

# THE MELBIRDIAN



MELBOCA (BOCA's Melbourne Branch) NEWSLETTER NO. 57  
October 2007

## MELBOCA Branch Meetings

Meetings are held at the Evergreen Centre, 45 Talbot Avenue, Balwyn, not far from the Balwyn Library, Melway 46 E8, on the fourth Tuesday of each month (with the exception of December) commencing at 8.00 pm. Entry is by a donation of \$4.00.

Out-of-town members & visitors very welcome.

## Future Speakers

**Tuesday 23 October 2007 8.00pm.**

**Dr Raoul Mulder, "Love-life of Black Swans".**

Raoul is senior lecturer in the Department of Zoology at Melbourne University. He has spent much time in both Madagascar and Botswana. His primary research interest is in the evolution of social behaviour and unusual mating systems, and he will share with us his fascinating research on the love-life of Black Swans. Symbols of everlasting love? Maybe not!

**Tuesday 27 November 2007 8.00 pm.**

**Patrick-Jean Guay, "Ecology, mating behaviour and conservation in Musk Ducks".**

Patrick hails from Canada and is currently engaged in his PhD at Melbourne University. He has been researching the Musk Duck for a number of years (some years were very dry) and looks forward to sharing his research and experiences with us.

## MELBOCA Website

With many thanks to Damian Kelly for his website design and computer expertise, [www.melboca.org.au](http://www.melboca.org.au) is now on line. It is your website, so please explore it and contribute to the Members' Contributions page.

*Bill Ramsay*

## MELBOCA Committee

President	Graeme Hosken
Vice-President	David Plant
Secretary	Janet Hand
Treasurer	Bill Ramsay
Sunny Fernie	Linda Stock
Diane Tweeddale	Chris Wichems
<b>MELBOCA Contact:</b>	<b>Graeme Hosken</b>

**Tel: 9802 5250**

**Email: [info@melboca.org.au](mailto:info@melboca.org.au)**

BOCA National Office

PO Box 185, Nunawading VIC 3131

**Website: [www.melboca.org.au](http://www.melboca.org.au)**

## Breakfast with the Birds at Banyule

**Sunday 28 October 2007, starting at 7.30am.**

**This is the first day of Daylight Saving.**

MELBOCA has organised the bird walk section of this Banyule City Council activity for several years.

It will be held at Banyule Flats Reserve via Somerset Drive. MELBOCA provides the bird leaders and leads the walks at 7.30am; the Council provides breakfast, commencing at 9.00 am, followed by birdcall.

There is no cost for the activity but all participants must register (for insurance and catering purposes) by phoning BOCA National Office on 9877 5342. Please encourage non-birders to give it a go with you.

*Janet Hand, Coordinator 2007*

## **Weekdays Outings Notes**

### **16 July 2007. Koonung Creek and Maranoa Gardens.**

The weather was cool, clear and breezy when we started walking along the Koonung Creek Linear Park at Mont Albert. There were 27 pairs of eyes and much interest in what this reserve would contain. Musk Lorikeets were foraging in the eucalypt blossom by the carpark but the other species included those universals—Noisy Miner and Australian Magpie. From an overhead boardwalk, which led high across the noisy Eastern Freeway, we surveyed a wetland beside the creek. Here were Pacific Black Duck, Chestnut Teal and a pair of Hardheads, as well as Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen and one Eurasian Coot looking rather lonely.

Silvereyes flew among the tree tops near us. Descending to water level, we had good views of an Australasian Grebe moving rapidly near the reeds. The walk took us near a short track through a fenced area undergoing revegetation, so we investigated. A pair of Grey Currawongs foraged on the ground until our approach became too close, and a Grey Butcherbird was spotted moving between trees. Then the sighting of two Tawny Frogmouths in a eucalypt was the highpoint of the walk so far. They were the first our group had sighted for the year and were obligingly perched where good views could be obtained with a little careful footwork.

Returning to the main track, we walked to the open area near the meeting of the track and the freeway, then the siren song of "lunch" started to be heard and we turned in our tracks. The birds hadn't knocked off however—a raptor was sighted high in a eucalypt and discussion followed. It was an Australian Hobby and the local Magpie-lark was diving at it. This reversed the earlier situation where a female Magpie-lark had been harassed by a couple of Noisy Miners. The morning did not finish there as a Collared Sparrowhawk was sighted beside the creek. We sat for lunch feeling rather pleased, there had been a total of 36 species sighted by this stage.

Some needed to depart after lunch but the remainder drove around to Maranoa Gardens in Balwyn. Here the attraction was native plants as well as birds and many of us spent a lot of time reading labels and considering the potential of different plants for bird habitat and decoration. No new species were added to the list here and the lack of understorey meant that small birds were limited to Brown Thornbills.

