

BirdLife Melbourne Newsletter



Volume 2 Number 1 March 2013



Gull flock at Lilliehookbreen, Spitzbergen Is. Photo, Sonja Ross

A July in the Scandinavian Arctic

Adventures beyond the Arctic Circle at the November Monthly Meeting, Balwyn.

Sonja Ross was guest speaker at November's Balwyn Meeting. Sonja travelled to Oslo with her non-birdwatcher husband, then flew to Iceland and then on again to Ilulissat, a port midway up the west coast of Greenland, and lying 250km north of the Arctic Circle. Greenland's Ilulissat Icefjord is so spectacular that the area has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From Ilulissat to the southern tip of Greenland they travelled aboard a coastal steamer. Sonja had a poor bird tally in Greenland, but took photographs of Northern Fulmars, Ravens and Wheatears.

Back in Iceland a hire car enabled Sonja and Geoff to circumnavigate the island. Close to Reykjavik were Arctic Tern, Common Redshank and European Golden Plover. In July the bleakness of Icelandic scenery was brightened by lots of wildflowers. Near the country's world famous Gullfoss Waterfall Sonja captured Black-headed Gull and Red-necked Phalarope.

Massive glaciers grind their way to the sea and are habitat for Snow Bunting. They saw evidence of the 2010 volcanic eruption in the far south, and the coastline yielded Great Skua, Whooper Swan, Common Eider, Whimbrel, Dunlin and Atlantic Puffins. Lots of ducks were resident on a crater lake, including Wigeon, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Scaup and Barrow's Goldeneye. Sonja's sharp eyes also spotted Common Snipe and Meadow Pipit, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Ringed Plover, Red-throated Diver, Northern Fulmar, Black Guillemot, Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Oystercatcher, and a very wary

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President's Report

Balwyn and Carlton Monthly Meetings now free

Our first year as BirdLife Melbourne has now been completed. Although it was a year that required some changes to our thinking and procedures, we have survived and can look forward to 2013. By the time this is published our first AGM will have been held and a new BirdLife Melbourne Committee formed, hopefully with some keen new members to take us through 2013 and beyond.

I am often asked 'How big is the membership of BirdLife Melbourne?' The answer is over 2,000 members with more than 170 new members joining in 2012.

Lining up an interesting and diverse roster of Guest Speakers for the Balwyn and Carlton Monthly Meetings is a significant task, and the Committee would like to hear from any members who have suggestions for speakers at our future

meetings.

The good news for attendees at the Balwyn Monthly Meeting is that we have secured funding from BirdLife Australia to cover the venue-hire charge, so a \$4 donation will no longer be required, at least for 2013. Both Balwyn and Carlton Monthly Meetings are now free.

Over December and January, BirdLife Melbourne has assisted Dr Caragh Threlfall of The University of Melbourne with a second round of surveys for the 'Biodiversity values in south-east Melbourne' Research Project 2011-2014. As well as obtaining valuable research information, this activity was a fund raiser for BirdLife Melbourne.

Hopefully the Committee will provide you with what you expect as BirdLife Melbourne members. If you have any questions or any issues of concern, please talk to a Committee Member, or send us an email on melbourne@birdlife.org.au

*Bill Ramsay
President*

Tel: 9803 1493, Email: melbourne@birdlife.org.au



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Great Northern Diver. In the far west of Iceland near Latrabjarg is a 14km long cliff rising to a staggering 440metres in height and home to millions of birds. These cliffs housed handsome Razorbills and Atlantic Puffins.

From Oslo they flew north to Tromsø, and then west to Spitsbergen, the capital of Svalbard, a Norwegian island territory. They sailed around the northern section of this group of islands by ship, courtesy of Aurora Expeditions. Massive glaciers meet the sea, and zodiacs took everyone close to shore and amongst icebergs. Walrus, mostly male, lounged around and a Polar Bear with cub was one of several spotted. The Alkefjellet bird cliffs teem with 90,000 seabirds. Mammals seen on the tour were Bearded Seal, Beluga Whale, Arctic Fox and Reindeer. In the finale Sonja showed the moment when glacial ice-melt splinters and crashes into the sea. The water is churned bringing krill to the surface, and the ever attentive Kittiwake dive in a feeding frenzy.



