

Western Australian Bird Notes

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Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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The Tyranny of Taxonomy

Taxonomy impairs the serenity of bird observers. All endure irritation, frustration and annoyance by being subject to an arbitrary, unhelpful and unappreciated schema expressed in a language few can follow. Taxonomy essentially started with Carl Linne (1707 - 1778), later known as Carl von Linne and even later known as Carolus Linnaeus. A successful botanist and physician, (he was a professor of medicine before becoming professor of botany by his own request), it is to Linne, that we owe the binomial nomenclature system, which became the foundation for modern taxonomy.

In the mid-18th Century when Linne suggested the binomial system using Latin, it was the then 'universal' language and could be read by most educated persons. Two hundred years before, the educated could speak Latin easily (Queen Elizabeth I of England delivered speeches in Latin — besides being fluent in Greek, French and Italian), but 200 years after Linne, that is the present time, very few can read Latin let alone speak it and a knowledge of Latin is no longer regarded as a sign of education but rather of dilettantism or of time wasted. Taxonomy, however, continues to use Latin.

Taxonomy is the classification of living entities by kinship and evolutionary descent. Fisher/Flegg (1974) state "Taxonomic zoologists.....have one of the most difficult tasks in the whole of zoology, for in their arrangement.....in a natural classification they have to bear in mind many very different principles.....the taxonomist has to be an historian, an evolutionist, a geographer, an anatomist, a bibliographer, and often a mathematician...." (p35). All this sounds impressively scientific and possessed of precision and certainty.

Consequently it is something of a surprise to find that "all systems of zoological classification are artificial in that they contain a large *subjective* element" and that the "category that has objective reality is species all other categories, lower or higher, are *subjective*" (Thomson 1964, p128/129), or "The species category has a biological definition.....but all higher

categories in the Linnaean hierarchical system, including genus, family, order, class, and so on, are *arbitrary* designations of genealogical relationship." (McKittrick 1991 p76) — (my emphases.) It is not of course that taxonomists do not wish to be scientific, it is simply that lacking data, "arbitrary" and "subjective" judgements are inevitable.

Wiens (1991) in discussing biogeography says "the details.....depend on the taxonomic classifications of birds and their relationships that are *in vogue*" (p159) — (my emphasis.) One of the newest techniques for distinguishing the orders of birds is based on DNA-DNA hybridization, an approach which involves the differential melting points of related and lesser related genetic materials. The technique results in a rather different taxonomic order to that with which we are currently forced to struggle — see comparative table on page 2.

It is obvious from the lists overleaf that if (or more likely when) the DNA method becomes fully in vogue, our present taxonomic order will undergo significant if not profound change. Some minor changes were wrought in the first volume of HANZAB: the second has introduced significant alterations to the taxonomic order for raptors, rails, stilts, plovers and dotterels, so that already (that is with only a few of the total of Australian birds covered by HANZAB) all previous bird publications, books and bird lists are superseded. Thousands of pages of printed material have become outdated overnight.

Brooke (1991) refers to the fact that where the DNA/DNA approach differs from that derived from anatomical features (the main basis for the current taxonomic order) "it is not possible (in the absence of a more detailed fossil record) to say which answer is right" (p78), but he appears to declare his allegiance by stating that "in our account of the orders of birds, traditional taxonomy has been followed since this will make it easier for the reader to tie together information.....with accounts in other bird books." (p78)

Traditional or current vogue taxonomy profoundly and

Current taxonomic order

Ratites
Grebes
Penguins, Albatrosses, Petrels
Gannets, Cormorants
Frigatebirds
Tropicbirds
Herons & Ibis
Waterfowl
Raptors
Button-quails
Rails
Shorebirds, Gulls & Terns
Pigeons
Parrots
Cuckoos
Owls & Nightjars
Swifts
Kingfishers, Bee-eaters, Rollers
Passerines

DNA taxonomy (McKittrick 1991)

Ratites
Waterfowl
Button-quails
Rollers, Bee-eaters
Cuckoos
Parrots
Swifts
Owls & Nightjars
Pigeons
Passerines
Rails
Shorebirds, Gulls & Terns
Raptors
Grebes
Tropicbirds
Gannets & Cormorants
Herons, Ibis & Pelicans
Frigatebirds, Penguins
Petrels & Albatrosses

adversely effects all bird observers. It is followed by all the literature. As you to hunt for information in your bird book, frustrated by trying to recall whether babblers are before treecreepers and where both are in relation to warblers you may well exclaim at the absurdity of the current situation in which your book is ordered according to an "arbitrary", "subjective" and artificial system which is understood by few and of interest to less. Hands up those who are aware that the White-cheeked Honeyeater is currently regarded as being evolutionary younger than the New Holland Honeyeater. Hands up those who care.

The current taxonomic ordering of bird literature, ie. listing by evolutionary date order, has the less sense when it is realised that the time spans involved cannot be realistically appreciated by the human mind. The evolutionary time between parrots and raptors may have been some 30 million years, or a mere 10 million between rails and shorebirds. Among the most recent of the bird groups is Passerines, evolved over 100 million years ago. These lengths of time are beyond any adequate comprehension.

Imagine your response when you next visit your book-seller to purchase an English dictionary. You are informed that all the dictionaries have been given a new approach. You find they are arranged according to the etymological family of each word, with each family expressed in a language you are unable to understand, but meaning Old French, Latin, Greek, New Latin, Old English, Old High German, Old Norse, Middle Dutch, Urdu, Portugese, Somali, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Scots, Middle Low German, Middle High German, Mediaeval Latin, Old Spanish, Hebrew — and many more. (there are some 95 analogous families in your Australian bird book.) You are also informed the words in the dictionary within each family grouping are set out in their evolutionary order.

You might well believe the change to your reference book to be not advantageous. You might well believe there must be a better way to set out your dictionary. You might even suggest alphabetically. You might feel the more strongly when you discover your new dictionary arrangement is agreed to be subjective, arbitrary and lacking in certainty, even by those with expertise, is the subject of intense debate among scholars and is liable to dramatic alteration and re-organisation. It seems

improbable you will greet the arrangement of your new dictionary with enthusiasm.

