

CAPE CHATTER

Nature Observations around The Cape

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Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos are still active
around 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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Going a 'little 'bat(ty)' ... for habitat

Along with the new creek line development, a project has been underway to design and manufacture **microbat habitat boxes** for placement in some of the tree stags. Led by the very inventive and creative Graeme McAlpine, several boxes have been built using timber recycled from Cape building sites (thanks to the Spano's). Based on personal observations of microbat behaviour, the boxes have been designed for both warm and cool weather and include snugly socks (thanks Jeannie H for the darning) for the bats to 'hang-out'. It will be interesting to see how they work in coming years – the bats are about; we just need them to take up residence!



Summer house (left) and smaller, darker, winter house (right). Bats will enter from the small opening below the inner, sock compartment which is snug and secure.



Mob Mutterings

The **Eastern Grey Kangaroo** mob are certainly enjoying this weather. On most sunny days, there are dozens lying about enjoying the comfort and warmth provided by the mulch and jute mate in the newly restored creek line and the wetlands. A couple of residents have raised the issue around the apparent lack of joeys, but they are about as the pictures on the right show. These were taken on Tuesday afternoon from a small mob that work the south east corner of The Cape and emerge at the end of Sunlight Blvd most evenings. Cute eh

Oceanside Observations

Thanks to Peter & Wendy (Sunlight) for letting me know of a **White-bellied Sea Eagle** observed on 2nd Surf (that is three sightings over the past 12 months) – here's hoping they find the tree stags! They also observed three **Sooty Oystercatchers** (last weeks featured bird) on the beach. Well done to Graeme C (Periwinkle) for photographing five **Hooded Plovers** he saw on 2nd Surf (no mean feat) and letting me know of a 'one-legged Hoodie' – has anyone else seen this bird? Last Tuesday, I watched for an hour or so from 2nd Surf lookout a couple of pods of **Common Dolphins** feeding with **Crested Terns** as company, and **Humpback Whales** further out – the humpies are still about. Too far out for decent photos. Thanks to Rob J (Periwinkle) for the observation of a **Shy Albatross**.



Above: Crested Tern with fish catch

I did a little side trip to the Mouth of the Powlett last weekend. Great spot for birders: observations included **Double-banded Plovers** (a winter migrant from NZ), a flock of 11 **Hooded Plovers** (my biggest ever), **Sooty Oystercatchers**, **Royal Spoonbills**, **Little Pied** and **Little Black Cormorants** and a **Sea Eagle** over the river.

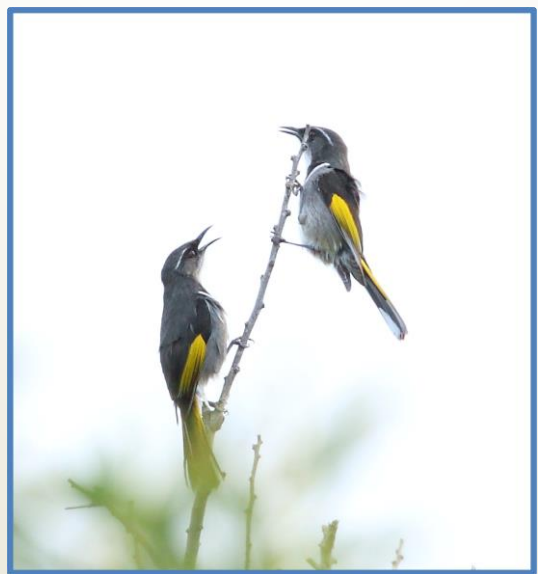


Feature Bird – Crescent Honeyeater

I saw three of these beautiful, fast, and active little honeyeaters a few days back on the south-east track. Two males peeled off and landed on a branch (picture below) and were quite vocal with each other – I wonder if this was some sort of courting behaviour toward the third bird which may have been a female?



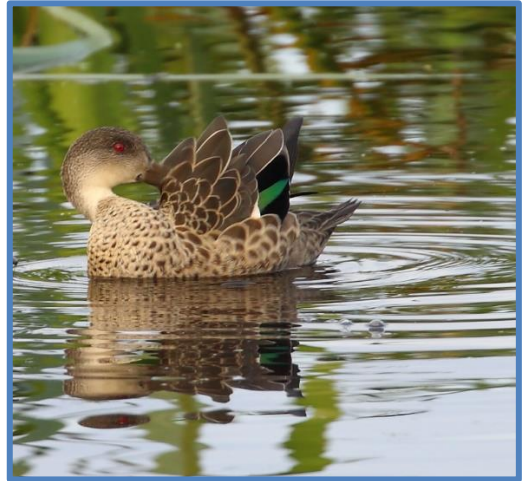
Crescent Honeyeaters are abundant in Tasmania and less common on the mainland, but I have seen them regularly around The Cape. Some birds migrate from Tasmania in winter. They inhabit coastal scrub and heath, breed from Jul-Jan, and can form long-term pair bonds.



Thank you to everyone for your observations – keep them coming.

Land Lines

Thanks again to resident wetland watcher Gabi (and Chris and Levi) for spotting more “duck” activity in the wetlands, including a **White-faced Heron** teasing Levi, a pair of male **Chestnut Teal** and a pair of **Grey Teal** (below) on the main wetland complex. Breeding season is on us!



Out in the open, I saw a **Nankeen Kestrel** hovering and diving for food and another **Peregrine Falcon** being chased off by the **Galah** flock. Last Tuesday, a ‘smaller’ flock of around 30 **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** were feeding in ‘Lone Pine’ – a great chance for some more pictures. A male (pink eye ring) and female are featured below.



Rob J (Periwinkle) ‘spotted’ a pair of **Spotted Doves**, a pretty but introduced bird, in his backyard, and I have seen them in the bush as well. I saw and heard the call (a slow, drawn-out high-pitched wail) of a few **Australian Ravens** flying over The Cape, but they were chased away by our resident **Little Ravens**. This is a new sighting, so the bird list is now up to 98.

Can't get enough of these 'Tuesday' cockies...

How one introduced tree ('Lone Pine') can provide so much food for a native bird like the **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo**. It may look out of place in the coastal bush, but it provides both history and habitat.



More Galah facts

Interesting picture and article on ABC News (Science) about Galahs and social distancing. Apparently, if you see Galahs perched and they are perfectly spaced, each individual bird has its own space — it is only when they form as couples that they will 'sit' very close together. Galahs will pair up toward the end of winter going into the breeding season in September and they tend to stay together for years. Another thing to check out with our local flock!!



Above: Spotted Dove

Below: Nankeen Kestrel and White-bellied Sea Eagle
pictures provided to help you with identification

