



April 2010

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



☒ **Saturday 10 April. Inman River and Yilki to Bluff**

Meet at Barker Reserve, Bay Road, Victor Harbor, opposite Council Chambers.

☒ **Thursday 29 April. Bullock Hill**

Meet on side road by primary school, Ashbourne.

☒ **Friday 14 May. General Meeting**

Speaker: Terry Dennis — *White-Bellied Sea-Eagle and Eastern Osprey in SA in 2010.*

☒ **Sunday 16 May. Aldinga Scrub and Washpool**

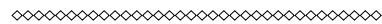
Meet at the entrance to Aldinga Scrub, Cox Road, Aldinga.

☒ **Wednesday 26 May. Currency Creek Gorge**

Meet at the Lions Park, Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road, Currency Creek.

☒ **Saturday 12 June. Nurragi**

Meet at the junction of Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road and Milang Road, Finniss.



... that your annual subs are due. The financial year for subscriptions runs from April 1 to 31 March.

If you wish to pay by cash or cheque please use the form on page 5. If you are paying by EFT instructions are there too. This method is for electronic funds transfer between bank accounts and is not suitable for cash payments. It is MOST IMPORTANT to include your name in the reference field.

This year's subs remain the same as last year. If you joined after 30 November 2009, no payment is due.

By the way, if you move house or change your email address please let us know so we don't lose touch!

Is your name badge overworked and looking tired ... or just strayed? Let me know — a quick email or indicate on your subs renewal form — and I'll send you a new one. Be friendly! Wear your name badge. Verle

- Meetings: Anglican Church Hall, cnr Crocker & Cadell Streets, Goolwa
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of odd months
- Outings: Meet 8.30 am. Bring lunch and a chair. See Events above.
- Contacts: Pat Uppill, 8552 4288; Judith Dyer, 8555 2736
fleurieubirds@gmail.com
- Website: fleurieubirdwatchers.org
- Newsletter: Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211



Friday 12 March

Denzel Murfet in the chair, welcomed all — 27 members — to the first General Meeting for the year.

Among the correspondence was a message of appreciation from Alicia and Dieter, American visitors to the Blanchetown campout.

Denzel updated news from the Committee. Members had met with an Alexandrina Council officer to discuss the Goolwa effluent ponds project. The site will include ornamental landscaping around ponds with walk-and bike-ways, and the bird hide will be re-located. Original planting lists suggested for the site by the late Joan Paton and Denzel Murfet have been emailed to the Council.

Each member has been allocated a membership number for use when accessing private property where authorisation is required. The number will appear on all new badges. Contact the Secretary if you need this number.

The General Meeting was held over while the Annual General Meeting was conducted. The Secretary read her report of the year's activities (see page 3). The Treasurer presented her report showing a healthy financial status and recommended that subscriptions remain unchanged for the ensuing year.

As the role of Chairperson has a two-year tenure Denzel conducted the election of officers.

Your new Committee comprises Denzel Murfet, Chairperson, and Committee Members Pat Uppill, Phyll Whellams, Judith Dyer, Teresa Jack, Wendy Phillips, Peter Gower and Verle Wood. In accordance with our Constitution specific responsibilities will be allocated at the next Committee Meeting.

The AGM was closed and the General Meeting continued with bird call.

Local sightings included

- » Cape Barren Geese, Sacred Kingfisher, Red Knot, Godwit, Eastern Curlew, Lewin's Rail and Nankeen Night Heron on Hindmarsh Island
- » Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo in Goolwa township — a rare event!
- » seven Little Egret and sixty Great Egret on the river at Goolwa
- » White-browed Babbler and White-winged Triller at Goolwa North
- » Wedge-tailed Eagle at Waitpinga, two adults and one juvenile
- » Kookaburra frequenting Goolwa
- » reduced numbers of Little Corella in Goolwa and Pt Elliot
- » Yellow-billed Spoonbill on river at Goolwa
- » large number of waders, Black Swan, Little Egret, Royal Spoonbill and raptors, at Point Sturt
- » Black-backed Magpie still around Bridge Terrace, Victor Harbor.

Denzel treated us to a most fascinating insight into his (Telstra) work scenario in Arnhem Land: a hard life with considerable privation, but time to observe the birds of the area in leisure hours.

Thanks to Wendy for preparing the suppa cuppa with goodies — appreciated by all.

If you missed the **Hooded Plover** segment on ABC *Stateline* 12 February I have a DVD of it for personal viewing.

Please contact me if you would like to catch up this interesting item.

