



December 2010

# Birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc



## Saturday 4 December. Barrages, Goolwa

Meet in the Barrage car park for a walk at 4.00 pm followed by BYO everything picnic tea. 35°31'41"S 138°48'18"E

2011

## Friday 14 January. Jarnu. Twilight walk

Meet at 6.30 pm at the Lions Park, Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road, Currency Creek. 35°27'17"S 138°45'35"E

## Saturday 19 February. Hindmarsh Island

Meet at Ferryman's Reserve, 500 m past the bridge on right. 35°30'29"S 138°47'35"E

## Friday 11 March. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Member speaker: Judith Dyer

## Sunday 13 March. Newland Head CP

Meet at Dennis Hut in the campground. 35°37'39"S 138°29'59"E

## Wednesday 30 March. Onkaparinga Gorge

Meet in Woolworth's car park, corner Main South Road and Penneys Hill Road, Hackham. 35°08'51"S 138°31'33"E

**Breaking News** Construction works at the Goolwa Effluent Ponds are well underway. Council has given us permission to resume birdwatching activities there, out of working hours as there are still some works in progress. Please wear your Fleurieu Birdwatchers name tag for identification if requested.



Meetings: Anglican Church Hall, cnr Crocker & Cadell Streets, Goolwa  
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of odd months  
Outings: Meet 8.30 am. Bring lunch and a chair. See Events above.  
Contacts: Pat Uppill, 8552 4288; Judith Dyer, 8555 2736  
[fleurieubirds@gmail.com](mailto:fleurieubirds@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org](http://www.fleurieubirdwatchers.org)  
Newsletter: Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211



Friday 12 November

Chairperson, Denzel Murfet, welcomed 16 members and two guests.

Matters dealt with included

- news from Ray and Val Laird thanking all for the farewell gift (a print of a Coorong scene, *Sunset Reflections* (see [www.brendaholdenart.com.au](http://www.brendaholdenart.com.au)), and inviting members to contact them when in Queensland (address available from the Secretary)
- a photograph entered in a local competition purported to be of a Little Eagle nesting at the Goolwa Barrages is in fact, a Whistling Kite
- sighting of Peregrine Falcon at Encounter Bay not unusual
- aviation rules for Waitpinga cliff-line to protect the territory of the White-bellied Sea-eagle are in place.

Bird call followed.

- » Good numbers of Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Bar-tailed Godwit, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers, Greater Sand Plover, between Thompson's Beach and Webb Beach, mid-north SA
- » Fairy Tern at the Murray Mouth
- » Hooded Plover first nestings for the season at Basham Beach and Inman Estuary both failed — Inman pair possibly breeding again
- » Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo in small flocks over Goolwa daily
- » Scores of Short-tailed Shearwater, dead and alive, on local beaches
- » Stubble Quail sighted after a number of years' absence
- » Button Quail in residential area at Pt Elliot



Failed Hooded Plover nest at Inman Estuary. Photo: Ross Brittain  
Late news. New nest with three eggs.

Terry Dennis also reports numbers of beach-washed shearwaters: 208 over a 3.25 km section of Encounter Bay between the Granite Island causeway and The Bluff; and 234 on Waitpinga Beach over 3.2 km — that's approximately one bird per 15 metres of beach.

After bird call Pat Uppill showed photos she and Gerald took recently of the unique wildlife on the volcanic Galapagos Islands, part of and about a thousand miles off the coast of Ecuador, South America. Some photos were also taken in Peru and Argentina. Their boat trip took them to the shores of a number of uninhabited islands to see the various finches which have evolved differently according to their environments. Among other fascinating species they were also treated to good sightings of Blue-footed Booby mating, penguins, frigatebirds and a flightless cormorant. On one island they had close encounters with seals, huge tortoises and iguana and were able to travel inland.

Members had plenty of questions for Pat and Gerald after the presentation and during supper — a healthy one Wendy had prepared for us.



*Birds of the Fleurieu 2011 Calendar* is now available at many outlets, including shops, tourist information centres and libraries across the Fleurieu, price \$10. Proceeds from the calendars support the Habitat Restoration Project and the White-bellied Sea-Eagle Protection Campaign at Waitpinga Cliffs.

