

THE BIRDER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF BIRDS SA

AUTUMN 2024 – NO 269



**LINKING
PEOPLE WITH
BIRDS IN
SOUTH
AUSTRALIA
SINCE 1899**

(LEFT) TWO OF THE
SEVEN FOUNDING
MEMBERS OF THE
SAOA.

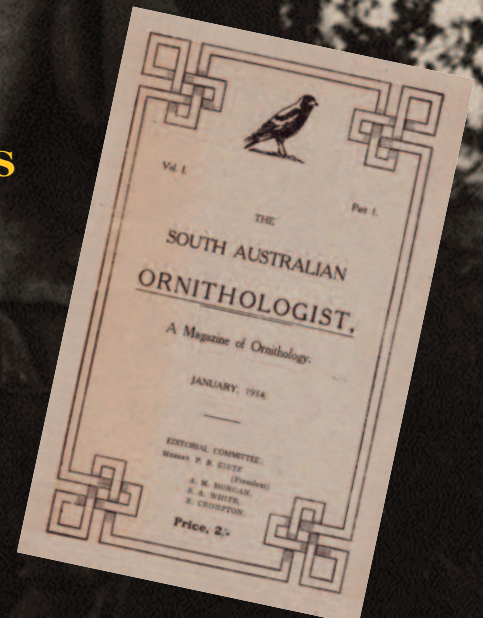
CAPT. S.A. WHITE
&
J.W. MELLOR

THE OTHER FIVE
FOUNDING MEMBERS
WERE:

EDWIN ASHBY,
DR. A.M. MORGAN,
M. SYMONDS CLARK,
A.H.C. ZIETZ
AND F.R. ZIETZ.



**BIRDS SA (SAOA) CELEBRATES
ITS 125TH YEAR.
ESTABLISHED IN MARCH
1899.**



IN THIS SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Hunting Inquiry Final Report

The History of SAOA (The SA Ornithological Association)

Seeking the Secretary Bird, Kruger National Park

The first SA Ornithologist Journal 1914

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



Red-eared Firetail

(Photographed by Glenys Grivell at Lake Seppings in WA,
29 December 2023)



White-breasted Robin

(Photographed by Ashley Grivell at Walpole National Park in WA,
24 December 2023)

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CENTRE INSERT No 86: Pulteney Malcolm Borthwick Murray (1860–1900) Part 1 by Penny Paton.

Cover image: Captain SA White (L) and his cousin JW Mellor, founding members of the SAOA, at the AOU Campout on EP in Oct 1909 (SLSA B 58290).
The cover of this magazine was designed by John Gitsham.

Graphic design: Ingrid Grigg

We welcome 25 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on page 27.

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.

"Birds SA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we live and work, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise and are grateful for the immense contribution of First Nations people to the knowledge and conservation of Australian birds."

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' and on the Member Jungle App.

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

April

Saturday 6 April	FB	Excursion, Myponga Reservoir, Myponga
Saturday 13 April	Birds SA	Excursion, Hart Road Wetlands, Aldinga Beach
Sat 13 April – Sun 14 April	PA	Campout, Munyaroo Conservation Park, Eyre Peninsula
Thursday 18 April	Birds SA	Excursion, Lobethal Bushland Park, Lobethal
Sunday 28 April	Birds SA	Excursion, Glenthorne National Park, O'Halloran Hill
Tuesday 30 April	Birds SA	General Meeting

May

Saturday 4 May	FB	Excursion, Scott Conservation Park, Currency Creek
Saturday 11 May	Birds SA	Excursion, Whites Road Wetlands, Salisbury
Thursday 16 May	Birds SA	Excursion, Brookfield Conservation Park, Blanchetown
Sunday 19 May	PA	Excursion, Quorn local area
Sunday 26 May	Birds SA	Excursion, Magazine Road Wetlands, Dry Creek
Tuesday 28 May	Birds SA	Annual General Meeting

June

Saturday 1 June	FB	Excursion, Stan Farquhar Reserve and Nangawooka Flora Reserve, Victor Harbor
Saturday 8 June	Birds SA	Browns Road, Monarto
Sunday 16 June	PA	Excursion, Depot Creek Road to Hawker
Tuesday 25 June	Birds SA	General Meeting

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.

Birds SA Management Committee

President

Steven Langley 0490 802 176

Vice President

Jeff Groves 0401 125 510

Vice President

Ray Nias 0414 917 297

Secretary

Roger Bourne

Assistant Secretary

Vacant

Treasurer

Anita Smyth

Assistant Treasurer

Vacant

Field Program Co-ordinator

Lynton Huxley 0498 466 092

Bird Record Secretary

Graham Carpenter 8297 5463

Membership Officer

Sue Winwood 0407 619 557

SA Ornithologist Editor

Philippa Horton 8271 4388

Features Writer, *The Birder*

Cynthia Pyle 0414 432 987

New Members & Events Team

Claire Bourne 0438 738 249

Member

John Gitsham 0438 900 393

Member

Alan Burns 0411 595 910

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.

President's Message

Hello everyone

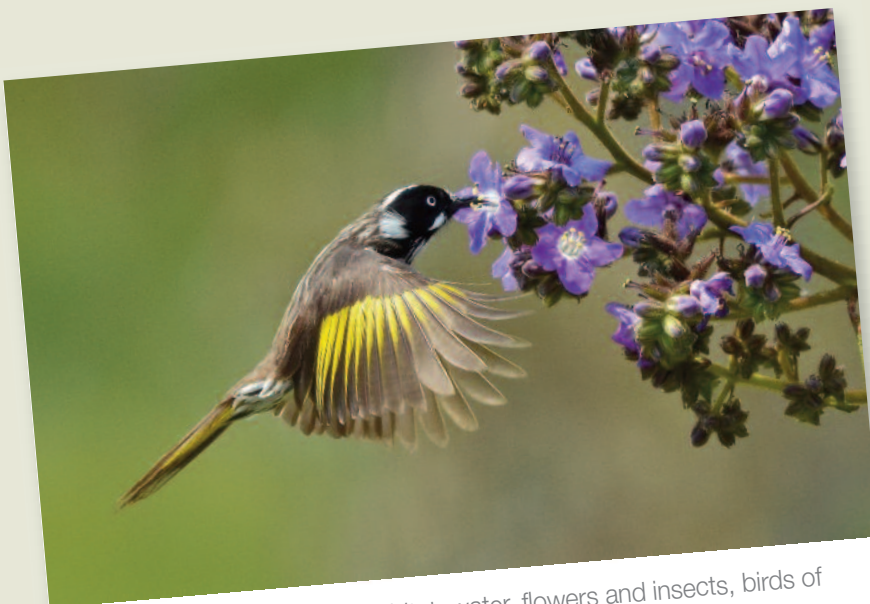
So this edition of our wonderful Birder magazine celebrates the 125th anniversary of our organization. What an incredible milestone in our history as we continue to enjoy and protect the birdlife in South Australia. Articles in this issue tell the story of how very fortunate we have been and continue to be in attracting a long line of smart, passionate, dedicated ornithologists who study and celebrate our birds.

There have been and continue to be many challenges, and we don't always succeed first time, but eventually we will prevail. 100 years ago pelicans were persecuted as perceived competition to commercial fishermen with a bounty paid by the State Fisheries Department – now they are protected. Huge numbers of native birds used to be trapped in South Australia for the national and international aviary trade – until a ban was imposed in the 1980's. We were successful in our campaigns to stop those activities and we will eventually be successful in stopping duck and quail hunting, even though we were massively disappointed by the recent very politicised, lazy and biased Inquiry. But with the overwhelming support (over 80%) of the people of South Australia we will prevail.

All the best,

Steven

Steven Langley, President Birds SA
M: 0490 802 176



When there is sufficient habitat, water, flowers and insects, birds of different types flourish.

standing trips by Birds SA members over the past 30 years
shown some species rarely move more than a few hundred
the entire life.

garden is not always a bird-rich one. Let some plants go
wild, especially over winter. This helps insect populations
thrive that shaggy foliage and become a welcome food
source, even a small

ago. Instead, the smaller musk lorikeet was chosen
change in the rainbow lorikeets' breeding patterns
opposed to the musk lorikeets' seasonal mating
for nesting hollows won out by the more aggressive
Protecting birds from predators is important
pets, but they don't mix well with our birdlife. How
feline friend indoors or within an enclosure enforces
coexist.

Birds SA article in **SA LIFE** magazine

If you have not seen it yet and can lay your hands on a copy, take a look at the "**Bring back the Birds**" article in the January 2024 issue of SA Life Magazine.

The 5-page article is interesting and informative, and promotes Birds SA and the work we do.

Several beautiful photographs taken by Birds SA members provide some excellent publicity for the Association.

New Holland Honeyeater

(Photographed by Jeff Groves)

Conservation Sub-Committee

Whaler's Way update

In January 2024, plans for the construction and operation of the Whaler's Way Orbital Launch Complex were made available for public consultation. The planned development is located on the southern tip of Eyre Peninsula, approximately 40km southwest of Port Lincoln. The site contains critical habitat for two endangered birds – the Eyre Peninsula subspecies of the Southern Emu-wren and Mallee Whipbird. Birds SA has consistently opposed this proposal as it represents an unacceptable risk to the survival of a vital population of these birds. It is estimated that less than 750 Emu-wren survive in 10 subpopulations across Eyre Peninsula in an area 20% smaller than was previously estimated in 2009. Clearing of habitat and increased risk of fire, are just some of the main threats posed by the facility. In addition, White-bellied Sea Eagles and Osprey also occur in the area and may be deterred from feeding or breeding as a result of rocket launches. Like other conservation groups, we called on the Federal Government not to approve the proposal, but instead to work with the company to find a more suitable site.

A proposed Biodiversity Act for SA

In January, Birds SA welcomed the release of a public discussion paper about the need for a Biodiversity Act for SA. The paper comprehensively and persuasively set out the case for this progression. The 10 topics

addressed in the report, and the 30 Matters for Consideration, show that the Government has considered the topic of biodiversity conservation seriously, and learnt from recent developments at the Federal level, including the 2020 independent review of the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Birds SA raised some concerns about issues raised and sought clarification on others. We suggested that the Act should be called the Biodiversity Conservation Act, as the current name is ambiguous. Overall, we are concerned that considerable additional financial resources would be required to effectively implement the Act, well above those currently spent on environmental programs in SA. We therefore recommended that a prioritisation study be carried out to ensure maximum biodiversity benefit from whatever resources will be made available. Considerable work on setting conservation priorities is being done in Australia, and SA should seek the best possible biodiversity outcomes from the allocation of scarce resources.

We also noted that the discussion paper does not provide any detail on how the Act would relate to existing environmental legislation in SA or the Commonwealth, and that clarification of this aspect is a high priority. Despite our concerns relating to lack of clarity and feasibility on particular matters, we strongly supported the implementation of the measures outlined.

National Feral Cat Threat Abatement Plan

Birds SA has made a submission to the draft National Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by Feral Cats (2023). In our response we noted the excellent work done to prepare the draft plan and the important role played by the Feral Cat Taskforce. We agreed that the plan would need to be adequately resourced, with a minimum of \$60m over the next four years. We noted that although the plan is focussed primarily on feral cats, increased management of pet cats is also needed, and pet cats should be restricted to the owner's property. We supported the suggestion for increased engagement of indigenous rangers in feral cat control, and targeted support programs for landholders in pastoral areas. We supported more research on ecological control of feral cats, using dingoes, fire and grazing management, as well as research into alternatives to 1080 poison. We supported the need for law reform to increase the level of cat threat abatement and noted that Birds SA had made submissions to the SA Government on this issue.



Nankeen Kestrel (Photographed by Trevor Cox at Elbow Hill, Eyre Peninsula, 13 November 2023)

Ray Nias

Chair, Conservation Sub-Committee

General Meeting Reports



Members Night: Tuesday 28 November 2023

Kite Optics Stabilised Binoculars

Presenter: David Hall

David Hall is the Australian distributor for **Kite Optics stabilised binoculars**, for which John Gitsham did a review in the *SPRING Birder*, rating them very highly. David is also the Managing Director of **HALLPRINT**, a worldwide distributor of fish tags. For those readers, like me, wondering exactly what fish tags are – they are metallic tags “used by Fish and Wildlife Departments, fisheries and researchers which enable the tracking and monitoring of habitats, populations, growth rates etc of fish.” David, who graduated 40 years ago, was Senior Consultant for Fisheries, then Director of Fisheries for 30 years. He began his presentation by asking the audience: “So what am I doing here trying to sell you binoculars?”



David explained that the company has no presence in Australia. Everything is done from its European base. **Kite Optics** stocks only two models, 16 x 42 and 12 x 42. He said it is the technology that is the game changer, making them 2-3 times more stable than other binoculars. He added that while he was rocking up and down in a boat or elsewhere, and moving all over the place, the bird in the lens was not moving at all. He said they had excellent horizon scanning for 12 x magnification, with a field of view approximately 60 metres over one kilometre. The binoculars are waterproof and can be immersed for 30 minutes without damage. They are a bit lighter than other models, weighing 720 gm vs 1 kg. A big plus is that they run on 4 x AA batteries, giving 120 hours (at least 5 and up to 60 times longer than rivals).

David said that birdwatchers were the biggest group interested in the technology, but that he had also spoken to Sea Rescue people who have since bought the binoculars for marine surveillance and searching, which they think will save people’s lives. Good optical quality and no movement are the standout features. David was not saying that they match Swarovski, but the lack of movement is the significant difference.

Normally priced at \$1899 (12X) or \$1999 (16X), on the night David offered a discount for BirdsSA members of \$1899 (with silicone jacket or skin (\$58) thrown in).

Chris Bates-Brownsword

General Meeting Reports *(continued)*

Members Night: Tuesday 28 November 2023

Birdwatchers Adventures — Peter & Angela Roodhouse

Presenter: Peter Roodhouse

Peter Roodhouse, a long standing member of Birds SA talked about his birding experiences and travels with his wife Angela. Peter migrated from the UK in 1966 and said it was the best move he ever made. His interests are walking, bike-riding, and sailing, but he was always very keen on birds and nature photography. He credits a visit to Gluepot Reserve at Waikerie (suggested by Angela), and listening to John Gitsham's enlightening talks there, as his real introduction to birdwatching. He has also attended BirdsSA field trips with Lynton Huxley.



Australian Raven

(Photographed by Peter Roodhouse at Gluepot, SA)

Peter said he just loves watching birds, even if he has seen them a 100 times. He said they all do different things. He thinks travelling to see birds is a good thing as it gives him an aim and encourages him to go places that other people don't, citing the example of a trip to the sewage ponds in Alice Springs where he saw a Sacred Kingfisher with a skink in its beak. He described taking pictures of birds as very frustrating, requiring a lot of patience, and likening the experience to sailing, where you are at nature's whim and at the mercy of wind changes and such. He said that his camera has a long lens which is heavy, but as soon as he decides not to take it with him, he will see a bird doing something amazing. He regularly takes multiple pictures of the same bird because he enjoys their different antics. He showed us a photograph he'd taken at Gluepot of an Australian Raven, and when Angela asked him why – he said he loved its expression. He obviously has a special fondness for Gluepot, and showed us photos of various birds, including one of an Owllet Nightjar in a hollow, unseen by the naked eye and taken in complete darkness. Peter said he took about 20 photographs, and this was the only one that came out.



Olive-backed Sunbird

(Photographed by Peter Roodhouse in Jullaten, QLD)

Peter has lived in Coromandel Valley for the last 56 years and showed us pictures of Common Bronzewing, Superb Fairywrens and Red-browed Finches he'd taken there. At this meeting, fellow Birds SA member Sue Winwood mentioned also seeing Common Bronzewing in her garden at Bellevue Heights this week, for the first time ever during the 50 years she has lived there.

Peter talked about a Queensland road trip to Cooktown in 2022 and recommended a visit to *Bowra Wildlife Sanctuary* near Cunnamulla, which is an important refuge for wildlife in the area. Other travels in Queensland and NSW have taken him to Ingham, Mt Glorious, Forbes and Moree. Whilst in Jullaten in Queensland, where he took a lovely photograph of a Sunbird, Peter said he was less than impressed when the guide whistled birds in – only to witness an attack by a Blue-faced Honeyeater!

Peter and Angela have also travelled west, to Broome, Kununurra, the Manning Lakes area near Fremantle, as well as up through the Centre, spending time at *Pt Augusta Arid Gardens* where they met a woman from the UK who made the trip specifically to visit the gardens.

General Meeting Reports *(continued)*



Owlet Nightjar (Photographed by Peter Roodhouse at Gluepot, SA)



Pink-eared Duck (Photographed by Peter Roodhouse at Forbes, NSW)

He said that he and Angela became 'Friends of the Garden' whilst there, to support them, as rumour has it that the Council is re-thinking support for the Gardens. Whilst in Katherine, Peter took a delightful photograph of seven Rainbow Bee-eaters clustered together on a branch.

Peter and Angela also enjoy visiting local spots like Myponga Reservoir, Redbanks, Cox's Scrub, Scott Creek, White's Road to name a few. His stunning photograph of a New Holland Honeyeater on a Banksia, taken in the Pangarinda Botanic Garden at Wellington, appeared in the Summer 2023 issue of *The Birder*.

Chris Bates-Brownsword

Members Night: Tuesday 28 November 2023

The History of the SAOA (SA Ornithological Association) — *A Personal View*

Presenter: Penny Paton

Jeff Groves introduced speaker Penny Paton, reminding members that Penny's original Degree was in History and English. Retiring from work in 2016, Penny is now kept busy with her five grandchildren, and her involvement in Bio-R, "a grassroots charity that reconstructs diverse habitats to support native wildlife" with husband David, who is the Managing Director. Penny has been working on the biography of David's grandfather John Cleland, but she has put that aside for the moment.

Penny began her presentation with a reminder that the *South Australian Ornithological Association* (SAOA), founded in Adelaide in 1899, has a proud history, and is unique amongst Australian birding societies as the first such organisation in Australia (predating the *Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union* (RAOU) by two years, so remains the longest-running state-based birding group in the country. Despite controversy and some turbulent years in the late 1950's, leading to a minor split in membership, the SAOA has remained intact and to this day encompasses scientists, amateurs, collectors, researchers, bird banders and recreational birdwatchers.

