

Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of
Birds Australia Western Australia Inc
(a division of Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union)

No 95 September 2000

AFTER THE 'WET'

In late June and early July this year our group walked in the north Kimberley from the Mitchell Plateau to the Hunter River. We climbed Donkins Hill and returned to the airstrip via the Mitchell Falls. A total of 13 days. En route we performed daily atlassing surveys.

The region showed many signs of the two major cyclones that passed over the area in the late summer and autumn. Along the Mitchell River many of the pandanus palms had been stripped of their leaves or uprooted. In one of our planned camping sites a whole grove of mature paperbark trees and an associated sand bar had just disappeared. The flood level in some of the gorges had reached over 15 m, whilst on the open flat grasslands it was still over 2 m. Wind damage in the more westerly areas was evident by the uprooting of up to fifty percent of the trees, all laid out in parallel rows. Most other trees showed damage to their foliage, though regrowth was well underway. The late heavy rains have maintained a high level of runoff late into the dry season, so that most streams were still running and groundwater was plentiful. The grasslands were still very boggy with a resultant lush growth that made progress rather difficult.

On our first afternoon we travelled only a few kilometres from the airstrip to our first campsite alongside a small rapidly flowing creek. We were delighted to be greeted by an Azure Kingfisher absolutely glowing in the late afternoon sunlight. Whilst we were happily setting up camp we became aware of a family of wrens in the adjacent grass. We soon spotted the male, a Red-backed Fairy-wren, only

too willing to flaunt his magnificent colouring. The wrens and the kingfisher remained around the camp until we left the next morning. As we broke camp a male Mistletoebird partook of his breakfast a few metres above our heads. Our trek was off to a most auspicious flying start.

Flycatchers and fantails were to become frequent visitors to our camps throughout the trip. We had a number of close encounters with Northern Fantails and were very pleased to see that they could be matched to the illustrations in our field guide. We had previously found them difficult to determine with distant observations. Another regular was the Leaden Flycatcher, mainly males, with only one female being seen during the entire trip. Willie Wagtails and Restless Flycatchers were common, often attending our rest breaks. Conversely we saw only one Shining Flycatcher, a female, skulking in the pandanus like a brown and white mouse. Other birds common throughout the region included the Striated Pardalote, Pied Butcherbirds and both Little and Silver-crowned Friarbirds. The song of the Brown Honeyeater could be heard along all the creeks and rivers.



Pheasant Coucals are conspicuous birds of the vast grasslands and savannahs of northern Australia.

Drawing: Judy Blyth

In the grasslands we saw a Bustard with its head barely visible over the lush grass. In a more wooded part, with shorter grasses, we flushed out a pair of Bush Stone-curlews.

Also in the shorter grass we saw several groups of Brown Quail, often sitting until we were only a metre away from them. On the return part of the trip we travelled through an area of very long grasses inhabited by Golden-headed Cisticolas, many of which were juveniles. Their presence

was announced by their typical calls. Nankeen Night Herons were common along the larger streams; again there were many juveniles.

At one waterside campsite we were entertained by a very obliging warbler which we examined and debated for about 15 minutes before deciding that it was a young Dusky Warbler. Only a few minutes after it had gone it was replaced by a White-throated Warbler. We did not see any other warblers during the whole trip.

Once we left the plateau proper we started to encounter the finches. The commonest were the Crimson Finches, regularly seen in the pandanus along the watercourses. We were watching one family early in the morning, preening themselves in the day's first rays from the sun, when they erupted into a frantic commotion. A Brown Goshawk had silently appeared in the tree a few metres above them and was watching them with decidedly hungry yellow eyes. The finches all retired into the inner parts of the pandanus until the hawk flew away. Double-barred Finches were common locally but usually well hidden. We shared one lunch break with a pair that were busy building their nest in spite of our presence.

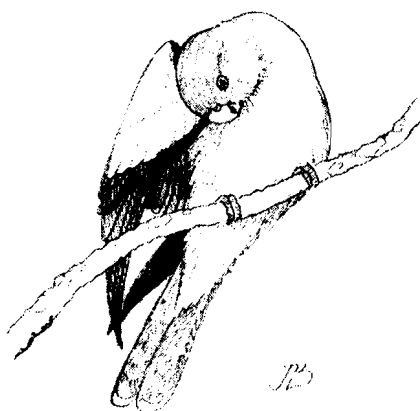
Banded Honeyeaters were common where there were tall paperbark or eucalypt trees. Bar-breasted Honeyeaters were widespread but never common and were usually close to creeks. In the denser thickets we saw occasional White-gaped Honeyeaters.

Small groups and pairs of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were in most areas, with occasional sightings of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos and Red-winged Parrots. We saw one group of about six to eight Northern Rosellas in light woodland.

Other interesting sightings included a Yellow Oriole and Spangled Drongo in very dense *Ficus* thickets. A young Wedge-tailed Eagle remained in a small dead tree and allowed itself to be examined before floating gracefully away. Similarly we were ignored by a pair of Brolgas as we worked our way around the boggy grassland that they had claimed. We encountered a number of Pheasant Coucals, and on one occasion we saw three of them on the ground, then climbing skilfully up through the undergrowth and into the trees before launching themselves into the air and crashing into the adjacent trees.

In the Hunter River area we regularly saw White-quilled Rock-Pigeons. On the day that we climbed Donkins Hill we were resting at a small waterfall on our ascent when one landed in the middle of the group. It soon realised its error and flew off. This was the only bird we saw in full during the whole period we were on the hill. We had a glimpse of only one other head in the rocks in over six hours.

The prize sighting occurred on the ninth day when we were climbing up a steep sandstone watercourse



The Red-winged Parrot has its stronghold in the tropical north of Australia, but in eastern Australia it is seen as far south as the Riverina in NSW.

Drawing: Judy Blyth

overgrown with grass and spinifex, when we were suddenly in the middle of a family of Black Grasswrens. They were there for only a minute or so, but a most memorable time it was.

After 13 days we arrived back at the Mitchell Plateau airstrip to await our flights back to Perth. Tired and happy we had achieved all our trip's goals, collected 13 atlassing reports and seen over 70 species of mainly grassland and woodland birds.

Bob Fergie, Jim Langford, Margaret Langford, Austen Langford, Judy Bonomelli, Sue Vetten, Bob de la Motte

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)

Emu – 2, 2/7/00, Albany Hwy, 8 km N of Bannister (Wandering) – GM (rarely seen in this area nowadays)

Soft-plumaged Petrel – 45 (including flock of 35 – largest flock recorded for SW WA), 18/6/2000, Hillarys Pelagic Trip – FO *et al.*

Wandering Albatross – 5, 6/00, West End, Rottnest – CD

Black-browed Albatross – 5, 14/5/2000, Hillarys Pelagic Trip – FO *et al.* * 9, 18/6/2000, Hillarys Pelagic Trip – FO *et al.*

Wilson's Storm-Petrel - 20, 14/5/2000, Hillarys Pelagic Trip - FO *et al.* * 5+, 8/7/2000, Bunker Bay near Dunsborough (Busselton) - FO (flying past about 300 to 500 metres off shore from the rocky point)

White-necked Heron - 32, 23/12/99, Stirling Road swamp, Forrestdale (Armadale) - DJ (high count for SW WA)

Australian White Ibis - 320, 13/10/99, in swamp just S of Hamel, SW Highway (Waroona) - DJ (possibly the highest count ever for SW WA)

Straw-necked Ibis - nests with young, 20/11/99, The Spectacles (Kwinana) - DJ

Great Skua - 17, 18/6/2000, Hillarys Pelagic Trip - FO *et al.*

Short-billed Black-Cockatoo - 500-600, 16/5/00, near junction Peppermint Grove Road and Old Coast Road (W of Waroona) (Waroona) - BN, JR

Rainbow Lorikeet - 1+, 3/00, S of Yangebup Lake (Cockburn) - SM * 3, 11/3/00, W side of Forrestdale Lake (Armadale) - DJ (this species is still expanding in numbers and range)

Regent Parrot - 48 in flock, 17/7/00, W side of Forrestdale Lake (Armadale) - DJ

Elegant Parrot - 95, 13/3/00, Piara Nature Reserve, Forrestdale (Armadale) - DJ (high number for the Swan Coastal Plain)

Southern Emu-wren - 2, 25/9/99, Mealup Point, Harvey Estuary (Murray) - DJ

Yellow-throated Miner - 50, 12/6/00, Anstey Road, Forrestdale (Armadale) - DJ (unusually high number for this area)

Hooded Robin - 2 (a pair), 19/7/99, Anketell Road, Oakford (Serpentine-Jarrahdale) - DJ * 1, 14/1/00, Modong Nature Reserve, Oakford (Serpentine-Jarrahdale) - DJ (uncommon on the Swan Coastal Plain)

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

Black-breasted Buzzard - 1, 14/7/00, near Coolcalalaya homestead (Northampton) - AR, SR

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo - 12, 14/7/00, near Yallalong homestead (Murchison) AR, SR.

KIMBERLEY

Radjah Shelduck - 1, 20/7/00, Kidney Bean Claypan (Broome) - BBO (2nd record for Broome)

Pied Heron - 1, 25/6/00, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - BBO (unusual in Broome area)

Osprey - 1, 7/7/2000, near Argyle Diamond Alluvial Tailings Dam (This is the first record on the lease) (Wyndham - East Kimberley) - FO

Red-backed Button-quail - 8, 6/8/00, caught and banded on the Roebuck Plains (Broome) - BBO (rarely recorded in the Broome area; southern-most record for WA)

Common Redshank - 5, 11/7/00, Crab Creek (Broome) - BBO (apparently over-wintering)

Grass Owl - 1, 29/7/00, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - BBO

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater - 1, 2/7/00, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - BBO (feeding on a *Hakea* above

the shadehouse; first record for Broome and northernmost record for WA)

Hooded Robin - 3, 8/8/00, Broome area (Broome) - BBO

Crested Shrike-tit - 2, 27/6/00, Miner's Pool, Drysdale River (Wyndham - East Kimberley) - DB, MG, RC (only rarely recorded in northern Australia) (see note elsewhere in this issue)

Welcome Swallow - 1, 21/6/00, Broome Sewage Works (Broome) - BBO

OBSERVERS

AR = Allan Rose

GM = Greg Marston

BBO = Broome Bird Observatory JR = Julie Raines

BN = Brenda Newbey

MG = Mike Griffiths

CD = Colin Davis

RC = Rick Curtis

DB = Di Beckingham

SM = Shapelle McNee

DJ = David James

SR = Sandy Rose

FO = Frank O'Connor

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

Book Review

THE DIRECTORY OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS. PASSERINES. By R. Schodde and I.J. Mason. (CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Vic, 1999). \$180.00 rrp.

This enormous, and enormously detailed, work is the first of a planned three volume set. The second volume will cover the non-passerines and the third will address the biogeography and evolution of Australian birds. The intention of the authors is to assemble as much as possible of the information available to be able to clarify the level of diversity within each genus of passerine bird resident in or regularly visiting Australia.

The book is described as "A Taxonomic and Zoogeographic Atlas of the Biodiversity of Birds in Australia and its Territories". It is not a book for use in the field - in A4 format, 851 pages (including a useful glossary, detailed reference lists and two indexes) and

weighing almost 3 kg, it is a reference book for libraries and research workers. It is an important document that will be of interest to many birdwatchers.

The current biodiversity unit in use for Australian birds is the species and sometimes, as in the current Action Plan for Australian Birds, the subspecies. The most radical difference between the *Directory* and other treatments of Australian birds is the use of the term 'ultrataxon'. Schodde and Mason go into some detail describing different species concepts and their application, and defining 'ultrataxa' and benefits of the concept. In effect, ultrataxa are equivalent to subspecies, except that in the case of species with little or no discernible variation, the species itself is an ultrataxon. Schodde and Mason argue that ultrataxa are the entities we should be considering in any appraisal of conservation efforts.

The bulk of the book consists of a listing of the ultrataxa of Australian passerines, each of which is mapped. At the beginning of each family is a summary of the characteristics of that family. Within each species treatment, broad habitat types are coded for each ultrataxon. Where a species consists of more than one ultrataxon, the differences between constituent ultrataxa are described. Taxonomic circumscription is noted and explanations given for the authors' taxonomic decisions. These are often quite interesting, providing a description of variation and relationships within the group of populations being discussed. The treatment for each species ranges from one to several pages, including a map for each species at the same scale as that in the RAOU *Atlas of Australian Birds*.

A number of subspecies are resurrected or newly described in the volume, but at the species level, there are three examples of particular interest to Western Australians. First, the northern and south-western populations (subspecies) of the Crested Shrike-tit are treated as separate species (Northern Shrike-tit and Western Shrike-tit). Second, the Western Whipbird is split into two species – one at Two Peoples Bay and Manypeaks (Western Whipbird) and the other in the southern wheatbelt and south-eastern Australia (Mallee Whipbird). Interestingly, there are few morphological differences between these whipbird populations and recently obtained genetic evidence (not available at the time the *Directory* was written) suggest that these populations are not from different species and are possibly all within one subspecies. Future workers are therefore not likely to follow the *Directory* in this regard. Third, the Rufous Fieldwren is split into two species – the Rufous Fieldwren of the Carnarvon coast, East Pilbara, Nullarbor and South Australia and north-west Victoria, and the Western Fieldwren in the south-west of Western Australia. Although Schodde and Mason give reasons for this decision, it is hard to see how it can be justified – they appear to have named different points on a cline, in much the same way as may have happened in the whipbird example. Nevertheless, Schodde and Mason may be correct in their interpretation of variation in fieldwrens and in their subspecific divisions of other species – a likely (and desirable) consequence of their suggestions is that

Birds Australia Western Australia Inc

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 December 2000 Issue
1 November 2000 at Perry House**

Advertising Rates

1/4 page \$30.00

1/2 page \$50.00

Full page \$90.00

Printed by Executive Press: Tel (08) 9275 8044

field observers and geneticists alike will be encouraged to look more closely at variation in these birds and bring us to a better understanding of their origins, relationships and conservation priorities.

