



December 2009

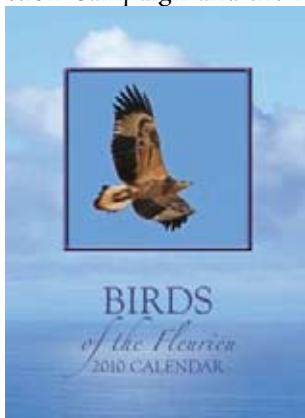
Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



- ✧ **Saturday 5 December. Breakup Hindmarsh Falls**
Walk at 4 pm followed by a BYO everything picnic tea.
Meet in the lower car park at the falls, off Hindmarsh Valley Road.
- 2010**
- ✧ **Friday 8 January. Twilight Walk, Hindmarsh River**
Meet at 7 pm near corner of Hindmarsh Road and Wattle Avenue, Victor Harbor.
- ✧ **Saturday 13 February. Newland Head CP**
Meet at Dennis Hut in the campground.
- ✧ **Friday 12 March. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**
- ✧ **Sunday 14 March. Laratinga Wetlands/Strathalbyn Eff Ponds**
Meet at the Railway Station, Strathalbyn

The 2010 edition of the *Birds of the Fleurieu* Calendar is now available at \$10 each. Profits from sales are used to fund environmental projects including a White-bellied Sea-Eagle Protection Campaign and the Habitat



Restoration Project at SeaWings, Waitpinga Cliffs, a Heritage Agreement area. Contact Elizabeth Steele-Collins, seawings@waitpingacliffs.com, 8552 8822, or check your local library or commercial outlets.

Thank you to all who have made *Fleurieu Birdwatch* such excellent reading this year. I do appreciate your willingness to share your personal experiences of outings which add a friendly touch to our newsletter.

According to the Alaskan Department of Fish and Game, while both male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to mid-December.

Female reindeer retain their antlers till after they give birth in the spring.

Therefore, according to EVERY historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, EVERY single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen, has to be a girl.



In any case, enjoy the Season and



- 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 13 November

Nick Tebneff took the chair in Denzel Murfet's absence. He welcomed 21 members and two visitors on this very warm evening.

We received with sadness news of the death of Kit Smith, a former resident of Goolwa and a foundation member of Fleurieu Birdwatchers, who passed away in Melbourne earlier this year. Kit moved interstate to be with family in latter years and until recently, was pleased to keep in touch with our group through the newsletter.

Kit was an avid birdlover, always willing to share her knowledge and experience. She enjoyed her outings with the group in its infant years, sometimes watching from her chair at a vantage point. One anecdote relates that she eyeballed a snake until members returned from their bird walk so that others could share the special sighting!

Plans for the imminent re-development of the Goolwa Effluent Ponds have been disappointing in that Fleurieu Birdwatchers have not been kept informed as was earlier promised. A copy of the proposed plan was tabled. The mound and hide are to be demolished, and a platform to be erected near the first pond is thought to be too close for effective viewing. The Alexandrina Council believes their proposal, with a shared bike path and landscaping, addresses the needs of the wider public.

In view of the predicted high temperatures for Sunday 15 November, it was agreed that the scheduled outing to Nurragi be cancelled. Members were emailed and a note placed on the website.

Bird call included

- » Mallee Ringneck at Clayton
- » A number of local sightings of Cockatiel
- » Population explosion of Native-hen
- » Banded Stilt and Avocet near Parnka on the Coorong
- » Dead Short-tailed Shearwater near Hindmarsh estuary, Chiton Rock and many beaches on the southeast coast
- » Also dead, Grey-headed Albatross and Little Penguin chicks on Encounter Bay
- » Pallid Cuckoo at Gluepot
- » Lots of Mistletoebird and an albino Blackbird near Clare
- » Freckled Duck, Lewin's Rail and Great Crested Grebe at Goolwa
- » Pied Butcherbird at Mt Compass
- » A nest built entirely of human hair and containing one eggshell, was tabled: found at Pt Elliot near the home of a lady who collects hair from local businesses.

