



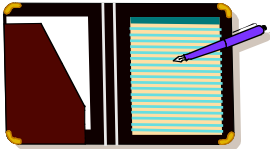
# fleurieu birdwatch

February 2000

**Meetings:** Glendale Christian School, cnr Glendale Close/Strathalbyn Rd, 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      Kate Bruce, phone 8555 5020  
30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa 5214      PO Box 403, Goolwa 5214



## FOR YOUR DIARY

### \* **Saturday 26 February**

#### **Hindmarsh River**

Meet in Wattle Drive, near the corner of Hindmarsh Road, Victor Harbor.

### \* **Friday 10 March**

#### **Annual General Meeting**

Slides and talk on waders: Denzel Murfet

### \* **Sunday 12 March**

#### **Lake and Coorong Boat Trip**

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### \* **Wednesday 22 March**

#### **Pt Willunga Wetlands**

Meet at the Star of Greece Cafe, Esplanade, Pt Willunga. Leader: Sue Regione.

### \* **Saturday 1 April**

#### **Tolderol Game Reserve**

Meet at the Railway Carriage, Milang.

### \* **Wednesday 12 April**

**Weekday outing to be advised.**

### \* **Saturday 29 April**

#### **Kyeema**

Meet at the corner of Brookman Road (Willunga to Meadows Road) and Woodgate Hill Road.

## **CHRISTMAS BARBECUE – BARRAGES**

*Saturday 4 December*

The venue, the weather and the informal gathering of about 30 birders and friends made the Saturday evening of our Christmas Barbecue a very pleasant occasion. Thanks to Jim and Maria for their hospitality.

Many of us wandered around the grounds and across the Barrage to the Lock where Pelican, Black Swan, Cormorant, Tern, Black-winged Stilt, Silver Gull, Grey Teal and Pacific Black Duck added numbers to our bird species count.

We were able to see, quite clearly, a Common Sandpiper which is apparently not so common around here. Thanks to Denzel's ability to distinguish between the waders we also added Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint to the count.

There were also some Great Crested Grebe to be seen as well as the Hoary-headed.

Of course, we were hoping for *something special* and we weren't disappointed. I think everyone was pleased to see two Lewin's Rail with a chick, in the reeds of the little offshore island — for most of us it was a first sighting of this species. We added steadily to the bird count to record about 38 species altogether, although many of the them registered only an A or B.

We saw one Swamp Harrier, but the species most conspicuous by its absence from the bird count was the New Holland Honeyeater – which suggests that we just weren't trying hard enough, distracted perhaps by the more social nature of our get-together.

And it was a lovely evening, in friendly company. Thank you all.

*Helen Bowlden*

## MEETING REPORT

*Friday 5 January*

Denzel Murfet chaired the meeting of 12 members, two prospective members, and Mary Crawford and Andrew West from the Department of Environment Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs. This meeting marked the Fifth Anniversary of our group, an event celebrated graphically and musically on our web site [www. etc](http://www.etc)

Members' contributions included

- ◆ Sighting of Southern Emu-wren and Latham's Snipe at Mt Compass;
- ◆ Golden Plover and Great Crested Grebe, among other waders, below the barrages at low tide – Teal and Musk Ducks also still around in the lower reaches;
- ◆ Speckled Warbler at the SAOA campout on the Glenelg River at Balmoral, Victoria;
- ◆ Japanese Snipe at the Effluent Ponds, Goolwa (a first for that site);
- ◆ Short-tailed Shearwaters, dead, on local beaches;
- ◆ A solitary Long-billed Corella, possibly sick, sighted at Victor Harbor;
- ◆ Lots of Ibis, both species, throughout the area;
- ◆ Masked Lapwing's second family for the season on Peace Park, Goolwa.

A Yellow-rumped Thornbill's nest, with its side entrance and false nest at the top – possibly to fool the cuckoo – and a deceased male Painted Finch (from an aviary) were passed around for inspection.

