

Friends of Belair National Park

Bus Trip Report 2019

On Saturday the 19th of October 2019 a group of 22 members enjoyed a fantastic trip to St. Kilda, to the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (AIBS).

We were graciously hosted by our colleagues in conservation, the Friends of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (FAIBS). FAIBS is a relatively young group as 'their' park is only about 4 years old, but they are skilled, enthusiastic and very knowledgeable. If Belair feels huge in terms of management at 835ha, spare a thought for our FAIBS – their patch is 65,000ha!

We had an interesting question-and-answer session to start with; an introduction to the Sanctuary, the Friends group; and the amazing little birds that migrate from as far as Siberia to the tidal flats of the Gulf St. Vincent annually. One little bird, the red-necked stint weighs as much as a single Tim-Tam (about 25grams) and flies for up to seven days straight as part of its migration!

The weather was 'less than favourable' early in the day, with strong onshore winds pushing the tide up on the mudflats and an occasional shower keeping us on our toes.

However, once the showers had blown over, the sun eventually came out and we were able to view some migratory shorebirds through spotting scopes ably set up by FAIBS.

Following a morning tea break, we adjourned to the nearby Mangrove Trail, a boardwalk generally off-limits to the public, for a most interesting talk by ecologist Joan Gibbs (Adjunct Research Fellow, School of Built and Natural Environments at the University of South Australia).

Joan discussed the Mangrove Forests in relation to carbon sequestration, the harsh brackish conditions; and coastal biodiversity; as well as coastal stability. Her personable, approachable and humorous delivery and deep knowledge of coastal ecology was fascinating. She has agreed to come and visit the Friends of Belair as a guest speaker at one of our monthly meetings so stay tuned.

After our walk through the mangroves, we stayed out for lunch at St. Kilda before moseying home with smiles on our faces, happy that we'd learned about something new and that South Australia's newest coastal sanctuary is in safe hands, thanks to the dedicated crew at FAIBS!!

A good day was had by all.

We've got big plans for next year's trip... watch this space..

Pete





The happy group(s) combined – Friends of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary with Friends of Belair (pic: Ali P)



Looking through the spotting scopes (pic: Steve)





A migratory shorebird – a Common Greenshank seen on the day, with a Mangrove seedling in the foreground. (pic: Mary Ann - FAIBS)





The Friends at the start of Mangrove Trail (pic: Hayley)



The Mangrove Boardwalk (pic: Hayley)





Alan spotted something interesting (pic: Pete)



FoBNP at the Mangrove Trail (pic: Pete)





Discussing all things FAIBS and AIBS (pic: Pete)



Talking about some of the stars of the show – the migratory shorebirds (pic: Pete)

