



# The Melbirdian

MELBOCA Newsletter Number 73  
Spring 2010



## That Really Sticks in My Crow!

Or Crop! On a recent trip to Lakes Entrance, Lisa Siciliano spotted this majestic Sea Eagle over the top reaches of Boggy Creek, near the Princess Highway overpass, Nowa Nowa.

On closer inspection, she noticed a large bulge near its throat.

Initially, Lisa was a bit worried. At first glance, the bulge looks like a nasty growth. But it is in fact more likely to be a full crop—food stored in the eagle's throat for its young.

Sea Eagle, like many birds, store food in a small pouch in the oesophagus. There it is pre-digested, either on its way to the stomach, or in order for it to be regurgitated later for its young. This pouch is known as the crop or crop.

*Photo by Lisa Siciliano,  
6 June 2010.*

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**Tuesday 24 August 2010 8:00pm**

**Paul Sinclair: "Remaking Connections between People and Nature"**

Dr Paul Sinclair is an expert on the Murray River system. Currently with the ACF, he is one of Australia's leading conservationists, often heard on radio and television. We are thrilled to have Paul as our speaker.

**Tuesday 26 October 2010 8:00pm**

**Will Steele: "Wetlands and Wetland Birds of South-Eastern Melbourne"**

Will is the Senior Wildlife and Wetlands Scientist with Melbourne Water and will present the results of the ongoing survey of south-eastern wetlands undertaken by MELBOCA. This is sure to be of great interest to all.

**Tuesday 28 September 2010 8:00pm**

**Grainne Maguire: "The Challenge of Protecting Beach-Nesting Birds"**

Grainne will speak about the vulnerability of our beach-nesting birds. We look forward to hearing about the measures being taken to protect nesting sites and how the public can assist.

**Tuesday 23 November 2010 8:00pm**

**Bruce and Sue Tardif: "What Role Can Friends Groups Play in the Conservation of Threatened Species"**

Bruce and Sue have a shared role as co-ordinators of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater for several years. We look forward to hearing more of the work undertaken to help this iconic species.

## MELBOCA Branch Meetings: Upcoming Guest Speakers

MELBOCA branch meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month (except December) in the Evergreen Centre, 45 Talbot Ave, Balwyn, not far from the library (Melway 46 E8). The meeting begins at 8:00pm and features a guest speaker and a Member's Topic segment. Entry is by a donation of \$4. Out-of-town members and visitors are always welcome!

## Past Meeting Reports

27 April 2010

A very good crowd gathered this autumnal evening to hear two passionate naturalists. After welcoming all, **Graeme Hosken** introduced **Chris Lester** and his Member's Choice topic, *Hummingbirds – A Passion?*

We departed for the Americas. Chris and his wife Rosemary's interest in hummingbirds started in Los Angeles, in 1992, when they saw Anna's Hummingbird.

On a 2000 trip to Ecuador, Chris notched up 50 new hummingbirds in a total of 700 species seen. He has been back to South America several times, and, in 2006, Rosemary joined him on a trip to Chile, north and south, where hummingbirds again featured amongst a vast number of new species. Later, in Peru, in the High Andes, many gardens had sugar bird feeders to attract nectar feeders; and as hummingbirds were in close photographic range, their tally and interest grew. At this point Rosemary decided that her quest was to see every species of hummingbird, so the Lesters have travelled extensively, trying to track down all of the approximately 341 species.

We followed their travels to Costa Rica and Columbia, and saw many bird treasures; my favourites, not least in name, were the Colourful Puffleg and Violet-crowned Woodnymph. The tiny hummingbirds are truly spectacu-

### “It was a group of birdwatchers which lobbied to have Hattah Lakes and Kulkyne declared a National Park”

lar, in plumage and name, like the Purple-throated Sunangel, and Chris is left wondering whether his own interest is a problem or indeed a passion.

Graeme then introduced **Murray Bouchier**. Murray has been a BOCA member for over 50 years, and was Vice President in the 1960s and 1970s. He belongs to Friends of French Island, and was a foundation member of VORG, the Victorian Ornithological Research Group. But his passion is the Mallee; the title of his talk was *Victoria's Dry Country – Journey through the North West*.

The Mallee, the dry country in the northwest, comprises 18% of Victoria, stretching from the Murray River to the Western Highway, and from the South Australian border to the longitude through Swan Hill. It is characterised by 11 species of eucalypt that grow from underground tubers, and are multi-stemmed. The summers are hot and dry, the winters mild and moist with frosts. The average rainfall is 14 inches in the south to 10 inches in the north. Settlers arrived in the 1840s and soon discovered that much of this country is unsuitable for agriculture.

Approximately one hundred years later, Murray, as a 14 year old, read an article in *Emu* by Howin Ross about the birds of the Sunset Country. This sparked his interest, and in September of 1955, Murray made his first trip to Hattah. He and a friend had arranged to stay with a beekeeper, Ben Eggleton, who met them with his car at the rail station at Hattah, which they had reached as dawn was breaking. The subsequent two weeks led, in Murray's case, to a

lifelong affliction, “Malleetis”. In the early days he made the journey two or three times a year, by train, never missing the highlight, Melbourne Cup weekend. Also, 50 years ago, one took a few souvenirs home, such as rocks, sand, timber and the occasional lizard, to make one's own diorama.

Murray entertained us with a cornucopia of excellent photographic slides and his memories. We saw what used to happen when flood water from the Murray River arrived via Chalker Creek, filling Lakes Lockie, Mournpall and Hattah, and all the small creeks would flow. Many old Red Gums show where the flood peaked in the 1950s. Whiskered Tern were common breeders, also Australasian Grebe, who cover their eggs when absent from the nest. At night, pelicans could be heard herding the plentiful fish, whilst Sea Eagle renovated the same nest for approximately 90 years, until it got too big and collapsed.

It was a group of birdwatchers which lobbied to have Hattah Lakes and Kulkyne declared a National Park. Fencing was erected to keep out the mobs of Red Kangaroo which also liked the habitat. Tree scars and human bones showed that the lakes had been inhabited by Aborigines; shellfish, lizards, snakes, roos and many species of birds and bird eggs would have made good tucker.

The old Kulkyne homestead had been built with local *Callitris* Pine logs, with a bark roof. It was familiar to Murray in the 1950s but was burnt down in the 1980s. Ben Eggleton became the first park ranger, building a hut to accommodate visitors. Murray took us on a tour of different habitats: claypans where Red-necked Avocet used to breed; lignum flats, loved by Spotted Bowerbirds; Lindrook Plain further west, a favoured haunt of parrots, chats and White-winged Wren; Murray-Sunset Country to see 3 species of woodswallow, the Southern Scrub-robin, Mallee Emu-wren and Malleefowl; and Raak Basin, samphire country and Henskey's Hut.

**Len Robinson**, in his vote of thanks, acclaimed the impressive photography, which was testament to Murray's passion and tenacity.

Graeme highlighted the BOCA AGM on 15 May 2010 and the MELBOCA AGM at the June meeting. **Janet Hand** related that she and **Annette Cook**, the Education Coordinator, are compiling a list of members' skills. She is also looking for volunteers to help later in the year as guides at Probus groups and the like.

After outing dates, shop interests and interesting sightings, **John Barkla** left us with the sorry news that approximately 50 Orange-bellied Parrots remain in the wild, and that they are destined to be extinct in 3-5 years. So hurry if you need to see one.