Yet bird books continue to be arranged similarly to the supposed new dictionary. Supporters of the present taxonomic ordering of bird literature, if there be any, can of course say that if we wish to locate information on a specific bird, all we have to do is look up the index. Overlooking for a moment the vexatious habit of printing indexes in so small a print as to induce eye strain, you would not accept the mere presence of an index as a rational defence of the "new dictionary". The presence of an index is not a rational defence of the current arrangement of bird books — merely an excuse for not making a long overdue alteration. An equally feeble excuse is that 'it has always been done this way'; the most sterile response to needs for change.

Why are not bird books in alphabetical order by English names — English now being the 'universal' language? The taxonomic order can then be placed in the pages previously occupied by the index, to satisfy the tiny minority of those interested in the current vogue among scholars as to the sequence of bird evolution. English alphabetical order would make bird books and bird lists easy for the vast majority to use, rather than the current very difficult "arbitrary" approach and would overcome the trauma of finding all existing books and all bird lists out of sequence when the taxonomic order alters, as it has done recently in HANZAB and will again.

A strict alphabetical order (of the English names) might not always be the most convenient. Groupings, themselves in alphabetical order, such as ducks, honeyeaters, parrots, raptors, seabirds, waders etc might make for greater ease of use, with the birds within each grouping in alphabetical order. Books with such 'family' groupings are already produced, but they remain tyrannised by taxonomy when it comes to the order of the species within each group, which follow the current "artificial", "subjective" and wholly infuriating practice.

When it is fully realised that current taxonomy is not scientific but the consensus among best guesses, that the overwhelming majority of bird observers are almost wholly disinterested in evolutionary sequences and that the use of bird books could easily be made simple, in place of the current

enigmatic intricacy, then the slavish adherence to "taxonomic order" for both books and bird lists will be seen for what it is, a pernicious blight.

We may be unable to avoid the binomial Latin for a while yet, particularly as translation is not the solution (for example, even *Emblema oculata* seems better than "Inlaid Work with eyes" — the Red-eared Firetail) but Latin binomials can be listed for early future change to English. This can wait until tomorrow. Today we can have a rational arrangement for our bird lists and bird books and throw off the crassness we currently endure. It is time to rise against the tyranny of taxonomy.

B. Buchanan

References:

- Brooke M, McKittrick MC & Wiens J (1991) all contributors to *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Ornithology*, Eds Brooke M & Birkhead T (1991) Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Australia.
- Fisher J, revised Flegg J (1974) *Watching Birds*, T & AD Poyser, Penguin Books, Victoria, Australia
- Thomson, Sir AL ed (1964) *A New Dictionary of Birds* British Ornithologists Union, Nelson, England.

Observations

Compiled by the Observations Committee. Shires are in brackets.

SOUTH-WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

- Cattle Egret** - 1, 10/1/94-11/2/94, Lake Kogolup (Cockburn) - JH
- Great Egret** - 60+, January-February, Lake McLarty (Murray) - JH, IS, KN, RD and others
- Sacred (Australian White) Ibis** - 5, 20/5/93, in the settlement paddock, unusual in the wheatbelt, Dryandra State Forest (Williams) - LS
- Royal Spoonbill** - 1, January-February, Lake McLarty (Murray) - JH, IS, KN, RD and others
- Yellow-billed Spoonbill** - 200, January-February, Lake McLarty (Murray) (highest number recorded for this site) - JH, IS, KN, RD and others
- Australian Shelduck** - about 1000, 7/1/94, Norring Lake, sw of Wagin (Wagin) - LS
- Chestnut Teal** - 1, 20/1/94, Bayswater Bird Sanctuary (Bayswater) - HvW
- Collared Sparrowhawk** - 1, 19/10/93, Buntine Nature Reserve (Dalwallinu) (not previously recorded in this Nature Reserve or this Atlas block) - BB
- Wedge-tailed Eagle** - 1, 25/1/94, Lake Kogolup (Cockburn) - JH * 1, January 94, Ocean Reef (Wanneroo) - IL, GL (uncommon on Swan Coastal Plain)
- Peregrine Falcon** - 1, 8/8/93, Mosman Park (Mosman Park) - MCr * 1, 17/11/93, McGillivray Oval, Mt Claremont (Claremont) - MCr
- Malleefowl** - 1, 17/11/93, roadside between Hyden and East Hyden (Kondinin) - TS
- Sooty Oystercatcher** - 1, 25/10/93 and on several occasions since, Alfred Cove (Melville) (apparently not previously recorded here) - JH

- Lesser Golden Plover** - 1, 7/11/93, Alfred Cove (Melville) - JH, TK, CD * 1, 12/12/93, Lake Kogolup (Cockburn) - JH * 14, 6/1/94, Creery Island, Peel Inlet (Mandurah) - JH
- Hooded Plover** - 1 immature, November- December 1993, Alfred Cove (Melville) - JH, TK and others
- Mongolian Plover** - 2, 7/11/93, Alfred Cove (Melville) - TK
- Large Sand Plover** - 12, 18/12/93, Oyster Harbour (Albany) - JH
- Red-necked Avocet** - 2500, 3/1/94, increasing to about 5000 in early February, Lake McLarty (Murray) (high number for the south-west) - BBa, MC, JH
- Wood Sandpiper** - 6, 10/9/93, Baldavis Water Ski Park (Rockingham) (early record for this species) - JH
- Grey-tailed Tattler** - 18, 17/12/93, Kalgan River Inlet (Albany) - JH * 14, 6/1/94, Styx Channel, near Mandurah (Mandurah) JH
- Marsh Sandpiper** - 20, January-February 1994, Lake McLarty (Murray) - JH, IS, KN, RD and others
- Terek Sandpiper** - 2, 18/12/93, Oyster Harbour (Albany) - JH
- Black-tailed Godwit** - 1, 18/4/93, Wellstead Estuary, adjacent to Bremer Bay town (Jerramungup) (unusual on the south coast) - AS * 19, January-February, Lake McLarty (Murray) - JH, IS, KN, RD and others
- Red Knot** - 1, January-February, Lake McLarty (Murray) (unusual away from the coast) - JH, IS, KN, RD and others
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** - 3000, January-February, Lake McLarty (Murray) (high number for the south-west) - JH, IS, KN, RD and others
- Pectoral Sandpiper** - 3, 17/11/93, Baldavis Water Ski Park (Rockingham) (usually only seen in ones or twos) - JH
- Little Stint** - 1 in breeding plumage, 8/2/94, Lake Cooloongup (Rockingham) - TK, BN
- Curlew Sandpiper** - 500, 3/1/94, Lake McLarty (Murray) - BBa, MC
- Broad-billed Sandpiper** - 1, 26/10/93, Alfred Cove (Melville) - MCr * 2, 7-8/11/93, Alfred Cove (Melville) - GM, JH and others * 1, 3/1/94, Lake McLarty (Murray) - GM, BBa, MC
- Ruff** - 1 (probably Reeve), 16/1/94, Lake McLarty (Murray) - TK, FO
- Great Skua** - 1, 26/11/93, RGC wetlands, 5 km S of Capel (Capel) - MJB
- Pacific Gull** - 1, 19/12/93, Sorrento (Wanneroo) (rare in metropolitan area) - JR, AB
- Gull-billed Tern** - 1, 25/10/93, in breeding plumage, Alfred Cove (Melville) - JH * 10, 8/1/94, Lake Preston, near Myalup (Harvey) - TJ
- Common Tern** - 17, 16/1/94, Mandurah Boat Harbour (Mandurah) - JH
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** - 6, 31/1/94, Lake McLarty (Murray) - BBa, MC
- Rainbow Lorikeet** - 2+, April-May 1993, Cannington (Canning) (unusual in this area) - TS
- Yellow Wagtail** - (subspecies *simillima*), 29/12/93, Lake McLarty (Murray) (third record for the south-west) - IS, JH
- Red-capped Robin** - 1 male, 30/10/93, 14/11/93 and 21/11/93, McGillivray Oval, Mt Claremont (Claremont) - MCr
- Western Yellow Robin** - 1, 27/11/93, Buntine Nature Reserve (Dalwallinu) - AB, JR
- Golden Whistler** - 3, 6/12/93, Wellesley, just west of Benger Swamp (Harvey) - MJB
- Splendid Fairy-wren** - 1 male, 11/11/93, Alfred Cove (Melville) - MCr * 2, 23/12/93, Attadale (Melville) - ND (uncommon in urban areas)

