



October 2013

Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



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

**WANTED: MORE
CONTRIBUTIONS FOR
NEWSLETTER FROM
MEMBERS!
(Thanks to those mem-
bers who contributed!)**

Request
Please update your
phone numbers for our
membership records
(including mobiles)
To :
fleurieubirds@gmail.com

Friday—Monday 18-21 October—Robe Campout

**Thursday 31 October —Onkaparinga Estuary Wetlands
Near the Institute, Old Noarlunga**

35°10'53" S 138°30'12" E

Friday 8 November—General Meeting

Sunday 10 November Goolwa Ponds—Beacon 19

Goolwa Ponds, Kessell Rd Goolwa

35°30'2" S 138°45'29" E

**Wednesday 20 November Langhorne Ck Cemetery, Tolderol
Frank Potts Reserve, Strathalbyn—Wellington Rd**

**Saturday 7 December Christmas Break-Up Laratinga Wetlands
Bald Hills Rd Mt Barker**

Wood-chip art



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

Currency Creek Arboretum Saturday 17 August

Three brave members met Dean Nicolle at the Lion's Park in the worst of the winter weather and after a short 15 min walk around the Arboretum the rain had set in for the day and we had no option but to abandon it. Dean invited the FBW's to attend on 2 other weekends but no official counts were done.

Bob Daly

Aldinga Scrub CP and Washpool Thursday August 29

Six members met at the Cox Road entrance to the Aldinga Conservation Park. Rain had just cleared away and a group of birds kept us busy at the gate whilst we waited for latecomers, who had decided to stay in bed and listen to the rain on the roof instead. A number of orchids were seen along the track. A Yellow Thornbill high up caused some discussion. The kangaroos looked wet but friendly. Sun broke through as we added to the species list. Notable sightings included Red-browed Finches, Golden and Rufous Whistlers, Peaceful Doves, Dusky Wood-swallows, several Eastern Spinebills and Spotted Pardalotes. We stopped to admire the Lacy Coral Lichen and the new interpretive signs. A group of Magpies were having a meeting as we turned for home. Aply led by Keith Jones, it was a pleasant morning with a total of 31 bird species seen and additional one (Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo) heard. During lunch and the bird call, rain began to fall. A few of us then briefly visited the Washpool, where Black Swans, Black-winged Stilts, Dusky Moorhens and several species of ducks were sighted, but as the weather was rapidly deteriorating, no bird counts were made for this part of the outing.

Joyce West



Rufous Whistler Photo: Peter Gower

Newland Head CP Sunday 15 September

Newland Head CP stretches the length of the of the Waitpinga cliff line from about 2kms west of Kings Beach at Encounter Bay to Parsons Beach. The Heysen Trail traverses the length of the park.

It was raining steadily when I left home and I was thinking that no one in their right mind would turn out to bird watch. But bird watchers are hardy souls who are used to being out in all conditions.

The rain had stopped when 15 of us set off down the road heading for Waitpinga Beach. On the way down we made a stop and scanned the Waitpinga creek. This area is always good for a few birds. The highlights were Chestnut Teal, Black-tailed Native Hen, Black-fronted Dotterel and Australian Pipit. On the way back a keen eyed Denzel spotted an Australian Spotted Crake.

On to the beach was a flock of 250 Crested Terns resting near the estuary mouth. We were then most fortunate to spot a pair of Hooded Plover close by.

We returned to Dennis Hut in the camp ground and then set off into the park proper, up the main track with the sand dunes on our right. A Fan-tailed Cuckoo had been calling constantly but was always one step ahead of us and we never saw it. Silveryeye were crossing the track and the elusive Crescent H/E were calling. The sky was blackening and there was the odd thunder clap in the distance so we decided to take a shorter route back to the camp ground. We just had time to climb the concrete tank look-out for a magnificent view over Waitpinga Beach and on to Kangaroo Island. We were lucky to spot a Wedge-tailed Eagle as it was being harassed by 3 Little Ravens and then the heavens opened up and we took cover under the gums.

The wind had increased so we rushed back to the camp ground to a very early lunch in the protection of Dennis Hut. Bird call revealed we had seen or heard 48 species which is pretty good for a two and a half hour walk. Best birds sighted were the Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Spotted Crake and Hooded Plover.

