

# Birds SA



South Australian Ornithological Association Inc.

# Newsletter

No 212

November 2009



c/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide, SA 5000

Birds SA is the operating name of the South Australian Ornithological Association Inc.

The Aims of the Association are:

To promote the conservation of Australian birds and their habitats.

To encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of, the birds of South Australia.

To record the results of research in regard to all aspects of bird life.

To maintain a public fund called the "Birds SA Conservation Fund" for the specific purpose of supporting the Association's environmental objects.

PRINT POST APPROVED PP532699/00009

# Members' Photographs

*I'm sorry there's not room for more*



**Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos**

Photographed by Greg Dare on 2/10/09  
at Americal River, Kangaroo Island



**Little Wattlebird**

Photographed by Barbara Bansaemer  
in Melbourne Botanic Garden on 19/8/09



**Juvenile Powerful Owl**

Photographed by John Fennel  
at Wombat Flat NFR SE on 16/9/09

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<b>CENTRE INSERT</b>	
SAOA HISTORICAL SERIES NUMBER 31, ERHARD FRANZ BOEHM PART 4.	

## DIARY

Following is a list of Birds SA activities for the next few months. Further details of all these activities are given later in the newsletter.

Nov 29	Sunday	Excursion to Noora *****
Dec 12	Saturday	Excursion to Browns Rd. Monarto
Dec 17	Thursday	Excursion to Onkaparinga Wetlands *****
Jan 9	Saturday	Excursion to Goolwa Barrage
Jan 21	Thursday	Excursion to Dry Creek Salt Fields
Jan 29	Friday	General Meeting
Jan 31	Sunday	Excursion to Paiwalla Wetlands *****
Feb 13	Saturday	Excursion to Dry Creek Salt Fields
Feb 18	Thursday	Excursion to Goolwa Barrage
Feb 26	Friday	General Meeting
Feb 28	Sunday	Excursion to Browns Rd. Monarto *****
Mar 13	Sunday	Excursion to Laratinga Wetlands

**Cover Photo: Crimson Chat photographed by Chris James on 2/10/09, near Carrieton in the Flinders Ranges.**

*General meetings are held in the Hawker Centre at the Waite Institute, Waite Road, Urrbrae at 7.45pm. Doors open at 7.00pm.*

*Committee meetings are held at the above venue on the second Monday of each month, starting at 7.30pm.*

***Donations to the Birds SA Conservation Fund are tax-deductible***

### New Members

We welcome 16 new members who have recently joined the Association. Their names are listed on p11.

## SAOA COMMITTEE 2009 – 2010

President	Jeremy Robertson	8278 1217
Vice President	Stuart Hull	8391 0007
Vice President	Rodney Attwood	8264 1527
Secretary	Brian Blaylock	8370 3349
Treasurer	Brian Walker	8263 3433
Assistant Secretary	Helen Monterola	8339 1311
Journal Editor	John Hatch	8362 2820
Newsletter Editor	Cynthia Pyle	8264 5778
Field Program Coordinator	Trevor Cowie	8263 2531
Bird Record Secretary	Colin Rogers	8336 3325
Member	Robert Rowland	83881790
Member	David Robertson	8278 7866

## OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Librarian	Karen McDowall	0402123960
Image Librarian	John Spiers	8333 0272
	email john_b_spiers@hotmail.com	
Ongoing Atlas	Pat Bowie	8278 6048

## RELATED ASSOCIATIONS

### Birds South-east

Chair	Bryan Haywood	8726 8112
Publicity Officer	Bob Green	8725 0549
Email	shriketit@bigpond.com	

### Fleurieu Birdwatchers

Contact Person	Judith Dyer	8555 2736
Email	dyer.jm@gmail.com	

**WEBSITE** [www.birdssa.asn.au](http://www.birdssa.asn.au)

## 2010 SAOA SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single membership	\$45
Family/household membership	\$55
Single concession*	\$40
Family/household concession*	\$50

Student members (full-time students under 25 years) \$10

\*Pensioners and people experiencing financial hardship can obtain concessions. Apply in writing to the Secretary, Birds SA.

**ABN** 76 339 976 789

## ADVERTISING IN THE Birds SA NEWSLETTER

SAOA relies on the integrity of advertisers for the quality and nature of their products and services. We cannot guarantee them. Advertising is charged as follows: \$1.00 per line, up to \$20.00 per quarter page and 10c per inserted leaflet (single sheet). The committee reserves the right to lower or waive these fees.

## COPY DEADLINE

Copy for the February Newsletter is due by the January General Meeting (January 29). Contributions ('Word' format preferred) can be made on CD, or emailed to one of my email addresses:

- [cynthia\\_p@iprimus.com.au](mailto:cynthia_p@iprimus.com.au)
- [cpy62284@bigpond.net.au](mailto:cpy62284@bigpond.net.au)

or typed/handwritten neatly.

Printed by Abbott Printers and Stationer

# President's Letter

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I am writing this letter in the heat wave and wondering what the effects are going to be on nesting birds. Our research on Superb Fairy-wrens suggests it will be devastating. It is of course one of the features of our southern hemisphere birds that they are very long lived relative to their northern hemisphere counterparts. In the north, seasons are by and large reliable and in most years parents can successfully raise a large brood. Thus they tend to be short-lived — about 3-10 years. In the southern hemisphere, and especially in Australia, the seasons are much more erratic so that broods are small and regularly fail. Many songbirds are remarkably long-lived (about 6-30 years). The current changeable weather shows why our birds are adapted to such unpredictable and harsh conditions.

I have now been president of the Association for two years, during which time there have been some significant changes. We polled the membership on their thoughts on the Association, canvassed changing the meeting night, implemented an active and effective Conservation Sub-committee, reduced the formal parts at the start of our general meetings, implemented research grants and gained trust status. Our publications have also been radically changed.

The *Newsletter* is better produced and now has colour photographs. Similarly, the *South Australian Ornithologist* has been redesigned, is printed on better paper and also publishes colour photographs. By and large these changes have gained popular support, but some members would like to see more change and the Association becoming more involved in conservation and lobbying on issues that threaten the well being of local birds.

To this end, I would like to encourage all members to consider running for election to the SAOA Committee early next year. This is the committee that makes most of the decisions that affect the running of the Association and influences its future direction. The committee meets on the second Monday of January to November at 19:30 in the Hawker Centre at the Waite Institute. Most of the meetings last for 2-3 hours. It is an ideal opportunity to contribute to the progress of your Association and ensure that a diversity of views is represented. The current committee largely consists of members who have served for many years and some will be retiring next year. We need at least two new members so please consider joining the lively committee and making a difference. Other ways in which members can contribute to the running of the

Association are by volunteering for our other vacant positions. We need a new Camp Organiser for 2010 to replace the sterling efforts of Brian Furby, who stepped in after Burt May. He cannot continue as he is leaving Adelaide. This is an important social function in the Association that gives many members an opportunity to visit good birding areas in excellent and expert company.

As I mentioned earlier the Association has become much more actively involved in conservation issues and is supporting research on South Australian birds. I am delighted to report that there is considerable interest in funding relevant research, which means we would like to raise more funds. Given the Association now has Trust status any contributions to the Association of more than two dollars are tax deductible, so could I ask you to consider a donation when renewing your subscription. It would also be an enormous benefit if members would consider contributing a bequest to the Association in their wills. All donations and bequests will make a significant difference to supporting the aims of the Association in furthering the welfare of birds in South Australia.