*Daphne Hards*

## Past Meeting Reports (cont'd)

25 May 2010

**John Young** was MC, and after welcoming a visitor and all present he invited **Sonja Ross**, of PhotoBOCA, to re-run her digital presentation, *Birds Need Trees*. In March, Sonja's Member's Choice segment was sabotaged by PC-Apple incompatibility, but this month we were able to enjoy the full-screen version. Sonja compiled some magnificent stills taken by members of PhotoBOCA, showing the various ways that trees feature in a bird's day. For food, perching and hunting, for shelter, caroling, preening, displaying and nesting. It featured a soundtrack sourced by John Stirling. The finale was a video of Gang Gangs in a tree at nursery feeding-time.

The main talk of the evening was given by **Jo Oldham**, who is Manager of the Shorebirds 2020 program. Jo studied at Adelaide and Flinders Universities and has worked in several conservation and environment positions. Her talk was titled *Birds Australia's Shorebirds 2020*. She began with some data on the biology of shorebirds. There are 210 wader species worldwide. In Australia we have 18 residents, 36 migratory species and 24 occasional visitors, all having various habitat preferences associated with the coast or wetlands. Daily movements of shorebirds are dependant on the tides, hence feeding and roosting patterns. The shape and size of the bill are linked to the availability of prey items. Birds with sensory receptors on the bill detect food items by feel, and this feeding behaviour is called the "sandpiper strategy"; birds which seek food by eye alone are said to use the "plover strategy". Mudflats are a vital resource for wader populations.

Resident species either stay within beach habitat, e.g., Hooded Plover, or are nomadic, such as Banded Stilt and Painted Snipe, which may occupy inland wetlands. Many species in Australia are migrants, and these travel on the East Asia-Australasian Flyway between Siberia and Australia/New Zealand. A total of five million birds and 55 species use this flyway annually. Of these, two to three million come to Australia, completing a round trip of approximately 24 000km in the year. After breeding in Siberia, China or Alaska in June/July, most adult birds head south, stopping at staging sites in East Asia to rest and feed, before continuing south. A study with Bar-tailed Godwits tracked one bird that flew non-stop from Alaska to New Zealand, covering close to 12 000km in eight days, and, amazingly, the young birds follow their parents some weeks later.

During the non-breeding season, birds feed furiously to increase their fat storage, and to achieve this their feeding organs enlarge. Before departure, the feeding organs decrease in size and their flight muscles increase. The heart increases in size, the blood thickens, moulting into breeding plumage begins and females store calcium for egg laying.

Departure time, usually February or March, depends on the length of flight and the climate of the destination. Arrival needs to be at the optimum time for food. Larger birds, like the Bar-tailed Godwit, can do long-haul flights, but smaller birds, such as stints, tend to island-hop. In flight,

they travel at an altitude of 2-3kms at up to 60kmph, often in V-shaped formation, making use of prevailing winds. Body changes reflect reduced fat stores. To navigate, it is thought that birds use a number of cues: the rotation of stars, the sun as a clock, magnetic direction and the memory of landmarks. Instinct must also play a role, since young birds leave after the adults.

Breeding occurs immediately after arrival in late May/early June, spread out over the tundra or boreal forests. Chicks emerge at peak insect abundance, and they are precocial, that is, they can feed themselves from birth. After six to eight weeks, birds return south, arriving exhausted, and engage in non-stop feeding for five to six months, until the cycle restarts.

The Australasian Wader Study Group began in 1981. After initial wide surveys, 30 sites have been monitored regularly by volunteers. The data has contributed to understanding the most important sites in Australia. World-wide studies have shown that shorebird numbers have experienced a 44% decline, and this highlights the need to look carefully at the East Asia-Australasian Flyway. 50% of the mudflats of the Yellow Sea have been reclaimed, notably the Saemangeum mudflats in South Korea, where about 200 000 Australasian waders used to rest. Moreover, China is to build a huge port in Bo Hai Bay, which will engulf 40 000sqkm of mudflats favoured by Red Knot. This is where Australia's coal and iron ore will be unloaded. Threats to habitat are also close to home: draining of wetlands, drought, agriculture, human disturbance, climate change, introduced predators, invasive weeds and pollutants.

Shorebirds 2020 was developed in 2007 to collect data to more readily understand the status of shorebirds in Australia. The main objectives are to track population trends, to increase the counting sites nationally, to train more spotters, increase community awareness and collect and collate data which can influence better outcomes for shorebirds. The program relies on dedicated volunteers, and much work has been put into their support, such as improving counting methods, mapping count locales, database management and online data entry, and workshops.

The Shorebirds 2020 website has been developed to provide easy access to lots of useful information. The address is [www.shorebirds.org.au](http://www.shorebirds.org.au). The project is supported by Birds Australia and the Australasian Wader Study Group, with funding from federal Caring for Our Country grants.

Data collected so far have shown that there is a marked decline of shorebirds in southern Australia. To get national trends, counting needs to occur at more sites, particularly inland and in the north, but this is difficult to achieve. The goal is to survey 113 sites for five years to get a clear picture of population trends for 26 shorebird species. To achieve this, there needs to be consistency in yearly counts and site location. Already low numbers of Great

*Past Meeting Reports continued on page 8*



## Beginners Outings

### Cranbourne Botanic Gardens

24 April 2010

Despite a dismal weather forecast and overnight wind and rain, 24 members assembled at the Stringybark Car Park in fine conditions. As we reached the picnic area, Dusky Woodswallow were observed, both flying and perching close together on the higher branches. Several Crested Shrike-tit were also clearly seen in the trees over and alongside the path. Golden Whistler and Eastern Yellow Robin were among other birds enjoyed in the early stages of the walk.

A lone male Koala, roused from his slumbers, also provided good opportunities for the many keen photographers in the group. As we left the bush for the open pastureland, several Flame Robin were sighted, the males brightening up the overcast sky. A large flock of European Goldfinch were also active in the area. The water level in the lakes was low, but still supported a few species, such as Australasian Grebe and Purple Swamphen. A dead Copperhead Snake reminded us to be cautious. After crossing the bridge, we had good views of Tasmanian Silvereyes feeding in a Kangaroo Apple bush. A Kestrel and another larger raptor, which was not identified, were then seen.

After lunch we drove to the Australian Garden car park where red-flowering gums were alive with nectar-eating birds, particularly New Holland Honeyeater and Red and Little Wattlebirds. Bell Miner were seen in a colony just over the fence. It is interesting that they no longer inhabit the Stringybark Picnic Area. We then walked up to the Trig Lookout where we enjoyed 360 degree views. A short walk to the Woodlands Picnic Area produced few birds, probably due to recent fuel reduction burns. We finished the day at the entrance to the Australian Garden, where everyone agreed it had been a most enjoyable outing.

### Pound Bend

22 May 2010

On a cold misty morning, 30 members were greeted by White-winged Choughs, five parrot species and a lone Koala as we assembled in the car park. Passing Eastern Grey Kangaroo and Swamp Wallaby, we started off along the river track. A sharp-eyed observer spotted a family of Tawny Frogmouth some distance off the track and we were able to approach through the bush and get a close view. A pair of Fantail Cuckoo making very different calls, one the usual chirring and the other a soft whistle, were clearly seen by everyone and created much discussion between the experienced members and the beginners. A Brown Goshawk and a perched male Darter were other highlights along the river where, by now, the sun had broken through the mist to provide near perfect bird-watching conditions.