Redthroat - 1 male, 25/5/93, Phillips River 14 km NW of Ravensthorpe (Ravensthorpe) (an extension of known range about 40 km S from near Lake King) - AS
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater - 2+, 28/11/93, Buntine Nature Reserve (Dalwallinu) (unusual this far north-east) - AB, JB and others

ARID ZONE (including the Pilbara, Gascoyne, interior and Nullabor)

Bourke's Parrot - 2, 27/7/93, apparently nesting in a mulga stump, Meekatharra (Meekatharra) - JS, HS
Cinnamon (Chestnut-breasted) Quail-thrush - 1, 10/7/93, Kidson Track, 100 km W of Canning Stock Route (East Pilbara) - KC * 4, and a nest with 2 eggs, 18/7/93, Kennedy Range (Carnarvon) - JS, HS * 1, 24/8/93, Yuimmery Station, near Sandstone (Sandstone) - KC

KIMBERLEY

Least Frigatebird - 32, 7/2/94, Barred Creek (Broome) - BBO
Garganey - 1, 5/12/93, near Argyle Diamond Mine (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - TK
Grey Goshawk - 1, (white phase), 11/1/94, near Argyle Diamond Mine (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - FO
Grey Falcon - 1, 5/10, 10/10, 19/10, 29/10/93, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - BBO
Greenshank - 2 flocks (60, 15), 24/1/94, Broome (Broome) - BBO
Common Redshank - 2, 18/10/93, Crab Creek, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO * 3, 16/1/94, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO
Asian Dowitcher - 45, 21/8/93, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO * 2, 13/10/93 and 2, 28/10/93, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO
Broad-billed Sandpiper - 1, 2/10/93, and 3, 26/10/93, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove - 1, 18/1/94, Broome (Broome) - GS
Common Koel - 1 male, 1/1/94, near Argyle Diamond Mine (Wyndham-East Kimberley) (at or near southern edge of range) - FO
Channel-billed Cuckoo - 1, 15/12/93, near Argyle Diamond Mine (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - TK

CORRIGENDA

Hooded Plover - 1 immature, 10/9/93, Pelican Point (Nedlands) - MBy (Shown as Double-banded Plover in WABN 68)
Double-banded Plover - The record of two immatures at Woodman Point in October (WABN 68) is presumed incorrect. This species breeds August to February in New Zealand and after breeding, many birds (adults and immatures) migrate to Australia. At this time, immatures can easily be distinguished from adults, but while in Australia, immatures begin to develop breeding plumage. Immatures can still be distinguished by their worn primaries and retained juvenile inner median coverts up until about the time of departure. A few birds spend summer in Australia, but by about August, immatures are indistinguishable from adults. One would therefore not expect to see a juvenile or immature Double-banded Plover in Australia in October. Immature birds can easily be confused with the Large Sand Plover.
Greenshank - 275, 5/10/93, Creery Island (Murray) (apparently the highest count from south-western Australia) - JH, TK, CD (Shown as 175 birds in WABN 68).

Members Contributions

LITTLE GRASSBIRD WADING

On Sunday 6th February after the Wellard wetland outing, Brenda Newbey and I visited Lake Cooloongup in Rockingham. We parked at the picnic area at the northern end and walked along the edge of the lake to the north east corner where the reeds are close to the water.

There were several thousand ducks (Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal and Australian Shelduck), about 200 Banded Stilt, some Red-necked Avocet and other expected saltwater habitat waterbirds.

There were several hundred waders (mainly Red-necked Stint and Red-capped Plover, plus Curlew Sandpiper and Greenshank). Brenda noticed a bird about 20 m away amongst other waders in a small (about 4m by 2m), very shallow (50mm at most) wet area, about 2m from the reeds. We had difficulty convincing ourselves because of the behaviour, but it was unmistakably a Little Grassbird. We saw another very close by and a third some distance away near three Spotless and one Baillon's Crake.

I have never seen a Little Grassbird in the open on the ground before. Not only that, but it was foraging almost exactly like the waders it was with, except that once it was on top of a small stromatalite in a pool. When alarmed, the waders flew out towards the lake, while the Little Grassbird flew the two metres to the edge of the reeds. It re-appeared quite soon each time.

We also noticed that sometimes the Little Grassbird used its feet to splash the water or to 'stamp on' the mud as though to disturb prey.

