



# fleurieu birdwatch

Newsletter of Fleurieu Birdwatchers Inc

October 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
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## DIARY DATES

### ✿ Saturday 9 October

Tolderol Game Reserve  
Meet near the railway carriage,  
Milang.

### ✿ Friday 12 November

Meeting  
Guest speaker: Andrew Black

### ✿ Sunday 14 November

Goolwa Barrages to Beacon 19  
Meet in the car park at the gate to the barrages.

### ✿ Thursday 25 November

Milang: Muntiri Heritage Area  
Meet at the junction of Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road and Milang  
Road, Finnis.

### ✿ Saturday 4 December

Currency Creek Gorge, Christmas Breakup  
Meet in the Lions Park, Goolwa–Strathalbyn Road,  
Currency Creek.

### ✿ Friday 14 January 2005 Twilight Walk

Scott Conservation Park (southern)  
Meet at 7.00 pm at the junction of Deep Creek Road and  
Frome Road, on the southern boundary of the park.



## Goolwa Effluent Ponds

To deter rubbish dumping the Alexandrina Council has erected a fence with gate, blocking access to our viewing platform. It is possible that the gate may have to be moved further out to the road and we may have to park on the roadside. We are assured that there will ultimately be a stile for us to enter the area.

The Committee has arranged a

### Working Bee

**9.00 am Saturday 16 October**

at the ponds to clean up the mound area around the bird hide. They will welcome your help. Please bring tools and wear protective clothing.

## Christmas Breakup Barbecue

**Currency Creek**

**Birdwatching at 4.00 pm.**

**Light up barbies about  
5.30 pm**

**Bring your own everything —  
don't forget insect repellent.**

**(There will be barbie space  
to share if you don't have  
your own.)**



**It's not too late to book for  
Campout. See June birdwatch.**

## MEETING

Friday 10 September

Ann Turner in the chair opened the meeting with a welcome to all including three visitors.

Concerns about access to the Goolwa Effluent Ponds were aired and Brian Ginno offered to speak to an Alexandrina Council officer about these. A suggestion was also made that we have a working bee to clean up the area around the hide. The Orange-bellied Parrot survey had resulted in just one bird seen locally and only 14 Australia-wide.

Karen Bradford's presentation, *From Smelly Swamp to Wonderful Wetlands*, followed. Karen related the story of the samphire area between the township and the lake at Milang. This was once a rubbish dump and a transformation to wetland has been brought about mainly by educating the locals to accept that the area was worth preserving as a habitat for birds, especially the migratory Japanese Snipe. The result has been not only a renewed community spirit but an economic boost for the town as tourists linger longer after walking the path and boardwalk, reading the signage and viewing the area.

### Bird call

- Ruddy Turnstone at Basham's Beach, and White-winged Triller in nearby trees
- Bittern at Tolderol, and numbers of foxes in the area
- Black-chinned Honeyeater have not been heard locally for some time
- Phyll Whellams brought along a Boobook Owl (road kill), and an egg (possibly Pacific Black Duck) found lying in scrubland
- The Weebill/Thornbill nest (see June 2004 birdwatch) was again displayed with evidence supporting the Weebill identification.

Bird chat continued over cuppa and biccies — a pleasant evening!

### Answers to Elaine's Quiz (see page 4 first)

1. Australian Magpie 2. Willy Wagtail, Dusky Woodswallow, Spotted Pardalote, Laughing Kookaburra, Grey Shrike-thrush, Feral Pigeon 3. Crows, Swans, Eagles, Hawks, Magpies
4. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
5. Ornithology 6. Birdie 7. Swan Reach, Cockatoo Valley, Cynet River, Swanport, Hawker 8. White 9. Cup-shaped nest of small twigs and strips of bark held together with spiders' webs, in pendulous outer foliage of eucalypts.
10. Peter Finch

## OUTINGS

### Newland Head Conservation Park

Saturday 7 August

It was a fine, mild day and our nine members were treated to 52 species. How about the Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Beautiful Firetail, White-fronted Chat, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Scarlet Robin, White-browed Scrubwren, Golden Whistler and a nesting Little Raven! And a clear, close sighting of a Brown Falcon, besides Wedge-tailed Eagle and Nankeen Kestrel!