**Jeremy Robertson**



Mulga Parrots  
photographed by Kay Parkin

# *Birds SA Notes & News*

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## **CONSERVATION SUB COMMITTEE**

Rodney Attwood is the convener of this committee. Other members are Nigel Gammon, Krystyna Rowland and William Brooker

The Committee met four times during the past six months and a number of matters were reviewed. Actions taken or in hand are shown in the following report

The issues addressed have been:

### **Greenfields Wetlands**

William Brooker and John Cox have raised concerns relating to the Greenfields Wetlands and the Salisbury Council's document showing its vision for development up to 2020. Copies of the Sustainability 2020 documents that show a vision for the development of the Salisbury Council area were obtained from the Salisbury Council. Housing and other urban developments are planned right up to the coastal region (particularly at St Kilda), and including the area presently occupied by the Bolivar Sewage Treatment facility. The plans show the major transportation routes of the Northeastern Expressway (under construction) plus the proposed Northern Connector, currently in a design phase. State Government documentation in the public arena indicates that, by the year 2030, significant urban development covering not only land in the Salisbury Council area but also in other council areas up to the Gawler River could be approved. There are no immediate plans by the State Government to move the Bolivar Sewage Plant although the sludge drying lagoons may be relocated northwards to be closer to the users of the product in the Virginia region. The Salisbury Council's Sustainability Plan shows no increase in the wetlands in the Council area and in fact the drawing with the document shows part of the Greenfield's site impacted by housing. Subsequent information provided to John Cox would

suggest that this is not so and that the Greenfields Wetland area is not under threat. However, there may be a rail corridor passing through it as part of the Northern Connector project. **The Sub Committee is undertaking an ongoing action activity that involves making appropriate representations to maintain and extend the Greenfields Wetlands**

### **The Salt Fields**

The Sub Committee has been aware of plans by the Ridley Corporation to sell their freehold land in the Barker Inlet and in association with a Developer (Lend Lease?) and the Land Management Commission (LMC) create a massive housing development at least up to the St Kilda area. This would impact on the continued existence of the evaporation ponds used in the manufacture of salt. Birds SA has been able to maintain access to the Salt Fields as they presently exist. Much anxiety exists within Birds SA about the future of the Salt Fields evaporation ponds and this issue is foremost amongst the activities of the sub committee. **This matter is receiving close attention from the sub committee as are the route options for the Northern Connector corridor**

### **Ferries McDonald Conservation Park**

A matter relating to the upgrade of roads passing through or adjacent to the Ferries McDonald Conservation Park has been brought to the Sub Committee's attention and has been dealt with via correspondence to the Minister and the Murray Bridge Council. This matter is still under consideration

### **Bird Trail Document**

The Mt Barker Council through John Fennel has requested help from Birds SA in the preparation of a 'Bird Trail' document similar to the one prepared with Bill Matheson for the Strathalbyn Council. John anticipates that Bob

Snell will be involved in this and has called for volunteers. Bill Matheson has offered to give advice on this matter. Awaiting advice from John Fennel

### **Brookfield Conservation Park**

Brookfield Conservation Park is now being managed by the "Conservation Volunteers". We have contacted the Conservation Volunteers group, which has responded with a protocol document to allow complete access to all of Brookfield by our members.

### **Laratinga Wetlands**

Birds SA is to fund the provision of three information displays at Laratinga Wetlands in association with the Mt Barker Council. **This matter is in hand and should be complete by the end of 2009**

### **Olympic Dam EIS**

The EIS for the Olympic Dam Mine extension was issued in May 2009 and a submission by Birds SA was prepared and submitted during August. The matters raised by Birds SA in the document are of serious concern for the birds attracted to the region of the proposed ore processing activities. **THIS MATTER WILL RECEIVE ONGOING ATTENTION BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE**

Other matters addressed by the subcommittee include a request for some assistance in a matter relating to a remnant area of scrub on Reeves Plains near Two Wells and for a bird list for an area within Greenfields Wetlands. **These matters will be dealt with appropriately.**

### **FLEURIEU'S WBSE UPDATE**

There is not a lot to report in regards to any breeding progress of our Fleurieu White-bellied Sea-Eagle (WBSE) pair at Waitpinga Cliffs this season.

We celebrated them fledging one young around Christmas Day last year and as reported in February's update, last year's season was their first successful breeding in 7 years.

# Birds SA Notes & News (cont)

However, it appears they have not bred this year although we can not be absolutely certain of this until a survey along the coast is carried out. This will be done from a boat along the Waitpinga cliff line to ensure minimal disturbance. Hopefully by the end of November we will know if there is any indication of another nest or possible young but when last checked, there was certainly no sign of incubation happening on the previously used nest.

Only eagle expert, Terry Dennis and the DEH Head Ranger have been authorized to monitor the nesting area at very carefully planned times and although there was evidence the pair had been decorating the nest as if in preparation to breed, this did not continue. Courtship behaviour between the pair was observed on a number of occasions in May, June and then again very late in the season at the end of August. I reported each event and noted that they were courting in some of the same locations as they had in past years. One interesting sighting was in late August when they were within one of the Heritage areas here at 'SeaWings', sitting together on the edge of a historical lagoon and being very vocal for some time. Terry Dennis checked the nest before leaving on his expedition to conduct WBSE and Osprey surveys over on the West Coast, but at that stage, there was no sign of any incubation happening there. The Head Ranger has since checked the nest and there was no sign of the pair at the time. On his return from the West Coast, Terry plans to check along the coast line from a chartered boat within the next couple of weeks.

For whatever reason, the birds have not continued with their nest preparations. We will probably never know why, but it is possible that they decided to skip a year or, as a worst case scenario, have been disturbed in some way. On a whole, aircraft have been complying with the authorized Fly Neighbourly

Agreement (FNA) Protection Area for the WBSE breeding season so it is encouraging that there have not been many low flying aircraft within the WBSE breeding territory this year. However, even just one plane or helicopter flying too low or one walker intruding into the area, has the potential to disturb the pair. More work needs to be done to get the word out to all pilots, both here and interstate, about the FNA. Unfortunately some of the 'low flyers' I have had to track down this year have been from interstate and were unaware of the WBSE protection area. Work will continue to ensure that the sanctuary set aside for the WBSE nesting territory is protected and kept from any interference and disturbance. I have been recording all sightings of the pair and will continue to report any observations of significance. We will also be distributing more printed information and posters before next years breeding season commences. Fingers crossed for 2010!

**Elizabeth Steele-Collins**

## **ERROR IN AUGUST NEWSLETTER**

p17 Past Excursions, Thursday May 21 to Manning Reserve

Manning Reserve belongs to The Field Naturalists Society of South Australia — not the Nature Foundation.

**Pat Church**

## **BREEDING OF ELEGANT PARROTS**

Thank you to those who have responded to my request for reliable breeding records of this species. Regrettably I did not realise at the time that I was about to change my email address, which is now:

abblack@bigpond.com

**Andrew Black, 8272 7271**

## **OBITUARY**

**DON MURRAY CORNISH (1922 -2009)**

I was a friend of Don but in that I was not unique. Don had many friends. In fact, it was one of Don's principle characteristics — people liked him.

Don was born in Berri and grew up on a fruit-growing block near Glossop. Don's mother died when he was 8 years old and he went to live with his Grandparents and relatives in Victor Harbor from 1930-36.

Don's introduction to birding began in his early years when his grandfather, also a keen bird watcher, gave him his first bird book, "An Australian Bird Book – A Pocket Book for Field Use" written in 1911 by J.A. Leach. This book remained in Don's possession throughout his life. As a boy he had a growing love and fascination with bird life and often went 'bird nesting' (a practice common among enthusiasts of the day).

Later a friend, Joe Mack, introduced Don to bird banding. He spent a lot of time with this, catching birds in mist nets, banding and recording all details for the CSIRO. He even caught and banded swans in the Moorook Lagoon. Many weekends were spent out in the bush, checking out birds, in particular finding Mallee Fowl nests. Don's friend, Dr Eric Sims, would often visit for these field trips.

Don had so many stories to tell and fondly remembered what he called 'birding safaris' with Joan Paton who taught him taxidermy. However, he was always quick to explain that he only used dead birds from the roadside and once even did a Wedge-tailed Eagle. David Paton also fondly remembers times when he was a child camping with his family in the Riverland and Don joining them to do some banding.

Don recorded a total of 208 bird species whilst in the Riverland and shared the tale that, around the 2<sup>nd</sup> October every year, the arrival of

# Birds SA Notes & News (cont)

several Rainbow Birds (the Rainbow Bee-eater) to nest near their home, would remind him that it was his wedding anniversary!

He gave quite a few talks on birds to adult and school groups in the Riverland and probably knew most parts of the river from the state Border to Morgan.

Don was thrilled to be asked to go as the birding guide on a trip in 1973 with Rex Ellis Tours to Lake Eyre when it was in flood, and became possibly one of the first Europeans to travel by boat down the Georgina River and across the SA/Qld border.

Many trips to Calperum and Chowilla Stations saw Don and his wife Jean setting up the mist nets in the evening, banding the birds, camping over night and then putting up the nets again early in the morning. He also talked of the experiences on the long weekend birding camps at conservation parks.

