



October 2011

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



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

- **Saturday 15th October. Kyeema CP**
Cnr Meadows–Willunga Road (Brookman Road) and Woodgate Hill Road
35°15'48" S 138°39'25" E
- **Friday 11th November, General Meeting.** Peter Merchant to talk about the birding in England.
- **Sunday 13th November. Nurragi Reserve.**
Junction of Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road and Milang Road, Finnis
35°22'25" S 138°48'01" E
- **Wednesday 30th November. Goolwa Barrages to Beacon 19**
Barrage car park.
35°31'41" S 138°48'18" E
- **Saturday 3rd December. Christmas Breakup. 4p.m. Hindmarsh Falls.**
35°26'23" S 138°34'59" E

Friday 7th to Sunday 9th October - Campout - Bendleby Ranges



**Send us your caption
for this amazing
photo !!**

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

Newsletter: Contact fleurieubirds@gmail.com

Scott CP 20th August 2011

The rain was pouring down as we left Goolwa and we were expecting a wet and dismal walk around Scott CP on our own. By the time we had reached Deep Creek Rd. the rain had finished and a few small bursts of sunlight were starting to appear. At the car park on Gould Rd we found ten members waiting for the outing and the walk proved to be in ideal conditions with very little wind and a riot of birdsong all around us.

The eucalypts are just starting to flower and we saw a good collection of lorikeets feeding in the canopy and inspecting nesting hollows. These were mainly Musks and Rainbows but a couple of Purple-crowned were also spotted. We also saw Elegant and some Red-rumped Parrots together with lots of Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos.

As we got back to the car park for lunch we finally saw the Fan-tailed Cuckoo we had been hearing all morning. It was a relaxed and low key bird watch with only 30 species counted but a most enjoyable outing for everyone who came.

Bob Daly

Hindmarsh River and Estuary 1st September 2011

It was the first day of Spring, with sunshine, and all the birds were out. 46 species. From the seashore to the top of Wattle Drive, via the school bridge, six of us were under Teresa's baton. There was the Great Egret, Caspian Tern flying, three Greenfinch, VH's Common Sandpiper (on his own again), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Nankeen Kestrel (eating), Fantailed Cuckoo (two) and the Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo (heard), Golden Whistler, Crested Shrike-tit, Australian Reed Warbler and 31 pelican overhead and circling. Then 10 tiny Australian Wood Ducklings, with parents. Lots of Silvereye, Welcome Swallow and Superb Fairy-wren. The Grey Shrike-thrush and the White-plumed Honeyeater were in full voice. What a morning! And the tracks are flat!

Geoffrey Evans



Photo: Peter Gower



Photo: Peter Gower



Photo: Theresa Jack

Bullock Hill CP, Ashbourne. 11th September 2011

Six hopefuls met on this cool overcast morning wondering not whether, but how much we would get rained on.

Curious Grey Fantails welcomed us as we walked the fence line and our first Mistletoebird appeared. We also had very good views of Common Bronzewing early but it soon became obvious that New Holland Honeyeaters were the predominant species in the park and their count throughout the walk was in the hundreds. Over the fence a few butter bums - Yellow-rumped Thornbills - fed or bathed in the grass before the first shower made us seek shelter and brought out the Tree Martins to play chasey in the rain.

At the bottom of the hill we passed through the gate to a great birdwatching spot where the tall gums interspersed with low fairly dense scrub - lots of acacia paradoxa - made good playgrounds for Musk Lorikeet, Rosella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Crescent Honeyeater, Grey Shrikethrush. Black-chinned Honeyeater and Fan-tailed Cuckoo teased us with their calls and we eventually sighted both.

Near the little dam in the neighbour's paddock were a group of Beautiful Firetails with a number of Red-brow Finches feeding on the ground. These birds had been sighted a few days previous in the same area.

We climbed the moderate incline to take in the wonderful vistas over the lower lakes and surrounds in one direction and towards the ranges in the other. Here, low on one of the ancient gums appeared three Varied Sittella, so close we didn't need binos to watch them.

Intermittent showers drifted over us during the walk and we had just enough time to eat lunch before the worst downpour of the morning sent us scurrying to vehicles, bird call abandoned. Count for the morning was 34 species. *Verle Wood.*



Varied Sittella Photo: *Peter Gower*



Group at Bullock Hill CP



Yellow-rumped Thornbill Photo: *Peter Gower*

Hardy's Scrub, McLaren Vale 28th September 2011

The scrub looked beautiful when checked out a few days before but when four intrepid birdos arrived on Wednesday morning the rain had set in with a vengeance. We sat around for a while hoping for an improvement but eventually abandoned the outing. Coffee at the Visitor Centre McLaren Vale was a good option and gave us a chance to have a good chat and see their Recycled Art Exhibition.

