



December 2013

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



INVITATION

Christmas Break-Up

Saturday 7 December at 4 pm

Laratinga Wetlands Bald Hills Rd Mt Barker

Bird Walk around Lakes followed by meal

Bring a Salad or Sweet to share and own drinks

Meat provided. RSVP to Wendy on 8555 0634

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

Twilight walk

Friday 17th January 6.30pm

Basham Regional Park

Meet at car park near entrance to Pt. Elliott Caravan Park

WANTED:
CAMPOUT PHOTOS
FOR WEBSITE
Please email Verle at
verlew@bigpond.net.au
and include the
location.

FBW Website Statistics October:

Site Visits	107
New Visitors	72
Australia	91
Overseas	16



Latham's Snipe Photo: Peter Gower

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: Neil Cheshire on 8552 7904 or fleurieubirds@gmail.com

Website: www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org

Newsletter: Contact fleurieubirds@gmail.com

OUTINGS

(This write-up should have been in the October newsletter but OOPS! we missed it)
Ferries-McDonald and Monarto Conservation Parks. 31 July 2013

Although these two parks are near to each other, the habitats are quite different and so were the birds we observed. Fifteen people set out on a cool, overcast morning, firstly at Ferries-McDonald CP, where 19 species were identified. A flock of about 30 Yellow-rumped Thornbills were disturbed on our arrival. During our short walk on the northern edge of the park we saw a number of Spotted Pardalotes and Weebills, as well as having an excellent look at 2 White-eared Honeyeaters. As the bush in the park is quite dense, it is hard to penetrate except on a path.

A short distance away is Monarto CP, which is a pretty little park with a well-marked walking trail. Gums and a number of native plants, including Grevillias and Correas, were in flower, so the Honeyeaters were in evidence, enjoying the bounty. Highlights of the morning were the Tawny-crowned, Brown-headed and White-fronted Honeyeaters, seen along with Spiny-cheeked, New Holland and Singing Honeyeaters. A group of 8 White-browed Babblers were seen, 2 Shy Heathwrens, a Southern Scrub Robin, a pair of Golden Whistlers and a Ringneck Parrot. In all, only 23 species were seen (or heard) at Monarto CP. However, we were delighted to see some of the less common species, which made the outing well worthwhile.

Thanks to Peter Gower for leading the outing and helping with identification of the honeyeaters, in particular.

Pauline Dundas



White-eared Honeyeater Photo: Peter Gower

ROBE Campout—Friday 18 October

A large group of birdwatchers and photographers met at 3pm by the Long Beach Caravan Park all anticipating a successful weekend, despite the strong and continuing winds. Our first site was Fox Lake where we expected to see Latham's Snipe. Up to twenty birds were seen at various times, either dipping their long bills into the mud in search of food or resting, well camouflaged amongst the samphire. This was a great start to the weekend as my previous sighting of Latham's Snipe had been fleeting. Feeding with the Snipe were three Red-kneed Dotterels and further out some Little Black Cormorants and a group of Black-tailed Native-hens. Chestnut Teal were the most common ducks in many areas and the only bird-life on Pub Lake which we next visited.

A walk around the cliffs of Guichen Bay towards the town added New Holland Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds and the dominant Blackbirds to our list. The windswept and rocky shoreline resulted in only one Sooty Oystercatcher and one Pied Cormorant. With a list of around twenty birds this walk proved a successful start to our weekend.

Pat Uppill

Photos: Bob Daly



Latham's Snipe



Red-kneed Dotterel

ROBE Campout—Saturday 19 October

Bob's Mob

After meeting at 7.30 outside the Long Beach Caravan Park, Robe, Wendy and her group went direct to Southend and Bob's Mob proceeded in convoy to Beachport. Our first stop was at Woolley Lake just north of the town where we split to take the path through thick vegetation around the lake. Mosquitos of the four engine B52 variety attacked in well organised squadrons but we were not deterred from our task. (Thankyou Mr.Deet) Early on the walk a Beautiful Firetail presented briefly but was only seen well by one person. Brush Bronzewing were calling and a variety of common bush birds were seen. The coast and beaches on the north side of Beachport, spectacular with rough seas, were then checked. Australasian Gannets were seen in the distance offshore and closer in an immature Kelp Gull and Black-faced Cormorants were recorded.

