



# fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

**August 2005**

- 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:** Val Laird 8555 5995                      Judith Dyer 8555 2736  
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## **Saturday 6 August**

Inman River Flats  
Meet at Barker  
Reserve, Bay Road,  
Victor Harbor, opposite  
Council Chambers (wet weather footwear).



## **Friday 12 August**

ONCE-A-YEAR NIGHT 🐦

## **Thursday 25 August**

Goolwa Effluent Ponds  
Meet at the ponds, Kessell Road, Goolwa.

## **Friday 9 September**

MEETING  
Guest speaker Terry Dennis: *Coastal Raptors*

## **Sunday 11 September**

Onkaparinga Gorge  
Meet in Woolworth's car park, cnr Penney's Hill  
Road and Main South Road, Hackham.

## **Wednesday 21 September**

Pt Elliot foreshore and Lakala Reserve  
Meet in the car park on the foreshore, at the end of  
Basham's Parade (esplanade), Pt Elliot.

## **Saturday 8 October**

Bullock Hill  
Meet at Ashbourne on side road opposite school.

## **Friday–Monday 28–31 October**

Campout, Eremophila Park, Waikerie  
Details in June birdwatch.

Enjoy a superb three course meal and  
Elaine's Avian Challenge!

## **ONCE-A-YEAR NIGHT**

Hotel Victor  
7.00 pm Friday 12 August

\$17 per person  
Please have correct money if possible.

## **YOUR COMMITTEE**

**works hard at trying to make our  
Friday night meetings  
interesting and informative.  
If you have any suggestions for guest  
speakers, a video we could watch,  
or other activity  
please contact**

**Geoff Evans 8552 1064  
evansone@arcom.com.au**

**or**

**Liz Sweetman 8554 2265  
sweetjohn@bigpond.com.**

## MEETING

Friday 8 July

Ray Laird smartly organised a last minute change of venue to the Church of Christ Hall, and welcomed 25 members, 4 visitors and our guest speaker.

Matters discussed included

- ⊙ Orange-bellied Parrot survey indicated no sightings in May; another survey will be conducted in July.
- ⊙ Recent appointment of Tim Vale as Works Extension Officer for the Mt Lofty Emu Wren and Fleurieu Swamps Recovery Program. Tim is keen to liaise with our group.
- ⊙ The Lions Club of Goolwa has been asked for help with restoring/relocating the bird hide near the barrages.
- ⊙ Pictures and photos still needed for the publicity boards.
- ⊙ A reminder to contact Val Laird with campout reservations.

Judith Dyer introduced our guest speaker, Penny Paton, a past President of Birds SA.

Penny took her inspiration for building her bird-friendly garden from Graham Pizzey's book, *A Garden of Birds*. In turn she inspired us with her philosophy that birds like messy gardens. Penny suggests that it is important to plant a diversity of

vegetation with a mix of taller species, midstorey and understorey plants. Although birds do not seem to discriminate between exotic and native species, Penny advises planting native species to attract native birds. She also strongly advocates avoiding pesticides, leaving leaf and bark litter for insects and other mini fauna, and providing water. If you wish to feed the birds mix sugar/honey in water but don't feed too often or too regularly. Penny's pictures of her garden showed how well she puts her principles into practice.

Bird call:

- ⊙ Grey Fantail on Franklin Parade, Victor Harbor
- ⊙ Sightings along the coasts in recent stormy weather included Albatross, Gannet, Giant Petrel, and a pair of White-bellied Sea-Eagle on Pullen Island, Pt Elliot.
- ⊙ Bar-tailed Godwit and Knots at Murray Mouth
- ⊙ Rock-hopper Penguin at Beachport
- ⊙ A number of bush birds in suburban gardens: Golden Whistler at Goolwa, Restless Flycatcher, Grey Shrike-thrush and Crested Shrike-tit at Victor Harbor.
- ⊙ On display was a splendid nest of sticks with a cosy insert, probably used by Collared Sparrowhawk or Brown Goshawk.

Bird talk continued over a welcome warm cuppa.

## OUTINGS

### Jarnu

Saturday 11 June

After a wet and windy Friday, 12 hardy souls— 11 members and one visitor—met at the Lions Park, Currency Creek. The weather had become fine and sunny, albeit cool with a light breeze. We drove to Jarnu, property of Dr Jarrett, along gravel roads and through a muddy paddock.

