

Western Australian Bird Notes



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CONSUMPTION AND DISPERSAL OF THE SEEDS OF *MACROZAMIA RIEDLEI* BY BIRDS

Observations of birds eating the bright red seed-coats of *Macrozamia riedlei* seeds have been published from time to time, but the number of first-hand records is small, some are anecdotal, and the total number of bird species involved is limited. The species are Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae* (Carter, 1923; Eastman, 1969), Western Rosella *Platycercus icterotis* (Loaring, 1952), Australian Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius* (Long, 1984), Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis* (Loaring, 1952), Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus* (Stranger and Stranger, 1970) and Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides* (Sedgwick, 1940, 1952; Loaring, 1952). In addition, there is an observation of White-tailed Black-Cockatoos, presumably *Calyptorhynchus latirostris*, feeding on the ground near the ripe seeds of *Macrozamia*, but eating of the flesh was not actually seen (Stranger and Stranger, 1970).

At 'The Colonel's', Callcup, we have seen, of the above short list, Emu, Silvereye and Australian Raven eating the seed-coats, but not Western Rosella and Australian

Ringneck (both common here). To the list can be added the Grey Currawong (locally known as Squeaker) *Strepera versicolor*, a species to the best of my knowledge not

previously recorded feeding on *Macrozamia*, although Loaring suggested it as likely. It is surprising that confirmation of his suggestion has taken half a century. The Grey Butcherbird does not occur locally.

Thus, seven species have so far been recorded eating *Macrozamia*, plus one doubtful. A few notes on each of these species follow:

Emu. Undoubtedly the greatest consumer and disperser of the fruits and seeds is the Emu. This has

been known in the ornithological literature for at least 80 years (Carter, 1923). Carter was confused about the facts; he evidently believed that Emus normally digest not only the coating, but also the seeds, which is not so. I quote, "Emus are not popular birds in the south-west coastal areas, as they eat the large seeds of the interesting Cycad, the Zamia Palm (*Macrozamia*) and voiding some of them undigested, spread the noxious plant to fresh places".



Emu

Photo courtesy Bea Myers & Ian Tarbin
 Eyre Bird Observatory

Actually, Emus do not digest the poisonous seeds: these always pass through undamaged. Surprisingly, Marchant and Higgins' (1990) only reference to Emus eating *Macrozamia* 'nuts' is still to Carter's inaccurate account and the much more comprehensive treatment by Eastman (1969) is ignored; Eastman's book is not even listed in the bibliography, which contains many items of very minor interest.

Eastman, although well aware of the importance of *Macrozamia* fruits in their diet, does not say that Emus play a great role in the dispersal of the plants; in fact she states the opposite: that Emus, by eating mainly unripe fruits, not yet at the stage of being able to germinate, actually reduce the production of fertile seeds, and hence the dispersal of *Macrozamia riedlei*. Our observations at 'The Colonel's' do not support this. Practically all cones we have seen demolished contained ripe seeds. Eastman herself pointed out that the opening of unripe cones would be difficult for Emus, and her photographs of cones eaten by Emus show ripe, red-coated seeds. Occasionally we did find a cone that had been demolished unripe; the seeds did not have a nice, succulent, red coat, but thin, pale-chamois skin, unattractive looking, and the seeds had not been eaten but were left scattered about the plant.

From their third edition onward, Serventy and Whittell (1967) list 'the red rind of *Zamia* nuts' as food, but without giving particulars, so that it is not clear whether this is based on personal observation by Serventy, or taken from the literature. *Macrozamia* seeds in Emu droppings are casually mentioned by Abbott (1999). More informative, and correct in my opinion, is the evaluation by Pate and Dixon (1982): "This bird was probably a major agent of dispersal before the opening up of the south-west of the state for agriculture". It is unclear why Pate and Dixon should have put their remarks entirely in the past tense. Where Emus have not been exterminated and some natural vegetation remains, they continue as important dispersers of the seeds. It is not so easy to see Emus actually at work, eating the fruits, but in season (mainly April-June), Emu droppings may contain as many as a dozen seeds, undamaged, only the red seed-coat having been digested. Early in the season even digestion of the seed-coat is not always complete, and some red may appear in the droppings. When, after a few weeks, the faeces have been washed away by rain, the seeds remain, close together, their large size giving them the appearance of a clutch of eggs.

Although Emus are able to break through any kind of dense vegetation, not to mention fences, they prefer to use existing paths where these are available. There, one finds many of their droppings and in our area, little-used tracks and neglected fire-breaks usually have a good vegetation of *Macrozamia*.

I have no evidence that Emus actually open the cone but observations suggest that they do not eat its contents all in one go; they pay return visits and finish it in two or three days.

Common Bronzewing. Burbidge and Whelan (1982) reported this species eating the fleshy outer coat of

Macrozamia seeds in Jarrah-Banksia woodland 25 km S of Perth. No further details of the bird's behaviour were reported. These authors also reported several mammals eating the flesh from the seeds, and Brush-tailed Possums were the primary agents of local seed dispersal at this site.

Western Rosella. Loaring's record concerns a small band of rosellas, repeatedly seen feeding on the red seed-coats at Bickley.

Australian Ringneck. The remains of *Macrozamia* sp. found in a few crops of birds shot near Ballingup may on geographical grounds safely be referred to *M. riedlei*. Evidently, this was only a minor item in the menu. It is not surprising that this parrot also belongs to the consumers of *Macrozamia* as it seems easily the most versatile feeder of all parrots, and will try anything that looks edible. The record does not suggest that *Macrozamia* is more than an incidental food and it is worth recording that Australian Ringnecks have apparently never actually been seen eating it.

Silvereye. Loaring recorded "that numbers of Silvereyes ... were knocking round the spilled seeds and greedily eating the layer of flesh". We would not describe our observations in Callcup in exactly these words. On several occasions, we put a handful of fruits on the lawn. When a small flock of Silvereyes passed, two or three birds might fly down and peck at the fruits, take perhaps a few mouthfuls of the succulent rind, and fly on. Such a visit might be repeated one or two hours later by the same or different birds. Even allowing for the small size of the birds, the total consumption was modest. Nevertheless, we can confirm Silvereyes as regular consumers.

