



fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

December 2004

- 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
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DIARY DATES

* Saturday 4 December

Christmas Breakup

Currency Creek Gorge

Meet in the Lions Park,
Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road,
Currency Creek

Birdwatching at 4.00 pm. Light up barbies about
5.30 pm. Bring your own everything — don't forget insect
repellent. (There will be barbie space to share if you
don't have your own.)

2005

* Friday 14 January

Twilight Walk

Scott Conservation Park (southern)

Meet at 7.00 pm at the junction of Deep Creek Road and
Frome Road, on the southern boundary of the park.

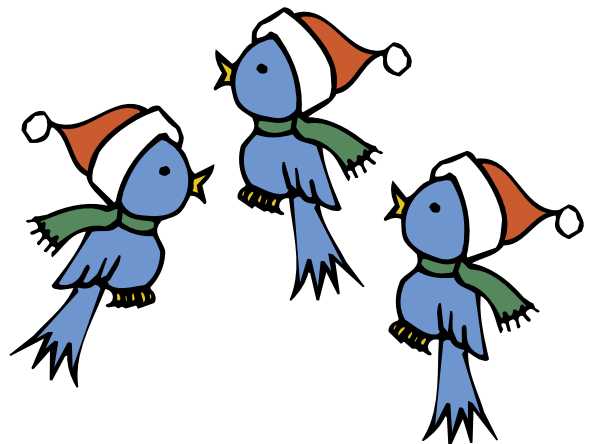
* Saturday 12 February

*Normanville Beach Caravan Park, Bungala Creek
and Lady Bay*



Merry CHRISTMAS

AND THE BEST OF BIRDING IN 2005



Convoy Etiquette: When travelling in convoy
please be sure to keep the car **BEHIND** you within
your sights. That way we can react appropriately in
an emergency and all arrive at the right place.

*A great big thank you to all who have contributed to this newsletter
over the past year. Your reports on outings and sightings keeps us all
interested, and your willingness and prompt delivery keeps me happy.
Special thanks to Ann and Judith for their ongoing support in pub-
lication, and to Val for generously allowing us to use her photos. V*

MEETING

12 November 2004

18 members and 5 visitors including the guest speaker attended.

As in all fields of human endeavour, much can be learned from the expertise of those skilled in their craft. The visit of Andrew Black, President Birds SA and representative on the Conservation Council, to our latest meeting afforded a significant opportunity of this nature.

Andrew took us on an absorbing journey of investigation into the distinguishing features of the various members of the Petroica family of robins. He pointed out that these red-breasted robins can be identified and distinguished from each other by colour, markings and habitat.

Generally, the amount and placement of white on median wing coverts, wing panels, tail feathers and forehead, the shade and extent of red on the breast, the main body colour (black or grey in males, brown or grey in females) are the features to look for. Habitats such as high country, open country, higher canopy etc, are also factors to take into consideration when identifying a particular bird. Finally, some time was spent considering the brown birds, that is the female robins, and those sometimes confused with them such as the Jacky Winter.

This was a most instructive lecture which no doubt will bear fruit in the future birdwatching of those who were privileged to be present. Thanks to Andrew for permission to reproduce his key charts. They are enclosed with this newsletter.

Ray Laird

GOOLWA EFFLUENT PONDS WORKING BEE

Saturday 16 October



Just three souls turned up on a cool but sunny morning. Several apologies were received and President Jim had single-handedly built formed access steps up the rear of the mound in the previous week as his contribution. He also supplied the materials for this job. They are a great improvement. Thank you, Jim.

One hour of hard work was all that was needed to clean up the pathways with mowing and spraying, trimming of bushes close to the shelter and removal of cobwebs, and spraying inside the shelter. All looked neat in the end.

Thanks to Win, Geoff and Judith.

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WELCOME

Juris Abols of Goolwa

Trust you will enjoy birdwatching with us.



OUTINGS

Tolderol Game Reserve

Saturday 9 October

On this beautiful sunny spring day, with a gentle breeze, 15 of us met at Tolderol. Several months previously there had been a controlled burn-off along some of the embankments and channels which enabled us to walk out past some willows. Here we



Blue-winged Parrot

Photo: Val Laird

sighted the highlight of the day — Blue-winged Parrot. Four flew over, and one was particularly obliging and stayed in the willow.

The Little Grassbird and Golden-headed Cisticola were numerous enough for everyone to get a good look at them, but waders were conspicuous by their absence, only Sharp-tailed Sandpiper being in abundance. There were plenty of Whiskered Tern.

A single Great Crested Grebe was unusual for this site and we were lucky enough to see five ducklings belonging to a vocal pair of Australia Shelduck. Four raptor species kept us scanning the sky but we also had to look down as the reptiles were out and about as well! In all, 36 bird species were sighted.

Phyll Whellams

Goolwa Barrage to No.19 Beacon

Sunday 14 November

On a morning when the threat of light moisture hung in the sky two lone birdos surveyed the river banks from the Goolwa barrage to about a kilometre below the 19th beacon.