Verle

My apologies for not acknowledging Teresa Jack as the photographer of photos in the February *Birdwatch*. We do thank her, and others, who generously share their photos. If you have images taken on outings we always like to have them to add to our photo library for use in newsletters, the website or presentations, and we will endeavour always to acknowledge you as photographer. Verle



Another successful year for our club has been completed. Many of our members have attended the various events which were planned throughout the year. This program included eighteen field trips to quite differing locations on the Fleurieu. Five evening meetings were held at which we were fortunate in having excellent speakers. The annually held Campout was this year centred at Blanchetown. Trips out into the mallee provided sightings of a variety of the birds that inhabit these areas while the campsite on the Murray supplied us with a good list of water birds. Two evening sessions made use of our new projector when we were able to see photographs of the day's sightings. Our year's events also included two social get-togethers, the annual dinner and the Christmas break-up at Hindmarsh Falls.

The Committee met five times during the year, one meeting being cancelled through lack of a quorum. On a number of occasions we have worked with the community on issues related to birds and birdwatching. Our brochures are available in Fleurieu libraries and we get frequent requests for information about good birdwatching sites. The projector has been well used for presentations to a number of local groups.

There have been six editions of our newsletter *Fleurieu Birdwatch* this year. It is a very informative and beautifully presented publication and we must thank Verle Wood for the enormous amount of work she puts into this. The website also provides information to a wide range of people. We know this as emails come from overseas from people intending to visit our region.

This is my first report as Secretary and I would like to acknowledge and thank members of the Committee for the enormous amount of support and help that I have received. There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes in the form of planning meetings and outings from which we, as members, benefit. We look forward to another interesting year.

Pat Uppill, Secretary



Newland Head Conservation Park

Saturday 13 February

A beautiful day greeted 17 members for our walk. We headed up the track to the water tank where some decided to turn back while others kept going along the loop track. Even that group split up and only four people ventured further on. These four had of course, the best sighting for the morning — a Shy Heathwren, a first for some.

Birds were hard to find but some of those seen were Golden Whistler (male and female), White-browed Babbler, Silvereye, White-browed Scrubwren, Superb Fairy-wren and Weebill.

We also walked on the beach to the Waitpinga Creek estuary, but not a lot to see there: Pacific Gull and juvenile, and Crested Tern. A most interesting find on the beach was the skeleton of a sea bird, unfortunately without its head so that made it difficult to identify. Another unusual find in the park was a rather vicious-looking arrow.

We ate lunch at Dennis Hut when we all came together again. A rather noisy Magpie tried hard to interrupt our talking and a Crescent Honeyeater also dropped in. The bird count was 30 species — a very good morning.

Pat Ashfield



The more adventurous watchers climbed to the top of the tank at Newland Head CP, for a better view of the scenery as well as the birds. Photo: Verle Wood



Crested Shrike-tit (F). Photo: Val Laird

Strathalbyn Effluent Ponds and Laratinga Wetlands

Sunday 14 March

Eleven members met at the Strathalbyn Railway Station on a very mild, lightly overcast morning. We proceeded to the Effluent Ponds and checked out the bird life there. We were all hoping to see the Crested Shrike-tit, which did not disappoint. On the water more than 170 Wood Duck were counted. We also had a great view of a Whistling Kite being dive-bombed by magpies, Red-rumped Parrot feeding on grass seeds, and within the hour, we had a bird count of 28 birds!

We then drove on to the Laratinga Wetlands at Mt Barker, and the car park was almost full. We all managed to find a parking spot and were joined by Peter Gower. He is very familiar with this site and was able to guide us to good viewing spots for several birds. The ponds had been drained and recently refilled, and there was plenty of activity, both in the trees and on the water. Again, Wood Duck were sighted in numbers, along with Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Grebe, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, and a solitary Masked Lapwing. A Clamorous Reed-warbler was fascinated by Bronwyn’s bird caller and we all had a very good close-up look at this lovely little bird.

The bird count totalled 46 birds for Laratinga including two Night Heron, three Yellow-billed Spoonbill, two Pelican, Little Pied Cormorant, Superb Fairy-wren, Magpie Lark, Common Bronzewing, Blackbird, Yellow Thornbill, New Holland Honeyeater, Rosella and White-plumed Honeyeater.

We were serenaded throughout our lunch and bird call by five Australian Magpie. All in all, a very pleasant morning was had by everyone.