Despite the list of only twelve species, the afternoon was enjoyable and we considered that the creek reserve plus the native garden made a good outing.

### **7 August 2007. Birds Land Reserve, Belgrave Heights.**

When we'd all congregated on a mild, clear and breezy morning, there were twenty of us. The reserve was clearly popular with the locals and many walkers and dog-walkers shared the carpark with our group. Several new members and a couple of visitors, one from the USA, swelled our numbers. Setting off behind our leader, Ken Baker, we were interested in the antics of a Magpie-lark which fluttered vertically near a stock watering point across the fence of the reserve. Then two Australian King-Parrots were in clear view perched low beside the track. We considered that they would be voted the "bird of the day", when the advice came back from the vanguard of the group, that there was a Powerful Owl up ahead and to approach quietly. Delight! A male Powerful Owl was perched high under the canopy in his daytime roost while holding the body of a headless Common Ringtail Possum. For many it was the first view of this fascinating bird species and for others it was the first sighting of the iconic pose with its prey. Great smiles all round and thanks to the first observer.

We continued, adding Darter to the waterbirds, Australian Wood and Pacific Black Ducks, Australasian Grebe, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot and Dusky Moorhen by the pond, and then followed the steep track to the ridge line. Not many birds were seen as we ascended, then the calmer side of the hill yielded raptors—a Nankeen Kestrel and then a Wedge-tailed Eagle being harassed by a pair of Peregrine Falcons. The track descended and we watched with mixed feelings as a Grey Butcherbird dived from a branch, caught a small lizard and then ate it, dropping pieces as the lizard was cut up.

After returning to the cars for lunch we had a bird call of 47 species and then a small number of us checked out the roadside area afterwards. This walk added Tawny Frogmouth and Crested Shrike-tit to the list, bringing the total to 49 species for the day and many thanks were given to Ken for introducing so many of us to this interesting area not very far from the Melbourne CBD.

*Diane Tweeddale*  
Convenor MELBOCA Weekdays Outings

## Community Monitoring of Bird Utilisation of Constructed Wetlands

The above project, instigated by Melbourne Water, involves the monthly monitoring of ten constructed urban wetlands in the Dandenong Catchment.

Bird Observation & Conservation Australia (BOCA) was awarded the contract for this project which extends over a period of three years. The Melbourne Branch of BOCA (MELBOCA), is monitoring five of the ten wetlands, the other five are being monitored by Penboc, three, and Bayboca, two. The project commenced in June 2007.

The five wetlands being monitored by MELBOCA are:  
Frog Hollow Wetlands, Endeavour Hills  
Kilberry Boulevard, Hampton Park East Drain  
River Gum Wetlands, Hampton Park East Drain  
South Golf Links Road, Narre Warren  
Narre Warren Township Drain

(Note: Access still being arranged for Narre Warren Township Drain.)

The progressive results from June to August 2007 are contained in the table (enclosed separately). As of August 2007, a combined total of 63 species has been recorded for the four wetlands. Continuing results will be published in *The Melbirdian*.

*Graeme Hosken, Recorder for MELBOCA*

### Choosing Your Digital Camera

**Please note: this is the 2 Wednesday nights, not as advertised in August *The Bird Observer*.**

This course, held over two nights, would suit a first-time digital camera buyer or those ready for an upgrade.

#### **Wednesday 17 October 7.30-9.30 pm Making the Right Choice**

Identifying your needs  
Understanding the jargon  
What other equipment will you need e.g. computer.

#### **Wednesday 24 October 7.30-9.30 pm Cameras in Action**

Croydon Camera Centre will demonstrate a range of digital cameras – showing you what they can do and what they can't do!

Sessions will be held in the Edna Walling Room at BOCA National Office 183-185 Springvale Road Nunawading. Please enter from the rear of the building, in Market St. Melway 48 F10.

Cost: \$25.00 (members) \$35.00 (non-members)  
*All proceeds assist BOCA with education and conservation activities.*

**There are limited spaces – so book early!**  
Contact Jenny or Hellena at BOCA 9877 5342

## Between the Mountains and the Sea Birding and Photography in Bairnsdale (and beyond)

**Friday 7 – Monday 10 March 2008**

Workshops to be held at Forestech – a short 20 minute trip from Bairnsdale.

Forestech is located on the edge of the Colquhoun Forest. It is a campus of East Gippsland TAFE and offers courses in conservation and land management, as well as fine craft woodworking and cabinet making.