Penny's interesting collection of photographs showed a very different Adelaide in those days, with limited settlement beyond the city allowing bird populations to flourish. In the late 1930's, observers described birds such as Red-capped Robins, Southern Whiteface and Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoos breeding at Firle only 8-9 km from the city. Sadly, those days are long gone.



Kent Town and Mt Lofty ca 1890 (SLSA B 72115/14)

Adelaide in 1899 was a vastly different place to now - there was a population of about 160,000 and the urban area only extended 3-5 km beyond the parklands, with strip development to the Port and Semaphore.

General Meeting Reports *(continued)*

The first SAOA meeting was held on 17 March 1899 at the residence of Dr AM (Mat) Morgan in Angas Street, at the instigation of the South Australian Museum's Assistant Director, Amandus Zietz (1840-1921). The attendees were collectors who regularly visited and supported the Museum's bird collection, namely, Amandus Zietz and his son FR (Robert) Zietz, Dr Morgan, JW Mellor, Edwin Ashby and M Symonds Clark. At a second meeting later in the month, SA White was also present, and it was these seven men who dominated the early years of the Association. The SAOA was formed to protect and study native birds and, apart from administrative changes, this remains its primary aim. The Association grew slowly; membership lists show 46 members in 1918, 61 by 1948, rising to 258 by 1968 and 542 in 1986. It remained around the 600 mark through the rest of the 1900s, and today is approximately 1,000. In the early years, SAOA focused on taxonomy and identification of birds and lobbying for conservation, without much time for field work. Conservation issues related to protecting forest reserves, passing legislation to protect native birds, protecting breeding islands in the Coorong, creating a reserve at the western end of Kangaroo Island, and the introduction of nature study into schools.

The most prominent figure of the early SAOA was Captain SA White (1870-1954) celebrated in Rob Linn's 1989 book, *Nature's Pilgrim*. The son of *Reedbeds* landowner and explorer/naturalist Samuel White, SA White dedicated over 30 years to exploring the natural history of mainly South Australia, particularly its birds, his personal wealth allowing him to devote most of his time to natural history and conservation.

There were no female Foundation members of the SAOA. Women were accepted as members early on, e.g.



Captain SA White (L) and his cousin JW Mellor at the AOU Campout on EP in Oct 1909 (SLSA B 58290)



A group of ornithologists outside Captain SA White's home Weetunga, Fulham.

This was likely to have been on Sunday 3 October 1909 when the AOU paid a visit to the collections of SA White and JW Mellor during the 9th Congress.

(SLSA B 58278)

His first wife, Ethel Rosina (née Toms), must have been a redoubtable woman, as she accompanied him on many of his journeys to remote places, often on camels or in horse-drawn vehicles & enduring the privations of camping in the bush for extended periods.

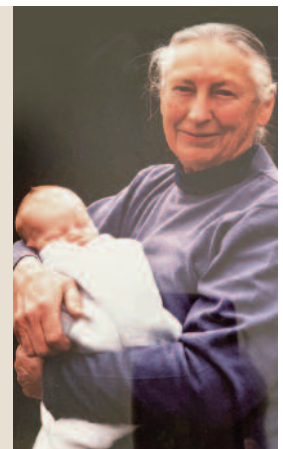
there were two women members in 1918 – both presumably teachers at Tranmere School, Coryton. However, the SAOA had to wait for many years for the first female President – Joan Paton, Penny's mother-in-law – who presided from 1979-1982. The only other female President was Penny herself, from 2001-2004.

While speaking of the early days of the Association, Penny paid tribute to various people who had stepped up to take leadership roles following the gradual passing of the Foundation members. One of the most notable was John Sutton whom Penny described as “*one of my heroes*” – and

Joan Paton (1916 – 2000) in 1992

While talking of women, although there were no female foundation members, women were accepted as members early on; eg there were two women members in 1918 – both presumably teachers at Tranmere School, Coryton. However the SAOA had to wait for many years for the first female

President – Joan Paton, Penny's mother-in-law – who presided from 1979-1982. The only other female President was Penny herself, from 2001-2004.”

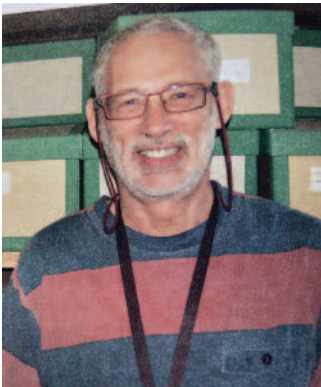


General Meeting Reports *(continued)*

who was the subject of her very first Historical Series (Paton 2002), adding *"little did I know that this series would still be going over 20 years later"*. John Sutton, a banker by profession who *"came late to ornithology"* carved out a niche for himself becoming Secretary (1922-1938), as well as other roles.

She also spoke of Bob Brown, another notable SAOA secretary who served from 1962 until 1975, and achieved some notoriety by helping to expose the corruption and illicit trade in wildlife involving the Adelaide Zoo in the 1960s.

The other exceptional secretary of the SAOA in more recent times was Brian Blaylock, who sadly passed away in 2022. Brian's service as Secretary from 2000 until 2018, is the longest to date, and Penny paid tribute to the enormous contribution Brian made not only to SAOA, setting up and managing the website and the database of bird records etc, but also to many other conservation organisations, and to the SA Museum, both at the computer and in the field.



Brian Blaylock
(1947 – 2022)
SAOA longest serving
secretary, 2000 – 2018

Penny also expressed her gratitude to past members like her mother Muriel Reid, and current members Philippa Horton and Graham Carpenter who have all written pieces for the SAOA Historical Series.

At this point in the talk, Penny expanded on her earlier reference to Bob Brown's efforts to expose the corruption and illicit trade in wildlife in the 1960s.

In March 1959 the SAOA Committee proposed a Fifth Schedule to the *Animals and Birds Protection Act*, to provide greater protection for all native birds. The Motion was rescinded, causing the Committee to question the motives of those who opposed it. Those opposing included egg collectors and aviculturists. At the time there was no limit on the numbers of protected birds that could be trapped and traded, whether in the wild or bred in captivity, provided one had a permit.

It became apparent that this trade was big business. Between 1955-1968, over 70,000 parrots (excluding budgerigars), cockatoos (excluding galahs) and finches

were exported from SA, mainly interstate but also overseas.

A poll of all SAOA members conducted later the same year provided 3 options:

- a) The original motion providing greater protection to all native birds
- b) That the SAOA no longer request a Fifth Schedule, but wanted no permits to be issued for 25 bird species (these included many quails, parrots, cockatoos and finches)
- c) Neither (a) or (b)



It was a close call, with 60 members supporting (b) and 41 supporting (c). As a result *"Friendships were broken and a number of experienced members were lost to the Association"*. Penny added that it was no coincidence that the *Adelaide Ornithologists Club Inc* was born at the same time as the avicultural lobby in the SAOA evaporated (1960), the main reason given was a study group to facilitate discussion on native birds. Some members of AOC remained as members of SAOA, but *"it was formed as a direct result of the 'Civil War' as described by Dick Schodde (2000)"*.

After the *Civil War*, the SAOA became a mainly birdwatching society, where it remains today. In closing her talk, Penny reflected on 3 main things, namely that an organisation is so much more than the sum total of its parts; that organisations need to change and adapt to remain relevant and effective, and also that each generation has its own baseline. She added that it is important to remember how the environment was 50 years ago and to note, sadly, declines in many bird species, which is one of the reasons why history is so important.

Chris Bates-Brownsword

Birds SA Future General Meetings

This special meeting marks the 125th Anniversary of Birds SA



Tuesday 26 March 2024

Waite Institute, Waite Road, Urrbrae

7.30pm – 10pm



Special Guest Speaker

BirdLife Australia's

PR Media Spokesperson and Bird Guru

Sean Dooley

(Author of the bestselling birding book "The Big Twitch")

'This special meeting is open to all birders, not just Birds SA members'



Tuesday 30 April 2024

7.30pm – Charles Hawker Centre, Waite Road, Urrbrae.

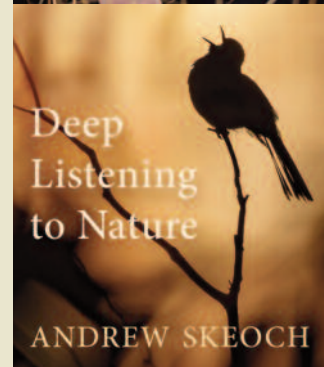
Special Guest Speaker

Andrew Skeoch

Andrew Skeoch is a professional nature sound recordist, naturalist, and author who has documented the sounds of the planet's wild environments for over 30 years, and worked on films such as *"Rabbit Proof Fence"*, the remake of Disney's *"The Jungle Book"* and Eric Bana's new film, *"Force of Nature"*. Andrew's recent book is called *"Deep Listening to Nature"*, and if you heard him speak at the 2023 Nature Festival events in Adelaide, you might also like to hear him at the Womadelaide Festival of Discovery in March 2024.

At April's General Meeting, Andrew will visit us from his home in the wilds of central Victoria and show us how to develop our auditory awareness, identify species by ear (not just bird species) and recognise the influences of climate, geography, evolution and earth time on repertoires and behavior.

Vibrant recordings and spectrogram analysis revealing the sheer beauty of birdsong will accompany his presentation, allowing you to hear the environment around you in a fascinating new way. Andrew is President of the *Australian Wildlife Sound Recording Group*, and his professional recordings will inspire you to listen to birds in your patch in a completely new way. Go to his website to hear some amazing audio clips from lions to dingoes to a lyrebird's repertoire!
<https://listeningearth.com/andrewskeoch/media.html#pics>



Alan Burns



NT Bird Specialists

Birding & Photographic Safaris



World-Class Birding Experiences, Local Expertise

Join Renowned Specialist Guide Luke Paterson & Team on Award-winning Birding & Photographic Tours in Northern Australia & Beyond.

2024 TOURS

MAY	Kimberley Birding Adventure	12 Days
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
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Pictured: Gouldian Finch



HUNTING INQUIRY



Grey Teal at St Kilda
(Photo: Jeff Groves)

Final Report Reveals a **DEEPLY FLAWED PROCESS**

The report by the Select Committee of the SA Parliament on the Hunting of Native Birds, published on 14 December 2023, contained a majority recommendation that read: *"The Minister for Climate, Environment and Water retains the provision within the National Parks & Wildlife Act 1972 (NPW Act) that allows for native bird hunting;"* The report contained a number of other recommendations relating to the conduct of hunting native birds in South Australia but the major recommendation was that hunting should continue.

This report was deeply flawed, lacked in-depth analysis and was overtly biased. In no way did it represent an impartial investigation of hunting native birds, nor a true reflection of the wishes of the overwhelming majority of South Australians who want to see this practice banned. The report ignored substantial contributions to the Inquiry and was of such poor quality that it could not properly inform future Government decision-making on the issue of recreational shooting of native ducks and quail.

Dissenting views

From a Birds SA perspective, the only two positive aspects of the report were the dissenting views expressed by Ian Hunter MLC (Labor) and Tammy Franks MLC (Greens) who stated that *"Native duck and quail hunting in South Australia should be made illegal."*

The final report can be found in the "Committee Details" area on the Parliament SA website. Birds SA is in discussions with the State Government on the serious shortcomings of the Inquiry and the potential response of the Government to the recommendations of the Select Committee.

The following discussion highlights some of the major flaws in the Inquiry and the final report.

Was the composition of the Select Committee appropriate?

The members of the Committee, announced 9 March 2023, were:

Hon. R. B. Martin MLC (Labor) - (Chair)

Hon. N. J. Centofanti MLC (Liberal)

Hon. T. A. Franks MLC (Greens)

Hon. S. L. Game MLC (One Nation)

Hon. B. R. Hood MLC (Liberal)

Hon. I. K. Hunter MLC (Labor)

Hon. F. Pangallo MLC (SA Best, now Independent)

It was assessed by Birds SA at the time that Labor and The Greens would support a ban on hunting of native birds, Liberals and One Nation would support a continuation of hunting and Frank Pangallo was an unknown. It was thought however, that Pangallo's history as an investigative journalist may convince him that a ban was appropriate, once confronted with the evidence of strong support for this across the SA community and when provided with graphic evidence of the inherent cruelty associated with shooting birds with shotguns.

As the inquiry progressed and questions were asked of witnesses in the oral presentations (including Birds SA), it became clear that Pangallo would take a pro-hunting position. That being the case it then became obvious that the Committee was 4 to 3 in favour of the continuation of hunting. Birds SA understands that the Committee Chair (Labor) abstained from taking a position on whether hunting should continue or be banned. If this is true, we can only speculate on what may have influenced this decision.

Hunting Inquiry a Deeply Flawed Process *(continued)*

Did the Select Committee consider the inevitable wounding and suffering resulting from shooting birds with shotguns?

The majority report stated: *"It is not known how many birds are wounded and how many die from shotgun wounds."* One has to ask why, if there is such a large gap in their knowledge, continuation of hunting would be recommended by a majority of the Committee.

The reality is, the Committee chose to either ignore, or were too lazy to take the time to fully understand the detailed evidence on duck wounding provided by POND (Protect Our Native Ducks) on 20 Sept 2023, which was backed up with peer reviewed scientific research. This evidence very clearly showed the physics of shooting birds with shotguns and the very high level of wounding that inevitably results from the expanding spray of shotgun pellets. For more detail on this issue, it is suggested that you read the response to the report by Geoff Russell of POND, available at:

[Parliamentary inquiry into duck shooting: couldn't hit the side of a barn \(geoffrussell.com.au\)](http://geoffrussell.com.au)



The Committee chose to ignore the appalling wounding and suffering such as that experienced by this Pink-eared Duck.

(Photo: Coalition Against Duck Shooting)

Does the SA public accept some level of wounding of native birds?

The report makes the statement that "It is also not known whether the SA public is supportive of some level of wounding of native birds or whether there is zero tolerance of shotgun wounding during open season." This ignores the results of polling, conducted by respected independent polling company uComms, of 4,090 South Australians across city and regional areas, which found that between 85% and 91% of respondents (depending on region) said it was important to them that any animals killed for food should be killed quickly and humanely.



Shooter attempting to kill a wounded bird using the non-approved "windmilling" technique

(Photo: Doug Gimesy)

Did the Select Committee observe duck and quail hunting taking place?

A critical element in the debate on duck and quail hunting is the method of killing. To properly understand the inherent cruelty perpetrated by shooters, duck shooting needs to be witnessed first-hand, without the hunters knowing they are being observed.

Unlike a similar inquiry in Victoria, which recommended an end to duck and quail hunting, the SA Select Committee did not report that it undertook such essential research. This contrasts with a small group of anti-hunting observers (including RSPCA SA) which on

Hunting Inquiry a Deeply Flawed Process *(continued)*

one day, at just one wetland on the opening weekend of the 2023 open season, observed multiple breaches of the hunting regulations resulting in five expiations, one letter of warning and one penalty which was dropped because the perpetrator had died.

Did the Select Committee take account of Public Opinion Polling?

Birds SA and its associates (RSPCA SA, Conservation Council SA, South Aussies for Animals and POND) commissioned a \$20,000 public opinion poll, conducted by uComms, a founding member of the Australian Polling Council, a group with a strict set of guidelines on ethical polling. The sample size was 4,090 South Australians across regional areas (2,046 respondents) plus city and semi-rural areas (2,044 respondents).

The Committee was provided with the methodology and the results of the regional polling to show that opposition to hunting native birds was not just a city centric phenomenon. Across regional SA the uComms polling showed a clear 5 to 3 majority ratio in favour of a ban on duck and quail hunting. The SA regional polling included respondents from the "shooting heartland" regions of the Riverland and the Southeast.

In comparison, CHASA (representing the hunters) in its submission said that it had completed a survey in which over 90% of the respondents were opposed to a ban on duck and quail hunting. How this polling was conducted and the credentials of those conducting the poll are not shown in the transcripts on the SA Parliament website. Some have suggested that a CHASA supporter ran the poll on their Facebook page, but we cannot verify this. In any case, the figure of "over 90%" support to retain hunting is ridiculous in the light of previous independent polls by reputable professional organisations in SA. These invariably show very strong support across South Australia for a ban on duck and quail hunting and include:

- McGregor Tan Research – March 2011
- Reachtel – March 2020
- Australia Institute – May 2023
- uComms – Sept 2023

In the transcripts of the Committee proceedings, there is no mention of the Committee questioning the way the CHASA survey was conducted, particularly whether it was a representative sample of all South Australians. Instead, the Committee final report states: *"There is conflicting evidence on whether the broader SA community supports or is against native bird hunting, with surveys showing different results."* To equate a large, independent, professional poll with an unknown amateur survey calls into question both the capability and the motives of the Select Committee.

Did the Select Committee consider the status of "Unprotected" bird species?

Schedule 10 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act (1972) lists unprotected native bird species including Zebra Finch, Budgerigar, Red Wattlebird, Grey-backed Silvereye, Galah, Little Corella, Australian Raven, Little Crow, Australian Crow and Little Raven.

The Modern Hunting in SA guide, jointly published by CHASA and the SA Government, indicates that these birds may be hunted at any time, with the only requirement being a basic hunting permit. The 'Code of practice for the humane destruction of birds by shooting in South Australia' lists the recommended shotgun specification and shot size for the destruction of these birds.

In our submission to the Inquiry, Birds SA argued that the hunting of these unprotected native birds should cease immediately and that the conditions under which permits are issued to destroy native birds be urgently reviewed to provide greater protection for these species. The Select Committee did not address this matter at all.



Budgerigars – Committee did not address their "Unprotected" status so they can still be shot in SA

(Photo: Jeff Groves)

Were sensible recommendations made regarding compliance with the legislation and codes of practice relating to hunting native birds?

The Select Committee made the following findings and recommendations with respect to compliance.

Findings:

- Compliance is difficult to enforce because of the geographic spread of game reserves and private property on which native bird hunting takes place.
- Incidents of compliance involving animal welfare were also difficult to police.