Grey Butcherbird. The observation by the Strangers remains unique. Its only unusual facet is the late date (Lake Yangebup, 16 August 1969). I have rarely seen the fruits after the first half of June, but undoubtedly they last longer in places where Emus do not occur.

Grey Currawong. We first noted Grey Currawong attending *Macrozamia* in April 2001; up to three birds were seen simultaneously at one plant. The procedure was that a bird moved up to the half-eaten cone, pecked out a fruit, and with this in its bill would walk away from one to two metres, where the fruit was placed on the ground and stripped of its coat. I have not seen whether the birds themselves open a cone, or only came after it had been opened and partially eaten by an Emu, and it was the red colour that attracted them. Our impression is certainly that Grey Currawongs are more than casual consumers.

Australian Raven. Several published observations, as well as our own records, show that the Australian Raven belongs to the regular consumers. They may demolish the fruits on the ground near the plants, but more often fly away with a fruit, holding it in the bill. Sedgwick (1952) speculated about the well-known food-carrying behaviour of this species, without being able to offer an explanation. A simple explanation is that they, when processing food, do a lot of hammering with their bills. This would be most efficient on a hard substrate, hence the birds fly with their

food to a tree-stump, a fence-post, a heavy branch, etc. Anybody who (like we at 'The Colonel's') has a corrugated metal roof, on which the birds come hammering (preferably in the early morning, so that it resounds through the house), will know what I mean. It means also that, in general, the birds do not fly great distances with their *Macrozamia* fruits, only to the nearest anvil. Australian Raven (and *Corvidae* generally) also conceal food. This implies carrying it away, either on foot or flying. As long-distance dispersers of *Macrozamia* seeds, they would play at best an insignificant role.

White-tailed Black-Cockatoo. This observation was doubtful, as its authors made quite clear. Nevertheless, as might have been expected, it has started its own life. It has entered HANZAB (Higgins, 1999), not as possible, or even probable, but as established. Through a tiny misprint in this work, the reference is moreover not the correct one to Stranger and Stranger, but to an article by Sedgwick and Sedgwick (1950) that contains nothing about *Macrozamia*.

Inter alia: the Sedgwick and Sedgwick paper refers to white-tails seen feeding on banksias at Esperance. Although Higgins (1999) lists this among the observations which might refer to

either of the two species, it is now known that Esperance is far outside the range of *C. baudinii*, as, indeed, is evident from the accompanying correct map of its distribution, so that the observation may safely be assigned to *C. latirostris*. As the observation is not dated, the species of *Banksia* unrecorded, and there is no mention of what the cockatoos ate (nectar from flowers, seeds, or what?), it is of very limited value anyway: an example of the inclusion of vague trivialities in the Handbook series, whereas major works, like Eastman's, have been overlooked.

The non-record of *C. baudinii* eating *Macrozamia* will probably continue to burden the literature. By far the best way to get rid of it would be a genuine observation, putting the matter beyond doubt.

In conclusion, although several bird species feed on the red coats of *Macrozamia* fruits, it is apparent that only the Emu is the important disperser of the seeds. Contrary to the suggestion made by Eastman, the Emu eats almost exclusively fruits with ripe, viable seeds, and there can be little doubt that under natural conditions, the Emu is the most important avian disperser of the seeds. In other

words, *Macrozamia riedlei* is to a large extent dependent on the Emu for its dispersal.

Note: *Macrozamia riedlei* was named for the French gardener and horticulturist A. Riedle (1775-1801), a member of the famous Baudin expedition. I do not know whether the misspelling *reidlei* originated with Loaring, or has deeper roots, but through Loaring it has become entrenched in the ornithological literature, even the most recent, for example, Johnstone and Storr (1998) and Higgins (1999).

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Brown Goshawk fledging on nest.
Photo courtesy Bea Myers & Ian Tarbin
Eyre Bird Observatory

G F Mees

Observations

This list has been compiled by the Observations Committee. Metropolitan suburbs or shires are in parentheses. Please report interesting observations to Frank O'Connor (9386 5694 or preferably sightings@iinet.net.au) or to the BAWA office. Sightings are included on the BAWA web site (<http://birdswa.iinet.net.au>) as soon as possible, and the most interesting are selected for inclusion in the next WABN.

The names and order follow Christidis, L. and Boles, W. (1994) (The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories. RAOU Monograph No. 2).

Highlights. There are two outstanding sightings in this edition. A Blue-and-white Flycatcher was observed closely for five days at the Broome Bird Observatory in November. This is the first live record of this species in Australia. Grant and Clare Morton found one dead near Cossack on the 5th December 1995, and they were among the first people to see the bird in Broome. The second outstanding sighting was an exhausted Oriental Honey-Buzzard found in Leinster. It was taken into care, but later died and the specimen has been lodged with the Western Australian Museum. This is the first record for mainland Australia. There were two sightings of this species on Christmas Island in 2002.

The most unusual sightings in the metropolitan area were Plumed Whistling-Ducks at Lake Joondalup south of Ocean Reef Road and a large flock of Freckled Ducks at Herdsman Lake. There continue to be numerous reports of White-necked Herons including at Rottnest Island.

There have been three separate sightings of Masked Lapwings in the south west since Christmas. Is this perhaps a sign of the dry conditions in Australia, or more significantly the beginning of this species establishing itself in the south west? The sighting near Esperance included two juveniles that probably had been bred in the area. There were four separate sightings of Australian Bustards in the south west. Lake McLarty near Pinjarra returned to its best this summer with estimates of more than 40 000 birds including rarities such as Little Stint, Ruff, Broad-billed Sandpiper and most unexpectedly a Southern Emu-wren.

There were a good number of local rarities reported in the Kimberley. The most unusual sightings apart from the Blue-and-white Flycatcher were two large flocks of Barn Swallows and a Red-rumped Swallow.

George Swann spent a week on Ashmore Reef at the end of January doing surveys for Environment Australia and found the largest number of major rarities so far reported from there. George again saw Pale-headed Munia (*Lonchura pallida*) and the first record of Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*) and took some video of both species. The former is only the second record for Australia.

The latter (also known as Spice Finch or Nutmeg Mannikin) is believed to be the first naturally occurring Australian record. The White-breasted Waterhen has only been recorded previously in Australia on Christmas Island. The Abbott's Booby is rarely reported away from its breeding area on Christmas Island.

