

Western Australian Bird Notes

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

No 93 March 2000

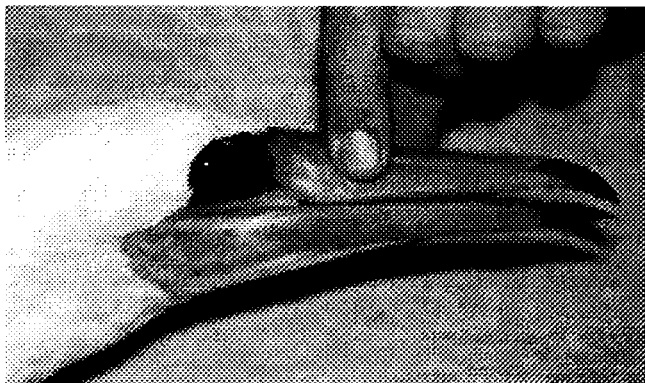
ABBOTT'S BOOBY: FIRST RECORD FOR WA

On Friday 17 December 1999 a phone call was made to Broome Bird Observatory about a strange bird, possibly an albatross, sitting in a tree at Eco Beach Holiday Resort. From the first description given, I managed to identify the bird as being a booby and, with lots of white on the bird, most likely a Masked Booby. Dan O'Sullivan, the fisherman who found the bird, said that he was familiar with Masked Boobies but this just didn't look right.

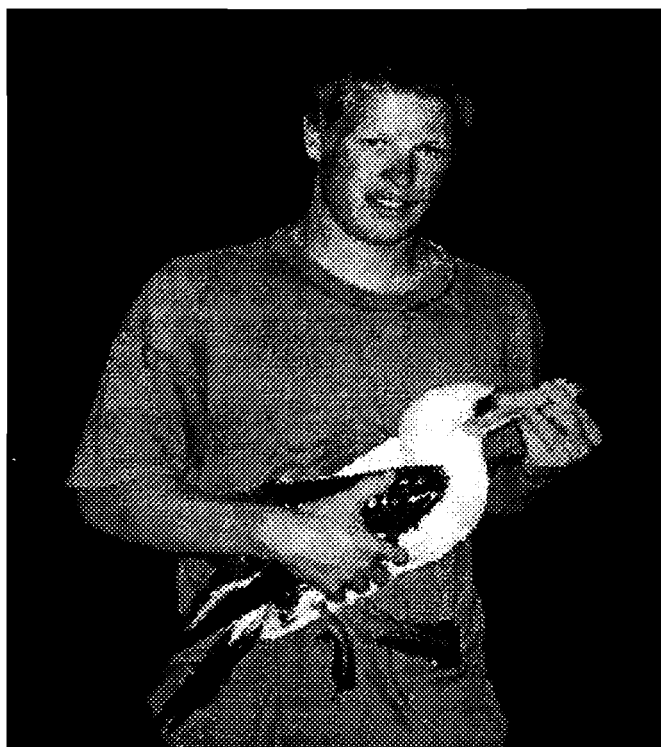
I then started thinking of other possibilities.

Over the past few days two tropical cyclones, John and Ilsa, had moved towards the North West of Australia, having originated near Christmas Island. I explained to Dan that as a long shot it could be the rare and endangered Abbott's Booby, which as far as I knew hadn't yet been recorded on the Australian mainland. Due to the cyclone having originated near Christmas Island, where the sole population of these boobies live, the chances of the bird being this species increased dramatically.

I asked Dan if he could have a closer look at the bird and see if it had a black tail, all black wings and blue feet.



Head of Abbott's Booby at Broome
Photograph by Adrian Boyle



Adrian Boyle holding the Abbott's Booby
that turned up at Broome.

He came back to the phone sounding very excited, answering "Yes" to all of the above questions.

I replied that I might see him there in a minute! I picked up Chris Hassell and we headed out to Eco Beach.

As soon as we saw the booby there was no mistaking what it was — no other bird has those markings. The bird was an adult male Abbott's Booby. We took loads of

photographs and Dan showed us how the bird eats the live fish he had caught.

The bird was in great condition considering where it had just been blown from — it just needed to put on some weight and it would be fine. Because Dan was a fisherman, this seemed the ideal place for an Abbott's Booby to be blown ashore!

The booby was looked after well and was flown back to Christmas Island on Christmas Eve.

I am sure it was a Christmas that the booby will never forget.

Adrian Boyle
Assistant Warden
Broome Bird Observatory



Abbott's Booby at Broome
Photograph by Adrian Boyle

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 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)

Southern Fulmar – 1, 8/11/99, beachwashed at Eyre (Dundas) – EBO

Blue Petrel – 1, beachwashed, 26/8/99, 4 km W of Guilderton (Gingin) – CR (clearly identifiable from photos of dead bird)

White-chinned Petrel – 3, 13/10/99, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) – RP

Australasian Gannet – 2, 3/1/00, Geraldton (Geraldton) – DC

White-necked Heron – 1, Gibb Road Swamp (Armadale), 6 on Thomson's Lake (Cockburn) and 3 on Twin Bartram Swamp, all observed within a few hours of each other on 28/12/99 – MaB, MBa

Buff-banded Rail – 3 adults and 2 chicks, 11/1/00, Kogolup Lake (Cockburn) – MS

Red-necked Phalarope – 1, 3/11/99, Rottnest Island – IS * 1, 30/1/00, Rottnest Island – CN

Pacific Golden Plover – 5, 19/12/99, Woodman Point (Cockburn) – MS

Little Ringed Plover – 1, 21/11/99, Pearse Lakes & Government House Lake, Rottnest Island – FO

Lesser Sand Plover – 2, 19/3/99, Woodman Point (Cockburn) – IS * 1, 21/11/1999, Pearse Lakes Rottnest Island – FO

Hooded Plover – 41, 23/12/99, Pink Lake (Esperance) – DC

Pacific Gull – 1 immature, 30/1/00, Dawesville Cut (Murray) – BG

Franklin's Gull – 1, 3-4/1/00, Kalbarri (Northampton) – DC (details elsewhere in this issue)

Gull-billed Tern – 40+ adults, several downy dependent young, some adults apparently brooding, 13/11/99, Durdebin Farm (31° 23' 18", 117° 22' 38"), approx 30-35 km NE of Cunderdin, on a small island in salt lake in farmland (Cunderdin) – CG, MG * 2, 18/1/00, Herdsman Lake (Stirling) – MaB, MBa

Fairy Tern – 10, 28/12/99, Pelican Point (Nedlands) – MaB, MBa (presence here not unusual, but courtship behaviour and copulation were observed)

Crested Pigeon – 3, 17/11/99, and 2, 25/11/99, near sewer plant, Anniebrook (Busselton) – RP

Cockatiel – 200, 31/12/00, Bodallin, near Southern Cross (Yilgarn) – HK per BN

Purple-crowned Lorikeet – about 3, early Sep 99, Catby (Dandaragan) – MBa (unusual in this area)

Regent Parrot – 7, 31/12/99, Vasse (Busselton) – RP (further south than normal for this species on the west coast)

Barking Owl – 1, 6/6/99, Julimar Conservation Park (Toodyay) – JD

Rainbow Bee-eater – c. 40, 1845 hrs on 8/2/00, Lancaster St, Dianella (Stirling) – RD (flock, spiralling and circling higher and higher, before heading off northwards; possible early departures for warmer climes?)

Striated Pardalote – 200+ in a flock, c. 1400 hrs, 21/1/00, Christmas Tree Well, Brookton Highway (Beverly) – RD (flock settled for a few minutes in the

trees around the well before all moving off again, heading north, twittering persistently)

Crimson Chat – 3 +, 17/10/99, Valema Farms, approx 12 km WSW of Corrigin (at 32° 23' 25", 117° 42' 38") – (Corrigin) CG, MG (further south than usual).

Southern Scrub-robin – 1, 4/10/99, 70 km NE of Wubin (Perenjori) – MC

Grey Currawong – 1+, 31/1/00, Karanga Street, Falcon (adjacent to W side of Peel Inlet) (Murray) – AHB, MBa (unusual in this area)

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

Freckled Duck – 2, 2/11/99, Lake Gregory (Halls Creek) – JS

Laughing Turtle-Dove – 1+, 5/1/00, Carnarvon (Carnarvon) – DC

Grey Honeyeater – 2 plus fledgling, 26/10/99, 7 km W of Yalgoo (Yalgoo) – FO * 1, 27/10/99, Nallan Station, near Cue (Cue) – FO

Yellow Wagtail – 1, 5/1/00, Chinaman's Pool, Carnarvon (Carnarvon) – DC (details elsewhere in this issue; this is only the second record between the Pilbara and the south-west)

KIMBERLEY

Green Pygmy-goose – 2, 31/12/1999, Wandarrrie sewage ponds (Argyle Diamond Mine) (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – FO (1st sighting here since September 1994)

Garganey – 1, 28/11/99, wetland north of Broome (Broome) – CH, AB (first record for 7 years)

Buff-banded Rail – 1, 16/01/00, Junction Pool (Broome) – BBO/AB

Spotless Crake – 1, 4/12/1999, Nimilaica (Broome) – BBO/AB

Gallinago snipe – up to 4, all months, Broome Sewage Works and wetlands (Broome) – CH, AB

Pectoral Sandpiper – 1, 27/12/99, Junction Pool (Broome) – CH, AB (uncommon near Broome)

Banded Lapwing – 1, 30/9/99, Broome Port (Broome) – PJ

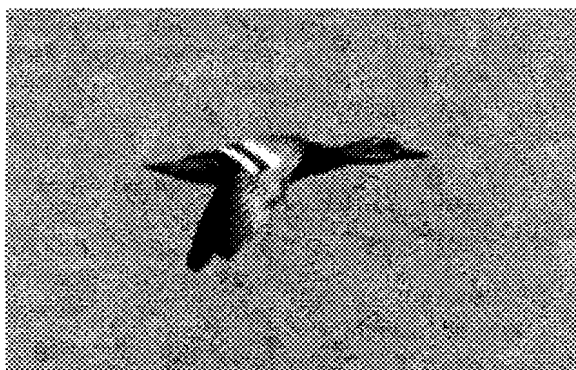
Roseate Tern – up to 20, Nov-Dec 99, Broome Port (Broome) – CH (uncommon near Broome)

Little Tern – 12/99 – 1/00, nesting, Coconut Well (Broome) – BBO/AB

Common Noddy – 3, 16/12/99, Broom Port (Broome) – CH, AB (rare on mainland at Broome)

Flock Bronzewing – 1, 8/11/99, Taylors Lagoon (Broome) – CH, AB (rare near Broome)

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo – 1, 2/1/00, near Argyle Diamond Mine Village (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – FO (rare passage migrant - very few records for Kimberley; also new species for Argyle – URRF submitted for Atlas)



Garganey seen near Broome in Nov 1999

Photo by Adrian Boyle

Common Koel – 1, 11/11/1999, near Leonard George (Broome) – BBO/AB * 3+ (1seen, 2+ heard), 31/12/1999, Limestone sewage ponds, Argyle Diamond Mine (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – FO

Fork-tailed Swift – 200, 11/11/99, near Tunnel Creek (Derby – West Kimberley) – CH, AB (first for season)

Purple-crowned Fairy-wren – 5, 12/11/99, Fitzroy Crossing (Derby – West Kimberley) – CH, AB (west edge of range)

Western Gerygone – 1, 17/11/1999, caught in mist net at Cable Beach (Broome) – BBO/AB (rare non-breeding visitor from the south)

Orange Chat – 4+, 1/11/99, near Lake Gregory (Halls Creek) – JS (at northern limit – see article elsewhere in this issue)

Yellow Chat – 30, 27/12/99, bore on Roebuck Plains (Broome) – CH, AB

White-browed Robin – 1, 12/11/99, Fitzroy Crossing (Derby – West Kimberley) – CH, AB (west edge of range)

Star Finch – 2, 31/12/99, *Typha* reeds along watercourse near Argyle Diamond Mine (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – FO (new species for Argyle list)

Pictorella Mannikin – 14, 11/11/99, south of Tunnel Creek (Derby – West Kimberley) – CH, AB

Barn Swallow – up to 2500, 20/01/00, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – BBO/AB

Red-rumped Swallow – c. 100, 12/99, near Kununurra (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – MT, GG, ANS *et al.* (specimen identified as *japonica*) * 1, 20/12/99, wetland north of Broome (Broome) – CH, AB (first

Broome record for 8 yrs) (see details elsewhere in this issue)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Red-rumped Swallow – 3 with 4 Barn Swallows, 18/11/99 – MCa, PC

OBSERVERS

AB = Adrian Boyle
AHB = Allan Burbidge
ANS = Tony Start
BBO = Broome Bird Observatory
BG = Bob Goodale
BN = Brenda Newbey
CG = Cheryl Gole
CH = Chris Hassell
CN = Clive Napier
CR = Chris Ros
DC = David Cooper
EBO = Eyre Bird Observatory
FO = Frank O'Connor
GG = Gordon Graham
HK = H. Kent

IS = Ian Standing
JD = John Dell
JS = Jonny Schoenjahn
MaB = Mandy Bamford
MBa = Mike Bamford
MC = Margery Clegg
MCa = Mike Carter
MG = Martin Gole
MS = Marcus Singor
MT = Michael Todd
PC = Peter Crabtree
PJ = Phil Joy
RD = Rob Davis
RP = Ross Payton

BIRDS AUSTRALIA RARITIES COMMITTEE (BARC)

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

240 Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* Broome, WA, 23/1/98

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sirs

A plea through you to the powers that be, to allow bird-lovers to remove feral 'laughing' kookaburras from the south-west. They are helping feral cats and foxes to decimate indigenous wildlife in some areas, and the mad CALM policy is to fine the good people who manage to get rid of any of these nasty predators against which our lovely wrens, robins, lizards, etc, have no defence.

It's time to act.

LF

Dear Sirs

On 16 January, we observed a Black-shouldered Kite at the top of a tree on Penguin Island. The kite had caught a young Bridled Tern and was trying to pluck it while swaying around in the top of the tree. Its task was made very awkward as it was being mobbed by Silver Gulls and Bridled Terns. Eventually, the kite dropped its victim and flew off.

Bob Clayson and Mike Potter
Members of RSPB in UK

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:

Proposal to incorporate — following a public notice placed in *The West Australian* on 3 November 1999, the application and draft constitution have been lodged with

the Ministry for Fair Trading and advice is awaited from this department.

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

Suburban Bird Survey — continuing, with an estimated 250 000 records now entered in the database.

Education/Public Relations:

- National Bird Week — public walks took place on 27 October at Wireless Hill, led by Allan and Rose Jones,

Birds Australia-WA Group

Office, Perry House

71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat WA 6014

Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 12.30 pm
Telephone: (08) 9383 7749
Facsimile: (08) 9387 8412
Email: birdswa@starwon.com.au

Birds Australia Home Page:
<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au>

Chairman: Clive Nealon
35 Hilarion Road, Duncraig WA 6023
Tel: (08) 9448 5921
E-mail: clivenealon@bigpond.com

Joint Editors: John Blyth
Tel: (08) 9405 5100 (w)
Tel: (08) 9381 6293 (h)
Fax: (08) 9306 1641 (w)
E-mail: johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au

Allan Burbidge
Tel: (08) 9405 5109 (w)
Tel/Fax: (08) 9306 1642 (h)
Fax: (08) 9306 1641 (w)
E-mail: austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au

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 June 2000 Issue
1 May 2000 at Perry House

Advertising Rates

1/4 page	\$30.00
1/2 page	\$50.00
Full page	\$90.00

and on 31 October at Perry House led by John and Judy Blyth.

- displays were prepared for the Birds on Farms report launch on 24 November and the Donnybrook Library resource centre;
- during November, Judy gave talks at the Selby Recreation Centre and to Wider Vision, a group in Scarborough, with a slide show of local birds.

New Members' Night, 15 November — about 31 members attended and received information on WA projects and activities.

Grants Sub-committee — the sub-committee continues to submit applications for funding of projects including —

- State Government Community Grant jointly with CALM for a Biological Resources Survey of Salt-affected Areas of the WA Wheatbelt, in conjunction with the Atlas Project, Coordinator Cheryl Gole;
- Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo project with applications to (1) Gordon Reid Foundation — to establish a survey of Carnaby's breeding sites 2000 season and (2) National Heritage Trust (jointly with CALM) — continuation of GRF survey (2001-02) — monitoring breeding 2001-02; encouraging protection of breeding sites, feeding habitats;
- Clean Seas grant (NHT) \$65 000 — a joint project of BAWAG and TSN being a continuation of the Hooded Plover project, with one survey proposed for the summer and one for the winter;
- Ground Parrot program — the final survey will be carried out at Cape Arid in May and the brochure is being prepared by Shapelle McNee.

Ken Hurst Park Committee — Clive Napier is our delegate to this committee which will be preparing a plan for the public use of this area in Melville as a nature reserve.

Trading Table — Valerie Hemsley and Clive Nealon are coordinating sales of bird cards, and Liz Walker has been looking after sales of field guides, books, CDs, etc.

Positions of Office Manager and Librarian — Liz Walker has very kindly offered to take over as Office Manager from Max Bailey as from 1 March. This leaves a vacancy for the Librarian position and Sue Mather is stepping into the job for which she is admirably suited, having been a librarian during her career years.

Database of WA Birds ("DABWA") — this has been a dBase program since inception. The Committee feels it's time to have it converted to MS Access to facilitate use by the Perry House volunteers and a consultant has been commissioned for this purpose.

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

GST — the National Office is setting up procedures to be followed by the regional groups.

Unusual sightings "Bush Telegraph" — Sue Abbotts is coordinating the setting up of a system to enhance the reporting of unusual sightings and to improve the dissemination of information — see item under Notices for details.

