



fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

December 2006

- 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:** Val Laird, phone 8555 5995 Judith Dyer, phone 8555 2736
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- Newsletter:** Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211; verlew@bigpond.net.au

For your
Diary



* **Friday 12 January**

Twilight Walk, Jarnu

Meet 7.00 pm at the Lions Park, Strathalbyn Road, Currency Creek.

Bring chair, torch, insect repellent, refreshments. See also page 6.

* **Saturday 10 February**

Meyer's Scrub

Meet at Ashbourne on the side road opposite the school.

* **Friday 16 March**

Annual General Meeting

* **Sunday 18 March**

Hindmarsh Island

Meet at Ferryman's Reserve, about 500 m past the bridge on the right.

A HUGE thank you to all who so willingly wrote the reports for all our outings this year. Your contributions with your own unique perspective on the day's birding have made entertaining and often thought-provoking reading. I have especially appreciated not having to chase people for copy—it just arrives!

Special thanks to Judith who meticulously proofreads *birdwatch* and makes sure all is accurate. VW

We wish
you all
the best
—the
best of
Christmas



—and the
best of
birding in the
new year

MEETING

Friday 10 November

RAY LAIRD in the chair welcomed 19 members and two visitors. Matters reported:

- The Committee had met with Neville Styan of the Alexandrina Council at the Goolwa Effluent Ponds to discuss the plans for the new ponds development. We will be able to pursue our birdwatching activities there when the project is concluded.
- A sub-committee has met three times and formulated plans for a Fleurieu Bird Week event for 2007. These will be discussed at the Committee meeting.
- The newly re-designed website is up and running and members were urged to visit.
- Campout was a good success and enjoyed by all.
- The stile at Jarnu will be installed later this month and used for the first time on the twilight walk in January.

A 2007 calendar produced by member, Elizabeth Steele-Collins, and featuring her photos of birds of the Fleurieu was tabled. Part of the funds raised by sales will help protect the last remaining breeding pair of White-bellied Sea-Eagle on the Fleurieu Peninsula. Copies are \$10 each. Contact Elizabeth at seawings@waitpingacliffs.com, phone 8552 8822.

Geoff Evans introduced our member speaker, Neil Cheshire, who showed and talked about birds he photographed during his three trips to the sub-Antarctic. These voyages, on the *Oceanic Viking*, were at different times of the year so Neil was able to observe the seasonal variations in the bird population and activity.

Heard Island, 53°S 73°E, is a pristine environment with no introduced predators and just one introduced grass. It also has one big active volcano, Big Ben, 2745 m. Following some early British fiascos Australia assumed sovereignty of the island. Penguins on Heard and neighbouring islands are generally unperturbed by human activity but seals can be quite aggressive. Penguins that Neil showed us included the spectacular King Penguin, Gentoo Penguin, and the crested Macaroni and Rockhopper Penguins. In flight were Kelp Gull, Sub-Antarctic Skua, Black-faced Sheethill, Antarctic Tern, Petrel, Fulmar and several different Albatross. Neil finished his presentation with a short movie of the ship in a huge 20-metre swell whipped up by high winds, a recipe for vertigo—and worse!

Ann Turner proposed a vote of thanks to Neil for his fascinating presentation and was enthusiastically supported.

Bird call included

- White-necked (Pacific) Heron and Glossy Ibis on Hindmarsh Island
- Buff-banded Rail at the Goolwa slipway
- A pair of Chirruping Wedgebill at Broken Hill
- Wounded Fairy Prion at Encounter Bay—did not survive
- Very few waders at Tolderol which is bone dry
- Bar-tailed Godwit on Goolwa Beach
- Lots of waders on the Coorong
- An influx of Common Starling at Mt Compass

On display were a nest lined with sheep’s wool, and a Little Penguin washed up on Goolwa Beach.

We socialised with more bird chat over supper that Helen Marinis had again prepared for us.



Above: King Penguin with chick.



Right: King Penguin

Below: Wandering Albatross

Photos: Neil Cheshire



OUTINGS

Mt Magnificent and Blackfellow Creek

Saturday 7 October

ON THIS OCCASION we did not access Mt Magnificent CP but confined our survey to the Blackfellow Creek.

