

The BIRDER

The official magazine of Birds SA Autumn 2023 No 265

In this Issue

Reports by Birds SA travellers,
from within Australia
and beyond



BirdsSA

Linking people with birds
in South Australia

Living the high life!



Nankeen Kestrel

*(Photographed by Lawrie Mortimer,
Port Willunga, 3 February 2023)*



Black-shouldered Kite

*(Photographed by Heather Connolly,
Hindmarsh Island, 15 February 2023)*

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CENTRE INSERT No 82: Dr Alexander Morgan (1867–1934) Part 2 by Penny Paton.

Cover image: A pair of Brown Treecreepers

Photographed by Jeff Groves on 15 October 2022 at Springton SA. The cover of this magazine was designed by John Gitsham.

Graphic design: Ingrid Grigg

We welcome 37 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on page 20.

Birds SA is the operating 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'.

MARCH

Sunday 19 March PA Telowie Gorge/Nelshaby Gorge

Tuesday 28 March Birds SA GENERAL MEETING

APRIL

Saturday 1 April FB Inman River Walk

Wednesday 5 April
to
Tuesday 11 April Birds SA **EASTER CAMPOUT** at Balcanoona Station Homestead

Wednesday 14 April
to
Monday 17 April PA **CAMPOUT** at Hiltaba Nature Reserve

Thursday 20 April Birds SA Byards Road Wetlands, Reynella East

Tuesday 25 April Birds SA GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 30 April Birds SA Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park

MAY

Saturday 6 May FB Private Vineyard, Currency Creek

Saturday 13 May Birds SA Glenthorne National Park

Thursday 18 May Birds SA Whites Road Wetlands

Saturday 20 May
to
Sunday 21 May PA **CAMPOUT** at Catninga Station

Sunday 28 May Birds SA Manning Flora & Fauna Reserve, McLaren Flat

Tuesday 30 May Birds SA GENERAL MEETING

JUNE

Saturday 3 June FB Cox Scrub

Saturday 10 June Birds SA Browns Road, Monarto

Thursday 15 June Birds SA Shepherd's Hill Recreation Park

Sunday 25 June Birds SA Jenkins Scrub

Tuesday 27 June Birds SA GENERAL MEETING

President's Message

Hello everyone

As I write this message, we are in the midst of probably the most important campaign that Birds SA has ever led. Driving your car onto the beach has long been a South Australian thing, even though it is completely banned in Victoria and subject to partial bans and constraints over most of the rest of Australia.

It never has been a great activity for the environment! However, the explosion in the use of 4-wheel drive vehicles, which now make up 50% of all new cars bought in Australia; together with the COVID pandemic encouraging all of us to explore our local state rather than holiday interstate or overseas; have combined to produce a massive acceleration in this problem.

We see nesting birds with their chicks and eggs run over, roosting birds squashed, feeding areas compacted and fragile dune environments destroyed. It has got to stop!

The State government has been talking about it for ages including a 2019 Parliamentary Inquiry, whose sensible recommendations have to date been shelved. The Malinauskas government brings hope because it came into power promising to review those inquiry recommendations with a view to implementing at least

some of them. We want to hold them to this commitment so that we start to regain the required level of control over these important but fragile environments.

But we are going to need your help to do this.

We need to press our politicians into action. Unfortunately, we're finding that most of them are largely unaware of the problem. We therefore need Birds SA members to speak face to face with their local MPs to make them realise that it's a problem that desperately needs to be corrected and the government needs to show leadership.

Please look out for our email news communications on this topic. Together we can fix this problem. We do have a window of opportunity with Susan Close as both Environment Minister and the Deputy Premier but we need to show all her Cabinet colleagues that this is an issue that the community cares about and that they need to act on.

Together we can make a difference.
Many thanks for your support.

Steven

Steven Langley, President Birds SA
M: 0490 802 176

Rosellas on the Murray

What have you observed?

I would like to hear from anyone who has observed birds in the stretch of the Murray between the entrance of the Marne at Wongulla and Mannum.

The Yellow Rosella *Platycercus elegans flaveolus* occupies River Red Gum and associated woodlands of the River Murray south to Wongulla. There it meets the Adelaide Rosella *P. e. adalaidae* whose distribution extends from the ranges along the Marne River to its junction with the Murray. It is unknown which of the two now occur south of Wongulla although there are historical specimens of Yellow Rosella from Mannum (see SA Ornithologist 47, 1-21).

There have been recent reports of rosellas between Wongulla and Mannum and of rosellas identified as Yellow Rosellas even further south but, when closely examined, most have been identified as very pale Adelaide Rosellas.

While many assume that Yellow and Adelaide Rosellas interbreed, this has not been examined critically, while the presence of almost completely yellow Adelaide Rosellas in this region certainly suggests intergradation.

So, if anyone has been cruising along the Murray below Wongulla and has observed rosellas there, I would very much like to hear from you.

Andrew Black

abblack@bigpond.com

Conservation Sub-Committee

Gearing up for 2023

2023 promises to be an important and exciting year for bird conservation and over the past 12 months there have been important developments that will shape our conservation work for years.

We have added three new members to our Conservation Sub-committee to increase our regional representation — Fran Solly from Pt Lincoln, Karleah Berris from Kangaroo Island and Bryan Haywood from Mt Gambier. This will enable Birds SA to better understand and engage in conservation issues that affect specific regions, as well as the whole of SA.

The Adelaide International Birds Sanctuary (AIBS) will complete its Conservation Action Plan and move into the implementation phase. Birds SA will continue to be a partner in the management of the AIBS and we have been following issues such as vehicle and other forms of disturbance to sensitive habitats and birds in particular. The Nature Conservancy's Blue Carbon Project is also up and running and this will result in significant restoration of coastal habitats over coming years to the benefit of coastal birds and the environment.

The Mt Lofty Bird Recovery Alliance will ramp-up its activities with a new coordinator based initially in the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape office. The Alliance has received significant funding that will build networks and capacity, and begin to plan for the conservation and large-scale restoration and re-vegetation that are required to halt the ongoing decline of birds in the Mt Lofty Ranges.

The SA Government has promised to take action in 2023 in relation to the long-standing problem of uncontrolled vehicle access to sensitive coastal habitats. In mid-summer our combined campaign with Birdlife Australia was launched with many opportunities for Birds SA members to become engaged in protecting sensitive beaches from over-crowding and disturbance. Our goal is to ensure that the migratory shorebirds that depend on undisturbed beaches are able to feed up for the long journey back to the Northern Hemisphere to breed, as well as protecting breeding sites for our resident shorebirds. Please help our campaign to ensure that 2023 is the year that we get Safe Beaches for All in South Australia: <https://www.actforbirds.org/safebeachesforall>.

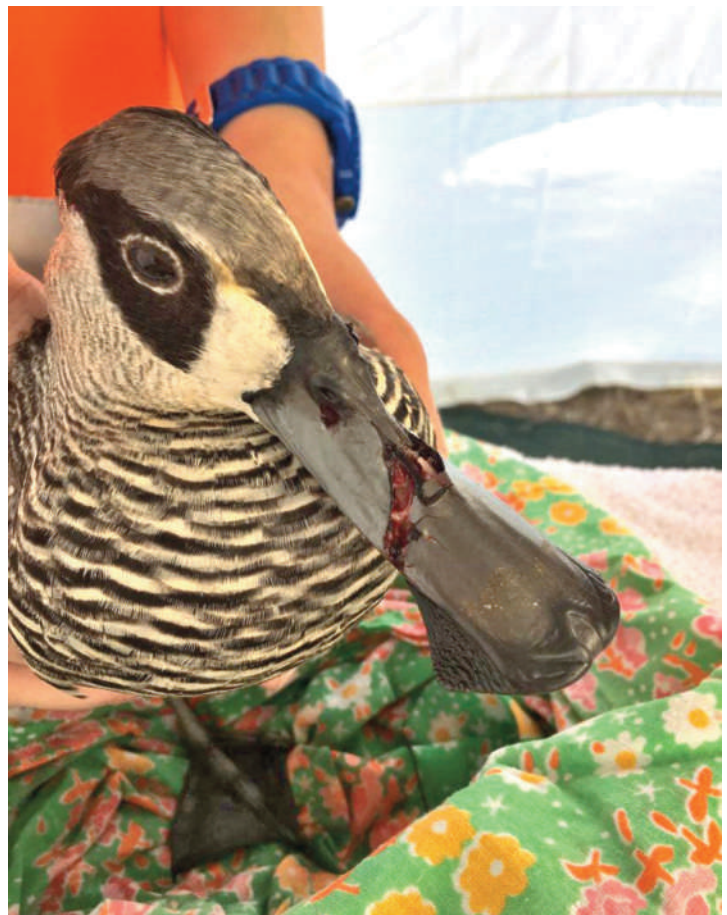
2023 will also see an inquiry into recreational duck and quail hunting that we hope will result in the cessation of this cruel sport that adds yet another threat to our waterbirds that have been in long-term decline for decades.

We will continue to be engaged in many other issues as well that affect our birds including debate about the need for a Biodiversity Conservation Act for South Australia that we will contribute to and support.

I would like to welcome our new Conservation Sub-Committee members for what should be an exciting year for bird conservation, and thank our existing members for their work in 2022. I hope that all Birds SA members will take the opportunity to engage in bird conservation efforts in 2023 in what promises to be a big year for birds!

Ray Nias

Chair, Birds SA Conservation Sub-Committee



A gunshot injured Pink-eared duck

(Photograph supplied by Jeff Groves)

2023 SA Duck and Quail OPEN SEASONS

The SA Government Gazette of 12 January 2023 announced open seasons for the hunting of native ducks and Stubble Quail. The details of these open seasons are as follows:

Ducks

Species which can be taken: Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Australian Shelduck, Wood Duck

Open season dates and times:

Saturday 18 March – Sunday 25 June inclusive.
Birds may only be taken from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset on any given day.

Bag Limit: On any day of the open season a person may not take more than 8 ducks.

Stubble Quail

Open season dates and times:

Saturday 29 April – Sunday 30 July inclusive.
Birds may only be taken from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset on any given day.

Bag Limit: On any day of the open season a person may not take more than 25 Stubble Quail.

Open Season Stakeholder Panel Meeting

Birds SA participated in the open season panel meeting, conducted by the Department for the Environment and Water (DEW), on 19 December 2022. Ray Nias was the one Birds SA member permitted on the panel and Steven Langley, Jeff Groves, David Andrewartha and Greg Johnston participated on behalf of the Conservation Council, who are allowed six seats at the table.

Birds SA makes its opposition to duck and quail hunting clear in this annual panel meeting. We see our role as arguing for restrictions to be placed on the seasons if

the data presented justify this. As hunting of native ducks and quail is allowed under the current National Parks and Wildlife Act, this is not the forum to argue for a ban on duck and quail hunting.

The data compiled by DEW for the panel meeting can be accessed at:

[2022-Conditions_Forecasts_Report.pdf](https://environment.sa.gov.au/2022-Conditions_Forecasts_Report.pdf)
(environment.sa.gov.au)

I draw your attention to the table below showing 2022 duck abundances compared with long-term averages. The very low percentages for six of the nine species listed compared with the long-term averages are of extreme concern. The argument put by the hunters in the 2021 panel meeting that there would be plenty of ducks in 2022 because of the two preceding La Nina seasons has proven to be incorrect. The other argument put by the hunters in 2021 that the birds have just migrated elsewhere out of SA has also proven to be incorrect as large numbers should then have been recorded with the Eastern Australia Waterbird Aerial Survey which covers a large proportion of Eastern Australia.

In the panel meeting Birds SA argued for a highly restricted duck season with only Black Duck, Wood Duck and Australian Shelduck permitted to be taken. We also argued for no quail season because of the lack of independent, verifiable survey data on Stubble Quail abundance.

Minister Close has committed to an inquiry this year into the hunting of native birds. Birds SA and the Treasures not Targets coalition (of which Birds SA is a member), will be putting a very strong case to this inquiry for the archaic practice of hunting native ducks and quail in SA to be banned.

Jeff Groves

TABLE 1:		Grey Teal	Chestnut Teal	Black Duck	Wood Duck	Aust'n Shelduck	Blue-winged	Hard head	Pink-eared	Totals	
2022 Duck Abundances Compared with Long-term Averages	South Australian Wetland and Waterfowl Surveys	2022	4,703	1,193	2,268	841	2,876	7	21	119	12,028
		Dataset average (2003-2022)	40,505	3,625	2,803	816	4,652	1,501	4,660	4,095	62,656
		2022 as % of dataset average	12	33	81	103	62	<1	<1	3	19
	Eastern Australia Waterbird Aerial Survey	2022	19,538	38	9,015	12,711	4,201	509	1,957	779	48,748
		Dataset average (1983-2022)	106,297	1,263	17,065	12,682	7,509	2,079	16,003	35,589	198,491
		2022 as % of dataset average	18	3	53	100	56	24	12	2	25

Past General Meetings

Tuesday 29 November

This was a Members' Night, on which three Association Members made individual presentations.

Birding in Queensland and other Distractions

Presenter: John Gitsham

The first speaker, John Gitsham, gave a highly enjoyable photographic presentation of a recent trip he undertook to North Queensland and started by showing a photo of his vehicle and a map of his route.

John reported that he had seen 145 species including 15 'lifers' — species he was seeing for the first time in his life.



John's transport and 'home' for his trip.

One area he visited was Lamington National Park. The photograph on the next page, while not doing it justice, provides an idea of its extent and spectacular features.

Following is a selection from the many photographs shown in John's presentation.

Summary prepared by Cynthia Pyle



John's trip, marked in red



Australian Brush-turkey and mound (Photographed by John Gitsham)

Past General Meetings *(continued)*



A male Satin Bowerbird (*right*) collects blue materials for his display area, while his lady friend checks him out. *(Photographed by John Gitsham in Queensland, 2022)*

A view of Lamington National Park
(Photographed by John Gitsham)



Past General Meetings *(continued)*

Olive-backed Sunbird, Cattana Wetlands, Cairns



Brahminy Kite, Mission Beach



Spangled Drongo, Cattana Wetland, Cairns



Pacific Baza, Abattoir Swamp



Eastern Yellow Robin



*(All photographs taken
by John Gitsham in
Queensland, 2022)*

Past General Meetings *(continued)*

A Korean Adventure

Presenter: Michael Huxley

The next speaker was Michael Huxley and following is his account of recent travels throughout South Korea.

In July 2022 I spent 7 weeks travelling in the small east Asian nation of South Korea. Although the principal aim of my visit was to see my best friend who was working in the country, I spent significant time exploring the stunning natural landscapes, eating copious Korean BBQ and of course, bird watching. South Korea is less than half the size of Victoria but home to over 50 million people, many of whom live in the capital of Seoul. To say Korea is highly developed is an understatement, yet the country still possesses stunning wilderness if you know where to look. Despite widespread clearing of lowland forest for agriculture and urban development, the mountain forests are largely preserved and the country also features many RAMSAR protected wetlands. Birdwatching is best done in the mountains and protected wetlands.

My visit marked the middle of the Korean summer. Oppressive heat and the worst humidity I have ever experienced left me drenched in sweat after the slightest exertion and perpetually behind on laundry. But despite the climatic difficulties, the landscapes and birdlife justified the effort. My journey began in Hyeonpung, a small (by Korean standards) town near Daegu which formed my base for the 7-week trip. Biseulsan National Park is only 30 minutes away and features spectacular hiking trails that meander through the mountains. It wasn't long before the first birds appeared. A highlight was the Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, a 13 cm long woodpecker species which proved common throughout



Parrotbill

(Photographed by Michael Huxley in South Korea, July 2022)



Eurasian Nuthatch *(Photographed by Michael Huxley in South Korea, July 2022)*

Korean forests. Another frequently encountered forest inhabitant was the Eurasian Nuthatch; reminiscent of a tree-creeper, these elegant and energetic birds methodically probe tree trunks and limbs for insects. Adding a dash of vibrant colour to the mix, I was lucky to glimpse a male Black-naped Oriole in Biseulsan National park, a bird I heard frequently but rarely observed. In the forest canopy the vivid yellow Oriole is surprisingly well camouflaged!

On my way to buy a coffee, I would traverse the rocky stream that courses through the centre of Hyeonpung. To my surprise, the babbling waters were home to Japanese Wagtails searching for small prey among the rocks. One bird even snared a small fish which managed to wriggle free. I was surprised to find wagtails in such an emphatically urbanised environment but it proved to be one of the only places I encountered this species during the trip. The wealth of small fish milling in the calmer sections of the river attracted Striated Herons, Intermediate Egrets and Grey Herons.