Annual General Meeting, 28 February — we will have at least two vacancies on the 2000 Committee and trust

that by the time this newsletter is received, new officebearers will have been appointed.

Clive Nealon
WA Group Chairman

LIBRARY REPORT

The following publications have been accessioned since the last report:

- Draft Regional Assessment of the Central Wheatbelt, August 1999
- CALM Annual Report, 1998-9
- *Flyway*, Friends of Broome Bird Observatory newsletter, 1/99 and 2/99, December 1999
- *Bush Heritage News*, Tasmania, Winter 1999
- RSPB Birds UK, Winter 1998, Summer 1999
- *Naragebup News*, Rockingham Regional Environment Centre newsletter, Issue 10 January 2000
- *Malaysian Naturalist*, March, June and December 1998
- Lake Mealup Preservation Society Newsletter, Vol 12, No 4, October 1999
- *The Tattler*, East-Australasian Flyway newsletter for Australasian Wader Study Group, No 21, October 1999 and No 22, January 2000
- Cumberland Bird Observers Club Newsletter, Vol 21, Nos 2 & 3, September-October & November-December 1999
- CALM News, September-October, November-December 1999
- *Malleefowl Matters*, Malleefowl Preservation Group newsletter, No 21, November 1999
- *Galah*, Birds Australia in-house newsletter, Nos 39-41, October-December 1999
- *The Swan Newsletter*, Vol 2, Issue 3, October 1999
- *The Bristler*, Barren Grounds Bird Observatory newsletter, Spring Issue, October 1999
- *The Bird Observer*, Bird Observers Club newsletter, Nos 802-803, November-December 1999
- *Boobook*, Australasian Raptor Association newsletter, Vol 19(2), November 1999
- *Wingspan*, Birds Australia newsletter, Vol 9, No 4, December 1999
- *Emu*, Birds Australia journal, Vol 99, Part 4, December 1999
- *Landscape*, Wildlife Magazine, Vol 15, No 2, Summer 2000
- *Rangeflash*, Issue 9, December 1999
- *Ecoplan News*, Issue 32, Summer 1999-2000
- Swan Avon Catchment Group Information Sheet No 1/2000
- Rotamah Island Bird Observatory Newsletter, Issue 19, December 1999
- *Riverview*, Swan River Trust newsletter, December 1999

Liz Walker
Librarian

BIRDS AUSTRALIA-WA GROUP

Birding Opportunities

WA Bird Notes contains the complete itinerary for all organised **birdwalks** and **campouts**. Typically the birdwalk outings occur each weekend, for either a halfday or a full day's walk, and also during the week halfday walks are held. Campouts are held throughout the year, usually to take advantage of long weekends. If you intend to attend a campout, you are asked to contact the Perry House office to register your intention.

Details are available at the office for those who would like to visit either the

- **Eyre Bird Observatory**, on the Great Australian Bight, or
- **Broome Bird Observatory**

Both observatories offer the opportunity for good birding, and also run courses covering various aspects of birding and other natural history subjects.

Armchair Birding is available through Videos, Tapes and Books available from our library at Perry House. The office is open between 9:30 am and 12:30 pm Monday to Friday.

The **Suburban Bird Survey**, a survey specifically covering birds in the metropolitan area — especially those in your garden — has been running for more than three years, and you are encouraged to submit your records.

Please contact Clive Nealon.

The **Nest Record Scheme** is a continuing collection of breeding records collected from anywhere in the state. Details can be obtained from the office.

The second **Atlas of Australian Birds** is a nationwide survey of our birds that is being conducted over a four-year period. The more observers that take part, the greater our knowledge of our birds and their whereabouts. Please help out by submitting your observations.

For information, please contact Cheryl Gole.

The **Database of WA Birds** is a collection of observations submitted by our members from sites all around WA. The data collected is available on request for a variety of uses. Please fill in a data card for all outings you make and send it to the office where it will augment the data already recorded.

We also assist with official **Research Surveys**, specific to certain species or groups of species. Those currently active are:

- **Hooded Plover survey**contact Phyllis Bentley
- **Wader survey**contact Colin Davis
- **Ground Parrot project**..... contact Shapelle McNee

Members' Contributions

DWINDLING BIRD NUMBERS IN A METROPOLITAN GARDEN

During the 1978-1982 Bird Atlas Survey in a metropolitan garden in Wembley, over 35 species of birds would be recorded each year but today less than 20 years later that number has been reduced to around 20 species and these species are greatly reduced in numbers except for Rainbow Lorikeets, corellas and ravens. Species such as the Laughing Turtle-dove and the Singing Honeyeater regularly nested often two or three times a year, producing usually two young a season, with both surviving. Juvenile birds of species such as Red Wattlebirds were regularly fed in our trees and shrubs.

During the early 1980s we owned a cat that slept inside on our beds. Yes, he did occasionally kill a bird and brought it into our kitchen — perhaps three times a year. Cats are predators and always will be. They are territorial and guard their territory. We now have had no cat for 15 years and our property has been without a feline guard. Our garden is overrun by five neighbouring cats on the prowl — on the ground we see at least every two weeks a patch of telltale feathers, usually turtle-dove, Singing Honeyeater or Port Lincoln Parrot.

Twelve months ago was our last nesting record of Singing Honeyeaters with two fledglings in a nest in the almond tree 5 m above ground. But alas one morning on investigating alarm calls from the parents there was a male cat, tail curled around a slender branch of the tree, chewing up the second of the fledglings.

Pet cats and dogs provide companionship, especially for the older generation. Cats as pets are important for a child's emotional and social development. But how we look after our cats may influence how much damage they do to populations of birds. We need to prevent our domestic cats getting bored. Perhaps children/adults no longer stimulate our cats with ball games, etc. Perhaps the commercial tinned food is too high in protein and energy giving the cat more energy to expend on its killer instincts? Is the male with high testosterone levels the more efficient killer? Should all male pet cats be mandatorily sterilised not only to cut down reproduction and the threat of more feral cats, but also to cut down on the 'hunting-killer instinct'?

Most importantly, we should keep our cats inside, preferably all the time, but certainly at night.

Our garden is very dense and is never without flowers both native and exotic. Up to the 1980s it could well be referred to as a natural aviary. But alas today the visiting bird species are less than 60% and the numbers of those species only around 25%. Some species may have dwindled because of the disappearance of bush (tree) corridors and others hopefully have managed to find safer nesting areas away from the marauding cat?

M H Bremner

THE MORNING AFTER

The morning following the BAWAG BBQ was cool and clear after the heavy rain on 19 December 1999. I was out and about doing my suburban bird survey. The little lake on the corner of Jon Sanders Drive and Herdsman Parade is where this interesting incident took place.

I could see some Yellow-rumped Thornbills in the distance and could hear some Silvereyes, so I headed in their direction. On closer examination I found Silvereyes flying up to the lower branches of a pine tree and back to the ground again, behaving like Yellow-rumped Thornbills.

I then noticed that the tops of the long grass in the shade of the pine tree had large drops of water on them. The Silvereyes were 'bathing' in them. They were actively opening their wings and fluttering so that even the undersides of their wings were wet. This continued until all the water drops on the shaded long grass were used up and then the birds flew away.

Now I know why some people call bouts of rain 'showers'. There had been plenty on 19 December 1999.

Claire Gerrish

BIRDING ON LORD HOWE ISLAND

Early in November 1999 I spent a week on Lord Howe Island, a beautiful place which is actually the remains of the rim of an ancient extinct volcano. It is reached by a little less than a two-hour flight from Sydney. My visit coincided with the peak period for many of the birds that nest there before flying to more northerly regions for the winter. The lovely White Terns were everywhere, but mostly around the settlement where the tall trees grow. They liked to rest in the Norfolk Island pines, but preferred a different species of tree, also with horizontal branches of no great width, on which to lay their single eggs, often at quite low levels. Since they don't build nests they can be vulnerable at times of gale force winds and unfortunately this did happen one night and some eggs and chicks were casualties. One newly hatched chick which survived was being raised outside a shop, on a branch less than two metres above tables where customers ate their take-aways. These terns were beautiful to watch when flying, usually in pairs, constantly wheeling and changing direction in perfect unison. As they passed overhead their wing and tail feathers looked translucent.

Sooty Terns were also present in large numbers and when not flying could be seen resting and nesting on grassy slopes.

Red-tailed Tropicbirds favoured the hundred metre high Malabar Cliffs at one end of the island as their nesting area, so getting to see them required a rather strenuous uphill walk, but it was well worth it for the spectacular views from the top, as well as the birds.

Common Noddies were gathering dried seaweed and other material at the extreme end of Ned's Beach before flying around the adjacent rocky headland to a shrub-covered hillside where much nest building was taking place.

Two species of Shearwaters, Flesh-footed and Wedge-tailed, had lots of burrows all over the island. When it was almost dark each evening they could be seen flopping rather clumsily on to land before scurrying into their holes.

A walk to Mutton Bird Point ended at a viewing platform that overlooked a flat-topped island where many Masked Boobies were also nesting. I missed seeing Providence Petrels as they had just left, having finished their breeding, and Grey Ternlets, as the bay they favoured was not easy to get to.

Many other species of birds were constantly to be seen around our resort. A pair of Golden Whistlers lived in the surrounding trees and were hardly ever silent, while Emerald Doves and Buff-banded Rails often wandered through the garden. Masked Lapwings and Cattle Egrets in breeding plumage were in nearby paddocks, as also were several species of waders. Whimbrels, Bar and Black-tailed Godwits, Grey and Golden Plovers and Ruddy Turnstones seemed to spend more time there than on the beaches. Another favourite spot for these waders was the grassed areas surrounding the airport runway. Purple Swamphens liked this place as well, as there was a small lake nearby.

A walk to Little Island at the foot of the two mountains at one end of the island brought a meeting with the flightless Lord Howe Island Woodhen. This once almost extinct bird, though still not common, seems to be doing well now, following elimination of its animal predators and a captive breeding program. The one I saw was not at all fazed by my close presence and calmly continued scratching among the leaf litter as I photographed.

The bird list for the island is not huge and I did not see all of them, but at that time of the year they are there in great numbers and made my visit a most enjoyable experience.

Mavis Norgard

SLATY-BACKED THORNBILL SOUTH OF EXPECTED RANGE

Date: 5 November 1999.

Location: latitude 30° 14' 05" longitude 121° 55' 07", about 3 m S of Binti Binti Rocks, Eastern Goldfields.

A pair of birds was seen in moderately thick mixed acacia/patchy mallee covered sand plain. I followed the birds and obtained views over 10 minutes with Leica 10x42 binoculars in sunny morning light.

Features seen and recorded at the time were: thornbill with dark reddish eye, distinctly grey head and back, length-wise dark fine striations on crown, markedly darker, somewhat brownish primaries compared to grey wing coverts. The rump was a pale rufous colour and the birds did not cock their tail.

Their behaviour was unlike that of Chestnut-rumped Thornbills. One only once went to the ground; they spent most of their time in the mid-height of bushes, and did not respond to whistle-'kiss' calls as Chestnut-rumps will generally do. Numerous parties of Chestnut-rumped Thornbills were seen in the area and some were seen within 5 minutes, confirming their markedly different appearance, even of the dark-eyed juveniles of Chestnut-

rumped Thornbills. The Chestnut-rumped Thornbills had an almost warm buffy colour in the morning light.

I used the field guide of Simpson and Day in the field. Using the Pizzey guide in Perth I noticed that this guide shows darker primaries compared to wing coverts — seen as a marked distinguishing feature in field. I knew the bird to be out of known range at the time of sighting. My sighting is one grid block south of old Atlas records and considerably further south of the distribution shown on WA Museum maps. I worked about 5 km further south for a week and did not see any Slaty-backed Thornbills despite careful observation so presumably the sighting is very close to the southern edge of their range.

Martin Gole

POSSIBLE SIGHTING OF A WESTERN GROUND PARROT

At about 3:00 pm on 27 October 1999, we were meandering through some low, flat sandplain country along the southern fringe of the Stirling Range National Park. At one point, we disturbed a parrot which in its haste to get away flew within a few metres of Joan. She saw it well, describing it as green and the size of a Western Rosella, most probably a Ground Parrot.

The area had been burnt only a few years previously and was without much cover. However, across the road is a large area of unburnt plain country, with no trees, just low heath and mallee.

Ray and Joan Garstone

RED-RUMPED SWALLOWS AT BROOME

Early in December 1999, at Broome Bird Observatory we heard a report of 100 Red-rumped Swallows being present at Kununurra. This report encouraged me to look through the numerous Barn Swallows and Tree Martins that flew over the observatory car park every night to roost. The first few attempts revealed nothing — things did not look good until two cyclones (John and Ilsa) moved off the coast towards the Broome region.

As soon as the skies were clear, I again checked the flocks overhead. On 18 December I had a brief view of a swallow that had no dark throat patch, which Barn Swallows distinctly have, plus a very forked long tail with dark under tail coverts. This had to be a 'red-rump'. I pointed this bird out to Barry Evans, a Volunteer at the observatory at the time. Barry has seen this species in Africa and Asia and agreed that it was a Red-rumped Swallow. We both waited, hoping that the bird would return to provide better views. Five minutes later the bird did return, showing us clearly its dark under tail coverts, pale collar and rump. We both noted that we could not see any streaking on the chest of this bird.

The next day we again sifted through the swallows and martins, this time with Chris Hassell.

We managed to see at least two more birds, possibly four, that night.

Since this initial sighting, they have been recorded on all nights but one when looking for them (up to 19 January 2000).

They have also been recorded at the local sewerage works where three individuals provided spectacular views whilst drinking.

The last and best sighting was on Roebuck Plains on 19 January. I went for a drive across the plains to see what was around when I noticed a huge flock of Barn Swallows and Tree Martins, approximately 4000 altogether, roosting in some dead trees. I suspected there would be Red-rumped Swallows also, so I scanned through the flock and found at least one bird. This bird had extremely long tail feathers and the fork was very obvious even when perched, dark under tail coverts, pale collar and very heavy streaking particularly on the throat, while the streaks became bolder but less numerous on the belly. This bird also showed red patches just above the ear coverts, which merged with the pale collar. When the bird flew the rump revealed a red wash, which was not noted on the observatory birds probably due to the distance and light conditions when they were observed there.

I am now trying to photograph the birds while they are roosting.

A full description has been submitted to the BARC.

Adrian Boyle

Assistant Warden Broome Bird Observatory

THREE DESERTS PRINCESS PARROT EXPEDITION

The Alexandra's or Princess Parrot (*Polytelis alexandrae*) is classified as 'Threatened (Data Deficient)' by the WA Threatened Species Scientific Committee. Many aspects of its ecology are unknown or poorly known, including its range and distribution. Its range has been roughly delineated as being sporadic within the Great Sandy Desert, extending south-east into the Gibson Desert (Atlas of Australian Birds, 1984). Because the Princess Parrot is highly nomadic, learning about the bird in the wild has been difficult. However, increased numbers of sightings are being reported, probably due to the growing popularity and accessibility of these regions. The article by Mike Carter in the December 1993 *Wingspan* provides good background reading on the Princess Parrot, and also gives an account of an expedition he conducted in 1993 to search for these birds.

In August 1999, another expedition was mounted, this time by Bill McRoberts and 20 interested birdwatchers. In an endeavour to increase our knowledge of these parrots, the group set off from Perth for 28 days in eight 4WD vehicles. Travelling via the Gary Highway and the Canning Stock Route, the party searched for Princess Parrots. General bird surveys on behalf of Birds Australia for the new Atlas of Australian Birds were also conducted.

Nine days out of Perth, on 24 August, we had our first sighting of the birds. Twelve parrots flew over us in a north-south direction as we travelled through sand dune country along the Gary Highway, approaching the Kitson Track.

It was late evening and not everyone in the party had seen the birds, so we decided to camp in the area for the night, and try again the next morning. Four birds flew over the camp at 8:00 am on the 25th. We did not see Princess

Parrots again until approximately 160 km later on that same day, when we entered the section of the Canning Stock Route between Wells 36 and 37. Four parrots flew over, again heading north to south. The next sightings were along the south shore of Lake Tobin (dry). The table below gives details of all Princess Parrot sightings. Once we left Lake Tobin, travelling south, we did not see Princess Parrots again.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
24-8-99	1600	Lat. 22° 51' 19" S, Long. 125° 07' 58" E, Gary Highway	12 birds flying North to South
25-8-99	0800	Lat. 22° 51' 19" S, Long. 125° 07' 58" E, Gary Highway	4 birds flying North to South
25-8-99	1100	Between Wells 36 and 37, Canning Stock Route	4 birds seen flying over convoy
26-8-99	?	Lat. 21° 45' 24" S, Long. 125° 40' 32" E, Lake Tobin Camp	Approx. 12 birds flying over
27-8-99	1300	Lake Tobin Camp	3 birds flying North to South
29-8-99	0730	Lake Tobin [3 km north of camp]	10 birds flying North
29-8-99	0730	Lake Tobin Camp	8-10 birds flying North
29-8-99	0845	Lake Tobin	10 birds flying NW to SE
29-8-99	1715	Lake Tobin sand dunes 2 km East of camp	8 birds feeding on berries on the shrub, <i>Gyrostemon tepperi</i>

Table: Princess Parrots recorded during the Three Deserts Princess Parrot Expedition, August 1999.

