

Westgate Park Bird Count

By: Peter Parrington, Rob Youl, Lyn Griffen, Mark Stanley, Ursula Dutkiewicz, Peter Petinatos, John McRae, Andrew McCutcheon		Date: Monday 5 August 2024
Weather: Clearing – sunny later		8-13 ° Cel
Coverage: Entire survey route completed		Times : 0840 – 1400

Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen
Brown Quail	4	Galah	
Black Swan	2 + 5 dy	Little Corella	5
Australian Shelduck		Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	
Australian Wood Duck		Rainbow Lorikeet	17
Pink-eared Duck		Budgerigar	
Musk Duck	1	Musk Lorikeet	9
Grey Teal	3	Little Lorikeet	
Chestnut Teal	58	Purple-crowned Lorikeet	
Pacific Black Duck	8	Eastern Rosella	
Hardhead	1	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	
Australasian Grebe	1	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	
Hoary-headed Grebe	6 + 3*	Southern Boobook	
Great Crested Grebe		Powerful Owl	1
Rock Dove	7	Sacred Kingfisher	
Spotted Turtle-Dove	12	Superb Fairy-wren	66 inc. 12 blue
Common Bronzewing		White-browed Scrubwren	13
Crested Pigeon		Brown Thornbill	1
Darter	1 (Female)	Spotted Pardalote	9 (1 at nest)
Little Pied Cormorant	1*	Striated Pardalote	
Great Cormorant		Eastern Spinebill	
Little Black Cormorant	2	White-plumed Honeyeater	51
Pied Cormorant		Noisy Miner	1 + 1 Todd Rd + 2 CFMEU + Nil*
Australian Pelican		Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	3
Eastern Great Egret		Little Wattlebird	2
White-faced Heron		Red Wattlebird	59
Nankeen Night-Heron		New Holland Honeyeater	62
Australian White Ibis	9	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	
Straw-necked Ibis		White-winged Triller	
Royal Spoonbill		Golden Whistler	
Black-shouldered Kite	1	Grey Shrike-thrush	
Whistling Kite		Grey Butcherbird	1 CFMEU + 1*
Collared Sparrowhawk		Australian Magpie	2 + 1*
Little Eagle		Pied Currawong	2
Nankeen Kestrel		Grey fantail	1
Brown Falcon		Willie Wagtail	3
Australian Hobby		Little Raven	30

Peregrine Falcon		<i>Magpie-lark</i>	9
Purple Swamphen	4	<i>Flame Robin</i>	
Buff-banded Rail		<i>Eurasian Skylark</i>	
Baillon's Crake		Golden-headed Cisticola	
Australian Spotted Crake		Australian Reed-Warbler	
Black-tailed Native-hen		Little Grassbird	2
Dusky Moorhen	22	<i>Silvereye</i>	
Eurasian Coot	100 + 11*	<i>Welcome Swallow</i>	15
Pied Stilt	2	<i>Tree Martin</i>	3
Black-fronted Dotterel		<i>Common Blackbird</i>	5
Red-kneed Dotterel		<i>Common Starling</i>	80
Masked Lapwing		<i>Common Myna</i>	5
Latham's Snipe		<i>Red-browed Finch</i>	21
Crested Tern	1*	<i>House Sparrow</i>	13
Pacific Gull		<i>Australasian Pipit</i>	
Silver Gull	75 + 50*	<i>European Greenfinch</i>	
Pied Oystercatcher		<i>European Goldfinch</i>	3
Number of Bird Species - Wetland dependent & Raptors... 20 Land based... 32 Total			52 species
Other animals: Brush-tailed Possum in habitat tree, and one Common Ringtail asleep on the side of a drey in a she-oak; 8 Grey-Headed Fruit Bats mostly in casuarinas throughout park			

* seen at/along Yarra River only

Salt Lake level: **0.82 m**

CFMEU These are added to the park tally

Silver Gull	5	Australian Magpie	2
Rock Dove	4	Grey Butcherbird	1
White-Plumed Honeyeater	4	Pied Currawong	1
Red Wattlebird	6	Little Raven	1
Noisy Miner	2		

As can be seen in today's results, the survey was very rewarding. After several dry months, there has been reasonable rainfall over the last few weeks. Unusual sightings today were four very elusive Brown Quail, Little Grassbirds calling on the edge of the Large Freshwater Lake, at least three Tree Martins in flight in the vicinity of the windmill and a male Powerful Owl roosting in a blackwood a short distance north of the dam.

The Powerful Owl was our bird of the day, with the four Brown Quail as runners up for second. This is only the second known record of a Powerful Owl visiting the park since our regular surveys began in 2007. The previous record was on 12 and 13 May 2021. Single Powerful Owls occasionally visit parks in inner Melbourne in the winter months for short periods to no doubt feed on the plentiful numbers of possums before moving on to their typical forest habitats. The owl that visited Westgate Park in 2021 was seen with a Ringtail Possum.

After several months we can presume that Red-browed Finches are gradually strengthening their numbers almost to the point of becoming residents in the park. They are now frequently seen in small groups of up to ten birds. Also pleasing were the sightings of three Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, a species that regularly overwinters in the park.

