



Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the WA Group
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

No 72 December 1994

Raptors at Watheroo National Park

COLLARED SPARROWHAWKS

Between 30 September and 3 October we watched a pair of Collared Sparrowhawks nest building within 150 metres of the CALM shed in Watheroo National Park. The nest was situated about 5 metres above ground in the centre of a *Eucalyptus wandoo*, just below the canopy.

When we first saw the nest it was only a thin flat platform of dead sticks each about finger thickness or less. By the time we left the nest was a cup shape with no light visible through the bottom.

The most active time for building appeared to be between 0700 hours and 0900 hours, when sticks were brought at the rate of about eight per hour. Both male and female brought sticks and fitted them into the nest, with the male the most frequent. The female sometimes visited the nest with no material after the male had departed and spent some time 'shaping' the structure.

Both birds used the same method of collecting building material. After sitting quietly in a nearby tree one would fly to a dead wandoo branch and sidle towards the tip where it was thin, wobbly and upon which it was difficult to balance. The birds would then stretch out and snap off the end of the dead twig with the bill and fly direct to the nest, transferring the twig to the feet during flight.

Both birds entered the nest from the southern side, which was unobstructed. Both would remain for several minutes, arranging the sticks, sitting down and "trying for size" before flying off for another short "rest".

We never saw either bird collect a stick from the ground; all were broken from the dead branches of wandoo. When returning to the nest with material both birds always called softly, which was usually answered by the mate from a nearby tree.

After 0900 hours the birds appeared to perch quietly in trees within 50 metres of the nest only occasionally delivering a twig and carrying out nest "adjustment".

and Grey Falcons

At about 1600 hours on 30 September we were "birding" close to the CALM campsite in Watheroo National Park. Suddenly, there was an "urgent" call, ki-ki-ki from above our heads and on looking up, we were treated to a fine display of acrobatics, by what we thought were four Australian Hobbys.

After a while all four birds settled in wandoo trees around the campsite to give us good views of three of the four. Two were Australian Hobby, but the third and probably the fourth were Grey Falcon.

The third bird was perched on a dead branch in full view about 35 metres from us. We were using 8 x 40 binoculars with the sun behind us. The bird was all grey, about the size of a large hobby, darker on the back, with a paler grey chest and belly both of which were flecked with darker grey vertical streaks. The primaries, when folded, were dark grey. The base of the bill, cere and skin around the eye were bright yellow with a darker patch below the eye, intruding into an almost white cheek.

We were not able to obtain a good view of the fourth bird. In flight it appeared to be a Grey Falcon and not an Australian Hobby.

Intermittent aerial displays, with a great deal of calling, continued off and on until sundown. Next morning all was peaceful. We then discovered the Australian Hobbys had a nest in a wandoo beside the CALM shed and were either incubating or brooding very small young. We saw an Australian Hobby carrying a Willie Wagtail at about 0700 hours on two consecutive mornings, but these were not taken to the nest.

We spent two more days in the Park but did not see the Grey Falcons again.

J. & H. Start

Editorial

This is my first editorial. It is also my last. This current edition of WABN will complete ten years as Editor and I have decided to relinquish the 'post'.

I have learned that to edit WABN competently requires more time than would appear and this, together with a desire to avoid the need to organise my life to be available to edit WABN four times annually, which has been the position for ten years, has been a factor in my decision.

Big Bird has also written to express exhaustion at the need for questions and those in this issue of WABN are Big Bird's last. He hopes his Clever Birdo Quiz has been of interest to some at least.

I shall not miss the contributors (many!) who did not use RAOU recommended English names and spellings and those who made anthropomorphic statements, which have required constant vigilance. However I shall be able to look forward to receiving WABN, which is less the case after having read the entire contents not less than four times (and still made errors!).

The years of editing have been enjoyable and I have (of necessity) learned a good deal about birding I might not otherwise have done. I have been helped by too many to name individually. I thank all who have helped.