Other birds seen at Lake Tobin Camp were Black Kite, Whistling Kite, Spotted Harrier, Brown Goshawk, Australian Hobby, Nankeen Kestrel, Little Button-Quail, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Budgerigar, Pallid Cuckoo, Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, Australian Owlet-Nightjar, Red-backed Kingfisher, Variegated Fairy-wren, White-winged Fairy-wren, Red-browed Pardalote, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, Grey-headed Honeyeater, Black-chinned (Golden-backed) Honeyeater, Black Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater, Crimson Chat, Orange Chat, Red-capped Robin, Willy Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, White-winged Triller, Masked Woodswallow, Black-faced Woodswallow, Richard's Pipit, Zebra Finch, White-backed Swallow, Tree Martin, Rufous Songlark and Brown Songlark.

My thanks to everyone who assisted with getting the expedition up-and-running and to all those who participated.

Bill McRoberts

Editors' note: For a summary and interpretation of previous knowledge, see also the article by John Blyth and Allan Burbidge 'What do we know about Princess Parrots (*Polytelis alexandrae*)?' published in *Eclectus* 3: 26-29 (1997). The first two records in the table above are from a 'new' locality additional to those mapped in the *Eclectus* article.

BOOBOOK CANNIBALISM

On 18 August 1999, Rod O'Donnell, acting CALM ranger at Bell Gorge/Silent Grove, observed some unusual behaviour by a Southern Boobook (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*).

At 7:00 pm while driving from Silent Grove to the Bell Creek campsites approximately 5 km north of Silent Grove, Rod witnessed a Boobook plucking at another Boobook — presumably road-killed.

On stopping the vehicle Rod watched the owl fly from the track, carrying the dead owl, to perch in a roadside tree. The Boobook had trouble balancing on the perch whilst continuing to grasp its prey. Rod watched the owl for a minute or so before having to continue on his way due to work commitments.

This interesting sighting is unusual and Rod and I would be interested if any other readers have noticed similar behaviour.

George Swann

ARE RAINBOW LORIKEETS IN PERTH CHANGING THEIR DIETARY PREFERENCES?

In recent years there has been increasing concern about the burgeoning population of Rainbow Lorikeets in Perth. During my post-graduate research, completed in 1997, I investigated the potential impact of this bird on the conservation and agricultural areas of south western Australia.

This study showed that critical elements for their successful establishment in Perth have been:

- the existence and continued expansion of an under utilised and evolving habitat, consisting of a mosaic of mature exotic and native vegetation;
- the generalist tendencies of Rainbow Lorikeet with regard to diet and nest requirements and their aggressive nature;
- their status as 'native' birds and colourful plumage that have evoked ready community acceptance; and
- inaction by government agencies whilst their population numbers were low.

In 1997 the range of Rainbow Lorikeets was believed to be from north of Lake Joondalup to East Fremantle to Armadale Town Centre. It may well have expanded since.

The range of foods used by Rainbow Lorikeets in Perth appears to vary little from that described for the bird within its natural range in eastern Australia. Blossom from eastern states eucalypts such as *E. maculata*, *E. citriodora* and *E. cladocalyx* were highly favoured and have been a significant factor in Rainbow Lorikeet establishment in Perth. Extensive plantings of these trees are present in Perth, particularly at Kings Park, which is adjacent to the area from where the free-flying population originated. The blossom of local eucalypts, eg. Tuart, Marri, Flooded Gum and Jarrah are also taken freely. During field observations Rainbow Lorikeets were noted feeding from more than 20 species of plants, with seeds, fruits, nectar, pollen and flower parts, being eaten (see Table 1). A high proportion (77.1%) of the foods taken were of an exotic origin, ie. not native to the Perth region.

Rainbow Lorikeets have also been observed gleaning lerps from leaves and twigs of Jarrah and Tuart. As this coincided with the time when many nestlings were being hatched, it is suggested that lerps and psyllids were taken to provide a food source with elevated concentrations of carbohydrate and protein for the nestlings

Implications for Agriculture

A curiosity of a review of the literature regarding the dietary preferences of Rainbow Lorikeets was that agricultural damage attributed to Rainbow Lorikeets was commonly reported from the late 1800s to the first decades of this century but since then accounts of agricultural losses have lessened considerably.

Recent reports from South Australia, however, suggest that Rainbow Lorikeets are quickly developing as the principal pest species of commercial orchards there, with the suggestion that they are becoming greater pests than Common Starlings.

Damage to commercial fruit crops by several species of parrots has occurred in Western Australia for more than 50 years, with annual damage being estimated at more than \$1 million in years of severe damage. The establishment of Rainbow Lorikeets in the prime fruit growing areas of south western Australian could exacerbate these losses. However until recently reports of the Perth population of Rainbow Lorikeets actually eating domestic or commercial fruit have been virtually non-existent.

To date the management option for Rainbow Lorikeets in Perth has been limited to the 'do nothing option'. However management options are limited, given the extent of the current problem and the limited methods of control available. Rainbow Lorikeets have been gazetted as an unprotected species under the Wildlife Conservation Act, 1950, and as such may be taken by prescribed methods. However they have not been gazetted as a declared species under the Agriculture and Related Resources Act, 1976, and this can not occur until it is demonstrated that they are a threat to agriculture.

It may be that we are about to see the threat to agriculture realised. In early January of this year a householder in the northern beach suburb of Trigg reported Rainbow Lorikeets to have eaten his entire crop of red seedless grapes. Although well known in the Trigg area for a number of years, this is the first known report of Rainbow Lorikeets eating grapes in Perth. The Rainbow Lorikeet is a highly social species and there is a high potential for the use of a new food resource to spread quickly. Having now learnt that grapes can be utilised as a component of an already diverse diet it may be only a matter of time before the commercial grape growing areas adjoining Perth are utilised by Rainbow Lorikeets. The author would appreciate any other information on Rainbow Lorikeets eating grapes or other fruit from domestic fruit trees in Perth, and he can be contacted on 0417090131.

David Lamont

Editors' note: If any readers have knowledge of Rainbow Lorikeets feeding on grapes, stone fruits, or other soft fruit crops, we also would be very interested to hear about any observations for possible inclusion in WABN.

Common Name	Botanical Name	Frequency of observation	Resource utilised
* Sugar gum	<i>Eucalyptus cladocalyx</i>	common	n p, I
* Lemon-scented gum	<i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i>	very common	n p
* Spotted gum	<i>Eucalyptus maculata</i>	very common	n p
Flooded gum	<i>Eucalyptus rudis</i>	moderate	n p
Jarraah	<i>Eucalyptus marginata</i>	common	n p, I nesting
Marri	<i>Eucalyptus calophylla</i>	common	n p, I /nesting
Tuart	<i>Eucalyptus gomphocephala</i>	moderate	n p, I /nesting
* Tasmanian blue gum	<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>	uncommon	n p
* Red-flowering gum	<i>Eucalyptus ficifolia</i>	common	n p
* Bottlebrush	<i>Callistemon</i> spp.	common	n p, fp
Melaleuca	<i>Melaleuca</i> spp	moderate	n p
* Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera</i> spp	uncommon	n p
* Mulberries	<i>Morus alba</i>	uncommon	f/b
* Pepper Tree	<i>Schinus molle</i>	uncommon	f/b
* Century Plant	<i>Agave</i> spp.	uncommon	n p
* Cotton Palm	<i>Washingtonia filifera</i>	very common	f/b
* Date Palm	<i>Phoenix canariensis</i>	very common	f/b
* Flame Tree	<i>Erythrina</i> sp.	common	n p, fp
* Coral Tree	<i>Erythrina indicia</i>	very common	n p, fp
* Fig (domestic)	<i>Ficus</i> spp.	uncommon	f/b
* Pt Jackson Fig	<i>Ficus rubiginosa</i>	common	f/b
* Weeping Fig	<i>Ficus hillii</i>	very common	f/b
* Moreton Bay Fig	<i>Ficus macrophylla</i>	very common	f/b
Casuarina	<i>(Allo)casuarina</i> spp.	common	s f
* Lilly Pilly	<i>Acmena smithii</i>	common	f/b
* Plum Tree	<i>Prunus</i> spp.	uncommon	n p
* Cape Lilac	<i>Melia azedarach</i>	common	f/b
* Illawarra Flame	<i>Brachychiton acerifolia</i>	occasional	n p
* Tecoma l	<i>Tecoma</i> sp	occasional	n p
Slender Banksia	<i>Banksia attenuata</i>	occasional	n p

Table 1. Food resources utilised by Rainbow Lorikeets in Perth (1997) (Key: * indicates exotic plant (includes east coast Australian natives); n p = nectar and or pollen; I = invertebrates deliberately harvested from foliage; f = foliage; f/b = fruit or berries; fp = flower parts deliberately ingested; s = seed).

INTERESTING BREEDING BEHAVIOUR OF BLACK-FRONTED DOTTERELS IN THE KIMBERLEY

On 26 September 1999, where the Beverley Springs track fords the Isdell River (latitude 16°54'57", longitude 125°34'24") Dave and Jeanette Bax from the United Kingdom and I discovered a Black-fronted Dotterel (*Elseya melanops*) breeding on a shingle bank in mid stream of the partly dry Isdell River.

At 1:30 pm having had lunch we decided to watch the brooding adult and see what happened. We sat quietly, about 15 m away from the nest. The brooding adult seemed quite relaxed with our presence. It was extremely hot with a slight NW breeze making the temperature bearable. As we watched closely we noticed that the dotterel was not

actually sitting on the two eggs but sheltering them, presumably to shade the eggs from the extreme heat.

The nest was located in an exposed position in full sun and contained two eggs that were slightly smaller than bantam eggs and decorated with fine brown spots over a lightish brown colour. The nest was a basic scrape but decorated around the edge with tiny pebbles of white quartz and smooth laterite, on average about 4 mm long.

As the dotterel sheltered the eggs, we marvelled at how well camouflaged the bird was on the nest; if you took your eyes off the spot for a second, it was very difficult to re-find it until one used certain reference points.

After watching for five minutes we witnessed the changeover with the adult on the nest moving away and the partner taking its place sheltering the eggs. We were

intrigued to see how long the next changeover would be, so we sat patiently. After only 4½ minutes the other adult returned and we noticed its breast feathers were dripping with water. As it took over the sheltering position from its mate the bird proceeded to 'paint' the eggs with its wet breast feathers. The partner flew down stream to a large pool that was still being fed by a small trickle that was the Isdell River.

The next changeover was after exactly five minutes and I watched the partner return from the pool with a wet breast, actually observing the bird flying low over the shingle with drips of water falling to the ground. The procedure was repeated and the next changeover was after 5½ minutes.

At this stage the nest site received dappled shade as the sun moved behind a large river red gum on the bank. This shade seemed to ease the situation and the adult on the nest at the time remained there for nearly 10 minutes before the next changeover.

Similar behaviour is documented in HANZAB Vol. 2 page 898 under the heading 'Relations within Family Group'.

References:

Marchant, S.E. and Higgins, P.J. (eds) 1993. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*, Vol. 2. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

George Swann

WADERS IN YALGORUP NATIONAL PARK

A report on waders recorded on the lakes in Yalgorup National Park from 1 January 1994 to 31 December 1999

For the past six years, I have been wandering round some of the lakes in Yalgorup National Park, recording waterbirds and waders seen in the process. Two of the lakes — Martin's Tank and Lake Preston — were visited most weekends while others were visited less frequently. An attempt has been made to visit each lake at least once each month. Occasionally — September 1998, for example — none of the lakes were visited during a month.

The vast majority of observations were made between 7:00 am and 11:00 am and nearly all on weekends. Binoculars were used for the majority of observations but telescope, tripod and tally counter were used when larger flocks of waders — particularly stilts — turned up. For any one lake, it was generally possible to avoid double counting; the lakes are not big and the waders were generally not particularly disturbed by my presence.

Because not all lakes could be visited on the one day, movement of birds between lakes could be an issue for a few species. The tables show maximum numbers for all the lakes for each month, achieved by simply adding up the highest count for the species at each of the lakes during the month. Occasionally I have made a subjective judgment that there has been movement and have adjusted the numbers accordingly.

For Martin's Tank, Lake Yalgorup, Lake Hayward, Lake Newnham and Lake Preston north, observations were generally made from a complete circuit of the lake, water

levels permitting. Observations for Lake Clifton north were generally made while walking from the boardwalk north round the top of the lake and returning. Lake Clifton south was generally reached by walking through from Lake Pollard or Lake Hayward, touching the lake at different points and returning by the same route. It was occasionally possible to walk around Lake Pollard but most waders are found along the eastern shores. Lake Preston mid was generally surveyed by walking along the shore to Ellis Road and returning by the same route.

The Lakes

1. Lake Clifton north — from the board walk at the end of Mt John Road to the north end of the lake
2. Lake Clifton south — south from the board walk
3. Lake Pollard
4. Martin's Tank
5. Lake Yalgorup
6. Lake Newnham
7. Lake Preston north — from the Preston Beach road to the north end of the lake
8. Lake Preston mid — from the Preston Beach road south to where Ellis Road reaches the lake
9. Lake Preston south — from Ellis Road to the south end of the lake.

The lakes are described in the management plan for Yalgorup National Park produced by CALM in 1995. Lake Clifton stretches about 20 km parallel to the coast; it is the furthest inland and least saline. Lake Preston stretches about 30 km, with the north end separated from the rest by a causeway. It is the lake closest to the coast and has intermediate levels of salinity. The other lakes lie between Lakes Clifton and Preston. They are all permanent water bodies which receive little if any surface runoff. The water in Lakes Clifton, Pollard and Preston is marginally fresher than sea water in spring but is much saltier than sea water in autumn. Water in the other lakes is saltier than the sea at all times. In my records, Lakes Clifton and Preston are split as shown and North and South Lake Newnham are treated as one. Lakes Clifton and Preston have been split up because of their size. Lake Preston north dries out completely over summer and Ellis Road is a local authority boundary.

There are no records for Lake Preston south in this report.

The lakes are set in mixed Tuart/Peppermint/Banksia woodland with fringing Paperbark around each of the lakes. Most of the Tuart trees have died over the past few years.

Water levels vary seasonally on all lakes. As levels rise over winter, suitable wader habitat gradually disappears and waders become restricted to small areas at the east end of Lake Pollard, south end of Martin's Tank, Lake Yalgorup and Lake Newnham and north end of Lake Preston mid.

Wader habitat is also limited at times by a build up of 'foam'. Foam whipped up by wind accumulates along the shore and is occasionally thick enough to deter waders. It is particularly noticeable on Martin's Tank but can be found on all the lakes. Wind direction and strength determines where the foam accumulates.

Systematic List

Black-tailed Godwit — *Limosa limosa*

Two birds recorded from Martin's Tank in February 1996.

Bar-tailed Godwit — *Limosa lapponica*

Recorded twice, a single bird on Lake Yalgorup in April 1994, and two birds on Lake Clifton north in May 1999.

Whimbrel — *Numenius phaeopus*

One at Martin's Tank in December 1999; seen twice, both times among short samphire on the eastern shore of the lake.

Eastern Curlew — *Numenius madagascariensis*

Single bird recorded flying north along Preston Beach, August 1995.

Common Greenshank — *Tringa nebularia*

Not recorded from Lakes Preston or Hayward but frequently recorded from the others, particularly Lake Clifton north.

Commonest in December–January–February but nine at Lake Pollard in June 1995. Generally found in ones and twos but nine together at Martin's Tank in February 1999.

Largest numbers have been found along the east shore of Lake Clifton north, with 24 recorded there in December 1997 and 25 in December 1998 with another 3 on the adjacent Swan Pond.

At all lakes, tend to be most common along the eastern shores which tend to be more 'rocky' and less sandy than the western shores although water levels influence this.

Maximum numbers across all lakes in each month are shown in Table 1.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	5	2		4	6	14
February	1		1	4	3	12
March			1	3	2	1
April	1				2	2
May	1		1		2	
June	1	10				
July			1			
August						
September						
October						
November				2		
December	1		1	32	34	

Table 1: Numbers of Common Greenshanks on lakes in Yalgorup National Park, 1994-99.

Terek Sandpiper — *Tringa cinerea*

One recorded at Martin's Tank in November 1998 and one on Lake Yalgorup in November 1999.

Common Sandpiper — *Tringa hypoleucos*

Recorded four times, all singles — at Martin's Tank in August 1996 and July 1997, at Lake Preston mid in January 1994 and at Lake Yalgorup in October 1997.

Grey-tailed Tattler — *Tringa brevipes*

Recorded four times, all singles — at Lake Preston mid in January 1994, at Martin's Tank in February 1996

and December 1998 and at Lake Yalgorup in October 1998. All four were found on the rockier parts of the lakes.

Ruddy Turnstone — *Arenaria interpres*

Recorded three times, all singles — at Lake Newnham in November 1997 and Lake Pollard in November 1998; one on Lake Yalgorup on 7 November 1999 was probably the same one seen on Lake Preston north on 21 November and 19 December 1999. All birds were found on areas of pebbly limestone.

Great Knot — *Calidris tenuirostris*

Recorded several times — group of 34 on Lake Preston north in March 1998, 3 in the same area in November 1998, two on Lake Clifton south in March 1999, one on Lake Yalgorup in November 1999 and up to about 160 on Lake Preston north through December 1999.

Red-necked Stint — *Calidris ruficollis*

Very common on all lakes over the summer but small numbers can be found at most times of the year, given suitable habitat. Maximum numbers across all lakes in each month are shown in Table 2.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	328	100	270	2255	236	738
February	100	265	725	477	740	1550
March			570	283	3840	2695
April	100	190	500	117	184	955
May		50	240	25	264	110
June		70	175		33	115
July						1
August	15					1
September			10			15
October	50		60	19	475	130
November		328	350	28	1480	4754
December	100	300	28	170	1389	15000

Table 2: Numbers of Red-necked Stints on lakes in Yalgorup National Park, 1994-99.

