

# The BIRDER

The official magazine of Birds SA Spring 2021 No 259



Linking people with birds  
in South Australia

## In this Issue

Orange-bellied Parrot seen in SA after 8 years

New venue for General Meetings

September General Meeting to be held in Port Augusta

*The hunting specialist*



© K Williams

**Collared Sparrowhawk**

*(Photographed by Kevin Williams at Mount Barker, 21 June 2021)*

# Contents

Calendar of Events .....	4
President's Message .....	5
Certificates for Long-Serving members .....	6
Conservation Sub-committee .....	7
May General Meeting: <i>Pelicans of the Coorong</i> .....	10
June General Meeting: <i>The Adelaide Rosella and what do we call it?</i> .....	15
Future General Meetings: <i>Important notice</i> .....	18
Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (FAIBS) .....	19
Orange-bellied Parrots seen in the Coorong .....	21
Recovery of the Osprey across Yorke Peninsula .....	22
Southern Eyre Peninsula's Emuwren and Whipbird .....	24
Bassian Thrush Monitoring Methods .....	26
Past Excursions .....	28
Future Excursions .....	39
Long Weekend Campout .....	42
From the Library .....	44
Bird Records .....	45
Birds SA Contact Details .....	49
Members' photo Gallery .....	50

**CENTRE INSERT: No 76 Mathew Symonds Clark (1839 – 1920), part 2 by Penny Paton.**

**Cover image: A juvenile Orange-bellied Parrot** on Bird Island, near the Murray Mouth, on May 29 2021; photographed by Bob Green. 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 9.

*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'.

Tuesday 31 August	Birds SA	General Meeting
Saturday 4 September	FB	Excursion to Myponga Reservoir
Saturday 11 September – Sunday 12 September Birds SA Members Weekend at Port Augusta		
Sunday 12 September	PA	Excursion to Bernie's Block
Thursday 16 September	Birds SA	Excursion to Scott Creek Conservation Park
Sunday 26 September	Birds SA	Excursion to Anacotilla Springs, Second Valley
Friday 1 October – Tuesday 5 October Birds SA Long Weekend Campout at Caroon Creek Conservation Park		
Saturday 2 October	FB	Excursion to Wellington Arboretum
Sunday 17 October	PA	Excursion to Quorn Local Area
Thursday 21 October	Birds SA	Excursion to Cox Scrub Conservation Park
Tuesday 26 October	Birds SA	General Meeting
Sunday 31 October	Birds SA	Excursion to "Cowirra", Mannum
Saturday 6 November	FB	Excursion to Hindmarsh Island
Saturday 13 November	Birds SA	Excursion to Jenkins Scrub
Thursday 18 November	Birds SA	Excursion to Tangari Regional Park, Woodcroft
Friday 19 November – Monday 22 November PA Campout at Cowell/Arno Bay		
Sunday 28 November	Birds SA	Excursion to Whites Road Wetlands
Tuesday 30 November	Birds SA	General Meeting
Saturday 4 December	FB	Ponds at Beyond (Christmas breakup)
Saturday 11 December	Birds SA	Excursion to Myponga Reservoir Reserve
Sunday 12 December	PA	Excursion to Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden
Thursday 16 December	Birds SA	Excursion to Barossa Goldfields

# President's Message

## Dear Members

As I write this we are just emerging from another COVID lockdown, which has caused us to cancel our July monthly meeting and a couple of field trips. This should remind us to be extra cautious when we get together - not just to be compliant with the regulations but to genuinely do our best to ensure that we are not inadvertent agents of this pandemic.

On a more cheerful topic, Birds SA is closing in on a couple of new initiatives, which we hope will make a difference.

Minko Scrub in Mount Compass is a wonderful spot that we have the opportunity to improve as a habitat for birds. Those of you who were unable to attend the webinar on 28 July can go to the Webinar section of the website to see the PowerPoint. Minko is special and we're lucky to have the opportunity to improve it even further.

Minko also represents our first foray into our "Reserve-Lite" concept, in which we do not own a property but we work closely with either private or public landowners

to try and improve the habitat for birds and overall nature conservation. With your help I'm sure we can be successful. We are going to need plenty of volunteers for bird surveys, bird banding and vegetation control, as well as for general project management, planning and co-ordination. If you think you can help in any way please email me at [minko@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:minko@birdssa.asn.au).

The second initiative is reaching out to the regions. Although more than 50% of our members live outside the Adelaide metropolitan area, we are very Adelaide focused. We are trying to address that deficiency by taking our September General Meeting to Port Augusta on Sat 11 September. We will combine with Bernie Haase's Babblers group for our weekend activities. We have planned a full weekend, with a couple of field trips to the Arid Lands Botanic Garden and Mambray Creek. See recent e-Newsletters for details. I hope to see you there.

Stay safe.

**Steven**



*I've been bathing*



*Anyone have a comb I could borrow?*

**Superb Fairywren** (Photographed by Gordon Pateman, Adelaide, 13 July 2021)

# Certificates

## for Long Serving Members

**At the AGM on May 28th seven Birds SA members received certificates to recognise their years of continuous memberships of the Association.**

Family members who have been members from the beginning were also recognised.

There are 4 levels of certificates: Platinum (40 years), Gold (35 years), Silver (30 years), & Bronze (25 years).

Congratulations to the following members who received certificates this year.

**PLATINUM:** Faye Lush and Joyce West  
Paul Taylor  
Chris Evans

**GOLD:** Vicki Natt

**SILVER:** Neil Cheshire

**BRONZE:** Graham and Julie Gould  
Nathaniel Doecke  
Rob Hogan and Liz Liebing

The Management Committee thanks all these members for their continuous membership, supporting the aims and objectives of our Association and our South Australian birds.



**President Steven Langley holding a Long Continuous Membership Certificate to be presented to Julie Gould** (Photograph by Alan Burns)

*N.B.: Please ensure that your personal details are up to date on the website so we can contact you if you are eligible for a long serving certificate in the future.*

*The membership team would also appreciate being informed if a Birds SA member has passed away.*

Please email [membership@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:membership@birdssa.asn.au) if you have any questions or information about your membership.

# Conservation Sub-committee

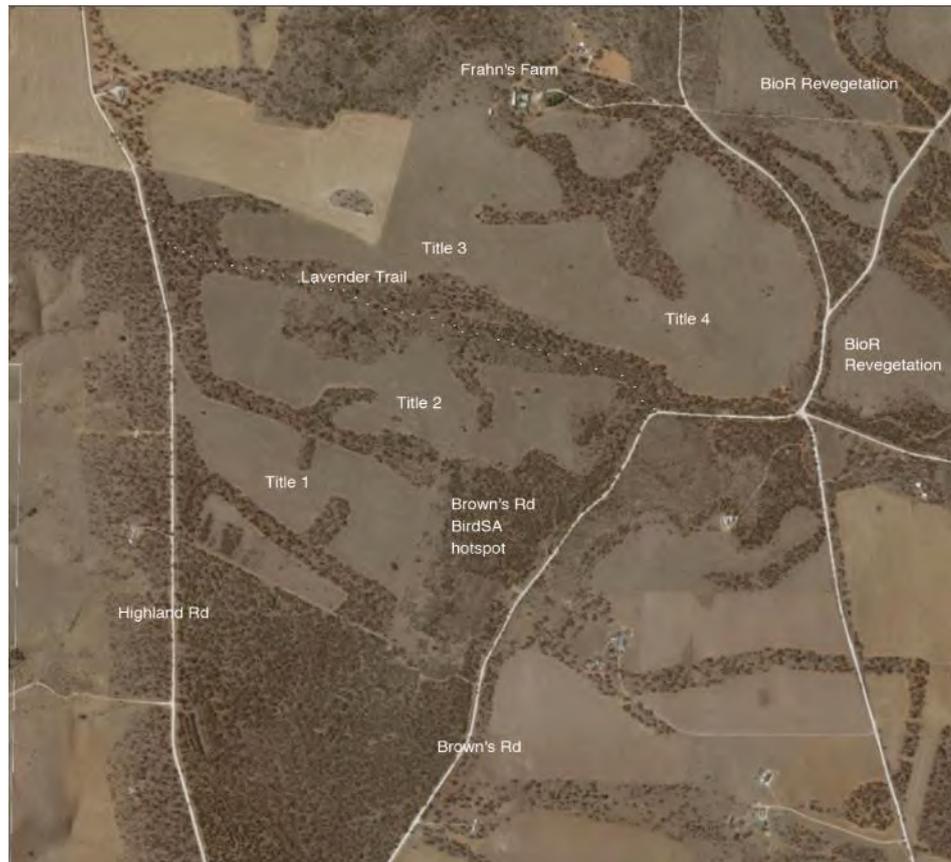
## Potential Opportunity at Browns Road

As previously reported, in February 2021 the Kanmantoo-Callington Landcare Group contacted Birds SA, advising us of their concerns with the potential sale of land at Monarto to private buyers. This land currently falls within the portfolio of the Department of Primary Industry and Regions SA (PIRSA). The land is shown as four titles on the attached map and totals approximately 177ha. It is located between Browns Road and Highland Road Monarto, just to the north of the popular Browns Road birding area and is adjacent to the area being revegetated by Bio-R near Frahn's Farm. Another block of land, within this area, of approximately 65ha has been transferred to the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) for the Lavender Trail.

In February 2021 Birds SA wrote to Minister Basham (PIRSA) suggesting that the land be transferred to DEW for conservation purposes. The importance of the area for woodland birds was stressed. It was also noted that retention of the land for conservation purposes would enable revegetation works to be undertaken, resulting in a large contiguous area of prime bird habitat.

In May 2021 we received a reply from Minister Basham containing a positive response to our suggestion. A portion of the letter was as follows:

*"However, as you have indicated, a worthwhile opportunity could exist to partner with the community to further establish the woodlands and foster local bird species if Birds SA and other interested volunteer organisations, such as the Kanmantoo-Callington Landcare Group, are in a position to commit to supporting revegetation activities as well as ongoing management of the land for pests and weeds.*



**Location of Land Parcels** (Map supplied by Kanmantoo—Callington Landcare Group)

*This is an opportunity Minister Speirs and I are open to, subject to consideration by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) of the biodiversity benefits to be obtained."*

Since receiving this response Birds SA has inspected the site several times with representatives from organisations who have expressed enthusiasm with participating in revegetation activities. These include:

- Kanmantoo-Callington Landcare Group
- Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Association (GWLAP)
- Trees For Life
- Monarto Water Network Ltd
- A representative from Murray Bridge Council

Discussions have also been undertaken with former Birds SA President, David Paton, who indicated that Bio-R strongly supports the transfer the land to DEW.

At the time of writing, Birds SA and GWLAP were scheduled to meet with senior DEW staff to discuss how the aspirations of the non-government organisations mentioned above and the Department could best be achieved with respect to this opportunity.

## Conservation Sub-committee *(continued)*

### Duck and Quail Hunting

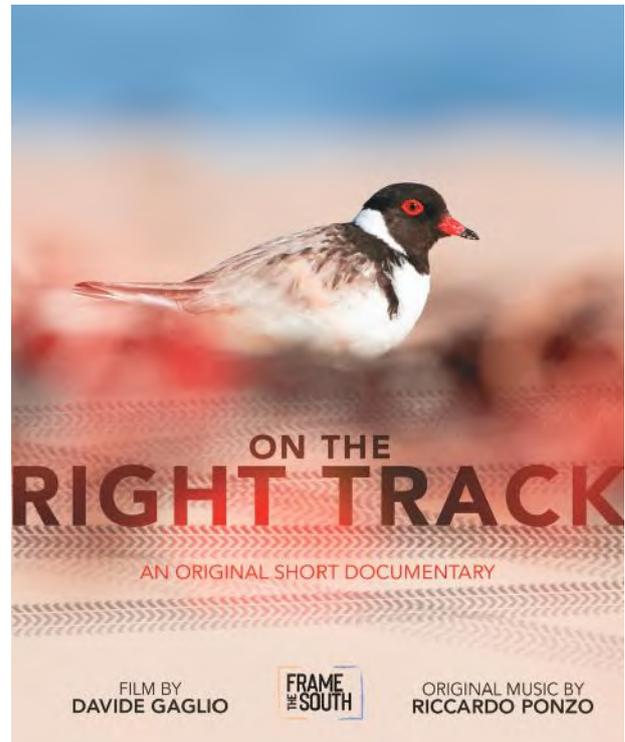
The South Australian and Victorian open seasons for duck hunting have concluded for 2021 and once again these have been characterised by appalling animal welfare issues in both states and breaches of hunting protocols. We understand these are under investigation by the relevant authorities in both states. Observations of hunting activities in both states by animal welfare organisations have proven yet again that the use of shotguns for hunting results in a high proportion of targeted birds being wounded but not killed. Many of these wounded birds are then subjected to needless pain and suffering.

As previously reported in *The Birder*, the 2021 Victorian duck season was of 20 days duration compared with the SA season which ran for over three months. Birds SA strongly argued that, should an open season be declared in SA, the season should be coordinated with the Victorian dates. DEW did not take this up.

One has to question the integrity of both major political parties in South Australia with respect to the hunting of native birds. At senior levels in both parties, opposition to hunting has been expressed privately and, for the Liberal Party, publicly. Surveys have consistently shown a high level of public opposition to recreational shooting of native birds. Based on 2021 figures, hunters with permits make up **less than 0.05%** of the South Australian population.

Can we really claim to live in a democracy when a minute proportion of the population such as this, appears to wield an inordinate influence over the political process, contrary to the wishes of the majority of the population?

The Treasures not Targets Coalition, of which Birds SA is a member, will continue to better educate the public about duck and quail shooting throughout 2021, using a range of media platforms. We will endeavour to ensure that the hunting of native birds is given prominence as an issue in the lead-up to the next State Election.



### Off-road Vehicle Documentary

Birds SA Committee member Davide Gaglio has completed an impressive documentary video that highlights the impacts on birdlife of off-road vehicles in coastal areas.

The documentary, titled *On The Right Track*, is intended to raise public awareness of the damage to ecological systems resulting from inappropriate off-road vehicle use. It will also be used to increase pressure on the State Government to commence implementation of the recommendations from the 2019 Inquiry into The Use of Off-road Vehicles, which were tabled in the SA Parliament in June 2020.

It is proposed to publicly launch the video at the Birds SA General Meeting on 31 August 2021. A link will be provided to members in an E-Newsletter to enable viewing.

### Cat Management

Birds SA's Cat Management Policy has been finalised and is now available via the **Policies and Statements** area of the Birds SA website.

Preparation of this policy has been largely the work of sub-Committee members Chris Proud and David Andrewartha. It was considered important for Birds SA to have its policy clearly articulated, in preparation for the review of the SA Dog & Cat Management Act, which is due to occur in 2022.

**Jeff Groves**

Conservation Sub-committee

## 2 FOR 1 TASTINGS

AT THE

PERTARINGA CELLAR DOOR



At Bec Hardy Wines and Pertaringa, everything we do is inspired by nature, from the vineyard to our branding.

The Bec Hardy Wines logo features the redbrowed finch, which is one of a plethora of bird species found at Bec's Tippy Hill garden and at the Pertaringa cellar door.

Exclusively to members of Birds SA, the team at Bec Hardy Wines is excited to offer 2 for 1 tastings at the Pertaringa cellar door in McLaren Vale.

Simply quote the below promo code in cellar door or when booking online:

[bechardy.com.au/pertaringa-cellar-door](http://bechardy.com.au/pertaringa-cellar-door)

**THEBIRDER2FOR1**

Pertaringa cellar door | 327 Hunt Rd, McLaren Vale | Open 7 days



Photograph: Bec Hardy

# New Members

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

Michael & Michelle Jones .....	Middleton
Elizabeth Kenihan .....	Hawthorn SA
Simon Walton .....	Norwood
Craig Pisters .....	Hallet Cove
David Bamford & Susan King .....	Uraidla
Sarah Wilkie .....	Tusmore
Michelle Arbon .....	Hahndorf
Anthony Collebrusco & Nicole Gschwind .....	Welland
Alan & Rae Rainbird .....	Lockleys
Kevin Smith .....	Berri
Lindsay & Keith Pheasant .....	Hahndorf
Julie Burgher .....	Aldinga Beach

Peter Gardner .....	Port Adelaide
Don Finlayson .....	Belair
Ben Gray .....	Adelaide
Bill Jenner .....	Kingscote
Sue Green .....	Brompton
Darcy Whittaker .....	Macclesfield
John Spencer .....	Hazelwood North (Vic)
Susie Nugent .....	Woodside
Joshua Martin .....	Stockwell
Barry Neylon .....	Hillier
David Roshier .....	Mount Barker
Callum McDonald .....	Linden 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.

John Gitsham was the speaker and his topic was:

## *Pelicans* OF THE COORONG

### Coorong National Park

The Rangers were concerned at finding a large number of feral mice on North Pelican Island just before the breeding season. We weren't sure if the mice would predate on the eggs and chicks or bother the adults while nesting or even if the mice could provide a supplementary food source for the adults or juveniles.

How could this situation be managed safely and successfully for the pelicans?

This dilemma inspired the rangers to apply for a Landscape SA Grass Roots Grant to monitor whether the mice could or would have an impact on the Pelican breeding rookery during the 2020-2021 breeding season, using remote cameras.

North Pelican Island is in the South Lagoon near Jacks Point and Policeman's Point. This Pelican rookery is the largest permanent Pelican rookery in Australia.



Figure 1:  
**Australian Pelicans**  
(Photographed by John Gitsham in the Coorong National Park)

## Introduction

Introduced mammalian predators have been responsible for population declines in native prey species around the world. Of 110 species of birds that have become extinct since ~1600 CE, at least 34 (31%) have been ascribed to introduced predators (Groombridge 1992).

