

An enthusiastic group of birdwatchers attended the Bird Blitz Volunteer Workshop on Sunday 22 October 202. The guest speaker was Dr Jess Lawton, Monitoring Coordinator at Connecting Country who shared insights into the secrets of success for citizen science biodiversity monitoring.

Now in its fifth year, the Macedon Ranges Bird Blitz event and bird data gathered will be subject to analysis sometime in 2024. The aims of the Bird Blitz Volunteer Workshop were

- Provide an opportunity for past and present participants of the Bird Blitz to give feedback
- Showcase the Bird Blitz so far – species, seen, methodology
- Hear from Jess Lawton – on Connecting Country’s phascogale nestbox program, and bird monitoring program
- And then workshop the strengths and weaknesses of the Bird Blitz and where to go from here.

The main hallmarks of success for Connecting Country’s monitoring program were to make sure the data collection is based on rigorous science, to have a paid coordinator to manage the volunteers, and to make sure volunteers are rewarded for their efforts!

The Workshop participants gave feedback as follows:

“It’s good to give bird blitz volunteers the opportunity to do the surveys either with just a friend, or as part of a group”

“we do our surveys using paper recording sheets, perhaps it would be helpful to have an alphabetised bird list for the scribe”

“it is fine to do the surveys just in spring – but if a reminder was sent out each quarter I would survey the shared sites four times a year”

We would like to thank Jess for her presentation and insights and for all the participants for attending a friendly and interesting session. (picture : Presenters Tanya Loos and Jess Lawton)

