

Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of Birds Australia - WA Group
(a division of Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union)

No 91 September 1999

WATERBIRD SURVEY OF MANDORA MARSH

On the 4th and 5th of May 1999 I accompanied Gordon Graham and Tim Willing from CALM on a survey and investigation of a flooded area to the north east of Sandfire Roadhouse. The aim of the trip was to ascertain waterbird usage and assess the site for survey work later in the year. Local reports were that the area was the wettest it had been for many years and this also prompted the survey. I also took the opportunity to undertake some comprehensive bird atlas survey work.

Upon our arrival a narrow band of shallow water was still flowing across the highway north of the Sandfire Roadhouse. Two or three weeks previously an approximately 2 kilometre stretch of the highway had shallow water over it.

Our first telescope views and binocular search of the flooded samphire to the west of the Highway revealed 390 Egrets — Great 350, Intermediate 20 and Little 20. Many hundreds of Straw-necked Ibis were feeding and small numbers of Australasian Grebes and Grey Teal were using the open water immediately adjacent to the highway. On the flooded highway 500 Whiskered Terns were loafing when not being put to flight by passing vehicles. More terns were feeding over the flooded samphire and the open water habitats. Where the water flowed under a culvert good numbers of Speckled Perch congregated and the terns were plunging for these. The most common prey items seen taken were, however, frogs.

After this initial search we moved a few kilometres north on the highway and from here waded into the dense samphire abutting the road to gauge boat access. The water was from 20 to 60 centimetres deep and thick with



The Red-backed Fairy-wren is a bird of the grassland of northern Australia. This sighting at Mandora Marsh was both unusually far south and in an unusual habitat.

Drawing by Judy Blyth

glutinous algae. We searched on foot using 10 x 42 binoculars and a 25 x telescope. The area was alive with Black-winged Stilts and Whiskered Terns. We only found one Black-winged Stilt nest, which had 4 eggs, but judging by the amount of noise and distraction displays being performed there were obviously chicks in the area. There were approximately 1000 stilts at this location. Whiskered Terns were in similar numbers. Approximately 25% of the terns were juveniles, all were free flying and we saw none being fed. Adults were in breeding, non-breeding and partial breeding plumage. They had presumably bred on the flood plain.

Please see page 3 for

**NOTICE OF
EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

Other species present were a maximum of 10 White-necked Herons foraging and several hundred Straw-necked Ibis feeding and flying over the area to the east. Gull-billed Terns were associating with the Whiskered Terns but in very small numbers. The Gull-billed Terns were in non-breeding plumage and of the resident race *Sterna nilotica macrotarsa*. Size and very pale upperparts were used as identification features. Hardheads, Grey Teal and Black Swans were seen on the open lake to the east with the telescope. Twenty Glossy Ibis flew over the area towards the east. Five Great Egrets were feeding. Red-capped Plovers in small numbers were flushed from the samphire. We also flushed up to 100 Red-kneed Dotterels. They were difficult to count and we may well have double counted some birds but this habitat was obviously to their liking.

The most exciting find in this area was a Painted Snipe (*Rostratula benghalensis australis*). We flushed the bird twice and obtained good views of it in flight.

The next morning we towed a punt by hand through the thick area of flooded samphire surveyed the previous evening out to the open water and spent the next 7 hours exploring this fascinating area. We visited four islands, Saunders Spring and a Melaleuca swamp. The last area was visited only briefly as clouds of mosquitoes descended upon us. We finished up approximately 32 km east of Sandfire Roadhouse.

Birds seen on and over the open water are listed below. The islands, spring and swamp are reported on separately. Black Swan 40, Grey Teal 30, Hardhead 10, Hoary-headed Grebe 3, Darter 3, Australian Pelican 1500, White-faced Heron 10, Little Egret 50, White-necked Heron 10, Great Egret 900, Intermediate Egret 50, Straw-necked Ibis 300, White-bellied Sea-Eagle 1, immature Swamp Harrier 1, Black-winged Stilt 500, Red-capped Plover 5, Gull-billed Tern 10, Whiskered Terns a minimum of 3000, Budgerigar 350 (flying over lake), Red-backed Fairy-wren 3 (in mangroves in middle of lake), Zebra Finch 5 (in mangroves in middle of lake), Tree Martin 100 (roosting in mangroves) and a Freckled Duck. The sighting of the fairy-wrens is interesting – this appears to be further south than they have previously been reported near the west coast.

We gave the islands our own names, as they are not named on the maps of the area. 'Round Island' was approximately 80 metres in diameter with only about 30 metres in diameter above the water and remaining totally dry. The vegetation was samphire and Cyperus 'grass'.



The rather ungainly Southern Giant-Petrel is a frequent visitor to waters off WA's west coast.

Drawing by Judy Blyth

Here we saw the following: Grey Teal 4 (2 birds flushed from 2 separate nests, one with 10 eggs and the other with 9 eggs.), Hardhead 4, Hoary-headed Grebe 8, Australian Pelican 20, Straw-necked Ibis 10, Black-winged Stilt 30, Red-capped Plover 6, Red-kneed Dotterel 10, Whiskered Tern 20, Budgerigar 15, Singing Bushlark 1, Fairy Martin 5.

The 'Atoll' was a small muddy, mostly flooded area of samphire. This island was different to all others visited, being made up of a central knoll with a lagoon of deeper water on the eastern side with a narrow crescent of flooded samphire on the outer edge. Seen here were Black Swan 2 (1 nest with 3 eggs), Grey Teal 2, (1 nest with 11 eggs under roly poly and 1 abandoned nest with 9 eggs), Hardhead? (1 abandoned nest with 3 eggs and shell fragments from hatched or predated eggs), Red-kneed Dotterel 1 (bird doing animated broken wing display).

'Pelican Island' was a narrow strip of land 200 metres long by 10 metres wide, fringed on its northern side by Grey Mangroves. Bird life was dominated by pelicans and Straw-necked Ibis. We counted 14 pelican nests in a 10 x 4 metre rectangle at the western end of the colony. All nests contained 2 eggs. We did not venture further due to disturbance of the birds. In this same 40 square metres were 15 Straw-necked Ibis nests with 2, 3, and 4 eggs. They were abutting pelican nests in separate stick 'towers'. Black Swans were nesting with one pair having three free swimming cygnets and one hatchling (presumably from this pair). There were five other nests with 2, 3, 5, 6 and 6 eggs. There were three, possibly Hardhead, nests concealed under speedy weed. Each nest had 9 eggs though one appeared abandoned.

The most intriguing observations on this island were of dead and dying adult pelicans with up to 30 seen from our vantage point. Dying birds couldn't hold up their heads or walk but had healthy looking plumages. Some form of botulism was a possible cause. Here we saw Black Swan 14, Grey Teal 10, Pink-eared Duck 3, Darter 10, Australian Pelican 1500, Straw-necked Ibis 1000, Swamp Harrier 1, Nankeen Kestrel 1, Eurasian Coot 1, Red-kneed Dotterel 2, Whiskered Tern 15, Budgerigar 35 in flight, Richard's Pipit 1.

'Pelican Spit' was a 5 metre wide by 100 metre long strip of sand. We did not make landfall on this but surveyed it from the boat. It was dense with pelicans, many on nests. Also present were Black Swan 10 (possibly nesting but not confirmed), Australian Pelican 1400 and Straw-necked Ibis 50 (approximately 14 nests).

'Arc Island' had some paperbarks and Grey Mangroves established on it. Birds on this island appeared only to be loafing and no breeding activity was recorded. Again the area was surveyed from boat. We saw Black Swan 16, Grey Teal 10, Darter 1, Australian Pelican 550, Great Egret 12, Straw-necked Ibis 25, Black-winged Stilt 4, and Tree Martin 25.

Approximately 2.5 kilometres east of 'Arc Island' we flushed a Freckled Duck from a Grey Mangrove. The bird was only 3 to 5 metres away when it flew and great views of the red bill base and sloping head were obtained. On searching the tree we found a nest of flat sticks with a lot

of down. We took a sample of the down and sent it to Ron Johnstone at the WA Museum. It was (unfortunately!) Pink-eared Duck down. We had seen this species in the vicinity.

Saunders Spring is a permanent fresh water spring that has been fenced off in a joint venture between CALM and the station owner under a Commonwealth grant to prevent damage to the vegetation by stock. The vegetation is comprised mainly of Dragon Tree, bulrushes, Saltwater Paperbark and Salt Wattle. We searched the area on foot for 1 hour in the early afternoon and saw the following: Black-fronted Dotterel 2, Whistling Kite 1, Brown Goshawk 1, Pheasant Coucal 1, Sacred Kingfisher 1, Rainbow Bee-eater 12, Variegated Fairy-wren 6, Gerygone sp. 2 (probably Mangrove as the chance of Western was slim), Brown Honeyeater 10, Red-capped Robin 1 (female), Rufous Whistler 10, Magpie-lark 2, Willie Wagtail 2, White-winged Triller 6, Masked Woodswallow 4, Torresian Crow 6, Zebra Finch 12, Clamorous Reed-Warbler 2.

On our return to the highway we saw large numbers of egrets roosting in the tops of a group of trees. On closer inspection this turned out to be 500 egrets and as with the earlier flocks was dominated by the Great Egret. When I entered the swamp I disturbed 300 Rufous Night Herons and 300 million mosquitoes! With long pants, repellent and more time this may have turned out to be only a fraction of the birds at this roost.

We visited Mandora again on the 10th of June. The access was more difficult due to the receding water so the survey was less comprehensive. Pelicans were in all stages of development from hatching to fully feathered juveniles. On 'Pelican Island' there were no young birds but new nests and eggs. It appeared the juveniles were creching on a nearby island. We also found a small breeding colony of Gull-billed Terns. Only five nests were located and the success of them was in doubt as botulism appeared to be killing many terns as well as pelicans.

We would like to thank John Stoate of Anna Plains Station for advice and allowing access to the station.

Chris Hassell

Observations

Compiled by the Observations Committee. Shires are in brackets.

Names and order follow Christidis, L. and Boles, W. (1994) *The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories*. RAOU Monograph 2.

Observers are reminded that, for rarely seen or difficult to identify species, adequate documentation is required for inclusion in WABN. For example, new records, or records of species rarely recorded in the south-west should be accompanied by a description of what was *actually seen* and reasons for the identification. Note that a statement to the effect that what was seen fitted a description in a field guide is a statement about what is

NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS to be held on Monday 25 October 1999 at the State Tennis Centre, Bolton Ave, Burswood commencing at conclusion of General Meeting

Business

To consider and adopt the revised draft constitution.

Note: If you would like to receive a copy of the revised draft prior to the meeting, please contact the Secretary, Margaret Philippon.

Note from the Chairman

Following the extraordinary general meeting held on 18 January 1999, at which a draft constitution was adopted subject to approval by the National Birds Australia Council and the Ministry for Fair Trading, the draft has been revised by both Council and the WA Group Committee and it would now appear to be satisfactory to both parties.

Adoption by members is now required so that it can be formally approved by Council and then presented to the Ministry after a period of 28 days' notice to the public.

Hopefully this will proceed as anticipated and incorporation will become a reality about February next year.

Clive Nealon, WA Group Chairman

in a field guide, and does not tell the editors what you actually saw. Providing extra details also assists the editors to provide extra information to readers.

SOUTH-WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Antarctic Petrel – 1, 16/7/99, North Mole, Fremantle (Fremantle) – JD (detailed description available)

Kerguelen Petrel – 1, 23/5/99, Hillarys Pelagic Trip – per FO * 2, 2/6/99, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) – RP * 2, 14/7/99, North Mole, Fremantle (Fremantle) – JD

Great-winged Petrel – 40, 23/5/99, Hillarys Pelagic Trip – per FO

White-headed Petrel – 1, 13/6/99, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) – RP

Soft-plumaged Petrel – 100, 23/5/99, Hillarys Pelagic Trip – per FO

Blue Petrel – 2-3, 14/7/99, North Mole, Fremantle (Fremantle) – JD * 2, 17/7/99, North Mole, Fremantle (Fremantle) – JD, FO * 1, 26/7/99, North Mole, Fremantle (Fremantle) – RM, JD (descriptions available)

Slender-billed Prion – 4-5, 14/7/99, North Mole, Fremantle (Fremantle) – JD

White-chinned Petrel – single birds on 5 occasions, 2/6 – 21/6/99, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) – RP

Grey Petrel – 1, 17/5/99, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) – RP

Wilson's Storm-Petrel – 25, 23/5/99, Hillarys Pelagic Trip – per FO

Great Skua – 9, 23/5/99, Hillarys Pelagic Trip – per FO (high number for this area) * 9, 2/7/99, Woodman Point – Fremantle (Fremantle/Cockburn) – JD

Arctic Jaeger – 8-9 all dark phase, 27/6/99, Woodman Point (Cockburn) – JD (high numbers for this time of year)

Long-billed Corella – c. 40, 10/7/99, Neil Hawkins Park, Joondalup (Joondalup) – TR (high number for this site)

Western Corella – 41, 26/7/99, Herdsman Lake (Stirling) – JD

Elegant Parrot – 20, 4/7/99, near entrance to the Water Ski Park, St Albans Rd, Baldvis (Rockingham). – RM, LM (high number)

Western Yellow Robin – 2, 28/7/99, in Jarrah woodland, Kemerton (Harvey)* 4, 4/8/99 in Jarrah forest and Blue Gum plantation, Gwindinup (Capel) – MB (rare on swamp coastal plain)

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

Malleefowl – 1, plus an old mound, 18/5/99, in tall Acacia shrubland, Woodleigh road, 48 km E of NW Coastal Hwy (Shark Bay) – AB (very few historical or recent records from this area) * 1, 29/6/99 and 25/7/99, road in to Eyre (Dundas) – EBO

Freckled Duck – 1, 5/5/99, Mandora Marshes (near Sandfire Roadhouse) (Broome/East Pilbara) – CH, GG, TW

Yellow-nosed Albatross – 13, 14/6/99, 10 km SE of Eyre (Dundas) – EBO

Black-necked Stork – 1, 26/3/99, Five Mile Creek, near Nullagine (East Pilbara) – per RD

Black-shouldered Kite – 1, 26/6/99, between Eucla and Eyre (Dundas) – TR, EP, HA * 1, 16/7/99, Cocklebidy (Dundas) – EBO (rare in the Nullarbor area)

Painted Snipe – 1, 4/5/99, Mandora Marshes (near Sandfire Roadhouse) (Broome/East Pilbara) – CH, GG, TW (description supplied; see also article on Mandora elsewhere in this issue)

Princess Parrot – 8, 30/5/99, near Well 36, Canning Stock Route (East Pilbara) – JS

Naretha Blue Bonnet – 7, 27/6/99, Arubiddy Station (Dundas) – TR, EP, HA

Red-backed Fairy-wren – 3, 5/5/99, Mandora Marshes (near Sandfire Roadhouse) (Broome/East Pilbara) – CH, GG, TW (southern limit of distribution in this area)

KIMBERLEY

Wandering Whistling-Duck – 1,000+, 24/07/99, Kununurra sewage ponds (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – FO

Radjah Shelduck – 400+, 24/07/99, Kununurra sewage ponds (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – FO (high number for this species) (possibly expanding in East Kimberley)

Great Crested Grebe – 9, 13/6/99, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – BBO (high number for this area)

Red Goshawk – 1 adult, 15/5/99, Gardner Plateau (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – JS (description supplied)

Grey Falcon – 1, 17/7/99, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – BBO

Australian Spotted Crake – 20, 16/6/99, ephemeral wetland near Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – BBO

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Notes for Contributors

The Editors request contributors to note:

- WABN publishes material of interest to the WA Group
- contributions should be written or typed with **double spacing**—a copy on disk of word processed documents would assist, especially if in MSWord format; a style sheet is available from Perry House to guide writers regarding format
- WABN uses Birds Australia recommended English names
- except for Observations, contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary.
- the full Editorial Policy is stated in WABN 74:10-12

Deadline for the December 1999 Issue

1 November 1999

at Perry House

Advertising Rates

1/4 page \$30.00

1/2 page \$50.00

Full page \$90.00

Asian Dowitcher – 18, 17/7/99, Roebuck Bay (Broome) – BBO

Partridge Pigeon – 1+, May-June 99, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – TV

Diamond Dove – 1+, May-June 99, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – TV (unusual this far north)

Purple-crowned Fairy-wren – 1+, 23/6/99, Junction of Ord and Negri rivers (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – ANS

Variegated Fairy-wren – 2, 2/5/99, Devil Devil Spring, Argyle Diamond Mine (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – FO (near limit of range in this area)

Yellow Chat – 200, 17/7/99, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – BBO

Crested Shrike-tit – 1+, May-June 99, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – TV (more details in next WABN)

White-browed Woodswallow – 1+, 23/6/99, Junction of Ord and Negri rivers (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – ANS * 2 (maybe 3), 26/07/99, Argyle Diamonds Village Sewage Ponds (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – FO (unusual in this area)

Welcome Swallow – 4, 8/6/99, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – BBO (few records in this area)

Fairy Martin – 400+, 24/07/99, Kununurra sewage ponds (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – FO

Tawny Grassbird – up to 6, June-July 1999, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – BBO (few records in this area)

OBSERVERS

AB = Andrew Brown

ANS = Tony Start

BBO = Broome Bird Observatory

CH = Chris Hassell

EBO = Eyre Bird Observatory

EP = Enid Pascoe

FO = Frank O'Connor

GG = Gordon Graham

HA = Hilda Anderson

JD = John Darnell

JS = Jonny Schoenjahn

LM = Louise McGovern

MB = Mike Bamford

RD = Rob Davis

RM = Roger McGovern

RP = Ross Payton

TR = Tony Russell

TV = Tom Vigilante

TW = Tim Willing

BIRDS AUSTRALIA RARITIES COMMITTEE (BARC)

BARC, chaired by Tony Palliser, assesses reports of national rarities. In the last few months, two Western Australian and Christmas Island cases have been accepted, and these are listed below for the information of local members. The format is case number, common name, scientific name, location, date.

259 Narcissus Flycatcher *Ficedula narcissina* Barrow Is, WA, 26/11/95

260 Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Christmas Island 20/11/98

Obituary

Graeme Talbot Smith

On 30 June 1999, Graeme died at the age of 61 after a short battle with cancer. With his departure, ornithologists in Western Australia have lost a colleague who will be remembered for his careful long term research on Noisy Scrub-birds, Western Whipbirds, Western Bristlebirds, and Western Corellas; work that led to important conservation measures.

Besides being a conscientious scientist, Graeme will be missed by his many friends, who enjoyed his breadth of knowledge, his cheerfulness and his generosity in helping others.

After completing his doctorate at the Australian National University in Canberra, based on two years studying Royal Penguins on Macquarie Island, Graeme joined CSIRO and came to Western Australia in 1970.

He is survived by his wife Helen and daughters Katie and Liz.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sirs

I have recently returned from the Australasian Wader Study Group Conference on Phillip Island, Victoria. There I was disappointed to find that I was the only WA representative.

WA probably has more waders along the coast (especially Roebuck Bay and 80 Mile Beach) than anywhere else in Australia and yet there seems to be a lack of interest in shorebirds and little realisation of what a unique situation we have on our own doorstep.

If we are not aware of the problems facing these migratory shorebirds — problems involving habitat destruction and human disturbance, for example — all along the flyway and not just on our own shores — how can we protect them? To be aware of these problems and the steps being taken to combat them, it is essential for all of us to keep abreast of developments through observation and data collection, published articles, national and international conferences and the like.

