



fleurieu birdwatch

June 2001

Meetings: Anglican Church Hall, cnr Crocker and Cadell Streets, 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 Ann Turner, phone 8554 2462
30 Woodrow Way, Goolwa 5214 9 Carnegie Street, Pt Elliot 5212

Web site: www.adelaide.net.au/~mhaywood/Fleurieu%20Birdwatchers.htm

FOR YOUR DIARY

❖ Wednesday 13 June

Muntiri
Meet at the junction of Strathalbyn and
Milang–Clayton Roads at Finniss.

❖ Saturday 23 June

Aldinga Scrub and Willunga Wetlands
Meet by the cemetery on Aldinga Road, Willunga,
near the access roads at the bottom of Willunga

❖ Friday 13 July

Meeting
Guest Speaker: Jan Macklin
Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation

❖ Sunday 15 July

Encounter Bay
Meet in Barker Reserve, opposite Victor Harbor
Council Chambers

❖ Wednesday 25 July

Manning Reserve
Meet at Gate 14, Chapel Hill Road,
McLaren Vale

❖ Saturday 4 August

Tonkin's Winery downstream
Meet at the winery, Currency Creek

❖ Wednesday 15 August

Hindmarsh River
Meet at the corner of Hindmarsh Road and Wattle
Avenue, Victor Harbor

❖ Friday 17 August

Dinner at Mt Compass Tavern 7 pm

❖ Saturday 25 August

Meyer's Scrub
Meet on Chapel Hill Road, Ashbourne, opposite the
Primary School

Middleton Tavern

7 pm 17 August

Join us on this

ONCE-A-YEAR NIGHT

Great food, great company,
lots of bird talk

3 courses, with choices, \$15

Bookings at or before the next meeting

Contact Gaynor

8555 5480

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Please forward newsletter material to
Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211
or email: verlew@granite.net.au
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Meeting

Friday 11 May

In the absence of Chairperson, Gaynor Jones, Denzel Murfet conducted the meeting and welcomed 22 members, and visitors, Paul and Carol Bean.

Matters discussed included

- An appeal for suggestions for additional sites for outings
- Chris Wastell and Judith Dyer are to meet with a Council representative to discuss a viewing mound over the new effluent pond at Goolwa.

An invitation to all members of our group was tabled from Betty Gregory, local textile artist, to the launch of her new book, A Garden of Wildflowers. Betty fashions native flora of the Fleurieu Peninsula from fabric. Her book contains instructions for this fascinating art. The launch will be held at the Old Police Station, Goolwa, at 2 pm on Sunday 17 June.

As video equipment was not available the entertainment for the night was a quiz. We were challenged to identify the birds in Rosalie Sharpe's slides and bird calls from Judith Dyer's tape — a steep learning curve for most of us.

Members' sightings included

- Black-chinned Honeyeater, Inman River
- White-winged Chough, Finnis
- Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Encounter Bay and Parawa
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo at Goolwa Barrages and Victor Harbor
- 2 Baby Barn Owl rescued: each weighed 220 g (adults weigh 400 g)
- Black-faced Cormorants on rocks at Encounter Bay
- White-necked Heron and young, Inman dam
- Glossy Black Ibis and 5 Elegant Parrots, Tolderol
- Little Eagle diving on Eurasian Coot causing death by drowning
- Skein of Cape Barren Goose and Wedge-tailed Eagles doing gymnastics over Scott CP
- Spotted Nightjar, Goolwa Quarry, Currency Creek
- Cisticolas, Tolderol
- Wedge-tailed Eagle over hills back of Pt Elliot



A very special sighting!

Wilson's Storm Petrel on Granite Island in and around the Screwpile Jetty and the Breakwater
28–29 May.



WELCOME

Henry and Margaret Dreyer, Mitchell Park
Glenys Pearce, Happy Valley
Janet Pedler, Bridgewater
Fay Lush and Joyce West, McLaren Vale



Two members have upgraded their membership.

Junior Daniel Kennedy, now Family Membership, with Gail, Rod and Michael.

Ann Turner, now Family Membership, with John.

We warmly welcome you all and look forward to your participation in our birdwatching activities.

