



# Werribee Wag-Tales • Volume 18 No 1, 2012

**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



## January Bus trip to Geelong...

The January outing led by Dave was really lovely. We were certainly very thankful to get a mild day after all the recent heat. It was good to catch up with a few of the group after the Christmas break. Liz turned up with an interesting foot decorated with the usual red nail varnish but unusual yellow beads poking out from the ends of her toes. It looked painful but we know our Liz is not easily defeated and she carried on as normal. She made a beeline for Brian as her partner on the bus because he was wearing fabulous aftershave. Mike also had signs of injury with a bandaged arm but it didn't stop him either. Wagtails are a hardy breed. We went by bus to Geelong stopping off at Gerringot Wetlands. This was a good example of the value in returning to familiar places. The recent heavy rains have caused the reeds to grow at such a rate that it was difficult to see any birds although there were plenty of signs they were there. We did catch sight of the Spotted Crake who usually puts on a showing and there was a magnificent Great Egret who couldn't hide in the reeds. Iian spotted a baby butcherbird along the roadside.

The next stop was Balynang Sanctuary in the Barwon Valley. This is a great spot. We walked around the lake where the pelicans were roosting on the little platforms provided. They look too big for them but they manage. According to Peter they are not a heavy bird. Do we believe him? How does he know? Nance has the sharpest 93 yr old eyes I know. She spotted another Crake on the far bank well before anyone else. We walked along the river to find the darters who were there in numbers. Some were sitting on nests others sunning. Hopefully Mike has a photo specially for Shirley. The boardwalk was also pleasant even though we did lose someone for a short period. The mobile phone is so handy if you carry it and have it on.

Next stop Point Henry. I have not been before and found it quite incongruous to have all the huge Alcoa structure and a wetland. It isn't quite clear to me whether it was already there or whether Alcoa put it in. There were lots of reeds and lots of weed on the water. There were Goldfinches walking over the reeds to feed. We also saw a greenfinch there. The reedwarbler was strangely in a tree !!!!! Trying out new real-estate. We saw 60 birds throughout the day. Bev scooped the chocolates which we all ate, thank you Iian. Bev has never won the chocolates before so 2012 has started well for her.

A great day thanks to everyone for contributing to it. *News reporter Flo*

Australian Wood Duck  
Pacific Black Duck  
Grey Teal  
Chestnut Teal  
Hardhead  
Australasian Grebe  
Hoary-headed Grebe  
Australian White Ibis  
Straw-necked Ibis  
Royal Spoonbill  
Nankeen Night Heron  
White-necked Heron  
Great Egret  
White-faced Heron  
Australian Pelican

Little Pied Cormorant  
Little Black Cormorant  
Australasian Darter  
Australian Crake  
Purple Swampphen  
Dusky Moorhen  
Eurasian Coot  
Black-winged Stilt  
Masked Lapwing  
Black-fronted Dotterel  
Latham's Snipe  
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper  
Silver Gull  
Rock Dove  
Spotted Dove  
Crested Pigeon

Galah  
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  
Rainbow Lorikeet  
Red-rumped Parrot  
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo  
Superb Fairy  
White-plumed Honeyeater wren  
Red Wattlebird  
White-fronted Chat  
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
White-browed Scrubwren  
Brown Thornbill  
Grey Butcherbird  
Australian Magpie  
Willie Wagtail

Little Raven  
Magpie-lark  
Welcome Swallow  
Fairy Martin  
Eurasian Skylark  
Australian Reed Warbler  
Rufous Songlark  
Little Grassbird  
Silvereye  
Common Myna  
Common Starling  
Common Blackbird  
House Sparrow  
European Greenfinch  
European Goldfinch







*Happy Wagtails at Geelong*





## Ticking the Tasmanian Endemics

In November 2011 I found myself lucky enough to be a on a pelagic out of Eagle-Hawk Neck, Tasmania. As I hadn't been to Tassie for over eight years, and I still had a few endemics to see, I took the opportunity. My flight arrived at Hobart at 8am. I collected my hire car and as I was driving out of the airport I saw Tasmanian Native Hen on the side of the road [tick 1]. Halfway to Hobart Town at Meehan Range, I thought I would fill some time there. As soon as I parked the car, a bird I did not recognize was calling. Wow a Dusky Robin [tick 2], and what was that that flew through my vision with the yellow throat? Yes a Yellow Throated Honeyeater [tick 3]. How easy is this? I've only been in the state an hour. I continued along the walking trail and after about 10 minutes saw a large bird move in the undergrowth. I carefully moved in its direction and could see it was Currawong, but was it Black or Grey? As I moved forward to flush it I could see a very heavy bill and no white patches on the wings. Conclusion: Black Currawong [tick 4]. It was beautiful morning to be in the forest and I was enjoying the various regular birds such as thornbills, shrike-thrush and honeyeaters, when a rosella flew past and settled in a nearby tree. Crikey! a Green Rosella [tick 5]. As I crossed a small waterway on a closer inspection revealed them to be Strong-billed Honeyeater [tick 6]. A short time later I decided I should turn back and that's when I heard wrens in the undergrowth, and wouldn't you know it, Tasmanian Scrubwrens [tick 7], and I haven't had morning tea yet.