The next AWSG Conference will probably be in April 2002 in WA when there will be (hopefully) more local support for these important aspects of the WA end of the migratory flyway and the shorebirds that use it on a regular basis. Otherwise, through apathy, we shall see a diminution in numbers of these incredible birds until they reach a point of no return.

Yours sincerely

Mavis Russell

WA Group Reports

BIRDS AUSTRALIA – WA GROUP COMMITTEE

Meetings of the WA Group Committee are held on the third Wednesday of each month at Perry House.

It is through the committee that the business of Birds Australia-WA Group is managed. Matters for consideration by the committee should be communicated to the office with adequate time for distribution to committee members.

Recent committee meetings have dealt with the following:

Atlas of Australian Birds #2 Project - see separate supplement for report from the WA coordinator, Cheryl Gole.

Conservation:

- Mariners' Cove Development, Creery Wetlands — Clive Nealon is our representative on the working party set up by CALM and the developer to oversee protection of the wetlands excised from the development; Mike Bamford in his capacity as project consultant is carrying out regular waterbird surveys.
- Milyu Reserve — a local conservation group has received a grant to consider the matter of jet skis in this area disturbing bird habitats; it is hoped that a proposal to modify the beach by the laying of limestone rubble for about 50 m (approved by the Marine Parks Authority) will encourage waterbirds to roost there; the joint CALM/BAWAG project (see below under Grants) should also assist in the protection of bird habitats.
- Bold Park: preparation of management plan by Kings Park Board — BAWAG will have input.
- Broome, oil and gas — the committee noted an article which appeared in the *West Australian* on 17 July re a modern off-shore service site for oil and gas platforms to be developed near the Broome jetty. There are expected to be 100 new wells drilled in the region over the next five years; a copy of the article has been sent to Melbourne so that a national focus can be formulated in opposition to the plan.
- Kings Park fundraising proposal — a letter will be sent to the Minister for the Environment arguing against the planned feeding of Rainbow Lorikeets as a tourist attraction.
- Carnaby's Cockatoo — Michael Brooker has attended a management plan meeting; very little is known about this species south of Perth; it is planned that there will be community involvement, particularly of farmers, in the management plan.

Suburban Bird Survey — the survey is continuing and the current number of observations entered into the database is in excess of 230,000; the database is currently being transferred to a new machine with, of course, new levels of software, and as anybody half literate with computers will know, nothing is as simple as it seems it ought to be;

however, the latest progress has at least been positive, and everything should be back in order in the next few days.

While talking of the survey, though, please continue to send in records if that's what you have been doing; if you haven't, please consider submitting weekly records from your garden, or any other location that you visit, even if those visits are infrequent; this is the only way in which we can build up a picture of the birds around us in the metropolitan area. With regular collection of this kind of data, we will be well placed to detect changes in the makeup of the local bird populations as they occur.

If you need any information on the Suburban Bird Survey please contact Clive Nealon.

Education/Public Relations - Judy Blyth, Clive Napier and Cheryl Gole continue to promote the BAWAG activities through talks, walks and displays at various centres including schools.

Grants — Allan Jones and his sub-committee comprising Sandra McKenzie and Tony Bennett, continue to submit applications for funding of projects including:

- Swan River joint project with CALM — an application for funding through the Natural Heritage Trust has recently been submitted, to provide signs and information boards for three sites along the Swan River (Milyu, Pelican Point and Alfred Cove) and possibly to fund a ranger to advise people about acceptable behaviour with dogs and protection of bird habitat (*Coasts and Clean Seas*).
- WWF grant for Hooded Plover and Western Ground Parrot reports — a grant of \$1760 has been received for these projects.
- Birds on Farms — see Notices for report.
- Natural Heritage Trust Centenary grant for Bold Park walks — official notification has been received that this application has been approved (\$30 000); the project is a joint one with BAWAG, Friends of Bold Park Inc. WA Wildflower Society and Kings Park Board, with Tony Bennett of the Grants Sub-committee the project coordinator; congratulations to Tony on his first major success; this will provide an excellent start to our Centenary Celebrations activities.
- Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO) — in 2000, should BAWAG become incorporated, we will be eligible to apply for this grant which would cover administrative and office staff costs.

Proposed fundraiser: personalised vehicle registration plates — this proposal will not proceed as no interest has been shown following a notice in the June Bird Notes.

CALM proposal re Lake Muir stop-point — a preliminary design plan for the stop-point has been done, including a boardwalk and nature trail; BAWAG continues to have input through Peter Taylor.

Estate of the late John Price: bequest \$2,000 — see elsewhere for report from Allan Jones; these funds have been allocated towards continuation of the Western Ground Parrot support group.

Slide collection — Bill McRoberts is updating the collection, and is including slides of waders recently received from Broome Bird Observatory.

Map collection, Perry House — Brenda Newbey and Max Bailey have gone through and sorted the 240-odd maps, and prepared a catalogue for ease of access; these are available at Perry House for research purposes by members.

Trading Table — good sales of bird cards recently to the Whiteman Park shop and at the *Festival of the Animals* held recently at Mundaring; Clive Nealon attended a recent meeting for the Combined Charities Christmas Cardshop to arrange for participation in this activity for which a further 20,000 plain and Christmas cards will be printed; Valerie Hemsley has taken over the sales of bird cards at general meetings. **More volunteers required for this important aspect of fundraising.**

Excursions — see *Coming Events* for summary for the next quarter.

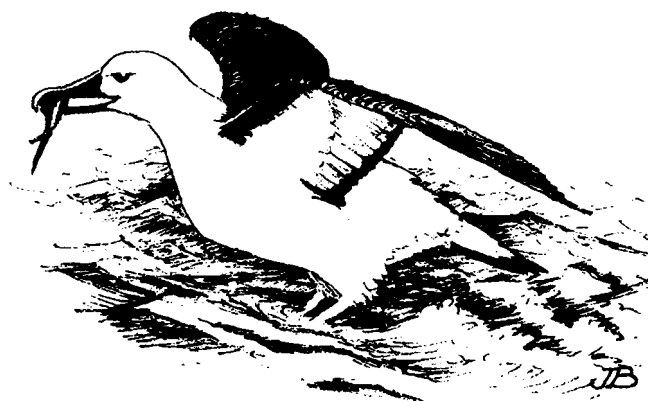
Proposal to incorporate — this is progressing well, with agreement in principle having been reached with Council on the draft constitution, subject to final approval by the forthcoming extraordinary general meeting of members on 25 October, by Council at its following meeting and by the Ministry for Fair Trading.

WA representative on Council — it was considered appropriate that an amount of \$150.00 per trip be available to cover some of the expenses incurred by our representative (currently Clive Nealon) when attending Council meetings, subject to the representative also being a WA Group Committee member, to be payable against receipts.

Clive Nealon
1999 Chairman, WA Group

You might like to check out this new website covering the ABC's TV series *Life of Birds*.

<http://www.pbs.org/~lifeofbirds/index.html>



The Yellow-nosed Albatross is seen on most pelagic trips off the south-west coast of WA.
Drawing by Judy Blyth

FINANCIAL REPORT, 6 MONTHS ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

The following Income and Expenditure Statement for the period 1 January to 30 June 1999 is presented for the information of members.

Note: Of this balance \$8,529 is Grants.

Grants and bequests

- Gordon Reid (Birds on Farms): second grant is for producing the report.
- World Wild Fund for Nature: grants for Hooded Plover and Ground Parrot are being wound up with Public Awareness Projects.
- Healthways: gave us a larger grant this year towards Promotions and Atlas expenses.
- World Wild Fund for Nature: new grant for Cape Arid Research.
- Bequest from late member: being used to further Hooded Plover and Ground Parrot awareness.
- Heritage Commission grant: just approved, for Walks, etc, in Bold Park.

Mary Vaughan, Assistant Treasurer

	1999 \$	\$ 1998
CASH AT BANK 1 Jan 99		9,143
PLUS RECEIPTS		
Campout 1998	...	4,944
Functions	297	111
Book sales	1,842	2,787
Trading Table	8,117	3,383
Bank interest	4	17
Donations	583	487
Grants	19,668	19,691
Sundries	40	800
WA Bird Notes	4,143	40
TOTAL RECEIPTS	34,694	32,260
LESS EXPENDITURE		434
Campout 1998	...	
Book purchases	1,273	1,226
Trading Table	2,653	...
Bank charges	76	104
Donations	466	...
WA Bird Notes	3,458	2,010
Office expenses	980	1,024
Rent	516	581
Utilities	711	788
Accounting	350	360
Insurance	315	440
Petty cash	200	143
Computer req	799	149
Grants	13,736	12,292
Capital expenses	...	1,046
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	25,533	20,597
BALANCE ON HAND	18,304	17,390

JOHN ARCHIBALD PRICE BEQUEST

We have pleasure in advising members of a bequest to the Western Australian Group of Birds Australia by our late member John Price.

John was an active supporter of organisations for the care and enjoyment of the environment. He and his wife June regularly attended meetings of the WA Naturalists Club to which a bequest was also made. Members from both organisations speak highly of his interest and support.

Our Committee has decided that the bequest be made available to support the recently formed Albany district Friends of the Western Ground Parrot in their program for the conservation of this endangered species. This active community group will work to protect the habitat, maintain a long-term monitoring program and obtain the support of landholders adjacent to the Western Ground Parrot habitats. It will also provide vital information for the WA South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team, in designing and implementing management of the Western Ground Parrot and its habitat. Eventually it is hoped that members throughout the known Ground Parrot range from Denmark to Esperance will be included in the Friends of the Ground Parrot. Surveys have now commenced in the Cape Arid area east of Esperance with teams made up of volunteers from Esperance to Albany.

The bequest will help in the cost of printing a brochure for distribution to landholders adjacent to, and visitors to, Western Ground Parrot habitats.

This is proving to be a real success story about the conservation of this endangered species through the support of government agencies, conservation and community groups. It is a very worthwhile project to honour the support of a great friend of our native heritage, John Archibald Price.

Allan Jones
Convenor, Grants Sub-committee

LIBRARY REPORT

The following publications have been accessioned since the last report:

- *Emu*, Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union journal vol 99, Parts 1 & 2, March and June 1999
- *The Greener Times*, Conservation Council newsletter, February, March, June 1999
- *The Bird Observer*, Bird Observers Club newsletter, Nos 793, 794, 797, January, February and June 1999
- RGC Wetlands, March 1999 report and minutes for May meeting
- RGC Wetlands Centre, reports Nos 42, 43, 44 and 46 on Taylors Lake, Cadjeput Pool, Capel, and Waterbird Usage of Lakes, February 1999
- *Narpulungup News*, Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park newsletter, February 1999; vol 18, Issue 1, May 1999
- *Riverview*, Swan River Trust newsletter, December 1998 and No 17, April 1999
- Esperance Lakes Nature Reserves Management Plan, 1999-2009, CALM

- *Contact Call*, Birds Australia North Queensland Group newsletter, March and June 1999
- Townsville and District Species List, Birds Australia, North Queensland Group
- Report on the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme, 1996-7, Environment Australia
- Wireless Hill Park Management Plan, 1999, City of Melville
- Fauna Survey of Garden Island 1996-7, Wykes, Pearson, Maher, March 1999
- Garden Island Environmental Advisory Committee, 1997-8
- *The Stilt*, Wader Studies Group newsletter, No 34, April 1999
- *Galah*, Birds Australia in-house newsletter, Nos 32-34, February-April 1999
- Rotamah Bird Observatory Newsletter, Nos 17 and 18, February and April 1999
- *The Harrier*, Conservation Network newsletter, vol 1, Nos 1 & 2, Summer, Autumn 1999
- Lake Mealup Preservation Society newsletter, vol 12, No 2, Autumn 1999
- Australian Seabird Group newsletter, Nos 33 & 34, January & April 1999
- *Malleefowl Matters*, Malleefowl Preservation Group newsletter, No 19, March 1999
- *Vic Babbler*, BA Victoria Group newsletter, No 51, June 1999
- Perup Forest, Lake Muir and Unicup Nature Reserve Draft Management Plan, 1998, CALM
- *Rangeflash*, Issue 6, November 1998
- *Bush Heritage News*, Autumn and Winter 1999
- Perth's Bush Plan, Dec 1998, vol 2, Parts A, B, C
- Cumberland Bird Observers Club newsletter, November 1998-February 1999, vol 20, Nos 3 & 4
- South Australian Ornithological Association newsletter, Nos 168-170, December 1998, March and June 1999
- *FlyWay*, Broome Bird Observatory newsletter
- Birds Australia Northern NSW Group newsletter, No 22, January 1999
- *Wingspan*, Birds Australia newsletter, vol 9, No 1, March 1999
- *Queensland Wader*, Issue 27, Autumn 1999
- Perth's Greenways, Strategic Plan, Final Report, Alan Tingay and Associates
- Green Plan, City of Melville vols 1 and 2
- Regional Forest Agreements Bill 1998, letter from Senator Andrew Bartlett
- *The Web*, Threatened Species newsletter, March 1999
- *CALM News*, January/February and May/June 1999
- Hooded Plover Report No 2, 1996-1999, Marcus Singor, Birds Australia-WA Group
- Report, Western Ground Parrot Survey at Waychinicup and Manypeaks, April to October 1998, Shapelle McNee, Birds Australia-WA Group
- *The First Five Years*, Harold and Dennings, Malleefowl Preservation Group
- World Birdwatch Magazine, March and December 1998, March and June 1999 (donated by B Wilson)

- Swan Newsletter, vol 2, Issue 2, July 1999
- *Ecoplan News*, Issue 30, Winter 1999
- RSPB Birds Magazine, UK Spring 1999

Liz Walker
Librarian

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Handbook of WA Birds: Vol 1,
Storr & Johnstone \$100.00
Birdlife of Rottnest Island
Saunders & de Rebeira \$12.50
Birding Sites around Perth
van Delft \$20.00
Wildflowers of the South West
Simon Nevill \$20.00

VIDEOS
Wilderness Regained
Houtman Abrolhos \$30.00
Endless Summer: Birds of Broome \$40.00

MID SUMMER WADER COUNT, FEBRUARY 1999 — SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH COAST

Seventy-eight observers took part in the program by monitoring 69 different sites at the following locations in the south and south west of the state.

Swan Estuary Marine Park

Milyu, Pelican Point and Alfred Cove plus the Claremont foreshore.

Perth regional lakes

Eleven selected lakes between Joondalup and East Rockingham.

Cockburn Sound to Rottnest

Six sites at Garden Island, the north-west shoreline at Point Peron, Woodman Point and Rottnest Island (see Bird Notes No 90, June issue).

Yalgorup-Peel Inlet

Observations at six sites in Yalgorup National Park plus the western Harvey Estuary (Dawesville to Harvey River), Lake McLarty, Austin Bay, Nairns, Coodanup, Bridge lagoons (Greenshank Cove), the Styx-Mandurah Quays and Point Roberts.

Leschenault Inlet to Esperance

Eastern side of Leschenault Inlet plus Broke Inlet, mouth of the Frankland River, Nornalup, Wilson Inlet, Oyster Harbour (Albany), Princess Royal Harbour (Albany), Yokinup Bay to Arid Bay (Cape Arid National Park) and Esperance

Inland lakes

Lake Yenyening, Lake Maitland, Lake Parkeyerring, Lake Quarbing, Lake Eyrie and Speldhurst Pool

Most of the sites surveyed during the 1998 counts were monitored again, plus new locations added by the growing number of observers.

This year's count has thrown up a few contradictions, however a decrease in wader numbers is generally evident in the south-west of the state. Most sites show a very low number of birds and some a complete absence of shorebirds.

The low numbers of resident species such as Banded Stilt, Red-necked Avocet and Red-kneed Dotterel is likely to be due to high rainfall in the south of the state. The decrease in transequatorial migrants is more complex and conclusions are still being debated regarding reasons for the low 1999 numbers.

Results: resident species, comparisons 1998-99

Pied Oystercatcher:	40% increase	Red-capped Plover:	decrease
Sooty Oystercatcher:	35.5% increase	Black-fronted Plover:	decrease
Banded Lapwing:	inconclusive*	Black-winged Stilt:	decrease
Red-kneed Dotterel:	decrease	Banded Stilt:	decrease
Hooded Plover:	decrease	Red-necked Avocet:	decrease

* 1998 Garden Island survey.

Banded Lapwing observed, no numbers given.

Results: transequatorial species comparisons

Grey Plover:	decrease	Terek Sandpiper:	increase
Golden Plover:	increase	Black-tailed Godwit:	decrease
Lesser Sand Plover:	static	Bar-tailed Godwit:	increase
Large Sand Plover:	static	Red Knot:	decrease
Ruddy Turnstone:	increase	Great Knot:	decrease
Eastern Curlew:	decrease	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper:	decrease
Whimbrel:	increase	Curlew Sandpiper:	decrease
Wood Sandpiper:	decrease	Red-necked Stint:	decrease
Grey-tailed Tattler:	increase	Sanderling:	increase
Greenshank:	decrease	Common Sandpiper:	static
Marsh Sandpiper:	decrease	Pectoral Sandpiper:	static

Colin Davis

TABLE 1

SW TABLE	W.A. MID SUMMER WADER SURVEY FEB 1998																	LOCATION LEGEND		
	SOUTHWEST REGION							CERVANTES TO ESPERANCE										TOTAL		
SPECIES AT EACH SITE	4	13	18	7	9	11	6	14	4	14	10	14	12	3	10	8	6			
LOCATION	CERV	PLKS	ROTT	GRDN	CBNS	SEMP	MAND	MCLRTY	YALG	LESC	WILS	APRH	OYHA	CPRC	BREM	INLD	ESPERANCE			
Pied Oystercatcher			7	13	2	46	19			13		2	49	1	18			188		
Sooty Oystercatcher				2								3		1	5			11		
Banded Lapwing		2	24	P(R)						9								35+		
Grey Plover			12	28	6	27				68		35	22			3		201		
Golden Plover																		0		
Red-kneed Dotterel		5						8								2		13		
Hooded Plover									85(R)					2	100	328 ^A		515		
Lesser Sand Plover			1															1		
Large Sand Plover			4								2	25	3		1			35		
Red-capped Plover	28	209	180(R)	39	32	243		422(R)	125	187	460	9	27		220	276	12	2476		
Black-fronted Plover		69						11								19		99		
Black-winged Stilt	16	1272	5			387	714	2439		28	519				17	55		5450		
Banded Stilt		23	3284			4	150	125	5		787					1	3500			
Red-necked Avocet		100	11					5468			1253				120		6952	6952		
Ruddy Turnstone	9		175	5	7						1	1						198		
Eastern Curlew										15			1					16		
Whimbrel			1															1		
Wood Sandpiper		8																8		
Grey-tailed Tattler			1		1							3	2					7		
Common Sandpiper		2	2	7	2		1								1	2		15		
Greenshank	12	6	1		5	6	2	8		22	275	29	13		3		4	386		
Marsh Sandpiper								37		2						1		40		
Terek Sandpiper										1								1		
Black-tailed Godwit								25										25		
Bar-tailed Godwit			4							8		7						19		
Red Knot						5						90	45					140		
Great Knot						68				58		370	133					629		
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper						63	18	2370		25	1059	41	18					3594		
Pectoral Sandpiper		1																1		
Red-necked Stint		5	438		3	1105		529	13	902	2709	550	600		341		450	7645		
Long-toed Stint								7										7		
Curlew Sandpiper			90			349		1694		47	552	55	45					2832		
Sanderling			77	37	6													120		
Ruff-reeve								1										1		
Oriental Pratincole		1																1		
Broad-billed Sandpiper																				
YYY																				
ZZZ	63	1703	4317	131	64	2303	904	13145	228	1363	7595	1220	958	4	824	359	4294	39492		

