



# fleurieu birdwatch

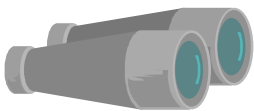
April 2000

**Meetings:** Glendale Christian School, cnr Glendale Close/Strathalbyn Rd, Goolwa  
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of alternate (odd) months

**Outings:** Meet 8.30 am. Bring lunch and a chair — see Diary

**Contacts:** Judith Dyer, phone 8555 2736      Ann Turner, phone 8554 2462  
30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa 5214      9 Carnegie Street, Pt Elliot 5212

**Web site:** [www.adelaide.net.au/~mhaywood/Fleurieu%20Birdwatchers.htm](http://www.adelaide.net.au/~mhaywood/Fleurieu%20Birdwatchers.htm)



## FOR YOUR DIARY

### ✧ **Wednesday 12 April**

**Currency Creek** — Private Property  
Meet at the entrance to the Lions Park,  
Strathalbyn Road, Currency Creek.

### ✧ **Saturday 29 April**

**Kyeema**  
Meet at the corner of Meadows to Willunga Road  
and Woodgate Hill Road.

### ✧ **Friday 12 May**

**Meeting**  
Video and discussion on Raptors

### ✧ **Sunday 14 May**

**Hindmarsh Falls**  
Meet at the Falls in the lower car park.

### ✧ **Wednesday 24 May**

**Hindmarsh Island**  
Meet on the causeway on the island side of the  
ferry crossing.

### ✧ **Saturday 3 June**

**Inman River upstream**  
Meet at Barker Reserve near Inman Bridge,  
opposite the Council offices, Victor Harbor.

### ✧ **Wednesday 14 June**

**Onkaparinga Gorge Conservation Park**  
Meet at the Institute in Old Noarlunga.

### ✧ **Saturday 24 June**

**Torrens Vale** — Private Property  
Meet at Parawa at the noticeboard near the  
junction of Range, Parawa and Tunkhead Roads.

## MEETING REPORT

*Friday 10 March*

Denzel Murfet welcomed all, especially new members Keith and Ann Gilbert and visitors Eddy and Cath, Neville Hudson and Andrew and Heather Jeffery.

A magazine from Peter Merchant was tabled. Peter is an English ornithologist who is engaged in the rescue and rehabilitation of birds of prey in eastern England. He also breeds five pairs of Barn Owl per year for release into the wild. Peter attended the outing at Manning Reserve last month and spoke impromptu then about his work.

There was also a box of magazines donated to the group by Don Overall. These are for members' use. Thanks, Don.

This being the **Annual General Meeting**, Collin Wood took the chair to conduct the official business. Brian Ginno, Judith Dyer, Mark Filkin, Helen Bowlden, Elaine O'Shaughnessy, Ann Turner and Judy Jones all accepted positions on the Working Party. Ann will continue to handle publicity with Helen as a backup; Judy is happy to keep up with our finances. Hillary again volunteered to prepare supper and excelled herself later in the evening

with yummy cake and biscuits to go with our cuppas.

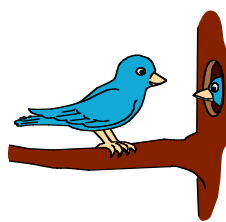
Judy presented the **financial statement** for the past year. Newsletters had cost more because of different printing arrangements; the shortfall of grant funds for the printing of the brochure had been met from the group's funds; some monies were being held for the boat trip. The WP had recommended small increases in subscriptions for 2000 and this was agreed by the meeting: subs now due are \$18 family, \$12 single and \$7 junior.

Chris Wastell reported on the **Goolwa Effluent Ponds Project**. The Council is increasing the number of ponds and will include another observation mound. Chris agreed to continue overseeing the project.

**Members' reports** included:

From Peter Ginnane a photo of the Tawny Frogmouths mentioned in the last Birdwatch, Fork-tailed Swifts, Elegant Parrot near the mouth, Grey Plover in breeding plumage, Long-billed Corella at Morphett Vale, Noarlunga and on Hindmarsh Island, Varied Sitella in Manning Reserve, Bassian Thrush at Talisker, Cape Barren Geese in decreasing numbers over Goolwa, a Pacific Gull demolishing a sea urchin, White-bellied Sea-Eagle at Newland Head, Hindmarsh mouth and Tauwitechere, and Black-chinned Honeyeater at Morphett Vale. Please report all sightings of this last named bird for research purposes. Mystery object of the evening was a branch of callitris embedded with a nest. It turned out to be a possum's dray.

Denzel showed us his **slides**, and some from the Bird Observers Club, of waders and gave us excellent tips for recognising some of the species we may see on the boat trip.



## WELCOME

Keith and Ann Gilbert,  
Seaford Rise

Andrew and Heather Jeffery,  
Victor Harbor

Raymond and Valerie Laird, Seacombe Heights

Peter McEntee, Victor Harbor

Jenny Missen, Aldinga

Barbara Russell, Middleton

We trust you will all enjoy your birdwatching experiences with us.

