

February 2018 BirdWatch report

We had calm and sunny weather on 18 February, when 44 people enjoyed a bird-spotting stroll at our seven regular circuits along the Merri and at Edwardes Lake. The strong wind a week later made conditions less pleasant for both observers and birds at our two survey locations. A total of 75 species was recorded across all surveys.

Native species Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark and Little Raven were recorded at all nine surveys, along with the non-native Common Myna. Also widespread were the Pacific Black Duck, Rock Dove, Spotted Dove, Crested Pigeon, Little Pied Cormorant, Rainbow Lorikeet, Red Wattlebird, Blackbird, and Common Starling, all recorded in seven or eight surveys.

Rainbow Lorikeet was by far the most numerous species with a tally of 226. At the opposite end of the scale, there were only single records of Hoary-headed Grebe, White-necked Heron, Straw-necked Ibis, Nankeen Kestrel, Brown Falcon, Striated Thornbill, Golden Whistler and Grey Currawong.

It can be tricky to distinguish between Collared Sparrowhawk and Brown Goshawk, but it was probably the latter at Galgi Ngarrk and in Kirkdale Street Park, Brunswick East.

A flock of ten Zebra Finches was feeding on a seeding grass, possibly Wallaby Grass, at Galada Tamboore. This was the first time our long-term survey leaders had seen them there, although they have been seeing them at the Western Treatment Plant and Point Cook for at least five years, where they have become a lot more common recently. Eighteen Zebra Finches were counted at Galgi Ngarrk, where they were first recorded on the February 2016 survey.

The Edwardes Lake survey reached a bumper total of 39 species, tallying 318 individuals. Coburg Lake had more individuals (463), but fewer species (30).

Eastern Grey Kangaroos and Foxes were seen at the three northerly sites: Galada Tamboore, Bababi Marning and Galgi Ngarrk. A couple of Swamp Wallabies were spotted at Bababi Marning.

Ann McGregor
BirdWatch Co-ordinator

[Photo caption:] Superb Fairy-wrens seem to have their tail on a spring as they hop around on the ground and through shrubs. Brown birds could be females or males in eclipse (non-breeding) plumage. Recorded in five of our February surveys. Photo: Peter Mollison