At Dennis Hut car park there was a wide range of small birds: Crescent Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Silvereye, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Red-browed Firetail, Superb Fairy-wren, Grey Fantail.

We walked via the water tank lookout to the top of the hill, then joined the Heysen trail near a fenced-off area of remnant vegetation for our return.

On the way back we found Yellow and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Adelaide Rosella, Elegant Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Grey Currawong and Brush Bronzewing.

At the Waitpinga Lagoon there were Australian Gannet, Pelican, Pacific and Silver Gulls, Caspian and Crested Terns, Black-fronted Dotterel, Masked Lapwing, Little Pied Cormorant and Grey Teal.

My, what a morning!

Geoff Evans



### Inman River Estuary

Wednesday 25 August

A warm, early spring day was promised as eight members met in the cool of the morning at Barker Reserve. After a short discussion we decided to split the outing into two parts, one the Inman River near Barker Reserve and the Estuary, and the other the seafront along Franklin Parade to and including the Bluff.

### Inman River near Barker Reserve and Estuary:

Initially we walked upstream along the river from Barker Reserve. Red Wattlebird and Little Wattlebird were plentiful, with Red Wattlebird breeding very close to a busy road. White-plumed Honeyeater, Welcome Swallow, a pair of Pacific Black Duck and a few Dusky

Moorhen added to the scene. From Barker Reserve we drove to Kent Reserve at the Inman River Estuary. The improvement in the variety of birdlife was immediately evident as we parked to the staccato voices of Masked Lapwing. We sighted Sooty Oystercatcher, Common Sandpiper, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Galah, New Holland Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, Little Pied Cormorant, Magpie-lark, Magpie and many Silver Gull. The Red Wattlebird were plentiful with more nests sighted.

We counted 23 species for this part of our outing.

**Franklin Parade–Bluff:** Along the seafront we saw Pacific Gull, Caspian Tern, Crested Tern, Pied and Little Pied Cormorant, Pelican, Common Sandpiper, Singing Honeyeater, Crimson Rosella. At the Bluff we sighted Willie Wagtail, New Holland Honeyeater, Crested Pigeon and Goldfinch. A goanna was observed watching us as we watched it. From the Bluff we moved to Petrel Cove for lunch and bird count.

A total of 19 species was recorded for this part of our outing. An interesting and enjoyable morning in the sun for all concerned.

Margaret Dreyer



Rufous Night Heron

Photo:Val Laird

### Onkaparinga Wetlands

Sunday 12 September

Meeting at the Insitute hall in Old Noarlunga we were pleased to see the Rufous Night Herons were still in their regular tree and also noted the absence of the Corellas. Moving to Onkaparinga Wetlands we were welcomed by a Black-shouldered Kite sitting on top of a large pole, and quite a large group of Great and Little Black Cormorant. A cold wind was blowing strongly but eased when we moved down the track. Clamorous Reed-Warbler, Little Grassbird and Golden-headed Cisticola were busy calling and flying in and out of the reeds. On the water Eurasion Coot

aggressively chased and called to each other in what appeared to be courtship behaviour. While circling each other one of the Coots raised its wings giving it a graceful dancing appearance.

We moved to Hutchinson Reserve for lunch where a pair of Peregrine Falcon were nesting in the cliff face along the river and a Tawny Frogmouth was fast asleep high in a tree in the reserve. While we ate lunch we kept watch on the Peregrine and saw the mate return to the nest, change places onto the nest and the other bird fly away. After a short wait we watched as it returned but, being harassed by three Magpie, it would not enter the nest so again flew away. It then returned a short while later to again change places with its mate. It made an interesting lunch break for us all. 63 species were recorded at bird call.

