

Westgate Park Bird Count

By: Peter Parrington, Rob Youl, Lyn Griffen, John McRae, Ursula Dutkiewicz, Peter & Jenny Petinatos, Gregor Howie, Kevin Sowerby, Andrew McCutcheon		Date: Monday 13 January 2025
Weather: - Partial cloud cover to fine with light south win		Approx Temp 27 ° Cel
Coverage: Entire survey route completed		Times: 0840 - 1330

Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen
<i>Brown Quail</i>		<i>Galah</i>	
Black Swan	2	<i>Little Corella</i>	10
Australian Shelduck		<i>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</i>	
Australian Wood Duck		<i>Rainbow Lorikeet</i>	14
Pink-eared Duck		<i>Budgerigar</i>	
Musk Duck		<i>Musk Lorikeet</i>	6
Grey Teal	1	<i>Little Lorikeet</i>	
Chestnut Teal	20 + 3 dy	<i>Purple-crowned Lorikeet</i>	
Pacific Black Duck	9	<i>Eastern Rosella</i>	
Hardhead	5	<i>Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo</i>	
Australasian Grebe	3	<i>Fan-tailed Cuckoo</i>	
Hoary-headed Grebe	11 + 1*	<i>Southern Boobook</i>	
Great Crested Grebe	1*	<i>Barn Owl</i>	
<i>Rock Dove</i>	16	<i>Sacred Kingfisher</i>	
<i>Spotted Turtle-Dove</i>	17	<i>Superb Fairy-wren</i>	40 incl 13 blue + 3* incl 1 blue
<i>Common Bronzewing</i>		<i>White-browed Scrubwren</i>	8
<i>Crested Pigeon</i>	5	<i>Brown Thornbill</i>	
Darter	1	<i>Spotted Pardalote</i>	
Little Pied Cormorant	1 + 3*	<i>White-plumed Honeyeater</i>	19 + 1*
Great Cormorant	2*	<i>Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater</i>	
Little Black Cormorant	2*	<i>Little Wattlebird</i>	1
Pied Cormorant	2*	<i>Red Wattlebird</i>	21 + 2*
Australian Pelican	1*	<i>New Holland Honeyeater</i>	5 + 2*
Eastern Great Egret		<i>White-naped Honeyeater</i>	
White-faced Heron		<i>Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike</i>	2 + 1 juv
Nankeen Night-Heron		<i>White-winged Triller</i>	
Australian White Ibis	20	<i>Golden Whistler</i>	
Straw-necked Ibis		<i>Grey Shrike-thrush</i>	
Royal Spoonbill		<i>Grey Butcherbird</i>	1
Black-shouldered Kite		<i>Australian Magpie</i>	6
Whistling Kite		<i>Pied Currawong</i>	2
Collared Sparrowhawk		<i>Grey fantail</i>	
Little Eagle		<i>Willie Wagtail</i>	11
Nankeen Kestrel		<i>Little Raven</i>	5
Brown Falcon		<i>Satin Flycatcher</i>	
Australian Hobby		<i>Magpie-lark</i>	9 + 2*

Peregrine Falcon		<i>Flame Robin</i>	
Purple Swamphen		<i>Rose Robin</i>	
Buff-banded Rail		<i>Eurasian Skylark</i>	
Baillon's Crake		Golden-headed Cisticola	
Australian Spotted Crake		Australian Reed-Warbler	3
Black-tailed Native-hen		Little Grassbird	1
Dusky Moorhen	15 + 2 young	<i>Silvereeye</i>	
Eurasian Coot	56	<i>Welcome Swallow</i>	2
Pied Stilt	9 + 3 dy	<i>Tree Martin</i>	
Black-fronted Dotterel	1 juv	<i>Common Blackbird</i>	1
Red-kneed Dotterel		<i>Common Starling</i>	36
Masked Lapwing	4	<i>Common Myna</i>	4 + 2*
Latham's Snipe		<i>Red-browed Finch</i>	1 (juv)
Crested Tern	2*	<i>House Sparrow</i>	32 + 11*
Pacific Gull		<i>Australasian Pipit</i>	
Silver Gull	5 + 30*	<i>European Greenfinch</i>	
Pied Oystercatcher		<i>European Goldfinch</i>	
		<i>Eastern Spinebill</i>	
		<i>Dusky Wood-swallow</i>	
		<i>Noisy Miner</i>	1 Todd Rd + 4 CFMEU + 2 park
Number of Bird Species - Wetland dependent & Raptors 24 Land based 26.....Total			50 species
Other animals: Brush-tailed Possum in habitat tree; Ringtail Possum in drey near car-park			