F. O'Connor

LETTER FROM UK

I was lucky enough to spend three weeks with RAOU W A members recently. My host in Perth saw notice of a walk in Bold Park for Bird week in October 1993. I had visited Bold Park and was eager to join the walk and knowing I was a stranger, people took trouble to explain the various habitats and calls. I saw several species - from a dramatic view of a Little Eagle soaring high to a little Silvereye flitting in the bushes. At the end of the walk I was told of two other walks, one at Booragoon Lake on the following day. A member offered to take me and in a very different habitat I was told of the problems of keeping a balance between man and nature.

The new boardwalk into the wetland area gave a marvelous opportunity to see a Darter with a family of two young and various ducks and cormorants. It seemed somewhat bizarre to join with some 30 others in turns to view the back of a sleeping Rufous Night Heron but this was not nearly so bizarre as the sight and sound of the male Musk duck displaying - amazing!

Then came the "Big One" - an all day trip to Austin Bay Reserve. I had an interesting ride down to meet 22 other enthusiasts. We saw a variety of damp and dry habitats. I have seen the infrequent spoonbill at home in Suffolk, but never so many and so clearly. I was very glad to have the opportunity to look at them through a telescope. Also, at the Australian Shelduck, so different from ours.

I had never seen a heat haze like that across the very wide estuary or walked on sand which felt crisp underfoot, with

encrusted salt. I was amazed to see natural vegetation with which I am familiar as wild or cultivated escapees at home. The Aussie avocets let me down - I did want to see them! I was delighted to be shown some smart coloured spiders with webs. Then the hunt for a Splendid Fairy-wren was on - a fine specimen was found which sat still long enough for me to marvel at it through a telescope.

I found the deep sand of the track on return rather trying, though I did find a single clump of emerald green kangaroo paw in flower, but I was so glad to get back to a shady tree by the cars. I had been afraid of letting the side down only to find others equally tired and glad of lunch.

We had a good trip home, seeing some Richards Pipits, like our Meadow Pipit and at Serpentine Falls watched a White-faced Heron catching fish right by the pool. The sun had set - a blaze of glory - before we returned to Perth.

Thank you all for your kindness and making my stay in WA memorable, it was just the sort of thing I wanted to do but feared I would not be able to do.

M. Leeson

Banding Networks

This is the first of a regular feature that will publicise bird banding events; local, national and international. Banders who wish to report on a project, or feature unusual and interesting recoveries are invited to submit copy to the Editor.

The systematic marking of free-flying birds for ornithological study was first used in Denmark almost a century ago. The Australian Bird Banding Scheme was created in 1953, although banding activity had been conducted in this country about 30 years before that. Bird banding has come a long way since then.

Bird and bat banding in Australia and its Territories is controlled by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency, formerly called the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. ANCA issues banding permits in conjunction with each state wildlife authority. Researchers in W.A. need a license from CALM to take fauna for study purposes. A further permit is required to operate in a National Park or Nature Reserve.

There are currently 110 bird banders registered in W.A., with another 15 out-of-State banders licensed to conduct banding projects in the West. Three are from the U.S.A., one from Germany and the rest are from interstate.

There are 83 separate banding projects in W.A., supervised by 45 individual supervising banders who are assisted by 55 collaborating banders. In addition to this there is a strong supporting group of volunteer assistants who take part in field trips and expeditions to band birds.

Of the 83 bird banding projects, 58 are being conducted by amateur researchers, the balance by staff of private field stations, universities, research institutions and government departments. At present there are 91 A Class banders resident in W.A., 17 C Class (Trainee status) and 2 R Class (Restricted duration permits).

One of the national projects underway is aimed at collecting information on birds for the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Some regional operators concen-

trate on gathering data on species endemic to their area and contribute whenever possible to the study of variations within species that are common across the continent. Other banders take part in co-operative national and international projects aimed at understanding migration routes and feeding requirements of long distance travellers that spend part of the year in Australia. This work enables researchers to identify major feeding and refuge areas along flightpaths used by migrants, an important step in the process of multinational habitat conservation. Other projects are oriented towards seasonal fluctuations in populations, longevity, site fidelity of individuals and dispersal of young.

Long term banding studies have unravelled some of the mysteries about birds; how long they live, where they come from, where they go, but not all the questions have been answered.

Do you have any questions?

P. de Rebelra

Regional Organiser for W.A.
Australian Bird Banding Scheme.

I am looking for banding sites for a new project that will concentrate on large seasonal gatherings of honeyeaters in patches of native vegetation that have massive annual flowering events. If any member knows of such sites within 300 - 400 km of Perth, please contact me at 12 Glenwood Avenue, Glen Forrest, Telephone: (09) 29 88 999.

P. de Rebelra

RAOU Office WA

Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive
Wembley 6014 or PO Box 199
Jolimont 6014.

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(09) 383 7749.
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Editor

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Notes For Contributors

The Editor requests contributors to note :-

- *WABN normally only publishes material on WA birds
- *contributions should be written or typed with Double Spacing
- *WABN uses RAOU recommended English names
- *copy will be edited where appropriate
- *contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary

Deadline for the June

Issue

21 May 1994

Notices

COMMITTEE

The WA Group Committee for 1994-1995 is

Chairman: Brian Wilson (09) 293 1094
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BOOKSHOP NEWS

We now have a good range of books, tapes and videos in stock. We also have catalogues of books available in Australia. Contact the office volunteer staff for help in locating your particular book. In most cases we are able to order books through our regular suppliers.

Prices are set as low as possible as we aim to provide a service for our members..

A new edition of *Birdlife of Rottnest* is now available at \$12.50.

COUNTRY BROCHURES

Thanks to members who have responded to our request for help in the preparation of birding brochures for country centres.

Twenty three members have already forwarded information or are in the process of so doing.

The brochures contain information on good birding habitats, with names of birds typical to each area. A map is provided showing routes and locations.

The birdlist brochure is prepared from various records. The W.A. Museum staff has been helpful in providing information and checking lists.

The project has been made possible with a grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation. Argyle Diamonds has funded three areas.

We are now seeking further funds to produce the remainder of the brochures being prepared.

1000 copies of each brochure are forwarded to country areas for distribution through various outlets. The brochures are also available at Perry House.

Many thanks to all who are taking part in this project.

AK. Jones

INDEX to WABN 1993

Numbers 66 to 68 inclusive, May to December 1993.

The INDEX for that part of 1993 not covered by the 50th Anniversary issue of the INDEX 1943 — 1993, is now available from RAOU office, Perry House,

71, Oceanic Drive, Wembley 6014

or Box 199, Jolimont. Telephone (09) 383 4479.