Two items were tabled:

- A Natural Heritage Journal, passed on from Des Commerford, Alexandrina Council, with items of interest including a report on the current Atlas project, and
- a copious tome of the last Atlas survey – the book, or CD, of the current Atlas project, to cost approximately \$60, will be available later.

Penny Paton will receive any feral duck (Mallard) survey forms up until February.



**Coorong Boat Trip:** See December NL for details. Also **page 3** of this NL.

Dr David Paton, one of our State's leading ornithologists, will be guest speaker on Thursday 23 March, at a meeting of the Port of Goolwa and Inland Rivers Historical Society in the Signal Point Interpretive Centre, Goolwa.

The Working Group is looking into adding some new sites for birdwatching to those we currently visit on a regular basis. Any suggestions?

**Brochures:** These have been distributed far and wide with some complimentary feedback. Among them, a Queensland lady staying at the West Beach Caravan Park, rang Ann Turner to say she was most impressed and had visited sites on the map, and a Victor Harbor lass had found the brochure most useful for the writing of a thesis. Gaynor Jones has exchanged a brochure for a similar publication with a friend in Wiltshire, UK. And there have been requests for extra supplies of the brochure from Strathalbyn, Victor Harbor, Signal Point and the Barrages. The Working Party will investigate funding options for a second printing.

A cuppa and biccies, with more bird talk, rounded off another enjoyable evening.

## MT COMPASS BOARDWALK and COLES CROSSING

*Sunday 16 January*

Ten people met at Arthur Road, Mt Compass, at 8.30 am for our first bird outing of the new millenium. The weather was hot, sticky and overcast.

We took our time and walked first along the northern arm of the boardwalk and right at the end of it we found our treasure – two beautiful female Southern Emu-wren – just magic – they were quite active but we were able to see them clearly. We were very lucky!

We continued along the complete length of the boardwalk and saw 17 species in all, including 10 Elegant Parrot in flight above us. Also worth mentioning – there were quite a few different butterflies which caught our attention.

We finished our walk at 10.00 am and after the bird call some people went home but four intrepid birdos went on to Coles Crossing where we quietly walked along Coles Crossing Road and stopped at every movement in the trees.

We were hoping to see Scarlet Robin but only heard one – Denzel identified the call.

We did, however, have a wonderful long look at a male Golden Whistler, just beautiful, and on the way back also spotted a juvenile Golden Whistler.

In all, we identified 16 species on this little walk. We finished at 12 noon and it certainly was very hot by then.

*Elaine O'Shaughnessy*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our next meeting on **10 March** will be the **AGM**. As is customary, all offices will be declared vacant and nominations will be called for the Working Party from the floor of the meeting.



Members of the current WP have done a sterling job. Some have served a number of years at the helm and feel they

would like a break. Please consider how you may best serve the group's interests by offering to join the Working Party. Your time, energy, enthusiasm, experience and/or expertise, are highly valued and your input into the organisation and administration of our group will be welcomed.

Members wishing to contribute and serve on the management team are asked to forward their names to Kate Bruce, 8555 5020. It's your opportunity to guide the group into the new millenium.

If you know of someone else who may be willing to nominate, but who is unable to be present, seek their consent to be proposed in their absence.

Any suggestions for activities during the coming year will, no doubt, be gratefully received by the new Working Party.

Entertainment at this meeting will be Denzel Murfet's presentation on Waders – timely, in view of the Boat Trip two days later.

## BOAT TRIP: Coorong and Lake

Seats for this most interesting excursion are still available, \$30 per person. Please ring Judy Jones, 8555 1108, and arrange to reserve your place **WITHOUT DELAY**.

Any berths remaining will be offered to interested persons outside our group if bookings are not filled from our own numbers. Our host for the day, Jack Miller, constantly cruises the waters and keeps an expert eye on bird populations there. On this trip you can be assured of some special sightings and a share of his wealth of knowledge.

Due to the narrowing of the mouth, it is likely we will have to leave via Mundoo Channel, so we will **depart at 8.30 am sharp** from **Hector's Jetty**, south of the main Goolwa wharf, near the boardwalk, and return 4.00–4.30 pm.