Chris Doughty led a tour to Christmas Island and reported three new species for the island including a possible Chinese Sparrowhawk, which will be the first record for Australia if accepted by BARC.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Plumed Whistling-Duck – 5, 30/12/02, Lake Joondalup South (Woodvale) – HvW * 17, 01/01/03, Lake Joondalup South (Woodvale) – CN, MH * 26, 05/01/03, Lake Joondalup South (Woodvale) – GL (rare in the south west)

Freckled Duck – 61+, 18/12/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – FO, LD, PV * 100+, 29/12/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – MS * 127, 04/01/03, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – EP * 130, 08/01/03, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – WM * 156, 10/01/03, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – FO (very high number)

White-necked Heron – 1, 08/01/03, Garden Lake (Rottnest Island) – MiM, JP, BB (very unusual at Rottnest Island)

Royal Spoonbill – 1, 05/01/03, Lake Joondalup South (Woodvale) – GL (unusual in the south west)

Square-tailed Kite – 1, 21/11/02, Trigg Bushland (Trigg) – RP

Little Eagle – 2, 03/11/02, Causeway (Rottnest Island) – WM (unusual on Rottnest Island)

Sooty Oystercatcher – 1, 18/01/03, Fish Hook Bay (Rottnest Island) – RT * 1, 19/01/03, Radar Reef (Rottnest Island) – JP, RT (unusual on Rottnest Island)

Red-necked Avocet – 500+, 02/02/03, North Lake (North Lake) – WM, FO (high number)

Hooded Plover – 1, 15/12/02, Alfred Cove (Attadale) – CD (unusual in the metropolitan area)

Pacific Gull – 1 immature, 02/11/03, Woodman Point (Coogee) – MS * 2 immatures, 28/12/02, Mettam's Pool (Trigg) – RP, MyM, ST (unusual in the metropolitan area)

Whiskered Tern – 1, 22/12/02, North Lake (North Lake) – WM (unusual in the metropolitan area)

Black-eared Cuckoo – 1, 04/01/03, Floreat Waters (Herdsman) – EP (unusual in the metropolitan area)

Spotted Nightjar – 1, 23/01/03, Whiteman Park (Whiteman) – BM, JW, KN (rare on the coastal plain)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Grey Teal – 18500, 27/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high number)

Black-tailed Native-hen – 19, 27/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high number for the south west)

Australian Bustard – 2, 22/09/02, 8 km north of Katanning (Katanning) – per DS * 2, 09/11/02, Beaufort Road (West Arthur) – VD * 2, 15/12/02 and 22/12/02, Greenlands Road (Murray) – JD * 1, 25/01/03, South Coast Highway Albany to Denmark (Albany) – JG

Red Knot – 7, 05/01/03, Lake McLarty (Murray) – JD

Grey-tailed Tattler – 1, 27/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC

LITTLE STINT – 1, 29/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – JD (rarely reported in Australia)

Red-necked Stint – 6500, 27/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high number)

Long-toed Stint – 33, 20/11/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC * 25, 15/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – JD (high number)

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – 3500, 27/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high number)

Broad-billed Sandpiper – 1, 20/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – PV, LD, FO

Ruff – 1, 15/12/02 to 05/01/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – JD *et al.*

Hooded Plover – 21, 12/11/02, Lake Chillinup Nature Reserve (Plantagenet) – ABG * 63, 29/12/02, Jerdacuttup Lakes (Ravensthorpe) – DS * 2 adults and 2 runenrs, 02/02/03, East end of William Bay (Denmark) – VE *et al.*

MASKED LAPWING – 1 (subspecies *novaehollandiae*), 21/12/02 to 11/01/03, Lake McLarty (Murray) – RJ *et al.* * 2 adults and 2 juveniles (no wattles; smaller than adults) (subspecies *miles*), 04/01/02, 5 km east of Esperance (Esperance) – RP, JC * 3 (subspecies *miles*), 01/02/03, Eyre River mouth, Cape Riche (Albany) – RG, FAB

Whiskered Tern – 13, 14/11/02, 12 km east of Denmark (Denmark) – WM * 25, 07/01/03, Hay River mouth (Denmark) – FAB

White-winged Black Tern – 1, 07/01/03, Wilson Inlet (Denmark) – RG, MM

Black Honeyeater – 2 males, 12/10/02, Jebarjup Nature Reserve (Plantagenet) – MAN

Southern Emu-wren – 1, 27/12/02, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC

ARID ZONE

Black-necked Stork – 1, 29/09/02, Carawine Gorge, Oakover River (East Pilbara) – JP (eastern limit of range in the Pilbara)

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD – 1, late 01/03, Leinster (Leonora) – per WAM (specimen; 1st record for mainland Australia)

KIMBERLEY

Freckled Duck – 2, 29/12/02, Halls Creek sewage ponds (Halls Creek) – AdB

Black Swan – 3, 03/01/03, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) – AdB

Spotless Crake – 1, 20/12/02, Nimilaica claypan (Broome) – AdB

Chestnut-backed Button-quail – 7, 14 and 15/11/02, northern Dampier Peninsula (Broome) – GS, FO

Whimbrel – 1, 03/01/03, Halls Creek sewage ponds (Halls Creek) – AdB (rare inland)

Banded Stilt – 1, 10/01/03, Roebuck Bay near Crab Creek (Broome) – AdB

Oriental Pratincole – 8,000, 10/01/03, over Roebuck Bay (Broome) – AdB (high number)

Black Noddy – 4+, 04/10/02 and 05/10/02, Adele Island – GS (1st confirmed record for Adele Island)

Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove – 2, 14/11/02, northern Dampier Peninsula (Broome) – FO

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo – 1, 23/01/03, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – AdB

Masked Owl – 1, 05/11/03, Mitchell Plateau (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – JS

Banded Honeyeater – 3, 19/01/03, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – AdB

Crested Bellbird – 1, 05/11/02, near Miners Pool (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – JS

BLUE-AND-WHITE FLYCATCHER – 1, 16/11/02 to 20/11/02, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – LD, PV *et al.* (1st live record for Australia; photographs; BARC submission sent)

Star Finch – 3000, 09/01/03, Forrest Road, Fitzroy Crossing (Derby – West Kimberley) – GS (very high number)