The cost is \$1.00 only.

BBCBQ

Raptor questions:

- 1) Are older Wedge-tailed Eagles lighter or darker in plumage ?
- 2) Older Marsh Harriers plumage is lighter or darker ?
- 3) Which 3 species of the following do not line their nests with leaves ? Black-shouldered Kite, Whistling Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Marsh Harrier, Brown Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle, Brown Falcon, Australian Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon.
- 4) Black-shouldered Kites prefer open grasslands. Do they prefer the grass tall or low ?
- 5) Little Eagles prefer dense forest or open woodland ?
- 6) Brown Goshawks sedentary or partially migratory ?
- 7) Whistling Kite usually nest near — open country, water, or woodland ?
- 8) Do Wedge-tailed Eagles hunt co-operatively ?
- 9) Whistling Kites sometimes associate with which other raptor ?
- 10) What is the success rate of attack of the Australian Kestrel during the breeding season ?

Malleefowl Project

Searches for Malleefowl mounds were conducted at Dryandra on the last weekend in October and at Buntine a month later. At Dryandra all of the mounds located in the earlier searches were re-visited. Others of particular interest were also examined in nearby areas. The reputation the Malleefowl established as an obvious and busy bird in Dryandra was not justified in 1993. Only one mound was clearly active (vegetation litter had been scraped into a prepared crater, although it was at an early stage of construction for so late in the year) and another mound appeared to have had some work done on it.

The Buntine weekend was well-attended by RAOU members from Perth and received interest and support from residents in the Buntine and nearby districts.

A section of Buntine Nature Reserve (measuring 3.5 km by .5 km) was searched on the last weekend in November. The hot weather sapped energy but it was felt that a quite satisfactory task had been accomplished. Not only was the weather unkind, but search conditions were not conducive to a comfortable stroll in the bush! However those who joined in stuck at the task. By Sunday afternoon three quite old mounds had been found. Buntine is an interesting and attractive search area. Malleefowl are frequently seen there and indeed recent tracks of the birds were seen at three locations during the search.

The work will continue in 1994. Support for the Malleefowl search was provided by the Principal and staff of the Buntine Primary School. Thanks to them and to all those who have worked hard to contribute to the Malleefowl Project.

R. Smith

Publications Considered

The third book, but Volume 2 of Marchant S & Higgins PJ (1993) *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds*, Volume 2, Raptors to Lapwings, Oxford University Press, Melbourne is now available. It would be pleasant to write "available to all" but at a price in excess of \$200, volume 2 of HANZAB will probably not be purchased by many.

However, like the first volume it is an indispensable reference, summarising and presenting large quantities of information that would otherwise demand the outlay of much time in a very good ornithological library. For example there are 129 Whistling Kite references, which date from 1903 (Emu) to the present, a list containing such arcane works (for the average reader) as van Tets F et al (1977) *Guide to the recognition and reduction of Aerodrome Bird Hazards*, Phillips M (1988) *Thylacinus* and Estberg JA (1983) *Abstract of Symposium Ecology of the Wet Dry Tropics* - this last title an interesting oxymoron in itself. It is pleasant to be able to observe that WABN observers receive mention under more than one species.

The new volume has abandoned the earlier irritating guide to illustrations, by directly numbering the plates, a real improvement. The illustrations themselves are very good.

While understandable in the need to keep costs down, the absence of the introductory parts of Volume 1 with plumage illustrations and glossaries is to be regretted. There will be those who will want Volume 2, raptor specialists for example, who will not wish to purchase Volume 1. Indeed it is difficult to envisage the purchasers of future volumes wishing to always refer to Volume 1. The sale of individual volumes to specialists in bird families may be impeded by the lack of the important introductory material. There is still an absence of a glossary of biological terms used in the text, which many would find of more value than bird names in Aboriginal languages.

The pages still are headed by the Latin family and Latin scientific names without the English names. Given that the RAOU itself believes that "English nomenclature.....does.....unlike scientific nomenclature, have the potential of stability.....the function of scientific nomenclature is not necessarily to remain stable but to reflect taxonomic judgement; therefore the scientific name must change.....as opinion changes" (Emu, Vol 77, Supplement May 1978 p 247). Thus the use of Latin only seems wilful, given the length of time HANZAB will remain the prime reference work. English names may also be subject to consideration at present, many of them need it, but the absence of English names from the pages does not lead to a better learning of the scientific, but to irritation and difficulty in use.

The new volume alters both the taxonomic order of raptors and of the waders it covers, the changes being quite significant. This means that all previous bird guides, bird books, bird lists in *Emu* and WABN etc are out of date. This poses a problem which needs to be tackled by the RAOU (and other birding authorities) as clearly HANZAB itself will undergo modification as the years pass.

Expensive - yes, irritating (in some ways) - yes, well printed, well presented, well illustrated - yes, and certainly indispensable.

B. Buchanan

Saunders, D & de Rebeira P(1993) *Birds of Rottnest Island*

The first edition of this excellent little book was released in 1985 and will be familiar to many members of the W.A. Group of the RAOU. The second edition is now available and has a number of useful additions and changes. The first edition itself was no doubt responsible for generation greater interest in making detailed observations of the Island's birds and therefore hastened its own obsolescence.

It is not a field guide, although Perry de Rebeira's 49 coloured illustrations (extensively changed since the first edition) will permit the identification of every resident or regular migrant to Rottnest, as well as two relatively frequent vagrants. What the book does best is to present information about the birds of Rottnest in a way which the general visitor will find interesting and which will help to enrich their stay.

The new edition contains a Preface which makes explicit the commitment of the authors to environmental education and their belief that Rottnest Island is an ideal place to learn about the environment and human interactions with it. The authors are not simply scientists or scientific educators, they are also regular visitors to, and lifelong enthusiasts about, Rottnest Island. Their book is written in a way likely to appeal to others who share that enthusiasm, even though they may not in the past have taken much interest in birds. It is not surprising therefore that the book emphasises the habitat requirements and the behaviour of each species of bird occurring on Rottnest, in the context of the island itself.

