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## WERRIBEE WAGTAILS BANOCKBURN FEBRUARY 2011

12 Wagtails boarded the bus to Bannockburn. There had been danger of only 11 as Brian Thompson was almost hijacked. Brian initially boarded the bus with the sign "Country Women's Association". We retrieved a red faced Brain and then Andre announced that there would be no Tim Tams. Something to do with his Grandchildren. However within an hour of leaving Werribee we marvelled at and congratulated our leader Peter Gibbons by arranging to have us all seated in an air conditioned Bannockburn cafe sipping Lattes and ice creams. Geoff Forrest was dubious about his mouldy looking ice-cream but undeterred he ploughed ahead and decided it was only the mint flavour. To my knowledge at this stage we had seen one bird - a White-faced Heron.

Kevin introduced us to an unusual solution of reversing from a difficult park. Don't reverse at all. Continue driving straight ahead over the footpath and onto the main road.

The first stop was the Bannockburn sewerage ponds where we were met by Barwon Water Manager Martin Wesols. Martin explained that the 3000 people of Bannockburn each produced 200 litre of "effluent" a day. The natural processes of sedimentation, biological actions and sunlight disinfection resulted in Class C water. This means it was suitable to irrigate paddocks where livestock grazed, and for certain human food crops that required cooking or processing. On the ponds we saw Shelduck, Chestnut Teal and Pacific Black. We walked for a while in the woodlands but no birds were seen in a temperature of 35 Celsius and an unrelenting ferocious north wind.

The second stop, Bannockburn Reserve. At a water hole protected by the winds we were charmed by the calls and jizz of Restless Flycatchers, Grey Fantails, New Holland and White-throated Honeyeaters, plucky male Fairy-wrens and Willie Wagtails. According to Simpson the familiar misnamed Willie Wagtail is a Fantail - not a Wagtail. The anatomical mechanism that allows a bird to "call" is interesting. The Syrinx (Greek for pan pipes) is the name given to the vocal organ of a bird. The syrinx is located at the bifurcation of the trachea into both lungs and because of this some birds can produce more than one sound at a time.

Peter Gibbons pointed out the Yellow eucalyptus in the Bannockburn Reserve. Eucalyptus is a word from the Greek "eu" meaning "well", and "Calytus" meaning "covered" or "cap". i.e. before it opens the flower is concealed and protected by the cap. We learnt the Pat Forrest adage 'By their seed shall you know them'.

We thought lunch was to be had in the Batesford picnic grounds adjacent to the Moorabool River. However the grounds turned out to be the car park of the Batesford Dog Rocks Hotel. Undeterred Peter Gibbons charmed the barmaid and we were able to sit in the shade adjacent to the river. One advantage was the proximity of the bottle shop where we purchased cold stubbies to have with our lunches.

The daily bird count was 37 and correctly guessed by Mr. Dave Torr.

We wish Nancy Marriott all the best for a safe and happy return to home. And we hope Kevin enjoys his retirement and subsequent caravan trip around Australia.

Ceri Parry explained that March 1st is the feast day of St David - the Patron Saint of Wales.

Thanks to the day's organizer the inimitable Peter Gibbons who - despite the foul weather - led us on an instructive and memorable day.

|                          |                          |                           |                     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Masked Lapwing           | Chestnut Teal            | Red-rumped parrot         | Rufous whistler     |
| Long-billed Corella      | Pacific Black Duck       | Shining Bronze Cuckoo     | Grey Shrike Thrush  |
| Sulphur-crested cockatoo | Crested pigeon           | Superb Fairywren          | Australian Magpie   |
| Eastern rosella          | Common Bronze-wing       | White-browed Scrubwren    | Grey fantail        |
| Red-rumped parrot        | White Faced Heron        | Yellow-rumped thornbill   | Willie Wagtail      |
| Shining Bronze Cuckoo    | Australian Wood Duck     | White plumed honeyeater   | Little Raven        |
| Superb Fairywren         | Australian white Ibis    | Noisy miner               | Restless Flycatcher |
| White-browed Scrubwren   | Black-fronted dotterel   | Red Wattle bird           | Magpie-lark         |
| Yellow-rumped thornbill  | Masked Lapwing           | New Holland Honeyeater    | White-winged Chough |
| Australian Shelduck      | Long-billed Corella      | Brown-headed honeyeater   | Welcome Swallow     |
| Australian Wood Duck     | Sulphur-crested cockatoo | White-naped honeyeater    | Tree Martin         |
|                          | Eastern rosella          | Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike | Red-browed Finch    |



# Western Treatment at the end of a wet summer..

What a day.... Who was in charge of the weather?

