

APRIL 2011

# Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



#### Newsletter Contributions:

Please send all items for inclusion in future newsletters to :  
fleurieubirds@gmail.com

- **Saturday 16th April. Milang / Clayton**  
Railway Carriage, Milang 35°24'32"S 138°58'17"E
- **Thursday 28th April. Manning Reserve McLaren Flat**  
Gate on eastern boundary, Whiting Road, McLaren Flat  
35°11'26"S 138°34'49"E
- **Friday 13th May General Meeting**  
**Pat Ashfield will talk on the works of John Gould**
- **Sunday 15th May. Mount Billy CP**  
Hindmarsh Valley Tennis Courts, Hindmarsh Valley Road  
35°29'49"S 138°37'35"E
- **Wednesday 25th May. Mount Magnificent**  
Junction of Nangkita and Enterprise Roads, Nangkita  
35°19'18"S 138°40'4"E
- **Saturday 18th June. Cox Scrub, Coles Crossing**  
Corner of Nangkita Road and Heifer Lane, east of Nangkita  
35°21'4"S 138°42'16"E
- **Thursday 30th June . Aldinga CP**  
Entrance, Cox Road, Aldinga  
35°17'50"S 138°27'30"E

#### CAMPOUT NEWS—BENDLEBY RANGES OCTOBER

Campout will be on the 7th 8th and 9th October

Bendleby Ranges is a 3 1/2 hour drive from Adelaide, north of Orroroo

Accommodation has Shearers Quarters, for 14 people at \$36 pp/night,

Camping with facilities is \$22 pp/night, Bush Camping is \$17 pp/night,

Camping Facilities: new camp kitchen, dining areas, hot showers and toilets

Bookings for Shearers Quarters: Phone Judith Dyer 8555 2736 ASAP

Information on website: [www.bendlebyranges.com](http://www.bendlebyranges.com)

**Meetings:** Anglican Church Hall, corner Crocker and 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:** [www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org](http://www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org)

**Newsletter:** Contact fleurieubirds@gmail.com

# OUTINGS

## Hindmarsh Island. 18<sup>th</sup> Feb.2011

14 members met at Ferryman 's Reserve, Hindmarsh Island at 8.30am. It was a dry, cool day of approx 18 degrees following a massive 70mm RAIN the previous day and evening.

With exceptionally high water in Lake Alexandrina and high flows through the Barrage at Goolwa and out the Murray Mouth this summer it has noticeably changed the bird life from the previous few years with a huge decline in wader birds. However, it has increased the 'large bird' numbers as they feed constantly with the water pouring down the Murray-Darling system and down to the Coorong.

As we headed off to Wyndgate we saw a Brown Falcon sitting on the fence and at the creek crossing we checked out the ducks, ibis and other water birds. We saw 2 Royal Spoonbills with the male in breeding plumage showing its long head feathers. Two Wedge-tailed Eagles were close by.

Along Mundoo Channel Road were several White-fronted Chats. We walked to the creek crossing and disturbed a young Night Heron. This area revealed a little Brown Thornbill, Fairy-wren and lots of Singing Honeyeaters.

So many birds could be viewed from the Murray Mouth Lookout, it is well worth a visit if you have not been recently. Loads of sea birds were present on the sand spits looking across the water and further towards Goolwa were groups of pelicans, swans, terns, spoonbills, oystercatchers and shelducks to name a few.

All up we saw 47 species for the morning which included only 2 wader species, greenshank and godwit. The highlight for me was seeing paddocks full of Cape Barren Geese which made it a very enjoyable outing.

Wendy Phillips

## Newland Head Conservation Park Sunday 13th March

Twelve members assembled at a very crowded campsite, it was a long weekend and the weather forecast was good. Once parking had been found we set off under rather leaden skies, it was pleasantly warm with a slight south westerly breeze. The first bird for the day was a Grey Currawong which drew attention to itself by calling plaintively as it flew through the scrub. Then a male Scarlet Robin made its appearance on a dead tree & stayed round long enough for most of the party to have a good sighting. At the highest point of the path through the bushland saw quite a few Tree Martins flitting about but there were no woodswallows amongst them. Elegant Parrots announced their presence with their distinctive call; we saw about 30 of them altogether.

The light was not very good & this infused the good natured arguments about which thornbills we were seeing with an additional cut & thrust: the final agreement was that there were Yellow-rumped, Buff-rumped and Brown about. On the way back to the lookout a small group of Brown-headed Honeyeaters flew backwards & forwards through the trees alongside the path. Three raptors made fleeting appearances; there were 2 Wedge-tailed Eagles, a Collared Sparrowhawk and a Nankeen Kestrel.

A small group of us went over the top of the sandhill to the beach, there we found a hardy group of fisher folk watched by 100 gulls and a similar number of crested terns. There was not much on the lagoon, a couple of dotterels plus about four Masked Lapwings were pecking in the shallows. The four ducks sighted on the water proved to be Pacific Blacks. A White-faced Heron skulked in the shadows of the vegetation along the edge. The sighting of the day was a Great Cormorant which sat on a dead branch overhanging the water preening itself.