After a brief introductory chapter the authors describe the six major habitat types relevant to birds which are found on the Island. These are the coast, the salt-lakes, the swamps, the woodlands, the heath and the settlements/disturbed areas. Two significant improvements over the first edition appear in this chapter. First, the colour plates which illustrate the habitat types and the maps of the island showing their distribution, as well as roads and other points of interest, are within the relevant chapter instead of being grouped together at the end of the book. Secondly, the chapter now includes a coloured vegetation map of the island, not only showing the six major habitat types but also illustrating the distribution of all vegetation associations across the island.

The third chapter makes up the bulk of the book and provides information about each of the 49 species most commonly occurring on the island. This information includes other names, identification and status. The last category ranges from as little as a few lines for the vagrant White-faced Heron, up to three pages for the conspicuous breeding resident, the Australian Shelduck. It provides descriptions of the distribution and behaviour of each bird, related specifically to Rottnest Island and gives some very interesting examples of the changing status of a number of species. In this section new information about a number of birds, including the Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Osprey and Bar-tailed Godwit, is presented.

The book concludes with a short chapter, with map, on the best places to watch for birds on the Island. One of the key messages from the book is made explicit in this chapter - 'that what for humans is a holiday resort and a great place to go, is to animals essential to their existence'.

A number of other small changes have added to the book's readability and usefulness. These include some rewriting to improve expression, a more spacious presentation and the updating of common names to be consistent with current RAOU recommendations.

This book is small enough to fit the daypack or pocket of anyone, birdwatcher, sightseer or recreationist to Rottnest Island and will increase the pleasure and interest of that stay. RAOU price is \$12.50 and the book is available from the RAOU office at Perry House or from other natural history bookshops.

J. Blyth

Excursion & Observatory Reports

BROOME

1994 at the Observatory, started with a Holiday Programme being run for the first time to encourage families to visit the Observatory to learn more about Broome's plants and fascinating birdlife. Although few participated, fun was had by all, and a similar programme will be organised during school holidays throughout the year.

The Australian Wader Study Group expeditioners, arrive soon for their longest stint. For nine weeks they will band and count at Broome, Eighty Mile Beach, and Port Hedland salt works. Along with the regulars, there will be overseas visitors and some new recruits. Daily migration watches will also take place at the Observatory, so if any WA Group members are up this way, come and join in.

Nesting birds have been hard to find in the thick Pindan woodland that has sprung up since Cyclone Naomi dumped 138 mm of rain on the Observatory in mid December. However, we have seen baby Black-faced Woodswallows being fed, a young Black-necked Stork on the Crab Creek Road saltmarsh, many juvenile Pied Butcherbirds and a very skimpy nest containing three Rufous Whistler eggs along the Botany trail. The nest was so sparsely constructed that the eggs could be counted from below.

On a trip to the Crab Creek mangroves we noted two Broad-billed Flycatchers and two male White-breasted Whistlers displaying a few metres from us.

Visit the Observatory for great birding.

J. Fallaw & B. Hayward

EYRE

1994 has started dry, - with only 1.2 mm rain for January. The bush, especially some of the Acacia, is beginning to look stressed and the access track is very sandy. We hope for rain soon.

Visitors are always surprised at the stream of birds which come to drink at the bird baths. It certainly is easy birdwatching, sitting at the kitchen window, with the bird bath only about 8 metres away!

Dune stabilizing this year was disappointing that there were only two course participants for one week, but we covered a fair area with seaweed and planted with *Spinifex hirsutus*. The bat course was very successful and knowledge of these interesting little creatures increases each year.

While visiting the Tableland caves for batting, Australian Bustards were seen on two consecutive days, - two on one occasion and three on the other. We also saw Southern Whiteface and Ground Cuckoo-shrikes. The Mallee is blooming heavily on the Tableland and attracting many Honeyeaters. On the 2nd February, not less than 82 White-faced Honeyeaters were

counted in 20 minutes, flying west to east.

On the same day, we were treated to an attractive sight on the Beach - 120 Banded Stilts in a flock at the waters edge.

Pink Cockatoo, Brush Bronzewing, Grey Currawong and Australian Raven are not present in large numbers and at the other end of the scale Yellow-rumped Pardalote, Weebill and Inland Thornbill are numerous.

Thanks to Colin Davis and Jim Stewart for recent work on the Solar Power Plant allowing us lights at any time of the day or night.

New course lists are now available, - please check on those being offered this year. A visit at any time for relaxation and birding is always rewarding. Eyre has something to offer almost everyone.

R. & G. Watkins

ALFRED COVE 5 Dec

Eighteen people turned up for our December walk. The tide was almost out - just right for wader watching. We commenced by looking at Greenshanks on the shore, together with four species of cormorants, a Great Egret and a White-faced Heron. The only duck was a Pacific Black Duck with young.

Further 'round' we saw a Red-necked Avocet and a pair of Fairy Terns. At the car park, an Australian Magpie-lark had a nest with two young and attacked anyone coming too close. Altogether we saw 43 species.

B. McRoberts

FLYNN ROAD 9 Jan

Thirty keen birders met for the first full day's bird watching for 1994, WA Group RAOU. Due to the warm conditions 31st C, Bryan Barrett our leader, thought few species might be observed but more than 40 species were sighted.

One of the unusual sightings for the area were a group of juvenile Red-eared Firetail. We were entertained by watching both Willie Wagtail and Dusky Woodswallow chicks being fed, the last in the nest. A most enjoyable day.

MD. Waller

WELLARD WETLANDS 6 Feb

On a beautiful mild summer morning 40 members and friends met for an inspection of the Alcoa "clay pits". They are a far cry from the barren ponds the RAOU assisted in regenerating in 1983. A wide variety of (mainly local) plant species have flourished and provided excellent habitats for both water and bush birds.

Owen Nichols of Alcoa gave a short history of the "clay pits" and their regeneration. The success of the project is evident from the sighting of over 1000 waterbirds on the lake at one time, from records of 38 waterbird species and a total of 84 species recorded in all. Alcoa plans to improve and regenerate new pits were outlined.

Sixty species were recorded during the walk around the lake, a Baillon's and a Spotless Crake being seen, both of which remained in view for over an hour.

Thanks to Bill McRoberts for organising and leading and to Alcoa for their efforts in converting a bare paddock and clay pit into a waterbird sanctuary and facility for birdlovers.

