

MEETINGS

Next year the Annual Meeting and Dinner will be held at Thunderbird Restaurant, Lot 5, Watsonia Road, Maida Vale, at 7.00 p.m. on the evening of Friday, 9 January 1981. The cost will be \$11.00 per head, and drinks will not be included, so please bring your own. As many of you will know Joan Seabrook has been off-colour this spring and Bess Fewster (9, Morphett Cres., Bateman, 6153, phone 332 7548) will organise the bookings. Please send your money in to her with your booking BEFORE DECEMBER 22, 1980. After the dinner Bert and Barbara Wells will present a visual and auditory display of Western Australian Wildlife. They prepared this for the recent Photographic Congress in Perth and we are most grateful to them for their offer to show it to us.

Nominations for the officers and four committee members should be sent to Stephen Davies by 8 January, 1981.

OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND

Twenty two members enjoyed near perfect weather over the weekend October 11-13th and Caves House at Yallingup proved to be an excellent venue for the social activities. Late starts in the mornings were not particularly conducive to efficient hunting for bristlebirds but a good time was had by all. What was thought to be suitable habitat was searched between Cape Naturaliste and the Fishing Place without a sign of a Rufous Bristlebird. The impact of fire and grazing on the vegetation varied considerably from place to place, but areas near Sugarloaf and Ellensbrook appears to be the most promising. Thanks to all those who took part and did so much walking.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA WADER GROUP

The following extract from their 1979/80 report shows that this group has had a busy season and hope for even better this present season.

.....The first field meeting took place at Pelican Point on 22 September 1979 in cold weather conditions. A total of 9 birds, comprising 1 Curlew Sandpiper, 1 Pied Stilt, 2 Redcapped Dotterels, 4 Rednecked Stints and 1 Sharptailed Sandpiper, was caught and banded, and 15 people, including Mike Lubbock on a visit from England, were present. The next field meeting, also at Pelican Point, was on 13 October 1979 and produced a total catch of 24 birds, made up of 19 Curlew Sandpipers, 1 Knot, 2 Redcapped Dotterels and 2 Rednecked Stints. 13 people were present. On 10 November 1979 the Group met a third time at Pelican Point and caught and banded a total of 19 birds (1 Curlew Sandpiper, 2 Redcapped Dotterels, 12 Rednecked Avocets and 4 Rednecked Stints). One of the Rednecked Stints was a retrap and turned out to have been banded on 3 October 1973 i.e. over 6 years before. The longevity record for this species was established on 12 April 1980, when Bill Lane recaptured in Sydney a bird which had been banded on 21 October 1972. 11 people took part in the night's work. 1 December 1979 saw the Group visit Jandakot Lake, Forrestdale. The efforts of the 16 people there secured 24 birds, of which 10 were Curlew Sandpipers, 1 a Pied Stilt, 10 Redcapped Dotterels, 1 a Rednecked Avocet and 2 Rednecked Stints. The Rednecked Avocet was a retrap, having been banded at Pelican Point on 10 November 1979, and afforded evidence of wader movement between the Swan estuary and at least one of the coastal lakes. Moonlight conditions rendered fruitless an attempt at driving birds into the nets.

Two extra field meetings were held in December 1979, the first on 8 December at Jandakot Lake and the second on 23 December at Thomson's Lake much closer to the sea. In each case the presence of large numbers of waders at the lake in question made an additional sortie seem worthwhile and the numbers caught justified the effort: Jandakot Lake produced 59 birds (8 Curlew Sandpipers, 24 Redcapped Dotterels and 27 Rednecked Stints) and Thomson's Lake 33 birds (21 Curlew Sandpipers, 10 Pied Stilts and 2 Rednecked Stints). 14 people were present at the former field meeting and 5 at the latter. Conditions underfoot at Thomson's Lake were, if anything, more difficult than at Jandakot Lake, for the quaking crust of mud seemingly took a shorter time to break up and a prickly water weed had an irritant effect on the feet of at least 2 members of the party. At Thomson's Lake, moreover, the considerable distance between the nets and the banding point called for additional effort from the small party.