Among these predators, rodents can have devastating effects on some seabird populations (Cuthbert et al. 2016, Jones et al. 2008, Le Corre et al. 2015, Towns-Atkinson & Dougherty 2006).

Until recently, introduced house mice (*Mus musculus*) were thought to have modest ecological impacts compared to other rodents (Simberloff 2009).

However, their impacts have been overlooked or confounded with the impacts of co-occurring rats (*Rattus* spp.; AngelWanless & Cooper 2009, Wanless et al. 2007).

Mice are predators of eggs and chicks of ground nesting birds (Caravaggi et al. 2019), including nestling albatrosses weighing up to 8kg (Wanless et al. 2009).

## Pelican nest sites

The location of pelican nests was mapped from vertical images taken with a drone (DJI Mavic 2 Zoom) on 24 November 2020 and 8 January 2021.

These images were spatially rectified against Google Earth imagery taken on 10th September 2018. This

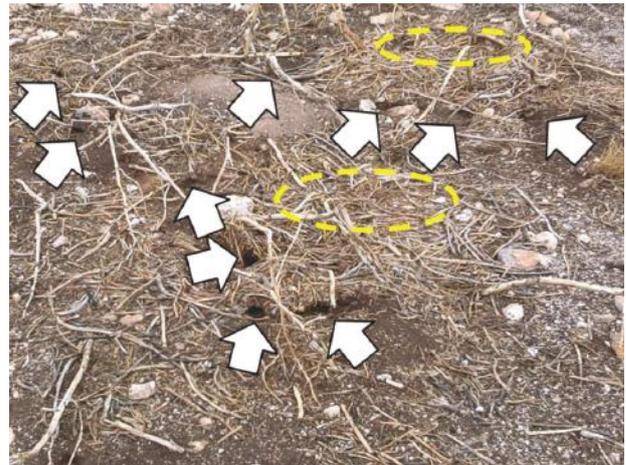


Figure 2: **Presence of House Mice**

The white arrows indicate house mice burrows and the dashed yellow ovals indicate old pelican nests on North Pelican Island (Photo by Greg Johnston)

information allowed an assessment of number of pelican nests, and their temporal and spatial distribution.

The number of fledgling pelicans was recorded for each nesting colony from ground-based counts and drone images. Breeding success was expressed as the number of fledglings per nest. This information allowed (1) an assessment of breeding success during the 2020-21 breeding season, and (2) comparison of this year's breeding success with that recorded between 2009 and 2013 by Manning (2010, 2011 and unpublished data).

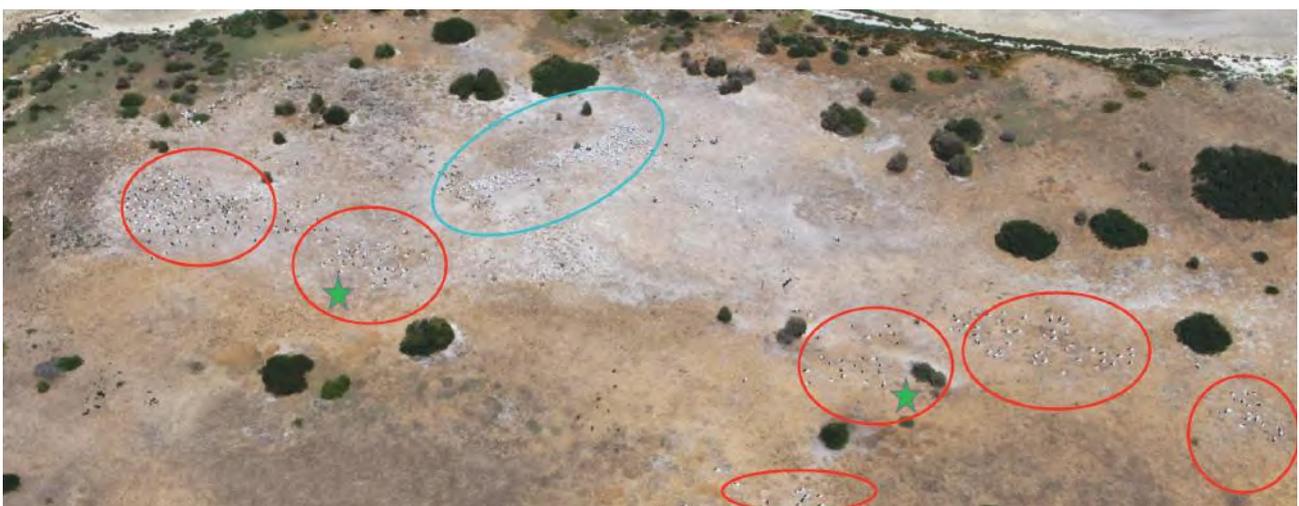


Figure 3: **The breeding colony on North Pelican Island**

Nearly 900 adult birds were counted at the peak of the breeding season, about average for most years. The breeding colonies are circled in red. Breeding adult pelicans courting each other are circled in blue. The green stars show where the first batch of remote cameras were placed.

## Mouse presence

The presence of mice among nesting pelicans was recorded from ten-second videos. This allowed the mice to be detected from their movements and eye-shine. The behaviour of mice and pelicans, and any interactions between the two species were recorded. This information allowed an assessment of the circadian and seasonal activity of mice, and whether mice interacted with pelicans.

## Methods

Mouse activity and breeding pelicans were monitored on North Pelican Island (-36.044°, 139.559°) over 81 days between 24th November 2020 and 12 February 2021.

On 8 July 2020 a trail camera (Swift Enduro 4G) was deployed at a location with a broad view of the island to record when pelicans began courtship behaviour prior to nesting. This camera was set up to take a photograph every hour.

After a large colony of breeding pelicans had formed during October 2020, two trail cameras (Swift Enduro 4G) were deployed to record mouse and pelican interactions from 24 November 2020 to 23 December 2020. At that time, some pelican nests contained eggs and small, immobile nestlings, but most contained mobile crèche young. Both trial cameras were programmed to take a photograph and a ten-second



Figure 4:  
**One of the ENDURO Remote Monitoring cameras with solar panels.**

video every hour. In order to minimise visits to the island, images were retrieved remotely to conduct daily checks for mouse activity.

On 23rd December 2020 one of the cameras was moved to monitor a second pelican colony that had been established during November. Pelican nests in this colony contained eggs as well as nestlings up to three days old.

On 20th January 2021 the second trail camera was moved to monitor one of three pelican colonies established during December 2020.

All trail cameras were removed from the island on 12th February 2021, after all young pelicans had moved away from their nests. In total trail cameras recorded mouse activity among breeding pelicans over 81 days.

## Mouse activity

It was found by early in the breeding season that the mice were not in large numbers, and the remote cameras detected them only occasionally

Mice were not visible in still photographs but were apparent in ten-second videos.

Fifty-four mice were recorded among breeding pelicans on 21 of the 81 days that trail cameras were deployed. As shown in figure 5, the mice appeared to be foraging on the ground among pelican nests overnight, between 22:00 and 07:00 hours.

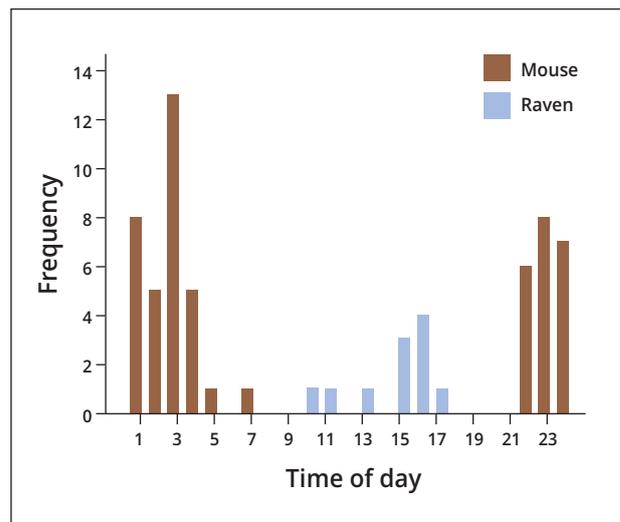


Figure 5:  
**Frequency of mice (■) and ravens (■)**  
Recorded among breeding Australian pelicans at different times of the day on North Pelican Island, Coorong National Park.

## Past General Meeting: Pelicans of the Coorong (continued)

There was no evidence of mice biting or eating pelican eggs, chicks, or adults. Indeed, mice seemed to pay no attention to the pelicans whatsoever.

Similarly, pelicans showed no outward response to the presence of active mice, even though at least one passing mouse touched the feathers of a sleeping adult pelican on a nest.

There was no evidence of pelicans eating mice.

### Pelican breeding

On 8 July 2020 two of 72 adult pelicans observed on the foreshore at Meningie were beginning to develop nuptial colouration. There was a considerable delay until pelicans were first observed on North Pelican Island in August.

A total of 888 pelican nests were recorded from October to December 2020. Nesting occurred on different parts of the island in each month.

Table 1 (below) shows the breeding success of pelican nests established on North Pelican Island from October to December 2020.

The table indicates that most nests were established during October. The number of nests established per month declined through November and December.

Overall breeding success during the 2020-21 breeding season was 0.45 fledglings per nest.

Table 1: **3 Month Nest Count**

Month	Nest count	Fledgling count	Fledglings per nest
October	614	225	0.37
November	218	150	0.68
December	56	22	0.39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>0.45</b>

Indigenous knowledge suggests that pelicans have long bred on the Coorong (Berndt, Berndt & Stanton 1993), and the first documented record comes from 1875. A pelican egg in the South Australian Museum (SAM B3864) was collected in that year. Pelicans appear to breed on one or more of the 'pelican islands' off Jacks Point in most years. Although there have been annual surveys of water birds on the Coorong since 2000 (Paton & Bailey 2019), there is little information available on the number of breeding pelicans, or their breeding success.



Figure 6:  
**A freshly hatched pelican chick, called "Pinky"**

The only available quantitative information on the number and success of pelicans breeding on the Coorong was collected during two breeding seasons between 2009 and 2011 (Manning 2010, Manning 2011). During 2009-2010 pelicans only nested on North Pelican Island. The number of adult pelicans on the island peaked at 2085 in December 2009. At least 854 nests were initiated between June 2009 and March 2010. Breeding success was 0.21 in one colony, which produced 52 fledglings from 254 nests. This breeding season was at the end of a prolonged period of below average rainfall and flows in the River Murray.

The following year provided a marked contrast, with the breaking of the drought. During 2010-2011 pelicans nested on Teal, Seagull, Pelican and North Pelican Islands. The number of adult pelicans on the four islands peaked at 2939 in September 2010. At least 1105 nests were initiated between August 2010 and May 2011. Breeding success was 0.87 in five colonies, which produced 499 fledglings from 571 nests.

During 2020-2021 the pelicans initiated nests over three months, compared to ten months recorded by Manning (2010, 2011). The 888 nests recorded during this study was similar to those recorded in 2009-2010, but the breeding success of 0.45 was intermediate between the two contrasting breeding seasons recorded by Manning (2010, 2011). Australian Pelicans at other breeding sites show breeding success averaging 0.15 fledglings per nest, with yearly variation from 0 to 1.2 fledglings per nest (Johnston 2016a, Johnston 2018). Thus, breeding success of pelicans recorded in the presence of mice in this study is not unusually low.

## Past General Meeting: Pelicans of the Coorong *(continued)*

Leg banding of pelicans hatched on the Coorong has shown that pelicans disperse widely across all mainland states and territories of Australia and to Papua New Guinea (Johnston Waterman & Manning 2015). However, most remain in the Murray-Darling Drainage Basin as non-breeding juveniles and as adults (Johnston Waterman & Manning 2015). We have no knowledge of where adult pelicans breeding on the Coorong obtain food to raise their young.

### Incidental observations

Ravens were previously known as predators of pelican eggs and small nestlings (Manning 2010, Vestjens 1977, Manning 2011).

There is no evidence that Australian ravens have a significant effect on the overall success of breeding of pelicans.

However, corvids have contributed to the extinction of small pelican breeding colonies in North America (Paullinlvey & Littlefield 1988).

The conclusion from these studies is that the mice have no apparent effect on the eggs, pinkies or juveniles; or bothered the adults while nesting. The mice appear to

be cleaners, picking up the scraps left over after the adults have fed the young.

The Silver Gulls and Australian Ravens appear to have had the same effect. They have not bothered the adult pelicans or their young. They have fed on the leftover scraps and the ravens have cleaned up any dead chicks or juveniles.

The number of mice recorded active in the pelican colonies was lower than expected from the high density of burrows and the number of mice trapped in May 2020. This probably reflects the waning density of mice during spring and summer 2020-2021, following the winter plague in response to drought-breaking rains (GRDC 2021)

The investigation revealed no indication that mice were disturbing, injuring or killing pelicans on North Pelican Island during the 2020-2021 breeding season.

It's believed that the size of the pelicans, eggs and chicks was an advantage against the mice. Also, there was also no evidence of the adults or juveniles feeding on mice. That would be a concern if anyone chose to poison the mice with baits.

The story and outcome might have been different if rats were present on the islands rather than mice.



**Adult pelicans open their bills to harvest water from light morning rain using gular pouches, which hang below the lower jaw.** *(Taken by ENDURO Remote Monitoring camera)*

Andrew Black was the speaker and his topic was:

## *The Adelaide Rosella* and what do we call it?

Andrew began by stating that the Adelaide Rosella, illustrated in Figure 1, is part of the Crimson Rosella complex *Platycercus elegans* Gmelin, 1788.



Figure 1:  
Gould's figure showing Adelaide Rosellas

### A complex of common and scientific names

This complex includes the following subspecies in South Australia:

- *P. e. elegans* SE Australia, SE SA (Crimson Rosella)
- *P. e. melanopterus* Kangaroo Island (Crimson Rosella)
- *P. e. flaveolus* Yellow Rosella
- *P. e. fleurieuensis* Fleurieu Peninsula
- *P. e. subadelaidae* Southern Flinders Ranges
- Adelaide Rosella, which currently has no scientific name

### Historical development of the names

The names have changed over time.

#### **Gould, 1840** *Platycercus adelaidae*

Gould took specimens from "the streets of that embryonic city" and found it "on the banks of the river Torrens" and "the grassy hills between [the source of] that river and the Murray."

#### **Mathews 1912** *Platycercus elegans adelaidae*

Mathews first recognised the Adelaide Rosella as a subspecies of Crimson Rosella; then he named three

subspecies within the Adelaide Rosella. Mathew's Reference List to the Birds of Australia introduced the subspecies concept into Australian Ornithology.

He recognised the Adelaide Rosella as one of six subspecies of the Crimson Rosella.

Mathews also grouped Rosellas in the Southern Flinders Ranges in *P. elegans subadelaidae*. They had previously been included among the Yellow Rosella group *Platycercus flaveolus* [now *P. e. flaveolus*]

#### **Ashby, 1917** *P. elegans fleurieuensis*

A scarlet form, the Fleurieu Peninsula Rosella was collected between Normanville and Cape Jervis and near Mount Compass but not all the birds seen within that distribution were so bright.

Finally, in 1997, Schodde and Mason named only the terminal populations as subspecies.

### Variations in taxonomic classification

- A subspecies of Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans adelaidae*
- Three subspecies (Mathews 1917):
- *P. e. adelaidae*
- *P. e. subadelaidae* Mathews
- *P. e. fleurieuensis* Ashby
- Two subspecies plus an intergradient population (Schodde and Mason 1997):
- *P. e. fleurieuensis*
- *P. e. subadelaidae*
- *P. e. fleurieuensis* x *P. e. subadelaidae*

### Genetic classification

Joseph, Dolman, Donnellan et al. Proc. R. Soc. B (2008) showed that:

- The Adelaide Rosella falls within a DNA group of organisms with a common ancestor that includes all populations of the Crimson Rosella complex south of the Hunter River in New South Wales.
- Crimson Rosella populations to the north are in two separate groups of organisms within a group that has a common ancestor.
- Within its group its DNA groups are largely distinct from those of Yellow Rosellas.
- Its nuclear DNA is clustered with KI Crimson Rosellas but not with Yellow Rosellas or other Crimson Rosellas.



Figure 2: Colour diversity amongst the main population of Adelaide Rosellas

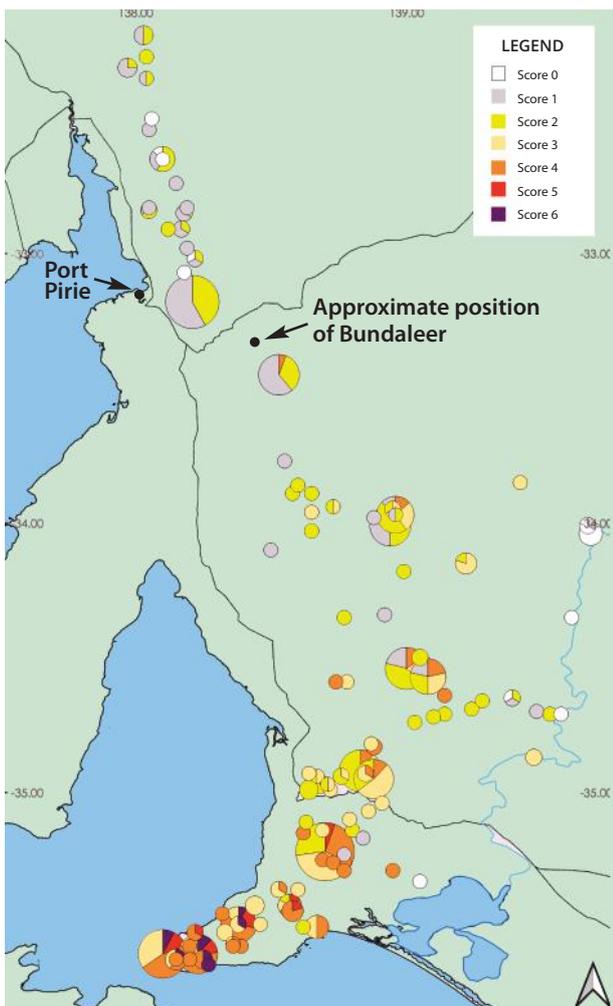


Figure 3: Colour variations over the distribution of Adelaide Rosellas

### Plumage Diversity

There is considerable plumage diversity across the range of the Adelaide Rosella. A census of all 430 adult Adelaide Rosella skins in the South Australian Museum and Australian National Wildlife Collection in Canberra showed that:

- The underside tone varies between scarlet, orange, orange on yellow, yellow
- The upper sides, including back of the neck the rump and the edges of the back feathers can be scarlet, orange or creamy yellow.

