

The Lakes Hub is an initiative of the Milang and District Community Association Inc. and is part of the South Australian Government's Murray Futures program, funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future initiative.

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## Merry Christmas from the Lakes Hub

The Lakes Hub would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This will be the last Bulletin for 2013, we plan to resume in mid January.

The Lakes Hubs at Meningie and Milang will be open up until Dec 24th, closed from Christmas day and then reopen on the 6th of January 2014.

Remember while you're out and about these holidays, if you see something interesting, take a snapshot and send it in! Even if you take a snap with your phone, the best camera is the one you have on you :-). Sunrise over the Coorong, a Sleepy Lizard basking in the hot Chrissy sun, to the elusive Latham's Snipe (see page 2), we'd love to share your holiday snaps in the first bulletin for 2014!

We hope you all have a safe and enjoyable holiday break.

From the Team at the Lakes Hubs.



Photos: Cormorants at Clayton Bay, November 2013 (courtesy of Leen and Greta Mansfield from Clayton, South Australia).

## The weekly links

### Community Nurseries Network

Keep an eye out for recent updates on the Community Nurseries Network web site. Jill Taylor, Community Nurseries Network Coordinator has been busy testing her new IT skills and is updating the website quite regularly!  
[www.communitynurseries.com.au/](http://www.communitynurseries.com.au/)

### Env-igorate

South East Natural Resource Centre Newsletter

*Energising communities to actively to actively care for the environment.*

If you are visiting the South East during the school holidays there are many great environmental and beach activities available for young and old .....

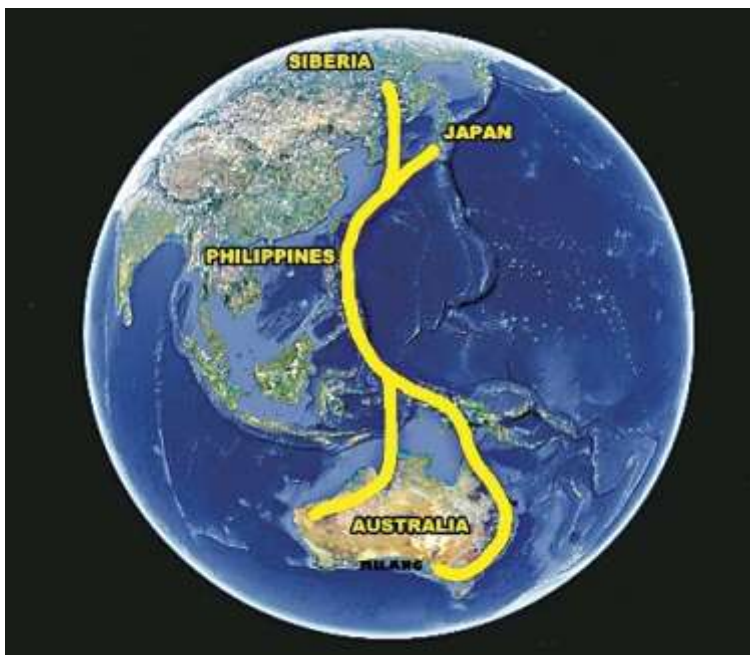
[www.southeastnaturalresourcesmanagementboard.createandsend1.com/t/ViewEmail/r/0C9E6EE271C114062540EF23F30FEDED/1522BE96E8F957C60CC2E775D3CF5869](http://www.southeastnaturalresourcesmanagementboard.createandsend1.com/t/ViewEmail/r/0C9E6EE271C114062540EF23F30FEDED/1522BE96E8F957C60CC2E775D3CF5869)

## Latham's Snipe

Contributed by Alex Stone

December and January is the time of the year when we welcome visitors to Milang, some of whom like it so much that they return year after year. It is not just people who like to come to Milang. Every year some small brownish-coloured birds arrive here in about September after travelling more than 11,000 km from northern Japan via the Philippines and Papua-New Guinea then down the east coast of Australia.