Particular mention does need be made of those whose work make WABN possible over the years, especially Rose Jones, Margery Clegg and Chris Wilder. Thanks also to Allan Burbidge for important input more recently and especial thanks to all those who made Members Contributions, the real core of WABN. More contributions would always have been welcome, but I am grateful for those received.

May your bird observing be rewarding.

Editor

Observations

Compiled by the Observations Committee. Shires are in brackets.

SOUTH-WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

- Freckled Duck** - 1, 29/8/94, Wellard wetlands (Kwinana) - JCr
Letter-winged Kite - 1, 10/94, 50 km N of Kalbarri (Northampton) - * 12, 10/94, Hutt River ca. 25 km W of Binu (Northampton) - IC
Square-tailed Kite - 1, 3/9 and 13/11/94, Mt Saddleback, about 20 km S of Boddington (Boddington) - MBa * 1, 9/9/94, Cooljarloo (15 km N of Cataby) (Dandaragan) - MBa
Spotted Harrier - 3, 30/9/94, Stirling Range National Park (Plantagenet) - IS, BS
Malleefowl - 1 roadkill, 9/9/94, 16 km NE of Wubin on Great Northern Hwy (Dalwallinu) - IS, BS
Buff-banded Rail - 1 fledgeling, 10/11/94, corner Beechboro and Marshall Roads, Malaga (Swan) - MBa
Baillon's Crake - 1, 18/9, 24/9 and 3/10/94, Lion's Weir Pool, Hotham River, Boddington (Boddington) - GM
Australian Crake - 4, 31/3/94, Lake Bennett, near Lake King Nature Reserve (Lake Grace) - MG
Black-winged Stilt - nest with 4 eggs, 20/9/94, Pelican Point (Nedlands) - KCr

- Red-necked Phalarope** - 1 female, 29/8/94, Lake Bagdad, Rottnest Island (Rottnest Island) - PC
Western Long-billed Corella - 2, 27/10/94, 3 km N of Manjimup (Manjimup) - MC (unusual this far west)
Elegant Parrot - 2, 14/8/94, 3 km N of Manjimup (Manjimup) - MC * 2, 2/11/94, 23 km ENE of Manjimup (Manjimup) - MC (this species is only patchily distributed in the extreme SW)
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo - 1, 7/10/94, 32 km NE of Manjimup (Bridgetown-Greenbushes) - MC * 1, 21/10/94, 28 km NE of Manjimup (Bridgetown-Greenbushes) - MC (these records are the south-western limits of distribution of this species)
Rainbow Bee-eater - 2, 23/9/94, Kings Park (Perth) - IS, BS
White-backed Swallow - 1+, 15/8/94, Rockingham Road, Cockburn (Cockburn) - PT, RN (unusual this far south on Swan Coastal Plain)
Red-capped Robin - 1, 22/8/94, Blue Gum Lake (Melville) - JBo * 1 male, 23/9/94, Darling Scarp at Kelmscott (Armadale-Kelmscott) - GM * 1 male, 12/10/94, 27 km NE of Manjimup (Bridgetown-Greenbushes) - MC * dependent young being fed by adult male, 1/11/94, Goosebery Hill (Kalamunda) - RS (breeds near Perth occasionally)
Crested Shrike-tit - 1, 16/10/94, Donnelly River (Nannup) - GL * 1, 5/11/94, Maxon Farm, Batalling, 13 km W of Darkan (West Arthur) - BM and RAOU Campout
Splendid Fairy-wren - 1 male, 9/94, Booragoon Lake (Melville) - MW, RW
Variagated Fairy-wren - 1 male, 2+ "brown" birds, 18/10/94, Big Carine Swamp (Stirling) - HvW, DP
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater - 1 adult, sometimes 2, 13/3 to 16/5/94 and 1 immature, 18/3/93, Yokine (Stirling) - IS, BS
Black Honeyeater - 3, 1/10/94, Dryandra Forest (Williams) - CW

