

Westgate Park Bird Count

By: Peter Parrington, Rob Youl, Lyn Griffen, Elke Link, Ursula Dutkiewicz, Mark Stanley, Gabriel Orloff, John McRae		Date: Monday 2 March 2025
Weather: - Clearing, calm		16° Cel
Coverage: Entire survey route completed		Times : 0845-1330

Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen
<i>Brown Quail</i>		<i>Galah</i>	
Black Swan	1 + 11*	<i>Little Corella</i>	
Australian Shelduck		<i>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</i>	
Australian Wood Duck		<i>Rainbow Lorikeet</i>	18
Pink-eared Duck		<i>Budgerigar</i>	
Musk Duck	1 ♀	<i>Musk Lorikeet</i>	12
Grey Teal	3	<i>Little Lorikeet</i>	
Chestnut Teal	34 + 5*	<i>Purple-crowned Lorikeet</i>	
Pacific Black Duck	18	<i>Eastern Rosella</i>	
Hardhead	12	<i>Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo</i>	
Australasian Grebe	2	<i>Fan-tailed Cuckoo</i>	
Hoary-headed Grebe	30	<i>Southern Boobook</i>	
Great Crested Grebe	1*	<i>Barn Owl</i>	
<i>Rock Dove</i>	4	<i>Sacred Kingfisher</i>	
<i>Spotted Turtle-Dove</i>	18	<i>Superb Fairy-wren</i>	40 (inc 4 blue) + 6*
<i>Common Bronzewing</i>		<i>White-browed Scrubwren</i>	13
<i>Crested Pigeon</i>	5	Brown Thornbill	4
Darter		Spotted Pardalote	1
Little Pied Cormorant	2 + 3*	<i>White-plumed Honeyeater</i>	27
Great Cormorant		<i>Noisy Miner</i>	4 Todd Rd + 10 CFMEU + + 4 in park
Little Black Cormorant	3*	<i>Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater</i>	
Pied Cormorant		<i>Little Wattlebird</i>	3 + 1*
Australian Pelican	5	<i>Red Wattlebird</i>	36 + 1*
Eastern Great Egret		<i>New Holland Honeyeater</i>	21
White-faced Heron	1	<i>White-naped Honeyeater</i>	
Nankeen Night-Heron	1	<i>Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike</i>	
Australian White Ibis	6	<i>White-winged Triller</i>	
Straw-necked Ibis		<i>Golden Whistler</i>	
Royal Spoonbill		<i>Grey Shrike-thrush</i>	
Black-shouldered Kite		<i>Grey Butcherbird</i>	1
Whistling Kite		<i>Australian Magpie</i>	3
Collared Sparrowhawk		<i>Pied Currawong</i>	3
Little Eagle		<i>Grey fantail</i>	3
Nankeen Kestrel		<i>Willie Wagtail</i>	11 + 2*
Brown Falcon		<i>Little Raven</i>	16
Australian Hobby		<i>Magpie-lark</i>	14 + 2*

Peregrine Falcon		<i>Flame Robin</i>	
Purple Swamphen	5	<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	28	<i>Silvereye</i>	4
Eurasian Coot	c 100	<i>Welcome Swallow</i>	11 + 1*
Pied Stilt	13	<i>Tree Martin</i>	
Black-fronted Dotterel	5	<i>Common Blackbird</i>	5
Red-kneed Dotterel		<i>Common Starling</i>	25
Masked Lapwing	2 + 2*	<i>Common Myna</i>	6
Latham's Snipe		<i>Red-browed Finch</i>	5
Crested Tern		<i>House Sparrow</i>	32
Pacific Gull	1*	<i>European Greenfinch</i>	
Silver Gull	3 + c 40*	<i>European Goldfinch</i>	2
Number of Bird Species - Wetland dependent & Raptors... 25 Land based ... 29 Total			54 species
Other animals: Brush-tailed Possum in usual habitat tree; Ringtail Possum at carpark has bred; another Brush-tailed Possum nesting on Railway Track; Common Froglet not heard			

* seen at/along Yarra River only

Salt lake 0.45 m Freshwater lake 0.22 m (estimates – very hard to read)

CFMEU These are added to the park tally

Silver Gull		Little Raven	
White-Plumed Honeyeater		Rainbow Lorikeet	
Red Wattlebird	9	Welcome Swallow	
Noisy Miner	10	Pied Currawong	6
Magpie-lark	1		

After a couple of hot and drier months than usual, the levels of the two larger water bodies are the lowest they have been since early 2020, but not as low as over a decade ago. Despite the dropping levels more waterbirds are visiting Westgate Park, possibly because other wetlands elsewhere in central and western Victoria are becoming totally dry. Increasing numbers of birds include Pied Stilts and Black-fronted Dotterels around the edge of the saltwater lake, and unusually high numbers of Hoary-headed Grebes, Hardheads and Eurasian Coots plus Australian Pelicans on the freshwater lake.

Interestingly, whilst last month we observed many Superb Fairy Wrens in blue plumage, this month there were almost none, although many were observed with eclipse plumage. Changing back early to eclipse plumage is a sign of stress for the wrens, no doubt due to the extremely dry conditions in the park and elsewhere, resulting in less available food.

Almost no additional species were recorded on eBird for February that were not encountered during today's bird survey. But there were 3 notable exceptions, a juvenile Sacred Kingfisher, male Australasian Shoveler and a Brown Goshawk all seen and photographed by our regular photographer, Ursula.

Some of the sites burnt this summer will be replanted ASAP.