Hunting Inquiry a Deeply Flawed Process *(continued)*

Recommendations made by the Committee in response to this included:

- The Committee recommends that a system be developed by DEW for permit holders to be able to report on the number of birds shot and recovered.
- The Committee recommends increased funding for DEW to provide appropriate resourcing of compliance, including observing the open season.
- The Committee recommends that recognised and registered shooting organisations appoint Marshalls to assist other shooters on Crown Land during native bird hunting open season.
- Permit holders are required to wear a large, visible identity tag when hunting on Crown Land.
- The Committee recommends that breaches of the NPW Act should attract more serious penalties than currently exist and should include consideration of a suspension of hunting permit for up to two (2) years.

Whilst some of these recommendations may appear reasonable at first glance, Birds SA makes the following points:

- It is impossible for DEW to ensure compliance with open season requirements for species shot, bag limits and animal welfare. To do this would require a massive increase in personnel to cover the geographic range of shooting on public and private land throughout both duck and quail seasons which can last for over 3 months (ducks) and 5 months (quail). In addition to the challenges of the geographic range to be covered, is the issue that hunting has been allowed to commence 30 minutes before sunrise and conclude 30 minutes after sunset. It is hard to imagine that DEW wardens would be consistently observing hunting activities during these times. An added impediment to ensuring compliance is the fact that bag limit requirements can be easily circumvented if the warden is not actually at the site when the hunting is taking place.
- One questions whether additional taxpayer financial support should be provided to DEW to manage an activity that is undertaken by only 0.06% of the SA population, especially at a time when there are many urgent needs for Govt funding elsewhere in SA society.
- It is not clear whether the recommendation of the Committee for shooting organisations to appoint marshals to assist other shooters on Crown Land during open seasons is for compliance checking, or for some other purpose. It would be ludicrous for this to be for compliance checking. Self-regulation has failed in many other areas of society and its application to hunting would be guaranteed to fail, based on our experience of hunter behaviour over decades in both SA and Victoria.

- Limiting the application of some of these recommendations to only Crown Land is clearly unacceptable, as much hunting takes place on private land.

Did the Select Committee Act with impartiality and in a professional manner?

Clearly, from the questions asked of witnesses to this Inquiry, and the behaviour of members of the Select Committee, the matter was not assessed impartially. It was also clear that no amount of well-researched information provided by witnesses to the inquiry was going to change the entrenched views of the pro-hunting members of the Select Committee. This information included verified arguments debunking many of the claims made by the hunting representative organization, CHASA, in its submission.

Of particular concern to those witnesses seeking an end to recreational shooting of native birds, was the attendance of four members of the Select Committee, including the Chairperson, at the CHASA hosted Wine and Wild Food Dinner at the National Wine Centre during the time the Inquiry was underway. A fifth member, Frank Pangallo, was represented at the dinner by his SA Best parliamentary colleague. This was a glitzy social event where the attendees made a public show of support for duck and quail hunting. None of the Select Committee members attending voted to ban hunting.

A Wasted Opportunity

Crucially, the majority report failed to adequately consider the central issue of inevitable wounding and suffering and the overwhelming community rejection of duck and quail hunting statewide, as high as 6:1, and 5:3 in favour of a ban in regional SA.

How the wishes of SA duck and quail hunters, representing just 0.06% of the SA population, can take precedence over the overwhelming majority of South Australians needs to be explained. The people of South Australia deserve much more from their elected representatives than this shoddy report delivers.

Jeff Groves, Vice-President
Steven Langley, President



Purple-crowned Lorikeet
(Photographed by Trevor Cox in 2014)

When James Smith was developing ideas for his highly successful book 'Wildlife of Greater Adelaide' (Axiom Publishers 2016), he planned to include some short background essays as 'breakout boxes' among the species accounts. He asked me to prepare one on birds that would make a contribution to what he planned as a 'celebration of local wildlife'. I reflected on what I might write to celebrate a story about Adelaide's birds.

Birds of Adelaide and its Parklands

Andrew Black

A Riverside bird watch

In my piece titled 'Birds of Adelaide Parklands' (pp 308-309), I described a walk along the Torrens from the Botanic Gardens to Bonython Park, and compared the birds I saw with what had been there in earlier times. I incorporated John Gould's observations from his visit in 1839, and three published accounts of the parklands' birds from the last century (Anon 1915 SA Orn. 2(3), 64-68; B Glover 1953 SA Naturalist 28, 16-17; P Paton 1976 SA Orn. 27, 131-134). Finally, I could describe recent trends from monthly transect surveys of the entire parklands that Bob Whatmough had been conducting since 1974 (Whatmough, van Weenen and Tan e-document DEWNR 2013).

Crested Pigeons, Spotted Doves, Adelaide Rosellas and Galahs were unrecorded in the Parklands in 1915, although Gould had collected and named the rosellas during his visit. All were present by 1953, but Eastern Rosellas were not recorded until the 1970s. Little and Long-billed Corellas and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were recorded only in the 1980s and became established in the 1990s. Red-rumped Parrots were more common in 1953

than 1915, increased through the 1980s but have declined since. Rainbow Lorikeets, occasional visitors before last century, have progressed to the point of dominance. Musk Lorikeets have declined and Purple-crowned, the commonest in Gould's time, is now uncommon; the Little Lorikeet, "equally numerous" then, is almost extinct State-wide. On the water, the abundant Maned Duck was uncommon before 1985, but Black Ducks (and Mallard/Black Duck hybrids) have declined. Swan numbers declined until 1990 but have increased since. Australasian Grebe, three Cormorant species, White-faced Heron, Moorhen, Swamphen, Coot and Silver Gull are on all lists; the Night Heron, unlisted in 1915, has increased since 2000.

Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Blackbird, Little Grassbird, Reed Warbler, Mistletoebird, Striated Pardalote, Silveryeye and Noisy Miner are on all published lists, as are Magpie, Magpie-lark, Sparrow and Starling. Willie Wagtail, White-plumed and New Holland Honeyeaters and Red and Little Wattlebirds have all declined since the early 1980s. The last record of a Grey Shrike-thrush was in 1974, the last Yellow-rumped

Birds of Adelaide and its Parklands *(continued)*

Thornbill in 1999; Goldfinch and Greenfinch are missing since the mid-1990s. The Little Raven was present in colonial times but unrecorded in 1915 and 1953. The Pelican and Masked Lapwing have appeared since the 1970s, White Ibis since 2000.

The common birds now are mostly larger ones, but many of the smaller birds have all but vanished, four unrecorded since 1915 and another eight since 1953. There are occasional records since the 1970s for a further seven. Common and familiar birds of the past have gone or are seen only very occasionally, Peaceful Dove, Spotted Pardalote, Superb Fairywren, Scarlet and Flame Robin, Restless Flycatcher, Black-chinned Honeyeater and Dusky Woodswallow.

What of the future?

I expressed a wish then that effective management might see some recovery of earlier biodiversity; Davide Gaglio expressed the same hope in the City of Adelaide's Bird Sensitive City Handbook (2021) [Bird-Sensitive-City-Handbook_online.pdf \(d31atr86jnrq2. cloudfront.net\)](https://cloudfront.net/d31atr86jnrq2/) accessible from the Biodiversity in Adelaide webpage. There, 20 target species are listed for return to former status. How can this be achieved?

Adelaide is an 'island' in biodiversity terms, and its biodiversity depends on maintenance and enhancement of pertinent habitat within, as well as outside the city. The critical potential of the Torrens and its five creeks, the Parklands, Glen Osmond and Brownhill Creeks and the Sturt River/Patawalonga Estuary is obvious. Open space and lesser drainages, so easily 'developed', are equally precious (e.g. 'the Greater Reedbeds', P Paton SA Orn 45, 45-84). The City of Adelaide must have the close collaboration of surrounding councils and State Government, most of whom have like aspirations but a similar history of ignorance and neglect. Green Adelaide, a statutory board under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019, seeks to coordinate this recovery.

What can Birds SA do?

Our 'Objects' include public promotion, education and advocacy for the conservation of our birds, as well as support for and publication of scientific research.

We must ensure that the state of our birds is widely known, especially among government bodies at all levels. We can further develop our relations with, and promote the objectives of, Green Adelaide and the Bird Sensitive City of Adelaide.

We have documented this subject and published the results, and we can do more. Bob Whatmough's invaluable surveys have continued to the present time, and another decade of data awaits analysis and access. We must facilitate this in every way, financially through the Conservation Fund and by promotion through our website.

Andrew Black
January 2024

English bird names for stability

In November 2022 I spoke to members about a movement within Birdlife Australia to replace all eponymous bird names, ie those that honour a person (the Birder 265, 13-14). The argument was that almost all were from the colonial period and therefore inherently white supremacist and racist. It was considered judgemental to retain the names of honourable persons; simpler to cancel all. Thirty-two species were the immediate target and 317 names the ultimate end point, with the elimination of eponymous place names. The value of English names in providing stability and ease of communication was to be discounted.

The move paralleled activity in North America, where a group 'Bird names for birds' proposed to eradicate all eponyms. The revision of names, the responsibility of the North American Checklist Committee, was halted, and the American Ornithological Society (AOS) established a committee of enquiry. To the astonishment of many, AOS Council decided, in the name of 'diversity, equity and inclusion', that all 150 eponymous names must be replaced. The South American Checklist Committee and the International Ornithological Community immediately rejected this authoritarian dictum.

There has been a strong backlash from American ornithologists who respect the history of science and past leaders honoured in the names of birds. Ironically, the AOS decision has instead promoted division, exclusion and inequity. Now, there is an alternative American lobby 'Bird names for stability' and their arguments can be accessed at <http://birdnamesforstability.org>

I encourage members to go to that website for information and to ensure that we in Birds SA make our views known to Birdlife Australia.

Andrew Black



The seeds of this book were sown in 2019, when artist and conservationist Jorji Gardener was invited to work with the South Australian Museum and Artlab Australia to preserve the handwritten labels of 3,400 bird egg clutches of Captain Samuel Albert White (1870–1954) an enthusiastic ornithologist who lived in an area known as the Reedbeds, in Fulham. The Reedbeds once extended from Glenelg to Port Adelaide, and inland as far as Torrensville. It was a rich ecosystem; a vast wetland dotted with woodlands and stands of River Redgums lining the Karrawirraparri (River Torrens). The abundance of bird life documented by S A White at the Reedbeds has all but disappeared from the area, as a result of drainage of the Reedbeds, and loss of habitat due to urbanisation.



Jorji Gardener (R) with mum Viv Szekeres
(Photo by Peter Hoare/SA Life Magazine)

Bird Life and Loss

from the Adelaide Reedbeds

..... Jorji Gardener

My story

Whilst working on the collection, I was deeply moved by the loss of these bird species, and in 2020, along with my mum Viv Szekeres, artist and historian, developed the idea of creating an exhibition and illustrated notebook documenting birds from the White collection that once lived in the Reedbeds.

The aim of our project, to catalogue the loss of bird species from the Adelaide Reedbeds — is a story that is being played out all over the world. Some of the concepts embedded in the work speak of extinction and loss, and one of the aims of the exhibition and book, is to encourage everyone to take part in preserving our environment.

The project also speaks to the importance of the work of museums. White’s collection is significant because it documents the distribution of bird species across Australia, and without collections such as these we would have little idea of the diversity of species that previously existed.

Last, but by no means least, this work is a celebration of the beauty of our native bird life and our connection with nature and wild places.

Kaurna Meyunna *(Aboriginal people of the Adelaide region)*

Early on in the project we met with *Mickey Kumatpi Marrutya O'Brien*, Kaurna Elder, to ensure that we presented the First Nations part of the story accurately, and with respect and appreciation for the vast living storehouse of Indigenous knowledge and continuing connection to the land.

We wanted to show that the birds illustrated in our notebook had already been named and identified by the Kaurna people well before White’s time. Uncle Mickey has generously given us permission to share these traditional Kaurna names. The Reedbeds were known to the Kaurna people as *Witongga*: reed place. The White residence, *Weetunga*, takes its name from this Kaurna word.

Captain S.A. White

Captain Samuel Albert White (1870–1954) was an ornithologist and conservationist. He grew up on the property built by his grandfather John White in 1878, known as ‘Weetunga’ at the Reedbeds in Fulham, South Australia. In 1886, when White was just 16, he began his first serious birdwatching and collecting trips along the Murray River, South Australia, and then further afield. As a young man he served in the Boer War in South Africa, where he made two tours of duty. He was temporarily promoted to Captain, a title he used for the rest of his life. On his return to Australia, his interest in natural science grew and he developed a determination to expand the knowledge of Australian birds.

Bird Life and Loss from the Adelaide Reed Beds *(continued)*



View across the Reedbeds, Fulham SA 1906 *(Author unknown. Postcard, State Library of SA. B75212)*

In 1908, White was introduced to Australian-born Gregory Mathews (1876–1949). It was an event that set him on a path to his most important work, which was his collaboration with Mathews on *The Birds of Australia* (London, 1910–1927).

Through modern eyes, White's work and museum collections such as these, could be viewed as being incompatible with our current approach to conservation. However, there is no doubt that White was a passionate conservationist of his time and that he cared deeply about protecting the environment.

The Reedbeds

The Greater Reedbeds was once a vast wetland of reeds and rushes, dotted throughout with redgum woodlands, extending from Glenelg, towards Adelaide Airport, and Fulham, the site of White's residence, and north to Grange. Following European colonisation, this fertile area was in demand for farmland and pasture, and later for urban development, but it was constantly prone to flooding until the construction of the Breakout Creek in 1935.

This development diverted the river near the Adelaide Airport and created a new channel to the sea, thus draining the Reedbeds. This was a catastrophic blow. Deprived of its waterways and wetlands, this important habitat was unable to sustain itself, which had a significant impact on the flora and fauna inhabiting the area.

Captain SA White wanted to share his appreciation of the natural world and educate people on the importance of preserving habitat, but he too despaired the loss of the rich ecosystems.

Today, more than ever before, we face the consequences of this so called 'progress of civilisation', with Australia recording some of the highest rates of extinction in the world. Whilst conducting research for our book, I was shocked to learn that every day in Australia over 1,000,000 birds are killed by feral or pet cats.

Sadly, there is little left of the Reedbeds today. Of the original 230 bird species, 70 have been lost from the area and a further 20 have been in decline over the past 30 years.

The Labels

Working at Artlab, I was fascinated by the variety of techniques and materials used in the repair of the labels, and I became particularly interested in iron gall ink which was the ink mostly used from the Middle Ages until the late 1800's. It is made from galls, formed by wasps laying their eggs into the tissue of a tree, resulting in growths that are high in tannins. The more I researched this ink, the more curious I became.

I found myself immersed in learning about the history, and process of making iron gall ink, which has now become a project in its own right.



Jorji Gardener with her gall wasp inks. Tracing the labels using her home made ink, left an impression on both the paper and on Jorji herself.

(Photo by Peter Hoare/ SA Life Magazine)

Bird Life and Loss from the Adelaide Reed Beds *(continued)*

As an artist with a background in horticulture and botany, it was a natural progression for me to prepare the ink myself. The process of making the iron gall ink gave me a material and physical connection with the fragile labels from a time when these bird species were plentiful so I decided that I would document the birds of the White collection that once inhabited the Reedbeds, using only my home-made iron gall ink.

Tracing White's Hand

During my time at the Museum, I fell in love with the labels, and wanted to include them with my artwork of the birds. The labels, which are the starting point for this project, document the egg clutches and contain a myriad of stories as well as scientific data. For each bird on our list, I selected and photographed a matching label from White's egg clutches. Using carbon copy paper, a process invented in the 19th century, I transferred a photograph copy of each label onto my artwork. Tracing the label using my homemade ink left an impression on both the paper and me. The experience of reproducing White's handwritten notes using an historic ink of his era, felt like an appropriate metamorphosis. And it has left me with a tangible sense of connection to White's collection.

Jorji Gardener



A restored label from Captain White rests on the eggs he collected

(Photo by Peter Hoare/SA Life Magazine)

"At one level this story is about the remarkable White family, the intrepid White senior and his son Captain SA White, who shared a lifelong commitment to the birdlife of South Australia and the collection that they created.

At a more complex level, the recurring theme is one of loss. The first, deeply profound loss, is that of the Kurna people losing their Country. Having been careful custodians for tens of thousands of years, their sudden separation from their Country, caused by the colonisation of South Australia, meant that this crucial connection was lost. Their Country would never be the same again.

Captain White could clearly see the destructive impact his fellow colonials were having on the landscape. The rich, abundant wetlands of his childhood had all but disappeared during his lifetime. This loss of habitat led to a frightening reduction in biodiversity, and ultimately, species loss. His collection at the Museum is virtually all that we have left of the diverse birdlife that populated these vast wetland areas leading down to the coast.

This devastating loss continues into our own lifetime, as we experience these consequences today. Climate change continues to threaten our landscape and the species existing within it. There are difficult choices to be made. However, we are currently in the position to make choices - and ones that could make a real difference to future generations.

The historic narrative of this book has been beautifully told and illustrated by Jorji Gardener and Viv Szekeres. We all have a role to play in how the story ends."

**Brian Oldman, Director,
South Australian Museum, 2022**

Copies of 'Flight' may be purchased at several outlets, including The SA Museum and The Art Gallery of SA, and we have one available for borrowing in the Birds SA Library.



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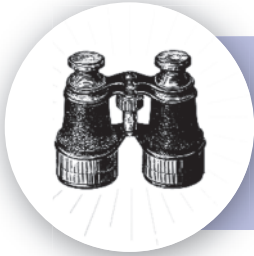


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Binocular reviews *with John Gitsham*

ZeroTech Binoculars, kindly lent for this review from Twin City Camera House/Adelaide Optical Centre now at 66 Gawler Place, Adelaide.

