

The BIRDER

The official magazine of Birds SA

Summer 2023 No 268



Linking people with birds
in South Australia



In this Issue

Shorebirds return from epic journey

Avian influenza update

Nuyts Archipelago Bird Expedition

South Australian Ornithological Association

Birds SA, HONORARY MEMBERS

Honorary memberships are prestigious awards bestowed to past and present members of Birds SA by the *South Australian Ornithological Association* for distinguished service to the Association or in the cause of Ornithology.

1914	Gregory M. Mathews	1964	Alfred G. Edquist	1990	Joan B. Paton	2007	*Penny A. Paton
1941	Samuel Albert White	1970	W. Roy Wheeler	1993	M. Joan Arthur	2010	*Graham A. Carpenter
1949	Frank M. Angel	1972	Brian Glover	1995	*Andrew B. Black	2010	*Leo G. Joseph
1954	Alfred Crompton	1974	Arnold R. McGill	2002	Robert F. Brown	2010	*Lynn P. Pedler
1954	Robert Crompton	1980	Erhard F. Boehm	2002	H. John Eckert	2010	*Max H. Waterman
1955	J. Neil McGilp	1985	Gordon B. Ragless	2002	David J. Vincent	2014	Trevor S.J. Cowie
1957	Frank E. Parsons	1988	J. Mark Bonnin	2002	*Richard Schodde	2022	Brian J. Blaylock
1961	John B. Cleland	1990	Harold W. Crouch	2007	*David C. Paton	2023	*John H. Hatch
1964	Herbert T. Condon						

* Current Honorary Members

Historical information from The Centenary Book: *Birds, Birders & Birdwatching 1899-1999*.
Chapter; Honorary Members by Muriel Reid 2000

News from the Grivells: Some recent encounters in outback WA



- 1 **Mangrove Fantail**. A first time find for the Grivells! (Photographed by Ashley Grivell at Port Smith Mangroves WA on 8 September 2023)
- 2 **Golden-backed Honeyeater** (Photographed by Glenys Grivell at Pentecost River Crossing, Gibb River Road, WA on 22 August 2023)
- 3 **White-breasted Whistler** (Photographed by Glenys Grivell Port Smith Mangroves WA, 8 September 2023)
- 4 **Star Finch** (Photographed by Glenys Grivell at King River Rd near Wyndham WA on 14 August 2023)

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CENTRE INSERT No 85: Dr Robert Peel (1835–1894) Part 3 by Philippa Horton.

Cover image: Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

Photographed by Jeff Groves at Highbury SA, 13 May 2022. The cover of this magazine was designed by John Gitsham.

Graphic design: Ingrid Grigg

We welcome 26 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on page 17.

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'.

December

Saturday 2 December	FB	Excursion, Kessell Road Ponds, Goolwa
Saturday 9 December	Birds SA	Excursion, Happy Valley Reservoir, Happy Valley
Sunday 10 December	PA	Excursion, Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Port Augusta
Thursday 21 December	Birds SA	Excursion, Onkaparinga Wetlands, Noarlunga Downs

* Please note there is no General Meeting in December

January

Saturday 13 January	Birds SA	Excursion, Altona CSR Landcare Reserve, Altona
Sunday 14 January	PA	Excursion, Baroota Reservoir, Baroota
Thursday 18 January	Birds SA	Excursion, Tolderol Game Reserve, Lake Alexandrina
Sunday 28 January	Birds SA	Excursion, Apex Park Wetland Reserve, West Beach
Tuesday 30 January	Birds SA	General Meeting

February

Saturday 10 February	Birds SA	Excursion, Riverglades Wetlands, Murray Bridge
Sunday 11 February	PA	Excursion, Mt Gullett Beach
Tuesday 13 February	FB	Excursion, Spirit Australia Cruises Birdwatching Charter, Goolwa
Thursday 15 February	Birds SA	Excursion, Shepherds Hill Recreation Park, St Marys
Sunday 25 February	Birds SA	Excursion, Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park, Tanunda
Tuesday 27 February	Birds SA	General Meeting

March

Sunday 3 March	FB	Excursion, Hindmarsh River walk, Victor Harbor
Sunday 17 March	PA	Excursion, Bowman Park, Crystal Brook
Thursday 21 March	Birds SA	Excursion, Tangari Regional Park, Woodcroft
Tuesday 26 March	Birds SA	General Meeting
Thurs 28 March – Tues 2 April	Birds SA	CAMPOUT, Mary Seymour Conservation Park, Bool Lagoon

Birds SA Future General Meetings

General Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month in the Charles Hawker Centre at the Waite Institute, and start at 7.30 pm.

Dates are listed in the Calendar above, and topics will be published in future monthly e-newsletters.

If members have a particular topic or speaker they would like to suggest, please contact Jeff Groves or John Gitsham.

President's Message

Hello everyone

Doesn't feel like it as I write this on a chilly 15C day in late October – but Summer is nearly upon us. Let's get out and enjoy it!

All the migrant waders are back from their amazing endurance flights from Siberia – last year a satellite-tracked New Zealand Godwit flew 11,000 km non-stop. This is believed to be the longest non-stop journey of any animal without pausing to feed; and not far off the longest commercial jet flight (15,300 km New York to Singapore). How do they do it?!

Thompson Beach in the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary is the place to see them. Especially on the Friends' open day <https://www.facebook.com/faibssa>.

You may even see the famous AKK, or "Go-Go" Godwit, the 13-year-old Bar-tailed Godwit featured in the story below.

We have 26,000 migratory birds visiting the 60 km coastline of the AIBS. There have been 52 recorded shorebird species, including 37 Summer migrants, so treat yourself and get out there to marvel at these beautiful, tough birds.

Have a great Summer!

Steven

Steven Langley, President Birds SA
M: 0490 802 176

Keep Going "Go-Go"

It was good to see the article in the paper about Go-Go the Bar-tailed the Godwit's return to our coastline after yet another "epic return trip to the Russian Arctic via China" (*Go-Go Godwit's Giant Journey* by Brad Crouch, Adelaide Advertiser, 25.10.23). Focusing on the unstinting efforts by the *Friends of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary* to protect and maintain this precious habitat, the story also highlighted the vital importance of the Sanctuary for migratory shorebirds.

The photos of Go-Go below were taken by Balaklava ornithologist and photographer Paul Taylor and show the distinctive AKK leg tag used to identify him.

The article explained that Go-Go was tagged by volunteers at Thompsons Beach in 2012 and that DEW (Dept of Environment and Water) officials believe that the bird's "annual migrations from Adelaide to the Arctic in the past 11 years have clocked up more than 330,000 km of flight time – almost from here to the moon"!

Keeping in mind that migratory godwits can fly up to 30,000 km during one annual round trip from Adelaide to Arctic Siberia, it is possible for a single bird to clock up about a "million kilometres in their 30-year plus lifespan."

Chris Bates-Brownsword



Go-Go (or AKK as he is officially known) in non-breeding plumage (Photo taken by Paul Taylor at Bald Hill Beach on 14 October 2023)



Go-Go in full breeding plumage, just before migrating north (Photo taken by Paul Taylor at Bald Hill Beach on 21 March 2023)

Conservation Sub-Committee

Mt Lofty Ranges Bird Alliance

The first official meeting of the Alliance in August was attended by 27 people from 19 different organisations representing both government and community. The meeting heard from each organisation and then discussed the over-arching aims of the Alliance and the way forward. The meeting agreed that not only is business as usual not enough, but that it is not working. The majority of MLR birds are in decline, and we need new approaches and new models. What are the things that we are missing and how can we overcome the challenge of large-scale habitat restoration? One of the next steps for the Alliance is to develop a Bird Recovery Action Plan to coordinate activities across the partner organisations, and to make the case for large-scale funding for habitat reconstruction and management.

Whalers Way

The proposed Southern Launch rocket launch facility at *Whaler's Way* (Eyre Peninsula) will have a significant adverse impact on two threatened bird sub-species, the Eyre Peninsula Southern Emu-wren and the White-bellied Whipbird. Of particular concern is the reduction of habitat and likelihood of increased wild-fires. Both sub-species are very poor dispersers and therefore highly susceptible to habitat fragmentation and fire. The proposal is being assessed under the *Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act*. Together with Birdlife Australia, we have requested that the Federal Environment Minister extend

the public comment period once a draft decision has been made from the usual ten days to 30 days in recognition of the public's interest in this proposal. Birds SA members, including Andrew Black and Fran Solly, have been actively opposing the project over the last three years through *advocacy to governments, supporting the Nature Conservation Society (NCSSA) campaign*, and engaging the local community. In some good news, surveys conducted for the NCSSA have revealed that Emu-wrens were present at all survey sites. However, it remains important for Birds SA to continue to oppose the proposed launch facility and to advocate for the conservation of the Emu-wren and Whipbird.

National Feral Cat Plan

The Federal Government is seeking feedback on the updated draft threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats (see: <https://consult.dceew.gov.au/draft-updated-threat-abatement-plan-for-predation-by-feral-cats>). The plan notes that feral cats kill over 1.5 billion native mammals, birds, reptiles, and frogs, and 1.1 billion invertebrates each year in Australia. Predation by cats is a threat to over 200 nationally listed threatened species, and cats have been implicated in 28 mammal extinctions. The plan has been through a thorough consultation process and brought together expertise from across Australia. Nine objectives have been identified to enact over the next 5 to 10 years. Four are cross-cutting objectives that support the delivery of on-ground actions, including enhancing legislative and regulatory settings, ensuring that cat management is evidence-based and supported by the public, delivering research to inform management, and improving control options. Five objectives are designed to deliver on-ground benefits to native species affected by cats. One seeks to prevent further spread of cats to islands; three objectives seek to protect native species that vary in their susceptibility to cat predation, and one focuses on protecting native species living in peri-urban areas. Feedback on the plan can be given via a survey until 11 December 2023.



Southern Emu-wren (Photographed by Dion Thompson on Eyre Peninsula)

Ray Nias

Chair, Conservation
Sub-Committee



As 2023 draws to a close, Friends of Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (FAIBS) can look back over a multitude of shore birding and habitat improvement events held over the last 12 months, often shared with like-minded organisations and local communities.

Most notable in recent times, was the *World Migratory Bird Day* (WMBD) gathering on October 14th. This event lured some fifty enthusiasts to Thompson Beach to see and learn more about the incredible long-distance flyers that intuit their way, in their thousands, from northern hemisphere areas to their summer home on Gulf St Vincent shores.

The event was organised by FAIBS in partnership with *Conservation Volunteers Australia*, and combined foreshore viewing of the migratory birds through scopes followed by a morning tea in the Thompson Beach Community Hall. The indoor program included an interactive shorebird identification session, together with the video *'Winaityinaityi Pankgara - The Country of the Birds'* filmed at Thompson Beach and produced by the Bowerbird Collective. New leadership representatives from the *Thompson Beach Progress Association* and several local community people showed keen interest in the significance of the migratory shorebirds, and the importance of careful stewardship of beach shores and hinterland.



Participants in FAIBS WMBD Shorebird viewing
(Photographed by Anna Woods)

The shorebirds present on that morning had recently returned to Thompson Beach after completing their annual 20,000 plus kilometre journey from their tundra breeding grounds around Siberia and Alaska, the adults followed some weeks later by their newly hatched young – a feat of navigation the mechanics of which scientists are still trying to fathom!

Early morning coastal viewing efforts were rewarded with sightings of Grey Plover, the critically endangered Curlew Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Common Greenshank and flocks of Red-necked Stints.



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
(Photographed by Mary-Ann Van Tright)



Red-necked Stint
(Photographed by Mary-Ann Van Tright)



Common Greenshank
(Photographed by Mary-Ann Van Tright)

Friends of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary *(continued)*



Family volunteers at FAIBS planting

(Photographed by Anna Woods)

Around twenty of the attendees were new to the world of migratory shorebirds and left impressed by the feats and aspects of these amazing, yet vulnerable avian marstoners. Feedback was resoundingly positive.

FAIBS, like Birds SA, continues to act on concerns about threats to migratory shorebirds such as reclamation of their feeding territories, and human and predator disturbance along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, which includes Gulf St Vincent shores. FAIBS' programs focus on conservation of recovery, roosting and feeding areas within our local coasts, knowing that this is critical to migratory shorebird survival. Increased input into issues around vehicles and horses on beaches, dogs on leads, and crabbing compliance implemented by Rangers has also been enacted.

Apart from shorebird viewing and educational events this year, habitat clean-ups in AIBS and Winaityinaityi Pangkara National Park took place, along with regular sessions for weed removal and planting of thousands of seedlings. These initiatives have been reliably and enthusiastically supported by FAIBS volunteers, guided by DEW/AIBS Senior Ranger Adam Pannell, and funded by various successful grants to FAIBS.



FAIBS and Two Wells volunteers at Parham

(Photographed by Anna Woods)



FAIBS planting working bee at Parham

(Photographed by Anna Woods)

FAIBS gives a huge thanks to all who supported and participated in these activities, especially the volunteers, and invites others interested to join the FAIBS mailing list at faibssa@gmail.com so they don't miss out on future such events. The FAIBS Facebook page includes photos and further information related to past and future events.

Before the end of the year, more shorebird viewing events are scheduled from November onwards at Thompson Beach and along Yorke Peninsula coasts. There will be another rehabilitation and revegetation working bee adjacent to the sabkha areas near Parham. AIBS is also NPWS "Park of the Month" in November - so there's plenty happening in the area!

The FAIBS AGM is to be held at the St Kilda Community Hall in early December. It will feature guest speaker Professor Sabine Dittman, a recognised leader in marine sciences, who is also an expert on coastal ecosystem ecology. A turnover of Committee members is likely, and anyone interested in becoming an active part of the organisational team is invited to contact FAIBS at faibssa@gmail.com.

Finally, but far from least, the FAIBS Committee would like to especially thank Senior Ranger Adam Pannell, who is an absolute stalwart for all that happens in AIBS and the FAIBS program, DEW/Friends of Parks, NPWS, the AIBS-Winaityinaityi Pangkara Partnership Group, BirdLife Australia, Green Adelaide, Adelaide Plains Council Coastal Conservation Officer, Northern & Yorke Landscape Board, and of course, Birds SA, who have all been constant and significant supporters among the many much appreciated contributors to FAIBS initiatives during 2023.

Season's Greetings to all and may we see many of you in AIBS in 2024. You are always very welcome at our events. Please note that we now have a number of viewing scopes, which come in very handy for sharing our shorebird experience with you!

Anna Woods

General Meeting Reports

Saturday 26 – Sunday 27 August 2023

Combined Birds SA and Birdlife Southeast SA Regional Meeting held at Mt Gambier

Australasian Bitterns: Habitat Management and New Survey Methods

Presenter: *Bob Green*

Birds SA and BirdLife South East SA held a Combined August General Meeting and field trips at Mt Gambier over the weekend of 26–27th August. The meeting was a great success, with nearly 30 participants from both clubs attending.

Bob's excellent presentation on Australasian Bitterns will appear in full in a future issue of *The Birder*. His report on field trip activities over the weekend is included below.

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A late report of a Chytrid virus outbreak in the frog population at Bool Lagoon meant that we would have limited use of wetland locations for the weekend's outings. As we had scheduled a visit to Pick Swamp, we had to do some quick thinking to give visiting birders a chance to see some nice birds. As the Southeast contains a number of birds that like to sneak across the border from Victoria, we decided to target areas near the Caroline Forest.

After assembling at the Lady Nelson Visitor Centre and carpooling to limit the number of cars in the convoy, we headed off via the back way into the forest, taking the long way round past Snow Gum NFR because forestry operations had closed the roads. We were a reasonable size group (approx. 30), so decided to split into two, with half starting out in Snow Gum Native Forest Reserve (NFR) while the rest headed into the Snow Gum corridor (a biodiversity corridor planted by Forestry SA to connect Snow Gum to Dry Creek NFR). Then we swapped over. The highlights from these two spots were Southern Emu-wrens in the corridor seen by a few people, a group of six Varied Sittellas, and three of the SE specials, Eastern Yellow Robin, Forest Raven and Pied Currawong, giving some members of the group a lifer.

Next, we moved to *Princess Margaret Rose Caves* where we picked up more Forest Ravens, Mistletoebirds, Olive Whistler, Eastern Spinebill and Rufous Bristlebird. A quick stop at *Donovans*, on the Glenelg River, didn't produce much but it did give us a great view of a Pied Currawong as it flew directly overhead. We moved on to Nelson for a quick food stop at the shop, eating at the estuary car park further down the road while we checked out the birds. Highlights were Royal Spoonbill, Great and Little Egrets, Great Crested Grebe and a distant flock of Red-necked Stint and Red-capped Plovers.

Management techniques and new survey methods helping bittern conservation in se SA and sw Vic



Bob Green



Combined meeting with Bob Green presenting on the Australasian Bittern Recovery program
(Photographed by John Gitsham)

After lunch we decided to head back into town. We did a quick detour via the Pick Swamp gate, not going beyond but we scanned hard trying to find a Bittern. We couldn't spot one, but in the paddock next to the road we did get a Brolga which flew across to join its mate on the swamp. A Striated Fieldwren was calling from its usual haunt in front of the shearing shed, and Magpie Geese were moving around, with one small group showing signs of having young which they were trying to protect from a circling Swamp Harrier that kept making attempts to attack.

We arrived back in town around 3:15 pm. It was a bit of a rush to freshen up and get to the RSL for the Birds SA meeting at 4:00 pm. John Gitsham (Birds SA leader for the weekend) opened and chaired the meeting, Jeff Groves

General Meeting Reports *(continued)*



Members enjoying birdwatching at Nelson in Victoria, near the SA border (Photographed by John Gitsham)

provided a report on the activities of the Conservation sub-committee, Sue Winwood gave a membership report, and after welcoming everyone, our own Karen Hunt (Convener of Birdlife Southeast SA) gave a regional update and reported on our group's activities. My presentation on *Australasian Bitterns, habitat management and new survey methods for the species* followed.