They are a small part of the total world population of Latham's Snipe, perhaps 30,000 in all, which breeds in Japan and Siberia during the northern Summer and then escapes



during the Winter months to eastern Australia to enjoy our warmer weather.

The Milang wetlands area is just one of the many destinations of these intrepid travellers who apparently accomplish their journey in just a few days-- not bad for a bird about the size of a Murray Magpie!

Milang is well-known as a good place to look for these birds in South Australia. They are usually to be found in the wetland area between the Railway Station and the Shacks but are not easy to spot because they blend in with the samphire and other vegetation in the area. You will only see them if they are disturbed and burst up into flight, zig-zagging

across the samphire with a harsh alarm call like tearing sandpaper.

Last year I was lucky enough to photograph one of these birds in the wetlands North-East of the Caravan Park. This year I have not been so fortunate but we have seen nine or ten of them flying up in the area behind the shacks.

Older residents may remember the time when Latham's Snipe would make their long journey to Australia, only to be met by local sportsmen with their shotguns. Now they are protected under the Federal EPBC Act and the international migratory bird agreements with China and Japan. Even a site which regularly supports just eighteen of these birds is regarded as a nationally important habitat for the species.

These birds could well come under pressure as the result of drainage and clearance of sites in their breeding areas and changes to the wetlands in their Australian destinations. For example, Birdlife Australia has been concerned during the past year that a developer in Port Fairy, Victoria has been given permission to build thirty-one houses in an area which regularly supports one hundred or more snipe over Spring and Summer.

It is therefore very important that we look after the snipe which come to visit Milang and look after their habitat.



## THE CAPE BARREN GOOSE



**By Robynne Barratt**

The Cape Barren Goose, (Lowrie), is an attractive goose with a broad light grey stripe on each side of back and generally ash grey in colour. The Crown has a broad white stripe and wing coverts spotted black, they have reticulate scaling on their feet, their voice box lacks a bulla and their skeleton is similar to the Shelduck, nonetheless they graze on land.

The Cape Barren Geese are distributed along the southern coast of Australia, in Western Australia, eastern end of Bass Strait.

The Cape Barren Geese generally only breed on offshore islands in winter and then disperse to the mainland in summer.

Cape Barren Geese spend the winter months on their breeding islands where the mature birds establish pairs and the same pair will stay together for life. The nest is made of twigs and vegetation and is usually in the shelter of a rock or shrub. Only the female incubates the eggs during a four and a half week period but the male stays close to the nest to protect his family. After hatching they feed on grass immediately and in about 6-8 weeks they have grown flight feathers. They will leave their parents and join the large flock of unpaired birds, and will soon fly to the summering areas.

Just as the geese have traditional breeding islands, so they also have traditional areas on the mainland. These areas must have sufficient green food and grain for the birds to survive the summer and still return to the islands in autumn.

In South Australia the marking of geese with special plastic collars has shown that the majority of birds from the islands of Eyre Peninsular make the hazardous journey across the Spencer Gulf, York Peninsula and St Vincent Gulf to spend the summer around Lakes Alexandrina and Albert at the mouth of the River Murray. Some older residents living in these regions can pinpoint to the day when they will arrive and their exact location.

Being large birds which spend the summer in flocks looking for green vegetation and grain, inevitably come into conflict with farmers. They particularly like to feed from irrigated Lucerne crops and grass and other legume pastures which are either cut for hay or used to maintain sheep and cattle. The Cape Barren Geese also defecate in stock troughs and dams. The conflict with agriculture is being investigated for the best form of management for these summering areas. Most of its critical winter breeding islands are now managed as conservation parks and monitoring continues to improve their survival.

## Friends of Meningie visit Melaleuca Orana

On December 5<sup>th</sup> the Friends of Meningie Volunteers joined with Melaleuca Orana personnel for a BBQ lunch in appreciation of all who took part in the Spring clean weeding which was recently completed along the Meningie Foreshore.

Melaleuca Nursery manager Robert Simpson gave a guided tour to Friends of Meningie members, many of whom had not seen the Coorong Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth seedlings in the Nursery before.



