequency of managed burns for fuel reduction has favoured carnivorous, ground-feeding species; with 37% of species declining and negatively impacted by fire management (bushfires plus prescribed fires)—emphasising the importance of protecting more long-unburned habitat.

### What we need to change

We must improve land management and restore habitat. Not doing so has terrible consequences for birds, the woodland systems, the environment and the ecosystem services we rely on.

What's happening in the Mount Lofty Ranges is a grave warning for woodlands across the whole of southern Australia. These "canaries in the coal mine" should be an alarm call for custodians of eastern Australia's woodlands, and agricultural landscapes everywhere.

Sadly, just when the work is starting to inform management and policy, funding is under threat. The NCSSA needs your help to continue the monitoring.

**Hugh Possingham, Ali Ben Kahn, Thomas Prowse, Annie Bond, Patrick O'Connor and Michael Stead.**

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### Further Information

Contact for day to day operations and volunteering: Ali Ben Kahn, Coordinator, The Nature Conservation Society of SA, 5 Milner Street, Hindmarsh SA 5007, [www.ncssa.asn.au](http://www.ncssa.asn.au), Ph 08 7127 4630. Contact for overall survey and donor support:

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### Donors

The program has received support from many organisations including The University of Adelaide, The University of Queensland, The Nature Conservation Society of SA, Department for Environment and Water, Australian Research Council, and Nature Foundation SA. We are also grateful to the small army of bird surveyors and the many landowners who allow us to access their properties.

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See the next two pages for Table 1, which presents, for each species, the total number of birds enumerated (summed over all surveys), trend (**decreasing ▼**, **no significant change =**, **increasing ▲**), a classification of species into one of three abundance groups (**abundant**, **common** or **rare**), and an a priori classification of species into different specialisation groups: Generalist (**G**), Woodland Generalist (**WG**) and Woodland Specialist (**S**).

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## Declining Woodland Birds *(continued)*

**Table 1:** Details of the 65 terrestrial bird species for which trends were analysed

Common Name	Scientific Name	Count	Trend	Abundance Group	Specialisation <sup>1</sup>
Adelaide Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans adalaidae</i>	17247	▼	Abundant	WG
Australian Magpie	<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	2970	▲	Abundant	G
Bassian Thrush	<i>Zoothera lunulate</i>	22	=	Rare	WS
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	804	▼	Common	WG
Brown Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	4669	▼	Abundant	WS
Brown-headed Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>	951	▼	Common	WS
Brush Bronzewing	<i>Phaps elegans</i>	147	▼	Rare	WS
Buff-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	3011	▼	Abundant	WS
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	<i>Hylacola pyrrhopygia</i>	47	▼	Rare	WS
Common Bronzewing	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	1576	=	Common	WG
Crescent Honeyeater	<i>Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus</i>	6516	▼	Abundant	WS
Crested Pigeon	<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	83	▼	Rare	G
Diamond Firetail	<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	37	▼	Rare	WG
Dusky Woodswallow	<i>Artamus cyanopterus</i>	222	=	Rare	WG
Eastern Rosella	<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	160	▲	Rare	G
Eastern Spinebill	<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	2513	▼	Abundant	WG
Elegant Parrot	<i>Neophema elegans</i>	225	=	Rare	WG
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	475	=	Common	WS
Galah	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	1916	=	Abundant	G
Golden Whistler	<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>	3365	▼	Abundant	WS
Grey Currawong	<i>Strepera versicolor</i>	3648	▲	Abundant	WG
Grey Fantail	<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	7043	▼	Abundant	WS
Grey Shrikethrush	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	4210	▼	Abundant	WG
Hooded Robin	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>	33	=	Rare	WG
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites basalis</i>	466	▼	Common	WG
Laughing Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	705	▲	Common	WG
Little Corella	<i>Cacatua sanguinea</i>	148	▲	Rare	G
Little Raven	<i>Corvus mellori</i>	1768	▲	Common	G
Magpie-lark	<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	78	▼	Rare	G
Mistletoebird	<i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>	1186	▼	Common	WS
Musk Lorikeet	<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	1175	▼	Common	WG
New Holland Honeyeater	<i>Phylidonyris novaehollandiae</i>	8156	▼	Abundant	WG
Noisy Miner	<i>Manorina melanocephala</i>	52	▼	Rare	G



## Declining Woodland Birds *(continued)*

**Table 1** *(continued)*

Common Name	Scientific Name	Count	Trend	Abundance Group	Specialisation <sup>1</sup>
Peaceful Dove	<i>Geopelia placida</i>	167	▼	Rare	WG
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	<i>Glossopsitta porphyrocephala</i>	557	▼	Common	WG
Rainbow Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	7194	▲	Abundant	WG
Red Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	5588	▼	Abundant	WG
Red-browed Finch	<i>Neochmia temporalis</i>	899	▼	Common	WG
Red-capped Robin	<i>Petroica goodenovii</i>	29	=	Rare	WG
Red-rumped Parrot	<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>	119	=	Rare	WG
Rufous Whistler	<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	804	▲	Common	WS
Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	253	=	Rare	WG
Scarlet Robin	<i>Petroica multicolor</i>	1256	=	Common	WS
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites lucidus</i>	216	▲	Rare	WG
Silvereye	<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	4594	▼	Abundant	WG
Spotted Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	699	▼	Common	WS
Striated Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	12439	▼	Abundant	WG
Striated Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	12778	▼	Abundant	WS
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	1231	▲	Common	G
Superb Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	15254	▼	Abundant	WS
Tree Martin	<i>Hirundo nigricans</i>	1801	▲	Common	WG
Varied Sittella	<i>Daphoenositta chrysoptera</i>	488	=	Common	WS
Weebill	<i>Smicronis brevirostris</i>	802	▼	Common	WS
White-browed Babbler	<i>Pomatostomus superciliosus</i>	353	▼	Rare	WS
White-browed Scrubwren	<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	3873	▼	Abundant	WS
White-naped Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus lunatus</i>	1453	▼	Common	WS
White-plumed Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus penicillatus</i>	507	▼	Common	WG
White-throated Treecreeper	<i>Cormobates leucophaea</i>	5106	=	Abundant	WS
White-winged Chough	<i>Corcorax melanorhamphos</i>	996	=	Common	WG
White-winged Triller	<i>Lalage tricolor</i>	53	▼	Rare	WG
Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	66	▼	Rare	G
Yellow Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	579	▼	Common	WS
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>	8754	▼	Abundant	WS
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza chrysorrhoa</i>	278	=	Rare	WG
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>	1815	=	Abundant	WG



The South Australian Shorebirds Foundation has recently been formed to financially support researchers, citizen scientists, coastal community groups and coastal managers to enhance our understanding on the conservation status of resident and migratory shorebirds.

**Annual grants of up to \$5, 000 per project will be available to successful applicants for up 3 years.**

South Australia has a number of vulnerable resident shorebird species, including Hooded Plover, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Sooty Oystercatcher and Red-capped Plover. They can be found along parts of South Australia's coastline, including ocean beaches, estuaries, rock platforms and tidal wetlands. They mostly nest on beaches and adjacent sand dunes, and, in the case of the Sooty Oystercatcher, rocky intertidal zones.

Because nesting often occurs at times of high levels of human activity on beaches in spring and summer, disturbance can significantly affect their nesting success. The Hooded Plover has been designated as **Endangered**. Australian Pied Oystercatchers forage and nest along ocean beaches, as well as estuaries and intertidal wetlands of sheltered bays. Often on sheltered sand spits, they form large roosting flocks comprising mainly sub-adult and non-breeding adults.

During our southern hemisphere spring, flocks of the migratory shorebirds arrive on our South Australian coast from their nesting grounds as far away as northern Siberia and Alaska. Here, during summer and early autumn, they forage on small invertebrates living amongst the mud or beach-cast seaweed, significantly increasing their weight, before their extraordinary return flight to their breeding grounds.

