



fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

August 2003

- Meetings:** Anglican Church Hall, cnr Crocker and Cadell Streets, Goolwa
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of 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
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- Newsletter:** Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211, verlew@iinet.net.au

DIARY DATES



✱ **Saturday 9 August**

Mt Magnificent

Meet at the junction of Nangkita and Enterprise Roads, Nangkita.

✱ **Friday 15 August**

ANNUAL DINNER

✱ **Saturday 16 August**

Working Bee

Goolwa Effluent Ponds 9.30 am

✱ **Wednesday 27 August**

Yankalilla Creek

Meet at Garnet Kelly park, 4 km south of Normanville.

✱ **Friday 12 September**

Meeting: Speaker — Denzel Murfet

✱ **Sunday 14 September**

Goolwa Effluent Ponds

Meet at the ponds Kessell Road, Goolwa
Launch of Sign Boards

✱ **Wednesday 24 September**

Nurragi Conservation Reserve

Meet at Milang turn-off, Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road.

✱ **Saturday 11 October**

Parawa private property

Meet at the noticeboard junction of Range Road and Yankalilla Road, Parawa

✱ **Friday 24–Monday 27 October**

CAMPOUT

Barossa Valley. See June *birdwatch* for details.

LAUNCH OF SIGN BOARDS

The interpretive sign boards at the **Goolwa Effluent Ponds** will be launched at a special outing on **Sunday 14 September**. We will birdwatch from 8.30 am as usual and the official launch will begin at 10.30 am.

We would like as many members — past, present and future — to support this culmination of the Ponds Project. Even if you cannot attend the early morning walk please come along later. Waterproof footwear is advisable as much of the area is wet.

Members of **Birds SA** have been invited to join us and their President Penny Paton, will officiate at the launch. Birds SA donated \$1000 towards the project. Alexandrina Council has also contributed over the years of planning and its members have been invited too.

The Committee will serve **morning tea** after the launch.

MEETING

Friday 11 July

Chairman Jim Marsh, welcomed 16 members including our Speaker, member Win Syson, and one visitor, who all braved the elements on a stormy night.

A reply to our letter to Minister Hill re the plight of the Hooded Plover on SA beaches was read. We are waiting to hear further from the Department of Environment and Heritage.

After much work by Gaynor Jones, Jenny Fontanot and Verle Wood our display boards are now set up at Signal Point, Goolwa. Thanks were expressed to these members.

Win illustrated and spoke on his travels as a member of the *Rambling Babblers* to Nelson and the Glenelg River, just east of Mt Gambier over the SA–Victorian border.

At bird call two road kills, a **Tawny Frogmouth** and an Apostlebird, were presented.

A wing from a **Boobook Owl** was passed around.

Pellets from below a Wedge-tailed Eagle's nest near Mt Mary and from Owls roosting on the cliff face of the Murray River near Murray Bridge, were dissected to try to ascertain the diet of the respective birds. The wedgie pellets were mainly fur with remains of several small claws, most likely from rabbits; and the owl pellets were full of little marsupial bones, skull, leg and others probably from mice.

20 **Hooded Plover** had been seen on the beach at Yilki but they had gone before our member was able to verify the sighting.



Hooded Plover, Yilki Beach

Hello Kit!

We recently received a letter from former member, Kit Smith, in response to our item in the April *birdwatch*. Kit is happily settled in with her daughter in Melbourne and busy — as always.

Please help

Saturday 16 August 9.30 am

We have to do some general maintenance at the Goolwa Effluent Ponds before the launch of the interpretive sign boards.

We need members who can chip off weeds around the shelter and platform. With council permission we also plan to build a new path to the mound. We want several strong men to help with the path construction.

Arm yourself with garden gloves and a thermos. Bring spades, shovels, mattocks/grubbers and wheelbarrows. Wear footwear that is waterproof.

Contact Brian Ginno
8555 3735 or
just be there!



Thanks, Jean

Recently Brian Glaister of Hallett Cove Primary School, asked if there were someone who would speak to his class about birds and birdwatching. Jean Boomer understands the importance of youth education and cheerfully took up the challenge. This note from Brian shows how competently she handled the situation. Thanks, Jean.

Thank you for putting me in contact with Jean. Yesterday Jean visited my 8–9 year olds and gave them a great talk for an hour till the end of the day. Jean was a “natural” for kids ... the time really flew. The students were really interested in what Jean had to say about birds and birdwatching and would have gladly listened for longer had time permitted. It was a great success. I will be moving around from school to school into the foreseeable future so maybe I can book Jean for a visit somewhere else.

Thank you also for the plans for the nestboxes which I'll start on soon. Hopefully we can get some native tenants.

OUTINGS

Parawa

Saturday 14 June

Destination Parawa and the forecast of showers may have been the reason only six members and one visitor attended our field trip. The weather actually was mainly sunny and calm. An unusual observation was made that the men outnumbered the ladies. Something for the statisticians amongst us!