Coffee and cake was taken at the Beachport Cafe and our UK visitor Peter Merchant was quick to spot two Australian Hobbies mobbing a Little Raven at the top of the Norfolk Pines.

From Beachport we drove to Southend and out to Cape Buffon. In rough seas, cray-fishing vessels were returning to Southend past the Cape. With telescopic aid we were able to identify Shy Albatrosses following the boats in. (A life bird for our visitor) An unexpected bird was an Eastern Curlew flying north past the Cape about 100 metres offshore. Some of us remained at the Cape whilst Bob's sub-group went walking and discovered a nesting Sooty Oystercatcher. Interesting to note that during her talk the previous evening Maureen Christie mentioned that in all her years of birding in the South-East she had never found a Sooty Oystercatcher's nest.



On the return to Robe we made a short stop at Drain M where there were Swamp Harriers, Caspian Tern, White and Straw-necked Ibis.

An interesting day with 53 species seen. Thank you Bob for leading our group.

Neil Cheshire



ROBE Campout - Sunday 20 October

Before leaving the caravan park we again split into two groups with Bob's group heading off to Freshwater Lake in Little Dip Conservation Park. The conditions were fine but cool and overcast. Prior to heading off for a walk around the lake Neil Cheshire played us the call of the Rufous Bristlebird, for those unfamiliar with this bird. The melaleuca scrub was very thick and provided great cover for the many White-browed Scrubwrens that were glimpsed and heard. Despite being bothered by mosquitoes, birdwatchers managed to see Brown Thornbill, Silvereye, Red-browed Finch, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Golden Whistler, Grey Currawong, Eastern Yellow Robin, Little Raven, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Red Wattlebird, as well as a very elusive Fan-tailed Cuckoo. In an open sandy area a small group of White-browed Babblers and Superb Fairy-wrens were spotted.

After a brief morning tea break we moved onto Little Dip Beach, where it was quite windy. On the rocky island offshore were seen Starling, Rock Dove, Silver Gull, and a Sooty Oystercatcher. There was much discussion over a bird perched on a high rock on the island and "Osprey" was mentioned. Bitter disappointment followed when the bird in question was identified through a telescope as an unusually coloured Rock Dove.

With the possibility of Osprey vanquished we drove to Big Dip Lake for a walk along an open track. Many birds could be heard in the heath thickets but spotting them was difficult, and made doubly so by the plagues of mosquitos.

Campout—Sunday continued....

Grey Fantail, Silvereye, Blackbird, Superb Fairy-wren, White-faced Heron and Brown Falcon were positively identified. The two groups re-united for lunch at Old Man Lake. A pair of Fan-tailed Cuckoos was heard, and thanks to Peter Gower for alerting us to the faint calling of Beautiful Firetails. Grebes were spotted on the lake in the far distance and a Pied Oystercatcher flew overhead as we were leaving.

The afternoon was free for our own pursuits. The highlight of a trip to the Sewage ponds was Blue-billed Duck and Musk Duck. Faye Lush spotted Rufous Bristlebirds near the Obelisk. We all met up again for the evening meal at the Robe Hotel. Neil did the birdcall, which was a very impressive 90 species for the campout so far.

Ann and Les Houghton showed us some amazing photos of a Latham's Snipe with its bill in an angular up-turned position.

Many thanks to Wendy and Bob for organising another **wonderful** day.

Julie Turner



Campout— Monday 21 October Butcher's Gap.