CERV : Cervantes (Lake Thetis)
 PLKS : Perth Lakes (Table 1)
 ROTT : Rottnest Island (Table 2)
 GRDN : Garden Island (Table 3)
 CBNS : Cockburn Sound "
 SEMP : Swan Estuary Ma Pk : Alfred Cove & Pelican Pt only**
 MAND : Mandurah Peel Inlet Nairns to Mandurah Quays
 MCLRTY : Lake McLarty
 YALG : Four lakes in Yalgup National Park
 LESE : Leschenault Estuary
 WILS : Wilson Inlet Five sites
 APRH : Albany Princess Royal Harbour
 OYHA : Albany Oyster Harbour
 CPRC : Cape Riche South Coast
 BREM : Bremer Bay area (Table 4)
 INLD : Inland Lakes (Table 5)

P : Present: Species observed at site but not counted
 * : Breeding Denotes runners or eggs
 ** : Milyu not included due to late count
 ^ : Immature birds

TRANSEQUATORIAL MIGRANTS 15,473
 RESIDENTS 24,019

TABLE 2

W.A. MID SUMMER WADER COUNT FEB 1999																														
SOUTHWEST REGION										CERVANTES TO ESPERANCE																				
SPECIES AT EACH SITE	10	20	11	9	12	14	9	4	1	13	1	4	11	15	11	8														
LOCATION	PLKS	ROTT	GRDN	CBNS	SEMP	MAND	MCLT	YALG	HARV	LESC	BRKI	NORN	WILS	APRH	AOYH	ESPN	INLD	TOTAL												
Pied Oystercatcher		11	9	1	91	12			6	4		3	3	2	57	35		234	PLKS : Perth Lakes											
Sooty Oystercatcher													1	2	2	10		15	Swan Coastal Plain											
Banded Lapwing		15	46	1														62	ROTT : Rottnest Island											
Grey Plover		21	12	5	49	4				38				28	23			180	GRDN : Garden Island											
Lesser Golden Plover		1					1							3				5	CBNS : PT Peron, Cockburn Snd.											
Red-kneed Dotterel																		0	Woodmans Pt											
Hooded Plover								20								4		24	SEMP : Swan Estuary Marine											
Lesser Sand Plover		1																1	Park (4 sites)											
Large Sand Plover		7												11	15	1		34	MAND : Mandurah (Peel Inlet,											
Red-capped Plover	70	431*	30	21	58	251	255	95		57	57		69	3		135*	75	1607	Austin Bay, Nairns,											
Black-fronted Plover	32																8	40	Coodanup Bridges,											
Black-winged Stilt	1184	2	7	11	53	106				44			53				302	1762	Pt Roberts											
Banded Stilt	21	1106																1127	MCLT : Lake McLarty											
Red-necked Avocet	4	20*				41							59				85	209	YALG : Yalgorup National											
Ruddy Turnstone		343				1								11				355	Park (6 sites)											
Eastern Curlew						5				4								9	HARV : Harvey Est to Dawesville											
Whimbrel		4	1			1												6	LESC : Leschenault Inlet.											
Wood Sandpiper	5																	5	Eastern sides											
Grey-tailed Tattler		15		3	1	2	5							9	15			50	BRKI : Broke Inlet											
Common Sandpiper	1	2	6	1	1	2				1		1				1		16	NORN : Nornalup Inlet.											
Greenshank	12	2		2	17	15	1	1		9			87	12	28		1	186	Frankland River											
Marsh Sandpiper	12						1			4								17	WILS : Wilsons Inlet.											
Terek Sandpiper	17	1																18	Ocean Beach.											
Black-tailed Godwit										1			1					2	APRH : Albany Princess											
Bar-tailed Godwit		7	1		4	101				20			2	2	19			156	Royal Harbour											
Red Knot														49	40			89												
Great Knot			1		56									201	111			369	AOYH : Albany Oyster Harbour											
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper					10	5	6			27			5	6	25			84	ESPN : Esperance Cape Arid											
Pectoral Sandpiper																	2	2	National Park											
Red-necked Stint		1054	57	1	595	115	45	50		715			865	550	450	42	14	4553	INLD : Inland Country Lakes											
Long-toed Stint							3											3												
Curlew Sandpiper		134			53		1			13			262	15	95			573												
Sanderling		125	15	2								3				8		153												
XX																														
DISTANT UNIDENTIFIED						130												130												
BIRDS AT EACH SITE	1365	3302	185	49	988	791	318	168	6	936	57	8	1408	904	878	236	491	TOTAL 12088												

Members' Contributions

MIMICRY BY INLAND THORNBILLS

In June I showed a lady from Queensland around the south west of Western Australia. One bird we particularly wanted to see was a Grey Honeyeater. These have been reported along the road from Geraldton to Mt Magnet, especially near Yalgoo.

We stopped about eight times in various areas along this road, especially where there was a species of mulga with reddish trunk / branches and a grey peeling bark. I played the BOCA tape of the Grey Honeyeater at each site.

There was no response except at one site. I followed the call and there was a small grey bird at the top of a dead, three-metre tree. I didn't quite get the binoculars on it before it flew, and I thought that this was it! I went in the direction of where the bird flew towards a patch of taller trees and relocated the bird. It began calling again, and I finally got my binoculars on it as it moved through the leaves to reveal an Inland Thornbill. I saw it make the call of the Grey Honeyeater at least twice more.

What a disappointment!

We failed to locate the Grey Honeyeater along this road, or near Mt Magnet, or on Nallan Station near Cue, or along the Payne's Find to Sandstone Road. Unfortunately the road from Payne's Find south to Beacon (where I have seen Grey Honeyeater in September 1997) was still closed after heavy rain several weeks earlier. There were Inland Thornbills seen at several more sites, but none ever tried to imitate the tape.

Frank O'Connor

RED-CHESTED BUTTON-QUAIL BREEDING

On 3 March this year I was accompanying Dave Stewart, a wildlife sound recordist, on Roebuck Plains behind the Broome Bird Observatory. Our reason for this early morning trip was to record the call of Red-chested Button-quail (*Turnix pyrrhothorax*). While Dave was busy getting his sound I wandered off to try and get a look at some of this difficult to see species. I ended up with a closer look than I had anticipated. As I was walking through the 30 cm high grass a quail flushed from under my feet and fluttered to the ground close by. It is unusual for a quail to fly such a short distance, so I headed toward it. I managed to get it in my hand several times before it finally eluded me and disappeared in to the grass. I headed back to where the quail had flushed from and, as I suspected, found a nest. The nest contained four eggs. Sadly two of them were broken; I had failed to see the well-camouflaged nest and bird. I carefully removed the broken eggs, took two photos and a GPS reading and quickly retreated to allow the adult to return to its duties.

The bird I saw was a female Red-chested Button-quail. The rich orange red underparts from chin to undertail coverts separated it from the duller, pale-bellied male. This is interesting as HANZAB states that only males incubate, but there are few data to go by. It's possible that I disturbed

this bird while she was laying which would explain her, even more than usual, reluctance to leave her nest at my approach. On visiting the area 12 days later I could not relocate the nest despite use of my GPS! One month later we flushed four adult birds in the area and one immature so I hope it was one from 'my' nest.

This record was 'atlassed' and a nest record scheme form completed.

Adrian Boyle

INTERESTING SIGHTING OF MANGROVE GOLDEN WHISTLER

Mangrove Golden Whistlers (race *melanura*) are a common species found throughout mangal in the Broome region. However a sighting I made on the morning of 14 June of an adult female on a vacant block on Lullfitz Drive was unusual in my experience of birdwatching in Broome over the last 11 years.

I found the bird in dense thickets of Saltwater Paperbark (*Melaleuca acacioides*) and Blackberry Tree (*Terminalia petiolaris*). On attempting to "squeak up" whatever I could, the female Mangrove Golden Whistler appeared low down in a shrub, allowing excellent views and showing the diagnostic yellow vent and under tail coverts. It was joined by a family of Variegated Fairy-wrens (race *assimilis*), several Double-barred Finches, a pair of both Rufous Whistlers and Northern Fantails, a juvenile White-throated Gerygone (showing an all yellow throat and underside) and a Singing and a White-gaped Honeyeater.

I have observed Mangrove Golden Whistlers in coastal vine thickets that adjoin mangroves at various locations on the Dampier Peninsula and this location in Lullfitz Drive could be classed as a vine thicket. However this locality is at least 3½ km from the Dampier Creek mangrove system and approximately 13 km south of the mangroves of Willies Creek. This sighting helps to indicate the important role that Saltwater Paperbark Thickets and Coastal Vine Thickets play in allowing the passage and movement of mangrove birds along the coast. This has already been proven with the re-trapping of Yellow White-eyes at a nearby banding site. It is also interesting to note that I observed Mangrove Fantails at the same location several years ago. Mangrove Gerygones and Little Bronze-Cuckoos are also commonly found at this location and throughout this habitat type on the Dampier Peninsula.

George Swann

HONEYEATER FEEDING AT SUNDEW FLOWERS

On 7 August 1998, between 11:00 am and 12:25 pm, I observed a Brown-headed Honeyeater feeding from the flower of a sundew. A specimen of this plant was later identified by Allen Lowrie as *Drosera macrantha*, a common species in this area.

The site was on a rocky hillside on the northern side of the Norseman-Hyden road near the turnoff to the Maggie Hayes Nickel Complex, at 32° 12' 58"S, 120° 30' 23"E (GPS reading). The habitat was largely casuarina with a low plant species diversity. A number of honeyeater

species were present in the area feeding on a *Calothamnus* species that was moderately common.

The Brown-headed Honeyeater was perched on one of the dead branches of a fallen shrub and the *Drosera* was twining through the twigs and branches of this. The bird was observed feeding at the flower and did not appear to be taking insects from the leaves of the plant.

This observation is interesting because of the lack of records of animals feeding at flowers of sundews. Any similar observations would also be of interest.

Cheryl Gole

PALLID CUCKOOS — 1998 AND 1999

During spring of 1998 I heard the "non-scale" call of a pallid cuckoo followed by a glimpse of a flying bird. With surprise, I realised that this was the first time I could recall hearing the bird in 1998, and I heard no further calls. Questions to other local birdos received vague responses, and I was left with the feeling that 1998 was a bad year for Pallid Cuckoos in the central southern wheatbelt. Was this the experience of others?

On 24 July 1999 I heard a Pallid Cuckoo calling around town, and have heard them occasionally since. Perhaps the cuckoos are having a better year in 1999.

Ken Wallace, Narrogin

IDENTIFYING CHESTNUT-SHOULDERED FAIRY-WRENS

Historically, few groups of birds have provided as much taxonomic confusion and controversy as the fairy-wrens. Even now, with the limits of species and subspecies fairly

well accepted, there are still considerable difficulties in separating Blue-breasted and Variegated Fairy-wrens in the field.

This is a significant issue for the new Atlas, because the two species overlap in a number of places around the Midlands and northern wheatbelt. Although I have no firm evidence for this, it is possible that the Variegated Fairy-wren, essentially a bird of the more arid and patchily vegetated inland, may be extending its range around the edges of the wheatbelt. The Blue-breasted Fairy-wren has declined, and may be continuing to decline, throughout the wheatbelt. Thus, it is important that we are confident as to which species we are reporting to gain an accurate understanding of the status of the two species.

At a recent BAWAG meeting where presentations were given on identifying some of the tricky groups of birds, one group covered was the chestnut-shouldered fairy-wrens. In that presentation I used tables showing the differences between the three chestnut-shouldered species in Western Australia, for females and males. These tables are partly based on my own experience but also borrowed from tables and other information in *Fairy-Wrens and Grasswrens* by Ian Rowley and Eleanor Russell, and are reproduced below. That book is an excellent source of detailed information about Western Australian (and all other) fairy-wrens and should be consulted for further guidance on separating the chestnut-shouldered species.

The article below on "Four Fairy-wrens" gives an example of the field application of the guidelines summarised in the tables.

Remember, if finally you are not able to be confident of the species, record it as chestnut-shouldered fairy-wren under additional information at the end of the form!

John Blyth

Female chestnut-shouldered fairy-wrens

SPP	BODY COLOUR	FACE/LORES	BILL
RWW	Grey head and back, wings warm brown	Mid to dark brown	Black
BBW	Greyish head, body grey brown	Orangey brown (darker than female Splendid Fairy-wren)	Dark brown
VW	Uniform grey-brown to brown	Deep chestnut or chocolate brown	Red-brown

Male chestnut-shouldered fairy-wrens

SPP	CROWN COLOUR	EAR COVERTS	BREAST COLOUR	FLANKS
RWW	Pale silvery, sky blue	Same as crown	Deep blue to dull black	Buff to pale rufous
BBW	Deep violet/cobalt	Same as crown	In direct sunlight, deep shining cobalt blue. Separated from belly and face by black lines.	Buff to white
VW	Deep blue, often with violet tinge	Paler blue	Dull black	Some purple may be visible, mainly hidden by wing.

FOUR FAIRY-WRENS

CALM has very recently acquired an area of about 80 hectares north of Gingin to be managed as a nature reserve, largely to protect an unusual plant assemblage that is classified as a threatened ecological community. The block includes some very old and healthy streamside vegetation, including dense patches of a tall, tussock forming sedge. On our first visit to the block three weeks ago, we noted that it looked suitable habitat for Red-winged Fairy-wrens, and given that the stream running through it was a tributary of the Gingin Brook, it was conceivable that we might find them there. However, on that visit, the only fairy-wrens that we saw were splendid and, to our surprise, variegated.

Fairy-wrens remain for most bird watchers the most delightful and exciting of all native birds, however common or easily seen most species are in the right areas. It is not difficult to see Splendid Fairy-wrens around the outer fringes of Perth, Variegated Fairy-wrens patchily distributed throughout the inland, White-winged Fairy-wrens in low, coastal or arid zone vegetation north of Perth, and Red-winged Fairy-wrens in dense gully and streamside vegetation in the south western forests.

With the exception of the Red-winged Fairy-wren, these are all very widespread species with considerable tolerance for climatic and other variations in their habitat. There are a number of places along the coast, from Swanbourne north to about Shark Bay, that the first three species can be seen quite close together. Even the Red-winged Fairy-wren used to occur at Herdsman Lake, and there are records from densely vegetated dune swales at Scarborough in the 1940s (Serventy 1948).

Regardless of the above, we certainly did not expect to see all of those four species when we returned to the block at the end of July. In fact we cannot recall ever having seen any four species of fairy-wrens together in one small area of bush, let alone this combination.

Nevertheless, on our return we had the pleasing experience of not only confirming the presence of Variegated Fairy-wrens, but also of having excellent views of the other three species as well. For the two red-shouldered species we were able to watch family groups containing fully coloured males, eclipse males (in two stages of colouring-up in the case of the Red-winged Fairy-wren) and females.

The fully coloured males of the red-wings and variegateds were reasonably easy to separate on the basis of the colour of the crown and ear coverts, with the red-



The Red-winged Fairy-wren, thought of as very much a forest species, has an unusual disjunct population on the Gingin Brook and its tributaries 70 to 80 km north of Perth.

Female drawn by Judy Blyth

winged male having both areas a uniform, pale silvery-blue. By comparison, the male Variegated Fairy-wren had pale blue ear coverts and richer sky blue crown with a touch of mauve on the very top. Further, there was no mistaking the grey head, dark chestnut lores, black bill and rufous-brown scapulars or shoulders of the female Red-winged Fairy Wren.

In deciding that we were seeing Variegated Fairy-wrens rather than blue-breasteds, we noted the absence of any variation in tone in the entirely black breast and throat, and the pale blue ear coverts contrasting with the darker, rich blue crown, on the coloured male. Again the female was useful, with a very strong contrast between the dark chestnut face (appearing almost dark chocolate at reasonable distance or in poorer light) and the fairly pale orange/brown bill. This contrast is absent in the female of the Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, in which the bill is slightly darker and the brown

face rather paler. Although the face and bill of the blue-breasted is darker than that of the female Splendid Fairy-wren the two are similar in lacking the striking contrast between face and bill seen in female variegateds.

The area we covered over five or so hours was probably less than thirty hectares and all but the White-winged Fairy-wrens were observed in a six hectare core area containing the best of the streamside vegetation. However, there did seem to be a definite pattern as to whereabouts each species was most likely to be found. The Red-winged Fairy-wrens were confined to the wettest and rankest streamside vegetation, dominated by sedge tussocks and usually heavily shaded by tall paperbark trees. The variegateds were in the next densest vegetation, often with sedges still present, but at least ten metres from the stream bank, and with few tall trees. The Splendid Fairy-wrens tended to overlap both of the other species but were mainly concentrated around the margins of those two habitat types, where there were tracks or other semi-cleared areas. We only saw the White-winged Fairy-wrens where patchy low shrubs were regrowing in areas cleared probably about ten years ago.

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John and Judy Blyth

ARE SOME PERTH SUBURBAN BIRDS BECOMING CULTURED NOCTURNAL GASTRONOMES?

Few outdoor activities involving food are unaccompanied by avian hangers on. I defy anyone to eat anything on the beach without being watched by screaming Silver Gulls. Who does not have a story of how food disappeared off their plate at a picnic? Or the one about snags being stolen off a BBQ? Black Swans, Pacific Black Ducks and Eurasian Coots enjoy being fed in suburban parks. In fact, Australian Ringnecks will sit on your arms and head to be fed at one of the northern suburban parks.

Outdoor activities of a different kind are becoming more prevalent at night now — many venues offer movies, drama, comedy or musical theatre, to be watched from deckchairs and cushions, and people take meals with them that provide tasty morsels for opportunistic birds.

If you need a break from all the culture on offer, then there is always the beach BBQ or the swimming pool party. These events do not seem to affect the birds as much as the ones at the larger venues. Maybe Silver Gulls are late night birds, anyway. Not only do the bright lights at these venues extend 'daylight', but they also attract moths and other insects that the gulls have learned to feed on by hawking around overhead lights.

Different venues seem to have different suburban birds participating in these events. The Quarry Amphitheatre has many Australian Ravens and Magpies on the upper level near the kiosk. Silver Gulls are a feature of the Supreme Court Gardens events. At the Somerville, Laughing Kookaburras become more noticeable during the season of the film festival. Red Wattlebirds become uneasy at the close proximity of the Laughing Kookaburras to their roosts. All these birds and the Australian Ringnecks and Pacific Black Ducks have been enjoying the current Shakespeare play at Kings Park. Fortunately for us, quiche was not on the menu of a foraging Laughing Kookaburra who made off with someone else's chicken drumstick. The other birds were not so fussy.

Soon I shall be finding out firsthand, how the Australian White Ibis and other birdlife at the Perth Zoo are coping with their nocturnal musical culture.

Claire Gerrish

BIRDING DAY OUT IN ENGLAND

In March 1999 I visited Dawlish Warren Nature Reserve with my cousin who lives in nearby Teignmouth in Devon. It was still bitterly cold in England, although spring had sprung! Initially it was drizzling as we set out, but it had fined up by the end of the day, with some sunny spells.

