

Westgate Park Bird Count

By: Peter Parrington, Rob Youl, Lyn Griffen, Euan Moore, Elke Link, Ursula Dutkiewicz, Andrew McCutcheon, John McRae		Date: Monday 8 April 2024
Weather: Rain overnight, light breeze, occasional cloud - increasing		18-23° Cel
Coverage: Entire survey route completed		Times: 0840 - 1320

Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen
<i>Brown Quail</i>		<i>Galah</i>	
Black Swan	1 + 2*	<i>Little Corella</i>	
Australian Shelduck		<i>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</i>	
Australian Wood Duck		<i>Rainbow Lorikeet</i>	7 + 2*
Pink-eared Duck		<i>Budgerigar</i>	
Musk Duck		<i>Musk Lorikeet</i>	5 + >5*
Grey Teal	3	<i>Little Lorikeet</i>	
Chestnut Teal	31 + 3*	<i>Purple-crowned Lorikeet</i>	
Pacific Black Duck	3	<i>Eastern Rosella</i>	
Hardhead	2	<i>Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo</i>	
Australasian Grebe	6	<i>Fan-tailed Cuckoo</i>	
Hoary-headed Grebe	5 (1 nest)	<i>Southern Boobook</i>	
Great Crested Grebe		<i>Barn Owl</i>	
<i>Rock Dove</i>	5	<i>Sacred Kingfisher</i>	
<i>Spotted Turtle-Dove</i>	17 + 1*	<i>Superb Fairy-wren</i>	96 + 5* (no blue)
<i>Common Bronzewing</i>		<i>White-browed Scrubwren</i>	14
<i>Crested Pigeon</i>	2	<i>Brown Thornbill</i>	5
Darter		<i>Spotted Pardalote</i>	1
Little Pied Cormorant	3 + 5*	<i>Eastern Spinebill</i>	1
Great Cormorant		<i>White-plumed Honeyeater</i>	18 + 4*
Little Black Cormorant	2	<i>Noisy Miner</i>	2 Todd Rd + 8 CFMEU + 2 in park
Pied Cormorant		<i>Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater</i>	1 + 2*
Australian Pelican		<i>Little Wattlebird</i>	4
Eastern Great Egret		<i>Red Wattlebird</i>	>150 + 10*
White-faced Heron		<i>New Holland Honeyeater</i>	13 + 20*
Nankeen Night-Heron	1	<i>White-naped Honeyeater</i>	
Australian White Ibis	2	<i>Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike</i>	
Straw-necked Ibis		<i>White-winged Triller</i>	
Royal Spoonbill		<i>Golden Whistler</i>	1 heard
Black-shouldered Kite		<i>Grey Shrike-thrush</i>	
Whistling Kite		<i>Grey Butcherbird</i>	2
Collared Sparrowhawk		<i>Australian Magpie</i>	1
Little Eagle		<i>Pied Currawong</i>	2
Nankeen Kestrel		<i>Rufous Fantail</i>	1
Brown Falcon		<i>Grey fantail</i>	40-50 + 2
Australian Hobby		<i>Willie Wagtail</i>	9
Peregrine Falcon		<i>Little Raven</i>	30

Purple Swamphen	5	<i>Magpie-lark</i>	3
Buff-banded Rail		<i>Flame Robin</i>	1 (female)
Baillon's Crake		Golden-headed Cisticola	
Australian Spotted Crake		Australian Reed-Warbler	1
Black-tailed Native-hen		Little Grassbird	
Dusky Moorhen	23	<i>Silvereye</i>	5
Eurasian Coot	60	<i>Welcome Swallow</i>	15 + 5*
Pied Stilt		<i>Tree Martin</i>	
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	<i>Common Blackbird</i>	3
Red-kneed Dotterel		<i>Common Starling</i>	40
Masked Lapwing	5*	<i>Common Myna</i>	17
Latham's Snipe		<i>Red-browed Finch</i>	4
Crested Tern	2*	<i>House Sparrow</i>	15 + 2*
Pacific Gull	1*	<i>European Greenfinch</i>	
Silver Gull	25 + 130*	<i>European Goldfinch</i>	2
Number of Bird Species - Wetland dependent & Raptors...20 Land based ...34 Total			54 species
Other animals: 3 Brush-tailed Possums – two including one young in habitat tree; 1 Ringtail Possum 1-2 Common Froglet calling in dam, Common Brown Butterflies (all female) 1 Grass Skink <i>Lampropholis guichenoti</i> (prey held by Grey Butcherbird)			