## BRING BACK THE BIRDS COURSE

At the meeting on 14 January our guests from the Department for Environment Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs were Mary

Crawford, a land owner/farmer with service on the Soils Board and the Land Management Program, and Education Co-ordinator; and Andrew West, Heritage Agreements and Bushland Manager. Together Mary and Andrew have devised a program titled Bring Back the Birds which they successfully presented at Kangarilla last year. They have now drafted a similar five-week course for the Mt Lofty Ranges, Southern Region (Fleurieu), and hope to conduct it at Goolwa later this year, possibly in May, on Wednesday nights 7.30-10 pm.

Sessions will deal with birds and bio-diversity, how to create the right habitat for birds and other animals, controlling threats to native birds and their habitats and assessing and improving the habitat value of a property. Illustrated presentations will be given by a Bush Management Adviser, a local ecologist, a local botanist, and officers from the Animal and Plant Control Board and Landcare or LAP (Land Assessment Program).

Homework for participants will include collecting plant specimens – both native and introduced – and with given guidelines, developing a work program for their properties to achieve the desired outcomes. The course will conclude with a farm walk to provide participants with practical experience on the topics covered.

The cost of the course will be \$75 per property (more than one person may attend for this fee), which covers the expense of local material development and production, lecturers, venue hire and promotional activities. Interested landholders who do not have an aerial photo enlargement of their property may obtain one for half the retail price if they enrol in the course three weeks prior to its commencement, but this is not a course pre-requisite.

For further information watch the local press or contact Andrew West, Bush Management Adviser (Mt Lofty Ranges), Department for Environment Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs.

## Bits and Pieces



Judith is now in her new home at **30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa**. Her phone number is unchanged – 8555 2736

## BOOK REVIEW: **A Bird in the Hand**

This is an Ulverscroft Large Print edition by Ann Cleeves and is an ornithologist's whodunit.

A murder is committed in a Norfolk village, and from there to the Scilly Isles a search goes on for one scrap of evidence that would lead to the killer.

The suspects are all birdwatchers, twitchers, taggers, netters, stringers and photo-graphers. Even members of the British Birds Rarity Committee are involved.

And how did the PENDULINE TIT and the BEMACULATED LARK fit into the mystery?



Get this gripping murder mystery from the Goolwa Library! – *Kate Bruce*

We all know that where birds are concerned cats can be a problem. A recent ABC Radio National Program (Ockham's Razor: Sundays, 8.45 am) was titled **The Effect of Domestic Cats on Australian Wildlife**.

According to the interviewee cats are known to feed on more than 347 native species including 186 species of birds and one study has suggested that each pet cat kills an average of 32 vertebrates each year. With an estimated 3 million pet cats in Australia that makes a significant problem. It was also claimed that domestic cats provide a high density reservoir of breeding animals for an estimated population of 5 million feral cats.

The final warning from the program was that cats and wildlife are incompatible. The night-time inquiry, "Have you put the cat out, dear?" should become "Have you put the cat in, dear?"

The transcript of this program is available at [www.abc.net.au/rn](http://www.abc.net.au/rn) and I simply searched for Ockham's Razor 07/11/99 to locate it. I have a copy if you would like to read the whole story. – *Verle*



Interesting notes appear from time to time on Atlas forms coming in. These from Greg Markey, Flagstaff Hill Road, Middleton.

- Often Cockatiels appear in summer but have not, to my knowledge, bred here previously. They usually come and go in ones and twos and never seem to stay in one spot for long. This year a group stayed in our little block of trees from

October to December and produced at least one lot of young in a hollow in a SA Blue Gum next to the house. I think one other produced some young also. As soon as the young were big enough they all left us and have not been seen since 16 December.

- Sometimes it's not what you see, but what you don't see, that needs comment. This year there has been a remarkable absence of the open air birds – pippits and larks – in our area. Usually, I see quite a few, but this year I've seen none, even in the paddocks around the vineyards where they usually gather.

PS Keep the forms flowing in! – *Judith Dyer*



MANY THANKS to all the contributors to this newsletter. I think you must all have that great motto! – *Verle Wood*

