



fleurieu birdwatch

December 2001

Meetings: Anglican Church Hall, cnr Crocker and Cadell Streets, Goolwa
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of alternate (odd) months

Outings: Meet 8.30 am. Bring lunch and a chair — see Diary

Contacts: Judith Dyer, phone 8555 2736 Ann Turner, phone 8554 2462
30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa 5214 9 Carnegie Street, Pt Elliot 5212

Web site: Under reconstruction



FOR YOUR DIARY

* **Saturday 1 December**

Christmas Get Together

Meet at Lions Park, Currency Creek, 4 pm for birdwatch stroll before tea. BYO everything. Barbecues available.

* **Sunday 16 December**

Goolwa Christmas Pageant

Meet in the car park behind Council Chambers 5.30 pm for a 6 pm start. The more the merrier!

* **Friday 11 January**

Ashbourne area

In the cool, cool, cool of the evening — 7 pm
Meet near the Ashbourne Primary School.

* **Saturday 2 February**

Goolwa Barrage to Beacon 19

Meet at the barrage.

* **Saturday 23 February**

Currency Creek Winery upstream

Meet at the winery car park.

* **Friday 8 March**

Meeting

Speaker: Denzel Murfet — Wader Identification

We are planning ...

a wader spotting expedition

to PENRICE SALTFIELDS, St Kilda

Saturday 9 March

Bus will leave Goolwa about 12.30 pm and return about 9 pm. Pickup may be possible in Southern Vales and/or Darlington area.

Cost: Max (we hope) \$20

FIRM REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

is required IMMEDIATELY so that we can make arrangements for bus and permission for access. Members only in the first instance and if seats are available, spouses and friends.

Phone Judith NOW— 8555 2736 or 0403 169 832

If sufficient members register and we are able to make the necessary arrangements, full details will be published in the February edition of birdwatch.

MEETING

Friday 9 November

23 members attended and were welcomed by Gaynor Jones.

The minutes of the previous general meeting were read and confirmed.

The Treasurer reported a healthy bank balance at present. Insurance will account for a large slice of funds in the near future.

Correspondence received included various newsletters, including Stipiturus, the Southern Emu-wren publication, and a letter from the new managers of Tonkin's Winery assuring us that we are still welcome to go on the property for our birdwatching activities there.

Brian Ginno gave a brief report of the Campout at Morgan and mentioned good sightings of kingfishers, bee-eaters, raptors nesting and Little Friarbird, which some had also seen nesting.

Goolwa Christmas Pageant will be held on 16 December. A number of those present indicated they would attend and carry the banner for us. Please walk with the group if you can.

In response to a communication from the Alexandrina Council it was agreed that an application be lodged for a citizen's award for Judith Dyer in recognition of her efforts on behalf of Fleurieu Birdwatchers.

As yet there has been no cutoff date for the submission of Atlas survey forms.

A suggestion was put that our group hold a Twitchathon in 2002 and the Committee will discuss this.

Speaker for the evening was our own Dianne Shearer, Clown Extraordinaire dressed for the part, who has travelled to Russia on two occasions with Patch Adams and an international group of clowns. They visited orphanages, hospitals and homes for the elderly and provided support for the welfare of Russian orphans. Di continues to keep the movement in public focus and forwards all donations to the organising body. She can be contacted on 8555 5323 or at 4 Baronet Street, Goolwa 5214.

Bird call was a hands-on affair with deceased (one-legged) Superb Fairy-wren, Striated Pardalote, Crested Pigeon, Painted Button Quail, Masked Lapwing and Black-tailed Native-hen being passed around for inspection. Live bird reports included Spotted Crake and Baillon's Crake at the Effluent Ponds, Goolwa, and Black-tailed Native-hen in great numbers in many areas of the state including over 900 in a paddock at Middleton.



**The stork is on its way for
Belinda, Mark and Sarah Filkin.
Best wishes
for a safe and smooth landing!**

OUTINGS

So sorry! Humble apologies to all for not including this report in the last newsletter where it belongs, and, again, especially to Margaret who wrote it so well and took such pains to get it right. V

Hindmarsh River

Wednesday 15 August

An overcast, still morning provided pleasant conditions for the keen group of 15 birdwatchers assembled at Hindmarsh River.

