

# Sept-Oct 2014

Friends of Edithvale – Seaford Wetlands Inc.



Number 138

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Clamorous Reed-Warbler

## Wetland Warbler

### HORRIBLE HEADLINES

Have you been reading the news lately? 'Wildlife plummets'; 'Natives in firing line'; 'Global migration of shore birds under threat'; 'Coal good for humanity: Abbot'; 'From flocks of 1000's to fewer than 400 birds' Makes you pretty dependent doesn't it?.

'Wildlife numbers have plunged by more than half as the Earth's human population has nearly doubled.' WWF: 2014 Living Planet Report (*Herald Sun*, 1st October 2014).

'Permits to kill more than half a million native animals including seals, cockatoos, wombats and black swans have been approved by the State Government .... over

the past five years. ....Permits to cull more than 9,000 wombats have been handed out including one instance when the native animal was destroyed for damaging the greens of a golf course.' (*Herald Sun* 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2014) *For heaven's sake!*

'The epic migration of shorebirds between Australia and their arctic breeding grounds is said to be in imminent danger of collapse. Birds are

disappearing by their tens of thousands mainly because of the loss of their refuelling stations. Hunting in the northern hemisphere and coastal development in Australia are costing the birds. But most critical is the loss of their stop-over habitats in the flyway caused by development, invasive grasses and pollutants like DDT.' (*The Age* 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2014).

'Coal is essential for the prosperity of the world': Abbot' (*The Age* 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014);

'In the name of human development, 80% of temperate woodlands in Australia have been lost.' (*Birdlife* September, 2014)

What a sorry litany!

Unfortunately nothing stands in the way of commerce and big business – not animal welfare, not the welfare of the lower echelons of human society, not the welfare of the planet (*and it's the only one we've got!*)

And the reality is that big business dominates decision-making and planning in Australia and abroad. Developers, coal

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Curlew Sandpiper at Edithvale

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# HORRIBLE HEADLINES

miners and other big polluters are concerned with short-term profit, not the long-term environmental consequences of their actions. They have and will continue to fight any attempt to restrict their profits.

There truly needs to be major system change. Major industry needs to be brought into public hands and under democratic public control that puts the needs of the planet first; there needs to

be major action on population control to reduce our consumption of natural resources; there needs to be major action on developments that ruin natural environments needed by our fellow sentient beings.

But how to effect this????

Sources: As mentioned above.

Pamphlet: *Socialist Party Australia*

(See Page 4 for story of amazing flight of Sandpipers.)



# WORKING BEES



**W**orking bees have finished for the year. Hundreds of plants have been planted in the buffer zone around Seaford Wetlands which serve to protect the wetlands and provide habitat for wildlife. Thankyou to all those who have helped plant for the environment and the future—Rex (leader), Dawn, Jacqui, Greg, Colin, Lorraine, Robin, and Lionel. Great job and great for the future of the wetlands.



# DUCKS' QUACKS DO ECHO & OTHER FACTS

By Melissa Mayntz: Birding/Wild Birds Expert. about.com

**S**cientists have solved one of the acoustic world's riddles. It is a myth, they announced, that a duck's quack has no echo.

Trevor Cox, of the acoustics research centre at the University of Salford, is an expert in techniques used to diffuse echoes. Prof Cox said. "It does indeed echo."

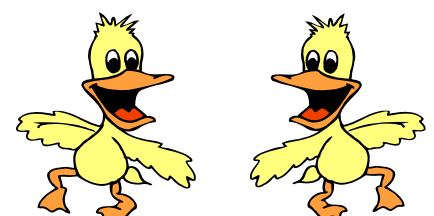
But they will also add, a trifle sheepishly, that the echo of a duck's quack is very difficult to hear.

All types of ducks are part of the bird family *Anatidae*, and there are species of ducks found worldwide on every continent except Antarctica.

Most duck species are monogamous for a breeding season but they do not mate for life.

Ducks are omnivorous, opportunistic eaters and will eat grass, aquatic plants, insects, seeds, fruit, fish, crustaceans and other types of food. But preferably not bread.

Because of their familiarity and comic nature, ducks are often featured as fictional characters. The two most famous fictional ducks are Disney's Donald Duck, who premiered in 1934, and Warner Bros.' Daffy Duck, who premiered in 1937.



# WHY NOT?

Over the past year or so FEWSI has .....

- planted over 1000 trees and under-storey plants in the buffer zones of Seaford Wetlands and on land bordering the southern end of the Edithvale Wetlands (Chelsea Heights);
- manned the opening of the Discovery Centre twice a month on Sunday afternoons, and hosted a number of visits from community groups on other occasions at the same venue;
- conducted walks around the wetlands and had presence at community events;
- had active involvement in shaping the Frankston Housing Strategy around the wetlands;
- had active involvement in attempting to protect the wetlands from inappropriate development;
- had active involvement in the rehabilitation of the bird hide in Edithvale Road;
- celebrated our 25th anniversary with an event for all members.

## WHY NOT become an active member?



Have you heard ...?





### FESWI OPEN DAY

AT  
DUCK IN  
ON  
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 16th  
11:00am—3:00pm







Displays	Migratory Bird Experience
Treasure Hunt	Launch of FESWI Walk Brochure
Water Discovery	Visit Discovery Centre and Viewing Platform
Tree Planting	
Barbecue	
Music	



# AN EPIC JOURNEY

Reprinted from WW Jan 2008

Robin Clarey

Currently in our wetlands are flocks of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. These intrepid little travellers have flown in all the way from Siberia to summer here and will head back again in a few months - a round trip of 12,000 kms. If you get a chance, go down to have a look at them and to marvel.