Don and Jean lived in the Riverland until moving to Encounter Bay in 1988 where he remained a passionate supporter of birds and their habitat. Both he and Jean were active members of the National Trust and the Australian Plant Society. Don grew over 1,000 native plants from seed and cuttings & spent many hours at working bees at Nangawooka Flora Reserve. They were very proud to win first prize for their own native garden in a local competition in 2007. Other times were spent counting dotterels down at Waitpinga Beach.

Although struggling with the challenge of living with cancer, Don accomplished a lot in his last year of life. He and his wife Jean celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary and he had a great time sharing his last trip to the bush with some 'mates' when they visited Gluepot Reserve. Don & Jean also made their last trip back to Berri where he could see his beloved River again.



Don Cornish supervising the installation of one of his nesting boxes.

Photographed by Elizabeth Steele-Collins

Don lived a full and productive life. It's impossible to even briefly describe all its aspects here, but his lifelong contribution to the well being of South Australia's native birds and wildlife was outstanding. Don loved coming out to 'SeaWings' to see the birds and the wildflowers and it wasn't that long ago when he and Jean arrived in the middle of winter to join a tree planting day here with a Trees for Life group. Don was very clever, always designing devices that 'worked', such as a feral cat trap so we could eliminate that particular threat to the local wildlife. He was also able to make effective nesting boxes out of just about anything. The boxes he made for 'SeaWings' were occupied by Rosellas within hours of being installed and have been used every season since. In fact at the time of this writing the latest brood of young is about to emerge.

Don will be remembered for his love and dedication to the birds and wildlife and endearing sense of humour. A few weeks before his death, Don said "Just leave me in

the bush somewhere", and that is one of the places I will remember him best, with his beloved birds and native flowers.

It was many months prior to Don's passing when I wrote a small dedication to go on the 2010 'Birds of the Fleurieu' Calendar, but I delayed in telling him as I wanted to surprise him with a finished publication. Unfortunately Don's illness progressed rather faster than the calendar production. Near the end, after Don had been admitted to hospital I took the decision to tell him of the dedication and show him the proofs of the calendar, the actual printing being still some days away.

When I told him that I had dedicated it to him and read him the words, he was silent for a few seconds and then, in a quiet voice he said "Oh

crickeys... that's... real beaut!" A bit later he whispered "thanks for all of that... that's real lovely". Two days later he left us. I was so grateful I had not delayed that visit to wait for the calendar to arrive from the printers.

I think the wording of the dedication sums up Don's life.

*"This calendar is dedicated to Don Cornish, a very dear friend and lifelong champion of all things environmental. Listening to Don's reminiscences of the time spent in his beloved native bush and of his many feathered and furry friends who reside therein, has been an inspiration to many, not the least of which is me."*

So many pass through life leaving scarcely a ripple. I think I can safely say that Don will not be among them.

Don will be sadly missed by many. We extend our sympathy to Jean, Margaret, Peter and families.

**Elizabeth Steele-Collins**  
**November 2009**

# Cheetham Salt — Conditions of Entry to: Dry Creek, St Kilda to Port Gawler Roads Section, and Price Yorke Peninsula SA

## Introduction

Having resolved the issues of concern relating to Occupational Health and Safety, Cheetham Salt Dry Creek and Price have again granted access to birdwatchers.

Below are the **revised** conditions of entry to cover both locations, with a second page covering the totally different aspects that relate to the operations at the Price site. All members are requested to read these conditions carefully as many new provisions are included.

The application and induction documents have also been revised and will be provided to the web sites of Birds SA & Birdpedia for downloading as required.

## Terms and Conditions

The South Australian Ornithological Association Inc (SAOA /Birds SA) has formally agreed to handle the administration of the entry requirements for access into Cheetham Salt. Dry Creek Complex (St Kilda to Port Gawler section) and the Price Salt Fields on Yorke Peninsula (subject to additional terms of Condition Next page). This covers applications, inductions and issue of appropriate documents (Indemnity & Entry Card) covering entry of all Bird Watchers, who must be members of a recognised Bird Organisation, into the Cheetham Salt Fields mentioned above.

**Every applicant is required to download and complete one Application Form and one Visitor Induction Form.** This information is required to create paperwork whilst undergoing the visual induction process in the presence of one of the members listed below.

There is a Fixed Expiry Date for all inducted members of South Australian birdwatching groups. To prevent any misunderstanding of the expiry date, it is based on a two year period (or part thereof) to be 30<sup>th</sup> June in each odd- numbered year. The first expiry date will be 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011, at which time

birdwatchers may reapply for entry using the appropriate application forms and signing a new indemnity for the period. Renewal is subject to any Cheetham Salt contrary direction. This creates an opportunity for any adjustment to terms and conditions of entry to be initiated for the ensuing two years period.

### SAOA/Birds SA Members

Will have their Cheetham Salt Indemnity/pass number details maintained by the SAOA/Birds SA Treasurer.

### Other SA Bird Groups

We will maintain a separate list for each additional SA bird group, which will be required to verify to SAOA/Birds SA in writing, as to the paid-up status of members at the time of application for entry, as well as within one month of the renewal date of the SA Bird Group to which they belong.

### Overseas & Interstate Bird Watchers

All other Bird Watchers requesting casual access into the Dry Creek Salt Fields, St Kilda section, must make contact with the SAOA/Birds SA members listed below, who are authorised to carry out inductions and have indemnity forms signed for a casual access only. The visitor(s) must be accompanied by an authorised SAOA/Birds SA approved member at all times.

### Entry Application Form

All applicants are required to complete a 'Request for Induction to Dry Creek Salt Fields' document, (see separate attachments for SAOA/Birds SA and other birdwatchers) which shall be used to complete Cheetham documents.

After which they shall be maintained in an Alpha file by SAOA/Birds SA.

These forms are available from the following web sites:

[www.birdssa.asn.au](http://www.birdssa.asn.au)

or [www.birdpedia.com](http://www.birdpedia.com)

### Key Collection (Dry Creek only)

As previously, collect (and return) from the Magazine Road Office of Cheetham Salt between 8.30am & 4pm, Monday to Friday. A \$30 key deposit is required, refunded on return. If you are a regular visitor you can arrange to leave the deposit on hold at Cheetham. This allows you (with permission) to have a key for the weekend or an arranged period and return the key to the metal post box at the gate within the terms of the agreement reached with Cheetham Salt. *There is a limited number* of keys and your failure to return your key may cause other authorised bird watchers to be refused entry due to lack of keys. A subsequent, temporary or permanent cancellation of entry to offenders may ensue.

Contact Reception. Bronwyn McConachy Tel: 08 8409 9500.

### Cheetham Salt - Price Yorke Peninsula SA

#### Additional Conditions of Entry

Access to Price Salt Fields is now available to anyone who has signed the above conditions of entry and holds a valid entry (blue) card to access Dry Creek. Since they have been through the induction process no additional induction is required. However, all authorised cardholders must accept the additional conditions (reminders) below, since they form part the conditions of access into Price. Entry is allowed only on this acceptance. Please read following information.

All visiting birdwatchers must conform to the following Policies and requirements at all times when on the site.

1. Glass items/articles are totally banned from the site.
2. Cheetham has a total no smoking policy within the site.
3. Prior to gaining access all birdwatchers **must** obtain an orange safety hi visibility jacket/vest (i.e. as used by road workers) and safety glasses (similar in style to prescription

## Cheetham Salt — Conditions of Entry (cont)

glasses) unless they already normally wear prescription glasses. Both these items must be worn at all times on the site. **No Vest or Glasses = No entry.**

4. To arrange entry, birdwatchers must make contact with the reception area by calling (08) 8837 6511 between the hours of 8.30am & 4.00pm on a day prior to desired date/day of entry, in order to confirm that access will be available on the day requested. This site is now a 24 hour 7 day a week operation, with many road train style vehicles moving around the area.
5. When you have been granted clearance to enter the site, you must report on your arrival to the reception area to sign in. Put on your safety wear before doing this. Take the original 2 part card and place in full view on the vehicle dash board. All visitors **must** return to the reception area to sign out of the site.
6. Requests to gain access for **Weekends and Public holidays** need to be planned ahead and must comply with the content of items 1 to 3 above. No access will be granted unless prior arrangements have been made to enter (*It's a long drive if you fail to abide by requirements*). Note that for the Price site the weekend sign-in and sign-out process is completed by administration during normal office hours. Weekend staff are made aware of approved expected visitors.
7. Site vehicles have a right of way on the tracks, so please consider this when parking along the tracks. We are there to enjoy and record birds not to hinder any operations on the site.
8. As with Dry Creek our presence on site is appreciated because we act as an aid to Cheetham by

reporting to the office anything seen or found which they may need to respond to. We also maintain records of the bird life and assist the sanctuary status of the site.