34 species were recorded with the sighting of the day being two Great Crested Grebe swimming just above the barrage. There was some exposed mud but only four species of migratory waders were recorded: Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers, Red-necked Stint and a lone Common Greenshank. Other sightings were of the usual river residents and bush birds.

Judith Dyer

CAMPOUT — NARACOORTE

Stony Point Reserve, Naracoorte Caves CP

Friday 29 October

A double serve and good measure!

All primed up to be “Birded Out” we set off for a pleasant late afternoon stroll through Stony Creek Reserve.

Grey Fantail and Superb Fairy-wren were most common throughout. 38 species were counted including Eastern Yellow Robin, Restless Flycatcher on a nest, Red-browed Firetail, Brown Thornbill, and beautiful Crimson Rosella. White-browed Babbler and White-browed Scrubwren were in the bracken.

We were able to inspect an echidna along the path — can’t wait till tomorrow!

Bruce Riglin

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About a dozen early arrivals at the weekend campout went to the reserve near the Victoria Fossil Cave in the late afternoon.

Initially we were disappointed as the heavy fern cover meant we could hear dozen of calls but see only a few birds. However, as we moved to the creek side with more open ground and bigger trees a much better variety of birds was seen. In all we saw 38 species.

The highlight was an Eastern Yellow Robin who obligingly sat still in a bush for all to see. It was the first of several sightings over the weekend. Also a nesting Restless Flycatcher gave a wonderful call and display so everyone had a good look at them and for me that made my day.

Thanks to Judith Dyer for her tireless efforts over the entire weekend in leading us in “foreign” territory.

Yrena Mountford

Bool Lagoon

Saturday 30 November

On the second day of our campout most of us spent the whole day in and around Bool Lagoon. The action started immediately on arrival. Our first sighting was a flying Rufous Night Heron which disappeared into the dense paperbark surrounds of the lagoon and a Brown Falcon obligingly posed upon a post while Val took his photo.



Brown Falcon

Photo: Val Laird

A walk out to the hide at the end of the boardwalk got us a closer look at the many nesting and courting Ibis and Spoonbill. Seven species of duck were recorded throughout the day along with swans, stilts, dotterels and cormorants. Clamorous Reed-Warbler and Little Grassbird were in fine voice throughout the lagoon.

A highlight of the day was watching two very busy Golden-headed Cisticola nest building. Those visiting Little Bool Lagoon in the afternoon were treated to sightings of a large flock of Glossy Ibis, an F (over 300) of Australian Shelduck and they estimated a similar number of Magpie Geese.

68 species were recorded for a long day of birding.

Judith Dyer



Photo: Val Laird

Magpie Geese at Little Bool Lagoon

Mary Seymour CP

Sunday 31 October

We were 18 birdwatchers and one visitor as we followed Pat Bourne, a local who had joined us to lead the first part of our walk. Pat led us to a swampy part of the park where we saw a Brolga family, two adults with one chick. It was the first breeding record for Brolga in Mary Seymour, and Pat was very happy about it. Several Pacific Heron fed, their necks rising above the marsh grasses.

We then drove to another side of the park with quite different vegetation. By this time the wind had come up, tossing foliage and making bird spotting difficult. Rufous Whistler and Sacred Kingfisher were particularly elusive — much neck straining for little result. Eastern Yellow Robin was a pleasure to see. There was a lot of discussion about the different ravens and crows and their calls before we recorded Forest Raven, its large size also aiding identification.

After lunch, we spent about an hour at Bourne’s Bird Museum with Pat and Jack Bourne — wonderful close-up looks at familiar and not so

familiar birds that Jack has 'taxi-derived' over many years and professionally arranged, many with nests. I found it particularly interesting to compare the sizes of the birds in the collection with how they appear in the wild.

After Bourne's Birds we all chose our own way back to the caravan park. Our group went via Little Bool Lagoon.

A very satisfying day, despite the wind, with a total of 50 species.

Many thanks to the organisers of the campout.

Jean Boomer



Photo: Val Laird

Lunch at Mary Seymour

Big Heath Conservation Park

Monday 1 November

Monday morning of our annual camp found the remnants of the group in the Big Heath CP. Most of the campers had to push off on Sunday afternoon so just 10 of us gathered for the final event.

Contrary to expectations, the walk started very slowly as far as sightings were concerned. What appeared to be a promising track held very little indeed. It was only as we moved further down the park and then to the drain at the entrance that things began to warm up.

In the event we saw 44 species, a rather pleasing number under the circumstances. Most we had seen before during the weekend but there were a few highlights including Noisy Miner, White-winged Chough, Fairy Martin, Eastern Rosella and a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo.

Perhaps the sighting of the morning was overhead — six Pacific Heron circling around together. Not even the long-standing members of the club remembered seeing Pacifics like this. The birds are full of surprises; this farewell salute was a fitting finale to a great weekend.