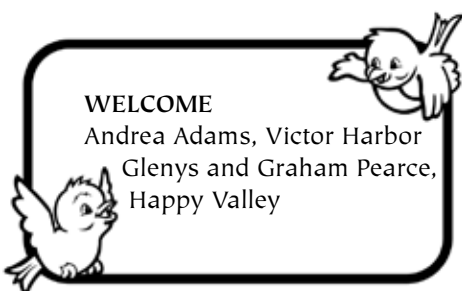
Guest Speaker for the evening was Emma Stephens, NRM Coast, Estuary and Marine Officer with the Department of Environment and Heritage. Emma has a special interest, professional and private, in Hooded Plover and is actively involved in surveying and monitoring them on the Fleurieu Peninsula. She showed a presentation given earlier this year by Grainne Macguire to a workshop at Yankalilla on monitoring HP. Grainne's work has been funded largely by Birds Australia and has been focused on the eastern seaboard and Victorian beaches. However, the experiences and findings of the monitoring by the large numbers of volunteers involved are relevant to SA. Emma hopes that the project may be integrated with SA efforts. Interesting was the use of appropriate signage to encourage public awareness, and the provision of shelters for chicks on exposed beaches.

Lively question time and discussion followed Emma's presentation before Nick proposed a vote of thanks which members heartily supported.

Neville Cayley's book, *What Bird is That?* was once the ornithologists' bible. A large hard-covered copy in excellent condition and with beautiful illustrations has been donated to the Goolwa Library through long-time member and avid birdlover, Rosalie Sharpe. A copy is already available at Victor Harbor Library.

This book can be a valuable reference as it lists birds within a particular habitat rather than in families as modern field guides do.

Members were reminded of pelagic trips from Pt McDonnell arranged once or twice a month. Provision is for 12 people each trip, which provides excellent viewing of sea birds up to 30 km offshore. 08 8336 3325



Outings

Normanville and Ingalalla Falls

Saturday 10 October

It was a fine and sunny morning for our walk at Normanville on the foreshore and around the caravan park alongside the creek. There were nine members for this walk. We spotted 33 species on our leisurely stroll, including six Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo. We were also pleased to see one Sandpiper. There were Australian Magpie on nests and a Nankeen Kestrel diving for food in the paddock by the caravan park.

Our next walk was at Ingalalla Falls where a latecomer increased our number to 10. We had a very relaxing walk into the falls and were treated to Crescent Honeyeater playing in the bushes, Mistletoebird—the male was a brilliant red—and Adelaide Rosella going in and out of hollows. We ended up with 26 species at the falls.

I enjoyed our time together and look forward to the next bird outing.
Graeme Mountford



Tall trees and watchers at Ingalalla Falls.
Photo: Peter Gower

CAMPOUT

Roonka

Friday 23 October

A keen group of 33 met in the afternoon at the Riverside Caravan Park for the first outing of the Campout. Our group included visitors, Dieter and Alicia from the USA. The afternoon was warm with light cloud and a light breeze.

On our way to Roonka Scout Camp a White-winged Fairy-wren spotted in low bush by the roadside, added to our enthusiasm.

On arrival we split into smaller groups. At the river were Wood Duck, Grey Teal, Pelican, Pied and Great Cormorants, White Ibis, a Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Darters and Purple Swamphen. Nearby approximately 60 Black-tailed Native-hen, the largest number seen for a while, proved a talking point.

Further into the bushes Variegated Fairy-wren was seen. A Mallee Ringneck in the peppertree kept our interest for a while and Crimson Rosella (Yellow form) were about. Other species seen on the outing were White-browed and Chestnut-crowned Babbler, Brown Treecreeper, Clamorous Reed-warbler and Little Grassbird. Overhead were Whistling Kite and Nankeen Kestrel.

On the return trip to the Caravan Park a Richard's Pipit sitting on a post stopped traffic.

The evening bird count totalled 48 species and we were treated to pictures taken of some of the birds. A good start to the Campout!

Margaret Dreyer



Above. The tranquil Roonka Scout Camp site. Photo: Colleen Evans

Below. Juvenile Richard's Pipit posed for identification. Photo: Mark Filkin



Brookfield Conservation Park

Saturday 24 October

Thirtysix birdwatchers and their cars made quite a crowd, but once the car hopping system got going, people were able to fan out and birdwatch at their leisure.

For the first time in quite a few visits to Brookfield, I didn't see Chestnut Quail-thrush or Southern Scrub-robin, though others did. I did see Gilbert's Whistler and identified Pied Honeyeater, which took a while given the large number of White-winged Triller in the park. It's always a pleasure to see Variegated and White-winged Fairy-wren, and Crimson Chat was in its usual area.