On Sunday morning we decided to visit Tower Road in the Nangwarry NFR as it was on the way home for people travelling from Adelaide. As we pulled up, a male Scarlet Robin was sitting on the fence around the tower. After some birding in the area, and checking out the orchids, we jumped into our cars in search of Southern Emu-wrens. When I yelled "Red-tails", everyone jumped

out of their cars in time to see 7 Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos flying south a bit further down the road, but as we moved closer the birds sneaked away. We then made our way into the northern part of the reserve where we quickly found Emu-wrens, although it was proving difficult to get a good look at them. We spread out a bit and a few people managed to catch a glimpse of the birds. On the way back to the tower, a single Chestnut-rumped Heathwren flew across the track in front of us, but only the lead vehicle was able to see it. Before heading home, we finished the very successful and enjoyable weekend with a food and coffee stop at the bakery in Penola.

Bob Green

Tuesday 26 September 2023



Square-tailed Kite Conservation Project

Presenter: Jason Van Weenan

Jason Van Weenan, who works as an ecologist with Green Adelaide, spoke about his involvement in conservation efforts to protect Square-

tailed Kites, listed as endangered in South Australia, with only 2-3 breeding pairs known. Medium sized birds of prey, the kites are woodland specialists, sometimes seen in the Mt Lofty Ranges, as well as lower Eyre Peninsula. They have a large range of seasonal movements, eg, not much seen in southern areas during winter, and in summer the reverse is the case, with a few sightings in the north. Jason spoke of the need to acquire knowledge of local critical habitat for the kites, and to better understand the characteristics of their foraging habitats. Green Adelaide is leading a project to learn more about Square-tailed Kites, with support from raptor experts and ornithologists, volunteer observers, DEW, Birds SA

and local landholders. This landmark project, which involves placing satellite trackers on the birds, was the subject of his presentation.

Jason said that over the last 20 years there has been a slight but steady increase in sightings of Square-tailed Kites, with more pairs seen in the Mt Lofty Ranges and Lower Eyre Peninsula. In consultation with noted SA field ornithologist Ian Falkenberg, who has been documenting raptors for 40 years, it was decided that the best efforts for conservation of these birds is aimed at:

- Locating and protecting nests
- Keeping sites confidential, as egg collectors are a concern
- Avoiding nest areas, where possible, for prescribed burns/bushfires
- Avoiding unnecessary disturbances
- Improving understanding of the species
- Habitat restoration long term.

General Meeting Reports *(continued)*



Placing satellite tracker on a Square-tailed Kite

Obtaining permits to put satellite trackers on Square-tailed Kites came with a huge expectation that it was safe and to a high standard, with Jason emphasising that it was not just a matter of putting a tracker on a bird at any cost. Again, in consultation with Ian Falkenberg, the decision was made to proceed, and in 2022 two young female Square-tailed Kites, the same age but different in size (christened Betty and Goldie) were fitted with trackers. The trackers have batteries with solar panels to charge the batteries attached with straps to the backs of the birds. The chicks were closely inspected to check their health (some crimping of feathers was found) whilst the parent birds perched nearby, remarkably tolerant of the process. The chicks came from one of two nests under observation, and Jason talked about the complexity of installing cameras on the nest to observe progress (sited to one side so the branches the birds used to get to the nest could be seen). The cameras had to be put in place quickly, using a cherry picker. It was a learning curve, as the wind blew some solar panels askew, and part of the nest progression was missed.

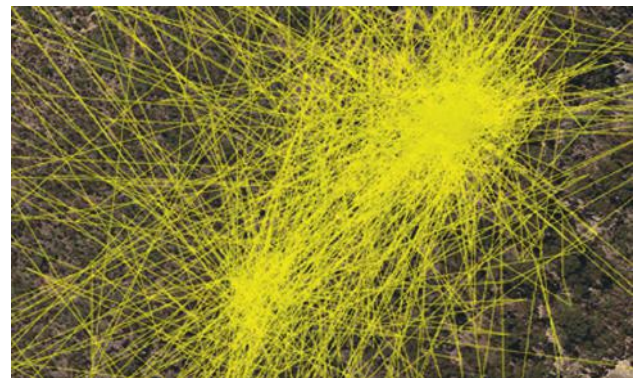
The birds spent lots of time around the nesting area after first flying, honing their skills to become independent. Goldie was first to leave the nest, and Betty 2 weeks later. Jason explained that young raptors have a high death rate and tend to “crash and burn” with no hunting skills.



Installing cameras *(left)* to observe the nesting site *(centre and right)*
Solar panels indicated by arrows *(right)*



Flight path taken by the second bird, Adelaide to Derby



Complex foraging patterns of the second bird in the desert

Unless this occurs near a phone tower, there is no record. Movements post fledging went into “overload” with one bird flying from Adelaide to Orroroo in a straight line – with no record since.

The second bird flew from Adelaide to Derby in Western Australia (via Fitzroy Crossing) - a huge distance through desert country, recording remarkably complex foraging patterns, but appearing to spend time in particular areas. Whilst these are encouraging indications that the bird has been foraging and feeding, it has not been heard from since.

Whilst it is early days, Jason says “the satellite data is building a picture of the sort of distances the young birds are travelling, taking some of the guesswork out of where these birds spend their time through autumn and winter when they disappear from the greater Adelaide area.”

Chris Bates-Brownsword

Tuesday 31 October 2023

Long Beach Presentation

Presenter: Doug Clarke

Doug Clarke is a tireless campaigner for better management of Long Beach at Coffin Bay on southern Eyre Peninsula, where he has lived for many years, particularly in regard to the widespread impact from vehicles driving on the beach. Doug began as a volunteer bird surveyor for the State Environment Dept in 2006 and was allocated Long Beach as “his patch”. During that time, he has been a keen observer of birds in the area, especially the large number of Australian Pied Oystercatchers. There are believed to be about 12,000 Australian Pied Oystercatchers in the world, and Coffin Bay has about 2% of this total population, making it a significant site for this and other shorebird species.

Doug opened his presentation with a video sweep of Coffin Bay with its beach and stretch of ocean, bordered by bushland. A truly beautiful place, with several images of shorebirds, particularly Pied Oystercatchers, in clusters along the beach. One of his slides, taken in March 2012 showed a flock of 267 Pied Oystercatchers – one of largest ever recorded. At the time, the significance of the beach for Pied Oystercatchers was not known. Doug’s surveys have revealed that Long Beach could be considered a site of international importance under the *Ramsar Convention*.

The **Ramsar Convention** was established in 1971 (named after *Ramsar*, a coastal city in northern Iran), where a meeting attended by delegates from many countries

concerned about the loss of wetlands, created this international treaty. The aim is to halt worldwide loss of wetlands, and conserve, through wise management, those that remain. The *Ramsar Convention* contains 9 criteria, and meeting one or more qualifies a site as being of international importance. Criterion 6 stipulates: *“A wetland should be considered of international importance if it regularly supports 1% of individuals in a population of one species, or sub-species of a waterbird.”*

Since 2011, regular surveys have shown that Long Beach annually holds more than 1%, and frequently 2%, of the estimated total population of Pied Oystercatchers. Today, 169 countries are signatories to the Convention. Australia became a member in 1975, and now has 65 sites, including 6 in South Australia.

Doug explained that spring is the usual breeding time for the Oystercatchers. The nest is a scrape in the sand above the high tide mark, in which 2-3 eggs are laid, and it takes 9 weeks from egg laying to the hatchlings being able to fly. Mortality is high, due to gulls, cats, foxes and crushing from vehicles. Surviving fledglings are independent by late summer. Young birds appear diffident about joining the flock and hang around the edges, distinguished by pale legs, and dark beaks and eyes. Counting the young birds indicates successful fledging in the Coffin Bay area, and since 2016, the biggest count has been 8. Such low numbers are of concern. The lifespan of the birds is about 25 years, so at least 10 fledglings are needed to maintain the population, and Doug said more data is needed on this.

Pied Oystercatchers on Long Beach



Social Inequity:
A walk on the beach may be denied to the elderly/physically handicapped



General Meeting Reports *(continued)*

The hazards the birds face are considerable. At the end of the beach there is a large area of samphire, with 4 species of heron often fishing there. The Pied Oystercatchers shelter in the samphire during storms for protection from wind and early sighting of predators like cats and foxes. Here they wait it out, storm tides flood access to food and they have great difficulty flying. Vehicles have decimated the samphire. Samphire is very slow growing and takes decades to fully recover, but regrowth is continually stalled.

Four-wheel drives and trail bikes on the beach are a major problem. During low tide, especially in warmer months, the sand can be covered in wheel tracks to the water's edge. Speeding with donuts is a popular pastime. The sand compaction and wheelies compromise the shorebirds' food source, and the beach is littered with unhinged cockles. The hoon activities are often nocturnal with speeding and gyrating headlights a catalyst for disorienting and panicking roosting birds. Forays by vehicles up sandhills are frequent, crushing vegetation and destabilising the dunes. Tracks on the wrong side of marker poles are frequently seen, as are vehicles with dogs running alongside, despite notices prohibiting dogs in the National Park section of the beach.

Some "before and after" images of Long Beach were especially bleak. One taken in 2008 showed a beach covered by vast areas of *Anapella cycladea* cockles, which grow to 30 mm and inhabit the upper reaches of the intertidal zone. In the summer of that year, 782 cockles were counted in one square metre of sand. The second image of the same area, taken 12 years later, showed only churned sand covered in wheel tracks, the richness of life in the area mostly destroyed. This includes the cockles, a valuable food source for Pied Oystercatchers and other shorebirds.

Doug showed us many more disturbing images of long stretches of sand, criss-crossed by tyre tracks, with deep furrows and areas turned to "slush", making them

unusable, not only for birds, but also for anyone else wanting to walk on the beach. As Doug rightly asks: *"Where is the social equity in that?"*

Doug showed photos of a variety of other shorebirds he had taken in the area – including Banded Stilt, Red-necked Stint, Common Greenshank, Red & Great Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Double-banded Plover – and one of Little Egrets courting, which he said, *"blew me away!"*



Doug finished his presentation with a statement by Barak Obama, ex-President of the US, and champion of National Parks and wilderness:

"If we are going to hang on to more of these wild places we depend on, each of us has a role to play.

Demand to protect our last wildernesses for future generations.

Campaign to create more wherever you live and insist that they're accessible for everyone.

Push your own communities to adopt smarter climate practices and vote like the planet depends on it.

There's no time to lose."

Chris Bates-Brownsword

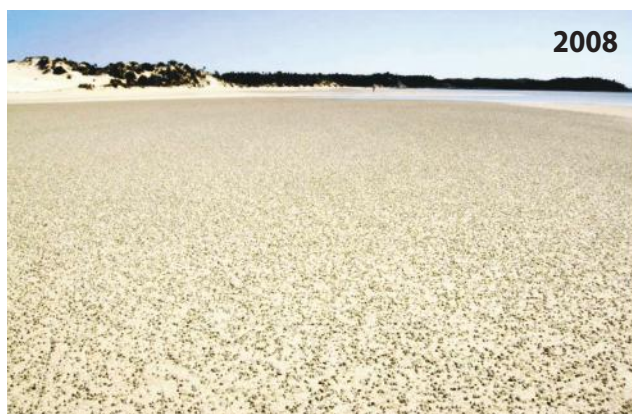


Photo above left, taken in 2008, shows vast areas of beach densely covered by cockles, a staple food for Pied Oystercatchers. Photo above right, of the same area, was taken 12 years later in 2020. In the interim, vehicle numbers have exploded, and the ecology of the beach is no longer sustainable. Only remnant pockets of these cockles remain.

General Meeting Reports *(continued)*

Birds of Darwin, Kakadu and the Top End

Presenter: John Gitsham *(All photography by John Gitsham)*



Black-necked Stork (Jabiru)

Birds SA committee member John Gitsham has in recent times been spending the months of June, July, and August at the Top End of Australia conducting bird tours and pursuing his love of photography. At the general meeting on 31.10.23, members were treated to some of John's beautiful photographs of NT birds, and where they are to be seen.

John said there are over 300 species of birds to be found at the Top End of Australia, and visiting is a reminder of how remarkably rich and diverse an area it is, not only for birdlife, but for reptiles and other creatures. He mentioned being fifteen minutes into a walk one day and seeing a yellow tree snake being devoured by a Black Butcherbird. Interestingly, there are no Australian magpies in the Top End – they only occur from about Katherine down. There are, however, Magpie Larks which seem to fulfill the role that Magpies do in a urban environment.

Sadly, John also said that going north is a sober reminder of just what we have lost in the south. Darwin has

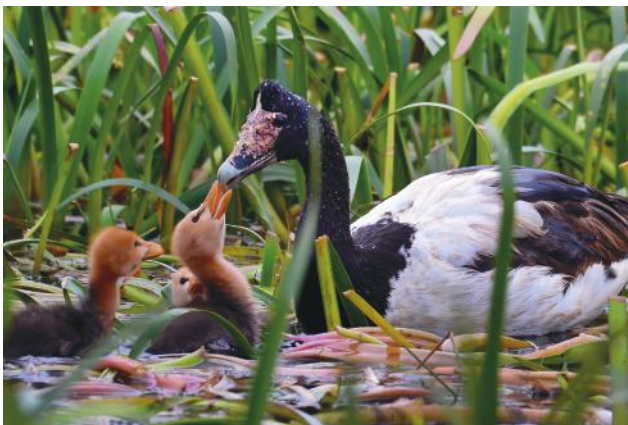


Pied herons, Fogg Dam

virtually no introduced birds apart from a small handful of sparrows and feral pigeons, and it was not unusual for him to look out of his window in the morning and see a Pheasant Coucal or Orange-footed Scrubfowl bouncing around the garden.

He encouraged any members who had the opportunity to do so, to head north and experience it for themselves, keeping in mind that with so much water around, crocodiles are everywhere! He especially recommended taking a journey through Kakadu's wetlands on the *Yellow Water Cruise*.

John named Fogg Dam near Darwin as a spectacular birding site and showed some wonderful pictures, including one of Pied Herons (only a small portion of approximately 5,000 birds there that day).

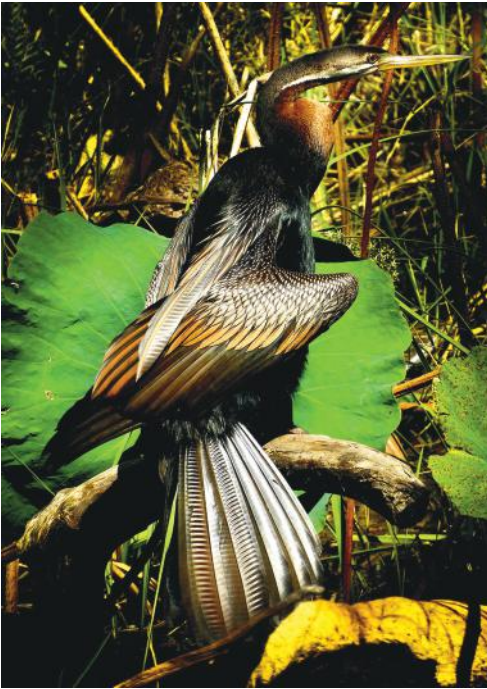


Magpie Goose and goslings, Fogg Dam



Little Kingfisher

General Meeting Reports *(continued)*



Australasian Darter male (left) and Great, Intermediate & Little Egrets + an immature Pied Heron, Fogg Dam

He captured a fine shot of an Australian Darter (male) spreading its wings to dry in the sunshine, and an amazing image of Great, Intermediate and Little Egret in the same frame (as he said, he only needed the Cattle Egret to have them all). One picture showed Magpie Geese feeding water to their goslings (John mentioned that we still have these birds in the south east of SA at Bool Lagoon).

He saw Rufous Owls, the second largest in Australia after the Powerful Owl. Although not as common these days, they can usually be seen in the Darwin Botanical Gardens, and John described one occasion when he came across two of these owls feeding on a dead possum lying over a branch. He mourned the loss of Bush-stone Curlews in the south, thanks to cats, foxes and other predators. In Darwin they are seen in every park, school oval, together with Beach-stone Curlews along the coastline of Darwin.

White-bellied Sea Eagles and other raptors are “everywhere” – Brahminy Kite, Brown Goshawk, Black Kite, Whistling Kite, Pacific Baza, to name a few.

Sworn to secrecy, John also felt privileged to be taken to see a pair of very rare Red Goshawks, whose location remains confidential.

The Top End has an abundance of Finches: Double-barred, Crimson, Masked and Long-tailed – and if you are lucky to sight them – the stunning Gouldian Finch. The beautiful little Rainbow Pitta which likes to forage amongst the leaf litter can be seen at several locations in the Top End. In fact, John said that hearing the rustling sounds was often the first indication of this bird’s presence.

We heard about the Hooded Parrots which nest in termite mounds, particularly around Pine Creek.

John talked about the five kingfishers in the Top End and was particularly proud of the shot he took of the Little Kingfisher (pictured on page 14). Taken with his large digital camera set-up whilst lying down on the boardwalk, John took 14 shots of this tiny bird (about the size of a golf ball) whilst it darted around non-stop, and this was the only one in focus(!) He also developed a method of using his mobile phone with his Swarovski Spotting Scope to capture impressive shots of a Buff-sided Robin, Tawny Frogmouth and Blue-winged Kookaburra – and encouraged people to experiment with the technique as the results can be surprising.

This report can only cover a small part of the amazing array of photos and information delivered on the night, but the presentation was clearly enjoyed by all present.



Buff-sided Robin

Blue-winged Kookaburra

(Taken using a mobile phone with a Swarovski spotting scope)

Chris Bates-Brownsword

AVIAN Influenza

UPDATE for Birdwatchers

Karleah Berris, Kangaroo Island Landscape Board

Andrew Breed, School of Veterinary Science, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Bill Breed, School of Biological Sciences, The University of Adelaide, Australia

Global spread of a new strain

If you do a quick Google search for “avian influenza” you’ll see some concerning media on a new strain of avian influenza (HPAI H5N1, clade 2.3.4.4b) currently spreading across the globe. This strain emerged in 2020 and has spread to all continents except Antarctica and Australia. It has had devastating impacts in the northern hemisphere and South America, especially for colony breeding birds. More than 300 outbreaks were reported in the UK alone during their 2022 summer, with coastal sites closed to the public due to the outbreak.

