

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BIRD NOTES

Editor: Graeme Chapman

Number 15, September 1980

Meetings: Please note that the next quarterly meeting will not be at Cygnet Hall but will take place during the excursion to Yallingup on October 10-13.

OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND

Caves House at Yallingup will be the venue for the long weekend excursion from Friday night October 10 until Monday October 13 and there are still a few vacancies. The cost of accommodation is \$24 per day each and if you wish to attend, please forward a deposit of \$5 per head without delay.

Searching for the Rufous Bristlebird will involve the use of replay tapes, so if you have a portable cassette recorder, please bring it along. A number of tapes of bristlebird calls will be made available. It would also be a good idea to refresh your memory on the differences between the Western and Rufous Bristlebirds as there is the possibility that both species might be encountered. Compare the illustrations on page 4 of Vol. II of Slater's Field Guide with pp. 422-423 of the Readers Digest Book, or better still with the two plates on p. 200 of Rigby's Every Aust. Bird Illustrated. The rufous crown and white around the eyes seem to be the best field marks for the Rufous Bristlebird, but these characters may not be so evident on immatures. A good account of both is given in Dr. Serventy's Birds of W.A.

IF YOU HAVEN'T SENT YOUR \$5 DEPOSIT PLEASE DO SO NOW.

Applications to join the excursion should be sent to Mrs. J. Seabrook, L. 36, Rabone Way, Boya, W.A. 6056, Tel. 299-6816.

THE NORTH WEST

The N.W. of Western Australia has had an exceptionally wet season this year, and any of you who are able should make a visit there to see the magnificent numbers of species that are abundant and conspicuous. Chats and Budgerigahs seem to have done particularly well, but many of the small, resident species are also obvious, where so often they need careful search. Black (Fork-tailed) Kites are widespread, and there should be an abundance of raptors visible during their breeding season especially in September, October and November.

SYSTEM SIX BREEDING ATLAS

Tom Delaney (269 CANNING HIGHWAY, COMO, 6152, phone 367 7452) is organising a project with special appeal for people in the Perth Metropolitan Area. As part of the Atlas of Australian Birds we are aiming to prepare ten minute maps of the area of the coastal plain between the Moore River and the Blackwood River - that is the System Six Conservation Area of the Department of Conservation and Environment. We have only sixteen months in which to survey the 108 ten minute grid blocks in the area, and if possible produce maps of the breeding distribution of those species in that part of W.A. most susceptible to development. Any of you even if you have not contributed to the Atlas before, who have an interest in conserving birds near Perth should contact Tom and see what you can do to help.

If we get adequate coverage we may be able to publish this ten minute Atlas of the coastal plain as an authoritative statement of what is there now.

HERDSMAN'S LAKE

The RAOU survey of Herdsman's Lake, directed by Peter Curry and funded by the W.A. Department of Conservation and Environment is proceeding well. Peter has established transects in the lake that should provide sites for repeatable, quantitative measures of bird numbers there, to back up the statements about bird usage and species status which are required in his final report. As a complement to this current field study, Maurice Millard and Nick Kolichis are compiling an historical appreciation of the Lake and its birds. Anyone with earlier information should contact them as soon as possible.

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Peter Congreve will be taking up residence at Eyre Bird Observatory as its new Warden in October 1980. He and Peter Curry are planning to conduct a course on Bird Identification at the observatory from 14-21 December, 1980. Details can be obtained from The Warden, Eyre Bird Observatory, Cocklebidy, via Norseman, W.A.

W.A. WADER GROUP.

The group was greatly encouraged by a visit from Clive Minton during the winter. Clive will be back again in October and will be meeting the group in the field on October 25. Please contact Jeremy Talbot (phone 291 6563) or Peter Curry (phone 390 6995) for details. The W.A. Wader Group will be represented at the national wader meeting convened by the RAOU in August where it is hoped to make plans for a national wader count this summer. Details will be made available in the next newsletter.

FROM JIM MASTERS IN THE NORTH WEST

"We hope to get on through Meekatharra tomorrow but in the meantime have done a bit of birding around the Cue town environs, some fifty species with water associated birds well represented this year as probably you would well know with the prevailing season here.

Pleased to report two unusual birds, for me at least, in the area, one Swamp Harrier and an obviously mated pair of Blue-winged Shoveller Ducks, a few miles out of town. If this local area is an average sample of the result of all the rain that has fringed the South-west Land Division this autumn and winter, then I should think that any south western water birds might be well advised to try their luck about these parts, as is pretty obviously an enormous number of their friends are already here. This time last year the river ford at home, Glen Avon, has a total water bird population of some 500 birds, but at the time I left last week no more than seventy-five, even though conditions there are much the same as last year."

Jim Masters
20/7/80