Dawlish Warren is a sandspit with dune, scrub and estuarine habitats. At Langstone Rock or the dunes you can watch for seabirds. There are also migrant passerines in the reserve. Dawlish Warren is part of the Exe Estuary. The Exe Estuary has been designated as a Ramsar site, a Special Protected Area and a site of Special Scientific Interest for its wetland habitats and dependent wild bird populations. The visitor centre is open in summer and occasionally in winter.

There is a golf course on the spit, so it is quite a hike around to the hide. The hide had glass in the viewing panel. The tide was ebbing as we arrived at the hide, so we really could have done with a telescope. Lots of Pied Oystercatchers, Brent Goose, Shelduck, Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Grey Plover and a Ringed Plover. A Ruddy Turnstone and Little Egret were familiar friends.

We then continued our walk around the reserve and saw and heard many other birds, Blackbirds, Pied Wagtails, Redstart and Warblers, but we were unsure which ones. Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Robins, Long-tailed Tits, Blue and Great Tits were very obvious. We found Wrens on the edge of the golf course. We managed to find a Dunnock, mixed in with Tree Sparrows and House Sparrows. During a sunny spell we heard and saw a skylark.

It was still quite light as we headed back to Teignmouth by bus at 1700 hours. I was very pleased with the information in Mitchell Beazley's *Birdwatchers Pocket Guide*, £8.00. Unfortunately the colours in the illustrations of the 14th edition do not appear to be as good as the colour in the earlier editions. Excellent text and lots of views of the birds. We had also been equipped with an Exe Estuary brochure and a tide timetable.

The reserve was very pretty with yellow gorse, forsythia and a few vagrant daffodils. Some white blossom trees in full bloom. A special area was fenced off for the rare Dawlish Crocus. The one drawback I found was the number of dogs running around without leads, despite all the signs. (No plastic bags for cleaning up after them, either.) Despite that I had a marvellous day and would recommend the area to anyone who had a couple of 'spare' days. When travelling by train in the area you have good views of the waders on the sandbars and seabirds, too. Gives a whole new meaning to 'trainspotting'!

Claire Gerrish

BROWN QUAIL AT FORRESTDALE

Over a number of years Brown Quails have been seen north of Forrestdale Lake at Lot 66, Anstey Road, Forrestdale. The area is part of Bushplan site number 342, and owned by the Ministry for Planning. It is now part of the Jandakot Botanic Regional Park.

The area is generally low shrubland under 2 metres in height, with a lot as low as 0.7 metres. Plant species include *Regelia ciliata*, *Banksia telmatiaea*, *Beaufortia squarrosa* and many other low shrubs and herbaceous plants. Part of the area is swampy, and a drain bisects the area in a north-south direction. A Western Power high voltage transmission line passes over in a roughly east-west direction.

The first record of the Brown Quail in the area was a sighting of seven birds by John Malone in May 1988 (WABN 47: 2). The next sightings I am aware of were by Stan and Margaret Telford, who saw Brown Quails here on three occasions in 1993. On one of these occasions (19/7/93) one group of seven birds and one of six were seen, on opposite sides of the drain. On this occasion, the accompanying photograph was taken by Stan.

Since then, I have seen or heard Brown Quails at this site on at least 18 occasions between 18/12/96 and 18/11/98. (I have kept Brown Quails in aviaries so am quite familiar with their call as well as their appearance). Up to 11 birds have been seen on a single visit and, on 6/2/97, an adult was seen with five juveniles drinking from the drain.

Brown Quails have been seen at the site almost every month of the year (all except March and September) over a period of almost 10 years and so are presumably resident. The frequent observations of parties of up to 10 birds and the recording of at least one successful breeding attempt also suggest the existence of a resident population. The birds have been seen over an area of about 40 hectares.

It is not known whether the population is a natural one or was established from birds escaped from aviaries. In any case, the population does seem to be a permanent one. This suggests that other sites on the Swan Coastal Plain where Brown Quails are occasionally recorded could also support permanent populations. It would be interesting to know if this is the case.

David James

PRINCESS VISITS BROOME — WILD OR ESCAPEE — THAT IS THE QUESTION?

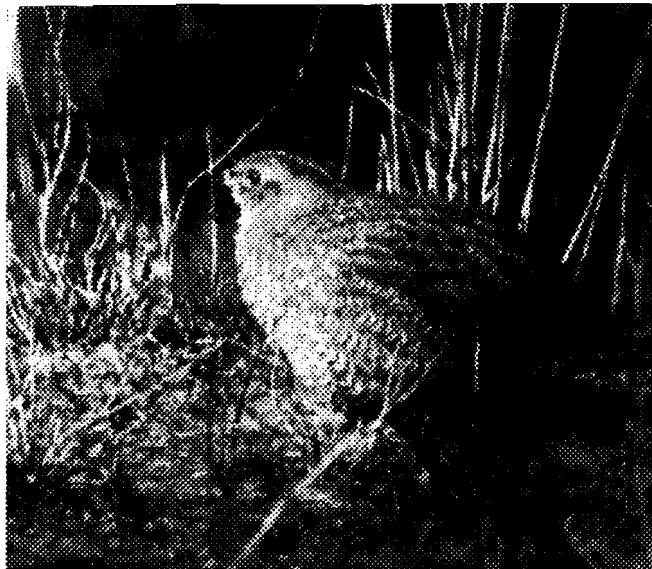
On 5 June at exactly 12:55 pm my attention was diverted from scrubbing the car to a loud raucous croaking parrot-like call. The 'noise' was moving at speed and coming directly towards our driveway from the east. Only split seconds after hearing the call I caught sight of what I am sure was a Princess Parrot. Although I had only brief views as the bird flew directly over our driveway at a height of approximately 12 m, I was able to distinguish several distinctive features. The parrot had an extremely long thin black tail from the underside and as the bird twisted and turned I noticed yellow on the upper side of the wing. The parrot was flying very quickly and erratically and calling as it flew. A mad panic ensued with me shouting "Quick arrhhh binoculars, binoculars" while running out on to the street in hot pursuit to try to obtain more views of the bird. Alas, only fleeting glimpses were had as it disappeared towards Cable Beach at great speed.

Keen birdwatcher and bander, Helen McArthur also happened to see a Princess Parrot perched, albeit briefly, on a power line on Herbert Street in Broome on Friday 11 June at 10:15 am. She was in traffic, which is not unusual at this time of year and when able to stop to get better views the parrot had disappeared. Helen has seen this species before on the Canning Stock Route.

These two sightings could represent an escaped bird but I have to say the bird I saw was not behaving as one would expect from an aviary escapee. However, at the time it was very exciting and with the sudden surge of adrenaline made the drudgery of car cleaning a breeze!

George Swan

Editors' Note: The Princess Parrot has been reported from the upper Geegully Creek area, about 150 km ESE of Broome, so it is feasible that such a strong flying bird could turn up at Broome.



Brown Quail photographed by Stan Telford at Forrestdale.

COLOUR BANDED CASPIAN TERNS

Located on the western side of the Serpentine River Estuary is a small wildlife sanctuary consisting of samphire, small lakes and mudflats. The reserve is well worth a visit for it has good sightings of waders, raptors and ducks. There is parking at the end of Peel Parade and boots are recommended.

A group of Caspian Terns can usually be found roosting near waters edge and up to 74 caspians have been counted here. It is one of the locations where Caspian Terns congregate in the Northern Peel Inlet.

Whilst counting Caspian Terns in May this year I noticed one was carrying coloured bands. It had an aluminium band on the right leg and a red coloured band over a white coloured band on the left leg. This posed an intriguing question, where had it been banded?

A phone call to Rod Smith from the Western Banders Association put me in touch with Marie Mitchell. She advised me that she had been conducting research into the movement of Caspian Terns for some time and had banded a number of Caspian Terns on Seal Island. Seal Island is located in the Shoalwater Bay Marine Park near Rockingham. The Caspian Terns had not been caught in the conventional way. A wire framed cage covered with wide mesh nylon netting was placed over the nest. The Caspian Terns were trapped and banded as they returned to their nests.

The first Caspian Terns (16) were banded in August and September 1997 and a further three in October 1998.

Marie explained that only the adult Caspian Terns banded in 1997 had received coloured bands; seven altogether. These birds had a light green band over a metal band on the right leg and a combination of an upper red band with a variable lower colour band on the left leg. The combinations thus were red over red, red over white, red over blue, red over green, red over yellow, etc. The Caspian Tern with a red over blue band was found dead on

Seal Island on 20 July 1999 nearly two years after it had been banded at this location.

The colour banded Caspian Tern, red over white, was first sighted at the Serpentine River Reserve on 22 May 1999. On 6 June 1999, at the same reserve, another colour-banded Caspian Tern was sighted, this one with a light green band that had slipped over the aluminium band on its right leg. Only a narrow rim of the aluminium band could be seen. On its right leg was a red band over a light green band. Both pale green bands were of the same colour.

High water levels flooded the reserve in the following weeks and no Caspian Terns were seen at this location.

These sightings show that at least some Caspian Terns that bred in Shoalwater Bay moved to the northern part of the Peel Inlet in late autumn and early winter. Not a great distance, some 60 km to the south.

The only reference I could find was that banding indicates that some Caspian Terns show high fidelity to general areas, eg, a nestling banded at Carnac Island WA was recovered dead only 26 km ENE over 8 years 8 months after banding. (HANZAB Volume 3.) The finding from Carnac Island compares with that of Seal Island.

Next time you happen to be looking at Caspian Terns check out their legs. Marie would appreciate any reports of colour banded birds.

In the meantime the first Caspian Terns have returned to breed on Seal Island. Nest with three eggs on Seal Island on 20 July 1999.

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Marcus Singer

THEDA STATION AND GALAXY SWAMP

Theda Station lies in the 126/127 and 15/14 Atlas (1984) square in the Kimberley. Anne and I and George Swann surveyed Theda between 23 and 29 May inclusive to determine an initial bird list for the station.

Theda is the most northerly working cattle station in the Kimberley, some 70 km south of Kalumburu. It has both volcanic and sedimentary (sandstone) hills and has parts of the Morgan, Carson and Drysdale Rivers and their many tributaries within its boundaries.

The first Atlas (1984) lists 65 species within the Atlas square containing Theda and one of the surprises, given the large river pools which maps reveal to be a feature of much of the rivers, is the absence of duck species. However, on seeing the rivers the reason for the absence of ducks becomes clearer. With a 1200 mm rainfall in the area the rivers have annual flood levels substantially above those of the dry season and the vast volumes of flood water have scoured the river beds and pools such that the main rivers and many of the creeks have beds of rock or sand, neither of which provides a source of food for ducks. However, on a small creek one Pacific Black Duck was noted, to be the only duck species we observed on the station. (The owners have recorded ducks breeding on the station, species uncertain.)

Having examined the 1:100 000 map sheet prior to travel and noted the position of the Theda homestead some 10 km from the Carson Escarpment and reached by fording the Carson River, it was another surprise to find on arrival that the homestead is now on the main 'road' to Kalumburu, having shifted some 30 km westwards. The move took place in the 1970s, testimony to the failure of the 1:100 000 map series to be kept up to date. (Incidentally, the Mt Elizabeth homestead has also made a substantial south south-easterly move.)

Theda Station is 310 000 hectares (with some 7000 cattle) and so constitutes about 31% of the Atlas square within which it lies. I anticipated finding a few species not listed in the Atlas as this is a fairly usual occurrence, particularly for more remote areas. Given that the station is less than one third of the Atlas square I had not expected that we should augment the 65 species listed by a further 60%, or 39 species. We did not see four species listed in the Atlas square: Little Black Cormorant, Australian Pelican (recorded very occasionally by the station owners), Royal Spoonbill and Rufous Songlark.

The Kimberley 'wet' of 1999 was 'good' and at the time of our visit the areas of the station known to have swamps could not be reached because of creek water levels. Had such visits been possible the bird list would doubtless have been greater as our visit to Galaxy Swamp (not on Theda) was to show. During the wet season migratory species (eg, cuckoos and shoreline birds) are likely to be present, although during the wet season it is difficult if not impossible to reach the station (except by air) and then very difficult to impossible to get about the station at all. Hence the descriptor "initial". George Swann hopes to be able to visit the station during a wet to add to the list.

I was pleased to make two sightings new to myself, those of Pacific Baza (two birds, both perched low and clear in the sunshine) and of a Red Goshawk (one bird circling to catch insects). Both species were seen once only, despite the quantity of apparently suitable habitat. Both were additions to the Atlas list and another list addition, Square-tailed Kite, besides being seen on three separate days at Theda was also seen at Mt Elizabeth Station. There we listened for Crested Bellbird (heard) and while so doing two Square-tailed Kites appeared together circling low, a nice sighting for a bird that HANZAB Vol II (1993) describes as "solitary" and "usually seen singly" (p.206).

All the crows seen were categorised as Torresian on the ground that we could not obtain sworn affidavits and fingerprints from the birds concerned. Greater powers of divination may have found Little Crows.

We looked for birds during six days, the first of which was a half day only (23rd) and also during part of the evening of a seventh (29th — the daylight hours being spent off the station). The number shown after each species listed below is the number of days (maximum six) on which the species was observed. On some days species were recorded at several widespread locations during a single day. Those species not listed in the Atlas (1984) are marked with an asterisk — * — and it will be noted that some of these were seen often.

Pacific Black Duck* 1; Darter* 1; Great Cormorant* 1; White-faced Heron* 3; White-necked Heron* 3; Nankeen Night Heron* 1; Australian White Ibis* 1; Little Pied Cormorant 3; Great Egret 2; Black Bittern 3; Pacific Baza* 1; Square-tailed Kite* 3; Black-breasted Buzzard* 1; Black Kite 2; Whistling Kite* 3; Brown Goshawk* 4; Collared Sparrowhawk 2; Red Goshawk* 1; Wedge-tailed Eagle 2; Brown Falcon 2; Nankeen Kestrel* 3; Brolga 5; Buff-banded Rail* 1; Purple Swamphen* 2; Australian Bustard 2; Bush Stone-curlew* 1; Black-fronted Dotterel* 1; Common Bronzewing* 1; White-quilled Rock-pigeon* 1; Diamond Dove* 4; Peaceful Dove 6; Bar-shouldered Dove 3; Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo 6; Galah* 1; Little Corella 4; Sulphur-crested Cockatoo 6; Rainbow Lorikeet 6; Varied Lorikeet 3; Red-winged Parrot 3; Northern Rosella 6; Pheasant Coucal* 5; Southern Boobook* 2; Barn Owl* 1; Tawny Frogmouth* 2; Spotted Nightjar* 1; Australian Owlet-nightjar* 1; Azure Kingfisher* 4; Blue-winged Kookaburra 6; Red-backed Kingfisher 4; Sacred Kingfisher 3; Rainbow Bee-eater 6; Black-tailed Treecreeper 1; Red-backed Fairy-wren 5; Striated Pardalote 6; Weebill 5; Green-backed Gerygone* 1; White-throated Gerygone 4; Silver-crowned Friarbird 6; Little Friarbird 6; Blue-faced Honeyeater 2; Yellow-throated Miner 5; Singing Honeyeater 1; White-gaped Honeyeater 6; Grey-fronted Honeyeater* 1; Yellow-tinted Honeyeater 3; Black-chinned Honeyeater* 1; White-throated Honeyeater 5; Brown Honeyeater 6; Bar-breasted Honeyeater 5; Rufous-throated Honeyeater 4; Banded Honeyeater 4; Jacky Winter 5; White-browed Robin* 3; Grey-crowned Babbler 3; Varied Sittella 2; Rufous Whistler 6; Sandstone Shrike-thrush* 1; Grey Shrike-thrush 1; Leaden Flycatcher* 6; Restless Flycatcher 6; Magpie-lark 6; Northern Fantail* 5; Willie Wagtail 6; Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike 6; White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike 5; White-winged Triller 4; Olive-backed Oriole 6; White-breasted Woodswallow* 2; Black-faced Woodswallow 5; Little Woodswallow 5; Grey Butcherbird* 3; Pied Butcherbird 6; Australian Magpie* 2; Torresian Crow 6; Great Bowerbird* 3; Singing Bushlark* 3; Double-barred Finch 4; Long-tailed Finch 6; Crimson Finch 5; Chestnut-breasted Mannikin* 2; Mistletoebird 2; Fairy Martin* 2; Golden-headed Cisticola 5.

On 29 May we decided to visit a swamp named Galaxy which is not within the Theda boundaries, in lieu of those to which we could not obtain access on Theda. Galaxy swamp was an 'extra' included in Kabay, ED and Burbidge AA, Eds. (1977), *A Biological Survey of the Drysdale River National Park, North Kimberley, WA in August 1975*, Wildlife Research Bulletin WA 1977 No. 6, p 1-133. As far as is known there have been no other bird observer visits to Galaxy since 1975.

The swamp is a shallow depression about 800 m by 300 m, looking like a slightly flooded paddock, with water between tufts of grass and with very little open water. Most of the swamp was about 150 mm deep or less, but there was a small area reaching 500 mm. Most of the swamp looked as though it would dry within a few weeks, although the track to the swamp had only become passable just three weeks before our visit. The 1975 expedition

remained about one hour and recorded seven waterbird species (no numbers given) and 11 bushbirds, although the area in which they recorded bushbirds is unclear, for one (Gouldian Finch) is stated to have been 2 km from the swamp.

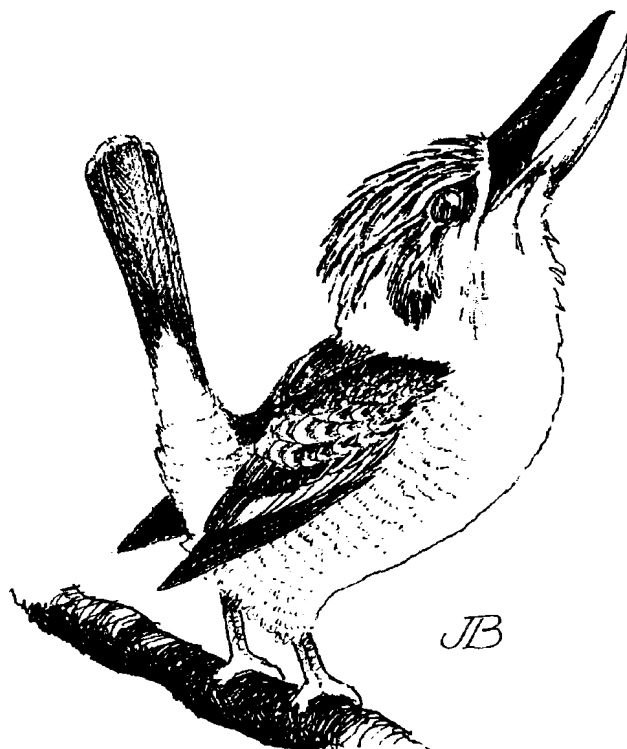
We stayed at the swamp for about 90 minutes and recorded eight waterbird species with the numbers shown: White-faced Heron 1; White-necked Heron 15; Intermediate Egret 4; Australian White Ibis 3; Straw-necked Ibis 8; Swamp Harrier 1; Buff-banded Rail 1; White-browed Crake 1. The three of these species not seen on Theda (Straw-necked Ibis, Swamp Harrier and White-browed Crake) are probably present in Theda swamps.

The bushbird species seen on the margins of the swamp were all recorded on Theda, with the exception of the first listed: Brown Quail; Black Kite; Brown Falcon; Peaceful Dove; Little Corella; Rainbow Bee-eater; Striated Pardalote; Yellow-tinted Honeyeater; Jacky Winter; Varied Sittella; Rufous Whistler; Restless Flycatcher; Magpie-lark; White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike; Little Woodswallow; Torresian crow; Golden-headed Cisticola.

