



Werribee Wag-Tales

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September in the You Yangs and Serenedip

Unfortunately no-one wrote a report and it is dangerous to rely on my memory! After good winter rain there was much new growth in the You Yangs and the number of birds has increased. A walk along the southern fence line was very rewarding. Then the short trip to Serenedip where there is an interesting collection of birds. Those with a bird more the Werribee Wagtails..... An impressive list below... Thanks to Mike for the photo.

Magpie Goose
Musk Duck
Cape Barren Goose
Black Swan
Australian Shelduck
Australian Wood Duck
Grey Teal
Chestnut Teal
Pacific Black Duck
Hardhead
Blue-billed duck
Spotted Dove
Crested pigeon
White-neck Heron
White-faced Heron
Australian white Ibis

Royal spoonbill
Yellow-billed spoonbill
Whistling kite
Black Kite
Brown Goshawk
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Little Eagle
Brown Falcon
Australian Hobby
Purple Swamphe
Dusky Moorhen
Masked Lapwing
Galah
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Red-rumped parrot
Fan-tailed Cuckoo

Kookaburra
White-throated Treecreeper
Superb Fairywren
Yellow-rumped thornbill
Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote
White plumed honeyeater
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Red Wattle bird
New Holland Honeyeater
Brown-headed honeyeater
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Grey Shrike Thrush
Dusky Woodswallow
Australian Magpie
Grey fantail

Willie Wagtail
Little Raven
Restless Flycatcher
Magpie-lark
White-winged Chough
Jacky Winter
Eastern yellow robin
Welcome Swallow
Common Starling
Red-browed Finch
Tree martin
House Sparrow
Tree Sparrow

October 5th. Werribee River Park



The Informal walk along the Werribee River Park was in absolutely perfect conditions. Jim Gunn claims we saw 35 species in the area. The most spectacular were the Nankeen Night Herons, the Crested Shriketit, the fly past of about 15-18 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, the Kookaburra catching and eating the frog, head first, just amazing. The Park is a place of unspoilt paradise. Pat and Mike claim they only had to take off their shoes and socks to cross the raging Werribee River! Jim was able to let us hear the Bird calls on his iPod.. We now all know the difference in the call of the ravens! Coffee, scones with Jam and Cream at Cache on K Road was another highlight.



Wagtails outing to Inverloch

A cold, wet and windy Sunday lunchtime found 9 Wagtails meeting local guide Nola in the Guide Park at Wonthaggi. We will not ask which well known coffee-addicted Wagtail brought 3 bottles of wine to lunch, but instead move on to the birding.

Our first stop was at Baxter's Wetland where we were immediately challenged by a strange bird on the wires. After much debate we decided on a young Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo. A short distance down the track saw a magnificent Royal Spoonbill with full breeding plumes. The wind made it hard to see the bush birds, but eventually we picked up a good range of honeyeaters. At the bird hide we soon saw several male Blue-billed Ducks as well as Hardheads and Chestnut Teal. A more thorough search found a Great Egret and a White-necked Heron flew over. Just when we thought we had seen all there was to see a Black Swan emerged from the reeds with 4 almost fully grown cygnets. On then to Wonthaggi Heathlands (the front 2 cars seeing an Echidna on someone's drive) where the wind seemed likely to frustrate our attempts to see Beautiful Firetails and Emu-wrens. However, as we walked round we added a few birds to our list, including White-fronted Chats, Eastern Yellow Robins, two Brush Bronzewing and a pair of Blue-winged Parrots. Arriving at the Emu-wren site our patience was rewarded (for a few) with glimpses of the birds, although we were to remain without seeing the Firetail.

Heavy rain overnight did not bode well for Monday, but it had cleared when we headed off to Phillip Island. Our first stop was Fisher's Wetland (on the road to Churchill Island) where we were met by Bessie Tyers and Elizabeth Shaw from WESBOCA. Elizabeth explained that the wetland - like most of the good habitat on the island - was owned and managed by the Phillip Island Nature Parks, primarily using the profits from the famous Penguin Parade. The wetlands held a good number of waterfowl, including what were to prove to be the first of many Cape Barren Geese - many with almost fully grown young. We puzzled for a long time over a large Egret with opinions divided as to whether it was Great or Intermediate - it was just too far away to get convincing views of the gape to determine which it was. After looking at the water birds we had a brief walk in the bush, hearing (but not seeing) a Yellow Robin.

On then to Rhyll for morning tea and then to an overlook at the Inlet. A group of rocks held a good number of waders which initially were put down as Bar-tailed Godwit - as indeed most of them were. They all had their heads tucked in as the wind was fairly strong - but later one or two showed their heads and we saw the distinctive down-curved bill of Whimbrel. More excitement just before lunch as we realised that one or two were smaller and plainer - after much debate we decided they were probably Grey-tailed Tattlers but we could not get a convincing view - until just as we finished lunch one showed its head and our identification was confirmed. Unfortunately Elizabeth (who had just come back from Cape York) and Bessie (who was just about to go there) had to leave us at this stage.

We headed to the far end of the island to Swan Lake - just before the Penguin Parade. We walked to the hides through what appeared to be a large Short-tailed Shearwater colony - there were fresh excavations at the start of many burrows so obviously they had just returned from migration. The birds would have been at sea fishing so we did not see any. As we approached the first bird hide the rain started and we were glad of the shelter. Another good selection of waterfowl, including our first Shoveler and Musk Dusks for the trip. We had brief glimpses of two Swamp Wallabies. Swamp Harriers patrolled the lake, periodically flushing the birds for us. A Wedge-tailed Eagle appeared and was harassed by the Harriers and Ravens, soon landing on the banks of the lake to avoid the trouble. The second bird hide had less of interest but someone has left the windows open and there was a Welcome Swallow nest - with young - on one of the beams, so we left them open! As we left the area the rain seemed to get worse and we decided we needed a cup of coffee.