Gouldian Finch – 12, 15/11/02, northern Dampier Peninsula (Broome) – GS, FO

Barn Swallow – 220, 10/01/03, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) – AdB * 200, 10/01/03, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – AdB (high number)

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW – 1, 09/01/03, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – AdB (BARC submission required)

ASHMORE REEF

Streaked Shearwater – 1, 27/01/03, Ashmore Reef area – GS

ABBOTT'S BOOBY – 1 dead, 26/01/03, West Island lagoon – GS (1st record for Ashmore Reef; BARC submission required)

WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN – 1, 25/01/03 and 27/01/03, West Island – GS (1st record for Ashmore Reef; BARC submission required)

Gallinago sp. snipe – 1, 30/01/03, West Island – GS (1st record for Ashmore Reef)

Black-tailed Godwit – 8, 02/02/03, sandbanks – GS

Common Redshank – 1, 25/01/03, sandbanks – GS (1st record for Ashmore Reef)

Grey-tailed Tattler – 1457, 02/02/03, sandbanks – GS (high number)

Ruddy Turnstone – 1607, 02/02/03, sandbanks – GS (high number)

Asian Dowitcher – 3, 26/01/03, sandbanks – GS (1st record for Ashmore Reef)

Sanderling – 1117, 02/02/03, sandbanks – GS (very high number)

Grey Plover – 1475, 02/02/03, sandbanks – GS (very high number)

White-winged Triller – 1, 24/01/03 and 25/01/03, West Island – GS (1st record for Ashmore Reef)

PALE-HEADED MUNIA – 2 sub adults, 28/01/03 and 01/02/03, West Island lagoon – GS * 1 sub adult, 02/02/03, West Island lagoon – GS (2nd record for Ashmore Reef; BARC submission required; video)

SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA – 1, 25/01/03 and 27/01/03, West Island lagoon – GS (1st record for Ashmore Reef; BARC submission required; video)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

CHINESE SPARROWHAWK – 1, 04/12/02, Nursery Lookout – CDo (1st record for Australia if accepted; BARC submission required)

Baillon's Crake – 1, 03/12/02, Nursery – CDo

Red-necked Phalarope – 1 (being attacked by Christmas Island Frigatebirds), 08/12/02, Smith Point – CDo (1st record for Christmas Island)

Oriental Cuckoo – 1 hepatic female, 05/12/02, rubbish tip – CDo

ORIENTAL REED-WARBLER – 1 (three times), 04/12/02 to 09/12/02, settlement – CDo (1st record for Christmas Island; BARC submission required)

OBSERVERS

ABG = Albany Bird Group

AdB = Adrian Boyle

BARC = BA Rarities C'tee

BB = Bob Black

BAWA = BAWA Excursion

BM = Brenden Metcalf

BR = Bill Rutherford

CD = Colin Davis

CDo = Chris Doughty *et al.* (Vic)

CN = Clive Nealon

DP = Dean Portelli

DS = David Secomb

EP = Easy Patterson

FAB = Fred & Anne Bondin

FO = Frank O'Connor

GL = Graham Little

GS = George Swann

HvW = Hank van Wees

JC = Jarrad Cousin

JD = John Darnell

JG = Joan Garstone

JP = Jane Prince

JS = Jonny Schoenjahn

JW = Jo Wallace

KN = Kathy Nostove

LD = Leander Dykstra (Netherlands)

MAN = Michael & Ada Nield

MC = Michael Craig

MH = Michael Hancock

MiM = Michi Maier

MM = Michael Morcombe

MS = Marcus Singor

MyM = Myles Menz

PV = Petra Verburg (Netherlands)

RG = Ray Garstone

RJ = Rolf Jensen

RP = Ryan Phillips

RT = Roy Teale

ST = Sean Tomlinson

VD = Vivienne Dare

VE = Val English

WAM = Western Australian Museum

WM = Wynton Maddeford

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

Alarm bells for our Ground Parrot

This is a bird in trouble. A population estimate in 1990 put the total number of individuals at 378. The most recent estimate in January 2002 has the total number of individuals at only around 250.

I first became aware of the Western Ground Parrot when I saw one on a track in what was then vacant crown land north of the Fitzgerald River National Park. That was 1978. Since then, from time to time, they have played a big part in my life and I have played a role in conserving the area where most of them now live. It now looks as if our time on earth could run out concurrently in another twenty-four or so years. For me this is a natural progression but I cannot agree that the Western Ground Parrot should soon disappear after its long years of evolution and adaptation.

The Western Ground Parrot lifestyle is not compatible with ours. They are notoriously difficult to see and to study. Should they be consigned to oblivion because of this? Or because they are 'only a subspecies'?

The next few years will be critical in determining the fate of this endemic WA bird. If you are concerned, as I am, consider becoming a member of Friends of the Western Ground Parrot. Friends can assist in various ways, not least by becoming more informed. Friends will be regularly

updated about Western Ground Parrots and their situation and will be in a position to monitor and influence progress or otherwise towards their recovery. For contact details see the boxed notice within this issue of *WA Bird Notes*.

Brenda Newbey

Dear Editors

Does Dr Mees have a Problem?

In WABN (103:7) Dr Mees praises WABN and laments the effects of editors and referees on individuality in authors and their penchant for stuffing up a good script.

One reason why one's work won't be accepted is that it isn't good enough, though I am certain this isn't so for Dr Mees. Another is that if one's first language isn't English inappropriate words may be used and thus the readers become confused. However, this may also apply to people whose first language is English, or who have been indoctrinated with the worst English of all—American English. And over the years I have noticed that some migrants, including my Filipina wife Fely, will sometimes use any word rather than no word, and Fely sometimes uses words which mean the opposite of what she is trying to tell me.

Also, one has to be careful not to be too individual or express too much originality, and I suspect that here lies

any problem that Dr Mees may have. If one has to detail and explain the article it becomes too lengthy and won't be published anyway, and one has to abandon impetus and inspiration. Further, such detail is tiresome and irksome and really dulls one's appetite for research, especially if one doesn't really care for learning what is already known and prefers to learn what isn't known.

But no matter how good one's work is it still needs to be refereed and edited by one's peers, because, I am told, that is still the best way to promote the integrity of published works. However, a good trick (tongue in cheek!) to facilitate the publishing of one's work is to include the editor and referees in the section titled Acknowledgments.