Our visit illustrated how under-surveyed are the more remote parts of Western Australia. While it was hot at midday on most days and wet at other times (walking in dewy cane grass wets one through from the waist down) we enjoyed our birding, with over 50 species seen each day and much of interest in the countryside. It was a long way to travel, but good after arrival.

Our thanks to Sheree and Mark Timms for their help and guidance to parts of the station, which made our survey much easier and more effective.

Bruce Buchanan



Blue-winged Kookaburras are common around timbered streams and waterholes in both the Kimberley and Pilbara.
Drawing by Judy Blyth

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER (PUFFINUS TENUIROSTRIS): NEW FOR BROOME

On Boxing Day 1998, during my tenure as warden at the Broome Bird Observatory, a local resident handed in an 'all dark seabird'. Unfortunately the bird was so exhausted and dehydrated that it did not survive. After its demise its identification was a priority. Visually it appeared to be a Short-tailed Shearwater. I knew this species to be in their millions on the islands off the south east coast and in the Bass Strait, also in much smaller numbers on the Recherche Archipelago, just south and west of Esperance, breeding at this time of year. So, what was it doing on the beach at Broome? Was it in fact Short-tailed? I measured the head-bill, the bill length and width, wing-length, the tail and, as the bird was dead, both wingspan and total body length. These last two measurements I do not take on live birds. To confirm the identification as Short-tailed Shearwater, we needed to eliminate Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*), Flesh-footed Shearwater (*P. carneipes*), Sooty Shearwater (*P. griseus*) and Christmas Shearwater (*P. nativitatis*). All, bar Wedge-tailed, would have been out of range, so distribution could not be the deciding factor. Identification is an easier task in the hand than as a bird whips by over a rough sea. The all dark bill, dark grey legs and feet ruled out Flesh-footed. The trailing feet, extending beyond the tip of the tail and the measurements, ruled out the other three contenders. To put the identification beyond doubt the specimen was sent to Ron Johnstone at the WA Museum. On finding I had a Short-tailed Shearwater, I started to trawl through the literature to find out what it was doing in Broome. HANZAB states 'movements in East Indian Ocean, reaching seas of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Thailand'. Harrison says 'stragglers have reached India' and mentions the capture of two live birds at sea off Phuket in SW Thailand. Enticott and Tipling write 'a few to north-east Indian Ocean'. Grimmett, Inskipp and Inskipp use Harrison's reference. The most recent records I found are of a single bird off the coast of SW Thailand on 30 December 1997 and another single in the same region on 8 May 1998. Although these records are hardly numerous it does suggest regular movements into the northern Indian Ocean. Whether these are birds from the non-breeding population of the Bering Sea, diverting from their usual migration route, or birds from the Recherche Islands, isn't known.

A category 5 cyclone had been active many hundreds of kilometres to the north east of Broome from 6 December through to 12 December. Tropical cyclone Thelma crossed the coast of mainland Australia at Kuri Bay, 280 km north east of Broome. The cyclone may have been the reason for this shearwater being found, exhausted, on Cable Beach, although there was not a spate of beach washed birds.

This record is the first of a Short-tailed Shearwater within a 70 km radius of the Broome Bird Observatory. I know of no other records north and west of Broome other than the ones mentioned above.

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Thanks to Ron Johnstone for confirmation of identity and verbal information on the Recherche populations of Short-tailed Shearwaters and Tom Chlebowski of the Broome Bureau of Meteorology.

Chris Hassell

A NOISY SCRUB-BIRD IN THE HAND

The excitement of catching a Noisy Scrub-bird 35 years ago, is well expressed by Robert Stranger in his article "The day I held the Scrub-bird" which was recently republished in *Western Australian Bird Notes* (No. 89, pp 1-5, March 1999). Even today, with relatively routine capture techniques, the elusive *Atrichornis clamosus* can be frustratingly difficult to remove from its impenetrable habitat. At the time Robert Stranger writes about, the Noisy Scrub-bird had been rediscovered only a little over three years before (Webster 1962a and 1962b). Very few people had seen the scrub-bird at Two Peoples Bay, and none had been captured. To capture and hold one of these remarkable birds, to photograph, weigh and measure it would have been a very significant and exciting experience.

However, the Noisy Scrub-bird that Robert Stranger held in his hands on January 5th 1964, was not a female as he claimed in his article. Having held and processed close to 200 Noisy Scrub-birds, I could see that the bird in the photograph was almost certainly a male. It was too big relative to the hand holding it to be a female. Male scrub-birds are distinctly larger than females and the difference is readily appreciated in the hand — a female Noisy Scrub-bird feels like a different species.

As is well known, the males are also distinguished from females by the presence of a dark band across the upper part of the chest. This doesn't show up in the photograph accompanying Robert Stranger's article however, because of the way the bird is being held with the finger of the hand obscuring the throat and crowding the feathers. The dark grey feathers of the male's throat band have white tips and these sometimes obscure the band, especially when the bird has his head down. A male scrub-bird observed with his head lowered while foraging, doesn't show a prominent dark throat band. With his head up — when he sings for instance — the dark throat is fully revealed.

This first capture of a Noisy Scrub-bird on the flanks of Mt Gardner was also reported by other members of the expedition. Vin Serventy filmed the event and his film was shown on Australian television. Serventy (1964) also wrote an article for *Walkabout*, which was a very popular Australian natural history magazine in those days. He did not state whether the bird they caught was male or female, but he did publish two photographs of the bird in the hand. One of these is the same as that used by Robert Stranger. The other, which is reproduced here, is a full frontal shot of the bird with its head up and it shows a very obvious broad dark area on the throat.

Graeme Pizzey also wrote about the event for the English magazine *Animals* (Pizzey 1964). Pizzey had visited Two Peoples Bay twice before and it was he that made the arrangements for the January 1964 capture specifically to film the Noisy Scrub-bird. His film was shown on ABC television and later in the UK (Serventy 1967).

Pizzey credited Dom Serventy with identifying the bird as a female and he seemed disappointed that they had not captured a male. He wrote: "But it was not the male. According to Dom Serventy, who immediately subjected it to a scrutiny from a range of about half an inch through a jeweller's eyepiece, it was either an immature bird or an adult female. But since few female birds have come to light, we were content." Pizzey illustrated his article with two photographs of the captured bird. In one, the throat band is apparent, in the other only some dark markings show up to indicate that it was indeed a male.

But if the photographs aren't enough to convince the sceptical, the weight and dimensions of the bird settle any doubt about its sex. In his 1967 *Western Australian Naturalist* article, Dom Serventy provided the weight of the captured bird as 55.9 gm. Male scrub-birds captured at Two Peoples Bay between 1983 and 1987 for the translocation program, had body weights ranging from 46 to 58 gm with a mean of 51.8 gm. The mean weight of females captured during the same period, was 34.3 gm and they ranged from 31.5 to 37.0 gm (Table 1.). The body weight of birds can vary significantly depending on the season and the time of day as well as the condition of the bird, but female Noisy Scrub-birds never achieve the body weight reported for the bird captured in 1964. That scrub-bird was an adult male of above average weight.

Serventy (1967) also provided wing, tail, bill, and tarsus measurements of the 1964 bird. Among Noisy Scrub-birds all these dimensions can be used to distinguish males from females. As can be seen from the table, the captured bird compared well with known measurements of male Noisy Scrub-birds. He also described the breast of the



Photograph of the Noisy Scrub-bird captured in 1964, published by Serventy (1964) in *Walkabout Magazine*.

bird as "greyish white" and, amazingly, states categorically that "There was no sign of any dark colouring on the breast." I am at a loss to explain how he could make such a statement. Obviously he didn't look at the photographs.

Of course, in 1964 far less was known about the Noisy Scrub-bird than is the case today, and we can't expect people in the field who were holding one for the first time, to be able to tell which sex it was. But it is surprising to find that the measurements and the photographs were not checked against known information. Robert Stranger claimed the "female" captured in 1964 to be "the first to ever come before the notice of science as the previous specimens collected had all been males". In fact, a female Noisy Scrub-bird had been collected during the nineteenth century as H M Whittell pointed out in a paper published in 1943. Whittell had researched *Trichornis clamosus* specimens in the world's museums and had found the only known female. Originally collected in the King George Sound area, possibly by John Gilbert in 1843, this specimen had been overlooked for almost 100 years. Whittell's paper contained bill, wing and tarsus lengths —

all of which distinguish the males from females.

Sadly, the naturalists involved in the 1964 capture had not checked their field observations and measurements against the available data. Perhaps they were all carried away by the excitement of capturing such a celebrated bird. So recently rescued from certain extinction, the Noisy Scrub-bird at that time was critically endangered yet conservationists were still arguing with developers about its future. The articles and films generated by the capture of a single bird in 1964, however, helped bring the plight of the scrub-bird to public attention and the argument was

	Weight (gm)	Tail (mm)	Wing (mm)	Bill (mm)	Tarsus (mm)
Bird captured 5/1/64	55.9	106	81	19	27.5
Mean of 36 males (1983-1987)	51.8	109	75.8	18	26.6
Male specimen 17692 (Whittell 1943)	-	101.5	82	19	26.5
Mean of 28 females (1983-1987)	34.3	89	65.7	16.4	23.1
Female specimen 17691 (Whittell 1943)	-	-	65	16	23

Table 1. Measurements of the Noisy Scrub-bird captured at Two Peoples Bay in 1964 (Serventy 1967), measurements from a series of males and females (Danks, unpublished data) together with dimensions of museum specimens (Whittell 1943).

soon decided - Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve was brought into being. This decision, together with the events leading up to it, was the beginning of a very successful conservation program for the Noisy Scrub-bird.

References:

- Pizzey, G. 1964. Discovery: The Noisy Scrub-bird. *Animals* 5 (6), 151-155.
- Serventy, D.L. 1967. Mist-netting and ringing the Noisy Scrub-bird. *Western Australian Naturalist* 10, 151-53.
- Serventy, V. 1964. 'Extinct' Bird Comes Back, *Walkabout Magazine*, November, 37-39.
- Stranger, R. 1967. The day I held the Noisy Scrub-bird. *The Passenger Pigeon* 29(4), 99-106. (Reprinted in *Western Australian Bird Notes* 90, 1-5).
- Webster, H.O. 1962a. Rediscovery of the Noisy Scrub-bird *Atrichornis clamosus*. *Western Australian Naturalist* 8, 57-59.
- Webster, H.O. 1962b. Rediscovery of the Noisy Scrub-bird *Atrichornis clamosus* - further observations. *Western Australian Naturalist* 8, 81-84.
- Whittell, H. M. 1943. The Noisy Scrub-bird. *Emu* 42, 217-34.

Alan Danks

New Members

All new members are invited to attend a Welcome Evening on Monday 15 November 1999 commencing at 8:00 pm at the State Tennis Centre, Bolton Ave, Burswood.

The WA Group Committee members and also project coordinators will be there to let you know about their activities, to give you a wider understanding of how our group operates.

Come along and enjoy the fellowship!

AN HISTORICAL BIRD LIST FOR LATHAM, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Preamble

Latham is a small town in the WA wheatbelt, some 250 km NNE of Perth. In April of 1961 I went there to work as a farmhand for Dave Lucas, who had named his 2500 ha property, about 6 km north-east of the town, "Rocky Ridge", because of the amount of bare rock it contained. The area generally was a mixture of established farmland and uncleared mallee, as was Dave's property, too. The remaining mallee wasn't virgin bush however and Storr (1991) relates how the Rufous Treecreeper had vanished from this and similar areas by the time of the first observers. But I didn't know that at the time or I would have stayed in Dave's employ a lot longer, would have studied the birdlife with real intent, and I would have recorded everything I saw and heard.

The work was varied: ploughing, seeding, root picking and all sorts of other activities involved in farming. Dave didn't have lights on his tractors so we could only use them from dawn to dusk, which allowed me to further observe the birdlife. We mostly ploughed the soil while it was still dry, which was very dusty work, and by the end of the day we were red all over, except for our eyes which had been protected by goggles. Seeding was relatively better because we delayed that until some rain had fallen. Some of Dave's land had only just been cleared and as my tractor, a Cat D4, was the larger and had steel tracks. I was given this land to plough. And so I had to plough over Malleefowl nests and termite mounds, the latter being up to one metre tall.

I worked a six-day week and had Sunday off, and after breakfast I would venture forth and observe the birdlife. I returned at dusk, just in time for dinner, and I never carried food or drink with me because that was considered a weakness by the older ornithologists. Those Sundays were quite magical and I roamed far and wide, walking and walking and always searching for the birdlife. I think my greatest joy was discovering the Southern Scrub-robin there, for it was a first time species for me, as were the Malleefowl, Southern Whiteface, White-fronted Honeyeater, Mulga Parrot, Black-eared Cuckoo, Crested Bellbird, Redthroat and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. I also claimed to hear the Barking Owl there too, but this was disallowed by my peers because Latham is a bit outside its known distribution.

At that time the White-fronted Honeyeater was especially abundant there, but when I visited Dave and Ruth in 1967, it was comparatively rare. Conditions up until 1961 must have been very favourable for it. I also saw a few Malleefowl and found a few nests in the remaining bushland around the farm. During the visit in Easter 1967, however, Dave related how he had often seen four Malleefowl by his front gate, but then a camp for roadworkers had been set up nearby and he never saw those birds again.

Interestingly, some recent observations are available for two properties from 20 to 30 km south west of Latham as a result of the Birds on Farms project. These surveys were conducted four times a year in 1997 and 1998. While this is not a direct comparison between Dave Lucas's farm now and in 1961, the range of habitats originally was probably similar, as are the changes brought about since then.

Fourteen species of birds that I recorded in 1961 were not observed on either property in 1997/98. One species, the Western Corella, that I did not record in 1961 is now common on one and abundant on the other Birds on Farms property and probably common to abundant in the general area. In the list below, species that I recorded in 1961 but were not observed on the two Birds on Farms properties in 1997/98 are in italics. The absence of several night birds from the more recent lists is not significant because no searching or observing was done at night for the Birds on Farms project. However, many birds dependent on more or less continuous woodland or scrub are not on the current lists and their loss from the area is probably real.

Reference:

Storr, G. M. 1991. Birds of the South-west Division of Western Australia. Records of the Western Australian Museum Supplement No. 35.

Robert H Stranger

The Birds

Emu	Weebill
Malleefowl	Western Gerygone
Black Swan	Inland Thornbill
Australian Shelduck	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
Australian Wood Duck	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Pacific Black Duck	Southern Whiteface
Grey Teal	Red Wattlebird
White-faced Heron	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Whistling Kite	Yellow-throated Miner
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Singing Honeyeater
Brown Falcon	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Australian Hobby	Brown Honeyeater
Nankeen Kestrel	White-fronted Honeyeater
Australian Bustard	White-fronted Chat
Banded Lapwing	Red-capped Robin
Common Bronzewing	Southern Scrub-robin
Crested Pigeon	White-browed Babbler
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Crested Bellbird
Short-billed Black-Cockatoo	Golden Whistler
Galah	Rufous Whistler
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	Grey Shrike-thrush
Regent Parrot	Magpie-lark
Australian Ringneck	Grey Fantail
Mulga Parrot	Willie Wagtail
Pallid Cuckoo	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Black-faced Woodswallow
Black-eared Cuckoo	Grey Butcherbird
Barking Owl	Pied Butcherbird
Southern Boobook	Australian Magpie
Tawny Frogmouth	Grey Currawong
Spotted Nightjar	Little Crow
Australian Owllet-nightjar	Richard's Pipit
Splendid Fairy-wren	Zebra Finch
Variiegated Fairy-wren	Welcome Swallow
Striated Pardalote	Tree Martin
Redthroat	Brown Songlark

BIRDS ON ALBION DOWNS STATION

During a two-week stay in July on Albion Downs Station, 90 km south of Wiluna, I recorded 56 species of birds in various habitats: mulga-wanderrie, spinifex-sandplain, and breakaway ridges. The region had received cyclonic rain up to the end of May, but the watercourses were dry and eremophilas were just beginning to flower in mid to late July. The station is currently grazed. It is 30 km to the north-west of Wanjarri Nature Reserve which the WA Group visited in August 1998, recording 86 species.

On two occasions I watched Ground Cuckoo-shrikes in groups of three or five fly overhead and then move to perch on several gidgee trees. This was in a mulga-wanderrie grass habitat about 3 km east of the homestead. Here I also saw White-winged Fairy-wrens, Southern Whitefaces and two male Brown Songlarks in song displays with a female nearby.

On a stony mulga plain with lots of dead mulga trees and Turpentine bush, I saw a pair of Hooded Robins. This was 5 km east of the homestead. There are many breakaways and rockholes to explore and I felt lucky to see a pair of Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrushes on a stony ridge above the breakaway 6 km east of the homestead. The time was half an hour before sunset.

Bustards turned up occasionally near the house. At a rockhole to the north an Emu with 21 cheeping chicks in tow was quite a sight! Corvids were so few that I didn't have a chance to practise identifying them.

The station is owned by Western Mining Company and is managed by Doug and Lucy Brownlie. They are happy to accommodate groups in the shearers' quarters. Contact Lucy on 9037 5928. Yeelirrie Station is near and may also be visited.

Diane Beckingham

CHUDITCH AND BABBLERS

During the first half of 1999 research was undertaken into the ecology of the Chuditch *Dasyurus geoffroii* in a semi-arid environment. This work, primarily done by Honours students, concentrated on a re-introduced population within Lake Magenta Nature Reserve some 450 km south east of Perth.

The chuditch or western quoll is a native carnivore and was formerly widespread over much of Australia. By the early 1980s this distribution had been reduced by some 95% and the species was listed as threatened. As part of the recovery plan for this species a series of strategic translocations have been undertaken by the Department of Conservation and Land Management to return the chuditch to parts of its former range. Lake Magenta was the second of these and has involved the transporting and release of 81 individuals bred at the Perth Zoo. Releases commenced in October 1996 and all indicators suggest that the population is now well established in the reserve.

As previous surveys to locate a semi-arid population of chuditch had been unsuccessful and because all known ecological data were from jarrah forest populations it was considered desirable to closely study their dietary and habitat preferences in lower rainfall areas of WA. Accordingly CALM supervised Honours students Sabrina Gee from Curtin and Raymond Redner from Notre Dame universities, who set about the task at Lake Magenta in February this year.

Nine individual chuditch were radio-collared and closely monitored for three months. Habitat preferences, refuge use, movement and diet were the main factors for which data were collected. It was during this data collection that I came across a strong radio signal emanating from a nest-like stick structure 2.5 metres up a



One of the babbler nests taken over by a Chuditch in Lake Magenta Nature Reserve. Photo taken by Brent Johnson

small mallee. By bending the supporting branches down I was able to observe the fact that a very healthy female chuditch was residing in what was quite obviously a well constructed nest. Another individual was located the next day taking refuge in an identical nest several hundred metres away. Since this discovery four of the collared chuditch were found occupying similar nests scattered

throughout the reserve with some individuals utilising several nests within their home territory. These nests are just big enough in chamber size to conceal the smaller female chuditch and young males. Large fully-grown males were not recorded. A sample nest was shown to Senior Technical Officer and bird net expert Phil Fuller at CALM's Wildlife Research Centre and confirmed as that of a White-browed Babbler.