Win. Syson

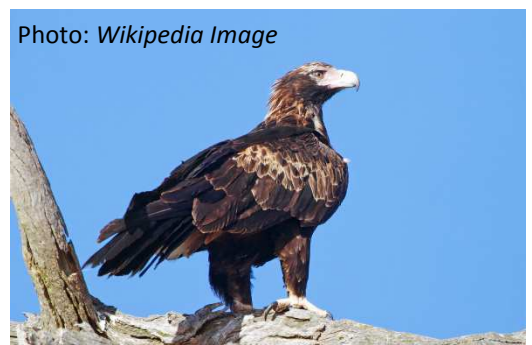


Photo: Wikipedia Image

General Meeting Friday 13th September - Items of Interest:

Goolwa Ponds Bird Hide

Neil spoke about the meeting with Shen Mann and David Mullins that he and Wendy attended. The outcome was the Birdhide at the Goolwa Ponds will get a makeover to make it more user friendly some time in November with seating and window improvements. Unfortunately they cannot move it to a better position. However, there are some grants available if the FBW would like to apply for funding to enable a new hide to be built at a later date. Neil will follow up any further developments. Signage will be discussed at a later date also.

The mouth of the river lookout at Sugar's Beach was also mentioned but this does not come under the Council jurisdiction and Fleurieu Birdwatchers would need to liaise with DEWNR and Water SA.

Wendy spoke about the planned Robe Campout. Approximately 26 people have indicated they will attend.

Keith reported we now have 84 financial members.

FBW Postal mail should now be addressed to: PO Box 417, Victor Harbor, 5211

Bird Call

Win Syson reported 59 species at Mambray Creek, 450 Fluttering Shearwaters along the northern Gulf beaches, Brown and Rufous Songlarks. White-winged Trillers and Barn Owls at Port Elliot. Judith reported on birds of prey breeding at Paiwalla. Wendy saw 30-40 Red-browed Finches and one Southern Whiteface at Bullock Hill CP. Geoff Evans found a Fan-tailed Cuckoo at Parawa. Verle has sighted Black-chinned Honeyeaters at Victor and Hooded Plovers at Hindmarsh Estuary. Two HP eggs at Watson's Gap. And HP's have been seen on Goolwa Beach but not breeding.

Talk /Presentation: Emma Stephens talked on Hooded Plovers in the Fleurieu region. The results of last years breeding program had 11 successful fledging's mostly at Tunkalilla Beach. Forty volunteers assisted with monitoring the breeding sites from August to January. Signage and fencing is erected to protect nest sites and dog owner education programs are run throughout the season. Neil Cheshire thanked her for her informative presentation.

Hardy's Scrub Wednesday 25 September

Thirteen Members met at Gate 19 for a walk in Hardy's Scrub, we were later joined by an additional two. The morning was warm but overcast with a light breeze. The scrub was in great condition with a variety of orchids and other wildflowers to keep us all interested. We also saw two koalas and three kangaroos.

As we walked along the track we could hear lots of calls but the birds were rather elusive. Striated Pardalotes were very busy in one area while the wrens were vocal but hard to find in the bushes. We eventually saw both male and female Superb Fairy-wrens, the males in full colour, but most of the time we could only hear them calling. Eventually, after hearing their call, we saw the Golden Whistler. We heard a number of birds without seeing them at all, Peaceful Dove, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, White-throated Treecreeper and Weebills, they were there, but kept themselves well hidden!

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos flew overhead. Yellow-faced, White-plumed, Crescent, and New Holland Honeyeaters as well as Musk Lorikeets, Eastern Rosellas, Adelaide Rosellas and Mistletoebird added to the interest of the morning. We enjoyed a stop by the lake to the chorus of Banjo Frogs and were further entertained by a pair of Kookaburras laughing nearby. We also saw Red-browed Finch and Red Wattlebirds as we sat by the lake. There were Currawongs, Little Raven, Australian Magpie, Grey Shrike-thrush, Silvereye and Grey Fantails seen as we walked back towards the cars.

We enjoyed the morning in beautiful Hardy's Scrub. The bird count came to 27 seen and 4 heard making a total of 31 species. A good morning's birding and thanks again to our leader Wendy.

Margaret Dreyer

Kookaburra Photo: *Peter Gower*



Northern Flinders Ranges trip : Jill McPherson

Six friends booked Grindell's hut in the Gammon Ranges with the intention of walking, birding and just absorbing the magnificent scenery from the front veranda of the Hut.

The country has had good rains...this was evident as we explored Weetootla Ck and Bunjip Chasm. Rock pools and running water in Weetootla Ck (no Spotted Gudgeon spotted in the clear waters) but a very scenic walk. The weather was kind averaging 22 degrees and not too cold at night.

Birds were every where, including Diamond Dove, Ringneck Parrot, Red-backed Kingfisher, Variegated Fairy-wren, Southern Whiteface, Dusky Woodswallow, Mistletoebird, Red-capped Robin and Zebra Finch being favourites amongst many more.