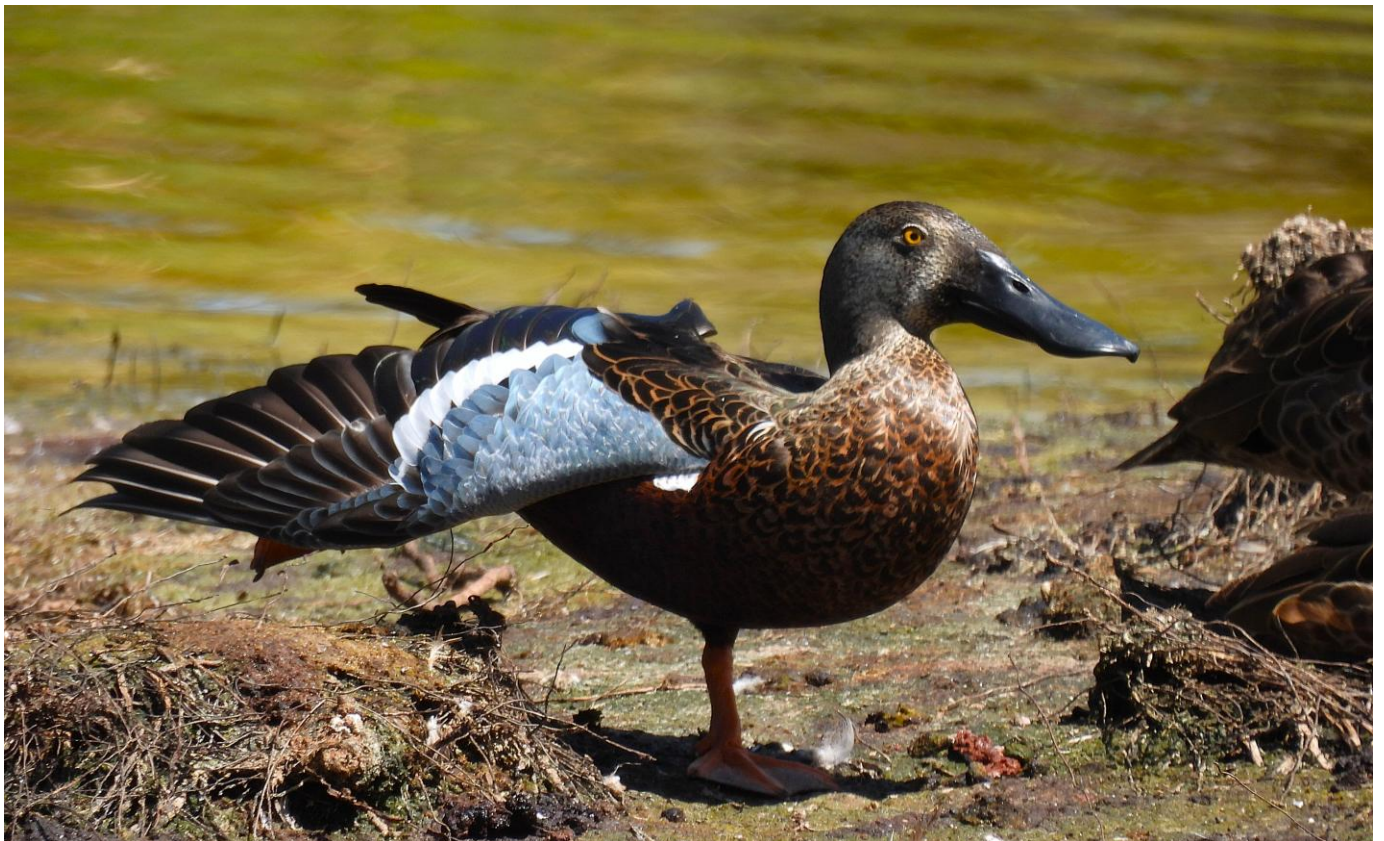
Opportunistic Sightings – Interesting or unusual sightings reported between surveys			
Date	Species	Number seen	Observer
11 Feb	^ Collared Sparrowhawk/ Brown Goshawk?	1	Elke Link (eBird)
14 Feb	^ White-faced Heron	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
14 Feb	Sacred Kingfisher (juvenile)	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
17 Feb	Australasian Shoveler	1 (male)	Ursula Dutkiewicz
17 Feb	^ Musk Duck	1 (female)	Ursula Dutkiewicz
17 Feb	^ Nankeen Night-Heron	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
21 Feb	^ Red-browed Finch	5	Ursula Dutkiewicz
25 Feb	Brown Goshawk	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
28 Feb	^ Australian Pelican	2	Ursula Dutkiewicz
Sub-Total			3 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

All photographs by Ursula Dutkiewicz



Pied Stilt and Australasian Shoveler actively feeding on what look like aquatic invertebrates in the freshwater lake



**The male Australasian Shoveler that briefly visited the park on 17 February.
They are occasional visitors to Westgate Park**



This is presumably the same female Musk Duck that has been visiting the park since 12 January 2023 when first recorded



Hoary-headed Grebes were present in large numbers today, but there was only a single pair of Australasian Grebes



Juvenile Brown Goshawk seen on 25 February and Nankeen Night-Heron roosting on the edge of the freshwater lake



Pair of Australian Pelicans on the freshwater lake on 28 February. Five were seen today



Sacred Kingfisher seen in the park on 14 February. The brown back and dull blue indicate this bird is a juvenile.



Australian Reed-Warbler



Red-browed Finch feeding in a She oak. These trees could well be playing an important role in sustaining the small population of these finches now seen frequently in the park.