A disappointing aspect of the volume is the detail in the maps. The introduction states that these are based on the *Atlas of Australian Birds*, updated where appropriate. However, there are many discrepancies with respect to the *Atlas* and authoritative sources such as Glen Storr's regional lists. For example, the *Atlas* and other published sources of information show that Brown-headed Honeyeaters normally occur to the base of Shark Bay, yet the *Directory* shows them as falling well short of here. A few other examples will illustrate the point: Thick-billed Grasswrens are shown on Bernier and Dorre (from where there are no records) but not on Dirk Hartog (where they once occurred), Slender-billed Thornbill is shown as having an extensive inland distribution but not occurring anywhere near Shark Bay (where they are well known as occurring on Edel Land and the coast south of Carnarvon), Purple-gaped Honeyeater is shown as not occurring east of Cape Arid, even though it has been known for over a decade as being at Eyre. A number of other examples could be cited. Most are where ranges are more extensive than shown, but occasionally the reverse is the case – for example, we know of no evidence that Gilbert's Whistler ever occurred near the coast between Perth and Geraldton, as shown in the map in the *Directory*. These errors are minor relative to the thrust of the book, but nevertheless are numerous, and detract from what is otherwise a very authoritative volume.

This volume reminds us that conservation of biological diversity must, to be truly effective, take place at three levels: ecosystems, species and genes. To a very large extent, the conservation of birds has traditionally concentrated at the species level. Taken to extremes this approach could still allow a very significant erosion of avian diversity in Australia. Further, the information in this book potentially allows conservation planners to decide at what level they want to conserve populations of the various species and which are the most important populations to conserve.

The size and cost of this book will put it beyond the reach of most bird watchers, but it is one that many would find interesting and useful as a reference document concerning the taxonomy and relationships of Australian birds. For the more ambitious, extending your identification skills to the ultrataxon level will add a challenging new dimension to birdwatching. It can also add further to the understanding of the detailed distribution of the various subunits of diversity within many widespread species.

Allan Burbidge and John Blyth

GPS Units

Since the introduction of the GST, GPS units have actually gone **down** in price! Birds Australia WA is now offering the Pioneer 300 GPS, together with the bonus car adapter AND carry pouch for **only \$280**. This price includes GST. Available from Perry House.

Birds Australia WA Inc reports

THE COMMITTEE

The committee continues to meet on the third Wednesday of each month at Perry House. The committee is charged with conducting the activities of the group on behalf of its members and we welcome any items that you feel should be considered by the committee for action.

Incorporation

In the June edition of Bird Notes I reported that we had finally achieved Incorporation. This after a long and at times arduous process, and I would like to again register my thanks to all of the people who helped us to overcome the obstacles that were encountered along the way.

In most respects our incorporation should be transparent to our membership. Members will still be members of Birds Australia nationally, and by virtue of living in Western Australia, will be members of BAWA Inc. There should be no difference at all in the services offered to members in WA. This does not mean that incorporation will not bring benefits to the group. One of the more important benefits, and one that helped spur on the committee in the face of seemingly insurmountable problems, is the ability to apply for larger grants from state bodies. In the past we have been restricted to comparatively small sums because we were not incorporated. We now look forward to successful applications for grants that may support significantly larger projects.

Birds Australia AGM 2001

The council of Birds Australia has agreed that the Annual General Meeting of the national body should be held in Western Australia. This will be the first time that the AGM of the national body has been held in WA, and we should all be keen to demonstrate that the group is a significant and important part of Birds Australia.

The AGM will be held on Saturday 27 May, Members Day. While the AGM itself will last for perhaps, an hour, we intend to stage a day of presentations that will showcase the work being carried out by the group in WA.

On Friday 26 May a Member's Forum will be held. The Member's Forum will afford the opportunity for BA members to meet the principals of Special Interest Groups, Observatories, and Regional Groups, as well as members of council, and to discuss issues of common interest.

The council will hold a council meeting on Sunday 28 May, bringing the weekend's official business to a close.

However, we hope to be able to stage a special campout that will allow those who have travelled to Perth from the eastern states to gain an appreciation of the birds of the west.

If anybody has suggestions that they consider will enhance the weekend please contact any committee member, or me. I am keen to ensure that we put on a weekend for which it will be worth travelling from the east.

Project Status

The Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo project has now commenced and Tamra Chapman and Cheryl Gole are the joint project officers. Cheryl is also working with Allan Burbidge on the Survey of salt-affected areas of the WA Wheatbelt, a project that will tie in closely with the national Atlas project.

The Hooded Plover project is continuing as a joint project of BAWA and the Threatened Species Network under a Clean Seas grant from the Natural Heritage Trust with winter and summer surveys planned.

The latest report from the Ground Parrot studies has been compiled by Shapelle Macnee and submitted to the sponsor.

Committee Activity

Having already said that the committee is charged with conducting the activities of the group on behalf of its members, I feel I need to highlight some of the activities carried out over the last quarter, and to point out that we do need the continuing support of our members to carry out the increasing number of activities.

The Perry House office layout has been changed to provide a more presentable appearance to visitors and a better environment for the volunteers who work in the office. Comments received from both volunteers and visitors have been positive and Liz Walker and Sue Mather are to be congratulated for their efforts with the office and the library.

Mary Vaughan has willingly and cheerfully accepted the challenge provided by the Federal government in the shape of GST, which has added considerably to her workload. The advent of GST also required that we upgrade our computer software to cater for the changes.

By the time this issue of Bird Notes reaches you, Wes Bancroft will have provided two bird identification sessions to Westralian Airports Corporation staff who have responsibility for conducting bird counts three times each week in the Perth airport precincts. The corporation needs to monitor bird numbers in order to develop strategies to minimise the danger of bird strikes on aircraft using the airport.

Our secretary, Dot Kingston, has resigned from the position for family reasons. I must thank Dot here for the work she has done while secretary, and I hope that she will be able to continue her involvement with the group in the future.

Volunteers Required

In addition to the points just made, the group's more visible and long-standing events, such as

- the birding excursions that are arranged
 - the monthly meetings that are organised
 - the staffing of our office
- continue to require the commitment of a number of selfless volunteers.

Two of our regular office volunteers have also had to withdraw from the roster. Thank you Tony Bennett and Eggy Boggs for your help in the past, and again I hope that you will be able to continue your association with BAWA into the future.

The continuing vitality of BAWA is dependent on volunteers, and on the sales of books, cards, and other items that provide funding to cover our operating costs. We will again be able, this year, to sell our cards through the Kings Park Board Wildflower Festival, and Christmas cards through the Combined Charities Card Shop.

These are all the sorts of events that we have become accustomed to over the past few years. However, we are receiving increasing requests to contribute to community issues and discussions concerning the conservation and protection of birds and their habitats around the metropolitan area. We should welcome these requests, because they indicate that BAWA is seen as an organisation that can help, and whose opinions are respected. To maintain and enhance this perception we must respond positively to these requests.

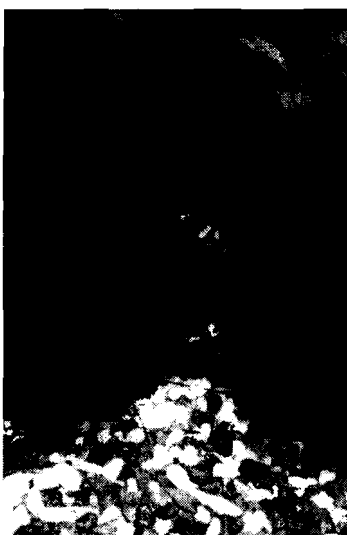
In order to do this, we need help. We need help from more of our members. The committee cannot respond to all of the requests received. We desperately need members to assist in responding to community concerns. Without our active involvement we may lose the very thing that we feel so strongly about — our bird life.

In spite of the recent study commissioned by Birds Australia that discovered that one in five species of Australian birds is threatened with extinction, we find that, in some parts of Australia, land clearance continues unabated. Within the Perth metropolitan region two particular issues are currently causing considerable debate.

In Melville the city council is proposing to divide the Flora and Fauna reserve on the bank of the Swan River which stretches from Alfred Cove and along the Attadale reserve towards Point Walter in two. Between the two parts will be a 175-metre stretch of beach designated as a dog exercise area. How will it be possible to ensure the dogs swim between the flags? How much more disturbance can the waders that use the area bear before they disappear from the river altogether? How long will it be before every council receives demands from its dog owner ratepayers for similar facilities on other waterbird habitats?

In Carine, the extension to the Reid Highway is going ahead this year. The highway will encroach on the southern end of Big Carine swamp; the road's two-metre high embankment will come within five metres of the paperbarks that line the swamp.

Each new development seems to remove more valuable habitat. The justification seems always to be that only a small percentage of the total area is being lost. Small percentages however, when added together, equate to large reductions in



Bower of Great Bowerbird
Bungle Bungles, June 2000
Photo: Molly Angus

useful habitats capable of supporting our dwindling metropolitan bird populations.

All of these requirements, none too big individually, mount up to a sizeable task. You can make a difference. You can.

There are people who can help you get started, and provide you with the sort of advice and encouragement that you need to take on some of these tasks. BAWA needs you take on one of these, and other, tasks. More importantly, the birds need us to make our presence known.

Please take some time to consider what I've said, and see if you could spare some of your time to helping with some of the tasks outlined. There is no minimum requirement specified. Any assistance you can offer will be valuable to the group, and I'm sure that you will find it personally rewarding. If you have any questions, please contact me, or leave a message at the office.

Clive Nealon
BAWA Chairman

HOODED PLOVER PROJECT

Survey 16 to 30 September

Your help is requested.

The success of past surveys by Birds Australia Western Australia has highlighted the need for pro-active management of beaches for Hooded Plover conservation.

As a result of this, the current project has been designed and funded to instigate on-ground management of Hooded Plovers in four key areas in Western Australia. An important part of the project is more survey to improve knowledge of distribution and breeding. Better knowledge should lead to better management.

All recipients of *WA Bird Notes* from Shark Bay southwards should have received a Hooded Plover observation form. The survey is running from 16 to 30 September inclusive. A second survey will be in February next year.

Priorities are (ambitiously):

1. a thorough coverage of the beaches and inlets from Cape Naturaliste to Esperance,
2. coverage of lakes in the target regions of Esperance and Yalgorup,
3. more breeding records and
4. coverage of any other salt lakes (particularly coastal ones) from Shark Bay southwards.

By thoroughly covering the area between Cape Naturaliste and Esperance during this study, we may be able to estimate the residential population in that important area.

Breeding records are scarce although Hooded Plovers nest out in the open and take about 28 days to hatch their eggs. It is especially hoped that the September survey will yield some additional breeding records. Although they don't have a clearly defined breeding season, there have been records of eggs or runners on the south and the lower west coast and inland in September. To determine if Hooded Plovers have a nest or downy young often takes extra time and patience. An adult Hooded Plover on its own may indicate another on a nest; a broken wing display while not enough to record breeding, is a good clue that your patience may be rewarded.

It is preferable to observe the birds from a distance and if checking a nest to do so very quickly.

How you can help

Use your observation form — preferably during the survey period 16 to 30 September. If you know in advance where you would like to survey, or would like some help in selecting a location, please advise Phyllis Bentley or Brenda Newbey. We wish to accomplish good coverage, and avoid duplication of effort. Survey sites will be along the coast from Cape Naturaliste to Esperance and any salt lake from Shark Bay southwards.

Phyllis Bentley Phone: 9384 0127

Brenda Newbey Phone: 9337 5673

Either can be contacted by mail, fax or email through the Perry House office.



Beach at Bremer Bay in June. Two Hooded Plovers were seen beside lagoon on RH-side. They flew across to the beach. They are sharing the area with 4WDs and dogs.

Photo: Brenda Newbey

Please note that negative records (where you have searched a site but not found Hooded Plovers), although not exciting, are very valuable.

Don't waste your form. If you can't do a survey in September, do use the form before the year ends. All information will form a part of the slowly emerging Hooded Plover picture.

Past Surveys

September has in the past proved a difficult time for finding Hooded Plovers. Typically they seem to be widely dispersed at this time of the year with a higher proportion of those found being inland than in summer

and autumn. It has been estimated that there could be about 4000 Hooded Plovers in WA. Whereas over 2093 were found in January 1995, and 1686 in January/February 1996, only 169 were found in August/September 1995 (118 sites surveyed, 43 positive) and 105 in August/September 1998 (81 sites surveyed, 33 positive).

Hints for finding Hooded Plovers

Hooded Plovers are often found at lake sites with rocky or stony outcrops, islands, or sandy spits. Sometimes, as well, or instead, there is an abundance of small cone-shaped shells along the lake edge and a wide bare lake margin.