I fully agree that WABN is a good medium in which to publish and this is largely due to professional local editors vetting local observations and local work. Perhaps, though, it could be improved by having a lift-out section that is an ornithological journal in its own right. WA ornithology, WA authors, WA editors, for the western third of Australia and within which WABN already recognises three very distinct regions, ie, the Kimberley, the Pilbara-Inland and the South-West. Each is worthy of its own individual studies but for now we can content ourselves with the whole.

Robert Stranger

To the Editors

Birds Approved

I clipped this story from *The Geraldton Guardian* about a week ago.

This information could be of interest in the newsletter to any BA members who travel to or through Geraldton. The

telephone number for Janelle and Glenn Ende is (08) 9964 2908.

Extract, The Geraldton Guardian, January 2003

Birds approved

Greenough Shire Council approved the establishment of a bird rehabilitation, aviaries and interpretive centre in Waggrakine.

The project consists of 17 secure free flight aviaries, walk trails and car park.

In the submission, Waggrakine residents Janelle and Glenn Ende said an interpretive centre would be "open to bird enthusiasts, school groups and the general public with operational hours restricted to two weekdays and one weekend afternoon".

Mr and Mrs Ende previously conducted a successful rehabilitation program, Just Raptors, using free flight aviaries for raptors on a smaller property in Wooreee.

Council would advertise the project publicly and send letters to all adjoining landowners and relevant authority bodies to encourage feedback.

The Ende's 3.6 ha property currently contains a residence, a small number of rehabilitation aviaries and small pockets of native vegetation.

Birds currently on the property include wedge tail eagles, kestrels, falcons and hawks.

Council officer Simon Lancaster said he did not believe the development would present "a negative visual impact to the surrounding area".

Sue Harris

From the CEO's Desk

To all our Western Australian members welcome to this first article in *WA Bird Notes* on news from the Birds Australia CEO. Each edition I will provide a very brief summary of some of the news from national office. I presently do this by email but we recognise only fifty per cent of members have access to email.

Birds Australia national office has recently assisted a visiting Birdlife International (our overseas affiliated body) training workshop for 20 delegates from all parts of the globe. The delegates were mainly from countries where birding groups were not as well established as here in Australia. The ten days included field trips to Werribee and the Royal Botanical Gardens where Birds Australia Councillor Dr Phil Moors (also director of the gardens) greeted our overseas visitors.

Members should be aware we now have an electronic calendar of events on our website that will provide you

with all current Birds Australia events. In the meantime another reminder that our annual general meeting and members day will be held in Hobart on 31 May 2003. The 2003 congress and campout will take place in Coonabarabran NSW from 6 September. It will include trips to the Warrumbungles and Macquarie Marshes.

We are very pleased to report that we have again been successful in having our Threatened Bird Network funded again by the Federal Government. This year we will have both Chris Tzaros and Andrew Silcocks working on the project.

Our latest publication *The Seabird Atlas of South eastern Australian Waters* is now printed and available at the Birding Shop. While on publications—12 Feb will see the launch of HANZAB Vol 6 by the former Premier of Victoria Joan Kirner at the State Library. This latest volume is a beauty.

The Birds Australia Council is presently considering a further land reserve acquisition and we are assessing a property at the moment. We are most interested in members' views on this and please feel free to contact me with your thoughts about us purchasing further land to protect birds. By post to national office at 415 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East 3123 is best.

Finally, we are still working hard on the renewal of the lease with CALM at the Broome Bird Observatory and we hope to conclude negotiations soon. Bye for now.

Jim Downey

Last Call!

The last call for observations of birds from the Mandurah district.

Any records from the Jarrah forest, coastal plain or ocean between the latitudes of Rockingham and Harvey would be very gratefully received.

Of special interest would be sightings of the Black-breasted Buzzard on the coastal plain, because claims of such seem to be mis-identifications of the Square-tailed Kite.

Please phone Robert Stranger
on 9370 1434

Birds Australia WA Inc Reports

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The Dalai Lama has suggested that above all else, people should strive to be useful and be happy, and I think BAWA has done well by those measures in the past year. Our members seem to be enjoying themselves, the committee and office volunteers are still smiling and much that we have done has been useful. It has been a hectic year and it is difficult to do that year justice in only a few words; but I will try.

The year began with the second of two planning workshops at which members were invited to discuss what the group means to them, where it should be going and what it should be doing. Such planning sessions are often criticised as introspective naval gazing, but under the watchful eye of professional facilitator and member Alison Day, a lot of useful comments surfaced and recommendations were laid down. Some of the developments this year, such as a questionnaire sent out to all members and the establishment of a Conservation and Research Committee, were the direct result of the planning days. Other goals are being achieved behind the scenes or will take longer to fulfil, but it is important to have these targets.

The AGM of 2002 saw the election of a new Chairperson and several changes to the committee, but the transition was smooth and the combination of established and new members has worked well. One of my first jobs as Chairperson was to attend a meeting of the Regional Groups in Sydney, and it was a great opportunity to meet up with the national President and CEO, as well as the members of other regional groups. Despite all the communications technology in the world, there is nothing like being in the same room as someone to exchange ideas and be understood. The Regional Groups' meetings are an excellent way of drawing the Birds Australia family together for the good of the organisation and of birds.

The Committee has had regular and positive contact with CEO Jim Downey in the National Office, and we are also maintaining links with the two observatories in WA and

groups of members in regional centres, such as Albany. Once again, we have sponsored students to attend a course on ornithological techniques at Eyre Bird Observatory, and we are looking at ways to become more involved with students both at schools and tertiary institutions.

This year has seen a number of special events, and I hope this sets the pattern for the future. To combine with National Bird Week in October, we held an Open Day at Perry House, organised largely by Jenny Wilcox. This provided us with an opportunity to launch the regional bird guides on our website, acknowledge the support of the Lotteries Commission and to showcase ourselves to members and non-members. During the preceding week we ran Perth Birdwatch. This was an attempt to get members of the public to submit observations of Willie Wagtails, Australian Ringnecks (28 Parrots in local parlance) and Rainbow Lorikeets (introduced) in the Perth area, and its success exceeded all expectations. Over 1500 people contributed observations and we know for next time that we need a lot more phone lines and a lot more people on those phones. We got a great snapshot of where these birds occur, raised the profile of Birds Australia in the community, and resulted in several articles in newspapers. Special thanks to Liz Walker and the Office volunteers, Wes Bancroft, Frank O'Connor and Rob Davis for their efforts.