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

- Letter-winged Kite** - 1, 31/8/94, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) JO * 5, 31/8/94, Three Mile Camp, Gnaraloo Station (Carnarvon) - JO * 1, 9/94, near Pt Cuvier (Carnarvon) - REJ * 1, 9/94, Boolathana Station (Carnarvon) - AB * 1, 9/94, Peron Peninsula (Shark Bay) - GF * 2, 10/94, Useless Loop (Shark Bay) - RJo (there has been a widespread irruption onto the west coast, extending from the southern Kimberley to south of Kalbarri, in the latter half of 1994 - also see elsewhere in this report and in WABN 71, pp 3 and 8)
Barking Owl - 1, 12/7/94, Weeli Wolli Spring, ca. 70 km NW of Newman (East Pilbara) - JS, HS
Blue-winged Pitta - 1, 6/11/94, 5 km N of King Bay, Burrup Peninsula (Roebourne) - JC (rare non-breeding migrant from SE Asia; very few records from Australia)
Cinnamon Quail-thrush - 2+, 11/9/94, Thundelarra Station (Yalgoo) - IS, BS, DN, JN
Black-tailed Treecreeper - 2, 12/7/94, Weeli Wolli Spring, ca. 70 km NW of Newman (East Pilbara) - JS, HS * 1, 18/7/94, House Creek, near Mt Stuart HS (Ashburton) - JS, HS
Grey-headed Honeyeater - 2, 12/7/94, Weeli Wolli Spring, ca. 70 km NW of Newman (East Pilbara) - JS, HS (near southern limit of range in this region)
Black-chinned Honeyeater - 2, 12/7/94, Weeli Wolli Spring, ca. 70 km NW of Newman (East Pilbara) - JS, HS
White-fronted Honeyeater - 1, 18/7/94, House Creek, near Mt Stuart HS (Ashburton) - JS, HS (near northern limit in this part of range)

Grey Honeyeater - 1, 15/7/94, West Angelas Hill, between Mt Meharry and The Governor (Ashburton) - JS, HS
Masked Woodswallow - 500+, 11/9/94, Thundelarra Station (Yaloo) - IS, BS, DN, JN

KIMBERLEY

Wilson's Storm-Petrel - 30, 10/9/94, pelagic, off Broome (Broome) - BBO

Australian Shelduck - 1 female, 29/10/94, Wyndham Sewage Farm (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - AB, SG, BMa (vagrant in the Kimberley)

Garganey - 3, 28/10/94, Parry Lagoons (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - AB, SG, BMa

Letter-winged Kite - 1, 27/7/94, Crab Creek mangroves (Broome) - GA * 3, 9/8/94, Willie Creek, Broome (Broome) - BBO * 2, 10/8/94, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - BBO * 3, 19/8/94, Broome (Broome) - BBO * 8, 26/8/94, Broome, near port (Broome) - MN, MV, KM, BM * 1, 18/10/94, Broome (most recent sighting in Broome area up to mid-November) - BBO

Black Falcon - 1, 10/8/94, Lake Eda (Broome) - BBO

Grey Falcon - 1, 1/7/94, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - PCo

Buff-banded Rail - 1, 2/2, 11/9 and 12/9/94, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) - GS

Pied Oystercatcher - 114, 5/6/94, Roebuck Bay, (Broome) - BBO

Little Ringed Plover - 1 juvenile, 8/9/94, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) - GS, BBO

Red-capped Plover - 655, 15/6/94, Roebuck Bay, (Broome) - BBO

Little Curlew - 1, 10/8/94, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - BBO (rare at this time of year) * 300, 30/10/94, Lake Eda (Broome) - BBO

Pectoral Sandpiper - 1, 25/8/94, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) - BBO * 1, 18/10/94, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO

Little Stint - 1 caught, 2/10/94, Lake Eda (Broome) - RJe, PCo

Common Bronzewing - 1, 30/6/94, Cable Beach, Broome (Broome) - BBO

Flock Bronzewing - 2, 2/8/94, Lake Campion (Broome) - BBO

Partridge Pigeon - 8, 5/8/94, Backstein Creek, Beverley Springs Station (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Black-eared Cuckoo - 1, 23/9/94, Coconut Well, just N of Broome (Broome) - BBO

Channel-billed Cuckoo - 3, 13/11/94, Derby (Derby-West Kimberley) - MGU

Welcome Swallow - 16, 24/5/94, Broome Sewage Works (Broome) - BBO (this species is a rare autumn-winter visitor to the southern Kimberley)

Red-capped Robin - 2, 23/5/94, 1 caught, 3/6/94, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - JF, PCo (northern limit of distribution)

White-browed Robin - 1, 30/10/94, Kona Caravan Park, Kununurra, in dense vegetation by the edge of a swamp (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - AB, SG, BMa (uncommon in the East Kimberley)

Western Gerygone - 3, 10/8/94, Lake Eda (Broome) - PCo

Black-tailed Treecreeper - 3, 10/8/94, Lake Campion (Broome) - PCo

Black Honeyeater - 1, 18/7/94, Ngumban Cliff, ca. 90 km SE of Fitzroy Crossing (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC * 30, 30/10/94, Anna Plains (Broome) - BBO (near northern limit of range)

Pied Honeyeater - 2, 30/10/94, Anna Plains (Broome) - BBO (at or near northern limit of range)

Crimson Chat - 47, 10/8/94, Lake Eda (Broome) - BBO

Orange Chat - 2, 10/8/94, Lake Eda (Broome) BBO

Yellow Chat - 64, 10/8/94, Lake Eda (Broome) - BBO

Yellow White-eye - 1+, 28/7/94, Windjana Gorge (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Painted Firetail - 8, 28/7/94, Windjana Gorge (Derby West-Kimberley) - KC

Gouldian Finch - 1 adult and 7 immature, 25/7/94, North Creek, Gibb River Rd - KC

Figbird - 1, 28/7/94, Windjana Gorge (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Masked Woodswallow - 800, 23/7/94, and 2000+, 30-31/7/94, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - BBO

ERRATA

Ground Parrot - 2, 4/8/94, Waychinicup National Park (E of Mt Manypeaks) (Albany) - AB, JKR. (Observer incorrect in WABN 71)

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BMa - Bruce Male	KC - Kevin Coate
BS - Bev Standring	KCr - Kate Creed
CW - Chris Wilder	MBa - Mike Bamford
DN - David Newsome	MC - Michael Craig
DP - Dorothy Pearce	MG - Mal Graham
GA - George Appleby	MGU - Mike Guger
GF - Graeme Folley	MN - Mavis Norgard
GL - Graham Little	MV - Mary Vaughan
GM - Greg Marston	MW - Marian Watson
GS - George Swann	PC - Peter Coyle
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B. Buchanan.

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 March Issue
1 February 1994
at Perry House

Members Contributions

KIMBERLEY GAPS IN BLOCKS

I visited the Kimberley in early August. The tourist hyperbole led me to expect an area scenically very different to more southerly parts, but it was not. It is possessed of gorges, though one is like another, but there are the Leopold Ranges, which are magnificent in late afternoon sun when descending the Gibb River Road.

Bird life however is different, with more birds generally and of course different species. The fact that species visually the same as in the south have different calls came as a surprise.

Total species seen was 164, excluding Broome Bird Observatory sightings. I found (after a difficult decision process) the Variegated Fairy-wren, *Rogersi* race, to win the visual attractiveness stakes (much better than Purple-crowned) and the most unexpected species was Black Grasswren, both bigger, bolder and "jolly" than any photograph depicts.

