



Werribee Wag-Tales

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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

Liz organised a great outing for March. We went to a couple of new places around the Geelong, known so well to Liz. Our 2nd stop was at the property of one of her schoolfriends and was a truly lovely visit. First of all though we stopped at Fyansford Common. It proved not to be a great start, we saw more dogs than birds and there were a few long faces!!!! Surprising really because the Common skirted the Barwon River and there was good tree coverage. But there was a highlight, 2 red browed finches sitting side by side preening each other in a leisurely fashion giving us plenty of time to observe and photograph

After lunch we drove to the property of Jane Loughnan in Connewarre off the Barwon Heads Rd. Jane gave us free run of the property which had the Connewarre State Game reserve on the perimeter. We were accompanied on our walk by 2 black Labradors who can never have too many pats and are quick to see an opportunity to get into places not normally allowed. They succeeded in this, sneaking through the fence into the Reserve until finally Jane came to take them home where they belonged. After we had been inspected by the resident goat, Crinkle, we could get down to birding and there were plenty to see. Egrets, ibis, swans, pelicans, spoonbills, raptors and many more. The highlight here was a beautiful White Bellied Sea Eagle glinting in the sun as it soared above us. The elusive Little Grassbird even showed itself, there's a first for quite a number of us!!! We had lunch here sitting on Jane's verandah feeling very lucky to have had such an exclusive viewing.

As an aside It is interesting to read in the Parks pamphlet that duck shooting is allowed in 'designated' areas of the Reserve. It states that the Gun Club undertakes conservation works outside of the hunting season as if this makes it ok!!!!

Liz handed out an interesting article about feathers which she got from the internet Anyone who doesn't have it can Google All about Birds :: Feather structure

Another great day for the Wagtails, Thanks Liz!



Black Swan
Australian Shelduck
Australian Wood Duck
Australian Shoveler
Chestnut Teal
Hoary Headed Grebe
Crested Pigeon
Little Pied Cormorant
Great Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant
Australian Pelican
Eastern Great Egret
Cattle Egret
White-faced Heron

Australian white Ibis
Royal spoonbill
Yellow-billed spoonbill
Straw-necked Ibis
White-bellied Sea Eagle
Whistling kite
Brown Goshawk
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Brown Falcon
Peregrine Falcon
Purple Swamphen
Dusky Moorhen
Eurasian Coot
Black-winged stilt
Red-kneed dotterel

Masked Lapwing
Silver Gull
Galah
Sulphur-crested cockatoo
Rainbow lorikeet
Musk Lorikeet
Red-rumped parrot
Superb Fairywren
White-browed Scrubwren
Striated Fieldwren
Yellow-rumped thornbill
Brown thornbill
White plumed honeyeater
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Red Wattle bird

New Holland Honeyeater
Grey Shrike Thrush
Grey Butcherbird
Australian Magpie
Pied Currawong
Willie Wagtail
Little Raven
Magpie-lark
Scarlet Robin
Little Grassbird
Welcome Swallow
Tree martin
Common Starling
Common Myna
Red-browed Finch



On Thursday 8th March a number of Wagtails and friends from Melton Environment Group and Pinkerton Landcare Group went for a night walk at Eynesbury.

After walking to a wetland in the forest the group set up camp chairs beside the water to see what wildlife may arrive. As the skies darkened several microbats could be seen darting about in the torchlight above the water, hunting the many insects that could also be seen in the torchlight. Eyes shining in the light among the surrounding trees also hinted at the presence of nocturnal wildlife.

The group hoped to see nightjars as these often hawk for insect on the surface of the water, but unfortunately no nightjars were seen or heard.

What we did hear were many owls. Southern Boobooks & Barn Owls called frequently from the darkness. Several owls of both species were seen, both beside the wetland & during the subsequent spotlight walk through the forest. The distinctive 'boobook' call of the Boobooks was easily distinguished from the harsh shriek of the Barn Owls. One Barn Owl we disturbed seemed to be following us through the forest. As we walked it maintained its shrieking intermittently & circling overhead; its white wings contrasting against the dark sky each time it was momentarily caught in the spotlights.

