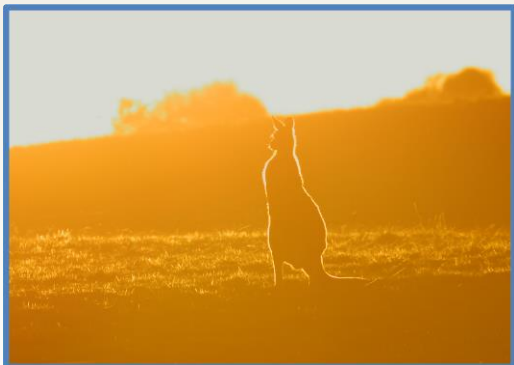


CAPE CHATTER

Nature Observations around The Cape

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Eastern Grey Kangaroo backlit by a golden sunset glow at The Cape

The Cape is on the traditional land
of the Bunurong people

*"When we tug at a single thing in nature,
we find it attached to the rest of the
world..." John Muir*

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Out of the blue ... a stunning surprise

The highlight of the week. Whilst out on a photo mission around the western side of The Cape last Saturday afternoon [29th August] – yes with my landscape lens(!), I observed some bird movements on the ground which at first, I thought were ground dwelling grassbirds like the **Australian Pipit** or **Eurasian Skylark**. On closer inspection after sneaking up, I was amazed and delighted to discover a **Blue-winged Parrot**. After grabbing one "insurance shot", I raced back home as quick as I could to get the telephoto lens, hoping the birds would remain in place. On return I discovered a small flock of six birds in the damp re-entrant west of the new creek line restoration. The birds were feeding on grasses and weeds and alternating between some soil mounds and sedges in a boggy area. What a joy to see these beautiful olive, yellow and deep blue birds in a sea of green.



The **Blue-winged Parrot** is an uncommon bird and just a little bigger than a **Budgerigar**. They are mainly ground dwelling, grass-feeding birds that inhabit the semi-arid inland of south-east Australia and Tasmania. Most birds reside and breed in Tasmania and migrate to the mainland, but it is believed some birds remain in SE Australia and not a lot is known about their movements. I am thinking this flock may have been on their way back to Tasmania after spending the autumn and winter in the slightly warmer climate of the inland.



Above and Below: Blue-winged Parrot at The Cape



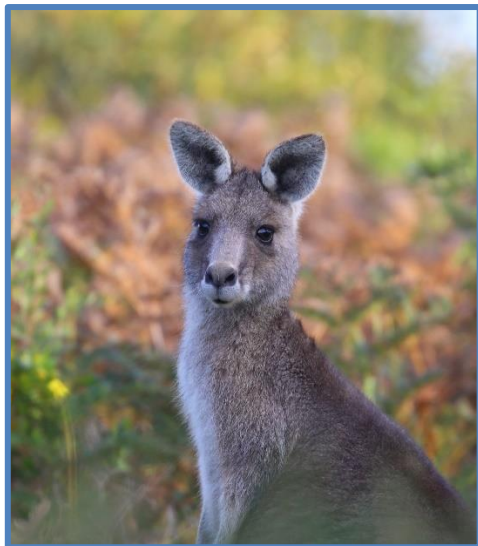
The **Blue-winged Parrot** is very similar in appearance to the **Elegant Parrot** and **Rock Parrot**, both of which reside primarily in Western Australia and South Australia: the **Elegant** in drier environments associated with open woodland, grassland, saltmarsh and pasture, and the **Rock**, which breeds in rock crevices on offshore islands and spends non-breeding on the mainland. The closest parrot in appearance in our area to the **Blue-winged** is the Critically Endangered **Orange-bellied Parrot**. The **Orange-bellied** has been observed in the past at the nearby Mouth of the Powlett. I dream of seeing one!

This brings our bird count since it was started just 12 months ago to 99 species. I wonder what will be the 100th?

More of our lovely Eastern Greys

I just love our **Eastern Grey Kangaroos**. I managed to get a couple of nice portrait shots of a male (top) and female emerging from the bush in the south east corner yesterday.

As I write this, a couple of Roos are wandering down the front of our house along Moonshadow Ave. The mob are slowly getting used to human presence in The Cape, but they are still skittish if disturbed unexpectedly. If you see anyone with dogs off lead - including a recent example of a dog on lead but running freely - could you kindly remind owners to put the lead back on or at least hold on to it!



Common Wombat have been seen by Jeannie (Sunlight) coming out of the F Break track and Brendan Condon saw three on one of his dusk walks around The Cape habitat areas west of the new creek line. Yet to see any significant **Echidna** activity, but they should begin to emerge in numbers soon.

INTERESTING BIRDS ABOUT

Plenty of action around the area. Thanks to Joe Spano for a lovely sound take of a **Crescent Honeyeater** in song (and one other mystery call we are yet to work out). Bongo and Wendy at the end of Sunlight have got their eyes on a potential nesting site for the **Masked Lapwing** pair in the main wetland and have tabs on several **Pacific Black-duck** in constant flight around their way. They have one identified as the lucky winner! Believe it or not, the **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos** are still visiting Lone Pine – I saw six birds fly out of it yesterday. The **Peregrine Falcon** is also still about with one spotted in the creek line stags again – seems to becoming a favourite spot for them.



Above: Peregrine Falcon attacking a Galah at dusk, using a stag as a launch point. The Galah survived!