9. A map of the Price salt fields may be found on the following web sites:

[www.birdssa.asn.au](http://www.birdssa.asn.au)  
[www.birdpedia.com](http://www.birdpedia.com)

### All Enquires Through

Trevor Cowie - Field Program Co-ordinator Tel: 08 8263 2531. Email: [birdos\\_sa@bigpond.com](mailto:birdos_sa@bigpond.com) in the first instance.

If unavailable contact Brian Walker – Treasurer Tel: 08 8263 3433.

Email: [brian.walker6@bigpond.com](mailto:brian.walker6@bigpond.com)

Below is the current induction procedure.

- i. At SAOA/Birds SA Friday monthly meetings at 7pm & 7.20pm.
- ii. At the Saturday & Sunday walks (if possible) following lunch and bird call.
- iii. At home in St Agnes, Tea Tree Gully by prior arrangement.
- iv. All visitors by arrangement (who must be accompanied by an

SA Guide authorised by SAOA/Birds SA at all times).

**Trevor Cowie SAOA/Birds SA**

**Tel: (08) 8263 2531 Email:**

**[birdos\\_sa@bigpond.com](mailto:birdos_sa@bigpond.com)**



Peregrine Falcon  
photographed by  
Kay Parkin



Buff-rumped Thornbill  
photographed by Graham Crooks at Houghton on 15/9/09

# Giving them wings

## conserving threatened species

### HOODED PLOVER REPORT SUMMARY

Many thanks to Emma Stephens for the project on Hooded Plovers on the Fleurieu Peninsula over the 2006-07 breeding season. Her report was produced this year and a summary has been 'lifted' almost word-for-word for members' interest. If you are interested in the complete document, I have a PDF which I am happy to email. Due to the costs of printing/posting I am unable to post hard copies to those who don't have access to a computer.

**Penny Paton**  
pennypaton@adam.com.au

### ASSESSMENT OF HOODED PLOVER (*THINORNIS RUBRICOLLIS*) BREEDING SUCCESS AND THREATS ON THE FLEURIEU PENINSULA 2006/07

Beaches are critical for the survival of beach nesting birds. The Hooded Plover breeding season coincides with the busiest time of year for beach recreation use (spring and summer). Beach nesting birds, such as Hooded Plover, are readily disturbed by humans and dogs, often resulting in eggs and nests being inadvertently abandoned, crushed and/or exposed to predators. Furthermore, vehicles and increasing numbers of introduced predators such as foxes and cats are having an impact on breeding success. Consequently, managing the coexistence of both humans and beach nesting birds requires dedicated research, practical on-ground management, and community awareness raising and engagement.

Hooded Plovers are listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List (2008) and Vulnerable under the SA *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The species is also rated as Endangered within the Gulf St

Vincent IBRA subregion, in a SA Regional Status Assessment Project (Gillam and Urban 2008). The *Southern Fleurieu Coastal Action Plan and Conservation Priority Study* (Caton *et al.* 2007) has recorded the Hooded Plover in 19 of the 27 study cells, covering the majority of sandy beaches in the region. Due to the species' status and that it is found nesting on the Fleurieu Peninsula, the plan recommends that the Hooded Plover is adopted as a focal species for its high conservation value. The draft Metropolitan and Northern Coastal Action Plan (Caton *et al.* 2009 unpubl.) also lists the Hooded Plover as a focal species.

In South Australia Hooded Plovers are found on Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, Fleurieu Peninsula and the South-East. The total population in SA was estimated at approximately 540 birds in 1994 (Natt and Weston 1995), however, more recent surveys suggest that the total SA population could be around 750-800 (Mooney *et al.* 2009). Numbers on Kangaroo Island have declined by about 24% over the last 20 years with greatest declines (44%) on the more popular northern and eastern coastlines where human disturbance is greatest (Dennis and Masters 2006). The negative impacts to Hooded Plovers of human disturbance is correlated in a number of other studies (Buick and Paton 1989, Weston and Elgar 2005, Weston 2003).

This project focuses on a detailed assessment of Hooded Plover breeding success on the Fleurieu Peninsula and the associated threats at each of 20 selected study sites. The project aims are based on a number of the Primary Recovery Actions listed in the draft *SA Recovery Plan for the Hooded*

*Plover* (Baker-Gabb and Weston 2006:13):

1 Establish current baselines on the following:

a) Hooded Plovers

- general distribution: the extent of occurrence and area of occupancy
- specific distribution: on which beaches they do and do not occur

b) Threats

- establish/define relative threat baselines

c) Identify gaps in knowledge/data

- distribution — general and nesting
- relative recruitment rates; and
- different threats

d) Identify key locations for long-term monitoring based on:

- ease of access/proximity to regular observer(s)/reliability of observers; and
- different management regimes (target specific areas)

A further project aim was to instigate practical management to assist breeding success, such as the installation of temporary fencing and signage. This required extensive engagement of key stakeholders such as Local Government, Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) and various community groups. Another aim was to raise community awareness by producing a monthly project report and providing updates in journals, newsletters and local papers.

This project was made possible by the efforts of 15 dedicated volunteers who: regularly surveyed their sites, assisted in installing and monitoring temporary fences and signage, and significantly raised

# Giving Them Wings (cont)

community awareness by talking with beach goers. In addition, the volunteers have included their recommendations for future site management as part of this report (Appendix 2). The future of Hooded Plover conservation in SA will be made a success by the involvement of the community as a whole.

This report briefly summarises Hooded Plover distribution, abundance, breeding success, threat analysis and management, using basic statistical analysis. A more detailed analysis of threats is yet to be completed.

**Emma Stephens, Project Co-ordinator, 2009**

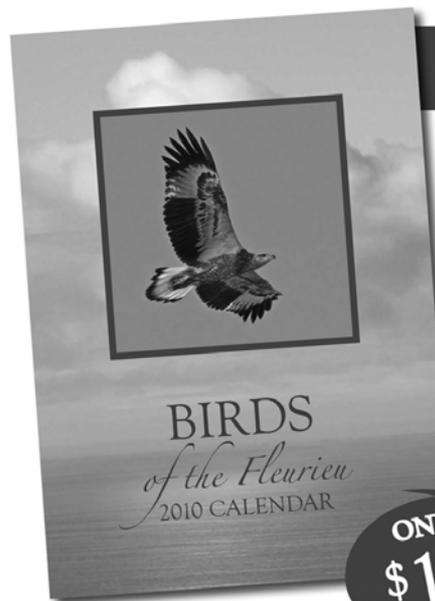
We welcome the following new members, who have joined the association in the past few months.

Adrian Mann  
Jo Morandin & Lars, Jamilla & Asger Keller  
Toby Galligan  
Lawrie & Pam Stevens  
Bob & Gloria Kay  
Barbara Kathleen & Peter Jeremy Davies  
Michael Wood  
Sally Greenhalgh  
Thomas & Stephen & Elena & Matthew Voss  
Sue Gredley

ADELAIDE  
MOUNT GAMBIER  
BROMPTON  
ST AGNES  
WINDSOR GARDENS  
CRAFERS WEST  
ELIZABETH GROVE  
SOUTH PLYMPTON  
STIRLING  
GREENWITH

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# Past & Future Meetings

## PAST GENERAL MEETINGS

### Friday August 28

Stuart Hull introduced Ian Tanner, Senior Regional Fire Management Officer, Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH). Prior to presenting his talk Ian showed a short video of the catastrophic 2003 fires in Canberra taken from within a fire truck. Although there were wide roads and the houses were set well back from the pine forests embers were responsible for the house fires not direct burning.

Fire Management in the Mount Lofty Ranges presents a big problem as nearly all the gullies run east-west. A series of slides of fire hazards around houses were shown. Ian explained how fire intensity was measured using a series of criteria. Fuel is directly responsible for fire intensity. Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI) is used to predict fire intensity. Fire in 30t/ha is largely uncontrollable even on a mild day. Fire in 5t/ha is much easier to manage.

