Westgate Park Bird Count

By: *Peter Parrington, Rob Youl, Ursula Dutkiewicz, Elke Link, Claire Kelly, Lyn Griffen, Nikki Gaskell, Andrew McCutcheon*	**Date:** Monday 2 November 2026
Weather: Cloud 9/10, rain threatening, drizzle later	16°Cel
Coverage: Entire survey route completed	Times: 0840 - 1310

Species	Number seen	Species	Number seen
Brown Quail	*1 heard*	Galah	
Black Swan	3 + 5 cygnets	Little Corella	
Australian Shelduck		Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	
Australian Wood Duck		Rainbow Lorikeet	*15*
Pink-eared Duck		Budgerigar	
Musk Duck		Musk Lorikeet	
Grey Teal	2	Little Lorikeet	
Chestnut Teal	15 + 3 dy + 5 dy	Purple-crowned Lorikeet	
Pacific Black Duck	7 + 4 dy	Eastern Rosella	*1*
Hardhead	12	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	
Australasian Grebe		Fan-tailed Cuckoo	
Hoary-headed Grebe	11	Southern Boobook	
Great Crested Grebe	1*	Barn Owl	
Rock Dove	*11*	Sacred Kingfisher	*1 heard*
Spotted Turtle-Dove	*10 + 2**	Superb Fairy-wren	*26 incl 20 blue + 2 incl 1 blue*
Common Bronzewing		White-browed Scrubwren	*3*
Crested Pigeon	*2*	Brown Thornbill	*1*
Darter		Spotted Pardalote	
Little Pied Cormorant	1 + 4*	Eastern Spinebill	
Great Cormorant	2*	White-plumed Honeyeater	*33*
Little Black Cormorant	3*	Noisy Miner	*Nil Park + 2 Todd Road + 9 CFMEU + Nil**
Pied Cormorant		Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	
Australian Pelican		Little Wattlebird	
Eastern Great Egret		Red Wattlebird	*60 + 2**
White-faced Heron		New Holland Honeyeater	*23*
Nankeen Night-heron	1	White-naped Honeyeater	
Australian White Ibis	1 on ground; 90 + 15* overhead	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	
Straw-necked Ibis		White-winged Triller	
Royal Spoonbill		Golden Whistler	
Black-shouldered Kite		Grey Shrike-thrush	
Whistling Kite		Grey Butcherbird	
Brown Goshawk		Australian Magpie	*8 + 2**
Little Eagle		Pied Currawong	*3*
Nankeen Kestrel		Rufous Fantail	
Brown Falcon		Grey fantail	

Australian Hobby	2 nesting	Willie Wagtail	*10*
Peregrine Falcon		Little Raven	60 (incl flock of 30+ in flight) + 1*
Purple Swamphen	5 + 3 dy	Magpie-lark	*8 + 4 dy*
Buff-banded Rail		Flame Robin	
Baillon's Crake		Golden-headed Cisticola	
Australian Spotted Crake		Australian Reed-Warbler	*2*
Black-tailed Native-hen		Little Grassbird	
Dusky Moorhen	11 + 3 dy + 2 dy	Silvereye	
Eurasian Coot	34 – 1 nest	Welcome Swallow	*4*
Pied Stilt		Tree Martin	
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	Common Blackbird	*5*
Red-kneed Dotterel		Common Starling	*15*
Masked Lapwing	2	Common Myna	
Latham's Snipe		Red-browed Finch	
Crested Tern	1*	House Sparrow	*2 + 2**
Pacific Gull		European Greenfinch	
Silver Gull	55 + 50*	European Goldfinch	*2*
Number of Bird Species - Wetland dependent & Raptors **21;** *Land based **24*** **Total**			**45 species**
Other animals: Brush-tailed Possum – in usual hollow. Possum drey near carpark occupied – four Brush-tailed Possums detected. No frog calls heard.			