Halfway back to the car I stopped to have a look around and found a small bird with few markings being very busy. I knew it was a pardalote, but needed to make sure it was not a juvenile Striated Pardalote. It was high but I finally saw spots on the wings - Forty-spotted Pardalote [tick 8]. This was a bonus as they are not regularly seen here. After lunch I visited the Peter Murrell Reserve just South of Hobart, and made my way to a wetland area. It wasn't long until I saw another unfamiliar bird: The Black-headed Honeyeater [tick 9]. Down near the stream I heard a very raucous call and tracked down the Yellow Wattlebird [tick 10]. Unlike the mainland wattlebirds this Tasmanian has not adjusted to city life. A satisfying day with only two more birds to find.

Unfortunately these last two are not as common as some might think. I searched at all the recommended spots around Hobart, and on Day 3 decided to go inland to the Mount Field National Park. Unfortunately, I got there before the gates opened, but luckily while waiting, I finally got the Tasmanian Thornbill [tick 11] adjacent to the car park, and it was the only time I would see them on the whole trip. I undertook the walk to the Russell Falls where the Scrubtit is regularly seen, but not today, I can feel myself tensing up as I fear missing the last of the endemics. I finished the walk along the Tall Trees walk, and found some nice gullies through this section. Suddenly, there were a couple of small birds buzzing around me, so very close and fast that I could not get my binoculars onto them. I persevere and finally get excellent views of the Scrubtit [tick 12]. The relief is extraordinary, and I am on a bit of a relaxed high for the rest of the day.

Finally, I went out on the pelagic on the last day, and we got an excellent suite of birds with 5 new ones for me.

Tasmania is a beautiful place to visit, and all the better for the 12 birds you cannot see anywhere else in the world.

Iian Denham

### Peter and the Altona Wetlands.

Did you go the Cheetham Salt works trip with Hobson Bay Council?

Did you receive a nice brochure about the Altona Wetlands? Did you see the excellent photos?

Then I sure you observed they were from Peter O'Connell, 5 excellent photos, congratulations Peter.

Peter enjoyed the trip and was amazed by the ingenuity of the Ravens who have been 'feasting' on the Red-capped Plover .



## WTP in Late summer February 7th.

The February outing was a car convoy to the Treatment Plant. 6 cars set off from Watton St and met up again at the Paradise Rd gate, where we saw a good selection of birds including Dusky Woodswallows, Red-browed Finch, Red-rumped Parrot and a Black-shouldered Kite. Pausing only to allow Trevor to join up with us on to the main Paradise Rd lagoon, where we had the first surprise of the day - amid a few Swampheens on the bank was a **Plumed Whistling-duck**. A rare vagrant to the Melbourne area and the first that I had ever seen at Werribee. Good numbers of Avocet were present along with a few Banded Stilts and the first of what were to be thousands of Shelduck (the most recent waterfowl count estimated 28,000 were present at the property). As we crossed the Little River we saw the first of several Great Crested Grebe, and we soon saw our first waders - Red-necked Stint and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers as well as a Red-kneed Dotterel. A reasonably fast drive then down to the Borrow Pits for morning tea - the wetlands were fairly dry but we did add a Red-capped Plover to our list.

Suitably refreshed we headed for the Conservation Ponds, which were very busy with large numbers of waders, including some Curlew Sandpipers. Having Stints and Sharpies in the same pond enabled us all to try and get the differences clear. Here we saw our first Spotted Crake and a flock of Darters soaring over one of the distant lagoons. On then to "Cormorant Jetty" which truly lived up to its name - not only the four usual species were there but also a **Black-faced Cormorant** - a bird that is more often found on ocean beaches - plus another Darter and a Pacific Gull.

As we drove back to the "main road" we flushed a young Night-heron from a tree.

Back then to the Little River crossing - some people seeing Glossy Ibis on the way - on to the southern end of Lake Borrie, where there were the usual numbers of Pink-eared Ducks and Shovellers.