More than 15 species visit our shores, and a number of these are deemed as **Critically Endangered**, including the Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Great and Red Knots and the Curlew Sandpiper.

**Pied  
Oystercatcher**

## Potential projects suitable for funding

- Resident shorebird population ecology, including their breeding success
- The roles of resident or migratory shorebirds in South Australia's coastal trophic ecology
- Localised movement ecology of resident or migratory shorebirds, using marked-recapture/resighting studies
- Activities by coastal community groups assisting in the conservation of shorebirds
- Travel scholarships to students or key speakers to shorebird conferences or study sites
- Depiction of aspects of the life cycles of shorebirds by writers, artists and media presenters.

Applicants are encouraged to seek additional support from other funding groups including:

- Birds SA Conservation grants ([www.birdssa.asn.au](http://www.birdssa.asn.au))
- Birdlife Australia Conservation grants ([www.birdlife.org.au](http://www.birdlife.org.au))

to enhance the success of their project.

Calls for applications will be made in February each year, and all applicants will be advised before early May. Grants will apply from the start of each financial year.

An application form is available on the website from which this information and the photographs were obtained: [www.shorebirds.org](http://www.shorebirds.org)



## Boost for Little Penguins on the Fleurieu Peninsula

### News from the Dept. for Environment and Water

17 December 2020

The re-establishment of Little Penguins on West Island, (near Victor Harbor) off the Fleurieu Peninsula coastline, has been an exciting discovery for National Parks and Wildlife Service S.A. (NPWSSA) staff.

The recent discovery is the first time in more than seven years that active burrows have been found on the island, with one breeding pair currently sitting on eggs. The discovery follows more than 17 years of ongoing habitat restoration work by NPWSSA in the location.

NPWSSA Fleurieu District Ranger, Paul Unsworth said "It had been a thrill to discover the active burrows. While it's just the two burrows that we have found, it's a huge boost to finally have evidence that they've returned to the island. It is hoped that with further success and establishment, this may be an important insurance population for the Little Penguins on Granite Island."

A trail camera will be used to monitor the burrow with eggs. During the recent census, 16 Little Penguins were found on Granite Island, in eight active burrows. Numbers dipped earlier in the year after two foxes crossed the causeway and killed 10 birds. Since then, gates have been constructed to deter foxes from crossing to the island, and an ultrasonic fox deterrent has been installed to further deter the pest species.

Little Penguins can have one to two chicks per hatch, and can sometimes nest twice during the breeding season, which can last until February. Currently there are several breeding pairs also sitting on eggs on Granite Island. "At Granite Island we have the best Little Penguin fledgling success rate of any monitored colony in Australia, it is higher than anywhere else, at two chicks per nest," Paul said.

"We try to control all the factors that we can on land, through native vegetation establishment, installing fences to protect the Little Penguin burrows, and baiting black rats, which are found on Granite Island, and can prey on chicks and eggs".

In another boost for West Island, 50 adult Caspian Terns were counted, with 50 nestlings fledged, and an additional 39 eggs yet to hatch. The location is one of the few nesting habitat locations of these birds, which only nest on a scrape on the ground, with nesting sites highly vulnerable to predation and disturbance.

The biggest tern in the world, the Caspian Terns stopped nesting on the island for several years in the early 2000s as undergrowth made the island unsuitable for nesting.

Habitat restoration work undertaken by NPWSSA staff and other agencies including the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board and Friends of Granite Island group, meant the terns returned in 2007.

Other wildlife on the island includes Crested Terns, Pacific Gulls, Silver Gulls, and Cunningham's Spiny-tailed Skink, White's skink and Peron's Earless Skink.

**Wendy Phillips**



**Caspian Terns on West Island, Fleurieu Peninsula** (Photographed by Corey Jackson, Coastal Conservation Officer, Dept. Landscape SA, December 2020)



## Goshawk or Sparrowhawk?

Recently, a photograph of a juvenile *Accipiter* species (Brown Goshawk or Collared Sparrowhawk) was circulated for identification. A single photo, such as photo (1), failed to provide enough information. There was initial disagreement because the bird appeared to have a notched tail tip, suggesting Sparrowhawk. However, close examination revealed that the 'notch' is an illusion caused by the central retrices (tail feathers) being slightly disarrayed and lying parallel instead of overlapping (SD). A second photo, since supplied (2), convincingly shows that the tail is graduated, with outer retrices shorter, and is thus rounded. The retrices also look too narrow for a

Sparrowhawk, which typically has a broader and slightly flared (and squared) tail at rest. The bird has a distinct brow-ridge ('frowning'), and the legs and feet are too robust for a Sparrowhawk. The second photo also better shows the fairly flat (rather than domed) crown and somewhat robust bill. The bird's perch is a thin branch, with middle claw wrapping around it, so the relative length of middle against other toes is not clear. Supplementary information since supplied revealed that the bird was photographed on 16 December 2020 at Rocky Gully (part of Kinchina Conservation Park), and that its call was like a Whistling Kite, but quicker, high pitched and shorter (i.e. a musical chatter).

The date places the bird as a dependent juvenile, fledged less than a month (maybe even less than a fortnight) old, as a yearling would be moulting into second plumage. The call identifies it as a Brown Goshawk, as a dependent juvenile Collared Sparrowhawk's begging call is a slow, downslurred single mewling note repeated. Going by its build, this bird is probably a male. Although caution is required with new fledglings, whose primaries and tail may not be fully grown, one of us (AB) has noticed that, in a few illustrations, the distance from wing tip to tail tip is



**Accipiter (goshawk or sparrowhawk)** (Photographed by Gordon Pateman at Rocky Gully, Kinchina Conservation Park, 16 December 2020)

greater than the primary projection (tertiary tip to wing tip) in the Brown Goshawk and less in the Collared Sparrowhawk, i.e. Sparrowhawks have both an absolutely and relatively shorter tail.

This episode is a lesson in obtaining as much information as possible, such as field notes taken at the time, when seeking an identification of two such 'difficult' species. When submitting photos for identification it is sometimes essential to offer several, so as to capture the crucial diagnostic features at appropriate angles. Sparrowhawks are more obliging in that regard, although fledgling Brown Goshawks can be reasonably approachable too. In this case a ventral view of the tail and a front-on view of the feet would have been ideal. For a helpful article, with comparative photos, on separating the two species, see 'Splitting pairs: Brown Goshawk vs. Collared Sparrowhawk', *Australian Birdlife* magazine September 2020, vol. 9 no. 3, p. 55.

We thank Gordon Pateman for supplying the photos and notes.

**Stephen Debus, Ian Falkenberg  
and Andrew Black**

# SPECTACULAR BIRDS *from* NORTH QUEENSLAND

*Ashley and Glenys Grivell*

*W*e spent all of 2020 in far north Queensland, camping in National Parks, by rivers, bush camps or any remote location we could find to photograph birds, from the wet tropics to Iron Range N.P. in Cape York.

We usually head west after the wet season, (about Easter) but this year the COVID restrictions put an end to cross-border travel.

Bird watching in North Queensland is extremely popular and everyone was very generous with information on birds and where to find them.

We were lucky to be in Cairns to see the extremely rare and endangered Nordmann's Greenshank.

A major achievement for us this year was finding and photographing all 13 endemic Wet Tropics' birds.

Glenys and I hope that you will enjoy this selection from the many photographs we have taken.

