



fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

August 2006

- 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, phone 8555 5995 Judith Dyer, phone 8555 2736
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rlaird@exemail.com.au jdyer@inet.net.au
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- Newsletter:** Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211; verlew@bigpond.net.au

For your
Diary



- ❁ **Saturday 12 August**
Onkaparinga Wetlands
Meet at the Institute, Old Noarlunga
- ❁ **Friday 18 August**
Annual Dinner
Hotel Victor 7 pm
- ❁ **Thursday 24 August**
Winery Road, Currency Creek
Meet at the canoe tree, Goolwa–Strathalbyn
Road, Currency Creek
- ❁ **Friday 8 September**
Meeting
Guest speaker: Jeremy Robertson, Flinders
University Biology Department
Home Page at [www.scieng.flinders.edu.au/
biology/people/robertson_j/index.html](http://www.scieng.flinders.edu.au/biology/people/robertson_j/index.html)
Guest lecturer at Bird Week, Fraser Island
- ❁ **Sunday 10 September**
Currency Creek Gorge
Meet at the Lions Park, Strathalbyn Road,
Currency Creek.

- ❁ **Wednesday 20 September**
Bullock Hill CP
Meet at Ashbourne on side road opposite school.
- ❁ **Saturday 7 October**
Mt Magnificent and Blackfellow's Creek
Meet at the junction of Nangkita and Enterprise
Roads, Nangkita.

Don't miss out!

➤ It's not too late

to book your place at the dinner
Hotel Victor, 7 pm

Friday 18 August

Details in June birdwatch page 1

*And Quizmaster/MC Elaine says,
"Don't forget to remember your
best sighting for the year to share!"*

Contact Geoff Evans: 8552 1064,
evansone@bigbutton.com.au

➤ Nor is it too late

to make your plans for campout at Burra

Friday 27–Monday 30 October

Details in June birdwatch page 5

*Full program of activities will be published in
October birdwatch.*

MEETING

Friday 14 July

MID-WINTER, COLD AND BLEAK, BUT 15 MEMBERS BRAVED the damp for bird talk and especially for the presentation by Ray and Val Laird of their trip to Queensland for the Fraser Island Bird Week. Routine business was soon dealt with. Neville Hudson of Aldinga, asked that members report to him sightings of Hooded Plover, especially those on the gulf side of the peninsula.

Ray manned the computer for the presentation and much of the photography was Val's excellent shots. The trip was in part a 40th wedding anniversary celebration and what a way to celebrate! The event was hosted by the Hervey Bay Birdwatchers Club at the Kingfisher Bay Resort on Fraser Island, a splendid facility offering ecotourism experiences. Accommodation and catering were first class and the program organised by the rangers covered a choice of 10 daytime and 2 evening activities each day. These included guided walks with rangers and experts, wetlands cruises, canoe paddles, photography and sketching field workshops, and 4WD trips farther afield on the island.

The collective bird call for the week was 162 species and Ray mentioned quite a few we don't see here: Bar-shouldered Dove, White-cheeked Honeyeater (as ubiquitous there as our New Holland here), Forest Kingfisher, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (whose numbers are thought to be declining), Russet-tailed Thrush (a tick for Ray and Val), Pale-headed Rosella, and the spectacular Scarlet Honeyeater and its less spectacular cousin, the Dusky Honeyeater. They found quite a variety of waders wintering over but in small numbers.

My pick of the pics was the Rufous Fantail, or the Plumed Whistling Duck, or the bats, or the (Donald Duck) Large-billed Scrub-wren, or the Red-backed Fairywren ... it was a great armchair bird walk. Thank you, Ray and Val, for sharing the experience and inspiring some to consider a Fraser Island destination next May.

Here at home, bird call included

- ◇ a large flock (40+) of Red-rumped Parrots vicinity Jagger Road, Victor Harbor
- ◇ Hooded Plover on Waitpinga and Parson's beaches
- ◇ Southern Giant-Petrel at several places including Rosetta Head



Photo: Verle Wood

Southern Giant-Petrel, Rosetta Head

- and also among the whales off Basham's Beach
- ◇ Southern Great Skua at Aldinga Bay
- ◇ Hutton's Shearwater, Rosetta Head
- ◇ Immature Golden Whistler in suburban backyard, North Goolwa
- ◇ Huge flocks of Little Corella vicinity Urimbirra
- ◇ 9 Flame Robin, plus Red-capped and Scarlet Robins, at Salt Creek
- ◇ Uncommon visitors to Goolwa, 4 Crimson (Adelaide) Rosella
- ◇ Variety of birds on Hindmarsh Island including 26 Teal and a White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

A warm cuppa and biccies rounded off a very pleasant evening.



