

## **Using Birds as Environmental Indicators on the West Coast**

Staff from the Nature Conservation Society of SA, Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula and volunteers undertook baseline bird surveys at 40 sites in October and November 2013 on the west coast of Eyre Peninsula.

The bushland bird monitoring was funded by the Australian Government through the WildEyre program.

Andrew Freeman, WildEyre Project officer said bird monitoring is a good way to measure changes to the health of the environment.

“Birds can be used as indicators of change to environmental health as a result of activities such as revegetation, fencing off native vegetation to exclude stock and weed control, as birds respond well to changes in native vegetation condition and cover”.

The bird survey sites comprised areas of remnant vegetation and other areas earmarked for revegetation and restoration between Mt Hope and Haslam along the coast and inland to Hincks and Hambidge Wilderness Protection areas.

Stuart Collard, from the Nature Conservation Society of SA said that each site was surveyed for at least one hour in the early morning and one hour in the late afternoon on different days, counting all birds seen or heard.

“The survey sites will be revisited regularly and it is anticipated that the number of bird species and individuals will change over time in response to different management regimes, although such changes are not expected to become evident for many years”.

Stuart said that “this year was a great year for seeing a number of species that are usually found a little further north. These birds occasionally move into southern areas such as Eyre Peninsula during dry periods in central Australia.”

“Masked and White-browed Woodswallows as well as Crimson and Orange Chats were breeding in large numbers. Cockatiels, Budgerigars and juvenile Pied Honeyeaters were also recorded at a small number of sites”.

Landholders who own land in the WildEyre area or passionate community members are encouraged to discuss any project ideas with local Natural Resources staff at Elliston or Streaky Bay or with the WildEyre Project Manager.

For further details about WildEyre (a collaborative conservation project on western Eyre Peninsula) see [www.wildeyre.com.au](http://www.wildeyre.com.au) or contact Andrew Freeman (WildEyre Project Manager) on 8688 3076.

Locals interested in becoming involved in bird monitoring can contact Greg Kerr from Natural Resources EP on 8688 3075 or [greg.kerr@sa.gov.au](mailto:greg.kerr@sa.gov.au). Greg is organising some bird identification training on western EP in early 2014.