Masked, Black-faced and White-browed Woodswallow took us to lunch, where everyone looked hot, as the day had warmed up considerably. Our total of birds for the day was 51.

Many thanks to the organisers.

Jean Boomer



Owlet Night-jar intrigued watchers at Brookfield. Photo: Val Laird



A trek through the scrub at Stockyard Plain brought watchers to the water's edge. Photo: Colleen Evans

Stockyard Plain Disposal Basin

Sunday 25 October

The full complement of happy campers travelled to Stockyard Plain, an 1870 ha reserve 12 km sw from Waikerie. Salt interception schemes capture saline groundwater after irrigation using deep bores near the river and pump it to this specially created disposal basin. Conditions were warm and windy as watchers spread out into the bush.

Exciting sightings at the first port of call were of Chestnut-crowned Babbler, White-fronted Chat, Cockatiel, and Brown Treecreeper with a nesting pair of Red-capped Robin conveniently near the car parking space. A neat mud cup in a tree proved to be the nest of White-winged Chough.

We moved further in to the reserve and found a sheltered spot for lunch. Here more waterbirds were observed, including about 50 Pink-eared duck and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. The convoy then spread out along the outskirts of the property and found White-winged Fairy-wren among the low bush and a couple of Emu passing through. Three of our watchers were drawn to some taller shrubbery where they found two immature Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, possibly being fed by wrens (unidentified).

The tally at bird call was 74 species. Wow! What a wonderful day and weekend.

Ponde and Brown's Road, Monarto

Monday 26 October

Twenty campers left Blanchetown by 8.30 am to travel via Mannum ferry to private property at Ponde.

The first thing to greet us was a raptor — a Little Eagle. The property is set up as a Birds of Prey and Wombat Awareness area. Frank, who worked at one time with Steve Irwin, told us about the property and what he hoped to achieve there. His first introduction was an injured Peregrine Falcon which was happy to give us a demonstration of its ability to get some food for itself — with the help of Frank's lure, of course.

We were then introduced to the Wombat Awareness ladies and to the house residents. A Barn Owl seemed to rule the roost, and in cages were a Galah and a Quaker Parrot, from the Asia/Pacific region.

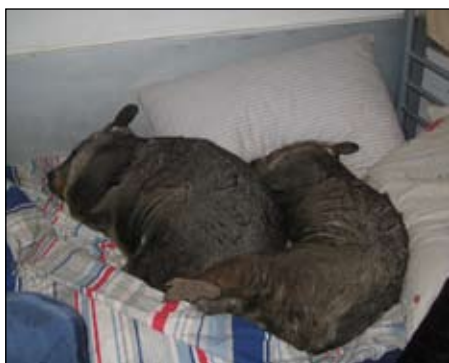
Then there were the wombats! — on the floor, in the beds, on someone's lap, looking for a feed or a cuddle. A Common Wombat and a Hairy-nosed Wombat, took every opportunity to rub themselves between someone's legs or get outside as quickly as possible! Lastly, we were treated, two members at a time, to the feeding of a juvenile White-bellied Sea-Eagle which was also recuperating from injury. It was easily upset, hence the caution of two by two.

After leaving this interesting place of refuge, 17 of us drove to Brown's Road, Monarto, for lunch. Some members enjoyed a walk through the scrub, spotting Varied Sitella and other elusive species.

Colleen Evans



Watchful Barn Owl and snoozing wombats at Ponde. Photos: Verle Wood



Coles Crossing Road

Thursday 26 November

After a little confusion about meeting place and location, seven members and two visitors started the trek along Coles Crossing Road. The heavy rains up North had left us with an overcast sky but mild temperature.

Birds in flight were hard to distinguish but we all agreed on a square tail for the two Collared Sparrowhawks moving over the cut down pines. There were few birds at the start and even less in the northern sandy section. By going through a small patch of natural woodland on the way back we had good views of Scarlet Robin, six altogether.

Our total for the morning was 33 species with Galah and Little Raven taking the most numbers. Only four types of honeyeaters with New Hollands enjoying the flowering bottlebrush the most. All the other trees along the track were in bud only, with Silvereyes and Superb Fairy-wrens most common.

Denzel Murfet