*"I always get the best binoculars **you** can afford."*

ZeroTech 10x42 Thrive ZT RRP \$749

These are new binoculars to Australia (Founded in Australia in 2018, ZeroTech International Pty Ltd), but now based in the USA, (Manufactured in China) with Tasco Optical heritage. I was very impressed, they are well constructed, solid and feel good in the hands. Optically superb in all lighting conditions, I was pleasantly surprised how sharp and clear they were. The focusing knob is firm but positive for quick focusing. Eye cups smooth when twisted in and out, depending on if you wear glasses (I tried both with glasses and without, I noticed very little difference in the field of view, which was great). The exit pupil of 4.3mm made for a bright view through the binoculars. They are excellent value for money for middle range binoculars. I would highly recommend them for any birder!

- Unconditional Lifetime Warranty (Any Owner, Any problem, Always Covered)
- Excellent Clarity, Field of View (FOV) and Light Transmission
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- Exit Pupil 4.3mm
- Unconditional Lifetime Warranty
- Flip top carry bag and shoulder strap included.
- Weight 670gm



Rating out of 10 **8**

ZeroTech 10x25 ZT Compacts RRP \$349

These little binoculars are physically too small and have too narrow field of view for Birding (maybe ok for a small child to use with little hands). I found them awkward to use, they were too small in my hands, small twist in and out eyecups, diopter adjustment clunky and focus knob at the front wasn't user friendly. Admittedly, they are very well made, solid and optically superb to look through, but very hard to line up to your eyes especially if you wear glasses. Exit pupil is only 2.6mm, so the image is not bright through the binoculars. These binoculars would be ok if you are bushwalking and want a pair of tiny binoculars to put in your pocket. I don't recommend this pair of binoculars for birding, stay with traditional size binoculars like the pair at left.

- ED Glass – Excellent Clarity.
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- Dielectrically Coated Bak 4 Prisms
- Unconditional Lifetime Warranty
- Weight 245gm



Rating out of 10 **6**



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Birds SA *Family Picnic* at the Laratinga Wetlands

On Sunday 19 November, 2023, Birds SA's first **Family Picnic** was held at the LARATINGA Wetlands in Mount Barker. Constructed in 1999, this beautiful wetlands area, occupying 16 hectares, is named after the Aboriginal Peramangk people's name for the Mt Barker Creek "Laratinga".

The inaugural event, organised by Claire Bourne, proved very successful, with about 60 people attending on the day. It was a BYO picnic lunch & chairs turn-out, with special activities for the kids, raffles, great prizes, guided bird walks and a sausage sizzle, as well as an opportunity to simply relax and catch up with fellow birders in great surroundings.

Birds SA President Steven Langley presented Minnie Robertson with 1st prize in the raffle. A remarkably spritely Minnie celebrated her 105th birthday during the week! *(Photo by Alan Burns)*



L-R: Lynton Huxley and Roger Bourne in the new Birds SA marquee
(Photo by Chris Bates-Brownsword)



Claire Bourne organised the event
(Photo by Alan Burns)



Attendees enjoyed the bird watching and guided walks
(Photo by Alan Burns)



The picturesque Laratinga Wetlands
(Photo by Trevor Hampel)

Historical Series No. 86
Pulteney Malcolm Borthwick ('Malcolm') Murray
(1860-1900).
Part 1 by Penny Paton

Malcolm Murray is not a well-known name in South Australian ornithology. I first came across him when researching records for the Historical Atlas in the late 1970s, through his egg clutches in the South Australian Museum in Adelaide (SAMA), mostly from the Wirrabara and Leigh Creek districts, from the late 1800s. Then recently when writing the Historical Series on Dr Morgan, his name cropped up again from Morgan's time in the 1890s at Laura (Paton 2022).

Family

Pulteney Malcolm Borthwick ('Malcolm') Murray was born on 28 August 1860 at 'Reedy Creek', Talunga, presumably on a property owned by his father Alexander Borthwick Murray near Tungkillo, on the eastern scarp of the Mount Lofty Ranges about 50 km east of Adelaide. He was the third child of Alexander's marriage to his second wife, Margaret Tinline, and the third of his four sons. AB Murray was a wealthy landowner and a member of both houses of the South Australian Parliament from 1862 to 1888 (www1). In 1881 he built a large stone house, Murray House, on land he owned at Magill and, on his death, it passed to his son, George Murray. Sir George Murray, who was Chief Justice, Chancellor of the University of Adelaide and Lieutenant Governor, extended the house in 1910. The property now forms part of Uni SA's Magill Campus.

I cannot locate any information on Malcolm Murray's early life or schooling. The family moved to Magill in 1862 (Mason and Pfitzner 2020), where his two younger siblings were born in 1863 and 1867, so presumably Malcolm would have gone to school in Adelaide. His egg collection includes sets of eggs collected at Magill in 1871, 1872 and 1876 (when he was aged only 11-16) and there is one set from Third Creek, presumably near Magill, from 1875. There are also sets of eggs of the Varied Sittella and Noisy Miner collected by Murray from Tungkillo, where his father owned land, from when he was about 18 years old.

From letters written by his relatives as well as Malcolm's letters to his mother Margaret, and his sister also Margaret, whom he affectionately called Maggie, we can piece together some of his movements.

In October and November 1879 he was part of a shearing gang working on Bookpurnong Station on the River Murray, where he liked it 'well enough', although he took a dim view of the cook. Although Malcolm had shot some ducks and presented them to the cook, she kept them for herself and gave the shearers salt meat for every meal. After that no more ducks were shot. Malcolm managed two of his family's stations - Myrtle Springs Station from about 1879 to 1886 and Wirrabara Station from 1886 till his death in 1900.

Malcolm married Rebecca Vera Brown (1865-1925) at Norwood on 7 September 1888, when he was 28 and the bride was 23 years old. Their first child, Malcolm George Douglas, was born at Norwood on 4 January 1887 and the second, Roy Allan, was born at the end of 1890, but he died on 29 October 1891 aged 10 months. His death occurred in the Frome district, presumably on Wirrabara Station, where the family was then living. Tragically their first born, Malcolm, died of dysentery on 25 October 1918 in Syria at the end of the First World War (www2). He was educated at St Peters College, Adelaide, and Trinity College, Cambridge, and before enlisting lived and worked with his wife and two children on his farm in Magill, then on the outskirts of Adelaide. He is buried in the Damascus Commonwealth War Cemetery in Syria.

Their third child John Tinline Murray was born at Norwood in 1892 and their only daughter, Margaret Isobel, in 1897 at Maylands in the Norwood district. Neither John nor Margaret married, so the only direct descendants of Malcolm and Vera are through their eldest child, Malcolm. John, or Jack as he was known, also enlisted in the First World War, and served as a gunner in the Howitzer Brigade, embarking from Melbourne in November 1916. He was a good cricketer and was a member of the AIF Cricket XI that played at Lords in London and toured the UK from May to September 1919 (Figure 1 shows Jack in cricket whites, 1919). Jack played for South Australia from 1912 to 1926 and was a member of the Australian Cricket Team of 1924/25. He died at Stirling in 1974.



Figure 1. SA Cricket Team for 4-day match against MCC, Adelaide March 1921. John Murray is fifth from left in back row (SLSA PRG 280/1/28/342)

Malcolm's widow, Rebecca, returned to Adelaide after his death in 1900 and took up residence on Park Terrace (now Greenhill Road) Eastwood. Figure 2 shows Rebecca in about 1910 and, from her dress, she appears to be well off, and her direct gaze suggests a very assured and confident woman. She did not remarry and died at Eastwood in 1925 aged 59.

Letters can only give a narrow perspective on personalities and relationships, but I have garnered what I can from the Murray archive in the State Library of South Australia (PRG 259 Series 67), from letters written by Malcolm, his sister Margaret, brother George and one from his older brother John. After 1880 it appears that Malcolm wrote only to his sister Margaret and younger brother George, despite his mother living until 1907, suggesting perhaps a less than close relationship with her after his teen years. His relationship with his father was probably strained, given a comment in a letter from Margaret to George in December 1883: 'Papa never hints we would like to see him [Malcolm] or that he would wish to come down.'

Another letter from Margaret to George from August 1884 gives an insight into the troubled family relationships, hinting that, with John and Malcolm both home, the house was full of noise and argument. She also alludes to Malcolm's health and, while not specific, it seems that he may have suffered from a mental illness. She finds him much better, 'home every night, and much more satisfied with every one.' The same letter comments that he played the piano well and hopes to have his own one day.



Figure 2. Rebecca Vera Murray (née Brown) ca 1905 (SLSA B 54458)

Malcolm's time on Myrtle Springs Station

The letters from Malcolm from his years at Myrtle Springs Station in the southern Flinders Ranges (1879-86) are mainly about visits or potential visits from family members, gifts to and from the family, and seasonal conditions. In September 1885 there was an exceptional rain event, over three and a half inches (90 mm), which washed away part of the railway line near Hergott Springs and five miles (8 km) of fencing as well as damaging the engine house.

Malcolm's earliest letter from Myrtle Springs Station was written in April 1879 and the latest was from January 1886, written at Mount Parry which is near Myrtle Springs. He seems to have been very happy at Myrtle Springs and expressed pride in the homestead and other buildings he erected as well as the homestead garden that he established. A photo from about 1890 shows a bullock wagon with wool bales leaving the Myrtle Springs woolshed (Figure 3). There are photos of Myrtle Springs in an album of 96 photos by the Reverend Robert Mitchell who opened the Smith of Dunesk mission at Beltana in 1894 and served there till 1898 (SLSA photographic collection 1610/11).

Figure 3.

A bullock team with wool bales leaving Myrtle Springs woolshed ca 1890 (courtesy of SLSA B 19917)



Figure 4.

Myrtle Springs Homestead ca 1898, with Matheson family members (courtesy SLSA B60681/51)



Figure 4 shows one such photo of members of the Matheson family on the veranda of the homestead built by Malcolm Murray.

A letter from Malcolm to his sister Maggie thanks her for the fruit she sent to the station ('fruit received in advanced state of decomposition, but apples were fine and appreciated', 15 February 1884). No doubt the fruit

was sent by rail and travelling in the heat of a South Australian summer over several days would have challenged most fruit. Malcolm's letter of 12 May 1884 asks Maggie to send things to make the house habitable; he comments that the existing house is very cold as it has no fireplace but this will be amended when he moves into the new house. A letter from



Figure 5. An irrigated garden, Myrtle Springs Station, 1915-20. (From an album compiled by Chrissie Ferguson who lived on a neighbouring property, North Moolooloo, courtesy Angela Dawes (granddaughter of Chrissie)).

September of the same year lets her know that he will go down to Wirrabara after shearing is finished at Myrtle Springs.

A light-hearted letter from Malcolm from December 1884 points out that both he and Maggie are still unmarried, gives her a humorous description of his ideal wife and promises her a part of his wife's dowry if she will send his description to Agnes. The tone of a letter from July 1885 is much bleaker. He is being pressured (presumably by his father) to move to Wirrabara after shearing, but "the more I look at my house the more I hate Wirrabara". He feels that he has put a lot of himself into Myrtle Springs – building the new house, planting all the trees and laying on water – and he is loath to leave this for someone else. He also asks about Agnes, but there is no further mention of her in letters and the woman he marries three years later is Rebecca.

The last letters from Malcolm from Myrtle Springs are dated from January 1886, in which he tells Maggie that it has been extremely hot and dusty and that Mr Sanders is very weak and may not survive. He also mentions an expensive bracelet that he sent Maggie for Christmas and thanks his mother for the book she sent.

In about 1916 Richard Dawes purchased Myrtle Springs Station and according to a newspaper article in 1920 when he sold the property, there was a 'fine homestead, a large well-appointed woolshed and other substantial outbuildings built by the late Mal Murray; at that time the property had a carrying capacity of 50,000 sheep and 700 cattle' (www3). Photos of the homestead and garden from 1915-1920 show an established garden and a sophisticated overhead irrigation system, possibly over a vegetable garden (Figure 5).

To be continued

References

Paton, P. 2022. Historical Series No. 81. Dr Alexander Matheson (Mat) Morgan (1867-1934). *The Birder* 264: i-iv.

Websites accessed

[www1: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Borthwick_Murray](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Borthwick_Murray) (accessed 6 July 2023)

[www2: https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/56707](https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/56707) (accessed 6 July 2023)

[www3: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/62717109](https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/62717109) (accessed 16 July 2023)

New Members



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
(Photographed by Trevor Cox at Cowell,
10 November 2023)

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

Penelope Smith	Hahndorf SA
Chris James	Stirling SA
Angela Morgan	Balhannah SA
Margaret Killick	Bridgewater SA
William Britten-Jones	North Adelaide SA
Naomi Forrest	Cherryville SA
Beverley Goughwin	Hallett Cove SA
Julie Clark	Marion SA
Jana & Kevin Rilett & Lillian, Lucy & Jules	Woodcroft SA
Alison Arblaster & Trish Branson	Hilton SA
David Speirs	Brighton SA
Fairlie Chappuis	Les Maracottes, Switzerland
Micah Jensen	Christchurch, New Zealand
Linda Stewart	Christies Beach SA
Paul Branston	Tranmere SA
Trevor Smith	Seaview Downs SA
Bernice Cohen	Payneham SA
Renate Velzeboer	Victor Harbor SA
Zoe Beer	Tanunda SA
Peter Hirst	Black Forest SA

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

FREE TASTINGS



At the Bec Hardy Cellar Door

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Photograph: Bec Hardy

SOUTH AFRICA revisited

... or seeking the Secretarybird

Roger Bourne

Kruger National Park

16 May – 17 June 2023

After visiting South Africa with a tour group in 2016 and planning to return in 2020, Covid cancelled the trip, so we went in 2023. This time it would be just the two of us, and primarily about birding. I had a target list of some 30 birds, mostly missed in 2016; Claire had only one, a Secretary Bird.

We confined ourselves to Kruger National Park and after watching numerous YouTube videos about travelling there, we settled on a combination of guided tour and self-drive trip. We also opted for a more relaxed experience, planning to stay at least 2 nights, and mostly 3-4 nights at each site. Lawson's Birding, Wildlife and Custom Safaris put together the most incredible itinerary for a Limpopo and Kruger birding safari: starting in Johannesburg, driving north to Limpopo Province, east along the Limpopo River to Makuleke Contractual Park, south through Kruger National Park and back to Johannesburg via Blyde River and the Drakensberg Mountains.

Given our delays and lost luggage experiences on our last overseas trip, we planned to arrive in Johannesburg a full day early to avoid mishaps. This gave us the opportunity to see some of Johannesburg's classic garden birds at the Africa Sky Guest House located about 25 km to the northwest of the city, where **we saw 20+ species** (see list on *Birds SA website*).



Secretarybird

On the first day of our safari, we were met by our guide Leon Marais, Director of *Lawson's Birding, Wildlife and Custom Safaris*, and SKS National Birding Specialist Guide. We began with an easy drive from Johannesburg, spending the morning at *Rietvlei Nature Reserve* before making our way to Polokwane, the regional capital of Limpopo Province which borders Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Botswana. *Rietvlei Nature Reserve* is about 4,000 hectares of mainly open grassland with undulating hills and indigenous trees clustered in small groups. **Here we saw 57 bird species** (see list on *Birds SA website*).

During our morning visit to *Polokwane Nature Reserve*, 3,200 hectares of dry Acacia thornveld, and home to some lovely birds, as well as a nice range of plains game species, **we saw 66 species of birds** (see list on *Birds SA website*).

From *Polokwane Nature Reserve*, we drove north to *Mapungubwe National Park* on the Limpopo River, a showcase for the region's trans-national wildlife roaming between South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, and for its cultural history. Mapungubwe Hill is the centre of Southern Africa's first indigenous kingdom, which reached its peak between 1200 and 1300 AD. We spent two nights at Leokwe Rest Camp, birding and game viewing, and enjoying the park's wonderful scenery.



Crested Barbet



Lilac-breasted Roller



White-fronted Bee-eaters

(Photographs by Roger and Claire Bourne, Kruger National Park, 2023)

Here, we saw our first elephants, including an incredible encounter with a large bull walking down the track directly towards us. Our guide Leon saw the elephant's regular path to our left and reversed the vehicle a judicious distance to avoid stressing the animal, which allowed him to pass seemingly unconcerned. We also saw Rock Hyrax, Black-backed Jackal, Zebra, Giraffe, Warthog, Blue Wildebeest, Klipspringer, Northern Bushbuck, and a dead Brown Hyena which the rangers thought might have been poisoned by poachers. **During our two days at Mapungubwe we recorded 65 species of birds** (see list on [Birds SA website](#)).

Next, was Pafuri Lodge located in the private *Makuleke Contractual Park* between the Limpopo and Luvuvhu Rivers, a rich and unique ecological region forming the northern tip of *Kruger National Park*. This is arguably the most scenic and diverse part of Kruger, with several bird species that do not occur further south in the park. Also known as the Pafuri Triangle due to the wedge-shape formed by the confluence of the Limpopo and Luvuvhu rivers at the tripoint Crook's Corner, this triangular expanse of remote wilderness covers a vast, unspoilt stretch of 26,500 hectares spanning three countries. It also serves as a natural choke point for an extraordinary variety of wildlife, including large herds of elephant, over 350 species of birds and the highly sought after Big Five. Here, wildlife roams without hindrance across three borders, and a profusion of birds, with numerous specials, makes it one of South Africa's most rewarding birding areas.

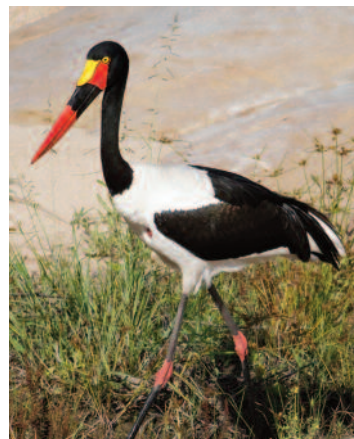
We stayed at Return Africa's *Pafuri Camp*, a wonderful place, with luxury safari tents overlooking the Luvuvhu River. Our 3 nights gave us ample time to explore the area, with two game drives per day, and the chance to enjoy the luxury of the camp itself. "Down time" was spent keeping an eye on what came around the camp and down to the river to drink. Returning one afternoon, we saw our first Leopard walking along the track ahead of us before slipping into the darkness. We also saw a Rusty-spotted Genet lounging at the base of a tree. **36 target birds seen here** (see list on [Birds SA website](#)).