Figure 2 shows a group of museum specimens that provide an example of these colour variations.

The following plumage scoring system has been allotted to the colour variations.

- 0 ..... Yellow
- 1,2,3 ..... Increasing orange
- 4 ..... Fully orange
- 5 ..... Scarlet below, paler above
- 6 ..... Fully scarlet.

Figure 3 maps this plumage diversity. It shows that:

- There is variation in plumage throughout the range of the Adelaide Rosella
- There is a gradation of colour from scarlet in the south to yellow in the north
- Fleurieu Peninsula rosellas merge with those in the Mount Lofty Ranges, and show considerable variation.



Figure 4: An example of colour variation within rosellas seen in the Adelaide region

Figure 4 shows an example of colour variation within a single population.

### Several Possibilities

There are various possibilities for naming the Adelaide Rosella scientifically. Three examples are:

1. Two terminal populations named as subspecies with the main population unnamed, as at present?
2. Three variable populations as subspecies?
  - *P. e. adalaidae*
  - *P. e. subadalaidae*
  - *P. e. fleurieuensis*
3. The whole variable population as a single subspecies?
  - *Platycercus elegans adalaidae*

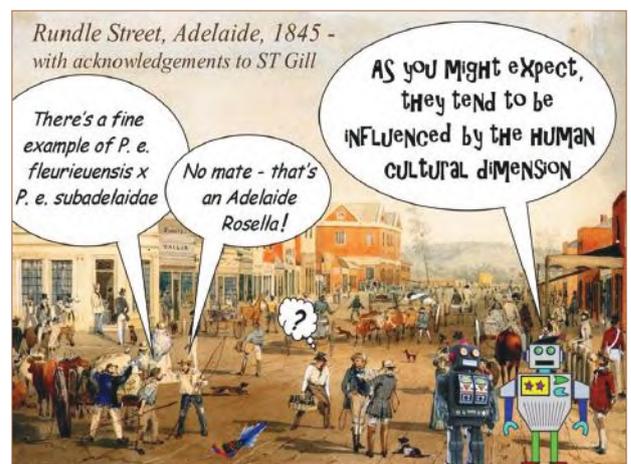
For the following reasons, it is difficult to determine actually how many populations of Adelaide Rosellas actually exist:

- Fleurieu Peninsula features vary and merge with the southern Mount Lofty Ranges population
- Scarlet gives way to bright orange, to paler orange and yellow through the Barossa and Mid North
- The gradation ceases at Bundaleer
- The Flinders Ranges population varies but is unchanging south to north

### Andrew's Recommendation!

Andrew put forward the following proposal for assigning scientific names to the wide range of Adelaide Rosellas:

- The main southern population of Fleurieu Peninsula, MLR and Mid North is of variable phenotype and shows gradation from scarlet to orange and mixed yellow and orange, south to north to be designated *Platycercus elegans adalaidae*
- The Flinders Ranges population, largely isolated, shows limited variation and no gradation to be called *Platycercus elegans subadalaidae*.





# Future General Meetings

Waite Institute refurbishment forces new locations for monthly meetings.

**Now on Tuesdays (NOT Fridays)**



Thebarton Community Centre (Source: City of West Torrens)

Please note the new locations for our General Meetings for August, September, October and November 2021:

**Thebarton Community Centre,  
Corner South Rd and, Ashwin Parade,  
Torrensville SA 5031**

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**Tuesday 31 August 7:30 pm**

Davide Gaglio will show his new movie about vehicles on beaches.

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**Saturday 11 September 1:30 pm**

Standpipe Golf Motor Inn  
3-5 Daw Street (Corner of Highways 1 & 87)  
PORT AUGUSTA SA 5700  
(see further details in e-newsletter)

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**Tuesday 26 October 7:30 pm (TBA)**

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**Tuesday 30 November 7:30 pm**

Members' Night

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**December 2021**

No Monthly Meeting

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The Thebarton Community Center is a beautiful modern building with excellent audiovisual capabilities and space for more than 100 attendees, even under COVID-19 restrictions. It has 120 parking spaces adjacent to the building so access is very good.

These changes have been caused by major building refurbishment at the Waite Institute at Urrbrae where we normally hold our monthly meetings. We hope to be back there early in 2022 and will advise members when we have more information.

Note that we will be taking the opportunity to try meeting on a Tuesday rather than Friday evening, and we hope this mid-week timing will make it easier for members with family commitments to join us.



## Winter and Spring with FAIBS

Through those chilly and moist winter days, FAIBS continued their habitat restoration and clean-up activities along the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary coastline and hinterland, gratefully dodging Covid lockdowns (so far) to do so!

Arbor Day in June saw FAIBS volunteers in the Parham Dunes planting a variety of seedlings under the guidance of Department of Environment (DEW)/AIBS Rangers Warrick Barnes and Andrew Cowley. The plants were donated by Green Adelaide and sourced from the Two Wells Nursery. In this instance, corflute tree guards were used and will be removed and recycled once the plants are well established. 600 seedlings were planted.

The feature of July was the Big Clean up at Parham, which truly demonstrated what a difference a day makes! Huge quantities of unsightly household and building refuse have been dumped in the Parham



### On Arbor Day, volunteers assisted with planting in the Parham Dunes.

The two volunteers in the front are a Buddhist monk, So Muny, and his friend Touch. *(Photographed by Anna Woods)*

hinterland. FAIBS and local community volunteers piled 36 cubic metres of rubbish into 2 skips, while John Coles, Chair of the Parham Action Group, brought along his Bobcat to clear up recyclable scrap metal and other rubbish. With skips reaching capacity, further piles were left to be scooped up by our support DEW/AIBS Rangers during the following week. A BBQ provided by the Port Parham Sports and Social Club provided a very congenial, tasty and much appreciated lunch break. It was an awesome effort by the volunteers and a message to those who made the mess that the community does care about this area. FAIBS hugely thanks all who were so energetically involved in the Big Clean.



### The Parham Big Clean Up begins.

The two people in the foreground are FAIBS members Kirsty Darlaston (*left*) and Kath Stubing (*right*).

*(Photographed by Anna Woods)*

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



### Parham Big Clean Up volunteers

Ruth Rice with her grandson Leo Rice  
*(Photographed by Maree Merchant)*

You may have noticed that not one bird has been mentioned so far in this report! Of course FAIBS birders are always on the lookout and would rarely leave home without at least their binoculars. No doubt there were some sneaky sightings in amongst all this planting and cleaning, which in the longer term is so important to the survival of birds in this habitat. Some of our members have also been involved in Winter Shorebird Counts. Nevertheless, we look forward to Spring when we'll once again start scanning for returning migratory shorebirds along the Gulf St Vincent coastline, and running events where all-comers will be most welcome to attend and view the birds with us through scopes and binoculars.

In the meantime, on August 15th we'll be removing tree guards from previous plantings at Port Prime, as well as checking out the bird life. On September 19th, FAIBS is organising a Bird ID and Beachcombing Walk at Webb Beach. Saturday October 9th is the Spring World Migratory Bird Day, and FAIBS is partnering with Green Adelaide and Birdlife to run an event on the St Kilda foreshore with bird viewing followed by a celebration of the return of the migratory birds focussing on Kaurna connections with the birds and their habitat. More details will be on the FAIBS Facebook page as plans evolve, and we look forward to welcoming BirdsSA members and all interested people to these events. Enquiries can be made to [faibssa@gmail.com](mailto:faibssa@gmail.com)

### Planting in cocoons

The May plantings by FAIBS volunteers at Thompson Beach are so far faring well in their experimental cocoons. The ones used in this planting trial were provided by Green Adelaide through Darren Kennedy, the Adelaide Plains Coastal Conservation Officer. They are made of biodegradable cardboard and consist, as the photo shows, of a circular 'gutter' which is buried in the dune sand around a seedling and filled with water.



Parts of  
the  
Cocoons



Set up  
and  
ready to  
grow

### Experimental cocoons provided by Green Adelaide *(Photographed by Maree Merchant)*

A lid containing a hole is placed over the gutter, enabling the seedling to get off to a sound moisture-fed start. Darren is recording cocooned plant growth and longevity and comparing it with identical species planted alongside without cocoons. In the longer term it'll be interesting to see what the survival rate and vigour of the trial plants turns out to be.

***Written by Anna Woods with input from  
Maree Merchant and Mary-Ann Van Trigt***

## Orange-bellied Parrots seen in the Coorong

**Two Orange-bellied Parrots (OBP) were seen near the Murray Mouth on May 29. This is the first confirmed record in SA since 2013.**

Covid restrictions have made it very difficult to run Neophema Identification workshops over the last two winters, with all 2020 workshops being conducted online and the first of 2021 run as a Webinar with Birds SA.



**Neophema comparison, juvenile Orange-bellied Parrot (front) Elegant Parrot (rear)**  
(Photographed by Bob Green, 29 May 2021)

So it was great to finally have a face to face workshop planned for Hindmarsh Island on May 29th. It is always better to run these face to face as we can take the opportunity to go out looking for parrots in the field after the inside session. We finished the training via a Powerpoint presentation, then enjoyed some lunch and headed along a few roadside areas looking for parrots on the way to the Murray Mouth where a few Neophemas are usually to be found. The decision was made to walk from the Murray Mouth car park across to Bird Island where Rock Parrots had recently been found. About half

way across the island, two birds flushed up close to us and I alerted the others instantly, saying that one of them was an OBP, as it had given its very distinctive “buzzing” alarm call. They flew only a short distance (about 15m) and landed together. Numerous photos were taken and a closer approach was made very stealthily to try and confirm the birds’ band details. As we were watching this bird, another alarm call was heard close by but we did not see the bird as we were focused on getting the band details. The leg bands on the juvenile that was seen provided later identification of the individual. The bird’s mother was a captive-released juvenile in early 2020 at Melaleuca in Tasmania. She migrated, returned to Tasmania and bred successfully with five young fledging from her nest. She is also one of the known location birds this year, being found in Victoria.

It was fantastic to see the reaction from the workshop participants, as it was a lifer for all of them, it was also very beneficial coming straight after they had learnt all the features used to identify the Neophemas to see two of the species at such close range and together for a side by side comparison.

The last confirmed records in SA were two birds seen in the Coorong by David Paton in 2013, and a single bird by Bob Green at Port MacDonnell in 2012. There have been a few reports since then but nothing that could be confirmed as an OBP; as the description did not allow the other closely related species to be ruled out. The last record from close to the Murray Mouth was coincidentally by Chris Steeles on 29 May 2010 on nearby Ewe Island.

Due to the SA lockdown, the July OBP count had to unfortunately be cancelled, so planning for the last count for the year on Sep 11/12 is underway.



**An OBP legband**

The Limestone Coast Landscape Board supports this project through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program. This project contributes to the South Australian Government’s Project Coorong initiative.

**Bob Green**

SA OBP Regional Coordinator  
Avian Monitoring Services

# Recovery of the Osprey across Yorke Peninsula

## Progress Report

The Osprey Artificial Nest project commenced in August 2020 and is focused on the recovery of the Osprey population across the Yorke Peninsula and Gulf St Vincent areas. The project is being delivered in partnership with Southern Yorke Peninsula Landcare Group, Birds SA, Birdlife Australia, Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (AIBS) Partnership Group, Department for Environment & Water (DEW) and numerous other community organisations and volunteers. The Southern Yorke Peninsula Landcare Group has managed and coordinated on-ground delivery of the project under agreement with Birdlife Australia and Birds SA. This agreement has been an important part of the project given the number of partners involved, funding sources obtained and to provide consistent and appropriate governance.

Two platform designs were selected to suit South Australia's open coastal landscapes and site characteristics including soil/substrate type and site accessibility for installation. To maximise opportunities and chances of Ospreys adopting the nesting platforms, it is important to install platforms in preferred Osprey nesting habitats (refer to *Recovery and Conservation Plan for the Osprey on Yorke Peninsula, South Australia — 2020–2025* for more detail). These sites are often inaccessible to boats as well as to plant and equipment that could mechanically pile drive posts and or auger post-holes into mud/sand substrates or reef and rock bases.

Single steel pole platforms and Composite Fibre (CF) tower nest platforms were used as these met the site requirements for installation and would also allow community groups to be involved at some sites.

There is no template or established process to guide the installation of the CF tower nest platforms. Installation involved use of a template to guide PVC sleeves into the substrate, mud and sand was forced out of sleeves using a centrifugal pump. A 0.5 tonne concrete block was carried to the site by helicopter and positioned in the centre of the platform footprint. The CF tower platform was then carried to the site using a helicopter and carefully lowered into the sleeves and finally secured to the concrete block. This method proved to be very safe, effective and an efficient way of installing these platforms in remote sites and difficult landscapes (see photographs on next page).

Community volunteers and contractors, with assistance from Yorke Peninsula Council staff, installed the CF tower platform. Maritime Construction built and installed the two single steel pole nest platforms at the AIBS and Sheoak Flat.

## Priority Locations for Osprey Nest Platforms



The Ardrossan Community Men's Shed and CP Progress Association (ACMSPA) have built and fabricated the CF tower platform at Wills Creek. The Gleeson's Landing Osprey tower platform is currently under production. The group's workmanship, dedication and enthusiasm have been outstanding.

Over the coming months the ACMSPA has a further two platforms to build and fabricate for installation at Port Broughton and Point Davenport CP; with help from the Corny Point Progress Association, Formby Bay Environmental Action Group and Port Broughton Progress Association.

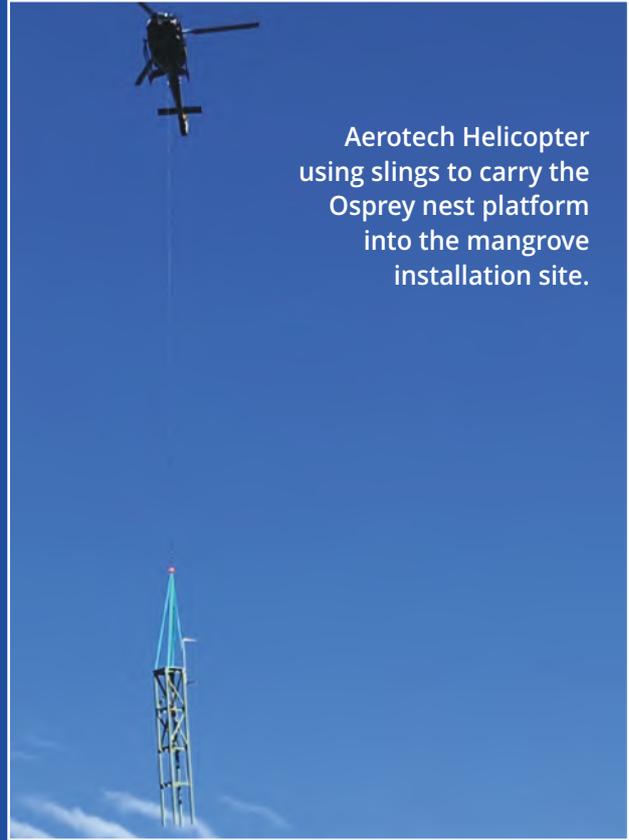
The nest platform at Price was installed on the 6th July and 5 days after the installation, Ospreys were observed undertaking nest refurbishment on the new nest site. This project demonstrates the importance of community involvement in local actions.

The installation of the Wills Creek, Osprey nest platform is a legacy to the tireless work of the late Mr. Kent Treloar, a great advocate for Osprey preservation and community conservation efforts.

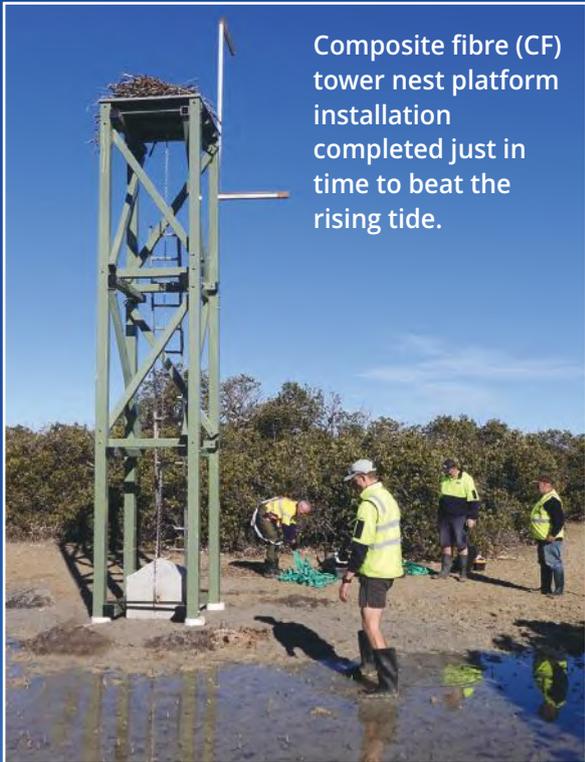
**Ian Falkenburg**



Aerotech Helicopters Chris Black guiding the Pilot as he lifts the Osprey nest onto the tower nest platform.