Some of the statistics of concern for conservation for birds are very troubling; an outbreak of the disease amongst great skua (*Stercorarius skua*) led to the death of between 64% and 85% of the populations at monitored nesting sites 2022 (*The Guardian*, 20 July 2022). Prior to the outbreak, this species only had an estimated population of 16,000, and it is feared it will take years for the species to recover. More recently, the virus has been spreading southward in Europe, with large mortality events in gulls, and has also spread to the Americas. More than 58 million poultry have died in the US due to H5N1, and it has been detected in more than 7000 wild birds (*Centre for Disease Control and Prevention website*, August 2023). The strain has spread southward through South America, with devastating impacts on wild bird populations, and there is now a significant risk that it will continue to spread south and reach Antarctica and its offshore islands (*OFFLU report*, 23 August 2023).

This avian influenza strain has also been recorded in wild mammal populations, and at the start of this year a mass mortality event of sea lions occurred in Peru due to the virus (European Food Safety Authority, 20 March 2023).

What about Australian native birds?

While low pathogenicity forms of avian influenza circulate naturally in Australian waterbirds (Wille *et al.* 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.ppat.1010150>), this new strain of high pathogenicity avian influenza has not, so far, been detected in Australia. However, in recent

weeks there have been media reports of large-scale deaths of seals, sea lions and seabirds on an uninhabited offshore island in Siberia, just a few hundred kilometres north of Japan. Other detections in China and Indonesia indicate that the virus could be present in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, a route flown annually by migratory shorebirds that visit Australia. Migratory shorebirds returning to Australia have been identified as one of the most likely ways this disease could enter Australia (see article in *The Conversation*, 4 May 2023). If it does enter the country, birds that congregate in high density or large flocks such as seabirds nesting in colonies or ducks that congregate on lakes, could be most at risk of infection and transmission. As the article in *The Conversation* points out, some species like the Black Swan are particularly vulnerable to avian influenza mortality due to their immune genes which make them highly susceptible to infectious diseases (see article in *The Conversation*, 23 January 2023)

What can we do?

Although we cannot stop this virus arriving on Australian shores through migratory birds, good surveillance and early detection of the virus if it arrives could help reduce its spread. A briefing paper prepared by the Invasive Species Council in April 2023 entitled ‘*High pathogenicity avian influenza in wildlife: Is Australia prepared?*’ recommends that surveillance for evidence of the disease be encouraged amongst birdwatchers, land managers, researchers and rangers, particularly in remote areas. Given the amount of time and area covered by dedicated birdwatchers in South Australia each year during their birdwatching activities, birdwatchers could play a key role in disease surveillance.

Wildlife Health Australia are very active on this topic and have a lot of very useful info on their website (which can be accessed at <https://wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au/>). We encourage birdwatchers to familiarise themselves with the documents about avian influenza on this website to help with surveillance efforts, and for their own safety when out amongst wild birds.

Avian Influenza Update *(continued)*

What to look out for

Clusters of dead wild birds should be reported to a local authority. There are specific clinical signs of sick birds that people should be aware of. Avian influenza can also infect people, so it is important to consider your own health and wellbeing if you encounter sick or dead birds. *Wildlife Health Australia* has further good advice on their webpage for people who find themselves in this situation, such as clinical signs to look out for, who to contact and how to ensure that you are safe when you find infected birds. If you are frequently amongst wild birds for work or pleasure, the management advice on this webpage for bird banders, wildlife rangers and researchers is also helpful to read, and there are also updates available on the webpage about the situation and spread overseas. You can access that information here:

<https://wildlifehealthaustralia.com.au/DiseaseIncidents/OngoingIncidents.aspx>

The current advice if you encounter sick or dead birds is:

- DO NOT handle dead or dying birds. Keep pets away from sick or dead birds.
- Record what you see, the location, species affected and take photos or video. If possible, do this from a distance.
- Report any unusual sickness or mass mortality events in wild birds to the **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888**.

By raising awareness amongst the birding community, we hope we can increase the surveillance for avian influenza in South Australia.

Useful references and more information

Offlu Report on Southward expansion of high pathogenicity avian influenza H5 in wildlife in South America: estimated impact on wildlife populations, and risk of incursion into Antarctica <https://www.offlu.org/index.php/2023/08/23/offlu-statement-on-hpai-h5-in-wildlife-in-south-america/>

Invasive Species Council Briefing Paper, April 2023 <https://invasives.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ISC-BriefingNote-HighPathogenicityAvianInfluenza.docx.pdf>

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention website, August 2023 <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/data-map-commercial.html>

European Food Safety Authority, 20 March 2023 <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.7917>

The Conversation, 23 January 2023 [Australia's iconic black swans have a worrying immune system deficiency, new genome study finds \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/australia-s-iconic-black-swans-have-a-worrying-immune-system-deficiency-new-genome-study-finds-theconversation.com)

The Conversation, 4 May 2023 <https://theconversation.com/migrating-birds-could-bring-lethal-avian-flu-to-australias-vulnerable-birds-204793>

The Guardian, 20 July 2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jul/20/avian-flu-h5n1-wreaks-devastation-seabirds-aoe>

New Members

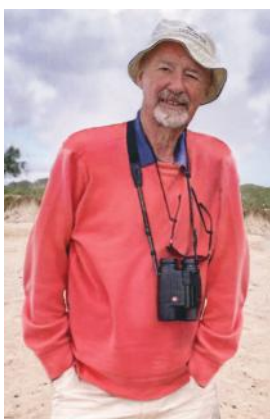
We welcome the following new members who have joined the Association in the past few months.

Mamun Ala Plympton Park SA
Carolyn Bartholomew Eudunda SA
Margaret Brown Glen Osmond SA
Peter & Judith Brown Myrtle Bank SA
Henry Cheesman Tusmore SA
Birgit Christensen Somerton Park SA
Lisa Dash Seaton SA
Richard Drogemuller Adelaide SA
Jen Gillet Mt Barker SA
Diego Guevara Glenside SA
Freya Harrihill Coromandel Valley SA
Meagan Hartley Tanunda SA
Sue Healy Somerton Park SA

Karen Lake Victor Harbor SA
Jacqueline & Alistair Lee Norton Summit SA
Doreen Marchesan Ridgehaven SA
Richard & Dianne Mignanelli Reedy Creek SE SA
Graham Moore Cudlee Creek SA
Steven Pearse Clare SA
Lisa Perry Ferryden Park SA
Jacinta Richards Mt Barker SA
Hilary Spacey Middleton SA
Laura Wills Tusmore SA

If your name has inadvertently been omitted from this list, please contact our Membership Officer, Sue Winwood at membership@birdssa.asn.au

Vale David Williams



David Williams was a member of *Birds SA* for 28 years (1992-2020), serving with distinction on the *Birds SA* Management Committee for six years as a Vice President (2002-2008). David passed away on 10 July 2023.

David John Williams was born in Hemel Hempstead UK on 24 November 1934. At the age of 17, he emigrated to Australia with his mother and sister,

initially settling near Mangoplah in New South Wales where David worked as a farmhand. After a short stint of National Service at Puckapunyal, David returned to farm work near Wagga Wagga until the middle of 1955, when he became a Field Assistant at the Wagga Wagga *Wheat Research Institute*. Here, he worked with agronomist Kelvin Powrie and loved the work. When Kelvin moved to the *Waite Agricultural Institute* in Adelaide in 1956, he wrote to David inviting him to become his field assistant. David accepted and moved to Adelaide in 1958. During the following years Powrie, with David's involvement, ran field trials on properties in the Southeast of South Australia, making significant discoveries about cobalt deficiency, excessive use of superphosphate, and the effects of sulphur on crop growth and health. In 1964, following Kelvin Powrie's untimely death from a motor car accident near Penola, David was left to explain a series of demonstration plots that had been established to show delegates from the World Soil Conference some of their work. David did this with aplomb. As a commemoration to Kelvin's contribution to agronomy, David proposed the naming of a piece of native vegetation beside the Dukes Highway near Keith *The Kelvin Powrie Conservation Park*.

David continued working for the *University of Adelaide* at the *Waite Institute* until 1979, when he switched to the North Terrace campus and became the Laboratory Manager of the *Department of Zoology*, a position he held until his retirement in 1999.

David Williams had a passion for birds and loved sharing this passion with overseas visitors, students, and the public. People from all walks of life remarked that it was David's enthusiasm and passion that originally sparked their interest in birds. David's own interest had been kindled while at the Waite Institute by another keen birdwatcher with whom he shared walks during lunch breaks. In the 1990s, David's passion for showing people birds was extended to running guided bird walks along the banks of the River Torrens. He undertook many of these tours, and when he was unavailable, trained and arranged for interested postgraduate students to run the tours in his absence. He joined the *South Australian Ornithological Association* in 1992 and was a member for over 28 years. Here too, he enjoyed leading birdwatching events and

showing people birds. Those trips were usually to nearby *Belair Recreation Park* which he visited frequently to watch birds and walk the dogs.

The earliest formal information of David's interest in birds dates to 24 August 1967. On that day, David saw an unusual male robin at Darwent's waterhole, which is about 35 km south of Keith on the Naracoorte Rd. David initially thought that this was a Pink Robin which had been seen in South Australia only a few times since John Gould procured a specimen near Waterfall Gully in 1839. There were few field guides in those days, so identification of unusual birds was always challenging. David took meticulous notes of the bird's appearance and behaviour. Armed with this information, he was subsequently able to determine that the bird was a Rose Robin – the first time the species had been seen in South Australia. By then, David was clearly a very competent birder. By sheer coincidence on the same day, a 14 year-old kid from Beaumont happened to catch an uncoloured Rose Robin in a mist-net – that kid happened to be David Paton, who 16 years later introduced David to bird-banding and using mist-nets to study birds. David Williams took to bird-banding like a duck to water. Initially he assisted Paton on field trips, which often involved students or *Earthwatch* volunteers. He became so proficient that he was often left in charge of bird-banding activities. He loved the social engagement, loved helping students, and loved showing people birds, but he was also a patient and considerate teacher. He continued that involvement, engaging with people and birds in this way for over thirty years, and long after retiring from the University.

Once hooked and with a full banding licence, David quickly started bird-banding programs at sites in the Mt Lofty Ranges, on Kangaroo Island and in his backyard at Glenalta, with the occasional foray into the South-East. He continued to band birds for the rest of his life, banding more than 20,000 birds, many caught in his backyard and often multiple times. One Silvereye he caught a staggering 29 times! David didn't just band birds with a numbered band, he also put coloured rings on selected species which enabled him to record which individuals were present in an area, without the need to continually capture them. This included many of the nearly 5000 Silvereyes caught in his backyard at Glenalta. Yes, 5000 Silvereyes in a small backyard in peri-urban Adelaide is impressive, but what was more impressive was that David, when home, recorded all the colour-banded Silvereyes that came to his feeder on an almost daily basis, accumulating tens of thousands of records. By doing this, David documented the lives of these birds and their seasonal appearances, always intrigued by the re-appearance of cohorts of birds months or years later without a single record in between. David found immense pleasure in this activity. He was doing something he loved – birdwatching but with a purpose. He was a constant in the lives of many of these birds, and they too will miss the man staring back at them through the window noting their presence and behaviour.

This summary of David Williams's life with birds was prepared by David Paton, with the assistance of his family and friends.

At The Barrage

(Photographs taken at Goolwa Barrage by Bob Daly on 27 October 2023)

We have not seen the Great Crested Grebe up close in this area for years, so it was really special to find a group of 10-12 feeding there recently. They are so comical in their appearance, with an amazing hairdo and beard! We also saw 30-40 Whiskered Terns diving to catch small fish in the turbulent water coming through the barrage gates.

Wendy Phillips



Great Crested Grebe



Whiskered Tern

Coorong Boat Cruise

Tuesday 13 February 2024



This will be a charter at a special price just for birdwatchers to view the waders and water birds of the Upper Coorong

Make your bookings directly to the manager of Spirit Australia Cruises quoting the reference number below

TOUR	Birdwatching Charter – 5 Hours
DATE	Tuesday 13th February 2024
DEPARTS	Goolwa Wharf (Cutting Road) at 10:00am
PRICE	\$110.00 per person. Includes morning tea and lunch
REFERENCE	584-011
NOTES	Minimum 30 people/Maximum 36

- Please ensure you arrive 15-minute prior to cruise departure (~9.45am)
- there is plenty of free parking without restriction here at the Goolwa Wharf
- If you have any further queries or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

PAYMENT DETAILS:

Passengers can individually call our office on 08 8555 2203 and pay with credit card over the phone or/ make payment via EFT:

- BSB: 085 938
- Account No: 048 121 311
- Reference: BIRD 059-128

Joel Hirsch (Manager), Spirit Australia Cruises



Nuyts Archipelago

Bird Expedition

with Zephyr Jones

Zephyr Jones, who is 12 years old and “passionate about birds” (especially shorebirds), has been a member of Birds SA for about 12 months. She wrote the following story about a birdwatching trip she did in February 2023, to St Peters Island off the west coast of Eyre Peninsula, hoping to see Eastern Curlews in particular.

Zephyr is also a talented artist with a keen eye for detail, as can be seen from the delightful paintings that accompany her story.

I have been thinking about this for a long time. I've always really wanted to see Godwits and Curlews and all those amazing shorebirds. So, for my twelfth birthday, we planned a ten-day sailing trip to St Peters Island in the *Nuyts Archipelago* (near Ceduna) where I heard there was a good chance of seeing Eastern Curlews.



Zephyr Jones sets sail for Nuyts Archipelago



Nuyts Archipelago Bird Expedition (continued)

On 24.2.23, my family and I set off from Anxious Bay boat ramp (Elliston), in our 21ft engineless yacht. We spent the first night anchored off Waldergrave Island, listening to the Australian Sea Lions roar, and the raucous calls of Little Penguins on the beach. The next day dawned sunny and windy, perfect sailing conditions. We sailed on past Venus Bay and the huge limestone cliffs of Cape Radstock, and by evening, were enjoying the protected waters in Sceale Bay.

We reached Franklin Island two days later, having travelled 110 nautical miles (203km), and caught and ate fish for dinner. We spent the next day walking the beaches of this snake-ridden island, coming across; Little Penguin [1], Rock Parrot [20], Cape Barren Geese [4], Red-necked Stint [13], Ruddy Turnstone [22], Little Egret [1] and a Buff-banded Rail. An Eastern Osprey circled above, and we eventually spotted its nest on top of a large granite boulder in the inter-tidal zone, not where we expected to see it. Climbing over the rocks at dusk, we spotted Greater Stick-Nest Rats, which was exciting because the Franklin Islands hold the last remnant population in Australia.

The next day we passed Evans, Lacy and Goat Islands, landing at last on the soft sands of St Peters Island, 6 days sailing from Elliston. I had heard that this was the place to see shorebirds, and it certainly was. Flocks of waders danced past, like schools of fish, their calls echoing in my ears. Mum and I set off with a small bag holding binoculars, *Shorebird Identification booklet*, *Birds of Australia* and Mum's phone containing all the waders' calls.



Creeping along behind saltbush to the long sandy beach, we reached the shorebirds. We also saw a large black snake basking in the sun and cautiously avoided it. Lying on our bellies, we wriggled up behind a mound of sand and feasted our eyes on hundreds of shorebirds, which were resting on the beach. As we only had one pair of binoculars, one of us would document and try to identify, while the other described the defining features of particular birds. Two hours later, we recorded a total of 14 species of birds. These included Sooty Oystercatcher (3), Pied Oystercatcher (2), Double-banded Plover (1), Lesser Sand-Plover (13), Red-capped Plover (50), Red-necked Stint (300+), Australian Pelican (11), Little black Cormorant (2), Pied Cormorant (14), Silver Gull (20), Pacific Gull (15), Tree Martin (30), Singing Honeyeater (5) and Caspian Tern (6).



I was up before sunrise the next morning and could hear the Pacific Gulls on the beach. We went ashore on our sups (or stand-up paddle boards, our only tenders for the yacht), paddling up the beach and crossing the mangrove channel before landing in the squelching mud. We tied the sups to nearby mangroves and set off.

I was very excited and as we walked, I kept getting glimpses of shorebirds with long beaks probing the mud. "They're probably Oystercatchers," I thought, trying to contain my excitement. "Be glad of what you've seen already." But as we slowly drew closer, it became clear that they were Bar-tailed Godwits – and not just a few – but 66! I was beyond happy. What's more, there were others, including Ruddy Turnstone (4), White-bellied Sea Eagle (1 juvenile), Masked Lapwing (4), Caspian

Nuyts Archipelago Bird Expedition *(continued)*

Tern (3), Pied Oystercatcher (3), Red Knot (110), Sooty Oystercatcher (4), Silver Gull (24), Rock Parrot (1), Red-capped Plover (25), Black Swan (13), Grey Plover (14) and Great Knot (29). I couldn't believe it! As the tide pushed us into the mangroves and the wind picked up, we came across other birds such as Cape Barren Geese (17), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (3), White-faced Heron (4), Common Greenshank (2), Red-neck Stint (20), Pied Cormorant (2), Chestnut Teal (8) and a flock of Feral Pigeons. It was all so amazing, and my ears were filled with the sound of Grey Plovers cooing, Swans trumpeting and the beautiful sound of Red Knots.

On our last full day of birdwatching, we saw everything again, plus a few extras such as Sacred Kingfisher (1, just a flash of electric blue), Welcome Swallow (20), Australian Raven (12) and Curlew Sandpiper (2). I felt very grateful to be in this thriving environment, rich in cockles for Knots and worms for Godwits.

