



Galahs and Magpie-larks chasing a Black-shouldered Kite (bottom right). Photo: Danny Fog.



Red-rumped Parrot in flight. Photo: Danny Fog.



Red-rumped Parrots. Photo: Susan Carden.



Eastern Rosella. Photo: Danny Fog.

Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve bird survey 12 April 2025

We began our first survey since the end of daylight saving at 7.15 am on a fine and sunny but cool morning. The temperature rose quickly from 13–17 C. With a few latecomers joining us around the Area A pond, our group soon comprised 19 surveyors plus a well-trained dog on lead. Unfortunately, we also encountered 4 dogs off-lead during the surveys, and 3 of these were inside the reserve.

The group recorded a total of 32 species, including 3 that are rarely seen in Yalukit Willam: Australian King Parrot, Spotted Pardalote and Cattle Egret.

The total bird count of 433 was above the current 2024/25 mean of 406; total waterbird numbers (131) were slightly below the mean (152); and total terrestrial bird numbers (241) were well above the mean (191). April also produced our highest terrestrial species count (16), which included 8 parrot species.

Area A had the most waterbirds (41) and its species diversity (9) was equal to that of Area F. Area A also had the most birds (89) compared to 84 in F, but we recorded 19 species in Area F and 17 in Area A. (After the Area A survey, Tania also recorded 2 Cattle Egret, 4 Crested Pigeon, 2 Rainbow Lorikeet, 1 Common Starling, 1 Little Black Cormorant and 7 Red Wattlebirds in Area A, which would have boosted the count to 23 species.) The lowest species diversity (11) was in Area B, which also had the lowest abundance (42 birds).

There was a constant movement of birds around the reserve with many flying between survey areas or through the reserve on their way elsewhere, making it difficult to keep an accurate tally. Lorikeets seemed to be moving through. A large flock of 21 Galah circling in Area A were later joined by a pair of Cattle Egret (recorded in Areas B and F). The flock was also recorded over F, boosting total terrestrial bird numbers.

A pair of Australian King-Parrots flew through Area C and were also seen in Area D but kept going. A single Black-shouldered Kite flew into Area A and caused a furore, being chased by 2 Magpie-larks, 4 Galahs and several Magpies. It later took refuge in a tall dead cypress in Area C. Six Red-rumped Parrots also flew off from the



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. Photo: Susan Carden.



Little Corella. Photo: Susan Carden.



Pacific Black Ducks. Photo: Susan Carden.



Australasian Grebe. Photo: Susan Carden.

Area A boundary fence when they spotted the kite.

We had a clear but brief look at a Little Grassbird hopping across a small boulder on the water's edge. Unusually, we did not record any Noisy Miners in Area A, but their presence may have been overlooked as our heads swivelled in all directions to count species and numbers. They were recorded in every other area (total 35). Rock Doves (10 in Area G) and Common Starlings (14, mostly in E and F) made up the rest of the feral species.

A Spotted Pardalote was heard calling high up in a large eucalyptus near the northeast entrance to the reserve. A marauding Pied Currawong soon flushed out the pardalote along with a second one.

It was almost low tide at Point Ormond, so Area G was quiet regarding waterbirds, with a single Pacific Black Duck and Chestnut Teal at the Glen Huntly Road bridge. Fortunately, a pair of Pacific Black Duck and another Chestnut Teal had been feeding in the channel closer to the reserve. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Little Corella were in abundance, with 15 cockatoos and 8 corellas feeding on the grass, perched in trees near a bird feeder or sitting near the old nest hollow.

There were fewer Musk Lorikeets this month—only 8 compared to 46 Rainbow Lorikeets—and some birds were only seen singly (Little Raven in A, B, C, E, G, Red Wattlebird in B and C, Little Black Cormorant in B) or in pairs (Eastern Rosellas in D and the above mentioned King Parrots and Cattle Egrets). However, Pied Currawongs had considerably increased presence and were found in every area except D, with a maximum of 6 recorded in A. Magpies, Magpie-larks and Crested Pigeons were also abundant, and at least 3 Grey Butcherbirds were present, with an adult and juvenile recorded in Areas D and F, and single birds in E and G.

Pacific Black Ducks (29) were the most numerous waterbirds, followed by Purple Swamphens (20), Dusky Moorhens (19) and Australian Wood Ducks (18). There were also a few Eurasian Coots (11), Chestnut Teal (8) and Grey Teal (5). These were mostly seen in Area A pond, while the Black Ducks, Dusky Moorhens and Purple Swamphens were scattered, and the Wood Ducks were found only in D and E. Three



Juvenile Grey Butcherbird. Photo: Danny Fog.



Common Starling in winter plumage. Photo: Danny Fog.



Little Black Cormorant. Photo: Susan Carden.

Australasian Grebes were also recorded (2 in A and one in F).

There was little water flow on the creek at New Street and one pond in the Chain of Ponds was still dry, but most ponds were well filled again after recent pumping.

Since our 15 March survey, some exciting YWNR bird photos were also posted on YWNA Facebook. These included: Buff-banded Rail (EstebantheNatureman, 18 March; Danny Fog, 3 April), Pacific Swift (Aidan Powell, 20 March), Tawny Frogmouth (Danny Fog, 21 March at night), juvenile Flame Robin (Fiona Etheridge, 31 March), Spotless Crake (Fiona Etheridge, 2 April). On 19 and 30 March, Danny Fog also photographed a Darter and Great Crested Grebe across the road, on Elsterwick Park pond.

Report: Sue Forster and Tania Ireton

Photos: Susan Carden and Danny Fog

Bird survey list for 12 April 2025

Wetland birds: Eurasian Coot, Little Black Cormorant, Australian Wood Duck, Black Pacific Duck, Cattle Egret, Little Grassbird, Australasian Grebe, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Welcome Swallow (12 species).

Terrestrial birds: Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Galah, Little Corella, Musk Lorikeet, Rainbow Lorikeet, Red-rumped Parrot, Australian King Parrot, Eastern Rosella, Little Raven, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Currawong, Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark, Red Wattlebird, Spotted Pardalote, Crested Pigeon (16 species).

Raptors: Black-shouldered Kite (1 species).

Pest/feral: Noisy Miner, Rock Dove, Common Starling (3 species).



Survey areas excluding Area G, Elster Canal.



Chain of Ponds. Gio Fitzpatrick.

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

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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 Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve in the filter*: <https://birddata.birdlife.org.au>

*Birddata's Explore function is now up to date, reflecting the reserve's name change from Elsternwick Park to Yalukit Willam.