Aerotech Helicopter using slings to carry the Osprey nest platform into the mangrove installation site.



Composite fibre (CF) tower nest platform installation completed just in time to beat the rising tide.



The Osprey tower platform (circled) remains relatively inconspicuous in mangrove habitat within Wills Creek Conservation Park.



Single steel pole nest platform installed by Maritime Construction in the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary National Park. Frederick "G" in background.

**UNDER  
THREAT**

## Southern Eyre Peninsula's Emuwren and Whipbird

Two endangered birds **under threat** from the Whalers Way Orbital Launch Complex

The Eyre Peninsula Southern Emuwren (EPSEW) *Stipiturus malachurus parimeda* and the nominate subspecies of White-bellied Whipbird *Psophodes leucogaster leucogaster*, presumed extinct except at the extremities of Eyre and Yorke Peninsulas, are now deemed endangered under International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria (Garnett and Baker 2021).

### EP Southern Emuwren

The EPSEW was investigated in a series of surveys (Pickett 2002, 2009) and a recovery program was prepared (Pickett and Te 2012). It had declined historically from habitat loss and is now found only in fragmented remnants. Its population (under 1,000 in 2002) is likely to have fallen since but has not been reassessed. It was listed Vulnerable in 2000 under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act and is on Schedule VII (Endangered) in South Australia. Fire is a major threat. Habitat fragmentation precludes recolonisation and limits genetic exchange. Pickett and Te (2012) observed the particular importance of populations near Kellidie Bay, D'Anville Bay, Whalers Way, Fishery Bay and in Lincoln National Park, and stressed the need to maintain and improve connectivity between these crucial areas.

The Southern Launch proposal involves clearance of habitat and major continuing disturbance in a critical portion of the bird's range, in which increased protection and improved connectivity are key to its survival. Until there is evidence of recovery of this endangered taxon it should not be subjected to additional threatening activities.



**Eyre Peninsula Southern Emuwren** (Image by Dion Thompson and used courtesy of the photographer and the Birds SA website photographic gallery)



**Eyre Peninsula White-bellied Whipbird** (Image by Dion Thompson and used courtesy of the photographer and the Birds SA website photographic gallery)

### EP White-bellied Whipbird

Eyre Peninsula's whipbird is one of six populations of the former Western Whipbird *Psophodes nigrogularis*, now recognised as two species (Burbidge et al. 2017). The eastern species *P. leucogaster* includes four isolates, in two presently named subspecies. Since the 2019-20 Kangaroo Island bushfires subspecies *P. l. lashmari* has been categorised as Endangered (Garnett and Baker 2021). The other subspecies *P. l. leucogaster* is extinct in Victoria and possibly lost from Billiatt and Ngarkat Conservation Parks (CPs). An extant population on southern Yorke Peninsula is genetically divergent from all others (Burbidge et al. 2017) and is declining (personal information). The Eyre Peninsula (White-bellied) Whipbird (EPW) is unique as a consequence, and is of even greater conservation concern than is presently acknowledged.

On the basis of widely varying cited densities, Garnett et al. (2011) judged the EPW's population as about 5000 and its conservation status Vulnerable. Now Verdon et al. (2021) suggest a total of only 1300 for both peninsulas combined and a conservation status of Endangered. Realistically there has never been a good estimate of the population size of the EPW (S Garnett pers. comm.). The subspecies is in Schedule VII (Endangered) in SA and listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. The risk to the EPW from fire is increasing (Verdon et al.), the largest remnant in Lincoln National Park was impacted by fire in 2015-16 but is recovering. Records are clustered in three main areas: near the base of Coffin Bay Peninsula, D'Anville Bay-Whalers Way and Lincoln National Park (NP). Their conservation is dependent on all three subpopulations and in the connectivity between them. The Southern Launch proposal is in the middle of the EPW's three locations,

## Southern Eyre Peninsula Emu-wren and Whipbird *under threat* (continued)

so that it would expose the EPW to perpetual disturbance, particularly intermittent intense noise. We have no knowledge of the effect of noise on whipbirds, which have vanished from vast areas elsewhere for reasons that are only partly understood.

### Summary

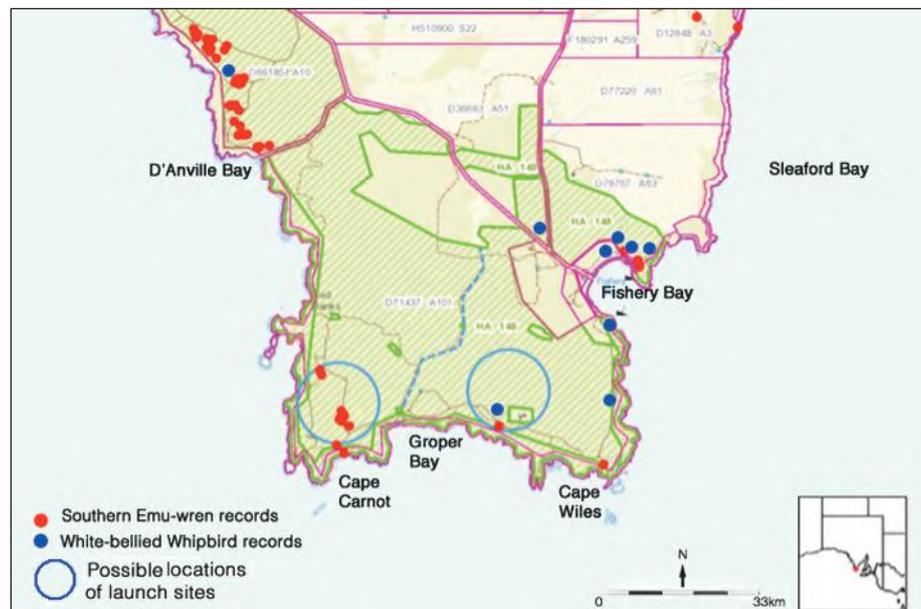
We lack all but the most basic information about these two endangered birds. There has been no effective assessment of distribution or population size for either for nearly two decades, during which time the conservation status of each has deteriorated. Until a recovery program is in place to manage existing subpopulations and to link sites to allow genetic interchange, no development should be permitted that compromises their existence.

### The threat

On 16 June 2021 a Committee of the State Planning Commission considered a proposal by Southern Launch for a temporary site for experimental launchings this year, purportedly to assess the effect of noise on EPSEW and EPW. **The proposal was superficial and error-ridden. The opposition from conservationists and local residents was pertinent and sound. The application was approved 'within the hour', a sham — a rubber stamp.**

The proponents conspicuously avoided available expert knowledge in preparing an Environmental Impact Statement on the major project, which is long delayed, and have procrastinated in notifying the Federal environmental authorities as repeatedly advised. While the proposal envisages destroying relatively little vegetation directly, it involves substantial disturbance, whose overall effect is unmeasurable. Even its more local impact will be hidden unless reliable reproducible baseline data have been obtained through the Environmental Impact Study (EIS), are monitored continually and are publicly available.

These two birds and two coastal raptors will be adversely impacted by the proposed development yet it has overwhelming support from the State Government. Adequate biodiversity conservation legislation is of little consequence when the Government chooses to flout it.



### Whalers Way Orbital Launch Complex and locations of Southern Emu-wren and White-bellied Whipbird.

Records compiled 16 July 2020  
Generated at [www.naturemaps.sa.gov.au](http://www.naturemaps.sa.gov.au)  
Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994

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**Andrew Black**  
July 2021

## Bassian Thrush Monitoring Methods

### Developing monitoring methods for the Bassian Thrush in the Mount Lofty Ranges, SA

*This report describes one of the projects that Birds SA's Conservation Fund has supported*



Figure 1: **Bassian Thrush from Kyeema CP** (Photo: Darcy Whittaker)

Difficult to detect, elusive species are often a challenge to study because of their cryptic biological traits. One such bird, the South Australian Bassian Thrush (*Zoothra lunulata halmaturina*) has remained poorly understood, largely due to the subspecies' shy and cryptic nature. A bird which is most vocal and noticeable during the breeding season (over the wetter months from May through to November), the Bassian Thrush's effective camouflage, propensity to inhabit thickly vegetated and difficult to access habitats, and generally shy character make it a challenging subject to study and monitor.

While Bassian Thrushes can be found along the south-eastern and eastern margins of Australia (including Tasmania and a separate subspecies in the Atherton Tablelands), the vulnerable South Australian subspecies is confined to the Southern Flinders Ranges, Mount Lofty Ranges, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. Here in South Australia, little information is known regarding the subspecies abundance, territory size, spatial distribution and density, hence our understanding and assessment of Bassian Thrush threats and conservation status are hindered. Central to gaining this much-needed information is the ability to better detect and monitor the Bassian Thrush.

In order to investigate different monitoring methods, three Conservation Parks (CP) encompassing known Bassian Thrush presences across the Mount Lofty Ranges (Mark Oliphant CP, Kyeema CP and Warren CP) were selected for surveying during autumn and winter in 2020. At each park, traditional 2-hectare observer surveys (each 60-minutes long) were conducted. In addition, both camera traps and acoustic recorders were deployed across the parks.

Over the breeding season, Bassian Thrush pairs will often vocalise to each other, providing an acoustic signal which can be more readily detected than with visual methods alone. Previous work by Dr Rebecca Boulton clearly demonstrated the ability of acoustic recorders, such as AudioMoths (Figure 2), to record these vocalisations. While these small, affordable, low-power usage recording devices can rapidly generate a vast amount of data, the equally extensive amount of time required to manually scan through the resulting audio files (spectrograms) has limited their wide-scale application.

A major focus of the study was to develop an automated call recogniser; an algorithm designed to detect bird sounds of interest from acoustic survey files.

# Historical Series No 76.

## Mathew Symonds Clark (1839 -1920)

### Part 2 by Penny Paton

#### Synopsis of Parrot Records from Diaries and Publications

As there is information on the parrot family in both the Royal Society publication (Clark 1889) as well as in the diaries, I have synthesised Clark's records from these two sources in the following discussion. Figure 5 is a photo of Second Creek near Rochester Street, Leabrook, at the turn of the twentieth century, giving a general idea of the creek habitat of Burnside.

The **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** (Figure 6) was once common and numerous on the Adelaide Plains but this changed with its destruction in large numbers because of its depredations in the new cornfields (Clark 1889). Between his arrival in the colony in 1850 and 1889, Clark had seen small numbers on rare occasions on the Plains, but in 1852 on a trip to Nairne, Strathalbyn and Macclesfield, he had seen several large flocks, some of which attained 100 birds. He thought in 1889 that a few birds might still be found in the Hills within 10 miles of Adelaide. The diaries record two birds at Hazelwood in August 1867 and one in the



Figure 5 – Second Creek crossing Knightsbridge near Rochester Street, Leabrook (from the Critic, December 1903, reproduced in Warburton 1961)

Fifth Creek Gully in 1864, and a much later record of 10 birds flying over Hazelwood in September 1880 seen by RSC (most likely a Clark or a Crompton family member).

While **Major Mitchell's Cockatoo** was not found very close to Adelaide and Clark (1889) had never seen a wild bird, he reported that Gould had said that this species bred at Gawler and that in the late 1880s it was still to be found within 50 to 60 miles of Adelaide in the direction of the Murray. A diary entry for 5<sup>th</sup> February 1890 noted that Robert Frederick Ware had recorded this cockatoo nesting at Erith within the last three years and that formerly these birds were plentiful "at Pearling Belt and Port gawler (sic)", including a record of about 1000 birds at Port Gawler on one occasion. Ware (1829-1909) arrived in the colony in 1838 and eventually settled at Erith where he was a farmer, hawker and postmaster. Erith is on the northern Adelaide Plains, northwest of Owen, and I believe that Clark's Pearling Belt should be Peachey/Peachy Belt, an area of woodland southwest of Gawler. Only a fraction of this diverse and important woodland is extant today.

**Galahs**, arguably the most common cockatoo in Australia now, were once confined to the arid and semi-arid parts of Australia, but the clearance of native vegetation and the provision of water for stock throughout much of the dry inland enabled the species to invade the newly created wheat belts (Rowley 1990). This was somewhat akin to the expansion of the Crested Pigeon, where the



Figure 6 – Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  
(Image by Brian Young and used courtesy of the photographer and the Birds SA website photographic gallery)

extension of their range into better-watered and more temperate areas of South Australia began as early as the 1890s (Black 2015). Symonds Clark first recorded Galahs in 1897, having seen “a few about” in January of that year (SLSA PRG 389/7). However, he was not sure if they were wild birds or escapees, as he had been told by a Mrs. Reeve that a dealer had lost 40 Galahs and large numbers had been brought to Adelaide, presumably from the north. Clark saw three birds at Knightsbridge in January 1897 and others told him that they had seen them recently too: Mr. Gee at Kensington Park, Mr. Ashby at Edwards Town (sic) and Mr. Mellor at the Reedbeds. Captain White noted that: “Small parties have visited the district from time to time, but not to stay” (White 1919). It is probable that some or all of the birds seen were wild birds, but it does beg the question of whether some of the escaped cage birds did enter the wild population. Clark’s diaries are silent on the Galah on the Adelaide Plains after this one entry.

In the first few decades of Clark’s life in the colony, the most common cockatoo about Hazelwood and the Mount Lofty Ranges was the **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo** (Figure 7). Clark saw small flocks in the MLR on “many occasions” and occasionally near his home at Hazelwood from 1853/54 till 1880, sometimes flying over and occasionally settled in trees. On one occasion he believed that three birds had overwintered in eucalypts at Hazelwood in March 1876. He recorded them in the MLR more frequently and in larger numbers, including near Willunga, at



**Figure 7 — Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos**

(Image used courtesy of the photographer and the Birds SA website photographic gallery)

Bridgewater and at Kangarilla.

Symonds Clark appeared particularly fond of **Cockatiels** which he kept in his aviaries over many years and which bred freely there. Early on they were uncommonly for sale but sometime prior to

1889 they were brought to Adelaide in large numbers. He first saw them in the wild on the Le Fevre Peninsula in 1855 and later saw them at Norwood several times and more rarely around Burnside. All of Clark’s records were from the spring months of September to November, corresponding with the species’ movement to southern parts of

South Australia in spring and summer. In 1868 and 1870 he saw flocks of 8-13 birds flying over Norwood or Adelaide city and his first record from Hazelwood came on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1870, when three birds alighted in eucalypts there. This occurred twice more, in 1873 and 1874 and, on the latter occasion, the ten wild birds may have been induced to land by his captive birds, which were calling to them.

The **Budgerigar** was another species that Clark had a fondness for and kept very successfully in his aviaries, where he believed that one pair had reared 26 young in one season. While wild Budgerigars were seen intermittently, as one colonist from 1836 attested, in some years they were very plentiful on the Adelaide Plains and wild birds were trapped in the Reedbeds, at Norwood and at Glenelg. In 1867 the landlord at the Hindmarsh Hotel who was also a bird dealer had nearly 30,000 birds of this species for sale. Clark (1889) worried that this number of birds being taken would deplete the wild population as well as arousing his concern about the welfare of such large numbers of bird crammed into cages without adequate ventilation, food and water. The diary notes of Clark indicated that numbers of visiting Budgerigars dropped in the last two decades of the nineteenth century (SLSA PRG 389/7). Small numbers were seen in some years at Hazelwood, for example in most years of the 1860s, less commonly in the 1870s (1871 and 1878) and 1880s (1880 only). In January 1899 Clark said that there were a few Budgerigars about but it was many years since he had seen them at Burnside. Budgerigars were seen in most months of the year at Burnside, but the majority of the records were in the October to January period, coinciding with the species’ incursion into the southern parts of the state.

A bird that is now extinct in South Australia, the **Ground Parrot**, was probably seen by Symond Clark “in the scrub between Willunga and Port Elliot” (Clark 1889).



**Figure 8 — Cockatiel**

(Image by Trevor Cox and used courtesy of the photographer and the Birds SA website photographic gallery)



**Figure 9 – Crimson (Adelaide) Rosella**  
 (Image by Kevin Williams and used courtesy of the photographer and the Birds SA website photographic gallery)

White (1919) called the **Adelaide Rosella** (Figure 9) once a common bird at the Reedbeds, visiting the Adelaide Plains in the autumn, and “exceedingly numerous” in the MLR (White in Mathews 1916-17). However due to their depredations in the orchards, they were shot and poisoned in their thousands. Crompton (1915) said that there were always a few present at Stonyfell, with numbers increasing in recent years, but Clark’s experience at Hazelwood was different. He recorded a young bird in January 1863, heard a bird in August 1868 and saw several young birds in March 1878 (SLSA PRG 389/7). He also commented in 1889 that he had not seen a bird of this species on the Plains for a long time. As this species is a relatively large and brightly-plumaged bird, it is difficult to see how Clark could have missed them if they had been around Hazelwood and Knightsbridge, so it may be that the species was more common in the MLR and Stonyfell was just that much closer to the more intact vegetation of the foothills and the ranges. Clark (1889) did record Adelaide Rosellas in numbers at Crafers and beyond in the Adelaide Hills in 1852.

Clark (1889) described the **Red-rumped Parrot** as frequently seen at Burnside, and sometimes in very large flocks; however, Crompton (1915) said that this species used to be very plentiful at Stonyfell but disappeared in the early 1880s and none had been seen since. On perusing Clark’s diaries, there are very few records of this species, with two sightings in the 1860s and then a flock of 50 birds in mid-December 1878, the largest number seen at any one time (SLSA PRG 389/7). He then commented that in February 1888 there were very few Red-rumped Parrots about. White (1919), writing about the Reedbeds, described the species as once very plentiful, but that it had disappeared. So apparently, this once plentiful bird became very scarce on the Plains, at least for a period.