C. Napier

National Parks Project

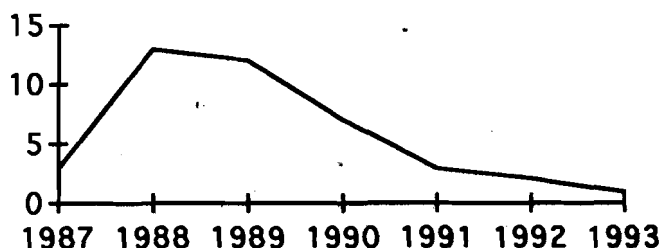
At its inception, the National Parks Project was intended to cover all designated National Parks in the state. Since then its scope has been broadened to include:

- a). lists from all designated Nature Reserves, Management Priority Areas, Marine Parks, Conservation Reserves, Timber Reserves, etc in the State;
- b). lists from Shires, e.g., Ashburton;
- c). lists from major wetlands, e.g., Lake Gregory; and
- d). lists from wetlands and municipal parks within the metropolitan area, e.g., Star Swamp, Mary Carrol Park, Piney Lakes, etc.

At the end of winter 1993, over 70,000 records had been entered into the computer database covering 435 species at 246 sites. Data sent in by contributors can be valuable in showing trends in individual species. An example extracted from the database is Malleefowl.

The number of sightings recorded in the database has dropped from a high in 1988 to almost nil (see graph). Contributors to the project are still visiting the areas where observations have been made previously so a decline is possibly indicated by our records for this vulnerable species.

Malleefowl Sightings



The National Parks data is available for use in other projects. A revised checklist has been printed and is available from the office. Please note that the Atlas number for the White-tailed Black-Cockatoo, 266, is incorrectly listed on the new card as 267.

The project is continuing supported by a small group of members who regularly send in checklists. All can contribute to the project no matter how many or how few species are seen. Every record is valuable for, at the very least, a record confirms the presence of a particular species at a site.

From 1/1/94, the project will cover all Western Australian country towns and will contribute to the country area brochures project.

For more information on the National Parks Project contact the office. Please address detailed enquiries to the co-ordinators who are usually in the office on Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

M. Bailey and P. Sandilands
National Parks Project Co-ordinators.

Coming Events

The W A Group has maintained a continuous programme of outdoor activities for birdwatchers, accomplished and novice alike. Over the last twelve months we have had 16 half-day excursions, 11 full-day excursions, 6 mid-week walks, 8 camp-outs, 4 Malleefowl camp-outs and a 24 hour twitchathon. It is hoped that members have enjoyed these. New suggestions and leaders are welcome.

Bryan Barrett and Margery Clegg have given much-valued advice and assistance. Our thanks also to the various leaders, without whom there would be no excursions. I look forward to 1994 as another year of very enjoyable outings!

Bill McRoberts,
Excursion Organiser.

Sunday 13th March - Half day excursion to Thomsons Lake

Meet at 8.00 am in the carpark off Russell Road, between Pearse and Hammond Roads. A good area for bush birds, waders, and waterbirds.

Leaders: Bill and Karen McRoberts

Wednesday 23rd March - Mid-week walk at Pelican Point, Crawley

Meet at 7.30 am at the gazebo opposite the Mounts Bay Sailing Club at the end of Australia 11 Drive, off Hackett Drive. For many years, Max Bailey has been looking at the Pelican Point birds..

Leader: Max Bailey

Saturday 26th March - Half - day excursion to Big Carine Lake

Meet at 8.30 am in the carpark off Beach Road, Carine. Sixty+ species have been recorded here, including the 3 ibis and 8 duck species, Buff-banded Rail and several raptors. Bring your telescope.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

Monday 28 March Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre 8.00 pm.

A panel of experienced birdos chaired by Dr Allan Burbidge will discuss the identification of several difficult bird species and answer questions from the floor about bird identification.

Although members have already suggested several groups of birds which cause them problems, Jeremy Talbot would welcome details of other birds which members have trouble sorting out. His address is 29, Joyce Road, Lesmurdie, WA 6076 and his telephone numbers are 2916563 (home) and 264 1402 (work).

Wednesday 13th April - Mid-week walk at Bibra Lake

Meet at 8.00 am at the first carpark at the northern end of the lake. Bibra Lake is part of the Beeliar Wetlands and large numbers of waterbirds can usually be seen.

Leader: Peter Anson

Friday 1st April to Monday 4th April - Easter Weekend Campout to Jaurdi State Forest

Travel to Southern Cross along the Great Eastern Highway. Continue east another 100 km or so to the old Boorabbin Townsite. Turn off onto Ryan's Find Road, and travel north for about another 50 kms to Jaurdi State Forest (NB. for conventional vehicles, Ryan's Find Road is a dry-weather road only). Facilities have been reserved for us including a large shed, three shearers' units, a BBQ, toilet and rain water.

The RAOU has never visited this area before. With its diversity of landforms and vegetation, Jaurdi should be an interesting place for birds. Southern Scrub Robins and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos are at the edge of their ranges here. We should see arid woodland species and some waterfowl. Major Mitchell Cockatoo are often sighted in the area.

For those who have opportunity, further activities have been arranged. On Tuesday, 5th April, we will travel to Rowles Lagoon Nature Reserve, about 70 kms north of Coolgardie and meet Andy Chapman, the CALM Regional Ecologist for the area. In conjunction with the W.A. Naturalists' Club, Andy is doing on-going work on ground-inhabiting vertebrates in the Reserve. We will stay at Rowles Lagoon for two nights. Then on to Goongarrie National Park, by road about 130 kms north-east of Rowles Lagoon. There are NO facilities at Goongarrie - be entirely self-sufficient. Two nights camp at Goongarrie until Saturday, 9th April, then departure.

Booking essential, with Bill or Karen McRoberts (09) 459 1971, from whom further information may be obtained..

Leaders: Bill and Karen McRoberts

Sunday 17th April - Half-day excursion to Wungong Gorge

Meet at 8.30 am at the first carpark for Wungong Dam, at the end of Admiral Road (off Albany Highway), Bedfordale.

An excellent site for Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and birds of prey. 87 species have been recorded.

Leaders: Bill and Karen McRoberts

Monday 18 April Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre 8.00 pm

Malleefowl numbers in WA seem to be dwindling throughout their range. Jean-Paul Orsini and Rod Smith will describe the efforts being made by volunteers from rural communities, the RAOU and elsewhere to find out what is happening.

Friday 22nd April to Sunday 24th April - Malleefowl Search Campout, Buntine area

Large areas of Buntine Nature Reserve have yet to be investigated. Meet at Buntine Primary School by 8.00 am on Saturday and contact Rod Smith 397 5319 (H) or 293 2777 (W) if you are attending.

