



# fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

August 2007

- 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
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For your  
Diary



\* **Friday 17 August**

*Once-a-Year Night Dinner*

URGENT! Book with Val 8554 5995, or  
Verle 8552 2197 NOW! Don't miss out! 

\* **Thursday 23 August**

*Milang/Clayton*

Meet at the railway carriage, Milang.

\* **Friday 14 September**

*General Meeting.*

Speaker: Terry Dennis, *Wedge-tailed Eagles on  
the Fleurieu*

\* **Sunday 16 September**

*Scott Conservation Park*

Meet in the main car park on the northern  
boundary off Deep Creek Road.

\* **Wednesday 26 September**

*Parawa (private property)*

Meet at the Junction of Range Road and Torrens  
Vale Road, Parawa, by the noticeboard.

\* **Saturday 13 October**

*Currency Creek Winery*

Meet at the Canoe Tree, Goolwa-Strathalbyn  
Road, Currency Creek.

Hotel Victor  
Welcomes  
FLEURIEU BIRDWATCHERS

ENTRÉE  
Chef's soup of the Day

MAIN COURSE

Roast Beef  
with red wine glaze

or

Chicken Breast  
oven baked & stuffed with ham & cheese  
with chicken gravy

or

Grilled Fish of the day  
with lemon butter sauce

DESSERT

Fresh Fruit Salad  
with cream & ice cream

or

Hot Steamed Sticky Date Pudding  
with cream & ice cream

Tea/Coffee

\$18.00 per person



## MEETING

Friday 13 July

Good publicity for this meeting drew an audience of 27 members and 5 visitors, and Ray warmly welcomed them all.

Business of the evening included

- » Private Property sign now installed at Jarnu to deter casual passersby from using the stile installed specifically for birdwatchers' access
- » Bookings for campout going well
- » Excursion to Thompson Beach still being checked out
- » Dinner bookings must be made by 10 August
- » A copy of *Which Bird of Prey is That?* by noted Australian (Q) ornithologist, Gordon Beruldsen, was tabled
- » Another book about bird migration is now available from Alexandrina Library.

Tim Vale then presented much interesting and useful information on his activities as Works and Extension Officer of the Fleurieu Swamps and Mt Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren Recovery Team.

He began with a detailed look at the Southern Emu-wren and its habitat on the Fleurieu, outlining the current threats to its survival but also offering hope through the practice of extending swamps and relocating birds. Tim's goal is to work with landholders to preserve swamp habitat, and to raise awareness of the problems and threats to native species—plants, animals and birds—its removal entails. Some financial incentives are available.

A number of members took up Tim's offer of copies of an attractive, easy-to-read and comprehensive booklet on the topic issued by the Department of Environment and Heritage. Drop him an email [tim.vale@ccsa.asn.au](mailto:tim.vale@ccsa.asn.au) if you would like one.

Ray thanked Tim and was heartily supported by all present.

### Bird call

- ◆ Neophemas within the same area on Hindmarsh Island included Blue-winged, Rock and Elegant Parrots
- ◆ Report of five Orange-bellied Parrots (some banded) in the northern Coorong see page 4
- ◆ Cattle Egret at Mt Compass
- ◆ Significant sighting of Yellow-plumed Honeyeater at Nurragi
- ◆ Immature Pink Robin still in residence at Willunga
- ◆ Hooded Plover at Franklin Parade, Victor Harbor, and at Oliver's Reef, Pt Elliot
- ◆ Fan-tailed Cuckoo along the Inman at Victor

Harbor for the first time in seven years—also heard at Goolwa and Hindmarsh Island

- ◆ Photo of Egrets at Scab Creek, Hindmarsh Island, tabled
- ◆ Visitors to the Fraser Island Bird Week reported adding lots of ticks to their lists. And they brought home the prizes! see page 4

We all appreciated the warm cuppas Jenny had prepared, and continued with our bird twitter.



