



fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

June 2004

- 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
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Diary Dates



Saturday 12 June

Hardy Scrub, McLaren Flat

Meet at Gate 14, Chapel Hill Road

Wednesday 23 June

Coles Crossing Road, Tookayerta

Meet at Junction of Nangkita Road and Coles Crossing Road

Friday 9 July

Meeting: Guest Speaker

Janet Pedler: *Birds and Biodiversity*

Sunday 11 July

Hindmarsh River and Estuary

Meet on Wattle Avenue near the corner of Hindmarsh Road, Victor Harbor.

Thursday 22 July

Gilbert Siding

Meet near the corner of Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road and Gilbert Siding Road, Finnis.

Saturday 7 August

Newland Head Conservation Park

Meet in the campground at Dennis Hut.

Once-a-Year Night

Join us for a great meal,
lots of bird talk and

Elaine's Feathered Quiz

7.00 pm

Friday 13 August

Hotel Victor

Not to be missed!

Bookings essential:

Geoff 8552 1064, evansone@arcom.com.



Some time ago foundation member, Kit Smith donated to the group a copy of an early field guide, *An Australian Bird Book* by J A Leach, first published in 1911. Kit's copy is the 1956 edition edited by well known naturalist, Crosbie Morrison. The book has now been passed for safe keeping to the Alexandra Library Service and is available in the new Family History Resources centre.

MEETING

Friday 14 May

Just 15 members met for a quite informal meeting. Those who had not already done so took the opportunity to renew their memberships.

We were all sorry to hear that Brian Ginno, our treasurer, has had major surgery and will be out of action for a while. News is that he had a setback after returning home but that he is back on the



road to recovery. We wish him speedy and complete healing, and an early return to his active lifestyle.

Judith reported that she had met with other parties interested in establishing bird trails on the Fleurieu. BirdsSA has been asked to help with seeding funding.

As many members on the South Coast were involved in the 150th anniversary celebrations of Australia's first public railway they were unable to be at the Onkaparinga Gorge outing on Sunday.

Bird Call

- ⊙ A dead bustard was found at Langhorne Creek
- ⊙ For inspection were
 - two birds both victims of barbed wire fences: a Buff-banded Rail and a Tawny Frogmouth
 - Apostlebird from north of Hallett
 - two nests: a chough's neatly rounded mud nest, and a weebill's (or thornbill's, see page 4) finely woven of dried grass with a tiny front entrance

- ⊙ White-bellied Sea-Eagles were sighted in aerial combat with Wedge-tailed Eagles over Waitpinga.



We watched the video, *The Living Wetland*, produced and narrated by Graham Pizzey. I was particularly enthralled with Pizzey's explanation of the food chain within wetlands: how every creature and every plant is dependent in some way on another, and I didn't realise that Black Swan are strictly vegetarian!
Verle

Kyeema

Saturday 17 April

Fifteen members arrived for our visit to Kyeema Conservation Park on a day of mixed cloud and sunshine, and with the occasional hint of an April shower.

Our walk took us on part of the Heysen Trail and we were greeted with a profusion of raucous Red Wattlebird, who easily qualified for a D in our count. A feature of the morning was short bursts of frenetic bird activity interspersed with quite long periods of silence.

The most active species were Silvereye, Striated Thornbill, Crescent and New Holland Honeyeaters and Grey Currawong. We also noted sightings of White-throated Treecreeper, Striated Pardalote, Golden Whistler, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Eastern Spinebill, Scarlet Robin and numerous others to give us a total count of 27. This was small by our recent standards. Our final sighting was of a high soaring Pelican.

Our outings are always pleasant and much looked forward to.

Keith Gilbert



Kyeema. What is it?

Hindmarsh Falls

Wednesday 28 April

Eight members turned out on this rather cool 9°C morning but this did not seem to bother the birds who were out in large numbers. We met at the bottom car park and one of the first birds to be observed was a beautiful Mistletoebird. Superb Fairy-wren were everywhere around the grassed areas. New Holland, Yellow-faced, Crescent and White-naped Honeyeaters, and Little and Red Wattlebirds were the honeyeaters observed.

One unusual sight was a male Scarlet Robin atop a eucalypt tree. The party moved along the track to

the falls, observing White-browed Scrubwren and juvenile Golden Whistler. Morning tea and bird call were taken back at the car park. The total count was 30 species.

After morning tea, the group, minus one, moved on to the Hindmarsh Reservoir which is empty at the moment. 15 species were recorded, including Grey Shrike-thrush, White-plumed Honeyeater and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike not seen at the falls. Total for the day was 33 species.

Win Syson

Onkaparinga Gorge CP

Sunday 16 May

This outing was cancelled. It coincided with the south coast celebrations in which local members were involved. If members notice future date clashes please chat with a Committee member.



CAMPOUT

Friday 29 October–Monday 1 November

This year's venue is Naracoorte. Our base will be the Big 4 Naracoorte Holiday Park. The program will be published later but it is advisable to book accommodation early. Make your own reservation directly with the park. These prices were quoted to our organisers. Website prices are not the same. One night's deposit is required for cabin accommodation booking but none is needed for sites.