Numbers are occasionally boosted by large flocks that turn up for short periods then disperse/disappear. Lake Preston north attracted flocks of 1500 in January 1997, 3500 in March 1998, and up to 15 000 in December 1999. There were about 1500 on Martin's Tank over February/March 1999. Very large numbers turned up on Lake Preston north in November/December 1999, peaking at an estimated 15 000 in late December. This coincided with larger than usual numbers of Great Knots, Curlew Sandpipers and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. In general, however, numbers are made up of flocks of 50–100 spread over suitable habitat — generally sandy limestone around the saline water of the lakes.

The very large numbers of this and other waders in late 1999 may be due in part to high water levels in Lake McLarty and Harvey Estuary restricting suitable habitat.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper — *Calidris acuminata*

Recorded several times, particularly on Lake Preston north. From Lake Preston north, records of one in November 1996, 15 in January 1997, one in May 1998 and

around 30 from mid November 1999 through to the end of the year. The May 1998 bird was picked up from the road at night and released unharmed. There were two birds on Lake Pollard in December 1997. There were seven on Lake Clifton south in April 1998 and four there in May 1999. There were two on Lake Yalgorup in October 1999.

Curlew Sandpiper — *Calidris ferruginea*

Irregular visitor to Yalgorup, most frequently recorded from Lakes Clifton (4 records) and Pollard (13 records) but also recorded on Lake Preston north (2 records), Martin's Tank (4 records) and Lake Yalgorup (2 records). Usually found in small numbers but occasional larger flocks seen.

On Lake Clifton, there was a group of 50 at the south end of the lake in January 1994 and a group of 20 at the north end in December 1994.

On Lake Pollard, there were 40 in April 1994, 17 in April 1998 and 38 in May 1998 with small numbers recorded in most summer months.

On Lake Preston north, there were 75 in January 1997, but bigger numbers turned up in 1999, rising from about 15 in late November up to over 400 by late December.

The largest number recorded on Martin's Tank was 10 in April 1998.

Pied Oystercatcher — *Haematopus longirostris*

One on Lake Preston mid in September 1997.

Black-winged Stilt — *Himantopus himantopus*

Small numbers found on most of the lakes at some time over summer, generally seen on land or in very shallow water. Banded Stilts and Red-necked Avocets are more often seen in deeper water, spread over the surface of the lakes.

Maximum numbers across all lakes in each month are shown in Table 3.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	24	6		2	23	3
February		30	50	12	73	13
March			36	26	144	17
April	20	9	42	24	43	14
May	2		38	34	75	
June		30	20		1	
July						
August						
September						
October						
November				6		
December			1	20	1	6

Table 3: Numbers of Black-winged Stilts on lakes in Yalgorup National Park, 1994-99.

Banded Stilt — *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*

Small numbers found on most of the lakes at some time with occasional very large flocks. More than two dozen birds have been picked up dead from the road that runs across Lake Preston into Preston Beach. It is not clear whether the birds collide with power lines or land on the road and are collected by cars but no other species has been found in anywhere near the same numbers. The power

lines had been equipped with floats and tape to make them more visible before these observations started. Most of these 'road kills' have been forwarded to the W A Museum.

Maximum numbers across all lakes in each month are shown in Table 4.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	4403	120		1	38	
February	216	221	4	47	221	
March			5	127	2580	1
April	231		2	29	3097	1
May	80		1		550	
June	513		112			
July						
August	16					
September						
October	200			6	260	
November						4
December	255		2500	1		1250

Table 4: Numbers of Banded Stilts on lakes in Yalgorup National Park, 1994-99.

Large numbers turned up on Lake Preston north and Martin's Tank in March/April 1998, peaking at about 2400 on Martin's Tank on 10 April. The birds were scattered over almost the whole of the surface of the lake, with a few tight flocks feeding along the edges. A Peregrine Falcon was present while the stilts remained at the lake.

A large flock also turned up on Lake Preston north in early December 1999, rising to over 1200 by the end of the month. About 75% had complete or almost complete breast bands.

Red-necked Avocet — *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*

Small numbers found on most of the lakes over summer with occasional large flocks for short periods.

Maximum numbers across all lakes in each month are shown in Table 5.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January		100		13		
February	7	7	60	6	30	3
March			304	53	596	
April	220		118	73	44	10
May	30		33		7	5
June			6			
July						
August						
September						
October	3					
November			15			
December			1	8	44	50

Table 5: Numbers of Red-necked Avocets on lakes in Yalgorup National Park, 1994-99.

Grey Plover — *Pluvialis squatarola*

Recorded nine times, single birds apart from a group of nine on Lake Clifton south in May 1999, three on Lake Yalgorup in mid December 1999 and five on Martin's Tank in late December 1999. Other records are from Martin's Tank in July 1996, February 1997 and March 1998, Lake Clifton north in December 1998, Lake Preston mid in August 1999 and Lake Hayward in December 1999. The December 1999 records may refer to the same birds moving around the area.

Red-capped Plover — *Charadrius ruficapillus*

Recorded on all lakes and on the coast at all times of the year, with highest numbers over summer.

Maximum numbers across all lakes in each month are shown in Table 6.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	386	106	124	685	492	456
February	63	252	275	160	683	162
March		15	174	60	108	363
April	107	55	174	65	95	204
May			110	51	63	54
June	3	88	126	40	52	20
July	5	2	9	45	32	28
August	2	2	10	16	4	64
September			12	18		100
October	38		35	32	136	127
November		127	108	44	606	360
December	52	125	41	208	376	850

Table 6: Numbers of Red-capped Plovers on lakes in Yalgorup National Park, 1994-99.

Largest numbers are generally found on Lake Preston north in early summer as it is drying out and on Lake Clifton north as water level drops. Numbers on Lake Preston north usually decline markedly when it has dried out.

Evidence of breeding — distraction display, eggs or runners — was observed at Lakes Newnham, Preston north and Clifton north from October through to January.

Greater Sand Plover — *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Recorded eight times but the same birds were probably involved in some of these records.

One was recorded at Lake Yalgorup in January 1997 and four in October 1998; two were still present in November and 1 in December. Overlapping with this last bird, there were four on Lake Preston north in mid December 1998 and five at the end of the month with other plovers. There was one on Lake Yalgorup in November 1999 and two on Lake Preston north in December 1999.

Black-fronted Dotterel — *Elseyornis cinctus*

Recorded sporadically from most of the lakes, generally singly but a group of eight adults and three immatures at Lake Preston mid January 1994.

Singles were recorded at Lake Pollard in January 1995 and May 1996 and at Martin's Tank in February 1996 and May 1996. Over April/May 1998, a group of six was found

on Lake Newnham and birds were seen at Lake Pollard and Martin's Tank, presumably the same birds. Generally seen on pebbly limestone areas of the lakes.

Hooded Plover — *Charadrius rubricollis*

Records for the Yalgorup lakes over the past few years are listed in the recent report on Hooded Plovers in Western Australia (Singor 1998).

They can generally be found on one or two of the lakes throughout the year and I have recorded them breeding on Lakes Pollard and Newnham and Martin's Tank.

Over the 1998/1999 summer, two pairs bred on both Lake Pollard and Martin's Tank. A nest with three eggs was found at Lake Newnham in early September 1999. Three chicks were subsequently seen at the lake. The adults were still on the lake at the end of December but the immatures apparently joined an adult flock on Lake Yalgorup.

Pairs were seen on the breeding areas on Martin's Tank and Lake Pollard in late December when water levels dropped.

Banded Lapwing — *Vanellus tricolor*

Not recorded from Yalgorup until August 1999 when there were five on Lake Preston mid in an open area of low samphire. They moved across the road to Lake Preston north and a nest with four eggs was found on 4 September: two chicks were seen at the end of the month. The group contained eight adults.

All birds had disappeared by early October.

Discussion

The Yalgorup lakes are an important breeding area for Hooded Plovers and, at times, support large numbers of other waders. The numbers recorded in November/December 1999 were exceptional.

Most waders are found either on or close to water, exceptions being Hooded and Red-capped Plovers, which can be found anywhere between the edge of the water and the start of the paperbarks. Highest numbers of both plovers have been found on the dry sandy bed of Lake Preston north. Red-necked Stints can also be found feeding over the drier areas of Lake Preston north but they are usually only there while there is still some water present.

When Lake Preston north has dried out over summer, Martin's Tank usually attracts the biggest number of waders, especially Red-necked Stints, which can be found in small flocks right round the lake. The largest flocks of Banded Stilts have also been on Martin's Tank. When water levels are high, waders are attracted to the other lakes but they move back to Martin's Tank as levels drop, exposing more shore line.

Threats?

Many people visit Yalgorup National Park but very few venture onto the lakes, even from the camp ground at Martin's Tank. This may change over time. The Management Plan for the park suggested that non-power boating be allowed on Martin's Tank but no action appears to have been taken since the plan was released. Anything which facilitates human use of this lake is likely to affect breeding Hooded Plovers and the feeding activities of other waders.

References:

- CALM (1995). Yalgorup National Park Management Plan, 1995 - 2005. Management Plan No 29, Department of Conservation and Land Management for the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority.
- Singor, M. (1998). Hooded Plover Report No 2, 1996 - 1999. Western Australia Bird Notes Supplement No 4, June 1998.

Bill Russell

RE COURTING CUCKOOS (WABN 92 p 15)

On 12 December 1999 I was atlassing on the Wyndham jetty. The sighting of a male Little Bronze-Cuckoo was a welcome addition to the 18 species already identified. The complete breast bars, clearly visible as the bird flew just over my head, and red eye ring shining in the early morning sun as he perched in a tree, made me confident of the bird's identity.

As I was about to depart I noticed the cuckoo perched in the top of dead tree with another bird — another Little Bronze-Cuckoo, this time what appeared to be a female. I was surprised to watch the male bird fly a few feet away and return carrying an insect which it fed to the female. After a short interval the feeding was repeated before both birds flew away.

A few days later I finally got round to opening my WA Bird Notes, only to find the article about courting cuckoos. I too had concluded that I had witnessed a male bird feeding a female rather than a juvenile as there had been no begging for food, calling or following around behaviour. But neither had I witnessed copulation if this was courtship behaviour.

At the time I hadn't realised I was witnessing anything particularly unusual — thanks to WABN I shall be even more observant next time.

Jan Lewis

BLACK SWANS ON THE SWAN RIVER — A REQUEST FOR OBSERVATIONS

We are currently undertaking a study to investigate the requirements of the Black Swan on the Swan and Canning Rivers, and would appreciate any observations that members (or non-members) may have.

The basic information we are after includes the location on the river, date of observation and number of swans seen. Recent observations are needed so that we can go to the site and assess the features that may be attractive to swans, but old observations would also be interesting. Even observations of single birds are useful.

Our contact details are:

Mandy and Mike Bamford
23 Plover Way, Kingsley WA 6026
Ph/fax: 9309 3671
Email: mabce@ca.com.au

LAKES IN THE MT BARKER-CRANBROOK DISTRICT

An ornithological quiz question might be: "What is the similarity between the Forth Bridge and a bird survey?". The answer being that shortly after one has completed either, the process needs to be repeated. The Forth Bridge is, sadly for the world of simile, no longer painted continuously as modern paints and coatings have obviated this necessity, but its current intermittent schedule of renewal befits bird surveys. The first Atlas, completed in 1981 (published 1984) is being revisited now and the South-west Waterbird Survey (SWWS) completed in 1985 probably will soon need another look.

Although annual waterfowl counts (AWC) were done between 1988 and 1991 these omitted shoreline or wading birds (although these were counted in some cases the data were not entered). Habitats, climates and behaviours change and bird distributions can change with them. A notable personal experience was a two-year survey of a bush reserve that had been previously examined 20 years earlier (by the WA Museum) to discover the Richard's Pipit, which they described as very common, to be wholly absent.

The area north-east of Mt Barker and north-west of Cranbrook is plentifully supplied with lakes. Recently (15 and 16 December 1999) I visited 16 of these (of which four were in the SWWS survey and three in the AWC) and tried to reach two others.

It became apparent that the district has essentially two types of lake, describable as 'crater' and 'saucer' types. 'Crater' lakes tend to have steep sides, be relatively deep, have little sandy shoreline and few waterbirds. 'Saucer' lakes are relatively shallow, usually have significant areas of sandy shore and generally good numbers of waterbirds. Brief notes:

Balicup Lake — visited once only in the SWWS. It is 4.5 km long and 2 km wide. I could get within 400 m but across the unharvested crop I would not go. Who knows of the access?

Jebarjup Swan Lake — 3 SWWS surveys, saucer lake, access easy: Red-capped Plovers 6.

Anderson Lake — 11 SWWS surveys, saucer lake, access easy: Hooded Plovers 14, two of which were immature (none previously recorded), Silver Gull 1.

Camel Lake — a notice says the access track is closed on account of dieback and prior permission to enter is required. (It was a long way to travel to find this sign.)

Martagallup Lake — in AWC, saucer lake, access easy: Australian Shelduck 134, White-faced Heron 8, Hooded Plover 3 (none previously recorded), Silver Gull 5.

Martagallup Swamp — not previously surveyed (NPS), an artificially created swamp area (without sandy shoreline) west of the lake and the Martagallup-Tenterden Road, access easy: Musk Duck 2, Black Swan 6, Australian Shelduck 3, Australian Wood Duck 8, Pacific Black Duck 11, Australasian Shoveler 4, Grey Teal 58.

Kwornicup Road Swamp 1 — un-named small swamp, NPS, crater type, 2.5 km east of Kwornicup Lake close to the north side of the road, access easy: Australian Wood Duck 8, Pacific Black Duck 22, Grey Teal 4,

Hoary-headed Grebe 2, Purple Swamphen 2 (1 sitting on nest).

Kwornicup Road Swamp 2 — un-named swamp, NPS, crater type, 2 km east of Kwornicup Lake close to south side of the road, access easy, medium size, deep: Musk Duck 1, Australian Shelduck 11, Pacific Black Duck 4, Grey Teal 2, Little Pied Cormorant 5.

Kwornicup Road Swamp 3 — un-named swamp, NPS, saucer, 1.5 km east of Kwornicup Lake close to north side of the road, medium size, access easy, much sandy shore, but: no birds.

Kwornicup Lake — 17 SWWS surveys, a saucer lake, access easy: Australian Shelduck 5000+ (cf greatest number SWWS 1500), Red-necked Stint 550 (cf greatest number SWWS 250), Curlew Sandpiper 5 (cf greatest number SWWS 1), Black-winged Stilt 190 (cf greatest number SWWS 100), Banded Stilt 26, Red-capped Plover 890 (cf greatest number SWWS 196), Silver Gull 44 (cf greatest number SWWS 3).

Lake 26586 — un-named lake in CALM Reserve 26586, NPS, saucer lake, access moderate through bush: Black Swan 126, Australian Shelduck 1700, Pacific Black Duck 5, Grey Teal 34, White-faced Heron 10, Swamp Harrier 1, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 2, Black-winged Stilt 38, Red-capped Plover 94, Silver Gull 4.

Mallawillup Road Swamp — un-named swamp on opposite side of the road to Lake 26586, NPS, saucer lake, access easy: Black Swan 22, Australian Shelduck 80, White-faced Heron 1.

Poorrarecup Lake — in AWC, large deep crater lake, water ski usage, access easy: Musk Duck 2, Silver Gull 19.

Warrinup Swamp — the map name, but at the site unfelicitously termed Kennys Tank (by CALM?), small baumea-filled crater lake, access easy: Swamp Harrier 1 (it rose from the centre of the swamp, possibly breeding).

Teetenyup Swamp — NPS, saucer lake, dries annually (and is cropped), access easy: Black Swan 7, Australian Shelduck 126, Australian Wood Duck 10, Pacific Black Duck 22, Australasian Shoveler 31, Grey Teal 63, Hoary-headed Grebe 16, Little Pied Cormorant 11, White-faced Heron 9, Australian White Ibis 4, Yellow-billed Spoonbill 13, Swamp Harrier 1.

Stockyard Road Lake — NPS, un-named crater lake on north side and near Stockyard Road, access easy: Musk Duck 1, Pacific Black Duck 5, Grey Teal 7, Hoary-headed Grebe 4, Little Pied Cormorant 1, Eurasian Coot 3.

NW Nuniup Lake — NPS, un-named crater lake NE of Nuniup Lake, access moderate: Australian Wood Duck 12.

Nuniup Lake — in AWC, large deep crater lake, water ski usage, access easy: Australian Shelduck 56, Pacific Black Duck 4.

In addition to the above there are at least 20 lakes named on the 1:250 000 map in the same area that I did not visit, not to mention those that are un-named. Some of the above are well worth a visit by waterbird fanciers, access to virtually all being easy.

Perhaps when the current Atlas excitement is over and it will be in excess of 15 years since the SWWS survey it will be time to do something similar again.

B Buchanan

PIGEONS AT KALUMBURU

I observed a pair of Partridge Pigeons one km east of Kalumburu on 8 April 1999 and again on two occasions about two weeks later. On each occasion they were flushed from a vehicle track where they were feeding or resting. When startled, the birds made a loud clapping noise as they flew. They flew hard and fast into the bush making it very difficult to follow them, but on one occasion they landed in a nearby tree and I was able to observe them for some time. The yellow facial skin was obvious. They were observed in a *Eucalyptus tetrodonta* and *E. miniata* woodland on sandy soil with a high lateritic gravel content. Annual sorghum is the dominant grass but other species are present. The site was unburnt.

G.F. Hill, in the early 1900s, recorded the species as common (in flocks of up to 20 birds) and breeding near Kalumburu. This is at the eastern limit for subspecies *blaaui*.

On 12 September 1999 I saw an Emerald Dove in tall woodland near a sandstone escarpment in the vicinity of Wobbinbee Creek. In my experience this species is rare in the area.