*Happy Birding!*

*Ashley Grivell*



**Frill-necked Monarch**

*(Photographed by Ashley Grivell in Iron Range National Park, Cape York, 30 September 2020)*



**Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher**

*(Photographed by Ashley Grivell in Mount Lewis National Park, 6 February 2020)*





**Paradise Riflebird**

*(Photographed by Ashley Grivell in Bunya Mountain National Park, October 2020)*



**Rufous Fantail**

*(Photographed by Glenys Grivell in Bunya Mountains, 14 January 2019)*



**Leucistic Pale Yellow Robin**

*(Photographed by Glenys Grivell on the Curtain Tree Fig, near Yungabarra, 30 October 2020)*



**White-faced Robin**

*(Photographed by Ashley Grivell in Iron Range National Park, Cape York, 3 August 2020)*



**Chestnut-breasted Mannikin**

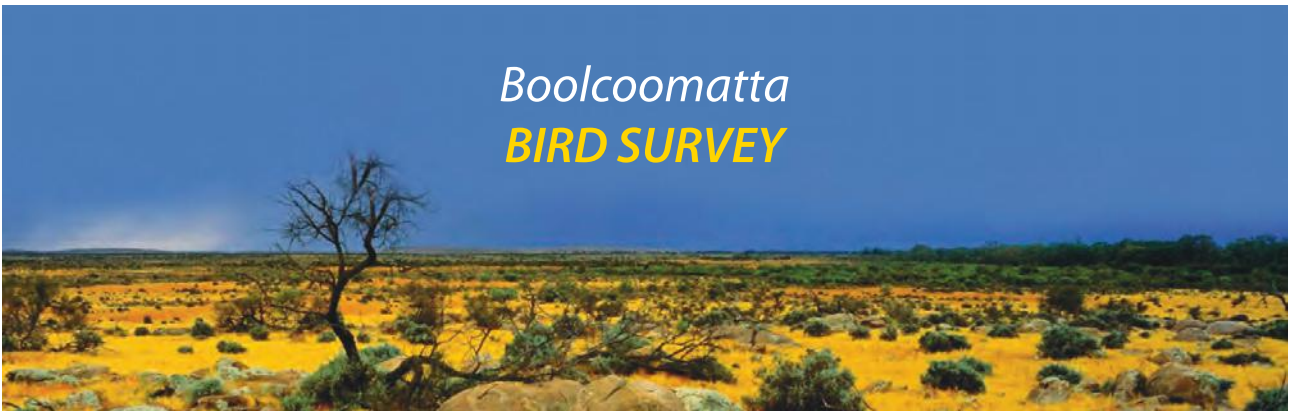
*(Photographed by Ashley Grivell in Mount Lewis National Park, 25 January 2021)*



**Crimson Finch**

*(Photographed by Glenys Grivell in Lakefield National Park, Cape York, 22 July 2020)*





## Boolcoommatta **BIRD SURVEY**

**A view of Boolcoommatta Station Reserve** *(an extract from the Reserve's website)*

Trevor Cox and I, with three other birders from Birds SA — Steven Langley, Jeremy Robertson and Richard Woodland — undertook a bird survey on Bush Heritage's Boolcoommatta station reserve in late November. We surveyed the homestead area and around Peechara Hills camping ground, where I stayed overnight on my return trip. The bird survey sites lists are with Bush Heritage. We saw quite a few Inland Dotterels and found three Australian Painted Snipes at a dam. The dams were full and the place is currently green with fresh growth after some good rains. These conditions attracted many Budgerigars, Brown and Rufous Songlarks, Masked Woodswallows, Black-tailed Native-hens, Australian Pratincoles, White-winged Trillers, Crimson Chats, Pied and Black Honeyeaters. We added seven new birds to the Boolcoommatta bird list. There were numerous birds at Peechara Hills and I'm positive that I saw and heard Plains Wanderers there.

**Bernie Haase**



**Crimson Chat** *(Photographed by Bernie Haase, Boolcoommatta Station Reserve, November 2020)*



**Little Eagle** *(Photographed by Bernie Haase, Boolcoommatta Station Reserve, December 2020)*

# General Meetings



**President Steven Langley, addressing members at our January General Meeting**

## **Past General Meeting** Friday, 29 January

This was our first General meeting for nearly a year.

Since rules about social distancing precluded us from using our usual lecture theatre at the Waite, we hired the University of Adelaide AHMS G030 Lecture Theatre on North Terrace. As the photograph shows, it is a very salubrious venue.

President Steven Langley opened the meeting and outlined his aims for the Association, especially ways in which we can contribute to conservation of the natural environment in our area.

This was a Members' Night meeting, consisting of presentations by three of our members.

The first speaker was our Secretary, Jim Spiker, who is also Vice President and Bird Banding Coordinator of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park. Jim first

showed a map of the park, indicating the large area that had been burned in the recent bushfires. He went on to describe the bird banding activities being carried on in the park, and the valuable information they provided.

Jim's presentation was followed by photos and a talk by John Gitsham on Woodswallows, particularly those 'companion' species, White-browed and Masked. He told us that both species were currently seen in large numbers at Gluepot Reserve. The photograph on the next page illustrates this abundance

Last but not least, Richard Woodland spoke about a recent survey of Boolcoomatta Station which is a Nature Foundation property, far up on the Broken Hill road almost into NSW. A description of the results this survey can be found on page 24.

***Cynthia Pyle***



## General Meetings *(continued)*

### Future General Meetings

- General Meetings will be held in the Charles Hawker building of the Waite Institute on Waite Road Urrbrae on the last Friday of every month except December, public holidays or prior to a long weekend.
- The doors will be opened at 7.15pm and meetings will start at 7.45pm.
- Notices of General Meetings will be published in the monthly e-Newsletters.
- Due to current COVID restrictions, the number of attendees at meetings will be restricted. If you intend to come to the meeting, you will be required to register through the relevant e-Newsletter. If you have no access to a computer, you can phone Alan Burns on 0411 595 910.



**Masked and White-browed Woodswallows** *(Photographed by John Gitsham at Gluepot in 2020)*



## Past Excursions

### Birds SA

Sunday 1 November

#### Tolderol Game Reserve Wetlands

A trip to Tolderol always proves to be rich in its rewards, whether you are a novice birdwatcher or experienced enthusiast; and never more so than at this time of year. About now, the migratory shorebirds and waders are in town, having flown south for the summer. One of the special features of Tolderol, with its raised levee banks affording great views into the basins, is that it consists of a swathe of variable habitats providing a welcome home to a wide array of species. Also, because they are at home, you not only see the birds, but are also afforded the privilege of watching them going about their lives, taking care of business, actively engaging with each other and their environment. This privilege differs significantly from birding elsewhere, where no sooner have you clapped eyes on the bird than it takes off and disappears. At Tolderol you can park almost anywhere and be assured you will see birds there, hanging around, waiting for you to watch them. What a place!

And what a pleasant day we had. Thirty four people — several of them first time trippers — sorted themselves into ten cars that then divided into two groups that later became three and headed off in different directions to go see what was on offer. I don't know which government agency is responsible for managing the water flow and levels in the basins, but I must confess to being a little anxious at first, having directed traffic towards the south-westerly Basins 17 and 4 – areas I have become accustomed to seeing decidedly wet and well stocked with birdlife – only to find them dry and barren. Oops! Where was the water? Where were the

birds? What would people be thinking? I don't know what people were thinking, but it turns out the water and the waders were further east in the newly redeveloped Basin 14. And, let it be said, it was heartening to see that considerable work — and time and money, no doubt — has been invested into repairing and raising and reshaping the basins in this area of the reserve. Clearly it is paying dividends, because that's where the waders were, and people seemed very happy to just sit and watch.