We followed the footpath across the paddock to the ridge track where we saw more of the expected bush birds and had a good view of a Wedge-tailed Eagle floating majestically across the sky. As we hit a hot-spot, due to unsea-

sonally flowering Yellow Box trees, the shout of "Scarlet Honeyeater" went up. Others quickly confirmed the sighting and beginners were able to see an immature male picking its way through the blossom. Initial enquiries suggest that this was a first for Pound Bend.

Those who stayed for lunch witnessed one member having her sandwich stolen dramatically from her hand by an opportunistic swooping Kookaburra. A leisurely stroll down the river in the opposite direction to the morning walk enabled us to see an adult wombat, doing nothing in particular, across on the other bank of the river. Shortly after, an Azure Kingfisher was seen flying up the river, and several members were lucky enough to get a look at it perched low on a tree before it flew off again. A visit to the Pound Bend tunnel completed a most satisfying excursion. Many thanks to all participants for their excellent spotting, resulting in a total of 43 species for the day.

### O'Donohue Picnic Ground, Sherbrooke Forest

26 June 2010

Seventeen members and guests travelled through rain and swirling cloud to reach O'Donohue Picnic Ground, high in Sherbrooke Forest. Fortunately, the venue was just above cloud level, making perfect conditions for a winter Lyrebird walk. Recent rains had reinvigorated the Mountain Ash-dominated rainforest, which was lush with fern and fungi species.

Male Lyrebird songs echoed tantalisingly through the tree ferns as we walked to Sherbrooke Falls. Eastern Yellow Robin were much in evidence whilst a hot-spot near the falls gave good sightings of White-throated Treecreeper, Grey Fantail and Brown Thornbill. The highlight was yet to come as we worked our way back round the track towards the Sherbrooke Picnic Area. An Olive Whistler appeared ahead on the track, where it obligingly stayed whilst all of us had excellent views and photographers got their pictures. Shortly afterward, an Eastern Whipbird emerged at head height, quietly feeding in the trackside bushes, affording good views for all. These two sightings not only gave beginners an unforgettable experience, but also gave some of the more seasoned birdos a better look than ever before. King Parrot and Crimson Rosella shone in the last of the brightness as the rain finally set in on approach to our parked cars.

After a hasty bird call, those staying for lunch drove the short distance to the George Tinsdale Gardens where we ate in a gazebo on the aptly named "Hazel's Haven" path. After lunch, six hardy hunters continued the quest for a Lyrebird sighting at nearby Grant's Picnic Ground. Again we heard but didn't see, until we followed our ears down Neuman Track where a short off-track gave us the long-awaited sighting of a very vocal male in all his glory. It was a fitting finale to a great day birding in the rainforest.

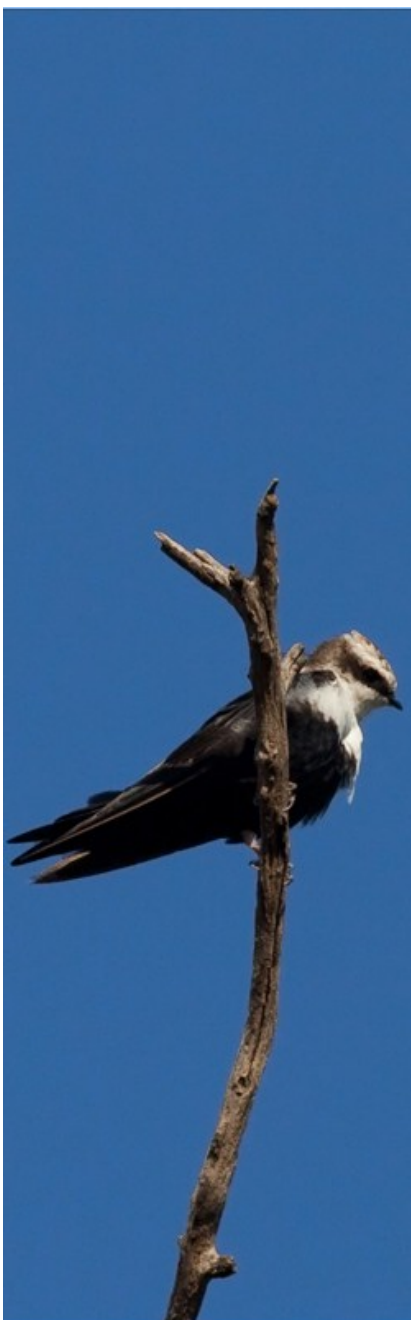
*Beginner's Outings Continued on page 12*

## Education Report

The year started slowly but is about to get very busy.

Blackburn Lake has been the location of two very successful education activities. Barbara Longmuir led a fantastic Breakfast with the Birds there on 17 April, with about 24 people attending, and, on 23 May, Diane Tweeddale and I ran a Stickybeaks Day in the Information Centre. We had nearly 25 children and adults take part in activities that afternoon. It was a lovely sunny day and a local school had set a bird watching activity for the Reserve. Parents came in to ask where do you find such-and-such and then joined in the fun too.

By the time this report is published, Graeme Hosken will have given a talk to the Friends of Scotsman's Creek, and I will have given one to the Friends of the (Plenty) Gorge. Both are about the birds people are likely to find within their area. I am also booked to speak to the Ringwood Garden Club in late August.



White-backed Swallow – Photo by Sonja Ross, Hattah Kulkynne National Park.

### Now I need your help at ...

Stickybeaks Day at Blackburn Lake on Sunday 29 August, 2:00pm to 4:00pm.

Australian Plants Society (Yarra Yarra Group) at Eltham Community Centre, 10 to 12 September. We are having an information table and I need help during that time. Can you spare an hour or two?

Australian Bird Fair at Leeton, NSW, 16 to 19 September. BOCA runs a schools Education Activities Day on the Friday and an Information Tent on Saturday and Sunday. Would love to hear from anyone in Leeton at that time able to assist.

Breakfast with the Birds at Banyule. Sunday 24 October at 7:30am. I need volunteer leaders (and telescope educators) for this day. This activity was started in 1999 by the late John Kirton and BOCA has worked with Banyule City Council each year since.

Janet Hand

MELBOCA Education Officer

(03) 9842 4177 or [info@melboca.org.au](mailto:info@melboca.org.au)

## MELBOCA Photography Group Outing to Serendip

**Saturday 19 June 2010**

We met in the car park at Serendip and had a quick drink and chat before going in. As it was a large group, which is inconvenient for photography, we broke into smaller groups, changing members over the morning as people lingered and others moved on.

The ducks near the entry were nice and close for those with compact cameras, and even those with longer lenses concentrated on the Pink-eared Duck.

The White-winged Choughs were dust-bathing/sunbathing, and some members got quite dramatic photos.

A young Brolga provided some amusement as he checked out his mother's tail feathers.

Hannah managed to get a fairly sharp shot of a small raptor as it flew over, and we crowded round to see, agreeing it was a Collared Sparrowhawk.

Anthea's sharp eyes noticed some pellets on the ground near a large tree. Looking carefully up from all angles, we eventually saw a Tawny Frogmouth trying hard to look like a part of the wood.

It was coolish but sunny for lunch, and

several of us enjoyed great views of a Spotted Pardalote above as we munched on our sandwiches.

