



fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

June 2005

- 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:** users.bigpond.net.au/FleurieuBirdwatchers
- Newsletter:** Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211; verlew@bigpond.net.au

DIARY DATES



- ◀ **Saturday, 11 June**
Jarnu (private property)
Meet at the entrance to the Lions Park, Goolwa—
Strathalbyn Road, Currency Creek
- ◀ **Thursday, 23 June**
Parawa (private property)
Meet at the junction of Range Road and Torrens Vale
Road, Parawa, by the noticeboard.
- ◀ **Friday, 8 July**
MEETING
Guest Speaker: Penny Paton. Birds in our Gardens
- ◀ **Sunday, 10 July**
Gilbert Siding, Currency Creek
Meet at the corner of Goolwa—Strathalbyn Road and
Gilbert Siding Road, Finniss.
- ◀ **Wednesday, 20 July**
Nurragi Conservation Reserve
Meet at the Milang turnoff, Goolwa—Strathalbyn Road.
- ◀ **Saturday, 6 August**
Inman River Flats
Meet at Barker Reserve, Bay Road, Victor Harbor,
opposite Council Chambers.
- ◀ **Friday, 12 August**
Annual Dinner, Hotel Victor

You are invited

Once-a-Year Night

- special food
 - special fun
 - special friends
- and Elaine's special feathered quiz

(She works all year for this!)

Do come

to the

Hotel Victor

7.00 pm Friday 12 August 2005

Bookings essential

Geoff 8552 1064, evansone@bigbutton.com.au

MEETING

Our new Chairman, Ray Laird, welcomed members and visitors. Twenty-two members, three visitors and our guest speaker attended.

The minutes were read and confirmed with no business arising. Several matters were raised by members and referred to the committee for consideration.

Judith introduced guest speaker, well known ornithologist, John Eckert from Langhorne Creek. With the aid of slides John talked about 'Birds: Yesterday, today, tomorrow'.

Brolgas, Plains Wanderers, Bustards and Curlews may once have been recorded in our area but no longer. Because of their secretive habits the threatened Bassian Thrush and Spotted Quail-thrush may be more prevalent than believed whereas Galah, Corella and Crested Pigeon which were unknown in this area at the turn of the 20th century are here to stay. Are Black-chinned Honeyeater improving their status?

Denzel moved a vote of thanks to John which was strongly supported by the meeting.

There was no 'Show' this meeting but quite a bit of 'Tell'.

- Banded Lapwing – 2 adults and one chick at Petersen Road, Middleton.
- Singing Bushlark at Waitpinga
- Black-chinned Honeyeater are being regularly recorded at Victor Harbor and Pt Elliot
- White-bellied Sea-eagle – immature seen on three occasions at Paiwalla Wetlands
- Fork-tailed Swift recorded from Victor Harbor to Clayton on two consecutive days the weekend after Easter, and again one day the following weekend.

Judith Dyer

This is Pat Ashfield's special Show 'n' Tell: a White Tern, complete with fish dinner, snapped by Bernie during their recent holiday on Lord Howe Island.

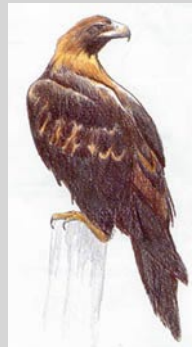


Photo: Bernie Ashfield

PUBLICITY

Our display boards are generally placed in Signalpoint at Goolwa, and occasionally are taken to other venues. They provide useful information for visitors interested in birds on the Fleurieu. These displays now need updating and refreshing. We are looking for pictures of birds found in the Fleurieu region.

We would like photos or coloured pictures from magazines, calendars etc. If you have some you think may be suitable please pass them on to a committee member as soon as possible.



WANTED!

We are seeking information about the location of resident **WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE** pairs on the Fleurieu Peninsula, South Australia.

A survey to determine the number of eagle pairs will be conducted by Birds SA (South Australian Ornithological Association) in the second half of 2005 in the area south and west of a line from Pt Willunga to Goolwa.

This project will for the first time provide an accurate assessment of the resident population and their distribution. The success of the project and accuracy of its findings is dependent on local knowledge

... CAN YOU HELP?

Please contact the project coordinator, Terry Dennis, Encounter Bay 8552 7659, eagleobs@bigpond.com

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Authorised by Dr Andrew Black, President Birds SA

*Campout's coming up!
Details page 4*

OUTINGS

Manning Reserve

Saturday 9 April

On a hot, windy day four men and one lady member braved the heat to walk around Manning Reserve at McLaren Flat. The day started rather badly with no birds in sight or sound. But once we got to the western boundary and headed south we had more success, ending up with 17 species sighted.

The large number of Peaceful Dove was a bonus for us as well as Eastern Rosella and an Elegant parrot among others.

We finished early as the day became more windy and unpleasant but still we had a satisfying walk.

Yrena Mountford



Our intrepid group at Manning Reserve Photo: Graeme Mountford

Mt Billy Conservation Park

Thursday 21 April

A beautiful autumn morning greeted 15 members. We started our walk with great expectations as the sun was shining and we expected every bird to be out and about. But they had other ideas, and sightings were a little slow to start with.

Elegant Parrot flew overhead just as we entered the park. Crescent Honey-eater were very busy but hard to find, though easily heard.

Golden Whistler and a Scarlet Robin were good sightings, but after descending the steep section, we found Fantail Cuckoo and Red-browed Firetail. Some were lucky to see the elusive Bassian Thrush or as Slater calls it, Australian Ground Thrush.

The bird call after lunch identified about 35 species. Elaine said it was a magic day and I'm sure we all agreed.