A reduced group of birdwatchers arrived at Butcher's Gap on Pink's Beach Road near Kingston at 10 am to meet James Ferguson (President of the Friends of Butcher's Gap) and were given bird lists of the area and advice on staying on the western side of the park if we did not want to get our feet wet.

It had rained all the way from Robe to Kingston and eased off as we walked the freshly mown track through lovely native bush. Here we saw lots of Wrens, Silvereyes, Wattlebirds, New Hollands and Spiny-cheeked HEs. and Thornbills. On the Lake there were 150 or so Black Swans and hundreds of Grey Teal, and Chestnut Teal ducks. A few pairs of Black-winged Stilts were feeding around the edge. The mosquitos were thick and enjoying our presence especially around the bird hide!!

On the way back Pauline was the first to spot 2 Beautiful Firetails and Geoff had seen a few Babbler near the carpark. As people drifted off we said our goodbyes and all agreed we had a very enjoyable weekend of bird watching. The area around Robe has so much to offer with all its lakes, drains, coast and bush and well worth more time and more visits to do it justice.

Wendy Phillips



Thursday 31 October Onkaparinga Estuary Wetlands

It was a warm and sunny day at Old Noarlunga, where we met at the Institute. We had our first sighting of the day with eight Nankeen Night Herons who were perched in the trees. We continued on from there to Hutchinson Reserve where we saw a Peregrine Falcon circling above us. After spotting a grebe on the water, a discussion ensued about whether it was an Australasian Grebe or a Hoary-headed Grebe. Hoary-headed Grebe won the day. At this site we identified 23 species.

From there we continued back to the cars and drove to Onkaparinga Wetlands. The first sighting was a Caspian Tern followed by many more - a total of 49 species at this site. Some of the highlights were a White-necked Heron posing with a Pelican; a flitting Golden-headed Cisticola; a group of Black Winged Stilts; a Great Egret and finally an amazing show of diving and bathing by a young male Osprey. Overall a very successful day with 58 species sighted.

Sam Dunn



Golden-headed Cisticola



Osprey Photo: Teresa Jack

Sunday 10 November Goolwa Ponds—Beacon 19

On a fine morning with broken cloud and a cool southerly wind 11 members and a visitor Fiona, met. The water level was high and the locals reported water birds were in lesser numbers than at other times. Despite this we saw 50 species of birds. There were large numbers of some birds like 10 Blue Wrens and 25 Tree Martins but only a single Blue-billed Duck. The highlight was the appearance of White-fronted Chats who obligingly sat on a branch for all to see. The sighting of a pair of Swans with 3 cygnets on the last pond made the morning.

After a bird count we met just past the barrages and then on to Beacon 19. Here we saw 37 species including a Royal Spoonbill in breeding plumage, and a single Caspian Tern sitting with Crested Terns on the end of the small island. The waders were in short supply but water birds abounded with large numbers of Pelican, Swans and Cormorants. We watched Whiskered Terns diving for insects instead of small fish over the salt bush near Beacon 19.

If anyone found a pair of binoculars after the lunch break, they are probably mine.

Yrena and Graeme Mountford



Royal Spoonbill
Breeding Plumage
Photo: David Thorn



White-fronted Chat Photo: Ann Houghton

MORE CAMPOUT PHOTOS ROBE 2013



Photos:
Peter Gower
Gerald Uppill
Bob Daly

Wednesday 20 November Langhorne Creek Cemetery—Tolderol

Twelve members turned up on a very cool (14 degrees) and windy day at our meeting spot at the Frank Potts Reserve. We made our way to the local Cemetery for an interesting walk around. Even though it was windy and the rain threatened we had a few special highlights amongst the 23 species found there. A Rainbow Bee-eater along the track sat on a dead bush giving everyone a clear sighting, and nearby we found a nesting hole with fresh markings belonging to the Bee-eater in the sandy ground in quite a precarious place in the middle of the track, this was something I'd never seen before. Also seen were a number of White-browed Woodswallows, Babblers, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Tree Martins and a Black Kite.