This was an interesting discovery as, although it was known that the chuditch is a good climber, we had no record of them utilising a bird nest as a refuge. The preferred refuges in the forests include log hollows, burrows and rock crevices. One chuditch may have many such refuges within their territory.

We now know that babbler nests provide an opportunity for chuditch to seek shelter, particularly in an area where there are limited logs on the ground. The fate of the original occupants is not known in this case but we do know that the extended babbler families may co-operatively built colonies of nests in one area. These may be abandoned for a new site the following year leaving numerous vacated nests free for adventurous, penthouse-seeking chuditch.

Brent Johnson

Brent is a Senior Technical Officer at CALM's Wildlife Research Centre at Woodvale, Eds.

New Internet Addresses

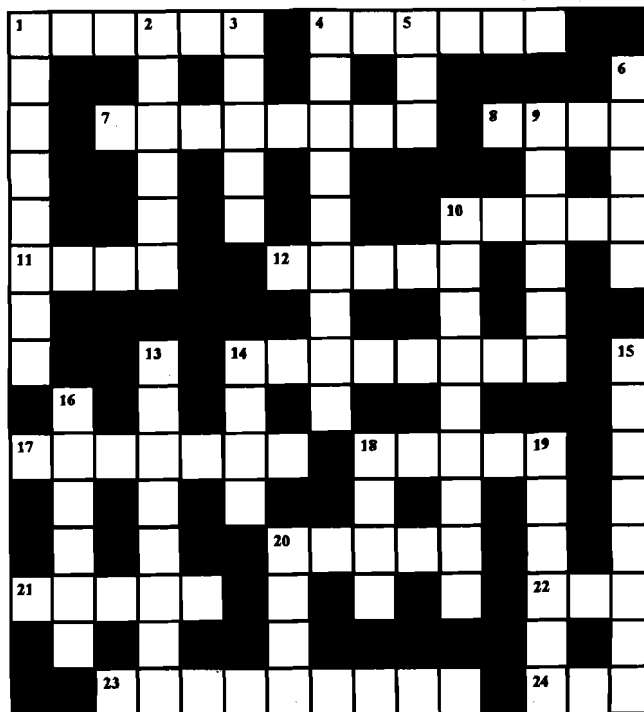
Birds Australia's home page has changed to:
www.birdsaustralia.com.au

WA Group Chairman, Clive Nealon, has a new email address:

clivenealon@bigpond.com

Crossword No 18

by Pam Agar



Clues across

1. Usually a smaller version.
4. Group of birds living or nesting together.
7. Duck species vagrant in Northern Australia.
8. Continent providing numerous summer visitors for WA.
10. Even keen birders need to stop for these.
11. Line followed by migrating species.
12. To dig with bill.
14. what male bower birds do to their bower.
17. Opposite to western.
18. Prominent markings of SW pardalote.
20. Small diving bird.
21. A high one may indicate a thermal air current.
22. Wing marker.
23. Bird of open dry country with monotonous song.
24. May make a meal of eggs in an unprotected nest.

Down

1. A bird may have a longer one in captivity.
2. A thorough one may be needed to discover a nest.
3. Bearing of a Brolga.
4. To build.
5. To produce an egg.
6. One thornbill may build this nest above the real thing.
9. Nature of vegetation in arid areas.
10. Family with strong legs for digging.
13. A GPS will give an accurate reading of this.
14. To move suddenly and sharply.
15. A likely time to see a nightjar.
16. To feed by kicking feet and ducking head.
18. Food of finches and galahs.
19. The best performer may be the successful one.
20. Expanse of open beak.

Country Groups

ALBANY BIRD GROUP

May outing

Twenty-four attended the outing on 11 May. We met at Eden Road off the lower Denmark Road, at 8:00 am.

The day was ideal for birdwatching. Tim Hunt organised us into Bird Atlasing groups. Cars stopped at 600 m intervals along Eden Road and with the number of cars, we covered a large section (approximately 2 km). Once in place, each group recorded the birds seen in their locality, then Tim took GPS readings to verify the position and Atlas forms were filled in for the record.

From there we travelled on down Eden Road to the Robinson farm where we were greeted by the gate keeper. Permission had been granted for the cars to be left inside the property.

From here, further atlasing took place along the new track. Lunch was rather late but by then we had recorded 57 species.

After lunch some of the bigger vehicles went on out towards the coast, where a pair of Hooded Plovers and Caspian Terns were added to the list. A Swamp Harrier seen fishing along the shore line was also added.

This made a total of 61 species. A good day's outing.

July outing

This took place on 13 July from 8:00 am to 12 noon and was to Ocean Beach Road, Denmark, attended by ten members.

Forty-three species were recorded on a card for entry on the WA Bird Database.

Of interest, a Whistling Kite continually returning to a Karri tree in which a stick nest could be seen.

Vivian McCormick

September, and a Birds on Farms display at the Ongerup and Needilup Museum Wildflower Show which runs from 19 September to 10 October.

Mini-reports: About half of these have been sent out. If you were a surveyor or farmer and have not yet received your mini-report, it could be a few more months as it will be a real challenge to complete the WA Report in time for the launch (see below).

Brenda Newbey

WA Coordinator, Birds on Farms Project

GORDON REID FOUNDATION FOR CONSERVATION GRANT

We are pleased to advise members of a grant of \$16 000 towards the cost of completing the Western Australian section of the Birds on Farms Project.



This grant will enable the Project Officer, Brenda Newbey, to complete all individual reports to farmers, as well as to prepare the state report and to conduct Birds on Farms events in four rural centres.

The report will be launched at Perry House on Wednesday 24 November at 10:30 am by the Chairperson of the Soil and Land Conservation Council, Mr Rex Edmundson.

This will provide an opportunity to make the report more widely known and for us to publicly acknowledge the support of the Gordon Reid Foundation, Healthway, and the many members and country people who helped in the survey over the past three years.

Members are welcome to attend to show our appreciation to Brenda and all involved. Please advise the office on 9383 7749 if you will be attending.

Allan Jones

Fund-finder for the WA segment of the Birds on Farms Project

Notices

BIRDS ON FARMS



Data collection for Birds on Farms and road verges is now complete. There were 104 farms in WA all told, with an average of seven surveys per farm — an impressive effort. (Eight surveys per farm was the maximum required.)

To spread the word about project findings there are to be events in four country areas: a bird session at 'Rosneath' (a communal holding near Dunsborough), Bird Days at Coorow 17–18 September and at Merredin 23

WESTERN GROUND PARROT SURVEYS

As announced in the last issue of WABN, the WA Group has attracted funds from the Threatened Species Network to carry out surveys for Ground Parrots at Cape Arid National Park. Shapelle McNee has already visited the park and begun planning the surveys. The first surveys will be conducted 15–22 September (see 'Coming Events' later in this issue) and a second survey is planned for autumn 2000.

For details contact Shapelle McNee in Perth (08) 9457 5008 or Allan Rose at Cape Arid (08) 9075 0055.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE CYBER GALAH?

The Birds Australia in-house newsletter, GALAH, is available free by email to all interested members of BA and its special interest groups, as well as to participants in BA projects such as the new Atlas of Australian Birds. Unfortunately, postage and handling costs restrict this offer to email subscription only.

GALAH is published primarily for people active in the various committees, groups, observatories and projects that comprise the Birds Australia 'family'. It is currently issued about ten times a year and contains news and announcements relating to Birds Australia — both the national body and its constituent groups.

The email version is at present a simple MS Word 6 document file, without embedded graphics, sent as an email attachment to your email address. Because it is sent simultaneously to all subscribers, it is not suitable for shared addresses where the name of an individual needs to be put in the 'subject' line.

While every effort is made to send 'clean' copy, good computer hygiene demands that you always check all email attachments with a good, up-to-date, anti-virus program before opening them.

Anybody who wants to subscribe to GALAH by email should send an email message to that effect to Hugo Phillipps, GALAH Editor, at hugophillipps@raou.com.au
Hugo Phillipps

CONFERENCES

Owls 2000: The biology, conservation and cultural significance of owls.

Manning Clark Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 19-23 January 2000. Presented by the Australasian Raptor Association.



SHOC 2000: Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Congress, Griffith University (Nathan Campus), Brisbane, 27 June – 2 July 2000. Presented by Birds Australia.



BIRDS ACTION PLAN REVIEW

Stephen Garnett and Gabriel Crowley

Extract from *Volunteer*, newsletter of the Threatened Bird Network, Issue 8, May 1999

We are currently reviewing the Action Plan for Birds for Birds Australia. To do this we are revisiting the recovery outlines in the first Action Plan and writing new outlines for taxa that now fall into the 1994 IUCN guidelines. We are putting all draft recovery outlines on the web, and calling for comments from people with specialist knowledge of any particular taxon. The web site, which is being developed and maintained by Rom Springall, is at the following address:

<http://www.tasweb.com.au/recovery/index.htm>

Visitors to the web site can find the species or subspecies of interest, read the texts and complete an electronic submission form that immediately transmits comments back to us.

The menu also leads to a database of all Australian subspecies of birds, as currently recognised, as well as isolated populations likely to be awarded subspecific status in the near future. Each taxon/population is given a draft IUCN status. Following the Marsupial Action Plan, we have compiled Recovery Outlines for Vulnerable and Endangered taxa, and Taxon Summaries for Lower Risk (near-threatened) taxa. We also provide Taxon Summaries for Extinct Taxa following Garnett (1992). No texts are provided for taxa classified as Lower Risk (least concern). However, submissions are welcome for such taxa, if you think they deserve a higher threat rating. All comments will be acknowledged in the final Action Plan.

The review is being undertaken in taxonomic order. As of 15 April we are up to the end of the raptors. We hope to have draft texts for all taxa completed by the end of June.

The last Action Plan has been useful in determining priorities for funding of threatened bird projects by the Commonwealth Government. It is likely that this revision will do the same. We therefore hope to draw on as wide a range of experience as possible in the hope of ensuring the status and proposed actions are accurate. We look forwarding to hearing from you.

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ORNITHOLOGICAL DELIGHTS FOR YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

Birds Australia WA has a series of attractive and informative laminated photographic displays on various themes. They are under-used because our publicity/education person simply does not have much time now to get them out into public view.

Hence this is an appeal to our members to individually take on the pleasurable task of informing their local librarians and schools that these resources are available — and encouraging their use. If you are concerned that mounting these displays might be too difficult, never fear. In most cases librarians themselves prefer to undertake that task as they are trained to do it. Also, most libraries already have the Velcro-friendly boards necessary for the displays — so there is usually no need to be carting that large equipment to the venue. Teachers usually have all sorts of ideas about how to use our displays, so you simply turn it over to them. Once the arrangement is settled, all that you usually need to carry is a light, 2A-sized plastic 'envelope' in which the particular display is stored. They are kept in BAWA's rear office in Perry House. There are also a few displays on larger card stored separately at the rear left hand corner of the BAWA garage.

When borrowing, simply record your own name and contact telephone number, the display venue and the start and finish dates in the Display Borrowers' Book in the rear office. It is important to first check with our office that your targeted display has not been prior booked for some other event.

Please check both before and after use that all listed components of each display are in fact present and in good condition. If there has been any damage to or loss of components, please contact Judy Blyth (on 9381 6293) so that she can replenish or fix if possible.

So far, the borrow-able displays (stored in rear office) are:

- Enraptured with Raptors
- The Flower-happy Honeyeaters
- Parenting in the Bird World (in 2 envelopes)
- The Hollow Question
- The Spectacular Seabirds
- Frequent Fliers of Alfred Cove
- Birdwatching all year round at Alfred Cove
- Threatened Birds of WA

***Getting to Know your Local Feathered Friends**

*As this display needs to be composed according to locality, it is necessary to contact Judy first to make sure that components are available at the time.

... and the displays on larger card, stored in the garage outside Perry House are:

- The Suburban Bird Survey
- Let's Go Atlassing!
- The Malleefowl Survey
- The Hooded Plover Survey
- The Ground Parrot Survey
- Birds on Farms
- The Roadside Verges Survey

Soon other displays will be upgraded to readily borrow-able form. These are —

- In Praise of Penguins
- Wonderful Wetlands

ALBANY SUMMER SCHOOL — JANUARY 2000 BIRDWATCHING COURSE

During the first two weeks in January 2000, this popular Birdwatching Course is being tutored by Ray Garstone at the annual Albany Summer School. Details of the course are set out below.

With more than 150 birds identified in the Albany area, participants are assured of two weeks of outstanding bird watching with one of WA's most experienced naturalists. Except for one day of the course, which will be spent in the classroom, every other day will see excursions to areas where different species can be found — waders, forest dwellers, urban visitors, birds of prey — birds large and small. These excursions are not strenuous, there are no long or difficult walks and each day the wonders of nature unfold in a way you will long remember. The start time for classes will be 9:30 am on the first day, thereafter the time

will be flexible, but usually about 7:00 am for the rest of the course.

Class Times: Jan 3–14; 9:30 am – 12:30 pm (Day 1)

Cost: \$115

Tutor: Ray Garstone is a farmer who developed a serious interest in all aspects of the natural world, particularly birds. A keen and talented nature photographer, he has won national and international awards for his work. With over 30 years experience in the field, Ray is a keenly sought after speaker, last year alone addressing about 13 groups, and he enthusiastically advances the importance and beauty of our wildlife.

Enrolments will commence during the first week of October. Further enquiries may be made by writing to The Enrolments Officer, PO Box 5146, Albany 6332, or telephoning Annette Grant on (08) 9844 7914 between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm.

NEW MILLENIUM COUNT PLUS WADER STUDY GROUP PROGRAM 2000

Hello birdwatchers

With the first transequatorial migrants arriving in August and a new millenium approaching, we thought it a great time to introduce you to the WA Wader Study Group's up and coming programs.

You may have heard of the WA Wader Study Group (WAWSG) or you may even have been involved with some of our activities. On the other hand this could be your first contact. Either way, we would like to take this opportunity to tell you a bit more about what we are doing.

The RAOU (now Birds Australia) has fostered wader study groups in each state. In spite of having some of the most interesting and unique shorebird habitats, WA has been the last cab off the rank so to speak in organising a wader study program.

Our goal is to encourage members to participate in the group's activities and help us regain some of the lost ground. With this in mind we ask you to join us in one or more of the programs we are currently running.

Special Interest Species (Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattler)

The Species of Special Interest Program collects sightings from members on species selected for intensive study by the national body.

Australia works closely with other countries situated along the East Asian-Australian Flyway in order to protect critical bird habitat and conduct joint migration research. Flyways are the migratory routes waders follow from their breeding grounds to their overwintering grounds. Australia has signed agreement with both China and Japan. At a joint meeting between these countries it was decided to nominate the Eastern Curlew and the Grey-tailed Tattler as species of special interest.

Marcus Singor is coordinating the special interest species programs. You may have seen Marcus's excellent work in the Hooded Plover Report or read his articles in

WA Bird Notes. He is keen to add to existing records of sightings from members.

WA Species of Special Interest

In order to foster interest among the larger base of WA members, it has been decided to run a parallel program by establishing our own Species of Special Interest Study.

To ensure state-wide participation among members it was decided to nominate the Banded Lapwing (*Vanellus tricolor*) as our first species.

This bird is more often seen by observers than the two species mentioned in the national program, is easily identified and can be found at inland sites as well as coastal areas. Strangely it is often overlooked and infrequently recorded. It should make an ideal and interesting subject of study and we welcome your sightings of this bird. Reports should be submitted to Marcus on the accompanying forms.

Excursions

WSG will run field trips to wader habitats to familiarise members with species and counting procedures. Come along and join us on the first excursion. This will be to Lake McLarty in December (see *WA Bird Notes* September issue). There will be regular visits to this lake and other wader habitats during the summer months.

Mid summer wader counts

The WA Wader Study Group has conducted Mid Summer Wader Counts over the last three years. This involves observers personally selecting a wader habitat, or participating with others at a pre-selected site, then counting shorebirds at the location for a short period (normally high or low tide) for one day during the peak of the mid summer migration.

The next count will be held in the year 2000 on Sunday 30 January.

These counts monitor wader habitats at different locations around Australia and assist in predicting population trends and fluctuations. The count helps to identify potential sites of ornithological and conservation value.

You may have read about the WAWSG's contribution in the last issues of *WA Bird Notes*. Our representation in the national count is presently small due to a number of factors.

If you consider the length of our coastline then add the inland sites, from many of which areas we have very little wader information (particularly from the Pilbara and the North West), you will appreciate why we are keen to recruit new support to the program. Those who regularly visit wetlands will have noticed a decline in wader populations over recent years. Birds Australia needs data backup. The networks have to be set up now for the collection of this information; your participation is essential.

Inland habitats

In addition to the coastal habitats, our inland waterways and lakes are infrequently monitored. The participation of country members and groups at these locations would be greatly appreciated. We are particularly

interested in sites monitored during previous RAOU programs, such as the Waterbirds Survey. Comparisons can then be made between past and present site records. Members intending to participate might already have a favourite wetland and have noted the presence of waders during previous visits. Great. If not, the following list of wetlands and the nearest town could assist you in choosing a location in your area.

The possibility of numbers of observers visiting the inland sites also creates an opportunity to add to the waterbird data bank. It is an opportunity too good to miss so we have included an additional list of non wader species hoping that members can do two jobs at once so to speak and record waterbird numbers as well as waders.

Mid winter counts

Mid summer counts are the first step in our monitoring endeavours.

Although most of the transequatorial migrants return to the northern hemisphere to breed, numbers of immature non-breeding birds stay back to overwinter in Australia. Our resident species can also move to new locations with weather changes.

A follow up mid winter count is needed to establish the movements of these birds and the locations they favour. We therefore encourage observers involved in the mid summer count to brave the elements and visit their site for a mid winter wader assessment.

All that remains now is to mark 30 January 2000 on the calendar and fill in a mid summer wader count form with your choice of location and post to:

Colin Davis, WA Wader Study Group

Birds Australia-WA Group

Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat WA 6014

You will then receive count sheets and instructions for the day by return mail.

Site list of inland habitats

- Bengier Swamp (*Harvey*)
- Coomelberrup Lake, Lake Dumbleyung (*Dumbleyung*)
- Hinds Lake, Ninan Lake (*Wongan-Ballidu*)
- Kwooncup Lake (*Plantagenet*)
- Taarblin Lake, Nomans-Bokans Lakes (*Narrogin*)
- Vasse Estuary (*Busselton*)
- Beverley Lakes (*Beverley*)
- Lake Flagstaff (*Woodanilling*)
- Nonalling Lake, White Water Lake (*Corrigin*)
- Mears Lake, Nambling Lake (*Brookton*)
- Lake Toolibin (*Wickepin*)
- Wannamal NR (*Gingin*)
- Balicup Lake (*Cranbrook*)
- Lake Gore, Warden Lake (*Esperance*)
- Lake Towerrinning/Moodiarrup Swamps (*Kojonup*)
- Kalgoorlie Sewage Ponds, Boulder Sewage Ponds, Rowles Lagoon (*Kalgoorlie*)
- Lake Quarbing (*Wagin*)
- Walyormouring Lake (Oak Park Lake) (*Goomalling*)
- Muir Lake, Tordit-Gurrup Lagoon (*Manjimup*)
- Karakin Lake (*Lancelin*)
- Lake MacLeod (*Carnarvon*)

Some wader study group members are conducting surveys at wetlands of their own choice. This entails regular monthly observations at the particular site. A record is kept of the number of birds and species, feeding habits, breeding evidence, plumage changes, checking for leg tags, changes in water depth, tides, and habitat disturbance, etc. These projects, once started, create a whole new dimension of birdwatching enjoyment.