Breeding sometimes occurs on small lakes or an overflow area near a much larger lake. As the small lakes dry out, the birds move to the larger lake. Hooded Plovers have occasionally been observed on recently dried lakes with no surface water. Coastally they appear attracted to inlets, estuaries and lagoons, and wide flat sandy beaches with rock outcrops. However they are also found on narrow and steeply sloped beaches. In inlets they may be on wide damp expanses well away from water. In sandy areas, footprints may be a give-away as often Hooded Plovers are the only small wader present. Of course to make a positive record it is necessary to actually see the bird but a fresh set of prints should intensify the search.

Project Progress

A meeting has been held in each of the four regional locations chosen as Hooded Plover management target areas (Yalgorup, Margaret River, Bremer Bay, Esperance). Everyone expressing an interest in attending one of these meetings was sent a draft management discussion paper. The paper was prepared by project officer Julie Raines and helped with background information and focus. The meetings all included local Birds Australia Western Australia Inc. members as well as members from other community groups. At least one CALM representative was present at each meeting and at Margaret River and Esperance there was local council representation.

The meetings served to introduce the project. The situation regarding knowledge and status of Hooded Plovers in the local area was outlined, threats were considered, and management difficulties discussed. The situation was very different in each of the locations.

An outcome of the meetings will be a list of Hooded Plover management requirements for each area, some of which may be achievable within the current project.

Brenda Newbey



Hooded Plover meeting at Bremer Bay in June
L-R: Lindsay Brown, Ken Broadbent (obscured),
Priscilla Broadbent, Peter Collins, Julie Raines,
Sarah Comer, Anne Gadsby

Photo: Brenda Newbey

This project was funded by the Natural Heritage Trust and WWF for Nature (Australia) and administered by the Threatened Species Network (TSN).

The project was organised and led by Shapelle McNee who was very ably supported by a willing band of volunteers.

Acknowledgments are due to a great number of people who participated in the survey, as well as Allan Rose, the Cape Arid NP Ranger, Sarah Comer and Lawrence Cuthbert of Albany CALM office and Sandra McKenzie, TSN Coordinator. A very special thanks to the Western Ground Parrot listeners who showed patience and perseverance in the long, cold, wintry nights. Thanks to the Applecross Girl Guides for the loan of their marquee, a lifesaver on the cold winter nights.

A reconnaissance trip was made in June 1999 with

Allan Rose, the Ranger, to view the sites where Western Ground Parrots had previously been recorded.

Two surveys were conducted in September 1999 and May-June 2000. Approximately 1940 ha were surveyed at a total of 111 listening posts. Despite these efforts, no Western Ground Parrots were located.

The apparent disappearance of the Western Ground Parrot from the 1984 sites, where previously recorded, may be due to a number of factors including heavy flooding during 1999 and 2000, predation by foxes and cats, or they may also have returned to sites previously destroyed by fire.

Shapelle McNee has produced a report on the Cape Arid National Park survey with a number of recommendations for continuing action in the vast area of heathland east of Esperance.

These include —

- To continue to put effort in to searching for the Western Ground Parrot within Cape Arid National Park and lands west of Cape Arid to Esperance. Priority areas need to be identified and agreed upon. Sources of funding need to be identified and pursued.
- To prepare detailed fire history maps for Cape Arid National Park and the uncleared lands between Cape Arid and Esperance. This will help identify high priority areas for searching.
- That the information brochure on the Western Ground Parrot being prepared by the WA Group of Birds Australia be distributed as widely as possible in the Esperance region.
- The possibility of translocating Western Ground Parrots to Cape Arid National Park could be considered if no Western Ground Parrots can be found.

THE SEARCH FOR THE WESTERN GROUND PARROT — CAPE ARID NATIONAL PARK



As part of the wider objective of implementing the Western Ground Parrot Interim Recovery Plan, Birds Australia WA Inc in cooperation with CALM has recently completed a project involving a search for the Western Ground Parrot in Cape Arid National Park and nearby areas.

However, it is considered that there is sufficient justification to spend more effort in searching for Ground Parrots that may still occur at Cape Arid before such a decision be made.

It is hoped that the interest and enthusiasm among the people of the south coast from Walpole to Esperance for the search and conservation of the Western Ground Parrot will be supported with further projects and grants.

At its July meeting, the General Committee made the decision to provide funds necessary to publish and distribute the report to all volunteers and conservation organisations with photographs and an excellent colour illustration, by Judy Blyth, of the Western Ground Parrot. Other members who could like a copy should notify the office NOW and a copy will be forwarded to you.

Allan K Jones

CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO — COCKIES IN CRISIS

Most people I talk to speak with great affection about Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoos, even if feeding birds have destroyed their prize Banksia. These cockatoos, with their slow, loping flight and distinctive whistling call, are indeed an avian icon in many parts of south-west Western Australia. However, Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo has suffered a serious decline over the past four decades and urgent action is needed to prevent the extinction of this, the only population on earth. Birds Australia WA has received a grant from the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia for two Project Officers (Tamra Chapman and Cheryl Gole) to implement the first stage of the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo recovery plan by raising awareness of the plight of these magnificent birds and identifying key breeding areas.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*, Carnaby 1948), also known as Carnaby's White-tailed Black Cockatoo and the Short-billed Black-Cockatoo, is the short billed form of Western Australia's two white-tailed black-cockatoos. It is a large black cockatoo, of between 53 and 58 cm in length, with a white cheek patch, white tail bands and a strong curved bill. Males and females are similar, but males have a black bill and red eye ring, whereas females have a light grey bill and grey eye ring. This species of black-cockatoo can be distinguished from Baudin's (Long-billed) Black Cockatoo by its shorter, wider bill, 'stockier' body and the longer appearance of its legs (Neil Hamilton, Curator of Birds, Perth Zoo). The two species also have different calls, feeding habits and their distributions do not overlap during the breeding season (in the winter months). Carnaby's

Black-Cockatoo in Western Australian is the only population in the world. It is rare, endangered, and likely to become extinct because it has suffered a decline of at least 50% over the past three generations (45 years) and the decline is considered to be continuing.

Distribution and Numbers

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo breeds in the Western Australian Wheatbelt in an arc from the Murchison River to Esperance, extending inland to Coorow, Kellerberrin and Lake Cronin. After breeding, birds move to higher rainfall coastal areas to search for food. Estimates show that Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo contracted from one third of its range between the 1970s and 1990s, with local extinctions and reduced numbers in many areas. In particular, it has declined in numbers in the northern and eastern regions of the wheatbelt due to the clearing of native vegetation for agriculture. The result has been a shift in distribution toward the west and south, since the 1950s. The population is currently estimated at 10 000 individuals.

Habitat Requirements

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo occurs in uncleared, remnant patches of eucalypt woodland including Salmon Gum or Wandoo and shrubland of kwongan heath, dominated by Hakea, Dryandra and Banksia species. These cockatoos require two habitat types to survive and breed successfully. First, they depend on heath species for food, feeding on the seeds of hakeas, grevilleas, banksias, eucalypts (Jarrah, Marri), some weed species and the larvae of wood boring insects. Second, the breeding success of this species depends upon the presence of large hollows (primarily in Salmon Gum and Wandoo) in close proximity to feeding areas. CALM officers estimate that trees with sufficiently large hollows may need to be around 130 years old.

Reasons for the Decline

There are five main reasons for the decline of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo listed in the recovery plan (written by



Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo
Drawing reproduced with
permission from artist
Martin Thompson

Belinda Cale):

- Since the 1950s a large proportion of its feeding habitat has been cleared for agriculture. The remaining fragments of vegetation are threatened by degradation from influences such as salinity, weeds etc;
- clearing of heathlands has isolated nesting trees so that breeding birds must travel so far to collect food that nesting attempts fail, or breeding ceases entirely;
- breeding habitat has been extensively cleared for agriculture and grazing by sheep and rabbits has prevented regeneration, reducing the availability of nest hollows;
- original food resources have been replaced by pine plantations in some regions of the Swan Coastal Plain, but while the birds have now learned to feed on the

pine cones themselves, removal of large areas of pine forest are planned; and

- poaching of nestlings from hollows for domestic and export trade has resulted in loss of birds and severe damage to hollows rendering them unsuitable for future breeding attempts.

The Recovery Process

Extensive research has been conducted on Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo over the past two decades, particularly by Denis Saunders of CSIRO. Detailed studies have investigated the distribution, habitat, hollow requirements, movements, diet, foraging ecology and reproduction of this species. The research is summarised in the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Plan written by Belinda Cale. CALM Officers, under the direction of Peter Mawson, continue to work on a captive breeding program (in conjunction with aviculturists and Perth Zoo), monitoring nests and nestlings and repairing hollows used by Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. In addition, Perth Zoo conducts an ongoing program to raise public awareness for the species and with the Zoo's help and encouragement, several primary schools have been involved in collecting seed and planting food plants.

The four main objectives of the Recovery Plan are to:

- manage habitat in priority breeding and feeding areas,
- monitor the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo population,
- raise awareness to involve private landholders in habitat protection and
- continue with the captive breeding program.

Birds Australia WA has been very fortunate to receive a grant of \$26 000 from the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia to work in co-operation with CALM and a range of other bodies such as Perth Zoo, the Western Australian Museum and CSIRO to begin the recovery process. During 2000, Project Officers Tamra Chapman and Cheryl Gole will:

- Raise awareness of the decline of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, why the decline has occurred and what can and will be done to halt it. A media campaign has already commenced and we will be doing a series of newspaper, radio and television interviews as well as setting up displays at wheatbelt agricultural shows. Perth Zoo has offered to assist us in producing display materials.
- Develop a monitoring program to identify key breeding areas (particularly those not in conservation reserves). A monitoring program has been established, which involves landowners filling out a reply paid postcard with information on cockatoo sightings and breeding activity. Participants will then be sent a kit to monitor the progress of nests.
- Survey nesting areas. Weekend surveys are planned for later in 2000, which will involve locating nests in the wheatbelt.

How You Can Help

1. If you live in the wheatbelt, or know someone who does, you can register with the monitoring program. You will be put on a mailing list and posted reply paid postcards. You just have to spend a few minutes filling out the information and pop the card into the post. You will then be sent a newsletter updating our progress and you may be asked to make further observations.
2. We are particularly interested to hear from land owners who live in the wheatbelt and either do not have Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo on their property or who have had them in the past but they no longer occur there. This is very valuable information to help us form a picture of the changes in distribution that have occurred.
3. Volunteers are needed to carry out office work, such as preparing mail-outs and computer data entry at Perry House. So, if you can spare a little time, please contact us.
4. We need volunteers to help with stalls at a range of wheatbelt agricultural shows. You can put your name down on the list of shows on the pin-up board in the office, or give us a ring.
5. For those who live in the City: we do not need records of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo sightings in the city of Perth or its suburbs as we already know that the cockatoos do not breed in these areas. However, if you have information from, or are planning a trip to the wheatbelt, please let us know and we will post you an observation kit.

6. We are planning some weekend surveys in the wheatbelt later in 2000, so if you can provide labour, car pooling, camping gear, etc please phone and register for field trips.

If you can help with any of these activities, we would love to hear from you, so just contact us or drop a note into the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo pigeon hole in Perry House.

I am relatively new to WA; I completed a PhD on Glossy Black-Cockatoos on Kangaroo Island, South Australia, before moving here to settle about a year ago. Since I have been in Perth, I have been very impressed by the enthusiasm of individuals such as Birds Australia WA members and organisations such as the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia, CALM and Perth Zoo. With the co-operation of these groups, we have already made significant steps toward the conservation of this endearing bird.

For further information, please contact Tamra Chapman on 08 9375 5316 (tamchapman@hotmail.com), Cheryl Gole on (08) 9293 4958 (gole@starwon.com.au) or write to Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project Birds Australia WA, 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat WA 6014.

Tamra Chapman



Tamra Chapman with Glossy Black-Cockatoo on Kangaroo Island.

MID SUMMER WADER COUNT 2000

One aspect of collecting data is the continually emerging information that upset theories with the passage of time. This year's MSWC is an example.

For various reasons the return of forms from members involved in the count is rather spasmodic. The majority is returned reasonably promptly after the event, others arrive later, due to a holiday in the north-west, etc, and some never arrive at all. These factors are a problem with a Bird Notes deadline looming.

This year the early returns from the count were from those members monitoring coastal locations in the south of the state, and information from these sites indicated a fall off in wader numbers. But, after adding the results of late returns then rechecking the figures, the total number of trans-equatorial migrants counted is markedly up on last year's count! However, this may not reflect a real increase in the number of birds in the south-west, because the number of observers, and the number of locations at which counts were taken, have both increased this year. So lower counts at individual locations are not necessarily inconsistent with an overall higher total count.

Higher than normal tides, with resultant water level increases at shorelines and mudflats, was a factor thought to be influencing wader numbers at most coastal habitats monitored in the south-west of the state during the 1999-2000 summer wader season.

In the months leading up to the count the first shorebird arrivals at south-west locations in late September and early October looked promising. Some observers optimistically predicted a possible return of wader numbers akin to those of the early nineties, when large flocks of waders could be found at sites such as the Peel Inlet, Alfred Cove and others.

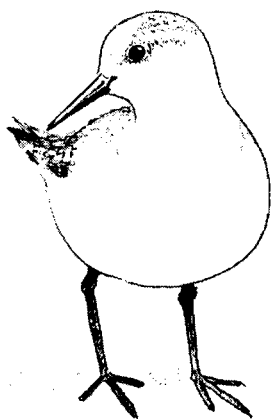
However, by mid summer, conditions at these and other coastal locations had changed. High water levels were being experienced at most sites, with the majority of observers reporting a general fall off in shorebird numbers.