A short bus ride from Hyeonpung lies the Daegu Arboretum, a botanic garden adjacent to forest which provided another great opportunity for photography. A group of Eurasian Hoopoes was living in the gardens and had recently bred there. During the day the luscious lawns were frequented by up to 10 Hoopoes. The birds would use their long bills to probe deep into the soil in search of grubs, which they would retrieve and consume with a precisely choreographed head toss. I visited the gardens on multiple occasions and spent many sweat-drenched hours watching the Hoopoes. I waited patiently in the unrelenting sun hoping to capture the fleeting moment a Hoopoe revealed its most characteristic feature: a fiery orange crest which is erected when the birds land or are excited. After missing

Past General Meetings *(continued)*



Hoopoe displaying its impressive crest (Photographed by Michael Huxley, Daegu Arboretum, South Korea, July 2022)

the shot too many times to count, a Hoopoe eventually relented, and I finally had my photograph which proved to be a highlight of the trip. Also photographed in the Daegu Arboretum was the Daurian Redstart, an abundant species across Korea. They behave somewhat like robins, perching on low branches and dropping to the ground to catch insects.

Travelling within Korea is facilitated by the highest density of high-speed train lines in the world (some exceed 300km/h). Alternatively, comfortable buses connect every imaginable destination. Located approximately 140km SE from Daegu are the RAMSAR listed Suncheon Bay Wetlands. The site consists of a large tidal reedbed adjacent to an extensive mudflat and is supported by excellent infrastructure including a boardwalk across the reedbed and a 'birdwatching boat cruise' that takes visitors onto the otherwise inaccessible mudflat. Birdwatching would be excellent at other times of the year when more waders and other waterfowl are present, however, in the height of summer the notable waterfowl are absent. Despite this, I was fortunate enough to photograph a Yellow Bittern which erupted from the reed bed as I walked past. The swaying reed stems sheltered flocks of Vinous-throated Parrotbills. Up close it's easy to see where these adorable birds obtained the name 'parrotbill'. They are shy but sufficiently inquisitive to approach their human observer from cover, especially in larger flocks. A non-avian highlight of the Suncheon Wetlands was observing, at close range, the boundless swarm of mudskippers (and crabs) which emerged en masse at low tide. These enigmatic creatures provided memorable entertainment: the males challenge each

other by flaring their impressive pectoral fins and leaping into a violent acrobatic contest with their opponent.

Towards the centre of the Korean peninsula is Donghaksa, a small mountain town adjacent to the Donghaksa Valley and Gyeryongsan National Park. The crystal-clear mountain stream and surrounding forest are truly exquisite, as are the mountains of the national park which can be accessed by various walking trails. Birdwatching was challenging on account of the oppressive heat and humidity. The highlight was observing a Striated Heron gather a large insect such as a wasp or beetle and carefully place it on the water surface to attract small fish. Due to the flow of the stream the insect was frequently retrieved and re-located.



Striated Heron gathers an insect to attract fish (Photographed by Michael Huxley in South Korea, July 2022)

Past General Meetings *(continued)*



Whiteye (Photographed by Michael Huxley in South Korea, July 2022)

Eventually, using this extraordinary ‘lure’ method, the heron captured lunch! Nearby in the gloomy understory, the sound of fallen leaves being violently tossed about filled the humid air as Grey-backed and Pale Thrushes probed for insects. Korea is frequented by 13 Thrush species; however, most are winter migrants and were thus absent during my visit. Azure-winged Magpies were another memorable sighting at Donghaksa, a noisy flock of these elegantly plumaged birds appeared at the main bus stop just as I was preparing to depart.

While planning my Korean adventure I immediately knew I wanted to visit Jeju, a volcanic island situated approximately 100km south of the Korean peninsula. The island is dominated by the giant shield volcano known as Halasan, which is the highest mountain in South Korea (2000m). The hike to Halasan’s summit was a spectacular 18km trek replete with an unexpected sighting of the rare White-backed Woodpecker. The lower altitudes are furnished in dwarf bamboo which gives way to groves of Korean Fir trees on the upper slopes of the volcano. The forests were filled with Warbling White-eyes, Brown-eared Bulbuls, Japanese Tits, Varied Tits, Large-billed Crows as well as Daurian Redstarts. Unlike much of mainland Korea, Jeju retains lush — almost rainforest like — lowland forest which presents a stunning environment for walking and birdwatching. The island itself is a popular vacation destination for Koreans owing to the exquisite natural landscapes, great food and quaint seaside towns.

These are just some of the memorable locations, experiences and birds I encountered in Korea. The weather made birding and travelling harder than expected, but the exceptional infrastructure, food and people always made it enjoyable. I was surprised by the

rugged scenery and lush forests, even more so by the fact that winter brings snow and ice to many of the places I was melting in! Korea is a fascinating destination, if you would like to see more, I have produced a birding/travel video series on my YouTube channel – just search ‘epicbirds YouTube channel’ for more!

Michael Huxley

Bird Names

Presenter: Andrew Black

The final speaker, Andrew Black, is a member of the English Names Committee (ENC) of Birdlife Australia (BLA).

Andrew listed several types of bird names. Scientific names will change only with advances in scientific knowledge, strictly regulated by ‘The Code’ of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. English names tend to be more stable but there are no rules; they may vary according to the custom of local bird authorities.

He then spoke of recent attention to names that are offensive, particularly to minority groups. Those named after an individual (eponymous names) are targeted because of their association with European colonisation and racism. Alternative names are being applied, including indigenous ones where feasible.

Another development is the collaboration between major world authorities to find an agreed taxonomy and a single English name for every bird, the Working Group on Avian Checklists.

ENC provides a name for any bird species or subspecies added to the Australian list, according to tight terms of reference. In 2021 BLA established an advisory group on insensitive or culturally inappropriate bird names, who identified over 30 high priority names for change and recommended ENC rename Major Mitchell’s Cockatoo, Bourke’s Parrot and Atherton Scrubwren. ENC’s terms of reference would not permit this.

In 2022 ENC, renamed Australian Bird Names Committee (ABNC) but without changes to its terms of reference, received a report from the Culturally Appropriate Bird Name Advisory Group (CABNAG), recommending:

1. Replacing all eponymous names (32 species, 63 taxa).
2. Obtaining permission for the use of existing indigenous names (6 species, 27 taxa).
3. In the longer term, replacing bird names that refer to places named after colonial figures (317 taxa) (secondary eponyms).

Past General Meetings *(continued)*

ABNC found the recommendations unsatisfactory, preferring to consider each case individually, as in North America, and to retain names not deemed offensive. They believed that modest and gradual changes are more likely to be accepted by the birding community.

Andrew asked the audience if they preferred the CABNAG proposal or the case-by-case approach of ABNC. All favoured the latter.

But, as a PS, Andrew showed that a North American group 'Bird Names for Birds' promotes the elimination of all eponymous bird names. Consequently, the North American Checklist Committee is no longer hearing requests for change of any English name, pending a multi-disciplinary committee enquiry into future policy.

Bird names are under scrutiny but the extent of future change is unclear.

Summary prepared by Cynthia Pyle

Tuesday 31 January

Birding and Costa Rica

Presenter: Michael Moore

Michael Moore opened his presentation by describing some significant features of the country of Costa Rica ... a tropical country, within 10° of the equator, covered in rainforest and seeping water from every pore as it generally rains every day.

Following is Michael's account of his travels.

Features of Costa Rica

Costa Rica is known for its stable democracy, progressive social policies, such as free, compulsory public education, high social well-being, and emphasis on environmental protection.

Politically it is considered to be the most stable country in Central America, having abolished its armed forces in 1948 after a short civil war. Its government has, over the last 25 years, become much less party driven and certainly is a long way from a two-party system.

Education is highly prized and free. Every tiny village had a publicly funded school, and in many of the villages we saw signs in English promoting "Knowledge is Power." Schooling is compulsory. Hours of schooling were extensive for older students but flexible for younger students.

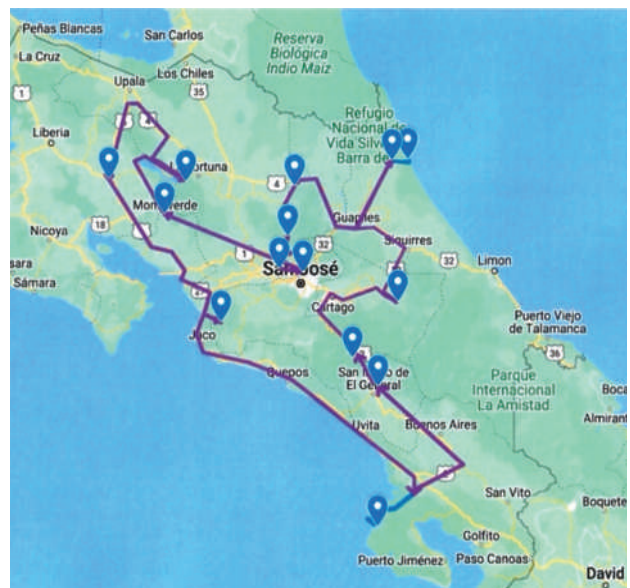
93% of the Country's electricity is provided by renewable, mostly hydroelectric means, and it claims to be carbon neutral. Mining and deforestation are banned throughout the country and financial incentives are given to landowners to put their land onto a register stating that they, and any subsequent owners, will not develop the land.

However, much of the land in the north has been cleared and planted with, bananas, pineapples, and palm oil. In the central mountains a good deal of coffee has been planted, and picking the beans is a widespread community activity and source of money for all. Cows are the pasture animals of choice. However, ecotourism brings in more money than the combined total of all the exports of these agricultural products.

Health services are free to citizens who pay a set percentage of their wages in taxes. Aged care aid and residency are free to those who pay a greater add on, tax. A large percentage of the population leads active, healthy lives to over 100 years of age. Virtually all the roads are narrow, single laned and in need of regular maintenance. Average movement speed is less than 60 km/hr.

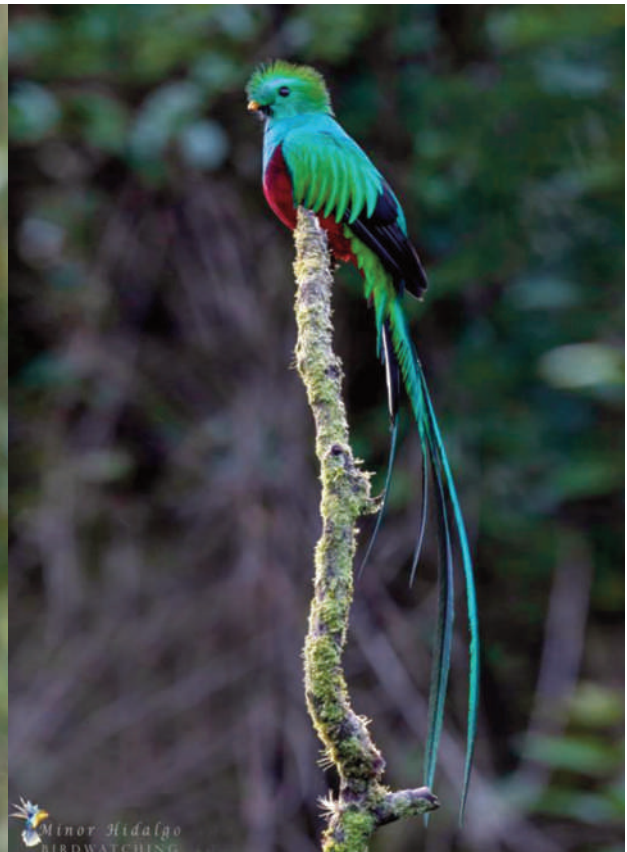
Costa Rica is the 12th happiest country in the World!

The modern Costa Rican flag was designed in 1848 (a year after declaring independence.) Being inspired by the 1848 French Revolution. Amongst other symbolism, the blue is for the sky, white is for peace and the red for the people's blood.



Our route through Costa Rica

Past General Meetings *(continued)*



The magnificent Resplendent Quetzal *(Photograph courtesy of Minor Hidalgo)*

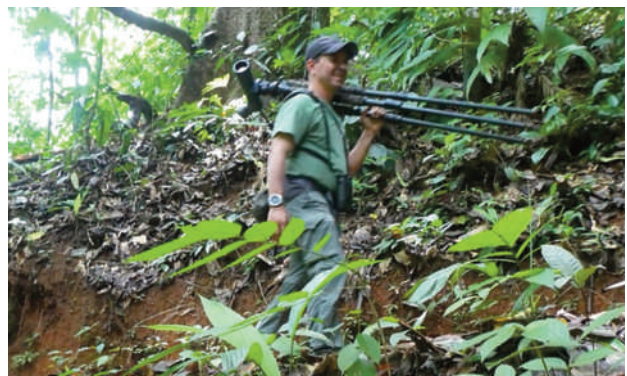
Our Covid-delayed trip was three years in the making. It developed from a one-week stopover between Ecuador and Brazil into a full time holiday of 31 nights. We used a local Birdwatching company – Costa Rica Focus. This business is run by two women with many years of experience.

The organisation was SUPERB! We were met as we left San Jose airport and dropped off there at the end of the trip. There were absolutely no problems and everything ran like clockwork. We had a full-time private guide who drove us everywhere and was there to provide us with as much birdwatching experience as we wished. Although he had a plan for every day, we could alter those plans to suit our wishes. He was focused entirely on our enjoyment.

Our guide, Minor Hidalgo, was EXCELLENT in every way. His experience and knowledge second to none. He spoke English fluently and was care and safety personified as well as being a great conversationalist.

The Birds and Wildlife

Costa Rica is about 80% of the area of Tasmania. Whilst Tasmania has about 250 bird species, Costa Rica has 950 species, although 220 of them are migrants which had left by the time we arrived in June. We saw our 450th bird species on the last day of the trip. We went principally to



Minor Hidalgo – Bird guide and photographer

see hummingbirds and woodpeckers, but also wanting to see toucans and macaws, hoping to see motmots and trogons, and never expecting to see antpittas and tinamous; and what is a mannikin? Whilst one wants to visit a place where “everything” is different, the differences between the Australian and Central American bird fauna were enormous — especially in the Passerines where there were virtually no similarities. This made the learning curve very steep indeed.

We saw 37 of the 52 hummingbird species and 12 of the 16 woodpecker species found in Costa Rica. Costa Rica has 17 species of owls. We only saw 7 species but that is more than we have ever seen in Australia.

Past General Meetings *(continued)*

Our Accommodation

Only one of our locations was not in the Excellent class but even there the food was excellent. We enjoyed accommodation above what we would use in Australia. Breakfast was included every day, while some locations provided full board. We stayed 2 or 3 nights in 12 different locations. Most of them were focussed towards outdoor living and activities and some of them emphasised bird watching. Only one was what we would term Resort-ish!

The rooms were set up somewhat differently from here in Australia. They were often set up for families, so they regularly contained two double or queen beds but strangely no tables or chairs. If you wanted to use your computer in your room, you had to sit on the bed with it resting on your knees. All but four of the places where we ate (all in the mountains) were open to the environment!

We did not eat only in the Lodges. Indeed, we went out whenever we could, and ate out every lunchtime. Everywhere we went the food was excellent. All breakfasts offered a fresh fruit starter. Some of the breakfasts were buffets, others provided selections, while some consisted of set menus. The major emphasis was black beans, rice and fried plantain – Cassados. The pineapple was amazing! Indeed, this theme, was repeated at lunchtime but with a meat added. Beef, pork or chicken (no lamb anywhere!) or fish — usually Telopea, which they farm in a big way in the country.

Evening meals were more varied, though steak, sea bass and, in the mountains, trout, were common main courses. It was considered quite OK to have only a soup for the evening meal.

Lunch could be most reasonably priced at a SODA. In restaurants, meals were slightly less than Australian



A luxurious bed — but no chairs or tables

prices but wine was expensive. All meals and drinks, everywhere, had a 12% surcharge added, as well as being due for a 13% VAT. We did very much enjoy the cheap, iced fruit drinks – all made from fresh fruit and whizzed before your eyes! The coffee was excellent. Tea, however, was a strange foreign thing in some places! — I am a tea drinker!

Service was excellent and cleanliness paramount.

Ant What?

Many birds associate themselves with Ant swarms, hoping to pick up insects fleeing from the ants.

These get the general name of Ant birds and come from 5 different bird families.

- Antpittas (4 – 3)
- **Antbirds** (8 – 6)
- **Antwrens** (4 - 1)
- **Antvireos** (3 – 1)
- **Antshrikes** (6 – 5)
- Antthrushes (3 – 0)
- Ant-Tanagers (3 – 2)

The four groups of birds **in bold** are actually all in the same Family, the **Thamnophilidae**, adding to the complexity of naming things. Add in the Checker-throated Stipplethroat and it is difficult for a traveller!

