



# Werribee Wag-Tales

• Volume 16 No 1... 2010 •

**Dave Torr, President**

E✉ davidtorr@gmail.com

☎ 9749 5141

**Iian Denham, Activities Co-ordinator**

E✉ iidenham@yahoo.com

☎ 9379 9483

**Shirley Cameron, Editor**

E✉ smc3030@bigpond.net.au

☎ 9741 2997



## Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010 Bellarine Peninsula by bus – Iian Denham

After a late date change and being so close to New Year it was a pleasant surprise to find the bus full for our expedition to the Bellarine Peninsula.

We got away around 8:50 and Kevin the bus driver used his initiative to take the scenic route through Eastern Park in Geelong.

Our first stop was the Basin Reserve at Drysdale. Unfortunately the birds were quite scarce with Noisy Miners seeming to dominate. This may be a spot to keep an eye on when Victoria returns to normal weather patterns.

Next we headed over to Lake Lorne for Morning tea and a look at the lake. The lake was not as good as it has been, but we still saw some good birds like Blue Billed Duck and White Necked Heron.

McLeod's Waterholes Reserve had not been visited before by most of the Wagtails who were pleasantly surprised by the surroundings. There was a strong wind from the South as we walked around both lakes and ticked off Grey Butcherbird, Black Swan and various ducks. Sadly no sign of the Freckled Ducks.

We had lunch in front of a pavilion overlooking a kids cricket match, although I think we chatted more than we watched.

At 1pm we headed off for Point Henry and walked around a wetland at the end of the Point. Being early afternoon birding was not great, but it was a nice spot and well worth a revisit. The highlights were Greenfinch and Black Fronted Dotterel. We got back to Werribee at 3:30 with a bird count of 61.

***NB. No police assisted in the compiling of this report.***

Black Swan  
 Blue -billed duck  
 Black Swan  
 Australian Shelduck  
 Australian Wood Duck  
 Pacific Black Duck  
 Grey Teal  
 Chestnut Teal  
 Hardhead  
 Australasian Grebe  
 Hoary-headed Grebe  
 Darter  
 Little Pied Cormorant  
 Little Black Cormorant  
 Black Cormorant  
 Pelican

White Faced Heron  
 Great Egret  
 White Necked Heron  
 Little Egret  
 Straw-necked Ibis  
 Australian white Ibis  
 Royal spoonbill  
 Black -shouldered kite  
 Black Kite  
 Swamp Harrier  
 Brown Falcon  
 Purple Swamphen  
 Dusky Moorhen  
 Eurasian Coot  
 Black-fronted dotterel

Masked Lapwing  
 Pacific Gull  
 Silver Gull  
 Rock dove  
 Spotted Dove  
 Crested pigeon  
 Galah  
 Rainbow lorikeet  
 Eastern rosella  
 Red-rumped parrot  
 Superb Fairywren  
 Red Wattle bird  
 Noisy miner  
 Magpie-lark  
 Grey fantail

Willie Wagtail  
 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
 Australian Magpie  
 Grey Butcherbird  
 Pied Currawong  
 Little Raven  
 House Sparrow  
 Welcome Swallow  
 Australian Reed-Warbler  
 Little Grassbird  
 Goldfinch  
 Greenfinch  
 Common Blackbird  
 Common Starling  
 Common Myna



### WHAT HAVE MEMBERS BEEN DOING?

Jim Gunn's been counting birds at the WTP with the Wader Group.

Dave' has organised a trip to Costa Ricca.

Iian's negotiated a new Job & his desire to have 1st Tuesday off!

Peter G. planning Long service Leave and ultimate retirement.....



## Hunting The Hylacola with Iian ...



By way of background, some months ago I noticed a sighting of the Chestnut-Rumped Heathwren near Heathcote in central Victoria. As I had planned a family holiday to Nagambie in January, I made a note of where to find the bird. In the meantime a book called 'Where to find Birds in Victoria' was published and gave other nearby locations.

Each morning before the heat got up I would head off to do some birdwatching, and on Day 4 I found myself in the vicinity of the Rushworth State Forest where the Heathwren could be found. However as I hadn't planned to be in the area, I didn't take the guide 'Where to find birds in Victoria', so tried to remember which road I was supposed to find the Heathwren. I thought it was Anderson Road so took off down it stopping a few times when I heard bird activity. I realised I was on the wrong road a little later as I came to a dead end, but the road proved very fruitful as I found Chestnut Rumped and Buff Rumped Thornbills as well as Red Capped Robins. I went back to Sayers Lane where I found Treecreepers, Jacky Winter and Restless Flycatcher, but it was not the right road for the Heathwren.