Reviewing my sighting lists against the Blakers M, Davies SJJF, Reilly PN (1984) *The Atlas of Australian Birds*, RAOU, Melbourne I was surprised to find a number of sightings in 10 Blocks hitherto without the species. While the *Atlas* is ageing it is still the only published distribution record. Species not *Atlas* recorded were:—

Intermediate Egret (15/126) King Edward River Stn. & Woodhouse River

Straw-necked Ibis (15/126) Drysdale River

Royal Spoonbill (16/126) Mt Elizabeth Stn.

Plumed Whistling Duck (16/126) Hann River

Grey Teal (17/125) Moll Gorge

Comb-crested Jacana (15/126) Woodhouse River

Common Bronzewing (15/126) Mitchell Plateau & King Edward River Stn.

Black-eared Cuckoo (16/126) Drysdale River Stn.

Azure Kingfisher (15/126) Drysdale River and King Edward River Stn.

Crested Shrike-tit (15/126) Drysdale River

Leaden Flycatcher (15/126) King Edward River Stn.

Clamorous Reed-Warbler (15/126) Drysdale River & (16/125) Manning Gorge

Blue-faced Honeyeater (15/126) King Edward River Stn. & (17/124) Kimberley Downs Stn.

Bar-breasted Honeyeater (15/126) Drysdale River

Crimson Chat (17/123) Broome-Derby Road

Yellow White-eye (17/124) Kimberley Downs Stn.

Masked Finch (17/124) Kimberley Downs Stn.

Masked Woodswallow (17/125) Mt House Stn.

All the above sightings have records in the *Atlas* in adjacent Blocks with the exception of the Comb-crested Jacana, nearest record Wyndham area 235 km away and Crested Shrike-tit, which has no Kimberley record at all, the nearest being in the Northern Territory.

Given that the area seems to be almost overwhelmed with "outback" tourist operators (most of whom are clearly not ornithological — I liked the "outback" bus with on-board TV !) the lack of records must surely derive from a failure to report. Prior to seeing two Crested Shrike-tit in the Drysdale River area I was informed of the possibility of seeing the species despite the *Atlas* having no records. I can only hope there will be an alteration of attitude for otherwise much useful ornithological information will never enter the record.

Gouldian Finch adults were unusual, a group of immatures/young with one or two adults being most often seen. However they were found in six locations — Bell Creek, Beverley Springs Station, Drysdale River Station, Mt House Station, Moll Gorge and Lake Gladstone. Also interesting was Striated Pardalote *melanocephalus* breeding on the Woodhouse River.

My thanks to George Swann for directing me to many good birding locations.

B. Buchanan

GREY HONEYEATERS AT MULLEWA

A small party of Grey Honeyeaters arrived in Mullewa in May of this year. They were observed breeding in July - September. One pair nested in dense garden vegetation in the Main street - Jose Street and during this nesting I was able to make positive identification.

Among the smallest of the honeyeaters, Grey Honeyeaters can be confused with Western Gerygone especially when obscured in foliage.

This south-western movement may be caused by renewed activity and mining in the Mt Magnet-Yalgoo area, the increasing cover of roadside corridors or the recent drier weather patterns. Mullewa appears to be the western limit, as two pairs are normally resident at Wilroy Nature Reserve, 23 km SE of Mullewa.

This year we forecast early prolonged spells of hot weather as the Budgerigars and Crimson Chats arrived early to breed. A Chiming Wedgebill was heard at the Greenough River crossing, north of Mullewa, in late August which is unusual so far south. Finally, a single Brolga was sighted at Bone's Lake after a recent cyclone.

We will be watching for further unusual sightings in this early dry season.

E. Leyland

RUFOUS TREECREEPERS & NECTAR

On two occasions in late November/early December 1993 I observed what I believe to have been the taking of nectar by a Rufous Treecreeper. Both observations were made in an area of *Eucalyptus marginata*/*E. calophylla* forest 20km ENE of Manjimup which at the time had a profusely flowering understorey of *Banksia grandis*.

