

21st June 2021

"The Winter Solstice"

Issue No. 47

Nature Observations around The Cape



Cape Chatter

Inside this issue:

Honeyeaters in the home garden 2

Songster of the coastal bush 3

Hooded Plovers on 2nd Surf Beach 3

Afternoon and evening snaps at The Cape from last week 4

Project KOALA at The Cape Notice 5

Up the creek line ... looking north from Middle Pond 6

Finally gotcha ...

This very small honeyeater has eluded me since starting *Cape Chatter*, but yesterday I managed to get a few decent photos of it feeding in my home garden. It is the stunning *Eastern Spinebill* (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*). The spinebill is a winter visitor from the high country to the established gardens of Cape Paterson and has been observed along the boundary of established Cape and **The Cape** estate. I was particularly pleased not only to see and photograph it but also because of the fact it travelled some distance to our garden to feed on the nectar from a couple of flowering *Grevillea Mount Tambaritha* we planted just a few months back. This is another great sign that the garden habitats at **The Cape** are going to provide great food and shelter for small birds and animals as they develop.

The *Eastern Spinebill* is part of the *honeyeater* family and becomes the sixth *honeyeater* species I have observed in our home garden at **The Cape** along with *White-eared Honeyeater*, *Crescent Honeyeater*, *New Holland Honeyeater* and the *Red* and *Little Wattlebird* (the most commonly seen).



Above: Female Eastern Spinebill in the home garden at The Cape on 19th June 2021.



For residents and owners at **The Cape**, a reminder that on Saturday 3rd July at 2.00PM the first community event for Project KOALA kicks off with a project update at 28 Sunlight Blvd, some pruning and mulching at our pilot planting site followed by Harvest Drinks at 4.00PM. See the flyer on Page 5 in this issue of *Cape Chatter*.

Some of the honeyeaters that have visited the home garden



Above and Below: Female Eastern Spinebill on 19th June 2021 amongst the Grevillea Mount Tambaritha.

Above: New Holland Honeyeater feeding on the nectar of a Kangaroo Paw



Above: Juvenile male Crescent Honeyeater feeding in a Coastal Banksia

The *Eastern Spinebill* is a small bird around 10 grams in weight. It has a distinctive long, thin bill with a downward curve. This bill is designed to extract nectar from flowers like grevilleas and other heathy shrubs but it also eats spiders and insects. Like most honeyeaters, it is very active and prepared to fight for its nectar territory. This particular bird was not overly concerned by me taking photos from a reasonably close distance while it fed. The female has a grey head or crown, while the male has a black cap. A pair of these birds have been observed locally so keep your eyes out for some quick flying little birds—it may be them!

The songster of the coastal bush...



The *Grey-shrike Thrush* is one of my favourite birds in the Australian bush because of its beautiful, melodic calls. They are often seen on the exit track in the south east going toward 2nd Surf Beach. There are five sub species of this bird within Australia—our sub species is *harmonica*. Pictured left is an immature bird taken on the exit track last week—it is distinctive by its eye-ring and streaks on the chest. Below is the male of the sub-species, recognised by the white lore and black bill.



Hooded Plovers along 2nd Surf Beach



Above: Hooded Plover pair on 2nd Surf Beach

This time of the year, local *Hooded Plovers* tend to flock together before they form breeding pairs in August. Along 2nd Surf Beach recently, small flocks of four birds have been seen—last year a flock of seven was observed. On a recent visit to the Mouth of the Powlett River near Kilcunda, I managed to see a flock of 16 ‘Hoodies’ along with a nice sized flock of about 20 *Double-banded Plovers*—a winter migrant from New Zealand.