From Pafuri, we headed south into Kruger proper. Stretching 80 km east to west and 320 km north to south, *Kruger National Park* is one of the world's largest game reserves of over two million hectares and is home to more than 130 mammals and 500+ bird species. We spent five nights in northern Kruger, staying two nights at Punda Maria Rest Camp and 3 nights at Mopani Main Camp. Punda Maria is a small camp situated at the base of a large rocky ridge with a small waterhole in front. The accommodation, a series of terraced rooms, was compact but comfortable and fronted by a low roofed verandah. You had to be wary of two things 1) banging your head on the low verandah and 2) the ever-hopeful Vervet Monkeys who snatched whatever was left lying around.

There was also a small walking track up the hill behind the camp along the boundary fence. Whilst we didn't see any



Southern Ground Hornbill



Saddle-billed Stork



Pearl-spotted Owllet

large animals close to camp, there were good bird sightings. The standout mammals were African Wild Cat, Dwarf Mongoose, and a Pangolin, albeit a rear end view as it disappeared into the undergrowth. Our standout birds were Crested Guinea fowl, White-backed, Cape and Lappet-faced Vulture, Black-winged Kite, Brown Snake Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Speckled Mousebird, Southern Ground Hornbill, Brown-headed Parrot, Brubru, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, White-browed Scrub Robin, Ashy Flycatcher, Common Waxbill, Yellow-throated Longclaw and Grey-backed Sparrowlark.

Mopani Rest Camp is situated on a bluff overlooking Pioneer Dam. Our accommodation, a round thatched building with rock faced walls, overlooked the dam and we were blessed with fantastic sunsets. Typically, we went birding and game viewing in the mornings and afternoons and rested in camp during the day. Without leaving our patio, we had great viewing of abundant water birds over Pioneer Dam. The Mopani area has good viewing for game, particularly Elephants, whilst the open plains offered chances to see some of the rarer antelope species. It is one of the best places in the park for Elephants, big bulls in particular, and we were lucky to have an encounter with one of the region's big tuskers, N'wendlamuhari.

In addition to Elephant, we saw Leopard, Black-backed Jackal, Zebra, Giraffe, Wildebeest, Tsessebe, Steenbok — and our first Hippopotamus, which became daily visitors at the Dam.

South Africa revisited (continued)

(Photographs by Roger and Claire Bourne, Kruger National Park, 2023)

The birding was also very good. **We saw 31 species, including the one Claire had been waiting for, the Secretarybird** (see list on Birds SA website).

On day 13 after an early breakfast, we departed Mopani (and Kruger) for the airport where we said goodbye to our guide and collected our hire car for the self-drive leg of our tour. Re-entering Kruger via Phalaborwa Gate, we made our way to Letaba Rest Camp, our base for the next 4 days. Letaba Rest Camp is situated on the southern bank of the Letaba River with wonderful views of the floodplain from the camp restaurant. The camp is situated in the Mopane Belt, stretching from Olifant's Rest Camp in the south, almost to the southern bank of the Levuvhu River in the north. The veld type country is characterised by the Mopane Tree, which dominates the space, resulting in a somewhat less diverse habitat than other veld types. The excellent Elephant Museum is the main feature in the camp, with the original tusks and life histories of a group of bulls known as the Magnificent Seven. In conversation with the Ranger, we discovered that the big tusker we saw earlier, was called N'wendlamuhari.

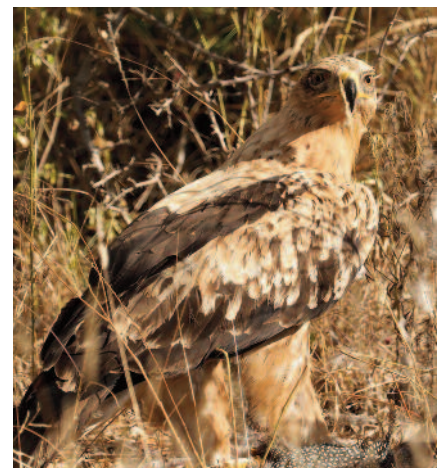
On a day trip to *Olifant's Rest Camp* we had an incredible Leopard sighting. First, we saw the silhouette of the Leopard's hind quarters hanging out of a tree before it pulled itself up onto a branch and gave us excellent photo opportunities. We also saw a Tawny Eagle on the ground which had just caught an unlucky Helmeted Guineafowl. **Other notable birds were seen** (see list on Birds SA website).

After Letaba, we drove south to Skukuza Rest Camp which lies on the southern bank of the Sabie River, one of the largest and most biologically diverse rivers in the park. We only stayed 2 nights, as a break in the driving to the southernmost part of Kruger. We heard about packs of Wild Dogs in the area but didn't see any. We did see Warthog, Zebra, Wildebeest, Nyala, Giraffe, Leopard with kill in tree, our only Honey Badger of the trip, African Buffalo and of course African Elephant, the latter often seen heading to the river in the heat of the day, to bathe and wallow.

Lake Panic Bird Hide, situated west of the camp along the H11, was a popular spot to visit and the local golf course was a great place for lunch, where you could sit overlooking the course and observe the wildlife and birds. There was also some good birding around the campground, and **we saw over 30 species during our short stay** (see list on Birds SA website).

We moved on to Berg-en-Dal, or 'Hill-and-Dale', situated in the SW corner of the park, where we spent the next 4 nights. This relatively new camp, built in the 1980's, is nestled in a large bowl between the hills and overlooks a waterhole, which is floodlit at night. There is also a self-guided walking trail around the inside perimeter of the camp (not to be done between sunset and sunrise) which was great for observing animals and birds both inside and outside the camp. Beside exploring the southern area, we spent many hours watching the waterhole's comings and goings. We saw Elephant, Zebra, Giraffe, Impala, a pack of Wild Dogs (seen on 3 consecutive days), our first White Rhinoceros, Steenbock, and Leopard Tortoise. One evening a Common Genet almost came through a high-level window whilst chasing a squirrel. **Our bird count for the 4 days was an impressive 80+ species** (see list on Birds SA website).

From Berg-en-Dal, our next stop was Lower Sabie, a wonderful camp on the southern bank of the Sabie River in the SE corner of the park, where we stayed for 4 nights. The Sabie river is the lifeblood of the area, especially during the dry season, when most activity takes place close to the banks. Great game viewing can be had from the large wooden deck outside the restaurant overlooking a weir in the river, which holds numerous pods of Hippopotamus, large Nile Crocodiles and water birds such as Yellow-billed Stork, African Fish Eagle, Egyptian Geese, Pied and Giant Kingfishers, Water Thick-knee and many others. Mammals seen were Hippopotamus, Elephant, Giraffe, Zebra, Buffalo, our only Lion sightings, African Civet, Common Genet, Spotted Hyena, White Rhinoceros, Common Warthog, Impala and Vervet Monkey.



A leopard gradually reveals itself

Tawny Eagle on kill



Retz's Helmetshrike

Our last camp within Kruger was at Satara Rest Camp, where we spent one night before heading back to Johannesburg. The area is characterised by open plains dotted with large trees such as Knob-thorn, Marula and Leadwood, creating some classic African savanna scenery, while stands of Lala Palms grow on the alluvial soils and ribbons of riverine thicket line the dry riverbeds.

After breakfast we headed out of Kruger to Eastgate Airport, to drop off our hire car and meet our guide Leon again for the final leg of the tour. Next stop was the northern arm of the Drakensberg Escarpment, where we stayed at Blyde River Wilderness Lodge, situated on the lower reaches of the river between the mouth of the canyon and its confluence with the Olifants River.

The lodge is known as a good spot to see the elusive African Finfoot via a morning or afternoon stakeout from a large rock on the riverbank. We headed down to the rock during the afternoon, but it was not to be seen, so we



Dark-chanting Goshawk

visited the rock daily and on the last day were rewarded with several sightings of the bird. **In total, we saw 52 species** (see list on *Birds SA* website).

After four wonderful days at Blyde River Wilderness Lodge it was time to head back to Johannesburg over the spectacular Drakensberg Escarpment, via the Verloren Valei Nature Reserve, where we picked up some new species such as Cape Griffon, Jackal Buzzard, Wailing Cisticola, Wing-snapping Cisticola, Buff-streaked chat and Long-tailed Widowbird. Our total trip was a fantastic 32 days, including travelling the full length of Kruger National Park, and seeing 252 species of birds including 73 lifers.

Roger Bourne

Bird list PDF is available, together with the latest issue of *The Birder*, on the Members page of the *Birds SA* website.



The elusive African Finfoot



Scarlet-chested Sunbird



Roger and Claire Bourne

“Go-Go” the Bar-tailed Godwit

BirdsSA readers will recall the story of Go-Go the Bar-tailed Godwit featured in the Summer 2023 issue of *The Birder*, whose epic journeys to the Russian Arctic have attracted major interest, including an article in *The Adelaide Advertiser* on 25.10.23. Local photographer Paul Taylor, who has been recording Go-Go's progress for some time, takes us on his journey with this amazing shorebird over the past few years.

I have a keen interest in migratory shorebirds. These remarkable birds fly to and from the northern hemisphere where they breed in their summer (our winter) in places like Siberia.

After nesting, they fly south along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, with many arriving in coastal parts of Australia in September and October. Here they stay, feeding and resting, until their departure in March or April.

In recent years I have taken note of shorebirds that have been banded and can be individually identified with engraved leg flags. This can provide information on their movements, and many have been found to return to the same beach every year. I have seen a lot of flagged shorebirds of several species, including 20 different Red Knots that were banded in various Australian states and some in overseas countries. But the most notable is a Bar-tailed Godwit which was caught and banded at Thompson Beach on 29 November 2012, with the engraved flag AKK.

AKK was seen at Thompson Beach again in 2014, and also in northern China on five occasions between 2013 and 2019. However, it wasn't reported in Gulf St. Vincent (or indeed Australia) again until February 2020, when I saw him (it's a male) at Bald Hill Beach.

This sighting attracted some media attention, with articles in *The Advertiser* and *Sunday Mail*. AKK gained the nickname of *Go-Go Godwit*, and even featured in the *Advertiser's* cartoons.

Since my first sighting, I've seen AKK several times at Bald Hill Beach each summer. He arrives in October with mostly non-breeding plumage, starts moulting in February and has full breeding plumage by the end of March, when it's time to migrate north.

Scientifically, there are two subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit in Australia. Both are found in SA, and AKK is of the subspecies *baueri*. This is the most numerous subspecies here, and breeds in western Alaska and northeastern Siberia.

On the same day that AKK was banded, another Bar-tailed Godwit was caught at Thompson Beach and flagged AHZ. A year later in 2013, another one was also



AKK in full breeding plumage (Photographed by Paul Taylor at Bald Hill Beach, 19 March 2022)



AHZ (missing this summer) (Photographed by Paul Taylor at Bald Hill Beach, 24 January 2023)

banded here with the flag CAH. I have regularly seen these three Godwits together in the same flock at Bald Hill Beach. Until this season that is. Although AKK and CAH have been seen on a few occasions, I haven't seen AHZ this summer. I fear the worst.

There appear to be good numbers of Godwits in Gulf St. Vincent this season. Most are in one fairly large flock that usually roosts overnight in the Price salt fields. From there, they often fly to Bald Hill Beach in the afternoon to feed.

In my early birdwatching days a few decades ago, I noticed that Bar-tailed Godwits were leaving the gulf around the middle of April. Over the last two years, they have left at the end of March. I don't know if this is due to weather conditions, the timing of the full moon, or perhaps a climate change trend affecting breeding grounds. It will be interesting to see what time they start migrating north this year.

A few days leading up to migration, Bar-tailed Godwits are restless and noisy. There is a lot of chirping and short flights up and down the beach. A light south breeze and moonlit night would be ideal for leaving. We wish AKK and the rest of the flock a safe flight.

Paul Taylor

Past Excursions

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 4 November 2023 Beyond Ponds, Hayborough

It was a cool and screeching start to the morning as sixteen members gathered in the car park of the Fleurieu Aquatic Centre, Hayborough. The screeching was from about 100 Little Corellas that greeted us!

We set off along the bitumen walking track. The first bird we spotted was a Yellow Thornbill in a dead tree, quickly followed by a Red Wattlebird. Our next stop was a large pond, and we were right into it. Superb Fairywrens were foraging around the edges, and dozens of Fairy Martins and Welcome Swallows filled the sky. On the water were lots of Eurasian Coot, Dusky Moorhen, and a stand-out White-necked Heron. Magpie Larks, Magpies and Willie Wagtails were soon added to the list.

From this point on there were several ponds of various sizes, and some had started to dry out. Cameras were soon clicking away at the nest of an Australasian Grebe with a parent and three chicks, and we saw several Little Pied Cormorants roosting. Next on our list were Black-fronted Dotterel with juveniles and a White-faced Heron.

At the next pond, using a scope, we observed three Australian Spotted Crakes at a distance, and then to our surprise one turned up about two metres away on the track! We were now at the last pond on the outward walk and several duck species were seen including Wood, Hardhead, Grey Teal, Pacific Black, and last of all only one Shoveler.

A black and white bird was observed at the very far side of the pond. I had observed two of them the day before and thought they might be Banded Stilt, but not having

a scope with me I could not be sure. With the aid of a scope we were able to confirm the bird to be a juvenile Banded Stilt, a first for this venue. On the way back several other bird species were added to our list, making a total of 63 species – a great result for the day.

Winston Syson

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Friday 10 – Monday 13 November 2023 CAMPOUT: Cowell / Arno Bay

Friday 10 November

It was a very hot and windy day when four birders from Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Adelaide and Mambray Creek, met at the Whyalla wetlands. We would meet two more birders from Whyalla, and one from Port Neill in Cowell.

We looked around the wetlands and found 34 bird species, including the usual ones found there. The Black-tailed Native-hens numbered about 100, and the Greylag Geese and Muscovy Ducks (one Mallard cross) were taking over the best pond and making a mess of the place.

The Geese are getting quite bold and will be attacking someone soon. There was only one migratory wader, a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and some Red-kneed and Black-fronted Dotterels, Red-necked Avocets and Pied Stilts.

After a quick smoko we headed to Cowell where the other three birders were waiting for us in the 41°C heat. We had lunch together and, as it was too hot and windy to go birding, decided to set up our camps and relax in one of the cabins in the Harbour View Caravan Park. The wind turned and a strong cool change arrived, dropping the temperature.



Black-fronted Dotterel (Photographed by Bob Daly at Beyond Ponds, Hayborough, 4 November 2023)



Pacific Gulls (Photographed by Richard Croll at Cowell, November 2023)

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Splendid Fairywren (Photographed by Judy Owen at Cowell. November 2023)

We had a look for birds in the evening around the park finding Magpies, Magpie Larks, Yellow-throated Miners, Singing and New Holland Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds, Mulga Parrots, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Crested Pigeons, Willie Wagtails, House Sparrows, Welcome Swallows, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Silver Gulls, White-faced Herons and Whiskered Terns.

Saturday 11 November

Owlet Nightjars called out in the early morning as we had breakfast. The wind had dropped a bit and we walked around the caravan park, which is bounded by Franklin Harbour and mangroves on the southern side and Mallee woodland on the other. We found more of the birds already seen and added some inquisitive Grey Currawongs, Weebills, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Grey Shrike-thrushes, Galahs, Common Bronzewing, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, White-browed Babblers, Australian Ravens, a Royal Spoonbill, Masked Lapwings, Great Egrets, Hoary-headed Grebes, Kestrels, Blackbirds, Starlings, White-browed Scrubwrens, and Purple-backed and Splendid Fairywrens, that were friendly but proved difficult to get good photos of. A total of 36 bird species were found here.

Our next stop was a short drive away at Swallows Nest Road, which is an area of Mallee woodland. The wind was picking up, but the trees sheltered us as we walked around the area. We found Grey Butcherbirds, Singing and White-eared Honeyeaters, Striated Pardalotes, Mulga Parrots, a Jacky Winter, Rufous Whistlers, Black-capped Sittellas, Little Ravens, Red Wattlebirds, and Red-capped Robins with young just out of the nest. While we were having smoko a pair of Blue-breasted



Spotted Crake (Photographed by Judy Owen at Cowell. November 2023)

Fairywrens brought our total here to 17 bird species. A couple of years ago we found 32 species here, but the area around Cowell is very dry and most of the crops have not been sown this year.

Ulbanda Reservoir was our next stop, about 14km away into the hills. As we arrived at the reservoir area we were greeted by Spiny-cheeked and Singing Honeyeaters, a Red-backed Kingfisher and Dusky Woodswallows. While having lunch a Brown Goshawk glided above us. We walked to the reservoir wall finding Silvereyes, Inland Thornbills, and more of the birds seen earlier. The reservoir was only about a third full and had a Pied Cormorant, Australasian Grebes and Grey Teal on it, and Welcome Swallows moving around it. On our way back to the vehicles a Brown Falcon brought our list for this location up to 18 bird species.

As we returned to Cowell we had a short stop at Four Mile Beach oyster lookout area. The wind was blowing and the tide was out but we found Red-capped Plovers with young, Caspian Terns, Little Pied Cormorants, an Eastern Curlew, and more of the birds seen earlier. A total of 12 bird species were found here.

Sunday 12 November

The wind was blowing strongly as we drove around the southern end of Franklin Harbour to the Conservation Park, stopping at the turnoff into the park to look at a flock of Banded Lapwings and Skylarks in a paddock.

We followed the track along a tidal mudflat for about 3 km before walking onto the mud flats with our spotting scopes. Here we found lots of Grey Teal, Red-necked Stints and Red-capped Plovers. Whiskered and Caspian

Past Excursions *(continued)*

Terns flew about diving into the water to catch fish. Silver and Pacific Gulls cruised about looking for food, and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Grey Plovers, Grey-tailed Tattlers and Masked Lapwings rested on the ground. Great Egrets, a Little Black Cormorant and lots of Pied Cormorants sat on the oyster racks nearby. In the sandhill bushes were a Grey Butcherbird, Spiny-cheeked and Singing Honeyeaters, bringing the total to 19 bird species found here.

