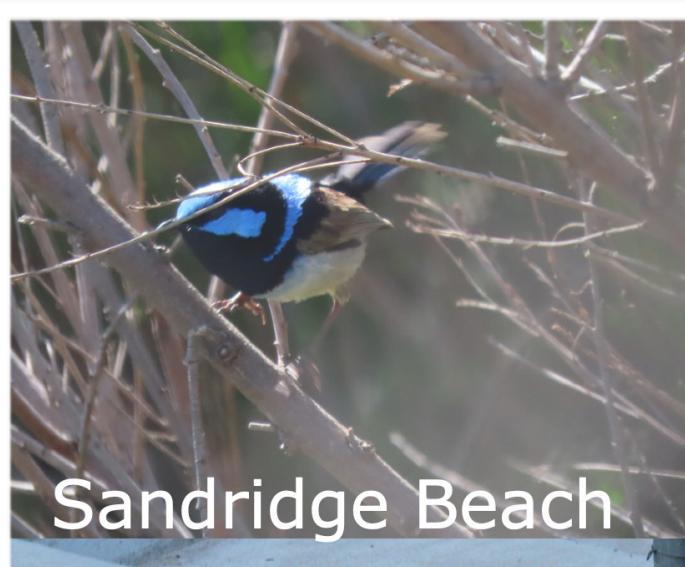
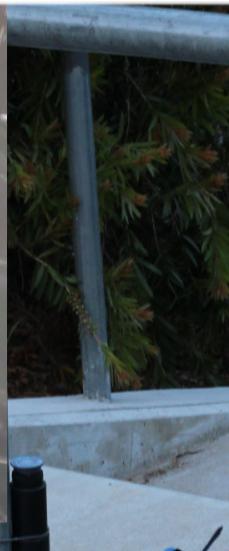


PHOTOGRAPHING AUSTRALIAN BIRDLIFE



Sandridge Beach



Swamp



Grampians
National
Park



Swamp



Yarra Bend Park



FOREWORD:

THIS IS A BOOK FOR ALL PEOPLE TO ENJOY AND READ. IT CONTAINS SOME OF MY FAVOURITE PHOTOS AND MANY PHOTOS OF BIRDS, MOST OF THEM WITH THE CAMERA THEY WERE TAKEN WITH AND ALL MINOR DETAILS. I ENJOY PHOTOGRAPHING BIRDS, AND I HOPE I WILL PASS THE PASSION ON TO YOU SO THAT EVERYONE WHO READS THIS BOOK HAS A FOND IMAGINATION OF THE BEAUTY, EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER AND MANY OTHER THINGS ABOUT, BIRDS.

A Willie Wagtail, the largest of Australia's fantails.

Canon PowerShot SX70 HS
3.8-247.0mm 5184 x 3888
7.2 MB ISO 800



PREFACE:

I HAVE OFTEN ENJOYED THE COMPANY, CHARACTER, AND SONG OF BIRDS. I LIKE SOME SPECIES MORE THAN OTHERS, TO BE QUITE PRECISE LIKE I LIKE WHISKERED TERNS BETTER THAN SPOTTED DOVES BUT I LIKE MOST BIRDS WITH A GENERAL COMPETENCE OF AFFECTION. BIRDS ARE THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE AND I MUCH APPRECIATE PHOTOGRAPHING THEM, DRAWING AND PAINTING THEM AND WRITING ABOUT THEM. I HOPE MANY OTHER PEOPLE WILL APPRECIATE THIS BOOK AND TAKE UP THE HOBBY OF BIRDWATCHING.

A Juvenile Nankeen Night-heron, a common Australian heron.

Canon PowerShot SX70 HS
3.8-247.0mm 5184 x 3888
7.2 MB ISO 800



INTRODUCTION:

BIRDS ARE THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY LIFE. I HAVE BEEN IN MANY EXPERIENCES ASSOCIATED WITH BIRDS, AND ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR HIGHLIGHTS ARE BIRDS FISHING. WHETHER ITS A HERON STRIKING ITS SPEAR-LIKE BEAK INTO THE WATER AND SPEARING A FISH OR A KINGFISHER DIVING HEAD FIRST INTO THE WATER, FISHING SEEMS TO BE ONE OF THE MOST ATTRACTIVE SPECTACLES TO ME. I HAVE SEEN WHISKERED TERNS PLUCKING FISH OUT OF THE SEA WITH SCARCELY A RIPPLE AND BULKY PACIFIC GULLS DIVING INTO THE WATER, MAKING A HUGE SPLASH AND COMING OUT EMPTY HANDED (OR BEAKED) AND OYSTERCATCHERS JABBING AT SMALL MOLLUSCS, CRUSTACEANS AND OTHER ARTHROPODS, EASTERN REEF EGRETS FISHING, PICKING UP LITTLE CREATURES HERE AND THERE, WHITE-BELLIED SEA EAGLES PURSUING SEALS TO SNATCH A LARGE SALMON THE SEAL CAUGHT, THEY ALL HAVE THE SAME TYPE OF EXCITEMENT AS I WATCH, BREATHLESS TO EXPERIENCE THE COMING OF THE BIRD.

