



## Cape Chatter

### *I could watch these Little Corellas for hours ...*

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For those of us who are fortunate to be living at **The Cape**, the raucous noise and amusing antics of the *Little Corella* flock can keep one occupied for unlimited hours of entertainment. The flock of 100 or so birds has been prominent recently, moving about the estate between feeding grounds, taking over various houses under construction, just hanging about playing, flying out over the nearby Bass Strait (what is going on there?) before returning to start all over again. I spent a few minutes watching them play, feed and preen in the late afternoon recently and managed to capture some of their behaviours with the camera at reasonably close quarters.



How many birds have you seen lay on their back and eat?? This *Little Corella* (above) amazed me as it munched on some kikuyu grass while laying on its back with its feet pointing upward! Very strange. I have seen *Galahs* also do this type of thing.

### *The Latham's Snipe have returned*

Thanks again to residents Gabi, Helen, Joe and Robyn W for helping with the count. It was a bit of fun wandering through the wilds!

We managed to see six *Latham's Snipe* on the second seasonal count last Saturday for the Latham's Snipe Project which is part of the Australian Waders Group. All the birds were 'flushed' from the natural south east wetland area. These remarkable birds have flown some 12,000 kms from northern Japan to spend summer in our area. We expect to see more on the next count in January.



## More Cockatoo action ...



**Above:** A little bit of Pilates exercise by way of some side stretching and loosening up the hip joints!!

**Below:** Umm ... I am thinking just silly play time for this fella ... head stands, bit of grass chewing. Corellas must use up so much energy in their daily activities!



A small family group of three *Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo* are still dropping by **The Cape** for a feed on the *Coastal Banksia* in the streetscapes, particularly the more developed trees along Sunlight Boulevard. Most of the birds that visit over the cooler months have probably headed into the higher country inland where they spend the warmer months breeding. These three birds (it appears it is a juvenile and parents) are hanging about for some reason, but we would expect them to depart this area soon.



**Above:** A Corella pair have some bonding and playtime on the ground.

**Below:** More bonding and preening time.



**Above:** Male *Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo* in Coastal Banksia

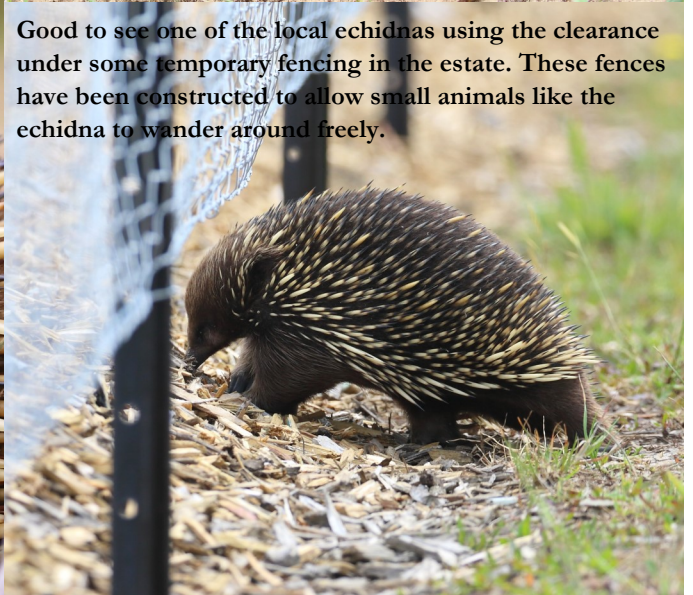


## *'Head in the sand' ... some quiet time with an Echidna*

Bird activity was pretty quiet on a recent wander into an area of habitat in the south east, but I managed to spot a *Short-beaked Echidna* and spent just under an hour watching it feeding in a sandy area that obviously had a fair bit of tucker. We are fortunate to see quite a few *Echidna* wandering around the estate this time of year and they seem quite at home wandering between homes and amongst the restored habitat. But there is something special about watching one away in the 'wilder' areas, undisturbed. It had its nose and head in a sandy area and every now and then, it would pop up with a face covered in sand particles, have a bit of a sniff around and resume feeding ... head in the sand again. After getting a few photos, I wandered off and it continued undisturbed obviously having a good feed.



Good to see one of the local echidnas using the clearance under some temporary fencing in the estate. These fences have been constructed to allow small animals like the echidna to wander around freely.





## Snake action ...

The resident pair of *Lowland Copperhead* snakes were in full action recently at the habitat log near the central wetland complex (right near the snake awareness sign!!). Landscape Manager Joel and some of his team were working in the area and noticed the pair in what could have been a mating activity (both snakes were intertwined—see the picture below by Joel). Joel alerted me, but by the time I reached the spot with the zoom lens, the deed had been done, and one snake retreated to inside the hollow log while the other was laying nearby (pictured right). There are quite a few snakes about at the moment so please be alert! The *Copperhead*, while venomous, is a shy snake and will generally slither away if you approach too closely and they sense your presence through vibrations. They are seen regularly in this location ... it is great snake habitat with plenty of food!



Snakes have very poor eyesight. They sense vibrations transmitted from the ground by their jowls as a signal of danger. Vibrant sound can be used as a practical way to scare snakes away from a certain area. So if you are worried about snakes entering your house space, there are vibrant sound emitting devices you can place in the garden. Snakes are protected animals and should not be killed to eradicate them, as they will keep filling the void you have created—there are plenty of them!