Clockwise from top, Polar Bear north of Svalbard, Razorbill dive at Latrabjarg, west Iceland, Arctic Tern. Photos, Sonja Ross

Education Report

Another successful Breakfast with the Birds

The second last education activity in 2012 was the annual Breakfast with the Birds at Banyule.

This activity has been running on the fourth Sunday in October since 1999. This year 117 people booked through the Banyule City Council and most turned up for a 7.30am start. I quickly dispatched groups of eight to ten people with an experienced BirdLife Melbourne leader into the Banyule Wetlands and Warringal Wetlands areas.

Some went straight to the wetlands where Brian Fleming and Duncan Turnbull had set up telescopes for people to get a close-up on the wetland birds. Others travelled via the 'goat track' along the Yarra and saw a wide range of bush birds. The walking track as far as the Plenty River was popular but one group continued on past the golf course down to Bonds Road and was collected by the council mini-bus and brought back for breakfast.

Two groups covered the Warringal Wetlands area where, as a leader explained the importance of tree hollows, a Brush-tail possum showed his face in the hole. Most groups got back to the Old Shire Offices for breakfast at 9.00am but it was a rush. Next year we are considering having the breakfast at 9.30 to allow more 'travel time'.

A total of 81 species were seen on the day, including 8 breeding species. Banyule produced 78 species and Warringal had 45 species. Best birds were Pink-eared Ducks, Eastern Great Egret, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Golden Whistler, Golden-headed Cisticola, Little Grassbird and Fairy Martins. Blue-tongued Lizard, Common Brushtail Possum, kangaroo, rabbits and a rat

were also sighted.

Once again the Banyule City Council provided a splendid spread. Muffins, quiches, croissants and many platters of fresh fruit were eaten. Tea, coffee and juice were also avail-

able.

Our thanks go to **Belinda Moody** (Banyule's Landcare Officer) and her assistants, **Fleur, John** and **Andrea** for organising the food, setting up the Old Shire Offices and taking the bookings. My thanks to all my wonderful leaders – **Pat Bingham, Xenia Dennett, Lyn Easton, Anthea and Brian Fleming, Daphne Hards, Elizabeth Lloyd, Richard Loyn, Wiji Naderan, John Prytherch, Bill Ramsay, Sonja Ross, Geoff Russell, Duncan Turnbull and John Young.**

The last activity was a BirdLife Educators get-together to share their experiences and ideas at the Edithvale Wetlands new Education Centre in late November. This was coordinated by Annette Cook and we were well represented. Vacancies always exist for more people to assist with Education activities. I would love to talk to you.

*Janet Hand
Education Officer*



Wetlands at Banyule Flats Reserve

Carlton Monthly Meeting

Monthly meetings at the BirdLife Australia National Office are held on the second Thursday of the month. Meetings begin at 8:00pm at the **BirdLife Australia National Office, 60 Leicester St, Carlton.**

Upcoming dates: 14 March, 11 April, 9 May, 13 June

Plenty of free street parking nearby. Tea and coffee served after the meeting with time to chat with other attendees.

Contact Fiona fionamarieparkin@gmail.com for details.

The committee is looking for interested BirdLife Melbourne members who may be able to assist co-ordinating speakers at either the Monthly Carlton or the Monthly Balwyn meetings. The position mainly involves phone calls and sending emails to arrange Guest Speakers. Guest Speakers are arranged at least three months in advance. If you are interested or would like further information please contact Bill Ramsay on 9803 1493 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au

Balwyn Monthly Meetings

BirdLife Melbourne's Balwyn 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**).

Upcoming dates: 26 March, 23 April, 28 May, 25 June

The meeting begins at 8:00pm and features a guest speaker and a Member's Topic segment. Out-of-town members and visitors are always welcome.

The Member's Topic segment is a 5-15 minute slot before the guest speaker for BirdLife Melbourne members to share a topic of their choice with the meeting.

If you think you have an idea that would make for a suitable Member's Topic segment, or require any other information about the Balwyn meetings, please get in touch with the Committee on melbourne@birdlife.org.au.

Beginners Outings

You Yangs

24 November 2012, species count 50

On a very hot day, early arrivals enjoyed good sightings of White-browed Woodswallow and Purple-crowned Lorikeet. Welcome Swallows were nesting, as usual, outside the Ranger's Office.