Climate

We had never been to a tropical country before so all was new!

There was never any wind. Only on the last day was there any mentionable breeze. The temperature was constantly between 24 and 30 degrees, mainly due to there being clouds every day. We saw the sun four times in 32 days! We did not see the moon at all, though we did see stars twice. It rained every day, but it just came straight down and was rarely heavy. An umbrella and a light weight raincoat are a must! Rain started about 3 pm. All the days were the same length – Sun up 4.30 am – sundown 5.30 pm!

We birdwatched before breakfast most days and then until lunch. On the days we could, we birdwatched in the afternoon until about 2.30 or 3.00 pm

Michael Moore

Honorary Membership

Awarded to John Hatch

At the 31 January 2023 General Meeting of Birds SA, the Members present overwhelmingly endorsed the proposal put forward by the Management Committee to award Honorary Membership of the Association to John Hatch.

John has demonstrated extraordinary dedication to the Association and to ornithology generally since joining 56 years ago. This is exemplified by the roles and activities undertaken by John over this period which include:

- President 1998–2001
- Vice-President 1994-1998, 2011-2015, 2018-2020
- Committee Member in most years from 1994 to the present
- SA Ornithologist Editor August 2008-May 2011
- Librarian 1972-1976
- Convenor of the Editorial Committee for the centenary booklet, a brilliant publication that celebrated one hundred years of the Association.
- Instigating and organising seabirding boat trips out of several SE SA ports from 1982-2000.
- Member of the SA Rarities Committee since 2009.
- Co-deliverer of the WEA course “Introduction to Birds & Birdwatching” since 2016.
- Manager of speakers for General Meetings for many years.
- Participating in more than 60 surveys of duck and waterbird abundance at the Bolivar Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Providing bird and birding information on ABC radio Adelaide.



John Hatch

John has demonstrated great integrity in carrying out his many roles, always in an affable manner. He has reminded us that the conservation and welfare of birds is our top priority and that we can better achieve this by making sure that membership of the Association is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The awarding of Honorary Membership to John has been welcomed by all Members that I have spoken to, both long-standing and those that have joined more recently.

Jeff Groves
Vice-President

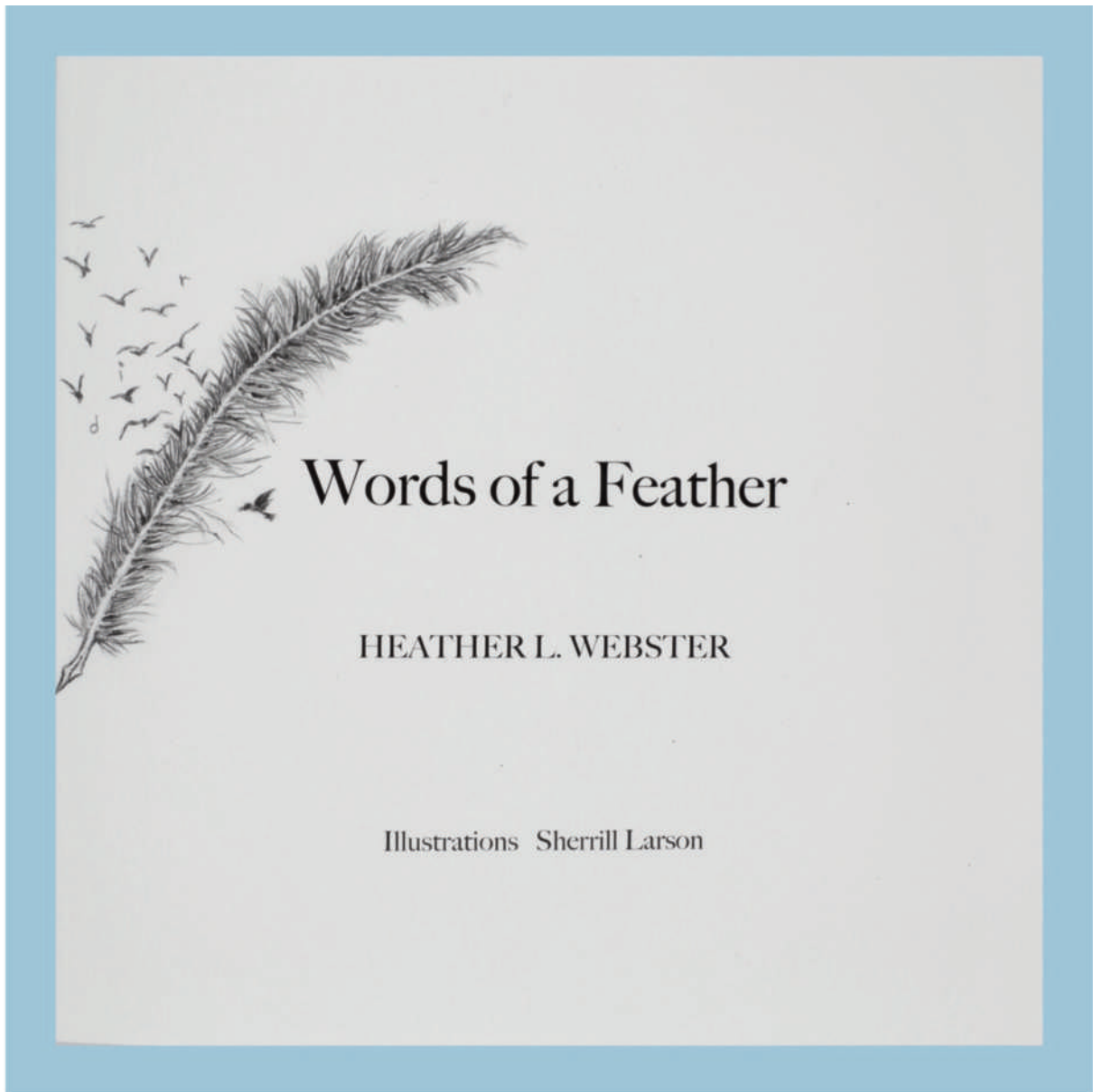
Future General Meetings

General Meetings are held in the newly refurbished Charles Hawker Centre at the Waite Institute and they start at 7.30pm.

Dates are listed below and topics will be published in future e-newsletters.

- Tuesday 28 March
- Tuesday 25 April
- Tuesday 30 May
- Tuesday 27 June

John Hatch



In *Words of a Feather*, Heather Webster combines her love of the natural world and her scientific background. Portraits of Australian birds come to life in this rich collection of poetry and prose. As a keen observer of avian behaviour, Webster captures the habits and traits of her local feathered friends. Drawings by talented artist Sherry Larson compliment this delightful collection. Quirky, cheeky, and informative, this book is a must to perch upon every bookshelf. You may never look at a cormorant chick or a plucky blue wren in the same way again. The flight of a bird is poetry in motion, just as the rich imagery and descriptions in *Words of a Feather* are uplifting, poetic and memorable.

Jude Aquilina prize winning author, Barbara Hanrahan Fellowship winner

Book available from WindSong Wines 370 Clements Road Langhorne Creek SA 5255

www.windsongwines.com.au ph 0401715895 ISBN 978-0-6456797-0-0 b/w 69pages \$25

Obituary

Peter Scapens

Members of Birds SA will be saddened to hear of the passing of Peter Scapens on 12th February 2023. He was 88 years old.

Peter was born in the UK and joined Birds SA when he first arrived in Adelaide.

He and his wife Pearl have been family members of Birds SA since 1972 so are due for their 50 year Long Serving Certificates at the next Annual General Meeting.

Peter & Pearl were keen sailors and members of the Brighton & Seacliff Yacht Squadron, as well as enjoying sailing model yachts.

Once Peter retired he was able to spend more time bird watching and with his birding friends at meetings, field trips and many campouts (including the Presidents campout at Balmoral in Victoria).

He and Pearl were Birds SA volunteers for a number of years, posting out the Birder & Ornithologist to members. They also co-ordinated the suppers at the end of general meetings for over 2 years.

Peter & Pearl were married for 63 years and have 2 sons Philip & Alan and four grandchildren.

Peter was a strong, steady, kind & caring man who will be sadly missed.

His funeral was held at Centennial Park on 22nd February 2023.

Sue Winwood

2-FOR-1 TASTINGS AT THE BEC HARDY CELLAR DOOR



At Bec Hardy Wines, 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 Topsy Hill garden and at the Bec Hardy cellar door.

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

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Foundation**



Photograph: Bec Hardy

Eastern Osprey *sighting*

A few years ago, I remember standing on Black Point at the northern end of the Hallett Cove Beach and seeing an Eastern Osprey fly overhead on its way south. As it flew over the beach at Hallett Cove, it dived into the water, capturing a fish, which it subsequently dropped. Continuing south, a large flock of birds (either Rock Doves or Silver Gulls) took off from the southern Hallett Cove cliffs and the Osprey disappeared. I thought at that time that this bird must have been one of a pair which then frequented the Onkaparinga River precinct. In the years following, the Osprey pair residing in the Onkaparinga Estuary had gone.

The current program of erecting Osprey nesting platforms (to which Birds SA is a contributor) gives us hope that the Eastern Osprey will again fly our coastal metropolitan waters.

Then in early December 2022 I heard that another Eastern Osprey had been seen locally, this time by National Parks & Wildlife Senior Ranger, South Metro, Angus Droogan-Turniski in the Onkaparinga River Recreation Park, Marine Sanctuary Zone, east of the Port Noarlunga Football Club in estuary samphire saltmarsh. This occurred on Sunday the 13th of November, the day of the 2022 Laratinga Bird Fair.

This was the weekend of the huge storms which hit Adelaide on the Saturday, into Saturday night and this may have had a bearing on this bird being seen locally. The time of the observation was 5.45pm to 6.45pm on the Sunday, after the storms had mostly cleared. Angus reported that he had a video of this bird eating a fish.

This species is known to eat only live catch, indicating that this bird had made a kill that afternoon.

Angus further reported that the Osprey had initially been hassled by several silver gulls, who were hoping to steal its fish, possibly a mullet, before landing on driftwood in the saltmarsh to devour its catch. Wind gusts up to 96km/h were recorded that weekend at the Port Noarlunga weather station and this bird may have been taking refuge.

Former Environment Minister, David Speirs MP and current Chair of the Friends of Osprey, said that the newly formed Friends group was excited by the sighting. "Since founding the group in March 2022 we've been working hard to establish safe nesting sites for Ospreys on the Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas, while also advancing Osprey research through banding and GPS-tracking of some fledglings".

"Our hope is to see these beautiful birds establish territories right across South Australia and there's no reason why this shouldn't include urban sites such as the Onkaparinga. The river's estuary is well-suited to these birds and it would be great to see an urban home for one of our State's most fragile species" MP David Speirs said.

Let's hope this bird will return and make its home once again in the reaches of the Onkaparinga River estuary. If you happen to sight this species in the greater Adelaide area, please send an email with full details and a photograph to Birds SA at general@birdssa.asn.au or it can be reported at our monthly General Meetings.

Alan Burns

Eastern Osprey

(Photographed by Angus Droogan-Turniski)



Australia's BRAVEST BIRD?

Over the years I have witnessed Willie Wagtails harassing everything from Magpies to Brown Goshawks, usually when the Willies are nesting nearby.

In November 2022, over several weeks, I was able to witness numerous instances of a pair of nesting Willie Wagtails expressing their displeasure with the presence of Kookaburras that were nesting in the hollow of a large River Red Gum along the Torrens Linear Park at Highbury. Every time one of the Kookaburras arrived back at the Red Gum with some food for their chicks they were set upon by at least one of the Willie Wagtails and sometimes by both.

The Willie Wagtails appear to have no fear when harassing much larger birds, perhaps relying upon their fast reactions and manoeuvrability to keep them out of trouble.

Jeff Groves



A Willie Wagtail giving a Goshawk a hard time (Photographed by Jeff Groves)



Willie Wagtails harassing a Kookaburra (Photographed by Jeff Groves, Torrens Linear Park, November 2022)

Membership Notes

MEMBER JUNGLE: The new membership system

The new system is working well and almost half our primary members have registered and paid their membership fees in the last 2 months.

It is necessary that you are registered on the new Member System BEFORE you can pay your subscription.

You can register at any time. You don't have to wait until your fee is due.

You will have to use your password which can be your old password, but we do advise to create a new one. Create a new one by clicking on "I forgot my password" & following the prompts.

Before your membership expires you will receive 3 emails to alert you to your expiry date (sent at 28 days, 7 days & 2 days before the expiry date)

These emails have the link to renew your membership and pay your fee.

You can also go to the Birds SA website birdssa.asn.au and click on "Renew my Membership" (red box, top right of the page) and follow the instructions.

Family members: If you have a Family membership please add your family members (secondary members). Login to your account and scroll down to the link 'Add secondary members'.

Expired Memberships

A few members have not renewed and their membership has expired.

Its not too late to renew your Birds SA membership. Our South Australian birds need your support.

You can renew up to 90 days after the actual expiry date.

Either go to the Birds SA website as described above, OR use the link in your reminder to renew emails and follow the instructions.

After the 90 days is up your membership will have expired, so if you'd like to join us again, you will have re-re-join as a new member. Go to the webpage and click on "Become a Member".

If we can assist you with any queries please email us on membership@birdssa.asn.au.

Sue Winwood
For the Membership Team

New Members

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

Pam Symes Largs North
Heather WebsterLanghorne Creek
Peter Johnston.....Alligator Creek, QLD
Cody & Kaileb JohnstonEvanston
Norbert ReniWoodside
Meridy & Stephen MalinWarradale
Bruce Muhlhan & Rae WatsonWhyalla
John MaderPt Noarlunga South
Astrid EliotColonel Light Gdns
Sapphire LazuliGreenwith
Michael BlochBurton
Rosemary McArthur.....Stepney
Brooke YatesMt Torrens
Sharon WinterAberfoyle Park
Marisa Ala DeaMt Barker
James ZackerDavoren Park
Timothy HughesGlen Osmond
Daniel Dong.....Melbourne, VIC
Peter BlecklySomerton Park
Annie & Lizzie HughesStrathalbyn
Alan WilliamsToowoomba, QLD
Matthew Benson.....Victor Harbor
Fiona Ryan.....Aldinga
Simon Harris.....Strathalbyn
Catherine DaviesUnley
Sarah MalcolmEvandale
Frans MollemansHawaii, USA
Gregory McConnell.....Aberfoyle Park
Sally Townsley.....Goolwa South
Jean SloanOld Reynella
Lorraine PooleWillunga
Zephyr Jones.....Elliston
Sandra KinseyBritish Columbia, Canada

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

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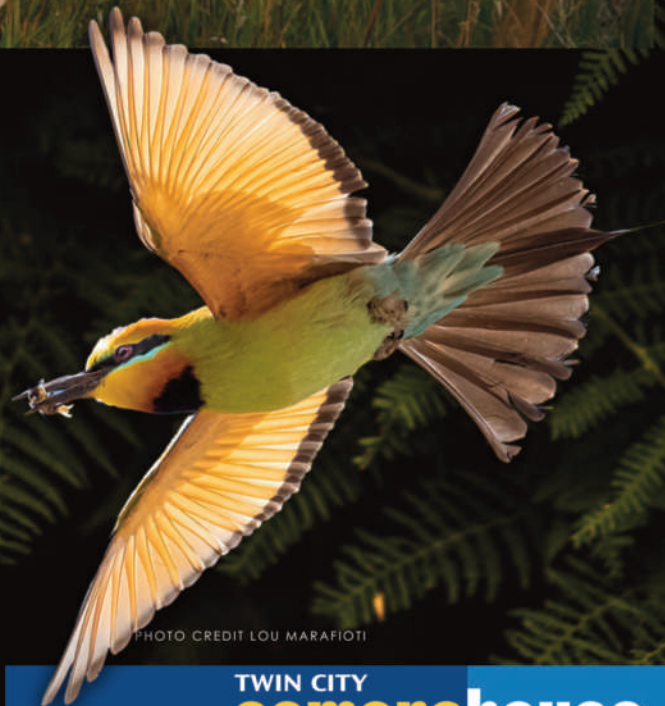


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GROWING NATIVE PLANTS AND ATTRACTING BIRDS TO YOUR GARDEN

By Chris Bates-Brownsword, Member of Birds SA



Eucalyptus erythrocorys



Nesting magpie



Grevillea superb



Red Wattlebird on tecomara

Some important considerations when choosing which natives to plant in your garden are:

- The **type of soil** you have (whether acidic, alkaline, neutral, or clay/limestone). This relates to the pH level of your soil.
- How many **sunny spots** are available for planting
- The **size the plant** will reach on maturity (this can vary depending on your soil)
- The **layout you want to achieve**, bearing in mind that the often-seen suburban garden of a lawn bordered by shrubbery is not helpful for attracting a **variety** of birds. It is, however, ideal for our **number one pest bird the noisy miner**, which likes to soar, and will quickly dominate the space and drive out any other birds who visit

SOIL

Whilst your location will give you an idea of your soil type, eg Coastal, Hills, Adelaide Plains – a good rule of thumb is to look around your neighbourhood and see what native plants are doing well in other people's backyards. It's not foolproof, but if for example, someone nearby has a thriving banksia covered in flowers, the soil is probably sandy loam, suggesting acidic or neutral soil, rather than alkaline. Alkaline soils often occur in coastal locations which have a higher salt content and a pH up to 8.