The other basins, with their variable water levels and habitats also absorbed much time and attention from the attendees, so that the morning seemed to pass [too] quickly and we again found ourselves back together again for the end-of-trip Bird Call and debrief. Altogether 48 species were recorded. Highlights? Two Yellow-billed Spoonbills seemed to score quite highly on the spotter-satisfaction meter, as did the single Pectoral Sandpiper. Three Singing Honeyeaters were well regarded, as were the 10 European Goldfinches. In the ducks department, 2 Pacific Black Ducks and 5 Australian Shelducks made the list, while up high both a Black Kite and a Black-shouldered Kite were seen doing the rounds. There were also 2 Whistling Kites and 6 Swamp Harriers up and about, but they didn't seem to rate quite as highly as the other two. Me? I like the sandpipers and stints, and there were an abundance of them either loping or skittering in the mudflats. While I wouldn't know what it was if it came up and pecked me, a Common Greenshank was also seen, and seems to warrant a mention.

Thank you to all who attended, and for sharing your interest and enthusiasm. It was a pleasure to not only be back at Tolderol, but also to share your company.

**Stephen Ramm**



**Red-capped Plover**



**Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**

*(Both photographs taken at Tolderol by Stephen Ramm, 1 November 2020)*

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Birds SA

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Thursday 19 November

#### Magazine Road Wetlands Dry Creek

Cancelled due to the COVID outbreak in SA

### Birds SA

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Sunday 29 November

#### Riverglades Wetlands Murray Bridge

A group of 16 members met at the car park along with the usual gathering of ski boat enthusiasts. The weather was good for birding with a cooling breeze and some cloud cover. The water levels in the wetlands and the Murray River were high, resulting in sections of the levy track being soaked, making for some interesting negotiation whilst still maintaining our birding skills. This is a great spot both for beginners and for experienced birders; especially when other locations are closed due to hot weather or fire bans. A total of 50 species was recorded.

*Lynton Huxley*

### Birds SA

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Saturday 12 December

#### Cleland Conservation Park

It was a pleasure to spend a Saturday morning with seven enthusiastic birdwatchers in the glorious environs of Cleland Conservation Park. The weather was perfect. The temperature a welcoming warm, the sky clear, the winds a glancing whisper.

Having been recently refurbished and reopened, we set out on the Steub Trail, which was named in honour of park benefactor, Ludwig Reinwald Steub. We joined the trail at the Cleland Wildlife Park entrance and, with a couple of detours along the way, followed its gentle and meandering climb through heathy forest woodland until it joined up with the main Mount Lofty Summit to Waterfall Gully trail. After recess-with-a-view we took the downhill route back to the gully floor and wended our way back up to where we started and conducted the bird call with a side of coffees at the park cafeteria.

Highlights? Other than the morning being most convivial and pleasant, I think we were in agreement that the greatest reward came from watching a female Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*) dining on the delights of a *Banksia marginata*. We first saw her 'from above' as the Steub Trail trended downwards, and then 'from below' as the trail effectively looped around and under her. From either direction we

wouldn't have been more than ten metres from the bird, and it seemed like something of a privilege to watch such an imposing yet elegant creature comfortable in her environment as she attended to her needs. I've seen many of them flying in flocks and swooping into trees, but never one at rest, and never so close. They are, indeed, solid and significant birds.

Our tally for the day was twenty-seven species. I was given the impression that nothing we saw was unexpected or 'out-of-place', and nor was there any debate or disagreement about identifications. There were an Australian White Ibis, a Common Bronzewing, several Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and Galahs, some rosellas and some lorikeets. There were also quite a few honeyeaters of different species, and some birds with 'shrike' as either a prefix or suffix in their name. Many birds were seen by a group of people who just seemed happy to be out and about and watching birds being birds in the company of like-minded individuals.

It was a most pleasant occasion.

*Stephen Ramm*

### Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

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Sunday 13 December

#### Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden

On an overcast day with winds picking up, 18 birders met in the car park at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden in Pt. Augusta. They had come from widely dispersed areas of the State. Nine were from Pt. Augusta, 3 from Adelaide and 1 each from Wilmington, Quorn, Whyalla, Pt. Neill, Weeroona Island and Mambray Creek. The usual chorus of bird calls was much quieter in the area as we all headed off towards the *Eremophila* garden. This was probably due to the birds having finished pairing up, and the nomadic birds headed for greener pastures further north where the rains had fallen. We saw Magpielarks and Welcome Swallows as we walked to the garden. A few *Eremophilas* were flowering and they attracted some White-fronted Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds and White-winged Trillers. A single Budgerigar flew past, calling out for its lost mates, while Australian Magpies sat in a tree watching us. Near the main building House Sparrows and Willie Wagtails moved around as 3 Black Kites hovered overhead. As we entered the main garden area some Australian Magpies hassled some Australian Ravens and White-plumed Honeyeaters chased each other around in the trees. We heard the soft squeaking calls of Fairywrens and then a group of Purple-backed Fairywrens with 3 coloured up males gave us a good sighting. A Nankeen Kestrel hung in the air above us as White-winged Fairywrens appeared in the bluebush,

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

including a lovely coloured male. A Collared Sparrowhawk was sitting on a nest high in a tree as curious Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters peered at us through the leaves. We moved on to the boardwalk lookout with the wind getting stronger and the temperature rising. It was quiet at the lookout as we enjoyed the view, so we headed towards the sand hills bird hide. A pair of Redthroat, Chirruping Wedgebills, plus Spotted Doves were added to our bird list. We went back to the main building for morning smoko and a good natter amongst ourselves. We still had time for more birding before our Christmas lunch, so some of us drove to the Redcliffs lookout that overlooks the gulf and some walked to the bluebush plains bird hide. At the lookout the wind was blowing strongly but the Rainbow Bee-eaters and Fairy Martins didn't seem to mind. On the mud banks and beach there were Pied and Little Pied Cormorants, Silver Gulls, Masked Lapwings and Red-capped Plovers. While at the bird hide Zebra Finches, Galahs, Southern Whitefaces and a Pipit were found. White-browed Babblers completed our bird list as we all returned to the main building for our Christmas lunch. Several more people joined us for lunch and we all sat back and enjoyed looking at photos taken by our group members over the year on a big screen in the conference room. Some ripper bird photos were shown of several unusual or spectacular birds, and some were caught in mesmerising poses. The corona restrictions confined the pictures to birds found in South Australia and showed that you don't have to go interstate or overseas to find spectacular birds. We saw only 34 bird species for the day, with birds of the day being the nesting Collared Sparrowhawk, White-winged Trillers, a Redthroat and Chirruping Wedgebills.

**Bernie Haase**

### Birds SA

Thursday 17 December

### Laratinga Wetlands, Mt Barker

This centred around "High Morning-tea" for Helen and Lee with the hand-embroidered tablecloth and serviettes!

The morning tea added to the beauty of the amazing number of chicks and young that we saw with Grebes, Ducks, Swamphens and Dusky Moorhens.

Sixty Pink-eared ducks were also a highlight along with a Crested Shriketit. A Wedge-tailed Eagle glided overhead whilst the very young Superb Fairywrens hopped around underfoot.

Fifty five species ensured a delightful morning for the 25 attendees.

**Kate Buckley**



### Willie Wagtail

*(Photographed by Jill Mortimer at Laratinga, 17 December 2020)*



### Superb Fairywren

*(Photographed by Rose Slade at Laratinga, 17 December 2020)*



### Dusky Moorhen

*(Photographed by Lesley Burton at Laratinga, 17 December 2020)*



### High Morning Tea

*for Helen and Lee!*



## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Birds SA

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#### Saturday 9 January Paiwalla Wetlands

The predicted weather was for mid to high 30C but that did not deter 21 members from gathering to start our field trips for the New Year. I should like to thank Steve Scowns and the Wetland Habitats (Paiwalla) Association Inc. for making this private asset available to us.

Given the hot conditions we gathered back at the car park for an early lunch under shade. Members were able to report a total of 59 species for the outing. These included Australasian Shoveler (4), Musk Duck (3), Straw-necked Ibis (50), Royal Spoonbill (1), three cormorant species: Little Pied (6), Great (4) and Little Black (30), Rainbow Bee-eater (20), Variegated Fairywren (6), Superb Fairywren (20) Red-rumped Parrot (4), Crimson Rosella (6), Singing Honeyeater (10), White-plumed Honeyeater (20), Willie Wagtail (12), Australian Reed Warbler (20) and twenty each of Welcome Swallow, Fairy Martin and Tree Martin.