Prior to a prescribed burn in a park, the area is identified and the records for flora and fauna are checked. The area is surveyed for presence of flora, which includes identifying any notable weeds. The area may be surveyed for fauna. Part A of DEH's prescribed burn documentation is completed. This includes:

- Burn objectives
- Prescription required
- Environmental Assessment Table
- Vegetation modification and condition
- Plant diversity
- Fauna
- Important habitat areas or threatened fauna populations
- Threatened plant species
- Sensitive or threatened communities
- Remnant vegetation
- Water
- Amenity
- Erosion
- Salinity and ground water
- Flooding
- Threatening processes

- Fire history
- Monitoring before and after the burn for up to 10 years
- Vital attributes data (species recovery post fire)

Burns are sometimes modified as a result of Part A or in some cases cancelled in favor of alternatives.

An operations plan is prepared. This looks at the resources required to complete the burn safely, as well as when and how the burn should be done. It includes planning for fire behavior and what to do if it all goes horribly wrong.

Efforts are also made to protect dead trees or hollow trees during the burn.

After a prescribed burn has been carried out, there is a site inspection to check results against objectives. This is followed by intensive weed control, depending on the site and priorities. Then there is ongoing monitoring of flora, fauna and fuel hazard.

Prescribed burning is not the solution to all fire management issues. A balanced and considered approach is required. It is unwise to put assets in areas where it is desirable to maintain high fuel hazards for biodiversity or amenity. The two situations are generally incompatible! It is also unwise to revegetate low fuel areas unless you are prepared to accept the impact this will have on fire spread within the broader area.

### Friday September 25

Stuart Hull introduced Philip Roetman of the Barbara Hardy Centre for Sustainable Urban Environments, University of South Australia. Philip gave a talk on "Citizen Science" with reference to the Operation Bluetongue, Operation Possum and Operation Magpie programmes.

Philip explained that, as Operation Magpie was still underway his talk would focus upon Operation Possum. "Citizen Science" is a research methodology in which professional researchers engage the public to collect data within a cooperative framework of research and education.

Philip noted the conflicting aims of increasing population and biodiversity. He highlighted the impact of changes in housing density, stating that the "Operations" brought together a number of different resources, including on-line surveys; partnerships; and "Citizen Science". "Citizen Science" provides large-scale collection of data and access to inaccessible places such as private gardens. Philip stressed the importance of education to enable people to undertake the surveys.

Statistics from Operation Possum showed that:

79% of participants thought that wildlife around home was important  
70% of participants thought that their garden was important to wildlife

70% of participants thought that they were attracting animals to their garden.

Philip spoke on a number of possum management strategies and their success rates, noting that the strategies that involved living with possums (as opposed to removing them) were generally more successful.

The survey results showed that 73% of respondents thought that we should learn to live with possums; 19% thought that possums were a nuisance; and 3% thought that the "only good possum was a dead one".

Preliminary findings of the Operations support the power of "Citizen Science" and highlight the importance of radio. There had been 1,300 responses to Operation Magpie in the first three weeks.

### Friday October 31

Stuart Hull introduced the speaker for the evening — Darryl Jones, Associate Professor and Deputy Director, Environmental Futures Centre, Griffith University. Darryl holds a Masters Degree in Natural Resources from the University of New England in wildlife management and a PhD in behavioural ecology from Griffith University. These two strands of his academic training – the applied and

# Past & Future Meetings (cont)

the pure – continue to inform his research.

His life-long fascination with megapodes started during an undergraduate bird course in which he discovered that Brush-turkeys were rather less monogamous than the experts thought. This was soon followed by a trip as a volunteer to New Britain to study the Dusky Scrubfowl, which lays its eggs in the warm soil on the sides of volcanoes. From then on, he was hooked.

Darryl moved to Queensland in 1983 to study the Australian Brush-turkey. Even before he had finished, his enthusiasms (some might say obsession) with these birds lead unexpectedly to two important invitations: to attend a special conference on precocial species in Germany; and to consider writing a book on the megapodes for Oxford. The German meeting resulted in the formation of the IUCN Megapode Specialist Group and the book – *The Megapodes* – was the first in Oxford's celebrated Bird Family Series.

While maintaining his life-long interest in mound-building birds, he now concentrates on urban ecology – especially the management and conservation of the wild animals that live with us in the suburban environment.

Darryl is the author of six books including *The Megapodes* (1995, Oxford), *Magpie Alert: Learning to Live with a Wild Neighbour* (2002 UNSW Press) and most recently *Mound-builders* (2008 CSIRO) as well as over 100 scientific papers. As well as formal science publishing, he is deeply committed to communicating to the public and writes many popular articles as well as a column on urban wildlife in the magazine *Wildlife Australia*.

Darryl's talk was entitled **Marvellous Megapodes, Ancient Perspectives and Recent Discoveries**. Megapodes were known to Europeans over 500 years ago but the details of their almost impossible lives have only been recently unearthed. Although

morphologically typical Galliformes, it is their remarkable approach to incubation that sets them apart from all other birds. Abandoned eggs, chicks buried alive, an absence of parental care, running away from home at birth and extreme sexual violence are just part of the story. The talk described what we now know – and don't know – about the three Australian species – all mound-builders – and their very different prospects for the future. There is also unexpected good news on Malleefowl from northern South Australia.

Darryl regaled us with some interesting facts about megapodes. The Philippine Scrubfowl was the first megapode discovered in 1521.

**What is a megapode?** It looks like a galliforme, but its incubation is the difference (Malleo from Sulawesi, Indonesia).

There are three megapodes in Australia – the Malleefowl, the Brush-turkey and the Orange-footed Scrubfowl.

A non-megapode, but in the same genus is the Peafowl.

The majority of megapodes are found in the islands centred on and around New Guinea. In New Guinea there are 9 species.

The Kergulan Scrubfowl, which was found only on the Kergulan Island has been declared extinct since the volcano on the island erupted.

The Nicobar Island Scrubfowl is found only on islands, not on the mainland.

Megapodes cannot live with predators, in particular the Civet Cats.

The Orange-footed Scrubfowl makes the largest mound of any bird – 4m. high, 15m. across.

The Brush-turkey, while not monogamous, is definitely not promiscuous. The Brush-turkey's wattle glows in the dark.

The Brush-turkey is a pest in suburban Brisbane

Darryl gave a very entertaining and very informative talk, which was thoroughly enjoyed by members present at the meeting.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

## GENERAL

*General meetings are held at 7.45pm in the Hawker Centre at the Waite Institute on the last Friday of each month except December, (provided there is no clash with a public holiday). The doors open at 7pm. The speakers and topics for the next three months meeting are given below.*

### Friday January 29

TBA

### Friday February 26

Terry Denis will give report on the progress of his Coastal Raptor Survey.

### Friday March 26

Colin Rogers will speak on "Seabirds and Waders here and there."



Forest Kingfisher  
photographed at Twonville  
Common, Qld on 15/8/09

# Past Excursions

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## **Saturday August 15: Ridley CP (MM)**

It was a very pleasant day away from the city, with the 25 members turning out being rewarded by 52 species, although ten species were represented by a single bird. As usual we started at the northern end of the park where a Crested Bellbird presented itself to those who had seen one before but not to those who had never seen one. However, I believe most people saw many Gilbert's Whistlers at both of our stopping points. No one could have failed to hear them as at least six were recorded. Large numbers of Southern Whitefaces, White-browed and Chestnut-crowned Babblers were looking after dependant young, and the many nests presented quite a sight to see. The second part of the park provided excellent sightings of White-winged Triller and Black-eared Cuckoo. Other Cuckoos were Pallid & Horsfield's Bronze and for some people Blue Bonnet were good to see. The worst thing observed on the day was a large increase in motorcycle tracks through the vegetation and yet another dump of unused concrete, this time close to the road edge partially under a tree.

**Trevor Cowie**

## **Thursday August 20: Browns Road, Monarto (MLR)**

This was an unusually large gathering because we had as guests a group from the University of the Third Age (U3A), who were doing a bird-watching course tutored by Burt May. The weather was perfect; clear sky and light winds. Fifty people set off in search of the many species that make this location popular. An Owllet-nightjar was soon disturbed from its hollow and gave everyone a good view before disappearing into another hollow. Early signs of spring were four White-winged Trillers, six Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos, and six Rufous Whistlers, all calling loudly. The usually reliable

Diamond Firetails proved hard to find, but a good number of other species made up for that. Honeyeaters were most numerous, notably New Holland, Brown-headed and Red Wattlebirds. Species most noticed in the forest were White-winged Chough, White-browed Babbler, and Weebill, while Purple-crowned Lorikeets flew overhead. Other birds of interest seen during the walk were Restless Flycatcher, Jacky Winter, Varied Sittella, Brown Treecreeper and Hooded Robin. Late in the walk a Southern Boobook was disturbed from its resting place, and all were able to see it. During the bird call, duelling male Red-capped Robins presented a great distraction. The day's total was 56 species, but it was thought that the number of birds overall was rather lower than usual. However, it was a very satisfying day and thanks to members for helping the guests with spotting and identifying the birds.