Opportunistic Sightings – Interesting or unusual sightings reported between surveys			
Date	Species	Number seen	Observer
6 July	Golden Whistler	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
12 July	^ Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
12 July	Collared Sparrowhawk	1	David Butler (eBird)
12 July	European Greenfinch	1	David Butler (eBird)
15 July	^ Musk Duck (female)	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
15 July	Silvereye	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
17 July	^ Collared Sparrowhawk	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
22 July	Black-fronted Dotterel	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
27 July	^ Black-shouldered Kite	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
31 July	^ Grey fantail	1	Anon. Birder (eBird)
2 Aug	^ Brown Thornbill	2	Ursula Dutkiewicz
Sub-Total			5 Species
Total number of species – Survey + Opportunistic Sightings			<u>57 Species</u>

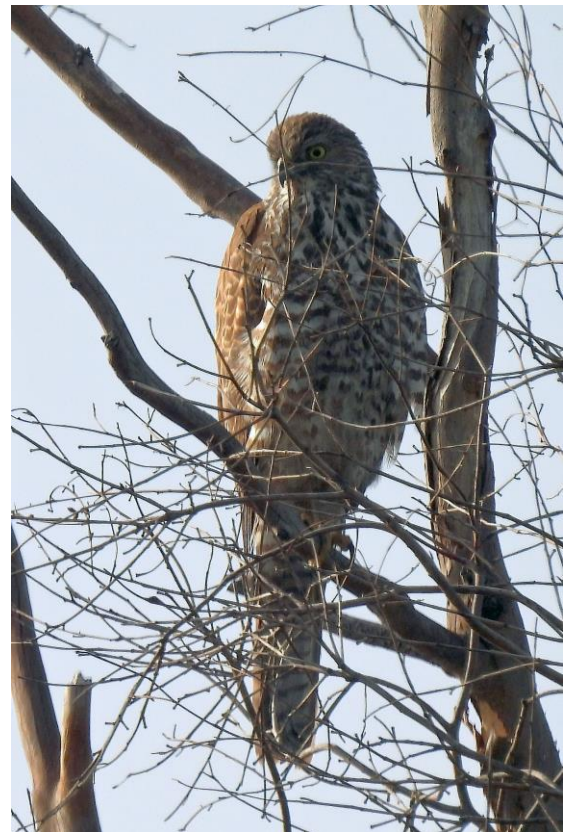
^ This species also seen on today's bird count or recorded more than once in Opportunistic Sightings above



Three of the four very elusive Brown Quail seen today



Brown Quail and female Australasian Darter over the park – photos by Pete Petinatos



Juvenile Collared Sparrowhawk seen on 12th and 17th July. The very long middle toe, clearly seen on the left image is a diagnostic feature of this species when compared to the closely related Brown Goshawk – photos by Ursula Dutkiewicz



Pete Petinatos

The male Powerful Owl well concealed in a Blackwood – photo by Pete Petinatos



**This Powerful Owl seen today is a 2nd record since our regular bird surveys began in March 2007
Photos by Andrew McCutcheon left and Ursula Dutkiewicz right**



**The Black-shouldered Kite seen today and on 27 July, when these images were taken
Photos by Ursula Dutkiewicz**



The female Musk Duck which was seen regularly all through 2023 and absent from March to May this year has turned up again – Photos by Ursula Dutkiewicz



**New Holland Honeyeater feeding on pollen
In a Golden Wattle *Acacia pycnantha*
Photo by Pete Petinatos**



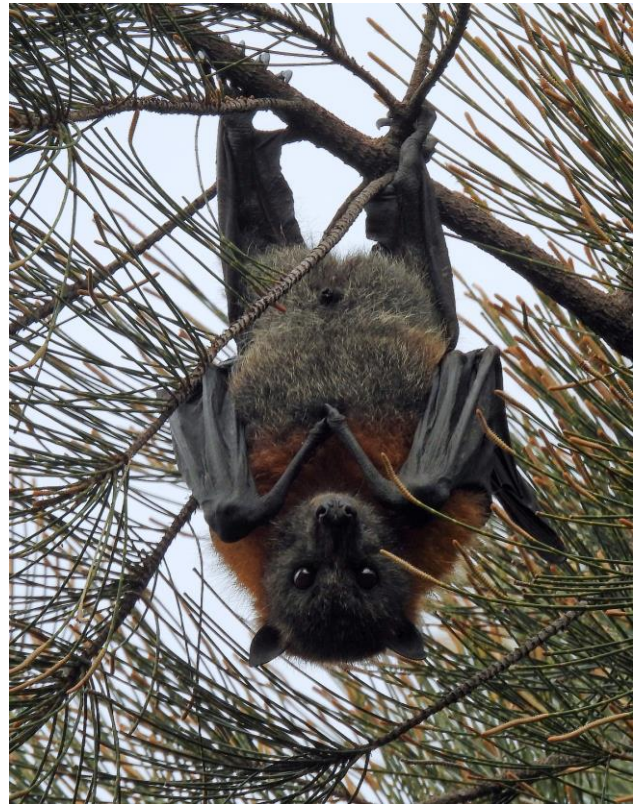
Male Superb Fairy-wren changing from eclipse brown to blue plumage a rapid process that takes just over one week – Photo by Andrew McCutcheon



Juvenile Golden Whistler and female Spotted Pardalote – Photos by Ursula Dutkiewicz



Two of the 8 Grey-Headed Fruit Bats counted mostly in casuarinas throughout park. They were well dispersed rather than all together as a small colony – Photo by Pete Petinatos



**Grey-headed Fruit Bats roosting mostly in locations not far from the large freshwater lake
Photos by Andrew McCutcheon left and Ursula Dutkiewicz right**



**Little Raven collecting nesting material off a Swamp Paperbark
Photo by Ursula Dutkiewicz**