Wendy Phillips

MEETINGS

General Meeting 9th September—Items of Interest

Win Syson recently gave an excellent talk on Bird Watching to people at McCracken Views Aged Care.

Teresa reported on a Mallee Fowl Forum that she and Peter attended that was held over two days at Renmark. The organization was excellent and the out-come good news for all birds.

Nick handed over two pamphlets which had been produced for pilots flying in local areas. While local pilots are well aware of the danger of flying low and to avoid the areas near White-bellied Sea Eagles nests, interstate pilots need this brought to their attention.

Neil Cheshire (vice-president) introduced the following members:

Peter Gower spoke on Australian corvids.

Teresa Jack presented a slide show which focused on birds and their wings.

Judith Dyer spoke on features of binoculars.

Elizabeth Steele-Collins, unable to attend the meeting, sent photos of the Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, together with their call. These were recorded on her property in the Waitpinga cliff area.

Wendy Phillips spoke on the birds of Stewart Island off the southern coast of NZ.

General Meeting 9th September—Birdcall:

Peter recorded 30 species at Tolderol including 2 Rock Parrots. Cisticola at the Barrage hide, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo Goolwa Oval, many Great Egret at Paiwalla, 2 Olive Whistlers were reported at Bangor Rd Willunga, 7 Hooded Plovers Hindmarsh mouth, at Aldinga 30 Straw-necked Ibis, Spotted Crake, Baillons Crake, Buff-banded Rail, Banded Lapwing. There was talk of the number of Barn Owls around. On Yorke Peninsula, Fairy Tern, Osprey, Mallee Fowl, Shining Bronze Cuckoo, Brown Falcon nesting. Buff-banded Rail at the Barrage. A Peregrine Falcon has taken over the nest of a Whistling Kite at Paiwalla. Black-chinned Honeyeater and Crested Shrike-tit at Victor and at Browns Rd Restless Flycatcher, a Bee-eater and an Owlet Nightjar. A Pallid Cuckoo was seen at the Urrbrae Wetlands.

HOODED PLOVERS- Update from Emma Stephens

The plovers have started nesting in a number of areas along the Fleurieu Coast including Hindmarsh River Estuary, Pt. Willunga, Maslin's Beach, Carrickalinga and Shelley Beach. Unfortunately due to high tides and the presence of ravens, dogs and foxes, etc. only one nest has remained intact. Signs are being erected once nesting sites are discovered to warn people to keep their dogs on leads and stay clear of the area to give the birds a better chance of survival.



YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO May 2011 Survey.

A total of 4688 YTBC were counted in the Mount Lofty Ranges over 2 days of the Survey with the largest group found in Second Valley Forest.

The official estimation is now 2030 birds and gives a base count to check numbers in the future. The last survey done in the mid 1980's involving 1000 volunteers and was found to have a population of between 6,000 and 13,000.

YTBC main food source in the Winter is Radiata and Aleppo Pines. In Summer they are more likely to seek out native species e.g. Banksia Ornata and Marginata and Hakea seeds.

It is thought that the YTBC birds have become reliant on Pine trees for their main food source and the decline in numbers may be due to the eradication of these exotic species of trees which are being removed in National Parks and Conservation Parks in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

Charles Benson

A TERN TO HELP

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is seeking your help to determine the current abundance and distribution of the SA Fairy Tern population 2011-12. This information will provide a baseline dataset upon which State and National Recovery planning can be developed. This project is funded by DENR, Nature Foundation SA, South East Cooperative Coastal Conservation Initiative, Caring for our Country, Birds Australia and Friends of Coorong.



Photo: Peter Gower

The Fairy Tern (*Sternula nereis nereis*) is a threatened piscivorous bird found along the coasts of Western Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. The Fairy Tern is currently listed as Vulnerable under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and Endangered under the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972. Fairy Terns have an estimated Australian population size of around 5,000 birds. Of these, 2,580 were once estimated to occur in south-eastern Australia. Historic declines in South Australia and in particular within the Coorong region, which has traditionally been considered the stronghold for the taxon are of current significant concern.

In South Australia, Fairy Terns appear to be primarily located in two regions 1) south-east of South Australia including the Coorong that forms part of the Coorong and Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert Wetland of International Importance and 2) the coastline of Eyre Peninsula including a number of neighbouring offshore islands. In 1984-85, the Coorong supported a Fairy Tern population of approximately 1,500 individuals. Abundances have declined over the past 11 years and annual census counts in January 2011 were the lowest on record for the Coorong. The current Coorong population size is estimated to be <180 individuals, a >85% population decline since the 1980's with no reports of increases of this species in other parts of South Australia. The dramatic declines in the Coorong population threaten the species in South Australia, and the species as a whole. In the Coorong, nesting failures and the current age of individuals e.g. 10-years (the maximum longevity recorded to date is 14 years) indicate that without a successful breeding season in the next 1-2 years this species is facing local extinction in the Coorong. At State level, increased human disturbance by recreational activities at breeding sites, predation by Silver gulls and Little ravens and introduced predators such as dogs, cats, foxes and rats are thought to contribute to the decline of Fairy Terns but yet not confirmed.