With Geoff Deason in charge, the 33 participants were transported to Hovells Creek car park. A pair of Whistling Kites flew low overhead, followed by a Wedge-tailed Eagle being harassed by 3 Little Eagles. A Rainbow Bee-eater, high on our wish list, perched nearby for several minutes, providing a good view for the entire group. The dam was full, with few birds on it, though Yellow-billed Spoonbills and Little Pied Cormorants were resting on the banks. A Sacred Kingfisher flew by whilst Brown Treecreepers fed on a nearby tree. More Rainbow Bee-eaters and a Pallid Cuckoo were further highlights.

A shady lunch spot at the Valley Picnic Area was appreciated as the temperature rose to 34°C. A family of 4 Tawny Frogmouths gave good views as they tried to keep cool in a nearby tree. On a short walk after lunch, a Brown Falcon and a Weebill were added to the tally.

Geoff was thanked for leading the walk and we left hoping for a cooler day for the You Yangs next year. .

Outing Leaders, Hazel and Alan Veevers

You Might Knot Know

Danny Rogers gave the main talk, called *Things You Probably Don't Know About Selected Shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway*, at the October Monthly Meeting, Balwyn. Danny's PhD was on Red and Great Knot, and he has learned much about shorebirds through his experience with the Victorian Wader Study Group.

Approximately 50% of the world's shorebirds are migratory. Red Knot reach the Siberian tundra in early June, display begins, and after just a week mates have been chosen and nesting begun. Incubation is three weeks and by early July the chicks have grown considerably. Late in July the adults begin to leave. As quick as that! Six weeks in Siberia followed by seven months in Australia. En route they must replenish their fat stores, and in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway 46% Red Knot recondition at a small beach area in Bohai Bay within the Yellow Sea. It is this location which so concerns conservationists as it is under huge threat from reclamation, for a port to receive Australian ore and for industry.

The bills of Red and Great Knot are specialised for hunting bivalves, which they swallow whole, extract the nutrients and defecate the remains. Probing in the mud they need a mechanism to detect prey, and indeed they have sensory pits, called Herbst corpuscles, in the epithelium lining the



Grey Plover
Photo, Danny Rogers

Birding and Boneseeding

The You Yangs

1 December 2012, species count: 59

We normally start at 10am, but two participants began an hour earlier and recorded 36 species at the quarry-dam area in the north of the park. A Tawny Frogmouth was found near the Park Office soon after the rest of us arrived. It was great to see a White-winged Triller in this area, too.

At the Gravel Pit Tor walk, the Scarlet Robins were in their usual places. The numerous boneseed plants there were past blooming and covered in fruit. In more than one place we found scats full of seeds. Brown Goshawk as well as Brown Falcon were sighted at both Gravel Pit Tor and our lunch spot. We disturbed a White-necked Heron when we went for a walk after lunch.

Highlights at our boneseeding site in the east of the park were Restless Flycatcher and White-browed Woodswallow. We removed many small boneseed plants and some larger ones as well. Our site is looking very good. There are lots of small native plants growing where the boneseed used to dominate the lower storey.

Those who stayed on at the Eastern Flat area were rewarded with two Diamond Firetails, a Jacky Winter and a Mistletoe-bird all perched together on a bare tree in the late afternoon sun; a beautiful sight. After that we watched Red-browed Finches bathing in the nearby dam.

inside tip of the bill. These sense organs can detect a difference in density in the material surrounding the probing bill, and the bird can then accurately grab its prey. Why would Spoonbill Sandpiper have such an amazing bill shape? Apparently they have very few touch receptors inside the bill and Herbst corpuscles on the outside of the tip. Feeding involves rapid exploratory running to and fro, with the occasional bill jab. Having identified a rich food patch, Danny believes the birds stir up the sediment with a hoeing action, slurping up mouthfuls and ejecting the water. Knowledge of their feeding behaviour may help understand this species' decline.