We walked several tracks seeing excellent views of Brush Bronzewing, Scarlet Robin, Red-browed Finch, Brown Thornbill in the open, and a pair of Wood Duck up in a tree. The two different calls of the White-naped Honeyeater was something most in the group had not heard before. Up the steep hill we located Golden Whistler and a White-throated Treecreeper.

Lunch was taken in the tractor shed when the only substantial shower for the morning passed over. The bird count totalled 32 species.



Not feathered, but pretty ... Toadstools at Parawa

Denzel Murfet

Currency Creek Gorge

Wednesday 25 June

Eight hardy souls braved the cold morning of 2.5 degrees Celsius when we arrived at Currency Creek for our walk.

The morning turned into a very pleasant day as we wandered along the creek. Not a lot of birds were seen at first but the sunshine revealed 30 species during the morning including Mistletoebird, Grey Shrike-thrush, Crimson Rosella and Red-rumped Parrot.

On the way back we diverted to Currency Creek cemetery where we found Golden Whistler and Superb Fairy-wren.

We returned to the car park where we had lunch and the usual bird call.

Pat Ashfield

Cox Scrub–Coles Crossing

Saturday 13 July

It rained when we met, it rained when we left and it rained intermittently throughout the morning — light rain, but enough to make it not the best morning for birdwatching.

Despite the less than ideal conditions, ten of us finished with a list of 33 species, with good numbers of Eastern Spinebill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Scarlet Robin. We saw a male Golden Whistler and noted the difference between a female Golden Whistler and Grey Shrike-thrush. Alas, no Owllet-nightjar this time round!

Jean Boomer



Thornbill argument discussion at Coles Crossing



Picturesque waterfall, Currency Creek gorge

... Ah, bitter chill it was!

The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold.

John Keats, British poet (1795–1821)

Scott Conservation Park

Wednesday 30 July

Well rugged-up against a very chilly morning four of us set out on the sodden but aromatic track. A fifth was confined to the car park to await the RAA as he had locked his keys in his prized new vehicle. Two more caught up to us just beyond the first creek crossing. In all we negotiated three slippery clay creek crossings — without losing a man.

It was a rewarding walk with 35 species in all and some quite special sightings.

An Owlet-nightjar snug in a hollow, eyed us drowsily as he underwent a thorough examination from a safe distance. The air was alive with parrot sounds: Musk Lorikeet, Crimson Rosella and a few Purple-crowned Lorikeet, all in house-hunting mode. Both Brown and White-throated Treecreepers favoured us and a pair of reconnoitring Australian Shelduck circled several times over the park. Special for me was the brilliant Crested Shrike-tit.

We saw six different Honeyeaters: White-plumed, White-naped, Brown-headed, Yellow-faced, Crescent and the ubiquitous New Holland. There was not enough sunshine for the Superb Fairy-wrens to show themselves in numbers and we spotted one only lonely White-browed Babbler. Towards the end of the morning two magnificent Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo displayed themselves for us.

Verle Wood



Black-Cockatoos

We recently focused on our remnant population of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo. An article by Victoria Laurie in *The Age*, Melbourne, recently highlighted another black-cockatoo, Carnaby's (White-tailed), that is found in the south-west corner of Western Australia. Denis Saunders, former CSIRO chief scientist, has studied the bird since 1968. He has seen flocks of up to 3000 birds in the early 1970s dwindle to 20–300 birds now. Clearing in the wheat belt, urban

development around Perth are mainly responsible, with help from feral cats.

Dr Saunders believes the rural Landcare movement has done a lot to focus on the importance of native vegetation. However, as the article points out, for Carnaby's (and for our glossies) trees take decades to grow large enough to provide nesting hollows. The competition for hollows is keen: several ducks, owls, galahs, corellas, parrots, possums and bees all seek them out.

Simpson and Day: *Field Guide to the birds of Australia* describes the White-tailed Black-Cockatoo as having white tail panels and cheek patches but has no illustration of the bird. Pizzey and Knight's book of similar title, describes and illustrates the Short-billed Black-Cockatoo identifying that as the White-Tailed Black-Cockatoo.

This sent me to look up what is available on the www. I simply did a Google search for White-tailed Black-Cockatoo.

For starters, there seems some confusion about the species names, *Calyptorhynchus baudinii* or *latirostris* and also about the common names, Long-billed, Short-billed or White-tailed. One site suggests that *C latirostris* is a sub-species of *C baudinii*! Another that Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo was formerly called the short-billed form of the White-tailed Black-Cockatoo.

Anyway it seems that this bird ... by any name ... is similar to the Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo but with white face patches and tail feathers — though, to add to the confusion, one photograph shows face patches definitely yellow! Ms Laurie described it as a 'raucous, handsome bird'. Its food, habitat and behaviour seem similar to those of our yellow-tails but its problems very much those of our glossies. Carnaby's current status seems to range from common to threatened/(endangered).

No doubt someone will use DNA testing to define the species beyond confusion in the not-too-distant future — if it hasn't already happened! Your contributions welcome!

In the meantime, I'll stay with the article in *The Age* and trust my bird books. VW