A light drizzling did little to dampen enthusiasm but prompted a chorus of Spotted Marsh Frogs, with their single clicking calls from the water's edge. Several of these gave a 'rapid fire' or 'castanet' call. Frog literature describes Spotted Marsh Frogs with this call as characteristic of populations north of the Great Dividing Range. However local Frog Census recordings show that these frogs are common in the Melton area, as once again demonstrated by these observations in Eynesbury Forest. The group found one lone Pobblebonk Frog on the forest floor. Its continued existence may not have been guaranteed with the numbers of owls & frogmouths seen & heard in the forest.

Eyespots shining from the trees also alerted the group to numerous Brush-tailed Possums. A highlight of the evening was the sightings of two Tawny Frogmouths, both beside the main road. One of these was in a tree beside the Discovery Centre, perhaps hunting the insects attracted by the lights.

The night walk was a great success. Eynesbury Forest at night is a different world, with its own special wildlife.

Doug's Blog. As you know Doug enjoys taking photos and is now able to share them with you all via his Blog. Some are on his 'mailing-list' if you are not you can log on at www.abundanceofbirds.blogspot.com With Peter O' and Denis O' assistance Doug has many photos, with the computer assistance of his daughter, Chris, he now has a Blog which he adds to about every couple weeks. This week is Silver Gulls.

Anita Dave reported that Anita had a fall and injured her shoulder, Premi just phoned with more detail., there is a break and Anita will be operated on at St Vincent's on Friday .
We all wish her well .



An Autumn Day's Outing to the Gisborne Area

Australian Wood Duck
Crested pigeon
Common Bronze-wing
Black -shouldered kite
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Galah
Sulphur-crested cockatoo
Crimson Rosella
Kookaburra
White-throated Treecreeper
Superb Fairywren
White-browed Scrubwren
Striated thornbill
Yellow Thornbill
Yellow-rumped thornbill
Brown thornbill
White-eared Honeyeater
White plumed honeyeater
Red Wattle bird
New Holland Honeyeater
Varied Sittella
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Golden whistler
Australian Magpie
Pied Currawong
Grey currawong
Grey fantail
Little Raven
Magpie-lark
White-winged Chough
Scarlet Robin
Eastern yellow robin
Common Blackbird
Common Starling
Red-browed Finch

Werribee Wagtails members numbered 18 when we met at Gisborne for our April outing. We were joined by visitors Ingrid and Mark on a warm and sunny morning. We set off in convoy for Barringo Reserve now part of Macedon Regional Park with Anita and Premi as our leaders for the day.

As we parked at Barringo we identified scarlet robins foraging on the ground. Grey fantails and thornbills were also in the forest. We walked along the creek sharing comments about how pleasant it was to be outdoors in the forest environment. Sightings over morning tea included crimson rosellas.

Driving to our next stop Treetops Camp and Activity Centre we had good views of Australia's largest raptor. A pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles were soaring low enough to appreciate their size and majesty. At the Camp, Anita led us on a perimeter walk where we observed Striated, Yellow, Yellow-rumped and Brown Thornbills. Two Wood Ducks flew off a dam, a Black-shouldered Kite was over an open paddock and Varied Sittella and Golden Whistler were active in foliage. A Common Bronzewing allowed us a view of the white line around its eye and the green, blue and red patches on its wing.

We ate lunch discussing the absence of Andre's Tim Tam's. The caretaker came to guide us through the bush but the Australian Magpies appeared to be the only birds not kipping. Then we had the pleasure of observing 4 Yellow Robins active in a thicket. Our last birds for the day. A count of 32 species. Thanks to Anita and Premi for an enjoyable day.