Although male Grey Plover have striking breeding plumage in Siberia, it is rarely seen in Australia. An examination of the blood of southern birds revealed that almost every Grey Plover in Australia is female. This species migrates in each of the world's three great north-south flyways, and worldwide sampling of wintering birds showed that female Grey Plover migrate further south than males in all flyways, yet they co-occur at staging posts. This cannot be explained convincingly on the basis of weight difference, prey difference or behaviour dominance. So far there is no answer to this riddle, but Danny suggested that if the males continue to decline due to challenges in the Yellow Sea, there may be no mates for the females which winter in Australia.

23 October 2012
Daphne Hards, Meeting recorder

Weekdays Outing

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands

11 November 2012, species count: 66

A strong wind and cloud made for challenging birding for the 14 people assembled in the Spectacle Lake car park. Despite encroaching suburbs near the hide, considerable bird numbers were present. Highlights were a Marsh Sandpiper, numbers of Black-winged Stilt and a male Australasian Shoveler. A few saw Black-tailed Native-hen and early arrivals saw a pair of Spotted Harrier. In the Cheetham Wetlands grassland Australasian Pipit, Golden-headed Cisticola and Eurasian Skylark were common. The salt flats near the tower added Red-necked Avocet, Banded Stilt, flocks of Red-necked Stint and some White-fronted Chat. After lunch a walk to the rocky beach had Pied, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorant roosting on a jetty. At the picnic area noisy tree felling was happening so we headed north-east and checked out the sandy beach without much result. Wind and racket were too much for most birds. At the RAAF Lake car park we decided to finish the bird list. A very creditable total for a team effort

Brimbank Park, Keilor East

13 November 2012, species count 49

Clear skies and little wind greeted 10 people in the car park. Led by Elsmaree Baxter we walked west initially, noting numerous Willie Wagtail and Welcome Swallow. Also common were Superb Fairy-wren in the undergrowth and White-plumed Honeyeater in the canopy. A detour to the ford added Pacific Black Duck and Australian White Ibis with excellent views of Red-browed Finch and White-browed Scrub-wren. Red-rumped Parrot and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo flew close and a cuckoo was closely watched and examined. This

was the day's highlight as it was provisionally identified using field guides as an immature Brush Cuckoo. Unfortunately after a post outing review it was determined that the bird was an immature Fan-tailed Cuckoo. Sacred Kingfisher was seen on the return to lunch while a post-lunch northern walk added Eastern Great Egret, White-faced Heron and Dusky Moorhen (with young). Raptors seen were Australian Hobby, Wedge-tailed Eagle and a much-debated Little Eagle which eventually performed an undulating flight. A Brushtail Possum in a tree hollow was fine but feral honeybees were unwelcome as were the numerous rabbits. A very good day's birding.

Maroondah Reservoir Park

3 December 2012, species count 57

The day began with fine weather and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Australian White Ibis dominating the picnic ground. Crimson Rosella and Laughing Kookaburra joined Noisy Miner watching our group of 21. An Olive-backed Oriole called loudly and was then located, giving some a 'lifer' and others finally the identity of 'that bird in the garden'. Common Myna was unwelcome but Common Bronzewing, both adult and immature, was much photographed. Superb Fairy-wren called from the understorey and debate was intense about the identity of a raptor, finally considered a Square-tailed Kite after consideration of the marked angle of the wings while soaring and the presence of pale patches near the prominent fingers. Few waterbirds were detectable from the reservoir wall. Lunch over, we headed around the picnic area, checking unsuccessfully for frogmouths and owls but adding good views of a male Gang-gang Cockatoo in a tree hollow and photographing kookaburras and rosellas on low branches. Many birds were heard rather than seen, as is usual in forests, like the Sacred Kingfisher and Lewin's Honeyeater. A good session birding.

*Diane Tweeddale
Coordinator, BirdLife Melbourne Weekdays Outings*

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE VICTORIAN BRANCHES OF BIRDLIFE AUSTRALIA

Save the date. Saturday and Sunday, 20-21 April 2013, Bendigo – 'the city in the forest' – Central Victoria

The first annual meeting of the Victorian (and adjoining regions) Branches of BirdLife Australia will be held in Bendigo to bring together all of the branches in south eastern Australia so they can discuss matters of common interest and benefit. We will have presentations on Conservation and Research topics with a South East Australian focus. There will also be presentations on the benefits of being part of an Australia-wide organisation and how branches can best interact with the BirdLife Australia National Office.