Tom Vigilante

Editors' note: The Partridge Pigeon sightings were reported briefly (with the wrong date) in the 'Observations' section of WABN 91. The notes above provide more detail to support these sightings.

ORANGE CHAT AT LAKE GREGORY

On 1 November 1999 I observed several birds that I identified as Orange Chats in the vicinity of Lake Gregory, about 200 km south of Halls Creek. Orange Chats only occur this far north during good seasons.

The first sighting was at a saltpan on the track from Mulan Community to a peninsula-type split into Lake Gregory. The birds were at 20° 05' 50"S, 127° 29' 44" E.

While driving slowly along the track I saw a yellowish chat-type bird fly into a little bush on the water's edge. My first thought was of a Yellow Chat, because I was expecting that I might see that species here. I jumped out of the vehicle but the bird was gone. I turned around and saw a bird singing from the top of a low saltbush on a sandridge behind the vehicle. I was just about to argue with myself why I could not match the 'Yellow Chat' and the song of this bird, when I saw the obvious black face and breast of a male Orange Chat. Another male flew into the top of the next bush and started to sing towards the first birds. There were female-type birds around, and I assume they were Orange Chat females. I refrained from checking this out because it would have cost me some time, the temperature was approaching 50° Celsius and the sun burned the skin. And, not least, I had no doubt on the

identification of the two male Orange Chats. The observation time was 1:45 to 2:00 pm, and I viewed the birds at distances from 15 to 25 m using a Zeiss 10x40 binocular.

The second sighting was on the edge of Lake Gregory at 20° 11' 44"S, 127° 23' 26"E. When I reached the shore of the lake, 16 km further on from the above sighting, I stopped to check the many waterbirds with the telescope. Yellow Chats, males and females, were very obvious and vocal, sometimes as close as three or four metres. Again I found two male Orange Chats, silent this time, and I was able to get excellent views at a distance of 15 m with the telescope. The black face and breast with the rich orange belly were easily recognisable with the naked eye, making the two species (Orange and Yellow Chats) easy to distinguish.

I have seen both species on a number of occasions in various places, and I am quite confident of my identifications on this occasion. While Yellow Chats are well known as occurring in this area, Lake Gregory is at the limit of the range of the Orange Chat, apparently only occurring here when conditions are favourable.

Jonny Schoenjahn

HISTORICAL NOTES ON SOME JARRAH FOREST BIRDLIFE

Introduction

When it was learnt that part of the South Dandalup River was to be dammed for a reservoir, the late Dr Serventy suggested to me that it would be worthwhile surveying the bird life of the area, as few bird lists from the Jarrah *Eucalyptus marginata* forest have been published. A further factor was that, of these lists, eg, Sedgwick (1968), most include species that are alien to the Jarrah forest (Stranger 1999). Consequently I did a survey using as a focus the remnants of Banksiadale, which was 0.8 km from the river and 6.5 km north of Dwellingup.

I made my first bird list for the area while living at Banksiadale between 8 September and 9 October 1964, and further notes were made on 12 December 1967. The periods of my subsequent visits were twice a month in November and December 1968, and at least once a month during January to August 1969. Additional observations were made at Dwellingup between 20 to 28 February 1969.

During late 1964 and mid June 1965 most houses were transferred to Dwellingup and the remainder were gone by 1970. The cleared area remaining, which I will still call Banksiadale, was situated 16 km inside the western border of the Jarrah forest in State Forest Number 14 (Stranger 1999). These notes expand on what was provided on the birdlife of the Banksiadale-Dwellingup area by Stranger (1999).

The forest there is typical and rather homogenous Jarrah forest and the demarcation between the open forest (which I have referred to as woodland) and the watercourses is usually well defined. One is either in the dense vegetation of a watercourse or in the relatively open woodland.

Notes on the Birds

Whistling Kite. One bird was seen on 16 November 1968 and another at Dwellingup on 20 February 1969.

Brown Goshawk. Uncommon and of local occurrence. Two birds in juvenile plumage on 8 and 9 February 1969 and also seen at Dwellingup.

Little Eagle. On 21 and 22 December 1968 a light phase bird was seen in the same area each day. Also seen at Dwellingup on 26 February 1969.

Australian Hobby. One seen on 12 December 1968, eating a dragonfly.

Common Bronzewing. One bird was flushed from the roadside on 12 December 1967 and two birds were seen flying along the river valley on 11 January 1969. The species was heard calling on 21 December 1968 and 12 January 1969.

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo. Always seen, numbers varying up to about 100. Some very young ones were seen on 22 December 1968. The flocks progressively disperse into smaller groups during the day and then progressively reassemble towards evening. On 9 August 1969 a flock of about 30 birds was feeding on Jarrah nuts.

White-tailed Black-Cockatoo, ? species. Small numbers in September and early October 1964 and small numbers, largest group about 30, were regularly seen between January and April 1969. Eleven were observed on 2 June 1969 and two on 2 June 1969 near North Dandalup. Varying numbers, largest flock of about 60 or 70, were feeding on the Marri blossom by the Murray River south of Dwellingup between 20 and 28 February 1969.

Purple-crowned Lorikeet. Present on 12 December 1967 and small numbers were seen between 20 and 28 February 1969 near Dwellingup, where the Marri was flowering.

Australian Ringneck. Generally and thinly distributed in the woodland and often seen on the Banksiadale clearings. It was slightly commoner than the Red-capped Parrot and some flocking was noticed in mid January 1969, the birds then being very noisy. In early April 1969 birds were feeding on the berries of the ornamental shrub *Cotoneaster pannosa* in the garden of an abandoned house. It also feeds on the seeds of *Acacia extensa*. It was noted that birds became very agitated when a Little Eagle flew overhead and, together with the Red-capped Parrot, exhibited nervousness when Brown Goshawks were in the vicinity.

Red-capped Parrot. Generally distributed in the woodland and of varying abundance. Small numbers were regularly seen but it was commoner in January and February 1969, juveniles and female-plumaged birds mostly being seen. It was then calling noisily and flocking, flocks of up to 10 to 15 birds being common. It was not recorded during my two day visit in April of 1969 but by June 1969 it had resumed its typical abundance. On 24 November 1968 the birds were feeding on Jarrah nuts and on 22 December 1968 two birds were feeding on the seeds of *Acacia extensa* together with two Australian Ringnecks.

Western Rosella. Thinly distributed throughout the region. On 2 November 1968 some birds were feeding on the introduced Cape Weed *Arctotheca calendula*. The

species has a variety of calls some of which I have syllabised as "zit-zit" "sweet-swoo", "chik", "chik-chik" and "chick-chik-chik" the chik call often repeated very rapidly, and a piping "it, who hit you".

Fan-tailed Cuckoo. Generally and thinly distributed throughout the woodland. It called loudly and consistently during 8 September and 9 October 1964 and in August 1969. In November 1968 it was regularly heard calling in the morning but in December 1968 it was only heard in the very early morning and at dusk. It was not seen during January and February 1969 and on 6 April and 31 May 1969 a few were seen but the species was not heard calling at all. On 6 April 1969 one bird was undergoing an extensive body moult and another bird had a loose outer primary, and the outer pair of tail feathers was half grown.

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo. Generally distributed throughout the woodland. It called loudly and consistently between 8 September and 9 October 1964 and in December 1968. It was heard in the very early morning of 11 January 1969 but was not recorded in February and April 1969. A few were heard calling on 9 August 1969. On many occasions it uttered its "sphere" call without any preliminary calling, and could thus be mistaken for the Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo. Dell (1971) has observed this too and gives details of behaviour while the birds are calling. On 12 December 1967 and 22 December 1968 fledglings were being fed by Inland Thornbills. It is frequently seen on the ground and in the lower foliage.

Australian Owlet-nightjar. On 19 December 1969 David Mell struck a bird with his vehicle and saw another six near Mt. Keats, between Nanga Brook and Dwellingup. The birds were apparently feeding on moths on the damp ground near a river.

Sacred Kingfisher. Generally and thinly distributed during spring and summer. Not recorded in early February 1969 or thereafter, but the species was observed at Dwellingup between 20 and 28 February 1969. One bird had a skink and, after considerable manipulation, swallowed it.

Rainbow Bee-eater. Generally and thinly distributed throughout the area. It inhabits the typical forest but is commoner over the clearings and the more open areas. It was regularly recorded between early November 1968 and early February 1969. It was not recorded at Banksiadale in early April 1969 nor thereafter, but was seen at Dwellingup between 20 and 28 February 1969, the species then flocking, very active and noisy.

Rufous Tree-Creeper. Pairs of birds were infrequently encountered in woodland localities and it prefers areas relatively free from dense undergrowth.

Splendid Fairy-wren. Very common, generally distributed, and it freely ranged into the riverine thickets. Its loud spirited calling had become subdued by late December 1968 and immediately thereafter it was relatively inconspicuous and quiet. Many males were moulting on 3 November 1968, some were moulting extensively in mid January 1969 and most males were moulting extensively in early February 1969. During 5 to 7 April 1969 no fully plumaged males of either this or the next species were observed. Displays involving the

erection of crown feathers and ear coverts have been described by Sedgwick (1956) and Stranger (1992). The species forms feeding associations with the Inland and Western Thornbills.

Red-winged Fairy-wren. A common species which is essentially an inhabitant of the riverine thickets. It does however range into the woodland, usually in association with thickets of *Bossiaea aquifolium*, and was seen once in an area of woodland some considerable distance from the nearest stream. Webster (1948) noted a similar distribution in an area of Karri *Eucalyptus diversicolor* forest and Bradshaw (1928) observed a similar distribution. Its call is not as spirited as that of the Splendid Fairy-wren and like that species its calling became subdued towards late December and remained so thereafter. Many males were moulting on 24 November 1968, one extensively moulting male was seen in late December 1968 and a moulting male was seen at Waterous, east of Waroona on 19 February 1969. During 5 to 7 April no fully plumaged males of either this or the preceding species were seen.

White-browed Scrubwren. Usually and frequently encountered in the riverine thickets. However near Dwellingup the species was observed in an area thickly clad with *Acacia pulchella* and a long way from the nearest stream. Some of its calls appear to have an attraction for the Silvereye and possibly the Western Spinebill too.

Western Gerygone. Generally distributed and constantly heard calling until late December 1968. Thereafter it called less frequently and during 5 to 7 April 1969 it did not call at all, though many were seen. Between 31 May and 2 June 1969 it was neither heard nor seen though it was present and calling in the Perth area at that time. It was not recorded on 9 August 1969 but was present and calling at North Dandalup, on the edge of the Jarrah forest 16 km to the west. In mid January an adult was observed feeding a juvenile bird. It appeared to be of a solitary nature and was mostly encountered singly, and otherwise only in pairs.

Striated Pardalote. A common woodland inhabitant whose loud incessant calling lessened during December 1968 and was noticeably subdued immediately thereafter. In early February 1969 it called a bit throughout the day at Banksiadale and similarly at Dwellingup in late February 1969. However during 5 to 7 April 1969 and 31 May to 2 June 1969 none was seen or heard, though the species was heard calling at Medina in late May 1969. On 16 November 1968 copulation was seen once and in late December 1968 a few juveniles were observed. A juvenile was also seen at Waterous, east of Waroona, on 19 February 1969.

Inland Thornbill. Common and generally distributed in the woodland, this very active species has a tremendous repertoire of calls, which vary from harsh chirps to prolonged spirited singing. It is usually seen in pairs or small groups and frequently forages with the Western Thornbill. On 6 April 1969 one bird had the outer pair of tail feathers half grown.

Western Thornbill. Very common and generally distributed in the woodland. It is usually seen in pairs

though small groups are also encountered. It sometimes forages on the ground (also see Serventy and Whittell 1976) and associates with the preceding species. One of its calls is very similar to the common call of the Yellow-rumped Thornbill.

Red Wattlebird. An inhabitant of the woodland which was infrequently encountered. Only one or two birds were seen at any one time though it was recorded on nearly all my visits.

Little Wattlebird. Essentially an inhabitant of the riverine foliage but ranges out into the woodland to feed on the flowering *Banksia grandis* and *B. littoralis*. It is generally common, very active, noisy and pugnacious and will attack and chase both the Australian Ringneck and the Red-capped Parrot.

White-naped Honeyeater. Frequently recorded but never abundant, usually being seen feeding on the blossom in the treetops. On 7 December 1968 an adult was feeding two fledglings.

Brown Honeyeater. A woodland inhabitant that was recorded during most of my visits, but seldom seen or heard. It was commonest in late December 1968 and early January 1969, when several were seen and it was calling loudly. It was not recorded at Banksiadale on 9 August 1969, but it was present near North Dandalup at that time.

THIRD CORELLA COUNT

Saturday 15 April 1999

Starting 3:30 pm

The first two corella counts, in June 1998 and April 1999, gathered useful data about the spread and numbers of feral corellas around Perth. Allan Burbidge has just recorded at least 20 Long-billed Corellas at Lake Joondalup, up from the 12 seen last year, and other populations may also be increasing. We need to continue to track distribution and numbers that will, among other things, strengthen the case for control of these pest species.

See WABN 86, June 1998 for background information and identification hints and WABN 87, September 1998, and 90, June 1999, for reports on the first two corella surveys.

If you know of a place that you regularly or often see corellas, or would be happy to be assigned to an area we already know about, please take part in an organised count at as many places as possible throughout the metropolitan area on 15 April. Counting begins at 3:30 pm and ends when it gets too dark to identify corellas.

We will identify the species of all corellas seen, and count the number of each species, at each site at approximately the same time on the same day.

If you would like to take part in this survey please contact John Blyth

by phone (work 9405 5100 – home 9381 6293);

facs 9306 1641

or email johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au

New Holland Honeyeater. A very common and pugnacious species that inhabits the riverine foliage, though it does range into the adjacent woodland to feed on the flowering *Banksia grandis*, *B. littoralis*, and Marri. In early January 1969 several juveniles were seen.

Western Spinebill. Generally distributed and quite common, it feeds extensively on the flowers of *Banksia grandis* and *B. littoralis* and in February 1969 it was feeding on the Marri blossom. On 11 January 1969 some juveniles were seen and many males were moulting extensively, the ventral plumage being ill defined, and in early February 1969 many males were doing likewise. The species has the habit of 'clapping' its wings and the sound is diagnostic of it in the Jarrah forest.

Scarlet Robin. A common woodland inhabitant that prefers the woodland adjacent to the riverine thickets. It mostly called loudly and continuously but became subdued during January and February 1969. In early February 1969 some males were moulting extensively, having some grey in the plumage in place of black. At Dwellingup it ranges into the township and at the sawmill a pair frequently attended stacks of freshly sawn timber which contained a long, thin white 'worm'. In Victoria Currie (1916) observed that 'robins' (species unknown, but could have been this one) frequented a sawmill for similar reasons.

Western Yellow Robin. A thinly distributed woodland inhabitant that prefers areas of *Banksia grandis*, does not range into the riverine thickets, and avoids the dense stands of *Bossiaea aquifolium* that the White-breasted Robin is so fond of. It also flies and perches higher than that species. This difference in habitat distribution between the two *Eopsaltria* species was also noticed by Jackson near Albany (Whittell 1952). On 24 November 1968 an adult was with two juveniles that had traces of yellow below their breasts and on 7 December 1968 another adult was with a juvenile that had yellow plumage developing below the breast. The juveniles perch and jerk their wings similar to the adults and the species has clear piping calls in addition to its common guttural ones.

White-breasted Robin. A fairly common species that prefers the cover of the riverine thickets, but it will range into the adjacent woodland in conjunction with thickets of *Bossiaea aquifolium*, to which it 'adheres'. At Dwellingup a pair was seen in partially cleared woodland about 0.4 km from the nearest stream. On 16 November 1968 a juvenile with brown clouding on the breast was observed. Apparently both species of *Eopsaltria* breed at the same time (also see Stranger 1967). Whittell (1933) and Stranger (1967) have described some of its habits and behaviour and the following can be added: on one occasion an individual swallowed food while on the ground, a habit which is also common to the Western Yellow Robin, and it also jerks its wings and tail while on the ground. In one of its calls, a 'weet weet chairr' the 'chairr' sounds similar to the '(chit chit) charr' of the Western Yellow Robin, but is lighter and not quite as grating. Other calls are a rather sharp 'weit' and 'weit weit'. All these calls seem to be different from those described by Pepper (1965) and Stranger (1967).

Varied Sittella. A few birds or small groups were occasionally encountered in woodland localities. On 7 December 1968 juveniles were accompanying adults and on 28 December 1968 a juvenile was with two adults.

Golden Whistler. Common and generally distributed throughout the woodland. It became rather quiet after December 1968 and on 24 November 1968 a (young ?) male was moulting extensively, its plumage pattern only just being discernible. On 11 January 1969 a nest containing a well developed nestling, and with a fledgling nearby, was located some 2.5 m high in a *Banksia littoralis*. Little Wattlebirds and New Holland Honeyeaters expressed great interest in the fledgling but did not harm it.

Grey Shrike-thrush. Fairly common and generally distributed throughout the woodland. It called loudly and frequently until early January 1969 but was then very quiet thereafter. It has one very mournful call that is so unlike its typical calls that it is difficult to reconcile it with the species.

Grey Fantail. Seems to prefer the environs of the riverine gullies but also found elsewhere in the woodland. It is usually very active and noisy but was much quieter and unobtrusive in mid January and early February 1969.

Dusky Woodswallow. Small flocks were irregularly encountered throughout the forest, over the Banksiadale clearings and at Dwellingup in late February 1969. It was not recorded during my April 1969 visit or thereafter, but I did record it during 8 September to 9 October 1964.

