



**Baillon's Crake**



**Rakali with Baillon's Crake (after survey)**



**Buff-banded Rail**



**Grey Teal**

## **Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve bird survey report 11 January 2025**

After several days of high temperatures and a forecast for 34 C, we were fortunate to start the survey on a still, sunny morning of only 19C. With 7 observers and a roving photographer (with canine companion), we started the first survey just after 7am.

We recorded a total of 29 species with a total count of 337 birds. The lower count was probably due to the recent hot weather, since in December we had 32 species and 497 birds. We had 14 wetlands species with a total of 132 birds, 11 terrestrial species with a total of 142 and 4 pest/feral species with a total of 63.

Diversity was greatest in Areas A (original lake) and E with 17 species each but Area A had the highest abundance with 71 birds and only 62 in Area E. Area D was next with 16 species and 59 birds, whilst Area F had 14 species and 35 birds. Areas B and C in the southern part of the reserve still have a temporary fence around them but access was mostly open, allowing us to count 10 and 12 species respectively, and 27 and 34 birds. Much of the grass in Areas B and C is undergoing spraying and steaming and there were definitely less birds feeding on the ground and more flying through those areas. Area G (canal) recorded 11 species and 49 birds.

Cormorants were well represented this month with 11 Little Black Cormorants (Areas A, D, F), 9 Little Pied Cormorants (Areas A, C, D, E, G) and 2 Great Cormorants (Area C). Quite a few seemed to have been disturbed from the lake on the other side of Bent Avenue and were flying through the reserve but several Little Black Cormorants were hunting in Area A with 3 Little Pied Cormorants perched on logs.

Single Baillon's Crakes were recorded in Area A and E (with Susan Carden later photographing the one in Area A alongside a Rakali) and a Buff-banded Rail was seen in Area D. The Australasian Grebe was still present in Area A and ducks were recorded in all survey areas with a total of 16 Chestnut Teal, 11



**Pacific Black Duck with ducklings**



**Rainbow Lorikeet**



**Australian Magpie**



**Crested Pigeon**

Grey Teal and 26 Pacific Black Duck, which included a female with 9 very small ducklings in Area A. Although we did not record Australian Wood Duck on the survey, there were 15 feeding on the sports oval outside of the survey area. We had 4 Eurasian Coot (3 in A, 1 in E), 19 Dusky Moorhen (mostly in E and F) and 17 Purple Swamphen (mostly in A and D). Welcome Swallow numbers were down with only 2 seen in Area A and 1 in Area B. A single White-faced Heron flew into Area A just seconds after we completed that survey.

Several of the eucalypts are just starting to flower and helped attract 46 Musk Lorikeets and 30 Rainbow Lorikeets, with Musk recorded in all survey areas. A family of 4 Grey Butcherbirds, including 2 juveniles were perched and calling in Area C, with 2 of them later recorded in Area D. Red Wattlebirds, mostly singles, were recorded in 6 of the 7 areas with a high of 5 in Area D. We were unable to find the Tawny Frogmouths, as they have apparently moved from the nesting area. Although we had been told they had moved to one of the southern corners we had no information as to which one or the type of tree in which they were now roosting, although we did have a good look for them.

Nine Australian Magpies and 11 Magpie-larks were mostly in the northern part of the reserve with one of each in Area B and 3 of each in Area G. Crested Pigeons were recorded in 5 of the survey areas but only in singles or pairs for a total of 7 birds. Five Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were seen in Area G and 5 Little Corellas were recorded in Areas D and E, the same flock moving through both areas.

Noisy Miner numbers were down from December but still numbered 40, with highs of 10 in both B and D. Single Spotted Doves were recorded in Areas C and F. Nine Common Starlings were seen in Areas E (5) and F (4), with some in relatively fresh breeding plumage with white spots on the tips of the feathers.

**Report: Tania Ireton and Stephen Machet**  
**Photos: Susan Carden**



Common Starling in fresh breeding plumage



Bird survey areas excluding Area G, Elster Canal

**To view the survey records** for all seven sites, go to Birdata website, select the Shared Sites tab and type Elsternwick Park in the filter: <https://birdata.birdlife.org.au>

### Description of current vegetation and habitat by survey areas:

A: a large pond with well-established reeds around the edge and on small central islands.

B: grassy slopes with stands of mature eucalypts, including winter-flowering ironbarks.

C: grassy areas with stands of mixed native trees with Elster Creek on its northern side.

D: partly fenced area still undergoing landscaping; scattered mixed native trees with a line of mature eucalypts inside the New Street fence; bounded by Elster Creek to its south.

E: newly opened Chain of Ponds with scattered native trees, widescale planting around ponds (currently still under netting) and mature eucalypts inside the New Street fence.

F: grassy slope with scattered eucalypts fringing area A pond, leading to the Chain of Ponds and new beds of ground cover and shrubs adjoining the northern sports field fence.

G: Elster Canal flanked by grassy slopes, mixed plantings and a few mature eucalypts fronting urban housing and a school.

**To join a monthly bird survey**, please contact Hayley Pottenger: [hayley.pottenger@gmail.com](mailto:hayley.pottenger@gmail.com)  
The surveys are led by BirdLife Bayside president Tania Ireton. Start times are between 7.00 and 8.00 am, depending on sunrise. Seven sections (including Elster Canal) are surveyed in two groups, for 20 minutes each; both groups complete Area A together around the main pond. The process generally takes one hour and thirty minutes per group.