Here's a rough idea of what will happen over the weekend.

Saturday

10-11 am – Registration and morning tea

11-11.30am – Welcome BirdLife Australia President or representative. Purpose of the Annual Meeting of BirdLife Branches in SE Australia.

11.30-12.30pm – Presentations on Victorian BirdLife issues,

including the Victorian Conservation Committee, Twit-chathon, Research Grants, Victoria-wide Activities and the Annual Meeting of the BirdLife Victoria.

12.30-1pm – Discussion on the interaction of BirdLife Branches with BirdLife Australia – with Fiona Blandford, Branch Liaison Officer, BirdLife Australia.

1-2pm – Lunch.

2-3.45pm – Presentations on matters of interest to Victorian Branches; including BirdLife Research and Conservation Staff detailing major projects in Victoria; conservation at a Branch level; Important Bird Areas in south east Australia; Birds in Victorian Backyards.

3.45-4pm – Afternoon Tea

4-5.30pm – Further presentations and discussions including a more social birdwatching aspect.

7-10pm – Meeting dinner. Including a short after dinner talk or team competition.

Sunday

Social birding program. Morning trips to places of birding or conservation interest. Designated lunch spot for those who would like to finish the weekend with a meal.

Inquires and more information to Stuart Dashper, trek-su3.0@gmail.com

Birdline Vic Highlights

Reports for October 2012 to mid-January 2013 Melbourne and Geelong

A grass fire at Little River in mid-January flushed out a male Plains-wanderer. The bird was seen by a CFA Firefighter walking out of a burnt area and then retreating back into longer grass. The area was between Bulban and Edgars Road which is the same area where Little Curlews were in residence for several months in 2010.

Following the first report in early November, Eastern Koels were heard, and sometimes seen across the region from Geelong to Mill Park Lakes, Hawthorn, Kew, Boronia and Scoresby. In fact there were over sixty observations of Eastern Koel in Victoria in this period. This is a far cry from the 1987 Atlas of Victorian Birds where they are described as "rare vagrants" with only two reports received in the five years of data collection.



Our backyard is typical suburbia, with plenty of grass left for the boys – which we didn't have – to play cricket on.

It's not the kind of place you often see Brown Goshawk, so it was a surprise to see this bird surrounded by feathers under the clothes line. It stayed there a while I got my camera and went out onto the patio. Discussing this with an ornithologist from the Department of Sustainability and Environment he suggested there may not be enough food for them in the bush due to the increase in the breeding numbers.

Margot Craddock, Montrose

Another irruption of Scarlet Honeyeaters has occurred and there were reports from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne to Bushy Park Wetlands in Glen Waverley and Newport Lakes Park. Painted Honeyeater were observed as far south as Rowsley, near Bacchus Marsh and another photographed at Banyule Flats Reserve in mid-January.

Freckled Duck have also been seen in quite large numbers with reports of 118 at Lake Lorne at Drysdale, 11 at Mill Park Lakes and 84 at the Western Treatment Plant, Werribee. These are very pleasing numbers for one of the world's rarest waterfowl.

Other highlights at the Western Treatment Plant, Werribee, were Pectoral Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Grey Plover, Red Knot, Great Knot, Glossy Ibis, Black-tailed Godwit, Sanderling, Pacific Golden Plover and Brolga.

Scaly-breasted Lorikeets were seen at Reservoir, Alphington and Preston along with the more usual Rainbow, Musk and Little Lorikeets.

A Red-backed Kingfisher was seen at Lake Road, Connemara over a period of several days. This is a bird that is rarely seen

south of the divide so this report created some interest. A Wood Sandpiper was also seen at the site with good numbers of Red Knot and Grey Plovers at the Lake Connemara delta nearby.

And finally an Eastern Osprey was reported from Mornington Peninsula National Park at Koonya Beach, Gunnamatta Beach and Point Nepean.

Margaret Alcorn

DCS Summary

October to December 2012

Eleven wetlands are now being surveyed for Melbourne Water in the Dandenong Catchment. In the July to September report I indicated two additional wetland results would be contained in this report, the sites being Heatherton Rd South and North surveyed by BirdLife Bayside members. An additional wetland, Rigby's in Rowville, has also been added to the survey list with the first survey conducted in December last year by Melbourne Branch members.