Photo: Neville Hudson

Hooded Plover on Aldinga Beach, 10 June 2006

Hooded Plover survey

GROUPS OF HOODED PLOVER HAVE BEEN OBSERVED ALONG the Aldinga Beach in recent months with consistent sightings throughout June and early July. A group of nine was seen on one occasion but pairs are also noted. I am assisting the Aldinga Bay Coastcare Group in gathering information about the number of Hooded Plover visiting our local beach and other beaches on the Fleurieu Peninsula. I would appreciate information giving details including where, when and how many. I would willingly exchange information about sightings we have at Aldinga and adjacent beaches.

We understand that the species is vulnerable in South Australia with only about 500 remaining and one third of these on Kangaroo Island. The increased number of visitors to our beaches, especially 4WDs on long sandy isolated beaches, and predation by introduced foxes and cats have reduced the success rate of their breeding. It would seem that they now visit Aldinga only during the non breeding season.

Please forward information to me nhudson@senet.com.au, 8298 4197, 8556 6782 or 0429 804 100.

Neville Hudson

WELCOME

Teresa Jack, North Brighton

Trust you will enjoy your birdwatching with us and adding to your bird photo collection.



OUTINGS

Coles Crossing Road and Mt Compass boardwalk
 Saturday 10 June

THIS OUTING WAS IN TWO PARTS: FIRST AT COLES CROSSING ROAD and then at the Mt Compass boardwalk. Thirteen birdos turned out on what started as a pleasant morning, sunny and without any wind. It was nice to have a new resident in our area, Neil Cheshire, sharing the outing with us.



The walk up Coles Crossing Road was quite fruitful with a number of Scarlet Robin brightening up the proceedings. Brown-headed Honeyeater were around, and juvenile Golden Whistler, Spotted Pardalote,

Crescent Honeyeater, Striated Thornbill and a Black-shouldered Kite were the more notable sightings. In all, there were 24 species, mostly less than four of each, apart from the Galah, Red Wattlebird, Silvereye and Magpie! Nevertheless, it was a pleasant walk in affable company.

The scene—but not the people—changed dramatically when we arrived at Mt Compass. The sky was overcast and the wind was biting through our jackets. It was COLD! The birds thought so too and preferred to stay under cover out of the elements. Here there were sightings of only 12 species. No Emu-wren showed themselves and there was little to enthuse about apart from a wonderful flock of Red-browed Firetail (oops! Finch)* that added some colour to a drab backdrop. The odd Nankeen Kestrel and Superb Fairy-wren did their part to spice things up but the weather tended to win out on us.

Lunch together was jovial enough but the biting cold sent us scampering off rather quickly. Still, we had the memory of those beautiful robins at Coles Crossing Road to take with us—they do make any outing a good day.

Ray Laird

***Finch v Firetail**

Reader's Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds (1976) lists 62 finches and 6 firetails: Beautiful, Diamond, Painted, Red-browed, Red-eared and Red-faced.

The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds (1986) has 12 finches and 5 firetails omitting the Red-faced from the above list.

Simpson & Day Field Guide to the Birds of Australia (1993) lists 10 finches and 5 firetails as Slater.

Pizzey & Knight (1997) has 21 finches, including European Gold and European Green, and 3 firetails: Beautiful, Diamond, Red-eared.

Has DNA research resolved this anomaly yet or are they Firetail-Finch? Verle

Photo with permission Scott Contini www.sydneynature.com



Red-browed Firetail?/Finch?

Hardy's Scrub

Thursday 29 June

TEN MEMBERS MET AT GATE 14 CHAPEL HILL ROAD. JEAN was our group leader. The weather was fine but cool and windy—in fact very windy and cold as we waited at the entrance to the park.

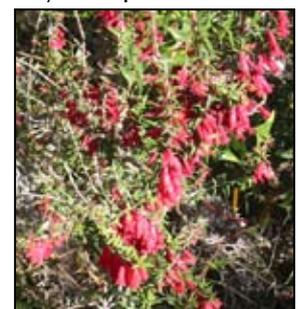
We were quite apprehensive about sightings at this stage. However, we decided to go ahead and as we moved down the hill out of the wind, we were well rewarded. We saw two Silvereye hanging grimly to a very tall thin tree which was moving about 150 degrees in the wind. As we continued and the wind abated, we saw many other birds: Eastern Spinebill beautiful as always, Striated Pardalote a-plenty, Yellow and Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantail, one White-browed Scrubwren, Yellow-faced, White-plumed, White-naped and Crescent Honeyeaters, and one Wedge-tailed Eagle overhead while we ate lunch.

