



fleurieu birdwatch

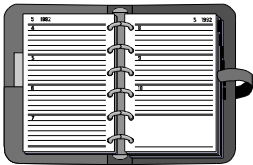
October 1999

Meetings: Glendale Christian School, cnr Glendale Close/Strathalbyn Road, Goolwa
7.30 pm 2nd Friday of alternate (odd) months

Outings: Meet 8.30 am. Bring lunch and a chair — see Diary

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FOR YOUR DIARY



✱ **Wednesday
13 October**

Gilbert Siding

Meet at the junction of
Strathalbyn Road and Gilbert Siding Road, Finnis.

✱ **Saturday 23 October**

No outing — **Campout** the following week.
See p 5

✱ **Friday 12 November**

Meeting: Guest Speaker, Hermann Bakker.
Slides of Bool Lagoon.

✱ **Sunday 14 November**

Onkaparinga Wetlands

Meet at the Park by the Institute at Old Noarlunga.

✱ **Wednesday 24 November**

Scott Conservation Park

Meet in the park at the main entrance on the
northern boundary.

✱ **Saturday 4 December**

Christmas Breakup

Barbecue at the Goolwa barrage. Birdwatching at
4 pm and Jim will light up the barbecue for us at
6 o'clock. Keep this date free. More details in the
December newsletter.

MEETING REPORT

Friday 10 September

Members met in the Japanese Room and
welcomed visitors, Chris and Ray Duncan.

Unfortunately, the invited Guest Speaker,
Steve Gilbert, was not able to attend but
he did report some items of interest from
the Coorong.

- ◆ Hooded Plover on Ocean Beach where
the count for this year is 61 compared
with 47 last year in an area extending
to 27 miles south of Salt Creek.
- ◆ 9 Emu chicks only two days old at
Pelican Point and a mob of 35 emu —
3 adults and the rest chicks — south of
Long Point.
- ◆ White-bellied Sea-Eagle south of
Parnka Point with a nest at Lousy
Jacks, and some perching on the
barrage.

Among the interesting sightings by
members:

- ◆ Di Shearer reported the antics of
nesting Masked Lapwing attacking the
helicopter at the rear of the Victor
Harbor hospital — a patient had to be
shielded from their bombardment
while a doctor took the flak.

- ◆ Anna Markey has seen Black Swan nesting twice in one season — a rare event.

We watched the video, *Pelican Island*, before enjoying the usual cuppa and chat.

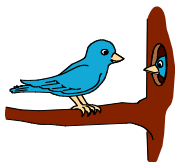
WELCOME

Helen Bowlden, Goolwa

Gillian and Philip
Rubinstein, Goolwa

Phyll Whellams, Victor Harbor

We trust you will derive much pleasure from your birdwatching activities.



MT BILLY CONSERVATION PARK

Saturday 7 August

The weather, cold with intermittent showers, provided far from ideal conditions for 19 birdwatchers. Fogged up glasses made the going difficult for some and for me, fortunately at the end of the walk, fogged up binoculars too.

There were some bright patches and at one spot the sun shone on Crescent and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters sharing a tree with a Golden Whistler.

Further down the track were more White-naped Honeyeater than I've seen together in any one place before, flitting amongst the treetops with quite a large number of Striated Pardalote.

We spotted Scarlet Robin, Eastern Spinebill and White-throated Treecreeper, but despite an extra ten minutes on a side track at the end of the walk, **no** Bassian Thrush.

I thought our total of 32 species quite good for such an uninspiring day weatherwise.

Jean Boomer

HINDMARSH ISLAND

Wednesday 18 August

With gale force northerlies blowing it wasn't a day for flying birds. Eleven members and a visitor met on the causeway of Hindmarsh Island. We

managed to leave several cars at Kate's so our convoy was a group of four cars.