During the bird call those birders who hadn't come down to the beach reported seeing White-fronted Chats, Superb Fairy-wrens and White-browed Babblers in the area around the parked cars. In all we saw 49 species, which was a good number for a day which didn't seem very promising at the start.

Edith St George

# AGM REPORT

## AGM 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2011

31 members attended the meeting and the president, Denzel Murfet gave an update on the previous committee meeting held a week earlier. At this meeting future outings for 2011 were discussed and plans made to accept volunteers to lead the walks following Judith Dyer 's request to leave this to other members. At the moment 3 people have volunteered and come forward to assist for the next 3 outings on week days and Denzel will continue to lead them on the weekends when he is at home. Geoff Evans will lead the Manning Scrub, and Nick Tebneff the Onkaparinga one. Wendy Phillips has offered to fill in on weekends when Denzel is not available.

The FBW brochure is to have Val Laird 's name removed as a contact person. The Annual Campout in Oct. at Bendleby Ranges was discussed.

### Other business:

Denzel reported that his meeting with Council worker Craig Ostigh at the Sewerage Ponds on Kessell Rd. Goolwa did not go too well and the site that Denzel and Judith chose for the bird hide was rejected. The council are still working in the area of the Ponds and people can visit the site out of work time so as not to disrupt the workmen and use of heavy equipment. The ducks have so much water this season that the Ponds have not been so popular for birds of late. Much planting and further landscaping will occur later to improve the area surrounding the ponds.

Peter Gower informed us that the Gemtree Wetlands at McLaren Vale will officially open in April to the general public. The site is about 3kms east of McLaren Flat and had good water areas and new and old vegetation around the area and well worth a future visit for birdwatchers.

Andrew Jeffery gave an update on the state of the Hooded Plovers at Hindmarsh River Estuary where young were hatched but unfortunately lost, probably to foxes. Denzel reported 2 young were raised at Basham Beach successfully and thought one chick survived at the Inman River Estuary.

### Reports:

The Secretary, Pat Uppill gave her Annual Report followed by the Treasurer, Phyll Whellams.

Whilst there are almost 100 members who subscribe to the FBW and receive the regular newsletter support at the ground level has been very thin this year. With Verle Wood hanging up the Editor 's job after 12/13 years and Judith Dyer and Ann Turner not able to lead future outings more support is required by ordinary members for the club to continue in its present form.

As the club is quite financial it was decided to keep the fees the same for 2011.

Election of Officers ':

President Denzel Murfet

Secretary Pat Uppill

Treasurer Judith Dyer

Committee Members: Include Phyll Whellams, Wendy Phillips, Pat Batchelor and Neil Cheshire. Outgoing members: Peter Gower and Teresa Jack.

### BIRDCALL:

Cape Barren Geese seem to be on the move earlier this year because of the rains. Buff-banded Rail at Victor Harbor, 2 Beautiful Firetails at Deep Creek, 31 Pied Oystercatchers at Goolwa Beach and the following waders on Yorke Peninsula: Grey-tailed Tattler, Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, Banded Stilt, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Fairy Tern and Hooded Plover.

## FAIRY TERN UPDATE

BY Kerri-Anne Bartley

DENR. Wyndgate. HI



Photos: Kerri Bartley

Some volunteers from Fleurieu Birdwatchers and Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group were trained by the National Parks to assist in surveying Fairy Tern nesting sites close to the Murray Mouth area on Younghusband Peninsula. Fox baiting had begun earlier and an area was fenced off in expectation that the birds would return to nest again this year.

However, they had other ideas and nested on the Beach side south of the Murray Mouth which made access even harder as it meant going by boat from Mundoo Channel and doing a long walk across the end of the Peninsula to the nesting site.

Professor David Paton has been monitoring the decline in Fairy Terns for some time and whilst 350 birds were recorded last year in the Coorong NP only 174 were sighted Jan 2011. This was a 48% reduction and becoming crucial for their survival.

There was great excitement to find a large colony breeding and the first chick hatched on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan. Banding of the chicks commenced at the end of January and on the 4<sup>th</sup> Feb a team of volunteers went to assist with further banding and discovered all the adult terns and chicks had gone. Fox prints were all over the area. This was total devastation for all those involved.

A small number of birds have been seen again on Younghusband Peninsula lately and further monitoring is occurring. Some young adults are amongst them and thought to have survived the onslaught of the destructive fox!!

Birds Australia has now listed the Fairy Tern as vulnerable.

