Westgate Park Bird Count

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Date: Monday 4 August 2025

Weather: - Cirrus forming, becoming overcast, light breeze 10° Cel

Coverage: Entire survey route completed Time: 0840 - 1345

Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen	
Brown Quail		Galah		
Black Swan	2 + 2*	Long-billed Corella	3	
Australian Shelduck		Sulphur-crested Cockatoo		
Australian Wood Duck		Rainbow Lorikeet	40	
Pink-eared Duck		Budgerigar		
Musk Duck	1	Musk Lorikeet		
Grey Teal	52	Little Lorikeet		
Chestnut Teal	90	Purple-crowned Lorikeet		
Pacific Black Duck	6	Eastern Rosella		
Hardhead	14	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo		
Australasian Grebe		Fan-tailed Cuckoo		
Hoary-headed Grebe	15	Southern Boobook		
Great Crested Grebe		Barn Owl		
Rock Dove	8	Sacred Kingfisher		
Spotted Turtle-Dove	8	Superb Fairy-wren	38 (incl 9 blue)	
Common Bronzewing		White-browed Scrubwren	4	
Crested Pigeon	6	Brown Thornbill	5	
Darter		Spotted Pardalote	1	
Little Pied Cormorant	3*	White-plumed Honeyeater	37	
Great Cormorant	7*	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater		
Little Black Cormorant	2*	Little Wattlebird	2 + 2*	
Pied Cormorant	1*	Red Wattlebird	33 + 2*	
Australian Pelican	2	New Holland Honeyeater	23	
Eastern Great Egret		White-naped Honeyeater		
White-faced Heron		Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		
Nankeen Night-Heron		White-winged Triller		
Australian White Ibis	15 + 2*	Golden Whistler	1♀	
Straw-necked Ibis		Grey Shrike-thrush		
Royal Spoonbill		Grey Butcherbird	1	
Black-shouldered Kite	1	Australian Magpie	9 + 1*	
Whistling Kite		Pied Currawong 7		
Australian Hobby		Grey fantail		
Little Eagle		Willie Wagtail 5		
Nankeen Kestrel		Little Raven 10 + 1*		
Brown Falcon		Satin Flycatcher		
Powerful Owl	1	Magpie-lark	Magpie-lark 19	
Peregrine Falcon	1	Flame Robin		
Purple Swamphen	14	Golden-headed Cisticola		

Buff-banded Rail		Australian Reed-Warbler			
Baillon's Crake	Little Grassbird		1		
Australian Spotted Crake		Silvereye			
Black-tailed Native-hen	Welcome Swallow		20		
Dusky Moorhen	21	Tree Martin			
Eurasian Coot	21 + 1*	Common Blackbird	6		
Pied Stilt		Common Starling	rling 70		
Black-fronted Dotterel		Common Myna 4			
Red-kneed Dotterel		Red-browed Finch	14		
Masked Lapwing		House Sparrow 9			
Latham's Snipe		Australasian Pipit			
Crested Tern	3*	European Greenfinch 3			
Pacific Gull	2*	European Goldfinch			
Silver Gull	15 + 100*	Noisy Miner	3 Todd Road + 4 CFMEU + nil * + 2 park		
Pied Oystercatcher					
Number of Bird Species - Wetlan	51 species				
Other animals:					

^{*} seen at/along Yarra River only

Saltwater lake: 0.5 m (same as on July 7) Freshwater lake: 0.4 m (up from 0.3 m on July 7)

CFMEU These are added to the park tally

Silver Gull	3	Willie Wagtail	1
White-Plumed Honeyeater	2	Magpie-lark	1
Red Wattlebird	6	Welcome Swallow	1
Noisy Miner	4	Australian Magpie	2

Recent rains have re-invigorated the park, with recent monthly surveys registering 60 bird species or more, but for today and over July the total has dropped slightly to 58. Today's survey revealed some notable sightings including the Powerful Owl still present in the park now making it a total of two and a half months after the initial sighting on 19 May, two raptor species – a Black-shouldered Kite and Peregrine Falcon, and finally at least three Crested Tern in flight over the river feeding on small fish.

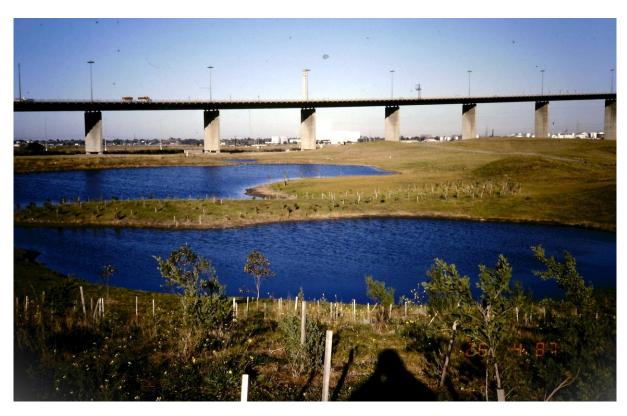
Whereas possum numbers are under pressure thanks to the presence of the Powerful Owl (or owls), it is heartening to note a reported sighting of a **Rakali** *Hydromys chrysogaster*, spotted by Mark Heath a park volunteer, and of various reptiles – this month a **Weasel Skink** *Saproscincus mustelinus*. Rakali are a beautiful aquatic rodent frequently seen in the vicinity of St Kilda pier, but have also been spotted in Albert Park Lake, Elwood Canal and Hobsons Bay foreshore from Port Melbourne to Elwood.