The Lake Albert and Alexandrina Bio-Remediation program has assisted Melaleuca Orana in offering their clients a greater diversification of work and ensure their future within the Meningie area. Many new skills have been learnt by Melaleuca Orana clients and this has seen more than 120,000 plants supplied to the CLLMM revegetation program over the last year alone.

Friends of Meningie members and Melaleuca Orana members have had many complimentary comments made about the Meningie Foreshore Habitat Restoration Project with many believing that visitors to Meningie now stay longer.

## History Spot

### THE RIVER MURRAY CHURCH MISSION BOAT- ETONA 1891

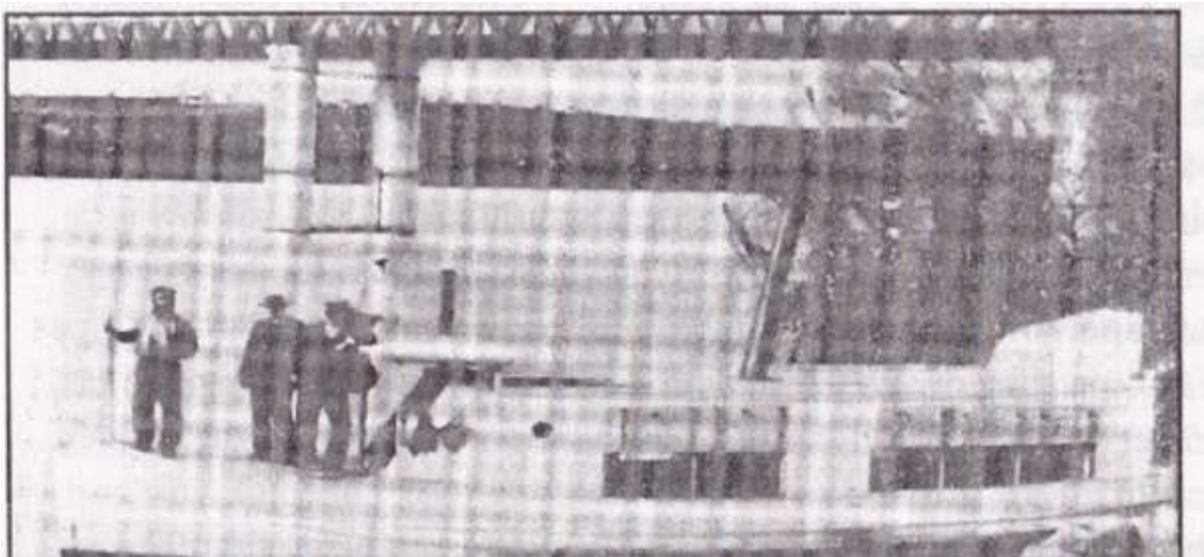
George Kennion, the Anglican Bishop of Adelaide decided to purchase a paddle-steamer to be used as a floating church. Funding such an imaginative new scheme must have had problems but eventually the greatest part of the initial cost of obtaining and fitting out a suitable craft was borne by the society for the Propagation of the Gospel, together with the proceeds of an afternoon fete held at Bishops Court North Adelaide and several Flower shows and Chocolate fetes. While in England he canvassed for financial support from the boys at his old school, Eton College. When the steamer was purchased in 1891 it was, therefore named, Etona for sentiment and maybe for possible assistance in the future.

On Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> Sept, 1891 the River Murray Church Mission Boat made her first voyage by leaving the wharf at Goolwa with the Bishop and three other aides.

The below is the only descriptive record of a trip on the Etona penned by Bishop Kennion himself.