Birds of prey sighted included Black Kite (20), Whistling Kite (10) and one each of Swamp Harrier, Nankeen Kestrel, Black Falcon and Peregrine Falcon.

***Lynton Huxley***

#### Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

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#### Sunday 17 January Baroota Reservoir

On a clear and sunny day 9 birders met at the Mambray Creek parking bay. Five were from Port Augusta, 2 came from Pt. Pirie and 1 each from Wilmington and Mambray Creek. We headed off to Baroota reservoir via the back track named Cattle track. The open paddocks along the track were mostly bare but the surviving remnant vegetation along the track yielded 22 bird species. Nankeen Kestrels and Black-shouldered Kites hovered overhead looking for mice and lizards, while Galahs, Welcome Swallows, Little and Australian Ravens flew past. In the sparse shrubbery there were White-browed Babblers, Black-faced Woodswallows, Singing Honeyeaters and Crested Pigeons. As we drove along we stopped several times to look at the numerous Australian Pipits, Brown Songlarks, White-winged Fairywrens, Horsfield's Bush Larks and some White-fronted and Crimson Chats. Some Emus ran away from us and a Little Buttonquail was flushed as we tried to photograph the Bush Larks. At the end of the track,



**Australian Reed Warbler** *(Photographed by Bernie Haase at Baroota Reservoir, 17 January 2021)*



**Horsfield's Bush Lark** *(Photographed by Bernie Haase at Baroota Reservoir, 17 January 2021)*

House Sparrows hid in a shrub while a Black Kite and a Brown Falcon circled overhead.

We entered the Baroota reservoir with permission from SA Water and parked near the entrance where the Red gum lined creek flows out of the site. There is permanent water here that leaks out of the reservoir and some old fruit trees growing that attract birds. The trees contained many White-plumed Honeyeaters, House Sparrows, Peaceful Doves, Dusky Woodswallows

## Past Excursions *(continued)*



**Wood Duck with young** *(Photographed by Bernie Haase at Orroroo Reservoir on a trip to the Peechara Hills, November 2020)*

with young and a few Magpielarks, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Flinders Adelaide Rosellas, Red-rumped Parrots, Magpies, Black-faced Cuckooshrikes, a Mistletoebird, only two Little Corellas, a Spotted Dove and a Red Wattlebird moving about in them. Passing overhead there was a big murder of about 60 Little Ravens and some Tree Martins. In the fruit trees, Silvereyes and Common Blackbirds fed on ripe figs. After we had morning smoko it was a short drive to the dam wall where we stopped to walk around under the Red gums and found a Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, several Grey Shrikethrushes, Yellow-throated Miners, Kookaburras, Willie Wagtails, Singing Honeyeaters, Rufous Songlarks and a Reed Warbler. We drove on and crossed the spillway where a Hobby was being harassed by a pair of Nankeen Kestrels. We passed a family of Masked Lapwings as we drove to the edge of the half-full reservoir. The wind was rising as we set up our spotting scopes but there was not much to see from this location. Eurasian Coots were nearest to us and in the distance we saw Black, Blue-billed, Musk and Wood Ducks, Grey Teal and Hoary-headed Grebes floating on the water. On we drove across the dam wall and up a hill with a steep cliff that overlooked a sheltered arm of the water. We look down on more of the water birds mentioned and some Pink-eared Ducks, and Black-tailed Nativehens and White-faced Herons. Wedge-tailed Eagles soared high above us. Following the track around the reservoir we stopped to have lunch under the trees near the water's edge. Purple-backed Fairywrens, a Sacred Kingfisher, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and a couple of Diamond Firetails were lunchtime highlights. Driving on around the reservoir we stopped to walk to the water adding Australasian Grebe with chicks, Whiskered Tern, Pied Cormorant and a White-necked Heron. As we slowly drove on to the end

of the water we found in the scrub, some White-browed Babblers, Grey Butcherbirds, a Rufous Whistler and an Elegant Parrot. At the end of the reservoir water in the north arm we found breeding Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, Welcome Swallows and lots of Black-fronted Dotterels.

We found 57 bird species at the reservoir and 22 along the Cattle Track, 14 of them not found at the reservoir. This made a total of 71 bird species for the day. The birds of the day would have to be the Diamond Firetails and Horsfield's Bush Larks, with a mention for the not often seen here: Little Button-quail, Crimson Chats and White-necked Heron.

**Bernie Haase**

## Birds SA

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### Thursday 21 January Kyeema Conservation Park

Cancelled due to fire ban and Park closure

## Birds SA

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### Sunday 31 January Thompson Beach

#### A PERFECT DAY!

On the last day of January, the weather was perfect, with just a zephyr to keep away the sand-flies. Thompson Beach North really turned on a variety of migratory waders for the 31 attendees, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-necked Stint, Common Greenshank, Red Knot, Grey Plover, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and the endangered Curlew Sandpiper. We also saw various other water birds.



**Grey Plover** *(Photographed by P. Taylor)*



## Past Excursions *(continued)*

It was good to see Enid Pascoe back out birding. Enid leaves no stone, or piece of seaweed, unturned. Enid and a few others then went to Thompson Beach South and were rewarded with five Far Eastern Curlew along with other birds.

I would like to thank the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) Rangers, Andrew Cowley and Phillip Dudley who kindly loaned us a 'scope for use that morning. They joined the group to enjoy the delights of the migratory waders.

Thank you, also to Friends of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (FAIBS), for arriving with 3 'scopes, and to BirdLife for loaning 1 'scope.

These 'scopes, along with the Birds SA members who brought their own 'scopes, enabled the group to be divided into teams of 2 or 3 people, thus allowing excellent viewing and a great opportunity for improving migratory wader identification skills.

**Kate Buckley**

### Fleurieu Birders

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#### Wednesday 3 February Coorong Trip

Fourteen birders joined the first of four Coorong Cruise charters for the Fleurieu Birders February outing.

We left from Goolwa Wharf and travelled down through the Barrage into the Goolwa Channel and then

past the Murray Mouth into the northern Coorong. We travelled as far south as the end of the Tauwichee Barrage before we turned around to head back to Goolwa by 3pm.

We were amazed by how many birds we saw on this trip. Although we only reached 47 species our experienced birders estimated around 1000 Black Swan, 2000 Grey Teal and 1000 Chestnut Teal, 800 Pelicans, 1500 Red-necked Stints, 3000 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, as well as several huge flocks of Starlings estimated at around 5000. We found out why they are called 'Murmurations' as we could actually hear the noise of their wings as the flocks flew overhead.

Other highlights of the trip were a group of around 60 Fairy Terns near the Murray Mouth, a single Eastern Curlew and a Black Falcon trying to find a meal from the huge Starling flocks.

We enjoyed the morning tea on the boat and stopped for lunch at Barker's Knoll. We went for a short walk to look for the Rufous Bristlebird but with no success. We did find a number of small groups of Emus walking along the beach.

The day was sunny throughout and the brisk cool breeze at the start calmed as the day progressed to provide perfect birding weather.

Everyone enjoyed the trip. Thanks to Wendy for organising the charter and juggling which trip everyone would prefer.

**Bob Daly**



**Black-faced Cormorant** *(Photographed by Bob Daly on the Coorong, 3 February 2021)*



**Flock of Common Starlings** *(Photographed by Bob Daly on the Coorong, 3 February 2021)*



# Future Excursions

## **Birds SA Contact: Lynton Huxley**

*Field Program Co-ordinator and Campout Organiser*

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

**Email: [lyntonhuxley@gmail.com](mailto:lyntonhuxley@gmail.com) or [fieldtrips@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:fieldtrips@birdssa.asn.au)**

In the light of current COVID-19 protocols for South Australia we have prepared the following programme of field trips and the 2021 Easter Campout. We will continue to monitor government constraints and keep you informed of any changes via our **e-News**.