* seen at/along Yarra River only

Saltwater lake 0.66 m Freshwater lake 0.47 m

CFMEU These are added to the park tally

Rock Dove	4	Noisy Miner	4
White-Plumed Honeyeater	1	Australian Magpie	1
Red Wattlebird	1	Magpie-lark	1

Evaporation accompanying recent hot weather lowered the levels of both lakes, especially the saline one. Indeed, before the rain on Sunday 12 January, this water body, viewed from the bridge, appeared to be starting to turn pink.

We are very concerned that, during late November and throughout December, vandals lit several fires in the park. Although quickly controlled by Fire Rescue Victoria, these fires caused considerable local damage to habitat and understory vegetation nurtured over the years by our volunteers.

A high number of species were recorded today, but almost all typically occur in the park at this time of the year. The only unusual sighting 'bird of the day' was a single Great Crested Grebe on the Yarra River.

Over the past few weeks, the most notable observation was a pair of Buff-banded Rails with one chick. A high number of other species have been breeding and have young at various stages of growth including Dusky Moorhens, Pied Stilts (two breeding pairs), Chestnut Teal, Pied Currawongs, Grey Butcherbirds and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes. Two pairs of Hoary-headed Grebes are attempting to construct nests in the large freshwater lake, but so far with little apparent success.

No raptors were recorded today, nor during the six weeks following the December survey.

Opportunistic Sightings – Interesting or unusual sightings reported between surveys			
Date	Species	Number seen	Observer
3 Dec	^ Black-fronted Dotterel	1	Elke Link (eBird)
3 Dec	Brown Thornbill	1	Elke Link (eBird)
11 Dec	Nankeen Night-Heron	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
14 Dec	Pink-eared Duck	1	Elke Link (eBird)
14 Dec	Australian Wood Duck	1	Elke Link (eBird)
18 Dec	White-faced Heron	1	Elke Link (eBird)
18 Dec	European Goldfinch	3	Elke Link (eBird)
23 Dec	^ Red-browed Finch	1	James King (eBird)
27 Dec	Eastern Great Egret	1	Pardalote Patrol (eBird)
27 Dec	Grey Fantail	1	Pardalote Patrol (eBird)
29 Dec	Purple Swamphen	3	Emma Day (eBird)
29 Dec	Tree Martin	5	Emma Day (eBird)
8 Jan	Buff-banded Rail	2 + 1dy	Ursula Dutkiewicz
Sub-Total			11 Species
Total number of species – Survey + Opportunistic Sightings			<u>61 Species</u>

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

Unless specified otherwise, all photographs below by Ursula Dutkiewicz





Buff-banded Rail with one young chick. This image had to be heavily edited and cropped to bring up visibility of the chick - right.



Pair of Dusky Moorhens with two chicks. The newly hatched chick top left was taken on 4 December. The images top right and below were taken nine days later. They grow and develop quickly.



**Nest construction activity by two pairs of Hoary-headed Grebes on the edge of the large Freshwater Lake
- Lower image by Peter Petinatos**



Australian White Ibis left, and the Nankeen Night-Heron recorded in the park on 11 December



One of two pairs of breeding Pied Stilts on the edge of the saltwater lake



Great Crested Grebe on the Yarra River today
- Images above by Andrew McCutcheon



Birds born and reared in the park - Pied Currawongs left, and possibly this juvenile Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
- Images above by Ursula Dutkiewicz



White-plumed Honeyeater and one of the eleven Willie Wagtails seen today
- Images above by Peter Petinatos



Pair of Superb Fairy-wrens. The male is showing the first signs of moulting, presumably back to eclipse plumage.



Blue Flower Wasp *Austroscolia soror*, and a pair of European Firebugs *Pyrrhocoris apterus*, an invasive species of bug from Europe and Central Asia - All images on this page by Peter Petinatos



**Pair of Common Ringtail Possums seeking shelter from the heat in the friends Compound.
Water should be provided to ensure their survival.**



Grey Mistletoe *Amyema quandang*



Australian Reed-Warbler