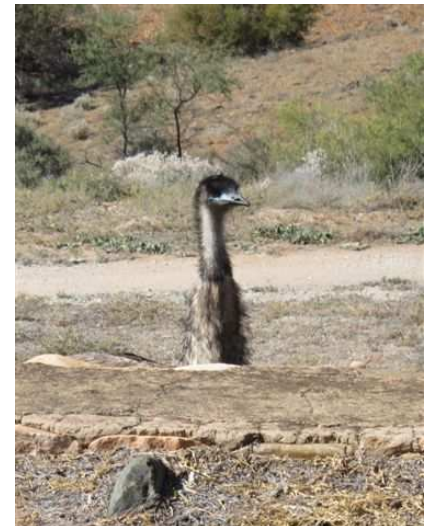
Perhaps a highlight for the group was good sightings of the Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby on the Weetootla walk. It was great to see them thriving there. Grindell's hut has been comfortably upgraded from our last visit. We also called in to see Nudlamutana hut further north which was destroyed by fire and it now looks very impressive with its rebuild. We included a picnic day travelling into Arkaroola to lunch at the Bolla Bollana Waterhole and drove to Nooldoonooldoona waterhole. A worthwhile trip as there was plenty of water and green shady spots. Sunrises and sunsets to wonder at and starry starry nights... all too good really!!!



Grindell's Hut Photo: Jill McPherson



Photos:
Jill McPherson



OBP CRIME AND SHAME!!

In 1838 John Gould reported in the Hobart Town Courier that the Orange-bellied Parakeet was dispersed around Hobart and New Norfolk but was more abundant on the Actaeon Islands near the entrance of D'Entrecasteaux Channel. He said "this beautiful bird was almost the only land bird that enlivens these solitary spots". He flushed small flocks while walking through the grass "their sparkling orange bellies forming a striking contrast with the green of the other parts of their plumage and the silvery foliage of the plant upon which they rested."

He travelled to Adelaide and found them "abundant in the flat, marshy grounds bordering the coast, especially between the Port of Adelaide and Holdfast Bay."

He realised these birds travelled to the mainland in Winter and flew back to Tasmania in Summer.

However in 1856 the Royal Society of Tasmania thought there was no such species and that it was merely a Blue-winged Parrot.

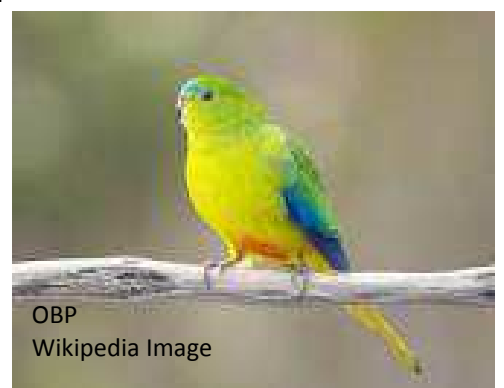
Thirty years later they were still numerous in the Callitris forest near Port Adelaide but "everybody that was able to raise a firearm was shooting these little birds."

In 10 years they became a rarity.

Gregory Matthews sent out alarm bells in 1917 and said "the Orange-bellied Parrot must now be a very rare bird everywhere and becoming gradually extinct."

Despite all efforts to restore the small population by 2013 only 20 birds found on the mainland returned to their breeding ground in south-western Tasmania. Sadly the efforts to breed them in captivity is barely saving the species in the wild.

Extracts from Article by Penny Olsen in *Australian Birdlife* September 2013



Ann Houghton's recent birding trip

We departed home in mid May with a few others for Gluepot. The first couple of days were fantastic with many birds around and a few new ones for us too, then it rained overnight, 18mm, and the road into Gluepot was closed. For us it was lovely with our group virtually having the place to ourselves, but the rain had its downside in that the birds did not require the watering spots by the bird hides so the numbers were considerably down. We stayed 5 nights then a couple of nights in Waikerie deciding where next to go.