Rigby is the largest constructed wetland in the Melbourne area and is located south of Ferntree Gully Rd between Dandenong Creek and Eastlink. Permission is required to enter the site as construction is still in progress re-fencing and constructing walking and cycling tracks. The 'team' has key access to survey the site. An official opening is expected later in the year.

BirdLife Atlas Surveys have been conducted during the construction phase and with the 50 bird species recorded by the 'Team' in December a total of 107 bird species are now on the Rigby list. Other species recorded include 5 frogs species, with single sightings of a fox, brown hare and carp in the water.

The site is already attracting interesting species – it is the only site of the eleven to record Red-necked Avocet, and Red-kneed Dotterel also have found a home there.

During the three months of this survey period, the following new species were added to individual wetlands: Stubble Quail at Hallam Valley Rd (HVR) and Rigby; Pied Cormorant at HVR; Spotted Harrier, Baillon's Crake and Musk Lorikeet at Heatherton Rd Sth; Australian Shelduck at Troups Ck; Spotless Crake at Waterford Wetland; Baillons' Crake, Red-necked Avocet, Rainbow Lorikeet, Brown Thornbill, Grey Shrike-thrush and Grey Currawong at Rigby's; and a Black Swan and White-winged Triller in November at Kilberry. The Stubble Quail, Spotted Harrier, Red-necked Avocet and Grey Currawong were new species covering the eleven sites.

The following species were recorded prior to October 2012 at Heatherton Rd Sth: Freckled Duck, Gang-gang Cockatoo, Dollarbird, Striated Thornbill, Eastern Spinebill and Jacky Winter, and at Heatherton Rd Nth a Red-bellied Black Snake.

As of December 2012 the combined number of bird species recorded at the eleven sites is 172, three of which, Australian King-Parrot, Glossy Ibis and Southern Boobook, were recorded on a non-survey day. Frog species now tally seven; snakes, two; mammals, five; a lonely Long-necked Tortoise, and Carp at all sites bar one.

A full tally of the three months' sightings may be found on the BirdLife Melbourne pages of the BirdLife Australia Website under Surveys. Go to <http://www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-melbourne> and follow the links.

*Graeme Hosken
BirdLife Melbourne DCS Recorder*

Activities Calendar March to June 2013

This calendar includes field activities for BirdLife Melbourne. For details on the **meetings held at Balwyn and Carlton**, please refer to **page 3**. Should you have any ideas for an

activity, or would like to volunteer as a leader, please contact the BirdLife Melbourne Activities Co-ordinator, Tim Bawden at tbawden@live.com.au or on 0405 184 100