## Manning Reserve

*Saturday 5 February*

What a contrast from our last visit to Manning in August '98! Then, a sudden hailstorm caused havoc at lunchtime. On this visit, 13 birdwatchers and one visitor from England, were feeling the heat by lunchtime.

The change of season produced some contrasts in species seen and bird numbers also. Two special finds were Rainbow Bee-eater and Zebra Finch. There were good sightings of Elegant Parrot and I haven't seen so many Common Bronzewing in one place before. Red-browed Firetail and Superb Fairy-wren were in fewer numbers than I expected.

We saw Hooded Robin, but no other robins, and the only honeyeater seen was the New Holland. Red Wattlebird, usually here in good numbers, was heard but not seen. An Australian Hobby was the only raptor spotted.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Purple-crowned Lorikeet and Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo all flew overhead.

In all, we spotted 41 species.

At lunchtime we were entertained by our visitor, Peter Merchant, who told us about caring for birds, breeding and birdwatching in his home territory in the UK.

*Jean Boomer*

## Hindmarsh River

*Saturday 26 February*

Sixteen members and friends gathered on a fine cool day, with an occasional gentle breeze, to walk the Hindmarsh River trail.

There was a slight hiccup at the start when one lady locked herself out of her car and had to be taken home to get her spare key, unfortunately missing the Black-chinned Honeyeater that entertained us until the ladies returned.

We walked first to the mouth where 12 species were seen, but none of the Hooded Plover that usually live there.

We then drove further up Wattle Drive, parking opposite Greenhills Adventure Park, and walked back from there.

On the way 45 species were seen. Two Magpie-larks' nests were spotted at the beginning of the trail. The highlights were good views of Crested Shrike-tit, Yellow Thornbill, White-browed Scrubwren, Red-browed Firetail, European Goldfinch and Mistletoebird, several of the latter with soft pink immature colouring.

Altogether a very pleasant and enjoyable morning.

*Rosalie Sharpe*

### **BOAT TRIP: Coorong and Lake**

The morning was pleasant and cool as 26 members eagerly clambered aboard the Wetlands Explorer. The river was calm as we sped towards Clayton. Jack soon steered the boat into an area of reeds where Ibis had earlier nested. (See later note re Currency Creek rookery.) A considerable time was spent viewing the many Tree Martin there.

Visibility from the boat was excellent. The upper, fore and aft decks all provided excellent viewing locations for photographers and birdwatchers alike.

Black Swans were aplenty, many with cygnets, but there was a noticeable decline in Pelican numbers. Presumably, they have flown north to the recently flooded Lake Eyre.

Travelling towards Tauwitchere we scanned the reeds and had a magnificent view of a Swamp Harrier patiently waiting close to the water's edge. Cormorant and Tern of several varieties were also sighted. After passing Rat Island and through the cormorant-lined barrage the water level was much lower and we proceeded slowly sometimes coming to an abrupt halt on the sand and coral.



Here we found Ibis, Great Egret, Black-winged Stilt and the most obliging bird of the day, a Whistling Kite (photo thanks to Belinda Filkin), which left its nest to sit on a nearby

Red-necked Stint were easily seen on the sandbars.

Lunch was on board, or on shore, listening to the background roar of the Southern Ocean and the occasional call of a Singing Honeyeater. Eastern Curlew, Royal Spoonbill and White-faced Heron were added to the bird list. Double-banded Plover, not seen on previous trips, were sighted near the old stockyards.

As the boat zigzagged across the river we watched Black-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, two White-bellied Sea-Eagle on Ewe Island barrage, Grey and Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit and eventually 62 species were observed. Oh, and the Pelican count came to 1286, give or take a few!

We disembarked at Mundoo and travelled back to Goolwa by bus. Thank you to Jack and crew, and fellow birdwatchers, for a very memorable day.

Because of space restrictions this report is condensed from Liz's story of the day. V

*Liz Sweetman*

### **Pt Willunga Linear Park**

*Wednesday 22 March*

Carol Shields, of the Pt Willunga Wetlands Conservation and Restoration group, led 14 of us along the Willunga Creek site of a proposed wetlands development. We have been approached by the group to monitor bird life to build up data which may be used in the evaluation of possible future change in the project area. As yet this project has not received approval to proceed.

19 species were identified on this warm, very windy morning. There was a variety of habitat and apparently good water flows occur at times. We recorded Musk Lorikeet, Nankeen Kestrel, Australian Hobby, a White-faced Heron near the beach, Singing and New Holland Honeyeaters, Red and Little Wattlebirds. Significant were the numbers of Rock Dove, Sparrow, Starling and Blackbird.

Peter Ginnane

## **Black Swamp Walk, Currency Creek Winery**

*Wednesday 15 March*

Although this was not an official outing for our group it was felt worthy of report.

It was a lovely cool overcast morning and quite a crowd of people, including children from Ashbourne School, had gathered by 10.30 am for the occasion.

Wally Tonkin welcomed everyone and gave a brief history of the winery which is his family business. He then welcomed our local MP, Dean Brown, who declared the Black Swamp Walk open.

This is heritage listed with unique wetlands supporting many rare plant species of conservation significance and providing habitat for many animal species.