Activities and classes will include the following topics:

- Digital photography workshops
- Owls and old-growth forests
- Wildlife art classes
- Magical owl activities for kids
- Spotlighting in the forest
- Birds of coast, estuary and lake
- Search for (and discover) the Southern Emu-wren
- David Hollands to be guest speaker at Bairnsdale RSL Saturday night

And lots, lots more.

**Outings** to Nyerimilang Homestead which is situated in a beautiful cliff-top garden overlooking the Gippsland Lakes, the Colquhoun Forest, wetlands, mountains and beach are possible. We will be sharing Forestech with the Lakes Entrance Rotary Art Show during the weekend.

**Cost:** \$105.00 (members) \$135.00 (non-members) (includes lunch, morning and afternoon teas on Saturday and Sunday and Monday).

#### **Optional Extras**

- Saturday night dinner at Bairnsdale RSL – with guest speaker David Hollands \$25.00/person
- Sunday night BBQ - \$10.00/person (venue to be confirmed)
- Additional field trips including, birdwatching from a boat, are being explored and details, including cost, will be available at a later date.

Single day registration is also available please inquire about fees.

Partners not attending education sessions do not need to pay the registration fee.

**Further information and booking forms available at [www.birdobservers.org.au](http://www.birdobservers.org.au) or by phoning 9877 5342**

**Accommodation** can be booked through **East Gippsland Visitor Information 1800 637 060**

*(As this is a long weekend and there are several events being held in Lakes Entrance we urge you to book your accommodation **EARLY!**)*

## INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

Entered 29 August 2007

The following Field Reports were received from members attending the MELBOCA monthly meetings held at Balwyn on 25 July & 28 August 2007, Email and WEB reports to BOCA National Office.

The reports include Currawong, Corella, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Brown Thornbill, Song Thrush, Little Wattlebird and Crested Pigeon sightings within 60km Melbourne, plus other Field Reports.

### Currawong Sightings

#### Pied

Most Days '07	2-4	Winters Way	Doncaster
?? May '07	1	Moule Street	Brunswick
01 May '07	2	Central Park Road	East Malvern
		(first sighting in street in 50 years)	
29 Jun '07	1	Moule Street	Brunswick
All Jul '07	8+	Appletree Drive	Glen Waverley

#### Grey

22 Jul '07	2	Gardiners Creek	Ashwood
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### Corella Sightings

#### Long-billed Corella

18/20 Jul '07	10/20	Cnr FTG & Burwood Hwy	Ferntree Gully
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#### Little Corella

No reports this period.

#### Corella Species

No reports this period.

### Crested Pigeon Sightings

Daily '07	Several	Hanks Baseball Park	Yarraville
28 Jun '07	2	Florence Tce	Beaconsfield
30 Jun '07	15-20	Holmesglen TAFE	Moorabbin
	5	Caulfield Park	Caulfield
04 Jul '07	3	Newport Lakes	Newport
14 Jul '07	12	Bambra Road (Princes Pk)	Caulfield
15 Jul '07	1	Andrew St	Oakleigh
	38	Ferndale Park	Glen Iris
19 Jul '07	8	Frog Hollow Reserve	Camberwell
20 Jul '07	26	Mullum Mullum Reserve	Ringwood
Mid Jul '07	12	Caulfield Park	Caulfield
24 Jul '07	53	Gordon Barnard Reserve	North Balwyn
08 Aug '07	5	Maribyrnong River	Footscray
23 Aug '07	2	Monash University	Clayton
27 Aug '07	2	Monash University	Clayton

### Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo Sightings

23 Jun '07	40	Yarra Bend Park	Kew
26 Jun '07	6	Royal Talbot Centre	Kew
07 Jul '07	20+	Pipe Bridge	Fairfield
08 Jul '07	37	Lysterfield Lake Park	Lysterfield
8-24 Jul '07	2	Vista St	Bulleen
19 Jul '07	12	O'Grady Street	Clifton Hill
21 Jul '07	15-20	Ross Street	Surrey Hills
28 Jul '07	1	Deep Creek Drive	East Doncaster
10-11 Aug '07	3	Railway Line	Jordanville
24 Aug '07	1	Koonung Creek Reserve	North Balwyn
28 Aug '07	2	Andersons Creek Road	East Doncaster
	20+	Nortons Park	Wantirna South

## Brown Thornbill Sightings

Daily '07	4-6	Central Park Road	East Malvern
20 Aug '07	1	Deep Creek Drive	East Doncaster

## Song Thrush Sightings

Most months '07	1-4	Rushall Park	North Fitzroy
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## Other Sightings