We



The Penguin Parade wanted to charge us \$4 each to get into the building to buy a coffee, so we went to the Nobbies - long time since I had been there and the new visitor centre is very impressive. After a re-viving coffee (and our first House Sparrow for the day in the café!) the rain (but not the wind) had stopped and most of us headed off to look for Kelp Gulls. We walked through the enormous Silver Gull colony (with many young) whilst a Peregrine loitered overhead, almost stationary in the strong wind, occasionally diving and causing the gulls to flush. We had a brief glimpse of a penguin down a burrow and then at the end of the boardwalk a pair of Kelp Gulls and some Gannets over the rough waves. On the way back we found another penguin sitting outside its burrow. As we got to the cars the rain started again and we headed for camp - surprised to find Liz Hurley waiting for us at the gate.

More heavy rain overnight and a gloomy start to the day (Tuesday) when we woke up. Eventually the rain cleared a little and we set off on the Screw Creek walk. Not a lot of new birds for the trip list - although we did get our second Hobby for the trip, but a couple of interesting sightings. A Koala was in a tree being harassed by a Magpie - the Koala was waving its arms ineffectively against the Magpie swoops. (When we came back the Koala had moved a little and the Magpie was nowhere to be seen.) And we found a new Holland Honeyeater feeding two small young. After coffee at the caravan park it was off to Maher's Landing (30-40 Eastern Curlew), Tarwin Lower Cemetery (Kookaburra and two Brown Goshawks) and then the mouth of the river for lunch - all in very blustery conditions.

After lunch a short walk we headed for Bald Hills to meet Nola again. We had been told that the way in was under deep water, but fortunately the levels had gone down and we were able to get through to the bird hide. On the way we found 4 Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, and the lake had a good selection of water birds. From the hide we thought we heard a Whipbird, and those who did not walk all the way in to the hide saw a female Leaden or Satin Flycatcher - but unfortunately were not able to distinguish which. We had to say farewell to both Nola and Liz at this point and head back to camp.

Our last day was (of course) a little sunnier and less windy. As we loaded our cars the first Little Corellas of the trip flew over. A short visit to the mouth of the Powlett was not very productive - the tide was a long way out so we could not see and waders - we did find a White-necked Heron on a nearby wetland.

The Gurdies Conservation Reserve was notable for another Blue-winged Parrot, our only Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, a White-throated Treecreeper and a small flock of King Parrots, which were not seen very well. Star place though goes to a Ring-tailed Possum which did not realise it was a nocturnal animal and happily climbed the trees giving us good views. Final destination was Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, where we had a small flock of Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos and our last two new birds - Spotted Pardalote and Eastern Spinebill.

Despite the weather, it was a good trip with 117 species of bird seen - 4 of which (Southern Emu-wren, Grey-tailed Tattler, Kelp Gull and Little Penguin) may well be new for a Wagtails trip. Our thanks to Iian (who won the chocolates with a guess of 120 species) for organising the trip and to Bessie, Nola and Elizabeth from WESBOCA for their time and local knowledge. Hopefully next year we will have a few more people along.



The Wandering Wagtails.... go to Western Australia in September...

4 intrepid Wagtails (Dave, Christine, Iain and Peter) and 2 non-Wagtails had 13 days in WA birding in late September. Our trip started in Perth (where we saw the introduced Laughing Dove in the car park) and headed to Dryandra (where we looked in vain for a Numbat) and Stirling Ranges before visiting the coast east of Albany - home to 3 of the great rarities of Australia - the Noisy Scrub-bird (we saw one bird 3 times as it sprinted across a gravel road), the Western Bristlebird (great views of one as it walked around on the edge of dunes at a beach) and Western Whipbird (no luck, but we saw a different



subspecies of this bird in the Stirling Ranges). The Leeuwin-Naturaliste area is home to both the Rock Parrot and the Red-tailed Tropicbird, but alas we had very bad weather in the area and we were to miss out on these two species. After 9 days it was back to Perth to drop off one of our group who was returning to Melbourne, and then the rest of us made the trip north to Monkey Mia. On the way we encountered our first flocks of Budgerigars and Cockatiels, as well as the spectacular Crimson Chat. Monkey Mia is famous for being the best place to see the Thick-billed Grasswren - Grasswrens are notoriously hard to see but this species haunts the car park (we saw 3 in there and a further 6 on a walk).

It was of course wild-flower season and we saw some magnificent sights as we drove around. We saw very few raptors apart from Kestrels. And of course WA is great as there are so few overseas species - Laughing and Spotted Doves (the latter only in Perth), Rock Doves and the Mute Swan - a tourist attraction in the town of Northam. We saw around 180 species of bird on the trip as well as various reptiles (including a Thorny Devil which Iain rescued from being squashed on the road) and some whales.

([Thanks to Iain and Dave for the report and the photo...](#)

Surveying Greenwich

Sunday Feb 19 8.00am to 10.00am

Sunday April 22 8.30am to 10.30am

Sunday June 17 09.00am to 11.00am

Sunday Nov 25 08.00am to 10.00am

Meet and register beforehand with HBCC Ranger

At the Gatehouse of the old SEC Newport Power Station

The Strand, Newport (The far end of The Strand. Next to the entrance to the Newport Athletics Track)

Melway ref: map 56, C4

As you can see I really do need assistance with the Newsletters, people to write reports and to send photos...