* seen at/along Yarra River only

Saltwater Lake level: - 0.74 m; Freshwater Lake level: - 0.58 m

CFMEU These are added to the park tally

Rock Dove	2	Grey Butcherbird	1
Rainbow Lorikeet	1	Australian Magpie	1
Noisy Miner	8	Pied Currawong	2
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	1	Magpie-lark	1
Red Wattlebird	10		

For the several observers, this was a memorable survey. Particularly interesting were the swarms of Grey Fantails, with one Rufous Fantail tagging along in the undergrowth; the larger than usual number of Red Wattlebirds; the single female Flame Robin; and a Golden Whistler, not seen but the distinctive call was clearly heard. Regarding the fantails, during March and April, Grey and Rufous Fantails migrate eastwards from southwestern Victoria, and then north to warmer climates, ending up in Queensland.

Although not a record for the park, the 54 species recorded on the day is nonetheless pleasing, given also that we saw a raptor but could not identify it as it was seen for a brief fraction of a second. Accordingly, the tally is 55 species. Following the extreme dry period from mid-January to the end of March, the Park has recovered quickly after good steady rain over the last week.

Water level remains high in the Saltwater lake and adjacent saline lakes, the Large Freshwater Lake and the dam. Other smaller freshwater bodies are yet to fill. The vegetation is recovering well, but a high number of small trees and shrubs did not survive the hot dry conditions.

This short stressful period had an impact on the Superb Fairy-wrens, as the males change from their blue plumage into brown eclipse plumage when the environmental conditions become unfavorable. Despite a high number of wrens counted today, no males were found in blue plumage.

Opportunistic Sightings – Interesting or unusual sightings reported between surveys			
Date	Species	Number seen	Observer
11 March	Long-billed Corella	-	Josh Gatchalian (eBird)
11 March	Little Corella	1	Josh Gatchalian (eBird)
12 March	Australian Pelican	2	Ursula Dutkiewicz
15 March	White-faced Heron	1	Russell Scott (eBird)
16 March	^ Grey fantail	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
16 March	^ Nankeen Night-Heron	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
24 March	Little Grassbird	1 heard	Elke Link (eBird)
27 March	Pied Stilt	2	Elke Link (eBird)
29 March	^ Flame Robin (female)	1	Jack Parrington (eBird)
29 March	^ European Goldfinch	8	Jack Parrington (eBird)
29 March	European Greenfinch	1	Jack Parrington (eBird)
29 March	^ Brown Thornbill	5	Jack Parrington (eBird)
29 March	^ Australian Pelican	1	Jack Parrington (eBird)
29 March	^ Masked Lapwing	2	Jack Parrington (eBird)
1 April	Darter	1	Russell Scott (eBird)
1 April	Collared Sparrowhawk	1	Russell Scott (eBird)
1 April	^ Pied Currawong	1	Russell Scott (eBird)
Sub-Total			9 Species
Total number of species – Survey + Opportunistic Sightings			<u>63 Species</u>

^ This species also seen on today's bird count or recorded more than once in Opportunistic Sightings above



Little Black Cormorant with fishing line on its neck and Australian White Ibis



Nankeen Night-Heron at rest in melaleuca beside the large freshwater lake

images by Ursula Dutkiewicz



Australian Pelican feeding on the large freshwater lake, 12 March



Pair of Purple Swamphens and Little Pied Cormorant

All images on this page by Ursula Dutkiewicz



Female Flame Robin seen on 29 March – photo by Jack Parrington



Female Flame Robin and male Superb Fairy-wren in brown 'eclipse' plumage with some of the previous blue remaining. Left image by Ursula Dutkiewicz and right image by Andrew McCutcheon



The immature Rufous Fantail seen today – photos by Elke Link



Rufous Fantail and Grey Fantail displaying their fanned tails – photos by Andrew McCutcheon



At least five Silvereyes were seen in the park today. The rich buff flanks seen clearly on the bird in the top right image indicate they belong to race *lateralis* which migrates across Bass Strait to and from Tasmania.

– Photos by Ursula Dutkiewicz top left and below, and Elke Link top right



Grey Butcherbird with small skin, most likely a
Grass Skink *Lampropholis guichenoti*



One of three Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters seen today
– images by Andrew McCutcheon



Pied Currawong and immature Grey Butcherbird – images by Ursula Dutkiewicz



One of at least 5 female Common Brown butterflies seen today



Two Brush-tailed possums in habitat tree. The
young one looking at us is resting on top of its mother

– images by Andrew McCutcheon