



Werribee Wag-Tales



A day around the Macedon area

By bus and car we went to visit the Macedon Area. 32 Werribee Wagtails say, "Thanks" to Anita and Mark for their grand tour and the Bird of the Day: Rose Robin

A full bus of Werribee Wagtails headed for the Macedon area. The rest of us travelled by cars and we all met at the Barringo Roadside Area.

Anita gave us an overview of the history of the area and the activities of the area. The one thing we had little control over was the weather, however wet or dry, we began to search for the birds of the area. In spite of the weather it wasn't long before a Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Pardalotes together with a number of Thornbills were added to the list.

We crossed to the open area of the Pony Club and within a few minutes the cry went up. "Rose Robin," and sure enough a male was on display. Not noted for sitting still, it took several attempts before most had seen at least a glimpse of this spectacular bird.

Some photographers were not so lucky.

We enjoyed morning tea and muffins and moved on to Stanley Park in Mt Macedon for a walk to the base of the waterfall, and good views of Eastern Yellow Robins, and White-naped Honeyeaters among others. Then we settled in for lunch.

From there we travelled to Dixon Creek Reserve in Gisborne, for a ramble around the wetlands, but the elusive Lewin's Rail remained elusive. Birdcall was just completed when the weather changed and a hail storm sent us to the bus and cars and an early trip home.

Count for the Day: 51 Birds.
Winner: Pat Forrest

Thanks to Anita and Mark for a good day, and for organising the find of the day, the Rose Robin.



Photo: Surong Gunn



Photo: Mike Pratt



Photo: Surong Gunn



Photo: Dorothy Jenkins

LEUCISTIC SUPERB FAIRY-WREN SEEN AT WTP

On 9 Aug 2014 Mark Buckby, Ian Denham and Trevor Hunt spent a day at the Western Treatment Plant.

After a reasonably quiet day, they noticed a strange bird amongst the trees near Ryan's Swamp and gave chase. It soon became apparent that it was a leucistic Superb Fairy-wren.

From Wikipedia:

Leucism is a condition in animals and birds characterised by the reduction in all types of pigment. This is in contrast to albinism, for which leucism is often mistaken.

Albinism results in the reduction of melanin production only larger.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SURVEYING AT PINKERTON/BUSH'S Paddock

15 birders joined Frances and Daryl from the Landcare group for our quarterly survey at Pinkerton, Bush's Paddock and Eynesbury. It was a cold and windy day and the birding was initially fairly slow, but we soon cheered up with our first sightings of Diamond Firetails at Pinkerton - a bird that has been rather scarce recently.

We were to see at least seven during the morning, and a similar number of Jacky Winters - another bird that has been dropping in numbers. We noted the numbers of Noisy Miners unfortunately seem to be increasing. We also added Silver Gull to our Pinkerton list. At morning tea Frances produced a

cake and some old documents to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our surveys in the area.

Bush's Paddock as usual had fewer species than Pinkerton, but we had around 10 Flame Robins on the boundary fence and at least 15 Zebra Finch.

After a cold and windy lunch it was off to Eynesbury, where we failed to find any Diamond Firetails (but did see 30+ Red-browed Finches). As usual there were good numbers of Brown Treecreepers and we found at least 2 Speckled Warblers.

The total species count for the day was a very respectable 65. Five more than last year.

WHAT MAKES A... FAIRY OR TREE MARTIN

What are some of the differences between Fairy and Tree Martins?**Fairy Martin.**

Shape: finer looking.

Underneath: white.

Rump: clean white.

Head: rust coloured.

Call: blowing little pberries, short churing.

Comparison details by:
Mark Buckby

**Tree Martin.**

Shape: chunkier.

Underneath: off-white.

Rump: dull white.

Forehead: a small rust Spot.

Call: more continuous twittering and not particularly distinctive.

Comparison Photos by:
Chris Watson, Alice Springs

**NEXT TRIP: OUR NEXT OUTING IS THE CAMP AT WARRNAMBOOL.**

Birdlife Werribee will be holding the annual camp at Warrnambool in October.

