



Werribee Wag-Tales



Geelong area day trip

The Wagtails group enjoyed a great day out to the Geelong area on the first Tuesday in March. The weather was sunny and calm, the habitats were picturesque and the company was excellent. Twenty four birders met at our first stop, the Fyansford Common.

Although the walking track was very busy, lots of birds were in the flowering eucalypts, swamp and along the river. We saw White-faced Herons, a flock of Australian White Ibis, Willie Wagtails, Red-browed Finches, Grey Butcherbirds, Grey Fantails, Brown and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, White-plumed Honeyeaters and Silvereyes to name a few. At the bridge, our turn-around point, there was excitement at the spotting of an Australian Ringneck. After much confab it was identified as a 'Twenty-eight Parrot' (see Nov '14 Wag Tails) an escapee from an aviary, and not able to be counted in the day's record. A couple of Rainbow Lorikeets cleaning out a hollow amused us with their antics. We heard Pied Currawongs in the River Redgums.

After morning tea we drove to Liz's friends' property on Lake Connewarre. Lake Connewarre is a large shallow estuarine lagoon on the lower part of the Barwon River. The lake provided some excellent birding this visit. Chestnut Teals and Shelducks, Pelicans, Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Purple Swamphens, a lot of White-faced Herons, Masked Lapwings, Black-winged Stilts and migratory waders-Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers and Common Greenshank.

In the Lignum a Striated Fieldwren with a streaked chest stared at us for some time. Also a Golden-headed Cisticola was seen. We finished our lake walk observing 3 Glossy Ibis and Red-kneed Dotterels. As we ate lunch, Shirley pointed out we were under a mature Coastal Moonah Tree with Brown Thornbills twittering above and Red-necked Avocets to view in front. Birders delight!

After lunch, Liz had more in store for us as we pulled into Breamlea Flora and Fauna Reserve, Pelicans came into land and a Great Egret took flight- all with beautiful reflections for the photographers. We walked over the sand dune to view the Hooded Plovers that inhabit sandy coastal beaches.

These birds are classed as vulnerable as they lay their eggs on the ground, making them easily destroyed by humans and animals. We enjoyed good views of 3 adults that came along the shore quite close to where we

were standing. They dashed around near the water's edge pecking, bobbing and darting as the waves receded. Through binoculars we could see three chicks and another adult further up the beach.

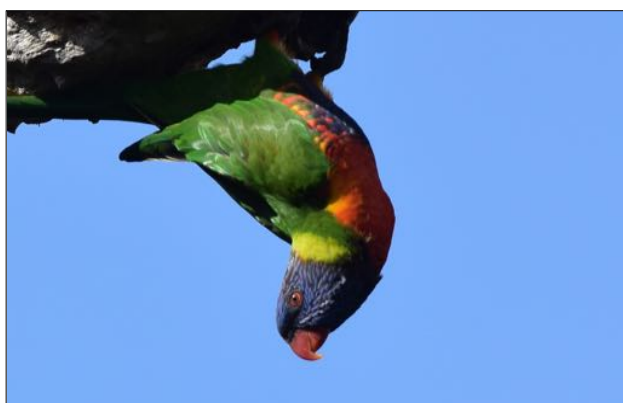
We adjourned to the Bancoora Surf Club for the bird call after spotting Singing Honey-eaters and a Crested Tern. The birdcount was 75 species. Jenny Pratt won the chocolates.

Many thanks to Liz for organising a great day and to her friends Jane & Michael Loughnan for inviting us onto their property.

Sue Myers

Count for the Trip: 75 Birds.

Winner: Jenny Pratt



Rainbow Lorikeet



Welcome Swallows

Photos: Dorothy Jenkins

BIRDLIST GEELONG MARCH 3 2015

Black Swan	Red-necked Avocet	Spotted Pardalote
Australian Shelduck	Masked Lapwing	Striated Fieldwren
Pink-eared Duck	Red-kneed Dotterel	White-browed Scrubwren
Maned Duck	Hooded Dotterel	Brown Thornbill
Grey Teal	Black-fronted Dotterel	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Chestnut Teal	Marsh Sandpiper	Grey Butcherbird
Hoary-headed Grebe	Common Greenshank	Australian Magpie
Australian White Ibis	Curlew Sandpiper	Pied Currawong
Straw-necked Ibis	Silver Gull	Willie Wagtail
Glossy Ibis	Greater Crested Tern	Grey Fantail
Royal Spoonbill	Rock Dove	Magpie-lark
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Spotted Dove	Little Raven
Great Egret	Crested Pigeon	Welcome Swallow
White-faced Heron	Brown Falcon	Fairy Martin
Australian Pelican	Galah	Tree Martin
Little Pied Cormorant	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Australian Reed Warbler
Great Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet	Little Grassbird
Australasian Darter	Red-rumped Parrot	Golden-headed Cisticola
Swamp Harrier	Superb Fairywren	Silvereye
Whistling Kite	New Holland Honeyeater	Common Myna
Purple Swamphen	White-fronted Chat	Common Starling
Dusky Moorhen	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Common Blackbird
Eurasian Coot	Red Wattlebird	House Sparrow
White-headed Stilt	Singing Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Banded Stilt	White-plumed Honeyeater	European Greenfinch

HOODED PLOVER, OR HOODED DOTTEREL

The Hooded Plover or Hooded Dotterel is a shore bird native to southern Australia. Hooded Plovers inhabit sandy ocean beaches as they feed on tiny invertebrates along the tide line. The nest is a shallow scraping in the sand above the high water line. This is sometimes lined with seaweed or sticks. One to three eggs are laid between August and March. This exposure to interference from humans, dogs, Silver Gulls, foxes and Ravens has led to a decline in their numbers.

