



# Werribee Wag-Tales

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**Dave Torr, President**

E✉ davidtorr@gmail.com

☎ 9749 5141

**Iian Denham, Activities Co-ordinator**

E✉ iidenham@yahoo.com

☎ 9379 9483

**Shirley Cameron, Editor**

E✉ smc3030@bigpond.net.au

☎ 9741 2997



## MT MACEDON 6<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2010

The temperature forecast 17C, Shirley emailed all to be prepared for cooler weather on the Mount some (me) were quite chilled, Lesson learnt for today, "Read your emails!"

While awaiting the Wyndham bus Liz distributed show bags to us all, a treat. Thanks Liz! knick knacks.

Our bus driver Kevin drove well and after a pleasant trip we arrived at New Gisbourne Station to meet our guide Bruce Donaldson. Bruce, leader of the Macedon Ranges bird group, guided us up to Barringo Reserve, which has been recently taken over by Parks Victoria.

Here we saw two Tawny Frogmouths, Spotted Pardalote, Grey Fantail and a female Golden Whistler.

There were plenty of toilets during the day, and we also had the terribly difficult quiz which Andre won hands down, especially his answer to: Q. What did local Aborigines trade? A Knick Knacks.

The walk from Day's Picnic Ground at Sanatorium Lake was a delight. A combination of indigenous vegetation and remnant garden escapees; Holly with red berries, Variegated Holly, magnificent Copper beech, Dogwood with red fruit, Linden, huge rhododendrons and autumnal hues. Here Iian, amazingly, spotted a Fan-tailed Cuckoo which was hidden high up behind branches. Good one!

We walked up to the Memorial cross through a new forest (since the '83 fires) of snow gums and looked across to the south and west far below us.

During the day we were privileged to see a copy of 'Birds of the Western Treatment Plant' beautifully put together by Doug, Peter, Shirley, Denis and Doug's daughter.

Doug Blood and Geoff Forrest are now nonagenarians. Well done both of you and Happy Birthday.

A very pleasant day, with a tally of 26 birds so Flo got the Chocolates.

🔑 Reporter : *Ginny* 📷 Photographic record... *Liz*.

- Australian Wood Duck
- Pacific Black Duck
- Spotted Dove
- Tawny Frogmouth
- Wedge-tailed Eagle
- Purple Swamphen
- Masked Lapwing
- Long-billed Corella
- Sulphur-crested cockatoo
- Crimson Rosella
- Fan-tailed Cuckoo
- Kookaburra
- White-throated Treecreeper
- Superb Fairywren
- White-browed Scrubwren
- Brown thornbill
- Spotted Pardalote
- Yellow-faced Honeyeater
- White-eared Honeyeater
- Red Wattle bird
- Golden whistler
- Australian Magpie
- Pied Currawong
- Grey fantail
- Little Raven
- Magpie-lark
- Welcome Swallow
- Common Starling



More from Macedon



The Werribee River in June

In winter we usually wander the Werribee River and we were again rewarded with it's many delights. We welcomed Marion Fitzpatrick and Geoff Forrest who has obviously recover well from his broken hip, We walked along the River from Synott St and for me the best bird there was the Brush Cuckoo because it was a 'lifer' We had our morning cuppa looking out of the serene Port Phillip, not a ripple on the water but enough birds to keep us interested. Then on to Historic Riverbend Park and here are the notes from Google.....

*The Diversion Weir is a 45 minute walk from the city centre along the river-side walking path. The Weir was constructed in 1910 to supply water to the Werribee market gardens and was later enlarged in 1938. On the south bank of the Weir is the site of George Chaffey's home Quantin Binnah, built in 1890 and destroyed by fire in the 1920's. George Chaffey is most notable for his creation of the Mildura Irrigation District of the Murray River.*

*Today on the banks of the Weir is the Riverbend Historical Park with pleasant shaded BBQ and picnic facilities. The views along the river for several kilometres upstream from this point are worth inspecting.*



There are still some relics of the Chaffey settlement... a well and a few palm trees. We had a delightful walk along the River and were rewarded with not only many birds but Anita saw a Water Rat too.

Our bird count was 38 and Flo won the chocolates.

Australian Wood Duck  
Australasian Shoveler  
Chestnut Teal  
Pacific Black Duck  
Australasian Grebe  
Spotted Dove  
Crested pigeon  
Australasian Darter  
Little Pied Cormorant

Little Black Cormorant  
Australian Pelican  
Purple Swamphen  
Dusky Moorhen  
Eurasian Coot  
Australian Pied Oystercatcher  
Masked Lapwing  
Crested Tern  
Pacific Gull

Silver Gull  
Little Corella  
Sulphur-crested cockatoo  
Rainbow lorikeet  
Brush Cuckoo  
White plumed honeyeater  
Red Wattle bird  
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
New Holland Honeyeater  
Australian Magpie

Grey fantail  
Willie Wagtail  
Little Raven  
Magpie-lark  
Welcome Swallow  
Common Blackbird  
Common Starling  
Common Myna  
House Sparrow



## Werribee Gorge State Park



The Gorge is the place of wild, rugged beauty almost within a stone's throw of the Western Freeway at Bacchus Marsh .

Geological features sandstones, granite, metamorphic rocks and glacial sediment, combined with spectacular flora and fauna, make the 500-hectare park a rewarding visit.