On leaving for home four of us decided to go via Milang to see if we could find the Japanese Snipe and although it was a long drive we were lucky enough to have sixteen fly up for us. A satisfactory ending to an excellent day's birding.

Ann Turner

### Cox Scrub

Thursday 23 September

A cool but pleasant morning greeted nine members at the southeast corner of the scrub. We headed down the perimeter track. The hill in front looked worse than it really was. As we rambled along we soon found ourselves nearly at the top where we took a right turn.

Birds were hard to find, but spring flowers were plentiful and kept the flower enthusiasts busy, and the cameras clicking. We identified 31 species during the morning including Common Bronzewing, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Grey Currawong, Grey Fantail, Brown Falcon and Black Falcon. I think the Golden Whistlers were the pick of the bunch. We saw really good views of male, female and juvenile. I shouldn't forget the raptors. As well as the falcons we saw a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagle plus two other raptors we couldn't identify.

The dam was disappointing — no Firetail. But an enjoyable morning was followed by lunch during which a Grey Butcherbird posed nearby for us, and the bird call.

Pat Ashfield



Photo: Alwyn Hunt

**Hooded Plover** at Hindmarsh River mouth

Two unsuccessful attempts have been made at nesting this season.

- 24 July: nest established with three eggs
- 4 August: nest and eggs washed away by very high stormy tide
- 14 August: nest with two eggs established higher up on the beach, closer to sand dunes
- 23 August: a second pair of birds observed on the beach approximately 50 metres from nest. When this pair approached nesting area, an altercation took place. The nesting pair appeared to strongly object to the intrusion.
- 25 August: only two birds present, one sitting on nest
- 26 August: nest vacated. When I checked, I confirmed that the eggs had gone. There were no shell fragments in or near the nest. There were no human, dog or lizard tracks anywhere near the nest nor were there any large bird tracks.

I suspect that the eggs were taken by Little Raven, Silver Gull or Caspian Tern. I had observed a pair of Little Raven near the nest on a number of occasions. The nesting pair was repeatedly disturbed by a flock of rowdy Galah feeding near the nest.

- 28 August: nesting pair disappeared from the area
- 11–12 September: pair of birds have returned

It has been suggested that dogs being walked along the beach in the vicinity might be a problem for the nesting birds. I can confidently state that all the regular dog-walkers are aware of the nesting birds and adopt a responsible attitude towards them by keeping their dogs under control near any nest. One lady who occasionally walks her Doberman does unfortunately allow it to race around out of control, chasing swallows.

Andrew Jeffery

**Our Once-a-Year Night** at the Hotel Victor was again a night to remember. Elaine and Peter O’Shaughnessy ensured we had the best of meals and the best of service.

Best of all Elaine had put a lot of thought and preparation into her Quizzical Quiz.

For those of you who were unable to attend on the night here it is. Answers page 2.

**Elaine’s Quiz**

1. What is the common name of *Gymnorhina tibicen*?
2. Unscramble  
WYLIL LAGWAIT  
SKUDY ODOW LOWLAWS  
DESPOTT DOPARTALE  
HAGGULIN RAURAKBOOK  
REGY RISKHE SHURTH  
LEAFR GINPEO
3. Name the AFL teams with bird names.
4. Expand the following  
ABI THE H I W T I THE B
5. What is the study of birds called?
6. What is the golfing term for a score of one better than par?
7. Name at least three townships in South Australia named after birds.
8. What colour are the eggs of a Red-browed Finch (Firetail)?
9. What type of nest does a White-plumed Honeyeater make?
10. Name the handsome Australian actor of the 50s (name of a bird).

Elaine presented Edith St George with a special treat for her superb effort.



As well as the quiz, there were a couple of other tidbits for us — A Tennis Romance and a bird silhouette and bird feet puzzle. Elaine also distributed copies of a Letter to the Editor in *Bird Keeping in Australia*, August 1992, which listed birds seen on the Victor Harbor Golf Course at that time. It was a jolly memorable night!