Clark recorded very few *Neophema* parrots at Hazelwood and was clearly unable to distinguish the

different species (Clark 1889). The following excerpt from his diary for 7<sup>th</sup> November 1868 illustrated his confusion: “This afternoon a boy named Lucas killed with a stone a beautiful Parroquet which I think from the quantity of deep blue upon the wings and from the orange colour upon the belly must have been the Orange bellied Parroquet (*Euphemia aurantia*). The colours were very brilliant, a narrow band of blue across the forehead and a patch of very deep rich blue on the shoulder. The tail was knocked off and I did not see it. I believe that I once saw a pair of these birds at Hazelwood more than 7 years ago” (SLSA PRG 389/7). Given the time of year, November, this bird was unlikely to have been an **Orange-bellied Parrot**, as the species breeds in Tasmania and is only on the mainland during the winter. From the description the bird was more likely to have been a **Blue-winged Parrot**, but without the specimen it is impossible to tell whether it was this species or the very similar **Elegant Parrot**.

John Gould saw the Orange-bellied Parrot and described it as “abundant on the flat, marshy grounds bordering the coast, especially between Port Adelaide and Holdfast Bay” (Gould 1865). It appears that this species became extinct there quite soon after European colonisation as neither S.A. White nor J.W. Mellor nor White’s ancestors mentioned seeing this species (Paton 2021). The Elegant and Blue-winged Parrots are still recorded in small numbers from the Adelaide Plains, with the former being more common than the latter.

Of particular interest are Clark’s records of two species that are now rare or extinct in the Adelaide region, namely the Little Lorikeet and the **Swift Parrot**. The latter, listed as Critically Endangered in Australia under the *EPBC Act 1999*, breeds in Tasmania and migrates to the mainland, where before 1950 it used to regularly visit the MLR (Commonwealth of Australia 2019). Clark recorded them between May and September in some years between 1854/55 and 1882 (namely 1862, 1864, 1868, 1870, 1871, 1874, 1876, 1878, 1879) and he noted on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1882 that he had seen large numbers over the last month, including a flock of about 100 (SLSA PRG 389/7). On 17<sup>th</sup> July 1914, when Edwin Ashby brought him specimens of a male and a female shot by his son at Blackwood (along with an additional five female birds), Clark recalled that he had not heard of any being seen since 1882, although Robert Crompton thought he might have seen two at Kensington Gardens in June 1914. Ashby (1914) reported small flocks from June 1914 at Blackwood flying over and roosting in the Grey Box *Eucalyptus microcarpa* trees, and possibly feeding on flowering South Australian Blue Gums *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*.

Horton and Black (2006) concluded that the **Little Lorikeet** was once a common bird in the MLR and on the Adelaide Plains, but that it is now an extremely rare bird in South Australia, except in the

South East, where it is nonetheless rare. Their conclusion that it was once common in the Adelaide region was partly based on Symonds Clark's publication (1889) as well as those of other earlier and contemporaneous observers. Clark inferred that Little Lorikeets were seasonal in their visits to Hazelwood, sometimes arriving about the time that almonds began blossoming in late winter. For example he first saw them in the blossom in 1864 on 31<sup>st</sup> July and recorded them using the almond blossom in 1863, 1874 and 1875, but noted that there were none there in 1879. Although there were numbers of Purple-crowned and Musk Lorikeets at Hazelwood in April 1882, there were no Little Lorikeets with them. Horton and Black (2006) questioned whether Little Lorikeets bred in the Adelaide region, despite documented evidence from the MLR. Clark recorded that J. H. Crompton had a young one about the house (and I assume by this he meant the Crompton's Stonyfell house) in December 1864, suggesting that the species did breed in the foothills, at least in some years (SLSA PRG 389/7).

Three other lorikeet species were recorded by Clark and were at least seasonally common on the Adelaide Plains. Clark (1889) believed the Musk Lorikeet to be more common and bolder than the Rainbow Lorikeet, but that the Purple-crowned Lorikeet was the most common lorikeet on the Plains. Another early observer only recorded two species of small lorikeets from the Plains south of Adelaide (around Fullarton, Malvern, Highgate and Unley) in the 1870s and 1880s and described them thus:

Of the birds the most numerous was the smaller green parakeet. These at some seasons of the year existed in thousands, the peppermint gum [i.e. Grey Box] being their favorite [sic] tree. There was a larger variety with a harsher note and more brilliantly colored [sic]. Both these species are now much reduced in numbers (Thomas 1922).

It is possible that Thomas (1922) did not discriminate the Little and the Purple-crowned Lorikeets and thus his larger lorikeet may have been the Musk and the smaller either or both of the aforementioned species. The larger one was not the Rainbow Lorikeet, which he referred to as the 'blue mountain lory'.

Symonds Clark (1889) saw very large flocks, up to 100 birds, of **Rainbow Lorikeets** when he lived in Kensington in 1852. He thought that like all the lorikeets, Rainbows were seasonal, with birds starting to appear about February and disappearing about July, although there are a few records from August and September (SLSA PRG 389/7). Clark recorded them in most years in the 1860s and 1870s from Hazelwood, with large numbers noted in April 1863, early June 1864, May 1867 and May 1879. Their numbers dropped off in the middle years of the 1870s and he recorded them less frequently in the 1880s than previously. Eight or nine birds at

Knightsbridge in March 1889 were the first seen for some time. Clark also said that he was not aware that they ate fruit, which seems surprising given the extensive fruit and vine crops at Hazelwood, but perhaps this was due to their rarity, as they are now well known for their fruit-eating propensities.



**Figure 10 – Musk Lorikeets**  
(Image by Teresa Jack and used courtesy of the photographer and the Birds SA website photographic gallery)

**Musk Lorikeets** were more common in some years than others at Hazelwood and appeared to be episodic or seasonal in their attendance there. For example, Clark observed that he saw the first for the season on 30<sup>th</sup> March in 1867, and most of his observations were from the January-March and the June-August periods. They came in late winter to

feed on the almond blossom in some years and at times were destructive in the Hazelwood pear trees (e.g. February 1876). He noted a great many in February 1870, May 1879, June 1871 and 1875, and July 1871. In August 1879 he recorded that there had been a lot in the almond blossom that year and in March 1889 that there were quite a few about but not as many as in the previous year, when in February 1888 he had seen lots at Hazelwood, Kensington and Norwood. In February 1873 he noted that there had been fewer in this year and the last (SLSA PRG 389/7).

At nearby Stonyfell, Crompton (1915) said that the **Purple-crowned Lorikeet** was extremely common when the gum trees were flowering. At Stonyfell and at Burnside there were River Red Gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, SA Blue Gums and Grey Box, with the first named flowering in summer, and the blue gums and the last-named in autumn. At Hazelwood the almond blossom offered rich pickings for the lorikeets and Clark noted the Purple-crowned Lorikeets in the blossom there in 1860, 1862, 1864, 1869, 1870, 1874, and 1875, with first sightings being on the 6<sup>th</sup>, the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 27<sup>th</sup> of July in different years. However, in 1879 he commented that he had not seen any at the blossom that year and there were very few birds in 1874. At other times of the year, he noted many in March of 1863 and 1867, in February-April 1882 and in February 1888, thus mirroring the occurrence of Musk Lorikeets, in that they were more common from late summer through autumn (when the eucalypts were flowering) and in late winter coinciding with the flowering of the almonds.

*To be continued in the Summer Birder*

## Bassian Thrush Monitoring Methods *(continued)*



Figure 2: (Left) Camera Trap (Right) AudioMoth (an automated acoustic recording device) in waterproof case. (Photo: Darcy Whittaker)

Survey Method	Mark Oliphant		Kyeema		Warren		Total	
	# of locations	# of locations detected	# of locations	# of locations detected	# of locations	# of locations detected	# of locations	# of location detected
Camera Trapping	30	3	29	4	29	2	88	9
Acoustic Recording	30	7	44	20	37	3	111	30

Table 1: Number of study locations where Bassian Thrush were detected (# of locations detected) for the total number of study locations at each Conservation Park.

The most commonly encountered call for the Mount Lofty Ranges Bassian Thrush, a high-pitched contact call (not unlike that of a Golden Whistler) formed the foundation of the recogniser. Once developed, the recogniser was able to detect Bassian Thrush contact calls from field recordings, enabling the presence of birds at field locations to be determined.

For each conservation park, 6 study locations were surveyed a total of three times using traditional observer surveys. Despite intensively surveying these sites, many of which were once known Bassian Thrush territories, traditional observer surveys produced a total of only 11 presences across the 54 individual hour-long surveys.

Both camera trapping and acoustic recording took place over three weeks in each of the conservation parks. Ultimately, AudioMoths produced many more detections than camera traps (Table 1) with the proportion of all study locations where Bassian Thrush were detected reaching over 0.27 after 21 days (in comparison to 0.1 for camera traps). Additionally, AudioMoths detected Bassian Thrush at 85.7% of all occupied locations (those study locations where Bassian Thrush were known to be present). With increased

detectability and lower associated costs, acoustic recording can be recommended as the most effective monitoring method for Bassian Thrush.

Aside from investigating monitoring methods, the study also aimed to begin exploring Bassian Thrush occupancy and density in the Mount Lofty Ranges. Survey results showed Kyeema CP to be an important location for the subspecies, with much of the park yielding detections and an estimated density of 2.4 territories per sq. km. However, the somewhat unexpected low number of detections from Warren CP suggests that densities vary significantly throughout the Mount Lofty Ranges.

I would like to thank Birds SA for their generous support of this work. As bushfires and other threats continue to impact Bassian Thrush populations across their South Australian distribution, the ability to better monitor and understand this subspecies will prove vital to their conservation.

**Darcy Whittaker**  
(Honours Student)

*Supervised by Associate Professor Phillip Cassey &  
Dr Rebecca Boulton  
The University of Adelaide*

## Past Excursions

### Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

Sunday 16 May  
Carriererloo Station

On a calm but grey overcast morning, seven birders came together in Port Augusta at the start of the Stuart Highway. Three were from Pt. Augusta, two from Wilmington and one each from Whyalla and Mambray Creek. We headed off along the highway and turned off onto the road to Carriererloo station. There was very little bird life to be seen and the countryside was looking dry, but there was some green growth in areas where earlier rain had fallen and collected in low places. We stopped at the Carriererloo shearing shed where shearing was in full swing and made contact with the manager of the station. The dam near the shed was about half full and displayed some Pink-eared Ducks and Grey Teal on the water, with Black-fronted Dotterels on the shore. Coming in to drink were lots of Little Corellas, Galahs and Crested Pigeons with the occasional Magpielark, Australian Raven, Australian Magpie, Willie Wagtail and Bluebonnet. Flying about were Welcome Swallows and Black-faced Woodswallows, while Sparrows and Starlings were fluttering around the



**Yellow-throated Miner** (Photographed by Richard Croll at Carriererloo Station, 16 May 2021)



**Western Grasswren** (Photographed by Richard Croll at Carriererloo Station, 16 May 2021)



**Fairywren** (Photographed by Larry Gruitt at Carriererloo Station, 16 May 2021)



**Slender-billed Thornbill** (Photographed by Richard Croll at Carriererloo Station, 16 May 2021)

buildings. We drove on towards the homestead and stopped to look at the South Four Mile Dam. At the dam we added to our bird list a flock of Zebra Finches, Australasian Grebe, Purple-backed Fairywrens and some shy Western Grasswrens. As we walked back to the vehicles White-winged Fairywrens, White-browed Babblers, a Grey Butcherbird, Singing Honeyeaters, Redthroats, Southern Whiteface, Pipits and a pair of friendly Slender-billed Thornbills lengthened our list. Our next stop was at the homestead where we had smoko with the station owners. While we were looking around the garden some Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Port Lincoln Parrots, Mistletoebirds, Mulga Parrots and a Common Blackbird increased our bird list. As we left the homestead some Emus walked past and we drove on into some mallee covered hills, along the Birthday Creek track. We stopped when we heard and saw Weebills and Mistletoebirds. As we walked around the area a Dusky Woodswallow glided past and Yellow-throated Miners squabbled in the trees while Striated Pardalotes and Weebills gleaned food from the leaves. In the shrubs we found a Grey Shrikethrush and Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, while high overhead two Wedge-tailed Eagles were aerial dancing with each other. At our lunch stop we added more birds that we

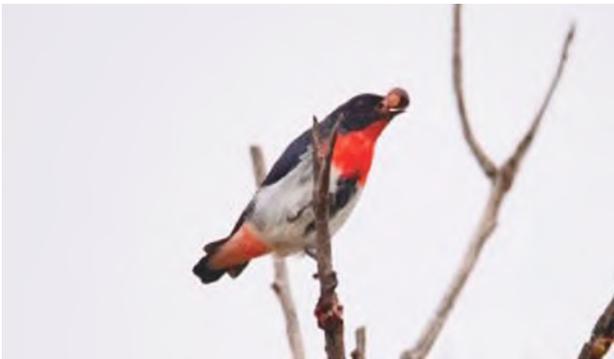
## Past Excursions *(continued)*



**Little Corella** (Photographed by Larry Gruitt at Carriewerloo Station, 16 May 2021)



**Inland Thornbill** (Photographed by Richard Croll at Carriewerloo Station, 16 May 2021)



**Mistletoebird** (Photographed by Larry Gruitt at Carriewerloo Station, 16 May 2021)

had already seen and then drove on to a likely bird place with mallee trees, shrub thickets and a Red Gum lined creek. Here we saw Inland Thornbills, Red-capped Robins, Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters and Turquoise Fairywrens, as well as many of the birds we had previously seen. We reached Birthday Well and then returned along the track and finally headed for home.

A total of 44 bird species had been seen, with the birds of the day being the Western Grasswrens and the Slender-billed Thornbills.

**Bernie Haase**

## Birds SA

Thursday 20 May

### Swan Reach Conservation Park

Fourteen people gathered for the visit to Swan Reach Conservation Park on an overcast, grey day. Things didn't look too promising at first when a walk in the north-west corner of the park just off the Sedan-Swan Reach Rd and then down along the track to the south failed to discover much at all apart from a Common Bronzewing. Of definite interest however, were 4 White-eared Honeyeaters seen just off the Old Punyelroo Rd.

Failing to find anything else of interest we went down towards the central 'camping' area and that's when things started to improve. As is often the case, we found several 'hot spots' where a mixture of birds could be observed. We were hoping to see Chestnut Quailthrush, and when we stopped to investigate an area of spinifex we spotted two of them tootling about on the ground which created some excitement. They are such attractive birds with their subtle but colourful plumage!

Honeyeaters seen on the day included Brown-headed (12), Spiny-cheeked (10), White-eared (4), Yellow-plumed (100+), Striped (2) and Red Wattlebirds (4). We heard two Crested Bellbirds calling and saw one Hooded Robin, two Western Whistlers (formerly Australian Golden Whistlers), one Grey Butcherbird and one Grey Shrikethrush. A Willie Wagtail kept us company while we were having lunch and Galahs (5), Grey Currawongs (6), Little Raven (1) and Australian Ravens (4) sailed overhead or sat quietly in trees. White-winged Choughs (6) were heard several times, and Weebills (11), Black-faced Cuckooshrikes (5) and Striated Pardalotes (6) were also encountered. Towards the end of the trip a Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen soaring high above us.

The total number of species observed for the day was 30. This may not sound like many but we were very happy, particularly as there were several birds not usually observed so close to Adelaide. The large number of Spotted Pardalotes (10), Jacky Winters (18), Varied Sittellas (15), Splendid Fairywrens (6), Purple-crowned Lorikeets (10), Mulga Parrots (6) and Australian Ringnecks (6) were all a treat to see.

**Ali Ben Kahn**

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Birds SA

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Sunday 30 May

#### Nurragi Conservation Reserve

This Reserve, which is in the Finnis-Milang area, was the old train line that ran off the Strathalbyn—Goolwa line to take goods to Milang. It was closed in 1970 and the railway line was removed. The local Strathalbyn Field Naturalists recognised it as having important intact Mallee vegetation and with only about 4% left in the district they wanted it saved. It belongs to the National Trust and is managed by the *Friends of Nurragi* group, who have continued to revegetate it and improve the biodiversity.

There are several access points to this Reserve and on this occasion, we entered it from Nurragi Rd. and walked in a southwesterly direction. The 16 of us braved the cold weather with the frosty temperature hovering around the low 2.5° on the way there. But, with blue skies, full sunlight and a light breeze it was looking good for finding bushbirds.

As soon as we arrived, we heard Weebills and thornbills calling, the most common being the Yellow Thornbill. Further along there was a large group of Yellow-rumped Thornbills. When they took off from the ground it appeared that a Collard Sparrowhawk had scared them.

A Peaceful Dove was calling and two Common Bronzewing sped past when disturbed. With blossom on some of the eucalypts we found a range of Honeyeaters — New Holland, White-plumed, Spiny-cheeked, Singing and Brown-headed as well as a few Red Wattlebirds. There were hot spots of birds in between long stretches of silence. A few expected species we had seen the previous week were not about; noticeably babblers, pardalotes and whistlers. We sighted many small groups of Superb Fairywrens. Galahs, Crimson Rosellas, Musk Lorikeets, Elegant Parrots and Rainbow Lorikeets were sighted.

The group spread out, with some people lingering and others walking about 6km. It was an enjoyable morning, finishing with lunch and birdcall at the wooden picnic table provided by the Friends Group.