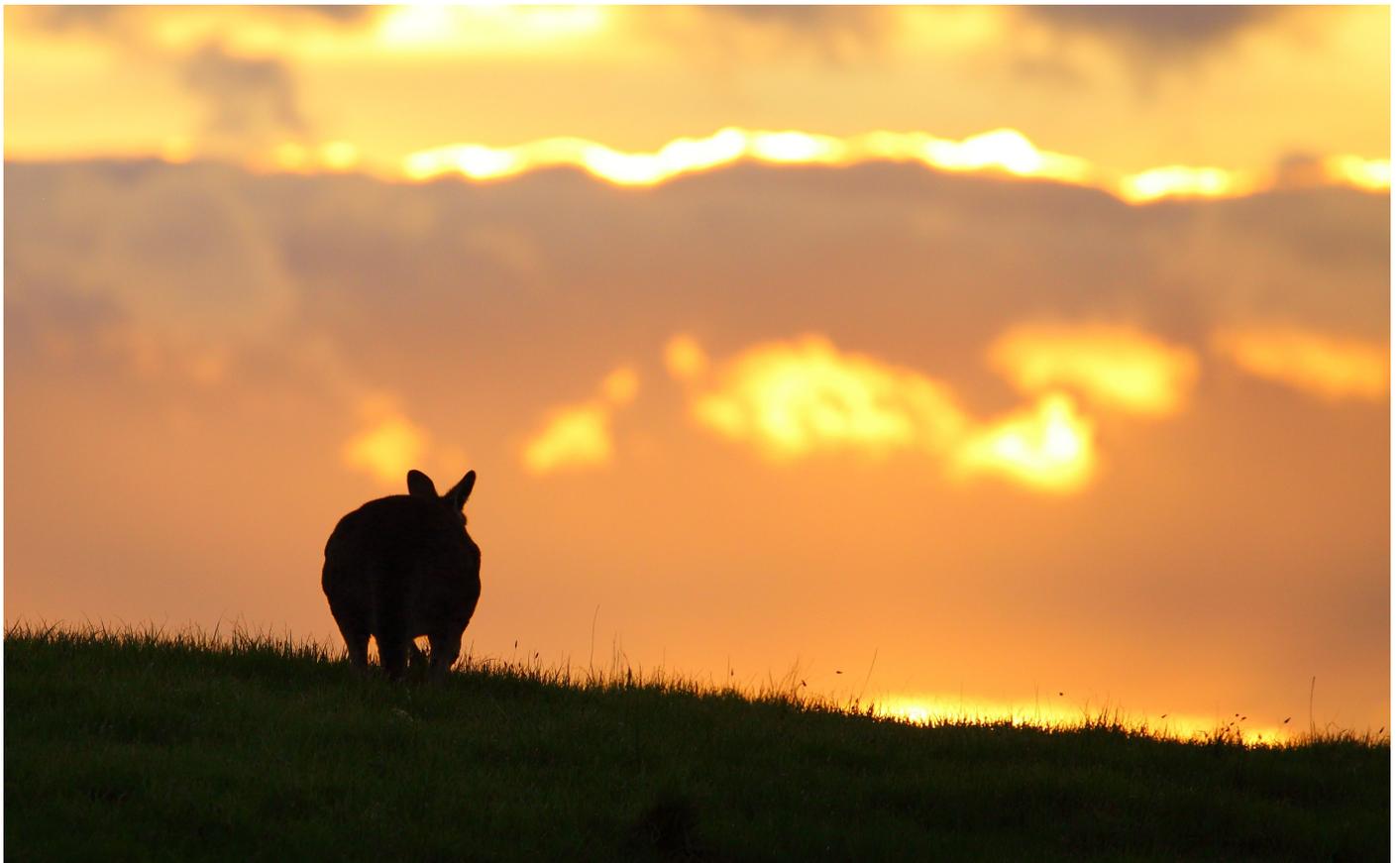
Above: Double-banded Plover. The Mouth of the Powlett is a great spot for bird enthusiasts to see shorebirds like plovers and oystercatchers

Afternoon and evening snaps near The Cape last week ...



Above: Sea spray and rough seas roll onto 2nd Surf Beach looking west along the Bunurong Coast, late afternoon on 17th June 2021. Whale watching was a bit of a challenge this afternoon! This part of the coast is the “backdoor” southern coastline adjoining **The Cape**. There are numerous Humpback Whale sightings at the moment, mostly further out!