OUTINGS

Newland Head

7 April 2001

The Ranger's eyes lit up when he saw 20 of us assembling at Dennis Hut. His expectations of collecting the overnight camping fee were soon dashed when he discovered we were only day visitors! The morning was warm and cloudy with a northerly wind blowing and we didn't need the Weather Bureau to tell us the forecast because circling in the sky above us were Fork-tailed Swift ahead of an autumn storm front. It was a first sighting record for the group.

Spottings were rather thin on our way up to the lookout but among them were Red-browed Firetail, Superb Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote, Black-shouldered Kite and a lone Scarlet Robin. We put our order in for some raptors at our high vantage point and were rewarded with Whistling Kite, a Wedge-tailed Eagle and a Brown Goshawk.

The group then split into two, one going north through the Park where their sightings included a Brush Bronzewing, Musk and Rainbow Lorikeets, Crimson Rosella, Crescent Honey-eater and Little Wattlebird. The other group went south along the creek spotting Pacific Black Duck, Chestnut Teal, Black Swan, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, Silver Gull, Crested Tern and a pair of Australasian Grebe among others. With the diversity of habitat, the sightings totalled 52 species.

A barbecue lunch at Dennis Hut rounded off the morning but Denzel and Verle want to change the "Press the blue button for 20 seconds" gas ignition sign to read "Hold for 20 minutes"!

Val Laird

Bullock Hill

Saturday 28 April

What a fabulous morning this was with a contingent of 20 twitchers all anxious to get into it. The weather was bright and sunny but with a cool breeze.

With about 15 or 16 cars parked on one side of the road at Ashbourne and all their occupants on the other — in the sun — passing motorists were somewhat puzzled as to what was going on.

The session was split into two parts with a short drive first to the gravel road bordering the golf course. It was almost as though the birds were waiting for our arrival and we logged a total of 33 species including Striated and Spotted Pardalote, Purple-crowned Lorikeet and Elegant Parrot. These latter put on an interesting display of aggression ... or was it affection?

Our second venue was Bullock Hill CP itself which is not easy to find if you are a stranger to the area. Paula was our willing guide and we skirted the park notching up a tally of 31 species, many of which we had registered at our first location but some new ones included Mistletoebird, White-browed Babbler, Wedge-tailed Eagle and Silver-eye. I suppose our overall total of species would be about 40 or so.

Our farmer members treated us townies to some bush lore, pointing out tracks and signs made by various animals and Janet was able to unravel the mystery of some shallow circular depressions within the CP itself, explaining that they had been made by Button Quail. The weather at Bullock Hill remained bright and sunny but the wind had turned decidedly cold.

A magic outing and we look forward to more of these.

Keith Gilbert

Onkaparinga Wetlands

Sunday 13 May

A beautiful autumn morning and, in spite of it being Mother's Day, 13 members turned up at the Park by the Institute, Old Noarlunga, for the Onkaparinga Wetlands outing. First watch for the day was to look up the resident Nankeen Night Heron in the trees behind the Institute building. They were present and it was another lesson in bird behaviour for the novice bird-watcher like me

to find them in the trees where they had been seen on previous occasions.

Arriving at the Onkaparinga Wetlands, which turned out to be completely dry, we decided to continue the birdwatch on the path around the dry ponds. Quite a few species were seen and I particularly enjoyed a close up of a Skylark sitting on the path. It allowed us all a good look. On the river bank and on the water were Australian White Ibis, White-faced Heron, and Pied Cormorant in abundance. For those who do not want to see New Holland Honeyeater, this is a good spot as very few were encountered.

The group then moved on to a position lower down the river. Here the sightings on a pond included Pacific Black Duck, Purple Swamphen, Australasian Grebe and Hardhead. Lots of birds were seen on and near the river and in the trees next to the river, including Australian Pelican, Black Swan, numerous Masked Lapwing, Little Pied Cormorant, stately Great Egret and busy Royal Spoonbill.

A highlight for me here was a good close-up of a male Golden Whistler and a bit later, some Black-Winged Stilt.

So far it was quite a hot day but now cloud cover and a cooler breeze moved in just in time for bird call and lunch. A total of 43 species were recorded for the outing.

Henry Dreyer

Mt Billy

Wednesday 23 May

This morning was cool, fine and sunny — a glorious day. Three kangaroos attended. The low shrub, *Epacris impressa* (Common Heath) was resplendent in full red bloom. 42 species of birds were sighted or heard.