Lunch was calling so off to the Bird Hide, passing Blue-billed Ducks on the way. After lunch we carried on towards the Beach Rd Gate, stopping to admire 3 Bar-tailed Godwits on the rocks and finding a Little Egret with Great Egrets in the wetland near the gate - another good comparison exercise.

On to the T-section where we found a large flock of Banded Stilts in the Summer Lagoon along with a couple of Greenshank, and on the bank around 6 Cape Barren Geese. Most of the ponds were pretty dry so we did not stay long, instead going to the new Pond 4/5 in the Western Lagoon - one that was constructed fairly recently by Melbourne Water as a wetland. Not a lot of birds present as we wrapped up the day, with a count of 89 species seen on what had turned into a fairly blustery day. Ceri won the chocolates as she guessed 90.

Plumed Whistling Duck	Little Black Cormorant	Purple Swampheens	Superb Fairywren
Musk Duck	Pied Cormorant	Australian Spotted Crake	White-browed Scrubwren
Cape Barren Goose	Black-faced Cormorant	Dusky Moorhen	Striated Fieldwren
Black Swan	Australian Pelican	Eurasian Coot	Yellow-rumped thornbill
Australian Shelduck	Eastern Great Egret	Black-winged stilt	White plumed honeyeater
Australian Wood Duck	White Faced Heron	Red-necked avocet	Red Wattle bird
Pink-eared Duck	Little Egret	Banded stilt	White-fronted Chat
Australasian Shoveler	Nankeen Night Heron	Red-capped Plover	Dusky Woodswallow
Grey Teal	Glossy Ibis	Black-fronted dotterel	Australian Magpie
Chestnut Teal	Australian white Ibis	Masked Lapwing	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Royal spoonbill	Bar-tailed Godwit	Little Raven
Hardhead	Yellow-billed spoonbill	Common Greenshank	Magpie-lark
Blue-billed duck	Straw-necked Ibis	Red-necked Stint	Golden-headed Cisticola
Hoary-headed Grebe	Black -shouldered kite	Sharp-tailed sandpiper	Australian Reed-Warbler
Great Crested Grebe	Whistling kite	Curlew Sandpiper	Silvereye
Crested pigeon	Black Kite	Fairy Tern	Welcome Swallow
Australasian Gannet	Spotted Harrier	Whiskered Tern	Fairy Martin
Australasian Darter	Swamp Harrier	Common Tern	Tree martin
Little Pied Cormorant	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Crested Tern	Common Starling
Great Cormorant	Brown Falcon	Pacific Gull	Zebra Finch
	Australian Hobby	Red-rumped parrot	Red-browed Finch
			House Sparrow
			European Goldfinch





Plumed whistling Duck



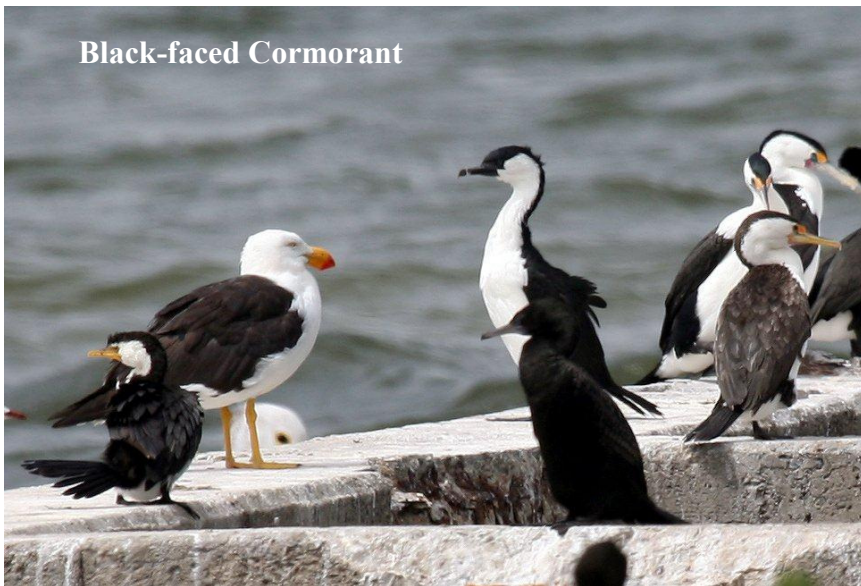
Here are some of the many photos sent to me after our Magic Day at the WTP

Sincere thanks to Surong, Susan, Peter, Mike and Joyce. In the process of sorting the amazing photos, I am not sure who took what!

Please forgive me!



Black-faced Cormorant



Juvenile Nankeen Night Heron