Below: On a stunning sunset evening, an *Eastern Grey Kangaroo* hops off over the ridge towards Wilson’s Rd on the western edge of **The Cape** on 16th June 2021.



Project Koala at The Cape *for owners and residents of The Cape*



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koala @The
Cape

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED IN GROWING THIS COASTAL MANNA GUM SAPLING INTO A TREE AS HABITAT FOR KOALA IN FUTURE YEARS?

Hopefully by now you are aware of the aims of Project KOALA at **The Cape**. The groundwork has been laid by a small team (the KOALITION) and the time has come for the community to get involved and begin nurturing some 600 plants for planting this Spring in the first phase of the Project to enhance the treed habitat of **The Cape**.

The plants species have been identified and ordered, and site preparation with mechanical weed clearance has been completed. We now need to get the site prepared for planting around September this year. Weather and COVID permitting, the first project community event is planned to give you an overview of the Project, then get all of us into some serious site preparation and weed pruning, followed by a bit of social chit-chat over drinks and nibbles.

WHEN: Saturday 3rd July 2021 at 2.00 PM

WHERE: Meet at Jeannie and David's home, 28 Sunlight Blvd, **The Cape**, for an overview of the Project's aims along with an outline of the afternoon's activities before a short walk to the site zone about 300m away for some pruning and clean-up activities.

WHAT TO BRING: Dressed in working/gardening clothes, bring gardening gloves, protective eyewear, secateurs/pruners/loppers, a hat (more like a beanie!), some water along with a sense of spirit and fun. We will provide the direction and help you work up a thirst in this cooler weather!

AFTERWARDS - AROUND 4 O'CLOCK: For those interested, reconvene at Jeannie and David's for the monthly "*Harvest Gathering*" of The Cape, where we can continue the community chit-chat and get to talk more about the Project (amongst other things) over a nibble and drink. BYO drinks and some nibbles for sharing (these can be left at the Hartney's at the 2.00 PM briefing).

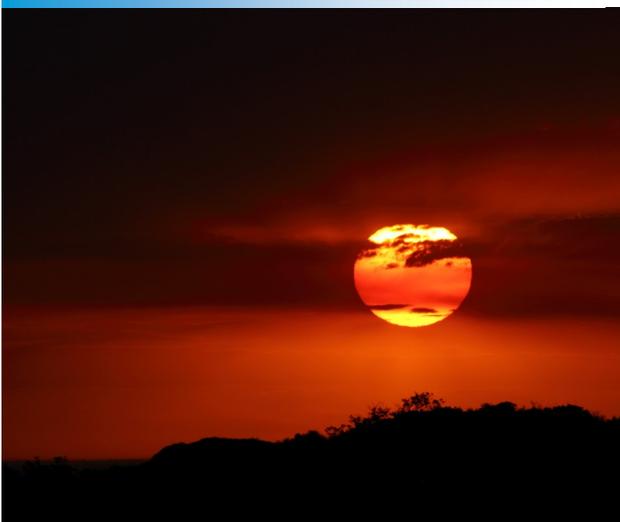
ANY QUESTIONS? Drop an email to David or Jeannie at dwhartney@bigpond.com

Further up the creek (line) at The Cape ... looking north from 'Middle Pond'



'Middle Pond' looking north on 6 October 2020. Bottom photo taken on 5 May 2021.

Nature Observations around The Cape



The Cape is on the traditional land of the Bunurong people

The ***Cape Chatter*** blog is a periodic newsletter produced by resident of **The Cape**, David Hartney. You can subscribe to receive it automatically by email by visiting <https://capechatter.com> and signing up. The website also contains all sorts of nature information and pictures of the ecology, flora and fauna at **The Cape**.

All photos shown in ***Cape Chatter*** are taken by David Hartney unless otherwise credited.

Feel free to contact David by email or through the website to report any nature observations at **The Cape**.

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