



fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

December 2003

- 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:** Judith Dyer, phone 8555 2736 Ann Turner, phone 8554 2462
30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa 5214 9 Carnegie Street, Pt Elliot 5212
- Website:** members.iinet.net.au/~verlew
- Newsletter:** Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211, verlew@iinet.net.au

DIARY DATES



Friday 9 January

Inman River twilight walk

Meet 7.00 pm at Barker Reserve, Bay Road,
Victor Harbor, opposite Council offices

Saturday 7 February

Aldinga Scrub/Willunga Wetlands

Meet at the park entrance, Cox Road, Aldinga

Wednesday 25 February

Cox Scrub NE corner

Meet at the car park at the northern end of the
park off Ashbourne Road.

Friday 12 March

Meeting

Guest speaker: Brian Furby, Slide Librarian of
BirdsSA

Sunday 14 March

Penrice Saltfields

See next column

PENRICE SALTFIELDS

Sunday 14 March

*Our excursions to Penrice are always
memorable. Don't miss this opportunity.*

Transport:

Bus — only 21 seats

Cost:

\$25 payable by 23 February

Further details and bookings:

Pat Ashfield 8552 5415



*Season's Greetings to all and
the best of birding in 2004*

A BIG THANK YOU to all who have contributed to birdwatch this year. Not everyone can go on outings and your stories help them keep in touch. Special thanks to Ann T for her ever-ready assistance with mailout, Phyll for filling in and Judith for her meticulous proofreading.

MEETING

Friday 14 November

Jim Marsh chaired the meeting of 17 members and two visitors from USA. The business of the meeting was brief.

- Campout report — see below
- A census of Glossy Black-Cockatoo shows that numbers are up from 250 to 288.

Judith introduced Phil Hollow, District Ranger for the Coorong and Lakes area, who described some of the activities of his department. His labour force is minimal but is supplemented from time to time by prisoners from gaols, who often experience a different aspect of community life than they have known before.

Facilities for visitors to the Coorong National Park have been considerably upgraded recently to minimise environmental damage while still allowing public access. In turn this is an advantage for wildlife, specifically migratory birds. Another measure to assist the birds, mainly Hooded Plover, is closure of Coorong beaches from 24 October till 24 December.

We all found Phil's lively, informative presentation and unbounded enthusiasm for his job inspiring.

Bird call included

- a pair of Peregrine Falcon in a blue gum on Deep Creek Road
- Hooded Plover breeding against the odds at Hindmarsh estuary
- Black-winged Stilt breeding at Paiwalla, a new wetlands, formerly a dairy farm near Murray Bridge, recently flooded
- Common Sandpiper at Inman and Hindmarsh estuaries
- among a huge flock of 52 Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, one almost completely yellow underneath — several sightings
- vagrant Noisy Friarbird stayed over a week in Scott CP — only one previous SA record, in the Riverland
- white Cape Barren Goose
- Val Laird's collection of photos of campout including proof of a Long-billed Corella in Altona Scrub
- deep-cupped nest lined with horse hair, possibly an Eastern Spinebill's.

The bird talk continued during the usual cuppa session that followed.

OUTINGS

Parawa — private property

Saturday 11 October

Eight intrepid watchers braved the biting winds in the Parawa hills. As it turned out, the birds were wiser than the watchers. Obviously they preferred to find warmer pastures. Only a very modest sighting of just 22 species was made. There were small numbers of most of these, mainly As and Bs and a lone C.

Highlights were Scarlet Robin, Golden Whistler, Eastern Spinebill and a Yellow-faced Honeyeater. Though the pickings were small, the company was pleasant and some beautiful orchids of various kinds were a welcome diversion, especially to Val with her new camera.

Anyway, we always say that if we see a Golden Whistler and a Scarlet Robin we have had a good day. And so we did!

Ray Laird



Female Scarlet Robin

Photo: Val Laird

CAMPOUT (Barossa)

Tanunda Effluent Ponds

Friday 24 October

Twelve of the campout crew already arrived in Tanunda made the short drive to the effluent ponds around 4.00 pm. We easily identified Red-kneed Dotterel and Black-fronted Plover but it took more time to decide on Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

There was quite a pause while we all watched two pairs of Pink-eared Duck very closely circling each other — a courtship ritual perhaps? Hoary-headed Grebe, Hardhead and Pink-eared Duck were in good numbers but the standout was a pair of Blue-billed Duck.

All told, 19 species.

Jean Boomer

CAMPOUT *(continued)*

Altona Scrub

Saturday 25 November

On arrival at Altona Scrub, as we walked slowly up the long entrance driveway Brown-headed Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler and Peaceful Dove noisily welcomed us. Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo called loudly but we were unable to find it. We were luckier with the Restless Flycatcher which also called while busy finding food in the undergrowth, so we all had good views of it. The Hooded Robin flew across the pathway allowing a quick sighting of him and the Mistletoebird came close for us to study him with ease.