Last November they were listed as a threatened species, classed as vulnerable. A number of projects are underway to protect

the nest sites. On Phillip Island their numbers have doubled from 22 to 44 but it took 12 years! They are a delight to watch with their antics along the shore.



Words and Photo: Sue Myers
Lo Res

NEXT OUTING WESTERN TREATMENT PLANT

On Tuesday April 7th our regular monthly outing will be to the Western Treatment Plant at Werribee. It will be a car convoy and numbers will be limited by the number of drivers with permits who will be able to come. If you want to come please let Dave Torr know - and also let him know if you have a permit and will be prepared to drive.

FROM OUR BROKEN HILL CORRESPONDENT

The weather has finally got very hot. It is too hot to go out into the desert.

So I have started to visit the air conditioned art galleries and museums. I fell asleep at Pro Hart gallery watching the hour and a half movie of his life. It was very interesting but I was comfortable and my sleep had been broken with the heat lately.

We drove home to Point Cook together in the Colorado before Christmas. We went to the Xmas Eve and New Year's Eve Ball, and the Altona Saturday and Sunday dances.

Although we had had a green Springtime around Broken Hill it was very dry by Christmas. The Darling River had ceased to flow and the lakes at Menindee were dry. The local mayor and politicians were having a great contest with stupid ideas, like water trains, pipes etc. All people coming to Broken Hill were commanded to bring a bucket of water.

After Surong came back to Broken Hill, I was getting calls to bring a boat and should she go to higher ground. They had over 100 mm rain around the area over four days.

When I drove back three weeks later there were 50 km patches of tall green grass right up to either side of the black road. And then patches of bare brown earth either side of the dusty road. Some patches had been missed by the rain.

We drove out to MUTAWINTJI about 130 km north of here, last week. The grass was long and green and the cattle looked well. We saw 33 bird species for the trip. The dirt road had just dried out. It was badly cut-up because people had driven on it. The marks showed slipping and sliding and bogging. Wild flowers and trees are flowering and birds were nesting. But, a week of hot weather will finish it.

They could not get any one to teach for the Debutant Ball and Surong volunteered me. I have applied for Working with Children Certificate. I have got \$20,000,000 insurance, organised my plan, am ready for the second night. They did very well the first night. None had seen Ballroom Dancing. After looking like two legged chairs and out of balance washing machines, they are really starting to swing.

James Gunn



White-fronted Honeyeater



Black-faced Cuckooshrike

Photos: Surong Gunn

A WALK AROUND KOROROIT CREEK WITH THE COUNCIL RANGER.

Hobson's Bay City Council runs occasional bird walks and the last one was in late Feb along Kororoit Creek. It was an unusual time - 1pm on a weekday - so only about 10 people turned up - including a few of the "Wagtails". Surprisingly there were very few waders at the mouth of the creek despite it being low tide - the only

species we saw there was the Common Greenshank. We walked up the creek to the ford, where we found our only other wader for the day - the Common Sandpiper. Despite the name this is not a common bird locally but this is usually a reliable spot in summer. We ended the day with close to 40 species of birds seen.



*Would you let these 'experts' near your spotting scope?
"I'm sure it goes on the other way round!"*

Words and Photo: Dave Torr

MEMBERS AMBLINGS AND ANECDOTES

Saturday morning at Kororoit Creek

Following on from the morning that Wyndham City Council organised at Werribee South, I decided we should experiment with a series of short Saturday morning walks aimed primarily at beginners. The first was held on Mar 7th 15 people - 8 "regulars" and 7 new faces met at Maddox Rd by the fishing huts. The tide was high but falling so we started with a walk up towards the ford. The mangroves are growing well and make viewing the creek quite hard in the early stages, but as they cleared we started to see good numbers of birds, including excellent views of a Common Sandpiper. The next highlight was an Australian Hobby hunting (unsuccessfully) Common Starlings over the old racecourse near the ford.

Returning to our starting point we found the tide had dropped and there were good numbers of waders (nearly all Red-necked Stints with a few Common Greenshanks) along with other water birds. Final highlight was a lone Artic/Parasitic Jaeger/Skua (it has been known by all combinations of those names) chasing a Silver Gull

We did not do a bird call but probably saw over 40 species. Afterwards a few hardy regulars went to Newport Lake which was very quiet.

