



Werribee Wag-Tales

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Western Treatment Plant, 1 November 2011.

In what has become a tradition, the Cup Day outing was to the Western Treatment Plant. John capably piloted the bus with exceptional navigation from Peter G. The beauty of the WTP is the range of habitats ensuring plenty of species during late spring and summer as the migrants join the vagrants and locals. Our excellent tally of quality sightings added several new birds to our list.

We suspected a treat in store as, en route to the T Section lagoons, we saw several goodies, - Black shouldered Kite to name just one. If you are going to have a great day, you might as well start out with a bang! And what a bang it was. Brolga nesting within reasonable sight and standing so we could get a really good look. Glance side-ways, and there are two Cape Barren Geese. What could top that you ask - the usually secretive Baillon's Crake and Spotted Crake just pottering around right in front of us. What a chance to learn the finer points with both adult and juveniles on display. Clamorous Reed Warblers and the elusive Little Grass birds singing provided the see me if you can element - and we did! Some things came in sets; some were stand alones - waders, cormorants, grebes, bush birds, terns, gulls and not to be left out, raptors.

Liz H ran the Melbourne Cup sweep. The winner, in a repeat of last year, was Shirley Cameron and with her usual themed spirit she gave it to the Royal FLYING Doctor. *Thanks to Reporter Carol Popham.*

Photos from Carol Popham and Peter O'Connell.

Bird list starts on this page and continues over the page..... 81 species, not a bad day! Nance brings the chocolates next time!

Cape Barren Goose
Black Swan
Australian Shelduck
Australasian Shoveler
Grey Teal
Chestnut Teal
Pacific Black Duck
Hardhead
Blue -billed duck
Musk Duck
Australasian Grebe
Hoary-headed Grebe
Great Crested Grebe
Crested pigeon
Little Pied Cormorant
Great Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant
Pied Cormorant
Australian Pelican
White Necked Heron
(see next page)



Eastern Great Egret
Cattle Egret
White Faced Heron
Glossy Ibis
Australian white Ibis
Royal spoonbill
Yellow-billed spoonbill
Straw-necked Ibis
Black -shouldered kite
Whistling kite
Swamp Harrier
Brown Falcon
Brolga
Purple Swamphen
Baillons Crake
Buff-banded Rail
Australian Spotted Crake
Black-tailed Native hen
Dusky Moorhen

Australian Pied Oystercatcher
Black-winged stilt
Red-necked avocet
Banded stilt
Red-capped Plover
Masked Lapwing
Bar-tailed Godwit
Red-necked Stint
Sharp-tailed sandpiper
Curlew Sandpiper
Whiskered Tern
White-winged Black Tern
Crested Tern
Pacific Gull
Silver Gull
Galah
Kookaburra
Superb Fairywren
White-browed Scrubwren

Yellow-rumped thornbill
White-fronted Chat
New Holland Honeyeater
Australian Magpie
Willie Wagtail
Little Raven
Magpie-lark
Eurasian Skylark
Golden-headed Cisticola
Australian Reed-Warbler
Little Grassbird
Silvereye
Welcome Swallow
Fairy Martin
Common Blackbird
Common Starling
Common Myna
Zebra Finch
House Sparrow
Australasian Pipit
European Goldfinch

A Message From Dave Torr...

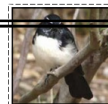
I thought it appropriate to update you as to the progress of the BOCA/BA merger. The BOCA office and shop will close by the end of the year and most BOCA staff have been offered positions in the BirdLife head office in Carlton. Those of you who have renewed your BOCA or BA membership recently will notice that the renewal is now as a member of BirdLife and that you may have a new membership number - if you want to log on to the BOCA website you will need to remember and use your OLD BOCA membership number. We should soon be seeing a big increase in the number of photos on the BOCA website as BA members become eligible to post photos to it. The new BirdLife website will be available early in the new year, but many functions will remain on the old BOCA and BA websites for some time. Next year you will start to receive "Australian BirdLife" as a new magazine to replace "Wingspan" and "The Bird Observer". Finally there has been great progress in merging the BA and BOCA branches throughout the country - it is fair to say that BirdLife has adopted the BOCA branch system enthusiastically and this can only be of benefit to those who travel as they will be able to access outings and information from an increased network of branches.

A couple of things for us to think about and maybe discuss at the **February meeting - and as we are limited in spaces you need to book with me if you are coming.**

Firstly I would like the Wagtails to move to a more democratic model (I have seen what happens to dictators in Libya!) with annual elections. For this to happen we need to have a slightly more formal membership list so we know who gets the vote!

Secondly we will almost certainly be asked in 2012 whether we wish to continue as an Affiliate of BirdLife or to become a Branch. There are pros and cons on both sides of course and I don't have enough details yet. Anyone who has renewed insurance recently will have noticed big increases in premiums as insurers seek to recover their losses from recent disasters. This applies to BirdLife's insurance as well and it is inevitable that if we remain as an Affiliate then we will be asked to pay more towards the insurance costs of BirdLife. This should not affect those who are BirdLife members, but will affect those who are not. On the other hand to become a Branch we will all need to become BirdLife members. BirdLife recognises that this may be a financial issue for some in affiliates who are used to paying lower fees, and is looking at introducing a cheaper class of membership that does not include getting the magazine. If we become a Branch then BirdLife members in the Werribee region will automatically become members of our group, which should increase our membership. We will also have more influence over the organisation - for example all Branches have been consulted regularly about the merger process, whereas Affiliates are not. And finally it is probable that Branches will get an annual grant from Head Office based on their membership.