Late Jan '07	Australian Hobby (1)	Moule Street	Brunswick
	Collared Sparrowhawk (1)		
Apr-Jul '07	Eastern Spinebill (2)	Botanic Gardens	Saint Kilda
22 May '07	Southern Boobook (1)	Mullum Mullum Creek	Templestowe
26 Jun '07	Striated Pardalote (1)	Moule Street	Brunswick
29 Jun '07	Eastern Spinebill (1)	Central Park Road	East Malvern
08 Jul '07	Eastern Spinebill (5)	Locksley Road	Ivanhoe
Early Jul '07	Eastern Spinebill (1)	Laverton Street	Williamstown
12 Jul '07	Laughing Kookaburra (4)	Braeside Park	Braeside
20 Jul '07	Australian Hobby (1)	Andrew Street	Oakleigh
21 Jul '07	Australian Wood Duck (2)	Andrew Street	Oakleigh
	Silvereye (24)	Andrew Street	Oakleigh
30 Jul '07	Spotted Pardalote (2)	Stafford Crt	East Doncaster
03 Aug '07	Gang-gang Cockatoo (6)	Bolton Park	Box Hill
12 Aug '07	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo (1)	Murray Road	Preston
16 Aug '07	Flame Robin (1)	Near Geddes Street	Mulgrave
20 Aug '07	Grey Fantail (1)	Almond Street	North Balwyn
	Australian King-Parrot (2)	Back Creek	Burwood
21 Aug '07	Galah (21)	Koonung Creek Reserve	North Balwyn
26 Aug '07	Gang-gang Cockatoo (1)	Koonung Creek Reserve	North Balwyn
	White-winged Triller (1)	Foreshore	Brighton

**Little Wattlebird.** Do you have this species in your garden or a park near you?

MELBOCA is examining the spread of the Little Wattlebird from the inner-city, coastal areas to the outer suburbs of Melbourne. MELBOCA welcomes your reports.

Information required: Observers name, Address, Date of record, Location of sighting (street, suburb), post code, Melway Ref, number of birds optional. How long have you noticed this species in your area? Eg. 1983

Forward info to: BOCA PO Box 185 Nunawading 3131 or Email: [info@melboca.org.au](mailto:info@melboca.org.au)

**Melbourne suburbs recorded so far where Little Wattlebirds have been observed. Is your suburb listed?**

Balwyn	Canterbury	Hawthorn East	North Fitzroy*
Balwyn North	Carlton North	Ivanhoe	Oakleigh*
Black Rock	Clifton Hill	Kew	Patterson Lakes
Blackburn	Doncaster	Langwarrin	Point Cook
Blackburn North*	Doncaster East	Lilydale	Reservoir
Blackburn South*	Elwood*	Lower Plenty	Richmond
Box Hill South	East Malvern*	Lwr Templestowe*	Saint Kilda
Brunswick*	Gembrook	Macleod	Ringwood*
Burwood	Glen Iris	Mont Albert Nth	South Melbourne
Camberwell	Glen Waverley	Mount Waverley	
Camberwell East	Greensborough	Newport	

\* Suburbs added July & August 2007

Please note that the above records cover the area within 60 km of the Melbourne GPO.

Refer to Melway Street Directory, Pages 1 & 2.

Graeme Hosken, Recorder

## *Spring Coach Tours*

### **Maryborough Area**

**Sat 13 October 2007**

Box Ironbark birding and spring wildflowers.

Fare per BOCA Member \$50.00

Non-members \$55.00

### **Wonthaggi Area**

**Sat 10 November 2007**

The attraction of heathland & coast, birding with Wesboc members at Powlett River or Cutlers Beach.

Fare per BOCA member \$45.00

Non-members \$50.00

#### **To book for Coach Tours**

Prepaid reservations only. Please post fare to BOCA, PO Box 185, Nunawading 3131, or for credit card bookings, phone Jenny on 03 9877 5342.

Late cancellations can be phoned in to the office, but for a refund, please confirm in writing.

A cancellation fee will be charged.

Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear sensible walking shoes. Don't forget your binoculars, hat, drinks & lunch. Extra baggage can be left safely on the bus when out walking.

Tours leave from outside the Hamer Hall (Melbourne Concert Hall), St Kilda Rd, Melbourne at 8.00 am sharp, returning approx 6.30 pm.

Melway Map 2F G7



### **Vale**

We are all saddened to learn of the death of Mrs Leslie Feather on 28 August 2007.

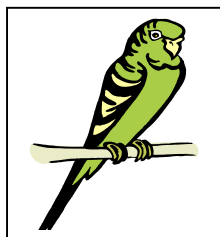
An enthusiastic member of MELBOCA, Leslie served on BOCA Council and was awarded a Life Membership for her contribution over many years as organiser and leader of camps, tours and tag-a-longs.