We first walked to the Hindmarsh Estuary. On the lake were Pacific Black Duck and Eurasian Coot, while overhead we saw Black-shouldered Kite, Little Raven, Red Wattlebird, Little Wattlebird, Singing Honeyeater and lots of New Holland Honeyeater. At the beach 5 Hooded Plover were busily feeding on the shoreline, while a Pelican, Silver and Pacific Gulls made a beautiful sight. Walking through the paperbark we saw a flock of Greenfinch and a Little Grassbird was heard but remained elusive.

The group then moved on to the Hindmarsh River upstream which took us just past the bridge to Greenhills, and back. We saw an abundance of birds by the river. Pacific Black Duck, Little Corella, Galah, Rainbow Lorikeet, Red-rumped Parrot, Red Wattlebird, Little Wattlebird, Singing Honeyeaters, Grey Fantail and a Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike.

Further along the river we spotted White-plumed Honeyeater, and two Black-chinned Honeyeater which have not been seen for a while. There were many New Holland Honeyeater which were very noisy and aggressive. A Fan-tailed Cuckoo and a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo provided some interesting moments as did a Black-shouldered Kite which sat on a dead tree giving us all a good view. As the walk progressed, a breeze sprang up and became quite strong by the end of the walk.

On our way back to the cars we passed a Magpie-lark's mud nest but could not see if it was occupied. The group heard Striated Pardalote but none were sighted

and a Laughing Kookaburra was heard but not seen. On arrival at our lunch spot we were able to sit back and watch a Little Pied Cormorant drying its wings by the river. Before lunch a Brown Thornbill's nest and a dead Striated Thornbill were passed around for observation.

At the count 18 species had been seen at the Estuary and 37 from the banks of the Hindmarsh River.

Margaret Dreyer

Yankalilla Gorge

Saturday 6 October

Six of us braved a most discouraging weather forecast and were rewarded with quite an acceptable morning for birdwatching. We were sheltered from the wind down in the gorge and the occasional brief shower was matched by long fine spells and even some sunshine.

It took a bit of time to get ourselves on the right side of the creek due to the increased water flow, though few water birds were taking advantage of it.

I was very pleased to see five raptors: Nankeen Kestrel, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk and Brown Falcon which perched beautifully on a bare branch of a small bush.

A number of birds appeared to be collecting nesting material. Varied Sitella were very busy in and around one tree, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Striated Thornbill and Red-browed Finch weren't easy to spot, but the challenging spot of the day was a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo finally seen at the top of a tall tree against a very pale sky.

A quick bird call because of the cold, gave us 36 species.

Jean Boomer



CAMPOUT



White's Dam Conservation Park

Friday 26 October

We left the caravan park at Morgan a little after 3 pm and travelled 18 km along the Burra Road to this spot. The predominant vegetation was bluebush and casuarina.

It was cloudy and windy. No dam was sighted and only ten species of bird were seen.

The highlights were a pair of Red-capped Robin, White-fronted Chat and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater.

Gaynor Jones

Banrock Station

Saturday 27th October

After a chilly night, Saturday dawned a beautiful day, sunny with a slight breeze, and 18 campers set off to meet at the gate of Banrock Station at 9 am. After registering our group we divided into two, each smaller group setting off in opposite directions and agreeing to meet for lunch at the Reception Centre at 1 pm.

The 7-kilometre walk encompassed both floodplain and wetland lagoons, the latter easily accessed by extensive boardwalks and discreetly placed birdhides. These gave weary walkers a welcome opportunity to sit quietly and absorb the peace and quiet of this wonderful environment, and even catch glimpses of the elusive Reed-warbler and Little Grassbird. One of the highlights was being able to observe a pair of young Whistling Kite in their nest in a dead tree in one of the lagoons. They perched on the edge of the nest and stretched their wings while mum and dad circled protectively overhead.

Small groups of tired and hungry walkers came together again at the Centre to enjoy a delicious lunch and sample some of the fine Banrock wines on the deck overlooking the wetland lagoons. Birdcall revealed a total of 72 species. Altogether a very satisfying outing!

It is very encouraging to see the work being done by Banrock to restore this wonderful wetland area, and also the flood plain and mallee scrub areas which are being extensively replanted and revegetated with seeds collected from the local native flora.

Many of us felt that any return visit to Banrock would warrant taking lunch and spending a whole day to do the walk, but do be warned that booking is essential!