From there, most of us continued on to The You Yangs. Unfortunately we didn't see Swift Parrot near the entry, but did have great views of a Purple-crowned Lorikeet enjoying the late sunshine at the top of a bare branch.

Most of us continued to the Toynes Road area, where we saw two Wedge-tailed Eagles on the ground, patiently waiting for a ewe to move away from her dead lamb.

A walk along the fence line strung the group out, with some enjoying the sight of three Jacky Winters sitting together on a log.

White-backed Swallow was called and we all hurried down, asking where, and then saw the bird hawking insects in the paddock with Welcome Swallow and Tree Martin. Some saw two, but others only one as they were diverted by the sight of several male Flame Robins glowing in the green grass of the paddock. Led by Merrilyn Serong.

Sonja Ross

## Interesting Sightings

### Field Note Reports – Entered 16 July 2010

The following MELBOCA Field Note Reports were received from members attending the MELBOCA monthly meetings held at Balwyn in April, May and June 2010, and email and web reports to MELBOCA.

The report includes **White-plumed Honeyeater**, **Eastern Spinebill**, **Bell** and **Noisy Miner** sightings within 40km Melbourne, plus other Field Reports.

MELBOCA is very interested in the apparent disappearance of the **White-plumed Honeyeater** from the Melbourne suburbs. Is this the case in your area and, if so, are **Noisy Miner** present? We would also like to know if **Eastern Spinebill** visit your garden.

Barry Clarris of Donvale has indicated that Eastern Spinebills have been regular visitors to his garden over the past 25 years and enjoy feeding in the many grevilleas and correas.

White-plumed Honeyeater		
25 Apr. 2010 (22)	Parkville	3052
15 May 2010 (7)	Blackburn Lake .	3130
18 May 2010 (1)	Elwood	3184
03 Jun. 2010 (2)	Blackburn Lake	3130
Eastern Spinebill		
15 May 2010 (1)	Blackburn Lake	3130
Noisy Miner		
25 Apr. 2010 (7)	Parkville	3052
18 May 2010 (1)	Elwood	3184

### Bell Miner Sightings

The Department of Sustainability and Environment has received reports that **Bell Miner** numbers are reducing or have vacated areas they have occupied for many years. To assist DSE, MELBOCA is asking members to provide the following information:

1. Details of existing colonies (eg Date, Suburb, Melway reference and, if possible, how long the colony has occupied the area);
2. Details of colonies that have disappeared from their normal location. Details as above, Date, Suburb, etc.

Several years ago, BOCA conducted a similar survey in the Melbourne area, but only recorded where Bell Miner

were located. It will be interesting to compare the records.

#### Existing Bell Miner Colonies

All year	Maribyrnong River	Avondale Heights Mel: 26 C 7
All year	Yarra River	Hawthorn Mel: 44 J 8

#### Vacated Bell Miner Colonies

Mt Eliza	Mel: 106 E 4
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Information may be directed to MELBOCA on email at [info@melboca.org.au](mailto:info@melboca.org.au).

### Tawny Frogmouth Study – Request for Sightings

A request has been received from Marian Weaving, a student doing a PhD at Deakin University, who is investigating the ecology and behaviour of the Tawny Frogmouth. Specifically, how the Tawny Frogmouth is impacted and affected by varying levels of urbanisation.

The research includes species distribution, genetic fitness, reproductive behaviour, home range and calling behaviour. The study is contained within the eastern suburbs in a general square from Doncaster (NW), Kangaroo Ground (NE), Wantirna (SE) and Mt Waverley (SW).

If any MELBOCA members know of Tawny Frogmouth who live in the area stated, could they please contact Marian either by email: [mweaving@deakin.edu.au](mailto:mweaving@deakin.edu.au) or by telephone : 0438 315 333.

If contacting by email, please include your phone number.

Thankyou for your assistance.

Graeme Hosken  
President MELBOCA



Tawny Frogmouth on nest – Photo, Anthea Fleming



## Interesting Sightings (Cont'd)

### Other Sightings

Date	Sighting	Street/Location	Suburb
03 Apr. 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (16)		Mordialloc
03 Apr. 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (100) (RBG)		South Yarra
04 Apr. 2010	Scarlet Robin (1)		Yellingbo
04 Apr. 2010	Red-capped Robin (1)	Western Treatment Plant	Werribee
04 Apr. 2010	White-bellied Sea-Eagle (4)	Western Treatment Plant	Werribee
04 Apr. 2010	Brolga (4)	Western Treatment Plant	Werribee
06 Apr. 2010	Yellow-tailed black-Cockatoo (5)	St Andrews Drive	Chirnside Park
07 Apr. 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (7)	Ruffey Lake (feeding on Hakea nuts.)	East Doncaster
07 Apr. 2010	Pied Currawong (1)	Kooyong Road	Armadale
16 Apr. 2010	Southern Boobook (1)	Frog Hollow Wetland	Endeavour Hills
17 Apr. 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (15) (RBG)		South Yarra
25 Apr. 2010	Black Swan (2) only recorded at site once before	Trin Warra Tamboore, Royal Park	Parkville
28 Apr. 2010	Rose Robin (1) recorded on Wednesday Wanderings outing	Yarra River	Fairfield
28 Apr. 2010	Scarlet Honeyeater (1)	Banyule Flats	View Bank
27 Apr., 3-5 May 2010	Scarlet Honeyeater (1)	La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary	Bundoora
03 May 2010	Grey Goshawk (White phase) (1)	Petty's Orchard	Templestowe
15 May 2010	Scarlet Honeyeater (1)	Blackburn Lake	Blackburn
25 May 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (50+)		Mt Martha
25 May 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (50+)	Chapel Street	Prahan
27 May 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (15)	Byson Street	Canterbury
28 May 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (20)	Orivietto Street	North Coburg
28 May 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (100+)		Mt Martha
02 Jun. 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (100+)		Mt Martha
03 Jun. 2010	Scarlet Honeyeater (3)	Blackburn Lake	Blackburn
23 Jun. 2010	Brown Falcon (1)	100 Steps to Federation	Altona Meadows
27 Jun. 2010	Scarlet Honeyeater (1)	Darebin Creek	West Heidelberg
All Jun. 2010	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (large nos)		Frankston
01 Jul. 2010 (07.30hr)	Nankeen Night-Heron (1)	Between Yarra River and Flinders St Station	Melbourne
10 Jul. 2010 (13.00hr)	Nankeen Night-Heron (2)	Between Yarra River and Flinders St Station	Melbourne

### Backyard Birds!

I have modified a proforma used for the recording of species seen on MELBOCA Outings for entering your sighting records, now titled, 'Backyard Birds'.

The following information is requested:

Name, Site Name, From Date, Abundance, Status, Breeding, Habitat

If you don't want to include info on the latter four items, a cross will do beside the species seen.

Forms may be obtained by one of the following methods:

- 1 Forward your request to [info@melboca.org.au](mailto:info@melboca.org.au) and I shall return the required documents by return email.
- 2 Contact me on 9802 5250 and I shall post the documents to you.
- 3 The **Backyard Birds** proforma may be found on the MELBOCA Website [www.melboca.org.au](http://www.melboca.org.au).

Since January 2010, a combined total of 142 species have been recorded.

The following species are in addition to the species listed on the proforma: Fork-tailed Swift, Barking Owl, Stubble Quail and Australian Koel.