Accommodation		2 persons per night +\$10 each additional person
Camp site		\$20
Powered site		\$22
Budget cabin (communal facilities)	6 berth	\$54
Ensuite cabin	6 berth BYO bedding or hire \$8.80	\$64
One-bedroom holiday unit	5 berth two double beds	\$73
Two-bedroom holiday unit	6 berth	\$79.50 double \$84.50 2 singles
Two-bedroom holiday unit	4 berth	\$110.50 double

Comprehensive details are on the website: www.naracoorteholidaypark.com.au

Contact: 1800 999 899 or m.sanderson@tpg.com.au

Green Road and Meyer's Scrub, Ashbourne

Thursday 26 May

As a dozen members gathered near the Ashbourne school it was one of those days when static grey skies dulled the colours and made birdwatching somewhat difficult. Nevertheless, a total of 37 species encountered on the morning belied any negative expectations.

The first stop was at Green Road off Signal Flat Road that runs beside the golf course. This area is well populated with trees and bushes that attract our feathered friends. We counted 30 different species including both White-throated and Brown Treecreepers. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo were barking overhead along with Galah and the acrobatic Tree Martin and Welcome Swallow. Both Purple-crowned and Musk Lorikeets were inspecting holes for the breeding season and the occasional Red-rumped Parrot was surveying the prospects too. Superb Fairy-wren, the males in

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their resplendent colouring, Red-browed Firetail (finch?), Grey Fantail and Willy Wagtail were flitting around the golf course. Some of us suggested that the place was over-crowded with New Holland Honeyeater — familiarity does breed contempt! — so the presence of Yellow-faced, White-naped, White-plumed and Crescent varieties was enthusiastically welcomed. While this is not the complete list it does indicate that a visit to this site is well worth the effort. Perhaps the highlight here was the beautiful female Scarlet Robin that waited on the road to greet us as we approached. Her mate and another were seen soon after.

An interesting moment in this walk came from meeting with a lady from England who had bought a property fronting Green Road. She was interested in the bird life of the area, seeking to plant what would encourage the birds. After a chat with Judith and the team she, with her friend, decided to join the Club. Nice! Welcome aboard Cherry and Dick.

Meyer's Scrub, further down the Signal Flat Road, has proved to be a fruitful site in the past. This was not going to be one of those days, so it seemed. At the entrance a short burst of activity of a few birds already spotted at Green Road gave way to a long walk of comparative silence apart from the ubiquitous New Holland. If we thought Green Road was over-crowded with them, then it seemed that they had really taken over down here. Added to the frustration were the sound of White-browed Scrubwren, White-browed Babbler and Grey Currawong but never even a glimpse of these. All was forgiven with the spotting of some Elegant Parrot as we neared the end of our walk. At the same time a Brown Goshawk rose from behind the line of trees and shrubs to grant us a brief but close view of its distinctive colouring and rounded tail.

To our surprise, as we sat down to enjoy lunch, we discovered with the bird-call that we had encountered 21 species on this walk, not so bad after all. As if to seal a profitable morning, a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagle looked down upon us from way up high in the sky as they scanned the land for their midday meal. A little sunshine would have enhanced the proceedings but, in spite of its absence, one would have to say a happy time was experienced by all.

Ray Laird

This nest was displayed at the May meeting and

I couldn't help marvelling at its construction. The fine grass and bark fibres are intricately interwoven and firmly cemented into a well insulated, cosy little home. The tiny entrance has an overhang — verandah! — and leads to the living quarters lined with the softest of down and tiny feathers. The back of the nest had been penetrated possibly by a vandalising predator such as magpie or currawong.



The verdict was that the former owner and occupier of the nest was a Weebill.

Thinking about LBJs (Little Brown Jobs — the late Joan Paton's term for those numerous hard to identify small brownish birds) I opened my copy of Steve Parish's *Amazing Facts about Australian Birds* and there before me was a picture of a Striated Thornbill at its hanging nest, almost identical to our specimen, even to the dried leaf attached (camouflage?).

According to Pat Slater (of Slater's Field Guide fame) who wrote the text for Steve Parish's book, 'Thornbills make round or pear-shaped nests of bark fibre, grass, spiderweb and spider egg cocoons, suspended from thin branches, or tucked into tree hollows or behind loose bark'.

Reader's Digest *Complete Book of Australian Birds* (1976) has almost identical descriptions of the nests of the Weebill and Striated Thornbill. Other thornbill and warbler nests are similarly described but without the word 'neat' which certainly applies to our specimen. J A Leach's *Australian Nature Studies* (1948) has an illustration very like our nest labelled 'Striated tit warbler'. Bird identification has come quite a way since then!

So still no positive identification! A revised edition of Gordon Beruldsen's *A Field Guide to Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds* will be available soon and perhaps will shed some light on the topic. We'll keep you posted.

Verle Wood