The next local trip will be the Melbourne Cup Day trip to the Werribee Treatment Plant.

BIRDLIST MACEDON 2ND SEPTEMBER 2014

Maned Duck	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Pacific Black Duck	Spotted Pardalote
Australian White Ibis	Striated Pardalote
Straw-necked Ibis	White-browed Scrubwren
White-faced Heron	Brown Thornbill
Great Cormorant	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Collared Sparrowhawk	Yellow Thornbill
Purple Swamphen	Striated Thornbill
Dusky Moorhen	Australian Magpie
Masked Lapwing	Pied Currawong
Common Bronzewing	Grey Currawong
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Black-faced Cuckooshrike
Laughing Kookaburra	Australian Golden Whistler
Galah	Grey Shrikethrush
Long-billed Corella	Willie Wagtail
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Fantail
Crimson Rosella	Magpie-lark
Eastern Rosella	Little Raven
White-throated Treecreeper	White-winged Chough
Superb Fairywren	Eastern Yellow Robin
Eastern Spinebill	Rose Robin
New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
White-naped Honeyeater	Common Myna
White-eared Honeyeater	Common Starling
Red Wattlebird	Common Blackbird
	Red-browed Finch

Wagtails joins Birdlife Australia as a branch



We are now Birdlife Werribee

Our application to become a branch of BirdLife Australia - Australia's largest bird conservation organisation with 65,000 supporters, and part of BirdLife International which is active in 120+ countries and claims 10 million supporters — was approved at the Board Meeting on August 23, 2014.

There will be no change to our program of activities or anything else in the short term — once I have discussed this development with the Branch Liaison Manager I will inform those of you who regard yourselves as members of what changes — which will be small — are likely over the next few months.

I regard this as very positive for the future of the group in years to come. *Dave Torr*

MEETING PLACE

The bus driver requested that we meet in future further down Watton St (closer to the roundabout) and Shirley and others have also suggested this as the street is becoming very busy.

As our program is posted on a number of websites and that tells people where to meet, so until we post our 2015 program we keep our current meeting place.

But we will definitely move the meeting place come January

SEAN DOOLEY... MY PIN-UP.



In 2002 Sean set out to see more birds in the 12 months than anyone else! I followed his trip with enormous enthusiasm. My good friend Marian Blood, a victim to cancer, and I shared his reports on Birding Oz and they always brought a smile to her face. At one stage I sent Sean an email to say we were starting a Sean Dooley Fan Club, there were now 2 members! (it did get a mention in his book The Big Twitch")

Can you imagine my delight when last week my phone rang, "It's Sean Dooley here. I wonder if we can meet I have a few questions to ask?"

I suggested he leave the Office and we could go round the WTP. In less than 90 minutes we were on the Plant, sunny, no wind and birds everywhere.

If you have not read his book go out buy it and settle back for a good laugh.

Shirley Cameron

THE PHOTO GALLERY

Werribee Wagtails is not just about the birds we seek. It's also about our wonderful social interaction. Here is a selection of photos from the recent Macedon Tour.



Photo Credits

Mike Pratt

Elizabeth Hurley

D Jenkins

WARRNAMBOOL CAMP

Have you made your booking for our Campout at Warrnambool?

The dates for the camp this year will be:

Sunday 12 October and conclude on Wednesday 15 October [3 nights].at the

The camp is to be based at the Surfside Holiday Park, Pertobe Road, Warrnambool.

For bookings contact them at:

<http://www.surfsidepark.com.au/>

Telephone 03 5559 4700.

You may however choose your own accommodation.

Warrnambool offers a range habitats and many birds that we would not see in the Werribee area. Ilian and the team are arranging a number of locations for us to explore and enjoy.

If you are planning to attend the camp, please arrange your own accommodation, then let Ilian know via email: iidenham@yahoo.com that you will be attending, and how many in your party. Individual members should contact each other regarding sharing of accommodation or car-pooling.

Anyone participating in the camp is welcome to attend as many or as few days as they feel comfortable e.g. after a couple of days you may wish to have a look at the local attractions instead of going birding, or you may wish to sit on the beach, or just go home.