* seen at/along Yarra River only

Saltwater Lake level: 0.895 m; Freshwater Lake level: 0.6 m

CFMEU - These are added to the park tally

Australian Hobby	2	White-plumed Honeyeater	7
Silver Gull	6	Willie Wagtail	1
Noisy Miner	9	Magpie-lark	1
Red Wattlebird	15		

The wet spring continues; accordingly, water levels are very high. As the day was cold and overcast, with light rain later, many land-based birds remained undercover with a lower count than we would have achieved in more favourable weather conditions.

Obviously, water birds (other than shorebirds) have been breeding, thanks to the higher than usual water levels and abundant food. Actively breeding species include Black Swan, Chestnut Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen and Eurasian Coot.

Some bush birds are also breeding or showing signs of doing so, such as Willie Wagtails and Magpie-larks. A Willie Wagtail was seen on a nest today, which suggests that another brood is on the way. It was noted that a very high proportion of the male Superb Fairy-wrens seen today were in full blue plumage. Although this suggests that habitat conditions are optimal, it is too early to predict this will lead to a high level of breeding activity. We should get a better idea over the next few weeks.

The survey group is concerned about two Nankeen Night-heron carcasses found in the park last month, initially thought to be the work of foxes. It appears strange to find two deceased Nankeen Night Herons, as they are alert birds whether its day or night. Therefore, the chance of them being on the ground and successfully ambushed by a fox or other predator such as a cat or dog is highly unlikely, unless the herons happen to be ill and not alert or quick enough to avoid danger.

On that basis it makes me wonder whether they came down with H5 N1 (or some other disease?), died and after that were scavenged by a fox or birds such as ravens.

It is recommended to call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on **1800 675 888** and explain these deaths and our observations to them.



One of the two deceased Nankeen Night Herons found in the park with all flesh eaten away from the carcass

This year several locations in the park have been set alight by arsonists. Whilst this has troubled all the numerous volunteers who work in the Park, the vegetation is showing good recovery in many of the affected areas.

Opportunistic Sightings – Interesting or unusual sightings reported between surveys			
Date	**Species**	**Number**	**Observer**
9 Oct	White-necked Heron - juvenile	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
9 Oct	Darter	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
12 Oct	**^** Nankeen Night-heron (deceased)	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
14 Oct	**Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
14 Oct	Little Grassbird	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
26 Oct	**^** Nankeen Night-heron	1	Ursula Dutkiewicz
28 Oct	Pied Stilt	1	Jonathan Tickner (eBird)
28 Oct	**^** White-necked Heron	1	Jonathan Tickner (eBird)
28 Oct	Spotted Pardalote	1	Jonathan Tickner (eBird)
29 Oct	Silvereye	1	Kiera Ponting (eBird)
29 Oct	Grey fantail	1	Kiera Ponting (eBird)
Sub-Total			**8 Species**
Total number of species – Survey + Opportunistic Sightings			**53 Species**

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

Unless stated otherwise, all photographs in this report by Ursula Dutkiewicz





A single Eastern Rosella seen briefly today and one of a pair of Australian Hobbies nesting on a crane at the CFMEU site. Part of the nest can be seen on the platform – images above by Elke Link





White-necked Heron, a juvenile taken on 9/10. An adult bird was observed in the park on 28/10 (eBird). This Nankeen Night Heron seen on 26/10, is probably the same bird recorded today.











It has been a good year for water birds in the park with lots of young chicks and an abundance of food for all to feast on. Shown here are the Black Swan pair with some of their 5 cygnets, Pacific Black Duck with eight ducklings taken on 10/10 (today there are only 4 survivors), two of the three Purple Swamphen chicks and a feeding Eurasian Coot family.