## OUTINGS

### Mt Billy Conservation Park

Saturday 2 June

After two days of rain the Saturday morning of the Mt Billy walk dawned clear and sunny. As I got ready to leave home I heard kookaburras outside my window, so decided to believe their word that this was a good day to move early. Fifteen other people resolved to enjoy the morning sunshine too.

The Mt Billy CP is about 12 km north of Victor Harbor on the Hindmarsh Tiers Road and has some great views. One of SA's newer reserves it comprises 200 hectares of stringybark trees on the higher ground and blue gums down the hill.

Denzel Murfet was the leader for the morning. After leaving three cars at the bottom of the hill we proceeded to the gate higher up. Although there were plenty of birds calling, we had limited sightings as we started walking. No-one was in a hurry so plenty of time was spent by those who knew the area helping less experienced birders.

About halfway along the wide downhill track the highlight of the morning was to see a pair of beautifully coloured Crested Shrike-tit. This was a first for several walkers including me.

Only minutes later we were treated to another similarly coloured bird, a Golden Whistler which provided us with excellent viewing on lower branches.

There was the usual discussion about Brown and Striated Thornbills and the fact that they never seem to stay still long enough for close scrutiny. Despite few trees with blossom and no lorikeets being sighted, Yellow-faced, Brown-headed, White-naped, Crescent and New Holland Honeyeaters, and the attractive Eastern Spinebill were seen.

Just when it seemed unlikely there would be any more interesting species to see, two Wedge-tailed

Eagle drifted slowly overhead at a low level—the only raptors for the morning.

Drivers were ferried back up the hill to collect cars and then most of us headed back towards Victor Harbor for lunch at Nangawooka Flora Reserve.

The final tally of species reached 30—an interesting morning with a couple of great highlights.

*Peter Gower*

### Nurragi Conservation Reserve

*Thursday 28 June*

Nurragi Conservation Reserve is a corridor of regenerating land along a disused railway corridor. Thirteen members travelled there in perfect birdwatching conditions. The birds met us early: a family of White-naped Honeyeater and then along the way White-browed Babbler and Superb Fairy-wren, Eastern Spinebill and Weebill.

A Diamond Firetail (right) sat in the sun for us, and a Southern Boobook flew ahead of us for quite some time allowing fleeting glimpses. Our leaders identified a juvenile Golden Whistler.



Photo: Teresa Jack

The find of the morning was a Yellow-plumed Honeyeater busy among the gum blossom. It allowed us an extended look and generated much conversation. It was very attractive and seems to be so rare in the area that it was not even on our bird list for recording.

Back to lunch and the birdcall, and we were joined by a perky Jacky Winter.

A very good birding morning with 38 species sighted.

*Teresa Jack*

### Jarnu

*Sunday 15 July*

A cold, overcast day with a sharp little wind blowing, but at least it wasn't raining. Jarnu was quite green in contrast to the brown of January, though the grass wasn't as high as I've seen it on past visits.

Our Spot of the Day appeared not long after we began our walk—one Tawny-crowned Honeyeater which foraged close to us for long enough to give us all excellent views.

There were good numbers of Elegant Parrot and I spent a lot of time looking at wing markings trying to turn them into Blue-winged Parrot which I haven't seen yet, but without success. Another day!

It was good to see two pairs of Hooded Robin and note the difference between the female/immature Hooded Robin and the Jacky Winter. White-fronted Chat popped on top of a bush just before we finished the walk.

In all, a satisfying morning with 10 birdwatchers recording 38 species. Well worth it, despite the chill!

*Jean Boomer*



*Yellow-plumed Honeyeater at Nurragi*

*Photo: Teresa Jack*



**WELCOME**

John and Jan Nicholls,  
Aldinga Beach

Kathy Scott, Yundi



**FOR SALE**

TASCO 60 MM SPOTTING SCOPE  
Rubber armoured with straight view  
Gerber 15–45x zoom lens.  
Optex tripod with quick release panning head.  
Sell as package.  
Negotiate with Val 8555 5995.