First stop was at the lookout at the southern end of the marina. Here both watchers and watched hid over the hill out of the wind. Several Musk Duck were seen with the aid of spotting scopes. Also sheltering were 41 Caspian Tern, 4 species of Cormorant, Swan and Grey Teal. With the water level low some Red-capped Plover were close for all to see. On the way out a Red-necked Avocet was seen snuggled close to the samphire around one of the salt lakes. About 18 species were recorded in the marina area.

Next main stop was the lakes toward the eastern end of the island. The wind had sent most of the birds away but some Black-winged Stilts were still present. Even along Denver Road the wind whipped up the water and little birdlife was evident.



At the Murray Mouth lookout it was so windy we couldn't hold our binoculars still enough to identify the large flocks of birds out on the channel islands.

A final stop at the Mundoo Channel gave us a good view of two Little Egret skipping about catching fish.

We had our lunch back at Kate's and birdcall to the tune of a jackhammer. The total for our windy watch was 41 species.

A Nony Mous

ALDINGA SCRUB

Saturday, 28 August



Oh, what a beautiful day! — at 8 am sunny, no breeze to talk of and an outing planned to Aldinga Scrub and the Willunga (effluent) Wetlands, with food for thought on having lunch there too.

Carmel and I went directly to the scrub and had a great start. We stopped near a culvert to look at some Greenfinch and others which turned out to be Fairy Martin, and were treated to a great display of an estimated 50+ Fairy Martin bursting out of the culvert, circling and returning.

There was an excellent turnout of 18 members, including several first-timers, plus junior, Sarah, and 4 visitors. The scene was set in the car park where we saw several species including three Hooded Robin. On the walk we counted 30 species including Golden and Rufous Whistler, many Mistletoebird, Grey Fantail and Yellow Thornbill. It got a bit cool heading into the sea breeze but was OK on our return.

A convoy of cars carried 17 of us who continued on to the superb Willunga Wetlands which proved most enjoyable, thanks to Mark and Belinda organising access. Due to permanent water the reeds are lush and the ponds are very well structured and maintained. I suspect they will list varieties not seen in the ephemeral Onkaparinga Wetlands. We saw 29 species here.

At the first large pond we saw Musk Duck, Australian Wood Duck, Grey and Chestnut Teal, and Pacific Black Duck plus the mandatory Dusky Moorhen and Purple Swamphen.

A corridor of trees led to the next pond where a Spotted Crake and Little Grassbird received a lot of our attention. There were several species again in this very picturesque pond. The third pond was the only one where there was the barest hint of odour noticeable, and that was probably because I was testing for it, and then only at the entrance channel. Here we saw a Black-fronted Dotterel, a feral Goose and heard several Little Grassbird and Australian Reed Warbler calling. There were five Black-tailed Native-hen foraging along the track.

We lunched on the grassy verge outside, and after completing the bird counts, drove home thinking – if artificial wetlands can be so good, how would it have been before we ‘developed’ the Fleurieu.

Peter Ginnane

GOOLWA EFFLUENT PONDS

Sunday 12 September

On a fairly cool morning, which warmed up later, we started at the shelter, behind which the area was virtually full of water. We spent some time there before moving down to the platform which very successfully supported, without complaint, all eleven members present.

This proved to be quite a good vantage point, overlooking both the ponds and the wetlands to the west. From there we crossed to the road by the sheoaks and wandered round the edge of that wetland to the unmade road reserve at the rear of the ponds. It was rather quiet in this area.

One good sighting as we circumnavigated the ponds was a lone Musk Duck. It was among other waterbirds, including Australian Shoveller, a pair of Shelduck and many Grebe, both Australasian and Hoary-headed. Black-winged Stilt were present and two Black-fronted Dotterel.

The only birds of prey for the morning were a Swamp Harrier and a Black-shouldered Kite, plus one that got away unidentified, possibly a Brown Goshawk. Ibis and a Yellow-billed Spoonbill also flew overhead.

On the other side of the roadway Black-tailed Native-hen scurried through the undergrowth. Returning along the road proved to be the highlight of this outing with Little Grassbird and Clamorous Reed-warbler on the verges where the water lapped the roadway.