Day 5: The reported sighting a few months ago was at Mt Ida near Heathcote, so I set off just after breakfast. The Mt Ida lookout road was longer than I had expected and I could not identify any specifically appropriate area for the Heathwren. In fact I didn't see any birds apart from at the entrance to the park. I didn't expect to get the Heathwren but not to get any other birds was a bit disappointing.

Day 6 (the last day of the holiday) I parked at the Mallee bush in Miller Lane at 8:30. It was very quiet, but I pushed on up the track playing the Chestnut Rumped Heathwren call at regular intervals. Occasionally I could hear birds in the distance but not a solitary bird was seen until I had passed through the mallee. Here I found Buff Rumped Thornbill, juvenile Red Capped Robin, and White Throated Treecreeper. Although the Heathwren is not uncommon it is notoriously hard to find and it appears this wasn't to be my year.

On the route home I thought I would stop at the quarry at Baillieston for Hooded Robin to add to my year list, and was met with Welcome Swallow and Tree Martin hawking over the scrub. As I stood trying to identify which of the Martins were present, I heard something in the bushes about 5 metres away. Crikey, it was a Chestnut-Rumped Heathwren. It was checking me out checking it out, and stayed long enough to get a photo then disappeared.

I decided to play its call and as I was fumbling with the player, I noticed another bird fly in, bloody hell, it was a Black Honeyeater, a lifer. Do I watch the lifer or try to get the Heathwren back? I followed the Honeyeater, and as it landed in a dead bush I noticed some new shapes, an adult and infant Diamond Firetail. Shoot, I've been here less than 5 minutes. Meanwhile I was also surrounded by Superb Fairy Wren, and Yellow Tufted Honeyeater. As I calmed down I played the Black Honeyeater call and the bird came back in and I got more good views and a photo. Then as I started to move around the rest of the site I heard the Heathwren call, so I played its call and it came scooting over to me and stopped for a couple of seconds just two metres away.

What a fabulous day. Pity about the Hooded Robin though.

Iian D

### FUTURE OUTINGS:

**April** Bus Trip to Macedon. Bus is fully booked. **May** : Bacchus Marsh area. Pinkerton Survey  
**June** : Cobbledicks & Riverbend Park **July** Lower Reaches of Werribee River,



Grampians Camp.... October... Have you made your booking yet?



## From Cheetham Salt in February



The day dawned with expectations of 34C' and a dilemma. Would it be too hot to be out?? There was the pull of the Cheetham Wetlands though, access to which for a long time our group had been denied. It would be terrific to see the area and birds here may be plentiful in numbers and species.

What to do? Stay home or go???

Well as it turned out, eighteen members of Werribee Wagtails, and five visitors, Ken and Suzy and Christine from the inner city, Heidi, and Murray from Box Hill, fearlessly and decisively met at Watton St to get navigation instructions from our Chief Pooh-Bar Dave.

We car pooled, drove S.East past a huge new subdivision east To Point Cook Cheetham wetlands. First impressions were of colour. Coastal scrub, glassworts, and saltbush on the edges of silvery ponds were superb, ranging from red, orange, milky green, brown and bright green under a blue sky. Best of all, a cool easterly breeze blew over us making the stops very pleasant indeed.

There were many waders here, elegant avocet, red-capped plover, royal spoonbill and dotterels being the highlights.

Coffee break at the beach and looked across the pale blue bay to our misty city in the distance.

On the return journey occupants of one lucky car (Shirley's), saw a spotted crane come up out of the water, walk along the margin on its milky green legs and disappear into the vegetation.

We then continued our trip to lunch at Point Cook coastal park.

Alas our breeze did not follow us there, the forecast 34C' had arrived, but we sat in comfort under a sail to eat, saw some bush birds, then set off for a walk. This proved to be too warm for most, the birds having more sense than us and not in view, so we retreated to the shady sail for birdcall.

Total count was an amazing 67 species and Jim Gunn won the chocolates, congratulations!

Joyce and Bob, Chris and Carol were missed, and where are you Denis?