On the bright side was a report from Yalgorup National Park, where at Lake Preston gradual exposure of the mud flats at the northern end resulted in the build up of a large flock of migratory waders that peaked in late December. However, at the time of the MSWC in late January conditions had changed and the Yalgorup sites were experiencing low bird numbers similar to other south-west locations.

These conditions of course were not experienced in the Kimberley and the count for this area, where a total of 25 501 birds were counted along a relatively short section of the Eighty Mile Beach, is rather daunting for those of us confined to the south of the state.

This year for the first time we have a report from Karratha; sad to say not from our own membership but via a valuable liaison between WSG and The Karratha

Naturalists Club. The Pilbara coastline is an area of wader potential, where we sorely need members to help with the MSWC. If we could muster a BA group at Karratha or Port Hedland a wealth of interesting sightings would result, I'm sure.



The count at Esperance recorded 368 Sanderlings.
Drawing: Judy Blyth

Those involved

Coastal locations between Anna Plains on the Eighty Mile Beach and Kanidal Beach on the Great Australian Bight, were monitored plus additional observations at selected wetlands. The count would not be possible without the efforts of the BA members who participated plus the assistance of various bodies outside our group. Acknowledgement of these parties and the areas they covered is listed below.

The Eighty Mile Beach data were provided by Adrian Boyle assistant warden BBO, while the Nicol Bay sightings were obtained via Phillip Brace and the Karratha Naturalists Club.

Dick Rule and the Mandurah Birders Group surveyed the northern Peel Inlet-Point Roberts area.

Vic Smith and Tim Hunt surveyed Albany and Wilson Inlet.

Department of CALM personnel assisted by providing data from the following locations:

Vasse Wonnerup: Jim Lane and staff

Walpole Nornalup: Carl Beck and staff

Esperance: Allan Rose.

Alex Bisgrove and Rob Stogdale, then EBO wardens, ventured almost to SA to count birds at Kanidal Beach.

Finally, thanks to the growing band of BA members who support this program each year with their reports from locations near and far. In particular, thanks to those country members who monitored the inland lakes and coastal areas at great effort and in most cases for low numbers of birds.

Great work! We hope it doesn't put you off participating in next year's count.

Results

Numbers of waders seen are summarised in Table 1. Some of the highlights are described below.

Coastal Sites

Broome: 25 500 birds and 22 species obtained from a twenty kilometre section of the Eighty Mile Beach.

Nicol Bay, Karratha: This location was visited on two consecutive days with almost identical numbers of birds on each day. 178 birds were counted and ten species positively identified. Additional numbers of waders were spread around the bay with an estimated 1000+ Bar-tailed Godwits feeding on the extensive mudflats.

Carnarvon: No report.

Kalbarri: Interference by dogs and people resulted in a small total count of nineteen birds, but a count of eight

species at the site could indicate a larger wader population in adjacent areas less frequented by people.

Chapman River (Geraldton): A disappointing result for observers: 20 people and 12 dogs in the area, plus high winds on the day of the count, resulted in zero waders.

Swan Estuary Marine Park (Alfred Cove and Pelican Point): High water covering sandbars resulted in low numbers of birds at both sites.

Cockburn Sound: Unusually high number of Pacific Golden Plovers at Woodmans Point.

Rottneest: See Bird Notes No 94 June issue.

Perth Wetlands: A mixed result from observers at these locations; see Table 1.

Northern Peel Inlet: A total of 143 birds and 12 species including Eastern Curlew and Whimbrel.

Point Roberts: The northern sand spit was washed away but two Hooded Plovers were seen on the beach.

Austin Bay - Harvey Estuary: High water, few birds.

In all there was a very low count for the Peel-Harvey locations. Birds were hard to find between Creery Wetlands and the Harvey River.

Lake McLarty: Water level high. A total of 970 shorebirds was counted, 866 of resident species and 104 of migratory species.

Yalgorup: Seventeen Hooded Plovers were among 118 waders reported from two locations.

Leschenault Inlet: Another location reporting high levels of water. Nine species were seen, with the total

number of birds 74. Grey Plovers made up 47 of the birds counted.

Vasse-Wonnerup: The total count was 1769, of which 299 were of resident species and 1470 of migratory species. The latter figure included 69 Common Greenshanks.

Walpole-Nornalup: The only waders located were 11 Sooty Oystercatchers.

Wilson Inlet: The lowest wader count for six years coincided with the highest water level for that period, and as the following figures show, total numbers this year were less than one tenth of those for 1995:

1995	6737 waders
2000	626 waders

Albany: Heavy rain prior to the count is thought to have caused bird movement to other sites. Princess Royal Harbour yielded 667 birds and Oyster Harbour 633.

Bremer Bay: No report.

Esperance: Although only 466 birds were counted altogether, there was a high Sanderling count of 368 birds.

Kanidal Beach: Seventy-three birds, among eight species, were counted. This is possibly the only site south of Geraldton with exposed reef habitat.

Inland sites

The inland lakes visited by members during the count revealed even lower wader numbers than the coastal sites, with low water levels prevailing at most locations.

A possible contributor to a low bird count at one site was the digging of a channel to divert water away from the lake by persons unknown.

Benger Swamp: A very small area of shallow water/mud in the north west corner supported five Black-fronted Plovers and six Greenshanks.

Wagin Lake: No waders but other waterbirds were present.

Lake Toolibin: No waders but other waterbirds were present.

Lake Taarblin: No waders but other waterbirds were present.

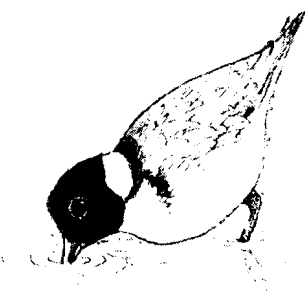
Lake Quarbing: No waders and no other waterbirds were seen.

Lake Yenyening: Only 25 Black-winged Stilts were seen over the lake system.

Lake Mears: No waders and no other waterbirds were seen.

Once again thanks to all who assisted in this program. Hope to have your involvement in next year's count.

This will be held on Sunday 11 February 2001.
See registration form in this issue.



Hooded Plover
Drawing: Judy Blyth

Walpole -Albany

Hooded Plover talk to be held at Walpole Recreation Centre

Saturday 9 September 7:30 pm

Find out more about this rare bird and the exciting new conservation management project that will help ensure its survival. Hooded Plovers need your help now.

For further information contact Julie Raines
9306 5819 austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au or
Carl Beck 9840 1027 carlb@calm.wa.gov.au

Table 1: Mid-summer wader count, Eighty Mile Beach to Kanidal Beach

TABLE 1	Mid-summer wader count, Eighty Mile Beach to Kanidal Beach																								
	Kimb	Nicol	Kalb.	Gltn	Cann R	Cool.	Tem	Rott.	Woodn	Swan	Peel	McLart	Yalg	Lesc	Vass	Walp	Wilson	Princ	Oyster	Inland	Esp	Kanid	KALBARRI	NW COAST	Total
	80 M Bch	Bay		Ch R	Perth	Lake	Isd	Isd	Pt	Est	Harv.	Lk	NP	Inlet	Wonn	Norn	Inlet	Royal	Hbr	Lakes		Bch	TO	KIMBERLEY	WA
					lakes													Hbr					KANIDAL		
SPECIES AT EACH SITE	22	9	8	0	8	7	2	23	7	5	13	7	6	9	16	1	9	11	8	0	6	7			
Black-tailed Godwit	2											10											10	2	12
Bar-tailed Godwit	6569	120	1				4	6			24			6									41	6689	6730
Whimbrel	6	1						1			5												6	7	13
Eastern Curlew	53										7			7									14	53	67
Marsh Sandpiper	176	2										22											22	178	200
Common Greenshank	321	2	2		33	44		1		3	9	51	8	5	99		33	35	22	6			351	323	674
Wood Sandpiper					11										7								18	0	18
Terek Sandpiper	860	5																		1			1	865	866
Common Sandpiper			1					1			4			2	4					1		8	21	0	21
Grey-tailed Tattler	1246	20						27	1						1			3	4			3	37	1266	1303
Ruddy Turnstone	46	2	7					285	9									2				1	304	48	352
Great Knot	6731	20									1			4	1			330			1		337	6751	7088
Red Knot	23					17												55					72	23	95
Sanderling	15							60	2												368		430	15	445
Red-necked Stint	471				600	1700		1504			17		79	1	935		390	180			21	3	5430	471	5901
Long-toed Stint																							0	0	0
Pectoral Sandpiper								1															1	0	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper					4	25		17			3	17			308		3	1					378	0	378
Curlew Sandpiper	725				150	120		449	59		4			1	96		73		2				954	725	1679
Pied Oystercatcher	2	6					2	12		2	7			1			2	3	48		55	3	135	8	143
Sooty Oystercatcher			3													11		2	1		10	23	50	0	50
Black-winged Stilt					150	156		2		32	204	796			3494		2			125			4961	0	4961
Banded Stilt					3			20							15								38	0	38
Red-necked Avocet								9				70			1167		66						1312	0	1312
Pacific Golden Plover	28								13						11		8	18					50	28	78
Grey Plover	726	15	1					11	6	4	10		4	47	5			31	54			1	174	741	915
Red-capped Plover	6		3		700	130		111	10	1	12		13		599		49			7	11		1597	6	1603
Lesser Sand Plover	28							1															1	28	29
Greater Sand Plover	4102		1					13					1		1			7					39	4102	4141
Black-fronted Dotterel					3										26					5			31	0	31
Hooded Plover												2		17									19	0	19
Red-kneed Dotterel																								0	0
Banded Lapwing								8															8	0	8
Red-necked Phalarope								1															1	0	1
Oriental Pratincole	4077																							4077	4077
Little Curlew	35																							35	35
Unidentified Waders		1000																	500				500	1000	1500
Totals	26248	1193	19	0	1654	2192	6	2540	100	42	305	970	122	74	6769	11	626	667	633	143	466	42	17343	27441	44784
See text for site names																									

LIBRARY REPORT

Accession List: from June 2000

Birding Information: Placed in Library/File

- Eyre Bird Observatory newsletter: March 2000
- *Vic Babbler*: nos 53/54: newsletter of Victorian Group
- *Wingspan*: no 2: June 2000
- *Queensland Wader*: Winter, 2000: issue 32
- Cumberland Bird Observers Club journal: May/June 2000: vol 21: no 6
- *Flyway*: Broome Bird Observatory newsletter: June 2000
- *Bird Notes*: Southern NSW and ACT group: nos 30, 33, 32, 33, 35: to June 2000
- *The Harrier*: Bird Observers Club: vol 2: June 2000
- *Atlas News* no 5: May 2000
- South Australian Ornithological Association Inc: Newsletter no 174: June 2000
- *Malleefowl Matters*: ed 23: July 2000
- *Emu*: vol. 100: part 2: June 2000
- Swan Estuary Marine Park Management Plan 2000
- Australian Sea Bird Bulletin: no 36: June 2000
- Water Bird Monitoring in the Conservation Zone of the Creery Wetlands: Dec 98-Feb 2000

•Non Birding Information: placed on Display Unit

- *CALM News*: March/April 2000; May-June 2000
- *Riverview*: Swan River Trust newsletter: no 21: June 2000
- Swan Catchment Urban Land Care Program: 2001 call for expressions of interest. Swan Avon Information Sheet: no 7/8: 2000
- *Narपालungup News*: Friends of Fitzgerald National Park: no 2: 2000
- *Landscape*: Conservation and Wildlife Magazine: Summer 2000
- *Bush Heritage News*: Winter 2000
- Heritage Expeditions Brochure: New Zealand
- Capel Wetlands Centre: April, May-June 2000. committee minutes of May 2000
- WACOSS Computer Training: June to October 2000
- Notice of 2nd Ornithological Congress: Oct 2000, Sri Lanka. Bird Conservation
- *Ecoplan News*: issue 34, Winter 2000
- Swan-Canning Clean Up Program: June 2000
- Swan Avon Integrated Catchment Management: Training Calendar 2000: 3rd quarter
- WACOSS Conference 2000: 22nd to 23rd August 2000: Fremantle WA
- Marine Conservation: CALM: July 2000
- *Greener Times*: Conservation Council: July 2000
- Range Flash: Rangeways Project: June 2000
- Bold Park Draft Environmental Management Plan: 2000 – 2005 (library)
- State Weed Plan: Draft for Public Comment: Agriculture WA (in Library)

Liz Walker
A/Librarian

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia WA between 1 May and 31 July 2000. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

L M Bligh, W Burns, C Cooper, R B Curtis, H A Danby, J W Danby, I K Davidson, A Flavell, C F Forbes, J Fripp, D L Harding, I Henderson, A L Keil, C Kiel, B King, J Lees, J Macey, P J Macey, N Martin, M McKenzie, A M Perrett, T Purchase, T B Rann, G C Saueracker, N Steiner, L Timmins, C Trethowan, M Vines, R A G Vines, M J Weir

NEW FIELD GUIDE

Steve Parish Publishing has just published a new Australian bird field guide by local BA member Michael Morcombe. This book is the culmination of 14 years of work by Michael and has some impressive new features. See next issue of WA Bird Notes for a review. Check with Perry House for availability.

Members' contributions

BUFF-BANDED RAIL IN APPLECROSS GARDEN

We recently photographed a Buff-banded Rail found in our garden in Applecross (we live opposite the river). It was there for two weeks in March. Being elusive, it was hard to photograph. We hope it was smart enough to stay out of the jaws of our neighbourhood cat. It was mostly on the ground, but did fly into trees and roost on low branches. In one case we photographed it 1.5 m from the ground in a Camellia bush.