*"The steam and ebbing tide were strongly against us, so we steadily steamed towards the lakes. The pace could hardly be described as rapid, but the machinery worked well, and we had good hopes of making our destination, Meningie, (some fifty or sixty miles off), at least in ten hours. The beacons marking the course of the channel were plentiful and only carelessness would make us lose our course. The colour of the water and the multitude of these strange solitary posts standing grimly in the swirling waters, as we entered the lake, would have suggested views of the great lagoons of Venice. Off the Mission Station, at Point McLeay a cutter yacht with her sails glistening white in the sunshine and the array of fishing boats and the jetty with mission houses looked very pretty from the water. It was past 3 p.m. when we rounded the cape into the narrows which join lakes Alexandrina and Albert. After a little more than an hours' threading of the channel, with swans, pelicans and cranes rising out of the water, musk duck diving, and little teal and wild fowl bustling along the water made an animated scene. The question was whether we should reach to the fringe of the belt of weeds which surround Meningie with daylight enough to pick the only channel. But it's 6.45 p.m. the service is supposed to be at 7.30pm, and we are at least a mile or two away. There's nothing for it but the dinghy and we must steer for the jetty light. A host of kind people and the Rev, Bussell were waiting for us on the jetty and before long the evening service was begun in the really beautiful little church. The church was crowded. The next morning saw us off in good time with Rev. Bussell on board and on our way to Milang. On our journey we stopped to baptise children and we reached Milang at about 6 p.m."*

Whilst the story of 'Etona' and the River Murray Mission in South Australia ends at 1912, the trim little Paddle steamer still graces the river today at Echuca, and although now a 'topender' of some eighty years she still enjoys the glory of her old romantic days when her cargo was the gospel.



## Milang Snipe Sanctuary Environmental Watering

### Project Update—December 2013

In May 2013 an opportunity arose to deliver environmental water to the Milang Snipe Sanctuary (south basin). This was to be a trial to increase the duration of inundation of the sanctuary by 1-2 months to increase suitable foraging habitat for migratory waders, particularly Latham's Snipe, and to promote seed set in submerged aquatic plants. The intended timing of delivery in spring however, due to the distribution of rainfall throughout Spring and early Summer in the Milang area, the Milang Snipe Sanctuary has received a semi-regular trickle of stormwater maintaining shallow water or wet mud. In previous years these areas often dried rapidly forcing the Snipe to move to find food elsewhere. Bird monitoring has been conducted regularly at the sanctuary in both north and south basins by Milang residents, Alex and Bev Stone, and as a part of the Cryptic Bird Monitoring in the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) project. Latham's Snipe have been observed in low numbers (~5 individuals) in the north basin during each monitoring round and most recently 10 individuals were sighted in the north basin in early December. Taking into consideration the monitoring results and the current condition of the site, it was decided to delay the trial. Delivering water in the 2014/15 water year (next spring) will be reviewed and an update on the final monitoring results will be provided in the new year. Many thanks to everyone involved including the Lakes Hub, Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning, Alexandrina Council, the Milang Shackowners Association, Milang residents, the Murray Futures Initiative and Natural Resources SA Murray Darling Basin.

**Kate Mason** | Wetlands Project Officer (Lower Murray)  
Natural Resources, SA Murray-Darling Basin  
Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources

### Expression of Interest

Volunteers needed for ***Seed Collection around Lake Alexandrina and tributaries***

2 hour activity - Early mornings starts( 8am)– Various dates in December, January and February.

Please register your interest with Community Nursery Network Coordinator at the Lakes Hub – Milang. Email [communitynurseries@lakeshub.com](mailto:communitynurseries@lakeshub.com) or ring **Jill Taylor on 0488 465 043**



## On the Level

### Lake Levels (AHD)

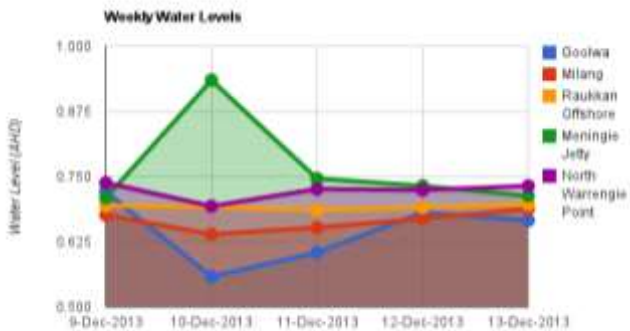
Date	Goolwa	Milang	Raukkan Offshore	Meningie Jetty	Nth Warrengie Point
9-Dec	0.721	0.676	0.694	0.709	0.738
10-Dec	0.558	0.639	0.692	0.935	0.693
11-Dec	0.604	0.652	0.686	0.746	0.726
12-Dec	0.681	0.669	0.691	0.732	0.724
13-Dec	0.666	0.688	0.697	0.713	0.732
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.646</b>	<b>0.665</b>	<b>0.692</b>	<b>0.767</b>	<b>0.723</b>