Thanks go to Dave for organizing a terrific outing *Ginny*

Black Swan	Brown Falcon	Whiskered Tern	Grey fantail
Australian Shelduck	Kestrel	Crested pigeon	Willie Wagtail
Australian Wood Duck	Spotted Crake	Galah	Dusky Woodswallow
Grey Teal	Black-tailed Godwit	Eastern rosella	White-breasted woodswallow
Chestnut Teal	Marsh Sandpiper	Superb Fairywren	Australian Magpie
Darter	Greenshank	Striated Fieldwren	Little Raven
Little Pied Cormorant	Red-necked Stint	Brown thornbill	Skylark
Pied Cormorant	Curlew Sandpiper	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Richards Pipit
Little Black Cormorant	Sharp-tailed sandpiper	Buff-rumped Thornbill	House Sparrow
Pelican	Black-winged stilt	Striated Thornbill	Zebra Finch
White Faced Heron	Red-necked avocet	Yellow Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Great Egret	Red-capped Plover	Red Wattle bird	Goldfinch
Little Egret	Black-fronted dotterel	Singing Honeyeater	Greenfinch
Straw-necked Ibis	Masked Lapwing	White plumed honeyeater	Silvereye
Royal spoonbill	Pacific Gull	New Holland Honeyeater	Brown Songlark
Black -shouldered kite	Silver Gull	White-fronted Chat	Common Myna
Marsh Harrier	Crested Tern	Magpie-lark	Common Starling





## Counting at Pinkerton

On Feb 14th 12 members (from as far afield as Bayswater) and 2 visitors from the UK came for the quarterly survey of three private woodlands between Werribee and Melton. We usually lack the resources to do a full count of each species, but in the 6 years of running these trips have gained some useful information.

We started as usual at Pinkerton Forest and whilst we opening the gate a Peregrine Falcon flew over. The drive in yielded a small flock of Zebra Finches, and in the forest we found a single Diamond Firetail - the first for about a year. We heard but could not see a Brown Treecreeper. Late last year Sea-eagles nested in the forest and raised one young - they have all left the forest now but this, added to the Wedge-tails which also raised a young the year before - shows the importance of this area. The understory was looking in much better condition after recent years. The other highlight of this part of the trip was our first ever Rufous Songlark, and our final bird was a female White-winged Triller. We also had a pair of Crested Shrike-tits.

On to Bush's Paddock which as usual was fairly quiet, although we did get our first ever record of Red-browed Finch for the area.

After lunch and on to Eynesbury, where the lake was a little high for crakes, although we had some Black-fronted Dotterels and great views of both Little Grassbird and Reed-warbler. In the forest we found a few small flocks of Diamond Firetails, good numbers of Brown Treecreepers and a pair of Crested Shrike-tits. Highlights were a fly-over by a Little Eagle followed almost immediately by flushing a Boobook.

## March at Altona

Summer has been very hot in Victoria the average temperature at 28° this is about 5° above the usual temperature for February. We have had very little rain so Altona was looking dry. Fortunately there was sufficient water to attract many egrets, moorhens ducks and a common green shank in the channel.

Andre had done the reconnoitre, but Dave was our Leader and we send our best wishes to Andre's wife Suzanne .

There were many interesting birds to see as we walked down the track towards the bay, was there a Little Grass bird in the reeds or could it have been a Reed Warbler? Unfortunately we were unable to get good sightings but we certainly did see the Red-rump Parrots on the ground the Horsefield's Bronze-cuckoo on the fence and in the far distance we saw a Striated Fieldwren.

Early morning tea before we went to the Altona

foreshore. There was much rotting seaweed on the shore but it did not encourage birds to come foraging.

Our walk along the foreshore was very pleasant, the Yellow-rumped Thornbill and many many Superb Blue Wren, but none in full breeding plumage.

After an early lunch the group made its way down to Koroit Creek.

The bird count was an amazing 47. I believe we all had a very pleasant day indeed. It was good that Carol Popham was able to join us again, and Gwen looking so well. We welcomed visitors Graham and Betty; Christine now seems to be a fully fledged Wagtail.

*Premi won the chocolates...*

Black Swan  
Australian Shelduck  
Australian Wood Duck  
Chestnut Teal  
Spotted Dove  
Crested pigeon  
Little Pied Cormorant  
Little Black Cormorant  
Australian Pelican  
White Faced Heron  
Little Egret  
Australian white Ibis

Royal spoonbill  
Yellow-billed spoonbill  
Straw-necked Ibis  
Purple Swamphen  
Dusky Moorhen  
Eurasian Coot  
Australian Pied Oyster-catcher  
Sooty Oystercatcher  
Black-winged stilt  
Masked Lapwing

Pacific Gull  
Silver Gull  
Galah  
Sulphur-crested cockatoo  
Red-rumped parrot  
Horsefield's Cuckoo  
Superb Fairywren  
Striated Fieldwren  
Yellow-rumped thornbill  
Singing Honeyeater  
White plumed honeyeater

Red Wattle bird  
New Holland Honey-eater  
Australian Magpie  
Grey fantail  
Willie Wagtail  
Little Raven  
Magpie-lark  
Welcome Swallow  
Common Blackbird  
Common Myna

Thanks to Michelle Wan for the new design for the Newsletter.