STATE FLORA NURSERY situated in Belair National Park, provides information regarding soil type and pH requirements on all their stock, which is very useful when you are choosing plants.

- **Soil type** is listed as **Sand, Loam, Clay, Limestone**
- **Soil pH** is listed as **ANC**. **ANC** stands for **Acid, Neutral and Calcareous**. Acid and Neutral soils have a pH level ranging from 6.5 or less (acidic), to 7.5 (neutral) to over 7.5 for alkaline. Calcareous refers to clay or highly alkaline type soil with a high pH environment, as found in dry coastal areas. If the plant label includes *limestone* tolerance, the plant should survive in very poor soils.

SUNSHINE AND WATER

Australian native plants LOVE sunny locations. Some will grow in part shade, but given a well-prepared growing area, regular water until established and lots of sunshine they will reward you with rapid growth and long flowering periods. They quickly become both a feast for the senses and a mecca for local birdlife. **Providing a birdbath or two in your garden will ensure that birds visit regularly.** It is important to keep baths clean & filled all year round, but particularly in summer when they need topping up with all the splashing and bathing that takes place(!)

LAYOUT OF YOUR GARDEN

Whether you have a small or large garden, with a bit of planning you can provide some habitat for birds. A mix of small and larger plants works well – and if you can plant some trees, or already have some in place, that's a real plus. Many of us inherit exotic plants rather than native vegetation when we buy a property, but established plants, especially of some size, offer greenery and shade, as well as shelter for smaller birds, and integrating these exotics into a new landscaping plan for the garden rather than removing them often works well. This can be important when locating birdbaths. Sometimes the best spot is under an old exotic (like an oleander tree, as in my own garden). It's hardy, has height, partly shades the bath and provides numerous branches for the birds to make their way safely down to the water. Whilst partly sheltered, the bath is open on all sides, allowing the essential quick getaway if needed. A landscaping plan providing bushy habitat, comprising larger plants with an understorey of smaller plants will increase the density of vegetation in your garden and is the best (and probably only) way of discouraging visits from our number one pest bird the **Noisy Miner**.



Eucalyptus caesia



NOISY MINER

This native Australian honeyeater is fast becoming the scourge of suburbia.

It is aggressive, raises its young in a communal fashion, with a higher survival of nestlings, and viciously attacks and kill other birds, often as a group, to take over a territory. As it is a native species, it is not legal to remove it. Trials undertaken in the Eastern states removing large numbers of noisy miners from a particular area showed that within three weeks of the birds being eliminated, a new population of miners had moved back in(!) Proof that creating a habitat that does not appeal to the noisy miner, is vital if we are to retain any diversity of birdlife in our parks and gardens.

Historical Series No 82.

Dr Alexander Matheson (Mat) Morgan (1867-1934)

Part 2 by Penny Paton

As well as being one of the founding members of the SAOA, Morgan was President for the first two years and, on the SAO's inception in 1914, served on the first Editorial Committee of four members, initially Morgan, F.R. Zietz, S.A. White and Robert Crompton. Morgan went on to serve another four terms as President (1907-08, 1916-17, 1925-26, 1931-32), preceded by the Vice-Presidency as custom dictated. After serving a four-year term on the Editorial Committee, Morgan was replaced on 26 April 1918 by Alfred Edquist.

Morgan was a prolific contributor to the SAO, beginning in the first part with a note on the method by which Mistletoebirds deposit sticky mistletoe seed on branches (Morgan 1914b). Even this short note hints at the qualities of Morgan's ornithological endeavours: accurate recording of date, location and events some years later, demonstrating that his record-keeping was first-rate. The analysis of the mechanics of the Mistletoebird's actions and the physical characteristics of the seed also indicate the workings of his scientific mind.

Morgan made several trips with Captain S.A. White in the motor launch, the "Avocet", at the invitation of its owners, A.G. and E.S. Rymill. During the first in early January 1916, they explored the Spit on Kangaroo Island, the Althorpe Islands, Pondalowie Bay, Wedge Island and Troubridge Island, but due to poor weather were unable to land on the Pages or Gambier Island as planned (Morgan 1916a). The second trip was over Easter 1916, when bad weather again hampered their plans to access Dangerous Reef and the Sir Joseph Banks Group, but they did do some dredging near Stansbury and explored Pondalowie Bay and Althorpe Island (Morgan 1916b). The reports on these excursions show his rigour in observation and

record-keeping as well as his interest in seabirds and conservation. On one of the smaller of the Althorpe Islands group Morgan and White found the dried carcasses of a number of seals as well as a rifle cartridge shell and he bemoaned the senseless killing of these harmless animals (Morgan 1916a). A feature of both these papers is the recording of the temperatures of seabirds, although Morgan does not say why he thought that this was of interest or to what use the data could be put.



Figure 3. Main street of Port Broughton 1914 showing railway lines (SLSA PRG 280/1/13/289)

As well as reports of ornithological trips, Morgan also wrote about the ecology and movement of birds. For example, an early paper on the migration of swallows and martins summarised the patchy information on the movements of the four species in Australia, as well as reporting his own observations and those of his colleagues (Morgan 1916c). The general consensus was that the Welcome Swallow and Tree Martin were more common in southern Australia in the spring and summer, but that some birds remained, especially in milder winters, when most migrated to warmer

climes to the north. The Fairy Martin was the most migratory of the four species, with few observers noting any in the autumn and winter. Morgan noted the arrival of Fairy Martins in the Adelaide region in September and commented that he had never seen them after 1 April. Further north he considered Fairy Martins migratory at Laura (where he lived for about five years in the mid-1890s) and at Wirrabarra, but while they occurred each year at the latter place, they were not seen every year at Laura. His experience of the White-backed Swallow was fairly similar, although less common around Adelaide,

where they were not seen from April to August. At Laura birds came to breed in September and left no later than April, but further north at Port Augusta this species was resident.

Morgan published a short article on a visit to Port Broughton, in the spring of 1917 and, apart from the details of the 70 species of birds recorded, he painted a picture of what this area looked like at that time (Morgan 1918a). Dense mallee had been replaced by wheat fields except for the roadsides and a few small scrub patches, the largest of which was Clements Gap of about 100 acres, 15 miles (25km) from the township. He appreciated the mangrove-dominated island and creek, a large sapphire swamp and a patch of acacia and sheoak scrub near the township. Near the creek Morgan collected a pair of Slender-billed Thornbills that he recognised as being different from those from western and central Australia. This was prescient of him as birds found along Gulf St Vincent are classified as the subspecies *Acanthiza iredalei rosinae*, first described by Mathews in 1913 from specimens collected at Outer Harbour (Matthew 1994).

Figures 3 and 4 show images of Port Broughton at about the time Morgan was there. The hotel was established in 1875 by Mr Edward Wall and his son William added the second storey in 1910. Morgan paid tribute to the hospitality and assistance of the landlord of the hotel during his visit. The jetty was built in 1876 and serviced by a railway line for grain haulage from Mundooora, 16km inland. Port Broughton figured again in an article by Morgan regarding nesting cormorant (Morgan 1918b). In early May 1918 Morgan, his wife and son (presumably his elder son William who would have been about 11 at this time and already an SAOA member) travelled to Port Broughton, where he had heard that the Pied Cormorants were nesting on Shag Island. Mr Wall Junior sailed them out near the island and then rowed them in a dinghy, after which the party waded for a quarter of a mile to the mangroves. Mrs Morgan must have been a redoubtable character, not least to put up with the pot pourri of smells at the cormorant rookery – a mixture of excrement and disgorged fish. The rookery covered about two acres (just under a hectare) with nests placed in mangroves, many of which were leafless and apparently dying. On their approach, the young disgorged the fish in their stomachs and, if old

enough, dropped to the mud and waddled off towards the water. Morgan identified a number of fish species that the cormorants were feeding to their young and gave very detailed descriptions of the young at all ages. He also took photos and illustrated the article with a view of part of the rookery with nests and young just out of the nest.

The rest of the article detailed a 2-day trip to Mundoo Island with the same party, who stayed a night at a shooting hut on Ram Island. Contrary to what Morgan was told, that Great Cormorants were nesting on Mundoo Island, it was in fact a mixed rookery of the Little Pied and the Little Black Cormorants. While the two species mingled, they tended to nest in small groups of the same species, with only the occasional interloper. On approach the young disgorged their fish and dropped to the water and swam away. The main species of fish fed to the young was carp, which Morgan indicated had become very common in the river and lakes in recent years.

Morgan (SAOA 1919) described at a meeting on 28 February 1919 that he had made a pair of collapsible scales that could be packed into a small space for travelling. He had found it difficult to buy such scales which he required for weighing the brains of birds. During the month-long trip to the South East alluded to above (Morgan 1919), he put the scales to good use, weighing all the birds he collected and their brains, as well as the eggs he collected. His object in weighing the brains was to discover what percentage of a bird's weight was taken up by the brain, but he noted that he would need to weigh many more specimens before any conclusions could be drawn. He published the weight of about 40 bird



Figure 4. Jetty and Hotel, Port Broughton ca 1910 (SLSA B15350)

specimens and 14 egg clutches, as well as giving the weight of individual eggs in these clutches. He estimated that a female Beautiful Firetail lost about 10% of her body weight each time she laid an egg and, as she laid one per day for seven days, he concluded that egg-laying is a considerable strain on a female bird (Morgan 1919).

A further note in the *SAO* (Morgan 1920) detailed the weight of 16 birds and their brains as well as their temperatures. These were of birds collected on a trip with his friend Dr Chenery to the southwest corner of New South Wales. In a further short article Morgan gave the weights of birds and their brains as well as their temperature, length and wing span from specimens collected on a trip to the Lennard River, WA, in 1921 (Morgan 1922a). He did not publish the results of his research into the weight of birds and their brains but modern-day scientists have concluded that, among Australian songbirds, the Magpie and corvids “are royalty as far as brain size, relative to body weight, is concerned” (Kaplan 2021). However top of the list are the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and a few allies amongst Southern Hemisphere parrots.

The afore-mentioned trip with Dr Chenery took them to that part of New South Wales between the River Darling and the South Australian border in October 1919 (Chenery and Morgan 1920a, Chenery and Morgan 1920b, Chenery 1922). Chenery had lived for some years at Wentworth and it was an area that the pair had explored on several trips together, while Morgan had also visited part of the area with Captain White. The first visit in 1917 coincided with a flood year and the third in 1919 was a dry year so they were able to compare the avifauna under different conditions. For example, very few Budgerigars were seen in the spring of 1919, whereas in 1917 they were present in hundreds of thousands (Chenery and Morgan 1920b).

Although not generally discussed by other sources, it seems that Dr Morgan dabbled in bird photography, as an incident related in the *SAO* attests (*SAOA* 1921c). At an *SAOA* meeting, Morgan related an amusing incident when he was photographing an Australasian Grebe nest on a small overflow of the Sturt River near Morphettville. His head was under the hood while he was engaged in photographing the nest when he felt some half-digested fish and other food land on his neck. On looking up he discovered that he was underneath the nest of a White-faced Heron, the young of which had vomited over him.

This mention of photography led me to investigate photos in the *South Australian Ornithologist* and I found that, after a few photos in Parts 7 and 8 of Volume 3 in 1918, the next ones did not appear until Volume 11 Part 2 in April 1931 — copious images of the historic breeding of Banded Stilts on Moolawatana Station in December 1930 (McGilp and Morgan 1931). After this, photographs appeared irregularly and uncommonly. This contrasts with *Emu*, which published photos from its inception in Volume 1 in 1901-02. Presumably cost was the limiting factor for the

SAOA in its early days with a very small membership and income.

Photography is mentioned again in Morgan’s (1921d) account of a trip to WA with his wife from Fremantle to Derby and then on to Meda and Kimberley Downs Stations during June 1921. At Kimberley Downs Morgan spent most of his time observing and collecting birds and insects along the Lennard River and on a nearby swamp he was so absorbed in watching a pair of Black-necked Storks catching frogs that he forgot to take a photo. He was largely unimpressed with the birdlife on this trip or the towns of Broome and Derby, particularly the hotel they stayed in at the latter place for three days. He was grateful to a Mr H. Monger who took them crabbing at the Derby jetty, where walking fish and scarlet and black fighting crabs abounded, and where a crocodile track in the mangroves precluded exploration of this habitat. The weeks spent on Meda and Kimberley Downs Stations were more productive and Morgan was appreciative of the help provided by the managers Mr G. Millard and Mr Chalmers.

Part II of Morgan’s (1922b) account of his North West trip is short and details birds seen at the end of their stay on Kimberley Downs Station as well as summarising birds seen over the whole month. Their return trip from Derby to Fremantle was most unpleasant as the S.S. Gorgon caught on fire out of Broome and, while the fire was contained, cyanide fumes spread through the ship and caused the death of cattle which were thrown overboard. To cap it off, after four days at sea Morgan contracted malaria and was very glad to reach a hotel in Perth three days later.

During the early 1920s Morgan wrote up short descriptions of individual bird species for the *SAO*: the Black-chinned Honeyeater (Morgan 1922c), Little Grassbird (Morgan 1922d), Red-capped Dotterel (Morgan 1923a) and Black-fronted Dotterel (Morgan 1923b). Figure 5 shows a Black-chinned Honeyeater caught and banded at the Santa Rosa Winery on the Fleurieu Peninsula from about 35 years ago. This species has declined enormously in the Adelaide/Mt Lofty Region since Morgan’s day.

Another brief article by Morgan (1922e) described a visit in January (of either 1921 or 1922) to Baudin Rocks, a group of three islands about 3-4 km from the northwest end of Guichen Bay near Robe. He was hoping to find breeding petrels, but decided that the soil on the islands was too shallow to allow for suitable burrows. However, on the first island he did record about two dozen nests of the Black-faced Cormorant, new but mostly empty and surmised, from seeing a Silver Gull eating a cormorant egg, that they had consumed most of the eggs. There was also a colony of thousands of nesting Greater Crested Terns and hundreds of Little Penguins nesting under bushes. On the second island was another “huge colony” of Greater Crested Terns, several Nankeen Night Herons and an old night heron nest containing a dead young bird. He suspected that a pair of Sooty Oystercatchers were



Figure 5. A Black-chinned Honeyeater caught at Santa Rosa Winery near Currency Creek, ca 1988 (Photo: D. Paton)

breeding and a colony of Silver Gulls were at the end of their nesting season. More recent fieldwork on Baudin Rocks found a breeding pair of Bridled Terns among a colony of Greater Crested Terns in the summer of 1968-69 (Bonnin 1969) and sight records continued there until 1975 (Christie 2003).

Morgan's interest in seabirds is also attested by short articles on two skins of shearwaters, one found beach-washed at Port Willunga by Edwin Ashby in 1914 and the other in the SAMA (Morgan 1923a, b). The first he thought was a Fluttering Shearwater (*Puffinus gavia*), but was puzzled by its being a young bird and there were no known breeding locations in South Australia (and we now know that this species only breeds in New Zealand). His second bet, that it was a Short-tailed Shearwater, is the more likely explanation. The second specimen, collected by E.R. Waite from the Neptune Islands, was similar to a new species *P. intermedius* described by Bassett Hull (now accepted as the Short-tailed) or even a Wedge-tailed Shearwater. It is almost certain to have been a Short-tailed as there are breeding colonies of this species in South Australia.