Dusky Moorhen with chicks on the nest. The image on the right was taken two days later



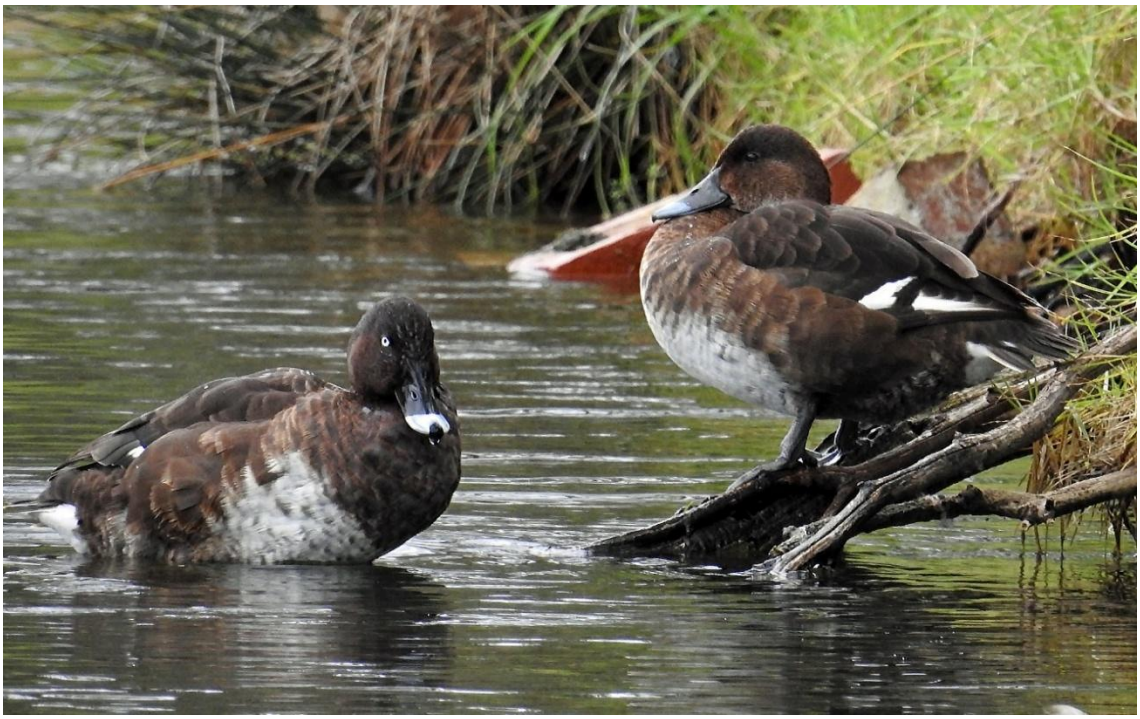

Pair of Hoary-headed Grebes on the freshwater lake, and Great Crested Grebe on the Yarra River today




Crested Tern on the beach near the Punt with leg band, and Little Pied Cormorant




A small flock of Australian White Ibis on the Fresh Water Lake Island, and one of a pair of Black-fronted Dotterel still in the park despite there being little shoreline habitat available due to high water levels



Pair of Hardheads, Male left and female right




Welcome Swallow and Little Grass Bird



Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo seen on 14/10





Superb Fairy-wrens - the male is holding a yellow petal which will be offered to a female as an act of courtship





Two of the three Willie Wagtail nestlings born in late September have survived to become juveniles.
Left, Magpie-lark nest with four chicks near the visitor carpark.



A pair of egg-laying Australian Emperors *Anax papuensis* **—Victoria's largest dragonfly—with a much smaller mating pair of Red and Blue Damsels** *Xanthagrion erythroneurum* **resting on their backs**



Three native bees, subgenus *Chilalictus* **on a Showy Copper-Wire Daisy** *Podolepis jaceoides*




Long-tailed Pea-blue *Lampides boeticus* **and Metallic Shield Bug** *Scutiphora pedicellata*



The survey group in action on the bridge today

Report prepared by Rob Youl robmyoul@gmail.com & Andrew McCutcheon, awmccutcheon1@bigpond.com