On a sunny day with a light but warm northerly wind blowing, 11 members met Jason van Weenen who owns the property on the lower side of Blackfellow Creek Road, opposite the western boundary of the conservation park. The property straddles Blackfellow Creek and is mainly Stringy Bark gum with a dense scrubby understory.

We were welcomed by the call of the Grey Shrike-thrush, and Crested Shrike-tit were heard calling intermittently throughout the morning. As we pushed our way through the undergrowth along the creek verge we were treated to sightings of Red-browed Finch, Silvereye, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb Fairy-wren and Scarlet Robin. Five species of honeyeaters were recorded in the total of 34 species during the morning.

Judith Dyer

Burra Gorge

Friday 27 October

SIXTEEN OF US met at Burra Gorge on this sunny, breezy afternoon. We walked up the creek, which was flowing and had reedy pools here and there, complete with Clamorous Reed-warbler. We spent some time watching a juvenile Grey Butcherbird, still with very brown feathers, flying about in the dead wattle.

On the way back we divided into two groups, one each side of the creek.

A highlight for me was getting a great view of a White-winged Chough on her perfectly



Photo: Verle Wood

sculpted mud nest in one of the stately old red gums.

Raptors including Wedge-tailed Eagles, Black and Whistling Kite and Nankeen Kestrel, were seen, as well as—in the middle of nowhere—the ubiquitous blackbird!

In all 38 species were sighted on this interesting beautiful walk.

Phyll Whellams

Redbanks Conservation Park

Saturday 28 October

SATURDAY MORNING AND we were off to discover Redbanks park. Passing our resident Emus we had good sightings of Mallee Ringneck, Red-rumped Parrot, Grey Butcherbird and White-winged Chough.

In the north-west corner Variegated and White-winged Wren, and Redthroat were hunted down before we headed



Photo: Val Laird

up the dry creek bed where we had good sightings of Boobook Owl, Red-backed Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra and Rainbow Bee-eater (above). An Eastern Spinebill was seen, Brown Tree-creeper and Yellow-throated Miner were common.

In the afternoon those who walked the saltbush/bluebush plains had good sightings of White-winged, Variegated and Splendid Wren among the Redthroat and Chestnut-rumped Thornbill. 32 sightings were recorded.

Thanks Judith and Ann for our campout.

Bruce Riglin

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AFTER BIRD CALL and lunch for the morning outing, I wandered to the open saltbush area directly out from the campsite to look for wrens. Judith joined me and we soon saw a snow white male White-winged Fairy-wren with at least three females. In the same area were several Redthroat flying into the bushes.

We returned to the campsite for a cuppa then drove to the oval where we were welcomed by Mistletoebird and a Black Kite. After walking along the creek bed for a few hundred metres, we turned back and walked on the opposite side where we found a huge area of bird poo. We looked up in the tree to see a small scruffy nest, also very white. Checking with the binos we could see two young White-faced Heron who were as keen to study us as we were them.

Photo: Val Laird



Moving on we then saw two pair of Mulga Parrot feeding on the grasses. On seeing something whitish fly down from the cliff top to the ground we hurried closer and found a Kingfisher. After waiting

patiently for it to turn around to show us its back, we saw it was a Red-backed Kingfisher which was a first for the weekend.

Eventually, we made the supreme sacrifice to return to camp to cook tea — but what a way to spend an afternoon!

Ann Turner

Caroona Creek Conservation Park

Sunday 29 October

AN IDEAL DAY for birdwatching—warm, sunny and still. We drove out to the park in convoy, throwing up clouds of dust. In the park we stopped every kilometre or two and spread out from the cars to see what birds we could find.

Highlights at our first stop included Hooded Robin and Mulga Parrot, with a discussion of the differences between Brown and White-browed Treecreeper. I was delighted before lunch to see Red-capped Robin, Pallid cuckoo and Red-backed Kingfisher.

We had lunch at the entrance to Tourilie Gorge. We did well in the gorge after lunch, spotting White-winged Fairy-wren, Shy Heathwren and Redthroat. After watching Peregrine Falcon in flight, we had a good chance to study one perched high on the cliff face.

Altogether, a most satisfying day, with excellent birding and good company. 44 species recorded.

