

fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

October 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:** members.iinet.net.au/~verlew
- Newsletter:** Verle Wood, 13 Marlin Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211, verlew@iinet.net.au

DIARY DATES

❖ **Saturday 11 October**

Parawa (private property)

Meet at the junction of Range Road and Torrens Vale Road, Parawa, by the noticeboard.



❖ **Friday 24–Monday 27 October**

ANNUAL CAMPOUT

Base: Tanunda Caravan Park

❖ **Friday 14 November**

General Meeting

❖ **Sunday 16 November**

Hindmarsh Island

Meet at Ferryman's Reserve, 500 m past the bridge on right.

❖ **Wednesday 26 November**

Jarnu, Currency Creek

Meet at Lions Park, Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road, Currency Creek.

❖ **Saturday 6 December**

Christmas Breakup Barbecue

Nangawooka Reserve, Adelaide Road, Victor Harbor, opposite Urimbirra.

❖ **Friday 9 January 2004**

Inman River — twilight walk

Meet in Barker Reserve opposite City of Victor Harbor council chambers.



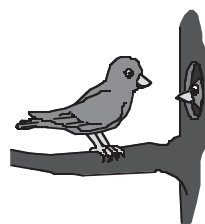
Christmas Breakup Barbecue

Nangawooka Reserve

*Meet at 4.00 pm for birdwatching
Light up the barbies about 5.30 pm*

*(probably space to share if you
haven't one of your own)*

*BYO everything,
including insect repellent*



Welcome new members
Dean and Raelene Cutten,
Victor Harbor

*We hope you will enjoy your
birdwatching activities with us.*

MEETING

Friday 12 September

There was a good turnout, 25 members, for this meeting. Several members reported on the dinner at the Hotel Victor, which all agreed was a lively and memorable occasion with excellent food and special attention from hosts Peter and Elaine O'Shaughnessy. For those unable to be there, the challenge of the evening, Elaine's Quiz, is included in this newsletter.

Main business of the night was arrangements for the Installation of the Information Board at the Goolwa Effluent Ponds and these were all well in hand. Members were reminded of the coming to Victor Cinemas on 2 October of *Travelling Birds*. Gaynor Jones asked for feedback about our display boards in the Signal Point Interpretive Centre. Helen Marinos asked for suggestions for a flag depicting Goolwa birdlife, which is one of a series to be erected in the town.

Show and tell, and bird call, included

- Glossy Black-Cockatoo feathers mounted in glass
- Gouldian Finch baby body showing luminous spots on each side of bill
- Black-chinned Honeyeater in Pt Elliot Caravan Park
- Pacific Black Duck on sea between Yilki and Granite Island — surprising but not unusual in this area
- Kookaburras in Goolwa township
- Pacific Gulls pecking at sampling wounds on whales

Denzel Murfet showed a series of slides of the northern areas of SA where he has worked, and of the birds he has found there. Everyone envied him being able to combine birdwatching with paid work — a relaxed, friendly and informative talk.

More bird chat followed over the usual cuppa.



Elaine and Peter O'Shaughnessy, Hotel Victor

EFFLUENT PONDS PROJECT

Sunday 14 September

A good number of members and former members, and a pleasing turnout of BirdsSA personnel, arrived well rugged up for the Installation of the Information Board at the Goolwa Effluent Ponds. In spite of the threatening weather and soggy conditions, the sun shone for the occasion and the showers held off until it was all over. Total attendance: 51.

Judith Dyer outlined the events leading up to this day: the fulfilment of the vision and a memorial to the efforts of her late husband, Bruce. The Effluent Ponds project has been in progress almost since the inception of Fleurieu Birdwatchers in 1995.

Pam Crancher introduced Bruce to the effluent ponds. When he met her there one day Pam was carrying her aluminium ladder towards the second pond so she could better view the numerous birds that congregate there.

Soon Fleurieu Birdwatchers was inaugurated by an enthusiastic band led by Bruce as its first chairman.