Not included in the combined total are the following species, presumed escapees:

Cockatiel, Red-collared Lorikeet now grouped with the Rainbow Lorikeet, Red-winged Parrot, Budgerigar, Zebra Finch and Canary.

Good luck!

Records Received		
Location	Sp. No.	From
Doncaster	61	Jan 2006
Ivanhoe	20	Oct 2009

## Past Meeting Reports (cont'd)

Knot and Curlew Sandpiper have caused Birdlife International to raise their status to vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Attention is being given to shorebird sites in Australia. Whereas the number of shorebirds at a site has to be greater than 20 000 for that site to be designated "significant" by international standards, in Australian policy this number is reduced to 2000. Hence many smaller sites have been deemed nationally significant, and worthy of protection. Volunteers are encouraged to report on disturbance, threats and habitat change. Later in this year, Shorebirds 2010 plans to conduct identification workshops at Werribee and Westport, events for all interested.

Jo also gave an update on the Geolocator Trials initiated by the Victorian Wader Study Group and the Australasian Wader Study Group. A geolocator records light levels, and from this information its geographical position can be located. It weighs 1.1 gram and is attached to a bird's leg. To retrieve the data, the bird has to be recaptured. In 2009, geolocators were attached to eight Ruddy Turnstone. Four were recaptured at Flinders after their migration. They had travelled north via Taiwan to northern Siberia. One bird returned via Korea. Another bird returned south via the western-central Pacific, calling in at the Aleutian Islands, the Gilbert Islands, eastern Australia and then to Flinders. A total migration distance of 20 000km. With this success, geolocators have been attached to Ruddy Turnstone, Greater Sand Plover, and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and Shorebirds 2020 with its partner Deakin University are awaiting results.

Jo gave credit to all the volunteers involved, and **David Plant**, in thanking Jo, acknowledged his early difficulties with identifying waders, and remarked on Jo's well prepared talk, packed with information.

**Janet Hand** reported on Education events. She is looking for more help with future programs. **Graeme Hosken** reported on past outings, results of the National Challenge Count, and took members' Interesting Sightings. John highlighted future outings and then drew the meeting to a close.

*Daphne Hards*

### 22 June 2010

A chilly winter solstice did not deter a large crowd from gathering. **Graeme Hosken** chaired the evening and welcomed two new members and several visitors. The evening began with MELBOCA's AGM, with all the retiring committee returned unopposed. There is a vacancy on the committee if anyone would like to participate.

Graeme then welcomed **Dr David Hollands** to give his talk: *Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars of Australia*. David did his medical training in England and came to Australia in 1961. Two years later, he and his wife moved to a practice in Orbost in south-eastern Victoria, and remain there to this day. At age eight, David first got interested in bird photography. In 1970, he began writing to accompany his

photography, and this led to his first book, *Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of Australia*. Six years ago, *Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars of Australia* was published.

Beginning with owls, David described their two genera: *Ninox*, comprising Powerful Owl, Rufous Owl, Barking Owl, Southern Boobook, and Christmas Island Hawk-Owl; and *Tyto*, which includes Barn Owl, Masked Owl, Grass Owl and the Lesser Sooty and Sooty Owls. In the 1980s, David studied five pairs of Powerful Owl in Central Victoria, all territories which are now deserted. Radio tracking has shown their hunting range to be 2000-3000 hectares. Their preferred roost is a secluded open tree with cover. The chicks are snowy white and downy, and depart the nest site at fledging.

The Rufous Owl is a close relative of the Powerful Owl and almost as big. It has a mean streak, occasionally menacing and even attacking people. David studied them near Ingham, Queensland, with his associate, John Young. Here, the diet of Red Flying Fox was plentiful. Moths are also taken. The Rufous Owl chicks are white with darker mottled wings and crown. Accidents happen – a chick sometimes falls from the nest. David saw the parents of such a chick watch over it until it was strong enough to fly to a safe branch.

The Southern Boobook has three subspecies: *boobook*, which is common in the south-east, *ocellata* inland and to the west, and the Red Boobook, *lurida*, in north-east Queensland. Subspecies *ocellata* is a paler bird than the familiar southern bird, and *lurida* is much darker. David had photographs to demonstrate that young owls have difficulty judging distance. Besides bobbing their heads, they can also twist them so that their eyes are vertically aligned – a very skew-whiff appearance.

The Christmas Island Hawk-Owl lives in tropical forests. With trees between 150 and 180 feet high, this poses great challenges to the photographer.

David photographed Barking Owl near Chiltern, Victoria, and found that it, too, does not like people. It is a powerful bird and can easily take rabbits. Working with Rod Kavanagh, David found a stronghold of Barking Owl in the Piliga Scrub, New South Wales, where there were approximately 20 pairs.

In the *Tyto* genus, the Barn Owl of Australia differs from those in the rest of the world. David took shots at night using an infrared sensor beam to trigger the flash and shutter release. One bird learnt that its approach to the nest set off the flash, and changed its approach to avoid the sensor beam.

Masked Owl inhabit the east coast from the tip of Cape York to Tasmania. The northern birds closely resemble the Barn Owl except the eye ring is sharper. Moving southward, the owls are darker, and, interestingly, the chicks can be of different colour morphs. Masked Owl in Tasmania are bigger and darker again, with dark shading of the facial disc.

Grass Owl also occupy the east coast fringe, but their fa-



## Past Meeting Reports (cont'd)

voured habitat is the grasslands of north-east Queensland. Here their habitat has contracted due to sugar cane production. Since they nest on the ground, their eggs are vulnerable to predators.

Contrary to current science, in David's view the Lesser Sooty and Sooty Owls are distinct species, differing in call, weight and colour. The Sooty Owl is a darker grey and can weigh up to 1200 grams, compared to 450 grams for the Lesser Sooty Owl. The stronghold of the Sooty Owl is the New England plateau. David took particular interest in a nest in the Jenolan Caves, west of Sydney. The nest is in a cavity at the top of an inclined tunnel. Below the base of the tunnel is a pile of pellets, which analysis has shown to contain prey items such as Rufous Bettong and White-footed Rabbit-rat that have been absent from the area for centuries. Carbon dating shows that the bottom layer to be at least 20 000 years old.

The frogmouths display subtle differences. In northern Queensland, the Tawny and the Papuan Frogmouths occupy the same range; the eyes of the former are golden whereas those of the latter are brick red. The Marbled Frogmouth has such an impressive camouflage that it is almost impossible to see when perched.

David calls the Australian Owlet Nightjar the "nocturnal Willie Wagtail" because it buzzes around after moths. The White-throated Nightjar roosts and nests on the ground,

surviving, again, by dint of its remarkable camouflage. It favours dry ridge habitat. The Spotted Nightjar is an inland bird, where its rufous plumage is difficult to discern against red soil. Lastly, the Long-tailed Nightjar occupies the margins of tropical rainforest in northern Queensland.

All the birds were photographed at the nest, and David showed us how these images were achieved. John Young builds a hide high in the canopy, level with a nest, sometimes 100 feet above the ground. Using various lines fired aloft, a steel cable ladder is set in place. John climbs up and is supplied with poles by means of a pulley, and using nails and hammer he constructs a platform, then adds a hessian cover. When complete, David clambers up – we were assured it is not easy – and sets up his camera and sensor. The vigil can be a few hours or all night.

David has also worked with Rowan Bilney whose PhD study was on the Powerful, Masked and Sooty Owls of East Gippsland. In order to do radio tracking and pellet analysis, Rowan erected a 10 by 20 foot net, and lured owls in by playing their call. David gave credit to all the help he received over many years.