**John Turner**

## **Sunday August 30: Brookfield CP (MM)**

The weather was cold and overcast as a group of 24 people gathered at the gate, and it stayed that way for the rest of the day, providing poor viewing conditions. The first walk, west of the entrance road, revealed the first of several groups of White-winged Trillers, new arrivals for the season. Subsequent walks were taken in the Mallee where birds seemed to be scarce, but the number of species sighted mounted quickly. Lunch and bird-call were taken rather late, and only about half way around the Mallee Loop Track. Among the most numerous species were Southern Whiteface, White-winged Chough, White-browed and Chestnut Crowned Babbler and Brown Treecreeper. Others of interest were Southern Scrub-robin, Gilbert's Whistler, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Bluebonnet, Yellow Thornbill, and both Splendid and Variegated Fairy-wren. A small

flock of Little Corellas flew overhead, and Crested Bellbirds and a Black-eared Cuckoo were heard. Species nesting or feeding young were White-winged Choughs, Galahs, Red-capped Robins, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills and Southern Whiteface. At this stage the species count totalled 49. Most people then continued on around the track where a small number of Richard's Pipits, Black-faced Woodswallows and White-winged Fairy-wrens were seen.

As we prepared to depart at the old shearing shed, a dark raptor rose from nearby; an unusual dark morph Little Eagle. At the same time a Kestrel appeared, and shortly afterwards a Peregrine Falcon zoomed overhead. Then a radio call reported a Collared Sparrowhawk at the entrance, and amazingly it passed near us a few minutes later. This was an exciting end to an already great day, despite the weather.

**John Turner**

## **Saturday September 12: Kenneth Stirling (Wotton Scrub) CP and Mt George (MLR)**

The strong wind and threat of rain did not deter the 20 people that came along on this trip. For the first several hundred meters the wind was quite strong and not a bird could be seen or heard. However, as we proceeded down into the gully the wind tapered off and we could hear many species calling. As the morning progressed we counted six species of honeyeater including, Yellow-faced, White-naped, Brown-headed and Crescent, as well as Red Wattlebird and Eastern Spinebill. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Laughing Kookaburra were both observed checking out nesting hollows. Golden Whistler males were especially vocal. We also observed Yellow-rumped Thornbills for the first time. The number of birds seen was quite low although a respectable 35 species were observed on the walk.

# Past Excursions (cont)

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After the walk we headed to Mt George Conservation Park for lunch. A Fan-tailed Cuckoo joined us for most of the lunch break, calling constantly from the canopy overhead. After lunch ten of us took a look around the eastern fenced off section and the pond. Pacific Black Duck and Rainbow Lorikeet were observed checking out hollows in the gum trees of the picnic area and a solitary Sacred Kingfisher was seen sitting quietly on a low branch over the water. Also observed were Yellow-faced, White-naped, and Crescent Honeyeaters, a single Eastern Spinebill and several Red Wattlebirds. It is interesting that no New Holland Honeyeaters were observed at either of the day's locations as they are usually one of the most abundant species counted. The White-faced Heron's nest, occupied on our last visit here, was now deserted and only one adult bird was seen. In all we saw 29 species during our brief walk. Courting and nest building activity seems to be well underway. Everyone enjoyed a very pleasant day. **Martyn Price**

## Thursday September 17: Sandy Creek CP (MLR)

Although we had a little rain on the drive to the outing we were lucky not to have much rain on the walk, unlike our last two visits. The 24 attendees got off to a good start with a flock of 100 or more Black-tailed Native-hens in the field adjacent to the park. But unlike our last visit here the numbers of Peaceful Doves were down and the European Goldfinches were absent. White-winged Trillers, both males and females, were especially abundant. Several White-winged Choughs were busily putting a lining to their mud nest that appeared to be composed of fur from the park's kangaroos. A lone male Australian Wood Duck was observed keeping watch from the high point of a small hillock and as we approached spread itself flat to the ground as if to conceal itself — recalling similar behaviour observed in Bush Stone-Curlews. Only four species of honeyeater were seen; White-plumed, Brown-headed, New Holland Honeyeaters and Red

Wattlebirds. Rufous Whistlers, both males and females, were constantly calling, with at least 10 birds seen or heard. However, the absence of Golden Whistlers was unusual. While the number of birds was quite low, the arrival of the migrant Trillers and a Songlark made the trip all the more enjoyable so early in the spring. In all, 42 species were counted. **Martyn Price**

## Sunday September 27: Moorunde Wildlife Reserve (MM)

Twenty members attended this infrequently visited location. We split into several small groups and combed the southern section of the park. The cold wind and overcast skies no doubt contributed to the rather low number of birds observed. However, large numbers of White-winged Trillers were seen, including one flock of twenty or more. The highlight of the day was probably the discovery of two Red-capped Robin nests, both containing young. Also observed breeding were Chestnut-rumped Thornbills (nests and with dependent young), Brown Treecreepers (nesting) and Southern Whitefaces (nests and with dependent young). About ten Gilbert's Whistlers were seen, including juveniles. An abandoned Emu nest with seven, lustreless eggs scattered about was found. Several bits of eggshell were also strewn around. It appeared to be from the current season. Other highlights included Chestnut and White-browed Babbblers, White-fronted Honeyeaters, Australian Ringnecks, Mulga Parrots and Varied Sittellas. In all, a total of 36 species were counted. After lunch several members also checked out the nearby Nardoo Wildlife Reserve, but again the windy conditions did not produce any new species. However, we did observe several Red-capped Robins with juveniles. **Martyn Price**

## Saturday October 10: Morgan CP (MM)

It was a great day to be in Morgan with the lakes full of water and being well used by nine duck species. Of note were Australian Shoveler, Blue-billed, Hardhead, Musk & Pink-eared as well as

breeding Swans. Crimson (yellow) Rosellas and the Regent Parrots were continually sighted throughout the day. One of the highlights for the day was four Tawny Frogmouth, two being young birds. Other species to delight us were Red-backed Kingfisher, Fairy Martins, Splendid Fairy-wren, White browed & Chestnut Crowned Babbblers, White-winged Triller, Gilberts Whistler and Richard's Pipit. The last four species were only seen by the last few members who were chatting. The total count for the day was 79 species, which far exceeded what had been anticipated for the site. Many of the people who joined this outing arrived the day before and enjoyed a great birding weekend. The number of members on the day was 16. **Trevor Cowie**

## Thursday October 15: Bullock Hill CP (MLR)

A few showers did not deter fifteen members and two visitors from Arizona, making the most of an interesting morning at Bullock Hill Conservation Park near Ashbourne. A total of forty one species were seen. Four Elegant Parrots and a group of six Southern Whitefaces feeding with Yellow-rumped Thornbills were highlights. The best birding area was down the slope from the main entrance of the park on Haines Rd. The strong wind was passing overhead resulting in plenty of bird activity in sheltered low trees and bushes. As one shower had everyone sheltering under a large gum tree, the bird watching continued from under and between branches. Good sightings of a Jacky Winter and an immature Hooded Robin resulted. Brown Treecreeper, White-browed Babbler and several Mistletoebirds added to the list. Along the way a Kangaroo with a Joey and a Koala helped make this an enjoyable walk for the 17 birders who turned out despite the threat of rain. **Peter Gower**

## Sunday November 1: Cox Scrub CP (MLR)

Cancelled: Due to the high temperature forecast for the day. **Trevor Cowie**

# Future Excursions

## Convener

Trevor Cowie 08 8263 2531

[birdos\\_sa@bigpond.com](mailto:birdos_sa@bigpond.com)

## Additional Note for summer:

### Excursions Heat Policy

*We draw attention to the **PROTOCOL** with regard to the anticipated hot summer and the state of fuel on the ground. If a Fire Ban is in effect or the Temperature is forecast for 36°C or above in the area of a scheduled walk it is automatically considered cancelled. This will not affect Salt Field or Wetland trips i.e. Paiwalla, Goolwa Barrage. These walks will proceed.*

Sunday November 29. *The trip to Stockyard Plains is cancelled because there have been two Campouts there this year. We have been requested by Loxton Field & Game to revisit Noora to carry out a survey as there is water in the catchment area. Our last trip here was in October 2000.*

## Sunday November 29 New Location Details:

### Noora Salt Reclamation Area (Riverland) (MM) (235km)

From Loxton drive north towards Berri. From the railway crossing as you leave Loxton travel 10km and take the right hand turn road towards Renmark. Drive 3 km and turn right into OBST Rd. Immediately after you make this turn pull over onto the left verge area, which is where we will meet at 8.15 a.m. Moving on slowly along this road to our destination has provided very good birding in the past. The best route from Adelaide is via Swan Reach. Allow 3 – 3.5 hours from the GPO. The Loxton Field and Game Association (who operate a lease from SA Water) have made their camp site available with access from Saturday. However there are no facilities Caravan Parks are available in Loxton and Berri.