Joan and Peter Sewell

Editors' note: Roosting sites of Buff-banded Rails have been recorded only rarely. It is also interesting to note that this species is sometimes seen up to 2 m from the ground in dense Ti-tree in the waterfowl enclosure in Perth Zoo.

KALUMBURU BIRDS

There are few published bird records from much of the far north-west Kimberley, so the following notes on recent sightings from Kalumburu may be of interest. It is difficult to know what to include, as some things common elsewhere are rare up here, eg, Silver Gull!

04/06/00 Near Kalumburu — Black-breasted Buzzard (uncommon here – the first I've seen although Tom Vigilante has seen them before).

04/06/00 Near Kalumburu — two Ospreys.

04/06/00 Near Kalumburu — 15+ Whimbrels.

03/06/00 Kalumburu Sewage Ponds — first Willie Wagtail of this year.

03/06/00 Kalumburu Sewage Ponds — 16 Plumed Whistling-Ducks.

02/06/00 Kalumburu — three Magpie-larks — first this year.

28/05/00 Near Kalumburu — one Pacific Golden Plover, three Grey-tailed Tattlers.

27/05/00 Bird Island, Napier Broome Bay — 200+ Roseate Terns, breeding, and 100+ Crested Terns, 5+ Lesser Crested Terns and two Silver Gulls (first sighting of gulls in the 18 months I have been here).

27/05/00 Louis Island, Napier Broome Bay — two Beach Stone-Curlews; three White-breasted Woodswallows (first this year).

18/05/00 Kalumburu Airstrip — eight Australian Pratincoles (first for this year).

16/05/00 Kalumburu Airstrip — one Spotted Nightjar.

14/05/00 Kalumburu Airstrip — two Bustards; two Brolgas.

Simon Wilson



The Pallid Cuckoo is a common bird of the inland, but is also a regular winter/spring visitor to the Perth region.

Drawing: Penny Towells

BIRDING BY NIGHT — A FROGOLOGIST'S PERSPECTIVE

In the course of my current research on frogs, I have a unique opportunity for birding. I currently spend many hours of the night tramping through the bush (and fields) of the central wheatbelt in search of frogs. Working such undesirable hours does have its benefits, however, and I have seen many interesting night and day birds in the process.

In the Kellerberrin area, there is presently (May 2000) a minor mouse plague. As a consequence, the region currently supports a very high density of Barn Owls. I have estimated that at the peak of their abundance, I saw 2-3 Barn Owls per 10 km of road. Their chilling screams can be heard across the dark fields and they are often seen roosting on fence posts and tree branches.

Having never seen an owl very closely in the wild before, I have been amazed and delighted at the encounters I have had with them. One of the most memorable and special experiences was the Barn Owl that roosted on the verandah of the house I was staying in. As I retired to bed one night, I glanced out of the kitchen window to see a ghostly white face piercing me with its gaze. A Barn Owl had come in to roost in the warmth and shelter of the verandah. I sat and watched it from a few metres away, for nearly an hour. It firstly preened itself, stretching its legs and wings alternately, before shutting its eyes and going to sleep! And I thought they were supposed to hunt all night! It was awoken once by a scuttling mouse, revolving its head at sickening angles to follow its path, before losing interest and going back to sleep (probably groaning at the thought of eating another mouse!). I went to sleep that

night, safe in the knowledge that my silent sentinel was protecting me (from the mice!).

Last year when I worked in this region (at the same time of year), Southern Boobooks were common and I

heard them at most of my study sites.

This year, however, I have heard only 3 altogether despite 2 months of night work at these same sites. Could they have been displaced by all the Barn Owls I wonder?

Encounters with night birds are not always friendly or peaceful, however. On a number of occasions I have been 'buzzed' by small night birds (probably Owlet Nightjars). Gazing into the blackness of a wheat field, I have suddenly felt a rush of air and heard a buzzing sound in my ear. Looking around I have then seen a night bird zooming past in my torch beam. This happened to me persistently in one field and unnerved me enough to make me leave.

This experience was tame, however, in comparison to my encounters with Barn Owls. I have had Barn Owls swooping me and reeling around my head 'screaming' at me. This is very unnerving, especially when you can neither see nor hear your attacker in the darkness. To combat this frequent occurrence, I have found that shining my

torch at the offending bird is enough to drive it away with no harm to either of us.

Other Barn Owl experiences have been equally fascinating. I shall never forget watching my fiancé Jennifer approaching a gate one night. I could see something she couldn't. Hovering silently in the darkness above her head was a Barn Owl, gleaming white in the car lights. As I watched, it dropped in height, getting closer and closer to her head until it was hovering just two metres or so above her. Meanwhile, Jennifer opened the gate and jumped into the car, unaware of the silent drama that had just been played out in the darkness above her. It made me think that death must come swiftly and quietly to the unfortunate victims of these nocturnal birds of prey.

I cannot decide whether the night birds are just inquisitive about humans, looking for prey stirred up by our actions, or acting aggressively towards us. Has anybody else had similar experiences?

These are just some of the many night-bird experiences I have had and I shall relate some more at a later date. Kellerberrin seems to abound with nocturnal birds, and I have recorded Tawny Frogmouths, Australian Owlet-Nightjars, Southern Boobooks and of course Barn Owls. The most memorable call of any night-bird I have heard, however, was at dusk in a wheat field one evening. As the orange rays of the sun pulled a blanket of darkness across the landscape, and the first stars twinkled in the clear sky, I heard the mournful, soul-wrenching cry of a stone-curlew: a sound that will stay with me forever.

Robert Davis

FAMILY SOLIDARITY

In July, east of Paynes Find, an Emu family crossed the road in front of us. The family comprised one full sized adult, five quite well grown young Emus and a posse of small striped and downy chicks. I have not previously noticed a tolerance of last year's brood so late.

Brenda Newbey

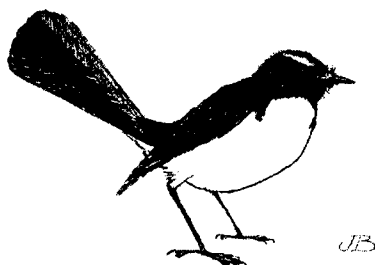
CRESTED SHRIKE-TIT AT MINER'S POOL, 27 JUNE

As our wildlife tour group broke camp one morning on the banks of the Drysdale River at Miner's Pool, I spotted a Crested Shrike-tit in the high foliage of a Cabbage Gum (*Eucalyptus grandifolia*).

I was joined by three other observers and we watched and tracked two birds for at least 15 minutes as they moved from tree to tree — their mournful call was heard several times.

We were excited as the northern subspecies (*whitei*) of Crested Shrike-tit is rarely seen. The last Atlas mentions a record from the Drysdale area, Graham Pizey notes a 'range to Beverley Springs WA' and in WABN (December 1999) Tom Vigilante reports his sighting of them near the Pago mission ruins north of Kalumburu (May 1999).

Diane Beckingham



The captivating Willie Wagtail is once again common throughout Perth.
Drawing: Judy Blyth

The Willie Wagtail is an amazing bird that can "sweet pretty sweet" in almost any habitat although it can be surprisingly absent in small localised areas, even in New Guinea where the Willie Wagtail has an extra syllable in its call.

On the eastern side of Lake Monger, Perth, on the very still morning of 16 June at 10:00 am, the birds made a recently revegetated stretch of lake a hive of activity and four species contributed to a not-so-common scene. Three Little Grassbirds were cavorting in the reeds, a non-breeding Great Egret was standing nearby motionless, eyes peering immediately downwards into the still water below its perch on a rock and a Musk Duck (with medium sized pendulous lobe) just 4 m away was swimming in circles

(one metre diameter) just below the smooth water surface, making small ripples above it as it swam. This was repeated six times between surfacing for air.

But what was this? An albino Willie Wagtail!! There, 2 m in front of me, flitting from shrub to fence was an 8-inch (20 cm) bird, tail wagging up and down. It was quite confiding and I observed it for ten minutes. There was no call.

Description: Dark brown head and beak. White eyebrow and front chest. Back and wings fawn with dark spots on the wings. Tail fawn with darker rump area. Blackish legs.

Behaviour: Identical to a Willie Wagtail. Not at all like a Grey Fantail, and I have not seen Grey Fantails in this area. It looked like what you might expect if the Grey Fantail and Willie Wagtail could interbreed.

Mary Bremner

THOUGHTS ON THE WILLIE WAGTAIL

During the 1978-82 Bird Atlas in a metropolitan garden in Wembley there was never a sighting of a 'willywag', nor even within 0.5 km in any direction. In this metropolitan garden there were over 35 bird species recorded with Singing Honeyeaters and turtle-doves nesting but never a Willie Wagtail.

Today, fewer than 20 species of birds are recorded in this garden and all species are reduced in numbers except for the Rainbow Lorikeets, Little Corellas and Australian Ravens which have increased in numbers.

The decline in numbers of the smaller birds would be due to loss of surrounding habitat, including bushland corridors, and in-fill housing and also an increase in domestic cats. Up to three or four years ago a domestic cat would regularly be seen munching fledgling honeyeaters or turtle doves at the nest high up in the tall trees. These birds are still stalked on the ground by our feline friends.

Over the last six months — a new species for our garden — the Willie Wagtail. Willie Wagtails are extremely quick in movement, so hopefully they cannot be stalked and caught by our local domestic predators.

Has anyone seen a Willie Wagtail killed by a cat?

SOME MT BARKER-CRANBROOK LAKES REVISITED

Having opportunity to visit the Mt Barker region again, Anne and I did so, during the 5th and 6th of April. Brief notes on some of those wetlands visited in December 1999 and reported in WABN 93 March 2000:

Martagallup Lake — Red-capped Plover 1, Hooded Plover 5 (2 adult and 3 immature).

Martagallup Swamp — Musk Duck 1, Australian Shelduck 102, Black Swan 10, Pacific Black Duck 10.

Kwornicup Road Swamp 1 — Australian Shelduck 17, Black Swan 2, Pacific Black Duck 1, Little Pied Cormorant 4, Little Black Cormorant 1, White-faced Heron 1, Australian White Ibis 3, Purple Swamphen 2 (bringing the species total for this small swamp to 11).

Kwornicup Road Swamp 3 — To my surprise this swamp had more water than in December 1999 — Australian Shelduck 16.

Kwornicup Lake — less water than last December — Australian Shelduck 28, Red-necked Stint 72 (some clearly coming into breeding plumage), Red-capped Plover 63.

Lake 26586 — after the great water quantity of Kworncup Road Swamp 3, it was disappointing to find this lake nearly dry and no birds.

Mallawillup Road Swamp — Musk Duck 22, Black Swan 73, Black-fronted Dotterel 3.

Teetenyup Swamp — as expected, dry and no birds.

Stockyard Road Lake — Musk Duck 3, Australasian Grebe 2, Purple Swamphen 2, Eurasian Coot 1.

Nuniup Lake — While not expecting much from a 'crater' and water-ski lake, as we were passing we visited. It was a pleasant surprise to observe Blue-billed Duck 29, Hoary-headed Grebe 1, Great Crested Grebe 7 (including 2 immatures loudly pursuing an adult for food), Musk Duck 8, Australian Shelduck 6, Little Black Cormorant 18, Great Egret 1, Silver Gull 8.

We also visited some 'new' lakes:

Boyup Road Swamp — An un-named 'saucer' swamp not shown on our map on the west side of Boyup Road. Access easy. Australian Shelduck 3, Pacific Black Duck 2, Spotless Crake 2, Purple Swamphen 4 (including 1 downy immature), Black-fronted Dotterel 4, Little Grassbird 1.

Lake Carabundup — a 2 km x 1 km freshwater crater lake. Access easy. Musk Duck 1.

Newton Road Lake, Cranbrook — latitude 34° 13', adjacent to the road. A 'saucer' saline lake, access easy. Grey Teal 1, Hooded Plover 3 (not previously reported from this location).

Curly's Lake, Brickhouse Road, Cranbrook — known to the owner as "the Sanctuary". The owner has modified the water drainage in the area to maintain lake water levels year round, with beneficial results: Black Swan 322, Australian Shelduck 205, Australian Wood Duck 1, Pacific Black Duck 43, Grey Teal 11, Mallard cross duck 1, Silver Gull 4.

Eleven other lakes in the Cranbrook area, including Racecourse, Milyunup and Tom South were examined. All were saline to very salt encrusted, Curly's Lake being the only one in its area supporting bird life at the time of the visit.

Bruce Buchanan

STINTON CASCADE RESERVE, 17 JUNE

Two days before our meeting, this area had received 76 mm of very welcome rain, but at 0830 hrs on Saturday the 24 members who attended the meeting, were greeted by a perfect crisp, sunny morning — a suitable reward for the early start for those who had travelled a long distance.

We have met to survey the birds in this conservation reserve every two years for the past ten. On each occasion we have followed the same procedure, splitting into two groups in order to cover both ends of the reserve and each group following the same path for approximately two hours. Each species seen and the number of individuals of each, are recorded.

On this occasion 29 species were recorded comprising 148 individuals. Over the ten years the average has been

190 birds of 30 different species. On this occasion we saw three species that we had not seen before: three Galahs, two Pacific Black Ducks and one Wedge-tailed Eagle.

The three most numerous birds we have recorded are the Red-capped Parrot, Grey Fantail and Silvereye with an average of 19, 16 and 13 respectively, closely followed by the Australian Magpie with 12.

As was to be expected, most of the passerines we saw were in mixed feeding parties that were mostly frequenting the edges of this mixed Jarrah/Marri woodland. It would be interesting to know if any one species acts as a catalyst for such parties.