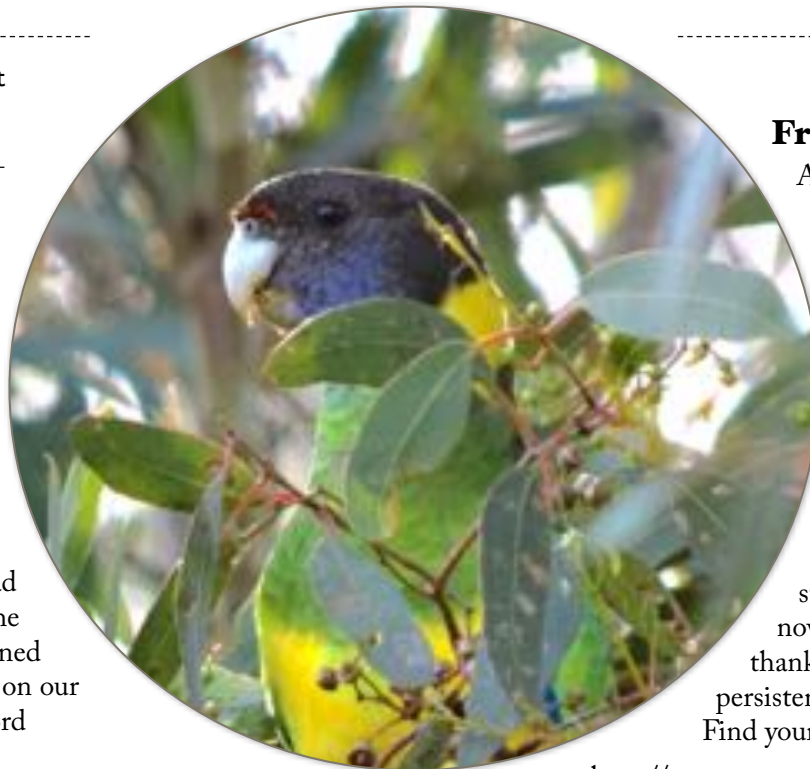
Feel free to join us on Easter Saturday at 9am at the West end of Watton St for a walk down Werribee River - bring a chair and morning tea for a chat afterwards if you wish.

Dave Torr

Twenty Eight Parrot

Photo: Dave Torr

Lo Res



Unusual Vistor

The Twenty-eight Parrot is a subspecies of the Australian Ringneck. This delightful greenish bird with a black head and a red patch on the front of the head turned up among the leaves on our walk around Fyansford Common.

No doubt an escapee, as the parrot is a Western Australian subspecies of the Australian Ringneck.

From the editor

After all our work on getting a hi-res file uploaded for those who would like the extra detail, we have finally found a home for the files to be stored.

BirdLife Australia have a policy of only small file size storage, so we have now located the files, thanks to Dave Torr's persistence, at a new location. Find your hi-res file here.

<http://wmcn.org.au/birds#our-history-and-newsletters>

Beginners Outing Dates

Sat Apr 4 0900-1100. Meet at the end of Watton St (<https://goo.gl/maps/vZdDT>) for a walk along Werribee River.

Sat May 2 0900-1100. Meet at the car park for Werribee River Park (<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/werribee-regional-park> - New Farm Rd is shown on <https://goo.gl/maps/p1800> but the actual park entrance is not shown) for a walk down to the woodland by the river. No toilets.

CONTACTS, WEB ADDRESS AND PLACES TO VISIT ON LINE

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Newsletter photos Online

Interested in seeing some of the newsletter photos at a larger size?

I've uploaded some to a Flickr photosharing site.

You will also be able to add some of your photos there. Contact me for how-to details.

Check here.

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/
126759107@N08/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/126759107@N08/)

As well the newsletter is available on our website at a higher resolution so you can view the images on a large computer/media screen at their best.

Go to our website at here.

[http://wmcn.org.au/birds#our-history-
and-newsletters](http://wmcn.org.au/birds#our-history-and-newsletters)

OUR OCTOBER CAMP AT CASTLEMAINE SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER TO WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER

Castlemaine is a small city offering a reasonable amount of infrastructure, and is the location for our 2015 camp. The dates for the camp this year will be:

Sunday 4 October and conclude on Wednesday 7 October [3 nights].

It is proposed to base the camp at the Big 4 Castlemaine Gardens Holiday Park, 1 Doran Avenue, Castlemaine, website: <http://www.big4.com.au/caravan-parks/vic/goldfields/castlemaine-gardens-holiday-park> Telephone Terri 5472 1125 or Free call 1300 472 762. However, you are free to seek your own accommodation.

When booking you will need to state you are with the Werribee Wagtails. Booking via internet is not possible due to the gold and silver cabins being held for us. The caravan park is ideally situated next to the botanic gardens and the public pool.

If you would like to attend the camp, please arrange your own accommodation, then let Iian Denham know, via email: iidenham@yahoo.com, that you will be attending, and how many in your party, so he can keep track of numbers.

