

HFNC Excursion to Lake Linlithgow & allied wetlands on 20 Feb. 2022

Rod Bird

Participants: Rod Bird & Diane Luhrs, Peter & Wendy McDonald, Reto Zollinger, Peter Hocking.

Diane & Rod arrived at 7.30 am for a brief look at **Lake Kennedy**. It was dry and had been so for most of December as a result of a dry year (558 mm) and very dry Nov & Dec (total of 32 mm). There was an ephemeral cover following 44 mm in January. There were no waterbirds present and few other birds.

We visited the SW corner of **Jenawarra**, off Chatsworth Rd and along the eastern edge of the pines to begin the survey of waterbirds and raptors on and near the lake. Silver Gulls & Masked Lapwing were the main species seen there, along with 18 Red-capped Plover.

We met other members at The Point, at 8 am. There was little wind but the sky was overcast and visibility was not that good (Photo by PH). The water level was at about 65% of full cover and the marker at The Point indicated 1.45, thus a max. depth of about 15 cm of water.

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	558
2022	15	
Long term		680



View across Jenawarra to Wurgari/Mt Sturgeon)

The table (left) has annual rainfall data (mm) and maximum lake water depth (cm) in February from the year we began 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 time was in 1956), so it acts as a crude rain gauge for the catchment. 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 24 years (1998-2021 inclusive) was 428-838 mm (ave. 601 mm) and the lake was dry in 11 years. The maximum depth of water in mid-Feb. 1999-2022 was 0-114 cm (ave. 29 cm).

There were few ducks or Black Swan on **Lake Linlithgow**, no Eurasian Coots, Hoary-headed Grebe or Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. We did not see the Pacific Golden Plovers noted 3 weeks earlier.

There were many Masked Lapwing (217) and Silver Gull (284) and a modest number of Red-necked Stint (145) and Red-capped Plover (82). An odd sighting was that of a Great Cormorant. We drove down to Boonawah Creek, stopping in the trees along the way. Here we saw the Red-necked Stints, along with many Red-capped Plover, a few Australian Shelduck and 2 Grey Teal.

We had morning tea at Boonawah Creek, where the wind was rising and the weather cooling. There was a great expanse of exposed mud at this spot. We walked out to near the shallow water and noted one Red-capped Plover sitting on a nest.

The access to Boonawah Creek frontage at 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 hooners with 4WDs and is not safe to drive on. The new route is better drained and, with the possible exception of a short muddy section adjacent to the fence not far from Linlithgow Lane corner, open most of the year.

Our next stop was at **Krause Swamp**, via Linlithgow Lane, where we saw more waterbirds, the best being 480 Australian Shelduck, 7 Hoary-headed Grebe, 26 Grey Teal, 13 White-faced Heron and 2 Wedge-tailed Eagles.

We continued our drive around **Jenawarra** (Linlithgow) via North Lakes Rd and then West Lakes Rd. We made 4 stops along the way. We did not encounter any 'new' species along the way. We did find more garden rubbish dumped at the North Lakes Rd cliffs lookout area. As a result of our complaints made last year about vandalism (cutting down 2 large trees we planted in 1985) and hoon-driving activity, Parks Victoria has installed a sign at The Point entrance warning drivers to keep on the tracks.

Other birds seen around Jenawarra included Grey Shrike-thrush, Crested Pigeon and New Holland Honeyeaters. As usual, we saw a couple of Black Wallaby along the east bank.

2022 Shorebird 2020 summer surveys of Lake Kennedy, Jenawarra (Lake Linlithgow), Lake Bulrush, Krause Swamp, Harnath Swamp & Soldiers Swamp

Rod Bird, Diane Luhrs & HFNC club excursion

WETLAND	LKEN		JENA		LBUL	KRAUSE		HARN	SOL
	RB	HFNC	RB&DL	HFNC	RB&DL	RB&DL	HFNC	RB	RB
Observer									
Survey date	19/01/22	20/02/22	02/02/22	20/02/22	02/02/22	02/02/22	20/02/22	19/01/22	19/01/22
Time started	0930	0730	0800	0750	1030	1010		1010	0850
Duration (mins)	30	15	250	255	20	10		5	30
Water depth (max. cm)	0	0	30	15	mod	mod	mod	low	v.low
Water % cover on bed	0	0	70	65	90	85	90	50	5
Shorebirds & Waders									
Black-winged Stilt			4 (2juv)						
Masked Lapwing			240	217	7		6		117
Pacific Golden Plover			2						
Red-capped Plover			175	82					
Red-necked Avocet			38						
Red-necked Stint			10	145					
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper									25
Cranes, Crakes, Ducks, Geese, Grebes, Swans									
Australasian Shoveler			1						
Australian Shelduck			85	31	115	70	480	77	40
Black Swan			15	19		2			2 (juv)
Grey Teal			14	2	8		26		11
Hoary-headed Grebe						4	7		
Pacific Black Duck						3			
Gannets, Pelicans & Cormorants									
Great Cormorant				1					
Little Pied Cormorant									1
Bitterns, Coots, Egrets, Herons, Ibis, Moorhens, Spoonbills & Swampheens									
White-faced Heron						4	13		12
Yellow-billed Spoonbill									3
Gulls & Terns									
Silver Gull			445	285	3				
Raptors									
Brown Falcon			4	3	1				
Swamp Harrier									1
Wedge-tailed Eagle							2		
Whistling Kite			1						
White-bellied Sea-eagle					1 juv				
Other Birds Associated With Wetlands									
Little Grassbird							1		