Next morning, we awoke to the stillness of fog, but we were madly keen to see Eastern Curlews before we left in the afternoon. So we set off towards a small island in the estuary, paddling our engineless yacht, because of poor visibility and no wind. The water was clear and glassy, and we caught a beautiful squid. As the fog cleared, we saw that we were close to the little sand island, which turned out to be a Caspian Tern breeding colony. We landed in the mangroves away from the nesting terns and began to quietly explore the island. I suddenly felt the need to look up, and there, flying low out of the mangroves, were four Eastern Curlews. I loved watching them - it was amazing and like a dream come true! We walked, right around the island in search of more Curlews, but to no avail. Our list of 16 species included: Sooty Oystercatcher (28), Australian Pied Oystercatcher (15), Fairy Tern (7), Silver Gull (206), Pied Cormorant (5), Pacific Gull (20), Australian Pelican (21), Crested Tern



Grey-tailed Tattler



(23), Caspian Tern (125, with chicks), Ruddy Turnstone (3), Eastern Curlew (4), Rock Parrot (7), Little Egret (2), White-faced Heron (30), Cape Barren Geese (10) and Singing Honeyeater (6).

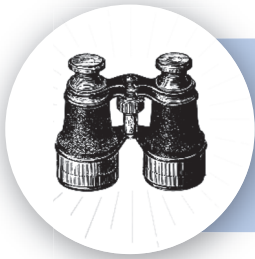
After an overnight stay at Goat Island, we left for Franklin Island and in the evening on Franklin, we went for a walk and came face-to-face with the same Buff-banded Rail we saw last time. The next day, sadly our last day of sailing, and deep in the ocean, we came across a tiny, dancing bird, feeding on the surface, and endlessly riding the swells. It was a White-faced Storm Petrel, a small and fragile bird out for days on end in the wild Southern Ocean, no land in sight.

That evening, anchored at our destination, Streaky Bay boat ramp, I went ashore for a walk and came across a small grey bird feeding nervously on the beach. I was so close, and my binoculars gave me the best view. Back on the boat I identified it as a Grey-tailed Tattler, the final bird for our trip. It seemed like a sign as it looked at me

with its beautiful eyes, telling me to keep on loving birds, especially shorebirds, and to save them. I promised to do my very best, and I will, as I think migratory shorebirds are amazing and deserve to be protected in every way. Together we can be Flyway Friends.

Zephyr Jones





Binocular reviews *with John Gitsham*

Nikon Prostaff 3 10x42 Binoculars – Budget binoculars \$ 250.00

The Nikon Prostaff 3S Binoculars are sturdy with a large 42mm objective lens for bright viewing, while their design, which fits in the hands nicely ensures they are lightweight and easy carry around the neck all day. They are waterproof to 1m and with O-ring seals and nitrogen gas to provide fog-free viewing in variable temperature conditions, this is the perfect introduction binocular for birdwatching.

- 10x magnification and a 42mm objective lens
- Multi-layer-coated lenses
- Shock-resistant rubber armouring
- Nikon Prostaff 3S Binoculars are built to withstand a lot of birding activities. They have also been fitted with rubber armouring to provide a more comfortable, slip-free grip and shock resistance. The 42mm objective lens provides a clear and detailed view of birds and despite this large size, the Binoculars themselves remain compact and lightweight.
- A High-reflective silver-alloy mirror coating has been applied to mirror surfaces of the prisms, while the lenses have been treated to multilayer-coating, all leading to brighter and clearer images.
- Weight 575g.. Length 150mm x Width 130mm
- The resin chassis is enveloped in a rubberized armour to prevent damage from knocks and scrapes. The optics in the Prostaff P3 10x42's are fantastic, especially considering how they're priced.
- Most Nikon products, such as binoculars and other sports optics are mainly manufactured in Japan, while some affordable models are produced in China.

I have used these binoculars a lot when I was working for National Parks and Wildlife SA over several years, they got a beating in the 4wd vehicles, but they held up very well, as long as you aren't too rough with them.



Optically they are nearly as good to look through as the more expensive binoculars on the market e.g., Leica, Swarovski, Zeiss, Kite optics etc.

These binoculars are perfect for those casual users starting their birding life. They are budget-friendly yet built with cutting-edge features, such as a dependable Eco-Glass optical system and advanced roof prism system with mirror surfaces coated with silver alloy.

Pros: The perfect beginner binoculars for birding, optically they are fantastic for their price, they sit well in your hands and are very light and easy to use. A perfect first pair of binoculars if you're on a budget or just getting into birding. (Ideal back up pair or second pair of binoculars for the car?) Just look after them and treat them kindly and they will last you for several years.

Cons: If you should drop these binoculars and they go out of alignment optically, you have no choice but to bin them, as they are not repairable (only a 1-year warranty given). The eyecups can come off and become loose after about 4 years of use. They are not a lifetime binocular. Ideal for intro into birding until you can afford a sturdier and better-quality pair of binoculars.

Rating out of 10 **6**



1. **Toyota Kluger** – Petrol, white or silver preferably, good condition, 4x2 or 4x4.
2. **Toyota LandCruiser Troop Carrier** – 80 series or 105 series, manual, diesel.

If you or a friend are selling these vehicles or similar, please call Alan on 0411 595 910



In keeping with Adelaide’s global status as a National Park City (awarded in 2021) the recent annual *Nature Festival of SA* was “all about embracing and enjoying nature as part of our everyday lives.” Supported by major sponsor Green Adelaide, the Festival hosted over 400 events for all age groups, providing a range of activities for people to connect with nature and each other. Some Birds SA happenings are listed below.

Sunday, 8 October
Victoria Park Pakapakanthi (Park 16)

On Sunday, 8 October, *Birds SA* had a stand in conjunction with a Biofair event, held in the Victoria Park / Pakapakanthi as part of the Adelaide Nature Festival.

The *Birds SA* stand was one of several at the event celebrating and promoting nature. Located in the woodland area south of the new wetland, the stand was manned by committee members John Gitsham, Alan Burns, Greg McConnell and Claire & Roger Bourne. During the day, we provided information about birds and answered questions raised by people attending the event.

We also offered four free guided bird walks through the immediate woodland and around the new wetlands, led by John, Alan and Roger, which attracted around 10 -12 people per trip. In total, during the four walks, 37 species were observed, and as well as the usual woodland and waterbirds, there were sightings of Hardhead, Black-tailed Native-Hen, Australian Spotted Crake, White-necked Heron, Australian Reed Warbler, Little Grassbird and one Peregrine Falcon.

Located in the southeast corner of the Victoria Park lands/Pakapakanthi (Park 16), the new wetlands were opened in May 2022 and comprise a series of lakes which stretch across nearly the entire width of Park 16 - from Beaumont Road in the west, almost reaching Fullarton Road in the east. In less than two years, the wetlands have developed into a thriving wetland environment attracting a large number of waterfowl and waterbirds. It is a great example of what can be achieved in a relatively short time and is well worth a visit.

Roger Bourne



The public enjoyed guided bird walks through the woodlands and new wetlands



The Birds SA information stand

Historical Series No. 85
Dr Robert Peel (1835–1894)
By Philippa Horton

In the bird collection of the World Museum, Liverpool, there are about 85 bird specimens collected by 'Peele', with nothing further to enlighten the collector's identity. They were all collected in Australia and were part of a collection sold to the Liverpool Museum by Canon Henry Baker Tristram in 1896. Tristram (1822–1906) was an English clergyman, explorer and ornithologist, and in 1870 was appointed Canon of Durham Cathedral (Hale 2016). In 1844 he had begun a bird collection that by 1889 amounted to more than 17,000 specimens from around the world (Tristram 1889: iv). Originally there were some 130 Peele skins in Tristram's collection (Tristram 1889), but about a third have since been lost, probably most during the bombing raids on Liverpool in World War II; these losses include all the honeyeaters, apart from chats, and all the finches. Most of Peele's skins were listed from South Australia (SA), but several species, such as Spectacled Monarch, do not occur in SA as labelled. Does this cast doubt on the other SA specimens? Why are some from New South Wales (NSW)? Is the solitary Tasmanian specimen really from there? In order to determine how Peele's collection of Australian birds found its way to Tristram, and the likely provenance of the specimens, I have uncovered Peele's identity and explored his life, with the aid of genealogical websites and scanned newspapers on Trove.

On 3 June 1835 Robert Peele (Figure 1) was born in Durham, England, the second of eight children to Edward Peele and Ann Winter. At Robert's baptism, his father's occupation was described as 'Singing Man at the Cathedral'; he was a chorister at the Durham Cathedral, as were his sons in their youth, and in 1858 Edward became the cathedral's Chapter Clerk (*The Durham County Advertiser* 20/4/1883: 5). Upon their father's death in 1883, Robert's brother Richardson Peele, a solicitor, became Chapter Clerk. Robert entered the medical profession and trained at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London. In August 1860, while in London, he married Mary Ann Blyth née Nash, a widow with a young son, George Herbert Blyth. After Robert qualified as M.R.C.S. in 1861, the family moved to Stockton-on-Tees (30 km SE of Durham) where Robert worked as a house-surgeon and municipal medical officer (*The London and Provincial Medical Directory*, UK, 1864: 532). All records I have located



Figure 1. Robert Peel c. 1875. Image State Library of SA B-3054

for Robert Peele in his adult life indicate that he spelt his surname without the final e, as I shall do hereafter.

In July 1864 Peel was employed as surgeon on the clipper ship *The Murray* from London to Adelaide, arriving 21 October; passengers in the first-class cabin included Mrs Peel and Master George Blyth. Peel commenced work as a surgeon at Koorunga (now Burra South) until accepting the post of Assistant Colonial Surgeon in late 1865, when the family moved to Adelaide. Mary Ann and George both returned to England soon after, departing on *The Murray* in January 1866. Peel worked at the Adelaide Hospital and in October 1866 showed representatives of the daily newspapers around the establishment. Innovations that he had introduced were artworks decorating the wards, donated by himself and others, and Divine Service on Sundays, read by himself, and he was held in high esteem by his patients (*SA Advertiser*

22/10/1866: 3). He soon moved on, however, as he had been appointed Assistant Colonial Surgeon for the Mount Gambier district, where he arrived in November 1866. There he remained for the next two years and quickly became an active member of the community, particularly in his support for the Mt Gambier Institute. He was a member of the Institute committee overseeing plans for a new building, the foundation stone being laid in January 1868 (Maslen 1981). With his tenor voice he sang at fundraising concerts for the Institute and other beneficiaries. He umpired cricket matches, and donated a font to the Church of England church, books to the Institute Library, and specimens to its museum, including a Musk Duck, a pair of 'swamp hawks' [Swamp Harrier?] and a 'blue crane' [White-faced Heron?], and copper ore, fossils and shells (*Border Watch* Mt Gambier 19/8/1868: 2, 5/9/1868: 2, 1/10/1868: 3).

In September 1868, Peel travelled to Adelaide where he shipped a case of 'specimens' to London. He also raised funds and sought subscribers and donations for the Mt Gambier Institute, as well as donating snakes, lizards, a 'porcupine' [Spiny Anteater?] and two Magpie Geese to the Zoological department of the Adelaide Botanic Garden. His return to Mt Gambier in October was brief, as he had been appointed surgeon to the Northern Territory (NT) Survey Expedition, to be led by Surveyor-General George Goyder. At his farewell dinner Peel was praised for his professional and personal contributions to Mt Gambier: 'Every public work in the township had been more or less aided by [Peel] ... if anything was to be done, and funds were required, Dr. Peel invariably came forward' (*Border Watch* 7/11/1868: 2). One of his final philanthropic activities was to acquire a shipment of carp, from the Torrens River in Adelaide, to stock Mt Gambier's Valley Lake; environmental consequences of exotic species introductions were not considered at the time.

Peel returned to Adelaide and on Christmas Eve 1868 joined the survey party on the *Moonta*, to sail for Port Darwin. During the voyage Peel conducted Sunday services and organised, and performed in, concerts of the 'Northern Territory Philharmonic Society' (Kerr 1971). The party arrived at Port Darwin 5 February 1869 and, having been chosen by Goyder as deputy leader, Peel's duties were many besides medical. He was responsible for taking meteorological observations (Murphy 1984). He also collected numerous natural history specimens, including plants (Kerr 1971), but may have spent excessive time doing so, as there were rumblings among the men: 'The doctor has a large number of patients suffering from

various complaints, and yet he goes away ... for several days together ... shooting and exploring' (*South Australian Register* 26/4/1869: 2). Goyder, now in poor health, returned to Adelaide in November 1869, leaving Peel in charge of those who had volunteered to stay until the arrival of a Government Resident. Again there was discontent with Peel's conduct but, according to a correspondent from *The Argus* (Melbourne 26/3/1870: 1), the conditions were trying, including poor rations and an extended delay in the arrival of ships to take the men home. Peel and the survey's naturalist, Frederick Schultze, made the most of the delay by continuing to explore and discovering new plant species only a day or two before the relief ships arrived (Millner 1870).

After a journey of more than two months, the *Kohinoor* reached Adelaide on 5 April 1870, carrying Peel and most of the remaining survey party. Peel brought with him 'some rare plants in excellent condition, several species of pigeons and doves, two kinds of quail, and some very handsome parrots' (*SA Advertiser* 12/4/1870: 2). In May, Peel made a brief visit to Mt Gambier, having already forwarded a large number of NT specimens for the Institute's museum (shells, geological specimens and Aboriginal artefacts), as well as 8 guineas that his sister had raised in England for the Institute, and his own donation of £28. He also arranged for FG Waterhouse, curator of the SA Institute Museum in Adelaide, to send duplicate NT material to the Mt Gambier museum in August 1870; among these were 101 specimens of 58 bird species including Crimson Finch, Bar-breasted Honeyeater and Shining Flycatcher. By 1874, however, space at the Mt Gambier Institute was at a premium and its museum was broken up, and 'the destruction of all of the collection of birds, kangaroos and tiger cats which had not been cured properly was ordered in July 1875' (Maslen 1981). Whether all the NT birds were destroyed we cannot know but it seems likely that none survived.

In July 1870, Peel sailed for England. It appears that he visited his wife and stepson, as on Census Night, 2 April 1871, he was staying at a hotel in Grantham, a short train journey from East Bridgford, Nottingham, where Mary and George were boarding. He left England in July 1871 on the *William Duthie*, arriving in Sydney early November and returning to Adelaide in mid-December. The following month he established a new medical practice on North Terrace opposite the SA Institute, in which he continued to work for the next seven years. He soon became involved in community activities, singing at charitable concerts, fundraising for worthy causes, serving on numerous

committees (often as chairman) of sporting clubs and horticultural and musical societies. He donated prizes for athletics competitions and horticultural shows, judged at agricultural shows and horse races, was on the medical committee to establish the Adelaide Children's Hospital, and acted as surgeon to the Adelaide Artillery. He was a frequent guest at levees held at Government House. He was a member of the Freemasons and other fraternal and friendly societies and surgeon to several. Milanese composer Paolo Giorza, who had moved to Adelaide in 1877 (Maguire 2001), dedicated a piece of music to him, *The Fizz Galop* (*The Evening Journal* Adelaide 28/8/1878: 2).

Peel was in frequent demand to assist at accident scenes, conduct post-mortems, and give evidence at inquests. In 1877 he strongly advocated compulsory smallpox vaccination regardless of age and recommended revaccination in adulthood as immunity waned; he had been vaccinating many people at the time and doing so free of charge if they could not pay (*The Express and Telegraph* Adelaide 17/5/1877: 1). In the municipal elections of October 1875, Peel was elected as a councillor for the Hindmarsh Ward and he served in that role for two years. Throughout the 1870s Peel donated specimens of natural history to the SA Institute Museum, as listed by Waterhouse in his monthly reports (SA State Records GRG19-168). A donation in January 1877 was of 'ruby tin' [= cassiterite, a tin oxide] samples from mines in Tasmania, following a trip he made there. Other donations included several ducks and in 1873 a series of Red-rumped Parrot eggs, suggesting he kept that species as aviary birds. He did keep domestic fowl, as he was awarded a certificate for his silver-grey Dorkings at the SA Poultry Society show in 1876.

Wishing to see his family, Peel sailed for England on the *RMS Tanjore* in April 1879. Prior to leaving, he was entertained at farewell dinners and presented with a silver casket containing 200 sovereigns, and a printed address expressing the gratitude of his friends and fellow citizens for his contributions to the colony (*SA Register* 19/4/1879: 7). In late June Peel travelled to Dublin with his friend Dr James G Beaney, senior surgeon at the Melbourne Hospital (*The Irish Times* Dublin 15/7/1879: 4), where he reunited with his brother Dr Edward Peel who was a medical practitioner there. At the end of July, Peel passed an exam for a medical degree at the King and Queen's College of Physicians, Ireland (*SA Register* 26/9/1879: 5). He returned to Australia in the *Tanjore*, arriving in Adelaide in December 1879.

After a few months, Peel moved to Melbourne

where he established a new medical practice in April 1880. Again, he threw himself into community, agricultural, musical and sporting societies and activities. Periodically, he visited Sydney, Adelaide, Mt Gambier and Tasmania. Late in 1886 he got into financial difficulties with a moneylender (*The Advocate* Melbourne 30/10/1886: 11) and moved to Sydney. On his return to Melbourne in July 1888 on the steamer *Rodondo*, the passenger list included 'Dr. and Mrs. Peel' (*The Evening News* Sydney 24/7/1888: 4). It seems unlikely that Mrs Peel was Mary Ann, however, for she died in England in October 1888. On the deaths of his grandfather William in 1873 and father Edward in 1883, both in England, Robert Peel had placed notices in the Adelaide and Melbourne newspapers, but he did not place any notices for Mary Ann's death.