## Onkaparinga River National Park (The Gorge)

Wednesday 25 July

The area chosen behind Hackham is called *Sundews*, its name commemorating the herb Scented Sundew, white with five petals, as recorded in Ann Prescott's wildflower book. These lovely small flowers grow alongside the park trails. But in the trees and shrubs we even saw 24 species of birds and heard another. The day was fine and mild but the wind sprang up at 10 o'clock.

Crescent Honeyeater were calling all over the park and showed themselves a few times. White-browed Babbler were heard but only one seen. Most species were sparsely represented, just ones and twos and threes—even the New Holland Honeyeater was scarce. Others seen were Yellow-faced Honeyeater, male and female Golden Whistler, Red-browed Finch, Eastern Spinebill, Striated Pardalote, Mistletoebird, Striated, Yellow- and Buff-rumped Thornbills, Grey Currawong and Wedge-tailed Eagle.

A loping kangaroo rounded off the day.

Geoff Evans

## FRASER ISLAND ADVENTURE

Bird Week on Fraser Island is an annual event held in May, and Ann and I are thankful to Ray and Val Laird for telling us about it.

The flight was the worst part of the trip. Everything else was just fantastic. The accommodation at Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village, in a unit overlooking a lagoon, was first-class. The presenters, including SA's Jeremy Robertson, were excellent and very knowledgeable. Meals were of a high standard and with great variety, leading to over-indulgence. The birdlife is truly prolific and 162 species were spotted in the week with, for us, 20 new sightings.

Various locations were visited on the island and additional trips were made to the Hervey Bay area and cruising the Great Sandy Strait. In such diverse locales, we were able to see seabirds, different forest species, raptors, and freshwater birds, as well as carpet python, eels, fruit bats and dingoes. We were all warned not to encourage the latter!

The terrain on the island was startlingly different to anything we had ever experienced. Being a sand island, the only tarmac road disappeared 200 metres from the resort, and from then on it was 4WD buses only. Highlights for us were the full-day tour to Inskip Point and the sighting of the Beach Stone Curlew—unless these actually moved, it was impossible to detect them.

It was good to have Geoff and Colleen Evans there too. Colleen and Keith won prizes—pictures of

birds produced by the talented Darran Leal. Keith's prize (Ornate Eagle Hawk, pictured), measures 96 x 64 cm so you can see that it is an imposing sight in our family room.

We have already received an invitation to next year's event and we would be pleased to pass on details to anyone who is interested.

Keith and Ann Gilbert



## COORONG BLITZ

In mid-June a small band of experienced observers systematically searched likely habitats working northwards from the 28-mile crossing. After enduring four nights of bone-chilling heavy frosts followed by clear but still chilly days, we found 'em! A flock of five were feeding in Beaded Glasswort on the Youngusband Peninsula in the northern Coorong National Park.

The Taswegians quickly went to work. Using spotting scopes they found that four of the five were banded and worked out that three of these were young birds on their first migration. After a couple of hours of quiet observation they had all the band details, none of which matched those found in May.

Anyway, we can assume there have been at least nine OBP in the Coorong so far this year. No more were sighted in the July survey. The rest of us had to make do with the odd flock of blue-wings, scrub-robins, bristle-birds, firetails, emu-wrens and the occasional field-wren—all a bit ho-hum really!

The **final National OBP survey weekend for 2007 is on 8–9 September**. Based on last October's sighting the challenge is to locate OBPs in the St Kilda/Pt Gawler sapphire areas again.

Remember we now have a spotting scope for loan, and do let me know any time you're going out specifically to search for OBPs so that I can register your activity for the Birds Australia Volunteer Insurance cover.

For a memory refresh on *Neophema* parrot diagnostic features and calls check out [www.birdsaustralia.com.au/birds/obp.html](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/birds/obp.html) Terry Dennis, OBP Survey Coordinator, Coorong/Murray Lakes. 8552 7659 or 0409 527 654, [obpsearch@bigpond.com](mailto:obpsearch@bigpond.com)