**Len Robinson** gave the vote of thanks; thanks for an enthralling talk with dazzling photographs from a breathtaking height.

*Daphne Hards*

## Outing Report: Lillydale Lake, Lilydale

**May 11, 2010**

The forecast was for wind, showers, hail and thunder, but enthusiasm saw 18 members set off under the leadership of Elsmaree Baxter. As is often the case, birding from the car park was very good and included, among the usual suspects, Australian Wood Duck, Australian Magpie, Noisy Miner, Galah and Little Raven. Also observed were Cattle Egret, Crested Pigeon and Australian White Ibis. Walking counter-clockwise around the lake, we were again impressed by its popularity with so many classes of people – walkers, joggers, dog walkers, fishers and model yacht sailors were joined by a group of rugged-up bird-watchers.

Welcome Swallow, Australasian Darter, Purple Swamphen, Little Pied Cormorant and Pacific Black Duck were seen immediately. We tried to ignore the Northern Mallard and its domestic hybrids which were clearly used to surreptitious feeding. The banks yielded Dusky Moorhen, Masked Lapwing and Silver Gull while a lone Black-shouldered Kite hovered over the water.

The bush at the northern end added Crimson Rosella, Laughing Kookaburra and White-plumed and New Holland Honeyeaters. Small birds were represented by Superb Fairy-wren colonies flitting among the reed beds and thornbills in the trees. Initially Brown then later Striated and Yellow Thornbills were listed, the last characteristi-

cally in wattles. A lone Grey Butcherbird posed on a dead tree beside the track.

Along the Olinda track the venerable elms carried bright mosses on their wide trunks following the wet weather. Here, a Grey Currawong probed into eucalyptus bark and clearly managed to find and eat several small prey items. A pair of Black Swan were observed at the same time as the thornbills, which nicely gave both ends of the size spectrum for the day. Near the swans, a mixed raft of Eurasian Coot and Australasian Grebe had found something worth their attention.

Lunch beckoned with a welcome rest and the pleasant realisation that the weather had done no more than the occasional spit of rain. After lunch, it was on to the south-eastern wetlands where a shorter circular walk added Chestnut Teal and Little Black Cormorant, with Grey Shrike-thrush and Common Bronzewing in the scanty undergrowth. Flocks of Straw-necked and Australian White Ibis probed the paddocks.

Bird call when we returned to the cars totalled 51 species and we thanked Elsmaree for showing us so comprehensively the different areas and the bird life of the reserve.

*Diane Tweeddale*  
Convenor MELBOCA Weekdays Outings

## Outing Report: Devilbend

30 June 2010

Twelve intrepid members from Penboc and MELBOCA braved a cold, cloudy morning. We headed off along the tracks around the main reservoir, only to discover that some recent pine tree eradication had reduced said tracks to wet, muddy bogs. Most of us had chosen gumboots and waterproof boots, so we ploughed on. Thornbills, Striated and Brown, were active, but not a lot of birds could be seen. As we "paddled" along, we passed a small dam, with a Little Pied Cormorant drying its wings, some Australian Wood Duck and Pacific Black Duck.

The ground became wetter and swamp-like as we approached the main reservoir. A White-eared Honeyeater looked golden in the emerging sunlight. We then spotted the resident Sea Eagle soaring over the water. It came quite close overhead, which made the photographers amongst us happy. Not much was seen on the choppy water, but Musk Duck, Black Swan, and Australasian Grebe were spotted. The coots were not in evidence but we ticked Masked Lapwing.

Walking the shoreline, we had a lovely view of a hovering and swooping Nankeen Kestrel, and, in the distance, a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles were circling high on the stiff breeze. We headed away from the dam, tip-toeing through puddles and mud, with many Grey Fantail making an appearance. We saw Galah, New Holland Honeyeater, White-browed Scrubwren, Grey Butcherbird and a superb male Golden Whistler. Superb Fairy-wren flitted across the track, and some other birds, such as a Laughing

Kookaburra were heard. We headed back to our parking spot and had a brief look at the Bittern Reservoir, where we saw Black-fronted Dotterels.

We found a sunny, dry place to set up for lunch, but soon someone detected a Peregrine Falcon sitting in a bare tree overlooking the reservoir. The photographers set off again! The photos revealed that it had three bands on its legs, two green and one black/grey. It eventually took off, and we completed our bird-call and lunch. A total of 40 birds. Thanks to Val for hosting the MELBOCA members on your patch. We were very lucky that the rain held off, and we had some sunshine to enjoy the walk.

Pam's photo (right) was forwarded to Victor Hurlley, Peregrine Falcon researcher and president of the Australasian Raptor Association. He responded: "*Could just make out the two letters on the band. Nice photo.*"



*It is a male I banded as a chick in 2008 at the Moorooduc Flora and Fauna reserve. It has moved ~10km S in about 2yrs 8 mo. I hope it can lead us to the nest site at Devilbend. Have always thought they must breed there somewhere..."*

*Photo and report courtesy of Pam Hearn (Penboc)*

## Outing Report: Birdsland Reserve, Belgrave Heights

16 June 2010

The forecast was for "gales with rain developing", but that didn't deter 23 birdwatchers from assembling in the car park. Ken Baker led us, with the species noted from the start, including Noisy Miner, Galah, Australian Wood Duck and Crimson Rosella. King Parrot was a highlight for most in the car park. The calls of Laughing Kookaburra, Australian Magpie and Rainbow Lorikeet were also joined by the twitters of Welcome Swallow.

A short walk to the lake yielded the expected waterbirds – Eurasian Coot, Dusky Moorhen (with well-developed young) and Purple Swamphen. Photographers were delighted with a young Australasian Darter posing very close to the bank. Others cooed over the fluffy Australasian Grebe warming their rear ends in the intermittent sunshine. Little Pied and Little Black Cormorant also attracted photographers, perching on branches above the bank. The fish population must have been healthy to judge by the number of darters and cormorants, as well as a couple of human fishermen. Eastern Spinebill was heard and finally seen, while one area yielded both Striated and Brown Thornbills with Grey Fantail in a mixed foraging flock. A Northern Mallard X Domestic hybrid was dubbed "Dinner", but went on its way unconcerned.

Away from the water, we heard Superb Fairy-wren among the bracken, while New Holland Honeyeater perched more co-operatively, in full view on the top of a dead tree. Silvereye were also more heard than seen, and their high-pitched calls challenged the hearing of many.

Heading to the more open country, we encountered what was for most of us the highlight of the walk. A pair of Wedgetail Eagle soared above. One was observed to descend in a stoop, but apparently without success. Here, a Whistling Kite also soared, but it was harassed by a pair of Little Raven with a pair of Galah in close (interested?) attendance. Later, a Whistling Kite was being attacked by a pair of Masked Lapwing. Another raptor for the day's list was a pair of Nankeen Kestrel which yielded marvellously close views while hovering. All these raptors were present in close proximity at the same time.

Heading back, we encountered a White-throated Tree-creeper and a male Chestnut Teal, both of which were rather challenging to see. Despite the somewhat unfavourable conditions, final bird call listed 47 species. We were extremely grateful to Ken for his preparation which had given us such a good day's birding.