Grey Currawong. Thinly distributed throughout the forest, the largest group being six. On 8 February 1969 an adult was feeding a juvenile and the next day birds were visiting the fruit trees in Banksiadale, the latter then being abandoned. A few birds were recorded near Dwellingup in late February 1969.

Australian Raven. Thinly distributed throughout the area but commoner in the vicinity of the farmlets. Common at Dwellingup in late February 1969.

Red-eared Firetail. A fairly plentiful species that inhabits the riverine thickets, but it does forage over the adjacent woodland. During 5 to 7 April 1969 one bird was moulting extensively. Three calls were recorded, of which only one has been described. It is a soft 'whee whee...' which was uttered by a bird sitting on a branch, and is presumably the identity call 'oowee' of Immelman (1960). The second call is a loud, pumping two-syllable 'zip-sip' which is repeated many times, and the second note is considerably higher in pitch than the first. On one occasion the bird was obviously disturbed by my presence so it is possibly a caution or danger call. The third call is a 'pz-wee' which may be uttered once or several times. Under still conditions the call carries for a considerable distance. I am unable to relate the latter two to either Immelman (1960) or Pepper (1964).

Silvereye. Only seen in pairs which were infrequently encountered until late January 1969. Then it was abundant, calling loudly and flocking and was most numerous in the riverine gullies and marshes. At the same time birds were feeding on the flowers of *Banksia grandis*. Thereafter it was commonly encountered until 9 August

1969 when only a few were seen and they were not calling much. The species has a call similar to the common call of the Scarlet Robin and I don't think that it is mimicry, although the species is a known mimic.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the firm of Hawker Siddely Building Supplies for courtesies and information relevant to Banksiadale, to Mr A Harris, then conservator of Forests, for permission to use Banksiadale as a camp, and to Mr R Royce, then of the Department of Agriculture, for identifying some of the flora. I am also grateful to the late Dr Glen Storr and the late Dr D L Serventy for helpful comments and advice.

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Robert H Stranger

HANZAB VOL 1 FOR SALE

I have a copy of HANZAB Vol 1 (in two parts), in excellent condition, which I want to sell for \$200.

If interested, please contact me on:

08 9761 2767

or by post: **Leila Fiddian**

5 Brockman Street, Bridgetown 6255.

FRANKLIN'S GULL AT KALBARRI

On 3 January and 4 January 2000, I saw an adult winter Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) at Kalbarri.

Observers were David Cooper and Brenda Kay, and we used Zeiss 10 x 40 binoculars and an Optolyth 30 x 75 telescope. The duration of observation was approximately two minutes on 3 January and on and off over a 4 hour period on 4 January. The weather was hot and sunny on 3 January with only a light breeze. It was overcast on 4 January with some slight early morning rain but calm.

On 3 January, we visited Red Bluff. On leaving the car to walk towards the point at 1:30 pm, my attention was immediately drawn to a small gull with noticeably dark upperwings flying south past us along the tideline at a range of around 50 m. On raising my binoculars I was immediately struck by the familiar 'upperwing and primary pattern' of adult Franklin's Gull, a species I have previously seen in the UK, the USA and Peru. I immediately drew BK's attention to the bird and proclaimed that it must be a Franklin's Gull. As it drifted away south along the north side of the Red Bluff Cliffs I quickly tried to concentrate on features that would clinch the identification, concentrating on the head pattern, which revealed an incomplete dark grey/black hood. The bird was lost to view as it flew south around the cliffs having been on view for just a couple of minutes. It seemed such an incredible record to have been watching a North American prairie gull, which I knew normally wintered along the Peruvian coast, here in WA and based on such a brief view would anyone believe me? I therefore quickly

"... familiar 'upperwing and primary pattern' ..."

looked up the status in my copy of Simpson & Day and was mightily relieved to see a small area of red hatch shaded across the SW coast of Australia — although a vagrant, at least it had been recorded in the 'area' before. In the event I returned to sea-watch from 'Jake's Corner' and, whilst I kept checking the Silver Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*) that were apparently being attracted to the people fishing along the beach between 'Jake's Corner' and the Red Bluff Cliffs, I did not see the Franklin's Gull again that day.

After a rough night including both wind and rain I was hopeful that the following morning would prove better for sea-watching. However at dawn I was back at 'Jake's Corner' and the wind had dropped to a slight offshore breeze. Although I walked to the point it soon became clear that there was little point in sea-watching and with rain clouds approaching I decided to make a retreat to the car. I drove to the Red Bluff car park and checked several flocks of resting Silver Gulls — no sign of the Franklin's.

I then decided to return to Kalbarri to check the congregations of birds that I had previously seen in the area of the rivermouth. At 5:30 am on checking through

the mixed flocks of resting Silver Gulls, Pacific Gulls (*Larus pacificus*) and Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*) on Oyster Reef I relocated the Franklin's Gull. Although it spent much time asleep it was once disturbed and flew a few metres. I took a description before returning to the caravan park to pick up Brenda. On returning to Oyster Reef the Franklin's Gull was still present. As the weather had improved I walked to the edge of the sand spit to obtain better views. I watched the bird until 9:30 am when it was still present, asleep on Oyster Reef. We then left the area.

We returned to Kalbarri on the 8th and 9th when the sea-watching had improved with the onset of an onshore wind but despite checking the birds at Oyster Reef we failed to re-find the Franklin's Gull.

Description taken on 4th: Noticeably smaller than the accompanying Silver Gulls with neat compact proportions. Very short dark legs mean it stands far less tall than the Silver Gulls. Bill all black, being both shorter and smaller than Silver Gull. Mantle and upperwings very dark grey being darker grey than the accompanying Crested Terns let alone the Silver Gulls.

Underwings white. In flight the primarily dark grey upperwings contrast strongly with a broad white trailing edge to the entire wings. The white trailing edge forms a continuous area with broad white bases to the primaries and also large white tips to the primaries. In flight the white bases and tips to the primaries broadly surround a black subterminal area which forms a crescent of black to the primaries — very eye-catching.

At rest primaries clearly broadly tipped with white forming large mirrors to at least P10, P9 and P8 interspersed with black. No obvious sign of wing moult in flight or at rest. Very large white tertial crescent separating the black of the outer primaries with the dark grey upperwings. In flight pure white rump contrasts strongly with grey mantle and upperwings and upper surface of tail which is 'shaded' grey. Underparts white extending over nape. Black at rear of crown rises strongly 'over' nape recalling rear of crown of Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*). Black of hood most extensive behind eye, on ear-coverts and over the rear of the crown. Neat white crescents above and below eye. Forehead and lores streaked grey — presumably in moult / winter plumage.

Previous experience of the species: (a) 3 in the UK — adult summer 22 June 1991 Saltholme Pools; adult winter 21 October 1994 Hayle Estuary; adult winter 6 January 1996 Gloucester Landfill

(b) 15 + in Texas on Spring migration 1985

(c) 300 + in Peru in October 1996.

My previous experience with gulls includes 38 species seen worldwide, including the following species with which Franklin's Gull could be confused (in the Australian context):

Sabine's Gull: 44 seen in UK since 1983.

Laughing Gull: 1 in UK, many hundreds in Washington DC area of USA, Texas, Florida, Costa Rica, Venezuela and Jamaica.

Black-headed Gull: seen virtually daily in the UK.

David Cooper

DRINKING BY LONG-BILLED BLACK-COCKATOOS

We live in an area 20 km from Albany, where there are many Marri trees.

For the last three months we have had large numbers of Long-billed Black-Cockatoos feeding on the honky nuts. Several times they have been resting and preening in trees in our garden, and taking a drink from the bird bath. They put their heads on one side and suck up the water sideways, perhaps because it's a shallow bath (an old plough disk) and their bills are too long for drinking anyhow else.

Liz Davies



Long-billed Black-Cockatoos
Drawing by Pam Free

and throat, it was most likely subspecies *simillima*. There is only one previous record of Yellow Wagtail in the Carnarvon area (one bird seen by Geoff Shannon on 16 February 1991; *Western Australian Bird Notes* No. 58: 2, 7) and only a handful of records from south of here.

David Cooper

YELLOW WAGTAIL AT CARNARVON

On 5 January 2000, Brenda Kay and I saw a Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) at Chinamans Pool, Carnarvon.

We used Zeiss 10 x 40 binoculars and observed the bird for about 20 minutes. The weather was hot and sunny.

We visited Chinamans Pool as it was mentioned in notes we had brought from the UK, and we gained access from the southern side along a driveable levy. At the western end of the pool an adult male Yellow Wagtail could be seen feeding on the wet mud at the edge of the Pool.

I decided to walk out (in the midday heat!) along the dry riverbed to the edge of the pool in an attempt to obtain better views to allow subspecific identification. I was able to approach to within 10 m of the bird until it flew, calling three times, to a nearby 'island' of mud.

The following description was made. Crown, nape and ear coverts pale grey. White supercilium broadening behind eye. Mantle very pale green. Median, greater coverts and tertials broadly edged yellow. Wings grey. Tail black with white outer tail feathers. Entire underparts very pale 'weak tea' washed with a hint of yellow. Eye, bill and legs black. Call a high pitched single note 'zeet', heard three times in flight.

My previous experience of the species includes many hundreds seen in the UK (including several identifiable 'forms'). I have also seen the species in Israel, Gambia, Nepal, South Africa, The Philippines, India and Singapore.

I have seen 10 species of wagtail worldwide, and my previous experience of species with which Yellow Wagtails could be confused is as follows (in Australian context):

Citrine Wagtail: 2 in UK (1 adult, 1 juvenile) and 46 seen in India 1998.

Grey Wagtail: Many hundreds seen in the UK.; also seen in Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand, The Philippines and India.

I am confident that the bird at Chinamans Pool was a Yellow Wagtail. From the colour of the nape, supercilium

Birds Australia-WA Group

RESEARCH PROJECT COORDINATORS

Research projects organised by the Western Australian Group of Birds Australia can commence at any time during the year.

Each project will require the appointment of a research project coordinator.

If you wish to be interviewed for any position as it arises, please forward NOW an expression of interest with your qualifications and areas of interest to:

Michael Brooker
Birds Australia-WA Group
71 Oceanic Drive
Floreat WA 6014

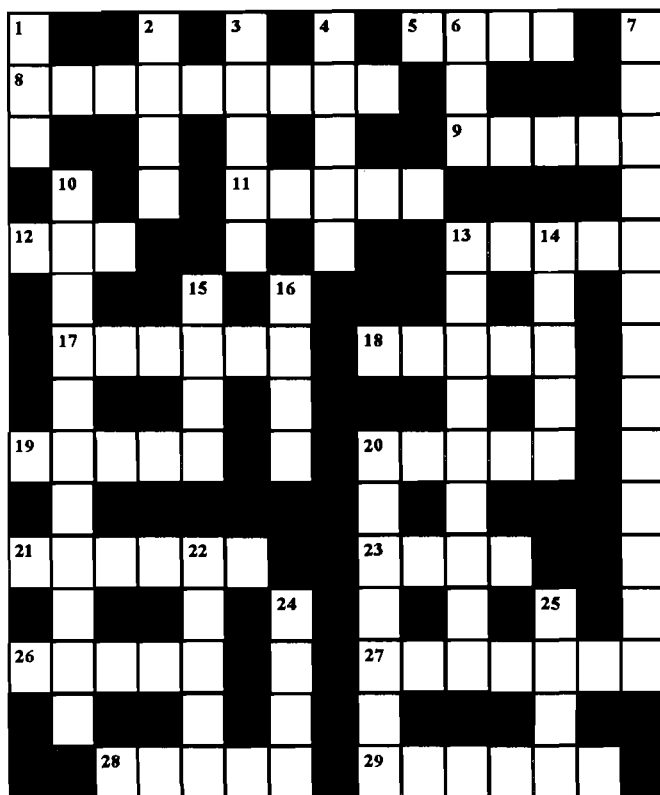
Mark the envelope CONFIDENTIAL.

You will be advised of funded projects.

Allan K Jones
Grants Sub-committee

Crossword No 20

by Pam Agar



Clues across

5. Area beneath lower mandible.
8. Watchers.
9. Major taxonomic divisions of animals.
11. Covered with dust.
12. Number of eggs usually laid by Purple-gaped Honeyeater.
13. Formed by interlacing.
17. Frigatebirds possess a red sac at this position.
18. Shelters for viewing birds.
19. Reef Egret morphs may be ... or dark grey.
20. Upper abdomen.
21. Robins ... lichen or bark to camouflage nests.
23. Parched.
26. Alternative nest-site for an Osprey.
27. Lake, site of mass breeding by Banded Stilts.
28. A Silver Gull often does this on one leg.
29. Further observation may cause you to do this with an opinion.

Clues down

1. Possible participant in conservation programs.
2. Gull, also known as Dominican.
3. To avoid detection or capture.
4. Comprised of longer feathers on bird's head.
6. Singing Honeyeaters often move in this way on the ground.

7. Largest cuckoo found in WA.
10. Event where as many birds as possible must be sighted in set time.
13. Frequently heard bird of arid country of NW of WA.
14. Initial one may give very different impression from the next.
15. One made on site may aid recall later.
16. Sudden forceful contact with a window can do this to a bird.
20. A determined birder may do this over rocks to reach a nest site.
22. Convenient field record forms.
24. Commonly used to capture specimens.
25. Major predators of small birds.

Country Groups

ALBANY BIRD GROUP

Outing, 9 November 1999

Our November outing saw 18 regular members and five visitors meet at 8:00 am at the Denmark Rotunda on the river.

Tim Hunt had an Atlas program mapped out. We broke into groups of four to a car and travelled along the Scotsdale Road. Each group had an area search, Site No 1 being 1.7 km north of Denmark on the East river road. We had perfect weather for birdwatching — no wind and very little cloud cover.

At 10:00 am we gathered on the corner of Scotsdale and Churchill Roads for morning tea (a most important activity). The next section for Atlas survey was from Scotsdale Road down Churchill Road to Mount Lindsay car park.

On behalf of the group I wish to thank Tim for all the preparation and effort he put in to making the day so enjoyable. Between us we managed 54 species for the morning.

Outing, 14 December

From the corner of Two People Bay Road and along the pipeline road, under the guidance of Tim Hunt, 21 members took part in an Atlas survey. Each group had two sections to cover.

We were lucky with the day — no wind and not too hot. The birds were very active and most people had good results. Fifty birds were recorded for the morning. Birds breeding were White-winged Trillers, Western Spinebill, Common Bronzewing and Red-winged Fairy-wren, all within a short distance of one another. Our very good nest spotter was Ray Garstone.

We all travelled on to the picnic area at Two People Bay and after a long walk up the hill we returned to eat a Christmas shared lunch, which we all managed very well!

Vivian McCormick

Notices

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS — BUSH TELEGRAPH

At the January Birds Australia WA committee meeting it was agreed that a system be set up to enhance the reporting of unusual sightings and to improve the dissemination of information. Currently, sightings are reported to the office and there is an informal system of people phoning their friends.

There will be four key people and the office to whom sightings will be reported. They are:

Clive Nealon	9448 5921
Clive Napier	9332 7265
Bryan Barrett	9457 2335
Sue Abbotts	9444 1607

A network of people will then be set up with each member required to phone two others — immediately. Plans will be put in place so that if someone goes on holidays they will be covered.

In addition there will be an email group.

If you are interested and wish to receive a phone call or email of unusual sightings you must register with Sue Abbotts, who is the coordinator of this project.

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, 27 June– 2 July 2000 Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia



Birds Australia is presenting the 2nd Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Congress (SHOC) in Brisbane this year. This Congress aims to bring together Southern Hemisphere ornithologists from around the globe to discuss research and conservation of birds in a distinctly southern fashion. With plenary speakers and symposium organisers confirmed from Southern Africa, South America and Australia, SHOC will be a truly international event. This major Congress will be held in Brisbane and hosted by the Queensland Ornithological Society.

Details can be found at the SHOC 2000 website (<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/shoc>). Information can also be obtained from the SHOC 2000 Congress Secretariat:

Conventions Queensland, PO Box 4044
ST LUCIA SOUTH, QLD 4067
Phone: +61 (0)7 3870 8831
Fax: +61 (0)7 3870 9514
Email: shoc2000@conqld.org.au

AWSG 3rd CONFERENCE, 2 JULY 2000

Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

SHOC 2000 is followed immediately by the 3rd AWSG Conference, at the same venue. The major theme for this conference will be long-distance migration between the hemispheres.

Details and registration forms can be obtained from Ken Gosbell, 17 Banksia Court, Heathmont, Vic 3135, tel: (03) 9729 5524, email: kenbg@ozemail.com.au

WADER BANDING

The WA Wader Studies Group continues with its banding programme, and recently leg-flagged 40 Red-necked Stints were caught near Milyu on the Swan River. These birds received a yellow flag on the right tibia (above the “knee”), an orange flag on the right tarsus (below the “knee”) and a metal band on the left tarsus. Two were subsequently seen at Milyu and, later still, on Rottnest.

Please send any observations of leg-flagged waders to either myself or Colin Davis, but take careful note of the positions of leg flags and metal bands.

Mike Bamford

REDUCING THREATS TO HOODED PLOVER AT BEACHES AND COASTAL LAKES



We have been advised by the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Robert Hill, that we have been granted funding of \$64 500 from the Natural Heritage Trust's Coasts and Clean Seas Program.

The two-year project is called ‘Reducing Threats to Hooded Plover at Beaches and Coastal Lakes’. This is a joint project between the WA Group, World Wide Fund for Nature and Threatened Species Network.

Committee members have, with the support of volunteers throughout Western Australia, been active for several years in the organisation of surveys and the writing of reports and this is a fitting grant to enable the WA Group to see many of the recommendations for the protection of this rare species being put into practice.