Ann Gilbert



Basham Beach Park provides varied bird habitat. Photos: Verle Wood

Basham Beach and Lakala Reserve

Wednesday 24 March

On a mild overcast morning, five members set off for this walk. The area close to the caravan park was alive with Rainbow Lorikeet enjoying the gum blossom, and Red and Little Wattlebirds added to the fray. Traffic on the track was equally active with a constant stream of bikes, so after a few hundred metres it was good to depart and head bush. Many birds were seen — 30 species for the morning. The highlight was a pair of Peregrine Falcon. They probably did not have to do much hunting as we saw in total an estimated 1000 Rock Dove. Yes, ONE THOUSAND! In one series of four waves, we agreed on a count of 500 birds.

The sun was now out and a pleasant stroll along the beach and rocky foreshore completed the morning. Other notable sightings were Richard’s Pipit, Crested and Caspian Terns, Common Sandpiper and Sooty Oystercatcher.

We moved on to Lakala Reserve, this being a pleasant place to stop for lunch. A new list of 20 species in 25 minutes seemed adequate for this improved reserve. A Nankeen Night Heron quietly resting on a small natural island surveying the cleaned-up shoreline was this location’s best sighting.

Nick Tebneff

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... but this time it was a House Sparrow and a Collared Sparrowhawk flew into Hotel Victor’s Flinders Room. The raptor was caught, his identity queried, deemed a minor and evicted to a nearby Norfolk Pine by Elaine O’Shaughnessy. His companion escaped unescorted. “I just talked to calm him down ... but he obviously couldn’t understand my lingo”, said Elaine.



Late news
Plato and a platypus walked into a bar ...



Black-chinned Honeyeater in typical feeding pose. Photo: Val Laird

BIRD FOR THOUGHT

During 2008 while discussing the value of counting bird numbers versus present or absent records I noticed I hadn't recorded Black-chinned Honeyeater at Scott Conservation Park since August 1997. On looking further I noted also I had not done many visits to Scott CP since 1997. During 2009 I did six surveys of Scott CP and didn't record any Black-chinned Honeyeaters. I enquired into the Fleurieu Birdwatchers' records which showed the last record for Scott CP was also 1997. Further research shows our last record for near Scott CP was 10 September 2006 when we heard a bird while doing a survey of Currency Creek Gorge, near the pistol club.

Looking through Black-chinned Honeyeater records for Currency Creek Winery area showed our last sighting was at Gilbert Siding March 2003. I have also looked at the Ashbourne area and the last record we have there is October 1999 at Meyer Scrub. There was a good number of sightings at Port Elliot from February 2003 to June 2008 but nothing since.

Why Black-chinned Honeyeaters have not been recorded recently could be the lack of observers and surveys, or the birds have actually left the area. In the case of Port Elliot, members living there are always on the lookout.

Black-chinned Honeyeaters are readily seen along the Inman River near the old Victor Harbor effluent works to Encounter Bay area, still being seen to this day. There are also occasional sightings from Nangawooka Flora Park. Our last record is six birds along the Hindmarsh River 27 November 2008.

Any records of Black-chinned Honeyeaters especially from the Currency Creek to Ashbourne areas will be good news for this rare bird.

Denzel Murfet

To pay subscriptions by EFT

Members who are familiar with the process may wish to pay their membership by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

The following information may be needed to make an EFT payment.

- Our financial institution is Bank SA
- Bank SA's BSB number is 105-160 (or 105160 if the hyphen cannot be entered)
- Our account number is 015551140.
- The organisation's name is Fleurieu Birdwatchers Incorporated (abbreviate or truncate if necessary).

On the Transfer Form there will also be a field probably called "Reference". This is usually used for the account number displayed on a bill. **MOST IMPORTANT:** For a Fleurieu Birdwatchers payment, enter your name and "subs" so we know who the payment is from. (Otherwise, when this payment appears in our financial statement, the entry may display your account name, or the contents of the reference field, or something quite unhelpful, such as "Payment".) As the field may be limited to 16 characters, you may need to truncate your name a bit but hopefully still keep it recognisable.

After you have made the funds transfer, so that we can match up these entries with expected payments, please send an email message to us to notify us that you have made the payment. Include in the subject "Subscription", and in the message write your name, the amount and the payment date.



Annual SUBSCRIPTIONS for 2010 are now DUE

Membership year is from 1 April to 31 March of following year.

- Single \$20 Family \$25 (2 or more people at the same address) Junior \$12

Please place this slip, together with your payment, in the enclosed envelope and forward to the Treasurer, PO Box 80, Victor Harbor SA 5211

Name Amount enclosed \$

NB To save postage, receipts will be forwarded with snailmail newsletters, or by hand at meetings and outings where possible. Please enclose a SSAE if you need a receipt mailed to you.

Thank you