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Description

Martin O'Brien's Trip report of Benalla-Lurg area Victoria is available

A brief report (from a birding point of view!) of the annual Squirrel Glider and Brush-tailed Phascogale monitoring weekend just gone here in Victoria (24-25 March).

Benalla is in NE Victoria and the Lurg hills area is SE of town about 15 km out. It's largely a privately owned landscape with much clearing but important remnant vegetation on roadsides, creeksides and fencelines remaining. It is these areas, plus sympathetic landholder allotments and properties, where nest boxes have been put up for hollow dependant fauna and also where the Regent Honeyeater treeplanting work has been undertaken for many years now.

While leading my groups around this area over the weekend we managed to see a few birds of interest.

Highlights were

1. Diamond Firetail flock (including juveniles) in Ross Lane not far from a Grey-crowned Babbler family in this area
2. a Pied Butcherbird heard calling off Wattle Creek Road
3. Black-shouldered Kite (a pair flying around in the dusk/twilight)
4. Black Kite
5. Brown Goshawk
6. and a single Black Falcon over the eastern edge of Benalla (Regent Honeyeater project nursery area)

The Black Falcon sighting was particularly pleasing as many volunteers on the weekend got to see the bird. Our attention was drawn to a large flock of agitated Galahs that had taken flight over our heads. I realised they were reacting to the falcon which was gliding overhead.

Black Falcons are very rare in this part of Victoria with the most recent record being 1993 (Atlas data). The Black Kite sighting adds to the irruption of kites into northern Victoria at the moment.

We may have seen a pair of (threatened) Speckled Warblers on a block in Embling Road Lurg. Two birds were flushed from regrowth woodland on the edge of a quiet area on our way to a nest box location!

It's been an absolutely bumper season for birdlife in the area with all sites we visited having calling birds. Remarkably we also noted running creeks and water in small roadside gutters, another indication of the wet summer in this part of Victoria.

To finish off our trip we observed a female Brown Goshawk sitting atop the road fencing on the freeway NE of Euroa with traffic going by at 100k/h!

Go to the [Regent Honeyeater project nest box weekends](#)

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Date Created

2012/08/08

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