The sub-committee is Sandra McKenzie (Project Manager), Phyllis Bentley, David Free, Brenda Newbey and Marcus Singor.

The Extension Officer, soon to be appointed, and the sub-committee have a challenging role in these two years. Tasks include the following:

1. Preparation of management action plans for the Hooded Plover in selected coastal areas.
2. Liaison with CALM rangers, local bird observers clubs, community networks and local government agencies to discuss the management plans.
3. Organisation of management workshops on Hooded Plovers in the main coastal areas for representatives from 2 above.
4. Design and have erected beach signs in recommended areas.

5. Organise a winter and summer coastal survey of Hooded Plover.
6. Distribute knowledge about the Hooded Plover for the education of coastal users.
7. Evaluate the program during the second year.

CALLING ALL OWLS

Imagine sitting in the forest at night, playing owl calls for hours on end, night after night. One night, suddenly, above your head a dark shape flies over, on goes your spotlight and there sitting on a branch is a huge Masked Owl staring at you. (You are immediately very glad you're not a rabbit or a bandicoot!).

September 1999 saw a preliminary owl survey of the south west of Western Australia carried out by CALMScience officers Ian Wheeler and Graeme Liddelow, with owl authority Doctor Rod Kavanagh from the New South Wales Forest Research Division.

The two vehicle survey team travelled thousands of kilometres working day and night over a two-week period covering areas from Toodyay to Dryandra, south to the Stirling Ranges and across to the west coast. One hundred sites were visited with all nocturnal birds and mammals being recorded.

The most common species recorded on the survey were Southern Boobooks, Australian Owlet-nightjars, Tawny Frogmouths and Masked Owls. Only five of the survey sites had Masked Owls (including two in Dryandra). Shortly after the survey, in October, a Masked Owl was also found in State Forest near Bridgetown. Barking Owls were not recorded during the survey, but we have since received Barking Owl records from outside the survey area.

Obviously we couldn't be everywhere so we are keen to hear from anyone who has owl sightings. Masked and Barn Owls can be difficult to tell apart so a description of the bird and habitat would help. It is OK to call them 'white-faced owls' if you are unsure. Of particular interest are the Masked and Barking Owls for which distribution knowledge is scant. In particular, breeding records are of great interest.

If you have any information on owls could you please pass it on to Ian Wheeler — phone 08 9771 7990 (work), 08 9761 1054 (home) or send details to:

PO Box 558, Bridgetown WA 6255
or e-mail to ianwh@calm.wa.gov.au

Ian Wheeler

Editors' note: Any reports of Barking or Masked Owls from south-western Australia would also be valuable contributions to the 'Observations' section of WABN.

WRONG WAY GO BACK: AUSTRALIA'S CLOSED TO AVIAN STOWAWAYS

Increasing numbers of exotic birds from Asia have been trying to hitch a ride on cargo vessels to Western Australia.

Birds Australia-WA Group

NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS to be held on Monday 17 April 2000 at the State Tennis Centre, Bolton Ave, Burswood commencing at conclusion of General Meeting

Business

To consider and adopt further revisions to the draft constitution, following rejection by the Ministry of Fair Trading of BAWAG's proposal to incorporate in WA.

If you would like to receive a copy of the revised draft prior to the meeting, please contact the Birds Australia Office at 9383 7749.

Clive Nealon, WA Group Chairman

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) officers have shot five Asian tree sparrows and two pigeons in coastal ports from Port Hedland to Albany since November last year. All these birds pose disease and pest threats to our health, native fauna and agricultural industries.

The masters of the ships on which the stowaways arrived hadn't alerted AQIS to their presence; in fact, some didn't even know the birds were on board.

According to AQIS regional manager Jeroen den Hollander, the growing number of tree sparrows is a

concern because this species travels in breeding pairs and readily establishes colonies in new areas.

"Exotic birds coming into Australia are high risk because they can carry diseases that are dangerous not only to animals but also to humans," he said. "Ships' masters have a responsibility to inspect their vessels before docking in Australia — or face the consequences if they introduce an exotic pest or disease."

"Sparrows are declared agricultural pests because they damage crops, and spoil feed and stored grain with their droppings. Sparrow nests also block gutters and downpipes."

Agriculture Western Australia's bird specialist Marian Massam helped AQIS identify the birds. Marian says the birds could act as carriers for a range of avian diseases, including Newcastle Disease, avian flu and sticky beak.

New South Wales is presently controlling an outbreak of Newcastle Disease that devastated the state's poultry industry, causing the destruction of a million birds.

Mr den Hollander appealed to the community to help AQIS keep watch for sparrows and other birds that could stow away on foreign vessels.

"Be watchful for any unusual birds, especially around ports. Many bird pests never stray far from human populations because they provide vital food sources," he said.

"Sightings of sparrows and other birds can be reported to AQIS and we'll act immediately. WA's \$11 billion agricultural industries need to be protected from these pests."

For further information, contact Sandra Townsend, AQIS public awareness officer on (08) 9311 5350 or 0413 159 380.

Editors' Note: Many of these potential invaders could have a very negative impact on WA birds. BA members are well qualified to help AQIS by being on the lookout for exotic birds especially around ports and other waterfront areas.

IN SEARCH OF WESTERN GROUND PARROTS AT CAPE ARID NATIONAL PARK

Autumn Survey: 22 May– 5 June 2000



Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Helping Australia



We are still in search of the Western Ground Parrot at Cape Arid National Park. We are hopeful of finding them during this autumn survey as Ground Parrots call particularly well at this time.

During spring 1999, six of us surveyed the old sites for Western Ground Parrots, located during the mid to late 1980s, but to no avail. We were instead greeted by many frogs or an empty silence. We covered an extensive area of

heath. However, the heath areas at Cape Arid are vast and many pairs of ears will be needed to seek the Ground Parrot out.

If you would like to join in please contact Shapelle McNee (08) 9487 1105 or Allan Rose at Cape Arid (08) 9075 0055. For those who have never heard the Western Ground Parrot calling out in the bush, we may be able to arrange a place and time to experience this prior to the autumn survey.

The project is funded by NHT and the WWF Threatened Species Network.

Shapelle McNee

NEW MEMBERS

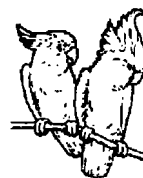
The following people joined Birds Australia–WA Group between 1 November 1999 and 31 January 2000. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

I Alexander, R B Angus, P Archer, L Baird, C Beck, P Desmond, M I Duperouzel, I Hughes, D Jackson, R Junckerstorff, M Kelley, S Kelley, S Kelley, R E Luyken, J Macknay, P J Morling, R J O'Donnell, M Rogers, E Sanderson, L Sellers, J L Walton, D Williams, R B Wyatt

Observatory Reports

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

A cool sea breeze sighs through the mallee. In a last blaze of glory the sun slowly sinks behind a distant sand dune. Seated atop another dune eight people raise their glasses to the setting sun. As dusk gently falls Mt Joseph lives up to its name as the Dune of Many Colours. The group wanders slowly through the dunes back to the house where, on the verandah, a candlelit dinner awaits. At midnight there are no fireworks, no loud noises — just the myriad stars, the flicker of candles and the gentle lisp of the ocean and so at Eyre one millenium ends and another begins.



On Christmas Day a walk along the East Track gave a guest family what they described as the best ever Christmas present. Much to their delight a Western Pygmy Possum was found in one of the nest boxes.

On the bird scene we have had Musk Duck in the ocean, Red-necked Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Pacific Golden Plover and Pectoral Sandpiper on the beach, Banded Lapwing, Blue Bonnet, Restless Flycatcher and

Southern Whiteface seen on Atlassing trips in the area as well as beach-washed Southern Fulmar and White-headed Petrel.

As Robert Burns once wrote, "The best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley", we find ourselves still at Eyre, however by the time this goes to print the new Wardens will have settled in. We wish Sharon Johnson and Robert Threadgold all the best for their time at Eyre. Coincidentally Sharon and Robert were Rangers at Gluepot at the end of 1999. From England they have travelled to a number of places in the world as well as doing research in the Seychelles and in Tasmania working with the Orange-Bellied Parrot Team.

Course dates for 2000 are now available. The first in April is on *Small Mammals and Insects* with Vi Saffer. Remember, it is only one or two days travel from the South West to Eyre and you do not need a 4WD for the last bit as the Wardens will pick you up at no extra charge.

Unfortunately very few Birds Australia members visited Eyre in 1999 and of these only a handful were from WA so why not make 2000 the year you discover or re-discover the Secret of Eyre.

Contact the observatory on:

Phone (08) 9039 3450

Fax: (08) 9039 3440

Mail: Eyre Bird Observatory
c/- Cocklebiddy, via Norseman 6443

Alex Bisgrove and Rob Stogdale
Wardens
Eyre Bird Observatory

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

It's the wet season and the birds are plentiful with 27 000 shorebirds being counted on the northern shores in early January. It will not be long until the waders start to colour up and head north for summer. The area is turning green and providing great breeding conditions for bee eaters, frogmouths and honeyeaters. The Fork-tailed Swifts have arrived along with the Oriental Pratincoles, taking the place of the once plentiful Little Curlews and Oriental Plovers.

We were also lucky enough to have a Banded Honeyeater drop in to the birdbaths for a morning.

Roebuck Plains have changed dramatically over the last few weeks with large amounts of water, and reeds cropping up everywhere. Australasian Grebes and ducks are where pipits used to run. Red-chested Button-quails are calling constantly, setting up their territories and a roost of the rarely seen Grass Owl has been discovered on the plains. The Yellow Chats have dispersed but the few that remain are paired up and we expect them to breed once water levels peak.

A lone Oriental Cuckoo was seen at One Tree and Channel-billed Cuckoos are common at Cable Beach.



The most exciting birds have been Red-rumped Swallows over the car park most nights and an Abbott's Booby was found exhausted after a passing cyclone. This is possibly a first for mainland Australia. (See reports elsewhere in this issue)

The sewerage ponds have provided some great birds this season — already Pectoral Sandpiper, Long-toed Stints and Yellow Wagtails (up to 26 recorded in January). There have been up to three snipe at the ponds but if any one knows how to identify them in the field, they deserve a medal!

Twelve Chestnut-breasted Mannikins, a species that has not been recorded in ten years, have been recently observed on the plains.

On the wader scene, the first known Korean-flagged wader to be seen in Australia (a Bar-tailed Godwit) was observed here in early December, and a banded Great Knot caught on 21 November 1999 proved to be the first ever Chinese-banded bird to be caught outside China!

As you can see, never a dull moment in Broome and with the Broome bird list boasting over 320 species and more being added all the time you can see why it is "One of the places to watch birds in Australia".

Adrian Boyle
Assistant Warden
Broome Bird Observatory

Excursion Reports

CHERRY TREE POOL, 30–31 October 1999

This venue again afforded a feast of good viewing thanks to Wayne Zadow's thorough and patient guiding, and the facilities were more than adequate. The kitchen and meeting room plus the huge wood fire, which was much appreciated on the very cold nights, provided an ideal gathering place for the 32 assorted campers, caravaners and dormitory dwellers who took part.

The weekend might have been advertised as a reunion for the Three Deserts Princess Parrot trip, as no fewer than nine of that party were there, with the consequent reminiscences and photo sharing.

Birdwatching around the campsite was confined to early mornings and evenings but the site still yielded 44 species, including Black-eared Cuckoo and Yellow Spoonbills.

The whole of Saturday was spent on the Heritage Block, 400 hectares of mixed wandoo woodland and scrub at Marribank. In all some 57 species were recorded and most interest centred around the 21 different varieties of nests found to have either eggs or young. Who will forget the thrill of meeting the young peregrine eye to eye through the lens of Dee's telescope, or wondering how

those two young Tawny Frogmouths and their mother ever fitted into that nest space? The Jacky Winter and Restless Flycatcher, and Golden Whistler carrying out his parental duties, also afforded much pleasure.

The other nests included those of Wedge-tailed Eagle, Black-fronted Dotterels, Western Rosella, Australian Ringneck, Red-capped Parrot, Elegant Parrot, Rufous Treecreeper, Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Gerygone, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, Hooded Robin, Varied Sittella, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Dusky Woodswallow and Tree Martin.

On Sunday we broke camp early to go firstly to the Boscabel Reserve where we hoped to find Crested Shrike-tit, but found 15 other species instead, and then on to Towerinning Lake for lunch and birding on the parts of the lake not affected by the water skiers, although the few numbers maybe suggested that Sunday isn't a good day for that spot. There were large numbers of black cormorants, quite a few shovelers, and Common Sandpipers and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers both in breeding plumage.

Thanks to Wayne for his excellent leadership and for searching out so many nests and then making sure we had all had a clear view, before moving on.

Claire Mercer

YANCHEP NATIONAL PARK, 11 December 1999

Earlier in the year the Ranger-in-Charge, Frank Ainsworth, asked BAWAG to survey part of the park for its birdlife. So, on the morning of 11 December, a party of 14 members met to carry out the first of four quarterly surveys. After a rather warm week, the morning was quite cool, making walking pleasant.

The area to be surveyed is approximately 2 km in length and a quarter to half a kilometre in depth. One side borders the golf course and the other Wanneroo Road. An inspection track runs through the centre of the area. Nearly the whole length of the block is covered in thick heathland with a grove of standing timber at the northern end and thickets of banksia.

We split into two parties, starting from either end, but found that the bush was too thick to penetrate. Observations were therefore made from the boundaries and on the central path. A total of 53 species was observed during the morning.

After lunch, an hour was spent on the Pipidinny heath, south of the park, where we sighted four types of raptors, including a Collared Sparrowhawk, the usual White-checked and Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, White-winged



Alfred Cove, site of recent BAWAG excursion

Drawing by Pam Agar

Fairy-wrens and several White-backed Swallows, all of which added to our overall list of 64 species for the day.

Bryan Barrett

WOODMAN POINT, 8

January 2000

About 15 people met at Woodman's Point at 8:00 am on Saturday, to be there earlier than other beach goers and the birds not yet disturbed. It was a moderately warm day following a week of

heat wave conditions. However paddling along the beach was very welcome. We began at the groyne and walked back towards the Cockburn Cement Jetty finding Grey-tailed Tattlers, Common Sandpipers and Ruddy Turnstones. A Pied Cormorant caught a large fish a few metres off the groyne and was having trouble swallowing it when a Pelican flew over and snatched the cormorant's prize!

We were watched by a Black-shouldered Kite as we made our way along the beach towards the point where there were Caspian Terns, Crested Terns, shelduck, Grey Plovers and approximately 30 Red-capped Plovers with one runner whose parents remained when the others flew off. Sanderlings and Red-necked Stints were amongst the rocks. Out at the point was the sighting of the day, three Golden Plovers, in flight, then landing on the beach. Excellent views through telescopes — very golden and spotted. Some Fairy Terns also very obligingly flew in and landed on the nearby beach. Les Harris caught a Crested Tern tangled up in fishing line and hooks which he managed to free.

After morning tea we went over to the Woodman Point Nature Reserve — the site of the old ammunition dump and quarantine station. Rainbow Bee-eaters, Galah, Red-capped Parrot, Australian Ringneck, Inland Thornbill, Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Gerygone, Weebill and Rufous Whistlers were seen amongst the various bush birds. A total of 46 species was seen.

Susan Abbotts

WELLARD WETLANDS, 16 January

It was a cool, overcast morning that greeted the group of 14 members at the entrance to Wellard Wetlands. Alcoa has rehabilitated the clay pits, which now form a series of lakes. Amenities include composting toilets and hides at each lake. There were also benches that came in very handy for the coffee break and bird count afterwards.

The sighting of the day occurred early on in the walk with Fork-tailed Swifts flying overhead. Comments that Dee would be sorry not to have been here were heard and

when she joined us at a later stage on the walk, she was soon told what she had missed.

There were plenty of waterbirds to be seen. One lake in particular gave us splendid views of Great Crested and Australasian Grebes, Musk Ducks and Australasian Shovelers.

Les mentioned that he had seen Buff-banded Rail and Spotless Crake at Kogolup Lake. Seven of us decided to visit the lake on the way home. We were rewarded with close-up views of the crake and rail as well as a Swamp Harrier walking along the edge of the mud. There were numerous Clamorous Reed-warblers, White-faced Herons and Black-winged Stilts but only one solitary wader was seen.

A total of 53 species was seen for the two sites.

Coral Lukies

PERTH ZOO, 18 January

It was a fine, sunny morning when Neil Hamilton, Curator of Birds for the Zoo, gave a conducted tour around the avian areas of the Zoo. A keen group of over 50 members enjoyed this, our third and by far the best visit. The real object of the mid-week walk was to demonstrate the subtle differences between Short-billed and Long-billed Black-Cockatoos. However, Neil also introduced the group to many other species thereby turning what could have been a somewhat dull, educational walk into one of extreme interest. We were shown Noisy Pitta and Barking Owls, both of which have bred at the Zoo, as well as many ducks and other waterbirds in the big free-flying enclosures. It was very helpful to be able to see so many of our native birds at such close quarters.

Our thanks to Neil for such an enjoyable and informative morning.

Bryan Barrett

SUNSET AT WADJEMUP, 29 January

Have you ever wondered where the Tree Martins go at sunset? On a beautiful Saturday evening at Wadjemup we found out!

A spectacular sunset at the close of a hot afternoon galvanised clouds of Tree Martins to an equally spectacular feeding frenzy that put the Skyworks pyrotechnics to shame. Clicking beaks, excited twittering and incredible aerial gymnastics heralded an almost surreptitious roosting behaviour.

As the sky darkened, seemingly one by one (and in direct contrast to their wild, noisy and collective pursuit of the insects that were invisible to the enthralled human audience), the Tree Martins slipped discreetly into their chosen tree.