Other than White-naped Honeyeaters, the area seemed strangely devoid of nectivorous birds, but twice I saw a Rufous Treecreeper land on a banksia florescence and plunge its beak, slightly agape into the flowers.

The birds left their beaks in the flowers for approximately three seconds before moving on to another part of the tree. Although I could not see their tongues moving I believe the birds I observed were taking nectar. First, the birds left their beaks in the flowers for about three seconds whereas when they are probing for insects in bark, a probe invariably lasts less than half a second. Secondly, there were numerous insects on the inflorescence which were ignored by them. I concluded they were drinking nectar from the flowers.

M. Craig

NECTAR POISONING ?

For a number of years now I have been pondering the 'illness' and eventual deaths of Little Wattlebirds around this time of the year (December & later).

While not a common occurrence, I receive 2 or 3 reports of sick birds each year within the Town of Narrogin. Occasionally I am brought such a bird.

Following information gathered by myself re poisonous flowering plants (in relation to bee deaths) I wonder if birds are affected by the toxins within the nectar of the *Eucalyptus leucoxylon petiolaris* (which has pink, white or red flowers, the last usually sold by nurseries as *rosea*) and whether other species have similar effects.

Plants known to have deleterious effects on the European honey bee are:-

Eucalyptus leucoxylon, *Brassica napus* (Rape), *Castanospermum australe* (Moreton Bay Chestnut or Black Bean), *Eucalyptus citriodora* (Lemon-Scented Gum), *Hakea costata*, *Schefflera actinophylla* (Umbrella Tree).

L. Silvester

NATURE RESERVE 20372

There must be readers who, like me, find life events have occurred out of sequence. This at least seems to be the position with my bird observing.

Not long after I joined the RAOU, water bird watching was the principal requirement. South-West Water Bird Surveys, Great Duck Counts, Scopewest and their like called for volunteers. After ten years plus of never less than three wetlands surveyed monthly, I concluded I must have counted all the Grey Teal in the State at least twice and decided to turn attention to 'bushbirds'.

Swamp wading and watching is pleasant and waterbirds are large and easily seen and identified on water and wing. Even waders stand quietly as one approaches and for the most part are not difficult to distinguish. Much can be done (if so minded) by sitting quietly at one good observation post with a telescope and some quite large swamps can be thoroughly surveyed in 2-3 hours when sight lines are clear. And being near water it is often cool.

By contrast bush birds are small, not easy to see, often not easy to identify in the bush and very difficult on the wing, rarely still for more than a second or so and frequently obscured in foliage. All this is bad enough but in addition much greater time is needed. Diminishing returns only set in markedly after 36+ hours at a site, during which time not less than 8-10 hours of walking are required and the quietude of the bush can be unpleasantly hot.

Having been involved in the easy waterbirding while young and dashing (at least it is a nice thought) at a rather greater age I find myself in the more physically demanding bush. No wonder it seems my bird-watching is out of sequence.

One of the places at which I commenced my new career was Nature Reserve 20372. This is north-east of Dalwallinu and is an area of some 6.5 square kilometres, largely of low 'acacia' type scrub interspersed with some small areas of eucalypts. Observation is easiest from the firebreaks which surround the Reserve, for although there are some old tracks through the scrub, the visual limitation on sightings is great. The Reserve is wholly surrounded by cultivated farming land.

I visited the Reserve seven times between September 1992 and October 1994, in the months of March, May, June, September, October and December. In all I recorded 50 species either in or over-flying the Reserve, five of which were breeding (either at nest or feeding young). A list is given below with the number of sightings made in the seven visits with a (b) for breeding.

One of the breeding species was Malleefowl, an active mound being discovered during a traverse of the bush. Malleefowl were seen on five of the seven visits: on one

occasion five Malleefowl were seen in a group and on another three were together. The solitary reputation of the bird may not be so securely based.

