

HFNC Excursion to Lake Linlithgow & allied wetlands on 21 Feb. 2021

Rod Bird

Participants: Rod Bird & Diane Luhrs, Reto Zollinger & Yvonne Ingeme, Peter Hocking, Ross Simpson, Greg Hartigan.

Diane, Rod & Greg met before 8 am for a brief look at a viewing point in the SW corner of Jenawarra, off Chatsworth Rd, where we saw 3 Freckled Duck amongst Teal. We then met the others at The Point, at 8 am. There was no wind and the sky was overcast but visibility was good. The water level was at about 85% of full cover and the marker at The Point indicated a max. depth of about 53 cm of water.

There were few ducks in the Chatsworth Rd Bay area where the waterline was well out. We noted later that the most numerous duck on Jenawarra was the Grey Teal (1940 birds), with 450 Australian Shelduck, 195 Blue-billed Duck, 55 Australasian Shoveler, 60 Chestnut Teal and 29 Hardhead and 32 Pink-eared Duck. Hoary-headed Grebe and Black Swan were few.



We drove along the SE bank, past the old windmill, and stopped several times to look for waders on the shoreline but finding only Red-capped Plovers and Red-necked Avocet (260). We observed several Blue-winged Parrots that perched obliging in the trees along the way, a highlight for some members (photo, left).

We drove down to Boonawah Creek, stopping in the trees along the way where we had a better view of the birds. Here we saw our first Red-necked Stints (80), along with Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (90).

We had morning tea at Boonawah Creek where the highlight of the day was the sight of 3 flocks of Straw-necked Ibis merging in the sky over the northern shore and then wheeling around to alight briefly on the NE corner of the lake. We estimated 1200 birds in that flock and a check later of numbers from a photograph (below) gave a similar result.



Our next stop was at Krause Swamp, via Linlithgow Lane, where we saw very few waterbirds, the best being 56 Hoary-headed Grebe.

We continued our drive around Lake Linlithgow via North Lakes Rd and then West Lakes Rd. The wind had increased by this stage and there was a shimmer over the water, making observations a little difficult. We did not note any different species.

At Lake Bulrush there were a few Shelduck and Pacific Black Duck and many Silver Gull. We did not stop to survey this wetland – this was done the next day (see Table).

Lake Kennedy was not visited, a survey having been done earlier when 55 Banded Stilt had been observed. The water level in that lake was very low and almost dry over a large part of the surface – the strong southerly wind had blown water over much of the northern part of the lake that had been dry previously.

The table (right) lists the annual rainfall data (mm) and maximum lake water depth (cm) in February from the year we began our annual surveys here. Note that the annual rainfall is read at the end of December, whereas the entry for lake water depth is for February of the next year. No water is pumped from this lake, and it rarely overflows (the last was in 1956), so it acts as a rain gauge for the catchment and the influence of climate change is evident.

Annual rainfall in 15 years (1983-97 inclusive) was 496-864 mm (ave. 666 mm) and the lake was never dry in February. The max. depth of water in mid-Feb. 1984-98 inclusive was 85-245 cm (ave. 158 cm).

Annual rainfall in 23 years (1998-2020 inclusive) was 428-838 mm (ave. 603 mm) and the lake was dry in 11 years. The maximum depth of water in mid-Feb. 1999-2021 was 0-114 cm (ave. 30 cm).

Water depth (cm) & Rainfall (mm)		
Year	Depth in Feb	Rainfall
1983	0	864
1984	158	704
1985	176	711
1986	164	689
1987	220	598
1988	174	595
1989	122	622
1990	138	634
1991	126	660
1992	126	870
1993	245	644
1994	209	512
1995	153	701
1996	133	696
1997	145	496
1998	85	629
1999	42	568
2000	0	592
2001	0	727
2002	45	532
2003	0	719
2004	14	687
2005	0	428
2006	0	434
2007	0	685
2008	0	540
2009	0	564
2010	0	737
2011	80	713
2012	46	553
2013	30	562
2014	16	488
2015	0	471
2016	0	838
2017	114	672
2018	110	565
2019	107	508
2020	34	676
2021	53	
Long term		680

Other birds seen around Jenawarra included Grey Shrike-thrush, Crested Pigeon, Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo (16) and New Holland Honeyeaters.

As usual, we saw a couple of Black Wallaby along the east bank.

The access to Boonawah Creek frontage to the lake has now been developed on a line through the trees on the bank, starting from the fence-line track about 200 m from the turn off into Linlithgow Lane. The previous track that followed the fence to the creek was deeply rutted by hoons with 4WDs. The new route is better drained and possibly open most of the year.

The **Table** (next page) summarises the waterbird surveys that were conducted here in the Linlithgow Wetlands area in February 2021, including the data for [Lake Linlithgow](#) and [Krause Swamp](#).

Summer 2021 Waterbird & Raptor Surveys of Linlithgow & Penshurst Wetlands							
WETLAND	LKEN	LLIN	LBUL	KRAUSE	HARN	SOLD	YATM
Observer	RB	hfnc	RB	hfnc	RB	RB	RB
Survey date	19/02/2021	21/02/2021	22/02/2021	21/02/2021	19/02/2021	18/02/2021	18/02/2021
Time	0740	0740	1005	1100	0930	0815	0920
Duration (mins)	90	260	50	20	20	30	150
Water depth (max. cm)	vlow	53	mod	mod	mod	vlow	mod
Water % cover on bed	60	85	95	95	70	50	95
Marker reading		1.83					
SHOREBIRDS/WADERS							
Banded Stilt	55						
Black-winged Stilt		1			1		
Masked Lapwing	35	135	4		2	71	2
Red-capped Plover	15	95					
Red-necked Avocet		260					
Red-necked Stint		80					
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		90					
CRAKES, CRANE, DUCKS, GEESE, GREBES, RAILS, SWANS							
Australasian Shoveler		55		12			
Australian Shelduck	250	450	110	297	430	4	
Australian Wood Duck	2		5				
Black Swan	2	103				14 #6j	8 #1j
Blue-billed Duck		195					
Chestnut Teal		60	2			2	
Freckled Duck		3					
Grey Teal		1940		6	19	46	
Hardhead		29					
Hoary-headed Grebe		13		56	1		
Musk Duck				1			
Pacific Black Duck			140	4		86	22
Pink-eared Duck		32					
CORMORANTS & PELICAN							
Little Pied Cormorant		3	1	1		1	4
BITTERN, COOT, EGRETS, HERONS, IBIS, MOORHENS, SPOONBILLS & SWAMPHENS							
Australian White Ibis		1				6	
Eurasian Coot		34					
Nankeen Night-heron *							3
Purple Swamphen							15
Straw-necked Ibis	20	1200					
White-faced Heron	9	4				43	6
White-necked Heron						1	2
Yellow-billed Spoonbill		12				5	
GULLS & TERNS							
Silver Gull	202	85	225		6		
RAPTORS							
Brown Falcon	1	2	2	1			
Black-shouldered Kite		1					
Nankeen Kestrel			1				
Peregrine Falcon		1					
Swamp Harrier		2		1			1
Wedge-tailed Eagle		1		1			
Whistling Kite	1	3	1	1			1
OTHER BIRDS ASSOCIATED WITH WETLANDS							
Golden-headed Cisticola		2					
White-fronted Chat		P		P			

Lake Kennedy, Lake Linlithgow, Lake Bulrush, Krause Swamp, Harnath Swamp, Soldiers Swamp, Yatmerone Swamp

nesting record (j = number of juveniles in the total)