On arrival at Jarnu, we were faced with either a climb over a locked gate or a crawl under a barbed-wire fence! For those of us who have lost both their 'get up and go' and their 'get down and grovel' it presented quite a challenge! However, by fair means or foul, we managed it—one small person even curled up like a porcupine and literally rolled under the fence! Where was Val with her camera?

After the lovely rain we had just had, the birds were out in droves—or should that be flocks, flights or gaggles? It was rather disappointing to find at the bird call that there were only 28 species, compared to the numbers of birds that were flying around us. Among those species, Elegant Parrot were most numerous, as were the Welcome Swallow letting us know in no uncertain terms we were in their habitat. Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Dusky Woodswallow and of course, the ubiquitous New Holland Honeyeater were also plentiful.

Some lucky people caught sight of the Yellow Thornbill, White-plumed Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-fronted Chat, Hooded Robin and White-browed Babbler. Other sightings were of the Golden Whistler, Grey Fantail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Skylark, Mistletoebird, Superb Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote and a solitary Nankeen Kestrel. Straw-necked Ibis, Crested Pigeon, Rainbow Lorikeet, Willy Wagtail, Magpie, Little Raven, Red Wattlebird, Sparrow and Starling made up our full sightings. A Grey Shrike-thrush was heard but remained elusive.

We then climbed back over or under that fence to our cars, and had our lunch and birdcall back at the Lions Park.

Colleen Evans



**Parawa**

Thursday 23 June

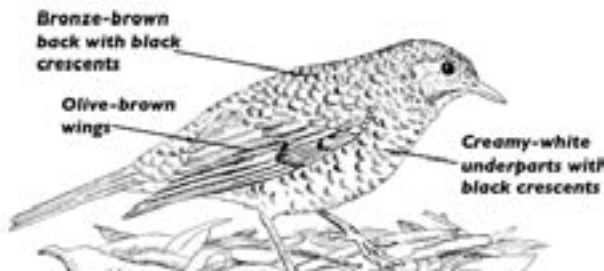
Ten members disregarded the gloomy weather forecast for this outing on private property and were pleased they did as it was fine but cold. The birds were very quiet and only 19 species were seen although Grey Shrike-thrush and Common Blackbird were heard.

Our first sightings were Striated and Brown Thornbills closely followed by a male Golden Whistler. Walking down the hill slowly an Eastern Spinebill made a brief appearance before we moved just a short distance along to find a Bassian Thrush. Along with male and female Scarlet Robin this was the highlight for the morning.

Once past the dam the birds seemed to have vanished which meant we had an early lunch and left just as the rain started. Still, an enjoyable outing as usual.

Ann Turner

Photo: Verle Wood



**Gilbert Siding**

Sunday 10 July

There were 11 of us, plus a pet Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, who assembled at Gilbert's Siding for our walk along the railway line. One member elected to remain at the siding but the rest of us set off in an overcast day with irritating fine drizzle interspersed with moments of sunshine. At first, the birds were few and far between but we were accompanied by the melodious chuckle of the many magpies.

Finally, the sun really broke through and the birds came out to show their appreciation. The total count for the morning was 53 species and included many New Holland, White-naped, and Crescent Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds. We were thrilled to identify a couple of small flocks of Elegant Parrot and a rare sighting of Orange-bellied Parrot.\*

As the morning unfolded, our sightings expanded to include Spotted Pardalote, European Goldfinch,

Superb Fairy-wren, Peaceful Dove, Galah and Silvereeye.

A strange sighting was of three Common Bronzewing, each sitting on the left hand rail, but not together. They allowed us within a few metres before flying away. And we had a treeful of White-faced Heron—well, eight perched together in a dead tree. Of course the usual common birds, Sparrow, Starling, Crested Pigeon and Little Raven, were in evidence. The cockatoo came along with its owner for a little distance but was not successful in attracting any more of its species.

Although the sleepers and rocky ballast made walking difficult, this was a great outing, as ever.