We then drove to The Knob / Flat Rock Beach area. On a small rocky headland we found Pied, Little Pied, Little Black and Black-faced Cormorants, and on the beach White-faced Herons, Pied Oystercatchers, and more of the shore birds seen earlier. Flying about were Crested, Caspian and Whiskered Terns. In the dune scrub were White-fronted Chats, White-browed Scrubwrens and a Pipit, bringing the total to 19 bird species seen here.

We had lunch at Arno Bay and then went to the boardwalk. The wind was blowing strongly as we walked, with Welcome Swallows, Starlings and a Hobby whizzing past. Willie Wagtails, Purple-backed Fairy-wrens, Rock Parrots and Spotted Crakes moved about in the mangroves. On the beach and tidal creek banks were Greenshanks, Pelicans, a Common Sandpiper, and more of the birds seen earlier.

We walked back to the mangrove boardwalk out of the wind. A Kestrel flew past, and roosting in the trees were Elegant Parrots, Crested Pigeons and Blackbirds. A Black-shouldered Kite hovered, while an Osprey sat on top of the tower built nearby for them. A total of 29 bird species were found here.



Whiskered Tern (Photographed by Richard Cox at Cowell, November 2023)

Monday 13 November

The wind was still blowing and the clouds were building when most of the group headed home, leaving two of us to look for more birds. We went to Starr Road south of Cowell to a block of old Mallee trees out of the wind. Amongst the Mallee trees we found lots of Weebills, and some Willie Wagtails, Little Ravens, Yellow-rumped and Inland Thornbills, Grey Fantail, Rufous Whistlers, Black-faced Cuckooshrikes, Welcome Swallows, Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Grey Shrikethrushes, Port Lincoln Parrots, Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, Rainbow Bee-eaters, and Silvereyes. Kestrels, Red-capped Robins and Brown Goshawks were seen with young. In the nearby open scrub we found White-winged Fairywrens, bringing the total to 21 bird species found here.

It was time to leave and head home. About 107 bird species were found on the excursion, including the Whyalla Wetlands birds. The birds of note were the Blue-breasted and Turquoise Fairywrens, Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattlers, Rock Parrots and Osprey.

Bernie Haase

Birds SA

Saturday 11 November

Buckland Lake Port Gawler

A cool/cold windy start to the day made birding difficult. We recorded over forty species. There were a few thousand duck and Black Swan spread around the lake, mostly Grey Teal, but some Australian Shelduck put on a show as they flew in, as did several flights of Black Swan. An impressive sight.

The wind initially kept the waders hidden, with over 100 Red-necked Stint and Red-capped Plover roosting in some vegetation by the lake edge. They gave good views through the scope. Numbers of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were flying about and landing along the lake edge, but only one or two Curlew Sandpipers were sighted. Banded Stilt were roosting and/or feeding out on the lake, and a juvenile Bar-tailed Godwit was spotted with one of the roosting groups. Buckland Park is an unusual location for a Bar-tailed Godwit as it has been a regular site for Black-tailed Godwit in the past, but none were seen on this trip. A late highlight was the appearance of a Great-crested Grebe just off-shore.

Overall, the windy conditions made viewing difficult and birds flying overhead were moving fast!

The group didn't come to the gate where William and I were waiting, but Seven Langley gave me a call and we all arrived safely at the lake edge.

Colin Rogers

Past Excursions *(continued)*

Birds SA

Thursday 16 November

Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens

Seventeen members met at the lower carpark on a cool and overcast day. As with past excursions, our route was over the dam wall for our sighting of 10 waterbird species which included Maned Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Eurasian Coot (6 + 3 young), Dusky Moorhen (6 + 3 young), Hoary-headed Grebe, Masked Lapwing, Little Pied Cormorant (6 + 1 young) and Australian White Ibis. We then made our way up the Rhododendron Gully track to the upper carpark. Apart from several quick dashes to avoid garden sprinklers, we took our time to enjoy the beautiful flowering plants and bird species.

Unfortunately we didn't see any Bassian Thrush, but our tally of 40 species for this outing kept our interest high and included Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Galah, Adelaide Rosella, Rainbow Lorikeets, Eastern Spinebill, Superb Fairywren, Crescent Honeyeater, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Western Whistler, Scarlet Robin, Silvereye, Red-browed Finch and Striated Pardalote.

This Botanic Garden is a wonderful place to visit and is highly recommended.

Lynton Huxley

Birds SA

Sunday 26 November 2023

Cox Scrub Conservation Park, Ashbourne

Twelve people arrived for the excursion, which I had volunteered to lead in Lynton's absence. Luckily we waited an extra ten minutes as a few people arrived late. Unfortunately Google Maps instructed people who were unfamiliar with the Conservation Park to go to the western edge of Cox Scrub, and they had difficulty finding us.



**Tawny-crowned
Honeyeater**

(Photographed by Bob Daly at Cox Scrub CP, 26 November 2023)

Rainbow Bee-eater

The birds were particularly quiet and hard to see, as the skies were dark grey and it was a bit drizzly. Someone spotted a koala not far from the car park, which was a real surprise, as I don't think I have seen one in Cox Scrub before. We soon found Crimson Rosellas, Rainbow Lorikeets, a Rainbow Bee-eater and Elegant Parrots as we walked up the hill.

The main Honeyeater present was of course the New Holland, and we were lucky to see Brown-headed and a couple of Tawny-crowned. The understory in the scrub was flowering beautifully, but not the eucalypts. We only saw one Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo flying, and there were a few pairs of Galahs and Little Corellas. Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail and Golden Whistler were seen, and an Eastern Spinebill appeared while we were eating lunch.

Although we totalled 29 species, it was our youngest member who spotted a few extra to lift the number. On a warmer day I'm sure we could have seen more, but one can never be certain. It's great to be out walking and meeting new members, and we all enjoyed the morning.

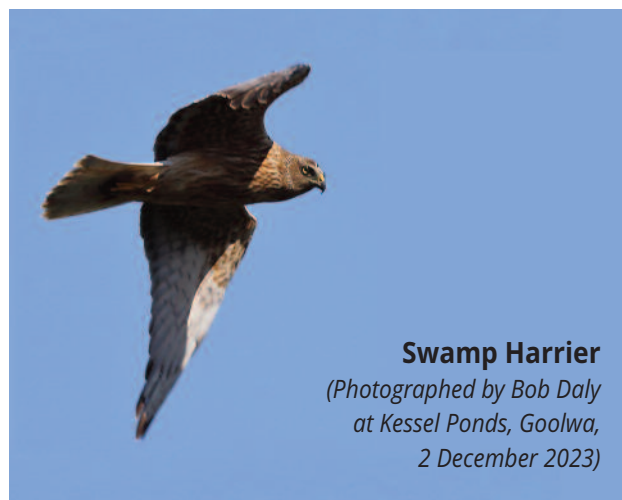
Wendy Phillips

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 2 December 2023

Kessel Road Ponds, Goolwa

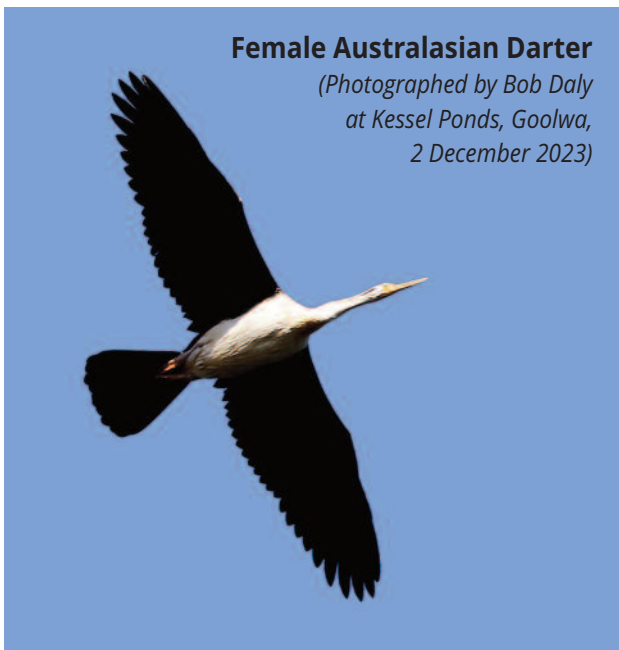
This was our last event for 2023 and following the tradition of the earlier group, known as the Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc, we met at 4pm for our Christmas get together. Only ten people arrived at the second car park and we headed up the track to the furthest two ponds, with a couple of scopes in hand. We looked up and instantly saw a Little Eagle, recognizable by its distinctive white pattern under the wings. This was the first time I had seen a Little Eagle in Goolwa. It circled back again, so everyone got a great view of it. A Swamp Harrier also cruised above us.



Swamp Harrier

*(Photographed by Bob Daly
at Kessel Ponds, Goolwa,
2 December 2023)*

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Female Australasian Darter

*(Photographed by Bob Daly
at Kessel Ponds, Goolwa,
2 December 2023)*



Hardheads *(Photographed by Bob Daly at Kessel Ponds, Goolwa, 2 December 2023)*

Some Great Cormorants flew over and we noticed two Australasian Darters amongst them. There were calls of bush birds, European Goldfinch, Superb Fairywren, New Holland Honeyeater, Silvereye and Grey Fantail, and frogs were croaking.

We cautiously crept up a slope to view the water birds so as not to scare them. The Hoary-headed Grebes were the most plentiful (50) and a few Australasian Grebes in breeding plumage were scattered amongst them. The ducks were Grey Teal, Hardhead, and a couple of Pacific Black. Little Black and Great Black Cormorants were either swimming or resting on the dead tree branches surrounding the ponds. Eurasian Coots were plentiful in all the ponds, while Purple Swamphens and Dusky Moorhen hung about the reeds on the fringes of the water.

We walked around the other four to five storm water ponds and, after the big rains we had in late November, they were all at maximum height. Little Grassbirds and Reed Warblers were calling but hard to see in the reeds. A pair of Black Swan had five large cygnets. One Spotless Crake was sighted, but we dipped on the Baillon's Crake

seen a few weeks earlier. A Black-shouldered Kite sat at head height in a dead tree until we moved closer.

As we walked down the eastern boundary we noticed White Ibis, Rock Doves and Swamphens feeding on the spills of horse feed in the neighboring paddock. A few Black-tailed Native Hens ran across the track to hide in the bush. Galahs, Little Corellas, Musk Lorikeet, Crimson Rosella, Red Wattlebird, White-plumed and Singing Honeyeaters were added to our list.

After two hours of birding, we were getting hungry and decided to go to the Goolwa Barrage (out of the cold southerly wind) for our Christmas tea. They have a good BBQ facility with a large table and seating for public use. It was a pleasant way to finish up the year and find out what others in the group had been up to on their birding holidays.

We totaled 46 bird species at the ponds and, although it is not as well managed as Laratinga Wetlands, it attracts a good variety of birds. As the water recedes over summer there may be more waders appearing, making further visits worthwhile.

Wendy Phillips

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Sunday 10 December 2023

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden

On a grey, windy and wet morning six keen birders gathered in the car park at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden in Port Augusta. Three people had come from Adelaide, and one each from Port Augusta, Port Neill and Mambray Creek.

We looked for birds from under the cover of the picnic area shelter, and surprisingly found small flocks of Galahs flying past. In the trees at the car park were Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds feeding young birds, and Crested Pigeons. In the shrubs and on the ground White-browed Babblers, Willie Wagtails and Chirruping Wedgebills chased insects stirred up by the rain.

It was too wet and windy to walk around the garden, so we moved to the Visitor Centre to sit under the veranda and watch for birds while we waited for the centre to open. Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins hunted for flying insects and roosted under the roof. Magpies (white-backed), Magpie Larks, Spotted Doves and Sparrows moved about in the garden area. A male Mistletoebird curiously came to look at us and almost landed on an outstretched hand!

The café opened and we had smoko and ordered our Christmas lunches. Two more birders from Whyalla and another from Adelaide joined us. We had time to drive to the Red Cliff Lookout and see what birds were around.

Past Excursions *(continued)*

A White-plumed Honeyeater, Rainbow Bee-eater, Australian Ravens, Purple-crowned Lorikeets and Magpies (black-backed) were in the car park area. On the beach and mud banks were Silver Gulls, Little Pied Cormorants, Crested Tern and a Great Egret.

The rain was still falling as we headed back to the Visitor Centre. A Blackbird was added to our meagre bird list as we sat down for our Christmas lunch. We were joined by another birder from Port Augusta and began looking on the big screen at our best bird photos taken during the year by the group. There were an assortment of photos from the group's regular outings and some from members' trips to all parts of the country. It was good to see the enthusiasm of the birders in their efforts to get the photos and the quality of the photos, which created some stimulating discussion amongst the group.

We only found 24 bird species for the day due to the inclement weather. The birds of the day were the Chirruping Wedgebills and the friendly Mistletoebird. No photos were taken as it was too wet and windy.

Bernie Haase

Birds SA

Thursday 21 December 2023

Onkaparinga Estuary and Wetlands

Twenty-nine people gathered on a cool, mostly overcast day with a light breeze for this excursion. Nevertheless, it was a very pleasant day with everything looking fresh after the recent rains. The group included three new members, which is always nice to see.

As usual, we started at the oval off Britain Drive at Port Noarlunga where we looked at the river and nearby estuary. There were Australian Pelicans, Grey Teal, Black Swans, Pied Stilts, Great Egrets, Australian White Ibis, Royal Spoonbills, Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Masked Lapwings, Little Pied Cormorants, Crested Terns, Caspian Terns, White Ibis and many Silver Gulls. Singing Honeyeaters flitted about in nearby trees and Magpie-larks strolled about on the oval.

We then headed to Perry's Bend on River Road. The car park was rather crowded, but we managed to find parking spots and proceeded in a clockwise direction along the walking trail and across the boardwalk. As expected after the rain, the marshy area was full of water, a pleasant change from the last few visits when it had been dry. Along the way we saw or heard numerous Superb Fairywrens, Rainbow Lorikeets, Grey Fantails, Adelaide Rosellas, White-faced Herons, Little Black Cormorants, Great Cormorant, Silvereyes, more Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal, Hardheads, Wood Ducks, Little Grassbirds, Reed Warblers, Australasian Grebes, Hoary-headed Grebes, Golden-headed Cisticolas, Australasian

Swamphens, Eurasian Coots, Dusky Moorhens, Australasian Darter, Great Egret, Red-browed Finch, White-browed Babblers, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeons, and numerous Galahs and Little Corellas.

Honeyeaters included New Holland, White-plumed, Red Wattlebirds and a Little Wattlebird. There were also Fairy Martins, Tree Martins, Grey Shrikethrush, Willie Wagtails, Little Ravens, Striated Pardalotes and Australian Magpies. Raptors included Black-shouldered Kites and a Whistling Kite. We also observed six European Greenfinch, which are not often seen in such a relatively large group. One Eurasian Skylark was also recorded.

After the boardwalk an eagle-eyed observer noticed a Dusky Woodswallow perched on a tree beside the track. This enabled everyone to have a good look, as it wasn't worried about us at all. Soon afterwards we saw several more, and we also heard Laughing Kookaburras near the carpark and further into the walk.

Feral birds included House Sparrows (30), Common Blackbirds (2), Common Starlings (2) and Feral Pigeons (10). The total species count for the day was a very pleasing 65.

Ali Ben Kahn

Birds SA

Saturday 13 January 2024

Altona CSR Landcare Reserve

Saturday morning began with very strong winds across the Barossa Valley as sixteen birdwatchers arrived to walk through the Altona CSR Landcare Reserve. Luckily, the wind abated and the predicted high daytime temperatures held off until after the walk. Whether it was due to the weather or the fact that it was summer, only a small number of birds were sighted during the walk, but this didn't detract from the enthusiasm of the birdwatchers.

The walk started from the car park up the access road to the Landcare container. What is normally quite a productive area for birdwatching was quiet this morning, however on the way out of the reserve three Red-capped Robins were sighted close to the exit. These were the only robins seen on the walk.

At the container the group turned left following the Black Chinned Honeyeater Trail. With some Grevillea *lavandulacea* (Lavender Grevillea) in flower, five Eastern Spinebills were observed. The most numerous honeyeaters were New Holland Honeyeaters with 40 being seen. Plenty of lorikeets were seen either flying overhead or feeding in the flowering gums, namely Musk Lorikeets (10) and Purple-crowned Lorikeets (6). The only other parrots and cockatoos sighted were Adelaide Rosellas (20) and Galahs (10).

Past Excursions *(continued)*

Only three raptors were seen by the group. One Brown Goshawk was observed high in the sky over the reserve and two Nankeen Kestrels.

The trail branched off to allow the group to walk down to the Chatterton Gorge lookout and see how much water was still in the North Para River, which flows through the gorge. Further along the Black Chinned Honeyeater Trail the path runs parallel to the river for a short distance. Even though the river was still flowing and there were relatively large pools of water in the gorge, not many water birds were observed. Those seen were Dusky Moorhen (1), Little Black Cormorant (1) and Little Pied Cormorant (1).

At the connection of the Firetail Track most of the group turned left and proceeded back to the Landcare container via this loop. A few decided to return via the shorter route as the day was beginning to heat up. Numerous thornbills were seen in the tree canopies, shrubs or on the ground, namely Striated Thornbills (20), Yellow-rumped Thornbills (3), Yellow Thornbills (2) and Weebills (4). Superb Fairywrens (12) were seen throughout the reserve, with the males showcasing their beautiful breeding plumage.

Overall, 36 bird species were observed by the end of the walk - those not already mentioned being : Australian Magpie (4), Common Bronzewing (4), Grey Currawong (2), Grey Fantail (6), Grey Shrike thrush (4), Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo (2), Laughing Kookaburra (1), Little Raven (3), Little Wattlebird (1), Peaceful Dove (4), Rufous Whistler (3), Silvereye (2) Striated Pardalote (8), Tree Martin (20), White-browed Babbler (6), White-throated Treecreeper (1). Introduced species observed were European Goldfinch (8) and House Sparrow (2).

We finished our walk just before noon. The group ate lunch under the shade of trees in front of the information sign, followed by the bird call. The bird of the day was the Rainbow Bee-eater, with five seen either soaring through the sky or perched on branches high up in the trees.