An Atlas Area Search form has been completed and a list of the sightings sent to the Armadale Council in whom the reserve is vested.

Helen and I would like to thank all who took part for their help and support to this project, most especially David James for his leadership.

John Start

DOVES AND HAWKS

There are few published records of the introduced Laughing Turtle-Dove being preyed on by the local hawks (Stranger, 1999). Hence it is worth recording the observation of a friend, John Booth, at Subiaco in July of 2000. He saw a Laughing Turtle-Dove being pursued by a Collared Sparrowhawk. The two birds flew into a wooden fence, both birds were stunned and fell to the ground. The sparrowhawk was the first to recover and flew up into a nearby tree. After a few minutes the turtle-dove also recovered sufficiently to be able to fly away.

Reference:

Stranger, R.H. (1999). A study of the Laughing Turtle-Dove in Perth, WA. *Western Australian Naturalist* 22 (3): 159.

Robert Stranger

NATIONAL BIRD WEEK

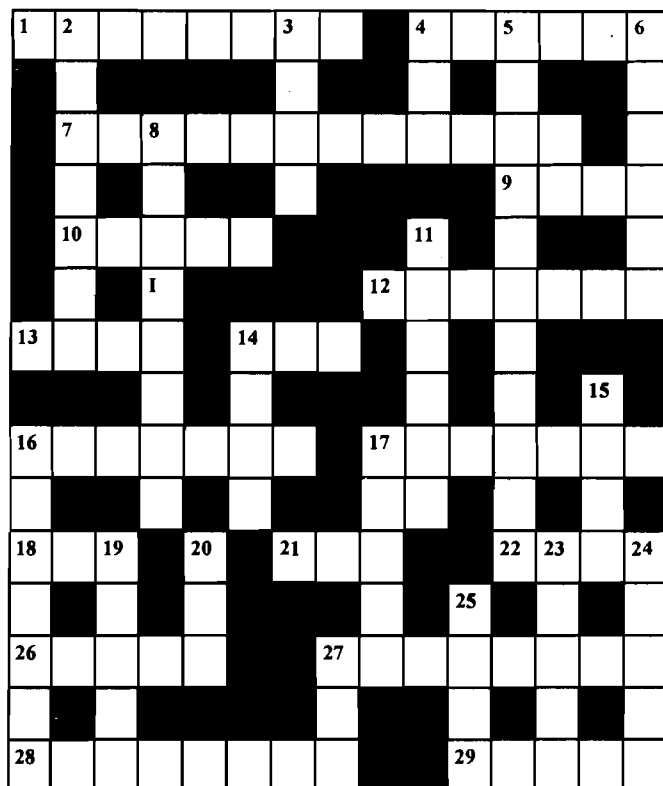
Sunday 22 - Sunday 29 October

This is an opportunity for us to bring birds to the attention of the general public. If you have a favourite spot at which you would be willing to conduct a public bird walk, this is your opportunity! BA has a number of pairs of binoculars that can be borrowed for such an occasion, but please book in advance with Perry House. Such an event would need advertising through your local paper or other media.

If you would like more information on how to conduct your walk, you can talk to Clive Nealon or John Blyth, who can advise you as to how these bird walks have been done in the past.

Crossword no 22

By Pam Agar



Clues Across

1. Small finch-like bird.
4. Common kingfisher of most of Australia.
7. Pattern in which species are spread over an area.
9. Small water source.
10. Of various shapes and sizes, depending on food eaten.
12. Living quarters of shearwaters.
13. Graceful seabird which plunges for food.
14. Coastal feature.
16. Brown nondescript thornbill.
17. To take observations regularly.
18. Colour of Pied Oystercatcher's legs.
21. May be useful to attach a message.
22. Back of neck.
26. A dove needs to move fast to ... a Hobby.
27. Duck with low silhouette and massive bill.
28. The kind of information essential for unusual records.
29. This part of a river may be saline.

Clues Down

2. Possible to be heard.
3. Breed in large numbers at Booragoon Lake.
4. To be inactive for prolonged periods while breeding.
5. Necessary between parents if all chicks are to be fed.
6. Shire of south-eastern WA.
8. Problem of WA wheatbelt.
11. Certain ... quails may be small and round, but not as small as this.

14. Not the usual sound made by birds.
15. Circuit, as in a bird walk.
16. Caretakers of observatories.
17. January may be a quiet one for birding in WA.
19. This Mallard has a dark green neck.
20. To observe.
23. To permit.
24. It's easy to make one when completing record cards.
25. Basic egg shape.
27. Bag-like membrane.

Notices

WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE!

Bird observers who have birdlists and/or notes from the Mandurah district. The area is that between the latitudes of Rockingham and Harvey, but extends into the Jarrah forest proper and well into the ocean.

If you can help, please 'phone me, Robert, on 9370 1434. Your observations are valuable.

Robert Stranger

BOOST FOR BIRD RESEARCH

Post-graduate ornithological research received a boost this year, with the injection of an additional \$10 000 into the Stuart Leslie Bird Research Award.

Initiated by Mr Stuart Leslie, AM, in 1997, the award helps students with their research and helps fund attendance at conferences to present papers and posters.

Aware of the crucial importance of ongoing ornithological research and the financial challenges facing students, this year Mr Leslie increased the award from \$15 000 to \$25 000. The extra funding will provide support for an increased number of research projects that will expand our body of knowledge of Australian birds and their habitats.

"Originally, I was going to give \$15 000 to the Winston Churchill Trust," said Mr Leslie. "But that would have meant only one student receiving a Winston Churchill Fellowship for \$15 000. By setting up the award and having it managed by Birds Australia, a larger number of students can be assisted. I think it's working well."

This year saw yet another increase in applications, presenting assessors with an increasingly difficult task of deciding which projects to fund. Of the 38 applications received, 21 were successful, receiving between \$400 and \$2000 each.

Three of the five applications from WA students were successful. All recipients are students of Edith Cowan University:

Jarrad Cousin, M.Sc., Foraging ecology and habitat selection of the Western Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria griseogularis*) within Wandoo woodland, Western Australia; conservation ecology of a declining species.

Christopher Norwood, M.Sc., Attendance at Ecological Society of Australia conference — Bark-foraging in Jarrah forest and Wandoo woodlands birds.

Alexander Watson, B.Sc. (Hons), The impact of disturbances caused by selective logging on Jarrah forest avifauna.

Details of award recipients from other states, together with information about some projects previously funded by the Award, are included on Birds Australia's web site at

www.birdsaustralia.com.au/leslie.

Birds Australia would like to express its appreciation to Mr Stuart Leslie for his generous and on-going support of bird research and conservation. We wish all students every success in their research.

Applications for the 2001 Award will open in January and close late March. Students seeking funding are encouraged to contact Birds Australia then for an application form. Until then, information about the Stuart Leslie Bird Research Award can be found on Birds Australia's web site at the above address.

BIRD SURVEY OF THE RECHERCHE ARCHIPELAGO

The Esperance Bird Observers Group has obtained a grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation to undertake a bird survey of part of the waters and islands of the Recherche Archipelago, Esperance. The survey will consist of six one-day trips within 12 months, departing from Esperance. The area to be covered will be in an arch from Mondrain Island to Figure of Eight Island. At this stage survey dates are 27 August 2000, 27 October 2000, 6 December 2000, 11 March 2001, 20 May 2001 and 28 June 2001. The dates may change due to rough weather. The vessel to be used is the 55 ft MV Southern Image. A zodiac will be used to assist in accessing those islands where it is possible to go ashore. All birds observed will be entered into the Bird Atlas.

As our bird group is only small, we are seeking experienced ocean bird observers to assist us during this survey. Transport to Esperance and accommodation will be at your expense but the boat trips are part of the grant and therefore free. All the group is seeking is your experience with Southern Ocean birds. If you are interested please phone/fax Allan Rose on 08 9075 0055 or email allanr@wn.com.au.

Allan Rose
Vice President
Esperance Bird Observers Group

BIRD-CAM — SITES SOUGHT

Hi everybody.

We are looking for sites where we could set up a video or web camera that would transmit to a website live coverage of birds doing interesting things during the period around Bird Week (roughly the second half of October and the first half of November this year). Ideally we would like sites in several places around Australia. However, there are some constraints. The site:

a) needs to be reasonably close to a telephone landline and a power source. I am not certain about the exact technical requirements, but this might mean within 100 m, may be much less,

b) needs to be reasonably secure from the possibility of human interference, such as being on private or restricted-access property,

c) should be on a property where the owner(s) or manager(s) would be willing and able to keep an eye on what happens to the setup and possibly make adjustments as necessary, or be part of an existing research project where the researcher could do so,

d) should not be so sensitive that the birds would be unduly affected by the establishment and maintenance operations,

e) should be where birds will predictably and frequently be present, and

f) should be where it would not be too difficult to put in and manage equipment.

Examples of suitable sites might include nesting (including colonial breeding), display and feeding places, as well as others that satisfy the criteria above. I realise that satisfying all criteria may not be easy, but if anybody has any good suggestions, or is willing to recommend a good place on their own property, please get in touch with Susie Grant (address and phone/fax details below), or email:

s.grant@birdsaustralia.com.au.

Do you have birds nesting just outside your office or kitchen window at that time of year? May be this is their opportunity for stardom!

Thanks.

Hugo Phillipps
Communications Coordinator, Birds Australia
415 Riversdale Rd, Hawthorn East, Vic 3123
Tel (03) 9882 2622, Fax (03) 9882 2677
Email: h.phillipps@birdsaustralia.com.au

HOME SWAPPING/SITTING

William and Delwyn Saunders, active birders and NSW Atlassers, and long time members of Birds Australia and Bird Observers Club, would like to visit WA to experience the birdlife in the south of the state. They believe that they will need to spend at least three months doing this, and they would like to do it during the next 12-month period.

They would rather not leave their home — a three-bedroom house with double garage — unoccupied for that length of time. As a result they would like to negotiate with any interested party who would be interested in

caretaking their home, or in exchanging properties for the period, while they travel in WA.

Their property is located in Port Macquarie NSW, on the coast, approximately mid-way between Sydney and Brisbane. The surrounding area includes rainforest, dry eucalypt forest and the Pacific Ocean, and should present some interesting birding opportunities.

If you are interested, please contact Clive Nealon who can put you in touch with William and Delwyn.

BA NQ GROUP PHONE CONTACT

I am advised that there is still some attempted use of the old phone number for Keith and Lindsay Fisher of BA's North Queensland Group (maybe because the old number is given as the contact number in the BA 1999 Annual Report) and the current owner of the number is becoming irritated with misdirected calls. Please make sure that all your contact lists and databases have the correct number, which is:

(07) 4039 0972

Thanks.

Hugo Phillipps
Communications Coordinator
Birds Australia, National Office

Observatory reports

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

At the time of writing we have been resident wardens at EBO for only two short weeks.

However, the fascination and history of this area is phenomenal and so are the birds. Unlike other observatories, we also have a well-documented museum of the past telegraph period. For our readers who are unaware, EBO homestead is the original Eyre Telegraph Station, built in 1897.

The well, which Edward John Eyre dug by hand and consequently saved the lives of himself and his party and horses, can still be seen, with water in it.

The homestead has been fitted with most modern conveniences, which makes life very pleasant for our guests who wish to make use of EBO's accommodation facilities.

Yes, history, nature and the bird life at EBO all intertwine as one unique way of life.

During our short time at EBO, our enthusiasm for birdwatching is brimming over.

Sightings have been made of Red-necked Avocet, Caspian Tern and Common Sandpiper, together with a



visiting fur seal pup, along the beach, which is only 1 km away.

Around the homestead and inland, we have had sightings of a Tawny Frogmouth, Australian Bustard, Striated Pardalote, Jacky Winter, Western Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler and Chestnut Quail-Thrush.

We also saw a Western Pygmy Possum and a Chocolate Bat, and of course our 'Major Mitchell's', each day — they are really beautiful and entertaining.

Come and visit us at EBO soon — you will be glad you did.

For any information, please call us on —

Phone (08) 9039 3450 or

Fax (08) 9039 3440

Leighton and Margot Martin
Wardens, Eyre Bird Observatory

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

With the vicissitudes of the last wet season, we were hoping for a less traumatic dry season, but this was not to be. Bushfires have spent most of July and the beginning of August raging around the Broome region. None have threatened the Observatory as yet, but staff have been fighting fires in the nearby Pindan woodland and adjoining Roebuck Plains. Although significant areas have been burnt, most of the fires have not been intensely hot and regeneration has been aided by a series of early morning mists during late July.

Putting the rigours of living in the Broome region aside, the birding around the Observatory has settled into its usual dry season rhythm. Shorebirds, always of key interest here, have been following the usual pattern of over-summering immature and non-breeding birds in near breeding plumage. In total, roughly 21 000 shorebirds spent the non-breeding season on the northern and adjoining shores of Roebuck Bay. The assemblage breaks down as follows: Great Knot 9000, Red Knot about 1000, Curlew Sandpiper 2400, Eastern Curlew 180+ with a supporting cast of Red-necked Stint, Greater Sand Plover, Whimbrel and Terek Sandpiper. On occasion up to 30 Asiatic Dowitchers and five Common Redshanks were recorded; making these totals the highest yet recorded in this season in Australia.

