



Male Rainbow Lorikeet feeding female. Photo: Sue Forster.



Hoary-headed Grebe in breeding plumage. Photo: Sue Forster.



Australasian Grebe in breeding plumage. Photo: Sue Forster.



Australasian White Ibis. Photo: Danny Fog.

## Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve bird survey 12 October 2024

Eleven observers and a dog on lead had the pleasure of meeting up with Hayley Pottenger, our new monthly survey coordinator, for a 7.15 am start. Two more enthusiasts joined us later.

Welcome Hayley — we hope you enjoy many more mornings with us in such perfect surveying conditions.

The surveys began with an air temperature of 12°C. Any cloud soon lifted, bringing a still sunny morning.

Thirty-three species were recorded, comprising 16 wetland, 13 'terrestrial' and 4 pest/feral. The total count was 347 birds. Species diversity was highest for this calendar year whilst abundance remained low.

We had a good range of species in Area A around the original lake. A female Rainbow Lorikeet was being fed by the male before she returned to the nest box, presumably to sit on eggs. A pair of Magpie-larks duetted on a branch above their mud nest. There were some hard looks at 6 ducks perched on the logs, most sleeping with their heads tucked, until we decided they were 2 Grey Teal and 4 immature Chestnut Teal. A Hoary-headed Grebe dived under the water and shortly afterwards an Australasian Grebe popped to the surface. Fortunately, they were both in breeding plumage, so we knew we had both species. Two Australian White Ibis landed by the lake, and a Little Grassbird flew between two clumps of reeds and just made it into the count before time ran out.

Later, as half the group were surveying Area F, 5 Black Swans flew over in a low V-formation. Eastern Rosellas were also active in the same area, where we found 5 flying together between eucalypts. Both Area A and Area F recorded 18 species, the highest diversity in the reserve, although the largest number of birds (75) was recorded in A.

Amongst wetland birds, Chestnut Teal were most numerous (25), followed by Dusky Moorhen (17), Purple Swamphens (18), and Australian Wood Ducks (13). Many had young out of the nest, including Australian Wood Ducks with families of 4 (Area E) and 6 (Area F) and Pacific Black Ducks (Area E). A Purple Swamphen was on a nest in Area E.

Welcome Swallows (total of 13) were recorded in every area except B. White-faced Herons were seen



Black Swans. Photo: Danny Fog.



Eastern Rosella. Photo: Danny Fog.



Female Australian Wood Duck with young. Photo: Danny Fog.



Pacific Black Duck with young. Photo: Danny Fog.

in Areas E and G, a single Little Pied Cormorant flew over Area C, 5 Grey Teal were scattered across 3 areas, and 7 Silver Gulls were recorded overhead.

There were no flowering trees in the southern part of the reserve so many birds were just flying through. One Grey Butcherbird was silhouetted on a dead branch against the sky and serenaded us with its beautiful song.

A highlight in Area G along the canal was 5 Long-billed Corellas that flew in and perched in a couple of eucalypts. We don't often see them there. Two were also spotted in Area E, inside the reserve.

With high tide due at 10.15 am at Point Ormond we were anticipating some ducks at the Glen Huntly Road bridge. We hurried there to find ... 1 Chestnut Teal, 2 Silver Gulls and 7 Rock Doves. A single Welcome Swallow flew across the bridge to cheer us up.

Amongst the terrestrial or woodland birds, we also recorded 2 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and a single Willie Wagtail in Area F; a single Galah flying over Area A; single Red Wattlebirds in Areas B and C; 4 Crested Pigeons scattered across Areas B, D and F; 20 Magpie-larks (present in every area except B); 11 Little Ravens and 9 Magpies. A pair of Magpies was aggressively chasing a Little Raven from a tree in Area E, suggesting nesting activity, and Danny Fog captured one of the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos harassing a possum in a eucalypt. Circulating Rainbow Lorikeets outnumbered Musk Lorikeets by 46:15.

Four pest/feral species were present: Noisy Miner (44), Common Starling (19), Rock Dove (9) and Common Myna (1). Rock Doves were only found along the canal, while Common Starlings were mostly present in Areas E and F (using the dead tree as their day perch), and Noisy Miners were, as usual, spread across all 7 areas.

Later the same day 3 more species were photographed in the reserve by Danny Fog and Fiona Etheridge (see YWNA Facebook): Black-fronted Dotterel, Spotted Pardalote and Great Egret (all single birds). Purple Swamphens and Dusky Moorhens have also been photographed with young in the past 2 weeks.

**Report: Sue Forster and Tania Ireton**  
**Photos: Danny Fog and Sue Forster**



White-faced Heron preening. Photo: Danny Fog.



Sulphur-crested Lorikeet harassing Ring-tailed Possum. Photo: Danny Fog.



Bird survey areas excluding Area G, Elster Canal

**Description of current vegetation and habitat by survey areas:**

A: a large pond with well-established reeds around the edge and on small central islands.

B: grassy slopes with stands of mature eucalypts, including winter-flowering ironbarks.

C: grassy areas with stands of mixed native trees with Elster Creek on its northern side.

D: partly fenced area still undergoing landscaping; scattered mixed native trees with a line of mature eucalypts inside the New Street fence; bounded by Elster Creek to its south.

E: newly opened Chain of Ponds with scattered native trees, widescale planting around ponds (currently still under netting) and mature eucalypts inside the New Street fence.

F: grassy slope with scattered eucalypts fringing area A pond, leading to the Chain of Ponds and new beds of ground cover and shrubs adjoining the northern sports field fence.

G: Elster Canal flanked by grassy slopes, mixed plantings and a few mature eucalypts fronting urban housing and a school.

**To join a monthly bird survey,** please contact Hayley Pottenger: [hayley.pottenger@gmail.com](mailto:hayley.pottenger@gmail.com). The surveys are led by BirdLife Bayside president Tania Ireton. Start times are between 7.15 and 8.00 am, depending on sunrise. Seven sections (including Elster Canal) are surveyed in two groups, for 20 minutes each; both groups complete Area A together around the main pond. The process generally takes one hour and thirty minutes per group.

**To view the survey records** for all seven sites, go to Birddata website, select the Shared Sites tab and type Elsternwick Park in the filter: <https://birddata.birdlife.org.au>