The special sighting for me was the male Golden Whistler. We had already seen the female earlier and just as a very enthusiastic group of 12–15 bushwalkers met us coming from the opposite direction there was Mr Golden Whistler. 'Harry Butler' and his team very kindly waited while we all sighted the whistler. We had a short break at a picnic table by a pool of water. This, of course, is birdwatching at its best—sitting at the table and watching the birds nearby!

Don Overall was with us today and provided an extra dimension by giving us some info on the local flora. The correct botanical name for heath, for instance. I would need to write it out 100 times at least!

27 species in all— a very rewarding day!

Elaine O'Shaughnessy



Epacris impressa, Mt Billy

Photo: Verle Wood

Cox Scrub Conservation Park

Sunday 16 July

THE FORECAST OF RAIN FOR THE WEEKEND KEPT OUR NUMBERS down to just three members. As we started out the clouds were quite high with no showers.

We recorded the usual high numbers of New Holland Honeyeaters, but we could hear Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters away in the distance.

The Murphy's bushwalkers rule came into action when we reached our farthest point—it started raining. The second half of our walk was a steady pace back to the cars, until the sighting of the morning—a Painted Button-quail scurrying along the path in front of us.

Our final tally for the two-hour walk, half in the rain, came to 26 species with 9 of these being heard records— showing just how difficult it was to stop and see birds.

Denzel Murfet

Hindmarsh Falls

Wednesday 26 July

ALL ENJOYED A GREAT morning of birding at the falls with the weather cold but sunny.



Australian Wood Duck, Hindmarsh Falls

Photo: Teresa Jack

At the commencement of the walk a pair of Scarlet Robin welcomed us with Mrs Robin enjoying a worm breakfast. Superb Fairy-wrens were busy foraging in the grass while Grey Shrikethrush and several Little Raven loudly called around us.

Walking to the falls we had Crescent, New Holland and White-naped Honeyeaters, and Eastern Spinebill. A Crested Shriketit was very obliging, staying around for quite a while, and a Male Golden Whistler was also keen to show off for the photographers in the group.

Not a great deal was seen along the bush walk side although there were several 'something' birds flying past us.

While we were having lunch the Magpies kept us entertained with their singing. After bird call we walked over to the reedy area and watched a pair of White-browed Scrubwren performing a courtship dance on a moss-covered branch and eventually flying away together, presumably to house hunt. A great ending to a top morning's outing for which we saw 31 species.

Ann Turner

OBP

THE SECOND NATIONAL ORANGE-BELLIED Parrot survey for the year was held over the weekend of 22–23 July. However, despite having a record number of people (28) out searching for those frustrating 'little-green-parrots' no OBPs were seen! The larger than usual search group enabled us to target likely habitats everywhere around the lakes and between the Murray mouth and Salt Creek, including inner Younghusband Peninsula and several Coorong islands.

There was a similar story in the south-east and so no OBPs were seen anywhere in SA! Different though over the border in western Victoria, where there were around 30 OBPs seen in total.

The score card reads: 60 Blue-winged (several hundred seen in the south east), 150 Elegant and a small number of Rock Parrots in their usual haunts.

So keep **Sunday 17 September** free. There will be plenty of opportunities for members to get involved on home turf, especially now that many are trained-up after Bob Green's Neophema ID workshop back in March.

Terry Dennis

OBP Survey Coordinator, Northern Coorong/Murray Lakes

Channel Country

DREW MORRIS, TOURISM INFORMATION OFFICER IN Birdsville, would really like to hear from you. He is currently looking into producing a brochure highlighting the birding assets of the Diamantina Shire in southwest Queensland's Channel Country.

Drew hopes that those who have travelled through this area can give him a better idea of where, when and why birdwatchers are travelling through the shire. And if you're planning a trip that way do drop into the Wirrari Information Centre at Birdsville and say hello.

If you would like to share your bird lists or trip journals do contact Drew at Wirrari Information Centre, Birdsville, Queensland 4482, 07 4656 3300, info@diamantina.qld.gov.au

Emu Parade

In the June edition of *birdwatch* we reported the sighting of an emu at Newland Head CP, with the comment that no-one on the walk could recall having seen them west of the Coorong. Andrew Jeffery has been watching birds locally for many years and says that three or four years ago he saw them in two places: a pair in the scrub alongside Depledge Road, northwest of the Victor Harbor rubbish tip, and a small group on the hillside near Cresbrook Road, about 2 km west of Hindmarsh Tiers. At the time Andrew didn't think that these sightings were at all unusual. Please let's know your emu sightings in this area. Verle