One bird that had us looking through the bird books was a corella sitting cosily in a hollow of a large tree. We could see pink across the front of the chest and it finally turned its head and we could see the long bill making it the Long-billed Corella — a pleasant surprise for us all.

The weather changed from sunny to rain very quickly so bird call was left and we soon headed for the cars. After lunch it was fine again so three of us went back to Altona and added 10 more species to the 44 seen earlier. We were lucky enough to see a pair of Clamorous Reedwarbler feeding young in the nest although during the morning we could only hear them calling. A pleasant ending to a good day of birding.

Ann Turner

Kaiser Stuhl Conservation Park

Sunday 26 October

Conditions were cool and overcast but no wind. The kangaroos were happy to allow us passage as we hunted down Eastern Spinebill, Crescent Honeyeater, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb Fairy-wren and White-naped Honeyeater, with nest, on our way to the top of our circuit.

There, two pairs of Rainbow Bee-eater were croaking away and giving all excellent views. We returned to our starting point for lunch where a pair of resident Sacred Kingfisher, with nest, kept us company.

Thirty-one sightings were made and the wildflowers complemented our pleasant journey.

Thank you Judith, for again taking us to another good spot to enjoy our weekend.

Bruce Riglin

Sandy Creek Conservation Park

Monday 27 October

A good roll-up of 15 members stayed on for the Monday morning outing at Sandy Creek Conservation Park. The weather was probably the best of the four days and thus an enjoyable time was anticipated. Sightings of a Peaceful Dove and a Rainbow Bee-eater at the very commencement of the walk reinforced that prospect. We were not disappointed, sighting 29 species.

Rufous Whistler were beautiful both in song and to sight. Others that spiced up the day were Red-rumped Parrot, Mistletoebird, Eastern Spinebill and Richard's Pipit, the latter allowing us to get close for excellent viewing.

The one disappointment was our failure to catch even a glimpse of a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo whose unmistakable call tantalised us for quite some time.

Early in the piece we had spotted a pottery-like chough's nest, an amazing piece of nature's handiwork. So we were pleased when near the end of the walk, to come upon a family of White-winged Chough, many of which cuddled up to each other. This gave a nice touch, not only to the day but also to the whole campout which had shared the same friendly spirit from beginning to end.

Val Laird



Photos: Val Laird

Hindmarsh Island

Sunday 16 November

Cool and windy weather greeted 13 members and one fledgling on Hindmarsh Island. Leaving the Ferryman's Reserve after pooling cars we turned right just before the monument. We then proceeded down a track which produced several species of waterbird: Great Egret, Royal Spoonbill, Black Swan to name a few in a wetland area that some of us were unfamiliar with.

We drove on to the Murray mouth and had some discussion on a group of waders, with no definite outcome. Here we also saw Little Black Cormorant, Crested Tern, and for me the highlight was a pair of Fairy Tern.

Then it was on to Scab Creek — not a lot to see there but we did see a Red-capped Dotterel, a Little Egret and another glimpse of the Fairy Tern. On the way back to Ferryman's Reserve for our lunch, in another area we saw a Great-crested Grebe. A very successful day with 50 sightings in all.

Pat Ashfield

One of the many blooming orchids that distracted some of us from birdwatching at campout.



Caladenia— Spider Orchid

Photo: Val Laird

Jarnu, Currency Creek

Wednesday 26 November

I was much struck by the difference between Jarnu in the colder, wetter months and its considerable dryness at the end of spring. Despite that, we had good sightings of Rufous Whistler, Elegant Parrot, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo and, for me, a very large group of White-fronted Chat.

We were pleased at the start to see White-winged Triller; then further on a male triller gave us a splendid rendering of his territorial song, and after that we found a female triller on a shallow nest that seemed quite small for the size of the bird. To top that, we saw two Budgerigar.

A very interesting morning for seven people seeing 32 species.

Jean Boomer

Rainbow Bee-eater

One of the best sightings of campout for me was the colourful Rainbow Bee-eater. We saw them on each of the three scrub excursions of the weekend. I gleaned these facts about them.

- Male and female Rainbow Bee-eater are very similar in colouring but the two extended central feathers which form the spinetail are shorter in the female.
- Bees, wasps, hornets and related insects, including dragonflies, comprise 80 per cent of a bee-eater's diet. A single bird may eat several hundred bees daily. Bee-eaters are immune to bee and wasp stings and seldom need to drink because of the high moisture content of their diet.
- Rainbow Bee-eaters tunnel a metre or more into a sandy bank or patch of bare, flat ground and gouge an egg chamber at the end. Young, unmated male bee-eaters may help pairs dig their nests. They lay 3–7 round, translucent white eggs.
- Bee-eaters arrive in the southern parts of Australia in early spring after wintering in New Guinea, and the Sunda and Solomon Islands. They return north again in April. Some birds may remain in northern Australia. At their winter haunts the immatures moult and don their adult plumage, but probably do not breed until their second year.

Verle Wood