And last, but not least, the crakes. We had a brief sighting of the Australian Spotted Crake, which we have seen there

previously, but the excitement of the day was an excellent sighting of a pair Baillon's Crake. These delightfully coloured and patterned crake are only about two-thirds the size of the Australian Crake and we spent an extended time watching them feed in the shallows. Later, back at the shelter, another Baillon's Crake was seen in the wetland behind the shelter.

Final count for the day was 48 species. Chris came running back at the last minute to say he'd seen a White-fronted Chat on the fence – a lone sighting, but added to the list nevertheless.

Judith Dyer

▲ Further planting at the Goolwa Effluent Ponds took place on Sunday 19 September in the area near the shelter.

Although the success rate of the previous planting on the eastern side is quite encouraging, some plants have drowned. Additional planting was carried out there and all plants are now staked.

NEWLAND HEAD CP, WAITPINGA *Wednesday 22 September*

Six members enjoyed the warm, calm Wednesday morning outing. We met at Dennis Hut and walked east up the track. The light quality made it difficult to distinguish bird markings and there was not a great number nor variety of birds here.

We had a good view of Crescent Honeyeater and a Grey Currawong returning to its nest with food in its beak. An Elegant Parrot was seen from a distance, and we heard the sound of a Bronzewing scurrying over the sandhill. Fantail and Silvereye were plentiful as was Superb Blue Wren. A Laughing Kookaburra was visiting the campsite at Dennis Hut when we returned from the bush walk.



From there we walked down the road to the beach. There were numerous Singing Honeyeater in the dune vegetation. On the beach, the Crested Tern was the

most numerous bird, but the party was mystified by a nondescript, Pipit-like bird running about on the dune, eating insects. Fortunately, this bird's father appeared on the scene and we decided it must be a White-fronted Chat.

We walked along the river estuary, the most notable bird present being five Black-fronted Dotterel. Having made our way back to the road, we could look down on the wetland and spied Dusky Moorhen, Black-tailed Native-hen, Chestnut Teal and a crake. To see if the crake had spots, Judith, Peter and Jean went in for a closer look and reported that, yes, it was Spotted Crake – four of them!

Back at Dennis Hut for lunch and the bird count, we had good viewing of Crimson Rosella, Red-browed Firetail and Brown Thornbill. Tally – 48 species in all.

Helen Bowlden

MYER SCRUB, ASHBOURNE *Saturday 2 October*

This was only my second outing with the Fleurieu Birdwatchers and I don't think I managed to see all of the 44 species sighted – have to get more adept with the binoculars!

Twelve of us met at Ashbourne on this overcast morning and the poor light made it hard to pick up the colours on the birds. There was plenty of activity in the taller gum trees, many of which were in flower, and also in the bushy understorey of mainly callistemon and acacia. New Holland Honeyeater seemed to be in plague proportions and actually scored an E on the final report sheet.

We walked into the wooded scrub area and were immediately greeted by Grey Fantail, Tree Martin and Musk Lorikeet. Also had a good sighting of Elegant Parrot in the taller timber. We walked out into the pastured area, with isolated clumps of callistemon and rushes, and found numerous Superb Fairy-wren.

The sun came out at this stage despite the distant black thunderclouds, and we had

three exciting sightings – a flock of about 10 Cockatiel in tight formation streaked past us, unusual for this area, then several Southern Whiteface were seen on the ground. A short walk back to the dam and we were able to observe a Diamond Firetail come down to drink. This was my highlight as it was the first time I had seen this spectacular bird.

We noticed some nesting activity – a Mistletoebird was building with sheep's wool in some hanging gum foliage, and Tree Martin and a Rosella were seen to come out of their tree hollows.

Lunchtime entertainment was provided by a Striated Pardalote having a tug-of-war with a lump of wool on the ground, then flying off with tiny pieces to its nest site in a gum tree. A pair of Hooded Robin were at our lunch spot too.

Just as we finished eating the rain arrived so it was a perfectly timed outing to this most interesting, worthwhile site.