All that remains is to wish you all a pleasant festive season and good birding in 2012!



December Outing to Point Cook Coastal Park



On Tuesday 6 December the Werribee Wagtails had their final outing for 2011. It was a beautiful, still, sunny morning as we met in the first carpark with views over RAAF Lake. A pair of Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoos flitted on and off the fence. A swamp harrier flew over the lake. After we had all assembled and scanned the lake for ducks, we set off for the beach recreation area. Walking from the carpark to the shore we sighted Silvereyes, Brown Quail and the medium sized raptor, the Brown Falcon.

After morning tea we drove back to view Spectacle Lake from the bird hide. Walking in from the carpark we disturbed a Black-tailed Native Hen. Accounts of previous visits to the hide are best not repeated. Today it was clean but one needed Cherie's stool to use the windows effectively. Outside large flocks of Straw-necked Ibis flew overhead. Shelducks, Grey Teal, Eurasian Coot dabbled and Black Swan landed. There were close-up views of shore birds - Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint. The common Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants were around. As were the Grebes. The observations here were great on a beautiful morning.

We returned to RAAF Lake and observed Masked Lapwing, Australian Pipit and Banded Stilts. During lunch the high pitched whistle "fee-ew" of a Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo in the Casuarinas, reminded us we were there for the birds as well as Andre's Tim Tams. We welcomed Denis O'Connor and his grandson to our end of the year revelry. Thank you for another great year of bird watching and an appreciation of the need for the conservation of birds. We look forward to 2012 to our new organisation Birdlife, and another great year of bird excursions.



Sincere thanks to Susan Myers for the Report and the photographs too... I need all the help I can get... Shirley

Thanks to Dave for the BirdList.

Brown Quail	Black-shouldered Kite	Pacific Gull	Willie Wagtail
Black Swan	Brown Falcon	Spotted Dove	Grey Fantail
Australian Shelduck	Dusky Moorhen	Crested Pigeon	Magpie-lark
Pacific Black Duck	Black-tailed Nativehen	Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	Little Raven
Grey Teal	Eurasian Coot	Superb Fairywren	Eurasian Skylark
Chestnut Teal	Black-winged Stilt	White-plumed Honeyeater	Australian Reed Warbler
Hardhead	Banded Stilt	Little Wattlebird	Silvereye
Musk Duck	Masked Lapwing	Red Wattlebird	Common Starling
Hoary-headed Grebe	Black-fronted Dotterel	New Holland Honeyeater	Common Blackbird
White-faced Heron	Red-necked Stint	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	House Sparrow
Little Pied Cormorant	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Striated Thornbill	Australian Pipit
Little Black Cormorant	Silver Gull	Australian Magpie	European Greenfinch
			European Goldfinch



Highlights by Nance M.

Melbourne Cup day is a Highlight for Werribee Wagtails!

As usual we set out from Werribee at 8-30am for the Western Treatment Plant :Shirley, Doug and Peter O'Connell had checked out the area prior to our visit.

Peter lead the way with the Council Bus driven by John Cunningham following close behind.

The Plant is an area of lagoons, ponds, roadways and tracks and roads and many locked gates. Although I had the privilege of driving with Peter, in the front seat I did not have to open a gate! Maybe it is something to do with age, thank you Peter!

It was not long before our first delight, a BROLGA, many more birds followed,81 species in all.

Our Leaders had certainly done their homework - turning, crisscrossing the area as each new lagoon or lake had special species for us to identify. In a lovely reedy pond there were both Ballion's and Spotted Crakes paddling around with Reed Warblers and Little Grass birds calling. Although there were 25 pairs of eyes looking down on them they were not distressed. On the other side of the road there were Glossy Ibis, Spoonbills and more. Terns flying, wheeling and skimming across the water. Raptors, Ravens, Magpies and Magpie Larks were there looking on. Then there were the tiny Shorebirds- sandpipers, stints, Red-necked Avocets and Banded Stilts, and more.

Time went too quickly, morning tea was another delight, Ceri had made a large batch of Pumpkin Scones for us all to share, thanks Ceri, and they were delicious.

Once more we were on the move- a pair of Oystercatchers was seen and all the species of Cormorants were on the pier. Somewhere along the way a large bird took to the air, another Brolga, probably a male by the brilliant red band on the head, it was certainly another highlight for me.

An interesting note to close on, one Black-shouldered Kite, immature by the buff feathers above the chest alighted on a bare tree beside us.

A great day with a great group of friends. *Thanks Nance for your additional notes.. You inspire us all!*

One of Doug's photos taken from Point Wilson Road on our way to the WTP