More information from [www.clifftopcreations.com](http://www.clifftopcreations.com) or email Elizabeth Steele-Collins at [seawings@clifftopcreations.com](mailto:seawings@clifftopcreations.com)



## **Mt Compass and Willunga**

*Saturday 9 October*

Some of us arrived early at Mt Compass on a beautiful morning — weather too good to stay in bed.

Eighteen members enjoyed the walk around the boardwalk in the wetland. Twenty-five species of birds were seen and to our joy, three Southern Emu-wren were sitting on a limb in the melaleuca. Superb Fairy-wren were there too but not as many birds seen flying over this visit. There are always a lot of New Holland Honeyeater in this area.

On the road again we travelled to a private property at Willunga. Some members walked around the house block that was planted 30 years ago and others went down the hill to the natural damp scrub.

A good variety of 26 birds was recorded. A Golden Whistler visited us during our lunch. Bird numbers were low — following a very good winter they are spoilt for choice.

*Teresa Jack*



*Find the Emu-wren! Mt Compass boardwalk. Photo: Teresa Jack*

## **Winery Road, Currency Creek**

*Sunday 15 November*

It was a mild, overcast day when Judith led four members along the railway line at Winery Road. We were greeted by a European Goldfinch and then a Mistletoebird, but after that birds were elusive. The single raptor, a Wedge-tailed Eagle, circled high up.

Sightings increased when we reached the flowering gums and bottlebrushes. The chatter of a flock of New Holland Honeyeater warned off a White-faced Heron which flew out of the wetland between the road and railway line. There were good numbers of Superb Fairy-wren, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and about 10 Mistletoebird. The parrots were Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Musk and Purple-crowned Lorikeets, Crimson Rosella and Galah.

The sighting of the day was five Bronzewing sitting on the railway line. They moved ahead as we approached but did not go far. Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush and Striated Pardalote were heard but not seen. The Mistletoebird again kept us company at lunchtime as we sat by the roadside — 24 species altogether.

*Jenny Fontanot*



*Some of us were distracted by the lush wildflowers alongside the old railway track, Currency Creek. Photo: Verle Wood*

## **Inman Flats**

*Thursday 25 November*

Meeting at the horse yards on Henderson Road were only five of us on this cool misty morning. The Clydesdales ignored us completely as they munched their breakfast, but two lovely Kookaburras welcomed us warmly as we set off, as did the rest of the bird life as we walked along.

There was chatter and song everywhere we went. The White-plumed Honeyeater in particular was prominent and aggressive — once one even had a Red Wattlebird by the tail! Crested Shrike-tit, Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike were in attendance along with Red-browed Finch, Superb Fairy-wren, European Greenfinch and European Goldfinch. However, the coup de grâce of the morning was a beautiful Clamorous Reed-warbler which emerged and sat on a nearby reed stalk, giving us a full frontal view and even entertaining us with a short song before flitting away.

Overall we had 37 species, on a very pleasant and profitable outing.

*Colleen Evans*



*Tram horses quietly munched to the accompaniment of reed-warblers and the babbling Inman River. Photos: Verle Wood*



**CAMPOUT 2010  
Tanunda**



*Blue-billed Duck on effluent ponds, Tanunda. Photo: Peter Gower*



*The song of Rainbow Bee-eaters surrounded us at Altona. Photo: Teresa Jack*



*Collared Sparrowhawk, Altona. Photo: Nick Tebneff*

**Tanunda Effluent Ponds**

*Friday 22 October*

Twenty people met for the first outing of the Barossa Campout, all anticipating an excellent weekend ahead. This was in spite of the overcast skies and threatening rain.

Almost immediately we were greeted by a very young family of Grey Teal and a slightly older group of Black Duck. The flowering eucalypts attracted honeyeaters around the edges of the ponds.

Perhaps the most exciting sighting was the Blue-billed Duck, particularly for those lucky enough to catch the amazing blue colouring of the bill in the fading sunlight.