### Salt Levels (EC)

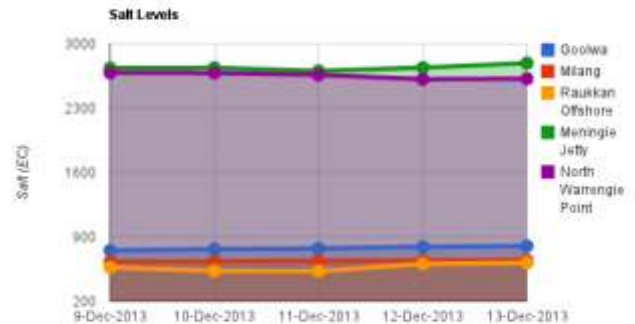
Date	Goolwa	Milang	Raukkan Offshore	Meningie Jetty	Nth Warrengie Point
9-Dec	752	631	568	2735	2683
10-Dec	767	634	531	2738	2682
11-Dec	774	641	528	2704	2662
12-Dec	792	643	607	2740	2614
13-Dec	800	648	618	2789	2620
<b>Average</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>2741</b>	<b>2652</b>

Data received from: [www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/RMWD/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/RMWD/Pages/default.aspx)

Lake Levels



Salt Levels (EC)



## River Murray – Weekly Flow Advice

For weekly flow / level reports on the River Murray and Lakes go to the following website: [www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au](http://www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au)

Up-to-date River Murray flow and water level information can be accessed at the Department for Water, SA Water and Murray-Darling Basin Authority websites: [Water Connect](#), [Daily Flow Report](#), [River Murray Storage Data](#)

Details of river height and rainfall information in the River Murray within Victoria and New South Wales are available at the Bureau of Meteorology website: <http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood>

Information on the discharge of acid drainage water into the Lower River Murray can be accessed online at: [www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au](http://www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au)

For the latest River Murray Flow Report and Water Resources Update - 16th November 2012 visit: <http://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au>

Some electrical conductivity ranges	
Water type	Electrical conductivity (µS/cm)
Deionised water	0.5-3
Pure rainwater	<15
Freshwater rivers	0 - 800
Marginal river water	800 - 1600
Brackish water	1600 - 4800
Saline water	> 4800
Seawater	51 500
Industrial waters	100 - 10000

Source: Suttar S., Ribbons of Blue Handbook. Scitech, Victoria, 1990.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS for more info contact the Lakes Hub

If you have any relevant community event or courses that you would like added to the Calendar of Events please contact the Lakes Hub.

November 2013	
23	
24	
25	
26	Flinders Uni lecture 'Are Weather Forecasts Still for Wimps' 3.45pm Level 1, 182 Victoria Square 7221 8693
27	Talking Heads DEWNR Schoenoplectus plantings for lake edge stabilisation Meningie Hub 8575 1830
28	
29	
30	

December 2013	
1	
2	
3	Talking Heads Salt Interception Scheme Peter Forward, SA Water, Milang Hub ph8537 0808
4	
5	International Volunteers Day <a href="http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org">www.volunteeringaustralia.org</a> Friends of Meningie meeting call Lakes Hub for information 8575 1830
6	
7	
8	Goolwa Christmas Festival
9	
10	UN Human Rights Day <a href="http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/">www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/</a>
11	
12	
13	Christmas Where the Angus Flows, Strathalbyn 6.30pm onwards
14	
15	
16	
17	Port Elliot Christmas Carols 5pm
18	
19	Talking Heads Lake Albert Scoping Study Update Meningie Lakes Hub Office 4.30-6.30pm
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	Christmas Day

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