Falling water levels in the fresh water wetlands covered in the Observatory recording area have resulted in shifting patterns and numbers of birds. Grebes and other diving waterbirds have moved out of the area (towards the sea) and larger numbers of dabbling and grazing species have moved into the recording area, utilising the shallower water. Examples include over 800 Green Pygmy Geese at one site in early August, a mini-invasion of Comb-crested Jacanas and a near absence of Whiskered Terns on Roebuck Plains. Favourable conditions on the coastal salt pans and lagoons have provided ideal conditions for waterfowl and shorebirds alike. A recent count of one particular salt pan revealed over 10 000 waterbirds.



Raptor numbers have remained generally static with reasonable numbers of Black Kites and Brown Falcons throughout the recording area, and local concentrations around fires revealing up to 15 Australian Hobbies and 70 Whistling Kites in the general area of the Observatory. Red-backed Button-quail are everywhere at present and so far, 24 of them have been banded. Other specialities on the plains include Little Button-quail and Red-chested Button-quail, although these are eluding the banders. For any shorebird enthusiasts or birders who have often wondered about the birdlife of Broome, why not take advantage of some of the courses available this coming wet season? The prices are still set at pre-GST rates and will change for the worse next year!

Bill and Adrian

Excursion reports

BOLD PARK, 22 April

It was a bright, sunny morning with a light breeze when our small group of 12 birders moved off towards Bold Park. A maximum temperature in the mid-twenties had been forecast. Many birds were heard as we crossed the north-eastern boundary of the park. We immediately had good views of a Laughing Kookaburra, half a dozen Australian Ringnecks, the same number of Galahs feeding on the ground and a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets hanging upside down from a bunch of gumnuts. As we walked up the first slope of the Camel Lake Trail we observed White-cheeked Honeyeaters feeding on the profusion of Banksia flowers. During the morning many further sightings of White-cheeked Honeyeaters seemed to indicate that this species is well established in Bold Park.

The Zamia Trail winds its way along the hill and affords spectacular views in all directions. It was here that we sighted our first raptor — a splendid Little Eagle soaring in the early morning thermals and displaying its distinctive underwing markings as it banked steeply. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, often in pairs, were seen perched on the uppermost branches of tall, long-dead eucalypts. They appeared to be maintaining a vigil, perhaps protecting their territory. From time to time they would take turns to make a brief sortie only to return to the same tree.

In Thornbill Walk we were accosted by over-friendly Magpies. Fleeting glimpses of very shy Rufous Whistlers maintained our interest. However, unfortunately there was no sign of the Splendid Fairy-wrens we had seen there a week earlier. As we headed back to the starting point, we were watched by an Australian Hobby preening itself in the sunshine.

This pleasant walk was made more interesting by the presence of several members of the Wildflower Society who kindly shared their knowledge of the surrounding flora.

A total of 22 species was seen during the morning.

Neil Porteous

FLYNN ROAD, 6 May

On a glorious autumn morning 14 members gathered to walk in Flynn Road with the hope of finding some of the endemic species for which the area is noted. The leaders, however, had some doubts after having walked in the areas earlier in the month when they had failed to locate any of the birds and had been constantly harassed by several trail bikers and heard the roar of their machines.

However, by lunch time we had found 37 species, including all three robins and a Crested Shrike-tit, and only two bikers had appeared. Most members were able to watch and listen to a Fan-tailed Cuckoo calling from a nearby tree and to distinguish its two quite distinctly different calls. Of interest more Spotted Pardalotes could be heard than Striated, which is generally the more common species.

Our lunch was disturbed by the advent of both Scarlet and Hooded Robins flying into the trees above our heads, as did a pair of Rufous Treecreepers and a small party of Varied Sittellas. Not a bad day after all!

Bryan Barrett



Spotted Pardalote
Drawing: Judy Blyth

HILLARYS PELAGIC TRIP, 14 May

A beautiful autumn day with a fair variety of species. The highlights were the good numbers of Flesh-footed Shearwaters still present with most in moult, Yellow-nosed Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Wilson's Storm-Petrels and Great Skuas. The petrels were not as common as expected after the storms late in the week but we saw Soft-plumaged Petrel and Great-winged Petrel. Seven Australian Sea-lions and a grey Eastern Reef Egret at Little Island at Hillarys were also good sightings.

For details of future trips contact Frank O'Connor on foconnor@iinet.net.au or (08) 9386 5694.

LAKE COOGEE, 14 May

A dozen enthusiastic birders turned up at Lake Coogee on Mother's Day, which happened to be a beautiful autumn morning. The sky was blue, the temperature just right and not a breath of wind - in other words, ideal birding conditions. We were not disappointed. Our morning's efforts resulted in a tally of 48 birds which, considering the absence of the usual species such as Eurasian Coot, Purple Swamphen, Grey Teal and Nankeen Kestrel, was good birding.

Lake Coogee lived up to its reputation as one of the best sites to see raptors in the metropolitan area. We saw seven species, including Black-shouldered Kite, Whistling Kite, Swamp Harrier, Brown Goshawk, Little Eagle, Australian Hobby and the highlight of the day, an Osprey. This beautiful bird sat on the branches of a lone dead tree, eating a Long-necked Tortoise, while we all passed within a distance of 25 m. We had unrestricted views. It sat there and watched us as we watched it through our binoculars. It was still there when we returned from our walk 90 minutes later. It then flew to another tree just along the shore.

We also had a new species to add to the area's bird list. A Spotted Pardalote was heard by Margery Clegg and was seen and confirmed by other birders.

This great birding area is undergoing development by the Water Authority as it upgrades its wastewater treatment plant. The tall trees at the southern end of the lake have been felled and the area cleared for construction. Since we did the walk on 14 May, the northern end of the lake, where we start our bird walks, has been fenced and a padlocked gate erected, denying access to that part of the lake. The future of Lake Coogee as a great birding area looks pretty grim as plans for the construction of the proposed Fremantle Bypass show it to run along the western shore of the lake.

Jan and Dave Crossley

VICTORIA RESERVOIR, 20 May

A beautiful day, but our 8:30 am start was too early for the ranger who had agreed to open the gate. Thanks to Tom for his 'mobile' wake up call. The new reservoir on Munday Brook was predictably low, and yielded one lonely Australian Shelduck and a White-faced Heron. On the way down below the dam wall, we saw three New Holland Honeyeaters raiding an embedded beehive.

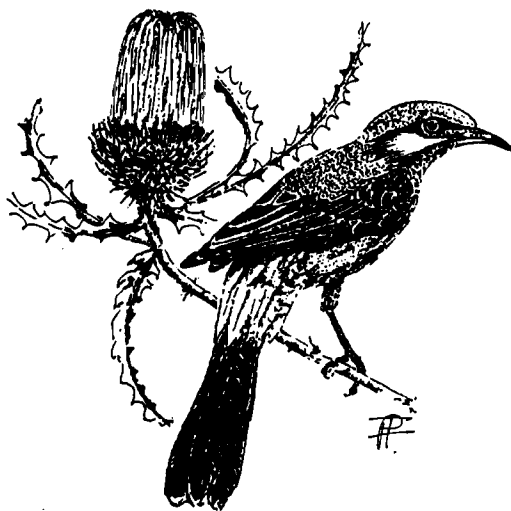
The delightful picnic area had been extensively planted with grevilleas and woollybush along the reedy overflow

creek. It produced an abundance of assorted honeyeaters, scrub-wrens, fairy-wrens and rosellas. The prize, a Spotless Crake.

We then followed Munday Brook down to the junction with Bickley Brook, looking for firetails. We did see White-browed Scrub-wrens, Weebills, Grey Shrike-thrushes, Grey Fantails and whistlers. A pause on the bridge to read an inscription relating to a hundred-year-old tragedy, and then the return leg up Bickley Brook. Fairly quiet except for some productive mixed flocks. These yielded Scarlet and White-breasted Robins, Western Thornbills and White-naped Honeyeaters.

A pleasant outing, with 16 members spotting 31 species. Thanks to those veterans for their support with new members and new leaders.

John Stewart



Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Drawing: Pam Free

WEEKEND CAMPOUT, DONGARA, 3-5 June

The long weekend produced perfect birding weather for the group of 15 members staying at the Seaspray Caravan Park. The program began formally on Saturday afternoon, although members arriving before this had already seen around 35 species, including a number of raptors.

Walking up the beach towards the river mouth, we saw mainly Silver Gulls and Crested Terns, but the walk up the Irwin River was more rewarding, with

waterbirds including Great Egrets, Darters, Pied and Little Black Cormorants, and a White-faced Heron. A scramble down a steep path took us closer to the riverside and bushes where Splendid Fairy-wrens, Striated Pardalotes and Mistletoebirds were seen.

Sunday began at an old road area of Banksia woodland, which was full of bushbirds, including Crested Pigeons, various honeyeaters, Grey Fantails, Red-capped and White-breasted Robins, Golden and Rufous Whistlers. Leaving this area, we were delighted to see a very large flock of Short-billed Black-Cockatoos, right on the roadside.

Further on the Burma Road heathland was less prolific, and very windy, but there was an excellent view of a White-fronted Chat. In the slightly less windy hollow, more Splendid and Variegated Fairy-wrens were seen, with Silvereyes and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters.

The highlight of the day was Ellendale Reserve, with many bushbirds, a Peregrine and a Brown Falcon in the cliff caves, many more Mistletoebirds in breeding mode, fairy-wrens and a rare sighting of the Little Woodswallow.

This was a beautiful area for birds, and produced several new birds for some of us.

A visit to the beach on the estuary saw a pair of nesting Ospreys, an Australian Pelican and Pacific Gulls, but being a holiday, there were too many people around for most waders. On the way back to camp a large flock of Little Corellas was seen from the road, and a good view of a Spotted Harrier.

Monday morning's walk down the old river bed saw many changes from last year, due to the heavy flooding in January this year. The water had swept out large areas, taken down trees, and left pools that had to be circumnavigated. There seemed to be fewer birds than last year, but still many bushbirds and some raptors to be seen, making a total of 12 raptors seen over the three days.

The weekend ended with a morning tea and a final bird count of 78 species, an excellent result from a very satisfying weekend's birding. The trip was well planned and executed. Sue had checked out the venues in advance, and always takes trouble to ensure that all of us see the rarer birds. She deserves our thanks for a very enjoyable weekend.

Liz Walker

HILLARYS PELAGIC TRIP, 18 June

A very calm, warm winter's day. The highlights were not the birds but the cetaceans with good views of Long-finned Pilot Whales, Humpback Whales, Striped Dolphin and Bottle-nosed Dolphin. The birding highlights were the good numbers of Black-browed Albatross, Wilson's Storm-Petrels and photographic opportunities for Yellow-nosed Albatross and Great Skuas. We saw a large flock of 35 Soft-plumaged Petrels sitting on the water and we saw a few Great-winged Petrels. Two Australian Sea-lions were also seen at Little Island at Hillarys.

For details of future trips contact Frank O'Connor on foconnor@iinet.net.au or (08) 9386 5694.

BENNETT BROOK, 23 July

Sunday 23 July dawned grey but dry and the 15 walkers who met at Clarrie Smith Park in Caversham were well prepared for inclement weather and muddy ground with coats, caps and, in many cases, Wellington boots. The area consists of a variety of trees as well as paddocks bordering Bennett Brook and also takes in several old clay pits, now well filled with water.

In all we saw 38 species. Two sightings of the Shining Bronze-Cuckoo caused much excitement, especially the second time when the sun peeped through the clouds and caught the iridescent sheen of the wings. A Mistletoebird tricked us at first but a second sighting by Les confirmed our identification. Then there was the 'nankeenwhite-

facednightheron' which called loudly to us from high in a leafy tree. Eventually we all agreed with Hank that it was a White-faced Heron.

Thank you to Ron van Delft for an enjoyable morning.

Molly Angus



Little Woodswallow
Drawing: Pam Free

NORTH MOLE AND WOODMAN POINT, 30 July

An offshore wind and calm sea conditions did not bode well for seawatching, but nine hopefuls gathered at North Mole, Fremantle, in anticipation.

After nearly an hour, only a few Australasian Gannets and Great Skuas put in an appearance so we moved to Woodman Point.

The wind had eased and it turned into a lovely warm morning. High tides meant a paucity of waders, but we did see five Pied Oystercatchers, five Red-capped Plovers and two Grey Plovers. Little Pied Cormorants shared the rocks with a few Darters, and Singing and Brown Honeyeaters were in the coastal scrub.

Overhead we spotted an Osprey and a Black-shouldered Kite, and sharp-eyed Les spied a Little Eagle. A total of 28 species for the morning.

Pam Agnew

Blackwood Basin Birdwatching/Atlassing Workshops and Bird Surveys

Birds Australia members are invited to join the Blackwood Basin Group in one or more of a series of workshops in the upper and middle catchments of the Blackwood River. The workshops are designed to bring together both beginning and experienced birdwatchers and will focus on birdwatching and atlassing/monitoring skills. Some bird surveys will be done in priority remnant vegetation areas. And just to add to the interest, we will also be talking about frogs!

Atlas Regional Organisers and Birds Australia members Peter Taylor and Cheryl Gole are leading parts of the workshops. Whether you are a local birdwatcher, or a Birds Australia member from further afield, we hope you will join us.

Upper Catchment Workshops and Surveys

- September 21 Narrogin (workshop)
- September 22 Wagin (workshop)
- September 23 Katanning (workshop & weekend bird surveys)
- September 24 Katanning (bird surveys)
- September 25 Kojonup (workshop)
- September 26 Darkan (workshop)

Middle Catchment Workshops

- September 23 Bridgetown (workshop)
- September 25 Boyup Brook (workshop)

Contact the Blackwood Basin Group for more information.
Phone 9765 1555.