## 'Bluey's emerging as well ...



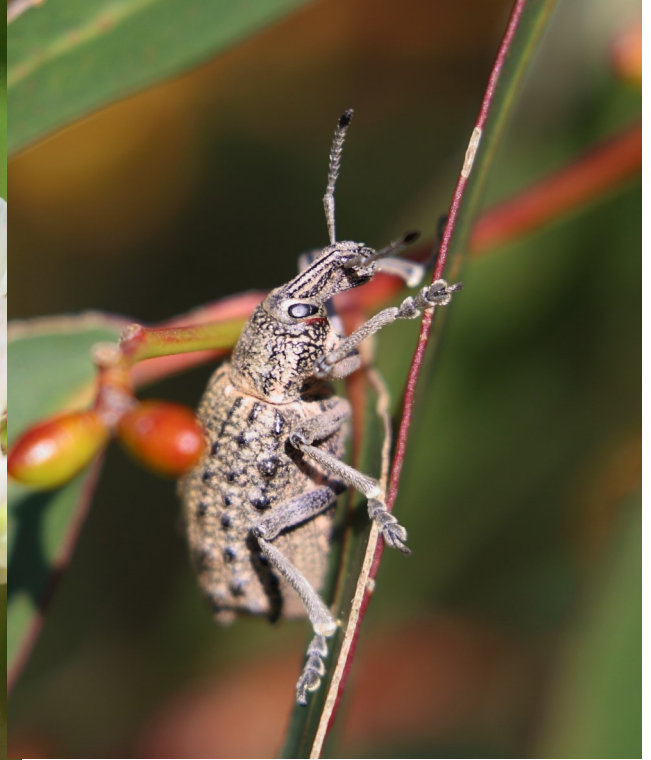
The *Blotched Blue-tongue Lizards* are also starting to emerge from their cool weather hideouts. They are seen often around house gardens and wandering around the estate over summer. Please be careful when riding and driving as they can sometimes be seen crossing roads and warming up on the asphalt and gravel swales. Do not mistake them for a tree stick—there are not that many branches falling to ground just yet!





## *The smaller things in nature ...*

I have managed to photograph a few more tiny creatures and plants on my treks around **The Cape** since the last issue of Chatter. I have been in pursuit of native bees and managed to photograph one a few days back which I think is a type of burrowing bee (pictured below left). It was on a clover flower in the garden. While walking past the old man Manna Gum, I noticed this strange looking creature (pictured below right) clinging to one of its leaves—I believe it to be a type of beetle??



I also came across a lovely patch of small plants with white and mauve flowers in an old pasture area of **The Cape**, which I think is a form of *Wurmbea* (or *Early Nancy*), a type of lily. Such a great time of year to see these plants which emerge throughout spring.



Thanks to future residents Kathleen and Matt who helped identify last Issue's unknown plant which I thought was a type of orchid. It is most likely a *Lobelia Anceps* (pictured below), a small herbaceous plant I found in a wet area in the south east habitat.





## *Bird observations ...*

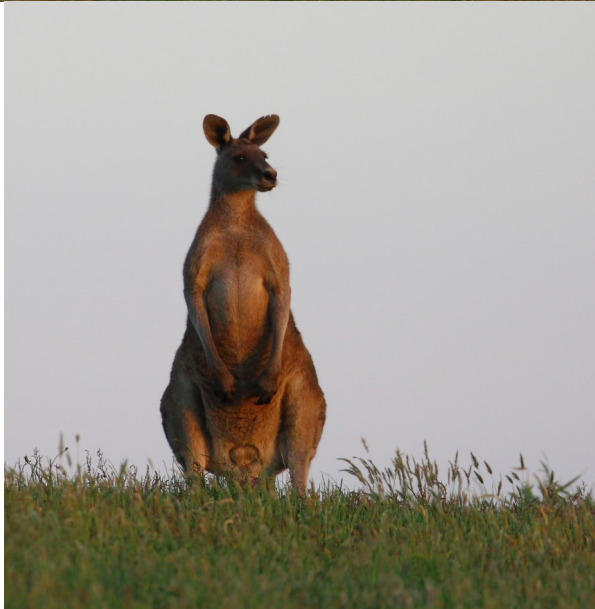
Gabi T has reported the two hybrid *Pacific Black* ducklings are still hanging in there in the small south wetland. There are a few immature bush birds about, namely *Grey Butcherbirds* and *Australian Magpies*. The calls of the *Grey Shrike Thrush* are still ringing out from the coastal reserve, and the lovely call of the *Yellow-faced Honeyeater* is the prominent honeyeater call at the moment. A lone *White-necked Heron* has been around the wetlands—a beautiful, graceful bird, larger than the more common *White-faced heron*.



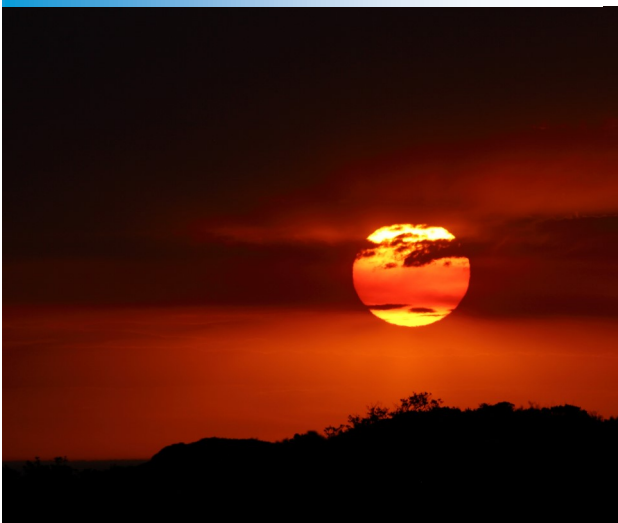
**Clockwise from Top:** Immature *Australian Magpie*, immature *Grey Butcherbird* (both hanging around the Project KOALA plot area), *Yellow-faced Honeyeater*, *White-necked Heron* and the beautiful songster, the *Grey-shrike Thrush*.



## *Kangaroos emerging for their night time feed (the southeast mob)*



### 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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