Ray Laird

Muntiri

Thursday 25 November

14 members of the club met at Milang Road and followed Judith to Muntiri, a private property owned by Andrew Black. The group split into two parties, one led by Judith and the other by Andrew.

It was a beautiful sunny morning, not a cloud in the sky and quite hot. We did get the odd cool breeze while walking through the scrub — which was quite a task at times!

The bird sounds were prolific and the sightings were very good. We saw Straw-necked Ibis wheeling in the sky, along with a Whistling Kite. We had good views of Elegant Parrot, Striated Pardalote, Jacky Winter, White-winged Triller, Musk Lorikeet, and one group were lucky enough to see a White-browed Woodswallow. One of the nicest sightings just as we were eating lunch was of a family of Diamond Firetail with young — seven in all!

The bird count was a magnificent 49 species with two more heard. Not a bad morning — the only problem was the huge number of flies which followed us everywhere. We even had sightings of a large kangaroo with joey and signs of echidna. Fortunately no snakes!

Many thanks to Andrew for the privilege of visiting Muntiri, for making available his day to join us and for leading half of our group. We appreciated his expertise.

Ann Gilbert

PS We would like to wish all the club members a very Happy Christmas, followed by a Healthy New Year. We look forward to more outings, more bird sightings, and another great campout later in 2005. Thanks for the memories.

Ann and Keith

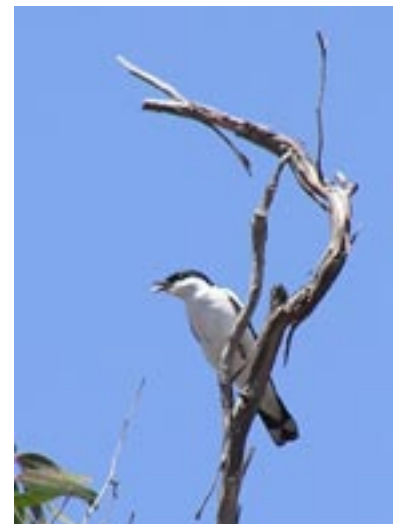


Photo: Val Laird

White-winged Triller



Waiting room reading

Birdwatching is a passion of mine, and my wife has always been impressed by my ability to identify each species solely by its song. To help her learn a little bit about birds, I bought a novelty kitchen clock that sounds a different bird call for each hour.

We were relaxing in our garden when a particular bird started singing. "What's that?" I challenged.

She listened closely before responding. "It's three o'clock."

RED-BREASTED ROBINS

- and the brown birds of the five species
in South Australia
Note: all may be seen in the Adelaide/Mt
Lofty Ranges Region

Andrew Black
February 2002

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RED-BREASTED ROBINS

A Black Feb 02

SPECIES	BACK & HEAD	BREAST COLOUR	EXTENT	WING BARS	WHITE ON TAIL
ROSE	Deep slate grey	Deep rose	Breast	Absent, faint	Outer 3
PINK	Sooty black	Magenta pink	Breast & belly	Absent, faint	Nil
FLAME	Dark grey	Flame	Throat to belly	Extensive patch	Outer 1
SCARLET	Black	Scarlet	Breast +	Extensive patch	Outer 2
RED CAPPED	Brownish black	Crimson	Breast + (white sides)	Extensive patch	Outer 1
(SCARLET FEMALE)	Grey-brown	Orange	Breast (part)	Extensive patch	Outer 2

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ROBINS - GENERAL HINTS

A Black Feb 02

SPECIES	SIZE	BEHAVIOUR & HABITAT	OTHER FEATURES
ROSE	11.5	Most arboreal, like Grey Fantail, spreads tail. Mid to upper canopy	Relatively long tail, graduated at tip: dainty, small headed
PINK	12.5	Patient, ground or mid stratum	No white in wings or tail, almost exclusively brown birds in SA, mostly costal in SE
FLAME	13.5	Open ground, boulders, vine yards; may flock	Slender, small headed: short tail but long wings, sits upright
SCARLET	13	Forest, woodland	Large head, round body
RED CAPPED	11.5	Dry country, but woodland, forest in winter	Small, longer legs

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ROBINS - BROWN BIRDS

A Black Feb 02

SPECIES	BACK & HEAD	BREAST COLOUR	WING BARS	WHITE ON TAIL
ROSE	Grey-brown	Off white ± pink high	Whitish-pale buff	Outer 3
PINK	"coldest grey" Warm brown (darkest)	Buff-brown ± pink belly	Rich buff or tan (broad)	Nil (or pale buff)
FLAME	Brown	Grey-brown, paler throat, belly ± yellow orange spots	Bars ± patch, buff to white	Outer 1
SCARLET	Grey-brown	Variable orange, pale brown (imm)	Bars & patch, white	Outer 2
RED CAPPED	Light grey-brown	Buffy-grey	Bars ± patch, buffor whitish	Outer 1

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