Many thanks to the organisers.

Jean Boomer



Photo: Verle Wood

Hopkins Creek Conservation Park

30 October

MONDAY MORNING, THE last day of our Campout, greeted the 17 members able to stay on with a very pleasant sunny day, ideal for bird-watching. It also greeted us with a meeting with the Ranger for the Mid-North who introduced us to the newly-created Hopkins Creek Conservation Park.

I nearly said, newly-opened, but as this park is jealously guarded from hordes of visitors who might damage the fragile ecology, access is a privilege granted only to the few. It adjoins Burra Creek Gorge, is watered by permanent springs, and to our delight, is a haven for birds and other wildlife.

The walk through this pretty park started with four Wedge-tailed Eagle circling overhead, the call of a Rufous Whistler, the sighting of White-winged Chough and encounters with Weebill (the Mid-North seems to be over-populated with them). This presaged the good morning we were to enjoy.

Forty-four species were recorded with some beautiful highlights among them. Rainbow Bee-eaters are always a wonder, the tiny Thornbills, Yellow, Yellow-Rumped and Chestnut-Rumped likewise evoke awe, as do the Pardalote, both Striated and Spotted. The sturdier Grey Butcherbird and the larger Kookaburra have a similar effect. The ever busy Honey-eaters—Spiny-Cheeked, Singing and White-plumed— have their own attraction, especially a White-plumed filling the gaping mouths of young. Wrens are always stunning, the Variegated we encountered this day being a reminder that a visit to the Mid-North is rewarding just by seeing the numbers of these petite creatures flaunting their beauty.



Photo: Mark Filkin

Eight of the members sent their hearts racing by climbing a steep hill on their way back to base. Rewarded with magnificent views of the park they were then thankful to sit by a large pool of the Burra Creek and watch a nestful of young Willie Wagtail being fed by toiling parents.

At the final lunch together we recounted the morning experiences, recorded the bird count and expressed appreciation to Judith and Ann for organising what all agreed was an excellent campout.

Ray Laird



Photo: Val Laird

Pool, Burra Creek

World's End

AT THE END of the campout, Dolf and I stayed at World's End Creek for a further two days. Extra species that we spotted included Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Crested Bellbird, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-winged Chough and Tree Martin, four very juvenile Diamond Fire-tail, and a Red-backed Kingfisher that called incessantly for the days we were there. At night time a Boobook Owl was heard.

Such a great place to go birdwatching and a perfect finish to a wonderful campout.

Alma Kroon

Aldinga Scrub

Sunday 12 November

SIX MEMBERS MET on a warm, humid morning at Aldinga scrub. The birdwatching was patchy, with long gaps between some very good sightings.

We saw 35 different species of birds over the course of the morning.

The best views of the day were a pair of Varied Sittella that perched on a dead tree for quite a long time allowing us all to get a really good view, and a quick glimpse of a single Lewin's Rail at the dam. It then hid itself so well no-one could find it again despite lots of bush bashing. We also had a wonderful sighting of both Rufous and Golden Whistler in close proximity to one another.

Unusually, White-plumed Honeyeater and Silverevee outnumbered New Holland Honeyeater, occurring mostly along the southern edge of the scrub. We wandered through the bush to the southern side of the park but very few birds in sight or sound—most seemed to be on the south boundary and along the central track to the dam.

Yrena Mountford

Inman Estuary, Franklin Parade Esplanade, The Bluff and Nangawooka

Wednesday 22 November

NINE MEMBERS MET at Barker Reserve on a cool and overcast morning—not good birding light at this stage. We spent quite some time here. There were literally dozens of Rainbow Lorikeet to welcome us, chattering and fighting over the eucalypt blossom. A family of Pacific Black Duck swam happily by, Mum first, eight ducklings, the Dad—all very content.

Judith and Ann spotted a large bird in a distant Norfolk Pine and of course by the time Judith returned with the spotting scope the bird had flown! It was a Peregrine Falcon, unusual for this spot.

It was very enjoyable to look at our Inman River at close quarters and admire the local resident Chestnut Teal, Wood Duck, Willie Wagtail, Crested Pigeon, Welcome Swallow, New Holland Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, White-faced Heron, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike among others.