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

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

If you have any queries or require further information please contact me at any of the contacts given above.

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 (facemask optional)
- Sun protection cream and a hat
- 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

## **Birds SA**

**Sunday 28 February**

**Magazine Road Wetlands Dry Creek (AP) 10km**

| Easy |

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 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 Hwy heading to Port Adelaide. Once you are along the Salisbury Highway, you need to move over to the right hand lane so you are ready to turn right into Magazine Road Wetlands.

**TRIP LEADER: *Richard Woodland***

## **Fleurieu Birders**

**Saturday 6 March**

**Langhorne Creek Cemetery and Dog Lake**

Meet at 8.30am at Frank Potts Reserve on Main Rd to Wellington.

**TRIP LEADER: *Wendy Phillips***

## **Birds SA**

**Saturday 13 March**

**Newland Head Conservation Park (MLR) 120km**

| Easy |

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

**TRIP LEADER: *Winston Syson***

## **The Babblers**

**Sunday 14 March**

**Mt. Gullet Beach**

Meet at 8am in Mambray Creek parking bay. Wear beach walking footwear.

**TRIP LEADER: *Bernie Haase***

## Future Excursions *(continued)*

### Birds SA

**Thursday 18 March**  
**Barossa Goldfields (AP) 42km.**

| **Moderate** |

Meet at 8.30am at Bowden Cottage on the corner of Allandale Road and Para Wirra Road at the top end of Para Wirra Conservation Park. There is a car park near the corner on Allandale Road and some parking in front of the cottage. There are some picnic tables and a toilet at the cottage. We will explore the Phoenix trail (about 5km).

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

### Birds SA

**Sunday 28 March**  
**Hart Road Wetland, Aldinga Beach (MLA) 46km**

| **Easy** |

Meet at 8.30am in the car park near the corner of Rowley Road and Hart Road Aldinga Beach. It is adjacent to the north east corner of the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Jim Spiker*

### Birds SA

**Easter Campout 1 to 6 April**  
**Cantara Homestead, Coorong National Park**

| **Easy** |

Full details on facilities available and how to get there were provided in the summer 2020 (issue No. 256) edition of *The Birder*. See also the Birds SA Website or contact Lynton Huxley 0498466092 for further information.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

### Fleurieu Birders

**Saturday 3 April**  
**Springs Rd. Native Forest Reserve, Mt. Hayfield**

Meet at 8.30am on corner of Range Rd. and Springs Rd. just west of Parawa.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Wendy Phillips*

### Birds SA

**Thursday 15 April**  
**Kyeema Conservation Park (MLR) 60km.**

| **Moderate** |

Meet at 8.30am. This Conservation Park is on the southern end of Kuitpo Road, about 10km west of Ashbourne and 20km SW of Meadows. Travel from Meadows on Brookman Road. About 5km past Kuitpo, turn left into Woodgate Hill Road. Continue approximately 3km to the Park entrance on the left.

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

### The Babblers

**Friday 16 April to Sunday 18 April**  
**Campout at Lake Gilles CP**

Meet at 8.30am at Tanks/Iron Knob turnoff

### Fleurieu Birders

**Saturday 1 May**  
**Randall's Vineyard Currency Creek.**

Meet at 8.30am in One Paddock car park (old Currency Creek Winery)

**TRIP LEADER:** *Wendy Phillips*

### Birds SA

**Sunday 2 May**  
**Tolderol Game Reserve, Lake Alexandrina 85km**

| **Easy** |

Meet at 8.30am. Take the road from Langhorne Creek to Wellington for approximately 5km and turn right into Dog Lake Road. Continue over a crossroad, 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:** *Stephen and Miles Ramm*

### Birds SA

**Saturday 8 May**  
**Byards Road Wetland, Reynella East (AP) 22km**

| **Easy** |

Meet at 8.30am. Car parking on Byards Road is adjacent to these recently established wetlands, which cover an area of 21 hectares and have been extensively revegetated

**TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*



## Future Excursions *(continued)*

### The Babblers

**Sunday 16 May**  
**Carrierloo Station**

Meet at 8am at the start of the Stuart Highway.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Bernie Haase*

### Birds SA

**Thursday 20 May**  
**Swan Reach Conservation Park (MM) 113km**

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

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

### Birds SA

**Sunday 30 May**  
**Nurragi Conservation Reserve (MM) 68km**

| Easy |

Meet at 8.30am at the junction of the Finniss-Milang Road and Nurragi Road.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Wendy Phillips*

### Fleurieu Birders

**Saturday 5 June**  
**Scott CP. Currency Creek**

Meet 8.30am on Gould Rd. at the 1st Car Park from Deep Creek Rd.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Wendy Phillips*

### Birds SA

**Saturday 12 June: Long Weekend**  
*No Field Trip*

### Birds SA

**Thursday 17 June**  
**Belair National Park**

| Moderate | MLR | 13Km

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 LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

# New Members

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

John Jessop .....	Cherryville
J. Oliver .....	St Peters
Richard Tucker .....	Gawler
Gerard Fitzgibbon .....	Magill
Peter Smith .....	Bridgewater
Ruth Campbell .....	Thebarton
Cheryl Edwards .....	Paradise
Erin Slater .....	Hilton
Marina Walker .....	Tranmere
Nicola Massy-Westropp .....	Myrtle Bank
Nynke van der Burg .....	Aberfoyle Park
Merrilyn Farnham .....	Hahndorf
Julie-Ann Stoll .....	Semaphore
Peter Shaughnessy .....	Grange
Bruce Carpenter .....	Craigburn Farm
Roz Daniell .....	Forestville
Robert Seymour .....	Adelaide
Raymond Nias .....	Aberfoyle Park
Steve James .....	Yongala
Judy Owen .....	Port Augusta
Emmanuel Smith .....	Sheidow Park
Danielle James .....	Stirling
Judy Harvey .....	Stirling
Toby Esplin .....	Littlehampton
Patricia Carter .....	Blackwood
Stephanie Newell .....	Goolwa
Cathy Smith .....	Henley Beach
Mark Wars .....	Balaklava
Anna Peek .....	Melrose Park

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

# 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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### Brown Quail

1, 1/1/2021. Elizabeth Vale, John Harvey oval, AP. Maric, M.  
2 + 7 juveniles, 19/1/2021. Rogue's Point, YP. Syson, W.  
4, 19/1/2021. James Well, YP. Syson, W.  
2, 21/1/2021. Middleton dunes, MM. Black, G.

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### Australasian Shoveler

1 + 5 juveniles, 22/10/2020. Novar Gardens, Brownhill Creek wetland, AP. Edey, D.

*Few breeding records from the Adelaide area.*

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### Blue-billed Duck

50, 31/10/2020. Myponga Reservoir, MLR. Haskett, C.  
2 pairs, 2/11/2020. Aldinga Scrub CP, MLR. Crouch, A.  
5, 5/2/2021. Greenfields Wetlands, Stage 1, AP. Fairbairn, H.

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### Diamond Dove

1, 15/11/2020. 12 km E Sandalwood, MM. In open mallee at edge of burnt regrowth. Carpenter, G.

1, 6/12/2020. Dutchman's Stern CP, FR. Hall, T.  
*Both southerly records following good rains in FR and LNE regions.*

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### Flock Bronzewing

Several, 12/11/2020. Boolcoomatta Stn, LNE. Haase, B. et al.

*A very southerly record, again no doubt due to the wet conditions in the district.*

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### Spotted Nightjar

1, 2/2/2021. Marion, Oaklands Wetland, AP. Cook, S.