The total number of species came to 36, and this number highlights the difference between more people spotting birds and only one or two people covering the same area; in which case 24 is an average number of bushbirds.

**Wendy Phillips**

**A group of Galahs** (Photographed by Chris Braham at Nurragi Conservation Reserve, 30 May 2021)



## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 5 June

#### Scott Conservation Park at Currency Creek

Our planned leader, Richard, phoned the night before saying he would be unable to attend as he unfortunately collided with a Kangaroo coming back from Waikerie the day before.

Bob and I split the group of 22 people and I took the seven new Birds SA members with me plus a few others. We covered the northwest corner of the park while Bob stayed on the main track to keep the groups apart. We eventually rejoined them near the exit to the road.

Scott Conservation Park was putting on its best, "Winter" show with many eucalypts flowering and the Galahs, rosellas, parrots and lorikeets were finding their mates and checking out their favourite tree hollows to produce the next generation.

The honeyeaters were busy too. The Crescent Honeyeater was the noisiest species and most plentiful. Yellow-faced, and New Holland Honeyeaters were also present. We found Eastern Spinebills along the track and Striated Pardalotes were calling. A couple of Maned Ducks sat at the edge of the neighbour's dam, and I explained to the new members that they actually build their nests high in the nearby eucalyptus trees and the ducklings have to jump out and flutter to the ground from a great height.

A few Little Ravens were calling and I explained to the new birders the difference between their call and that of the Australian Raven. A bird of prey was thought to be a Brown Falcon but was too quick to be identified. A few Tree Martins were high in the sky.

The male Golden Whistler put on a colourful show, as did the Musk and Purple-crowned Lorikeets, along with Crimson Rosellas amongst the greenery.



#### Golden Whistler

*(Photographed by Bob Daly at Scott Conservation Park, 5 June 2021)*

A White-throated Treecreeper and a Brown Treecreeper in the middle of the park provided an added bonus, as they are not always easy to find. The other group saw White-browed Babblers.

A couple of Elegant Parrots delighted the group. They were quiet in comparison to their noisy cousins.



#### Purple-crowned Lorikeets

*(Photographed by Bob Daly at Scott Conservation Park, 5 June 2021)*



#### Members enjoying the day *(Photographed by Bob Daly at Scott Conservation Park, 5 June 2021)*

After leaving the Park it was easier to see and hear the smaller birds. We found Yellow Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Weebill, Fairywrens and Red-browed Finches while walking along the road.

Combining our two groups we tallied 36 species for the morning with many first sightings for the newcomers. They had big smiles and were most grateful to be introduced to Scott C.P. and admire the prolific concentration of birds in this area.

Over the next couple of months, the orchids and small bush plants will be flowering and the park will be well worth another visit.

**Wendy Phillips**

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Birds SA

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#### Thursday 17 June Belair National Park

With a very bleak forecast and dark skies, I thought I would soon be able to return home to a warm bed – surely no one would venture out for today's excursion! Well I was wrong. There was a healthy attendance of 11 members.

We took the usual route from the car park, around the lake and the bush track, on to the native nursery before making a direct and earlier return to our vehicles via the bitumen. It was very cold but only a dozen or so drops of rain fell (it bucketed down after we had packed up and departed for our homes). The birdcall gave us a total of 34 species for the day and a total of 606 birds seen with Rainbow Lorikeet (200), Musk Lorikeet (50), Noisy Miner (50), Eurasian Coot (50), Little Corella (30) and Australian White Ibis (27) being the most prolific. We also recorded Crescent Honeyeater (6), Striated Pardalote (6) and just one White-browed Scrubwren.

***Lynton Huxley***

### Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

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#### Sunday 20 June Mundallio Station

Five keen birders met on the northeastern side of Port Augusta on a crisp, clear morning, with fog patches hugging the distant hills. Four were from Port Augusta and one was from Mambray Creek. We drove along the Depot Creek road for about 5km, and then turned onto the Mundallio homestead track. The area is low bluebush plain where we found Australian Pipits, Rufous Fieldwrens and White-winged Fairywrens while Elegant Parrots and Australian Ravens flew overhead. We walked to an extensive area of sandhills covered in low scrub. Here we saw Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Crested Pigeons, Purple-backed Fairywrens, White-browed Babblers, Australian Magpies and Mulga Parrots. We returned to the vehicles and drove on towards the homestead spotting Nankeen Kestrels and a White-fronted Chat on the way. At the homestead we were greeted by the property owners and were proudly shown around their flash new shearing shed. Many House Sparrows were around the buildings, along with some Little Corellas, Magpielarks,



**Redthroats** *(Photographed by Judy Owen at Mundallio Station, 20 June 2021)*

## Past Excursions *(continued)*



**Chestnut-rumped Thornbill** (Photographed by Bernie Haase at Mundallio Station, 20 June 2021)

Welcome Swallows and a single Yellow-throated Miner. A pair of Elegant Parrots was sitting in a tree nearby. As we drove further along the track that followed Mundallio creek towards the ranges, we saw more Australian Magpies, consisting of both white-backed and black-backed forms as well as some hybrids. We stopped for lunch in the Red Gum-lined creek at the start of the valley into the ranges, with the wind and clouds building up. After lunch we walked along the creek and found an Emu, a Southern Whiteface, Galahs, Mallee Ringnecks, Wedge-tailed Eagles, Red-capped Robins, Weebills, Grey Fantails, Striated Pardalotes, a Grey Butcherbird, Inland Thornbills and some friendly Redthroats. We drove on and left the creek area along a track that rose up, following a long gully that eventually joins the Pichi Richi Pass road. However, access is closed by a property in between. This area consists of hills covered predominately by mallee scrub. We stopped at a spot where there was plenty of birdlife and saw more of the tree canopy and scrub birds that we had seen earlier; and added Mistletobirds, Rufous and Golden Whistlers that annoyingly would not let us take any good photos of them, Black-capped Sittellas, Grey-fronted Honeyeaters, Grey Currawongs and an Owlet Nightjar. We drove as far as we could go along the track and tried to call up a Short-tailed Grasswren in the Triodia covered hills there — a bit of wishful thinking though. As we turned along the track we stopped to look at a windmill and found Red Wattlebirds, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters. It was getting late so we continued on back to the creek and found a Black-faced Cuckooshrike and Common Starlings. As we left the property a pair of Black-faced Woodswallows and more Mulga Parrots were the last birds we saw. We had found a total of 44 bird species, with the Sittellas, Golden Whistlers, Grey-fronted and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters being the birds of the day.

**Bernie Haase**

## Birds SA

Sunday 27 June

### Kaiser Stuhl Conservation Park

As I meandered up Mengler Hill I mused “perhaps nobody will turn up and I can go somewhere warm and dry!” I should have known better and a stalwart group of 17 people assembled in search of birding satisfaction! I had decided that we would start with the Stringybark Loop track as the forecast was for the drizzle to pass early – again, I should have known better!

As we strode off into what could best be described as a cloud-forest of dripping vegetation and extremely limited visibility one thought kept nagging at me – I can't hear any birds! It was an inauspicious start to the day, trying to be enthused by distant Adelaide Rosella calls and elusive Crescent Honeyeaters. When we did hear a call, the birds were determined not to show themselves. However just as things were appearing as gloomy as the weather a beautiful female Scarlet Robin took pity on us and started to bathe in a puddle on the path. She put on a bit of display in full view of the now enlivened birders and was soon joined by her partner. This seemed to spur on our avian friends, and Superb Fairywrens and Yellow-rumped Thornbills soon joined us, and at last we saw those Crescent Honeyeaters!

Progressing along the track we were teased with distant sightings of Eastern Spinebills in the thickening mist, which showed no sign of lifting. A Grey Fantail entertained us as it moved amongst some bushes near the track. Finally, as the bush closed up to the track, we were rewarded by good close views of Eastern Spinebills in all their glory, buzzing past and sometimes through the group. The ubiquitous New-Holland Honeyeaters appeared in small numbers but even they were subdued. Just before the end of the loop track, we were joined quite literally by another Grey Fantail, which appeared to want to join in the fun by flying in between birders. We also had another good view of a pair of Scarlet Robins.

At the junction with the Wallowa track some (more sensible?) birders called it a day as the mist was clearly set to remain. The rest of us moved along the track for a further few hundred metres, encountering a White-throated Treecreeper but little else. As we moved back towards the entrance a Grey Shrikethrush began calling but, in the murk, it could have been on the track and we probably couldn't have seen it.

Since the shelter at Bethany happened to be in use, we headed to Lyndoch for the birdcall (and the bakery).

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

The total species for Kaiser Stuhl was 11 seen, 3 heard only and an unknown lorikeet (probably Musk). Most numerous species were Eastern Spinebill and Crescent Honeyeater. As was pointed out we saw nearly as many species during the birdcall as we did in the field trip proper!

**Richard Woodland**

### Fleurieu Birders

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Saturday 3 July

#### Cox's Conservation Park

Fifteen birders gathered at the Cox's Scrub Conservation Park car park on a surprisingly sunny, but cool breezy morning; contradicting the previous evening's forecast for showers and gusty winds! Before we started, a male Golden Whistler greeted us at the car park. We decided to take the shorter Stringybark track loop, about 4 km around the mainly sandy hill on the eastern side of the park. Walking along the track through young River Red gums, we saw Eastern Spinebills and Superb Fairy Wrens. Where the trail divided at the Sugar Gum plantation, we split into two groups, respectively following the southern and northern sides of the hill and meeting at the top of the hill. At the Sugar Gums, we heard and saw Adelaide Rosellas. On the northern side of the loop, amongst the understory of flowering Flame Heath and Grevilleas, we caught sight of a male Scarlet Robin, and several in the group were rewarded with a Chestnut-rumped Heathwren. The New Holland Honeyeaters were everywhere, and we heard a number of Crescent Honeyeaters as well. Near the top of the hill, several Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters made their presence felt, often seen perched on the bare branches

**Tawny-crowned Honeyeater** *(Photographed by Bob Daly at Cox's Conservation Park, 3 July 2021)*



of cup gums. About 5 years ago, a "controlled" fire had burnt out much of the eastern part of the park; however, much of the vegetation has now recovered. For example, we saw many young flowering banksias on the southern side of the hill. It would be useful to research any bird data prior to the fire, to see if the same has occurred for the birds. Walking back down the hill, one of the groups saw pairs of Rainbow Lorikeets and a small flock of Elegant Parrots flying overhead. Over the whole morning, we saw other birds, including Brush Bronzings, Red Wattlebirds, Little Ravens, Weebills, Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, a Grey Currawong, Silvereyes and Grey Shrikethrushes. Also, we agree that we had heard a Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo. When we gathered back at the car park for a late morning tea, our tally of 27 species was agreed to be quite a reasonable one for this time of the year and the weather conditions.

**Keith Jones**

### Birds SA

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Saturday 10 July

#### Glenthorne National Park

Nineteen eager birders gathered in the car park at the Glenthorne National Park *Ityamaiipinna Yarta* (GNPIY) early on a cold and foggy July morning. As we waited for late arrivals, the group was pleasantly surprised when the Minister for Environment and Water, David Speirs, arrived to join the morning's field trip. The Minister often conducts personal tours of the GNPIY for those who book a walk with him and he was keen to join the group from Birds SA and learn more about the property's birdlife.

About 40,000 trees, shrubs and native grasses have been planted in the National Park over the past year, including 5,000 planted at the start of this winter. The park is about to undergo a number of improvements, including the construction of walking trails, a Nature Play playground for children, watercourse re-engineering as well as more revegetation. It was the perfect opportunity for Birds SA to establish some baseline bird number data.

At the start of the walk, a long distance sighting of an escapee Blue and Yellow Macaw was made in a flock of Galahs. This species was not officially recorded. The cold and foggy morning seemed to affect bird activity and numbers but there were some good sightings of Musk and Rainbow Lorikeets and both species of rosellas in the old Sugar Gums of the CSIRO entrance. The property has always contained good numbers of common local

## Past Excursions *(continued)*



**Minister for the Environment, David Speirs, joins the morning field trip** *(Photographed by Wendy Digby at Glenthorne National Park, 10 July 2021)*

species and we saw most of these on our walk, including New Holland Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds, Crested Pigeons and Little Ravens. Since the removal of the sheep in 2018 and the opening up of the property to the public just over 12 months ago, more bird species are returning and their numbers seem to be increasing. It was good to see Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Superb Fairywrens, Grey Shrikethrushes and Black-faced Cuckooshrikes along the creek line, as the morning warmed up. Until the recent winter rains arrived, the central dam had dropped to extremely low levels and consequently the waterbird numbers had declined dramatically. The resident Hardheads have not yet returned, but 32 Grey Teal and 15 Pacific Black Duck were seen on the dam as well as a dozen Maned Ducks and small numbers of other common waterbirds, such as Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebes, Dusky Moorhens, Black-fronted Dotterels and even the

Eurasian Coots, which were usually on the dam in quite large numbers. The Minister commented that he had recently learnt that Maned Ducks nest in hollows in trees and had seen a pair checking out an old, large hollow at Glenthorne National Park Ityamaitpinna Yarta.

The group ventured around the central dam, gaining a good view of the waterbirds there, then past the lower dam, before heading back towards the Ranger Station carpark for lunch. Highlights of the walk included a Brown Falcon, seen early in the morning, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and on the western side of the watercourse, many Welcome Swallows (approx. 100) which were picking off insects just above the newly planted vegetation. While lunch was taken, some of the newer members spotted a Whistling Kite flying high overhead as well as an Australian Pelican circling on thermals. Everyone who came along enjoyed the morning, and it was great to meet some new Birds SA members and

particularly to chat with our Minister for Environment and Water, David Speirs. Later in the day, Friends of Glenthorne volunteers spotted a Black-shouldered Kite and an Australian Pipit, which took the total number of species recorded for the day to 48 and a total of 547 individual birds.

**Alan Burns**



**Rainbow Lorikeets** *(Photographed by Keith Pheasant at Glenthorne, 10 July 2021)*

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

### Birds SA

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Thursday 15 July

#### Brown's Road, Monarto

Over the previous week or so Browns Road had become a popular site for birders as a female Rose Robin had taken up residence. A check of the Birds SA distribution map indicates this species has rarely been seen in this locality, so clearly a sighting of this bird would be rather special.

There were 23 participants, so as is usual we split into a few smaller groups as we made our way around the site. A couple of the group had seen the Rose Robin the previous week so they were able to direct us to the general area; although expectations were not high as several expert birders had failed to locate her on the previous day. However we were patient and in luck, as she was located coming and going through her territory. In the same area were brilliant Red-capped Robins and Hooded Robins.

#### A female Rose Robin

*(Photographed by  
Gordon Pateman  
at Brown's Rd,  
Monarto,  
15 July 2021)*



#### Brown-headed Honeyeater

*(Photographed by  
Rose Slade  
at Brown's Rd,  
Monarto,  
15 July 2021)*



**Male (left) and female (right) Red-capped Robins**  
*(Photographed by Rose Slade at Brown's Rd, Monarto,  
15 July 2021)*

Other birds seen included Black-chinned and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Purple-crowned Lorikeets, Yellow-rumped, Striated and Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, a Varied Sittella, Golden and Rufous Whistlers, two groups of White-winged Choughs and Diamond Firetails. The species seen in greatest numbers was the Red Wattlebird. The only raptors sighted were two Nankeen Kestrels. A total of 47 species were observed, with the site generally busy and noisy with birdlife. It was a good morning of birding for all.

**Phil Cole**

### Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

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Sunday 18 July

#### Whyalla Conservation Park

It was a calm but cold, overcast morning when 5 birders met at the tanks car park near the Iron Knob turnoff. Three were from Pt. Augusta with one each from Wilmington and Mambray Creek. From our meeting place we drove to Whyalla, turning off just north of the city into the Conservation Park. Another birder from Whyalla met us there and we drove along a typical rough parks track until we reached an old dam. The dam was dry, as was the countryside but we were greeted by a Grey Butcherbird, White-browed Babblers, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters with some Australian Ravens flying lazily overhead. We could hear more birds in the myall and bluebush scrub and on investigation found Purple-backed Fairywrens, Southern Whitefaces, Singing Honeyeaters, a Redthroat, some elusive, camera-shy Turquoise Fairywrens and Slender-billed Thornbills. As we circled around the dam area a Crested Bellbird called nearby and a Mistletoebird zipped past.

## Past Excursions *(continued)*



**Turquoise Fairywren** (Photographed by Judy Owen in Whyalla Conservation Park, 18 July 2021)

When we returned to the vehicles, movement was spotted on the ground and four Western Grasswrens were heard and seen bouncing between the bushes. A group of Black-capped Sittellas then came to investigate us, providing us with some good camera shots. We drove on to Wild Dog Hill on the western edge of the park finding Yellow-throated Miners and a White-winged Triller on the way. At the hill there were some Port Lincoln Parrots, Australian Magpies and two more elusive Western Grasswrens. We then drove along the northern boundary to another low hill and added Willie Wagtail, White-fronted Chat, Red-capped Robin, Black-faced Cuckooshrike and a Welcome Swallow to the bird list. After we had our lunch we returned along a smoother track next to the track on which we came in and found some Chestnut-rumped Thornbills. Two of our group had to leave us for work commitments and the rest of us drove on along the Port Bonython road to Point Lowly.