ALBERT KEMP

I AM STANDING UP HIGH IN A LIGHTHOUSE IN ANGLESEA, VIC. I HAVE SEEN EGRET TRACKS, A LEGLESS LIZARD, A YELLOW-TUFTED HONEYEATER, A SPOTTED PARDALOTE, A GANG-GANG COCKATOO AND A NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER IN THE PAST TWO DAYS. I RELISH THE PEACE OF THE MORNING WITH GRACE AS I ASCEND UP INTO THE LIGHTHOUSE ABOVE. BEFORE I WENT UP I SAW TWO UNDETERMINED RAPTORS CIRCLING THE LIGHTHOUSE AND A WHOOSH OF EXCITEMENT FILLS MY MIND. I CLIMB UP THE STEPS, HAVE A BIT OF AN ARGUEMENT WITH MY FRIEND ABOUT IF WHITE-BELLIED SEA EAGLES REALLY NEST ON EAGLE'S NEST ROCK AND HE SAYS THEY DO AND I SAY THEY DON'T. UNFORTUNATELY, I AM JUST AT THIS MOMENT MISSING OUT ON THE HIGHLIGHT OF THIS STORY, RICHT AT THIS MOMENT A NANKEEN KESTREL IS CIRCLING THE LIGHTHOUSE. SO THAT'S WHAT THOSE RAPTORS WERE (I ONLY GOT PROOF WHEN VIEWING THE PHOTOS MY ALBERT-UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL TEACHER TOOK) AND AT THIS MOMENT, I UNFORTUNATELY AM NOT GAPING IN WONDER AT THE PAIR OF NANKEEN KESTRELS CIRCLING THE MONUMENT BUT ARGUING ABOUT A SUBJECT AS RASH AS "Do WHITE-BELLIED SEA EAGLES NEST ON EAGLE'S NEST ROCK?" WELL I DON'T REALLY WANT TO FIND OUT AS I HAVE MISSED OUT ON THIS, BUT HERE'S SOMETHING I LACK. I'M NOT SO SAD ON THE FACT THAT THERE AT THIS MOMENT A NANKEEN KESTREL IS NEXT TO THE LIGHTHOUSE BUT INDEED, I ONLY MENTIONED THAT I WANTED THE PHOTO SENT. SO HERE'S WHAT I LACK. I ONLY CARE ABOUT THE PHOTO, WHETHER IT'S A WHOPPING GOOD ONE OR ONE THAT LOOKS MORE LIKE A HORSE BUT IT JUST SEEMS LIKE A PHOTO IS ALL I REQUIRE TO BE HAPPY INSTEAD OF EXPERIENCING THE ACTUAL PRESENCE OF THE BIRD, THE ACTUAL PLACE, ACTUAL TIME, THE WIND IN MY FACE. I DON'T KNOW WHY BECAUSE LOOKING AT AN OLD PHOTO IS BASICALLY THE SAME AS LOOKING AT A BIRD SO THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE MUCH DIFFERENCE.

Image above: A White-browed Scrubwren, one of Australia's native wrens.

Canon PowerShot SX70 HS
3.8-247.0mm 5184 x 3888
7.2 MB ISO 800

Some recommendations for cameras

Fast-action camera:

Canon PowerShot SX70 HS

3.8-247.0mm 5184 x 3888

7.2 MB ISO 800



Sample shot

Standard/Still camera

Canon DIGITAL IXUS 860 IS

4.6-17.3 mm

2448 x 3264 ISO 400



Underwater camera:

Canon PowerShot A620

7.3-29.2 mm

2000 x 1500 ISO 100

Sample shot



PHOTOGRAPHING AUSTRALIAN BIRDLIFE



*Gracefully probing in
flowers,
To extract the full
essence of life
The New Holland
honeyeater
Albert 2021*



Canon PowerShot SX70 HS
3.8-247.0mm 5184 x 3888
7.2 MB ISO 800

Out of the ever-changing list of birds that I like, Honeyeaters can score a pretty big goal. This is a New Holland Honeyeater perching on a bush in the long strip of coastal vegetation at Sandridge Beach. I have seen many things at Sandridge – Superb Fairy-wrens to Pacific Gulls but the hardest bird that I have ever taken is the New Holland Honeyeater. I am excited when I photograph any bird but for honeyeaters, it seems to go a step further. I like New Holland Honeyeaters for the difficulty of photographing them as they are quite shy and I'm not very good at remembering to bring my camera but just the satisfaction of taking a photo of a honeyeater makes me feel assured, I have captured one of the birds that I find hardest to photograph.⁶



Willie Wagtails might be one of my favourite birds due to their character. I like how they seem to be always curious about what's going on in the world. I chose this photograph of one because of the background of white flowers, it makes you get a sense of an interesting image with not only the background blurred but a sort of balanced effect with the white standing out, it seems to put the bird out of the focus, though I like that, I had to crop it to make it fit so it doesn't look quite like what I expected but I like how it looks like a curious bird surveying the gorgeous view (a few white flowers) but it makes me think of how big this world is for birds like Willie Wagtails. Although my favourite birds are small birds like fairy-wrens, Willie Wagtails have a precious characteristic of being cheeky, which although is found in most birds seems to be exaggerated⁷ the quality, I have to admit that Superb Fairy-wrens are quite hard to capture but Willie Wagtails have a luxurious character that can't be missed.



