



fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

February 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:** www.granite.net.au/~verlew
- Newsletter:** Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211, verlew@granite.net.au

DIARY DATES



- Saturday 22 February**
Currency Creek Winery
Meet in winery car park.
- Friday 14 March**
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Guest Speaker: Tim Wilson, Alexandrina Council's RAMSAR Officer: Implementation of RAMSAR Lower Lakes and Coorong Management Plan. Also Russell Seaman will speak about his role in habitat mapping in the area.
- Saturday 22 March**
Penrice Salt Fields, St Kilda
Important details page 2.
- Wednesday 26 March**
Gilbert Siding
Meet at the junction of Strathalbyn-Goolwa Road and Gilbert Siding Road, Finnis.
- Saturday 5 April**
Mt Billy Conservation Park
Meet at the Hindmarsh Valley Hall and tennis courts about 200 metres along the Hindmarsh Tiers Road from its junction with the Victor Harbor-Adelaide Road.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Do you

- enjoy observing birds in their natural environment?
- have an interest in conserving the environmental needs of birdlife?
- wish to promote community awareness of the importance of birdlife and habitat conservation?

You don't have to be an ornithologist to be on the Committee. Please consider spending a few hours just six times a year to help organise the group's activities and promote its welfare. Duties are not onerous and you will have the enjoyment and satisfaction of making a useful contribution.

The Committee consists of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and two/three other elected members. At the AGM all positions will become vacant. We need YOUR expertise and ideas, and above all, your support.

Gaynor Jones completes her two-year term as Chairperson this year. In spite of health problems Gaynor has soldiered on and proved a very able and dedicated leader. Nominations will be called from the floor at the meeting for her replacement. Other positions will be filled by the Committee from their number at their first meeting.

Wader Spotting Expedition

Penrice Saltfields, St Kilda

Saturday 22 March

A 21-seater bus has been booked for another Penrice trip. Some members have already registered and payment is now due. Several seats are still available on the bus and private cars can follow. If you wish to add your name to the booking list or intend going by private car please contact Judith at 8555 2736.

PLEASE NOTE

Penrice Soda Products requires **everyone** entering the saltfields to sign an indemnity form. For those who have already registered a copy is enclosed with your newsletter.



Each individual must sign this form.

Return it with your payment.

No form — no trip!

The Committee is responsible for delivering these to Penrice **prior** to the outing.

Payment of \$22 must be forwarded to the Treasurer, Keith Gilbert, PO Box 727, Noarlunga Centre 5168 (cheques payable to Fleurieu Birdwatchers) together with your signed indemnity form ASAP and no later than Friday 28 February. If these are handed personally to the Treasurer please enclose in an envelope clearly marked Penrice Trip.

The bus will leave Genesis Tour and Charters depot on Waterport Road, Pt Elliot at 12.30 pm sharp and return by about 9 pm. Cars may be left at the depot. We are assured that they will be quite safe as the owner lives on the premises. It is well off the road up a long driveway. A large sign is situated at the gateway on Waterport Road.

Mt Compass pickup will be at the bus shelter at 12.50 pm; Hackham pickup opposite Woolworths at 1.15 pm. These times are approximate only and we suggest you be early. We will travel into St Kilda Beach for a comfort stop and enter the Saltfields by 2.30 pm. High tide is at 6.40 pm. We aim to leave the Saltfields by 7 pm.

Bring weather protection, lap food, drinks and mozzie repellent.

Display Boards

As many of you are aware, our group has a threefold, free-standing display board which was remade for us last year. We intend to offer the boards for displays at Information Centres or at special events throughout our wider region.

Gaynor has undertaken the task of organising the refurbishment of the boards and is appealing to members for help to plan and re-dress them. We anticipate that two sessions will be needed — one to plan the layout and material and one to set up the display. The time could be morning, afternoon or evening or a combination. Some computer help is needed to produce printed labels, headings, captions and information. She is also asking for any material such as old illustrated calendars or photographs, preferably of local birds, or anything else you may have that you feel would be suitable.

Please spare some time to help with this project. It could be a fun time spent with other members.

Gaynor would really like to hear from you. Her number 8555 5480.

Satellite trackers find Kerry the Goose in Eskimo freezer

British conservationists are mourning the loss of Kerry the goose after tracking him by satellite all the way from Ireland to an Eskimo's kitchen in Arctic Canada.

He was found by researchers who tracked the beeps from the £3000 transmitter on his back to a hunter's home on remote Cornwallis Island. Kerry was one of six light-bellied Brent Geese being followed on their 4,500-mile migration by the British-based Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.



fleurieu birdwatchers

T-shirt transfers of our logo and name are now available. They look like this and make a neat unobtrusive emblem on a light coloured T-shirt.

If you would like one, with instructions, please contact Verle.

OUTINGS

Hindmarsh Falls

Saturday 7 December

What a pleasant spot the Hindmarsh Falls picnic area turned out to be for our Bush Breakup Barbecue and Christmas celebrations.

Twenty-nine members and three fledglings enjoyed a very happy late afternoon walk and picnic. The weather was fine and warm.

Strolling down to the falls we had several sightings. The juvenile Golden Whistler caused some discussion. Overhead flew a Wedge-tailed Eagle and a Nankeen Kestrel. Grey Fantail were easily seen as were Striated and Brown Thornbills.

Some of us missed out on the later part of the walk and joined the convivial company who started celebrating early. The smallest fledgling kept us amused, eating all and sundry — I hope his grandparents didn't have a problem later.

Altogether 36 species were seen that day and a very happy bunch we were after a wine or two and the picnic baskets and barbecue had produced some tasty morsels.

