

fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

August 2002

- Meetings:** Anglican Church Hall, cnr Crocker and Cadell Streets, Goolwa
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of alternate (odd) months
- Outings:** Meet 8.30 am. Bring lunch and a chair — see Diary Dates
- Contacts:** Judith Dyer, phone 8555 2736 Ann Turner, phone 8554 2462
30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa 5214 9 Carnegie Street, Pt Elliot 5212
- Web site:** Under reconstruction
- Newsletter:** Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211, verlew@granite.net.au

DIARY DATES



- ☐ **Wednesday 14 August**
Onkaparinga Wetlands
Meet at the park by the Institute, Old Noarlunga
- ☐ **Friday 16 August**
Annual Dinner — still time to book. Ring Gaynor Jones 8555 5480. Not to be missed!
- ☐ **Saturday 24 August**
Scott Conservation Park
Meet at the main car park on the northern boundary off Deep Creek Road.
- ☐ **Friday 13 September**
Meeting
40 Days and 40 Nights in the Wilderness:
Birdwatching on Eyre Peninsula — Judith Dyer
- ☐ **Sunday 15 September**
Woodcone and Mt Compass boardwalk
Meet at the intersection of Victor Harbor and Woodcone Roads, Mt Compass, by the markets, formerly Dairy Vale factory.

- ☐ **Wednesday 25 September**
Coles Crossing Road, Nangkita
Meet at the corner of Nangkita Road and Coles Crossing Road east of Nangkita
- ☐ **Saturday 5 October**
Manning Reserve
This reserve is bordered by Whittings Road and Kays Road, McLaren Vale/Flat. Meet at the gate on eastern boundary (Whittings Road).
- ☐ **Wednesday 16 October**
Inman River flats
Meet in Barker Reserve opposite Victor Harbor City Council Chambers.
- ☐ **Friday 25–Monday 28 October**
CAMPOUT — Gemini Downs, Salt Creek
If you haven't already booked there's no harm in trying your luck at this late stage. Full details were in the April *birdwatch*. Ring Judith for further information.



MEETING

Friday 12 July

This was a very small meeting on a cold winter evening. In Gaynor's absence Brian Ginno presided. Members enjoyed the evening exchanging bird talk and watching a video of Brahminy Kite, Bazza and Spotted Harrier. For close scrutiny was a deceased Red-necked Avocet found at the Goolwa Dump.



By the time our next newsletter goes to press Chairperson Gaynor Jones will be sporting a brand new hip. Gaynor has been finding it increasingly difficult to join in our outings for some time and will go under the hammer on 12 September.

Our best wishes go with her for a successful operation and a smooth path to a speedy recovery.



FAREWELL

We must say farewell to Kate Rogers who for the last 12 months has been an active member of our group. Kate came to Australia from South Africa and settled in the Southern Vales area but is now moving on to New South Wales to live closer to family.

Kate has been most enthusiastic in her quest to become familiar with Australian birds and has been successful in no small measure. She has been a wonderful friend to those who go on our outings and we will miss her. We wish her well in her new situation.

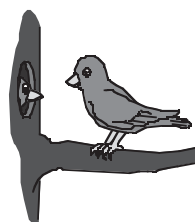
Best wishes from us all Kate, and many more happy hours of birding.



WELCOME

Katerina Bickford,
via Willunga

Happy birding! Pleased to have you join us.



OUTINGS

Kyeema Conservation Park

Wednesday 12 June

A nature trail in this park accessed from a new car park area off Woodgate Hill Road, is a very pleasant walk engaging a section of the Heysen Trail. The weather on the day was good for conversation but not for birds. The wind was blustery and the racing clouds overhead only an arm's length (or two) away. We saw only eleven species.

Grey Currawong, Red Wattlebird and Australian Magpie were the only larger birds seen. Crescent Honeyeater followed us. There was also a Yellow-faced Honeyeater and another sort unmentionable! Grey Fantail, Brown Thornbill, Superb Fairy-wren and Eastern Spinebill provided the colour along with some brilliant Crimson Rosella.

We numbered eight. A visitor, Katerina, enjoyed the day so much she has signed up for membership.

Geoff Evans

Cox Scrub NE

Saturday 22 June

Thirteen of us rose out of our warm beds on the cool winter's morning to walk through Cox Scrub. An early sighting of a Hooded Robin encouraged us. However, for quite a while we felt that the birds that were staying hidden had much more sense than the watchers out in the cold. The exception to this was the ubiquitous New Holland!

In time, Eastern Spinebill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Crimson Rosella and Rainbow Lorikeet were added to our list. Black-shouldered Kite and Brown Falcon helped the count and a couple of Golden Whistler brightened the morning. Some forays off the beaten track flushed out Spotted Pardalote, Striated Thornbill and Brown-headed Honeyeater. The morning was rounded off with a bandicoot running across the path. A count of 32 species wasn't too bad for the rather slow morning.

Val Laird

Goolwa Effluent Ponds

Sunday 14 July

Four members found the weather forecast was wrong and enjoyed a sunny morning at the ponds. First sighting was a Brown Falcon which flew into a Black-shouldered Kite's area but was soon sent away. Both sides of the road were very dry but Black-tailed Native-hen were busy running around with Crested Pigeon and one rabbit. Further down the road we saw a Fan-tailed Cuckoo sitting on the wire but it flew closer into a bush and had a fat grub for breakfast.