In the absence of a ground plan for the area, Bruce, a retired engineer, drew an excellent scale plan of the proposed project, including the bird hide — which has become a shelter — and a raised walkway to a viewing platform near the second pond.

Geoff Dyer (son of Bruce and Judith) and Associates, Consulting Engineers drew up plans for the viewing platform and shelter. After Bruce's death in 1996, member Chris Wastell embraced the project. He compiled comprehensive documents outlining the proposal. After perusal by the group, the plans were submitted to the (former) Pt Elliot and Goolwa Council. Council supported the project with a grant of \$4000 for materials and earthworks, and by September 1998 the scheme started rolling. Chris supervised the project throughout.

In January 1999 Green Corps began construction of the shelter and this was completed at a working bee of members in April. The viewing platform was also built at that time.

Kate Bruce, with help from Denzel Murfet, planned and supervised the plantings from locally collected seed raised by the volunteer group *Trees for me*. Hindmarsh Island Landcare,

Goolwa Gardeners, (former) Glendale Christian School, Callen Dennis (council gardener) and Fleurieu Birdwatchers members all helped with the planting.

Shortly afterwards, the council began planning and working on the third pond so preparation of the interpretive sign was put on hold pending the completion of that pond.

BirdsSA offered substantial financial help and their generous donation was applied to the signage.

Judith outlined her hopes for the future: a car parking area, a walking trail with stiles, and further plantings.

Mayor Kim McHugh also addressed the gathering and explained the Council's three-pronged commitment to such projects: economic, social and environmental. Both the Mayor and Councillor Frank Tuckwell pledged their ongoing support for future expansion of the project at the ponds. Cr Tuckwell announced a donation of \$200 from his discretionary fund.

Penny Paton, President of BirdsSA, then officially unveiled the Information Board. She pointed out the importance of the educational value of such projects in helping visitors appreciate and preserve the environment.

Post Script: On the Monday following the launch Mayor Kim McHugh spoke of the project at the Alexandrina Council meeting. He mentioned his attendance at the function and commended those involved, in particular, David Banks, Director Technical Services, formerly Works Manager, who supported the project from its inception.



Chairman Jim Marsh and Judith Dyer at the Goolwa Effluent Ponds ceremony.

Thanks

I would like to say a very big thank you to the Committee and all those members who contributed so much to the success of the launch of our project at the Goolwa Effluent Ponds. It was fitting to remember Bruce and his vision and contribution as cofounder and inaugural Chairman of our group. For me and my family it was a special day. To those who attended and supported the event in so many ways I say many, many thanks. *Judith*



OUTINGS

Mt Magnificent Conservation Park

Saturday 9 August

It was a small group of just seven that set out over the stile on the Mt Magnificent section of the Heysen Trail. Grey Shrike-thrush greeted us as we began our descent down the track while Tree Martin were on the wing overhead. Four Kookaburras filled the air with their laughter and lots of Striated Thornbill were busy in the tops of the trees. The bright colours of a Golden Whistler were a contrast to the dark clouds which threatened overhead, but which emptied only a few spots on us. Crimson Rosella and Rainbow Lorikeet showed their beautiful colours while a White-throated Treecreeper pecked his way up the tree trunks.

We meandered our way through to Blackfellows Creek Road where a female Scarlet Robin sat on the fence waiting for us. A Fan-tailed Cuckoo didn't stay around long after gulping down its meal of what looked like a large moth. A Wedge-tailed Eagle quickly went out of sight when it spied its lunch and the Grey Currawong that we had heard eventually came into sight.

We took our time climbing back up the steep hill, enjoying the warm sunshine which occasionally peeped through the clouds. However, icy winds greeted us at the top of the hill so we didn't stay long after our bird call, which tallied 29 species.