BAWA took on a number of new projects and continued with others through 2002. Leonie McMahon continued with the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo project, identifying important areas for this species, Julie Raines and Marcus Singor have worked on the Hooded Plover, with Julie publishing a management plan for the species in the South-West, and Brenda Newby has recently embarked on a new project on the western sub-species of the Ground Parrot. Cheryl Gole has coordinated two new projects this year: the Perth Biodiversity Project is looking at birds in urban bushland and the Living Landscapes Project is looking at birds in bushland remnants in agricultural areas. She also coordinated BAWA's involvement in the inaugural

Bioblitz, a weekend fauna survey of a Wheatbelt reserve in which our organisation joined forces with other groups, including WWF. Meanwhile, Allan Jones is working steadily away on the bird guides, including a new guide for Wanneroo. All these projects rely heavily upon our volunteers.

Projects, research committee meetings, the sale of bird cards and all the work put in by volunteers are important but mostly low profile activities, as it is our excursions and meetings program that directly affect most members. Meetings at the State Tennis Centre continue to draw good crowds and Brian Wilson finds presenters to entertain and occasionally challenge us. The program of excursions is unbelievable, with everything from weekday excursions to sites within Perth to major campouts to remote locations. These are organised by Brice Wells and many other, and rely on the efforts of numerous volunteer excursion leaders.

WA Bird Notes continues to keep our members informed and provides members with an opportunity to publish their observations. During the year, Sue Mather replaced John Blyth and joined Allan Burbidge as joint editor. *Bird Notes* is vital to the operation of BAWA and all its editors, past and present, are to be congratulated for their efforts.

The coming year holds more of the same but also some changes. For example, there are plans for a seminar on Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo and ideas for another profile-raising event like Perth Birdwatch. On a serious note, there are discussions being held about our future office accommodation, with the strong possibility of combined office, library and meeting facilities at a new centre planned for Bold Park by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority.

Finally, my thanks to those members who have helped in the day-to-day operation of BAWA, but also to all members, just for being members. An organisation such as ours cannot be useful without people prepared to put their names to it.

Mike Bamford



Malleefowl

Photo courtesy Bea Myers & Ian Tarbin

LIBRARY NEWS

The Library budget for 2002 has been spent on a new bookshelf to house those resources that are not available for loan, for example *Emu* and the *HANZAB* volumes. Apart from continuing purchases such as the subscription to *Landscape*, a number of exciting new titles have recently been purchased and are now available for borrowing. These have been selected on the basis of establishing a good basic reference collection on specific orders, providing field guides for countries and places most likely to be visited by members and suggestions.

Following requests for donations, there have been a number of additions to the book collection and back copies of the *Western Australian Naturalist* and *Landscape*. These will be useful to members wanting to chase up historical records.

New Books and Videos

598 Kaplan, G. & Rogers, L.J. *Birds: their habits and skills*. John Blyth reviewed and recommended this book in WABN Vol. 99. It covers a general introduction to the evolution, life cycles and behavioural characteristics of birds.

598.099429 Goodfellow, D.L., *Birds of Australia's top end*. This book is more than a field guide to the species found in the top end of Australia. It also covers when and where to watch birds. Whilst not detailing sites it describes habitat types and the species likely to be found there. The evolutionary history of birds, their anatomy and physiology are also covered briefly. A really useful book for anyone visiting the top end.

598.33 Hayman, P., Marchant, J. & Prater, T., *Shorebirds: an identification guide to the waders of the world*. This is an invaluable reference, especially because it includes tips on wader identification.

598.92 Olsen, P., *Australian birds of prey*. This book covers, in general terms, most of the areas concerning raptors using Australian species as examples. For instance, there are chapters on raptor ecology, raptor predation, reproduction, conservation and the link with humans. The photographs are superb and the text includes many useful tables and graphs making comparisons between species very clear.

598.942 Ferguson-Lees, J. & Christie, D.A., *Raptors of the World*. This good general reference is illustrated and includes distribution maps plus detailed descriptions of each species.

598.338 Onley, D. & Bartle, S., *Seabirds of the Southern Ocean*. Those members who participate in the pelagic trips will find this a great reference, with clear illustrations and descriptions.

598.338 Olsen, K.M. & Larsson, H., *Terns of Europe and North America*. A deceptive title as many of the species discussed are also found in Australia. There are short chapters that include distribution maps and detailed descriptions on each species.

598.995 Hutton, I., *Birds of Lord Howe Island*. This is a comprehensive account of all one could want to know about the species found now and historically on this island. A must for anyone planning a visit.

598.645 *Albert Lyrebird: prince of the rainforest*. A video produced by Glen Trelfo, the resident naturalist at O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse.

574.5 *Rainforest: the amazing world within*. This video also produced by Glen Trelfo, gives a definitive look at this unique habitat, filmed in the McPherson Ranges and including many rainforest avian species.

Book Review

Members interested in what has happened to the bird species population of the Western Australian central wheatbelt may like to read the results of Cheryl Gole's recent work published as *Bird surveys in bushland remnants in the Western Australian central wheatbelt*. Birds Australia WA was contracted to Greening Australia Western Australia to do these bird surveys.

The work followed and expanded on sites surveyed between 1998 and 2000 by the CSIRO. A team of 46 volunteers, mostly members, assisted by local landholders surveyed 200 sites over a three-month period. The result of this work is the establishment of some baseline survey data for selected bushland remnants and showed some fluctuation and variation in species numbers in sites previously surveyed. This gives a valuable and detailed picture of the bird species in the sub catchments of Dowerin-Tin Dog Creek, Gabby Quoi Quoi, Morbinning and South Tammin. The Appendices showing what was seen categorised as priority, remnant dependent, farmland or other species is of particular interest to members who have an interest in this area. This information will also be of value to the many conservation minded landholders in these areas.

This report can be borrowed from the BAWA Library and is found at 598.09941.

