



## MEETING

Friday 11 July

It was a rather cold winter's night and this was a smaller meeting than usual, with just 14 members and two visitors attending.

Judith Dyer was in the chair and commented briefly on the sad passing of our former treasurer, Brian Ginno, and the loss to the birding community of noted local ornithologist, John Eckert, who died suddenly of a heart attack.

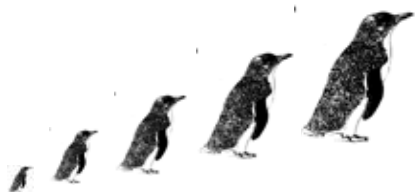
The treasurer indicated our financial position is healthy, with the funds for a data projector boosted by income from raffle tickets. The raffle will be drawn at the Annual Dinner, 15 August.

Guest presenter, Natalie Gilbert, spoke enthusiastically about her work with penguins on Granite Island. Statistics kept annually since 1995 show that penguin numbers are in steady decline, though the survival rate has improved. Natalie's work is supported regularly by 14–16 volunteers who help with counting, monitoring, microchipping and public education, and by more volunteers for the annual census. Her personal anecdotes of penguin encounters enriched her presentation — thank goodness, we couldn't smell the photos!

Bird call

- ◆ a deceased Purple-crowned Lorikeet was displayed
- ◆ the Black-chinned Honeyeater reported at the last meeting as heard at Goolwa is now thought to have been a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
- ◆ photos of Black-chinned Honeyeater and Crested Shrike-tit at Inman Flats, and of Spotted Crake at Paiwalla, were shown
- ◆ White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Australian Gannet and Wedge-tailed Eagle were reported from Waitpinga vicinity
- ◆ Gannet also sighted on Hindmarsh Island
- ◆ 24 Bar-tailed Godwit seen above the barrages
- ◆ Hooded Plover at Hindmarsh estuary.

We appreciated the warm cuppa prepared by Jenny Fontanot, especially as it gave time for more bird chatter.



## OUTINGS

### Inman River Flats

Saturday 14 June

A keen group of 12 parked our cars in Henderson Road, Victor Harbor, and set off on the Red Gum Woodland Loop with Ray leading the way. It was a day for the hardy: not actually raining, but occasionally drizzly and quite cold. However, the birdwatching made up for the weather.

We found a purple patch quite early in the walk and everyone lingered while we enjoyed great views of Crested Shrike-tit (a first for several of our new members) as well as Striated Pardalote and Grey Fantail.



Well camouflaged Crested Shrike-tit at Inman Flats. Photo: Teresa Jack

Many eucalypts were in flower. Ray left the trail and struck out for a usually productive spot on the river flats. There was great anticipation as Verle and Ann identified the call of the Black-chinned Honeyeater. Several were seen fleetingly by a few members of the group but the rest of us were initially disappointed.

However, as we scanned along the river flats, four or five black chins were seen among a flock of Brown-headed and New Holland Honeyeaters. We concentrated on these for quite a while—the photographers were busy too! This was the highlight for most of us and another first for some.

The bird hide near the golf course prompted a discussion on the height of viewing panels—why are they never the right height for the average person! Those of us who could see out had good views of several kangaroos. Moving on we said hello to the horses resting from their duties on the Horse Tram.

To round off the day, we walked to the settlement ponds where we added a number of waterbirds to our list, including Shoveller and Black-fronted Plover. On the walk back to our cars we were pleased to see a group of Red-browed Finch.

We adjourned to the Nangawooka pavilion for lunch and the birdcall, with a total of 44 species seen.

Faye Lush

## Strathalbyn effluent ponds and Laratinga wetlands

Thursday 26 June

A small group met at the Strathalbyn Railway Station, the main topic of conversation being how good the morning was after the horrendous winds of the previous day. We proceeded to the effluent ponds where we quickly spotted a perched Whistling Kite. The sighting might have been immediate but our identification was not as quick, as it proved to be an immature bird with obvious spots on its wings. We later saw another immature bird perched nearby, as well as an adult in the same area.

On the waters of the pond were a number of species including both Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebe. The sun was at a frustrating angle and prevented us from identifying many of the water birds we could see at the eastern end of the pond. After a walk up the road we finished with a total of 30 species.

Seven of us drove on to Laratinga wetlands at Mt Barker where we were met by two more members and a welcome visitor. This time we were able to walk with our backs to the sun making identification of the water birds much easier. Six species of duck were seen including two Shovellers and a number of Hardheads. A couple of times the Little Grassbird forgot its need to be secretive, affording us some good views as it foraged among the reeds. In the foliage around the ponds we saw Superb Fairy-wrens, New Holland Honeyeater, some Dusky Woodswallow and a Bronzewing as it made its escape. In all we saw 44 species at the site, more than enough to make it a very successful day.

Pat Uppill



Serene Pacific Black Duck at Laratinga.