The walk itself is 3 km in length and 106 bird species have been recorded on Black Swamp and its lightly wooded banks. The native fish present in the swamp are apparently of special significance.

The Fleurieu Birdwatchers group was represented by 11 members who enjoyed the outing and the lovely coffee and biscuits provided by the Tonkin family.

We walked the trail around the swamp and observed 19 species which we considered quite a good count because we were the last of the crowd to walk the trail, behind the school children and other interested persons. We think the birds may well have taken cover by the time we were looking for them!

We congratulate the Tonkin family for having the foresight and natural heritage appreciation to undertake this project.

*Elaine O'Shaughnessy*

## **Working Party Notes**

- ✧ Funding to be sought for reprint of the brochure, Birdwatching on the Southern Fleurieu.
- ✧ As yet no confirmation of grants for the Effluent Ponds Project signage.
- ✧ Costs and venue for a dinner during the year to be investigated.

- ✧ Newsletter to be limited to one double-sided A3 sheet. Members to be asked to restrict the length of contributions and to be as concise as possible.

## **Currency Creek Rookery**

Over one thousand birds have been observed in the Currency Creek rookery and those in large numbers are Straw-necked and Australian White Ibis (Sacred), Royal Spoonbill and Swamp Harrier.

The Straw-necked Ibis is nomadic and found in flocks. It prefers secluded situations where it can search for food and breed undisturbed. Both this and the Australian White Ibis usually breed from September to December. They build cup-shaped nests lined with herbage in lignum and other low vegetation. The Straw-necked lays 3-5 dull white eggs and has a drawn out croaking call. The Australian White lays 2-4 eggs and has a harsh croaking call: it is more common and forms huge flocks, often in association with the Straw-necked.

Both Ibis feed mainly in swamps and by shallow water on visible prey and also by probing with their long bills, and sometimes may even be found scavenging in rubbish dumps. Adult birds can fly up to 40 km a day to find feeding grounds. When disturbed in such a tight breeding area as Currency Creek many eggs and young are at risk of being damaged in the confusion and the adult birds use up valuable energy. The preferred method of observation from a safe distance with binoculars or telescope is more rewarding and less traumatic for the birds.

*Kate Bruce*

## **Tolderol Game Reserve**

*Saturday 1 April*

This overcast morning found 12 of us rugged up against the brisk breeze surveying the backwaters at Milang before setting off in convoy for Tolderol. Although the first impression there is one of wasteland, we found it vibrant with 39 species.

Best sightings of the day were the Spotless Crake easily observed feeding in the mud, and the White-winged Black Tern displaying varying degrees of blackness, but nevertheless,





quite distinguishable from the prevalent Crested and Caspian.

There were hundreds of Red-necked Stint in breeding colour, and a good number of Red-capped Plover with a Double-banded among them. We found three different sandpipers: Sharp-tailed, Curlew and Wood. Other species plentiful were Black Swan, Purple Swamphen, Tree Martin and a couple of flights of Black-winged Stilt. In the reeds we spied the Little Grassbird and the Golden-headed Cisticola.

The view from the bird hide shows the vastness of this reserve which is well worth a visit if you want to see waders.

*Verle Wood*

~~~~~  
Please send newsletter material to  
Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211  
or email: verlew @ dove.net.au  
~~~~~

### **Black-chinned Honeyeater Project**

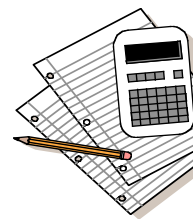
Penny Paton, of SAOA, has received funding from the Natural Heritage Trust to monitor the Black-chinned Honeyeater, once apparently common in the Ranges and on the Adelaide Plains, and to do some re-vegetation in two areas that are strongholds for the honeyeaters, namely, near Scott Conservation Park and the mouth of the Inman River, Victor Harbor.

She is asking for volunteers for a whole day **sit-in** in various locations on 29 April to do a count to try to establish how many birds exist.

As this day is an outing morning for our group she will accept records on a day very close to 29th. Would anyone like to be involved? Please contact Penny, 8344 8891, or Judith, 8555 2736.

### **Incorporation and Insurance**

At the next meeting, 8 May, the new committee will recommend to members that our group become an incorporated body. There has been some discussion re affiliation with the South Australian Ornithological Association, but the committee recommends that we remain an independent group.



Apart from the protection that incorporation and insurance gives to individuals within the group, there are many grants that are not available to us unless we are an incorporated body.

At present we need funds to complete the Effluent Ponds Project, in particular, the signage, and to reprint our brochure. We have also experienced difficulties in the past in hiring hall facilities for meetings because we did not carry our own Public Liability Insurance.

The cost of incorporation is a once only \$108 and insurance for 12 months would be about \$450. Treasurer Judy feels that this cost can be met in the first year from existing funds but a further increase in subscriptions may be necessary down the track to cover insurance costs.

Please think about this issue and come along on 8 May and contribute to the discussions.

---

### **THANK YOU**

to Bruce Riglin who gave his time and expertise to audit our financial statements again this year.

---