*Little is known about movements of this species. Two were reported at the Norwood Croquet Fields on 22/3/1994 and another at Tonsley on 17/3/2017.*

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### Fork-tailed Swift

*A few reports so far this summer:*

30, 10/11/2020. Farina, NE. Newell, D.  
200, 13/12/2020. Younghusband, MM. Steeles, C.  
100s, 14/12/2020. 3 km SE Two Wells, AP. McNamara, J.  
100s, 14/12/2020. Finniss, MM. Barron, P.  
20, 15/12/2020. Balaklava, AP. Taylor, P.W.  
20, 24/1/2021. Encounter Bay, MLR. Carpenter, G.

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### Northern Giant Petrel

8, 15/11/2020. Sea off Port MacDonnell, MO. Harper, D. et al.  
1, 20/1/2021. Goolwa Channel, MM. Resting on open water. Long, R.

*John Eckert's (2000) 'Natural History of the Strathalbyn and Goolwa Districts' reports two instances of live Giant Petrels found inland, at Hindmarsh Island and Finniss respectively.*

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### White-necked Heron

1, 30/12/2020. Warren Reservoir, MLR. Slade, R. & Gredley, S.  
1, 17/1/2021. Baroota Reservoir, FR. Haase, B. et al.

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### Australian Little Bittern

Heard, 11/12/2020. Younghusband, MM. Steeles, C.  
Heard, 12/12/2020. Renmark, Longwang Island, MM. Ed Smith

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### Glossy Ibis

8, 7/12/2020. Bolivar Sewage Works, AP. Breed, W. et al.  
1, 2/2/2021. Whicker Rd wetlands, AP. Brooker, W.  
*Few reports from near Adelaide in recent years.*

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### Straw-necked Ibis

1, 29/12/2020. Port Wakefield, AP. Probable hybrid with white wings and dark back photographed among 160 Australian White Ibis. Taylor, P.W.  
2, 6/2/2021. North Adelaide, Mackinnon Parade Oval, AP. Paton, P.



## Bird Records *(continued)*

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### White-bellied Sea Eagle

1, 8/9/2020. Brown Bay, SE. Campbell, J.  
1, 13/11/2020. Lake Woolpolool, MM. Mableson, A.  
1 immature, 11/12/2020. Goolwa Channel, MM.  
Bainbridge, T.  
2, 10/1/2021. Coroong, South Lagoon, SE.  
Paton, D. et al.

*Increasing reports from the Coorong area suggest birds are breeding locally.*

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### Little Eagle

1, 25/1/2021. Big Swamp, EP. Fairbairn, H.  
*Few reports from lower EP.*

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### Square-tailed Kite

2, 14/1/2021. Naracoorte, SE. Leddy, L.

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### Spotless Crake

2, 23/1/2021. Woorabinda Reserve, Stirling, MLR.  
Heikaus, A. & Moritz, M.

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### Bush Stonecurlew

2, 22/1/2021. Inman Valley, Strangways Rd, MLR.  
Burgess, K.  
*See also report from MLR in last newsletter.*

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### Lesser Sand Plover

1, 22/1/2021. Little Eyre Island, EP.  
Rudder, A. & Belder, D.

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### Australian Painted Snipe

3, 16/11/2020. Boolcoommatta Stn, Mundianna Dam, LNE.  
Haase, B. & Cox, T.

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### Curlew Sandpiper

1500, 17/1/2021. Hindmarsh Island, Goolwa Channel, MM.  
Harper, S. & D.  
78, 18/1/2021. Bald Hill Beach, AP. Taylor, P.W.  
*Encouraging reports of larger numbers this year.*

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### Pectoral Sandpiper

1, 4/2/2021. Port Lincoln, EP. Photographed roosting on rocks with 100+ Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints.  
Fairbairn, H.

*Rarely reported from marine shores.*

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### Whimbrel

1, 30/10/2020. Wright Bay, SE. Campbell, J. et al.  
12, 18/1/2021. Price Saltfields, YP. Brooker, W.

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### Ruff

1 male, 10/1/2021. Tolderol Game Reserve, MM.  
Potter, M. & Harper, D.

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### Common Greenshank

1, 31/12/2020. Marion, Oaklands Wetland, AP.  
Zeek, A.  
Also seen there on 1/1/21 by Cook, S.

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### Common Tern

1, 12/11/2020. Cape Banks Lighthouse, SE.  
Christie, M.

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### Little Tern

1, 24/1/2021. Denial Bay, EP. Roosting non-breeding adult identified by small size, long, dark outer primaries, black bill and extensive white cap.  
Earl, H. & I.

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### Long-billed Corella

400, 4/2/2021. Hallett Cove, MLR. Lloyd, R.  
*The largest flock reported from the Adelaide/MLR region.*

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### Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

1, 7/11/2020. Marion, Oaklands Wetland, AP.  
Coddington, P.  
*Also unusual northerly reports from:*  
5, 22/11/2020. Kaiser Stuhl CP, MLR. Draper, G.  
6, 1/1/2021. Modbury Heights, MLR. Harper, D. & S.

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### Rainbow Lorikeet

2000+, 5/2/2021. Edwardstown, Castle Plaza supermarket, AP. Flying into planted gums to roost in evening.  
Carpenter, G.  
*Gums in supermarket carparks seem to be favoured roosting sites on AP.*

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### Dollarbird

1, 16/1/2021. Gluepot HS, MM  
Pascoe, T. & Gitsham, J.  
*Widespread reports from eastern SA (mostly MM and MLR) with last record from River Torrens AP 2013.*

---

### Brown Treecreeper

1, 7/1/2021. Waite Conservation Reserve, MLR. With White-throated Treecreeper feeding in Grey Box E. microcarpa woodland.  
Bird, P.  
*Now very rarely reported from the western foothills.*

## Bird Records *(continued)*

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### Western Gerygone

1, 16/12/2020. Piccadilly, MLR. Feeding in canopy of stringybarks.

Hunt, T.

*Rarely reported from the MLR, possibly influenced by the fires in eastern Australia.*

---

### White-browed (Spotted) Scrubwren

2, 26/10/2020. Weroona Island, LN. Also one present on 10/11/20.

Brittain, R.

*Interestingly there are few reports of this species from Spencer Gulf despite the presence of apparently suitable samphire and mangrove habitat.*

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### Pied Honeyeater

10+ including immatures, 3/2/2021. Orroroo, LN. In African Boxthorns.

Trengove, J.

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### White-bellied Cuckooshrike

1, 17/1/2021. Banrock Wetlands, MM. Moore, G.

---

### Olive-backed Oriole

2, 21/11/2020. D'Estrees Bay, Three Chain Rd, KI.

Mackintosh, J.

1 immature, 2/12/2020. Mount Lofty, Gores Rd, MLR.

Hunt, T.

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### Grey Currawong

1, 2/2/2021. Crafers West, MLR. A pale grey 'leucistic' bird with darker lores.

Frodsham, A.

*Similar birds reported from this district back to at least 1995, although it is unknown how many individuals are involved.*

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### Restless Flycatcher

1, 25/12/2020. Nairne, MLR. Jones, K.

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### Leaden Flycatcher

Male, 13/12/2020. Skye, MLR.m van Weenen, J.

*Scattered reports from eastern SA with most records from MLR from spring to early summer.*

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### Brown Songlark

1 immature, 17/12/2020. Adelaide Oval, AP. Feeding on oval and adjacent concrete seated areas during cricket test match.

Haskett, C.

(also reported independently by A. Black)

*Occasional reports from Adelaide parklands, with last report in 1990.*

---

### Bassian Thrush

1, 8/1/2021. Upper Sturt, Wychwood Gr, MLR.

Gillam, S.

2, 23/1/2021. Woorabinda Reserve, Stirling, MLR.

Heikaus, A. & Moritz, M.