Suzanne Mather

RELIEF WARDENS

From time to time there are opportunities for couples interested in working at Eyre as relief wardens. A register of such people will be maintained as a waiting list.

Please contact Shapelle or Rod for details.

* Shapelle McNee — Phone: 9494 1286,
Email: mshapelle@hotmail.com

* Rod Smith — Phone: 9447 3804,
Email: rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au



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May: 12 Day Ashburton Discovery Tour

This one off tour gets well away from the tourist track. We visit many of the region's isolated outback stations and follow the footsteps of pioneer pastoralists, prospectors and miners through this magnificent region of Western Australia. This promises to be a great birding experience with the added attraction of the region's exciting history.

Accom: Camping.

June / July: Kimberley Wonders Coastal Cruises and 4WD Tours

Kimberley Coast - Gibb River Road - Mitchell Plateau - Bungle Bungles

Camping and accommodated tours available.

Aug: 17 Day Far North Queensland Cairns To Cape York

Visit the Daintree, Lakefield and Iron Range National Parks considered some of the best birding sites in Queensland

Accom: Camping

Oct: 12 day South West Birds

This tour offers it all. Spectacular inland and coastal scenery, diverse botany and a variety of bird life including time spent looking for the three rare species of birds around Albany (Western Whipbird, Western Bristlebird and the Noisy Scrub-Bird). All this plus the comfort of Hotel / Motel accommodation.

Nov.: 8 day Christmas Island

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Nov: 9 Day Lord Howe Island

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BIRDS AUSTRALIA WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.
TREASURER'S REPORT — YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002

Note: These accounts have been audited by Greg Wyllie, Chartered Account, and a satisfactory report received. This is an abridged version — a copy of the complete accounts is available at Perry House.

BALANCE SHEET	\$	\$	\$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Total Cash on Hand	51,316		
Total Stock on Hand	<u>19,901</u>	71,218	
Non-current Assets			
Investments	109,599		
Equipment on Hand	<u>10,348</u>	<u>119,948</u>	
Total Assets			191,166
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Sundry Creditors	451		
GST Liabilities	<u>-1,433</u>	-982	
Grants			
Centenary Grant	2470		
G Reid Ground Parrot	6,894		
Carnaby's	15,761		
Brochure Revision	109		
EBO Dune Restoration	1,631		
Wanneroo Brochures	5,733		
Floreat Water Contract	<u>660</u>		
Total GRANTS		<u>33,258</u>	
Total Liabilities			<u>32,276</u>
Net Assets			<u>158,890</u>
Accumulated Funds			
Prior Year's Surplus (Deficit)		116,574	
Retained Earnings		31,624	
Current Year Surplus (Deficit)		<u>10,691</u>	
Total accumulated funds			<u>158,890</u>

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR 2002

Income	4,384	
Total Trading Table	8,091	
Total Books	8,091	
Total <i>WA Bird Notes</i>	-1,157	
Donations	3,831	
Interest & Investment Rollovers	6,005	
Other income – Fees, etc	<u>3,601</u>	24,755
Expenses		
Audit & Bank Charges	535	
Donations	2,051	
Functions	1,763	
Rent	1,701	
Office expenses (Phone, Stationery, Postage, etc)	6,779	
Regional Group Travel	559	
Library Expenses	<u>676</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>14,064</u>
Net Surplus (Deficit)		<u>10,691</u>

BAWA Projects

WESTERN GROUND PARROT PROJECT

Western Ground Parrot in the Waychinicup-Manypeaks area: distribution, numbers and breeding



There are very few Western Ground Parrots left. The last population estimate in early 2002 was quite alarming. The total number of individuals is probably around 250. These birds are spread between only two separate locations of which Waychinicup-Manypeaks is by far the smaller.

Birds Australia WA Inc. was most fortunate to receive funding from the Gordon Reid Foundation (Lotteries Commission of Western Australia) to continue the project which was begun, without funding, in 2001.

The search for Western Ground Parrots in the Waychinicup-Manypeaks area resumed last spring. The overall goals are to provide further information about the status of the subspecies, and also to provide information on which management of the area for best conservation of the Ground Parrot can be based.

Objectives are to locate birds, to estimate numbers, to find out anything at all about breeding in the area, and to compare results with those obtained in survey work in the same area in 1998 and 2001. The 2001 work appeared to show a marked decline in distribution and numbers since 1998.

The project fieldwork sessions began in spring 2002, and a further survey session is planned for autumn 2003, so the project is not yet complete.

It was thought that little change may have occurred between 2001 and 2002 and that a lead on breeding could be further investigated in 2002. Calling in spring 2001 had been poor, but in spring 2002, most birds were calling even less frequently, possibly indicating that there was a lower density of birds. In a location that had supported six birds in spring 2001, and where the breeding investigation was to have been, only three birds were found, and those with difficulty. However, birds were found over a wider area than in 2001. Some birds seemed to be resident in an area, others to move on after a few days. Numbers appear very low. More information will become available after the autumn 2003 survey.

Support was provided by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), with help in mapping from Sarah Comer, ecologist, CALM, South Coast Region. Sarah, a member of Birds Australia, also did some volunteer surveying.

This project is heavily dependent on volunteer assistance as Ground Parrot censusing is done by listening for the birds at their two daily call-flight periods. The nine volunteers included Stephen Fryc and Joan and Tony Bush, and Birds Australia members Anne and Fred

Bondin, and Anne Gadsby. In spring, there were 123 listening sessions. Of these 88 were carried out by volunteers and 35 by the co-ordinator. In addition there was some playback surveying at non-optimal times.

The autumn survey session will be from 1 to 12 April. It is hoped to get the best yet coverage of the available habitat and this can only be done if there are plenty of listeners. If your hearing is quite good you will be able to assist. Training will be provided. If you are unable to participate in the survey but are interested in the recovery of the Western Ground Parrot, consider becoming a Friend of the Western Ground Parrot. Members of this group will be kept up to date with Ground Parrot news.

Please contact Brenda Newbey (Project Co-ordinator) for more information about the survey. Phone: 9337 5673; Email: sfryc@iinet.net.au

Contact Brenda, or Anne Bondin (Tel. 9844 1793; Email albanbirds@hotmail.com) if you would like to join the Friends group. We are hoping there soon will be at least one Friend per bird.