Pat Ashfield

Scott Conservation Park

Sunday 15 May

It was a cool, calm, cloudy, autumn day as five members set off through the park. There was plenty of activity up in the trees with a diversity of species in good numbers.

Notable sightings were several White-throated and one Brown Treecreeper, also Buff-rumped Thornbill, both Spotted and Striated Pardalotes and two pairs of Scarlet Robin.

There were Elegant and Red-rumped Parrots, Galah and lots of Adelaide Rosella. The Lorikeets included Purple, Musk and Rainbow. We saw six species of honeyeater, Brown-headed and White-naped being the most numerous, with one Crescent, and last of all — during lunch — one Yellow-faced Honeyeater. In crossing the creek we saw the empty nests of Fairy Martin in the walls of the ravine. No birds of prey were noted.

On leaving the park we were diverted by an echidna trundling along in a nearby paddock, to round off an enjoyable visit — 34 species.

Jenny Fontanot



Nixon-Skinner and Springmount CPs

Wednesday 25 May

Six members met at the car park by Myponga Reservoir and walked the short distance to the park gate.

It was a cool, overcast morning—not good light early for bird watching—but the sun came out on our return walk which helped us immensely. We were thrilled with the Scarlet Robin who were very obliging and stayed around so we could all enjoy their company. Two female and one male Golden Whistler were sighted although the male made only a brief silent appearance. Quite a few White-throated Treecreeper were out and about which was very special for me as I have had only brief sightings previously. Sixteen species in all at Nixon-Skinner.

Something of note: We read a memorial plaque in the park which informed us that Nixon-Skinner CP was donated by Mrs Lucy Eleanor Page and named after her two grandfathers. It was the first privately donated reserve to be established in SA “for the preservation in perpetuity of native plants and animal, and for nature-lovers to enjoy”.

Four of us then moved on to Springmount with eight sightings there.

Elaine O'Shaughnessy

CAMPOUT

Friday 28–Monday 31 October 2005

Eremophila Park, Wunkar Road, Lowbanks via Waikerie

(RAA Riverland and Central Murray map reference is K4. A mud map will be published later.)

Our host will be Stella Mack. Eremophila Park is a private property offering camping facilities and some basic accommodation in 'The Shack'. This is **not** a grassed campsite but is set in the middle of a large area of mallee scrub which is crisscrossed by a maze of tracks for walking or driving.

We will enjoy the campfire (wood provided) which is surrounded by seats or use the living area of the shack if the weather is inclement. There are two bedrooms which will each sleep six people (four and two), and two divan beds in the living room.

Power for lights and fridge is gas or kerosene.

There are two showers and toilets at the site with hot and cold water limited by the use of rainwater and having to stoke the underside of the hot water tank with wood to heat the water. If you wish to book a bed ring Val 8555 5995. Campsites are unlimited and without power.

Alternative accommodation is available at Waikerie approx 23 km away.

The Caravan Park provides

Villa \$90.00 per night (double linen included)

Ensuite cabin (linen required)

Park cabins \$50.00 per night (" ")

Budget cabins \$25.00 per night (" ")

Powered site \$22.00 per night

Unpowered site \$15.00 per night

Members are responsible for booking their own accommodation. Contact

Waikerie Caravan Park,
Peake Terrace, Waikerie SA 5330
Phone (08) 8541 2651.

Stella spreads feed to attract the Malleefowl, Bronzewing and White-winged Choughs into the camp area. Some other birds of interest will be White-eared and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters, Gilbert's Whistler, Mulga Parrot and Variegated Fairy-wren.

We have booked a visit to the wetlands at Banrock Station Winery at Kingston on Sunday 30 October with the option of a light restaurant meal at the winery after our walk. We will need confirmed bookings several weeks in advance. A visit to Brookfield CP, west of Blanchetown on the way home on Monday 31 October will conclude the weekend.

King of the Heavens

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is Australia's largest raptor. and found nationwide except in closed forest.

The female is the larger of the pair. She can have a wingspan up to 2.3 metres and may weigh over 4 kilograms. Breeding begins at about seven years of age. Young wedgies are light in colour and gradually change to rufous. They darken into adulthood when they are black with tawny hackles on the nape. The legs are feathered and the tail in flight is distinctively wedge-shaped.

A Wedge-tailed Eagle may soar for long periods, gaining uplift from thermals, its broad upswept wings showing six 'fingers'. During courtship the male gives a spectacular display as he dips, then hurtles up into the air again in a 'pothook' formation. A pair mates for life and shares all nesting duties.

Wedgies generally feed on rabbits and other small creatures, though they may take animals as large as kangaroos. They congregate at carrion and often feed on road kill.

Wedge-tails are fully protected but are still persecuted. Poison baits used to kill dingoes and foxes kill scavenging birds as well.

Out of history: About 350 BC the Greek Aristotle wrote: "Each pair of eagles needs a large territory and on that account allows no other eagle to settle in the neighbourhood."

e-birdwatch

27 members — 43% of membership — now receive *birdwatch* electronically. In addition copies are emailed to several interested personnel of Parks and Wildlife.

We thank those who participate in this service which saves the club good dollars and helps to keep subscriptions down. These members have the added benefit of receiving their newsletter earlier than by snail mail and enjoy colour graphics and photos.

If you have an email address we would like to add your name to the growing list. Send me an email and I will send you a past copy of *e-birdwatch* as a trial.

If you are concerned about any aspect of receiving or downloading *e-birdwatch* please call me on 8552 2197 to discuss any issues.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Verle Wood