Peel resumed medical practice in Melbourne at the beginning of September, 1888, whereupon the committee of the Victorian Poultry and Dog Society made him an honorary life member for services rendered while he had been president (*The Leader* Melbourne 11/8/1888: 14). On 25 February 1889, Robert Peel, widower of Balaclava, aged 53, married Mysie Wrixon, spinster of Balaclava, aged 36, in Fitzroy, Melbourne; was Mysie the 'Mrs Peel' on the *Rodondo*? Two years in Melbourne was enough for Peel however, and in September 1890 he moved back to Adelaide, apparently alone. He attempted to establish a medical practice in the west end of the city but with no great success as his health was failing, exacerbated by a fall from the back of the Hindmarsh tram when it ran off the tracks in January 1891. Despite his ill-health, he travelled to England on the clipper ship *Torrens* in June 1891, probably to see his brother Richardson Peele who was also unwell. Richardson died in August 1892 aged 47 (*The Northern Guardian* Hartlepool 23/8/1892: 3) and the following February Robert returned to Australia in the steamer *Tainui*, as a third-class passenger, his finances probably now dwindling. He arrived in Hobart in March 1893 and, after a short stay in Melbourne, returned to Adelaide.

In August 1893 Peel was appointed surgeon to the steamer *Woolloomooloo*, bound for South Africa, but he bailed out at Albany, WA, and returned to Adelaide. Having become prone to fits, he died during one on 11 January 1894 at the General Havelock Hotel in Hutt Street (*The Adelaide Observer* 13/1/1894: 29), where he was residing at the time. The cause of death was

given as 'Disease of Heart'; he was aged 58. Obituaries were published in newspapers around Australia, describing him as a skilled physician, immensely kind even to the poorest patients, a *bon vivant*, a rover, a Bohemian. It appears that he left no children from either marriage, and the papers seemed unaware that he left a widow. Mysie Peel died in Melbourne in 1906, described in her death notice as 'relict of the late Dr. Robert Peel.'

From these biographical details we can see that Robert Peel must have known Canon Tristram. His father then brother worked with Tristram at Durham Cathedral for 22 years. Robert visited England and undoubtedly Durham in 1870–71, 1879, and 1891–93, providing opportunities to meet Tristram and bring him bird specimens. The case of specimens Peel shipped to England in 1868 was most likely for the Durham University Museum, established in 1833 (Hale 2016). Waterhouse at the SA Institute Museum, undoubtedly at the request of Peel, had sent 96 Australian bird skins in April 1866 and 146 more in February 1868 to the Durham University Museum in exchange for British bird skins (Curator's Monthly Reports, SA State Records GRG19-168). Waterhouse's list of contacts and addresses included 'Richardson Peele Esq Durham College Solr.' (Museum Diary October 1867 to April 1868, SA Museum Archives AA298/14/1/2). It appears that Tristram obtained some of his 'Peele' specimens via the Durham Museum, because on his label for the Barking Owl LIV T364 he wrote 'Recd. from W. Proctor from Peele, So Australia'; William Proctor was curator at the Durham Museum 1833–1877 (Hale 2016). Nevertheless, I think it likely that Peel donated most of his bird skins directly to Tristram, particularly as among the 56 specimens I examined at the Liverpool Museum in October 2019, the Barking Owl was the only one annotated as received via Proctor.

The stated provenance of most Peel(e) specimens in Tristram's collection is probably correct. While in Australia, Peel lived in SA for the longest time and so most specimens could be expected to be from SA, including the rarest, a Ground Parrot. Peel also lived in NSW and visited Tasmania, hence some specimens being from those states. A few specimens were from Queensland and, while I did not find any trips Peel made there, it is possible that he did visit Queensland, given his propensity for travel. Alternatively, he may have obtained those specimens from a Queensland collector. It is also possible that Peel retained a few bird specimens from the NT survey. Among the

surviving Tristram material, the Pheasant Coucal and the Magpielark appear to be northern Australian subspecies, but their origins in far north Queensland cannot be ruled out. The eight species labelled from SA that do not occur in SA could be a result of mislabelling. Peel's specimen of Superb Parrot (Figure 2), an eastern Australian species, bears a Tristram label with 'South Australia' crossed out and replaced with 'NS Wales'. Not one of Peel's skins is dated, but they are all likely to have been collected between 1864 and 1893.



Figure 2. Superb Parrot LIV T1053, NSW, coll. Peele (Tristram Collection). Image P Horton

Acknowledgements

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Nature Festival of SA 2023 *(continued)*

Tuesday 10 October Tea Tree Gully Library, Modbury SA

On Tuesday 10 October, as part of the Nature Festival, I gave a presentation on cultivating bird-friendly gardens, on behalf of *Birds SA*.

The talk took place at the rather imposing City of Tea Tree Gully Library. Advertised as an event for “*seasoned enthusiasts or beginners*”, it attracted a mixed crowd of younger and older people. A total of 55 people attended, and it was rewarding to see them quickly become engaged in the prospect of being able to create some habitat for birdlife in their backyards and gardens. I was also able to raise their awareness about bird corridors and the significant role they play in helping our birds to survive in our cities and suburbs.

Also discussed were the types of plants suitable for gardens of various sizes, planting for the species of birds likely to visit, emphasising that no matter how limited the space, it was always possible to create a



bird-friendly corner. We also spent some time talking about our number one pest bird, the Noisy Miner, and ways of creating a habitat to discourage this native honeyeater from dominating the space.

Timed for 45 minutes, the session, including questions, ran for an hour and the bundle of *Birds SA* leaflets I took along and placed on a table for interested parties had all disappeared by the time we left, which must be a good sign!

Chris Bates-Brownsword

Saturday 7 October Birds and Bingo at Bec Hardy Wines



As part of the Nature Festival, *Nature Foundation* co-hosted two events in the program. One of these was ***Birds and Bingo*** at *Bec Hardy Wines* in McLaren Vale. Erica Stacey, *Marketing & Communications Manager* at *Nature Foundation* has written the following report on the event.

Nature Festival is a two-week celebration of our love of nature in South Australia. Held in early October, the festival offered over four hundred events across the state for all ages, full of creative ways to connect with nature and each other.

In 2023, *Nature Foundation* supported two events in the program as a Festival Partner. One of the events they hosted: ***Birds & Bingo*** at *Bec Hardy Wines* would resonate well with our members and readers!

The premise was relatively straightforward: enjoy some wine and food while playing some rounds of bingo, interspersed with bird-related conversation.

The afternoon was hosted by bingo master, bird nerd and keen nature photographer *Sputnik*, who kept the group entertained with his bird-related numeral rhymes and discussions with *Nature Foundation* team members

Alex Nankivell (CEO) and Dr Lucy Clive (Acting Science and Knowledge Manager), along with Bec Hardy (Nature Foundation Board Director and owner/winemaker at *Bec Hardy Wines*).

Lucy shared insights from *Nature Foundation's* conservation activities at *Watchalunga Nature Reserve*, supporting the nationally endangered Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren, and at *Murbpook Nature Reserve*, supporting the nationally vulnerable Regent Parrots which nest in the large River Red Gums gracing



From left: ‘*Sputnik*’ (that’s his full name), **Bec Hardy**, **Alex Nankivell** (CEO, *Nature Foundation*), **Dr Lucy Clive** (Acting Science & Knowledge Manager, *Nature Foundation*)

Nature Festival of SA 2023 *(continued)*

the waterway's banks. Alex then spoke about his study of raptors at *Witchelina Nature Reserve*, including their interesting diet of bearded dragons.

Bec shared her early recollections of *Nature Foundation* and her grandmother Dr Barbara Hardy AO, being one of its founders, along with her current involvement with the Foundation and the various activities undertaken across the winery to support sustainability.

Senior Ecologist Peter Copley was in the audience and provided additional bird-related facts and insights to complement the conversation.

Guests enjoyed delicious food and wine from the *Bec Hardy Wines* kitchen in the impressive barrel shed, with several people winning prizes from their bingo efforts.

It was a most enjoyable afternoon with several guests asking when the next such event would occur!

Erica Stacey



Good times were had by all in the Bec Hardy Barrel Shed!

Footnote: Nature Foundation is an apolitical not-for-profit foundation that invests in conserving, restoring and protecting Australian landscapes, flora and fauna to ensure their survival. The Foundation owns and manages seven nature reserves across South Australia, comprising over 500,000 hectares. Considered conservation programs are planned, implemented and monitored across the reserves, supporting revegetation, threat abatement and protecting threatened species.

<https://www.naturefoundation.org.au/>

FREE TASTINGS



At the Bec Hardy Cellar Door

At Bec Hardy Wines, everything we do is inspired by nature, from our vineyards to our kitchen at cellar door. We are Certified Members of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia and are working with Biodiversity McLaren Vale to increase the sustainability and biodiversity of our vineyards.

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

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BIRDSSA

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

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Photograph: Bec Hardy

Identifying a Little Eagle

Neil Cheshire, Bob and I were travelling back from Waikerie on 14th Sept and stopped on the cliff overlooking the Murray River at Bow Hill. I spotted a bird of prey in the distance but could not identify it with my binoculars.

Bob's first photo shows just the outline of the bird on the tower, the 2nd photo of the blown-up image was still hard to guess, but when the bird flew, the 3rd photo showed the pattern of the wings and even though it was not focused it made it possible to identify it as a Little Eagle.

The benefit of the Canon EOS 7D Mark 11 has such an advantage as shown here.

Wendy Phillips



Little Eagle finally identified by its distinctive wing pattern

Vale Burt May 1937–2023

Albert Edward May (known to Birds SA members as Burt) passed away in April this year.

Burt was born in Wigan in Lancashire UK in 1937 where he enjoyed a happy loving childhood. Burt was a boy scout, which is where he developed his love of the outdoors. He became a qualified electrician, and in 1956 he met and married Winnie and they went on to have their first daughter Karen. In time, two more daughters came along, Denice and Michelle.

In 1965, the family emigrated to Australia on the "Ten-pound Pom scheme" and welcomed their fourth daughter Rebecca in 1972. The whole family was involved in the local netball clubs, of which Burt was President. He was also involved with the St Vincent De Paul Society as President of the local group and served on the State Committee.

Burt and Winnie travelled extensively overseas and around Australia in their caravan, until his beloved Winnie developed cancer and passed away in 2000. It was at about that time that Burt's interest in birds & bird watching began. He attended one of Joan Paton's "Little Brown Birds" courses at the WEA after which he joined the South Australian Ornithological Association in 2001.

Burt met and made many new friends through Birds SA, and thoroughly enjoyed the field trips, especially the campouts. Burt met Dru in 2001 and together they attended bird meetings and field trips and travelled to birdwatching sites around Australia. Dru died suddenly in March this year, and Burt was admitted to hospital on the same day. He passed away three weeks later.

Birds SA members will always remember Burt's happy personality and his jokes. He was such a fun, caring, and genuine person.

Sue Winwood



Chestnut-rumped Thornbill

(Photographed by Bob Daly at Gluepot on 12 September 2023)

Connecting with *The Bool*

Located midway between Adelaide and Melbourne, Bool Lagoon Game Reserve and Hacks Lagoon Conservation Park (a.k.a., *The Bool*) are one of the largest and most diverse freshwater systems in southern Australia. Once upon a time, *The Bool* was kept permanently wet and served as a drought refuge for many rare and endangered bird species, including Australasian Bittern, and Blue-billed Duck. More recently, *The Bool* has been managed as a seasonal wetland, supporting large numbers of Magpie Geese and Straw-necked Ibis in the wetter months. Given this, these wetlands have attracted the interest and affection of a great number of people. To some, *The Bool* means culture, heritage, and livelihoods. Traditional Owners, for example, cultivated tunnels through *The Bool's* once dense stands of tea-tree to trap and harvest ducks. Today, vineyards and croplands adorn the banks of *The Bool*, benefiting from soils made rich by huge flocks of wetland birds distributing nutrients (to put it nicely). To others, *The Bool* has meant leisure and exploration. Birdwatchers and campers flock to *The Bool* for the ambience and to try their luck at spying the ghost of the wetland, the Australian Painted Snipe.

With this long-established connection between people and *The Bool* in mind, it was a no-brainer forming the *Friends of Bool and Hacks Lagoons* in early 2021. Moreover, it was a breeze recruiting members, with local farmers, naturalists, practitioners, and at least one travelling bard

joining our ranks. Together, we started assembling a cultural and ecological baseline for *The Bool*. With support from the *Department of Environment and Water*, and the *Friends of Parks South Australia*, we've been able to establish two long-term listening posts and undertake monthly bird surveys at *The Bool*. To-date, 40 bird species have been detected in recordings from these posts, including Australian Little Bittern, Southern Boobook and White-throated Treecreeper, while ~120 species have been detected during surveys. Furthermore, we've been able to capture aerial imagery of *The Bool* to better understand the state of vegetation and audit the number of Black Swan and Magpie Geese nests. These activities have reinforced that these wetlands may be the most significant area in the southeast for water birds – provided that there is water available.

More recently, after discussions between the *Friends of Bool and Hacks Lagoons*, *SA Power Networks* and the *National Parks and Wildlife Service*, a raptor platform is due to be installed on the western bank of *The Bool*. Additionally, our group (in partnership with *BirdLife Australia*) secured funds to install artificial hollows around *The Bool*. This project is supported by the *Limestone Coast Landscape Board Grassroots Grants* program and is funded by the regional landscape levy.

Great Egrets

(Photographed by Diana Vine at The Bool, 25 July 2023)



Connecting with The Bool *(continued)*



White-fronted Chat

(Photographed by Diana Vine at The Bool, 25 July 2023)



Juvenile Black-shouldered Kites

(Photographed by Diana Vine at The Bool, 25 July 2023)

When taken together, these initiatives demonstrate our group's commitment to restoring ecological function at *The Bool* through supplementing bird nesting habitat. We hope to see species like Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Owllet-nightjar and Blue-winged Parrot setting up shop at *The Bool*.

While our group is relatively new, we are keen to continue our work of monitoring and restoring *The Bool* into the future. Securing these wetlands is critical for the conservation of a range of species, and a broad network of people is needed to do this. If you are interested in participating, please reach out via email: bradley.clarke-wood@birdlife.org.au And please remember that we are always interested in data and observations from *The Bool*, so feel free to send this information through as well.

Bradley Clarke-Wood

Wetland Bird Program Coordinator
Birdlife Australia



Brolgas

(Photographed by Diana Vine at The Bool, 25 July 2023)

Magpie Goose *(Photographed by Diana Vine at The Bool, 25 July 2023)*



Past Excursions

Birds SA

Sunday 30 July

Minko Scrub

A group of 19 birders assembled outside the Minko farm on a cold Sunday morning in July. We consolidated into a smaller number of 4WD vehicles, so as to safely traverse the slippery grass slopes of the property. The forecast rain never came, which was fortunate. Minko is a wonderfully wooded site, but the paths are narrow and barely there, so we were strung out in a long line as we walked through the bush.

We saw many of the expected Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Red-browed Finches that were feeding on the paddocks and jumped into the adjacent woodland as we approached. The highlight of the day was an obliging Fan-tailed Cuckoo, which not only flitted along the entire length of the walkers along the path, but also hung around for more than five minutes at a close distance, singing and displaying. Other interesting birds included White-throated Treecreepers, Scarlet Robins, Crescent Honeyeaters and Eastern Spinebill. There were a total of 35 different species.

Steven Langley

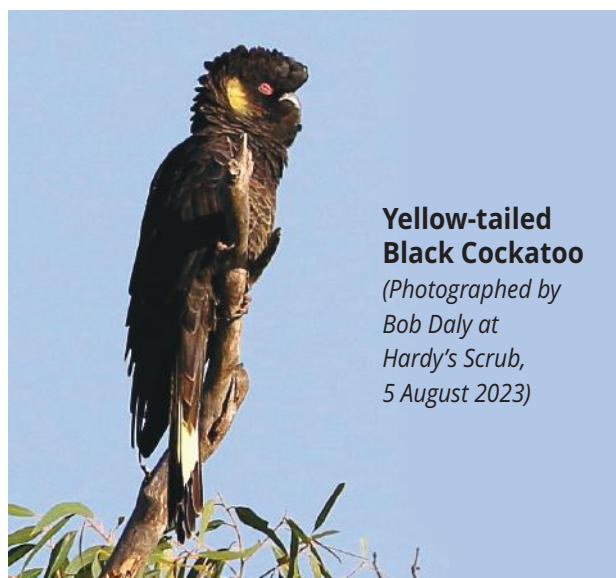
Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 5 August 2023

Hardy's Scrub

It was a cool and cloudy morning, with a forecast of possible showers later in the day, when we assembled at gate 16. Nine birdwatchers and two local photographers made up the group.

We walked west along a bush track flanked by low growing wattle in glorious blossom. Our first avian encounter was a large mob of Yellow-tailed Black



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

(Photographed by Bob Daly at Hardy's Scrub, 5 August 2023)



Eastern Spinebill *(Photographed by Julie Hocking at Hardy's Scrub, 5 August 2023)*

Cockatoos feeding in the trees, an estimated 50 to 60 birds. They serenaded us as they moved through the trees, before disappearing across the road.

The highlight of the day was seeing a Wedge-tailed Eagle flying in low unhurried circles over the park boundary while being harassed by five ravens. A Brush Bronzewing was flushed from the path by our approach and hung around on a nearby tree branch, allowing the photographers to get some good shots. A Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo calling from the top of a dead branch in a tree near Wine Dam provided everyone with good views.

We heard a Common Bronzewing, a Fan-tailed Cuckoo, some Purple-crowned Lorikeets and White-browed Babbler. Other species seen included Red-browed Finch (11), Mistletoebird (4), Silvereye (5), Golden Whistler (3), Grey Shrikethrush (7), Striated Pardalote (12), White-naped Honeyeater (6), Yellow-faced Honeyeater (1), Crescent Honeyeater (6), Maned Duck (1), Black-faced Cuckoo (1) and White-browed Scrubwren (2).

The rain held off and we completed our walk two and a half hours later. During the bird call it was noted that there seemed to be a scarcity of Thornbills, Weebills and Treecreepers. The total of species for the day was 38.