On three of the sightings the Malleefowl took wing. For birds which often walk slowly, almost ponderously, the ease of flight came as a surprise. Loud flapping of wings was minimal and one bird rose easily at an angle in excess of 45° to a height of 10 metres to fly strongly and swiftly across the Reserve for over 60 metres before dropping from view. Malleefowl are clearly not so terrestrial as they appear and flight from one reserve/area to another seems readily possible.

The Reserve was surveyed by John Dell of the WA Museum in 1975 and 1976 in three separate periods of 6 days minimum. He also recorded 50 species in or flying over the Reserve, although listing further species close to and probably using the Reserve. Naturally Dell saw species I did not and vice-versa despite the coincidence of numbers.

It seems possible some species may have increased since the Museum surveys — Malleefowl, Port Lincoln Ringneck, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and Brown Honeyeater.

Other species appear to have declined, notably Crested Pigeon, Galah, Red-capped Robin, Western Yellow Robin, Redthroat, White-eared Honeyeater and White-fronted Chat.

Species seen by Dell and not recorded by me were Southern Scrub-robin and Shy Hylacola (both of which species are not readily observed and may still be present), Striated Pardalote, White-winged Fairy-wren, Calamanthus and Richard's Pipit and a group of nomadic/migratory species, Emu (seen outside the Reserve trying to pass in through the fence unsuccessfully), Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Australian Kestrel, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Australian Owllet-nightjar, White-backed Swallow, Zebra Finch and Little Crow.

The most striking of these absentees is Richard's Pipit, recorded by Dell on every visit and noted as common. Despite specific effort to locate them not a single pipit was seen. Changed farming practice?

Most of the other 'non-nomad' absentees/apparent declines are of ground using species. This may reflect changed farming practice also and/or greater predation from feral cats and foxes.

To reinforce my statement earlier about the problems of bush bird identification I have only to point out that I thought I saw Variegated Fairy-wren at the Reserve. Strikingly, Dell saw none but recorded Blue-breasted Fairy-wren. He informs me (and inspection of skins at the Museum only reinforces the problem) that the birds at the Reserve are of the Blue-breasted species. In the list below I retain Variegated (although Dell is most likely to be correct), as I thought I observed the Variegated species. A mist net expedition seems to be needed to determine the matter.

While NR 20372 is not among the more attractive reserves visually, it clearly has importance for Malleefowl.

My thanks to Mike Fitzgerald and his colleagues of CALM, Merredin for their assistance and support and to John Dell for discussing my "findings" with me.

NR 20372 Bird List, with number of sightings out of 7: —

Grey Teal (1) (there is a small seasonal swamp in one corner), Brown Goshawk (1), Australian Hobby (2), Malleefowl (b) (5), Common Bronzewing (6), Crested Pigeon (6), Galah (5), Port Lincoln Ringneck (7), Mulga Parrot (4), Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo (3), Sacred Kingfisher (1), Rainbow Bee-eater (1), Welcome Swallow (1), Tree Martin (2), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (1), White-winged Triller

(1), Red-capped Robin (3), Western Yellow Robin (1), Golden Whistler (5), Rufous Whistler (5), Grey Shrike-thrush (5), Crested Bellbird (7), Grey Fantail (3), Willie Wagtail (7), White-browed Babbler (b) (7), Rufous Songlark (1), Splendid Fairy-wren (1), Variegated Fairy-wren (5) - see text, Redthroat (2), Weebill (7), Western Gerygone (3), Inland Thornbill (b) (7), Chestnut-rumped Thornbill (7), Yellow-rumped Thornbill (b) (5), Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (1), Yellow-throated Miner (4), Singing Honeyeater (7), White-eared Honeyeater (1), Brown-headed Honeyeater (2), Brown Honeyeater (5), White-fronted Honeyeater (1), White-fronted Chat (1), Australian Magpie-lark (1), Masked Woodswallow (1), Black-faced Woodswallow (5), Grey Butcherbird (b) (6), Pied Butcherbird (1), Australian Magpie (2), Australian Raven (7)

B. Buchanan

VOLUNTEERS AGAIN

Having read Max Bailey's salute to the willing and capable band of office volunteers in the September WABN, I thought it would be appropriate to mention some of the other activities undertaken by volunteers on behalf of the RAOU in WA.