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|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Saturday, 2 March 2013 | Boneseeding & Birding | You Yangs Regional Park. Meet at 10:00am in the car park just past the Park Office, approx 300 m from the Branch Rd entrance to the park. Melway Key Map Page 11 C12. Until late afternoon the day is spent birding and removing the invasive weed Boneseed. Bring all you need for a normal days birding plus gardening gloves and a trowel for Boneseed removal. Contact Merrilyn, 9889 4924 or merrilyn@wirejunkie.com |
| Sunday, 3 March 2013 | Yellingbo Birdwalk | Yellingbo Reserve. Melway 305 G11. Take Warburton Hwy to Woori Yallock, 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 10:00am, walk starts 10:30am. Toilets available. Bring lunch and gumboots. Contact Maryanne, 0402 283 080 or onlyme53@bigpond.com |
| Wednesday, 6 March 2013 | Weekdays Outing | Reef Island. 10:00am to 3:00pm. Leader Bill Ramsay. Melway Page 18 P23. From Bass Hwy turn right into Soldiers Rd (~9km past Grantville). Drive straight on into Bluff Rd to car park at end. Toilets at Tooradin near bridge and Grantville near jetty. Scopes useful. Some rock hopping probable. Contact Diane, 9836 8692 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |
| Tuesday, 19 March 2013 | Weekdays Outing | Glenfern Valley Bushlands, Upper Ferntree Gully. 10:00am to 3:00pm. Leader Geoff Russell. Melway 74 F10. Enter from Glenfern Rd. No toilets. Toilets at Upwey South Recreation Reserve (Melway 74 K12) and Wally Tew Reserve, Ferntree Gully (Mel 74 B5). Contact Diane, 9836 8692 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |
| Thursday, 21 March 2013 | Photography Group Workshop | Using Lightroom. Contact Sonja, 9846 5380 or sonja.ross@yahoo.com.au |
| Saturday, 23 March 2013 | Beginners' Outing | Westerfolds Park, Templestowe. Meet at 10:00am in the lower car park by the canoe launching place. Melway Map 33 F1. Contact Hazel, 9876 3712 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |
| Sunday, 24 March 2013 | ETP Survey | Eastern Treatment Plant, Bangholme. Meet at 9:00 am for a survey that will continue until the evening. The survey is carried out by 4WD. Numbers are restricted and booking is essential. Survey date may change at short notice due to operational constraints. Leader is Mike Carter. Contact Mike, 9787 7136 or pterodroma@bigpond.com |
| Sunday, 7 April 2013 | Yellingbo Birdwalk | Yellingbo Reserve. Melway 305 G11. Take Warburton Hwy to Woori Yallock, 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 10:00am, walk starts 10:30am. Toilets available. Bring lunch and gumboots. Contact Maryanne, 0402 283 080 or onlyme53@bigpond.com |
| Monday, 15 April 2013 | Weekdays Outing | Coolart, Somers. 10:00am to 3:00pm. Leader Pat Bingham. Melway 193 H9. Meet in car park by entrance. Toilets available. Contact Diane, 9836 8692 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |
| Saturday, 27 April 2013 | Beginners' Outing | Lillydale Lake. Meet at 10:00am in the first car park on left off Swansea Road. Melway 38 G7. Contact Hazel, 9876 3712 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |
| Sunday, 5 May 2013 | Yellingbo Birdwalk | Yellingbo Reserve. Melway 305 G11. Take Warburton Hwy to Woori Yallock, 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 10:00am, walk starts 10:30am. Toilets available. Bring lunch and gumboots. Contact Maryanne, 0402 283 080 or onlyme53@bigpond.com |
| Tuesday, 14 May 2013 | Weekdays Outing | Note change of outing location. Happy Valley, Christmas Hills. 10:00am to 3:00pm. Leader John Prytherch. Melway 265 C12. From Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd turn north and park in car park before track. No toilets. Contact Diane, 9836 8692 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |
| Saturday, 25 May 2013 | Beginners' Outing | Grant's Picnic Ground, Sherbrooke Forest. Meet at 10:00am in the car park. Melway 75 J4. Contact Hazel, 9876 3712 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |
| Saturday, 1 June 2013 | Boneseeding & Birding | You Yangs Regional Park. Meet at 10:00am in the car park just past the Park Office, approx 300 m from the Branch Rd entrance to the park. Melway Key Map Page 11 C12. Until late afternoon the day is spent birding and removing the invasive weed Boneseed. Bring all you need for a normal days birding plus gardening gloves and a trowel for Boneseed removal. Contact Merrilyn, 9889 4924 or merrilyn@wirejunkie.com |
| Sunday, 2 June 2013 | Yellingbo Birdwalk | Yellingbo Reserve. Melway 305 G11. Take Warburton Hwy to Woori Yallock, 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 10:00am, walk starts 10:30am. Toilets available. Bring lunch and gumboots. Contact Maryanne, 0402 283 080 or onlyme53@bigpond.com |
| Wednesday, 19 June 2013 | Weekdays Outing | Badger Weir, Yarra Ranges. 10:00am to 3:00pm. Leader Diane Tweeddale. Melway Page 10 R5. Enter park at end of Badger Weir Road, park near farthest toilets. Contact Diane, 9836 8692 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |
| Saturday, 22 June 2013 | Beginners' Outing | Woodlands Historic Park, Greenvale. Meet at 10:00am in the car park off Somerton Road. Melway 178 B6. Contact Hazel, 9876 3712 or melbourne@birdlife.org.au |

New Members

A very big welcome to the following new members who joined BirdLife Melbourne in November and December 2012 and look forward to seeing you at the BirdLife Melbourne activities and meetings.