We moved along to the estuary and saw a Common Sandpiper as a standout, and then to Franklin Parade and the boat ramp where we saw another Common Sandpiper, White-face Heron, Pied Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, and of course, Pelican.

From there we went to Nangawooka and by this time the sky was clear and the light good. The birds and birdos feel Nangawooka is a very special native garden and thank you to all those who make it so. The highlights here today were the Crested Shrike-tit and the Golden Whistler. Jenny and Elaine had a special view of one Crested Shrike-tit which was telling Elaine in no uncertain manner to move her car out of its territory!

39 species for Inman to the Bluff and 25 for Nangawooka.

Elaine O'Shaughnessy

OBP Hope

MID OCTOBER, THIS message came from Terry Dennis, our local Orange-bellied Parrot Survey Coordinator.

"Just to confirm how little we really know about them, there has been an unexpected sighting of three Orange-bellied Parrots near Buckland Park in the Cheetham saltfields, north of Adelaide!"

This sighting corresponds with an unusual situation at the breeding grounds in Tasmania where only a few birds have arrived at the expected time for the breeding season."

Sadly, there have been no further sightings in SA since then.

New ...

Our website has a new look! If you haven't viewed it lately I hope you'll be pleasantly surprised. Most is the handiwork of my daughter, Ros, and the Committee has sent a letter of thanks to her.

Sorry to those who will miss the tweetybird but he has been flying around the ether for about eight years since Mary Haywood took the initiative and mounted our first web presence as a link from her personal webpage. She did a grand job and gave me a good starting point when I took over.

We moved a little further down the web track with more photos, a downloadable Membership Application form, links to other bird sites, and an electronic version of our brochure Birdwatching on the Fleurieu.

And now we have added an email link so that visitors intending to birdwatch in South Australia can contact us more easily. This, along with a new attractive layout and interface, makes our website a pleasant and practical experience.

Give us a few more days and we will have a page of the Best of Campout 2006 for you also. Some of the photos will include members who participated. You will not be named but if you prefer not to have your image posted please let me know. Verle

... and Brand New

A stunning set of brochures of Bird Trails will be launched in January. They have been produced by Alexandrina Council with considerable advisory input from Judith Dyer. Judith, Denzel Murfet and a team of birdwatchers from Birds SA have carefully planned and checked the trails which cover both wetland and bushland throughout the Alexandrina Council area.

Watch for these publications beautifully presented in full edge-to-edge colour, with an excellent map, descriptions and GPS locations of sites, access information and lists of birds likely to be seen.

The brochures will be available from the council and at tourist information centres later this month.



Fleurieu Bird Encounter

YOUR COMMITTEE RECEIVED the report from a sub-committee re preliminary investigations into holding this event in October 2007. Members were impressed by the detailed and thorough work of the sub-committee and all agreed that we should go ahead and stage the event, with both daytime and evening activities.



The sub-committee will continue to work on planning details. So far it has been decided that

- FBE will be held at a venue in Goolwa from Monday 22–Friday 26 October 2007.
- Advertisements will be placed in the Birds Australia magazine, *Wingspan*, in March and June.
- Registrants will arrange their own accommodation.
- Guests will be offered the option of joining our campout at Gemini Downs by the Coorong, immediately following Encounter.
- A bus will be hired to transport guests to birdwatching sites.
- The charge for Encounter, including registration, daily coach travel for three days, a packed lunch for three days, welcome and farewell dinners, will be \$385 per person. Fleurieu Birdwatchers members will be charged only for dinners and lunches (at cost) when attending, and may travel free on buses when seats are available.
- A painting/drawing workshop will be held as an optional extra and we hope to arrange a photography workshop also.

We'll keep you posted!

Jarnu stile

ON SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER, Chris Wastell and Ray Laird built the long-awaited stile for easier access to one of our favourite birdwatching spots, Jarnu, the property of Dr and Mrs Jarrett at Currency Creek.

We have been privileged to visit this scrub site for some time and will enjoy our new year's twilight walk there. After the walk we will have bird call, and in celebratory mood (that is, bring your own beverage and tidbits) we will (in)formally commission the stile.

Hope you can be there!



Photo: Ray Laird