

WERRIBEE BIRDWATCHERS

Newsletter Number 7, 1997



September 2nd. The weather on Tuesday 2nd was delightful, as the predicted. It rained very heavily during the night but the day dawned in beautiful sunshine, partial eclipse and all. The Ford area is now well maintained but unfortunately the birds do not know about it. There were many old trees with great hollows suitable for any of the parrot family to nest. Lots of tress where there should be Eastern Yellow Robin and tree creepers but alas they too do not know of the area.. There are deep scars in the banks where would be 'dare-devils' try out their 4wd., and there were some cartridges about too, both are not conducive to bird life. We did see 22 different varieties and one was new to me, so that was a bonus.

September 16th. Slide night with Rohan Bugg at Marion Blood's home at 209 Watton St., Opposite Chirnside Park. Please phone me a.s.a.p. if you are coming. 9741-2997. There will be a *gold coin* collection to defray costs.

October 3rd. Friday Jells' Park, Community Bus. There are some vacancies so 'phone me if you wish to come. According to notes available, the 127 hectares of Jells Park opened in 1976, was named after Joseph Jell who grazed his cattle there from 1849 - 1886. Bird watching is popular when the Japanese snipe visit the lake in September. The lake has a hide.

We will meet in the car park near Centenary Hall at 8-15 am for a 8-30 departure. Bring your own lunch and thermos. Remember there is very little room in the bus so keep baggage to the minimum. We expect to be back in Werribee by 4-30pm.. I will not forecast the weather this time !

November 14th. Community Bus, it is suggested we go to Anakie Gorge or Steiglitz, both in the Brisbane Ranges. Please make your comments so a democratic decision can be made.

December 2nd. Point Lillias Revisited or the mouth of the Werribee River , or back to the Werribee Mansion to see if those seen nesting have managed to raise their young , which would you prefer? Now there are more members of BOCA in Werribee and many are not able to come out during the weekend, maybe we should have a Saturday or Sunday outing?

If you see anything of special interest about jot it down and we can tell others. The reed warblers are back near Bungies Hole, there is often a darter there too.

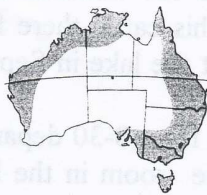
Birds seen on the Werribee River, Cobbledick's Ford area.. September 2nd.

Spotted Turtle-dove
Galah
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Eastern Rosella
Red rumped parrot
Corella
Tree martin
Superb fairy wren
White-plumed honeyeater
White-browed Scrubwren
Fan-tailed Cuckoo (H)

Magpie Lark
Willy wagtail
Magpie
Dusky Swallow
Raven
House sparrow
Re-brow finch
Welcome swallow
Blackbird
Starling
Common Mynah

'H' means heard by at least two
but not seen.

LATHAM'S SNIPE *Gallinago hardwickii* 28-31 cm

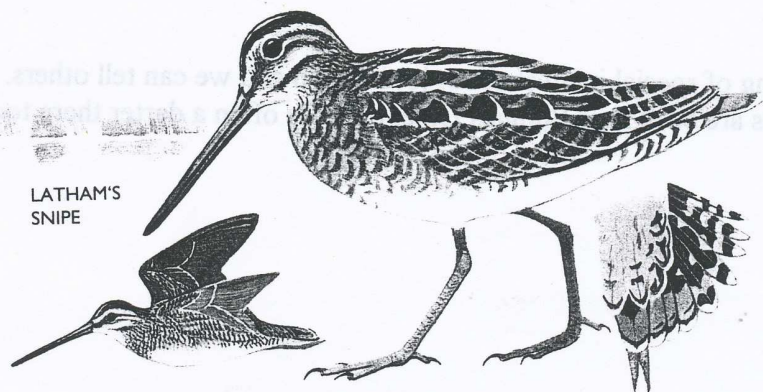


Other names: Australian or Japanese Snipe.

The only true snipe known to regularly visit se. Aust.: note the long (7.5 cm), straight bill and large dark eye, set high in head. Plumage intricately marked rufous, black and buff, with bold brown stripes and cream streaks; *flanks barred*; *belly and underparts whitish*. Small parties, occasional large companies. Shy: forages on marshy ground, ramming bill vertically into mud with rapid sewing-machine action. Disturbed, freezes, or bursts up in fast, zigzagging flight, alarm-call flushing others; may dash wildly into sky, or quickly drop to

cover. Note the long bill, conspicuous white belly. **Similar species:** safely identified from Swinhoe's and Pin-tailed Snipe only in hand: has 18 or fewer tail-feathers; Swinhoe's has 20+; Pin-tailed 24-28. Narrow outer 'pin' feathers on sides of tail (specialised sound-producing feathers erected in diving display flights over breeding territories) are most distinctly barred. Length of extended wing: Latham's: 15.2 cm and over; Swinhoe's under 15 cm; Pin-tailed c.13.2 cm. See also Painted Snipe. Note that godwits and other long-billed sandpipers are incorrectly called 'snipe'. **Voice:** when flushed: quick, explosive 'chak!' or 'zhak!', like sudden tearing of sandpaper. **Habitat:** soft wet ground or shallow water with tussocks and other green or dead growth; wet parts of paddocks; seepage below dams; irrigated areas; scrub or open woodland from sea-level to alpine bogs over 2000 m; 'samphire' on saltmarshes; mangrove fringes.

Range and Status: breeds Japan (Hokkaido and Honshu); Kurile Is., and Sakhalin I. Regular summer migrant to Aust. arriving in ne. Q July-Aug. Stronghold is from se. Q, through NSW, Vic., Tas. and s. SA, Kangaroo I., w. casually to Eyre Pen. and Ooldea; numbers peak in this region Dec.-Jan. Mostly coastal and subcoastal, but substantial inland movement through Murray-Darling region. Some overwinter. Uncommon: locally common. Small numbers to Darwin (NT) and coastal WA, s. to s. WA. Generally uncommon; migratory. Also PNG, Lord Howe I., NZ. Vagrant Macquarie I.



LATHAM'S
SNIPE