Keith Gilbert

\* As the Orange-bellied Parrot is an endangered species and rarely seen on the mainland our Bird Record Secretary has asked several members to submit evidence of their sightings for verification. We will publish more on OBP Identification in the next birdwatch. V)

**Nurragi CP**

20 July 2005

After the early fog lifted, the 11 persons who gathered at Nurragi, between Finnis and Milang, were greeted with a calm and sunny day, one which was ideal for birdwatching—a welcome change from the cold and blustery weather we had been experiencing. Intensifying our expectations was the increase in foliage in the reserve since the last visit most of us had made there. The promise of the day and the site was made good in that 40 species were encountered.

Sufficient flower was in bloom to attract Rainbow and Purple-crowned Lorikeets and Red-rumped Parrot. Among the honey-eaters the Brown-headed was well represented, second in numbers only to the New Holland, followed by White-plumed and a Spiny-cheeked heard. Mistletoebird were sighted, as were a Golden Whistler, White-browed Babbler, a few Grey Shrike-thrush, Weebill, and the odd White-fronted Chat and a Richard's Pipit.

Eastern Spinbill were there too, somewhat to be expected due to the influx of this species into local



Photo: Val Laird

gardens in recent weeks. Friendly Grey Fantail kept us company along the way and three Banded Lapwing flew noisily overhead.

Together with the other species encountered, these were enough to fill a very pleasant morning. Included in the 11 birdwatchers was a visitor and probable new member, Mike Browne. Mike is soon to be married, so we take the opportunity to extend our congratulations and look forward to two new members rather than one.

Ray Laird



### TRAVELLERS' TALES

On their recent trip Ann and John Turner had numbers of Gang-gang in the Grampians, and good looks at the Regent Bowerbird as it stole their grapes at O'Reilly's in Queensland. In Warrumbungle NP a Turquoise Parrot posed for them on a post in the morning sun.

Margaret and Henry Dreyer are back from their adventure into Central Australia where they saw some 'new to us' birds.

"The bird which caught us by surprise, so to speak, as we hadn't really noticed it in our field guide, was the Western Bowerbird with its lilac-pink nape—a real treat. Others to enhance our trip were sightings of Major Mitchells, Grey-crowned Babblers and Yellow-throated Miners. It is amazing how these birds survive and thrive in such harsh conditions. See you soon," says Margaret.

Judith Dyer and Peter Koch had a busy five-week avian tour of Tas.



### Tassie Birds

Our recent trip to Tasmania was very profitable for my Life list adding 15 ticks including the 12 birds which are endemic to Tasmania. The Pink Robin, the Spotted Quail-thrush and the Grey Goshawk made up the balance. There are 179 birds listed in the latest Tasmanian Field Guide and I recorded 115 of these or approximately 65%. Peter recorded 117 including the Ground Parrot—not bad I thought, for cold and damp weather with much shortened winter days.

Tassie has a number of birds which go south only in the summer months, and those like the Orange-bellied Parrot and the Swift Parrot which migrate to the south-eastern mainland during the winter. Although the weather was cold and often damp we had very little wind and this contributed to our success. Peter again concentrated on finding sub-species of many birds. Because of the isolation and the distance south the birds tend to have developed unique features and are regarded as specific sub-species. Many tend to be much darker in colouring than those we see here.

Our most common sighting was of Masked Lapwing sometimes in flocks of 50–100 birds. In New Norfolk we even had them perching on rooftops among the seagulls—'ubiquitous' as Colleen E would say! Little Egret were common in the north and there were many road kills as a result of feeding in the roadside drains.

Kelp Gull, seen only rarely here, were counted in the hundreds on the Hobart Waterworks Reserve, and flying back and forth across the base of Mt Wellington to the sea. The Forty-spotted Pardalote was elusive and the last of the endemics we found. We saw it twice but in the same area on two different occasions.

The highlight for both of us was the Grey Goshawk. In Tasmania it only occurs in the pure white form and is magic to see. It is known to the locals as the white hawk and we were lucky to see it on three occasions.

Tasmania is a great place to birdwatch and I can highly recommend a trip to this very hilly and beautiful island, but allow plenty of time. A week or even two is not enough; we had little spare time in our five-week stay.

Judith Dyer

Photo by the late Jack Cupper from "Australian Birds" by Donald and Molly Trounson, with permission.