The 2011-12 Census will take place across the entire SA coastline including Kangaroo Island. The State has been divided into 8 regions with each region having its own Coordinator, and community volunteers are welcome to get involved. For example, coordinated by local Senior Ranger Ecologist Clare Manning key areas in the Coorong include the River Murray mouth, several islands in the Coorong South Lagoon and a number of feeding and resting spots known along the Coorong mainland and these areas will be visited by DENR Park staff either by boat, kayak, car and/or foot. At each site the total number of adults, sitting adults (if breeding) and juveniles will be counted. At selected sites, and if breeding, volunteers could expect to help DENR Park staff, count the number of eggs and chicks, which will provide an indication of breeding success rates.

Survey dates have a 2-week window however each preferred survey will take place on the weekends of Nov 12 and 13th, Feb 11 and 12th and Mar 31 and Apr 1.

INTERESTED? The following open community talks within the Adelaide and South East region are planned and will highlight the birds ecology, how to identify them, how to observe and record observations. Where required, these talks will be further followed by ID workshops for those people interested in participating in the census:

Sunday 9 October 2011 1pm
Valente Education Centre
Cleland Wildlife Park
Mt Lofty, Adelaide

You can register your interest in the talks and/or census direct with the Project Managers Clare Manning or Catherine Dickson via email Clare.Manning@sa.gov.au or Catherine.Dickson@sa.gov.au or call 0428 757 015.

Gluepot Reserve.

Last month, Ann and I had a trip to Gluepot where we stayed for 6 days while I attended a Photographic Workshop for 2 of the days.

Gluepot Reserve is a Birds Australia owned property 64km north of Waikerie of which the last 60 kms is an unsealed road and is suitable for 2wheel drive vehicles. It takes about 4 hours to get there from Goolwa. There are three camping areas on the property suitable for tents and caravans at a cost of \$10 per night and you need to take everything with you including water as the only comfort provided is a toilet.

It has a self service book-in centre with free maps, walking trails, bird lists etc. All major roads within the area are well maintained. The best visiting times are from Autumn to Spring. It gets its name from the fact that after 5 - 10mm you stop. "Stuck like glue". Average rainfall is 215mm with most of it falling in Summer storms and it reaches temperatures of 40+. Best to be avoided!!

Gluepot is a bird watcher's paradise with over 180 species recorded there.

How did we go? In six days, we counted 65 species. The most memorable being a good sighting of the Scarlet-chested Parrot (a rare visitor). There were lots of magic moments seeing owls and owlet nightjars, cuckoos and raptors. There were nesting and displaying birds and lots of photo opportunities. We met other keen 'birdos' from all the Eastern States and Tasmania too.

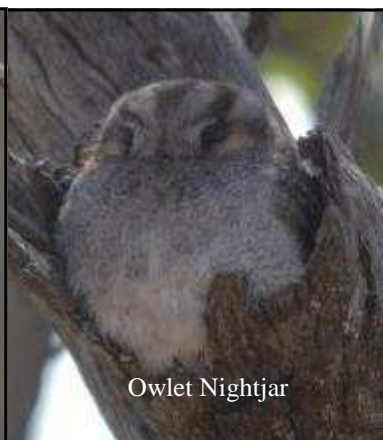
What we didn't see were summer birds, not yet down from the North, so it will be back again with the swag in autumn. Care to join me?

Nick Tebneff.

All Photos except Scarlet-chested parrot by Nick Tebneff



Red-capped Robin



Owlet Nightjar



Superb Blue Wren



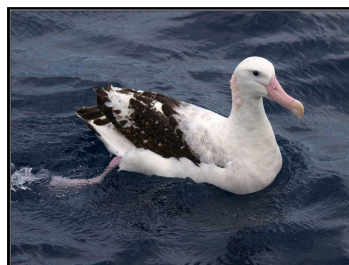
Scarlet-chested Parrot Photo: Anon



Striated Pardalote

PELAGIC TRIP

Birds SA are organising Pelagic bird-watching trips out from Port MacDonnell in the South East of SA. Recently two members went on this trip on 24th -25th September. They stayed at Port Mac Caravan park for an early morning start. The trip goes to the edge of the Continental shelf and returns by around 3.30pm. Cost is around \$200 including accommodation. This trip is recommended for other members. Being a good sailor is a plus!



Wandering Albatross and Cape Petrel
Photos: Teresa Jack