Iian had organised the group book with WTP and made sure we all had enough Drivers with Permits and had everyone in a car. Bev Ashford did a sterling job opening the gates. Ceri made sure we all knew it was St David's Day and provided Welsh Cakes.

The bird list started well with Gannets in the Bay, waders on the rocks and aeroplanes flying to Avalon for the Air Show.

But all the elements were against us, high tide, strong cold wind, grey sky and grey water. Still we soldiered on, the main waders were Red-necked stints who were hunkered down. By the time we got to the Hide for morning tea we had added terns, spoonbills and herons to the list. The Little Grassbird was making its mournful call, White-browed Scrubwren kept low in the undergrowth.

After lunch we came to 85 west and with the help of our telescopes we were able to see more Great Knots and Godwits.

We ended the day with a quick trip to the Western Lagoon, a list of 53 birds and Brian shared the chocolates with us.



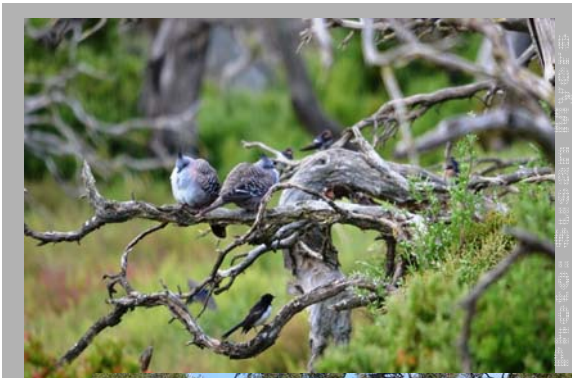
Pelican Photo: Peter O'Connell

- Australasian Gannet
- Little Pied Cormorant
- Great Cormorant
- Little Black Cormorant
- Pied Cormorant
- Australian Pelican
- White Faced Heron
- Australian white Ibis
- Royal spoonbill
- Yellow-billed spoonbill

- Musk Duck
- Black Swan
- Australasian Shoveler
- Chestnut Teal
- Pacific Black Duck
- Hardhead
- Blue -billed duck
- Australasian Grebe
- Hoary-headed Grebe
- Crested pigeon

- Straw-necked Ibis
- Whistling kite
- Swamp Harrier
- Brown Falcon
- Purple Swamphen
- Australian Pied Oyster-catcher
- Masked Lapwing
- Bar-tailed Godwit
- Great Knot
- Red-necked Stint

- Curlew Sandpiper
- Little Tern
- Whiskered Tern
- Crested Tern
- Pacific Gull
- Silver Gull
- Sulphur-crested cockatoo
- Superb Fairywren
- White-browed Scrubwren
- Yellow-rumped thornbill



- White-fronted Chat
- Australian Magpie
- Willie Wagtail
- Little Raven
- Magpie-lark
- Golden-headed Cisticola
- Australian Reed-Warbler
- Little Grassbird
- Welcome Swallow

- Fairy Martin
- Tree martin
- Common Myna
- House Sparrow
- Australasian Pipit





## The Wagtails April Outing

organised by Anita and Premi



After welcoming visitor Jim's cousin Gilbert and new member Fiona Brooks we set off in a convoy towards Bacchus Marsh. How many birds would we see who would guess the right number?

The recent rain had left much water on the sides of the road near Bacchus Marsh so we were able to see some Australian Grebe with young, Dusky Moorhens and a couple of Pacific Black Duck. We made our way through Bacchus Marsh and out on the Gisborne road turning into Carrols Lane near Bullengarook to enter Lerderderg State /Wombat State Forests.

After a cup of coffee, in delightful autumn weather the group went walking through the majestic trees, little birds could be heard calling and soon the identification of each was under way. Iian had a most interesting program on his iPod that helped with the identification of the bird calls. The Scarlet Robin, the Tree Creeper, the many honeyeaters, the distinctive call of the Yellowtail cockatoo added to the delights of the morning.

As we made our way back we called in to Merrimu, it was great to see so much water there and of course we were able to add waterbirds to list, a darter with its wings out to dry, a few cormorant and others.