A Crescent Honeyeater gave an operatic performance to our enthralled group of 12 birdwatchers. Other show-offs were the Golden Whistler and the Scarlet Robin. Four Striated Thornbill tried to frighten us away from their tree! Lots of Silvereye, some Eastern Spinebill, a pair of White-naped Honeyeater, both Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, six Common Bronzewing, a Fan-tailed Cuckoo and some Hardhead were recorded.

The highlight of the day was a male Musk Duck in courting mode on the reservoir — Victor Harbor's original water supply — water splashing at the rear, tail elevated forward like the classical Lyrebird and a shrill descending call that seemed to come from over our heads.

Two of our group on this outing were visitors from Hervey Bay, Queensland: Jim and Ann Matthews, from the birdwatching corps there.

Geoff Evans

BIRDS SA EASTER CAMP

Some members will have great memories of our visit to Mary Seymour Park when we visited the Naracoorte area for our annual campout in 1998. At Easter, I returned to the area and camped for five nights in the park with Birds SA. It was a great camp, again with lots of support from Pat and Jack Bourne who spent much time with us during our stay in '98.

The weather was generally fine although it clouded over one evening and we had about 30 BIG spots of rain. The first couple of nights were extremely cold but I managed to keep very cosy. I slept in my down sleeping bag with two set of night garments on along with woolly socks. I then pulled my acrylic quilt over the top. Jack had organised an old water trough as a fireplace and the neighbouring farmer delivered us a very generous load of wood so campfires were the order of the evenings for bird call and socialising.

I recorded 53 species in Mary Seymour for the weekend compared with 33 for our half-day visit in '98. (The Birds SA total was 70 something.) A Peregrine Falcon nesting in a large gum tree in an adjoining paddock, Southern Emu-wren in the heathy areas, Diamond Firetail, Beautiful Firetail and Red-browed Finch all drinking together at a water trough, Hooded and Eastern Yellow Robin aplenty, Blue-winged Parrot, Restless Flycatcher, White-eared and Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Brown Quail and Forest Raven were the highlights for me there.

On Sunday, along with a friend, I circum-navigated nearby Big Heath CP, some 29 km around, which took us 9 hours with 61 species recorded. What a day! Many of the species were the same as we had been observing in Mary Seymour but on three separate occasions we sat spellbound watching Painted Button-quail feeding on the edge of the rough track. While we ate lunch on the far side of the park Crested Shrike-tit played in the trees

above. Further along the track Emu, Swamp Harrier, White-fronted Chat, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and the Striated Fieldwren (or the Shy Hylacola, as I would rather call it) were seen.

That evening Jack demonstrated his skills in skinning and mounting a Raven as he did for our group when we were there. There is no doubt that the absolute highlight of the weekend was the visit to Bourne's Bird Museum where Jack has over 300 birds mounted, along with nests and eggs, in a wonderful display. Do give Jack and Pat a ring if you are in the area and give yourself a treat. I've enclosed a brochure to give you the information.

Judith Dyer

ATLAS TRIVIA

One of the pleasures of being the Regional Organiser for the Atlas count are the little extras I hear about by checking forms or by phone queries from observers and even letters attached. I specially enjoy receiving forms, always with a letter of highlights attached, from Dr Greg Markey, father of member Anna. He lives on Flagstaff Hill Road, Middleton, adjoining the winery there. His latest bundle of forms, with letter attached, was no exception.

Just some of his comments:

"Black Cockies: the Year of the Black Cockies. Not seen often at this property but arriving in flocks of 30–35 this year. Cockatiel: Seen this year but unlike last year no evidence seen of them breeding. Black Duck: Nested in an old burnt out stump near the house as previously but mysteriously abandoned the nest (frightened by feral cat?). 14 eggs counted later in the abandoned nest. Another pair nested successfully in another location. 11 ducklings counted. Little Raven: successfully reared two children — seems to be a community effort; lots of birds involved in rearing the babies. Pratincole: seen close to the property. (This would be a fairly unusual sighting for this area. JD) Noisy Miners: The dominant bird around the place. There is one miner that I talk to most days; he's gotten accustomed to me (they tend to be unapproachable mainly) and we have longish conversations, mainly in Minerese about the weather and suchlike!"

... and much more.

Judith Dyer