*One also reported there on 24/1/2021 by A. Fowler and C. Rich.*

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### Painted Finch

2, 12/11/2020. Arkaroola, Stubbs Waterhole, FR.

Brittain, R. & Diment, J.

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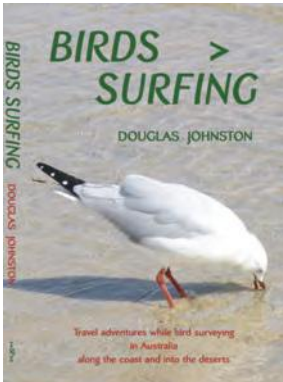
### The colourful feathers of the Brush Bronzewing

*(Photographed by Bob Daly at Goolwa Beach, 5 January 2021)*





# From the Library



**598.07234 JOH**

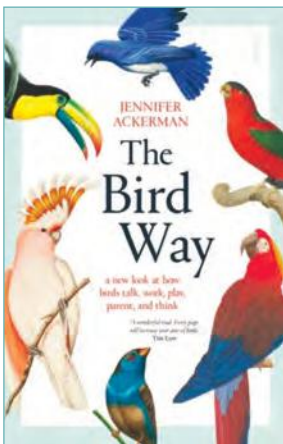
Johnston, Douglas

**Birds surfing: travel adventures while bird surveying in Australia along the coast and into the deserts**

Adelaide SA: Spindrift Press, 2016

ISBN 9780646956053

Join Douglas Johnston in *Birds Surfing* on adventures to places like Iron Range on Cape York Peninsula, Broome, Giles Weather Station in the Gibson Desert, Kakadu, Quobba and Alice Springs. Come face to face with a Perentie and see what tricks it can get up to, and wonder about the nacre in a mother-of-pearl shell.



**598.251 ACKb**

Ackerman, Jennifer

**The Bird way: a new look at how birds talk, work, play, parent and think**

Brunswick, Victoria: Scribe Publications, 2020

ISBN 9781925713763

From the author of *The Genius of Birds*, this is a radical examination of the bird way of being and of recent scientific research that is dramatically shifting our understanding of birds — how they live and how they think. Drawing on personal observations, the latest science, and her bird-related travel around the world, from the tropical rainforests of eastern Australia and the remote woodlands of northern Japan, to the rolling hills of lower Austria and the islands of Alaska's Kachemak Bay, Ackerman shows there is clearly no single bird way of being. In every respect — in plumage, form, song, flight, lifestyle, niche, and behaviour — birds vary.

The Birds SA library can be accessed at this address <https://birdssa.libib.com/>  
or via the Birds SA Website <https://birdssa.asn.au>



## Photo-Finish

### Seeking that elusive image

I grew up in the northern rivers area of New South Wales. Our home was outside the town with plenty of bush nearby and the birdlife was brilliant. Eastern Rosellas and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets were common. We would see the occasional King Parrot and on bike rides the small birds encountered would often include Double-barred Finches. Rainbow Bee-eaters would nest nearby and Pied Butcherbirds were regular visitors to our backyard.

Since becoming interested in bird photography, I enjoyed visiting relatives in the northern rivers area as this provided opportunities for obtaining images of the local birds that I remembered from my childhood. However, I became somewhat obsessed with trying to capture an image of a bird that I don't recall ever seeing as a kid, the Regent Bowerbird.

The female Regent Bowerbird is slightly larger than the male and is mainly brownish coloured. She has off-white underparts with scalloping on both the breast and back and a black spot on the crown. The male Regent Bowerbird is a visually striking jet-black bird with bright yellow primaries and secondaries, a yellow iris and bill. The forehead, crown and nape areas are also bright yellow with an orange splash on the forehead.

My initial goal of photographing the male Regent Bowerbird covered the Coffs Harbour and Sawtell

regions along with several visits to Dorrigo National Park in the Great Dividing Range west of Coffs. As so often happens when seeking a specific bird species to photograph, success can be very elusive. Several times I heard from locals, "you should have been here yesterday". Although I managed to eventually find the birds, good photographic opportunities did not arise. The target bird always seemed to have some foliage in front of it, the light was poor or the wind was blowing so strongly that the bird was moving around too much to obtain a sharp image (see below).

I decided that the best way to obtain a reasonable image was for my wife June and I to spend some time at O'Reilly's on the Lamington Plateau in Qld where we were guaranteed to see the Bowerbirds. The birds at O'Reilly's have become accustomed to humans so obtaining a reasonable photograph was assured. At O'Reilly's I finally succeeded in getting some reasonable images, like the one in the photograph on page 41.

However, it was June who took the Regent Bowerbird image that ultimately gave me the greatest satisfaction, as we were about to head off on an early morning walk at O'Reilly's. Although this was the closest I had been to a Regent Bowerbird I was unable to photograph it, as you will see in the final image.

**Jeff Groves**



**Male Regent Bowerbird obscured by twigs** (Photographed by Jeff Groves at Sawtell, September 2015)



## Photo-Finish *(continued)*



**Male Regent Bowerbird** *(Photographed by Jeff Groves on the Lamington Plateau, October 2015)*

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 your contributions to 'Photo-Finish', using the email address: [magazineeditor@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:magazineeditor@birdssa.asn.au)**



**Male Regent Bowerbird (and Jeff)** *(Photographed by June Groves at O'Reilly's on the Lamington Plateau, October 2015)*

## We hope we will be able to enjoy our General Meetings again in 2021

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

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### 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 .....

Campout Organiser, Lynton Huxley .....

Rare Birds Secretary, Brian Blaylock .....

### Port Augusta Birders (The Babblers)

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Greg Bannon 8648 6630, Bernie Haase 0419 863 834

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

Contact: Wendy Phillips 8555 0634 or 0414 248 648  
Neil Cheshire 8552 7904  
Email: [fleurieubirders@gmail.com](mailto:fleurieubirders@gmail.com)

### BirdLife South East SA

Convener: Bob Green 0407 649 909  
Email: [shriketit@bigpond.com](mailto:shriketit@bigpond.com)

### Conservation Sub-committee members

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

### SA Rarities Committee (SARC) Members

Andrew Black (Chair), Graham Carpenter (bird records), Brian Blaylock (database manager) Philippa Horton (SA Museum), Lyn Pedler, Bob Green, Julian Reid

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

Andrew Black (chair), Bob Green, Brian Blaylock, Graham Carpenter and Julian Reid.

### BIRDS SA CURRENT SUBSCRIPTIONS

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Full-time Student (no age restriction) .....	\$10.00

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'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.

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- 10c per inserted leaflet (single sheet).

The Committee reserves the right to lower or waive these fees.



# *A Study in Contrasts*



**Peregrine Falcon** (Photographed by John Spiers at Morialta Falls, 23 November 2020)



**New Holland Honeyeaters** (Photographed by Bob Daly at Kangaroo Island Flour Cask Bay Retreat, December 2020)



# ROCK SAND SALT



**NEW** illustrative guide to native flowering plants in the Gawler Ranges in South Australia's north

Native Flowering Plants of the  
Gawler Ranges  
Northern Eyre Peninsula

Nadine Brown

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## ROCKY HILLS AND OUTCROPS

Granitic rhyolite hills and rocky outcrops are a feature of the Gawler Ranges. As with rocky outcrops anywhere, the flora here is diverse and supports endemic and rare species. This is partly due to rocky areas providing a number of micro climates with varying moisture levels. They are also relatively isolated from the surrounding plains that may support different vegetation that adjacent to it. Due to the rugged nature, grazing pressure has historically been fairly low. Goats now pose the greatest threat to the flora and native fauna of the hills and management strategies are mostly in place to tackle this.

**Features:**  
160 colour pages  
with over 400 plant  
species illustrated in  
specific habitats in the  
Gawler Ranges and  
areas beyond