Morgan's publishing flurry continued in 1924 with a short note on the nests and eggs of the Western (formerly the Thick-billed) Grasswren *Amytornis textilis myall* (Morgan 1924). This subspecies was not reported until 1902 (Chenery 1903) and Morgan's description of the nest and eggs was the earliest. Morgan (1924) explained that Mathews was the first to describe this taxon in 1916 from two skins collected from Myall Creek on Cariewerloo Station in the Gawler Ranges. The nest Morgan described was found by J.Neil McGilp on 30 August 1923 in a saltbush near Wertigo Dam about 80 km northwest of Port Augusta. The open cup nest was constructed of dried grass and scantily lined with rabbit fur and there were three eggs in the nest.

Another short note was published by Morgan (1926) on the collection of quailthrushes, a male at Wipipippee south of

Lake Gairdner in August 1902 and three birds near Kimba in September 1925. He noted that these were different from the typical Chestnut-backed Ground-bird of the Murray Mallee and designated them as *Cinclosoma castanotum clarum*. This taxon was later submerged in synonymy or ambiguity until its reinstatement by Schodde and Mason in 1999 for a form that occurred in Central Australia and the Great Victoria Desert (Black *et al.* 2019). A later review recognised two sister species: the Chestnut and the Copperback Quailthrushes (the latter with two subspecies), but Black *et al.* (2019) proposed a third subspecies of the Copperback Quailthrush, *C. clarum morgani* for the population on Eyre Peninsula and in the Gawler Ranges. This is a just reward for Morgan's perspicacity in recognising the more highly coloured birds he collected as something different as well as noting the limited sexual

dimorphism, a character that differentiates this subspecies from *C.c. fordianum* of southwestern Western Australia and South Australia.

Volume 8 Part 7 of the SAO focussed on the birds of Kangaroo Island and Morgan (1926) listed species seen on a trip between Kingscote and Rocky River via Kelly Hill from 20 - 25 May 1926. Most notable were the seabirds seen off Rapid Head, in Backstairs Passage and along the coast between Kingscote and Hog Bay (now Penneshaw): namely Fluttering Shearwater, Giant Petrel, Brown Skua and Arctic Skua.

Morgan accompanied Frank Parsons and John Sutton on a week's trip to the South East in late October/early November 1926 (Sutton 1927a). A number of specimens were taken on this trip and, as Sutton was not a collector, we can surmise that the collecting was done by Morgan and Parsons. The article ended with a list of additional species recorded by Dr Morgan in the Robe district, indicating that he had visited the district more than once. Morgan spent quite a lot of time in the field in the spring of 1926 with John Sutton and sometimes Frank Parsons; there are numerous nesting notes from Meadows, Blackwood, Goolwa, Happy Valley, Wood's Point, Sellick's Beach and a swamp near Adelaide (Sutton 1927b). Sutton and Morgan also spent time exploring the River Torrens environs near the city on 30 September and 1 October looking for nesting birds, after Morgan and his son had seen an Azure Kingfisher near the north bank of the River between Frome Road and the city on the previous day.

Returning to seabirds, Morgan published with J.B. Cleland an account of albatrosses and other birds seen in January 1927 between Melbourne and Dunedin, New Zealand, where they attended a medical conference (Morgan and Cleland 1927). Both men found seabird identification from the boat very difficult and were only confident in their sighting of the Black-browed Albatross, Cape Petrel, Australasian Gannet and, on the return trip from Wellington to Sydney, of two Red-tailed Tropicbirds.

SOME PLANTING RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, a mix of native trees, medium sized shrubs, smaller plants, grasses and groundcovers can create a very appealing native garden which will attract not only birds, but also butterflies, insects and maybe the odd blue tongue lizard, always a nice addition to any backyard! If you can include a pond, even a modest one, this can enhance the space considerably. Go to plantselector.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au database for details on a range of plants suitable for your local area within South Australia – or to seek information on any plant.

TREES AND LARGER SHRUBS



A tree or two on your property is a great help in providing "bird corridors" in our suburbs. The importance of this cannot be overstated. You might think the magpie or wattlebird regularly seen in your garden is almost a member of the family, but in actual fact these birds often travel widely between several backyards as they forage for food, and these corridors are the link to sustaining them. Ongoing developments and destruction of tree canopy in Adelaide, particularly the removal of big old trees, is a catastrophe in the making for both humans and our birdlife. "Replanting" is not the answer to the loss of these significant trees. Trees of this size take decades to grow back. In our garden at Cumberland Park, several large old trees provide nesting opportunities for birds. The kookaburra in the picture on the left, seen delivering food to his young, regularly uses a hollow at the top of an ancient Canary Palm tree in our front garden to nest in.



And what a fantastic thing that is, only 10 minutes from Adelaide's city centre(!) However, without the trees, this will cease to be. Loss of nesting hollows through clearance is another problem for our birds. The growing interest in using artificial nest boxes to address this issue, is encouraging. The picture on the right shows a pair of galahs which took up residence in a box we installed in our garden earlier this year.

Be all of that as it may, whatever you can grow in the space you have available in your garden will help not only the birds and enhance the streetscape but give you enormous pleasure as well.

Suggestions for moderately sized trees and shrubs growing from 3-6 m:



Alyogyne hakeifolia
Frigly Purple



Eucalyptus torquata



Acacia pycnantha



Eucalyptus caesia
Silver Princess



Grevillea superb

- **Eucalypts:** *Euc forrestiana* (fuschia gum), *Euc landowndean*a (crimson mallee) and *Euc torquata* (coral gum) all bear beautiful blossoms. *Eucalyptus caesia* (Silver Princess) is another attractive gum tree with silver grey foliage and a weeping habit. Its exquisite scarlet flowers look like ballerinas' tutus. *Eucalyptus erythrocorys* (red capped gum), has the most stunning blossoms of all. It is worth growing for the flowers alone, which are a bird magnet, but be aware that it does have a tendency to lean and should be encouraged to grow up straight.
- **Callistemons** or **Bottlebrushes:** are hardy and popular with large and small birds during their flowering period, and are often used as street trees. For tight spaces there is a narrow form called *Callistemon SLIM* (1 x metre wide) which is quick growing, flowers well and makes excellent screening.
- **Melaleucas** are hardy plants with numerous varieties. Melaleucas also include a tall, narrow form (1 x 1 metre) called *Melaleuca decussata fastigata*, which, if planted 30 cm apart, makes a great hedge. A bushier variety, *Melaleuca nesophila* is droughtproof and dependable. Both have attractive purple ball flowers.
- **Acacias** come in many varieties, shapes and sizes. *A. pycnantha*, *A. iteaphylla* and *A. calamifolia* are three reliable, moderately sized wattle trees I have found rewarding to grow. *A. rupicola* is an excellent small very tough prickly wattle for small birds to hide in.
- **Hakeas**, especially *hakea laurina*, banksias and *Allocasuarinas* (sheoaks) are also good choices, depending on soil type.



Callistemon SLIM



Melaleuca nesophila's
purple ball flowers



Eucalyptus forrestiana *Fuschia Gum*



Banksia 'Giant
Candles'



Hakea laurina

GROWING NATIVE PLANTS AND ATTRACTING BIRDS TO YOUR GARDEN (continued)

GREVILLEAS have over 350 species, ranging from trees to large shrubs to dwarf bushes, to groundcovers. All great bird attractors

Some larger specimens commonly seen in Adelaide gardens include:

- a) **Grevillea Moonlight, G. Honey gem** and similar, with splendid **“toothbrush like” blossoms**
Grevillea Robyn Gordon and **G. Superb** are reliable smaller versions of the above group, and are great value as they need minimal care once established, and their flowers feed the birds all year round.
- b) **Grevillea Olivacea** (named for its olive-shaped leaves) which has either apricot, yellow or red spider flowers.
 Of these, **Grevillea olivacea” Red Sunset”** is a favourite. It’s very reliable and I love its striking deep scarlet flowers.
- c) **Grevillea rosmarinifolia** (loved by eastern spinebills) has spiky rosemary-like foliage and red spider flowers
- d). **Grevillea winpara Gem** (hybrid between *G. olivacea* and *G. thelemanniana*) is one I routinely grow, together with its sister plant (another hybrid) called **Grevillea winpara Gold**. Both of these resilient, fast growing natives bear masses of golden spider flowers with red spikes which literally drip with nectar. (See picture below).

All the above grevilleas are irresistible to large birds like parrots, lorikeets and wattlebirds, as well as smaller nectar eaters like honeyeaters, spinebills and silveryeyes. The smaller birds often gravitate towards the *rosmarinifolia* or *olivacea* bushes to avoid the raucous, noisy harassment from the larger birds, so it is good to vary your planting. If you find grevilleas difficult to grow in your garden, grafted grevilleas are an alternative... The rootstock comes from **Grevillea robusta** or Silky Oak tree, the biggest grevillea of them all, which can survive almost anywhere.



Grevillea Bush Lemon
(grafted)



Grevillea Moonlight



Grevillea Robyn Gordon



Grevillea Honey Gem



Grevillea Winpara Gold

Some ideas for hardy small to medium sized native plants ranging from 1- 2 metres:

NAME OF PLANT	COMMENTS
Alyogyne hakeifolia is a branching upright shrub with hibiscus-like flowers	Beautiful mauve, yellow or pink tubular flowers with dark centres. The “frilly purple” A. hakeifolia is a standout
Calothamnus quadrifidus (one sided bottlebrush)	Erect or spreading shrub, inc dwarf form, red flowers spring & summer. Birds love them.
Chamelaucium (Geraldton wax) A range of sizes and colours, inc dwarf; grows well in a pot	Easy to grow native that thrives in a sunny spot. For a magic combination grow a white Geraldton wax alongside an Eremophila nivea x drummondii . The contrast between the white wax flowers and sky blue eremophila flowers is stunning!
Correa Dusky Bells	One of the most reliable correas to grow – popular with birds
Dodonaea viscosa (sticky hop bush)	Extra hardy, droughtproof. “Capsule flowers” are orangey red coloured foliage. Good for erosion control, dense windbreaks. Non-native purple foliage variety also available.
Eremophila (emu plants) A wide variety of sizes, flowers and foliage colours, inc groundcovers and dwarf plants. Excellent bird attractors	Hardy, drought tolerant plants that grow in a range of soils, inc arid regions. Bloom for long periods and provide food for smaller birds. Excellent smaller or g/cover plants are E. glabra, E. maculata, E kalbarri, E. racemosa, E. youngii . Shrub or small tree size E. bignoniiflora bears lovely tubular pink or mauve flowers with spotted throats.
Melaleucas (Trees = paperbarks, smaller forms = Honey Myrtles) Melaleuca wilsonii Highly attractive honey myrtle with bright pink clusters along spreading branches in spring and summer	M. nesophila has dense green foliage and is an excellent screening or background plant. Dwarf form M. nesophila (Little Nessy) is a good low hedging plant. Both grow in part shade and have fluffy purple ball-shaped flowers tipped in gold.
Myoporums are drought tolerant plants ranging from groundcovers to small shrubs to small trees	Myoporum parvifolium is great groundcover, with green or purple foliage, Myoporum insulare (Boobialla) can be a groundcover, dense shrub or a small tree. All are fast growing with white flowers. Once established M. insulare survives almost anywhere.
Ozothamnus diasmofolius Radiance (rice flower)	Resilient, fast-growing, white rice flowers, long flowering periods spring & summer
Templetonia retusa (cockie’s tongues) can stagger flowering times to provide winter food for birds)	Very dependable foliage plant. Good for screening or background or informal hedge. Tolerates part shade. Prune to keep bushy & compact. Masses of red pea flowers in winter.
Westringias (native rosemary) Many varieties available	I particularly recommend a dwarf variety called Westringia dampieri , which is available at State Flora at Belair. This little Westringia grows about a metre high, has white flowers and is very reliable once established,
GRASSES make an excellent addition to any garden: They hold the soil together, look good in clusters or along borders, and attract insects and butterflies. Some examples are: Themeda triandra (kangaroo grass), poa labillardieri , or tussock grass) and Ficinia nodosa (knobby clubrush), which can survive coastal exposure, as well as further inland.	

Keep in mind that Australian natives, just like other garden plants, need regular watering until they are established, regular tip pruning or shaping to keep them bushy, mulching, and fertilising with a slow release (low phosphorus) product designed specifically for them. Regular use of SEASOL (or a similar seaweed product) is a great tonic for all plants, native or otherwise.

Past Excursions

Birds SA

Thursday 17 November

Sandy Creek Conservation Park

This excursion was originally planned for Kaiserstuhl CP but heavy rain just before the walk resulted in the creek just inside the entrance on Tanunda Creek Rd running strongly and blocking access. Therefore, we went instead to Sandy Creek CP where the sandy soil meant there was no danger of flooding. The wild weather of the previous few days had calmed down and it was a warm and clear day.

Twelve people assembled for the walk and we proceeded in a clockwise direction which was a variation on our usual route. We first went north and then cut across to the Wren trail and then headed back to the carpark along the Honeyeater Trail.

The usual gang of parrots and lorikeets was present including Galahs (20), Adelaide Rosellas (6) Rainbow Lorikeets (2) and Musk Lorikeets (4). We also saw 5 White-throated Treecreepers and 6 Superb Fairywrens. Striated Pardalotes (15) were busy in the trees and on the ground as were Weebills (2), Striated Thornbills (6), Buff-rumped TB (4), Yellow-rumped Thornbills (20) and one Yellow Thornbill. We also observed Western Whistlers (2), Rufous Whistlers (12) Grey Shrikethrush (4), Willie Wagtail (1), Grey Fantails (2), Black-faced Cuckooshrikes (4), Australian Magpies (5), Grey Currawongs (12) Little Ravens (4), Fairy Martins (4) and White-winged Choughs (12). Highlights were Diamond Firetails (2) and the cheerful Red-capped Robins (2). Regarding feral species, only 1 Common Blackbird was seen.

Honeyeaters included Eastern Spinebill (1), Crescent (6), New Holland (20), Brown-headed (5 and showing breeding activity), Yellow-faced (2), White-plumed (3), White-naped (1) and Red Wattlebirds. Two White Ibis were seen flying over and we saw or heard Common Bronzewing (1), Peaceful Doves (4) and Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo (2). Rainbow bee-eaters (10) were darting about and we were quite fortunate regarding raptors, seeing one Wedge-tailed Eagle and 2 Brown Goshawks.

The bird call resulted in a total of 42 species for the day.

Ali Ben Kahn

Birds SA

Sunday 27 November

Anacotilla Springs, Second Valley

Thanks to prior warning by the property owners Pamela and Rob we drove very slowly up from the main road to their new home on the hill and were rewarded with

excellent views of Elegant Parrots (20) feeding quietly by the track. That one kilometre drive took us over 45 minutes but this time I got no complaints, a rare thing when I am the trip leader!

It was also pleasing that we had new attendees amongst the 16 members present. As is customary, Rob provided a summary on the history of the property and on the magnificent views over the gulf. But we were here for the birding and given our delayed arrival at the home we started our way down to the Anacotilla River and spring. This provided us with good views of Eurasian Skylark, Australian Pipit, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel and Brown Falcon. Along the Anacotilla River with its large gums and other vegetation we saw Maned Duck, White-faced Heron, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Yellow-throated Miner and Laughing Kookaburra. We saw plenty of Galah, Crimson Rosella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Superb Fairywren, Australian Magpie, Mistletoebird, European Goldfinch, Tree Martin and Welcome Swallow.

Our lunch was taken at the 'holiday shack' and our bird call there produced a total count of 30 species for the morning's work including two that previously had not been recorded for the property. Surprisingly many regular species were totally absent and this will need to be followed up when we visit next.

This was our eighth visit since July 2017 and I am most appreciative to Pamela and Rob for allowing us access to their property and for their warm hospitality.

Lynton Huxley

Birds SA

Saturday 10 December

Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park

It was shaping up to be a hot day, when a small group of intrepid birders set out from the Cox Road entrance to the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park (opposite Aldinga Holiday Park). We were lucky to have along Jean Turner from Friends of Aldinga Scrub, who shared her high level of knowledge of the plants and birds occurring in the scrub. It was also pleasing to some of the very keen new Birds SA members in the group. Aldinga Scrub is a gem of a park, home to a range of rare plants including lacy coral lichen, nardoo, hairy sedge and several species of orchids. It has a wide range of plant groups including those associated with sclerophyll forest, mallee scrub and coastal sands, thus creating habitat for a range of birds and other animals.

As we set off in a westerly direction, we looked out for the Mistletoebirds that are often to be found near the start of the walk. They were not as readily evident as sometimes, but were spied by a few members of the group.