Pat Ashfield

Hindmarsh River and Estuary

Friday 10 January

It was a perfect evening as we arrived on the beach at the Hindmarsh River, Victor Harbor. The temperature was mild and the light conditions were good. It was pleasing to see such a large turn out for a Friday evening, 19 people in all.

We started on the boardwalk around the lagoon and then walked down to the beach. There was a light wind blowing and nothing was seen on the beach. We did have good sightings of a Common Sandpiper at the lagoon, and Grey Teal and Silvereye in the estuary.

It was then on to a pleasant walk along the river. It was not long before we had our best sighting, a Rufous Night Heron. We also saw White-plumed Honeyeater, Galah and Grey Shrike-thrush.

As we walked back in the fading light we had not seen as many birds as we might have done for a morning walk. There were approximately 20 species sighted for the evening.

The experience of visiting locations at different times of the day makes it possible to see species that are more active at these times, and may not be seen on the usual day walks.

Chris Wastell

Tolderol Game Reserve

Saturday 1 February

Seventeen of us arrived at the reserve. As we disembarked, a Barn Owl, in broad daylight, went by in slow measured flight — beautiful light colouring.

The wetlands held little water so ducks were scarce but two flocks of Australian Shelduck went by. Raptors were prolific: Swamp Harrier, Whistling Kite, Australian Hobby, Black-shouldered Kite and Nankeen Kestrel. Brown Songlark intrigued many, while White-fronted Chat, Golden-headed Cisticola, and Clamorous Reed-warbler were observed.

The waterbirds included lots of Whiskered Terns, Red-kneed Dotterel, Red-necked Stint, Red-capped Plover, Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (sharpies), Royal Spoonbill, Australian White Ibis, Masked Lapwing and majestic Pelican. And late in the day a pair of Glossy Ibis dropped in. What a treat! Lake Alexandrina nearby certainly attracts the birds. 48 species! Afterwards Phyll had two nests on display — Clamorous Reed-warbler and Superb Fairy-wren.

During our bird call a local, John Eckert, stopped by and hinted we would find Orange Chat on his property a kilometre away. On the way there we put up a pair of hares with black tipped ears. Two camels rested nearby. It was exciting to find the chats too. Sure enough two male and one female Orange Chat were foraging in the dry grass and among the samphire.

Geoff Evans

That elusive grebe in the channel at Tolderol



The Reed-warbler's nest John Whellams retrieved from a bulldozed soak on a neighbour's property

Brahminy Kite

A Brahminy Kite has been sighted in several places in southern SA. Recently it was seen in the Mannum area being fed fish by a resident of Caloote. There have been unconfirmed sightings at Myponga.

The mystery is how it came to be in the region as its usual range is the coastal regions at and north of the Tropic of Capricorn. Is it an escapee from a collector's aviary? Has it been blown here? Please write to Jim Smith, PO Box 235, Mannum 5238, if you have seen this bird or have heard of someone who has.

Tripping Tips

Peter Ginnane is an inveterate bird watcher — and spotter. He offers these tips for travellers seriously looking for bird sites in Victoria. Much of his advice applies wherever you may travel.

"I use the Vic Roads Country Street Directory. This shows nearly every road in country Victoria, forests, parks, rest areas, reserves, swamps, lakes and a street directory for most country towns.

I visit the local water authority and request permission to access sewage ponds — you win some, you lose some!

I talk to the local Department of the Environment & Natural Resources for information on forests, parks and reserves. They publish a great book covering Victoria.

I call in at the local Information Centre. Some keep lists of species likely to be found locally.

I carry four different up-to-date field guides for different views, colours, calls etc.

As a last resort I contact the local bird group. Why a last resort? Because I like the challenge of finding birds for myself."

Some of Peter's notable sightings around Ballarat early this summer included

- more than 3,000 Banded Stilts, 500+ Grey Teal, 30+ White-fronted Chat and many waders at Chinaman's Swamp 15 km east of Lake Colac
- 3,000+ Whiskered Tern at Lake Burrumbeet
- Superb Lyrebird near Lal Lal
- Olive-backed Oriole at Mt Clear
- Bassian Thrush at Mt Buninyong
- a group of 15 Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo at Shady Acres Caravan Park.

Emu-wren Update

(from *Stipiturus*, December 2002)

Thirty Mt Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren (15 males and 15 females) were re-introduced to Cox Scrub Conservation Park in July 2001. Monitoring from August 2001 to April 2002 revealed eight established pairs and 10–11 fully grown young. At least seven pairs were still present in March 2002.

In July–August this year (2002) a supplementary 16 Emu-wren (9 males and 7 females) were released, to augment the survivors of the -2001 release and to enhance the genetic diversity of the re-introduced population. Recent monitoring has revealed evidence of 10 pairs of Emu-wren at Cox Scrub CP, at least three of which are breeding — one pair with two young and two pairs with nestlings or recently fledged and cryptic young.

Members of six of the seven pairs present in March were located in or adjacent to their respective 2001–2002 home ranges, although the original colour-banded female of one pair appears to have been replaced by an unbanded female. The female from the other previously established pair present in March was recently found with an unbanded male, approximately 500 metres west of her previously recorded home range with a banded male.

Importantly, the latter two observations and the finding of two pairs comprising unbanded individuals provide evidence of recruitment of founder-group progeny to the breeding population (no progeny have been banded), but further monitoring is required in order to confirm a breeding status for these individuals.

To date, one pair from the group released in 2002 has been found, but monitoring this breeding season has so far focussed on pairs found last season and it is hoped that subsequent searches of other parts of the park will locate additional individuals.

Marcus Pickett

BEWARE of a female sparrow seen flitting surreptitiously around Victor Harbor. It has a blue band on its leg and it's been done for breaking and entering. A third charge of stealing has been withheld due to lack of physical evidence. Rosalie Sharpe nabbed this vagrant in her finch aviary and let it out on parole.