During the Devonian period, 400-300 million years ago, molten material rose into the Earth's crust and crystallised to coarse-grained granite rock at the 1 km below the earth surface. The molten material "cooked" the surrounding sedimentary rocks, turning them into slate and hornfels. In some places the granite broke the surface and formed dykes, which are pale-grey, hard and dense, with relatively large crystals of quartz and felspar within the finer-grained mass of quartz and white mica.

Erosion continued until the Permian period 250 million years ago. A remarkable climate change took place which resulted in the chilling of the Southern Hemisphere and the formation of glaciers and ice sheets. Boulders and rocks in the base of the glaciers scraped and polished underlying rocks forming glacial pavements and left behind clay and boulders.

But the geological changes did not end there. During the last 70 million years volcanoes poured out their lava over the low relief surface and filled the river valley. Then, with further land movement along the Rowsley Fault, the Werribee River had its gradient increased and cut a deep gorge down to the underlying Oredovician rocks, exposing the geological history in the cliff face. This gorge is typically V and U shaped and up to 200 m deep.

The area was reserve for public use in 1907 and became a state park in 1975.

Trees including manna gum, red ironbark, golden wattle, white cypress pine and groundcovers including snowy mint bush, bush peas, groundsel and fern.

Birdlife is prolific the wedged tailed Eagle and peregrine falcon are worth looking out for also common are sulphur-crested cockatoos, eastern rosella, red rump parrots, golden whistlers, diamond firetails, fly-catchers, magpies and Little Ravens.. (I used Dragon voice recognition and read from **Melbourne Great Outdoors**).

Pacific Black Duck  
Spotted Dove  
Crested pigeon  
Straw-necked Ibis  
Black -shouldered kite  
Brown Goshawk  
Brown Falcon  
Black Falcon  
Dusky Moorhen

Eurasian Coot  
Galah  
Sulphur-crested cockatoo  
Crimson Rosella  
Kookaburra  
White-throated Treecreeper  
Superb Fairywren  
Yellow-rumped thornbill  
Brown thornbill

Spotted Pardalote  
White plumed honeyeater  
Red Wattle bird  
New Holland Honeyeater  
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
Grey Shrike Thrush  
Australian Magpie  
Grey fantail  
Willie Wagtail

Little Raven  
Magpie-lark  
Silvereye  
Welcome Swallow  
Fairy Martin  
Common Blackbird  
Common Starling  
Red-browed Finch  
House Sparrow



### Book Review... Shirley C.

In my Sample bag given to me by Liz Hurley I found many interesting things, yes, I have had my flu shot! There was a small book "Birding Babylon" by Jonathon Trouern Trend and epidemiologist who has had 2 sorties to Iraq. He took his binoculars and note book. Amid all the madness that is war he saw the beauty of the country, recorded the many species he saw, and returned home a 'sane man'. It is a delightful read and if you did not get a copy I am more than delighted to pass my copy on.



Each May the Echuca branch of BOCA runs a 3 day camp. This year was the first that I was able to go, and accompanied by fellow Wagtails Iian, Peter and Christine and friends Jill and Diane we set off for Gunbower Island. We were not the only Wagtails to go - Jim was there camping but we opted for the "luxury" of a caravan park in Cohuna. We arrived in time for a walk around the camp area and were rewarded with Yellow Rosella, White-browed Babbler, Azure Kingfisher and a number of other species not seen often in our area. After tea we assembled in the north-east corner of Terrick Terrick for a spotlight walk - with local guide Simon to look for the Plains Wanderer. His knowledge helped us to find our target bird very quickly - a new bird for many of the group and my first in Victoria.

On Sunday and Monday local birder Betty took us to many sites on Gunbower Island - much of which is soon to become a National Park, which does not please all the locals. A good mix of river, wetlands and forests built up a good bird list, the highlight probably being the Grey-crowned Babbler (and more White-broweds). Our last day - Tuesday - was spent in the woodlands at Terrick Terrick with branch president Peter Allen. Whilst the small local population of Mallee Ringnecks eluded most of us, we had a good day picking up dry country species such as Southern Whiteface, Hooded Robin, Red-capped Robin and a very co-operative singing Gilbert's Whistler. The scheduled finish of 3:30pm, coincided with the start of heavy rain, around for much of our trip home. An enjoyable trip with more than 100 species seen (including a few "ticks" for many) with a good and varied bunch of birders - recommended for future years. *Photo thanks to Jim Gunn.*

Dave



Photo: Joyce Burt



### A message from The President (!)

Many of you will know that the Wagtails are an "affiliate" of Bird Observation & Conservation Australia (BOCA). One of the advantages to us as an organisation is that official outings of affiliates are covered by BOCA's insurance. For us to buy our own insurance cover would be very expensive - and for us to run without cover in these litigious days would be foolish. We have benefited from BOCA's generosity for a long time, but BOCA has now decided that it can no longer afford to subsidise such cover. As a result it has introduced an annual fee of \$10 a head for all members of affiliates who are not BOCA members (which I know many of you are). This fee comes into force on July 1st.

So at the July meeting I will need to get EITHER your BOCA membership number from you OR \$10 to send to BOCA. Those of you who will not be at the meeting should contact me (9749 5141 or [davidtorr@gmail.com](mailto:davidtorr@gmail.com)) to make arrangements.

Thanks. Dave

### Nonagenarians Thanks

Our two recent Nonas, Geoff Forrest and Doug Blood have sent letters thanking us for recognising their birthdays.