We hope these programs plus others in the pipeline will encourage you to become involved in the group's activities. In the meantime, we wish you good birding. Additional questions on the WAWSG's activities can be answered by contacting:

Colin Davis — Organiser, Mid-Summer Wader Count
199 Kitchener Road, Booragoon 6154
Tel: (08) 9330 1482 AH

Marcus Singor — Organiser, Special Interest Species
149A Bishopsgate Street, Carlisle 6101
Tel: (08) 9362 2742 AH

OUTREACH: TAKING BIRDS TO THE COMMUNITY!

Are you interested in any of the following events?

12 September Spring Fling, the Wildflower Society's wonderful annual event by 'Perry House'. BAWA will have a stall and displays, and we also run free public bird walks every hour in Bold Park and by Perry Lakes. The event is from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm.

17-18 September Bio Blitz on Armadale Settlers' Common. This event aims to record as many different species of animals and plants as possible, providing information to help the managers protect the natural resources of the Common. BAWA has been invited to help identify the birds of the Common. For more information, or to register for participation, ring Brett Tizard on 9224 3137 (or email: btizard@cyllene.uwa.edu.au), or ring John Nicholson on 0411 756 415.

7-8 October The WA Association for Environmental Education's Second Annual State Conference will be held at Murdoch University and Ellis Brook. For more information, contact Catherine Baudains, (Tel.: 9222 7191 or Facs.: 9322 1598) / Jason Froud (Tel.: 9335 6800 or Facs.: 9430 4736 or email: jfroud@fisheries.wa.gov.au)

30-31 October Hobbitat at Claremont Showgrounds. (This used to be called **Hobby Spectacular**, and we have participated, with displays and stall, since its inception. Through it the Rotary Club of Floreat raises funds for its nominated charities.) The hours each day are 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, so we will have two 4-hour shifts each day. Hence we need 8 volunteers, each of whom will have a free entry pass. Please ring Judy on 9381 6293 if you can help.

PLEASE REPORT PROHIBITED BIRD SPECIES

Agriculture Western Australia is responsible for the eradication of prohibited exotic bird species which may enter the state.

The high profile starling eradication program in the south-east of the state would be familiar to those who have visited Eyre Bird Observatory. Sparrows are frequently eradicated at ports around the state — an infestation of Tree Sparrows is currently being controlled at Port Hedland. In 1996, a Blackbird was found in Narrikup, north of Albany, prompting continuing surveillance of the area. Bobwhite quail were recently added to the list of prohibited birds and some individuals may still be maintained in aviaries or in the wild.

A list of species prohibited in Western Australia is included below and those that are likely to be observed here are marked with an asterisk. Birds placed on the list are thought to be capable of causing significant damage to either agriculture or the environment.

Birdwatchers are in a great position to provide Agriculture WA with intelligence on the occurrence of these species. If any are observed, please report them to the nearest office of Agriculture WA. Additional information is available from Agriculture WA's internet site at:

www.agric.wa.gov.au

**Marion Massam, Technical Officer,
Agriculture Western Australia**

Common name	Scientific name
*Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
*Bobwhite Quail	<i>Colinus virginianus</i>
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
California Quail	<i>Lophortyx californica</i>
*Common Myna	<i>Acrideres tristis</i>
*Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
*House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
*House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
*Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>

CLEVER BIRDS?

I am writing on behalf of Dr Simon Bell at the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol, England. We are currently researching for a new series of programs about animal intelligence.

The two programs, to be filmed in the next 18 months will feature 'clever' animals and the stories of the people they come into contact with. Perhaps a bird that overcomes its natural fear to raid meals from the kitchen table, a squirrel or raccoon who breaks into a supposedly 'raccoon

proof feeder or climbs up the side of a high rise building to obtain food, or a bear that has learnt to raid dumpsters at a picnic site. In fact any animal that is obviously showing intelligence and manipulating the human environment they find themselves in for their own ends.

I am therefore wondering if you know of any similar stories — if so, I would be very grateful if you could let me know about them. We have in particular heard of a story of some sparrows which open the automatic doors of supermarkets in order to steal the food — and of Satin Bower Birds which steal the blue tops of milk bottles for their blue nests. However, we do not know the details of either of these stories, and would like to be in touch with someone who knows about it.

If you are unable to help with any stories, but think that someone else may know a good story, please ask them to contact me (on the email address below).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Charlotte Beaumont

Dr Simon Bell

Tel: +00 44 (0) 117 9746848

Fax: +00 44 (0) 117 9736489

Email: simon.bell@bbc.co.uk

BBC Natural History Unit, Bristol, BS8 2LR, UK

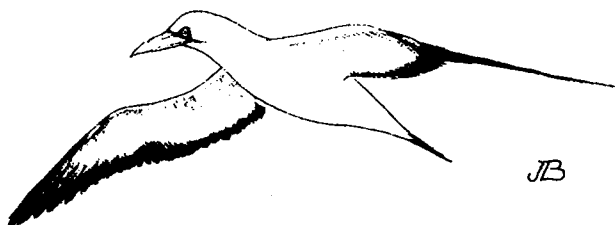
ERRATUM

In the last issue of WABN (No. 90, p. 26), it was reported that a Pied Butcherbird was seen during the excursion to the Wellard Wetlands on 14 February. This was incorrect; only Grey Butcherbirds were seen.

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia-WA Group between 1 May and 31 August 1999. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

L Allen, A Austin, J Barnett, W Beck, P Bostock, C Davies, M Dawbarn, T & J Duckworth, M Gartrell, M Glaser, P Hack, Mr Hasted, B Hewitt, R Hogben, C Jones, C Kennedy, C Kupke, J Mackinnon, J & L Male, A May, I G McLean, P McMillan, E & A Paull, R Peach, B Porteous, R Reid, E Robins, R Russell-Taylor, K Schekkerman, O Schmidenberg, M A Smith, V Spence, G Stapp, H Stewart, R Sundararaj, R Walker, J Westbrook, V White



Australasian Gannets are spectacular seabirds seen around coastlines of the southern half of Australia.

Drawing by Judy Blyth

Observatory Reports

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

It is mid winter at Eyre but, try as he might, Jack Frost's icy fingers have not been able to get a firm grip. Though temperatures may have dropped below zero overnight, the days have been warm and sunny. The occasional shower of rain has resulted in the Mallee being lush and green, while Acacias have trapped the sunlight in their yellow flowers, so that even when it is cloudy the sun appears to be shining through the trees. Mother Nature has contrived to carpet the sand with a brilliant green layer of moss.



After a wake-up call from the Fan-tailed Cuckoos, Welcome Swallows and Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters fill Eyre with their melodies all day. It is not unusual to see New Holland, Singing, White-eared, Brown, Brown-headed, Spiny-cheeked and Purple-gaped Honeyeaters around the bird baths at the same time. Welcome Swallows, Singing Honeyeaters and Weebills have nests completed or near completion while Red Wattlebirds and White-browed Babblers have been seen with nesting material. On the way in, drivers often need to give way to Chestnut Quail-thrush as they forage or the occasional Malleefowl as it saunters across the track.

In June, a short sea voyage had us marvelling at the effortless flight of 13 Yellow-nosed Albatross as they soared on the Eyre currents. Two Great Skuas were also sighted along with large numbers of Australasian Gannets. Raptors have been plentiful with Brown Falcons, Nankeen Kestrels and Wedge-tailed Eagles seen on most trips onto the plains. A Little Eagle gave us a brilliant display of its undulating flight followed by the unusual sight of a Black-shouldered Kite hovering over the roadhouse. On the beach Red-capped Plovers scamper through the seaweed and a few over-wintering Red-necked Stints are still to be seen. A Rock Dove (in this case a wayward racing pigeon) was seen with a Brown Goshawk in pursuit. Somehow it has evaded becoming a raptor's meal and has taken up residence near the house.

Atlassing continues on our various excursions. However, we cannot cover the area as much as we would like. Should you be heading off to the BA Campout why not have a break at Eyre. After a day's birding, return to the house for a ready-cooked meal and then relax around the cheery fire.

Places are still available on the remaining 1999 courses: Banding, Focus on Birds, Field Techniques as well as Christmas at Eyre. As the millenium draws to a close and celebrations are planned consider spending the New Year at Eyre, isolated from all the hubbub and Y2K bugs. Join us for Dinner on the Dunes as the sun sets for the last time this century, followed by Breakfast on the Beach, at dawn, to welcome the new century.

The Buy A Battery for Eyre (BABE) campaign has been launched. The goal is to raise sufficient funds, as soon as possible, to replace the very tired batteries for the solar power unit. To provide sufficient power we need 24

batteries priced at \$330 each. Any donations, small or large, will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged on a plaque in the powerhouse. Donors of the full cost of a battery will also, if they wish, have a battery named in their honour.

This is our penultimate contribution to *WA Bird Notes* as we will reluctantly leave in January for commitments which were delayed to enable us to spend a year at Eyre. Should you be interested in taking on the positions as Wardens, don't hesitate to contact us about what it entails.

Alex Bisgrove and Rob Stogdale

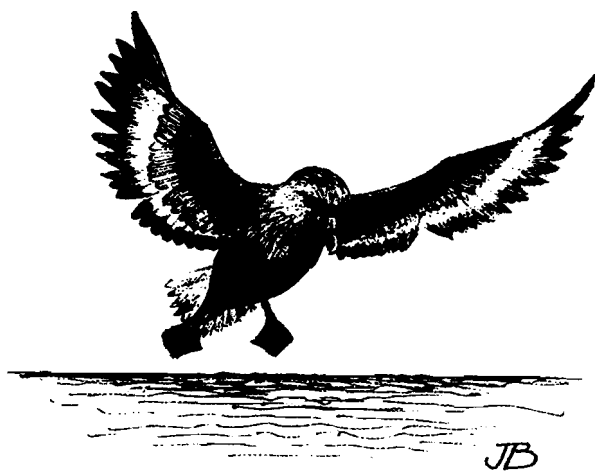
Excursion Reports

CARBUNUP CAMPOUT, Labour Day weekend, 27 February–2 March

During the long weekend at the end of February, 17 BAWAG members enjoyed a bush camp within the grounds of an area now known as Forest Rise Chalets near Carburnup. The chalets have been constructed in a secluded part of the 260 hectare estate which allows people to roam the pristine bush without disturbing the occupants.

The area consists of regrowth forest giving good cover for native birds and other animals. We noted different habitats ranging from swampy wetlands to tall standing timber and banksia woodlands through which we rambled. We were led by John Ashford who has been developing the area for the owners. A swamp area, together with a dam, is being developed to attract other species of birds.

It was a very hot weekend so most of our walks were confined to the early mornings and late afternoons. Apart from finding species of birds which one would expect to find in the SW, we noted six species of raptors including a Square-tailed Kite and two active Wedge-tailed Eagles'



While mainly coastal rather than a true seabird, the Great Skua is frequently seen during Pelagic trips out of Hillarys.

Drawing by Judy Blyth

nest. Parrots were plentiful with numerous Elegant Parrots and flocks of Western Rosellas. In all, 59 species were located during the weekend.

We hope to visit the area again during the nesting season and have been invited to do so by the owners.

Bryan Barrett

KENT STREET WEIR, WILSON, 15 May

Nineteen people attended this walk on a morning which saw a few showers, but stayed mostly fair. The heavy rains earlier in the week ensured that the Canning River was high and some of the areas were quite boggy. The Kent Street Weir divides the Canning River's brackish tidal water from the fresh water and there are therefore a variety of habitats for waterbirds. A recent revegetation program of the riverbanks should provide a further area for bushbirds. The river provides a good environment for waterbirds and especially large numbers of Dusky Moorhens were present on the freshwater side of the weir on the day of the walk.

The completion of new walkways enabled the group to do an entire circuit of the area and a total of 46 species was recorded in all.

Liz King

HILLARYS PELAGIC TRIP, 23 May

A fine day with an easterly breeze that made conditions a bit choppy well offshore. The morning was very good with good views of most birds, but the afternoon was very quiet except for a possible Green Turtle well out of range. There were eight pelagic species plus Great Skua, Arctic Jaeger and Australasian Gannet. The highlights were the large numbers of Soft-plumaged Petrels, Great-winged Petrels and Wilson's Storm-Petrels and a Cape Petrel. For details of future trips contact Frank O'Connor on:

foconnor@iinet.net.au
or (08) 9386 5694.

FLYNN ROAD, 30 May

Twenty-three people enjoyed a very pleasant outing in perfect winter birding conditions — cool, fine, still and sunny for most of the day.

Approximately an hour's drive from Perth, this is an interesting area of wandoo woodland which has been visited at least once a year, for most years between 1988 and 1999.

On this occasion three areas were visited, the first being an area along Goods Road where a small creek flows through. Wandoo is the predominant tree species, with an understorey of hakea and other shrubs. Thirty species were recorded in this area, including clear views for almost everybody, of Crested Shrike-tit, as well as Golden and Rufous Whistler, Hooded Robin and Rufous Tree-creeper. Although there was little flowering, White-naped and Yellow-plumed Honeyeater were seen. Western Spinebill was also heard, and both Spotted and Striated Pardalote were either seen and / or heard.

After a coffee break, the group moved on to a second area along Flynn Road. Again wandoo was the predominant species with sparse understorey, mostly of blackboy. The same creek flows through this area but there was little water in it at this time. Another eight species were added to the list here, the most interesting sightings being Varied Sittella, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Splendid Fairy-wren in breeding plumage and Singing Honeyeater. A real bonus was further sightings of Crested Shrike-tit, Western Yellow and Scarlet Robin were also seen.

Following lunch beneath the trees, the majority of people opted to continue to a small area of heathland and powder-bark wandoo on Abercorn Road. This area is bounded by farm paddocks on two sides. Flowering shrubs of One-sided Bottlebrush (*Calathamnus*) provided an unexpected bonus. A flock of Brown-headed Honeyeater were making the most of this food source. White-cheeked and Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, and Red Wattlebirds were also seen.

A satisfying count of 44 species rounded off the day. Thanks to Brian and Margery for their competent leadership, and for willingly sharing their extensive knowledge of the area.

Pam Agar

MOUNT GIBSON STATION CAMPOUT, 4-7 June

Mount Gibson Station is situated 76 km north of Wubin and was a very popular campout with 34 people attending. Several lodged at an old house while the majority camped at a large designated camping ground that was supplied with plentiful firewood, a drop toilet and wood-fired shower.

The camp ground was surrounded by bushland with a granite hill 100 m to the southern aspect of the camp ground. This area provided good birding with, among others, White-fronted Honeyeaters, Inland Thornbills, Crested Bellbirds and a pair of Chestnut Quail-thrush.

On Saturday morning the group split into two parties with one group venturing forth to investigate the area behind the station homestead where the only sighting of Mulga Parrots occurred for the weekend. The other group travelled east to Kurrajong Mill. In this bushland Redthroats, White-eared Honeyeaters, Brown Honeyeaters, White-fronted Honeyeaters and other common species were seen. After a late lunch back at camp, the whole group drove east to the 80 km long Lake Moore, that is rarely wet, however was full due to the recent rains. Here were seen four Hooded Plovers, many Red-capped Plovers, approximately five Red-necked Avocets, and several Australian Shelducks.

On Sunday the group again split into two, travelling north. One stop was at a Salmon Gum/mulga area with several Jacky Winters and a raucous pair of Major Mitchell Cockatoos that flew overhead. The "pink lake" was the destination for group two which yielded mainly bush birds in the surrounding bush land. Later we all met for lunch at Beanthiny Rock which was inhabited by White-browed Babblers and White-fronted Chats. After lunch most went for a walk along the top of this granite outcrop in a westerly direction.



Flynn Road wandoo woodland.
Drawing by Pam Agar

The weather was superb with sunny, windless days followed by very chilly nights; each morning we awoke to find ice on the windscreens. We were delighted to have a strong contingency of Albany and south coastal birders attending this camp which enabled all to catch up with each other.

A total of 69 species was seen and our thanks go to Clive and Wendy Napier for organising this very successful and popular campout.

Dee Smith

Note: David Smithdale has some photos of the campout on his website at:

<http://www.q-net.net.au/~smithdal/dls005.html>
until the end of September.

BURSWOOD OPEN SPACES, 16 June

Several "conglomerations" of Little Black Cormorants and a pair of Yellow-billed Spoonbills greeted the seven walkers who met near the Burswood Lake on Wednesday 16 June. The water levels in both the lake and river were high and correspondingly the bird species were lower than expected. In all we saw 29 species.

The sight of a Laughing Turtle-Dove quietly feeding next to a Spotted Turtle-Dove caused some comment as also did a Blue-billed Duck with two ducklings.

Thank you to Mary Vaughan for an enjoyable morning.

Molly Angus

HERDSMAN LAKE, 27 June

The usual 10 species of ducks were present on this day, including two pairs of Black Swans already either sitting on large nests or adding building material to them. While the Hoary-headed Grebes, which had been absent for some time were not to be found, the other two species of grebes were seen.

The Glossy Ibises seem to be at Herdsman all year round now. Perhaps they will establish a breeding colony some time in the future? On this day, 14 were counted.

One Long-billed Corella was positively identified. Let us hope it remains just one!

A New Holland Honeyeater, a "first" for leader John Blyth's Herdsman list, was spotted on the tallest branch of a heavily flowering *Hakea linearis* in a private garden on the Perth side of the channel by the new housing estate. While White-cheeked Honeyeaters are abundant in nearby Bold Park, it is curious that they have not made the move over into suitable remnant vegetation by the lake. The New Hollands are not to be found in Bold Park — and yet here was one making an appearance on this bird walk. (Some weeks earlier, we saw an Elegant Parrot in the same area — it seems to produce oddities!)

There were several pairs of Rufous Whistlers. Ten to 15 years ago, these and other insectivorous birds were largely absent from Herdsman. With the cessation of poisoning for Argentine Ants and the reestablishment of areas of bushland around the lake, these birds returned to the area. Willie Wagtails, Grey Fantails, Magpie-larks, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes have now all given the place their stamp of approval.

The delicate little Chestnut-breasted Mannikins were seen on the mown area of the horse paddock. A flock of 19 of these descendants from aviary escapes were counted. They seem to do little harm in the scheme of things.

The 16 or so people on this excursion enjoyed a lunchtime picnic together near the small 'Tennis Court Lake' near the Dodd Street/Herdsman Parade junction. Our checklist for the day amounted to 58 species. Then it was time to turn for home — with the truly stentorian calls of the numerous Clamorous Reed-Warblers still ringing in our ears.

Judy Blyth

LAKE MONGER, 10 July

Sixteen members appeared for a walk around Lake Monger on a fine but cool and overcast morning. It was strange to see the lake so empty of birdlife in the centre but with all the water lying around at present, hardly surprising.

Musk Ducks and Dusky Moorhen were the prominent species with a good number of Australasian Grebes. A large flock of Domestic Geese and the Muscovy and Mallard crowd were loafing around the "tourist strip" on Lake Monger Drive waiting for handouts.