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Juvenile Western Whistler

(Photographed by Julie Hocking at Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park, 10 December 2022),

We made a circuit through the park following the path heading north near the western boundary of the park, then across and back down the easterly path that passes the fenced in area with the rare orchids. Due to the heat, we skipped the sidepath heading to the coral lichen, and also the wetlands to the east. As we headed north, a Brown Goshawk was seen flying above, and subsequently a pair of Raptors, most likely Brown Falcon. We were also fortunate enough to see a group of four Spotted Pardalotes in the low mallee. Interestingly, we neither saw nor heard any of the Crescent Honeyeaters that are commonly encountered, possibly it was too hot for them to be active. Also surprising was the prevalence of Rufous Whistlers (six seen in total). We were puzzled by one bird, subsequently identified, from a photo taken by Julie Hocking, as a Juvenile Golden, whoops Western Whistler (thanks Lynton Huxley and John Gitsham). Other notable bird sightings included an Elegant Parrot, three Dusky Woodswallows, a Kookaburra, a Common Bronzewing, two Tree Martins, a Nankeen Kestrel, several Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoos, an Eastern Spinebill and the usual plethora of Peaceful Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galahs, Eastern Rosellas, Superb Fairywrens, New Holland Honeyeaters, White-Plumed Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds, Thornbills (yellow), Weebills, Magpies, Grey Shrikethrush, Grey Fantail, Little Ravens, Magpielark and Welcome Swallows.

We were happy to reach the shade and have our lunch at the end. The bird call confirmed that we had seen 28 bird species.

Bonny Vogelzang

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Sunday 11 December

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden

On a sunny but windy morning nine birders met in the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden car park. Four were from Pt. Augusta, three from Adelaide and one each from Wilmington and Mambray Creek. As we were waiting for others some Purple-crowned Lorikeets and Welcome Swallows flew about, while Yellow-throated Miners were feeding young in a nest and others that had left their nest. Red Wattlebirds and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters moved about in the trees as a mixed flock of Little Corellas and Galahs flew past high above us.

We walked into the outer edge of the garden heading for the Myall tree dominated sand hills area. Crested Pigeons, Australian Ravens, White-browed Babblers, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Tree Martins, Singing Honeyeaters, Blackbirds and a Mistletoebird were added to our bird list as we walked through the garden and patches of Myall trees. In a scrubby area the sound of a scolding Redthroat and White-winged Fairywrens could be heard and upon closer inspection we had some good viewings of both birds.

We had a look at the sandhills bird hide area and Willie Wagtails, Nankeen Kestrels, Zebra Finches, Spotted Doves and Chirruping Wedgebills increased our list. We moved on to the boardwalk lookout with some Common Starlings, House Sparrows, Elegant Parrots and Budgerigars flying past.



Rainbow Bee-eater and Zebra Finches

(Photographed by Bernie Haase at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, 11 December 2022)

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Southern Whiteface (Photographed by Bernie Haase at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, 11 December 2022)

After we had admired the view from the windy lookout and saw some Magpie Larks, we continued on towards the western boundary of the garden. More Redthroats made themselves known and Rainbow Bee-eaters were hawking for insects from some dead shrubs in which there were Zebra Finches roosting. Fairy Martins darted about overhead and congregated at the entrance to the Whyalla railway line tunnel that passes under the Stuart highway. The boundary fence prevented us from being able to look in the tunnel to see if they were nesting there.



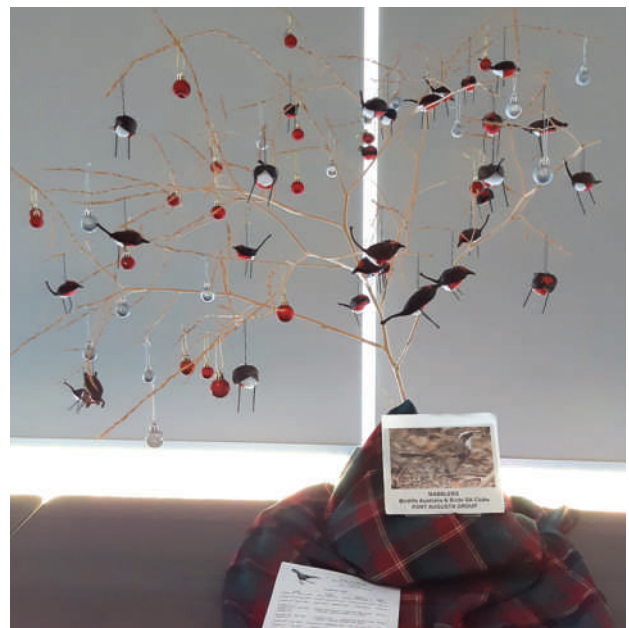
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
(Photographed by Bernie Haase at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, 11 December 2022)

As we headed back to the main building for smoko Purple-backed Fairy-wrens, Magpies and a White-fronted Honeyeater were seen.

We met some more late arriving birders at smoko time. Three were from Whyalla, two from Pt. Pirie and one each from Pt. Neill and Nelshaby. They had found a pair of Southern Whiteface nesting in the plains bird hide and a Black-shouldered Kite and Little Raven was also seen. After we had our smoko and ordered our Xmas lunch meals it was decided to have a quick look at the Redcliffs lookout area, so we drove there. There was a strong wind blowing and the only shore birds we found were Silver Gulls and a Pied Cormorant. There were some more of the birds already seen but at the lookout a couple of Pipits were added to our bird list. A Sand Goanna provided us with some stalking practice and photo opportunities. It was time to get back to the main building for our Xmas lunch.

We had an enjoyable lunch and then went into the conference room and watched bird photos on a big screen that had been taken by our mob throughout the year. There were some brilliant photos taken by keen birders and some interesting discussions about the birds, the photos and cameras used. It was a good day out with 38 bird species found and the birds of the day being the Redthroats and Chirruping Wedgebills, with a mention for the always popular Rainbow Bee-eaters and the Fairy Martins, which are only seasonally seen here.

Bernie Haase



The Babbler's Christmas Tree, made by Chris Nayda, with Red-capped Robins made by Jude Owen (Photograph supplied by Shirley Mundy)

Past Excursions *(continued)*

Birds SA

Thursday 15 December

Monarto and Ferries-McDonald Conservation Parks

A keen group of 16 birders turned up for this field trip to Monarto and Ferries MacDonald Conservation Parks. The day was a bit overcast with a slight breeze. These two Conservation Parks are notorious for either plenty of interesting birds or not much at all. Unfortunately this day was not much at all. A combined total of just 16 bird species (common birds) were either seen or just heard, so rather disappointing, but everyone had a great walk, talked about plants, spiders, animal tracks etc. while getting eaten alive by mosquitos.

John Gitsham



Members, led by John Gitsham, 'enjoying' their Conservation Parks field trip *(15 December 2022)*

Birds SA

Saturday 14 January

Altona Reserve

Cancelled due to fire ban and Park closure.

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Sunday 15 January

Baroota Reservoir

On a mild, overcast and windy morning, which was much appreciated after the preceding days of 40°+ temperatures, 5 birders congregated in the Mambray Creek highway parking bay. Two were from Port Augusta and one each from Whyalla, Wilmington and Mambray Creek. We drove off towards Baroota reservoir via the cattle track back road and enjoyed some birding along the way.

The first birds we saw were a pair of Brown Falcons that cruised across a paddock while a Singing Honeyeater and a Crested Pigeon sat in some shrubbery watching a small flock of White-fronted Chats on the ground. Nankeen Kestrels hovered in the wind above some Australian Magpies searching for food in a fallow paddock. As we drove across a bluebush-dominated plain, we found many White-winged Fairywrens and Australian Pipits and a few Brown Songlarks, Horsfield's Bushlarks and a pair of White-browed Woodswallows. Flocks of Galahs and Little Corellas flew past heading South while many Little Ravens and a few Australian Ravens moved about in the nearby paddocks looking for grasshoppers. Near some old ruins a flock of House Sparrows was flushed out. Some Emus and small flocks of Budgerigars and Zebra Finches were added to the bird list on our return trip from Baroota reservoir.



Black-fronted Dotterel *(Photographed by Richard Croll at the Baroota Reservoir, 15 January 2023)*

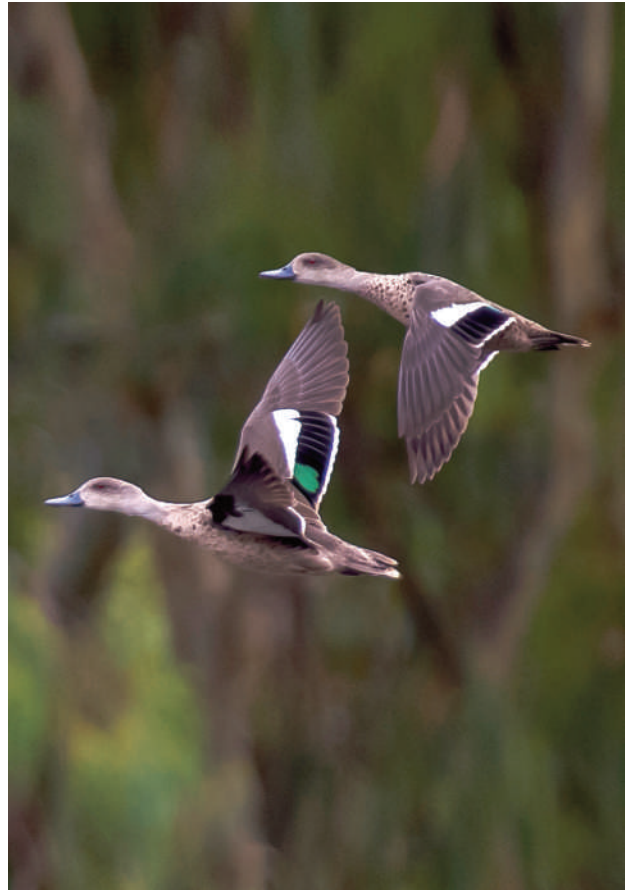
Past Excursions *(continued)*



Sacred Kingfisher (Photographed by Colin Elliott at the Baroota Reservoir, 15 January 2023)

At the reservoir gate, which I opened gratefully with a key supplied by SA Water, we met two more birders from Pt. Pirie. We stopped at the entrance area and looked for birds in the Redgum-lined creek, finding Peaceful Doves, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Silvereyes, Crested Pigeons, Common Blackbirds, House Sparrows, Mallee Ringnecks, Rainbow Lorikeets, many White-plumed Honeyeaters and some vocal Grey Shrike-thrushes. This time there were no Reed Warblers, Little Grassbirds or Crakes in the reed-filled creek. It must be too good in the flooded areas to the north and east.

We drove on and parked near the reservoir wall for smoko and walked around the more open Redgum treed area. Here we found Singing, Spiny-cheeked and more White-plumed Honeyeaters, a Red Wattlebird, Yellow-throated Miners, Kookaburras, Sacred Kingfishers, Magpielarks and Flinders Adelaide Rosellas. On we drove, crossing the spillway and driving to the edge of the reservoir water. The water level was much higher than last year and few birds were to be seen. On the far side of the reservoir we could see Wood Duck, Coots and some Pacific Black Duck and high above was a Wedge-tailed Eagle. We moved on driving across the reservoir



Grey Teal (Photographed by Larry Gruitt at the Baroota Reservoir, 15 January 2023)

wall and up a hill that overlooks the south arm of the water body. Here we found some more Pacific Black and Maned Ducks, Grey Teal, Eurasian Coots and Australasian Grebes with young.

After we had driven around the south arm of the water we stopped for lunch under the Redgums that line the edge of the reservoir. Here we saw Willie Wagtails, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Tree Martins, Galahs, a Diamond Dove, Welcome Swallows, a Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, White-browed Babblers, Rufous Whistler, Dusky Woodswallows with young and a Black-fronted Dotterel.

After we had eaten our lunches, we followed the road around the edge of the water, stopping in places to 'scope the water and banks. We found only three Musk Ducks and five Blue-billed Ducks, which was a lot less than on previous visits here. I had come across a Black-fronted Dotterel nesting in the middle of the track two days earlier when I was checking out the place after I had picked up the gate key. It was standing over its eggs shading them in the 40°+ heat and would not move, allowing me to get very close and get some photos and then place some rocks nearby to mark the nest position.

Past Excursions *(continued)*

I then had to slowly drive over the bird and it did not move. I was hoping it was still there as we approached the spot but the nest was empty, but we found two very small chicks on the mud flats nearby and with the parents doing the broken-wing thing, trying to lure us away.

At the northern end of the water body there were White-faced Herons, many more Australasian Grebes, Great Cormorants, Masked Lapwings, nesting Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants and more of the ducks seen earlier. Australian Magpies, Little Corellas, Grey Butcherbirds, Purple-backed Fairywrens, Elegant Parrots, Mistletoebirds, White-fronted Chats, Rufous Songlarks, Common Bronzewing, Red-rumped Parrots, and a Hobby were in the trees and shrubs. We turned around and headed back to the entrance adding a Brown Goshawk, Australian Ravens, White-winged Fairywren and a Whistling Kite to our bird list. It had turned out to be a lovely day even though it was windy.

The Cattle Track yielded 19 bird species and Baroota reservoir 58 species, providing a combined bird species total of 68 for the day. A pretty good days birding! The birds of the day would be the Horsfield's Bushlarks, Diamond Dove and Hobby, with a mention of the nomadic Zebra Finches and Budgerigars, plus the Black-fronted Dotterel with young.

Bernie Haase



Little Black Cormorants *(Photographed by Bernie Haase at the Baroota Reservoir, 15 January 2023)*

Birds SA

Thursday 19 January Onkaparinga Wetlands

It was not a typical summer's day when we met at the Port Noarlunga Oval with an overcast sky and cool breeze. It was another good attendance with 25 members including a handful of new faces which is very encouraging and I thank those experienced members for sharing their knowledge and encouragement. Given recent rain and a high tide the water level required us to undertake our observations by walking the tall eastern oval bank. A total of 29 species was recorded including Black Swan and Grey Teal (40 each), Masked Lapwing (25), Silver Gull (100), White-faced Heron (10), Crested Pigeon (20), Galah (50), Little Corella (10), Musk Lorikeet (12) and rainbow Lorikeet (8). Other species seen included Nankeen Kestrel, Black-shouldered Kite, Caspian Tern, Australasian Darter, Australian White Ibis and Straw-necked Ibis which helped new members get into the groove before we drove the short way to Perry's Bend Reserve for the main part of the excursion. I will mention here that two members, Tina and Kevin, chose to walk directly between both survey sites and in doing so were able to add a number of additional sightings to our lists.

Perry's Bend Reserve is part of a wetland trail opened in 2016 after the wetlands were rehabilitated by SA Water. The 16-hectare site was formerly a sludge lagoon near a wastewater treatment plant, but has been transformed into a sanctuary that features a series of interconnected pools that treat urban stormwater before the water enters the Onkaparinga River. The walking trails are well defined and offer a variety of habitats to explore. This site also has a toilet and picnic tables under shelter and is highly recommended for you to visit. Whilst having lunch we did the bird count and were pleased to see our tally of sightings for this location was 50 species. In addition to our sightings at the Oval we were able to include 32 new ones for the day. The notable included Brown Quail (2), Tawny Frogmouth (4), Royal Spoonbill, White Faced Heron, Elegant Parrot, White-throated Treecreeper, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Weebill, White-browed Babbler, Dusky Woodswallow (6 + 1 juvenile), Crested Shrike-tit, Grey Shrike-thrush, Fairy Martin (20), Tree Martin (50), Welcome Swallow (20), Little Grassbird, Australian Reed Warbler, Golden-headed Cisticola, Silvereye (20), Mistletoebird, Red-browed Finch (20), European Green Finch (6) and European Goldfinch (20).

In total we recorded 56 species during our visit to both locations.

Lynton Huxley

Past Excursions *(continued)*

Birds SA

Sunday 29 January

Myponga Reservoir Reserve

With unpredictable weather bringing rain overnight and into early morning who would think we would get a large group of birders turning up?

Thirty-six people came, some of them new to Birds SA. As soon as we arrived a huge flock of noisy Galahs swirled above us and we estimated a flock of 150-200 in number.

Win Syson and I brought our scopes and we headed down to the water's edge where we could see water birds scattered over a large distance. The water level was low and there was pink water weed, interspersed with green and yellow grass where birds could hide. Looking across the water to the opposite side, we spotted Black Swan, Shelduck, Maned Duck, 3 species of Cormorants, Little Pied, Great and Little Black, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Coots, a White Ibis, a few Swamp Hens. White-faced Herons and Magpie Larks were feeding on the edges. A Musk Duck caught our attention and later put on a display.

The tracks in the Reserve are well laid out and we followed the lowest one that's only accessible now that the water level has dropped down in summer. This was where the beautiful little Black-fronted Dotterel and its mate were seen.