### Saturday December 12: Browns Road, Monarto (MLR) (60km)

Meet at 8.00am at Browns Road, Monarto, just off the old Murray Bridge Road. Leave the SE Freeway at the Callington exit. Drive through Callington and turn right onto the old Murray Bridge road. The junction is on the left at the top of the hill.

### Thursday December 17: Onkaparinga Wetlands (MLR) (32km)

Meet at 8.30am at Port Noarlunga Oval Car Park off Britain Drive.

### Saturday January 9: Goolwa Barrage & Hindmarsh Island (MLR) (90km)

Meet to the west of Goolwa Yacht Club at 8.00am.

### Thursday January 21: Dry Creek Salt Fields (AP) (26km)

Due to high tide (2.23m) being at around 8.07 a.m. we meet early at 7.15am at the new entrance gate. Turn west onto St Kilda Road from Port Wakefield Road and keep straight on. Pass the original entrance road as it is now blocked off. Take the next turning right onto Radar Road (dirt) actually called Samphire Road. As per the normal request please bring your two-way radios if you have them. **Note each Individual must be authorised by Cheetham Salt Ltd and must carry a valid card of authority before entering the Dry Creek Salt Fields. If you do not have authority, ask Trevor Cowie (Tel: 8263 2531 email: [birdos\\_sa@bigpond.com](mailto:birdos_sa@bigpond.com)) how to become authorised.**

### Sunday January 31: Paiwalla Wetlands (MM) (88km)

Meet at Sunnyside Lookout at 8.15am. Take the Murray Bridge to Mannum Road on the eastern side of the river opposite Murray Bridge. Stay on this road till just past the turnoff to Bowhill (on the right). Take the next turning left to Sunnyside lookout car park. Also be advised that a **minimum** donation

of \$5.00 is required to assist in maintaining the wetlands.

### Saturday February 13: Dry Creek Salt Fields (AP) (26km)

Due to high tide (1.96m) being at around 7.45 a.m. we meet early at 7.45am at the new entrance gate. To get there turn west onto St Kilda Road from Port Wakefield Road and keep straight on. Pass the original entrance road, as it is now blocked off. Take the next turning right onto Radar Road (dirt) actually called Samphire Road. As per the normal request please bring your two-way radios if you have them. **Note each Individual must be authorised by Cheetham Salt Ltd and must carry a valid card of authority before entering the Dry Creek Salt Fields. If you do not have authority, ask Trevor Cowie (Tel: 8263 2531 email: [birdos\\_sa@bigpond.com](mailto:birdos_sa@bigpond.com)) how to become authorised.**

### Thursday February 18: Goolwa Barrage (MLR) (90km)

Meet to the west of Goolwa Yacht Club at 8.30am.

### Sunday February 28: Browns Road, Monarto (MLR) (60km)

Meet at 8.15am at Browns Road, Monarto, just off the old Murray Bridge Road. Leave the SE Freeway at the Callington exit. Drive through Callington and turn right onto the old Murray Bridge road. The junction is on the left at the top of the hill.

### Saturday March 13: Laratinga (Mt. Barker) Wetlands (MLR) (34km)

Meet at 8.15am at the car park on Bald Hills Road, Mt. Barker.

# Bird Records

## Compiled by Colin Rogers

*Records included here are species listed as rare, uncommon or not recorded for SA or a region of SA (refer to the SAOA Field List for the birds of SA) Also included are interesting breeding or ecological notes, new records for a well known locality, and first of the season records of migratory species.*

*These reports are not all authenticated records: researchers are advised to check with the observers before citing them.*

*Send all reports to C Rogers at twitcher.colin@hotmail.com or 83363325 or MOB 0417 896 977*

### Malleefowl

08/09/2009. Two were in Innes NP, YP.

Teresa Jack & Peter Gower.  
19/07/2009. One was at Desert Camp Conservation Reserve, SE.

Birds SE outing.  
22/08/2009. Three were in Gum Lagoon CP, SE. Two were actively working a mound.

Birds SE Campout.

### Freckled Duck

20/09/2009. Two adults and an immature were opposite the shed in the Barrage Reserve, Goolwa, FP.

Bob Snell and Sue Burnell.  
05/09/2009. One was at Paiwalla Wetlands, MM.

B. Mountain.  
12/09/2009. Five were at White's Road Wetlands, AP.

Kay Parkin.  
*The number had increased to 14 on 27/10/2009.*

John Cox.  
23/10/2009. Six were at Greenfields Wetlands, magazine Road, AO.

John Cox.  
05/11/2009. Twelve were at the Goolwa Barrage, MM.

Winston Syson.

### Grey-headed Albatross

26/08/2009. One adult was off Parson's head, FP.

Neil Cheshire & Colin Rogers.  
30/08/2009. One juvenile was off Parson's Head, FP.

### Royal Albatross

04/10/2009. Six, three Northern and three Southern, were at 38S 140E on the pelagic trip from Port MacDonnell, SE.

Colin Rogers et al.

### Southern Fulmar

29-30/09/2009. One was found beached-washed near Sugars Beach Carpark, Hindmarsh Island, LA.

Ann Turner.  
11/10/2009. One was at 38S 140E on the pelagic from Port MacDonnell, SE.

Colin Rogers et al.

### Australian Bittern

20/09/2009. One was at Mullins Swamp, Wandilo, SE.

B. T. Haywood and I. Stewart.  
04/10/2009. One was 'booming' from the swamp east of Port MacDonnell, SE.

Colin Rogers et al.  
*One or two were reported regularly from Greenfields Wetlands, AP, during October.*

John Cox.

### Australian Little Bittern

23/10/2009. One was calling at Paiwalla Wetlands, MM.

Peter Koch.

### Eastern Reef Egret

29/08/2009. One was on the rocks at Kings Head, Victor Harbor, FP.

Steve Potter.  
23/09/2009. One flew past Parson's Head, FP.

Neil Cheshire, Colin Rogers & John Cox.

### Osprey

19/08/2009. One was flying over the Onkaparinga Estuary, FP.

Steven Romankus.  
23/08/2009. One was flying north along the cliffs at Port Willunga beach, FP.

Jeffrey Crocker.

### Letter-winged Kite

August. One flew across the township at Maree, NE, at dusk.

Michael Hunter.  
October. Several were along the inside track to Birdsville, NE.

Colin Rogers.

Bird Quest.

### Grey Falcon

08/10/2009. One was in the Flinders Ranges National Park, Wilkawillina Gorge, FR.

Richard & Margaret Alcorn.

### Greater Sand Plover

19/07/2009. One was at Cape Rouge/Marsden Pt, KI.

Chris Baxter.

31/10/2009. One was at Stony Point, SE.

BA Twitcherthon team per Bob Green.

### Hooded Plover

07/09/2009. Four were in Pandalowie Bay, Innes NP, YP.

Peter Gower  
19/07/2009. Nineteen were at Lake Bonney, SE.

Maureen Christie.  
19/07/2009. Five were at Cape Rouge/Pt Marsden, KI.

Chris Baxter.  
06/10/2009. Twenty were at Vivonne Bay, KI.

Chris Baxter.

### Eastern Curlew

03/05/2009. One was at Reeves Point, KI.

Chris Baxter.  
10/09/2009. Eighteen were at Port Arthur mudflats, YP.

Peter Gower.  
04/10/2009. Fortyone were at Pt Arthur, YP.

Teresa Jack.

### Terek Sandpiper

23/10/2009. Two were in Dry Creek Saltfields, AP.

Colin Rogers.  
05/11/2009. One was on the mudflats south of the Goolwa Barrage, MM.