*Diane Tweeddale  
Convenor MELBOCA Weekdays Outings.*

## Dates to remember

### Weekday Outings (Contact Diane, 03 9836 8692)

#### Wed. 1 Sept. – Woods Bushland Reserve, Tuerong

10:00am to 3:00pm (Mel 152 E6). Leader Joan Peters. From Mornington Peninsula Fwy take Old Moorooduc Rd and immediately turn into Tuerong Rd. At T-intersection, turn right into Derril Rd then right into Woodlands Rd. Park at the end. Nearest toilets at Devilbend Reservoir picnic area (Mel 152 J3). All welcome, no need to book. Bushbirds.

#### Mon. 27 Sept. – Long Forest Reserve and Lake Merrimu

10:00am to 3:00pm (Mel 329 C11). Leader Graeme Hosken. From Western Hwy take Long Forest Rd to Canopus Circuit. Beware traffic on hwy turn. Reserve entrance is on Canopus Circuit. Park by entrance and on road. Nearest toilets at Merrimu Reservoir picnic area (Mel 328 J6). All welcome, no need to book. Bush and waterbirds.

#### Tue. 19 to Wed. 20 October 2010 – 2-day overnight Outing to Anglesea area. Arrange own accommodation

Leader Leonie Robbins. Mel 514 F7. Meet at the beach/river car park near toilets at 1:30pm Tuesday and 8:30am Wednesday. Convoy driving to different locations. Bring afternoon tea and picnic dinner for Tuesday and morning tea and picnic lunch for Wednesday. Final birdcall about 2:00pm Wednesday at Ironbark Basin picnic area. All welcome, no need to book. Bush and waterbirds.

### Birdwalk at Yellingbo Reserve (Contact Maryanne, 0402 283 080)

#### First Sunday of the month (5 September; 3 October; 7 November; 5 December)

Take Warburton Hwy to Woori Yallock and turn right to Yellingbo. At Yellingbo, turn right towards Seville, then left into Macclesfield Rd. After 2.5km, turn right at large pine trees. Gate opens at 10:00am. Walk starts at 10:30am. On-site toilets available. Bring lunch and gumboots. Mel 305 G11.

### Wednesday Wanderings (Contact Celia, 03 5982 1314)

#### Wed. 22 Sept. – Yarra Bend Park/Walmer St, Kew

9:45am (Mel 2D F10). Park near Sir Arthur Rylah Oval off Walmer Street, Kew. Toilets on site. A walk down Walmer Street towards Yarra Bend Park and the Capital City Trail. BYO picnic lunch and chairs.

#### Wed. 27 Oct. – Kevin Bartlett Reserve, Burnley

9:45am (Mel 59 B1). Toilet on site. A shortish walk through a revegetated area then upstream along the Yarra. BYO picnic lunch and chairs.

#### Wed. 24 Nov. – Bird Survey on Herring Island, South Yarra/Toorak

9:45am (Mel 2M C3). Meet at Como Landing at 9:45am for a 10:00am river crossing. Carry lunch. Toilets on island. Walk finishes approx. 2:00pm.

### Beginners Outings (Contact Hazel, info@melboca.org.au)

#### Sat. 28 Aug. – Yellow Gum Park, Plenty

10:00am (Mel 10 F5). Meet in the car park.

#### Sat. 25 Sept. – Karwarra Australian Plant Garden, Kalorama

1:00pm (Mel 120 B9). Meet in the car park by the entrance. The garden is behind the sports oval at Kalorama Park.

#### Sat. 23 Oct. – 100 Acres Reserve, Park Orchards

10:00am (Mel 35 E9). Meet in the car park to the right at Domeney Reserve, Knees Road)

MELBOCA branch meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month (except December) in the Evergreen Centre, 45 Talbot Ave, Balwyn, not far from the library (Melway 46 E8).

See the front page of this edition of *The Melbirdian* for more details, including upcoming guest speakers.

## Member's Choice Segment – Call for Contributors

Every fourth Tuesday of every month, at the MELBOCA branch meeting, we dedicate five to ten minutes for a Member's Choice segment. This segment is an opportunity for members to share a topic of particular interest to them with all of us.

We are currently on the look out for contributors for this segment. It could be a bird species you have a special interest in. It could be a report on a recent tour, either in Australia or abroad. Perhaps there is an area that you've

been visiting for many years that you'd like to share. Or maybe you have a collection of birding photographs. A tale of birding obsession? A quest? Or just a question? Let us know!

Sunny Fernie is the coordinator, so if you think you have a topic that would make for a suitable Member's Choice segment, or just want to run some ideas past us, please get in touch with Sunny through MELBOCA on email [info@melboca.org.au](mailto:info@melboca.org.au) or by phone **03 9592 7728**.



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See us at:

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



*MELBOCA is the  
Melbourne Branch of  
Bird Observation &  
Conservation Australia*

# Dandenong Catchment Survey Summary

## April to June

With the completion of the three-year contract between Melbourne Water and BOCA in June, the six wetlands surveyed by MELBOCA teams have identified 134 bird species, four frog and mammal species and one fish species. Four additional bird species were reported by members on non-survey days, taking the total for the six sites to 138. Not bad for wetlands in a suburban environment.

Fourteen species were recorded at all the survey sites, and the following sites recorded exclusive species: Frog Hollow (3), Kilberry Boulevard (1), River Gum (8), South Golf Links Rd (3) and Hallam Valley Rd (7). Please refer to the *Apr-Jun 10 Insert* for all sighting details.

Jenny Lau, BOCA's Conservation Officer, will produce the past year's report for the ten wetlands, and I shall produce a summary report for the six sites surveyed by MELBOCA, which will appear in a future *The Melbirdian*.

Among the highlights, the Waterford Wetlands team recorded their first Rainbow Lorikeet, now recorded at all sites, and the Hallam Valley Road team added a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and Mistletoebird to their site record.

A lowlight was the sighting of a Northern Mallard at two sites. This species is becoming a problem due to its interbreeding

with the Pacific Black Duck. According to a recent press article, native Pacific Black Duck in New Zealand have disappeared through introduction of the Northern Mallard.

In the winter edition of *The Melbirdian*, I indicated that the three-year contract with Melbourne Water would be extended another three years. BOCA has been advised by Melbourne Water the extension is for one year only, ending in July 2011, with the possibility of an extension at that time. In the same publication, a request was made for additional volunteers to survey the new site at Rigby's in Scoresby and the extended site at Kilberry Boulevard. Three members have nominated but more are required as Rigby's may require two survey teams due to its size. An extra team is also required for Kilberry. A survey takes a maximum of three hours once a month.

Melbourne Water has delayed the opening of Rigby's Wetland, in part because the planting program is yet to be completed. It is expected to be opened for surveying in August or, at the latest, in September.

My thanks to the MELBOCA members for their participation over the past three years and their continuing dedication for the next year in an important BOCA project.

*Graeme Hosken*

## Beginners Outings (Cont'd)

### Banyule Flats

24 July 2010

The morning began with a Tawny Frogmouth in a tree by the car park, providing a welcome diversion from a parking crisis caused by the local baseball crowd. Recent heavy rains had raised the water in the swamp to lake-like levels, providing good views of five duck species, with lots of Australasian Grebe, Eurasian Coot and Dusky Moorhen. We were unable to see any crakes or rails as no mud banks were visible.