Photo: Teresa Jack

## Bullock Hill CP

Sunday 13 July

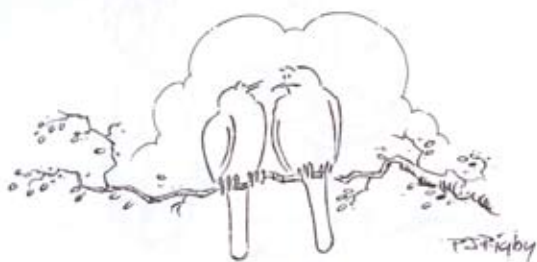
On a cool and windy day nine members met at Ashbourne School and then drove to Bullock Hill Conservation Park. The wind kept many birds from being visible but once we got to a sheltered gully more birds were seen. The ever-present New Holland Honeyeater topped the count though a big flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos feeding in an adjoining paddock came close.

In all 29 species were sighted — no great numbers of most species but a good variety. A newly-built dam and tank in an adjoining farm paddock meant Wood Duck and two lovely Australian Shelduck were a different sight to the usual bush species seen in this area.

Later, we went for a walk along the road behind the Ashbourne golf course and this rich area provided 23 species of birds including a lovely Golden Whistler. This little track and the bush on either side always seems to be rich in birdlife, and at present is also home to a family of bandicoots who obliged by crossing the road as we walked up to them, so we had a good sight.

Lunch and bird count at the edge of road finished a rewarding morning of birding.

Yrena Mountford



*"Not now – there's bound to be someone watching."*

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## Some say this and some say that ...

spring is in the avian air and birds are nesting earlier this year.

Do they know something we don't, or after the rains, are they just rejoicing?

## Mt Magnificent CP

Wednesday 23 July

Thirteen members met at the corner of Nangkita and Enterprise Roads, east of Mt Compass. It was a beautiful chilly morning with clear light and sunshine for most of the morning — a wonderful morning for birdwatching, and virtually no wind. It did get little chilly sitting having lunch later.

We began at the higher entrance to Mt Magnificent Conversation Park and after happy walking and viewing there we moved to the lower entrance of the same park.

It was my first visit to this park and I found it very interesting with wonderful big gums and totally different species in each area — big blue gums up top and stringy barks in the lower area.

Many native plants were in flower. A pretty greenhood native orchid was cleverly spotted on the track by the last person passing. Somehow, it wasn't stepped upon.

30 bird species in all. Highlights were Golden Whistler, Scarlet Robin, Eastern Spinebill, White-throated Treecreeper, an unusually high population of Striated Pardalote, and several Honeyeaters: Yellow-faced, Brown-headed, White-naped, Crescent, White-plumed and, of course, New Holland.

*Elaine O'Shaughnessy*



Looking down on creation from Mt Magnificent CP.

Photo: Verle Wood

## CONGRATULATIONS!

We add our plaudits to those of bird lovers and conservationists Australia-wide to Associate Professor **David Paton** and **Penny Paton** who were each awarded an AM (Member of the Order of Australia) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for 2008. The citations read:

For service to conservation and the environment through research into the ecology and behaviour of Australian birds, to the management and restoration of the natural environments, and to education.



### On the net

- Bird Observation & Conservation Australia, formerly the Bird Observers Club of Australia (BOCA), will launch a map-based guide to birding in Australia, hopefully in early August.

Their Marketing Manager, Dave Torr, contacted us about this, and has now included Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc information and a link to our website, on their prototype site, <http://www.birdobservers.org.au/BirdingMaps/PHP/ShowMap.php?environment=BOCALive&usemap>.

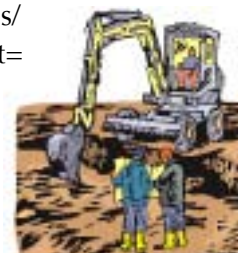
Be aware that this site is under construction so may contain some glitches.

Eventually, the maps will be linked from the BOCA home page.

<http://www.birdobservers.org.au>

- Some great photos of birds on this blog.

[www.blognow.com.au/birdwatch](http://www.blognow.com.au/birdwatch)



### The Universal Laws of Birding [www.gadwall.com/birding/](http://www.gadwall.com/birding/)

The Camera Power Conundrum: Bird lands 15 feet away, battery in camera fails.

The Aircraft Conspiracy: Birds which need to be distinguished by call only sing when aircraft are overhead.

Sosenky's Theory of Optical Availability: Birds are most visible when your binoculars are down.

Sosenky's 2nd Law: The active foragers are always in the canopy or the back of the tree.

Frazier's Law No 1: The bird will only come out after you have begun to leave. Sometimes you can trick the bird into coming out by loudly announcing that you are leaving and starting to move in that direction.

Sitting in the Woods Corollary: The bird will be seen by others only after you have snuck into the woods to take care of biological responsibilities.