Edith St George

Birds SA

Saturday 12 August

Paiwalla Wetland

Ten birders met in drizzling rain at Paiwalla Wetland. Our group included Mary and David Bates from the United Kingdom, and several newbies. Mary and David seemed to have brought their weather with them, as the previous days had been warm and sunny.

Past Excursions *(continued)*

The sky cleared as we began our walk from the car park along the base of the cliff-face, looking for roosting birds of prey. Unfortunately, persistent drizzle returned as we started across the first pond bank, creating sticky muddy conditions for the rest of the walk.

We recorded 17 waterbird species (a total of 358 birds) including Musk Duck (8), Black Swan (12), Spotless Crake (1), Grey Teal (30), Australasian Swamphen (20), Australian Pelican (50), Little Pied Cormorant (20), Australian Pied Cormorant (6), Little Black Cormorant (25), Australasian Darter (6) and all three Grebe species.

Our tally of birds of prey included Swamp Harrier (2), Black Kite (10), Whistling Kite (12), Black Falcon (1) and Nankeen Kestrel (1). Other species recorded for the day included Peaceful Dove (6), Red-rumped Parrot (20), Adelaide Rosella (10), Australian Ringneck (2), Singing Honeyeater (6), Tree Martin (10), Australian Reed Warbler (6), Little Grassbird (10) and Silvereye (6).

Fortunately, the drizzle stopped for our lunch and bird call. Our hardy group was pleased with the total of 51 bird species (721 birds).

Lynton Huxley

Birds SA

Thursday 17 August

Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park

The drive to Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park was not promising, as thick fog alternated with showers along the way. Fortunately conditions were better on arrival. I was lucky to see a pair of Kookaburras and three Australian Wood Ducks before our group of three set out.

The first part of the loop was busy with small birds flitting between the trees. Many Striated Pardalotes were calling, but none were sighted at this stage. A Yellow-faced and a White-plumed Honeyeater put in brief appearances, and we saw a group of a dozen Yellow Thornbills. A few Eastern Spinebills flitted nearby, while a small group of Red-browed Finches foraged on the ground.

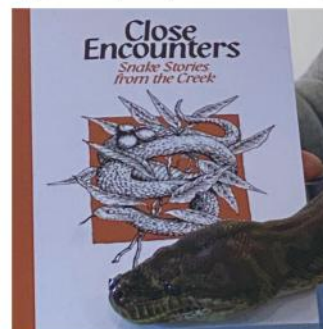
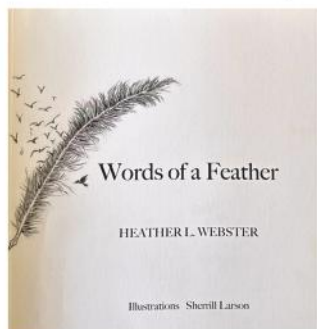
Just before moving into the more open section we spotted a group of six White-winged Choughs foraging under the trees. We watched them for a while before a glimpse of a large raptor through the treetops drew us away. Unfortunately the raptor, probably a Brown Goshawk, flew out of sight before we could identify it.



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Past Excursions *(continued)*

Moving into the open area we started to encounter New Holland Honeyeaters and a few Grey Fantails. A couple of Scarlet Robins were spotted as we moved towards the wooded section where a pair of White-throated Treecreepers kept us entertained. Unfortunately the rain set in and continued until we reached the track returning to the car park.

It was a good morning in spite of poor light conditions. A total of 25 bird species were seen, including Crescent Honeyeater (2), Red Wattlebird (2), Black-faced Cuckooshrike (2), Grey Shrike-thrush (1), White-winged Chough (6), Silveryeye (1) and Red-browed Finch (6).

Clive Paling

Birds SA

Sunday 27 August

Talbot Reserve and Bushland Conservation, Rockleigh

Thirteen members arrived at Talbot Reserve for our excursion. The weather could not have been better: no wind and a mostly clear sky.

Most of us stuck to the gravel road that runs uphill alongside the reserve. On the other side of the road is a private conservation reserve, being revegetated, which gave us the best of both worlds. Despite being there for only an hour, we saw 32 bird species, including an Elegant Parrot, a Black-shouldered Kite, a Brown Treecreeper, Rufous Whistlers (6), Hooded Robins (3), Mistletoebirds (4), a Diamond Firetail, White-eared Honeyeaters (2), Elegant Parrots (2), and Rufous Songlarks (3).

We proceeded to Bushland Conservation's Rockleigh property, 121ha under a Heritage Agreement. Bushland Conservation (BC) is a private company owning the Rockleigh land, another conservation property on Kangaroo Island, and one in the Tothill Ranges in the mid-north. Some of the Rockleigh property was originally grazed, which has resulted in a serious weed problem, with much African Veldt grass. About 50% was completely burnt out 10 years ago.

There are several different habitat types on the property: flat grassy areas being revegetated, woodland, steep rocky slopes, and a sandy heathland with winter creeks and a dam, all of which means excellent diversity of bird life. We were joined by Graham White, a long-term member of BC and a Birds SA member, who gave us a tour and made sure we didn't get lost.

Less common birds for the area included Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo (2), Little Eagle (1), Wedge-tail Eagle (2), Purple-backed Fairywren (1), Superb Fairywren (2), Dusky Woodswallow (3), White-winged Triller (1), Rufous Whistler (5), Western Whistler (2), Mistletoebird (3),

Elegant Parrot (1), and Diamond Firetail (4). We saw 41 bird species at BC, and between the two sites a total of 52 bird species.

It was a splendid birding day, with special thanks to Graham and Marg, another BC member, who produced a delicious cake to share after lunch.

Barbara Bansemer

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 2 September

Pangarinda Botanic Garden

Spring had arrived, and six keen birders met at the Pangarinda Botanic Garden, including two recently joined members. It was a cool morning, warming to a beautiful 20 degrees by lunchtime. As we walked around the outside track it seemed as if all the plants and bushes were flowering, bringing in huge mobs of New Holland Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds.

On the northern side we could hear the beautiful calls of the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and eventually saw a few.



New Holland Honeyeater (Photographed by Peter Roodhouse in Pangarinda Botanic Garden, 2 September 2023)

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater

(Photographed by Bob Daly in Pangarinda Botanic Garden, 2 September 2023)

A Singing Honeyeater and a Little Wattlebird also appeared. The Superb Fairywrens stayed close to the ground and were heard in several places. A few Babblers were found as we headed back to the shelter, where we had the bird call and an early lunch. Later we were joined by a couple of other Fleurieu Birders who said they found a Collared Sparrowhawk and heard a Peaceful Dove.

A Nankeen Kestrel and a Whistling Kite were the only birds of prey found. With the Murray River nearby, waterbirds including Pelicans were often spotted flying overhead. Overall, there seemed to be a lack of small bush birds.

The morning total came to 21 bird species, a far cry from our visit three years ago when we recorded 38. The park is well used by visitors and is a credit to the Friends Group who help to maintain it.

Wendy Phillips

Birds SA

Saturday 9 September Scott Creek Conservation Park

Nine birders attended the excursion at Scott Creek Conservation Park. After a very wet week we had almost perfect weather for our day, and saw 38 bird species. Most were the usual customers, although we came across Weebills, which have not been recorded in the park for some years.

Jim Spiker



Birders in action

(Photographed by Betty Brezovskis in Scott Creek Conservation Park, 9 September 2023)

Port Augusta Bird Group - The Babblers

Sunday 10 September Wirrabara Forest

On a cool, clear morning five birders from Hallett, Adelaide, Port Augusta and Mambray Creek drove to Wirrabara Forest. Red Wattlebird and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo calls filled the air, with White-winged Choughs occasionally joining them. In the trees were Galahs, Flinders Adelaide Rosellas, Striated Pardalotes, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Purple-crowned Lorikeets.

Along the track we found Inland Thornbills and Grey Fantails. Peaceful Doves, Rufous Whistlers, Silvereyes, White-plumed Honeyeaters and a Fan-tailed Cuckoo could be heard before being seen. Noisy chip-chipping sounds in the dense shrubbery were tracked to a flock of six squabbling Yellow Thornbills.

As we neared the old nursery area a pair of Scarlet Robins were spotted in a low tree branch, while Weebills moved through the canopy. Brown-headed Honeyeaters were searching for food and looking for nesting sites in tree hollows.

At the Bluff Lookout we found a flock of Yellow-rumped Thornbills in the car park surrounded by thick scrub. As we enjoyed the view a pair of Scarlet Robins and some Yellow-faced Honeyeaters flitted about in the trees, and a Wedge-tailed Eagle glided past.

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Galah (Photographed by Bernie Haase in Wirrabara Forest, 10 September 2023)



Rufous Whistler (Photographed by Judy Owen in Wirrabara Forest, 10 September 2023)



Scarlet Robin (Photographed by Judy Owen in Wirrabara Forest, 10 September 2023)

In the valley below the tall trees were full of New Holland and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. A Brown Goshawk and some Tree Martins glided overhead, while a group of Purple-backed Fairywrens darted about in the undergrowth. A pair of Scarlet Robins were seen carrying food in their beaks.

In the flowering trees we saw Purple-crowned Lorikeets, and White-plumed and Brown-headed Honeyeaters. A Pair of Striated Pardalotes were seen coming and going from their nest in a hollow. On the ground, Grey Shrike-thrush searched for food. At our last stop we found Common Bronzewing, a flock of 15 White-browed Babbler, a Painted Button-quail, and more of the species seen earlier.

A total of 42 bird species were found, with the bird of the day being the Painted Button-quail. It was good to see the Eastern Spinebill, Yellow Thornbill, Scarlet Robin and Fan-tailed Cuckoo, which are not usually found in these more arid areas.

Bernie Haase

Birds SA

Thursday 21 September Belair National Park

It was pleasing to have 23 members attend this event, with a few being members for less than a month! We set off around Playford Lake in perfect weather. Only seven water bird species were seen, with the highlight being a Pacific Black Duck with four young that were very adventuresome and cute.

Next we headed easterly along one of several tracks leading to the native nursery. The bird species through the scrub are different to the lake area, and we slowed our pace to capture sounds and any movement that could result in a sighting. Eventually we arrived at the nursery where we saw four White-browed Scrubwren foraging.



Belair bird call (Photographed by Lynton Huxley in Belair National Park, 21 September 2023)

Past Excursions *(continued)*

We returned to the carpark for lunch having enjoyed a pleasant walk in a beautiful location. Our birdcall record was 34 species, which included Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Adelaide Rosella, Eastern Rosella, Crescent Honeyeater, Red Wattlebird (with young on nest) and Striated Pardalote.

Lynton Huxley

Birds SA

Sunday 24 September Kinchina Conservation Park

It was a fine and warm day when 28 people gathered at Kinchina Conservation Park. In line with recent trends, there were several new faces who were either new members or members who hadn't been on an excursion for a while. We proceeded into the area adjacent to Monarto Zoo, which resulted in the sighting of a Zebra in the distance.

We saw a large flock of Little Black Cormorants (approx. 100) and Straw-necked Ibis (7) flying overhead. Red-rumped Parrots (10), Australian Ringnecks (4) and Adelaide Rosellas (5) were scattered throughout the area.

Honeyeaters included Brown-headed (4), New Holland (12), Singing (6), Spiny-cheeked (12) and Red Wattlebirds (10). A Spotted Pardalote was seen with nesting material, and there were others calling from the trees. Weebills (approx. 100) seemed to be everywhere, and Yellow-rumped Thornbills (8), Chestnut-rumped Thornbills (8), Purple-backed Fairywrens (12) and White-browed Babblers (25) were busy along the trail. We also saw Grey Shrikethrush (6), Mistletoebirds (2), Western Whistler (1), Rufous Whistler (1), Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo (1), Shining Bronze Cuckoo (1) and Black-faced Cuckooshrike (1). Despite much listening and looking there were no signs of the Southern Scrub-robins often found at the site.

It was a good day for raptors with Wedge-tailed Eagle (1), Little Eagle (1), Black Kites (4), Black-shouldered Kites (2), Whistling Kites (2), Brown Falcons (3) and Nankeen Kestrels (2) seen. We saw one of the Brown Falcons with a lizard for lunch, which it dropped but then swooped down and caught again in mid-air, an impressive feat!

The highlights of the day were the 7 raptors, and the bird call resulted in 45 species for the day.

Ali Ben Kahn

Sheltering from the sun at Red Banks

(Photographed by Lynton Huxley on the Long Weekend Campout, September 2023)

Birds SA

Friday 29 September – Tuesday 3 October Long Weekend Campout: Hallelujah Hills

Competing with the AFL Grand Final was always going to be a challenge, but we successfully lured 16 Birds SA members to our campout. The weather was hot and very windy for our second campout in this beautiful location.

We undertook bird surveys at the two heritage agreement properties owned by Worlds End Conservation Pty Ltd (the camp site and Read Creek Hills), and the nearby Red Banks Conservation Park. The total bird species count was 73, with numbers for the respective sites being 48, 23 and 43. The birds seen included Emu, Black-eared Cuckoo, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Goshawk, Common Bronzewing, Rainbow Bee-eater, Red-backed Kingfisher, Nankeen Kestrel, Budgerigar, Mulga Parrot, Australian Ringneck and Brown Treecreeper. We heard Tawny Frogmouth and Australian Owlet-nightjar calling each evening.

Passerines included both Purple-backed and White-winged Fairywren, Weebill, Spotted and Striated Pardalote and eight Honeyeater species: Brown-headed, New Holland, White-eared, Spiny-cheeked, White-fronted, Singing, White-plumed and Red Wattlebird. Other birds seen included Chestnut-rumped, Yellow-rumped and Yellow Thornbill, Redthroat, Southern Whiteface, White-browed Babbler, Masked Woodswallow, White-browed Woodswallow, White-winged Triller, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrikethrush, White-winged Chough, Jacky Winter, Hooded Robin, Red-capped Robin, Silvereye, Black-capped Sittella and Diamond Firetail.

It was a memorable campout with lots of good birding. Special thanks to Ali for arranging for the property to be available, and for her excellent guidance to each of the locations visited.

Lynton Huxley



Past Excursions *(continued)*



Striated Pardalote (Photographed by Julie Hocking in Scott Conservation Park, 7 October 2023)



A cheerful bunch of birders (Scott Conservation Park, 7 October 2023)



Elegant Parrot (Photographed by Bob Daly in Scott Conservation Park, 7 October 2023)

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 7 October

Scott Conservation Park, Currency Creek

On a cool but mainly sunny morning, 17 birdwatchers met at Scott Conservation Park (SCP) near Currency Creek. We divided the group in two, with one group going anticlockwise around the 3km loop track and the other clockwise.

Due to the cool temperature and sunshine the birds were quite vocal, but not easy to spot in the high canopy. As the walk progressed, we found many Crimson Rosellas and Elegant Parrots. Lorikeets were still nesting, mainly Musk with an occasional Purple Crowned and Rainbow. The park has an array of different sized nesting hollows in old gum trees, making them suitable for all sizes of birds ranging from Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos to Striated Pardalotes.

The Honeyeaters were everywhere with New Holland, Crescent, Yellow-faced, White-naped and Brown-headed being seen. Tree Martins were nesting high in the big eucalypts, and both Rufous and Golden Whistlers were heard and then seen. Striated Pardalotes were very vocal throughout the park. One Sacred Kingfisher was spotted by a member near the car park.

Our combined bird count came to 42 species, which for a bush site with only one Straw-necked Ibis flying overhead representing the water birds, was impressive. Everyone enjoyed the morning of birding, and the few who hadn't seen SCP before were very impressed.

Bob Daly

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Sunday 8 October

Bernie's Block, Mambray Creek

It was a clear, calm and cool morning when a group of birders gathered at Mambray Creek. Two others arrived later, bringing our group to six birders from Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Adelaide and Mambray Creek.

As we parked at the house Welcome Swallows darted about, calling to their young that had just left their nests under the veranda. Spiny-cheeked and Singing Honeyeaters, Peaceful Doves and Mallee Ringnecks moved about in the garden, while Magpies and a White-faced Heron stalked insects in the cleared fire break area.

As we walked towards the creek the calls of young Yellow-throated Miners greeted us. Along the creek we found Striated Pardalotes, Red-rumped Parrots, Flinders Adelaide Rosellas, Apostlebirds, Weebils, Rufous Whistlers, Sacred Kingfishers, Chestnut-rumped and Inland Thornbills, and White-Browed Babblers. In a revegetated paddock we found a Spotted Harrier, Emu,

Past Excursions *(continued)*

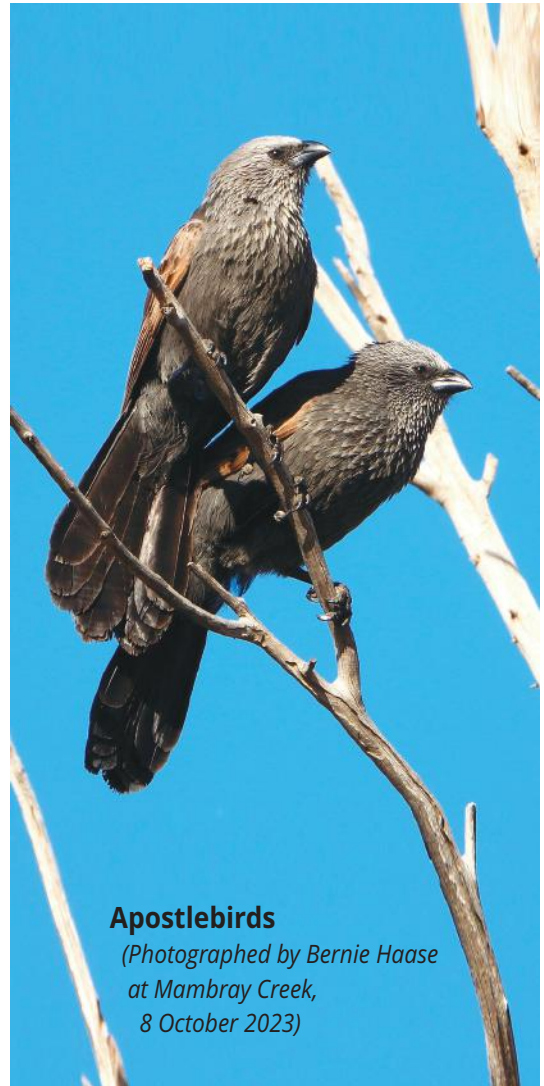
White-winged Fairywrens, and a Black-shouldered Kite fighting with a Kestrel.