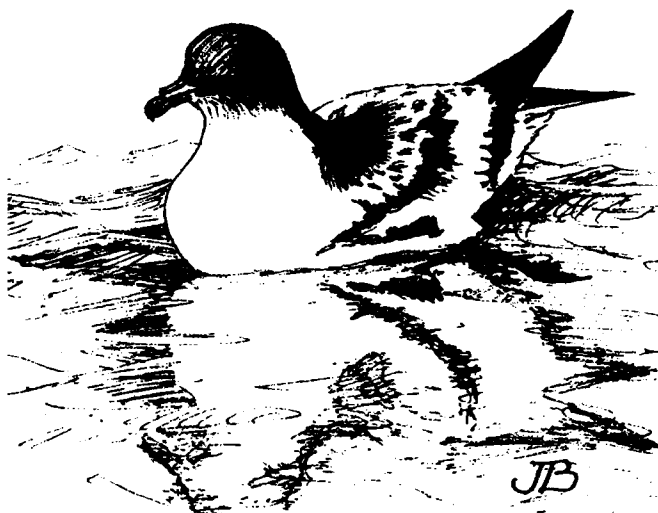
The rehabilitation area on the northern side seems to be progressing well. At present it is looking rather bare but the future looks hopeful. The flowering *Grevillea* bank is attracting a lot of honeyeaters — Brown, Singing and White-cheeked. A total of 37 species was recorded.

Norah Brockman

HILLARYS PELAGIC TRIP, 11 July

A trip with a good variety of species but very low numbers possibly due to the north easterly breeze. The highlight was an immature Bridled Tern which is unusual for winter, plus excellent photo opportunities of Southern Giant-Petrel and Cape Petrel. Other species were Soft-plumaged Petrel, Great-winged Petrel, Black-browed Albatross, Yellow-nosed Albatross, White-faced Storm-Petrel and Great Skua. For details of future trips contact Frank O'Connor on foconnor@iinet.net.au or (08) 9386 5694.

Frank O'Connor



The strikingly marked Cape Petrel is rarely seen inshore, but is reasonably common on many pelagic trips off Perth.

Drawing by Judy Blyth

BIBRA LAKE 25 JULY

In unseasonable bright sunshine and 23°C, 30 people met at Bibra Lake. With us were three visitors from Japan and a number of other new birders amongst the more experienced.

A gentle walk around the eastern end of the lake to the opposite shore and the two bird hides afforded us excellent views of Splendid Fairy-wrens with a number of males in full breeding plumage, Black-shouldered Kites mating on a nearby pylon and 3 Brown Goshawks. Whiskered Tern were seen over the lake from the boardwalk, some in breeding plumage. Nine species of duck were seen but none in abundance.

After the walk most of the participants went to a nearby bird sanctuary which cares for injured birds. We had close views of 2 Tawny Frogmouths, an opportunity to see the marked difference between Eastern and Little Corellas and the short bill of the Carnaby's Cockatoo. A Southern Giant-Petrel was recovering in a pen — a first for Bibra Lake! A dead Southern Brown Bandicoot was found on the eastern side of the lake and positively identified.

A thoroughly enjoyable Sunday morning stroll with both bush and water birds bringing the total to 55 species seen.

Sue Abbotts

Coming Events

Important note re campouts

Members anticipating attending campouts **must** notify the BA Office of the number in their party and when they will arrive. With this information we will be able to make sure the group will be together and when to expect people.

Saturday 4 September — Half-day Excursion, Lake Joondalup and Yellagonga Regional Park

Meet at 8:30 am at Neil Hawkins Park, in the car park at the end of Boas Avenue. Lots of bird species should be seen on and around this large lake.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Tuesday 7 September — Threatened Species Day/Month

There will be a whole range of activities statewide for September and early October. There is something you can do! Please call Sandra on 9387 6444, or email <info@wwf.org.au>.

Sunday 12 September — Full-day Excursion, Brookton Highway Reserve

Meet at 9:30 am at the junction of Strange Road and Brookton Highway (new Travellers Atlas Map 55 B3). This reserve is mainly wandoo woodland and contains many species of birds. Distance from Albany Highway turnoff is approximately 106 km.

Leader: John Ashford or Bryan Barrett

Sunday 12 September — *Spring Fling*, Perry House/Bold Park, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Hosted by the Wildflower Society — lots of beautiful native plants for sale. Wildflower and bird walks throughout the day.

Wednesday 15 September — Mid-week Excursion, Lowlands Estate, Serpentine

The owner, Midge Richardson, has again invited us to visit her large property adjacent to the Serpentine River where Golden Whistlers and Western Yellow Robins (not commonly seen on the coastal plain) have been sighted. Many other bushbirds should be nesting here in the spring and lots of waterbirds use the river.

Meet at the entrance to the property at 8:00 am. Lowlands is approximately one hour from Perth. Turn off Thomas Road, Oakford, into Kargotich Road, then travel south for 14 km to the T-junction with Lowlands Road (a No Through road). Turn right — the entrance to the property is approximately 3 km further on. Please arrive promptly as this is private property.

Leader: David James

Wednesday–Wednesday 15–22 September — Cape Arid National Park

Shapelle McNee will be coordinating surveys of Ground Parrots as part of the Birds Australia role in recovery of this endangered species. The objective is to find Ground Parrots in Cape Arid National Park, starting where they were last recorded on Poison Creek Road. We will be listening for Ground Parrots in the evenings. Participant will need to camp, and be self-sufficient. Be prepared for a mix of glorious weather and cold and windy conditions plus great coastal scenery and interesting birdwatching. Volunteer Ground Parrot listeners are most welcome! A follow up survey will be conducted in autumn 2000.

For details contact Shapelle McNee in Perth (08) 9457 5008 or Allan Rose at Cape Arid (08) 9075 0055.

Saturday 18 September — Breeding Birds Workshop, Half Day, Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, Wembley, 10:00 am to 12:30 pm

Have you ever looked at birds *knowing* that they were breeding, but been unable to find the nest? Dr Stephen Davies, well-known ornithologist, will lead this half-day Atlas workshop on breeding birds and how to find their nests. This will be a fascinating insight into one of the less well-known aspects of birdwatching. Nest-finding is not only the result of chance, it is also a skill that can be learnt, one that is bound to increase your enjoyment and knowledge of bushland and water birds. Morning tea is provided. Cost: \$5 to cover venue costs. There is no course limit. You may book and pay ahead at Perry House (Tel: 9383 7749) or pay on the day.

Sunday 19 September — Full-day Excursion, Yalgorup National Park

Meet at 9:30 am at the first information bay along the Preston Beach Road, a right-hand turn off the Old Coast Road, some 60 km south of Mandurah. This is the southern end of the Yalgorup National Park which should hold some interesting bushbirds. Hooded Plovers may also be seen at Lake Preston.

Leader: Frank Pridham

Monday 20 September Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Note: 3rd Monday due to the public holiday on the following Monday.

Robyn Phillimore of CALM and doing an MSc at Edith Cowan University, will be speaking on her area of research which is egrets and herons in general including those at the Perth Zoo.

Friday-Monday 24-27 September — Campout, Perenjori

This small northern wheatbelt town has got smaller over the years but is the centre of a spectacular wildflower area which should be at its best at the end of September. Thirty km due east of the town, farmland development ends and there are large salt lakes which, after the early rains this year, should have numbers of waterbirds. Around this area

are large areas of sparse eucalypt woodland which should have considerable numbers of nesting birds.

On the way home on Monday 27th we have been invited to visit the property of Alison and John Doley east of Coorow. There has been a large revegetation program for many years and the property is noted for nesting Short-billed Black-Cockatoos and many other species. It will be an ideal stop on the way back to Perth which can be reached easily in the afternoon.

Please make your own bookings at the Perenjori Caravan Park, phone 9973 1193, and advise the BA office of your intention to join the campout. Perenjori is approximately 348 km NE of Perth.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

Saturday–Monday 25–27 September — Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park Atlassing Project

Come birding in the Fitzie as part of the Birds Australia Atlas Project. The Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park aim to survey birds across this exciting and important reserve, and to repeat the surveys at six month intervals if this first one is a success. You may choose your own survey sites, or have them allocated or suggested to you. Beginners are welcome to accompany more experienced observers. Why not get a group of friends together for the first systematic bird survey of the Park in more than ten years and help put the birds of the Fitzgerald on the map this Spring.

Accommodation for the Jerramungup side of the Fitzgerald: Twertup Field Station (Nadine and Lindsay Brown, Tel 9835 5043, 4WD access, no caravans, suitable for a group); Qualup Homestead (private facility, 2WD and caravan access, Tel: 9837 4124); there are also caravan parks at Bremer Bay.

GPS units are not essential but may be borrowed from Birds Australia. Bookings are essential (Tel: 9383 7749).

Accommodation for the Hopetoun side of the Fitzgerald: Caravan parks in Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun. There is free bushcamping at Andy Chapman's near Moir Road on the Hopetoun side of the Park (Tel: 9838 1149).

Organiser/coordinator for Hopetoun side of Park: Andy Chapman (Tel: 9838 1149). Organiser for the Bremer Bay side of the Park: Barbara Miller (Tel: 9837 4190).

Sunday 3 October — Full-day Excursion, Wambyn Reserve, York

Meet at 9:00 am at The Lakes turnoff, corner of Great Eastern Highway and York Road.

Leader: Bryan Barrett.

Wednesday 6 October — Mid-week Walk, Ray Marshall Park (Blackadder Creek), Viveash

A morning's walk along the John George Trail which runs beside the Swan River, crossing Blackadder Creek. Meet at 8:30 am in the car park of the Ray Marshall Park. Go to the end of First Avenue, off Great Eastern Highway, just east of the Governor Stirling Senior High School.

Leader: Jan Rogers

Friday–Saturday 8–9 October — Campout, or Full-day Excursion, near Crossman, Shire of Wandering

The aim of this campout is to establish a number of Atlas sites at Bill and Sara Ladyman's bushland property. Their 150 hectare block, which features Wandoo and Jarrah/Marri woodland, adjoins Moramokining Reserve (only 115 km from the GPO). Some indoor accommodation is available for Friday night. You may come for the day only on Saturday if you wish. Contact Rod Smith (Tel 9447 3804) or the Birds Australia office (Tel 9383 7749) if you wish to attend, and a mud map will be sent to you.

Leader: Rod Smith.

Saturday–Sunday 9–10 October — Campout, Wubin–Dalwallinu Area

The North Central Malleefowl Preservation Group based in Wubin–Dalwallinu would like to invite all interested Birds Australia members to assist them with their annual Malleefowl Survey. A campout is proposed for 9–10 October. Your assistance will be most welcome with visits planned to Nugadong, Maya and Old Well Reserves.

The campout will involve a substantial amount of walking. Visitors are encouraged to bring strong boots, a compass, sharp eyes (for birds and wildflowers) and a good sense of humour. If you would like to participate, please contact:

Sandra McKenzie on (08) 9387 6444
or email: wwfperth@ozemail.com.au

Sunday 17 October — Half-day Excursion, Alfred Cove

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale. This is one of a series of outings to identify some of the waders that spend their summer in the southern hemisphere. Bring your telescope if you have one.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 24 October — Full-Day Excursion, Karakin Lake and Doopiter Swamp

Meet at 9:00 am at the entrance to the gravel pits on KW Road, which branches off Lancelin Road, some 7 km south of Lancelin (the gravel pits are about 300 m from the junction on the left-hand side).

We'll look at the heathland around the pit for Shy Heathwrens and fairy-wrens. White-backed Swallows have bred in the sand pits, as have Red-backed kingfishers.

We'll then proceed further along KW Road to Lake Karakin which, when wet, can hold many species of duck, waders, etc, some of which breed in the area. The grove at the southern end of the lake is sometimes the home of a very large colony of Nankeen Night Herons. After lunch we'll drive on to Doopiter Swamp. (For those of you who've been wondering, *Dupetor* is the genus name for the Black Bittern. Perhaps the names are connected.)

Be prepared to travel approximately 300 or more km from Perth.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Monday 25 October Extraordinary General Meeting and General Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Jim Lane of CALM works from the Busselton Office and will speak on "Birdlife and Management of the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands".

NOTE: The EGM will consider the proposed revised draft constitution (see page 3 for details).

Saturday–Sunday 30–31 October — Campout, Cherry Tree Pool, near Kojonup

From Perth, travel south on the Albany Highway, and turn left into Cherry Tree Pool Road, which is about 15 km north of Kojonup. You should see a sign that points to "Camp", but I will post RAOU signs as well. Follow these signs for about 15 km until you arrive at the camp.

We've booked dormitory-style accommodation at the Youth Camp, which includes toilets, hot showers, kitchen and fridges. You will need to be self-sufficient, as there are no shops nearby. Bring your own sleeping bag and pillow. Power is available for caravans.

People will be welcome from Friday night onwards. Cost is approximately \$3-\$5 per person per night.

Please phone the Birds Australia office on (08) 9383 7749 and let them know how many people are in your party and how long you'll want to stay.

About 130 species have been recorded for this area.

Leader: Wayne Zadow

NATIONAL BIRD WEEK

Sunday 31 October — Bird walks at Perry House

To mark the end of National Bird Week, free birdwalks will be conducted from Perry House at 8:00 am, and 4:00 pm. If you can help for any part of the day, or if you would like to do public bird walks in your local area in the preceding week, please contact Judy Blyth at 9381 6293.

Saturday 6 November — Half-day Excursion, Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale

Meet at 8:30 am at the first car park for Wungong Dam, at the end of Admiral Road (off Albany Highway), Bedfordale.

This is an excellent site for Red-eared Firetails and White-breasted Robins. Ninety-two different species have been seen at this site. Wedge-tailed eagles are again being sighted — since at least one bird was shot and fire destroyed their nest.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

Christmas Cards
Only \$1.00 each incl envelope

More stock available from our Perry House office or from the Combined Charities Card Shop, Perth

Sunday 14 November — Half-day Excursion, Ellis Brook Reserve, Gosnells

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Gosnells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin.

This interesting site for bush birds, close to Perth, may have some species not often seen in the metropolitan area.

Leader: Les Harris

Monday 15 November — New Members' Night, State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

See page 21 for details.

Thursday 18 November — Mid-week Walk, Alfred Cove

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast) off Burke Drive, Attadale. An opportunity to see the waders soon after their arrival from the northern hemisphere. Bring your telescopes.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Sunday 21 November — Full-day Excursion, Walyunga National Park

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park at the end of Walyunga Road (off Great Northern Hwy, Upper Swan, near Bungarah Pool). Please be advised that there is a park entrance fee.

The National Park lies along the Darling Scarp. The Avon River bounds one part of the planned walk, and there are some good stretches of Wandoo. We should see a good variety of birds.

Leader: Clive Nealon

Monday 22 November Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Professor Brian Collins, Dean of the Faculty of Science, Curtin University, and a former President of the then Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, will speak on "Nectar-feeding birds of Australia, Africa and America".

Sunday 28 November — Half-day Excursion, Thomson's Lake, Beeliar

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park off Russell Road, between Pearse and Hammond Roads. A good area for bushbirds, waders, and waterbirds.

Leader: Dee Smith

Sunday 5 December — Full-day Excursion, Lake McLarty, Pinjarra

Meet at 7:30 am! at the gate into the Lake McLarty Reserve — look for the BA sign. Travel on the South West Highway through Pinjarra, turning right along the Old Bunbury Road (5 km south of Pinjarra), then right into Mills Road (fourth road). Continue along Mills Road for approximately 10 km until you see the BA sign.

Take wellington boots/old shoes, sun hats, insect repellent, water and telescopes.

There should be a variety of waders at the lake, as well as many water and bush birds.

Leader: Colin Davis

**Saturday 11 December — Full-day Excursion,
Yanchep National Park**

We have been asked to do regular surveys of the birds in the recreational areas of the park. Meet in the park at 9:30 am. At the entrance gate say that you are a BA volunteer and there will be no charge. Turn left at the first roundabout and meet in the car park on the right-hand side, near the park office. Look for the BA sign.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

**Wednesday 15 December — Mid week Walk, Full-day
Excursion, Amarillo Pool, Baldvis**

Meet at 9:00 am at entrance to Amarillo Farm on Serpentine River. Travel south on Mandurah Road, turning left into Paganoni Road. Travel several kilometres then turn right into Vine Road.

We will search for waders along the mudflats of the river. Long trousers and boots or wellingtons are recommended — snakes have been seen in the area. Hat, insect repellent and water should be carried. Bring lunch.

Another area will be looked into in the afternoon if necessary.

Leader: Les Harris

**Sunday 19 December — Half-Day Excursion, Webb's
Lease, Jarrahdale**

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park.

Travel from Armadale on the South West Highway. Turn left into Jarrahdale Road. Go through Jarrahdale. After approximately 5.5 km, turn right into Acacia Road (the next right turn past Blue Rock Road). Keep to the left to get to the carpark.

This is a new area, where Red-eared Firetails, White-breasted Robins and Red-winged Fairy-wrens are regularly seen.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

Sunday 19 December — Christmas Function

A barbecue will be held on Sunday 19 December commencing at 6:30 pm at Perry House. BYO meat and drinks — all members welcome.

**Monday 24 January 2000 Meeting — State Tennis
Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm**

Andrew Schmitz, manager of the Karakamia Sanctuary, Chidlow, will speak on "Management of the Fauna of Paruna and Karakamia Sanctuaries".

Sunday 30 January — Mid summer wader count

See story elsewhere for details and inserted form to register your interest.

**Monday 28 February AGM and Meeting — State
Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm**

Sandra McKenzie, head of the Threatened Species Network/WWF in Perth, will speak on aspects of her work.

**NOMINATIONS ARE INVITED FROM MEMBERS
FOR POSITIONS ON THE COMMITTEE.**

Crossword Answers No 18

ACROSS

1 lesser, 4 colony, 7 Garganey, 8 Asia, 10 meals, 11 path, 12 probe, 14 decorate, 17 eastern, 18 spots, 20 grebe, 21 cloud, 22 tag, 23 wedgebill, 24 rat.

DOWN

1 lifespan, 2 search, 3 regal, 4 construct, 5 lay, 6 false, 9 sparse, 10 Megapodes, 13 latitude, 14 dart, 15 twilight, 16 dabble, 18 seed, 19 suitor, 20 gape.

Wildflower Society

SPRING FLING

Perry House — Bold Park

**Sunday, 12 September
9:30 am to 4:00 pm**

Wildflower displays and bird walks every hour



FALCON TOURS

2000 & 2001 Program (1999 tours full)

KIMBERLEY BOAT TOUR

10 days late June 2000 dates and cost
to be confirmed August.
Expressions of interest welcome.

We travel again along the remote western and stunning Kimberley coast visiting rarely visited gorges. Our destination, the Prince Regent, Hunter River and Lancelotti Islands. This tour will entail some walking in remote and rugged country.

SOUTH WEST BIRDING & WILDFLOWER TOUR
11 days fully accommodated. 27 Aug-6th Sept 2000

Simon not only knows where to get the WA bird endemics but has written a successful guide to the wildflowers of the south west now in its 2nd edition, so come and enjoy both wonderful subjects. \$1980.

KENYA TOUR 20 day January 2001. \$7760.

Why do I keep going back to Kenya, my 5th visit there, well it's the beautiful country, great birding and best guides. As one client wrote, "I had my first bird tour there in 1990 this tour was just so much better".

This year we are staying longer in Kenya visiting a few little visited parks like Tsavo and the coast. We will drive 9000ft up Mt Kenya in the cloud rainforest getting those rare mountain species. Not only did we get a high bird count but we also saw 58 species of animals on the last tour.

Regarding why we travel in January every time, well it's simply the best time with all the Palearctic migrants down and contrary to belief the weather is great, no rain and mild to warm weather as we are on average 4000 ft up.

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South Fremantle WA 6162
Ph: 08 9336 3882 Fax: 08 9336 3930
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