### At the AGM: —

Judith spoke of her experiences at Kalamurina, an Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) property to the west of the Birdsville Track. Her photos showed the amazing contrast between the cycles of wet and dry periods experienced in this area. In 2008 Judith and Ann volunteered to assist in Bird Surveying on Kalamurina for AWC. They were disturbed by the degraded country they found and Ann wrote in her diary when referring to revegetation – ‘ Even with a lot of rain I feel the wind will defeat it by shifting too much sand – but I would like to be proved wrong ’. They returned in 2009 and this time the Warburton Creek was flooding with water that had travelled from far up in Queensland. The areas close to the river were lush and verdant but outer lying areas were still very distressed.

However, when Judith returned in October 2010 much rain had fallen over the whole property and transformation had occurred with annual herbage colouring the once barren sand dunes. Coolibahs, which had appeared as dead in the previous seasons, were showing new growth, bird numbers had increased and nesting was occurring. Such is the resilience of the Australian bush.

Eyrean Grasswren

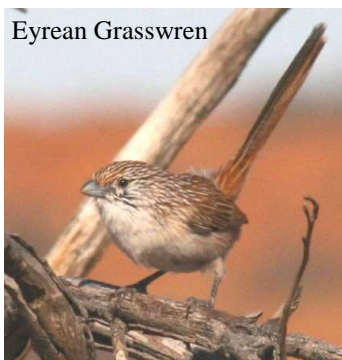


Photo: Michael Kearns

Banded Whiteface



Photo: Judith Dyer



Photos:  
Peter Gower

## Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos (YTBC) are often heard as they fly above the tree canopy, but how much do we know about them? Is the population secure? Being a large slow moving species with distinctive loud call general observations may give a misleading account of their numbers when compared to other more secretive and less visible species. The species roam widely and the same flock may be observed 60km away on the same day giving the impression of much larger numbers. Their vulnerable status is based largely on a presumed low population, a lowered reproductive rate due to the reduction in numbers of large tree hollows and importantly a lack of suitable food near nesting areas. Unfortunately at present we don't have a good idea of how many birds exist to monitor trends in population. We expect there to be between 1000 and 2000 birds in the Mount Lofty Ranges but clarifying this will be a major step forward.

The Biodiversity Conservation Unit (BCU) has decided to attempt a YTBC census this year to give us a better idea of how many birds remain and where they are congregating outside of their breeding season. Typically the YTBC have a long breeding season over spring and summer at which times the birds disperse across the Mount Lofty Ranges in search of nesting hollows with convenient food resources nearby. Once nest attendance duties have ceased for the year and young have fledged, YTBC's tend to congregate in the safety of large flocks over autumn and winter, navigating the region for food. It is at this time that counting the YTBC will be more practical. We expect the birds to begin congregating from about early April.

We would appreciate your help in observing and reporting YTBC observations especially large groups. Observations simply made as part of your normal activities is all we are after.

Please send the information to **Luke Price** via e-mail [luke.price@sa.gov.au](mailto:luke.price@sa.gov.au) including:

Observers Name	
Date of Observation	
Time of Observation	
Approximate Number of Birds	
Location Description (corner of x road and y road)	
Habitat Description (e.g. Stringybark woodland)	
GPS coordinates if possible	
Behaviour (feeding or flying)	
Photograph	

This information will help us build a picture of where the YTBC are congregating and where their favourite feed sites are. When (and if) we get a good idea of these sites we will organise a time to go and find the birds at the different locations, count them and gather other information like sex ratios of flocks. Too easy!

Please let me know if you have any questions. Your help will be invaluable!

Anthony Abley, Bush Management Advisor, Adelaide Region, Regional Conservation Delivery

T: 08 8336 0903 F: 08 8336 0999 M: 0428 104 894 E: [anthony.abley@sa.gov.au](mailto:anthony.abley@sa.gov.au)

A: 115 Maryvale Road, Athelstone SA 5076

# Annual SUBSCRIPTIONS for 2011 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 forward this **slip**, together with your **payment**,  
to the Treasurer, 30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa, 5214*

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.

If paying by EFT please follow the instructions below.

*Thank you*

## To pay subscriptions by EFT

The following information is needed to make an EFT payment.

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

**Important: In the Reference Box on the Transfer Screen, please enter your name (abbreviate if necessary).**

If there is a box on the screen to send an email notification to the payee, please check this box and enter **fleurieubirds@gmail.com** or send an email direct to this address notifying us of your payment (or do both)

*\*\*\* Failure to do this will mean we do not know, when checking the bank statement, who has made the payment \*\*\**

## WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

Bob Daly of Goolwa

Peter Owen of Willunga

Rick Sullivan and Diana Rogers of Encounter Bay



## THANK YOU

Thank you to those members who responded to our Fleurieu Birdwatcher email check.

Our new Gmail 'Contacts' list seems to be working well.

To any members who do not receive an e-newsletter and are prepared to accept their newsletter this way please email your details to [fleurieubirds@gmail.com](mailto:fleurieubirds@gmail.com) so that we may add you to the list.

Less than 20 members now receive a Snailmail newsletter and this has helped us to maintain subscriptions at the current rate for several years.