We continued south and saw a Wedge-tailed Eagle gliding on the thermals as we turned into the Lerderderg Gorge. The very heavy summer rains had obviously taken their toll there rocks and tree stumps were all about. Most of the members went for a walk up into the gorge and came back with an impressive list of sightings. It was now time to do the bird count, we had seen 53 different species in all, many were new birds to some of our members.

We expressed our thanks to Anita and Premi for organising such an excellent day, we also appreciate those who drove us to the various places,. We certainly all enjoyed a lovely day in ideal conditions, just enough sun, no-wind, what a difference that makes to birdwatching, an absolute delight. .

Australian Wood Duck  
Pacific Black Duck  
Australasian Grebe  
Crested pigeon  
Australasian Darter  
Little Pied Cormorant  
Little Black Cormorant  
Pied Cormorant  
White Faced Heron  
Black -shouldered kite  
Wedge-tailed Eagle  
Brown Falcon  
Dusky Moorhen

Eurasian Coot  
Masked Lapwing  
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo  
Galah  
Sulphur-crested cockatoo  
Crimson Rosella  
Red-rumped parrot  
Kookaburra  
White-throated Treecreeper  
Superb Fairywren  
Striated thornbill  
Buff-rumped Thornbill  
Brown thornbill

Striated Pardalote  
Yellow-faced Honeyeater  
White-eared Honeyeater  
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater  
White plumed honeyeater  
Red Wattle bird  
New Holland Honeyeater  
Brown-headed honeyeater  
White-naped honeyeater  
Golden whistler  
Rufous whistler  
Grey Shrike Thrush  
Australian Magpie  
Pied Currawong

Grey fantail  
Willie Wagtail  
Little Raven  
Leaden Flycatcher  
Magpie-lark  
Scarlet Robin  
Silvereye  
Welcome Swallow  
Common Blackbird  
Common Starling  
Common Myna  
House Sparrow  
European Goldfinch



|         |            |  |
|---------|------------|--|
| May 3   | Tue<br>VIC | <b>Activity.</b> Altona Area. 8:30am. West end of Watton St, Werribee. (Opposite Salvation Army) Melways 205H9.  |
| May 5   | Sun<br>VIC | <b>Survey.</b> Western Woodlands. 9:15am. Pinkerton Forest is on Mt. Cottrell Rd (Melways Page 7 near the right side about 1/3rd the way up or Map 221 on newer Melways), which runs between Greig's Rd and Boundary Rd. From Greig's Rd there is a group of 2-3 houses on the right after about 2km – entrance to the forest is IMMEDIATELY after these. If approaching from the south (Boundary Rd) Pinkerton Forest is IMMEDIATELY before the 1st house on the left. Pinkerton and Bush's Paddock in the morning, then Eynesbury Forest in afternoon. No toilets in the morning!. |
| June 7  | Tue<br>VIC | <b>Activity.</b> Werribee Linear Park. 8:30am. West end of Watton St, Werribee. (Opposite Salvation Army) Melways 205H9.   |
| June 19 | Sun<br>VIC | <b>Bird Count.</b> Greenwich Bay and Kororoit Ck. 10:00am. Gatehouse, Newport Power Stn, Strand, Newport (Mel 56C4). Joint activity with Friends of Greenwich Bay. Survey at Greenwich Bay, then general birding at Kororoit Creek.  |

**5 minute In-depth interview with W W member Iian Denham**

*Age 56 years*

What first attracted you to bird watching?

*My daughter*

*Favourite Birding Spot*

*Anywhere in northern Victoria*

*Favourite Bird*

*Black cockatoo*

*Number of years looking at birds*

*8 years*

*Number of Species seen*

*503*

*Rarest bird seen*

*Stilt Sandpiper*

*Bird on top of the "to be seen wish list"*

*Orange-bellied Parrot*

*What would you like to see changed?*

*I would like to see more documentaries and birding information on Television and in the media.*



**Dave's Trip to India**  
**Brief report...**



India was pretty good - lots of birds, mostly fairly easy to see (spent 2 days scouring burnt grasslands for a grassbird that we did not find, and we missed a forest crake we were after but got everything else we hoped for.) Food etc all good - no "Delhi Belly". Stayed at one weird hotel (for 4 nights!) where there was a bar but you could not get drinks in the restaurant - you had to drink before or after the meal but not with it!! Indian bureaucracy is still as wonderful as ever. One place we went had an old prison where the British imprisoned the participants in the Indian Mutiny - the Indian take on this (in a video we saw on the boat to the island where the prison was - we did not visit the prison) was somewhat different to what I learnt at school!