Val Laird

Did you know? A grebe's dense plumage contains around 20,000 feathers. A preening grebe swallows feathers from its flanks. These form a mass in a part of its stomach. Parent grebes feed their chicks feathers from hatching time. Grebes were once killed for their breast feathers which were made into muffs, caps and hats, and their pelts into saddle blankets. Before diving a grebe sleeks its plumage forcing out air bubbles so it loses buoyancy. From Steve Parish's Amazing Facts about Australian Birds — text by Pat Slater

Yankalilla Creek

Wednesday 27 August

A keen group of eight met at Garnett Kelly Park to walk along Yankalilla Creek, which was flowing fast due to recent heavy rain. The morning was cool and sunny. However, those with waterproof footwear (the waders amongst us!) were more suited to the terrain.

A pair of White-faced Heron sat in the trees near the park while further along we saw two Kookaburra. Rainbow Lorikeet and Galah were plentiful, and very noisy and active all morning. The Superb Fairy-wren were numerous and looked beautiful in the sunlight. Other sightings included White-browed Scrubwren, Striated Pardalote, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Eastern Spinebill, Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, and Yellow-faced, White-plumed and New Holland Honeyeaters. Several pairs of Wood Duck were sighted further along the creek. A Wedge-tailed Eagle overhead was harassed by two very determined Little Raven.

We returned to the park for lunch and birdcall. During lunch we watched a Nankeen Kestrel hunting nearby. Some 33 species were recorded.

Margaret Dreyer

Goolwa Effluent Ponds

Sunday 14 September

While the slaves attended to preparations for the big event of the day, the Installation of the Information Board, the rest of us surveyed the birdlife. On the mound spotting-scopes were put to good use to help us to distinguish the Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebe. The nesting activities of the Magpie-lark and Black Swan also created interest.

We walked along the road and around to the far side of the ponds where there were Pink-eared and Blue-billed Duck, and Hardhead. Some intrepids in their wellies even completed the circuit of all three ponds but those of us who retraced our steps were treated to a Royal Spoonbill, plumes blowing in the wind, and a White-faced Heron nearer the road.

Other highlights of the morning's watching for me were Greenfinch (haven't seen one for ages), Musk Duck, Swamp Harrier and Scrub-wren. Little Grassbird was calling but as usual, oh so elusive. Count: 54 species.

Verle Wood

Nurragi Reserve

Wednesday 24 September

Eight of us braved the wild winds to visit Nurragi. This narrow strip of mallee scrub did not provide much shelter. There was enough sun to entice the sleepy lizards out but the birds were at times hard to hear and spot among the tossing branches.

However, the White-browed Babblers were babbling, the Rufous Whistler whistling, and the many Mistletoebirds were quite vocal.

Ann T called down a female Golden Whistler to within a metre of us. Most discussion of the day was identifying different thornbills — Yellow-rumped being in abundance. Highlight of the walk was a good sighting of Diamond Firetail. In all 28 species were seen.

Phyll Whellams

Elaines' Quizzical Quiz

- 1 What is the common name for *Passer domesticus*?
- 2 Unscramble the following birds which are local residents.
lusalag; allsore; pigame karl; everyesil; lawelf drib; bupers ernw; igginns throneeyea
- 3 Whose mother is in a very famous painting?
- 4 Name two Australian past political leaders whose names are birds.
- 5 Our neighbours across the Tasman are ...
- 6 Name the South Australian pioneering bus company with an avian connection which served the Eyre Peninsula for many, many years.
- 7 What does an oologist study?
- 8 What colour are Silvereye's eggs?
- 9 What type of nest does a Reed-warbler make?
- 10 What Australian actor was married in Coff's Harbor in April?



Stand on your head for answers —

Maria Marsh knew them all!



- 1 House Sparrow
- 2 Seagull, Rosella, Magpie-lark, Silvereye, Wattlebird, Superb-wren, Singing Honeyeater
- 3 Whistler's
- 4 Peacock, Hawke (and a lot of galahs!)
- 5 Kiwis
- 6 Birdseye (Remember Sylvia?)
- 7 Eggs
- 8 Blue
- 9 Deep cup woven of strips of reeds and bound to several reed stems.
- 10 Crowe