Suddenly they were all gone — and silent. If we hadn't seen it we would have had no idea at all that hundreds of the tiny creatures were tucked in for the night in that particular tree.

(PS: Wadjemup is the aboriginal name for Rottnest Island.)

**Claire, Mavis, Mary, Kath and Darryl
2000 Wader Count — Rottnest Island**

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.

Sunday 27 February — Full-day Excursion, 'Bootline Road' Nature Reserve, Gingin

Meet at 8:00 am at the new reserve on the northern side of Bootline Road 7.9 km west of the Brand Highway (at A, 0.5, Map 69, in the Western Australian Travellers Atlas). A hand painted "CALM" is visible on a large tree near the gate and nature reserve sign, about 100 metres past the creek crossing. The Bootline Road turnoff from the Brand Highway is well signposted, about 100 km north of Perth city and is virtually opposite the Boonanning Road turn off.

Bring lunch, lots of water and long pants or gaiters to protect against snakes and grass seeds.

This reserve supports four species of fairy-wrens. The outing should provide a reasonably good selection of bush birds as well as some experience in separating fairy-wrens of the red-shouldered group — a must for atlassers in the south west!

Leaders: John and Judy Blyth

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.

Saturday–Monday 4–6 March — Campout, Busselton

The long weekend at this time of the year provides an opportunity to see the Vasse–Wonnerup Estuary system with a diverse range of both waterbirds and waders. Jim Lane from the CALM Busselton office has agreed to show us the birds on the estuary including his best Long-toed Stint area. We can also expect to see Spotless Crake, Spotted Crake and Buff-Banded Rail. Bring telescopes.

We will also look at the bushland near the coast, go to Sugarloaf to see the Red-tailed Tropicbird and do the night possum trail off Layman Road so bring a torch or spotlight.

Contact the office to book and for accommodation details by Friday 19 February — phone 9383 7749. Accommodation is difficult to get so this is essential.

Leader : Sue Abbotts

Saturday 11 March — Half-day Excursion, Alfred Cove

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast) off Burke Drive, Attadale. A last chance to look for migratory waders before they return to their breeding grounds in Siberia — hopefully some will already be in their breeding plumage. Bring your telescopes.

Leader: Les Harris

Thursday 16 March — Mid-week Walk, Blackwall Reach, Bicton

Meet at 8:30 am at the junction of Kent Street and Blackwall Reach Parade. A new area along the river to look for waders and bushbirds.

Leader: Eric Pyatt

Sunday 19 March — Full-day Excursion, Yanchep National Park

This will be the second of the regular surveys we have been asked to do of the birds in the recreational areas of the park. Meet in the park at 9:00 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.

Leaders: Bryan Barrett and Clive Nealon

Sunday 26 March — Half-day Excursion, Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale

Meet at 8:00 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 here. Wedge-tailed Eagles are again being sighted — since at least one bird was shot and fire destroyed their nest.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

Monday 27 March Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Michael Brooker, of the CSIRO (Wildlife and Ecology) and a member of the Committee, will speak on "The Biology of the Blue-breasted Fairy-wren in a fragmented landscape near Wyalkatchem".

Sunday 2 April — Full-day Excursion, Udumung Reserve and Wannamal Lake

From Bindoon, take the Great Northern Highway for approximately 20 km, then turn left into Hay Flat Road. Meet at 9:30 am at Udumung Reserve, about 100 m along Hay Flat Road on the right — look for the BAWAG sign.

We will look at the reserve first, then travel west to the lake.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

Saturday 8 April — Half-day Excursion, Bibra Lake
Meet at 8:30 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake, off Progress Drive. Bibra Lake is part of the Beeliar Wetlands Chain and a large number of water and bush birds can be observed here.

Leaders: Pam and George Agar

Wednesday 12 April — Mid-week Walk, Ray Marshall Park (Blackadder Creek), Viveash

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. This is a walk along the John George Trail which runs beside the Swan River, crossing Blackadder Creek.

Leader: Jan Rogers

Saturday 15 April — Third Corella Count

Begins 3:30 pm, ends when dark.

To take part contact John Blyth 9405 5100 (w) 9381 6293 (h).

Sunday 16 April — Half-day Excursion, The Spectacles, Kwinana

Meet in the main car park on McLaughlan Road at 8:30 am. From Perth, proceed along the Kwinana Freeway turning right at the Anketell crossroad, some 30 km south of Perth. Travel about 2 km, then turn left into McLaughlan Road. Over 100 species of birds have been sighted here. Bring your lunch, if you wish, as there is a picnic area.

Leader: Dee Smith

Monday 17 April General Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Simon Nevill of Falcon Tours will speak on "Top birding locations throughout Australia and the species to be seen there".

Note (1): 3rd Monday owing to a public holiday on the following (4th) Monday (Easter Monday).

Note (2): The EGM to consider progress with incorporation (see Notice page 26).

Friday–Tuesday 21–25 April — Easter and Anzac Day Campout, Corrigin

This year's Easter campout will be held at Corrigin. This wheatbelt town is situated 228 km east of Perth via Brookton. There are numerous reserves within comfortable driving distance from the town and there is a large reserve around a granite outcrop at the town itself.

Recent rains should ensure that many of the salt lakes will have water in them and there should be numerous waterbirds.

The Corrigin Caravan Park is small so early bookings are essential: (08) 9063 2289. There is a motel in the town for those who prefer this type of accommodation.

Please advise the Office (9383 7749) at the earliest opportunity if you wish to attend this campout. It is entirely your responsibility to arrange accommodation and

book sites. The campout will commence officially on the evening of Friday 21 April.

Leader: Clive Napier

NB: As there will be quite a lot of driving to other areas during this campout, please remember the **Convoy Rule** — watch for the car **behind** you and make sure it follows you at corners!

Saturday 22 April — Half-day Excursion, Bold Park

Meet at 9:00 am at the car park, Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat. This is a pleasant and interesting walk at BAWAG's back door for those not attending the Easter Campout at Corrigin.

Leader: Neil Porteous

Sunday 30 April — Half-day Excursion, Lake Gwelup

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park at the corner of Stoneham Street and Huntriss Road (north of Karrinyup Road). Plenty of both waterbirds and bushbirds.

Leader: Clive Nealon

Saturday 6 May — Full-day Excursion, Flynn Road

Meet at 9:00 am on the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about one kilometre on the Perth side of "The Lakes" turnoff, ie, the York Road turnoff.

We will look at several areas of wandoo woodland where three species of robin are usually seen.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Sunday 14 May — Half-day Excursion, Lake Coogee

Meet at 8:30 am on the southern side of Mayor Road, Munster (50 m west of Hamilton Road).

This is a diverse area, with over 100 species having been seen on the lake and in surrounding bushland. Nine species of raptors have often been sighted.

Leaders: Jan and Dave Crossley

Sunday 17 May — Mid-week Walk, Burswood Open Spaces

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park near the Tourist Centre on Resort Drive. We will look at the bird life which has returned to the public parks and gardens that occupy the site of the former Rivervale Dump.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Sunday 14 May — Full-day Pelagic Seabird Trip

Meet at Hillary's Boat Harbour at 6:45am. We will leave at 7:00 am from near Underwater World and return at about 4:00 pm. There is a limit of 23 people. Booking is essential.

The cost is expected to be \$65 and is required one week before the event.

Book by email foconnor@iinet.net.au or by phoning Frank O'Connor on 9386 5694.

Sunday 20 May — Half-day Excursion, Victoria Reservoir, Canning Mills

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park beside the Information Board, at the entrance to the Dam. From Perth travel east along Welshpool Road to the T-junction at Canning Road, turn right and travel for about 200 m to Masonmill Road. Continue along this road for several kms, following the signs to the dam past the rose nursery, to the entrance to the car park. We will follow several walking tracks in this area, which is not normally open to the public at the weekend.

Leader: John Stewart

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

Ian McLean, Conservation Ecologist, Natural Heritage Division, King's Park, will speak on "In search of the Fiordland Crested Penguin".

Sunday 28 May — Half-day Excursion, Ascot Waters, Belmont

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park at the end of Tidewater Way. To reach the area from Great Eastern Highway, turn into Stoneham Street, then into Resolution Drive, and left into Tidewater Way. Continue through two roundabouts, cross the bridge, and up to the car park at the top of the rise. We might see Buff-banded Rails, and a Black-shouldered Kite has nested in the area.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Saturday–Monday 3–5 June — Campout, Dongara

A previous campout in this area produced a total of 86 species of birds from riverine woodland, low heath and banksias. Some areas to be visited will be Ellendale Pool and the Burma Road Nature Reserve.

Dongara is 358 km from Perth. We will stay at the Seaspray Caravan Park, Church Street, which is on the ocean beach front near the mouth of the Irwin River. To reach the caravan park, turn off the Brand Highway into Moreton Terrace, Dongara, which runs into Church Street.

Two on-site vans are available and 10 cabins: cost approximately \$40 per night for 2 people. Camp sites and powered caravan sites are \$14 per night for 2 people. Please make your own bookings — phone: 9927 1165.

Leader: Sue Abbotts, phone: 9444 1607

Sunday 11 June — Half-day Excursion, North Mole, Fremantle

Meet at 8:30 am at the end of North Mole, near the lighthouse. We will spend a couple of hours looking for seabirds. Don't forget your telescope.

Leader: Ian Standring

Saturday 17 June — Half-day Excursion, Stinton Cascades Nature Reserve, Karragullen

Meet at 8:30 am in Gardiner Road, about 200 m past the intersection with Brookton Highway (13 km from Albany

Highway). This is a CALM reserve of Jarrah and a good area for birds. Bring lunch.

Leaders: John and Helen Start

Sunday 18 June — Half-day Excursion, Waterbirds for Beginners, South Perth Foreshore

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park adjacent to the Wesley College boat shed at the end of Coode Street.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Sunday 18 June — Full-day Pelagic Seabird Trip

Meet at Hillary's Boat Harbour at 6:45 am. We will leave at 7:00 am from near Underwater World and return at about 4:00 pm. There is a limit of 23 people. Booking is essential.

The cost is expected to be \$65 and is required one week before the event.

Book by email foconnor@iinet.net.au or by phoning Frank O'Connor on 9386 5694.

Sunday 25 June — Full-day Excursion, Yanchep National 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 BAWAG sign.

This will be the third of several regular surveys of the birds in the recreational areas of the park which we have been asked to undertake.

Leaders: Bryan Barrett and Clive Nealon

Monday 26 June Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Three field coordinators will each speak on their current BAWAG project and explain about interesting developments and their outcome.

Monday 24 July Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Kevin Coate of Kevin Coate Tours will speak on "Kingston Rest: a birdwatcher's paradise in NE Kimberley".

Monday 28 August Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Speaker to be announced.

Have you visited our lending library and bookshop at Perry House yet?

There is a range of interesting books together with some videos which can be borrowed for up to two weeks by members.

The bookshop has field guides, bird cards, audio cassettes, CD-roms and videos for sale.

Contact our new Librarian, Sue Mather, or the office volunteer for more details.

Proposed Campouts

Due to the popularity of campouts in recent years the Excursions Committee is asking for expressions of interest from those who would consider attending either one or both of the following two northern campouts to be held in early spring.

Saturday–Friday 2–8 September — Carnarvon Campout

This campout will be based at a caravan park thus allowing as many people as possible to participate in a wide range of accommodation.

The area has a broad group of habitats ranging from mangroves to mulga so an interesting bird list should be achieved. It is also an area which will benefit from additional Atlassing.

Contact the office (9383 7749) or Clive Napier (9332 7265) for further details.

Saturday 9 September to Sunday 17 September — Week-long Campout, Muggon Station, Murchison

Birds Australia–WA Group has been asked to provide a bird list for this newly acquired CALM station which contains an extensive system of saltwater lakes and claypans in otherwise semi-arid pastoral country. Nearby Breberie Lake will also be visited.

Camping facilities and basic shearers' quarters accommodation with cooking facilities and showers are available. A small fee may be charged for use of facilities.

Access to the station by 2-wheel drive cars is OK, but we will car pool in 4x4s for birding.

The main survey will be held between 11 and 15 September to allow one or two days travel to and from Muggon.

Anyone wishing to car pool for travel to and from Muggon can contact Martin and Cheryl Gole on 9293 4958.

By road the station is 60 km northwest of Murchison Settlement or 140 km east of Billabong Roadhouse, these being the last fuel stops before the station.

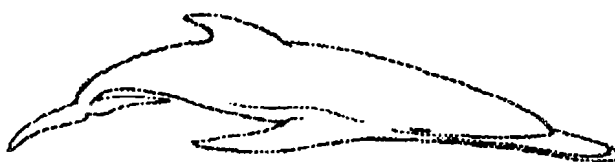
Leaders: Martin and Cheryl Gole

Campouts take considerable organisation and it is important that you advise the Office of your interest in these campouts **before 30 April**. Also, bookings at northern caravan parks are strong during this time so early arrangements are necessary.

Further details for both campouts will be in the June issue of *WA Bird Notes*.

2000 Celebration Environment Festival

Saturday 25th - Sunday 26th March 2000

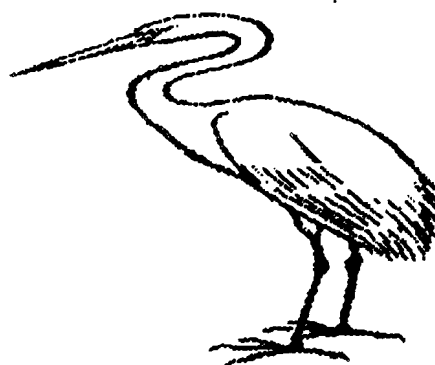


10am – 5pm

**Naragebup, Rockingham Regional Environment Centre
Safety Bay Road, Peron (opp Lake Richmond)**

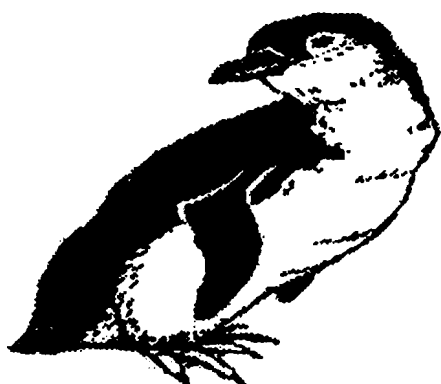
Activities

- Solar Cooking
- Crafts
- Nyungah Artifact Making
- DIY Games for Young and Old
- Potters Wheels
- Kite Flying
- Music and Dance
- Organic Gardening
- Nature Walks
- Marine World



Demonstrations and Information

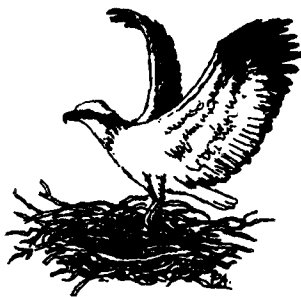
- Sustainable Energy
- Landcare
- Local Flora and Fauna
- Renewable Energy
- Art Works
- Greening WA
- Weeds
- Films and Talks
- School Exhibits
- Native Animal Caring



Find out all you want to know about environmental issues.
Things to do, things to make, things to take home for family fun!



Julimar Conservation Park
Drawing by Diane Beckingham



Osprey
Drawing by Pam Agar



White-bellied Sea-Eagle
Drawing by Pam Free



Southern Boobook
Drawing by Diane Beckingham

The WA Group of Birds Australia is very fortunate in having several artistic members, who, among other contributions, help ensure that WA Bird Notes is attractive as well as interesting. We thought it would be good to repeat some of the lovely illustrations we have used over the last several years to remind readers what a significant contribution they have made to our newsletter. We are always on the lookout for more attractive art work on birds, so if there are more of you out there who like drawing and would like to see some of your art work 'in print' don't be shy; contact one of the editors now and we can suggest subjects for illustration. Alternatively, you could send us examples of your work to do with birds or birding.



Spotted Pardalote
Drawing by Peter Melling



Crested Pigeon
Drawing by Pam Free



Jaurdi Environment Centre
Drawing by Pam Agar



Zebra Finches
Drawing by Judy Blyth

Are you interested?

Wendy and Clive Napier are planning a caravan trip to Queensland in mid May 2000. We will vary the route by travelling through Laverton, Warburton, Giles, Docker River to Uluru and then to Alice Springs.

We anticipate that it will take at least two weeks to reach Alice. From there anyone can do their own thing and return via the Northern Territory or South Australia or continue with us to Lawn Hill and on to Cairns and the Cape.

We will be Birding and Atlassing all the way and not making too many one night stops.

People with a tent or any form of accommodation are welcome. Some stops will be "bush stops" and some will be caravan parks.

There is naturally no cost involved except your own and it is simply a question of people with similar interests joining together.

For further information or expressions of interest contact Clive or Wendy on 9332 7265.

Crossword Answers No 20

Across

5 chin, 8 observers, 9 phyla, 11 dusty, 12 two, 13 woven, 17 throat, 18 hides, 19 white, 20 chest, 21 attach, 23 arid, 26 tower, 27 Ballard, 28 rests, 29 revise.

Down

1 zoo, 2 Kelp, 3 evade, 4 crest, 6 hop, 7 Channel-billed, 10 twitchathon, 13 wedgebill, 14 visit, 15 note, 16 stun, 20 clamber, 22 cards, 24 nets, 25 cats.

Birds of the Fitzroy

This is your chance to join Chris Hassell for a unique opportunity to experience the birdlife and wilderness of the mighty Fitzroy River.

Chris Hassell, experienced research and field ornithologist from Broome, will be leading a special combination of birdwatching, camel riding and bushwalking, on a three day trek, along the Fitzroy River in the Kimberley.

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