Coming up to the 2nd car park and kayak loading area, small bush birds were about in the acacias and gum trees including Superb Fairywrens and Brown Thornbills. Further up we hoped to find Scarlet Robins in the pine forest, but they were not there. A Grey shrike-thrush was calling and later a White-throated Treecreeper was heard and seen.

We headed up the hill to the adjoining scrub area where we enjoyed the long-distance view and a short rest. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos were flying about and a few Sulphur-crested Cockatoos joined in with them. Walking alongside the eucalypt trees near the pine forest, we finally found the male and female Scarlet Robins. The honeyeaters were scarce as there was little for them to feed on. In fact, NO one saw a New Holland Honeyeater! Grey Fantails were easy to find, but the Striated Pardalote, and Striated Thornbills were harder to see amongst the gum leaves.

A slow walk back to the main car park where we planned to meet at 12 midday for the bird count and lunch break was perfectly timed. Some of the group dispersed earlier and the rest of us gathered at a nearby picnic table.

We totalled 57 species. A good count for the morning considering the duck species were low compared to previous visits. The Reservoir is a good place for birding with its variety of habitats and wide open spaces to view them.

It was lovely to see new members attend and some young ones amongst them, but it's hard to give them special time with such a large group. Registering a week beforehand may help to plan it better in the future.

Wendy Phillips

Birds SA

Saturday 11 February

Thompson Beach

The morning was overcast, with the south westerly wind being quite strong and thus not allowing the high tide to recede for about 4 hours. The sabkha at the northern end of Thompson Beach was very full, so the few Migratory Waders that were present were hunkered down against the wind. Red-necked Stint was the most numerous at the northern end at 200. This was particularly disappointing because on Friday 10th February there were over 1000 on the sabkha and about 300 Curlew Sandpipers, along with other species, basically alive with birds. What a difference a day makes!

Down the southern end Common Greenshank numbered 40, with 20 in northern end and 40 Red Knots. By 10.30am with the tide beginning to recede, Red-necked Stints and Red-capped Plover gave a very good close-up view, with the bird of the day being a Lesser Sand-plover. Thirty people attended the morning and I offer an apology on behalf of Birds SA to the folk who missed the "start time" due to a mistake in The Birder.

Kate Buckley

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Sunday 12 February

Whyalla Conservation Park

It was much cooler than on previous days, but there was patchy cloud and a strong wind blowing when five birders came together at the tanks parking bay near the Iron Knob turnoff. Two were from Adelaide and one each from Pt. Augusta, Pt. Pirie and Mambray Creek.

From here we drove to Whyalla and turned off into the Whyalla Conservation Park, just north of the city. We were met by another local birder, collected our birding gear together and started looking for birds.

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Crested Tern (Photographed by Richard Croll in the Whyalla Conservation Park, 12 February 2023)

White-browed Babblers and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters started our bird list. We drove into the park along the track that goes to the main feature of the park called Wild Dog Hill.

Our first stop was a short way along the track where we heard some birds amongst the Myall tree woodland and chenopod scrubland. Chestnut-rumped Thornbills and Splendid Fairywrens were the first birds we found here and then we saw a Crested Bellbird perched on a tree in the distance. The overcast sky and strong wind only gave us a poorly lit silhouette view of it. Singing Honeyeaters, Southern Whitefaces, Inland Thornbills and Redthroats improved our bird list.

On we drove to a dry dam next to the track and found Purple-backed Fairywrens, a Grey Butcherbird, Australian Ravens, Crested Pigeons, and a Nankeen Kestrel. Some Red Wattlebirds were flying past looking for some flowering plants, which would be hard to find in the dry woodland here. The call of the Western Grasswren was played, and shortly there was a glimpse of movement in the undergrowth. A single Grasswren came to look for the call's origin whilst giving us some good viewings and photo opportunities.

We drove on to Wild Dog Hill where we stopped for brunch and added Australian Magpies, Yellow-throated Miners, Willie Wagtails, Little Ravens, Blue Bonnets and more Grey Butcherbirds to the list. Western Grasswrens are usually found in the area but we were unable to locate them this time.



Western Grasswren (Photographed by Bernie Haase in the Whyalla Conservation Park, 12 February 2023)

On our way back along the track we stopped again at the dam and found Mulga Parrots and a much more approachable Crested Bellbird that allowed us to photograph it. We left the conservation park and drove the 20km. to Point Lowly. The wind was blowing at gale force with big white capped waves and surf crashing onto the rocky headland. We sheltered behind the Lowly lighthouse homestead for lunch.

In the trees around the homestead were Common Starlings and House Sparrows and Welcome Swallows flew past. We walked around the rocky, windblown headland where Crested Terns, Pied Cormorants, Black-faced Cormorants, Silver Gulls and Pacific Gulls rested quietly in the wind. A single bird was spotted sitting on a rock and had us confused as to what it was. As we got closer it stood up on short legs and turned its head to reveal a stout, pointed bill. It was an uncoloured Ruddy Turnstone.

As we moved around the headland Singing Honeyeaters and Purple-backed Fairywren moved about in the shrubs further inland. After bird call we drove to the boat ramp passing some White-winged Fairywrens on the way. Some of the group had to head home while the rest of us drove around the rough coastal track to Fitzgerald Bay. The wind was keeping the birds from view in the bushes and the numerous campers and four wheel drive tracks through the scrub also would be keeping bird numbers down. There were flocks of Crested Terns and Pied Cormorants on some of the rocky points but not much else was found.

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Ruddy Turnstone (Photographed by Bernie Haase in the Whyalla Conservation Park, 12 February 2023)

The number of birds for the day was not great, with 23 bird species found at the Conservation Park and 12 at Point Lowly. We saw a total of 32 bird species for the day. The bird of the day would be the Western Grasswren, with a mention to the Crested Bellbirds, the tricky Ruddy Turnstone and the most northern of Spencer Gulf's, Black-faced Cormorants.

Bernie Haase

Fleurieu Birders

Tuesday 14 February Coorong Boat Tour

The February boat trip this year was very different to the last few years' charters that we've enjoyed in the "little orange boat", which sadly, was sold last year. We were offered the larger Spirit of the Coorong boat instead. A maximum of 38 people booked and we had perfect weather for the day. Most people made good use of their cameras and while some stood up the front of the boat, others took to the top deck for perfect viewing and photo opportunities.

With all the barrage gates left open, the salt water is mixing with the river water and the bird life at the Goolwa Barrage is down 95%. Most of the New Zealand fur seals that bask on the lock structure had left.

Heading up towards the Mouth of the River were good numbers of Pelicans, Black-faced Cormorants, Caspian

Terns, Crested Terns, small groups of Fairy Terns, Great Cormorants, Cape Barren Geese, Silver Gulls, Black Swans, Pied Oystercatchers, and a couple of Sooty Oystercatchers.

Three Eastern Curlews were resting with heads turned, and the camera picked up Bar-tailed Godwits and a few Greenshanks. Red-necked Stints were in one group near the Murray Mouth which is where the biggest number of birds congregated at the top of the Coorong. The River current was swirling around at the Mouth and brown water could be seen a long way out in the ocean.

We stopped at Barker's Knoll and strolled through the sandhills of the National Park to the open beach. Dead Carp were in stages of decay, a familiar site over the last 3 months to all the locals from Goolwa to Victor Harbor. Despite this, the Coorong is beautiful. The beach was full of seaweed and fur balls. There were Ravens and Silver Gulls as far as the eye could see. A murmuration of Common Starlings swept across the skyline, Singing Honeyeaters were calling and a Brush Bronzewing sighted amongst the bushes. As soon as we re-boarded the boat Captain Bain said, "watch out for Sea Eagles". Instantly one appeared and it was chased by a dozen Ravens until it dropped out of sight. It was so good to see it briefly.

In the fresh water soak we spotted one Yellow and four Royal Spoonbills, a few White Ibis and 4 Emus. A Whistling Kite was keeping guard near a large nest at the Snake Pit site. Ducks were in small groups close to the shore, mainly Chestnut Teal, Shelducks, and a few Pacific Black Ducks and Grey Teal.

On the return journey, I passed the record sheet around and tallied 41 species. I expected a few more could be added to the list when photos got checked later and they were. Birds of prey added were, Collared Sparrowhawk, Australian Hobby, Swamp Harrier.

We knew it was going to be a very different experience for bird watchers this year, as we could see the effects of the high- water flows in comparison to other years resulting in the low numbers of migratory shorebirds.

Many thanks to the Spirit of the Coorong Cruise and their support staff for providing us with lunch and morning and afternoon tea. Always an enjoyable trip!

Wendy Phillips

Birds SA

Thursday 16 February Shepherds Hill Recreation Park

Cancelled to comply with our Hot Weather Protocol.

Future Excursions

If you have any queries or require further information:

CONTACT: Lynton Huxley

Field Program Co-ordinator and Campout Organiser

Phone: 0498 466 092

Email: fieldtrips@birdssa.asn.au

The following Excursions have been scheduled, but are subject to cancellation or change due to weather conditions or the close of a site for conservation requirements, so it is important that you check the Birds SA website and/or the Facebook page for any updated information. Any affected Excursion will be updated 24 hours prior to its commencement if there is to be any change.

Whilst usually not relevant this time of the year, please be aware of our **HOT WEATHER PROTOCOL:**

If a **Fire Ban** is in effect or the forecast temperature is 36C or above in the area of a scheduled excursion, that walk is automatically cancelled.

With the above in mind and to assist members being informed directly, we have arranged for you to pre-register your intention to participate on a particular Excursion using the Member Jungle site. Pre-registration is not compulsory but is another way we can keep you informed if your chosen event is cancelled.

Given Birds SA duty of care obligation to you, our members, we do ask that Members only attend field trips if they are well and have no cold or flu-like symptoms.

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

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Sunday 19 March

Telowie Gorge/Nelshaby Gorge

Meet at 8am at Telowie Gorge.

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 1 April

Inman River Walk

Meet at 8.30am at the car park opposite the Victor Harbor Library on Bay Rd.

TRIP LEADER: *Bob Daly*

Birds SA **EASTER CAMPOUT**

Wednesday 5 April - Tuesday 11 April

BALCANOONA STATION HOMESTEAD within the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park (660km from Adelaide and 100km east of Leigh Creek)

Contact Lynton on 0498 466 092 for information or refer to details in the previous issue of the Birder magazine. Don't miss this campout for birding in this area is expected to be 'as good as it gets' for this region.

TRIP LEADER: *Lynton Huxley*

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Friday 14 April - Monday 17 April

Hiltaba Nature Reserve

Meet at 8.30am at Tanks/Iron Knob turnoff (campout facilities available, costs apply)

Birds SA

Thursday 20 April

Byards Road Wetland, Reynella East Easy
(AP) 22km

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

TRIP LEADER: *Lynton Huxley*

Birds SA

Sunday 30 April

Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park Medium (MLR) 60km

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

TRIP LEADER: *Tina Woods*

Future Excursions *(continued)*

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 6 May

Private Vineyard, Currency Creek

Meet at 8.30am at the car park, One Paddock, Currency Creek Winery

TRIP LEADER: *Wendy Phillips*

Birds SA

Saturday 13 May

Glenthorne National Park Medium (AP) 17km

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

TRIP LEADER: *Alan Burns*

Birds SA

Thursday 18 May

Whites Road Wetlands Easy (AP) 16 km

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

TRIP LEADER: *Ali Ben Kahn*

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Saturday 20 May — Sunday 21 May

Catninga Station

Meet at 8am at Stirling North service Station (campout facilities available, costs apply)

Birds SA

Sunday 28 May

Manning Flora & Fauna Reserve, McLaren Flat Easy (MLR) 32km

Meet at 8.30am at the Manning Reserve track entrance located off Kays Road about 500m from the junction with Whittings Road.

TRIP LEADER: *Ali Ben Kahn*

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 3 June

Cox Scrub

Meet at 8.30am at the main car park on Ashbourne Rd.

TRIP LEADER: *Edith St. George*

The Birder | Autumn 2023

Birds SA

Saturday 10 June

Browns Road, Monarto Easy (MLR) 60km

Meet at 8.30am at Browns Road, Monarto, just off the old Murray Bridge Road. Leave the SE Freeway at the Callington exit. Drive through Callington and turn right onto the old Murray Bridge road. The junction is on the left at the top of the hill.

TRIP LEADER: *to be advised*

Birds SA

Thursday 15 June

Shepherds Hill Recreation Park Difficult (MM) 10km

Meet at 8.30am at the carpark on Ayliffes Road. The carpark is located approx. 500m east of the intersection of Main South Road and Ayliffes Road.

TRIP LEADER: *Lynton Huxley*

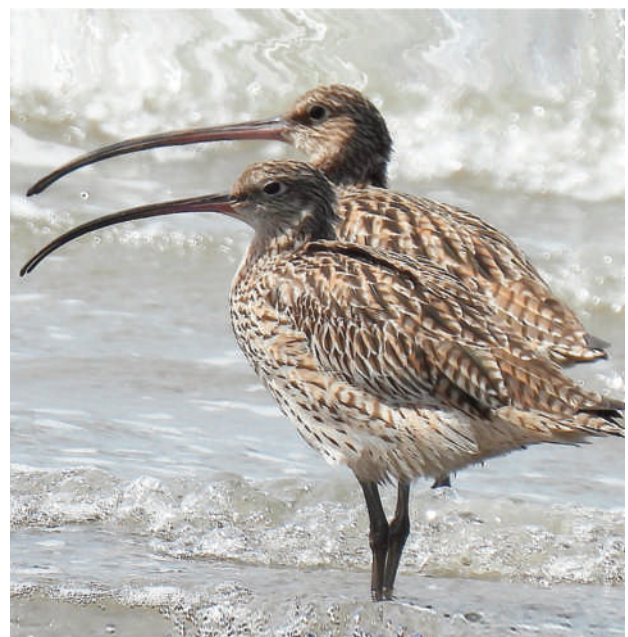
Birds SA

Sunday 25 June

Jenkins Scrub Moderate (MLR) 61km

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.

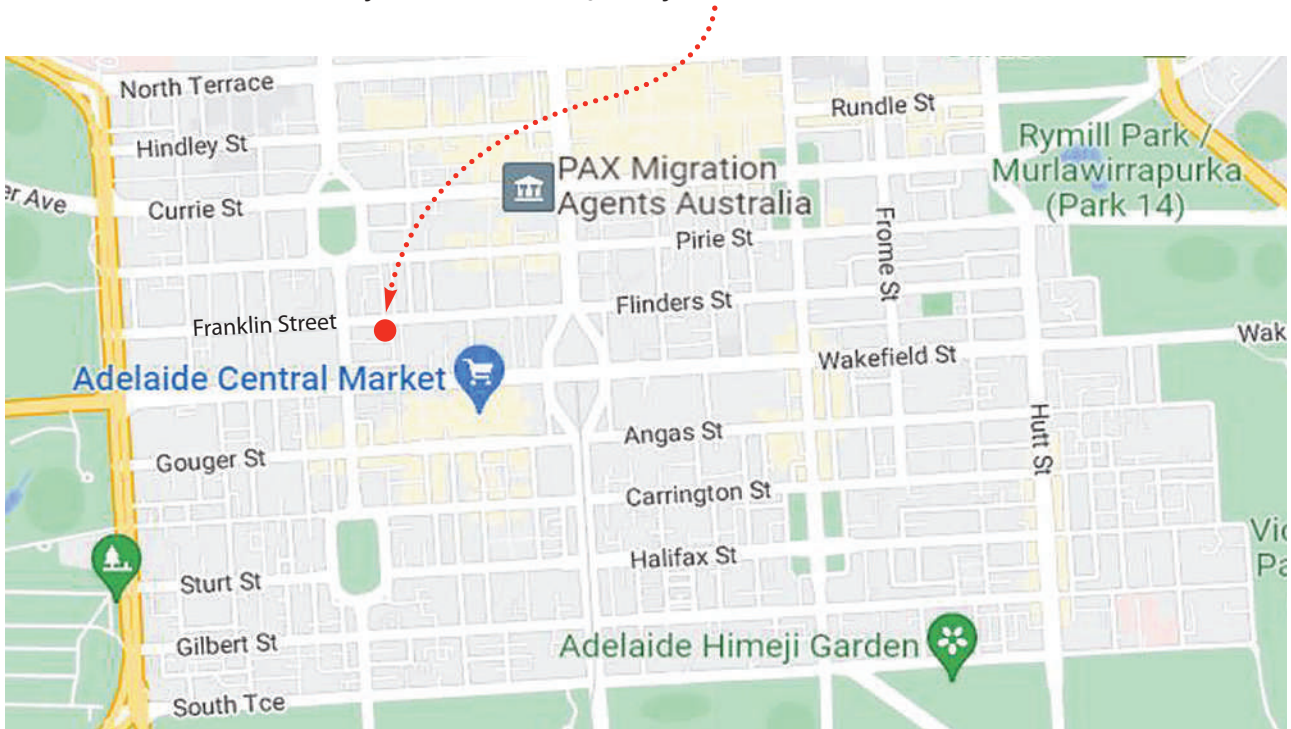
TRIP LEADER: *Richard Woodland*



Eastern Curlews (Photographed by Richard Irving at Oyster Point Park, Queensland, 2023)

From the Library

The library is now operational upstairs in the boardroom of the Conservation Council SA.
The library is located at The Joinery, 111 Franklin Street, Adelaide.