SUPERB FAIRY-WREN

The Superb fairy-wren is a common fairy wren inhabiting much of Australia. The birds living in different locations vary in colour, the inland ones have paler head plumes (left) and the ones living in coastal areas have darker ones (above). They are very attractive little birds, in my opinion more attractive than the almost all blue Splendid Fairy-wren because they don't seem to overdo it in colour. I often see them hopping around bushes, darting in and out, they are very hard to capture. Another thing I enjoy watching is the movement above, the bird has one leg up in the air and is wagging his tail, somewhat expressing a cheeky character. I'm still waiting for one of them to lose their balance.





Canon DIGITAL IXUS 860
IS
4.6-17.3 mm
2448 x 3264 ISO 400

MY FAVOURITE PHOTOS

In the next few pages there are a few of my favourite photos of birds looking sly, birds reflected against the light but not silhouetted and birds that just seem like they're trying to be naughty. I enjoy bird's character because they always seem curious about what the world is. I prefer tough birds looking a bit funny or appearing to scream at things than the rainbow fat smiley birds that people call cute. It seems that birds have so many great characteristics that people don't understand, birds have as complex brains as humans in some ways. If humans were basically robots saying only facts and never laughing I wouldn't call them humans, humans have character and can think, exceeding the skills of any computer, no matter how intelligent they are.



Canon PowerShot SX70 HS
3.8-247.0mm 5184 x 3888
7.2 MB ISO 800

Albert

I have always liked seabirds because of their size, elongated shape – chiefly Albatrosses have extremely long, thin wings and gulls seem to rejoice in their speed and soar in great heights. I like this photo especially because the smaller Silver Gull on the right looks sort of grumpy, like the characteristic here is like “I caught a fish,” said the Pacific Gull excitedly “Look, it’s a mighty big one!” “Yeah right, and you don’t share it with me,” bitterly “I wait loyally all this time and you... Also, I like how the Pacific Gull’s wings just fit into the picture, like it was made at the angle to just fit the wings in. I have many experiences of Pacific Gulls gliding over the ocean on their much praised wings and soaring in, surprised to find their old territory gone, people congregating in huge numbers on the once deserted shores, it makes me feel sad as I have always had some admiration in the seabirds of Australia.

*'Well, if you
don't go away
soon I'll have to
take action.'*

Albert 2021

Canon PowerShot SX70 HS
3.8-270.0 mm 5184 x 3888
ISO 400



I have always liked this photo of a Nankeen Night-heron as it seems to have a sly look on it's face like if these humans stay any longer it will plan for a trick like fill someone's sock with wood lice or something. It looks sort of sly like it has a plan or is doing it, but it also looks a little like an old man who's just having a break from caring for someone's spoilt baby like "I'm having a break at last" (it did have a juvenile sleeping next to it on p1)

*Slim and in anguish
Rejoices in the
morning light
Clearing its mind*
Albert 2021



Canon PowerShot SX70 HS
3.8-247.0 mm 5184 x 3888 7.2 MB
ISO 800

I take a fancy for photos that are silhouetted with a border of light circling the subject but even better, this photo the rosella has actually kept it's colours. I like how in this photo even the cobwebs look like glittering jewels, they usually look like them when they have raindrops on them but in this photo even they have a pleasant golden colour. I also like how in this photo the Eastern Rosella has a slim and elongated appearance and how the mottled breast with red and yellowy green shows clearly in the photo. Even though I like the function of making the bird have a bright edge I still like having it completely silhouetted – it gives an artistic impression to the photo.



Canon PowerShot SX70 HS
3.8-247.0 mm 5184 x 3888 7.2 MB
ISO 800

Albert

As on the last page I was talking about silhouettes, this is a real one. There is no editing, no black and white function but the appearance to be taken by an old fashioned camera is entirely created by the sun. On this occasion the sun was extremely bright so it created a black and white silhouette. I like the photos with silhouettes, but I prefer them to be silhouetted with a golden background rather than a completely white one. Even 14 so, I like this photo because it brings you to see the detail in a bird's plumage – just the outside but when looked at it creates a highly contrasted image of a bird's feathers as they are black and white – when a photo is in colour people see colour but don't notice the details of a bird's body.