Saturday 7th May - Full-day excursion - Stinton Cascades Nature Reserve, Karragullen

Meet at 8.30 am in Gardiner Road, about 200 metres past the intersection with Brookton Highway. This is a new CALM reserve of jarrah and a good area for birds.

Leader: John Start

Saturday 15th May - Full-day excursion to Doopiter Swamp

Meet at 9.30 am at Cowalla Bridge on Cowalla Road over the Moore River. From Perth travel up the Brand Highway, turn left into the Gingin Brook Road, continuing on to Cowalla

Road. Alternatively, take the Lancelin Road and turn right into Gingin Brook Road, continuing on to Cowalla Road.

From the Cowalla Road junction with Gingin Brook Road travel north for approximately 28 kms. Look for the RAOU signs. The round trip from Perth is approximately 200 kms.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Monday 23rd May Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre 8 pm

Professor John Craig of the School of Biological Sciences, University of Auckland has actively researched New Zealand birds and ecosystems for 27 years. His main fields of interest at present are restoration ecology and conservation biology. He has been actively involved in island restoration with the aim of ensuring that New Zealanders regain access to much of their lost natural heritage, has played a major role in the re-planting of Tiritiri Island with over 400 000 trees and the re-introduction of 7 locally or nationally rare birds.

New Zealand has 11% of the world's rare birds on less than 1% of the world's area. The introduction of more than 30 mammal and bird species has threatened many of the native birds and conservation is a growing national interest. Research on New Zealand bird species has shown that conventional Northern Hemisphere ideas of the management of rare birds do not always apply.

Professor Craig's talk will introduce New Zealand birds and will use examples of research in which he has been involved to show how ideas on conservation management are changing.

Saturday 28th to Sunday 29th May - Malleefowl mound search at Dryandra.

Many areas of Dryandra are promising Malleefowl habitat and need to be searched. Accommodation at the village. If you are to attend please contact Rod Smith 397 5319 (H) or 293 2777 (W)

Saturday 4th June to Monday 6th June - Campout to the Halse Property, near Badgingarra

Travel north on the Brand Highway to Badgingarra. Just past Badgingarra, turn right onto North West Road. Drive approximately 6 kms, turn left onto Winjardie Road. Drive for 9 kms to a T-junction, turn right onto Watheroo Road. Drive for 3 kms, turn left into Dewar's Road. Drive 14 kms to T-junction and turn right onto the Marchagee Track. Drive approx 5 kms to the 2nd property on the south (right-hand) side of the road. Look for the RAOU signs.

Meet at 11 am Saturday morning. Come self-sufficient for camping; water is available. A bush toilet will be provided. If weather is inclement, a large shed with a wooden floor will be available. We should see a good variety of bushbirds and waterbirds.

Leader: Dr Stuart Halse

Sunday 12th June - Half-day excursion to Jarrah forest, Kalamunda

Meet at 8.30 am on Lockwood Road at the power lines, about 2 km from the intersection with Mundaring Weir Road, Kalamunda. Birds that may be seen are Red-winged Fairy-wren, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, and Grey Currawong which are not often seen in the metro area.

Leader: Jeremy Talbot

Monday 27 June Meeting- Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre 8.00 pm.

Barry and Jennifer Muir will describe the habitats of various tropical bird species in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Monday 25 July Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre 8.00 pm.

Speaker and topic to be announced.

Monday 22 August Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre 8.00 pm.

Speaker and topic to be announced.

Monday 26 September Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre 8.00 pm.

Mr CFH Jenkins, well known for his natural history contributions to the West Australian newspaper and a founder member of this Group, having attended its inaugural meeting on 22 May 1943, has entitled his talk "Looking Back".

Monday 24 October Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre 8.00 pm.

Karen McRoberts, who has considerable experience in the investigation of disease in waterbirds, will talk on this topic.

B B C B Q Answers

- 1) Darker (p165)
- 2) Lighter (p 106)
- 3) Marsh Harrier - grass (p116), Australian Kestrel - nil (p262), Peregrine Falcon - nil (p317)
- 4) Tall, 300 to 1500 mm (p36)
- 5) Wooded farmland (p181)
- 6) Both - movement may relate to food availability (p136)
- 7) Water (p77)
- 8) Yes (p170)
- 9) Black Kite (p170)
- 10) Male 76%, female 71% (p257)

All questions derive from Marchant, S & Higgins, PJ (1993) *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds*, Volume 2, Raptors to Lapwings, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, to which the page numbers refer.

Wardens Wanted

We know bird watching is fun. This is very evident from RAOU Conservation Notes No. 10 (from which the quotations are taken".)

The first wardens for Cat Island spent their early days "organising the facilities" around their bijou residence — an aluminium shed. This they carpeted with cut tussock grass. They also painted concrete birds — there being so few that making ones own produces a respectable bird count and being of concrete they do not blow away.

Unlike the shed, which in less than a week blew down, requiring evacuation of the wardens "in stormy seas". Returning to "the old ruined hut" they made more concrete birds (and one supposes laid/harvested a new carpet) and for something to do, photographed water rats and counted the Tiger Snakes, of which some 400 were estimated. One of the wardens was bitten by a Tiger Snake, though not seriously. You may be more fortunate. This necessitated a second emergency evacuation.

On their second return, the wardens were pleased to record "a live gannet" which must have been a change after counting their own concrete birds.

To crown this fun filled, action-packed bird watching experience, it is revealed that Cat Island wardens are unpaid.

The RAOU Conservation Committee is seeking more volunteers for Cat Island. Fun lovers need not hesitate and if you are also high on herpetology, it is a **MUST**.

Rush your application to the Conservation Committee "as soon as possible".

Malaysian Bird Tour

I am seeking expressions of interest in a two week tour to Peninsular Malaysia specifically for bird-watching, probably in June 1994, led by myself.

The proposed tour would include highland, lowland and island locations and therefore a large number of bird species could be expected.

There would be an emphasis on comfort and learning about birds; travel time would be kept as low as possible. The tour group would be small in number.

For details please contact me by telephone (089 855103 home) or letter (22 Alawa Crescent, Alawa. NT 0810) as soon as possible.

R. Jaensch

I N D E X

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to **Western Australian
Bird Notes**

Numbers 66 to 68 inclusive

May to December 1993 inclusive

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Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive, Wembley

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