| | | |
|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| Laura | Schultz | CROYDON |
| Caroline | Baxter | ARMADALE |
| Lesley | Macdonald | BURWOOD |
| Ken | Russell | BURWOOD |
| Dave | Bullock | FITZROY NORTH |
| Trish | Sawrey | HAWTHORN |
| Bronwyn | Porter | ELTHAM NORTH |
| Thomas | Porter | ELTHAM NORTH |
| John | Daniels | WANTIRNA SOUTH |
| Clyde | McGill | ST KILDA |
| Colleen | Rigby | ST KILDA |
| Frankie | James | BALACLAVA |
| Megumi | Otsuka | BALACLAVA |
| Bill | Godbehere | BEACONSFIELD UPPER |
| Jessica | Menzies | SOUTHBANK |
| Hanna | Kaiser | FAIRFIELD |
| Tony | Cowdell | CAMBERWELL |
| Peta | McCarthy | CHELSEA HEIGHTS |
| David | Wilson | KINGSVILLE |
| Michael | Noble | FLEMINGTON |
| Margaret | Noble | FLEMINGTON |
| G | Stack | CHIRNSIDE PARK |
| Lauren | Angel | BRAYBROOK |
| Fionnuala | Spillane | WATSONIA |
| Jacqui | Bennett | OAKLEIGH EAST |
| Judy | Orford | CAULFIELD NORTH |
| Davina | Jenner | KENSINGTON |
| Helen | Jones | SURREY HILLS |
| David | Portelli | VIEWBANK |
| Jill | Edmonds | NORTH BALWYN |
| Annette | Lund | ST ALBANS |
| Matthew | Jeppesen | THORNBURY |
| Mark | Crosher | RESERVOIR |
| Jonathan | Sonnenberg | ST KILDA EAST |
| Richard | Lund | ST ALBANS |
| Emily | Jeppesen | THORNBURY |
| David | Leslie | NORTH MELBOURNE |
| Laura | Gibbon | CRAIGIEBURN NORTH |
| Charlene | Dignum | WATTLE GLEN |
| Stella | Severs | OAKLANDS JUNCTION |
| Mirjana | Blazeska | RESERVOIR |
| Beau | Meney | SUNBURY |
| Ellie | Bastow | HAWTHORN |
| Ryan | Dove | FERNTREE GULLY |
| Roland | Scollay | EAST MELBOURNE |
| Kerrie | Firth | BRUNSWICK EAST |
| James | Davis | GLEN IRIS |
| Simon | McGuinness | GLEN IRIS |

Northern Vic Roundup

Spring 2012 to Summer 2012/13

During October many spring migrants were to be found around the north of the state including some higher than average numbers of a range of inland birds, such as Cockatiel, Black Honeyeater (20-30 birds at a number of sites), Freckled Duck, Black-tailed Native-hen, White-browed Woodswallow and Spotted Harrier.

Red-backed Kingfishers popped up at a number of sites through the mallee and northern country, and small numbers of Pied Honeyeaters arrived again as they seem to most years now, near Ouyen and at Goschen.

The October influx was just the start this spring, with more arrivals occurring through November/December presumably as the inland dried out further. Freckled Ducks appeared at most quality wetlands with Lake Murphy having 70+, and good numbers also in various lakes around Boort.

Orange Chats arrived in good numbers later in October and into November, with Lakes Tutchewop, Tyrrell, and Lookout having the best numbers. There were four Crimson Chats at Goschen late in the year too, but perhaps surprisingly no other reports of these beautiful desert nomads.

Banded Stilts are in this year, with birds at many salt lakes, and some big flocks in the Wimmera, eg 12,000 at Lake Wyn Wyn. Nineteen Gull-billed Terns at Lake Tutchewop was the biggest flock reported.

Other interesting sightings included:

- Diamond Doves on 5 Oct at Mt Korong and in Wilby in November
- Scarlet Honeyeater at Lurg on 8 Oct
- 3 Regent Honeyeaters at Chiltern on 3 Nov
- 1 Grey Falcon on 7 Nov on Mulcra Island in Murray-Sunset NP
- Eastern Koel in Bendigo through November
- Small groups of Australian Painted Snipe at Burramine South Swamp and Black Swamp near Boorhaman East in the north-east of Victoria.
- And last but not least a Cicadabird in the Whroo forest on 2 Dec, a rare sighting north of the divide.

Simon Starr

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