From the bird shelter in the first pond we saw only Grey Teal, Hoary-headed Grebe and three Black Swan. On moving to the viewing platform there were large numbers of Australasian Shovellers, Grey and Chestnut Teal, Eurasian Coot and a single Australian Spotted Crake. Being undecided on Musk or Blue-billed Duck we checked the book and due to the colouring of the male and the shape of the bill we settled for Blue-billed. A good learning curve for us all!

As it was too early for lunch we drove to Goolwa Coastal Reserve where the highlights were White-browed Babblers, Peaceful Dove and Brush Bronzewing. Lunch was enjoyed in a sunny sheltered spot with 39 species seen at the ponds and 22 at Goolwa Reserve.

Ann Turner

Normanville and River Bungala

Wednesday 24 July

Sunshine soon dispelled the winter morning gloom by the time we — six of us — arrived at Normanville beach. The seascape was calm and idyllic with the River Bungala flowing gently into the sea.

We soon had a list of common species but were quite delighted by the Great Egret who seemed to welcome our company at various stages of our walk.



We were disappointed in our stroll along the beach not to find any plover.

We wandered over the boardwalk and through the caravan park where a number of Australian Magpie were nesting in the purpose-built fronds of the Norfolk Island pines. Largest numbers were of Welcome Swallow, Silvereye, Rock Dove and Black-tailed Native-hen with a good sprinkling of House Sparrow, Singing Honeyeater, Magpie-lark and Little Raven. A solitary Hoary-headed Grebe made its way up the creek and fascinating to watch while we sipped coffee on the foreshore was a Little Pied Cormorant flying purposefully out to sea then back up the estuary following the same route on several sorties. This was not a remarkable morning birdwise and at birdcall I was quite surprised to find we actually had 30 species on our list.

Notable sightings of the morning were the *Woody Oystercatcher*, debris of a beach bonfire nestled in seaweed on the beach, the (*empty*) *Tincan* Chat perched high on a dead twig above the dunes and several *New* sightings — *New Holland Honeyeater!*

Verle Wood

Cox Scrub SE

Saturday 3 August

Cold wet and windy was the forecast but five people braved the elements and were rewarded with some long bright spells. The morning was dominated by the cries of Rainbow and Musk Lorikeets and the raucous calls of the Brush and Red Wattlebirds. The *New Holland Honeyeaters* were there but we could not hear them!

A *Golden Whistler* put on a show for us — *Silvereye* flitted in and out of the banksia along with two beautiful *Eastern Spinebill*. A pair of raptors flew overhead defying definite identification and the *Southern Emu-wren* proved elusive. A good morning for all that with a count of 21 species.

We scurried home (*Thanks for sheltering us, Paula!*) for lunch and the bird call.

Paula Rawson

BIRDS'–EYE VIEW

Birdwatchers in Scandinavia, according to a recent article in *New Scientist*, don't want to miss a trick. They are using cellphones equipped with a GPS satellite positioning receiver to help fellow twitchers dash to the sites where rare birds have been spotted. When members spy an interesting bird they send a text message describing it, complete with the GPS coordinates. The text is automatically posted on a Web page and forwarded to the phone or email address of every twitcher who has registered. Subscribers with GPS-enabled phones can view a small map, pinpointing the spot. Others can get directions from the websites. If it takes off, the system will be rolled out to other European countries.

HARBINGERS OF SPRING

One doesn't usually think of owls in this light but as our thoughts turn to spring spare a thought for author Allan Parker. An edited extract of his book *Caio Tuscany* recently appeared in a weekend newspaper. At the end of a chilly Tuscan winter sex-crazed owls play havoc with his sleep.

'First, an owl emerges from wherever it is that owls go for winter to set up residence on the closest branch of the acacia tree it can find outside our bedroom window. It is a screech owl. Naturally. As the warming weather fires up its mating lust, it becomes increasingly raucous. Finally, it finds a mate — and we have to endure an hours-long screech owl sexual frenzy.

'Their big night begins with soft whisperings, which I presume is their equivalent of foreplay. Then they build to a screaming crescendo that includes much flapping of wings. They take a breather for 20 or so minutes and then are at it again. This all starts about 2 am. It doesn't stop until first light, when they seem to be sated and head off for a day of rest.

'I feel like a voyeur at an orgy. As I try to get a couple of hours' sleep, I can only hope their night of passion has done the trick; another night of screech owl sex would be unbearable.

'At least with the appearance of the owls we know spring is on the way and we can look forward to six or seven months of warm weather.'



Members Alwyn and Scott Dolling recently travelled to the sunshine state and sent a beautifully handcrafted card of these special pigeons with the accompanying explanation.

A PIGEON BY ANY OTHER NAME ...

Imperial-Pigeon, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Torresian Pigeon, Torres Strait or Nutmeg Pigeon

'Each year spring heralds 'the coming of the white birds' — the flock of Torres Strait pigeons flying south from the New Guinea region to congregate and nest on the small islands off the north Queensland coast.

'As these small islands do not provide food the parent birds take it in turn to fly to the mainland each morning to feed on the fruits of the forests, returning in the late afternoon.

'By autumn the young have grown and the flocks are flying north again.

'Numbers declined dramatically on some nesting islands due to shooting in earlier times and to land clearing. Since the 1960s when large organised shoots stopped, the numbers have increased remarkably, though never again will we see the immense flocks which greeted the first white settlers.

'The Brook Islands house the largest nesting colony in the southern part of their breeding range and since 1965 counts have been made of the pigeons on the daily return flights to North Brook. Numbers have risen from a low of 1400 to a steady 30–35,000 in the past few years.

'The future of these most beautiful birds now depends on the degree of hunting in New Guinea and the well-being of the remaining lowland rainforests of New Guinea and northern Queensland.'