## The Bird

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is 18–26 cm in length. It has a moderately long bill and legs, long narrow wings and a fairly short tail. Its colouring is a complicated 'dead grass' pattern of browns, buffs and black on the upper parts and white or cream below. It is the most abundant and wide spread of migratory birds in Australia and is strongly gregarious.

Tracking the birds to understand their movements is a difficult task and the following is a possible scenario.

## The Facts



### Breeding

Breeding occurs during the short Arctic summer - June to August - in Siberia.

Little is known about the breeding cycle except that within a week or so of arrival, four eggs are laid, in an open, scantily-lined hollow in the ground. Incubation takes three weeks, fledging takes three weeks and it is all done by the female.

The birds then start their migration south along the flyway.

### Flyway

A flyway is a route flown by birds during migration. There are eight flyways around the world. The Sandpipers use the East Asian-Australasian flyway stretching from Siberia, Northern China and Alaska southward to Australia and New Zealand where the birds rest and feed during the southern summer. This flyway passes through 22 countries.



Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands

## The Story

The Arctic summer draws to a close. The sun moves south, readying to cross the celestial equator and dip into the austral hemisphere. Shadows lengthen in the tundra and the air is sharper. Chicks are raised and fledged amongst the sedge and heath. That eternal, internal, insistent, atavistic tug within becomes stronger. It is time to gather in the skies.

The flock wheels and turns and dips in synchronised farewell, then heads south.

Wingbeat upon wingbeat upon wingbeat.



Flight muscle, like heart muscle endlessly beating.

From the tundra, over forests and vast treeless steppes; semi-deserts and mountains (*of Russia - the largest country in area in the world*).

Over rugged plateaus and lakes; towering mountain ranges and bleak deserts (*of Mongolia*).

Over forests and hills (*of the Eastern Highlands*) and fertile farms and large cities (*of the Eastern Lowlands of China - the third largest country in area*) to the first resting place.

Below are the shallow waters of the ponds. The climate is temperate - unsettled, cloudy and mild. Food is in abundance - insect larvae, invertebrates, shrimp.

Replenished and onto the next resting place.

Continued Page 5

## AN EPIC JOURNEY CONT.

There is a chain of thousands of wetlands along the flyway - crucial to the birds' survival for, after a long flight, they lose a large percentage of body weight and need the resting-place wetlands and their rich food sources, to replenish and continue on their way. If the chain is broken the results are disastrous for the birds.

Given human population pressures and propensity for development there is a huge need for protection of the wetlands on the flyways. This has been assisted by various treaties that have been established between countries (eg JAMBA, CAMBA, CMS) and the RAMSAR Convention established in 1971.

### Resting Places

The journey probably takes about five weeks to complete, with three stop-overs on the way. The first stop could be on the coastline of Tianjin Municipality (China) on the Yellow Sea with its adjacent salt and shrimp ponds.

The second stop could be mangrove forests in the tidal coastal lowlands of East Central Vietnam, or the extensive rice paddies in the Mekong Delta. The third stop could be the mangrove swamps along the coastlines of Sumatra, Kalimantan and Irian Jaya.

The final destination is Edithvale-Seafood Wetland. Here the birds rest and build up body mass over the summer. Their stomachs expand to facilitate this and when it is time to return to the northern hemisphere, their stomachs shrink to provide more muscle mass.



Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at Edithvale

Wingbeat upon wingbeat



Over mountains and limestone hills (*of the Southern Uplands of China*) and mountainous forests and jungles (*of the Northern Highlands of Vietnam*) to the second resting place.

Below are the mangrove forests in the tidal coastal lowlands, sparkling in the sunshine and beckoning. It is hot and humid and frequently raining.

Replenished and onto the third resting place.

Wingbeat upon wingbeat



Over dense tropical rain forests where the mists rise perpendicularly in the still air, and over low swampy plains (*of Malaysia*) then myriad tiny islands (*of Indonesia*) scattered upon the shining sea.

Below are low swampy areas along the coastline. It is hot and muggy. Plants grow all the year around. The rain is heavy and afternoon thunderstorms rend the air.

Replenished and onwards.

Wingbeat upon wingbeat



Over high plateaus, gorges, hills and low mountain ranges (*of the Eastern Highlands*), and low flat farmlands and cities (*of Australia*) to the final destination.

Below, tucked within a sprawl of urban development, are tiny oases glinting in the early morning sunshine. Shallow waters bordered by phragmite and cumbungi growing on muddy margins. Waters filled with polychaete worms, small molluscs, insect larvae and crustaceans. Descend and land - in a haven of safety and provision for the summer.

### References

Australasian Wader Studies Group (Internet); Wetlands International – Oceania (Internet); A Year on the Wing – Learning and Doing (Internet); WWW.shorebirds.org.au/migration\_East\_Asian\_Aust\_flyways (Internet); Wetlands International – Oceania (Internet); Australian Birds - The Multimedia Experience. Published by Webster; 1994-1998 Encyclopaedia Britannica; Microsoft® Encarta® 99 Encyclopedia. © 1993-1998; Simpsons & Day: Field Guide to the Birds of Australia.

## Corporate Members

Following is a list of our corporate members. Please give them your support.

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Aspendale Gardens Primary School

Frank and Isobel Baguley's Nursery

Bird Life Australia

Bonbeach Primary School

Chelsea Heights Community Centre

Chelsea RSL

Edithvale Primary School

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