### Point Lowly

A cold northerly breeze was blowing off the water as we parked at the lighthouse and assembled our spotting 'scopes. There were some Singing Honeyeaters, Common Starlings and House Sparrows in the trees, with Welcome Swallows flying past. On the rocky shoreline there were the usual Silver and Pacific Gulls, Pied Cormorants, Greater Crested Terns as well as about 200 resident Black-faced Cormorants, an Australian Pelican and a Reef Egret. The Egret flew away along the shore and as we followed it some White-winged Fairywrens and Black-faced Woodswallows were added to our bird list. We quietly stalked the dark phase Reef Egret, took our photos and returned to our vehicles. As we drove along the road and onto the



**Eastern Reef Egret** (Photographed by Larry Gruit at Point Lowly, 18 July 2021)

coastal track we saw some Australian Magpies and Crested Pigeons. The coastal track to Fitzgerald Bay was rough and rocky in places but has some good viewing points and is popular with campers. As we drove along the track, we added Australian Pipits, White-browed Babblers, Australasian Gannets, White-fronted Chats, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Galahs and a Brown Songlark. It was getting late when we made our final birdcall at Fitzgerald Bay and then headed back to our homes. We had found a total of 40 bird species for the day, with the Western Grasswrens, Slender-billed Thornbills, Reef Egret and Australasian Gannets being the birds of the day.

**Bernie Haase**

## Birds SA

### Sunday 1 August Laratinga

We had been warned that water levels at Laratinga were unusually high, and that plenty of water was available in the surrounding area, so we should not expect to see any very exciting birds during our excursion. At least, after a wet week, the morning was dry and we even enjoyed sunshine and blue skies. Fourteen birders were keen to find out what the very wet Laratinga environment had to offer.

We were pleased to welcome three very enthusiastic 'newbies' and Ali introduced them to both waterbirds and bushbirds. One of the group had brought along his Bird Book (Simpson and Day) and looked up each new bird he was introduced to.

Australian Reed Warblers seemed to be more conspicuous than usual. Even though it was too early in

## Past Excursions *(continued)*

the season to hear them call, they were easily seen flitting amongst the reeds. Little Grassbirds were also unusually conspicuous, so it was possible to compare the features of these quite similar species.

Due to the high water levels, we had not expected to see any crakes or rails. However, one Spotless Crake had found an area of shallow water that met its requirements.

The 'birds of the day', however, were the 25 Pink-eared Ducks on the treatment ponds.

Our total species count for the morning was 41. Although it was much lower than the usual Laratinga count of about 61, it had proved to be a pleasant morning of birding.

**Cynthia Pyle**

### Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 7 August

#### The Washpool and Aldinga Scrub — Southern end

Wow, what a turn out!! 26 people arrived at the end of Button Rd. near the Washpool. It was a clear, calm morning and plenty to see on both sides of the road. August is probably not the best time to visit with the water level so high and flooding onto the road, that is unless you are wearing rubber boots, as a couple in the group did. Surprisingly, we were able to wade across the ford in shallow water and get closer to the main lagoon, which would normally be much busier for birds in the summertime with lower water levels.

Here we found a couple of Black Swans, one crouched low on a nest, a few ducks — Pacific Black and Grey Teal, while Pied Stilts were wading nearby. Two small grebes, thought to be Australasian, were a long way out. About 30 Silver Gulls were swimming and 6-8 Pacific Gulls were resting on a railing. A Richards Pipit sat on a low bush and a Eurasian Skylark was calling.

#### Members gathering near the main lagoon

*(Photographed by Bob Daly at the Washpool, 7 August 2021)*



#### Shining Bronze Cuckoo

*(Photographed by Peter Corbett in the Aldinga Scrub, 7 August 2021)*



On the southern side of Button Rd. there were about 80 Galahs in one group, 22 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos flew over and a Black-shouldered Kite came into range. Altogether the count for the Washpool area came to 32 species. If you Google the Washpool you can see a map. The Conservation area has been extended to 75ha, some of which has been re-vegetated over the last few years with sedgeland and wetland species.

We headed off to Aldinga Scrub about an hour later and walked along Acacia Tce. from Norman Rd., entering the park at the junction of Wattle Avenue. We split the group and followed the wattle loop walk on the southwest corner. The weather was perfect and the bush birds were calling, including Eastern Spinebill, White-plumed Honeyeater, Crescent Honeyeater, Mistletoebirds and Weebill to name a few. Our group spotted 2 Eastern Rosellas, and the pick of the day was a lone Cuckoo but was it a Shining or a Horsfield's Bronze?

After checking photos, the conclusion was a Shining Bronze Cuckoo.

A couple of people in the group belong to the Friends of Aldinga Scrub and they undertake regular bird surveys there. Many Kangaroos were present in the park. They cause considerable damage to the low vegetation.

Our count for the Scrub came to 34 species and ended up a great day of birding.

**Wendy Phillips**

# 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)

The following field trips have been scheduled, but are subject to complying with any COVID protocols for South Australia that exist at the time of the field trip. Monitor government constraints and, if in doubt check for any changes via our e-News.

### Given Birds SA Duty of Care obligation to you, our members, we do ask that:

- You attend field trips only if you are well and have no cold or flu-like symptoms;
- You observe and comply with the COVID-Safe Procedures implemented for our field trips, including all relevant social distancing restrictions;
- You consider bringing personal hand sanitiser and a facemask for added personal protection.

If you have any queries or require further information please contact the Field Trip Coordinator Lynton Huxley on 0498 466 092 or [lyntonhuxley@gmail.com](mailto:lyntonhuxley@gmail.com).

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

## Excursion Terrain Difficulty Ratings

**Easy** – generally flat terrain

**Moderate** – may include some short undulating gradients

**Difficult** – may include some continuous or steep gradients

## What to bring:

- Personal hand sanitiser (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

## Fleurieu Birders

### Saturday 4 September Myponga Reservoir

Meet at 8.30am in the car park in Hansen St. at the start of the walking trail.

TRIP LEADER: *Pat Uphill*

## Birds SA

### Saturday 11 September: Jenkins Scrub – Cancelled

## Birds SA

### Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 September Members Weekend at Port Augusta

*Program Outline:*

**Sat 0830 to 1200** – meet at the Café' of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens, 144 Stuart Hwy Port Augusta for morning bird walk.

**Sat 1330 to 1600** – meet at the Chapple Room at Standpipe Golf Motor Inn, 3-5 Daw St Port Augusta for monthly General Meeting with Guest Speaker John Read.

**Sat 1800** – suggest we gather for members' dinner (at own expense) at the Standpipe Motor Inn.

**Sunday 0830 to 1300** – meet at the parking area on the eastern side of the Port Augusta Highway by the bridge over Mambray Creek for a bird walk around Mambray Creek.

Accommodation options are listed in the Birds SA website or you may contact Lynton Huxley 0498466092 for further information.

TRIP LEADER: *Steven Langley*

## Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

### Sunday 12 September Excursion to Bernie's Block

Meet at 8am in Mambray Creek parking bay.

## Birds SA

### Thursday 16 September Scott Creek CP (MLR) 28km **Difficult**

Meet at 8.30am at Gate 20 located on Frith Road, which runs off Dorset Vale Road, Cherry Gardens. This area of the Park was spared from the devastating fires earlier this year.

TRIP LEADER: *Jim Spiker*

## Future Excursions *(continued)*

### Birds SA

**Sunday 26 September**

**Anacotilla Springs, Second Valley (MLR) 87km**

#### Difficult

This is a private bushland property, which enjoys the permanent flow of the Anacotilla River. Take the Southern Expressway and Main South Road through Normanville towards Wirrina Cove Resort. Meet at 8.30am at the property gate that is on your left near a yellow 90km sign, a gravel area and some cattle yards.

(NB If you reach the entrance to Wirrina Cove Resort, Paradise Drive, you have gone about 700m too far!)

**TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

### Birds SA

**October Long weekend Campout: 1 to 5 October**  
**Caroona Creek Conservation Park (MN)**

#### Easy / Moderate

The location is 204km NNE of Adelaide and about 6km E of Hallett on the Barrier Highway.

Refer to page 42 in this issue of the Magazine for details about this campout at the Old Shed Main Camp area.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

### Fleurieu Birders

**Saturday 2 October**

**Wellington Arboretum, Pangarinda Botanical Gardens**

#### Easy

Meet at 8.30am on Pangarinda Drive, Wellington East

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

### Birds SA

**Saturday 9 October: No Field Trip**

### Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

**Sunday 17 October**

**Quorn Local Area**

Meet at Quorn Pool at 8am

### Birds SA

**Thursday 21 October**

**Cox Scrub CP (MLR) 66km.**

#### Moderate

This Park is located 70km south of Adelaide and approximately 5km south of the town of Ashbourne on the Strathalbyn to Goolwa Road. Meet at 8.30am in the northern car park.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Jeremy Robertson*

### Birds SA

**Sunday 31 October**

**'Cowirra' — a private property adjacent to the River Murray at Mannum (MM) 100km.**

#### Easy

There are two routes to this property located at 10374 Hunter Road Cowirra.

**Route 1:** Take the Freeway to Murray Bridge and cross the River Murray at Murray Bridge. Take the Karoonda road out of Murray Bridge and travel on the eastern side of the river to Mannum.

**Route 2:** Travel via Gumeracha, Birdwood, Palmer, and Mannum Ferry. Turn left as you leave the ferry and the family house is just past the houseboat builder, approximately 100m from the ferry landing. Please park on the roadside. Allow about 1 to 1.5 hours travel time from Adelaide city to the property with the usual meeting time of 8.30am..

**TRIP LEADER:** *Anna Woods*

### Fleurieu Birders

**Saturday 6 November**

**Hindmarsh Island**

#### Easy

Meet at 8.30am at the Information Bay on Randall Rd., just over the Bridge.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Keith Jones*

## Future Excursions *(continued)*

### Birds SA

**Saturday 13 November**  
**Jenkins Scrub (MLR) 61km**

#### Moderate

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

**TRIP LEADER:** *Richard Woodland*

### Birds SA

**Thursday 18 November**  
**Tangari Regional Park Woodcroft (MLR) 23km**

#### Moderate

Meet in the car park on Pine Road at 8.30am. This reserve at Woodcroft is bounded by Reynell Road, Pine Road, Pimpala Road and partially by Riddoch Crescent/Chappell Hill Road/Nyrang Circuit.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

### Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

**Friday 19th to Monday 22 November**  
**Cowell/Arno Bay, Campout —**  
*facilities available, costs apply*

Meet at Whyalla Wetlands at 9am

### Birds SA

**Sunday 28 November**  
**Whites Road Wetlands (AP) 16 km**

#### Easy

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

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

### Fleurieu Birders

**Saturday 4 December**  
**Ponds at Beyond, Christmas Breakup**

#### Easy

Meet at 4pm at the Aquatic Centre car park off Waterport Rd. Hayborough.

Walk starting at 4pm and then BBQ if allowed.

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

### Birds SA

**Saturday 11 December**  
**Myponga Reservoir Reserve (MLR) 60km**

#### Easy

Meet at 8.30am in the car park off Hansen Street, Myponga (the Myponga Memorial Hall and public toilets are on this corner). The Myponga Reservoir Reserve is near the town of Myponga on the Fleurieu Peninsula, about one hour's drive south of Adelaide via Main South Road.

**TRIP LEADER:** *Lynton Huxley*

### Port Augusta Bird Group: The Babblers

**Sunday 12 December**

**Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden**

#### Easy

Meet at 7.30am in the Botanic Garden car park

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

### Birds SA

**Thursday 16 December**  
**Barossa Goldfields (MLR)**

#### Moderate

Meet at 8.30 am 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 on Allandale Road near the corner and some parking in front of the Cottage. There is a toilet and some picnic tables at the Cottage and we will explore the Phoenix trail (about 5km).

**TRIP LEADER:** *To be advised*

# Long Weekend Campout 1–5 October

The October Long Weekend Campout this year has been scheduled for Caroona Creek Conservation Park, which is northeast of Burra and approximately 175km from Adelaide. We will use the 'Old Shed' campsite as our base whilst we undertake bird surveys in this Conservation Park and some surrounding areas for our records as well as to provide our survey data to National Parks — the managers of this Park.

To reach there from Burra, travel about 5km east along the Burra-Morgan Road and turn left at the sign to Redbanks Conservation Park. Follow this gravel road for approximately 14km, then turn left (due north) towards Caroona. (If you arrive at Redbanks CP you have missed the turning). The road splits after about 5km and you take the road on the right. About 18km past this split, you will pass Caroona Homestead on your right. The main road continues across Caroona Creek and the Park access road is on your left, about 2.5km past the homestead. You will soon spot a large iron shed, which means you have arrived at the campsite. (See location map on the next page.)

There is also access to the camp from Mount Bryan East. For this route you will need a good map or navigation device and maybe a robust vehicle. The road condition is variable, depending on the most recent rain or grading.

**See the next page for Caroona Creek Conservation Park location map.**



## **Please be aware that:**

1. All attendees **MUST** comply with our Birds SA COVID Safe Plan. **Do not attend if you feel unwell!**
2. Bring personal hand sanitiser and a facemask;
3. The campout will be cancelled if the Park is closed due to a weather or fire event.
4. The meeting point will be at the Old Shed Campsite at whatever time you arrive.
5. Roads to and within the Park are unsealed and heavy rain may require the closure of tracks.
6. A handheld UHF radio or vehicle-mounted unit is recommended. Mobile phone reception may be patchy.
7. A fee of \$20 per person for the duration of the campout will be collected and a receipt issued by the Camp Organiser. These fees will contribute to our Birds SA Conservation fund.
8. You will need to be self-sufficient with all food, drinking water, vehicle fuel, gas and camping equipment and **responsible for taking your own rubbish out with you.**
9. There are no showers or potable water.
10. The camp ground facilities are limited to one drop-toilet. **No holes are to be dug for personal toilets.** Porta-potties can be used, but they must not be emptied into the long-drop.
11. Planned camp activities include:
  - Nightly 'Happy Hour' – you may consider sharing your favourite nibbles
  - and*
  - Nightly birdcall.

**Lynton Huxley**

Campout Organiser

0498466092

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

**Grey Currawong** (Photographed by Rose Slade at Brown's Rd, Monarto, 15 July 2021)

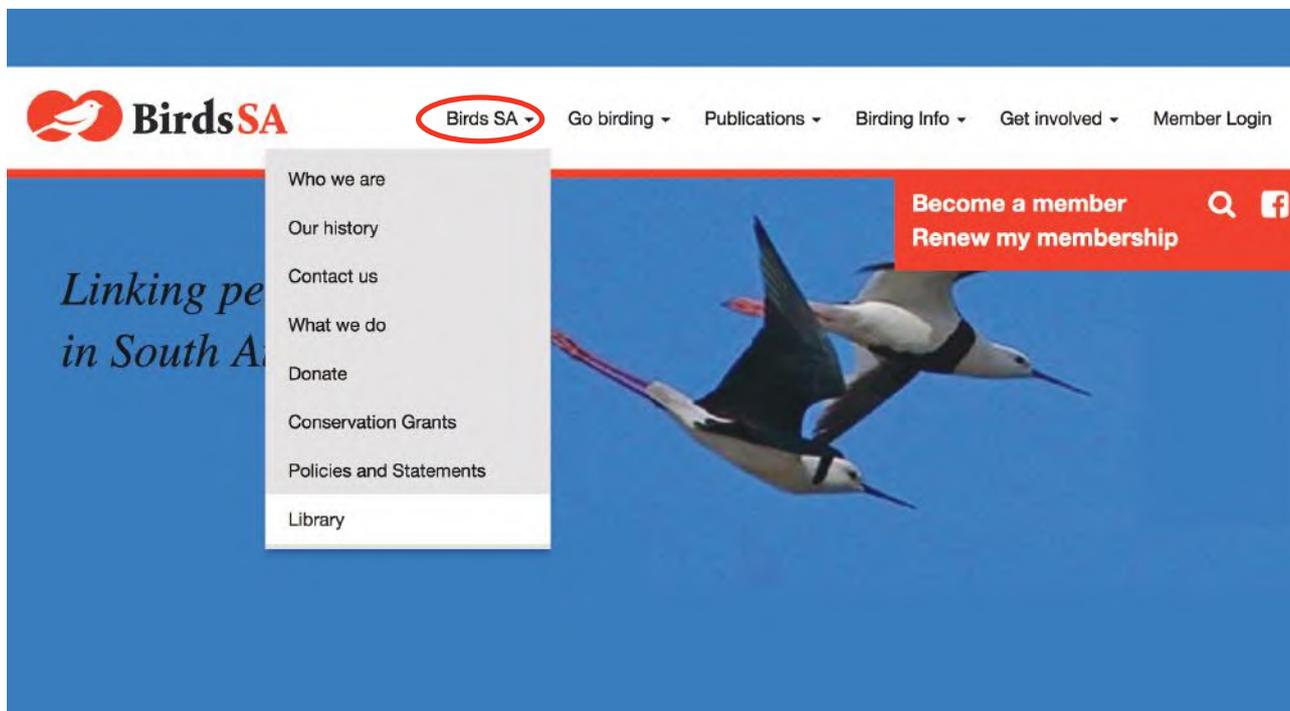
# Route from Burra to Carroona Creek Conservation Park



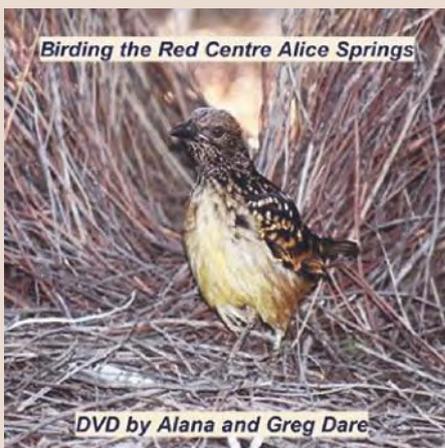
# From the Library

Due to the major building refurbishment at the WAITE Institute from August 2021 to February 2022, access to the Birds SA library will not be possible as all the resources will be going into storage.