Participation in birding activities is optional.



Hopkins Falls in flood.

Ilian Denham

BOOK REVIEW: WHERE SONG BEGAN

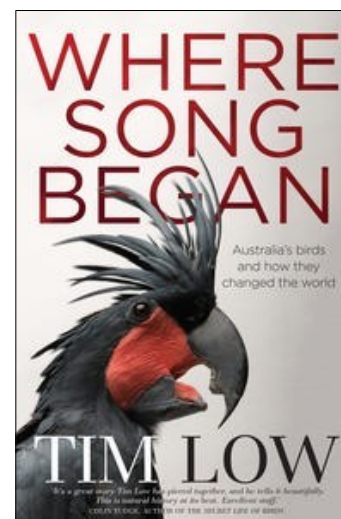
"Where Song Began" by Tim Low

For a scholarly book — and this book has 60 pages of footnotes and references — to receive 3 reviews in *The Age* it must be interesting! So I ordered a copy from Wyndham Library and have been busy reading.

Scientists divide the world's birds into 40 "orders" with one order — the Passerines — containing around half of the world's bird species (and most of their number — one species alone has an estimated population of 1.5 billion). The Passerines are divided into two sub-orders and it is now generally accepted that the

Oscines (or songbirds) which make up around 40% of the world's birds evolved in Australia - along with parrots and pigeons. Tim includes New Guinea in Australia as it has formed part of the "mainland" more often than Tasmania has, and points out that — as birds are so fragile and thus do not give good fossils — there are many gaps in our knowledge.

It is a fascinating read — exploring issues such as why our honeyeaters are so noisy and aggressive, and why poor soils caused certain types of trees which support parrots. It also raises the interesting thought that hummingbirds may have evolved from our own owl-nightjar!



Wyndham residents — put yourself on the wait list for this book at the local library!

Dave Torr

Help wanted

If you would like to help provide details of birds that can be a bit confusing, our section of **“What makes a...”** needs your input.

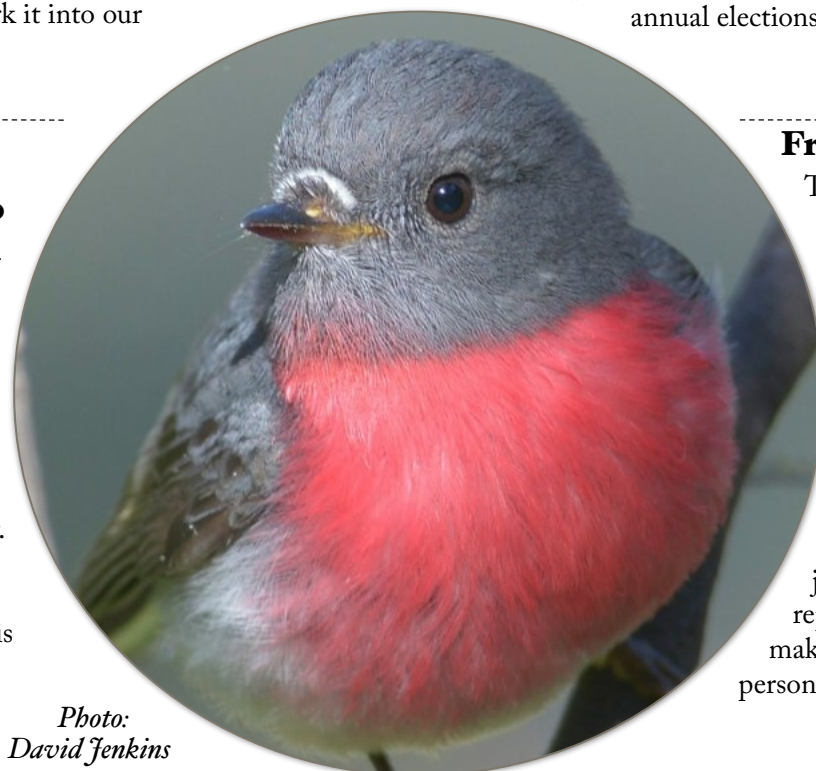
Send me a few points of how to distinguish birds that can sometimes be confused.