Winston Syson.

### Brolga

28/06/2009. Two hundred and ten were on the Kaladbro Road, Kaladbro, SE.

B & T Haywood.

# Bird Records (cont)

*Pairs were reported from several locations in the SE from July through to September.*

## **Red-tailed Black Cockatoo**

18/08/2009. Five were at Earls Lane, Wandilo, SE.

B & T Haywood.

05/10/2009. At least 20 were at Grundy Lane NFR, SE.

K. Richardson.

## **Bourke's Parrot**

08/07/2009. Two were on Wilcatana Station, forty km north of Port Augusta, NFR.

Peter Langdon.

## **Orange-bellied Parrot**

25-26/07/2009. Two were recorded in SA on the official count. One at Picks Swamp, near Piccaninnie Ponds CP, SE and the other at 29 Mile Crossing, Coorong.

Per Bob Green.

## **Swift Parrots**

11/10/2009. Three were feeding in Tasmanian Blue Gums in Elliot Drive, Mt Gambier, SE.

Nathaniel Doecke.

## **Powerful Owl**

03/07/2009. Several were in Dry Creek NFR, SE.

K & K Jones.

16/09/2009. Two adults and a juvenile were at Wombat Flat NFR, Penola, SE.

Amanda Pearce.

## **Black-eared Miner**

09/08/2009. A flock of eight was along the Gluepot Road, Taylorville Station, MM.

Peter Waanders.

## **Pied Honeyeater**

08/08/2009. Four were at the Arid Lands Garden Port Augusta, EP.

Peter Langdon.

22/08/2009. Two males were in the Arid Lands Botanical Garden Port Augusta, EP.

Peter Waanders.

*Several were still present in early November.*

12/09/2009. Eight males and two females were alongside Yorkey's Crossing Road, EP.

Michael Moore.

## **Orange Chat**

20/09/2009. Two were at Reeves Point, Kingscote, KI.

Noel Luff.

*Three Crimson Chat also reported from KI in September.*

Chris Baxter.

## **Black Honeyeater**

08/08/2009. Two females were at the Arid Lands Garden, Port Augusta, EP.

Peter Langdon.

22/08/2009. A pair was in the Arid Lands Botanical Gardens, Port Augusta, EP.

Peter Waanders.

*Subsequently reported by several observers from this location in October and early November.*

22/09/2009. At least 10 were near the summit of Kododo Hill, Gawler Ranges NP, EP.

Dennis Boome.

## **Black-chinned Honeyeater**

21/06/2009. One was in Glen Roy CP, SE.

Birds SE outing.

23/09/2009. Four were in the Nangawooka Flora Reserve, Victor Harbor, FP.

Colin Rogers, Neil Cheshire & John Cox.

08/11/2009. One was in a garden on Mandalay Drive, Happy Valley, MLR.

William Brooker.

## **Western Whipbird**

08-09/09/2009. Two were calling in Innes NP, YP.

Teresa Jack & Peter Gower.

## **Red-lored Whistler**

13/09/2009. Two males were singing in Bookmark Biosphere, MM.

Peter Waanders.

14/09/2009. One was in Gluepot Reserve, MM.

John Turner.

05/11/2009. One was photographed in Calperum Station, MM

Kay Parkin.

## **Pied Currawong**

23/07/2009. One was calling in Snow Gum NFR, SE.

B. T. Haywood.

06/08/2009. Two were at Kangaroo Flat Road, Compton, SE.

B. T. Haywood.

## **Bassian Thrush**

08/07/2009. One was in the Dry Creek NFR, SE.

B. T. Haywood.

09/09/2009. One was in the Overland Track NFR, SE.

Sue Black.

## **RECORDS CONSIDERED BY THE BIRDS SA RARE BIRDS COMMITTEE**

### **ACCEPTED RECORDS**

An older record for Little Stint at Dry Creek saltfields on 3/10/08. Record well supported with photographs.

Colin Rogers

### **Rockhopper Penguin**

(race Moseleyi) at Nautilus Rock, KI from 24/1/09 to 9/2/09. Record well supported by photographs.

Chris Baxter, Daniel Baxter, David Baxter and Prue Coulls.

### **Plains Wanderer**

Two birds possibly a pair 5km SE of Innamincka on 20/3/09.

Luke Einoder

### **Powerful Owl**

Breeding record at Wombat Flat NFR on 16/9/09 supported with photographs.

Amanda Pearce, Greg Hammon, Mark Rasmus

### **NON ACCEPTED RECORDS**

#### **King Quail**

Blackfellows Caves SE on 16/5/09. Insufficient evidence for Acceptance

#### **Night Parrot**

Warburton Creek on 8/7/09. Lacked sufficient evidence for Acceptance

#### **John Fenne;**



As reported in the July newsletter **Birds SA** are conducting a threatened species research project to **up-date what is known of White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Eastern Osprey populations in South Australia**. The researcher coordinating the project is Terry Dennis, who has conducted similar surveys for Birds SA in the past and whose published work in 1996 first provided evidence of a substantial decline in the breeding range of sea-eagles in SA.

So far, that has meant two winter/spring seasons of extensive foot transects and/or boat-based surveys over known habitat, or prospecting previously poorly surveyed coastlines throughout the state and also the upper-Murray flood-plain.

**Project FAQs**

People have asked:

• 'how do you go about working out how many there are?' Answer; ... with birds that establish territories when breeding, like sea-eagles and osprey, populations are best estimated from the number of breeding pairs identified during the least intrusive part of a breeding season ... that is, either early – during courtship and nest repair, or late – when nestlings are well feathered ...

• 'what happens when you find birds but not a nest?' Answer; ... well you find an ideal 'perch' overlooking nearby foraging areas and be prepared to spend long periods sitting behind a spotting scope and watching for tell-tale direct prey carrying flights or territorial behaviours ...

And to the 'dumbest' one;

• 'after two years aren't you tired of it?'

Answer; ... just disappointed that only sub-adult sea-eagles were reported along Coopers Creek during recent floods, otherwise we would have had the excuse to spend time up there as well!

**Results to date**

The good news is that numbers of both species is marginally up on previous estimates.



However, in the case of the White-bellied Sea-Eagle this result reflects the thoroughness of the current survey – not a trend, as more deserted habitat (50km of coast with only long-abandoned nest structures present) has been identified.



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

Thanks to a trusty telescope, and a number of reliable offshore island observations from project supporters, around 65 sea-eagle territories have been identified overall so far. However, **only 17 of these were found on the mainland**.

With the Eastern Osprey though, there is evidence of small population increases on western Eyre (3) and Yorke Peninsula (2).

A total of 59 territories have been confirmed so far – up seven on the recently published population estimate.



Western Eyre Peninsula has by far the greatest concentration of mainland territories with 24, including three based on specially provided platforms on oyster-farm lease marker posts.



The one shown here is in Coffin Bay township and has quietly been in constant use since 1988, <200m from the Esplanade and a row of shops! Interestingly, the oyster farmer says "every summer cormorants come and use the nest platform and throw all the sticks off ... and the osprey come back in winter and put them all back again!"

**Whats new ...**

A new \*SCRRA! (Significant Coastal Raptor Refuge Area). With six pairs scattered over just 60km of coastline Coffin Bay National Park has emerged as having the densest concentration of osprey breeding habitat anywhere in SA!

More about the SCRRA concept next newsletter (\*NB unofficial acronym).

**Volunteer involvement**

In addition to the near continuous on-ground survey days logged since re-commencing the survey work in early September, there have been ~250 hours of volunteer participation over the same period (~435hrs total to date); ~2400kms of volunteer vehicle use; and ~16 hours of volunteer boat use.

While the mainland fieldwork is largely complete, Terry is still keen to hear about observations from: mangrove areas; offshore islands; the upper-Murray region, particularly the Chowilla area; also from the Coopers Creek complex in the NE of the state.



Terry Dennis

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(photos: Kerry Williams, sea-eagle; Edy Tasovac, osprey; & Helen Dennis, nest with young)

*This project is partially funded through Birds SA and the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program*

## *More Bird Photos from Members*



**Rock Parrot**

Photographed by Teresa Jack at Pondalowie Bay Innes NP on 7/9/09



**Blue-winged Kookaburra**

photographed by Greg Dare at Townsville, Qld on 22/8/09



**Wedge-tailed Eagle**

photographed by Chris James just north of Birdsville  
on 22/5/09