Coming events

Important note re campouts

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

Saturday 2 September — Half-day excursion, Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale

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

This is an excellent site for Red-eared Firetails and White-breasted Robins. Ninety-two different species have been seen here.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

Saturday 9 September — Hooded Plover talk, Walpole Recreation Centre, 7:30 pm

Find out more about this rare bird and the exciting new conservation management project that will help ensure its survival. Hooded Plovers need your help now. For further information contact Julie Raines 9306 5819 austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au or Carl Beck 9840 1027 carlb@calm.wa.gov.au

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

Birds Australia WA has been asked to provide a bird list for 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 travel to and from Muggon can contact Martin and Cheryl Gole on 9293 4958.

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

Booking with Cheryl Gole (9293 4958) is essential and numbers will be limited if oversubscribed.

Leaders: Martin and Cheryl Gole

Sunday 10 September — *Spring Fling*, Perry/House/ Bold Park, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

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

Saturday 16 September — Half-day excursion, Ellis Brook Reserve, Gosnells

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Gosnells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin. This interesting site for bushbirds, close to Perth, may have some species not often seen in the metropolitan area.

Leader: Neil Porteous

Sunday 24 September — Full-day excursion, Nanga Bridge along the Murray River

Meet at 8:30 am at the Dwellingup Hotel. From Perth drive down the South West Highway to North Dandalup. Turn left to Dwellingup. Allow one hour of driving time from Armadale (about 70 km one way).

This will be a 7 km undulating walk down a creek and along the Murray River. We'll follow a good track through Jarrah, Marri and Banksia, with beautiful views of the river.

Bushbirds seen in this area include Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, Red-eared Firetail, Red-winged Fairywren, White-breasted Robin and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo.

Bring lunch and a minimum of one litre of water per person. I'll boil a billy at lunch-time for everyone.

Leader: Sue Abbotts (9444 1607)

Monday 25 September meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Mavis Norgard, a member and keen photographer, will speak on "Birds of the Eyre and Broome Bird Observatories".

Saturday 30 September to Monday 2 October — Campout, Tutanning Nature Reserve, Pingelly

Please 'phone the Office (9383 7749) for directions, as you will need a map and a set of instructions sent out to you. Leave your name, telephone number, contact address, and number of people in your party. Numbers will be limited as the camping area is small.

Leader: Dee Smith

Sunday 8 October — Half-day excursion, Acourt Road Reserves, Banjup

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Acourt and Nicholson Roads. We will look at two reserves recently acquired by CALM who have asked us to let them have a list of the birds seen here. The area consists mainly of banksia woodland and heath. Kangaroos inhabit the area so take insect repellent as there are sure to be ticks!

Leader: David James

Thursday 12 October — Mid-week excursion, Garvey Park, Ascot

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park (next to the rowing club) at the western end of Fauntleroy Avenue, off Great Eastern Highway. This is a new birding area with a good variety of birds. Since 1997 67 species of birds have been recorded here, including Buff-banded Rail, Spotless Crake and Mistletoebird.

Header: Hank van Wees

Saturday 14 October — Full-day excursion, Mundaring State Forest

Meet at 9:00 am at the CALM sign 'Wash Point' on the left-hand side of Mundaring Weir Road just past the CALM office, opposite Fred Jacoby Park. From here we will go into the forest to Mann's Gully. Be prepared to share cars as this is a die-back area and only a few cars will be allowed in.

Leader: Eric Pyatt

Sunday 22 October — Half-day excursion, Ray Marshall Park (Blackadder Creek), Viveash

Meet at 8:00 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

Monday 23 October meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Brian Wilson, a member, will speak on "Birds of Botswana and the Kruger National Park".

Sunday 22 – Sunday 29 October — National Bird Week

It is hoped that, as in previous years, members will organise and promote local bird walks for the public in their area. Please ensure that details are sent to the office and that the binoculars are booked in advance.

Saturday 28 October — Full-day excursion, Yanchep National 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.

This will be the final of the regular surveys of the birds in the recreational areas of the park which we were asked to undertake. Spring should be the best time to count the birds here.

Leaders: Bryan Barrett and Clive Nealon

Sunday 5 November — Full-day excursion, Karakin Lake and Doopiter Swamp

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

We will look at the heathland around the pits for heathland birds.

We will then proceed further along KW Road to Lake Karakin which, when wet, can hold many species of duck, waders, etc, some of which breed in the area. After lunch we will drive on to Doopiter Swamp. (*Dupetor* has been used as the genus name for Black Bittern — perhaps the names are connected — we have not yet seen bittern in the area.) Spoonbills breed here and several wader species are often sighted. We recommend you wear long trousers, boots/wellingtons, insect repellent and take drinking water.

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

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Saturday 11 November — Half-day excursion, Alfred Cove, Attadale

Meet at 7:45 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast) off Burke Drive. The migratory waders should have returned from their breeding grounds in Siberia so bring your telescopes. This is also a good area for bushbirds.

Leader: Les Harris

Wednesday 15 November — Mid-week excursion, Kings Park

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at May Circle, in May Drive. Enter the park from Saw Avenue off Thomas Road, turn left and the car park is at the top of the hill. We will look for Variegated Fairy-wrens, the nest of a goshawk, Painted Button-Quail, and there should be plenty of birds nesting in the park.

Leader: Ian McLean

Saturday 18 to Sunday 19 November — Short weekend campout, Julimar Forest

Enjoy a spring weekend in the forest. The site is different to that used in previous years. Those intending to come must contact the office at Perry House (9383 7749) and let them know when you will arrive and how many will be in your party. You will be given directions and a sketch map of how to get to the camp site. Please note that no water or facilities are available. Permission for tents, campers and caravans has been granted by CALM.

Arrive Friday evening, 17 November, or Saturday morning. There will be night spotting for owls and nightjars.

Don't forget! Contact the Office (9383 7749).

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 26 November — Full-day excursion, Flynn Road, The Lakes

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. Spring should be an ideal time to look for the three robins and Crested Shrike-tits that are usually seen here.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Monday 27 November meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Ron Johnstone of the WA Museum will speak on "Biology of Three Forest Cockatoos".

Saturday 2 December — Full-day excursion, Neerabup National Park

Meet at 8:00 am at the shelter in the parking area for the 10th Light Horse Heritage Trail (look for the tourist sign off Wanneroo Road on the western side). This is 4 km north of Burns Beach Road lights.

This area is mixed forest with some Tuart trees. We have not looked here for quite a few years but there could be some interesting birds to be seen. Bring your lunch.

Leader: Rod Smith

Thursday 7 December — Mid-week excursion, Star Swamp, North Beach

Meet at 8:00 am at the Hope Street entrance. Star Swamp has Tuart woodland, mixed Banksia woodland, and heath. A variety of bushbirds and raptors has been seen here.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Saturday 9 December — Half-day excursion, Woodman Point, Munster

Meet at 8:00 am at the entrance to the Woodman Point Recreation and Nature Reserve at the end of O'Kane Court, off Cockburn Road, south of the caravan park. We will walk in the reserve first, and later look for waders and seabirds on the point, so bring your telescopes.

Leaders: Bryan Barrett and Sue Abbotts

Sunday 17 December — Full-day excursion, Amarillo Pool, Baldivis

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

Please be punctual as the gate will be locked after us!

We will search for waders along the mudflats of the river. Long-toed Stints and Wood Sandpipers are usually seen here as well as plenty of waterbirds. Long trousers and boots or wellingtons are recommended as snakes have been seen in the area. Hat, insect repellent and water should be carried. Bring your lunch.

Leader: Les Harris

NOTE

No meeting in December



FALCON TOURS

2001 & 2002 Program (2000 tours full)

Unique Kimberley Boat & 4WD Tour
16 day 1 - 16 August 2001

Two tours in one. Flying over the Buccaneer Archipelago (included). Cruising 8 days along the spectacular west coast. Over-nighting on land at various remote locations. Picked up by 4WD for an 8 day tour through pristine wilderness country. Yes, we are in Red Goshawk, Rufous Owl, Black Grasswren country but this tour is far more than a birding tour. The operators have lived in the Kimberley most of their lives. We will be privileged to see Aboriginal rock galleries and camp alongside remote pools.

Cost (Inc.GST) \$4970 (max 10, 4 taken)

Kenya & Tanzania tour 20 day
January 2002 (January tour 2001 FULL)

Why do I keep going back to Kenya my 6th visit there, well its the beautiful country, great birding and best guides. As one client wrote "I had my first bird tour there in 1990 this tour was just so much better" B.Seddon. This year we are combining Kenya with Tanzania Not only did we get a high bird count but we also saw 58 specie of animals on the last tour. Regarding why we travel in January every time, well its simply the best time with all the Palearctic migrants down and contrary to belief the weather is great, no rain and mild weather as we are on average 4000 ft up. Costs - 2002 is too far ahead, but it is wise to pencil yourselves in (no commitment).

Write: Falcon Tours

Unit 11, 342 South Terrace South Fremantle WA 6162

Ph 08 9336 3882. Fax 08 9336 3830.

Email: falcon@highway1.com.au

Established 14 years

Sunday 31 December — Half-day excursion, Canning River Regional Park, Wilson

Meet at 8:00 am at the Kent Street Weir car park, near the Canning River, to explore the varied birdlife of the Canning wetlands.

Leader to be announced

Sunday 11 February 2001 — Mid summer wader count

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

Wheatbelt Birds Project

It's still not too late to take part in this project and help put some of the wheatbelt birds on the map. The project links the Atlas with the biological resources survey work being done by CALM for the Salinity Action Plan.

Some people have enjoyed it so much they have asked to be allocated some more sites! You can have a great day out birdwatching in some fascinating wheatbelt reserves, and contribute to two very important projects.

Ask about sites close to you or in an area that interests you.

Contact Cheryl Gole

(Tel/Fax 9293 4958; email gole@starwon.com.au)

Christmas sale!

**Buy some of these specials
before the Christmas rush!**

Breedon, R:

Out of the Bush **\$2.00**

van Delft, Ron:

Birding Sites Around Perth **\$15.00**

Field Guides

(latest editions) **only \$30.00**

- **Pizzey & Knight:**
Field Guide to Birds
- **Simpson & Day:**
Field Guide of the Birds
of Australia
- **Slater:**
Field Guide to
Australian Birds

**Also our beautiful bird cards @
\$1.00 each including envelope
(some with Christmas message)**

Crossword Answers No 22

Across

1 mannikin, 4 sacred, 7 distribution, 9 pond, 10 bills, 12 burrows, 13 tern, 14 bay, 16 western, 17 monitor, 18 red, 21 pin, 22 nape, 26 evade, 27 shoveler, 28 specific, 29 lower

Down

2 audible, 3 ibis, 4 sit, 5 cooperation, 6 Dundas, 8 salinity, 11 button, 14 bark, 15 loop, 16 wardens, 17 month, 19 drake, 20 see, 23 allow, 24 error, 25 oval, 27 sac

Enjoy a great day in the country!

Would you like to spend a day or two in the country talking to people about one or two of the Birds Australia WA projects, and selling small items such as cards and books? BA WA is attending a number of agricultural shows, field days, spring festivals and expos to promote the Wheatbelt Birds, Hooded Plover and Carnaby's Black Cockatoo Projects and the organisation generally. Enjoy convivial company and do a great job for Birds Australia. If you live locally, you can even come for just a few hours. You don't need to be an expert on any of the projects: we'll fill you in, and project leaders from the relevant projects will be there for the whole event.

Transport can be provided from Perth, and basic accommodation costs will be paid.

By the time this goes to print, we will already have visited Beverley and Dalwallinu. Why not join us at one of the following?

Newdegate	September 6-7
Ravensthorpe	September 9
Mingenew	September 20-21
Narrogin	October 14
Kojonup	October 21
Katanning	October 27-28

Interested? Call Cheryl Gole (9293 4958)
or Tamra Chapman (9375 5316)

KIMBERLEY



BIRDWATCHING

Wildlife & Natural History Tours

For info contact: George Swann

Kimberley Birdwatching

PO Box 220, Broome WA 6725

Email: kimbird@tpg.com.au

Ph/Fax: (08) 9192 1246

*Offering the most authoritative birdwatching tours
in North Western Australia.*

Pelagic Birding Trips

Visiting Ashmore Reef, Scott Reef, Adele Island, Lacepede Islands

23rd-30th October 2000 & 1st-8th November 2001

Broome - Broome

8 days

Led by Mike Carter

Limited places available

Plus more exciting trips

Wildflower Society
of WESTERN AUSTRALIA (Inc.)

Spring Fling

Celebrating the beginning of spring

🌻 Demonstrations & Displays

Growing plants from seed
Know what soil is in your backyard
Floral Displays

🌻 Childrens Activities

Make gum nut toys
Paint sand picture

🌻 Plants & Seeds for Sale

Local wildflower seeds
Some unusual plants

🌻 Cut Wildflowers for Sale

Banksia, Geraldton Wax,
Dryandra, Verticordia & more

🌻 Souvenirs for Sale

Calenders, books, fridge
magnets, posters etc

🌻 Wildflower & Bird Spotting Walks

A walk every half hour

🌻 Tea Towels, Shopping Bags, Aprons

🌻 Light Refreshments



Actinotus superbus

Sunday, 10th September, 2000
9:30am — 4:00pm

Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat Park

All enquiries to the Wildflower Society of W.A. (Inc.) Ph 9383 7979
After Hours: Sybil Speak Ph 9444 1495