Two images taken in the 1980's recently brought to our attention show what Westgate Park looked like over forty years ago – a treeless wasteland. They clearly indicate what can be achieved in three to four decades to create a natural landscape consisting of lakes and indigenous vegetation that now provides habitat for over 170 recorded bird species (still increasing!) just 5 kilometers from Melbourne's CBD.



Emma in Rob's Ute

The first image taken in 1983 or 84 by John Stirling of Emma working with John dumping a uteload of clean fill obtained during excavations for their wine cellar – good quality fill contributing to the final landscape in the park we enjoy today!



This second image was taken by Peter Parrington 40 years ago in July 1985 when the park was newly established with formed lakes and first plantings of trees and shrubs consisting of natives including some from Western Australia, but none were indigenous as they are today.

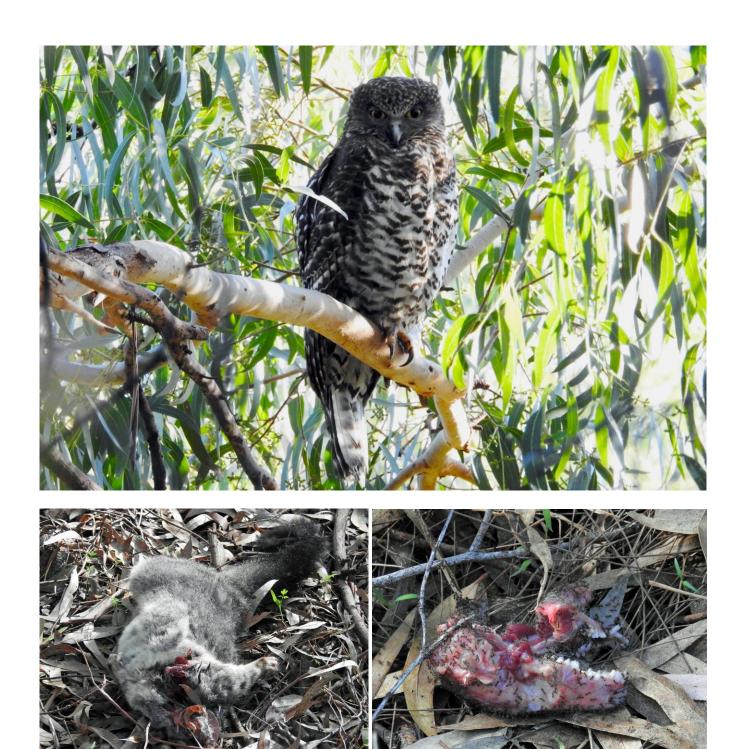
Opportunistic Sightings – Interesting or unusual sightings reported between surveys					
Date	Species	Number seen	Observer		
11 July	^Powerful Owl	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz		
11 July	Buff-banded Rail	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz		
23 July	^Powerful Owl	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz		
26 July	Australian Wood Duck	2	Ruth Bird (eBird)		
26 July	Nankeen Kestrel	1	Ruth Bird (eBird)		
26 July	Musk Lorikeet	2	Ruth Bird (eBird)		
28 July	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz		
2 Aug	European Goldfinch	2	Ursula Dutkiewicz		
4 Aug	Australasian Grebe	1	Elke Link (eBird)		
	Sub-Total		7 Species		
Total number of species – Survey + Opportunistic Sightings		58 Species			

[^] This species was also seen on today's bird count <u>or</u> recorded more than once in Opportunistic Sightings above

Unless specified otherwise all photographs in this report by Ursula Dutkiewicz



Pair of Black Swans that recently lost all six of their cygnets suspected to a Red Fox which is known to be present in the park



The male Powerful Owl which has been in the park since 19 May, and recent prey a headless Common Brushtail Possum on the ground beneath the owl's roosting branch.

Powerful Owls almost always consume their prey head first, then hold the body minus the head while roosting during the day under one of its feet to be consumed later. In this case only the flesh around the head and brain appear to be eaten, and the rest of the body rejected. No doubt it will be found later to be consumed by Ravens or a Red Fox.



New Holland Honeyeater stretching its wings



Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike seen on 28/07

Female Golden Whistler seen today



European Goldfinchs seen on 28/07. They are becoming a less frequent sight in the park.



Five of the twelve Red-browed Finches seen on 1/08



One of three Crested Terns seen over the Yarra River today



A Weasel Skink Saproscincus mustelinus. They are a species of Shadeskink, a genus that is both diurnal and crepuscular (active in twilight). They typically seek shady habitats with dappled sunlight during the day. — Photo by Mars Reid.