We travelled on to Crystal Brook then to Port Augusta hoping for finer weather. The Arid Lands in Port Augusta is usually teeming with birds but the bad weather made an impact there too, so we waited out the bad weather before moving on up to Coober Pedy. It was still cold and wet and even the road into the Breakaways was closed as we headed north in search of some sunshine. Wildlife along the route was virtually non-existent, where normally one would expect to see Wedge-tailed Eagles by roadkill, our only sighting into Kings Canyon were a few brumbies. In the canyon we found Spinifex Pigeons, Zebra Finches, White-plumed Honeyeaters and Magpie Larks. The numbers were down due to the area being badly burnt by a bushfire earlier in the year and the poor weather. On we went into the Alice where we spent 10 days enjoying the East McDonnell Ranges and catching up with friends. In Jessie Gap Dusky Grasswrens live amongst the spinifex and rocks as do the Western Bowerbirds. In Trefina Gorge we found the Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Splendid Fairy-wren, Weebills and Rufous Whistlers. National Parks had opened up a new caravan parking area within the Gorge which is nicely set-up. Desert Park is always a must to visit every time we go to the Alice and it did not disappoint. One of the highlights was watching a male Bustard displaying whilst the female completely ignored him. The raptor flight display is always entertaining there too and a good source of photographs. Still not warm enough for us we decided to go north again so on to Daly Waters and even there the weather was not the best, but we did find the Red-backed Fairy Wren, a stunning male with at least 20 females in a very close group and always singing. We also found the Long-tailed Finch and the Masked Finch there too but the forecast was for rain so we moved on again to Katherine - and sunshine.

Black Kites abound in Katherine especially hovering near the smoke from bushfires. We went into Edith Gorge where we had been before and noted that the kiosk and cafe had completely gone, the walk around the rim was closed and a lot of work was happening as they had a huge amount of water through there, and the only birds around of note were the Rainbow Bee-eaters, so we left just as a fire broke over the rim. Whilst we were in Katherine we decided to go west, and the night before we departed Katherine we met up with Peter and Annie in the caravan park a surprise to us both as they were heading north the next day. On the way to Kunnunurra we saw a Bustard by the side of the road with no opportunity of stopping for a photograph but once in Kunnunurra there were plenty of birds. In the caravan park Straw-necked Ibis strolled through the park quite used to people. I decided to offer them some bread..... well it was multigrain.... One came close so I decided to hold out a small piece to it and amazingly it took it so gently from me, no grabbing, then waited for more, then its friends came in for their share too. The next day Les said 'your friend is waiting on its breakfast' it had come up to him and complained, so I took a slice outside and it had wandered across the park so I yelled 'Hey', it turned, saw me and flew low across the park to my feet for a repeat performance. I was sorry when we had to leave him behind. I noted that the Straw-necked Ibis were in abundance with flocks of thousands but no Australian Ibis to be seen. I was also able to get photos of the Glossy Ibis there too, plus Bar-shouldered Doves, Peaceful Doves, Rajah Ducks and many more. In Kunnunurra there is a stunning National Park called Mirima NP which has the most fantastic wide, long and sturdy boardwalk. In this park we found the White-quilled Rock-pigeon, Pheasant Coucal, Red-winged Parrot, White-gaped Honeyeater and Pied Butcherbird, well worth the visit.

After a week there we had decided to move on to Wyndham in search of the Gouldian Finch.



Mulga Parrots

Photo: Ann Houghton

Ann's trip continued....

We had been given some hints of how to find them from 4 Adelaide birdwatchers we met in Mirima NP. On arrival in Wyndham I had the photos within minutes of arrival. It was very windy but warm and we saw both the red-headed, and the black-headed with quite a number of juveniles. They came in with the Double-barred Finch, The Star Finch, Masked Finch and Long-tailed Finch as a mixed group. Also there were Grey-crowned Babblers, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Nankeen Night Heron, Black-necked Stork, Australian Darter, Spinifex Pigeon and my first ever sighting of a Cane Toad.....

Time to head home for the grandsons first birthday, so we slowly meandered back to the cold, it was a good 10 weeks away but we could have done with more time to travel on further ... there is always next year.



Gouldian Finch Photo: Ann Houghton

Ann Houghton

“Hoodies”

The dear little Hooded Plovers. Every spring they try desperately to breed and raise a little family on the many beaches around the Australian coast and have to compete with the increase of humans with their cars, dogs, horses etc. If they beat these odds then the foxes, gulls and ravens attack their eggs and chicks or the weather turns foul and the tide washes them away. It is truly a wonder that any survive!

The Beach-nesting Birds Programme is helping to turn the odds around with notable results following strategies of training volunteers to assist with monitoring and educating the public. Signage and fencing of the area near a nest is vital to warn people to stay clear of the site for the short period it takes for the eggs to hatch and the chicks to fledge.

Here on the Fleurieu coast 40 volunteers participate in the programme under Emma Stephens guidance.

The government funding has been cut and funds are urgently needed for it to continue. Donations are vital to continue the program and if these programmes succeed we will save one bird species in Australia. Bird-life Australia would love you to give a donation which can be done online. Visit www.birdlife.org.au

Wendy Phillips

Photos: Ann Houghton