Tina A Woods

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Sunday 14 January 2024

Baroota Reservoir

It was a warm, muggy and overcast morning when eight birders met in the Mambray Creek parking bay: three from Port Pirie, two from Whyalla and one each from Port Augusta, Baroota and Mambray Creek.

We headed to Baroota Reservoir via the Cattle Track back road, birding along the way. The road is in crop paddock country with remnant grass, bluebush and scrub along the roadside. Singing Honeyeaters, Crested Pigeons, Sparrows, Starlings, Cockatiels, Black-faced Woodswallows

and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes were found in the scrub and isolated trees. Brown Songlarks, White-winged Fairywrens, Magpies, Pipits, Horsfield's Bushlarks, Zebra Finches, Little Ravens and Stubble Quails with young were found in the grassland and bluebush areas. Flying above were a Wedge-tailed Eagle, Welcome Swallows, Tree Martins, Kestrels, Brown Falcons and two Spotted Harriers that glided low over the plains.



Diamond Dove (Photographed by Richard Croll at Baroota Reservoir, 14 January 2024)



Rufous Whistler (Photographed by Raye-lene Yates at Baroota Reservoir, 14 January 2024)

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Stubble Quail (Photographed by *Raye-lene Yates* at Baroota Reservoir, 14 January 2024)

We arrived at the reservoir gates and thanks to SA Water we were able to enter the area with the key supplied. We stopped at the entrance and searched for birds in the red gum-lined creek that flows from the reservoir wall. There were lots of White-plumed Honeyeaters, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, a Rock Dove, Kookaburras, Peaceful Doves, New Holland Honeyeaters, Spotted Doves and Sparrows in the trees. In the shrubs and reeds were Grey Shrike-thrush, Silvereyes and Reed Warblers.

We stopped for smoko at the base of the reservoir wall under the red gums and found Purple-backed Fairywrens, Yellow-throated Miners, Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Australian Ravens and a Wedge-tailed Eagle. In the pools of water in the creek were Spotted Crake, White-faced Heron, Wood Duck and Dusky Moorhen, which is a new bird for the Baroota Reservoir list.

We drove on across the spillway and to the edge of the reservoir water which was only about half full. The wind had picked up and was blowing towards us. Most of the water birds had moved to the other side, but there were Eurasian Coots, Hoary-headed Grebes, Great Cormorants, Grey Teal, Wood Ducks and Musk Ducks to be seen.

We moved on over the wall and stopped on a hilltop with a steep drop that overlooked the southern narrow inlet arm to the main water body. Here there were more of the birds seen before plus Pink-eared, Pacific Black and Blue-billed Ducks, Australasian Grebes, Black-fronted Dotterels and Magpie Larks.

After driving around the southern end of the reservoir we stopped for lunch under the red gums. We added

White-browed Babblers, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Willie Wagtails, Rufous Whistler and Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo to the bird list. A short way on from the lunch stop we came across some Diamond Firetails with young fledglings, Diamond Doves with fledgling, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, Common Bronzings and a Grey Butcherbird. Further along the track, which closely follows the water banks, we stopped at several places where we found lots of Grey Teal and Wood Duck, some Hardheads, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, Black-tailed Native Hens, Darters, Masked Lapwings and a Great Egret in breeding flush.

At the end of the track and northern end of the water body we found Red-rumped Parrots, Galahs, Rainbow Lorikeets, Sacred Kingfishers, Dusky Woodswallows, Budgerigars, Striated Pardalotes, Flinders Adelaide Rosellas, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Tree Martins. On our return trip to the entrance it was threatening to rain and a cool change dropped the temperature.

A total of 62 bird species were found at the Baroota Reservoir and 21 along the Cattle Track. A grand total of 75 different bird species for the day - a pretty good day's birding! The birds of the day were the Dusky Moorhen, being a new bird for the reservoir, and the Diamond Firetails and Diamond Doves with fledglings. The Stubble Quail with young and Horsfield's Bushlarks from the Cattle Track are also worth a mention.

Bernie Haase

Birds SA

Thursday 18 January 2024

Tolderol Game Reserve, Lake Alexandrina

It was pleasing to have twenty members attend this excursion, and even better was the fact that there were some experts there to guide us. Colin Rogers gave a much-appreciated briefing on the track conditions and on the work planned for the Reserve, before we split into three groups for our survey. Colin identified two basins that were most likely sites for us to see and count waders so those were our main focus - and he was spot on.

During lunch, the bird call revealed that we had seen a total of forty-nine species, including Australian Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler, Australian Crake, Baillon's Crake, Red-capped Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Red-kneed Dotterel, Black-fronted Dotterel, Masked Lapwing and the most prolific species were 100 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Some other interesting sightings included Swamp Harrier, Black Shouldered kite Nankeen Kestrel, Elegant Parrot, Australian Ringneck, Superb Fairywren, Golden-headed Cisticola and White-fronted Chat.

Lynton Huxley

Past Excursions *(continued)*

Birds SA

Sunday 28 January 2024

Apex Park Wetland Reserve and River Walk, West Beach

Sixteen keen birders - some young and others more than young - gathered on a perfect mild summer's morning at Apex Park to begin the walk around the reconstructed Wetland Reserve pools and along Breakout Creek to the Torrens Outlet at West Beach.

Before we set off, a brief overview of the birding history of this area was given. These wetlands were part of the wide-ranging 'Greater Reedbeds', prior to the diversion of the Torrens River in 1935. Three generations of the White family lived in the area during the later 19th and first half of the 20th Centuries, with Samuel White and son Captain Samuel White becoming renowned ornithologists through their detailed surveys of local birds. 230 species of birds were documented before much of the wetlands habitat was drained, and they disappeared with the landscape reconfigured for the airport and real estate developments. Today, 70 of the species the Whites recorded are no longer seen in the area, and another 20 have been in decline over the past 30 years. The White collections are now housed in the South Australian Museum.

The contemporary assortment of birds has also been disturbed over the past two years by further significant landscaping projects. Major earthworks and vegetation removal, then planting in both Apex Park and along the river, have triggered a 'new' environment which will be interesting to monitor as various birds return and hopefully thrive into the future.

Our group set off optimistically, looking for those species that have survived these changes. Fifty species were identified during our walk around the lakes, pools and river, to the tune of much chatter from Lorikeets,



Visiting ducklings along Breakout Creek

(Photographed by Anna Woods)

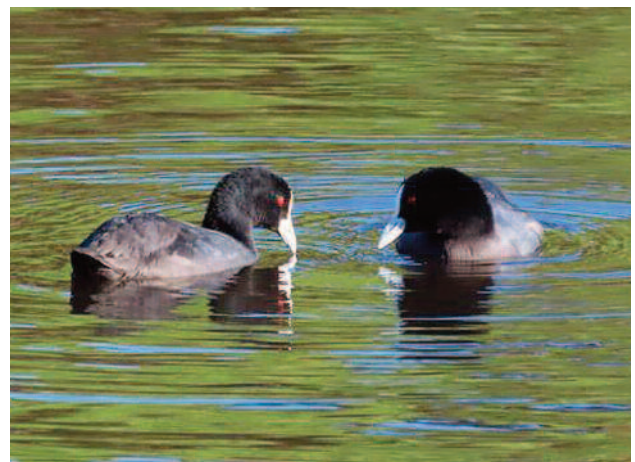
Rosellas and Corellas. Ducks and Grebes challenged ID skills, while hearts fluttered when young families of Australasian Swamphens, Australasian Grebes, Pacific Black Ducks, Dusky Moorhens and Black Swans appeared. Then 'he with the young ears and eyes' excited observers when he both heard and saw a lone Sacred Kingfisher, rarely found in these parts these days. Also of particular interest were a Black-shouldered Kite, Striated Pardalotes, and a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike.

All in all, a satisfying morning in glorious weather revealed the following bird count: Maned Duck (50), Pacific Black Duck (65), Hardhead (2), Mallard (2), Black Swan (8), Chestnut Teal (2), Grey Teal (18), Spotted Dove (10), Crested Pigeon (10), Feral Pigeon (50), Eurasian Coot (60), Dusky Moorhen (20), Australasian Swamphen (11),



Reconstructed Breakout Creek, looking west

(Photographed by Betty Brezovskis)

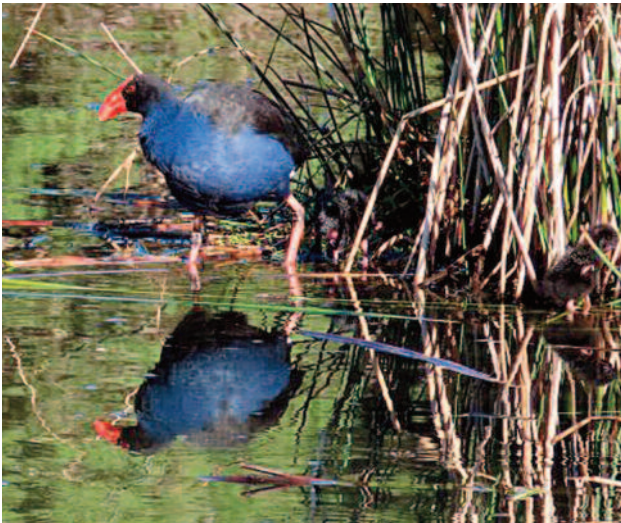


Eurasian Coots *(Photographed by Anna Woods)*

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
(Photographed by Betty Brezovskis)



Australasian Swamphen and chicks
(Photographed by Anna Woods)

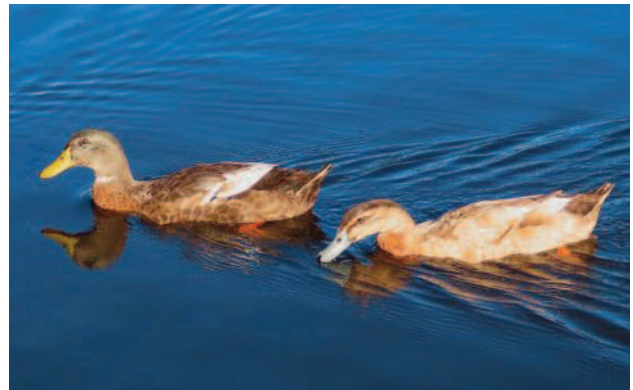
Australasian Grebe (7), Hoary-headed Grebe (4), Masked Lapwing (2), Pacific Gull (2), Silver Gull (110), Greater Crested Tern (11), Little Black Cormorant (8), Little Pied Cormorant (6), Australian White Ibis (20), Great Egret (1), White-faced Heron (1), Black-shouldered Kite (1), Sacred Kingfisher (1), Little Corella (40), Galah (9), Musk Lorikeet (55), Purple-crowned Lorikeet (10), Rainbow Lorikeet (50), Adelaide Rosella (4), Eastern Rosella (4), New Holland Honeyeater (30), Singing Honeyeater (2), White-plumed Honeyeater (10), Noisy Miner (20), Little Wattlebird (20), Red Wattlebird (5), Striated Pardalote (5), Australian Magpie (10), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (1), Willie Wagtail (4), Magpie Lark (10), Little Raven (3), Welcome Swallow (3), Little Grassbird (2), Australian Reed-warbler (2), Common Starling (3), House Sparrow (1).

We look forward to bird ID and educational signage being added to this area.

Anna Woods



Black Swan family on Breakout Creek
(Photographed by Betty Brezovskis)



Mallard hybrids *(Photographed by Anna Woods)*



Members at the Torrens outlet
(Photographed by Anna Woods)

Past Excursions *(continued)*

Birds SA

Saturday 10 February 2024

Riverglades Wetlands and Casuarina Reserve Murray Bridge

Unfortunately, despite verbal confirmation from the Council earlier in the week that the riverbank walk at Riverglades Wetlands was open, the locked gate was still there! While Rose Slade sought some local knowledge, we undertook a short 20-minute walk and were quite pleased to record 27 of the usual species around this location.

It was a warm bright day for our 10 members and with some perseverance Rose was able to lead us to The Casuarina Reserve, a short drive on the town side of the river. This beautiful wetland has walking trails with viewing platforms on the boardwalk and is a definite recommendation if you are in the area. We stayed there for about one and a half hours and recorded 39 species before heading back to the Bunyip and some shade for lunch. Our combined bird record for both sites was 51 species.

Lynton Huxley

Port Augusta Bird Group (The Babblers)

Sunday 11 February 2024

Mount Gullet Beach

On a clear, calm and sunny morning eight birders met in the Mambray Creek parking bay. Three from Mambray Creek and one each from Baroota, Pt. Augusta, Wilmington, Whyalla and Adelaide. We drove to Leue road, which leads down to Spencer Gulf, past Mt. Gullet and onto the beach area inside Winninowie Conservation Park. Along the road we found small flocks of White-fronted Chats, Little Ravens and Magpies in the paddocks, lots of White-winged Fairywrens in the blue bush, Pipits, Kestrels, a Black Falcon, a Brown Falcon, Wedge-tailed Eagles being harassed by Black-faced Woodswallows, and Sparrows.

Stopping at a dam next to the road we found lots of Galahs, Crested Pigeons, Tree Martins and Grey Teal. A Black-shouldered Kite watched us from a dead tree whilst Welcome and White-backed Swallows darted about. A couple of Australian Grebes were on the water, with Cockatiels, Willie Wagtails, White-fronted Chats and a Magpie-lark on the banks. In the scrub around the dam were Singing Honeyeaters, Starlings, Yellow-throated Miners, Elegant Parrots and a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike. We continued on to Winninowie Conservation Park and along a dry-weather-only track that follows the beach. In the sparse scrub was a Grey Butcherbird, Brown Songlarks, White-browed Babblers, Spiny-cheeked and



Australasian Grebe (Photographed by Richard Croll at Mount Gullet Beach, 11 February 2024)

Singing Honeyeaters, Crested Pigeons, Silvereyes, Elegant Parrots and Black-faced Woodswallows. We saw the heads of Pelicans above the bush near the waters edge, so stopped and walked to the beach. On small islands above the receding water, were Pacific and Silver Gulls, Caspian Terns, Red-capped Plovers, Red-necked Stints, Pied Oystercatchers, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Great and Little Egrets and a small flock of Eastern Curlews. At the end of the track where a tidal creek drains out from the samphire mud flats, we had smoko. The tide was rapidly falling, exposing a vast mud flat where many Red-necked Stints and Red-capped Plovers roamed around searching for food. On some small mounds in the receding water were more of the birds seen earlier, and also Crested Terns and an Asian Gull-billed Tern, White-faced Herons and a couple of Black Swans. Amongst the birds on the mud flats were Curlew Sandpipers, Greater Sand Plovers and a flock of about 45 Eastern Curlews.

We walked about on the slippery mud flats as Welcome Swallows darted about and Australian Ravens flew past, while a flock of 28 Pelicans lifted off from the nearby mangroves and slowly glided over us. Pied Cormorants sat in the mangroves and a Grey Shrike-thrush flew to the nearest tree to see what we were doing.



Cockatiels (Photographed by Richard Croll at Mount Gullet Beach, 11 February 2024)

Past Excursions *(continued)*



Eastern Curlews (Photographed by Larry Gruit at Mount Gullet Beach, 11 February 2024)

A Hobby panicked the small waders as it shot across from the trees looking for a meal. The day was warming up, so we headed back to our vehicles and had lunch. The tide was way out and it was time to leave. As we left, a flock of inquisitive Purple-backed Fairywrens said goodbye.

A total of 54 bird species were found, with the birds of the day being the Black Falcon, Eastern Curlews, Curlew Sandpipers, Asian Gull-billed Tern and Greater Sand Plovers. It was also nice to see the Cockatiels.

Bernie Haase

Fleurieu Birders

Tuesday 13 February 2024

Coorong Boat Trip from Goolwa Wharf to Tauwitschere Barrage, a 5-hour journey

By 2nd January, 40 people were booked (full capacity) for this popular event, with 10 plus people left on a wait list.

We boarded the Spirit of the Murray boat at 9.45am, skippered by Rupert, with Allesha his assistant. There was lots of space inside the boat, out the front, or upstairs on the top deck for people to get their preferred views with cameras, binoculars, and scopes on hand.

Fur seals were fun to see lulling about while the boat passed through the barrage lock. A couple of Great Crested Grebes were close by, delighting those who had not seen them before. These birds arrived in numbers of 100-200 and have now spread out around other wetlands in the Fleurieu. Pelicans and Cormorants were feasting on fish pushed through the open gates, mixed in the turbulent water draining from the fresh water side to the sea side of the Goolwa Channel.

Heading towards the Murray Mouth, Rupert slowed the boat as we looked along the shoreline for waders and water birds. There was just so much to see. The waders were mostly Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints, with one Common Sandpiper and a few Sanderlings seen amongst them. There were Little and Great Egrets, Royal Spoonbills, White-necked Herons, and White Ibis, either resting or busy feeding. As we came up towards the Coorong Café we could see Cape Barren Geese, on the island sand spits, and Pelicans, Grey Teal and Musk Ducks, Black Swans, Australian Swampheens, Coots, Red-necked Avocets and one lone Eastern Curlew. The terns were mainly Greater Crested and Caspian, with some Fairy Terns near the Mouth of the Murray River.



Sharpie with Sanderling (Photographed by Diana Georg on the Coorong, 13 February 2024)

Past Excursions *(continued)*

The Fairy Terns started breeding early in December and are nesting on the sand at the tip of the North Coorong. Birdlife Australia has erected warning signs requesting people to stay clear of their breeding site. They are being monitored weekly by Kerri Bartley (Birdlife Aus), with a few volunteers like myself on their roster.

Rupert explained how the “Mouth” has changed since the floods of 2023, and you can now see the cliff on the edge of Sir Richard Peninsular (Goolwa), collapsed due to the high water eroding the sand. The dredging to keep the “Mouth” open is a constant battle as the huge tides bring the sand straight back again. The Black-faced Cormorants gather in large numbers in this area and they use the dredge pipes to rest on while drying their wings before fishing again.