We entered the native pine woodland to the song of a Rufous Songlark, and found Elegant Parrots, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Red-capped Robins, Purple-backed Fairywrens, Grey Shrike-thrush, and a pair of nesting Black Kites.

Back at the house for lunch, the birders from Whyalla had arrived. They added Black-faced Woodswallows and Rainbow Bee-eaters to our list. After lunch we found a Black-shouldered Kite just out of the nest, Whistling Kites, and a Black Falcon. A male Emu with eight chicks cautiously watched us as we re-entered the creek.

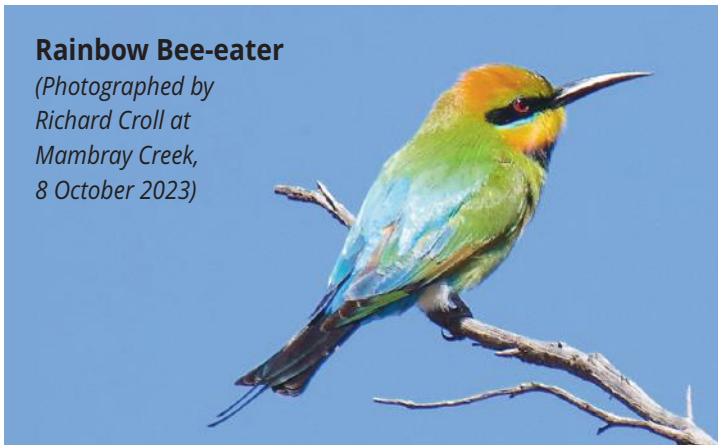
Bird call revealed a total of 51 species. The bird of the day was the Black Falcon, with special mentions to the Emu with chicks, the White-faced Heron, and the friendly Apostlebirds. Shortly after everyone had left some Cockatiels flew past, and a flock of Masked Woodswallows with a few White-browed Woodswallows settled in the woodland.

Bernie Haase



Apostlebirds

(Photographed by Bernie Haase at Mambray Creek, 8 October 2023)



Rainbow Bee-eater

(Photographed by Richard Croll at Mambray Creek, 8 October 2023)



White-browed Babbler

(Photographed by Richard Croll at Mambray Creek, 8 October 2023)

Past Excursions *(continued)*

Birds SA

Saturday 14 October

Whites Road Wetlands

The weather was slightly overcast, but warm and dry, as I arrived early to find everyone already there! Two Australasian Darters were circling overhead as our group of nine birders set out.

After a few minutes checking out the birds near our cars, including Red-rumped Parrot and Fairy Martin, we set off around the first pond, pausing to watch a dozen Great Cormorants pass by.

Continuing to the main pond we found a fair number of Australasian Grebe. One solitary Shelduck sat on the sandbank in the middle of the pond and a pair of Red-kneed Dotterel foraged along the water line amongst the White-faced Heron. One of the highlights for many were Silver Gulls, or to be more precise three large fluffy chicks. Many had never seen them before.

Following the cycle track, we observed a pair of Black-fronted Dotterel on the far side of the pond. As we approached the old growth trees with abundant hollows, we began to encounter Cockatoos, Lorikeets and Rosellas. Reed Warblers called constantly from the reeds and occasionally appeared in view. Little Grassbirds were heard, but not seen. A Hobby passed quickly overhead just before we saw a juvenile White-necked Heron, sitting on a branch in full view for many minutes.

After the birdcall we moved on to the cycle track and saw several White-winged Fairywren along with many White-headed Stilts (including juveniles), a Kestrel and a Black-shouldered Kite. A couple of members held back after the rest of us left and were lucky to see a male White-winged Fairywren. Our species tally for the day was 60.

Clive Paling

Birds SA

Thursday 19 October

Lobethal Bushland Park

Twelve participants attended the Bushland Park outing on a beautifully warm and sunny day. The park had been hit by the December 2019 bushfires, nearly four years ago. Due to the abundance of post-bushfire wattles, the walk incorporated the wider tracks only, affording us a better likelihood of sighting birds. We were off to a good start sighting our first 15 species within a few metres from the car park! Highlights from the lower lake included Brown-headed Honeyeaters and a lone Baillon's Crake.

We traversed the park on the eastern side seeing numerous small birds, Common Bronzewing (2), Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos (4), and Elegant Parrots (2). Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, which were calling throughout, determined not to show themselves.



Dusky Woodswallows (Photographed by Peter Roodhouse in Lobethal Bushland Park Park, 19 October 2023)

Heading towards the upper lake we sighted Varied Sittellas (2) and a Long-billed Corella. The return track gave us great views of a Dusky Woodswallow nest tucked into a hollow. We were serenaded with the lovely song of a Rufous Whistler, that decided to reveal itself. Returning to the lower lake, two Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike were calling and seen moving around the bare canopy.

Lunch and the bird call was enjoyed in a shady setting by the lower lake. We added another 5 birds to the list, which totalled 55. No birds of prey were sighted, possibly due to the dense wattles restricting visibility from above.

Rose Slade

Birds SA

Sunday 29 October

Myponga Reservoir Reserve

It was a perfect morning for birding – the air was still, the calm water was a mirror, and the sun was shining as eight birders set off.

Welcome to Coot heaven! There must have been a couple of hundred Eurasian Coot scattered across the water. Also on the water were Black Swan (35), Grey Teal (50), Chestnut Teal (10), Pacific Back Duck (15) and Hardhead (15). A few Little Pied Cormorant (4) were at rest and small groups of Little Black (12) and Great Cormorants (25) were flying around. A Whistling Kite was circling over the opposite shoreline – our only raptor of the day.

Past Excursions *(continued)*



White-necked Heron (Photographed by Bob Daly at Myponga Reservoir Reserve, 29 October 2023)

Leaving the water we headed along the track. A couple of Laughing Kookaburra made their presence known, sitting in full view. Heading back toward the pine trees we saw Striated Pardalote (10) and Striated Thornbill (2).

Returning to the water we found Musk Duck (10) and Blue-billed Duck (6) in breeding plumage. In the shallows were Swampheh (10), Dusky Moorhen (6) and White-faced Heron (15). As we made our return journey we came across a group of four Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes.



Golden-headed Cisticola (Photographed by Bob Daly at Myponga Reservoir Reserve, 29 October 2023)

Other birds seen included Australasian (5) and Hoary-headed (10) Grebes, Great Egret (3), White-headed Stilt (2), Tree Martin (5), Australian Reed Warbler (6), and European Goldfinch (1). Heard, but not seen, were Grey Currawong, Grey Shrike-thrush, and Little Grassbird.

It was a pleasant morning's birding in good company. Many thanks to Bob Daly for the photographs.

Clive Paling



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Future Excursions

The following excursions are subject to cancellation or change due to weather conditions, or other factors outside of Birds SA's control. It is important that you check the Webpage, our Facebook page or your phone App for updated information. Updates will be provided 24 hours prior to the commencement of any affected excursion wherever possible.

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 excursion is automatically cancelled.

We 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). Distances provided with excursion information below are km from Adelaide.

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)
- Sunscreen and a hat
- Sturdy footwear and long pants
- Drinking water
- Binoculars and/or camera
- A chair/ stool and your lunch for our 'bird call' at the end of the walk.

If you require any further information contact:

Lynton Huxley, Field Program Co-ordinator

Phone: 0498 466 092

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

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 2 December

Kessell Road Ponds, Goolwa (EASY) 83 km.

Christmas break-up. Meet at the Goolwa Ponds at 4.00 pm. The bird walk will be followed by tea at the rotunda on Porter Street, Goolwa. BYO food and drinks. Chairs and BBQ available. Finish at 6.30pm. Please call Wendy on 0414 248 648 if you have any queries.

Birds SA

Saturday 9 December

Happy Valley Reservoir Reserve, Happy Valley

(MODERATE) 20 km.

Meet at 8.30am in the car park opposite the roundabout at the junction of Chandlers Hill Road and Kenihans Road, Happy Valley.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Ray Nias*

Port Augusta Bird Group – The Babblers

Sunday 10 December

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden (EASY)

144 Stuart Highway, Port Augusta West.

Meet in the car park at 7.30am. Bird watching, followed by Christmas lunch in the cafe and showing of the year's best birding photos.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Bernie Haase*

Birds SA

Thursday 21 December

Onkaparinga Wetlands, Noarlunga Downs (EASY)

32km.

Meet at 8.30am at Port Noarlunga Oval car park off Britain Drive.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Ali Ben Kahn*

Birds SA

Saturday 13 January

Altona CSR Landcare Reserve, Altona (MODERATE)

55km.

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

EXCURSION LEADER: *Tina Woods*

Port Augusta Bird Group – The Babblers

Sunday 14 January

Baroota Reservoir (MODERATE)

Meet at 8.00am in the highway parking bay, Mambray Creek.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Bernie Haase*

Birds SA

Thursday 18 January

Tolderol Game Reserve, Lake Alexandrina (EASY)

85km.

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

EXCURSION LEADER: *William Brooker*

Future Excursions *(continued)*

Birds SA

Sunday 28 January

Apex Park Wetland Reserve and river walk, West Beach (EASY) **10km.**

Meet at 8.30am at the Wetland Reserve car park located off Burbridge Road, West Beach. There are toilets near the entrance of the car park.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Anna Woods*

Birds SA

Saturday 10 February

Riverglades Wetlands, Murray Bridge (EASY) **80km.**

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

EXCURSION LEADER: *Lynton Huxley*

Port Augusta Bird Group – The Babblers

Sunday 11 February

Mt Gullett beach (MODERATE)

Meet at 8.00am in the highway parking bay, Mambray Creek. Wear beach walking footwear.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Bernie Haase*

Fleurieu Birders

Tuesday 13 February

Tour: Spirit Australia Cruises Birdwatching Charter

Duration: 5 hours (leaves wharf 10am and returns 3pm)

Departs: Goolwa Wharf (Cutting Road) 10.00am

Price: \$110 per person including morning tea and lunch

Note: Minimum 30 / maximum 36 passengers

Please ensure you arrive 15 minutes prior to cruise departure. There is plenty of free parking at the Goolwa Wharf.

Payment Details: Passengers can contact Spirit Australia Cruises on 08 8555 2203 and pay with credit card over the phone or pay via EFT:

- BSB: 085 938
- Account #: 048 121 311
- Reference: BIRD 059-128

Birds SA

Thursday 15 February

Shepherds Hill Recreation Park, Saint Marys (DIFFICULT) **10km.**

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

EXCURSION LEADER: *Lynton Huxley*

Birds SA

Sunday 25 February

Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park, Tanunda (MODERATE) **60km.**

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

EXCURSION LEADER: *Ali Ben Kahn*

Fleurieu Birders

Sunday 3 March

Hindmarsh River walk, Victor Harbor (MODERATE) **82km.**

Meet at 8.30am at the end of Bridge Terrace.

EXCURSION LEADER: *TBA*

Port Augusta Bird Group – The Babblers

Sunday 17 March

Bowman Park, Crystal Brook (EASY)

Meet at 8.30am at the Crystal Brook information park in the main street.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Bernie Haase*

Birds SA

Thursday 21 March

Tangari Regional Park, Woodcroft (MODERATE) **23km.**

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

EXCURSION LEADER: *Lynton Huxley*



Bassian Thrush (Photographed by Rod Tetlow at Jenkins Scrub, 29 September 2023)

Future Excursions *(continued)*

Birds SA

Thursday 28 March – Tuesday 2 April

EASTER CAMPOUT

The 2024 Easter Campout will be held at Mary Seymour Conservation Park in the southeast, about 360km from Adelaide. Our last visit there was in 2019, and our return will provide an opportunity to also visit nearby Bool Lagoon, Big Heath and Glen Roy Conservation Parks to update the bird records for these locations.

To get there from Adelaide:

- Take the M1 freeway to Tailem Bend and then the A8 to Keith, where you change onto the A66 and drive though Naracoorte towards Coonawarra and Penola.
- About 17km south of Naracoorte, turn right at Bool Lagoon Road (large Bool Lagoon sign) and drive to the end of this road.

- At the T-junction turn right onto Bool Lagoon West Road and follow the signs to, and then drive past, Bourne's Bird Museum until the road turns sharp left. The entrance to the Conservation Park is on your left, near the southwestern corner of the park.
- Birds SA signage will be posted from Thursday morning onwards.

Please note:

- There are no facilities in the Conservation Park, and pets and fires are not permitted. A portable toilet will be installed for the duration of the camp. Campers will need to be self-sufficient with shelter, food and water supplies. A camping fee of \$40 per person covering the duration of the campout will be collected during the weekend and a receipt issued.
- The traditional Sunday gas barbeque lunch is planned. Please provide your own tucker (suggested bacon and eggs, and/or pancakes) for the Committee Members present to do the cooking.
- Please contact Lynton Huxley by email (lyntonhuxley@gmail.com) to secure your attendance or to get more information about this fun event.

CAMPOUT LEADER: *Lynton Huxley*



Bellbird

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2024 TOUR PROGRAM

JAN	Mt Isa Short tour	4 days
MAY	Far Western SA Splits & Specialties	8 days
JUN	Pilbara Specialties	7 days
JUN	Kimberley & Black Grasswrens	8 days
JUL	Chestnut-br. Whiteface & Grey H' eater	4 days
JUL	Red Centre Adventure	5 days
JUL	Comfortable 9 Grasswren tour	16 days
JUL	Savannah to Tropics	8 days
AUG	Tropical Far North Queensland	8 days
SEP	Best of Top End	7 days
SEP	Grey Falcons & Letter-winged Kites	7 days
SEP	Red Centre Adventure	5 days

JUL	Comfortable 9 Grasswren tour	16 days
JUL	Savannah to Tropics	8 days
AUG	Tropical Far North Queensland	8 days
SEP	Best of Top End	7 days
SEP	Grey Falcons & Letter-winged Kites	7 days
SEP	Red Centre Adventure	5 days

2025 TOUR PROGRAM

...all our usual tours plus:

MAR	New Zealand Birding Tour	14 days
MAR	Tanzania Birds & Wildlife Tour	16 days

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).

Malleefowl

active mound, 16/10/2023. Monarto CP, MM. Copley, P. *et al.*

Stubble Quail

1, 19/10/2023. West Beach dunes, AP. Young, A.

Brown Quail

3, 29/7/2023. Para Wirra NP Lake, MLR. Kaashoek, M.
1, 31/10/2023. Naracoorte, Old Kingston Rd, SE. Kester, B.
7, 1/11/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.

Cape Barren Goose

25, 30/9/2023. Aldinga Washpool, MLR. Mortimer, J. & L.
1, 8/10/2023. Marion, Oaklands Wetlands, AP. Crouch, A.
Also seen there the next day by S. Cook.

Freckled Duck

3, 27/10/2023. Victoria Park, Pakapakanthi Wetlands, AP. Allen, J.

Australian Shelduck

Pair + 3 ducklings, 1/10/2023. River Torrens, University Footbridge, AP. Whatmough, R.
2, 8/10/2023. Adelaide, River Torrens, AP. Edey, D.

Buller's Albatross

1, 10/9/2023. Shelf off Port MacDonnell, MO.
Also seen on the boat trip were 1 **Salvin's Albatross** and 1 **White-chinned Petrel**. Harper, D. *et al.*

Blue Petrel

2, 13/8/2023. Shelf off Port MacDonnell, MO. Harper, S. *et al.*

Great Crested Grebe

An increase in reports since October.
1, 16/10/2023. Greenfields Wetland, Magazine Rd, AP. Merchant, M. *et al.*
1, 27/10/2023. Victoria Park, Pakapakanthi Wetlands, AP. Allen, J.
24, 28/10/2023. Goolwa Barrage, MM. Joy, P.
2, 1/11/2023. Onkaparinga RP, Perry's Bend, MLR. Vrey, P.

Royal Spoonbill

1, 29/9/2023. Marion, Oaklands Wetlands, AP. Cook, S.

Straw-necked Ibis

1 juvenile, 10/9/2023. Port Wakefield, AP. Taylor, P.W.
1, 25/9/2023. Victoria Park, Pakapakanthi Wetlands, AP. Edey, D.
9, 1/10/2023. Forreston, MLR. Slade, R.
1, 14/10/2023. Whyalla, Parfitt Reserve, EP. Croll, R.

Great Egret

1, 28/9/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.

Cattle Egret

1, 6/8/2023. Port Wakefield, AP. Edey, D.
Also reported here in previous Birder

White-necked Heron

Widespread reports in SA following the River Murray floods.
1, 14/9/2023. 60km NNW Marla, NW. Hopton, D. *et al.*
1, 16/9/2023. Big Swamp, EP. Wood, M.
6 over, 23/9/2023. Onkaparinga wetlands, MLR. Thompson, J.
1, 2/10/2023. Sleaford, Mikkira Lane, EP. Hewstone, P.
4, 8/10/2023. Barker Inlet wetlands, AP. Edey, D.
1, 10/10/2023. Newland Head CP, Waitpinga Creek, MLR. Chuck, M. & A.
1, 26/10/2023. Owen wetlands, AP. Steeles, C.
1, 26/10/2023. Wasleys, AP. Milde, S.
1, 26/10/2023. Marrabel, LN. Winnick, S.
1, 31/10/2023. Hahndorf, MLR. Rich, G.

Nankeen Night Heron

1 immature, 12/9/2023. Dernancourt, AP. Cellier, G.

Brown Booby

1, 24/9/2023. Shelf off Port MacDonnell, MO. Photographed from fishing boat. Submitted to Birds SA Rarities Committee for consideration.