By the time that rain sent us to shelter we had seen 28 species.  
*Pat Uppill*

**Altona/CSR Landcare Reserve**

*Saturday 23 October*

It was a fine, cool morning with all the vegetation looking washed clean after overnight rain. Twenty-two of us made the walk and began our sightings with one Red-capped Robin. Seen in greater numbers was Rainbow Bee-eater. They were right throughout the reserve and were a pleasure to see when the sun lit up their colours in flight.

We enjoyed the view from the lookout, though there were no birds to be seen on the water below. Very few trees were flowering which could account for the very few honeyeaters. Much more eye-catching was the Rufous Whistler, calling, gathering nesting material and chasing each other about noisily.

I enjoyed seeing the yellow form of Crimson Rosella, which I hadn't seen for a while, and the beautifully flowering calytrix just inside the reserve entrance.

After a bird count of 49 at lunch we were off to the bakery at Lyndoch for coffee.

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*Happy Hour*



After Happy Hour and our barbecue evening meal, Eric Walton from the Altona Landcare Management Group gave us a history of the reserve from the 1950s: grazing, mining (sand, gravel, clay), then from the early 1990s with its acquisition as a corridor between Sandy Creek and Kaiser Stuhl Conservation Park, up to the on-going management plan of today. The group worked with the local council to prepare the reserve for public access, rehabilitating the land (seed collection, bringing in topsoil, removing weeds and exotic species, and managing erosion.)

Once again, many thanks to all those who organised this year's campout.  
*Jean Boomer*

*Campout 2010 pics on the web page soon.*



White-winged Chough at Sandy Creek.  
Photo: Teresa Jack

Fascinating information about the communal feeding and nesting of White-winged Chough at [www.avianweb.com/whitewingedchough.html](http://www.avianweb.com/whitewingedchough.html)



Calytrix blossomed profusely in Altona and Sandy Creek. Photo: Verle Wood



Halfway rest at Kaiser Stuhl. Photo: Verle Wood



Not at campout, but when camping out Helen Dennis took this photo of a pink Little Corella in a flock of white ones at Walker Flat.

## Sandy Creek Conservation Park

Sunday 24 October

We all found the park, having travelled from the Tanunda Caravan Park. A set of walking trails led across an open area and into the wooded Blue Wren track.

No wrens here but Red-capped Robin were around. Two male Rufous Whistler were having a major territory dispute and looking wonderful with their tails fanned out.

The birds were sparse: Peaceful Dove to be heard, Thornbills and Superb Fairy-wren on the outside boundary and more Rufous Whistler. As we moved back towards the car park we found a favourite, Rainbow Bee-eater.

We then diverted out along the northern fence-line. Here were great views of White-winged Chough, playing a cat and mouse game with us and finally the nest was noticed. It's always great to be able to watch the birds coming back to the nest to feed the chicks.

We had lunch in the shade and more birds were to be seen from our comfy seats. 36 varieties in total.

Teresa Jack

## Kaiser Stuhl

Monday 25 October

Twenty of us from the group of twenty-one who had been in camp, arrived at the park to enjoy our last day together. A couple of kangaroos noted our arrival. The day weatherwise, was delightful with just a gentle breeze to keep conditions comfortable.

A comprehensive bird list was available as we entered the Park. Birds were immediately noticeable by their cheerful song, and Rainbow Bee-eaters delighted us from a nearby branch, as a Kookaburra quickly departed the area.

Forty-one species showed themselves to the group by eye and ear, some members being luckier than others with the sightings thereof. Several nests were also noticed along the way. For me, the Rainbow Bee-eater will always be top of the list, but I appreciated seeing the Eastern Spinebill, the Sacred Kingfisher, the Rufous Whistler and the White-browed Babbler just on lunchtime. A Kookaburra laughed us out of the Park.

Along with the many kangaroos who carefully watched us, a Koala was seen snoozing in a tall tree and a myriad of orchids smiled at us as we passed.

Colleen Evans

Thank you to all who have contributed to *Birdwatch* this year, even if reluctantly at times. Without your reports with their personal perspectives this would be a very dull publication indeed, and may be non-existent. Be assured that members unable to participate in outings do enjoy and appreciate your efforts.  
Special thanks to those who have shared their photos.  
I am also most grateful to Judith Dyer for her meticulous proof-reading, often saving me from acute embarrassment.  
Verle