Library Opening Times

until the
end of June

Friday March 10	12.30 – 3:00
Friday March 24	12.30 – 3:00
Friday April 7	Closed for Good Friday
Friday April 21	12.30 – 3:00
Friday May 12	12.30 – 3:00
Friday May 26	12.30 – 3:00
Friday June 9	12.30 – 3:00
Friday June 23	12.30 – 3:00

Thank you!

*A big thank you to Lynton Huxley and his team
for all their work installing the cabinets.*

From the Library *(continued)*

New books



636.6864

OLS

Olsen, Penny

Flight of the Budgerigar : an illustrated history

Canberra, National Library of Australia, 2021.

ISBN 9780642279606

The Budgerigar is arguably Australia's best-known bird. Taking the reader from the Dreamtime to the colonial live bird trade, the competitive culture of the showroom and today's thriving wild flocks, flight of the Budgerigar is the authoritative history of the Budgerigar, written by respected ornithologist Dr Penny Olsen, and lavishly illustrated in full colour.



598.299423 FRI

Friends of the Coorong

Key bird species of the Coorong

Friends of the Coorong, 2020

Produced by the Friends of the Coorong, this spiral-bound publication is grouped by habitat or type with detailed information about the bird and is accompanied by colour photos.

Missing journals

The library is missing the following issues of Emu — Austral Ornithology:

2015 Issue 3 and 4

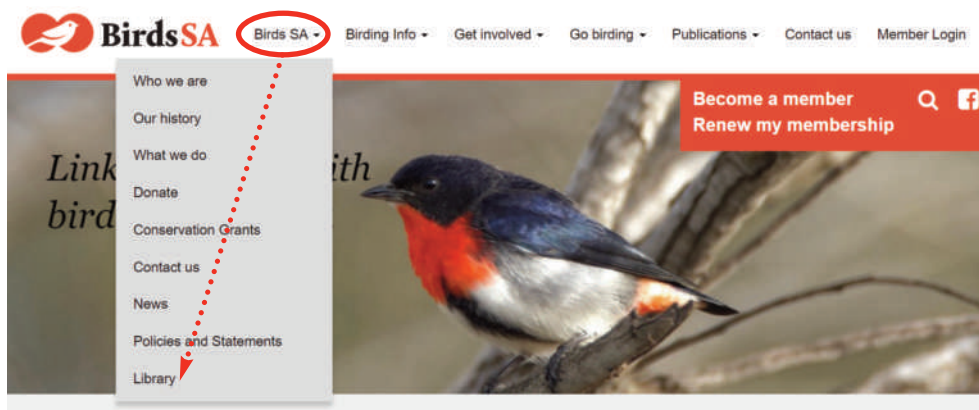
2017 Issue 3

2018 Issue 1

If anyone has any spare copies or would like to donate replacement copies, we would be most grateful.

If you are able to assist, please contact Karen Donkin. Email: karen.donkin@birdssa.asn.au

Access to the library catalogue is via the Birds SA website: <https://birdssa.asn.au>
or directly at <https://www.libib.com/au/birdssa>



Bird Records

Collated by Graham Carpenter

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

birdrecords@birdssa.asn.au or phone 8297 5463.

Note that the list includes reports of rare or vagrant species to South Australia that may 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).

Brown Quail

Additional reports of small numbers, mostly from AP.

3, 27/11/2022. Owen, AP. Steeles, C.

1, 27/11/2022. Pinkerton Plains, AP. Milde, S.

1, 11/12/2022. Port Wakefield Proof Range, AP. Lange, J. *et al.*

1, 21/1/2023. Port Prime, AP. Parkyn, G.

Heard, 22/2/2023. Webb Beach, AP. Carpenter, G.

Adult + 5 juveniles, 14/12/2022. Onkaparinga RP, MLR. Whatmough, B.

Also several reported here on 31/1/2023. Cook, S. *et al.*
2, 7/1/2023. Salt Creek, Coorong, MM.

Carpenter, G. *et al.*

1, 15/1/2023. Mintaro, LN. Howell, B.

Cape Barren Goose

1, 8/12/2022. Aldinga Washpool, MLR. Carpenter, G.

3, 13/12/2022. Bolivar Sewage Works, AP.

Breed, B. *et al.*

1, 23/12/2022. Aldinga Reef, MLR. Luker, A.

Plumed Whistling Duck

4 + 10 juveniles, 1 to 3/2/2023. Witchelina Reserve, Black Hill Dam, NW. Hiscock, J. & Cole, P.

The Annotated Checklist of the Birds of SA (Parker et al. 1985) lists few previous reports of breeding in SA, only from the far NE (last 1979).

Royal Spoonbill

1, 29/1/2023. Grange, Charles Sturt museum, AP. Harding, F.

Straw-necked Ibis

1, 26/11/2022. Glenthorne NP, MLR. Burns, A.

White-necked Heron

1, 3/12/2022. Aldinga Washpool, MLR. Colgan, S.

Black-faced Cormorant

1 immature, 14/11/2022. Bald Hill Beach, AP.

Taylor, P.W.

1, 22/1/2023. Port Clinton, YP.

Taylor, P.W.

Rarely reported in northern part of gulf.

Osprey

1 immature, 20/11/2022. Henley Beach, AP.

Edey, D. SA

A number of young Ospreys in SA are being satellite tracked by Ian Falkenberg and others, providing great insight into the birds' movements.

White-bellied Sea Eagle

1 immature, 26/12/2022. Port Augusta,

Power Station Rd, NW.

Langdon, P.

Square-tailed Kite

1, 24/11/2022. Forreston, MLR.

Slade, R.

1, 12/1/2023. Gawler, Clonlea Park, MLR. Harper, D. & S.

1 over, 15/1/2023. Windsor Gardens, Torrens River, AP.

Whatmough, B.

1, 30/1/2023. Para Wirra NP lake, MLR. Kaashoek, M.

Australian Bustard

1, 14/1/2023. Cockburn, LN.

Mulconray, N.

Lewin's Rail

1, 24/11/2022. Aldinga, Hart Rd wetlands, MLR.

Bainbridge, T.

Australian Spotted Crake

1 immature, 1/2/2023. Nelshaby Reservoir, FR. Elliott, C.

Baillon's Crake

Few and later reports this spring-summer compared with recent years.

1, 10/1/2023. Greenfield Wetlands, Magazine Rd, AP.

Lange, J.

1, 20/1/2023. Mount Barker, Laratinga Wetlands, MLR.

Moore, G.

Painted Buttonquail

1 found dead, 18/11/2022. Richmond, AP. Avemarg, J.

Little Buttonquail

Several reports from suburban AP

1, 27/11/2022. Adelaide, Frome Rd, AP.

Buring, N.

1, 4/12/2022. Prospect, Clifton St, AP.

Paton, F.

1, 18/12/2022. Hove, AP.

Crouch, A.

1, Dec 2022. Prospect, AP.

Mackintosh, M.

1, 8/1/2023. Marion Shopping Centre, AP. Edey, D.

Bird Records *(continued)*

Greater Sand Plover

Reports of relatively high numbers for this species in SA.

19, 9/1/2023. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*
17, 13/1/2023. Clinton CP, AP. Taylor, P.W. & Moore, G.
Also 15 seen there on 21/1/2023 Woodland, R.

Lesser Sand Plover

1, 12/12/2022. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*

Common Sandpiper

1, 16/11/2022. Hope Valley Reservoir, AP. Wright, D.
1, 18/12/2022. Bay of Shoals, KI. Buick, I.

Red Knot

1200, 9/1/2023. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*
1200, 24/1/2023. Port Prime, AP.
van Trig, M.A. & Parkyn, G.

Pectoral Sandpiper

1, 10/1/2023. Bolivar Sewage Works, AP. Breed, B. *et al.*
1, 21/1/2023. Port Clinton, YP. Letheby, R. & M.
1, 3/2/2023. Brimpton Lakes, EP. Wallace, S.

Broad-billed Sandpiper

3, 13/1/2023. Clinton CP, AP.
Feeding on intertidal mudflats. Taylor, P.W. & Moore, G.
1, 21/1/2023. Port Prime, AP. Parkyn, G.

Bar-tailed Godwit

90, 10/12/2022. Murray Mouth, MM.
Jack, T. & Bainbridge, T.
13, 25/12/2022. Middleton Beach, MM.
Also present were 26 Pied and 8 Sooty Oystercatchers.
Black, G.
19, 18/1/2023. Goolwa Beach, MM. Haskett, C.
*Presumably feeding along ocean beach due to high river
levels around Murray Mouth, leading to potential conflict
with off-road vehicles.*

Whimbrel

12, 12/12/2022 & 9/1/2023. Price Saltfields, YP.
Jack, T. *et al.*
1, 15/1/2023. Bald Hill Beach, AP. Edey, D.

Red-necked Phalarope

1, 15/11/2022. Thompson Beach, AP. Reeves, J.

Grey-tailed Tattler

2, 23/1/2023. Bald Hill Beach, AP. Taylor, P.W.
1, 27/1/2023. Port Lincoln, Billy Lights Point, EP.
Wood, M.

Common Gull-billed Tern

13, 13/1/2023. Clinton CP, AP. Taylor, P.W. & Moore, G.
1, 21/1/2023. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*

Common Tern

1, 11/1/2023. Clinton CP, AP. Mulconray, N.
Also seen there on 15/1/2023 Moore, G. *et al.*
1, 3/2/2023. Bald Hill Beach, AP.
Possibly the same bird as above. Taylor, P.W.
*Few reports in Gulf St Vincent, with most previous records
around Murray Mouth.*

Little Tern

2, 9/1/2023. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*
2, 11/1/2023. Coorong Channel,
Hindmarsh Island, MM. Newman, L.
1, 25/1/2023. Murray Mouth, MM. Kalvas, J.

Diamond Dove

1, 26/11/2022. Port Augusta arid lands
botanic gardens, NW. Langdon, P.
1, 27/12/2022. 5km SW Victor Harbor, MLR.
Carpenter, G.

*Several recent reports from southern areas, although
difficult to determine if wild or escaped birds.*

Peaceful Dove

1, 23/11/2022. Kingscote, John Downing Reserve, KI.
Ingram, G.
See previous report from KI in last Birder.

Little Corella

3000, 30/1/2023. Port Elliott, MLR. Spiker, J.

Long-billed Corella

10, 21/11/2022. Callington, MM. Edey, D.
*Members are encouraged to check flocks of corellas for
the long-billed species to monitor its spread north in the
MLR and east into MM.*

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

A few more reports in northern MLR and edge of MM.
2, 3/11/2022. Para Wirra NP, MLR. Letheby, R.
5, 20/11/2022. Monarto Woodlands, MM. Hansman, D.
5 or 6, 21/12/2022. Sandy Creek,
The Barracks Rd, MLR. Dennis, B. & Banks, S.
*Also small numbers over suburban AP in Dec and Jan, a
bit later than in recent years.*
3, 4/11/2022. Fullarton, AP. Horton, P.
5, 27/11/2022. Cumberland Park,
MLR. Bates-Brownsword, C.
2, 9/12/2022. Adelaide Oval, AP. Carpenter, G.
10, 20/1/2023. Black Forest, AP. Carpenter, G.

Bird Records *(continued)*

Elegant Parrot

2, 21/1/2023. Port Clinton, YP. Letheby, R.

Surprisingly few reports from YP (see Eckert, J. SA Ornithologist 35:65-67).

25, 30/1/2023. Flinders Chase NP, near Cape du Couedic, KI Correll, S.

A regular post-breeding visitor to KI with no breeding reports yet.

Eastern Koel

1, 25/11/2022. Prospect, AP. Christy, P.

Male heard, 24/12/2022. Flinders Park, River Torrens, AP. Edey, D.

To note that only the male gives the coo-ee call.

Tawny Frogmouth

2, Dec 2022. St Agnes, Greenwood Dr, AP. Nesting in suburban garden. Stevens, L.

Fork-tailed Swift

Only one report so far this summer.

150, 13/1/2023. Cockburn, LN. Mulconray, N.

Sacred Kingfisher

1, 10/11/2022. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Carter, D. & P.

Superb Fairywren

1 uncoloured male, 11/12/2022. Black Forest, Dryden Rd, AP. Stayed in shrubs in suburban garden for about 5 minutes before flying off to west. Carpenter, G.

Southern Emu wren

2 groups, 27/1/2023. Coffin Bay NP, Point AVOID, EP. Wood, M.

Crimson Chat

Several +juveniles, 2/1/2023. Brookfield CP, MM. Kaashoek, M.

Subsequently reported by various observers.

New Holland Honeyeater

2, 25/11/2022. Stirling North, FR. Interestingly has not colonised gardens in Port Augusta but is present in Port Pirie and Whyalla. Langdon, P.

White-plumed Honeyeater

2, 7/1/2023. 3.5 km NNW Salt Creek, MM. Carpenter, G. *et al.*

There is a small gap in its distribution between the SA and MLR, corresponding to the lack of woodland habitat.

White-throated Gerygone

1, 16/11/2022. Redbanks CP, MN. Moyle, B.

White-browed Babbler

3, 18/11/2022. Blackwood Hill Reserve, Magpie Gully, MLR. Edey, D.

Little Woodswallow

4, 13/11/2022. Devils Peak, FR. Haase, B. *et al.*

White-winged Triller

Male, 10/11/2022. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Carter, D. & P.
Also reported there on 26/11/2022 Edey, D.

Golden Whistler

3, 17/11/2022. Penola CP, SE. Boyle, A. & S.

Recent genetic research by Leo Joseph and others indicates there are two distinct types of 'golden' whistlers in SA whose status is obscured by their similar plumage (especially males) and extensive post-breeding dispersal. The western bird 'Western Whistler' (former subspecies fuliginosa) is more widespread and breeds as far south-east as the upper SE. The eastern bird 'Golden Whistler' (youngi) breeds mainly in the forests of eastern Aust just extending to the lower SE (very few nesting reports) and disperses west to the MLR and beyond in autumn-winter.

Olive-backed Oriole

1, 3/11/2022. Berri, MM. Carter, D. & P.

Australian Raven

2, 14-16/11/2022. Innes NP (Inneston, Royston Head and Cable Bay), YP. Sound recordings obtained to confirm ID. Alcorn, R. & M.

Its status on YP is poorly known.

Tree Martin

800, 21/1/2023. St Kilda, AP. Graff, P.
Members are encouraged to report mass-gatherings of this species given the presence of the large roost at Leigh St in the city used Jan-May in recent years.

Australian Reedwarber

1, 26/12/2022. Birchmore Lagoon, KI. Heldt, C.
Few reports from KI, presumably due to limited extent of reedbed habitats.

Brown Songlark

Male, 26/11/2022. West Beach stormwater basin, AP. Edey, D.

Rufous Songlark

1, 10/11/2022. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Carter, D. & P.

Diamond Firetail

1, 8/1/2023. Para Wirra NP lake, MLR. Hawkins, J.

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Committee meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month, starting at 7.30pm

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Your message will be forwarded to that person.

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Please send in your photos, from your bird trips or from your own birding activities, for inclusion in 'The Birder'

Gotcha!



A Hoopoe about to dine on a grub *(Photographed by Michael Huxley in South Korea, July 2022)*

Now you see me...



Chestnut-rumped Heathwren

This species can be very elusive, moving rapidly through the undergrowth and rarely venturing into the open.

(Photographed by Richard Croll at Alligator Gorge in the Southern Flinders Ranges, 20 February 2023)

It pays to be wary...!



A young Southern Cassowary (Photographed by John Gitsham in North Queensland, 2022)

Did you see that?



Nankeen Kestrels *(Photographed by Lawrie Mortimer, Port Willunga, 3 February 2023)*

Here's looking at you!



A nesting Willie Wagtail *(Photographed by Jill Mortimer in the Riverglade Wetlands, 29 November 2020)*