Phyll Whellams

PS Peter and Carmel reported 10 Black-chinned Honeyeater in the tall gums near the gateway.

UP, UP AND AWAY!



The brochure was very successfully launched on the evening of 20 August. The whole occasion went according to the well laid plans.

I wish to thank the many members who contributed to the completion of the brochure and the great success of the organisation of the launch.

The brochure information that was ultimately set up and printed was compiled by a subcommittee which I convened. Those who helped were Judy and Gaynor Jones and later, but not least, Kate, who applied the pressure when I lost momentum. A special and sincere thanks to you all for a job really well done.

To Denzel for initial checking, suggestions and advice, to keep the brochure factual, to Verle for proof-reading, to Geoff and Elaine who went out and used the draft brochure to find and check directions to the locations and pick any errors before it finally went to print, I wish to say a great big thank you. The brochure has been much admired and we have already distributed about half of the copies printed.

We have also received many compliments on the launch and I thank members who contributed very generously with food and help in setting up, generally circulating among invited guests and making it a happy, friendly occasion, and for cleaning up afterwards.

My appreciation also to Verle, Ann, Elaine and Bev who helped me with the planning; to Verle who produced very professional invitations and took responsibility for their distribution; to Peter who took photos for our album and the press release and to Di who updated our Information Boards at short notice.

Another very special thank you must go to Elaine and husband, Peter, who generously provided the drinks for us all. From all members, Elaine and Peter,
THANK YOU.

Judith Dyer

1999 CAMP OUT

The Camp Out is not far away now – **Friday 29 October to Monday 1 November.** Details are in your last newsletter.

This weekend promises to be an exciting one of intense birdwatching so do yourself a big favour and join in.

Please let Judith know if you're coming and contact her if you have any queries.

If you haven't yet booked accommodation, here again is the contact.

Riverside Caravan Park, Blanchetown
Mrs Daphne Walton (Daph)
Phone 8540 5070

BIRDWATCHING ETIQUETTE

We do encourage all members to join us both at meetings and on our birdwatching expeditions. The more the merrier, and if there are too many for one group, we often split into two or even three groups, and may be take different paths or directions through an area, under separate leadership. Bird call after such outings is always exciting, and sometimes controversial.

Do try to remember **to wear your name badge**. If you have lost track of yours, or like me, have drowned it in coffee, please let me (Verle) know and I'll gladly print another for you.

When we need to travel in convoy, our rule is that you **keep an eye out for the car behind** you. If it disappears from view, stop. This action will have a reverse domino effect so that if someone misses a turnoff or has a breakdown, they won't be left to their own resources.

When walking, **keep within earshot of the leader** who is usually someone with more knowledge and experience. Try to moderate conversation noise to give everyone the chance to listen for calls.

Avoid getting ahead of the group. You may flush out birds and the opportunity for others in the group to see them may be lost. Also, it may not always be possible for you alone to make a reliable identification of a species.

Thank you to those who contribute the **outing reports** for the newsletter – please be prepared to take your turn at this task.

We realise that these reminders are quite unnecessary for most seasoned birdwatchers but we felt they needed reiterating from time to time so that every outing can be relaxed and enjoyable for EVERYONE.

Why?

Why don't sleeping birds fall off their perches?

Sleeping birds stay upright on their perches thanks to the flexor tendon that runs down the back of their legs and under their feet.

When a bird lands on a perch its legs bend causing the tendon to automatically tighten and flex the toes, thus closing the claws firmly round the perch. The sleeping bird's weight forces knobby projections on the tendon to lock into a ridged sheath surrounding one section of it, preventing the tendon from sliding.

As soon as the bird wakes and straightens its legs to leave the perch, the tendon relaxes and the grip is released.

There! Now you know!

Below: The Brochure Launch was reported in the Southern Argus (Strathalbyn) and Entre Nous (Mt Compass). A letter of appreciation was received from David Robertson, immediate past President of SAOA.