You can still check our online catalogue for details of resources at this address:  
<https://birdssa.libib.com/> OR via the Birds SA Website <https://birdssa.asn.au>



## New DVD



DVD 76

Dare, Greg and Alana

**Birding the Red Centre - Alice Springs**

Running time 30 minutes

A HD documentary of a birdwatching trip to the Red Centre around Alice Springs, featuring 82 bird species. Includes the hard to find Grey Honeyeater, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Western Bowerbird, Dusky Grasswren, five parrot species, Painted Finches and a Perentie drinking.

It has been uploaded to YouTube and can be seen by googling "Birding the Red Centre Alice Springs" or at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=givclCrI7Zg>

# 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

Two autumn breeding records.

2 + 4 juveniles, 6/4/2021. Middleton, MM.

Black, G.

Several + immatures, 4/6/2021. Onkaparinga Wetlands, MLR.

Koufalakis, K.

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### Northern Shoveler

1 male, 1/6/2021. Hindmarsh Island, Chappel Rd, MM.

Diment, J. & Brittain, R.

*A male previously seen in this area in autumn-winter 2017.*

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### Canada Goose

1, 10/6/2021. Scott CP, MLR. Surprised to see flying over.

Day, B.

*Presumed escaped from captivity. This species has the potential to become invasive, occasionally visiting the Eastern States from a feral population in New Zealand.*

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### Peaceful Dove

Pair + juvenile, 20/4/2021. Elliston, EP.

Gordon, S.

*The status of this species on EP is poorly known.*

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### Southern Fulmar

c.5, 29/5/2021. 20km off Port MacDonnell, MO.

Kain, T. & Fulham, J.

*The species has not been reported from SA for several years. This report coincides with records off NSW and Tasmania.*

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### Slender-billed Prion

1, 20/6/2021. Continental shelf off Port MacDonnell, MO.

Rogers, C. *et al.*

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### Antarctic Prion

1, 20/6/2021. 20 nm off Port MacDonnell, MO.

Donovan, D. *et al.*

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### Australasian Darter

2, 15/5/2021. Salt Creek, Morella Basin, SE.

Green, B. *et al.*

1, 28/5/2021. Bedford Park, Warriparinga wetlands, AP.

Edey, D.

1, 29/5/2021. Port Wakefield wharf, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

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### Cattle Egret

2, 13/5/2021. 10 km S of Kingscote, KI.

Gould, G. & J.

*A rare visitor to KI.*

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### Eastern Reef Egret

1, 18/7/2021. Point Lowly, LN.

Haase, B. *et al.*

*Few reports from northern Spencer Gulf.*

---

### Grey Goshawk

2, 23/4/2021. Mount Gambier, Leg of Mutton Lake, SE.

Green, B.

1 white-phase, 28/6/2021. Renmark West, Tarcoola St, MM.

Lill, D. & C.

---

### Black-breasted Buzzard

*Several southerly reports including:*

2, 2/5/2021. Farina, NE.

Hopton, D. & Carpenter, G.

1 over, 5/5/2021. Nilpena HS, FR.

Carpenter, G.

1, 6/8/2021. Parachilna Gorge, W end, FR.

Syrette, J.

---

### Grey Falcon

2, 26/4/2021. Witchelina HS, NW. Flying over chasing Galahs in early morning.

Black, A. *et al.*

2, 21/7/2021. 1 km W Innamincka, NE.

Dennis, T.

## Bird Records *(continued)*

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### Lewin's Rail

1, 2/6/2021. Hindmarsh Island, Rushy Island, MM.  
Edey, D.

1, 27/6/2021. Goolwa, Beacon 19, MM.  
Haskett, C.

---

### Spotless Crake

2, 1/7/2021. Morphett Vale, Brodie Rd wetlands, AP.  
Carpenter, G.

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### Australian Bustard

1, 1/6/2021. Near Minlaton, YP.  
Wilson, P.

1, 7/6/2021. Brentwood, YP.  
Cook, W.

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### Pied Oystercatcher

3, 17/6/2021. West Lakes, S end, AP. Loafing on a large  
pontoon.  
Edey, D.

---

### Hooded Plover

14 + 3 immatures, 31/5/2021. Tennyson Beach, AP.  
Edey, D.

*Intensive conservation efforts over recent years have  
significantly improved breeding success.*

*Unusual winter reports for the following migratory waders:*

---

### Common Sandpiper

1, 30/7/2021. Port Wakefield wharf, AP.  
Taylor, P.W.

---

### Pectoral Sandpiper

1, 7/7/2021. Bolivar Sewage Works, AP.  
Rogers, C.

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### Long-toed Stint

1, 17/8/2021. Tolderol GR, MM.  
Rogers, C.

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### Whimbrel

13, 15/4/2021. Price Saltfields, YP.  
Rogers, C. *et al.*

6, 23/6/2021. Price Saltfields, YP.  
Rogers, C. & Jack, T.

1, 25/7/2021. Reeves Point, KI.  
Dennis, D.

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### Terek Sandpiper

4, 15/4/2021. Clinton CP, AP.  
Woodland, R.

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### Brown Skua

1, 28/5/2021. 1 km off Seaford, MLR.  
Bainbridge, T.

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### Gull-billed Tern

*More reports of the migratory Asian form 'affinus'*  
12, 15/4/2021. Clinton CP, AP.  
Woodland, R.

2, 4/6/2021. Clinton CP, AP. In breeding plumage.  
Taylor, P.W.

---

### Arctic Tern

1, 1/4/2021., Robe breakeater, SE.  
Rogers, C. & Hull, S.

---

### White-fronted Tern

3, 17/7/2021. Beachport breakwater, SE.  
Rogers, C. & Hull, S.

4, 17/7/2021. Robe breakwater, SE.  
Rogers, C. & Hull, S.

35, 17/7/2021. Port MacDonnell, SE.  
Rogers, C. & Hull, S.

1, 6/8/2021. Almonta Beach, EP.  
per C. Rogers

---

### Fairy Tern

*Good numbers reported from Gulf St Vincent, confirming  
the importance of saltfields for breeding.*

150 including juveniles, 15/4/2021. Price Saltfields, YP.  
Rogers, C. *et al.*

77, 5/5/2021. Bald Hill Beach, AP.  
Taylor, P.W.

200, 23/6/2021. Price Saltfields, YP.  
Rogers, C. & Jack, T.

---

### Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

1100, 30/4/2021. 3 km N Mount Benson, SE.  
Edey, D. & Copley, P.

16, 30/6/2021. Wistow, Blue Wren Lane, MLR.  
Day, E.

120, 1/7/2021. Highbury aqueduct reserve, MLR.  
Wilson, S.

*An unusual incursion of large groups across the south-west  
AP in June – August, possibly birds impacted by the Cherry  
Gardens fire:*

100, 23/6/2021. Bedford Park towards Glenelg, AP.  
Huxley, L.

230 flying W, 24/6/2021. Mitchell Park, AP.  
Edey, D.

65 overhead, 27/6/2021. Marion, Oaklands Wetland, AP.  
Coddington, P.

100, 8/7/2021. Bedford Park, Sturt Rd, AP.  
Robertson, D.

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## Bird Records *(continued)*

400, 10/7/2021. Warradale, AP.	Royans, D.
70, 11/7/2021. Panorama, AP.	Allen, J.
110, 12/7/2021. Panorama, AP.	Allen, J.
8, 18/7/2021. Glenelg North, AP.	Ladd, A.
70, 22/7/2021. Glenelg North, AP.	Ladd, A.
50, 27/7/2021. Fulham Gardens, AP.	Jones, R.
60, 27/7/2021. Lockleys, AP.	Edey, D.
60, 4/8/2021. Marion, Oaklands Wetland, AP.	Cook, S.
70, 4/8/2021. Cowandilla, Marion Rd, AP.	Pring, A.
200, 6/8/2021. West Lakes, flying towards Grange Golf Course, AP. Also returning later in day.	Carter, D. & P.
60, 6/8/2021. Brighton Caravan Park, AP.	Parnell, M.
14 flying N, 12/8/2021. Black Forest, AP.	Carpenter, G.

### Little Lorikeet

2, 7/7/2021. Lockleys, AP.	Edey, D.
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*Two tiny lorikeets were seen flying with a flock of 6 Rainbow Lorikeets. Red in front of the eye (with no red behind the eye, and no purple on the green head). Underwing green front-half and brownish rear-half (no red in underwing). Upper body green, the body less chunky than musk or purple-crowned, and the short tail tapered to a point. The birds were flying at about 12m above ground and 40m away, and were seen for about 4-6 seconds without binoculars. Could not be relocated despite searching.*

### Orange-bellied Parrot

adult + immature, 29/5/2021. Murray Mouth, Bird Island, MM.	Green, B. <i>et al.</i>
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*First confirmed report from SA since 2013. Band details read from photos indicate the immature to be a wild born male from the most recent breeding season, last seen at Melaleuca, Tasmania, on March 15. The adult was its mother, being released as a captive juvenile in Tasmania in early 2020 and has successfully reared five offspring.*

1, 13/6/2021. Mundoo Island, MM. Possibly one of the same birds.	Grundy, S.
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### Blue-winged Parrot

1, 15/6/2021. Manning Reserve, MLR.	Rodda, B.
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### Regent Parrot

c.15, 18/4/2021. Brookfield CP, MM.	Hall, T.
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### Shining Bronze-cuckoo

1, 3/7/2021. Mount Billy CP, MLR.	Harper, D. & S.
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*Few winter records in SA, most commonly reported in September.*

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### Dollarbird

1, 9/5/2021. Cygnet River, KI.	Barth, M. <i>et al.</i>
Most likely the same bird seen on 10/5/2021. Cygnet Park Sanctuary, KI.	Paton, P. <i>et al.</i>

*One previous report from KI at Antechamber Bay in May 1978 (Baxter's 'Birds of Kangaroo Island').*

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### Eyrean Grasswren

2, 30/4/2021. Wilpoorinna Stn, E of Lake Harry, NE. In sandhill canegrass on parallel dunes.	Jones, K. <i>et al.</i>
--	-------------------------

*Near the southern limit of its distribution, coinciding with the limits of its habitat.*

---

### Banded Whiteface

6, 1/5/2021. Wilpoorinna Stn, Mulga Dam, NE.	Carpenter, G. <i>et al.</i>
--	-----------------------------

*Also near the southern limit of its distribution.*

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### Chestnut-breasted Whiteface

1, 25/7/2021. 7 km S Witchelina HS, NW.	Bannon, G. & Oswald, R.
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### Chestnut-rumped Heathwren

1, 7/7/2021. Wirrabara Forest, Block Nine Rd, FR.	Carpenter, G. & Farmer, P.
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*Few reports since the extensive Bangor bushfires in 2014.*

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### White-browed Scrub-wren

3, 28/5/2021. Bedford Park, Warriparinga wetlands, AP.	Edey, D.
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## Bird Records *(continued)*

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### White-plumed Honeyeater

6, 16/4/2021. Lake Gilles CP, EP.

Haase, B. *et al.*

*See SA Ornithologist 40:36 for a review of EP records. Other recent reports associated with ornamental plantings around towns and homesteads.*

---

### White-fronted Honeyeater

20, 19/6/2021. Mount Monster CP, SE.

Edey, D. & Copley, P.

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### Crested Shriketit

Pair + nest, 1/8/2021. Scott CP, MLR.

Haskett, C.

*While living in SA in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Gordon Beruldsen, author of 'Nests and Eggs of Australian birds', noted this species often trimmed branchlets above its nests.*

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### Golden Whistler

1 uncoloured, 25/6/2021. Prospect, AP.

Christy, P.

1 male, 30/7/2021. Gilberton, AP.

Paton, P.

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### Rufous Whistler

1 uncoloured, 9/5/2021. Gilberton, AP.

Paton, P.

---

### Olive-backed Oriole

1 immature, 26/4/2021. Lochiel Park wetlands, AP.

Gordon, S.

1 immature, 14/6/2021. Manning Reserve, MLR.

Goland, R. & G.

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### Little Woodswallow

1, 3/4/2021. Bay of Shoals, KI.

Seen perched on powerlines allowing close approach, noting small size and lack of white edge to wing.

Jenner, B.

*First report from KI. Chris Baxter reported another inland woodswallow (Black-faced) from KI in July 1982.*

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### White-winged Chough

8, 18/7/2021. Belair NP, MLR.

Bennett, K.

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### Jacky Winter

Unusual reports of relatively large numbers in relatively close proximity:

10, 13/5/2021. Swan Reach CP, MM.

Slade, R.

18, 20/5/2021. Swan Reach CP, MM.

Birds SA

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### Pink Robin

1 female, 29/4/2021. Picaninnie Ponds CP, SE.

Buring, N. & T.

Subsequently seen by many observers including on 22/5/2021.

Green, B.

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### Rose Robin

1 female, 21/6/2021. Monarto, Browns Rd. MM.

Cook, S. & Robinson, N.

*Again, seen by many observers since (up to the time of writing).*

1 uncoloured, 3/7/2021. Mount Billy CP, MLR.

Harper, D. & S.

---

### Bassian Thrush

1, 14/6/2021. Kaiser Stuhl CP, MLR.

Whittaker, D.

*First report from the park.*

---

### Beautiful Firetail

1, 6/6/2021. Hindmarsh Is, Chappel Rd, MM.

Edwards, N.

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### Zebra Finch

20-30, 17/6/2021. Gawler River, Northern Expressway, AP.

Hartland, D.

*Few recent reports from AP and adjacent Barossa region, where formerly widespread.*

25, 19/6/2021. Mount Monster CP, SE.

Edey, D. & Copley, P.

---

### White Wagtail

1, 15/4/2021. Price Saltfields, YP. Foraging along vehicle track between saltpans, near White-fronted Chats. Full report and photos submitted to SA Rarities Committee.

Rogers, C. Jack, T & Brooker, W.

*First report from SA, with most Australian records from the north-west and its offshore islands, in particular Christmas Island from April to May.*

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

## BIRDS SA COMMITTEE

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## COMMITTEE EMAIL CONTACTS

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

### e-newsletter EDITOR

Anthony Collebrusco, [e-newsletter@birdssa.asn.au](mailto:e-newsletter@birdssa.asn.au)

## FURTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Librarian, Karen Donkin ..... 0402 123 960  
 Campout Organiser, Lynton Huxley..... 7009 5038  
 Rare Birds Secretary, Brian Blaylock ..... 0448 822 374

### Port Augusta Birders (The Babblers)

Contact people: Peter Langdon 0457 708 859  
 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), David Andrewartha, Ali Ben Kahn, Bill Breed, Chris Proud, David Hansman, Davide Gaglio, Greg Johnston, Richard Woodland, Rodney Attwood, William Brooker, Ray Nias.

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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.

The e-newsletter is published monthly and provides up to date information about the Association's activities and other recent news.

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*Thank you to Members for supplying so many beautiful photos to fill the following pages.  
Unfortunately the magazine only has room for a limited number, but please keep sending them in!*

## *Lots of Little Birds*



**Silvereye** (Photographed by Kevin Williams  
at Mt. Barker, 11 January 2019)

**Grey Fantail** (Photographed by Ann Kirk at  
Naracoorte Caves, April 2021)



**Black-capped Sittella** (Photographed by  
Bernie Haase in Whyalla Conservation Park, July 2021)

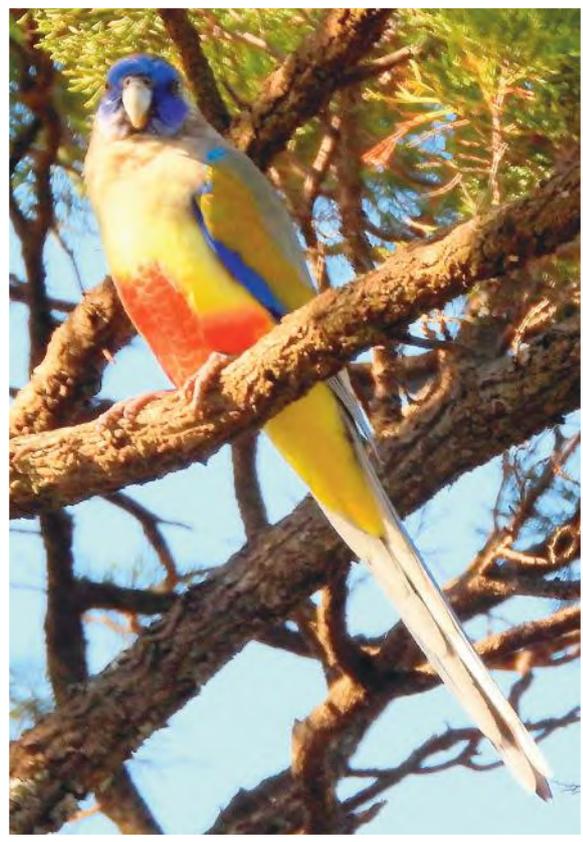


**Weebill**  
(Photographed by Kevin Williams  
at Mt. Barker, 1 May 2018)

**Zebra Finches**  
(Photographed by  
Philippa Horton  
at Witchelina,  
April 2021)



## *A Colourful Collection*



**Bluebonnet** (Photographed by Gordon Pateman near Murray Bridge, 18 May 2020)

**Fan-tailed Cuckoo** (Photographed by Rod Tetlow at Cox Scrub, 27 May 2021)



**Musk Lorikeet**  
(Photographed by Wendy Digby at Glenthorne National Park, 10 July 2021)

**Orange Chat**  
(Photographed by Philippa Horton at Witchelina, April 2021)



*Here's looking at you!*



**Australian Owlet-Nightjar** (*Photographed by Andre Laubscher at Cox Scrub on 17 January 2021*)



**Wedge-tailed Eagles with carrion** (*Photographed by Gordon Brooks near Myponga Beach, 8 July 2021*)