

COMMUNITY FLOCKS TOGETHER TO Welcome Back the Birds

The Welcome Back the Birds event held on Friday 10 October 2025 at the Eagle Point Foreshore was a wonderful day out.

With a vibrant crowd of community members, nature lovers and families coming together to celebrate the return of migratory birds and learn more about the incredible journeys these species undertake each year.

The location provided the perfect shelter from the wind in behind the Eagle Point reserve. The day was filled with engaging activities, informative displays, and opportunities to connect with local organisations and community groups dedicated to protecting and enhancing habitats for all species.

“It was the perfect place for people to learn about inspiring initiatives across the Gippsland Lakes and surrounding catchments, and to discover how habitat restoration projects are helping support the migratory birds that visit our region,” said Bec Hemming, East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority’s CEO.

From hands on activities and guided nature walks to insightful talks and scenic boat tours, the event offered something for everyone, with plenty of opportunities to discover, connect, and learn.

“People discovered the vital role Australia plays in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and how simple actions, like observing signage and keeping dogs on leads, can help protect these vulnerable species.”

“The enthusiasm leading up to and on the day helped create a friendly and welcoming space for everyone – and reminded us how powerful it is when people come together to talk and share ideas and knowledge,” added Bec.

Together, we can help these remarkable birds continue to return year after year.

The East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority extends a massive thank you to all who helped organise, attended, participated, and contributed to making the day so special.

The Gippsland Lakes and catchment is the Traditional Lands and Waters of the Gunaikurnai people, and we acknowledge their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country.



EAST GIPPSLAND
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY







**Some
pictures
from the
day**



WELCOME BACK THE BIRDS - ACTIVITIES

Photo credit: John Hutchison



MARINE MAMMAL FOUNDATION

Hear all about the Gippsland Lakes Burruran Dolphins.
Find out how you can help this species.



BIRDLIFE EAST GIPPSLAND

Bird conservation insights and bird ID on boat trips and guided walks.
Dr. Chris Purnell from BirdLife Australia will talk about returning migratory birds.



BLACK SNAKE PRODUCTIONS

An amazing display of native wildlife to view up close.
Some of the species will be ones that are found in East Gippsland.



H2O TOURS AND ADVENTURES

Board the Lady Jodie and enjoy a cruise on the Gippsland Lakes and see what birds you can spot.
BirdLife members will be on board to help ID birds.



EAGLE POINT LANDCARE GROUP

The group is hosting guided walks through the reserve with bird, bat and mammal experts from BirdLife and Wildlife Unlimited.



FISHCARE EAST GIPPSLAND

Offering activities to promote responsible fishing practices.
Participate in a fishing workshop and throw a line.



TRUST FOR NATURE

One of Australia's oldest conservation organisations working with Victorians to create a protected and thriving environmental future.



EAST GIPPSLAND ART GALLERY

Be creative and decorate your very own endangered species.
All materials supplied.



WILDLIFE UNLIMITED

A team of experienced senior ecologists will be providing expert knowledge throughout the day and on guided walks.



TODD COOK BAND

The band will perform live music and lead a fun, interactive workshop where people can learn and sing along to a special song dedicated to shorebirds.



PAYNESVILLE COAST GUARD

Chat with members from Paynesville's coast guard, a marine search and rescue organisation comprised entirely of volunteers.



AGENCIES ATTENDING

East Gippsland CMA
West Gippsland CMA
East Gippsland Water
Parks Victoria
East Gippsland Shire Council
Gippsland Ports





Photo credit: Sean Phillipson

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Migratory shorebirds make the long journey across the globe from places like Siberia, Japan and Alaska to visit the Gippsland Lakes, in some cases over 10,000 kilometres.

Visiting each year, they arrive in Spring and make the long-haul flight back to breed in the northern hemisphere as the weather turns colder in Autumn.

Most migratory birds travel to the Gippsland Lakes from breeding grounds in northeast Asia and Alaska along what is known as the East Asian Australasian Flyway. It is a 20,000-kilometre round trip for some of these birds.

Used by millions of waterbirds each year, the Flyway is a network of wetlands and coastal habitats from the Arctic through East and Southeast Asia to Australia and New Zealand where birds rest and feed during their long journeys.

The Bar-tailed Godwit, one of the larger migratory birds that visits the Gippsland Lakes, holds the world record for the longest non-stop flight by any bird recorded. This being a 13,560-kilometre journey non-stop from Alaska to Tasmania in only 11 days!

Bar-tailed Godwits stop off in the Gippsland Lakes after their long journey to rest and refuel. They leave Australia in late Autumn, returning to their breeding grounds in Scandinavia, northern Asia and Alaska. Young birds often remain in Australia all year, returning to the northern hemisphere the following year to breed.

The Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site supports more than 90 species of waterbirds, including important migratory species such as the Bar-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Stint, Common Greenshank, Latham's Snipe, and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

This free event is a fantastic opportunity to learn about the inspiring initiatives that protect and enhance the Gippsland Lakes and surrounding catchments and to connect with local agencies and community groups. Discover how habitat restoration projects are helping to support the migratory birds that visit our region each year.

MORE INFORMATION NEXT PAGE



SAND RENOURISHMENT

An inspiring local project is using science-based restoration to rebuild critical shorebird habitat and guide conservation into the future.

There have been major declines to populations of shorebirds across Australia due to predation from introduced species, loss of habitat and human activities. Breeding colonies are becoming rarer, and many traditional nesting sites have been abandoned.

“This collaborative project in the Ramsar listed Gippsland Lakes is enhancing critical habitats and nesting areas for Little Terns, Australian Fairy Terns, Eastern Hooded Plovers, and Eastern Curlews through targeted sand renourishment efforts,” said Bec Hemming, East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority’s (CMA) CEO.

Sand dredged by Gippsland Ports has been used to create critical breeding and feeding habitats across several locations in the Gippsland Lakes, restoring a further four hectares of vital habitat.

The project includes the monitoring of key ecological health indicators of the Gippsland Lakes with the installation of water quality gauges as well as conducting surveys of migratory birds, frogs, saltmarsh, and seagrass. The data collected will inform management actions for the Gippsland Lakes throughout this project and into the future.

“Bird surveys conducted by BirdLife are an important part of this project, and with over 20 years of data already captured, these efforts are continuing. Confirmed sightings of terns already using the renourished area is a very encouraging early sign of the project’s success,” added Bec.

In addition to sand renourishment and surveys, this project is protecting fringing wetlands and saltmarsh habitats surrounding the Gippsland Lakes by installing fencing to restrict animal and human access.

This project is funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and delivered by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.



Australian Government