Above: Male Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo flying out of Lone Pine

Sitting quietly in the creek line

After the excitement of seeing the **Blue-winged Parrots**, I ventured over to the Top Dam in the new creek line and sat quietly for a while on one of the habitat logs. It was fascinating listening to some **Pobblebonks** who have recently moved in, along with another recently returned traveller – the **Black-fronted Dotterel**. A pair were working the water's edge of the dam and moving up and down between the ponds of the creek line. Here's hoping for one of their simple nests somewhere in this new habitat they have taken a liking too.



Above and Below: Black-fronted Dotterel on the jute at the water's edge of the Top Dam.



A big thank you

Many thanks to Brendan, Marie and new resident Jane Wiles (Trumpeter) for kindly providing me with a 'maggie deterrent' beanie in bright orange colours, with The Cape logo and two pair of large eyes (front and back). It has not stopped the swooping, but it has reduced the frequency and intensity of the intrusions into my personal space!! Haha!

Another 'Welcome Swallow' surprise

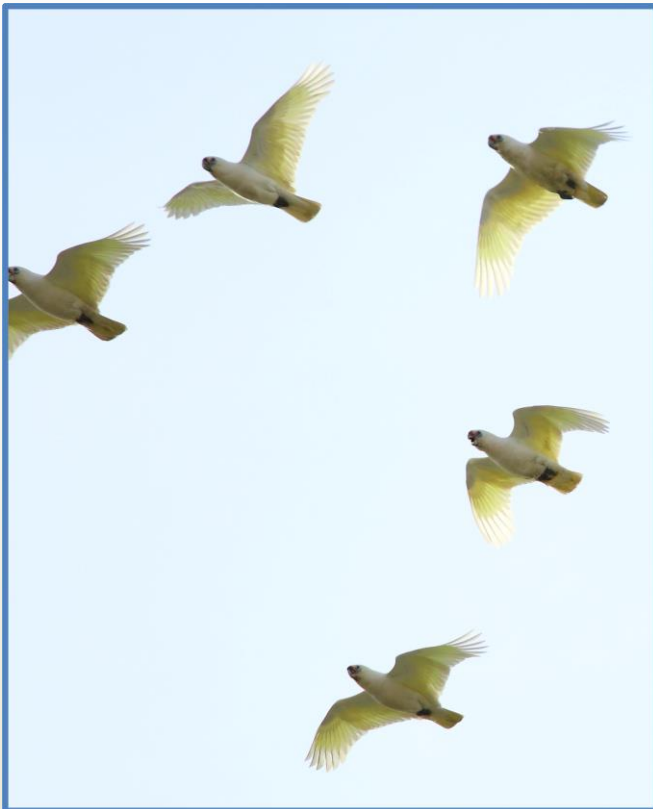
Keen observers may have noticed a real up-kick in the number of **Welcome Swallows** flying about at the moment. These little birds are extremely quick in flight and change direction rapidly making it very difficult to get any decent photos unless they land momentarily. While on my log contemplating nature, I managed to see several birds resting quickly and gathering nesting material of grass and mud. I have also noticed quite a few Welcome **Swallows** showing a lot of interest under balconies and eaves of several Cape homes as possible nesting sites – so keep your eyes out to see if you are harbouring the next batch of "Swallow Juniors"!



Above: Welcome Swallow in the creek line

A 'Little' more from the week

A flock of Little Corella has returned to The Cape to join their boisterous **Galah** mates. Who needs an alarm clock in the morning with these guys around! This flock will probably hang around a bit and into the summer months feeding on the grasslands.



Above: Little Corella, checking out Pep and Matts new Ecoliv house and a small flock in flight overhead

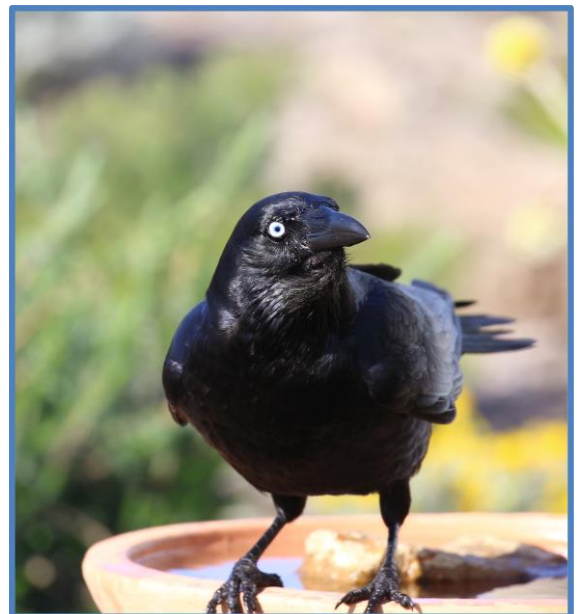
Little Pied Cormorant

This Little Pied Cormorant has been showing a lot of interest around the larger wetland over the past week. They spend a lot of their time on the coast and come inland periodically.



The intelligence of a Little Raven

We positioned a basic birdbath yesterday in front of the house and within hours a Little Raven was there drinking. Not long after, it returned with someone's leftover lunch of stale bread, proceeded to 'dunk' it to soften it up before downing the 'mash'. Smart bird!



Above: Little Raven at the bird bath