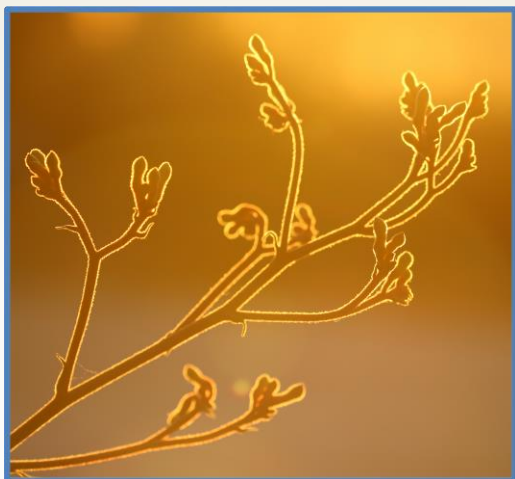


CAPE CHATTER

Nature Observations around The Cape

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Kangaroo Paw, backlit by a golden sunset glow, at The Cape on the 25th August 2020

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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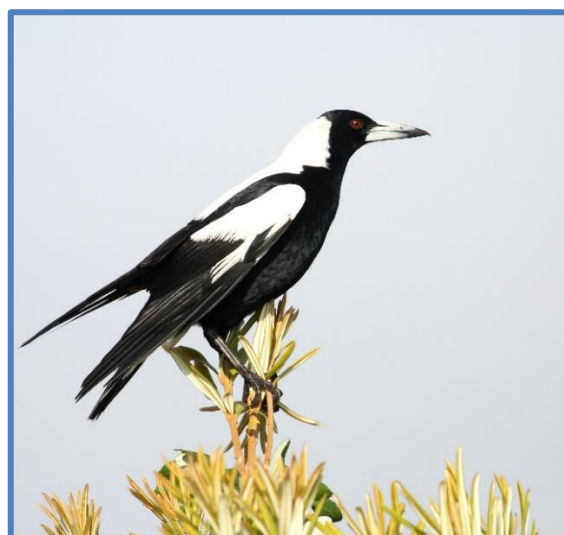
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under development but coming soon)

Pies, Pies, Blacks and Greys ... and a little splash of colour every now and then

It has been gloomy weather this past week with dark, grey skies, plenty of rain and the occasional short burst of sunshine. The overcast weather sort of gets you down a bit along with this COVID lockdown stuff... but spring is just around the corner so hang in there. Staying with the 'darkish' weather theme, this week I am focusing on birds around currently which are pied, black or grey in plumage with just a touch of colour every now and then to brighten up our spirits. Some of the shots are from my archive over the last year given it has not been great bird photography weather.

How could I not begin with and mention my all-time favourite friend the black and white **Magpie** (aka Darcy M) which has now pretty much "confined me to barracks". Its home range appears to be bigger than the surface of the MCG and it is like a missile when it swoops me from its perch in the backline (aka the wetlands). 'Side by side, sticking together' we ain't!!



Above: This is the man! **Australian Magpie** (male). His job is to protect the nest and manage any threats/intruders into his territory. I appear to be the only human threat – not sure what I have done wrong. I have not been able to get any decent swooping shots with the camera – they are all out of focus for obvious reasons!!

Down by the sea ...

Cormorants, Oystercatchers and Gulls are prominent at the moment with sightings also of **Gannets** and **Hooded Plovers**.



Above: Little Pied Cormorant – 2nd Surf rocks



Above: Pied Cormorant – 2nd Surf rocks

The **Pied Cormorant** is larger than the **Little Pied** and note the differences in bill and facial colours



Above: Silver Gull, F Break beach



Above: Pacific Gull pair, on the rocks at 2nd Surf



Above: Sooty Oystercatchers on 2nd Surf beach

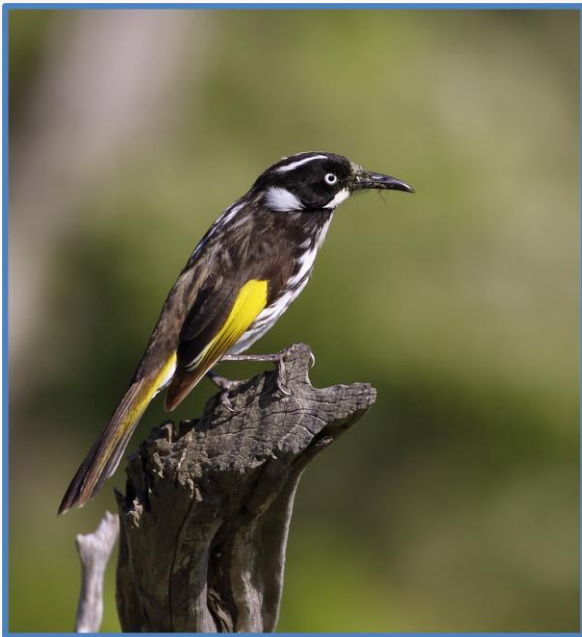
...and around the wetlands

Pacific Black Duck (below) and **White-faced Herons** (bottom) are a common sight in flight over the wetlands at the moment.



Other Bird Observations

Pretty subdued week for the little birds. **New Holland Honeyeaters** were active despite the weather and **Grey Fantail** are starting to build in numbers. Of the larger birds, **Grey Butcherbird**, the **Red** and **Little Wattlebirds**, **Grey Shrike Thrush** are about. A **Laughing Kookaburra** surprised me with a wake-up call today, **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** have returned and are calling in the bush and the **Galah** flock remain ever busy following around the landscape team. On the raptor front, **Nankeen Kestrel** have been hovering (thanks Helen T) and a **Peregrine Falcon** was spotted attacking a **Galah** in the new creek line (thanks Jay v D from the landscape team).



Above: **New Holland Honeyeater**. A common honeyeater at The Cape and often seen chasing each other. They regularly perch on open branches in the top of trees and chirp to highlight their presence.



Above: **Grey Fantail**. The south-east exit track to 2nd Surf is a great spot to see these lovely little birds 'dancing about' in flight.



Above: **Grey Shrike Thrush**



Above: **Grey Butcherbird**. **Below:** **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**



Our more common black and grey birds

I can never get enough of our playful pink and grey **Galahs** feeding in the open spaces. This one is obviously enjoying itself digging up grass roots by the looks of all the dirt on the beak and face.



Above: Galah – enjoying a feed of grass roots



Above: The ever-present Little Raven

Frog eggs??

I managed to see what looks like frog eggs (below) in a floating foamy mass in a swale on the south east exit track. Not sure what type of frog it is.

Does anyone know? I am 'knee-deep' in googling other things at the moment!



... a couple more of our 'black' birds

I am still hearing the call of an occasional **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo** in 'Lone Pine'.



Above: Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (male)

Below: Common Blackbird with a mouth full