## **Let's Go Birdwatching**

A four part TV series "Let's Go Birdwatching" was recently aired on Community TV C31, commencing on Saturday 1 September 2007.

The series will be repeated as follows:

- Four consecutive Mondays at 3.00 pm starting 1 October
- Four consecutive Fridays at 9.00 am starting 5 October

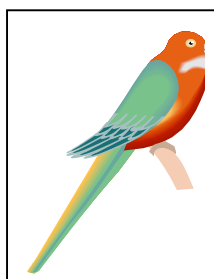


### **BOCA's 17th Annual Bird Week**

**October 21 – 28, 2007**

#### **"Parrots on Parade"**

Each year, BOCA sponsors educational activities to promote awareness of birds with the goal of inspiring all Australian birders to take action and get involved in bird conservation efforts. This year, the focus is on Australia's wealth of parrot species. Learn which birds are doing well, which birds need help – and what you can do to make a difference!



The Parrots on Parade Bird Week Kit is available from BOCA

National Office and the BOCA website. Let us know if you would like a kit so you too can join in the Bird Week celebration!

Contact Annette Cook, Education Coordinator, [a.cook@birdobservers.org.au](mailto:a.cook@birdobservers.org.au) or Tel: 9877 5342

#### **The Melbirdian Deadline**

Please submit articles for the December edition of *The Melbirdian* by 1 November 2007. Send to Jenny: [membership@birdobservers.org.au](mailto:membership@birdobservers.org.au) or post to PO Box 185, Nunawading VIC 3131

Dandenong Catchment Survey by BOCA (MELBOCA branch)

Jun – Aug 2007

Location No					Location No											
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4					
<b>Location:</b> 1: Frog Hollow Wetland, Endeavour Hills 2: Kilberry Boulevard, Hampton Park 3: River Gum Wetland, Hampton Park 4: South Golf Links Road, Narre Warren				Little Black Cormorant	X											
				Great Cormorant	X			X								
				Australian Pelican				X	X	X	X					
				White-faced Heron	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
				Great Egret	X						X					
				Australian White Ibis	X	X	X									
				Straw-necked Ibis	X	X										
				Black Kite											X	
				Purple Swamphen	X			X		X	X					
				Dusky Moorhen	X	X	X									
				Eurasian Coot	X			X		X	X					
				Latham's Snipe						X						
				<b>Date: June – August 2007</b>				Black-winged Stilt			X					
								Black-fronted Dotterel					X			
Red-kneed Dotterel										X						
Masked Lapwing	X							X								
<b>Melway Ref.</b>				Silver Gull			X									
				Rock Dove	X											
				Spotted Turtle-Dove	X	X	X									
				Crested Pigeon			X									
				Galah		X	X	X								
				Long-billed Corella										X		
				Little Corella	X											
				Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	X											
				Rainbow Lorikeet			X	X								
				Eastern Rosella			X									
				Superb Fairy-wren	X						X					
				Yellow Thornbill										X		
				Red Wattlebird	X	X	X	X								
								Noisy Miner			X					
White-plumed Honeyeater	X	X						X								
White-naped Honeyeater	X															
				New Holland Honeyeater	X	X										
				Magpie-lark	X	X	X	X								
				Willie Wagtail	X	X										
<b>Within 500 OR 5,000 m of a central point</b>				Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	X											
				Australian Magpie	X	X	X	X								
				Little Raven	X	X	X	X								
<b>No of persons:</b>				Singing Bushlark							X					
				House Sparrow	X											
Blue-billed Duck			X			X										
Black Swan	X		X	X	X		X		X	X						
Australian Wood Duck			X	X												
Pacific Black Duck	X	X	X	X			X		X							
Australasian Shoveler				X			X				X					
Grey Teal			X	X			X		X	X						
Chestnut Teal	X		X	X			X	X	X	X						
Hardhead	X		X				X	X	X	X						
Australasian Grebe	X		X													
Hoary-headed Grebe			X				X				X					
Darter	X			X												
Little Pied Cormorant	X	X	X	X												
				<b>FROGS</b>												
				Common Froglet	X		X	X								

**Total Species June – August 2007:**

<b>1: Frog Hollow Wetland, Endeavour Hills</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>2: Kilberry Boulevard, Hampton Park</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>3: River Creek Wetland, Hampton Park</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4: South Golf Links Road, Narre Warren</b>	<b>30</b>

**Progressive Total: 61**

*Entered: Graeme Hosken*