The debacle of 20 January 1980 made it clear that the evening high tide precluded any wader roost at Point Waylen, which is situated across the Swan from Pelican Point, and the 20 people present (many of them new to the Group) between them dealt with but a single wader - a Bartailed Godwit. Other birds such as Silver Gulls did, however, fly into the nets and one Silver Gull was a retrap, having been banded as a breeding adult at Carnac Island in July 1977.

The Group returned to Pelican Point on 16 February 1980 and the 11 people there caught some 56 birds (17 Curlew Sandpipers, 1 Grey Plover, 4 Pied Stilts, 7 Redcapped Dotterels and 27 Rednecked Stints). Silver Gulls also favoured the nets and one of them proved to have been banded by Lexie Nicholls in 1972 or 1973. Another point of interest was that 1 Curlew Sandpiper and 1 Rednecked Stint had swollen feet reminiscent of the condition known as bumblefoot.

On 15 March 1980 10 people handled some 15 birds at Pelican Point. There were 5 Red-capped Dotterels and 10 Rednecked Stints, one of the former having been banded at Pelican Point on 16 February 1980.

The final field meeting of the 1979/80 season was held at Pelican Point on 12 April 1980. A total of 40 birds (5 Redcapped Dotterels and 35 Rednecked Stints) was caught and no less than 18 of the Rednecked Stints were noted as having "red" breeding plumage as against only one bird of that species banded the previous month. One Red-necked Stint, moreover, had been banded at Jandakot Lake on 8 December 1979.

Dr. Clive Minton paid Perth a brief visit in May 1980 and an impromptu meeting was held at 29, Joyce Road, Lesmurdie, on 28 May to enable him to talk to members of the Group. During a long and interesting discourse on what was being done in the Eastern States in the sphere of wader banding and on what activities the Group should undertake, Clive made two points of especial interest to the writer *viz.* the important part cannon netting could play in helping the Group to catch more waders of a greater variety of species than was possible with mistnetting and the fact that the Group's results from mistnetting were by no means as poor as some of its members had feared. We look forward to another visit from Clive on Saturday 25 October 1980, when he will help demonstrate cannon netting techniques to the Group.

We have learned some useful information during the past season. There does not appear to be a wader roost comparable to that at Pelican Point in its dependability in the various other places we have visited and hence no place where consistently large catches can be made with mistnetting techniques. Pelican Point, moreover, offers better wading conditions for humans than the coastal lakes, where trips from the shore to visit the nets can be protracted and laborious - for the larger members of the Group, at any rate. Moonlight and high tides militate against success with mistnets and most catching is done well before midnight, so that the all night sessions with which we began the season are unnecessary. Finally, it is desirable to use teams of more than 5 people, as our experience at Thomson's Lake showed.

Our thanks go to Dr. Stephen Davies for enabling the Group to start its operations and to Jim Lane and Grant Pearson for sacrificing so much of their spare time to keep an eye on us and transport the equipment kindly loaned to us by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. With any luck, we should be able to relieve them of these chores this coming season. Clive Minton's interest in our activities and the time he gave to talk to us are likewise much appreciated. Nic Dunlop of Murdoch University was good enough to find out for the writer details of the banded Silver Gulls we handled, and we hope he will be able to join us from time to time in the future.

It would be invidious to single out any particular member of the Group for his or her special contribution, but Peter Curry's expertise has been a source of great reassurance and deserves mention. It augurs well for the future that people have been prepared to turn out in sufficient numbers in fair conditions and foul to enable the nets to be put up and birds to be dealt with satisfactorily. With this kind of support, the Group should do well during the coming season, and hope to exceed this year's catch of 280 birds.

J.N. Talbot for
Western Australian Wader Group