We then headed off to Tolderol and we mainly stayed in our cars due to the strong cold wind and along the way we had sightings of a Whistling Kite hunting low over nearby paddocks, over a hundred Whiskered Terns, and an estimated 400 Black-tailed Native Hens were seen both on the way in and also on the way out. Around 50 Straw-necked Ibis, also Australian White Ibis along with Little Pied, Little Black and Great Cormorants. Some of the smaller birds brave enough to venture out were Elegant Parrots, White-fronted Chats, a few Australian Pipits on fencing, a Skylark and a pair of Silvereyes. In all the total of species seen at this location was 31.

On the way back we stopped off for a quick look at Dog Lake where many Pelicans and Shelduck were seen before heading back to the Frank Potts Reserve for lunch.

Our thanks go to Peter for leading us on an interesting bird-watching trip. The sites we visited promise even better bird-watching once the weather improves.

Ann Houghton



White-browed Woodswallow
Photo: Wikipedia



Photo: Val Laird

MUTTON BIRD EXHAUSTION

Ten of thousands of Short-tailed Shearwaters have been washed up dead along the east coast of Australia as they head south to their breeding ground in Bass Strait after flying 15,000 km from the Bering Sea near Alaska.

Many have been found dead along our beaches at Goolwa and Middleton over the last 4 weeks. Some have been alive one day and dead the next as they suffer from extreme exhaustion and are unable to fly. Severe weather and lack of food are suggested causes for this.

However, Neil advised me there are 24 million of these birds and the strongest and fittest survive to breed again and it is part of nature's way of reproducing the best genes for the species to continue.

Wendy Phillips



Photo: Wikipedia

General Meeting Friday 10th November - Items of Interest:

Present: 10 members and guest speaker Will Miles from Goolwa and Wellington Local Action Project group.

Apologies: Pat Uppill. Neil Cheshire, Pat Batchelor, Denzel Murfet, Ann Turner

Twilight Outing - Friday January 17th 2014 Basham Regional Park carpark near Port Elliot Caravan Park. **Outings for next year** to be organized by Keith and Neil and printed in February newsletter.

Thank you to Maureen Christie for her presentation on Friday of the campout.

Reprint of Brochures – Judith Dyer has been organizing a re-printing of the current FBW information brochures and the committee plans to up-date it with new photos next year.

Campout 2014 Next year's Campout at Waikerie to be organized by Teresa Jack.

Birdcall: 7 Hooded Plovers were seen at the Yankalilla River Estuary recently and a total of 12 on the Fleurieu coast. Two Fairy Terns seen just past the barrage in Goolwa, a first for this season. A Peregrine Falcon and an Osprey seen on the Onkaparinga River.

Presentation by Will Miles: The Community Re-vegetation Project Coordinator talked about the massive re-vegetation program in the region starting in 2009 and running under current funding until 2016. The plants are propagated in Community Nursery's at Milang, Clayton, Hindmarsh Island, Meningie and Narrung and many local groups assist with the planting to raise money for their clubs.

He also talked of special efforts to re-habilitate habitat for the endangered Southern Emu-wren in the Finniss area where there is a small population surviving.

Maureen Christie from Friends of Shore Birds South East gave us a very informative talk on their groups activities e.g. catching and banding Shorebirds, providing protection for beach nesting birds, monitoring and doing surveys of bird numbers and locality, and raising awareness of birds in danger to the wider community.

Maureen travelled to Robe from Carpenter's Rocks west of Mount Gambier to do her presentation and joined us for a meal and chat on the first night of the Campout. We thank her for her dedication and educating us on the finer details of bird banding.



Birds of the Fleurieu

2014 CALENDAR

ON SALE NOW



This years focus is on the Hooded Plover. Proceeds from this calendar support habitat restoration projects and the protection of endangered and vulnerable wildlife on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Cost \$10

Available from local information centres and some newsagents.