Our trading table and various displays of bird photographs have appeared at many community events over recent months — at "Spring Flag", Bold Park, August 28; the Wannamal Wildflower Weekend, September 10/11; Mingenew Rural Expo, September 23/24; WA Naturalists Club Craft and Garden Fair, November 26; Gosnells Earthfest, November 27 and ahead, the Hobby Spectacular in Claremont Showgrounds, January 21/22. On many of these occasions, RAOU guides have conducted members of the public on free bird walks in addition to staffing our displays and stalls. We are always keen to hear of new persons willing to be involved.

The RAOU participated in the Bold Park Festival by running bird walks on October 9 & 11. To celebrate Bird Week, our volunteers took free bird walks at Pelican Point, Crawley on October 25, Lake Booragoon on October 29 and Lake Monger on October 30. Swan Shire's "Be Active Together" programme saw us taking a bird walk in the FR Berry Reserve near Gidgegannup on November 9.

Our thematic bird displays (photographs) have been set up in many places, though mainly in public libraries — such as Subiaco, Melville, Guildford, Spearwood, Coolbellup, Safety Bay and Floreat. The Environment Centre in Perth has had a display, as well as two hospitals, Sir Charles Gairdner and Osborne Park and several schools.

Thanks to those who so willingly lend the RAOU their vehicles, selves and time to enable all these activities.

J. Blyth

Notices

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre Monday 27 February, 1995, at 8.00 pm. All Committee positions will be declared vacant and office bearers will be elected for 1995/96.

Nomination forms may be obtained from the office, Perry House and must be signed by the proposer, seconder and the person nominated, all of whom should be paid-up members. The completed form should be sent to the Secretary or be handed in prior to the commencement of the AGM.

LAKE GLADSTONE - permission

At the commencement of my article on Lake Gladstone I stated it was on Mt House Station. While most will have

appreciated the desirability of obtaining prior permission from the Station owners before a visit, my statement did not make this wholly clear.

Permission to visit Lake Gladstone ought to be obtained from the Station owners prior to any visit.

B. Buchanan

EDITORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE

This is the last issue of WA Bird Notes to be edited by Bruce Buchanan, who has decided to relinquish the position after 10 years of dedication to the job.

The WA Group Committee has appointed a new Editorial Sub-committee consisting of John Blyth and Allan Burbidge (joint editors), Margaret Philippson (typing), Roger and Marian Watson (typesetting) and Rod Smith (distribution). The Sub-committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Bruce Buchanan for his many years of service. In particular, the Index to WABN will be invaluable to the new editors.

Deadlines

The deadline for the March issue is 1 February 1995, and it is intended that WABN No 73 will be distributed in the first week of March 1995. Other deadlines for the year are 1 May, 1 August and 1 November, with distribution during the first week of June, September and December.

Contributions

Members are encouraged to contribute material for Bird Notes. Almost all will know something about birds or places to see birds which other members would be interested in knowing about. Please put pen to paper on anything to do with birds which you think may be of interest.

If you think you are not good at writing, jot down your thoughts and we will help you put it in a form suitable for WABN or talk to a member of the Editorial Sub-committee (see tel. numbers below) to receive help in your writing. If you prefer to sketch rather than write, you might like to illustrate some aspect of bird behaviour you have observed.

The WA Group Committee has also asked the Editorial Sub-committee to seek views of members concerning WABN and in the light of this, revise the editorial policy if appropriate. If you have any ideas, comments or criticisms, please talk to one of the people on the WA Group Committee or the Editorial Sub-committee. We would appreciate hearing from as many members as possible, both new and long-term.

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