Judy Jones

Morgan Conservation Park

Sunday 28 October

The early threatening cloud soon blew over without depositing its contents on us and we enjoyed lovely weather for the rest of the day as we walked around Morgan Conservation Park on the Sunday of our campout.

We all wished we'd brought our cameras with us as two Yellow-billed Spoonbill posed high in a tree. There were plenty of other waterbirds to delight us — Grey Teal, Australasian Grebe, Darter, Black-fronted Dotterel, Great Egret and White-faced Heron, to name a few.

Further along the bush track, we were treated to sightings of Gilbert's Whistler, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and Variegated Fairy-wren. Rainbow Bee-eater, Sacred Kingfisher, Regent and Mulga Parrot

showed off their wonderful colours and some of us had a good look at the Little Friarbird.

Most of the morning we chased an elusive trill, only to discover that it was a Variation on a Theme belonging to a Rufous Songlark, one of the first birds we had seen that day!

Some of the group had to leave after lunch but went home on a high note with plenty of ticks for first sightings in the park — and we let John Whellams take the prize for having the most!

Val Laird

Mt Mary–Brookfield

Monday 29 October

We set off about 9 am and headed towards Mt Mary. About 3 km down the Mt Mary–Blanchetown Road and about .5 km past the trig point on the left, we spotted two White-winged Fairy-wren. We watched them as they posed on the tops of the bluebush and on the fence.

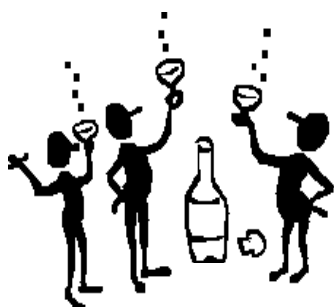
Then off to Brookfield, which we entered via the east gate on Park Terrace. It was a good morning for a walk but, apart from surrounding and having glimpses of Southern Scrub-robin, and some excellent sightings of Variegated Fairy-wren, the birds were not in great numbers.

Our attempts to see the Splendid Fairy-wren near the water tank at the road junction were unsuccessful.

After lunch and a bird count which numbered only into the teens, we split for home with memories of another successful annual campout.

Thanks again, Judith and Ann, for choosing another good camping spot.

Bruce Riglin



Happy Hour at Campout

Tolderol

Sunday 11 November

On the morning of 11 November, which felt more like a June morning, 17 members and friends braved the cold wind and rain for an excursion to Toderol Game Reserve.

We stopped first at Milang where we found to our delight several Japanese Snipe in the samphire — a first for me and I believe, for some others.

On arrival at Tolderol, our first stop revealed Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Red-kneed Dotterel, Black Swan, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and more. We motored on through fairly long grass to the bird hide.

Most of us climbed the rickety ladder to the comparative comfort of the hide only to find our slight discomfort completely forgotten as we viewed the wonderful collection of birds to be seen from that height. We had good numbers of duck — Pink-eared, Australasian Shoveller, Hardhead and Grey Teal, to name a few.

Numerous Whiskered Tern in breeding plumage, Black-winged Stilt, Banded Stilt, Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebe, Red-necked Avocet, one lone Australian Wood-duck and a Marsh Harrier overhead caused excited chatter and loud exclamations to fill the hide. We were all having a good time!

We drove to another area and had good views of a Golden-headed Cisticola carrying nesting material and some of us tried, but in vain, to see an Australian Spotted Crake.

The bird count was taken between showers. We then went our own ways from there, some of us to Milang for lunch in a shelter shed on the foreshore, which included a lesson on the birds and the bees.

An excellent morning with 51 species identified.

Pat Ashfield

Hardy's Scrub

Wednesday 21 November

Despite a slow start eight of us finally spotted 35 birds. We noticed a lot of dieback in the pink gums. The highlight for me was a Buff-rumped Thornbill. It was the first time I had seen one — at least knowingly.

There were good number of Eastern Spinebill and White-browed Scrub-wren.

Jean Boomer

Thank you to all who have contributed to birdwatch this year. I have greatly appreciated receiving your reports so promptly. Special thanks to Judith for meticulous proofreading and to Ann who faithfully helps with the mailout.

Best wishes to all for the Festive Season and a Happy and Healthy New Year