Kain, T. per D. Harper

A previous report from SA off Marion Bay YP on 27 Oct 2012 was clearly a booby but lacked sufficient detail to confidently identify the species.

Australasian Darter

1, 28/8/2023. Clare, Gleeson's Wetland, LN. Fuss, D.
1, 7/10/2023. Coorong, Salt Creek, SE. Thompson, J.

Osprey

1, 19/10/2023. Swan Reach, MM. Dubbioso, M. & A.

Black-breasted Buzzard

1, 13/9/2023. Copley, FR. Croll, R.

Square-tailed Kite

Pair + nest, Sept 2023. Coultla, EP. Bates, R.
Not reported nesting on EP for many years.
4, 14/10/2023. Belair NP. Interacting at existing nest site. Hopton, D. & Richardson, M.
1, 22/10/2023. Marble Hill, MLR. Paton, P. *et al.*
1, 23/10/2023. Kersbrook Forest, MLR. Christy, P.
3, 31/10/2023. Glenthorne NP, MLR. Turniski, A.
1, 1/11/2023. Cockatoo Valley, MLR. Seen predating nest at close range. Mdrin, J.

Australian Bustard

1, 16/8/2023. Owen, AP. Steeles, C.

Bird Records *(continued)*

Buff-banded Rail

1, 19/8/2023. Narrung, MM. Moore, G.
1, 22/8/2023. Mirra Mitta Bore, NE. Taylor, P.W. & Milde, S.
1, 5/9/2023. Bowmans, AP. Sanders, B.
1, 25/9/2023. Victoria Park, Pakapakanthi Wetlands, AP. Edey, D.
2, 15/10/2023. Felixstow Wetlands, AP. Custance, K.
2, 22/10/2023. Aldinga Washpool, MLR. Jack, T.

Lewin's Rail

4 heard, 12/8/2023. Stipiturus CP, MLR. Stewart, R.
1 heard, 19/8/2023. 6 km WNW Poonindie, EP. Rudder, A.
Few reports from EP.

1, 25/8/2023. Piccaninnie Ponds CP, SE. Rich, G.
2, 15/10/2023. West Beach Golf Course, AP. Whatmough, R.
Few previous reports from AP.

Australian Spotted Crane

Reports of good numbers including in the intertidal samphire flats of Gulf St Vincent.

11, 26/8/2023. Port Lincoln, Greyhound Rd wetland, EP. Croll, R.
14, 28/9/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.
20, 22/10/2023. Aldinga Washpool, MLR. Jack, T.

Baillon's Crane

In contrast to last year there have been numerous reports this spring.

1, 16/8/2023. Greenfields Wetland, Magazine Rd, AP. Letheby, R.
2, 22/8/2023. Aldinga, Hart Rd wetlands, MLR. Thompson, J.

2, 19/9/2023. Whyalla Wetlands, EP. Croll, R.
7, 23/9/2023. Onkaparinga wetlands, MLR. Bainbridge, T. *et al.*
3, 6/10/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.
1, 7/10/2023. Coorong, Salt Creek, SE. Thompson, J.
1, 9/10/2023. Balaklava, Rocks Reserve, MLR. Sizer, A.

Also one seen there on 27/10 by J. & I. Trengove.
3, 18/10/2023. Roseworthy stormwater pond, AP. Milde, S.
1, 24/10/2023. Victoria Park, Pakapakanthi Wetlands, AP. Tyrrell, K.

Numerous reports there since, including 3 on 29/10 by I. Reid.

1, 29/10/2023. Seaford Rise, Pedler Creek wetlands, MLR. Andrews, J.
1, 1/11/2023. Mawson Lakes, George St wetlands, AP. Harper, D.
2, 1/11/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.

Spotless Crane

1, 14/8/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.
3, 13/9/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Carter, D.
1, 21/9/2023. Adelaide Airport, Sir Donald Bradman Dr, AP. Edey, D.

Black-tailed Nativehen

40, 29/10/2023. Aldinga, Hart Rd wetland, MLR. Spiker, J.

Painted Button-quail

1, 27/8/2023. Woodcroft, Amata Reserve, MLR. Stevenson, B.
2, 4/9/2023. 2km W Leasingham, LN. Bellchambers, K.
1, 3/10/2023. Roseworthy, Pengilly Scrub, AP. Milde, S.

Pied Oystercatcher

25 including 3 groups juveniles, 16/10/2023. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*

Banded Lapwing

20, 4/10/2023. American River, KI. Buick, I.

Common Sandpiper

1, 29/7/2023. Port Wakefield, AP. Taylor, P.W.
1, 16/9/2023. Big Swamp, EP. Wood, M.
1, 25/10/2023. Netley, Brownhill Ck retention basin, AP. Edey, D.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Additional unusual winter records.

1, 14/8/2023. Bald Hill Beach, AP. Taylor, P.W.
1, 15/8/2023. Bolivar Sewage Works, AP. Breed, B. *et al.*
7, 24/8/2023. Mirra Mitta Bore, NE. Taylor, P.W. & Milde, S.
4, 24/8/2023. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*
4, 28/8/2023. Aldinga Washpool, MLR. Jack, T.

Curlew Sandpiper

1, 22/10/2023. Aldinga Washpool, MLR. Jack, T.

Latham's Snipe

2, 23/9/2023. Onkaparinga wetlands, MLR. Bainbridge, T. *et al.*

Eastern Curlew

15, 28/8/2023. Thompson Beach south, AP. Taylor, P.W.
10, 16/10/2023. Port Prime, AP. Van Trigt, M-A.

Whimbrel

Several reports from the northern part of Gulf St Vincent.

1, 28/8/2023. Thompson Beach south, AP. Taylor, P.W.
1, 16/10/2023. Port Prime, AP. Van Trigt, M-A.
3, 16/10/2023. Clinton CP, AP. Moore, G. & Taylor, P.W.
2, 16/10/2023. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*

Wood Sandpiper

1, 23/8/2023. Leigh Creek retention dam, FR. Taylor, P.W. & Milde, S.
10, 16/9/2023. Big Swamp, EP. Wood, M.

Australian Gull-billed Tern

8, 26/10/2023. Tolderol GR, MM. Brooker, W. & Rogers, C.

Caspian Tern

1, 8/10/2023. Marion, Oaklands Wetlands, AP. Crouch, A.

Little Tern

1, 16/10/2023. Clinton CP, AP. Moore, G. & Taylor, P.W.
2, 16/10/2023. Price Saltfields, YP. Jack, T. *et al.*

Fairy Tern

2, 28/10/2023. Aldinga Reef, MLR. Bainbridge, T.
Not reported in this area for several years.

Peaceful Dove

Several reports from eastern KI although its status on the island is uncertain, possibly originating from captive birds.

1, 5/8/2023. Kingscote, John Downing Reserve, KI. Ingram, G.
1, 2/10/2023. Ballast Head, KI. Passmore, S.
1, 8/10/2023. Kingscote, KI. Correll, S.
1, 8/10/2023. Kingscote Golf Course, KI. Custance, L.

Bird Records *(continued)*

Gang Gang Cockatoo

4, 28/1/2023. 1 km N Donovan's Landing, SE. Flying along east bank of Glenelg River. Rich, G.
 4, 13/8/2023. Dry Creek Native Forest Reserve, SE. In stringybark forest. Harper, D.
 6, 26/8/2023. Dry Creek Native Forest Reserve, SE. Rich, G.
Possibly becoming a regular visitor to the far SE of SA along the Victorian border.

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

400 over, 21/9/2023. McLaren Vale, MLR. West, J. & Lush, F.
 1, 22/9/2023. Coultas, EP. Bates, R.
Few now remain on EP.

Blue-winged Parrot

1, 16/9/2023. Ettrick CP, MM. Slade, R. & Storey, R.
 2, 29/9/2023. Roseworthy, Pengilly Scrub, AP. Gunjko, J.
 Also 2 seen there on 9/10/2023 P. Knight.

Elegant Parrot

2, 26/10/2023. Woodcroft, 80 acres reserve, MLR. Brooker, W.
 First seen in district.

Bourke's Parrot

6, 14/9/2023. Marla, NW. Drinking at borrow pit near railway. Hopton, D. *et al.*

Pallid Cuckoo

1, 6/10/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.

Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo

1, 1/11/2023. Colonel Light Gardens, AP. Recovered after flying into window. Stewart, S.

Black-eared Cuckoo

1, 15/9/2023. Grassdale Lagoon, KI. In regenerating mallee from fire. Video and sound recordings taken. Correll, S.
First report from Kangaroo Island.

Eastern Koel

Heard, 4/9/2023. Prospect, AP. Paton, F.
 Male, 8/9/2023. Prospect, Ballville St, AP. King, W.
 Male, 10/10/2023. Moana, MLR. Smith, S.
 Heard, 19/10/2023. Nairne, MLR. Maurovic, N.

Tawny Frogmouth

1, 31/10/2023. St Agnes, AP. Stevens, L.

Spotted Nightjar

1, 23/10/2023. 9km SE Balaklava, AP. Taylor, P.W.

Red-backed Kingfisher

Several southerly reports this spring.
 2, 10/9/2023. Swan Reach CP, MM. West, A.
 1, 23/9/2023. Onkaparinga RP, Perry's Bend, MLR. Goland, R. & G. & Thompson, J.
 1, 7/10/2023. Brookfield CP, MM. Boundy, M.
 1, Oct 2023. Pinkerton Plains, AP. Milde, S.

Sacred Kingfisher

1, 18/10/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.

Superb Fairywren

Further reports from suburban Adelaide Plains.
 2, 20/10/2023. Marion, Oaklands Wetlands, AP. Cook, S.
 2, 25/10/2023. Netley, Brownhill Ck retention basin, AP. Edey, D.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater

1, 29/7/2023. 5 km SW Victor Harbor, MLR Carpenter, G.
Few reports from MLR region.

Pied Honeyeater

2, 26/10/2023. Quorn, Powell Gardens, FR. Merchant, M.

Black-chinned Honeyeater

2, 17/10/2023. Happy Valley, Mandalay Dr, MLR. Also 1 at bird bath on 25 and 31/10. Brooker, W.
 Not seen here for several years.

Noisy Friarbird

1, 23/10/2023. Deep Creek CP, MLR. Photos and description submitted to Birds SA Rarities Committee. Markos, D.
Few previous reports from SA, all from the Upper Murray district.

White-fronted Honeyeater

3, 23/9/2023. Halbury, AP. Feeding in flowering gums. Taylor, P.W.

Black Honeyeater

Male, 6/9/2023. Brookfield CP, MM. Bainbridge, T.

Chestnut-rumped Heathwren

1, 27/8/2023. Mt Bold reservoir, Razorback Rd lookout, MLR. Edey, D.

Grey Currawong

6, 6/8/2023. Gilberton, River Torrens, AP. Paton, P.

Crested Shriketit

1, 30/7/2023. Nairne, Timkins Rd, MLR. Koch-Jones, K.
 2, 17/9/2023. Lewiston, AP. Jones, S.
 2, 1/11/2023. Lewiston, Hayman Rd, AP. Brampton, P.

Rufous Whistler

Female, 12/10/2023. Clarence Gardens, Dinwoodie Rd, AP. Found dead on footpath. Carpenter, G.

Olive-backed Oriole

3, 15/8/2023. Yattalunga, MLR. Letheby, R.

Apostlebird

1, 9/9/2023. Port Wakefield golf course, AP. Taylor, P.W.
Its range is slowly spreading to the south and west towards Adelaide, although there was a small isolated population in the Waite Arboretum (Urrbrae) area

Bassian Thrush

1, 21/8/2023. Mount Lofty, Arthurs Seat, MLR Farmer, P.
 1, 29/9/2023. Mount Crawford, Jenkins Scrub, MLR. Tetlow, R.
 1, 27/10/2023. Parawa, Range Rd, MLR. At edge of pine forest. Christy, P.



BIRDS SA COMMITTEE

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

COMMITTEE EMAIL CONTACTS

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

MEMBERSHIP CONTACT

If you have any queries about your membership, Email: membership@birdssa.asn.au

e-newsletter EDITOR

If you wish to place material in the monthly e-newsletter please send it to Malcolm.downes@birdssa.asn.au

FURTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Librarian, Karen Donkin 0402 123 960
Campout Organiser, Lynton Huxley..... 0498 466 092

Port Augusta Birders (The Babblers)

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

Fleurieu Birders, a sub-group of Birds SA

Contact: Wendy Phillips 0414 248 648
Neil Cheshire 8552 7904 Email: fleurieubirders@gmail.com

BirdLife South East SA

Convener: Karen Hunt 0437 487 687 Email: gr.kehunt@bigpond.com

Conservation Sub-committee members

Ray Nias (Chair), Jeff Groves, David Andrewartha, Ali Ben Kahn, Bill Breed, Chris Proud, David Hansman, Greg Johnston, Fran Solly, Karleah Berris, Rodney Attwood, Bryan Haywood.

SA Rarities Committee (SARC) Members

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

SA Bird Records Committee Members

Andrew Black (chair), Graham Carpenter (Bird Records Secretary), Philippa Horton (SA Museum), Bob Green (SE), Julian Reid (NE), Lynn Pedler.

Conservation Fund Committee

This Committee assesses applications for research grant funding. Members: Jody Gates (Chair), Leo Joseph, Charles Moore, Beatrice Rogers, Anita Smyth, Brian Walker, David Paton (participates when conflicts of interest arise).

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magazineeditor@birdssa.asn.au

NOTE: Submissions to 'The Birder' may be edited for clarity and brevity.

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Editor: Chris Bates-Brownsword
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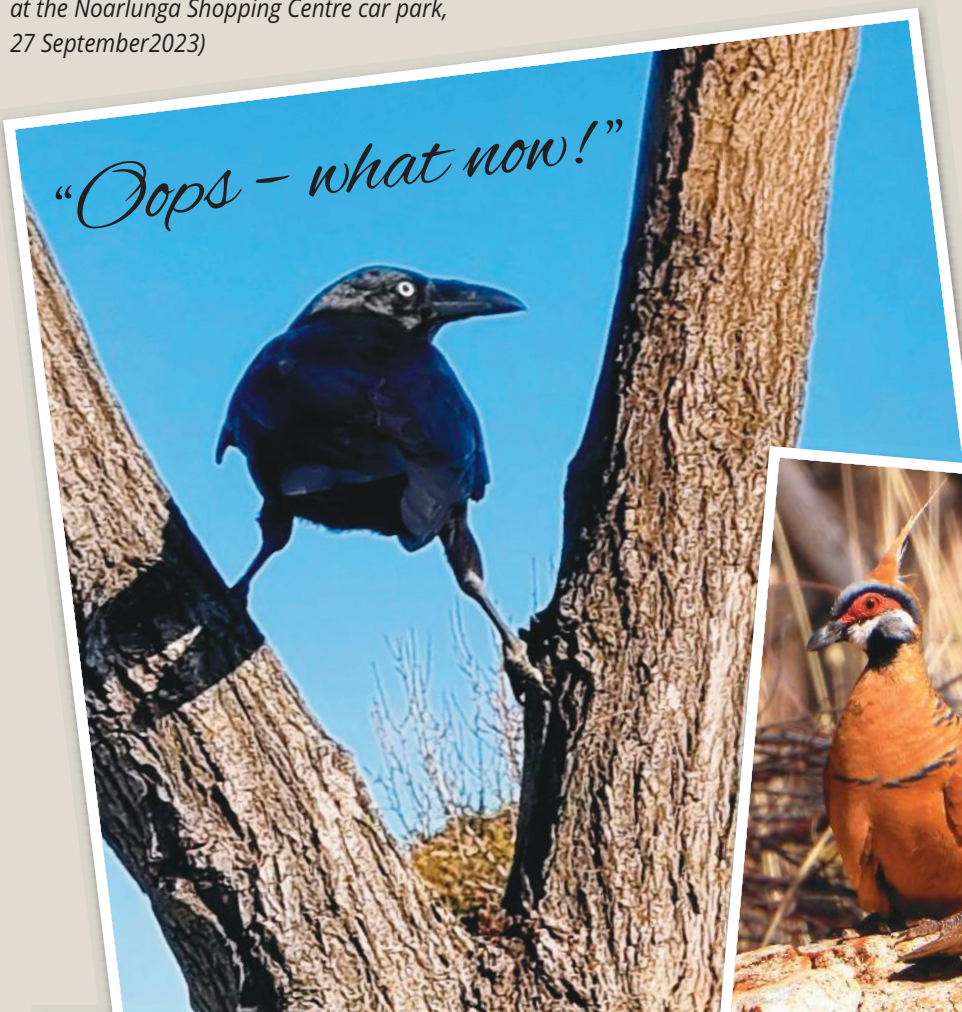
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MEMBERS PHOTO GALLERY

Little Raven doing the splits (Photographed by Sandy Werchon
at the Noarlunga Shopping Centre car park,
27 September 2023)



“Oops - what now!”

Spinifex pigeons
(Photographed by Bernie Haase
in WA, August 2022)



Two adult Laughing Kookaburras feeding a young bird
(Photographed by Brian Walker at Banksia Park, 15 August 2023)



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JULY	Ultimate Top End Birding Adventure	10 Days
JULY	Kakadu Birdwatching Tour	4 Days
AUG	Top End Finch Frenzy Ex. Darwin	7 Days
AUG	Kakadu Birdwatching Tour	4 Days
SEP	Top End Bird & Wildlife Photo Tour	6 Days
SEP	Kakadu Birdwatching Tour	4 Days
OCT	Borneo Birding & Wildlife Tour	15 Days
	Private Tours (Australia & Sri Lanka)	Various

2025 TOURS

MAR	Sri Lankan Birding & Wildlife Tour	15 Days
JUNE	Wild Kakadu Photography Workshop	5 Days
JULY	Ultimate Top End Birding Adventure	10 Days
AUG	Outback Birding Darwin to Mount Isa	9 Days
	Private Tours (Australia, Sri Lanka, Borneo)	EOI



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Pictured: Gouldian Finch