As we cruised down to the first stop at Barker’s Knoll, we saw Bar-tailed Godwits, Black-winged Stilts, Masked Lapwings, Silver Gulls, Pacific Gulls, Black Swans, Royal Spoonbills, Egrets and Herons. We walked through the sand hills to the beach and found two separate groups of Sooty Oystercatchers, approx. 30, mixed with two Pied Oystercatchers.

While enjoying lunch on board and heading further south, two large birds of prey came into view. We were hoping they were the Sea Eagles, but they were two Wedge-tailed Eagles. A Whistling Kite was the only other bird of prey seen.



Red-necked Avocets *(Photographed by Bob Daly on the Coorong, 13 February 2024)*



Spirit of the Murray charter boat *(Photographed by Wendy Phillips on the Coorong, 13 February 2024)*

The Emus were great to see. Five or six were strolling near the permanent freshwater soak.

The volume of birds that congregated opposite the Tauwitchere Barrage was so enormous we were spellbound. Rupert said it was the best number they had seen there this Summer, and was probably due to the floods and fresh water that came from last year’s River Murray floods. The Upper Coorong environment has responded and looks magnificent.

We had a wonderful, uplifting experience on this special tour and although we didn’t include everyone in the count, I tallied just over 50 species of birds.

The Spirit Cruises are to be congratulated for providing a bird charter to accommodate our Birds SA group, and our skipper Rupert, slowed the boat to give the photographers the time they needed to enjoy the bird life for much longer – as they will appreciate when they see their photos.

Wendy Phillips

Birds SA

Thursday 15 February 2024 Shepherds Hill Recreation Park

There was a very cool breeze when our group of 12 members gathered in the carpark, but conditions quickly warmed up and it was a perfect day for birding. I was fortunate to have Clive Paling and Robert Gulley lead the group along the River Red Gum Loop which passes through the archery field and onto the Viaduct Track to the rail line. Ben Saunders with his keen eye and new binoculars quickly spotted three Tawny Frogmouth perched motionless on a low branch. They provided a memory card or two of photos and were awarded the bird of the day! A Little Black Cormorant flew over at one point and was awarded our most unexpected bird sighting of the day.

This Park is a very peaceful place to walk, with large trees providing plenty of hollows both large and small to keep our feathered friends happy, or should I say relatively happy as there were quite a few squabbles between pairs claiming the same hollow.

The predominant species seen were Rainbow Lorikeet (60), New Holland Honeyeater (40), Australian Magpie (30), Superb Fairywren (20) and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (15). Other species sighted included Red-rumped Parrot, Musk Lorikeet, Crescent Honeyeater, Striated and Spotted Pardalote, Red-browed Finch, Grey Shrike-thrush, Weebill, Striated Thornbill and Laughing Kookaburra.

The total species seen was 31, but the constant chatter and flybys made for a most enjoyable day.

Lynton Huxley

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

Sunday 3 March

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

Meet at 8.30am at the end of Bridge Terrace.

EXCURSION LEADER: *To be confirmed*

Port Augusta Bird Group – The Babblers

Sunday 17 March

Bowman Park, Crystal Brook (EASY)

Meet at 8.30am at the Crystal Brook Information Centre 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*

Birds SA

Thursday 28 March to Tuesday 2 April EASTER CAMPOUT

The 2024 Easter Campout will be held at Mary Seymour Conservation Park in the southeast, about 360 km 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 through Naracoorte towards Coonawarra and Penola. About 17 km 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.

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. 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.

A camping fee of \$40 per person covering the duration of the campout will be collected during the weekend and a receipt issued.

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*

Future Excursions *(continued)*

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 6 April

Myponga Reservoir, Myponga (MODERATE) – 3km walk) 63 km.

Meet at the Hansen Street car park (main entrance) at 8:30am.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Edith St George*

Birds SA

Saturday 13 April

Hart Road Wetlands, Aldinga Beach (EASY) 46 km.

Meet at 8.30am in the carpark near the corner of Rowley Road and Hart Road, Aldinga Beach, adjacent to the north-east corner of the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Jim Spiker*

Port Augusta Bird Group – The Babblers

Saturday 13 April to Sunday 14 April

Munyaroo Conservation Park (MODERATE)

CAMPOUT

No facilities available. Meet at Whyalla Wetlands at 8:30am.

For further information contact:

Bernie Haase on 0419 863 834 *or at*

b.haase55@outlook.com.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Bernie Haase*

Birds SA

Thursday 18 April

Lobethal Bushland Park (MODERATE) 43 km.

Meet at 8:30am in the Lobethal Bushland Park car park about 2 km north of Lobethal on the Lobethal to Gumeracha Road. The entrance is on your left.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Rose Slade*

Birds SA

Sunday 28 April

Glenthorne National Park, O'Halloran Hill

(MODERATE) 17 km.

Meet at 8:30am at the Ranger Station on Major's Road, O'Halloran Hill, which is on the southern side of Major's Road between Main South Road and the Southern Expressway. The property is 3 km from north to south and up to 2.5 km wide, so it will be a long walk if we explore the whole area.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Alan Burns*

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 4 May

Scott Conservation Park, Currency Creek (MODERATE) 74 km.

Meet at the first car park on Gould Road, turning off Deep Creek Road, at 8:30am.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Richard Smyth*

Birds SA

Saturday 11 May

Whites Road Wetlands, Salisbury (EASY) 16 km.

Meet at 8:30am. Head north on the Port Wakefield Road. At 1.5 km after passing the Salisbury Highway Bridge, turn left onto Globe Derby Drive and continue on this road until it meets Whites Road. Turn right and continue to the end. The park entrance is on the left.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Clive Paling*

Birds SA

Thursday 16 May

Brookfield Conservation Park, Blanchetown (EASY) 123 km.

Meet at 8:30am just inside the gate, approximately 35 km east of Truro. The entrance is 2 km past '8 mile corner' at a gentle left bend on an otherwise straight road.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Ali Ben Kahn*

Port Augusta Bird Group – The Babblers

Sunday 19 May

Quorn local area (MODERATE)

Meet at Quorn Swimming Pool, Silo Road, Quorn, at 8.00am.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Bernie Haase*

Birds SA

Sunday 26 May

Magazine Road Wetlands, Dry Creek (EASY) 10 km.

Meet in the car park area at 8:30am. If you are travelling northwards on South Road, continue onto Salisbury Highway heading east. The road bends to the north and there is one road off to the left - this is Magazine Road. From the city, take Port Wakefield Road north, turning left up onto the Salisbury Highway heading to Port Adelaide. Once you are on the Salisbury Highway, move to the right hand lane so you are ready to turn right into Magazine Road Wetlands.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Clive Paling*

Future Excursions *(continued)*

Fleurieu Birders

Saturday 1 June

Stan Farquhar Reserve and Nangawooka Flora Reserve, Victor Harbor (EASY) **81 km.**

Turn left off the Victor Harbor Road into Angus Gillespie Drive and then left into Kleinig Drive. Meet at the western end of Kleinig Drive at 8:30am.

EXCURSION LEADER: *To be confirmed*

Birds SA

Saturday 8 June

Browns Road, Monarto (EASY) **60 km.**

Meet at 8:30am at Browns Road, Monarto, just off the old Murray Bridge Road. Leave the South Eastern Freeway at the Callington exit. Drive through Callington and turn right onto the old Murray Bridge Road. The junction is on the left at the top of the hill.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Harry Beauchamp*

Hooded Plover

(Photographed by Bernie Haase at Port Neill, 13 November 2023)

Port Augusta Bird Group – The Babblers

Sunday 16 June

Depot Creek Road to Hawker (MODERATE)

Meet at Port Augusta Cemetery, Carlton Parade at 8.00am.

EXCURSION LEADER: *Bernie Haase*



Bellbird

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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

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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).

King Penguin

1 immature, 25/1/2023. Coorong Beach, SE.
Christie, M. et al., Friends of Shorebirds SE (FoSSE)
Previous reports in SA are from the SE: Lake Bonney outlet in March 1987 and Cape Northumberland in Feb 2004.

Northern Giant Petrel

3, 12/11/2023. Shelf off Port MacDonnell, MO.
Also seen were 3 White-headed Petrels. Harper, D. et al.

White-faced Storm-petrel

1, 2/2/2024. Vivonne Bay, KI. Redman, N.
This species breeds nearby on Nobby Islet off Seal Bay.

Great Crested Grebe

Widespread reports following River Murray flood.
100, 3/11/2023. Goolwa Barrage, MM. Blacker, R.
1, 4/11/2023. Inman River, near mouth, MLR. Brittain, R.
1, 8/11/2023. River Murray, Berri, MM. Ling, A.
2, 23/11/2023. Myponga Reservoir, MLR. Howes, M.
1, 3/1/2024. Valley Lake, SE. Huon, C.
1, 4/1/2024. Hope Valley Reservoir, MLR. Harper, D.
Also 2 on 21/1/2024. Copland, B.
2, 11/1/2024. Mawson Lakes, AP.
1, 13/1/2024. Glenelg River, Donovans Landing, SE. Hopton, D. & Harper, S.
4, 20/1/2024. Granite Island, north side, MLR. Cellier, G.
Interesting report from ocean waters.

Cattle Egret

3, 7/1/2024. Onkaparinga RP, Perry's Bend, MLR.
Also 2 on 24/1 with one in breeding plumage. Thompson, J.

Intermediate (Plumed) Egret

1, 18/12/2023. Globe Derby Park, White Rd Wetland, AP. Ferguson, L.
Also seen on 2/1/2024 by M. Kaashoek and 14/1/2024 by K.&J. Donkin.
1, 21/1/2024. Port Adelaide, Vincent St stormwater pond, AP. Ed Smith

White-necked Heron

1 immature, 6/11/2023. Adelaide Botanic Gardens, AP. Knight, P.

Australasian Bittern

Heard in reedbeds, 16/10/2023. Glenelg Golf Course, AP. Pearce, A.

Australasian Darter

More reports from southern areas, including:
2, 10/11/2023. Coobowie, Salt Creek, YP. Jack, T.
1, 20/11/2023. Port Clinton, YP. Letheby, R.
4, 19/11/2023. Goolwa Sewage Works, MM. Malacari, D.
1, 20/11/2023. Duck Lagoon, KI. Mirth, K.
Also one seen on 11/12/2023 by B. Dunlop.
1, 21/11/2023. Bay of Shoals, KI. Buick, I.
1, 18/1/2024. Western River, KI. Chester, Q.
2, 1/1/2024. Bay of Shoals boat ramp, KI. Grinter, K.
1, 6/1/2024. Middle River, KI. Wickham, C.
1, 14/1/2024. South West River, KI. Patterson, C.
1, 17/12/2023. Globe Derby Park, White Rd Wetland, AP. Ferguson, L.
4, 14/1/2024. Hope Valley Reservoir, MLR. Harper, D.
Also 9 seen on 20/1/2024.

White-bellied Sea-eagle

1 immature, 13/1/2024. Little Para Reservoir, MLR. Harper, D.

Square-tailed Kite

1, 15/11/2023. Telford Scrub CP, SE. Hopton, D. & Richardson, M.
2, 14/11/2023. Forreston, MLR. Also 1 on 11/1/2024. Slade, R.
2, 4/1/2024. Hope Valley Reservoir, MLR.
Also 1 on 14/1 and 20/1/2024 Harper, D. & S.
1, 7/1/2024. Blakeview, AP. Krieg, J.
1, 7/1/2024. Happy Valley Reservoir, MLR. Crouch, A.
1 over, 17/1/2024. Flinders University, MLR. Pfeiffer, P.
1, 18/1/2024. Salisbury, AP. Dedes, J.

Black Falcon

1, 15/12/2023. Tunkalilla, First Creek, MLR. Brinsley, R.
1, 21/1/2024. Mount Barker, Laratinga Wetlands, MLR. Rich, G. & Fowler, A.

Buff-banded Rail

2, 6/11/2023. Bordertown wetlands, SE. Rich, G.
1, 13/11/2023. Marion, Oaklands Wetlands, MLR. Jonsson, S.
2, 14/11/2023. Hayborough Wetlands, MLR. Harvie, G. & Heness, R.
1, 19/11/2023. River Torrens, Fulham, AP. Allen, D.
1, 7/1/2024. Hart Lagoon, MM. Ed Smith

Australian Spotted Crane

More reports from southern areas:
10, 1/11/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.
Also 4 seen there on 15/11 by D. & P. Carter
1, 13/11/2023. Marion, Oaklands Wetlands, MLR. Jonsson, S.
Also 2 seen there on 22/11 by P. Coddington.
1, 23/11/2023. Myponga Reservoir, MLR. Howes, M.
1, 27/12/2023. River Torrens, Adelaide Zoo, AP. Green, P.
1, 13/1/2024. Clare, Gleeson's Wetland, MN. Wilson, S.

Bird Records *(continued)*

Baillon's Crake

More reports from southern regions:

Several, 3/11/2023. Reynella East, Byards Rd wetland, MLR. Challis, R.
1, 4/11/2023. Lobethal, Bushland Park, MLR. Reni, N.
3, 9/11/2023. Salisbury, Unity Park wetlands, AP. Gordon, S.
2, 9/11/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.
1, 19/11/2023. Gillman, Whicker Rd wetlands, AP. Belder, D.
5, 19/11/2023. Goolwa Sewage Works, MM. Malacari, D.
1, 22/11/2023. Marion, Oaklands Wetlands, AP. Coddington, P.
2, 22/11/2023. Koppio, Letton Farm, EP. Wallace, S.
4, 13/1/2024. Millicent, Lake McIntyre, SE. Boyle, S.

Spotless Crake

1, 3/1/2024. Valley Lake, SE. Huon, C.
1, 16/1/2024. Victoria Park, Pakapakanthi wetlands, AP. Whatmough, R.
1, 21/1/2024. Onkaparinga RP, Perry's Bend, MLR. Thompson, J.

Australian Painted Snipe

2, Nov 2023. Lake Hawdon North, SE.
Haywood, B. *et al.* Friends of Shorebirds SE
Also 3 photographed on 27/12/2023 by A. Zevenboom, Nature Glenelg Trust.
Few reports in recent years.

Common Sandpiper

1, 14/11/2023. Salisbury, Dry Creek, AP. White, S.
1, 18/12/2023. Glenelg North, Sturt Creek drain, AP. Ladd, A.
1, 4/1/2024. Hope Valley Reservoir, MLR. Harper, D.

Long-toed Stint

1, 31/12/2023. Whyalla sewage works, EP. Croll, R.

Little Curlew

1, 6/12/2023. Bald Hill Beach, AP. Taylor, P.W.
Reported from the same location in March 2017 and March 2023.

Wood Sandpiper

1, 6/11/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Edey, D.
1, 9/1/2024. Aldinga Washpool, MLR. Thompson, J.
Also 2 seen there on 21/1/2024 by P. Coddington
1, 2/2/2024. Aldinga, Hart Rd wetlands, MLR. Cook, S.

Arctic Jaeger

1, 15/11/2023. Bald Hill Beach, AP. Taylor, P.W.

Rainbow Lorikeet

1, 8/11/2023. Ceduna, EP. Akers, D.
Slowly spreading westwards on EP with previous reports from Streaky Bay.

Eastern Koel

1, 8/11/2023. Aldinga Beach, MLR. per Turner, J.
1, 13/11/2023. Moana, MLR. Smith, S.
1, 17/11/2023. Maslin Beach, Oleander Rd, MLR. Thomas, G.

Tawny Frogmouth

Found dead, 21/12/2023. Cumberland Park, Cross Rd, AP. Iwanicki, I.

Dollarbird

1, 18/12/2023. Narrung, MM. Photographed perching on TV antennas. Krijt, J.

Sacred Kingfisher

1, 28/1/2024. River Torrens, West Beach, AP.
Reported separately by Ferguson, L. and Bansemer, B.

Black Honeyeater

4, 6/1/2024. Lowan CP, MM. Mulconray, N.
1, 27/1/2024. Mount Mary, MM. Milde, S.

White-throated Gerygone

1, 12/12/2023. Padthaway CP, SE. Possingham, H.
A regular summer visitor to woodlands in the SE, but few breeding records.

Dusky Woodswallow

3, 15/10/2023. West Beach stormwater pond, AP. Carter, D. & P.

Ground Cuckoo-shrike

7, 9/11/2023. Quorn, Kelly Rd, FR. Osborn, C.
4, 15/1/2024. Witchelina HS, NW. Hiscock, J. & Cole, P.

Olive-backed Oriole

1, 11/12/2023. Duck Lagoon, KI. Wickham, C.
Regular spring-summer reports from this area and elsewhere on KI since 2020.

Satin Flycatcher

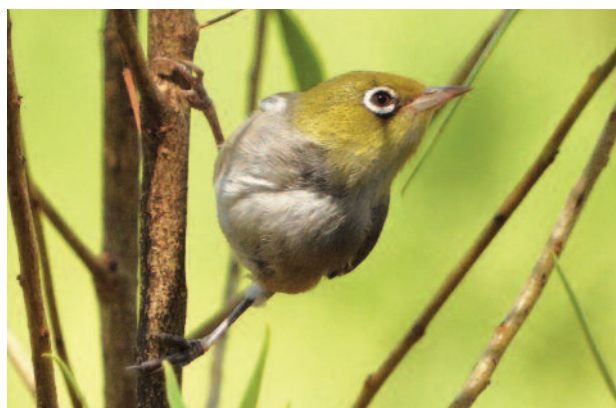
Pair + juvenile, 12/1/2024. Mount Burr swamp, SE. Haywood, B.

Restless Flycatcher

1, 18/12/2023. Light Beach, AP. Hatch, J.

Barn Swallow

1, 2/1/2024. Port Augusta botanic garden, Flinders lookout, NW. Stracey, K. & Dodd, L.
1, 6/1/2024. Port Augusta golf course, NW.
Perched on powerlines with Welcome Swallows.
Report submitted to SA Rarities Committee. Rogers, C. *et al.*
Previous reports from Koolunga (Mar 1977), Dullingari near Moomba (Jan 1990), Nantawarra (Feb 1995) and Roxby Downs (Mar 1996).



Silvereye (*Photographed by Raye-lene Yates at Baroota Reservoir, 14 January, 2024*)



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magazineeditor@birdssa.asn.au

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