I've had a couple of suggestions, but really need a few line of text and descriptions of birds that can sometimes be confused. We've all done it, so drop me note with some pointers and I'll be happy to work it into our pages.

For those who missed a good sighting at Macedon

Rose Robin.

This is another male we have been following as it has wintered over. He has only just disappeared and travelled back for his summer season.



*Photo:
David Jenkins*

My obscure email address

As editor I thought it rather clever to set up the contact email addresses as 'live' click-on links.

However because my email has an “_” underscore in it some will have found it a bit unworkable. So this time I've removed the underlining. Hope that helps.

dw_jenkins@icloud.com

dw_jenkins@icloud.com

Being a BirdLife Branch

Several people have asked me what the implications for us are, and apart from the obvious ones of changing our name to BirdLife Werribee and ensuring that we have insurance cover for outings I cannot really say — the person at Head Office who deals with branches is on leave for another couple of weeks so we will continue as before.

The only thing that is certain is that we will be expected to be a bit more democratic and have annual elections!

Dave Torr

From the editor

Thank you to all who have given me some great encouragement and fine feedback for the first newsletter I edited.

Very happy to receive your trip reports, birding days, best places to visit, and photos. It makes the job a bit easier. Your reports and input help make our newsletter more personal.

Join the Melton Environment Group for a Bird and Wildflower Walk

When: Saturday 20th September

Where: Gilgai Woodland,
Harkness Road,
Melton.

Melway 330 B12

<http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au>

CONTACTS, WEB ADDRESS AND PLACES TO VISIT ON LINE

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Newsletter

David Jenkins

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The newsletter is also available on our
“Unofficial website”

<http://www.wmcn.org.au/birds>

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/)

SURONG GUNN, YELLOW SEA TRIP

To view the story and photos from Surong
Gunn's Yellow Sea Survey trip they are all on
her Web Site:

www.paintedbuttonquail.weebly.com

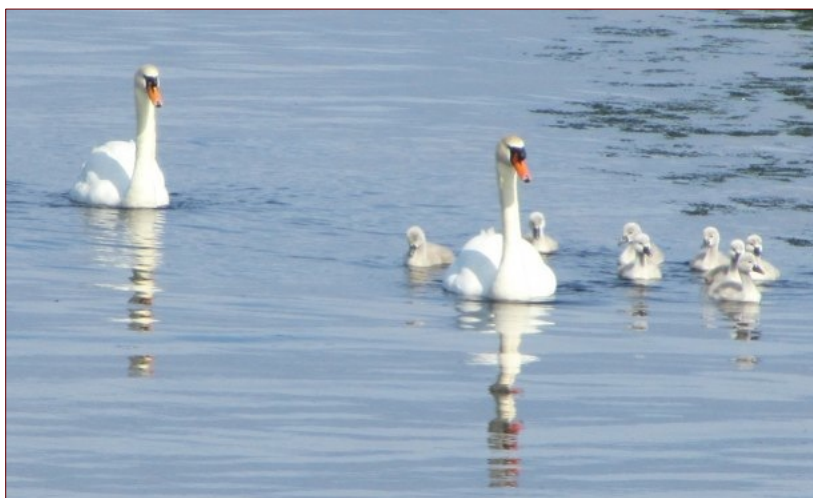
MUTE SWANS, NAIRN SCOTLAND

The mute swan is one of the largest waterfowl species and heaviest flying birds. They have left their image through history as fossils and in mythology.

The name is derived from them being less vocal than other swans, though they do make grunting and snorting noises, especially when communicating with their cygnets. The mute swan has a large knob on its bill.

The Queen owns all the mute swans in England and Wales and employs a 'master of the swans'. The swans are no longer marked to identify their owner, called swan-upping. However a symbolic ceremony remains that is useful in monitoring the number and condition of mute swans on the Thames.

These swans were observed on the coast at Nairn, in the north Highland region of Scotland.



Story and photograph by Sue Meyers from her trip to Scotland in June 2014.