A walk through the dry billabong enclosure revealed a variety of bush birds, the highlight being a mature male Scarlet Honeyeater near the old windmill site. Returning to the Main Yarra Trail several

more Tawny Frogmouth were seen along with an Olive Backed Oriole, a Fantail Cuckoo and a lone Grey-headed Flying Fox. As we returned to the car park a Little Eagle was sighted, being harassed by Little Ravens.

After lunch a short walk was taken along to the "Grotty Ponds" where the best sighting was of a Brown Goshawk flying overhead. A large Eastern Grey Kangaroo, reclining near the swamp, reminded us what a wildlife haven this area is.

A tally of 57 bird species was recorded. Our thanks go to Anthea Fleming for sharing her local knowledge with us and bringing along some interesting historical photographs for lunchtime viewing.

*Reports by outings leaders, Hazel and Alan Veevers.*

Survey site number and location	Melway	Survey site number and location	Melway
1 Frog Hollow Wetland, Endeavour Hills	91 G9	4 South of Golf Links Road, Narre Warren	110 F11
2 Kilberry Boulevard, Hampton Park	96 J9	5 Hallam Valley Road, Hampton Park	96 A3
3 River Gum Ck Reserve, Hampton Park	96 H9	6 Waterford Wetland, Rowville	73 E10

Table 1. Bird species observed at MELBOCA survey sites.

Bird species	Site number						Bird species	Site number					
	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
Black Swan	X		X	X	X		Baillon's Crake						
Australian Shelduck						X	Australian Spotted Crake						
Australian Wood Duck	X	X	X	X	X		Spotless Crake			X			
Pink-eared Duck							Black-tailed Native-hen						
Australasian Shoveler							Dusky Moorhen	X	X	X	X	X	X
Grey Teal		X	X			X	Eurasian Coot	X		X	X	X	X
Chestnut Teal	X	X	X		X	X	Black-winged Stilt						
Northern Mallard			N	N			Black-fronted Dotterel					X	
Pacific Black Duck	X	X	X	X	X	X	Red-kneed Dotterel						
Hardhead				Ns			Masked Lapwing	X		X	X	X	X
Blue-billed Duck							Latham's Snipe						
Australasian Grebe	X	X	X		X	X	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper						
Hoary-headed Grebe					X		Caspian Tern						
Rock Dove	X	X	X	X			Pacific Gull					Ns	
Spotted Dove	X	X	X	X	X	X	Silver Gull	X		X			
Common Bronzewing	Ns		Ns				Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	X		X			
Crested Pigeon	X	X	X	X	X		Gang-gang Cockatoo	Ns		Ns			
Australasian Darter	X		X	X	X		Galah	X	X	X	X	X	X
Little Pied Cormorant	X	X	X	X	X	X	Long-billed Corella			Ns			
Great Cormorant	X	X	X	X	X		Little Corella	X	X	X	X	X	
Little Black Cormorant	X		X	X	X		Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	X	X	X	X		
Pied Cormorant							Cockatiel		Ns	Ns			
Australian Pelican				X	X		Rainbow Lorikeet	X	X	X	X	X	N
White-necked Heron			Ns				Scaly-breasted Lorikeet			X			
Eastern Great Egret				X	X		Musk Lorikeet						
Intermediate Egret							Crimson Rosella	Ns					
Cattle Egret	X						Eastern Rosella			X			
White-faced Heron	X	X	X	X	X		Red-rumped Parrot			Ns			
Little Egret				Ns			Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo						
Australian White Ibis	X	X	X	X	X	X	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo						
Straw-necked Ibis	X		X	X	X	X	Palid Cuckoo						
Royal Spoonbill				X			Fantail Cuckoo						
Yellow-billed Spoonbill							Southern Boobook	Ns					
Black-shouldered Kite	Ns			X	X		Laughing Kookaburra						
White-bellied Sea-Eagle							Superb Fairy-Wren	X	X	X	X	X	
Whistling Kite	Ns				Ns		White-browed Scrubwren		X			X	
Black Kite							Yellow Thornbill						
Brown Goshawk					X		Yellow-rumped Thornbill					Ns	
Collared Sparrowhawk		N					Brown Thornbill		X	X	X	X	
Swamp Harrier					X		Spotted Pardalote					X	
Wedge-tailed Eagle		Ns					Striated Pardalote						
Little Eagle							Yellow-faced Honeyeater						
Nankeen Kestrel					X		White-eared Honeyeater						
Brown Falcon				Ns	X		White-plumed Honeyeater	X	X	X	X	X	
Australian Hobby		X	X		X		Bell Miner						
Peregrine Falcon			Ns				Noisy Miner	X	X	X	X	X	
Purple Swampphen	X		X	X	X	X	Spiney-cheeked Honeyeater					N	
Buff-banded Rail							Little Wattlebird		X	X		X	

Survey site number and location	Melway	Survey site number and location	Melway
1 Frog Hollow Wetland, Endeavour Hills	91 G9	4 South of Golf Links Road, Narre Warren	110 F11
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3 River Gum Ck Reserve, Hampton Park	96 H9	6 Waterford Wetland, Rowville	73 E10

Red Wattlebird	X	X	X	X	X	X	Golden-headed Cisticola		X	X		X	
White-fronted Chat	Ns						Australian Reed-Warbler					X	
Crescent Honeyeater							Little Grassbird			X	X	X	
New Holland Honeyeater		X	X	X	X		Brown Songlark						
White-naped Honeyeater							Silvereeye				X	X	
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike			Ns		X		Welcome Swallow	X	X	X	X	X	X
White-winged Triller							Fairy Martin	X					
Golden Whistler			Ns				Tree Martin						
Grey-shrike Thrush			Ns		X		Common Blackbird	X	X	X	X	X	
Grey Butcherbird	X	X	X				Song Thrush						
Australian Magpie	X	X	X	X	X	X	Common Starling	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pied Currawong							Common Myna	X	X	X	X	X	X
Grey Fantail	Ns			X	X		Mistletoebird					N	
Willie Wagtail	X	X	X	X	X		Red-browed Finch				X	X	
Australian Raven				Ns			House Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	
Little Raven	X	X	X	X	X	X	Eurasian Tree Sparrow			X			
Magpie-lark	X	X	X	X	X	X	Australasian Pipit						
Scarlet Robin							European Goldfinch	X	X	X	X	X	
Flame Robin		Ns		Ns	X		Common Greenfinch					X	
Horsfield's Bushlark							Feral Duck	X		X	X		
Eurasian Skylark				X	X		Feral Goose						

Total number of bird species seen at each site during the current survey months:	43	39	53	48	63	22
Total number of bird species seen on survey days:	85	63	99	86	97	48
Total number of bird species seen at each site on Survey and Non-survey days:	93	65	108	91	99	48
Total number of bird species seen at all MELBOCA sites to date:	138					

Table 2. Other species observed at MELBOCA survey sites.


Species	Site number						Species	Site number						
	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	
<b>Frogs</b>							<b>Mammals</b>							
Eastern Common Froglet	X	X	X	X	X		Red Fox		Ns	Ns			X	
Eastern Banjo Frog					X		European Rabbit						X	
Spotted Marsh Frog							Brown Hare	X	Ns					X
Striped Marsh Frog							Feral Cat							
							<b>Fish</b>							
							European Carp	X					X	

**Key:**

**X** Denotes species seen at this site during the current survey months.

**N** Denotes new species seen at this site during the current survey months.

**Ns** Denotes species seen on non-survey day.

 (Shading) denotes species seen at this site on previous surveys.