Additional Ground Parrot plans

The Western Ground Parrot (WGP) is one of the species that falls under the auspices of the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team (SCTBRT). The team most recently met in December 2002. Despite an awareness campaign on the south coast from spring 2002, no definite evidence has yet emerged of WGPs at any localities other than the two already known (Fitzgerald River NP and Waychinicup-Manypeaks). The population that was in Cape Arid National Park has not been located with absolute certainty since 1989 despite some intensive searching. Recent and extremely extensive fires at Cape Arid have further reduced the available habitat.

The SCTBRT decided that the opportunity to survey for the presence of WGPs there will never be better and a survey is planned for autumn 2003.

It may seem ironic that the available funding is to be used to search for birds that are quite unlikely to be found: a case of closing the stable door.... If the results of the survey are positive, it will be marvellous news. The existence of only two populations in such fire-prone habitat means that the species is at great risk of further population decline, and it will be very useful for the park managers to be aware of the presence of WGPs in Cape Arid NP. If the result is negative, then the next WGP recovery plan can be prepared with more confidence that the WGP lives on at only two locations, which should enhance the urgency for action.

Brenda Newbey
(Birds Australia WA Inc. representative, SCTBRT)

CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO RECOVERY PROJECT

The current stage of the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project has been running now since August 2001 and one thing is abundantly clear: this species generates a lot of public interest.

The fate of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo is of concern not only in rural communities, where it is commonly known as the 'Rainbird' because of its habit of arriving with the winter rains, but also in the Perth metropolitan area where large flocks tend to congregate in the summer and autumn months to feed—most obviously on the pines under which your car is inevitably parked. Regular visitors to Perry House take one look at the decimated pine cones scattered across the car park and wisely forgo the shade so tantalisingly offered by those trees when the Carnaby's are around.

Because people still do see large flocks of Carnaby's they tend to dismiss as impossible the claim that the species is endangered. It is worth

remembering that the overall population is estimated to have more than halved in the last few decades and the species no longer breeds in up to a third of its former breeding range in the wheatbelt. Breeding success is suspected to be very low and the flocks we currently see probably represent an aging population. An irreversible crash is foreseen unless we act now.

The project being conducted by Birds Australia is currently focused on assisting rural communities to manage their breeding populations of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos.

During the 2002 breeding season efforts were made to find out as much as possible about the breeding populations at key sites. This included such factors as accurately identifying the number of pairs of breeding birds at each site, the locations of their hollows, their corresponding feeding sites, number of breeding attempts and the result of their breeding attempts.

At most of the breeding sites this type of information has never been recorded before so there is a fair bit of ground work involved in these early stages just to get an idea of the situation. As the volunteers who've taken part in monitoring can testify, it can be laborious work tracking cockatoos up hill and down dale but it's also very rewarding when said cockatoo finally arrives home and feeds his mate who in turn backs down the hollow to feed her chick.

We've had some surprises along the way: a female squeezing into a hollow so small I'd earlier dismissed it as

a 'pink and grey' hollow; a pair, twice thwarted, going for their third consecutive breeding attempt this (last) season; chicks sitting in draughty, broken down hollows while a perfectly good hollow remains vacant just a few trees down. We've even come across a completely bald adult female Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo who seems to be doing quite nicely despite her unconventional haircut (believed to be most probably due to plucking by her mate or skin disease).

We've found the most suitable times to track Carnaby's to their hollows is around sunset and early to mid morning, depending mostly on how far away their food sources are located and how high the temperature soars—an issue for both the cockatoos and the observers.

There is still a lot of information to gather so anyone interested in monitoring during the 2003 breeding season (August to December) is welcome to contact me and discuss their interest. Most sites are in the northern wheatbelt, within a three-hour drive from Perth. Trips are usually between two and four days duration and accommodation is

usually in shearers' quarters and the like

In conjunction with monitoring, recovery actions are also being implemented where appropriate at key breeding sites. We are working with WWF and Million Trees Program who currently have a project in place to plant suitable feeding and breeding species in a few Carnaby breeding areas and to conduct a nesting box trial. Many people are interested in putting up artificial hollows for Carnaby's but questions arise as to the overall viability of this approach. The trial involves the placement of 40 nesting hollows at known breeding sites and on-going monitoring of these hollows to determine what species, if any, make use of these hollows and under what circumstances.

Other recovery actions are being carried out by various landholders, Landcare groups, rural shires, members of rural communities and agencies such as CALM.

We hope in the years ahead we can capitalise on the interest generated in Carnaby's to help secure the long term future not only of this cockatoo but also of the many other species that share its diminishing habitat.

For further information please phone: 9287 2448 or 0438 678492 or Email ljmcmahon@bigpond.com.

Leonie McMahon, Project Officer



Carnaby's male in tree.

Photo courtesy Leonie McMahon



In the 2002 breeding season, BA members and community volunteers (from left to right) Marie Carter, Stella Stewart-Wynne, Margaret Wilson, Phyllis Bentley, Liz Walker and Norah Brockman, tracked breeding Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos to their hollows at one key breeding site in the northern wheatbelt.

Photo courtesy Leonie McMahon

CALM STATION SURVEYS

Early June 2003

Federal funding has allowed CALM to purchase 15 stations in the Gascoyne-Murchison Region. CALM has asked BAWA to provide data on the bird populations of these areas whenever possible.

In 2000 Cheryl Gole led a group after the Carnarvon Campout to Muggon Station SE of Carnarvon. In 2002 we visited Nanga Station on Shark Bay for the Easter Campout and Lochada Station, east of Morawa, on the end of May long weekend.

Doolgunna and Mooloogool, adjoining stations on the Great Northern Highway north of Meekatharra and Lake Mason and Black Range between Mt Magnet and Leinster provide a useful group to be surveyed in early winter of 2003.

All are too far from Perth to be considered as venues for normal weekend campouts but the Excursion Sub-committee has approved the idea of continuing the Greenough Campout in early June for those who would be interested in this survey. The stations have some facilities but anyone interested must be prepared for bush camping and be able to carry fuel and supplies for at least a week. It is envisaged that at least a week will be spent on each group. Meekatharra will be a refuelling and supply stop between the two. 4WD will be desirable but unless heavy rains are recorded should not be essential.

Anyone interested in this survey is asked to contact Clive Napier on 9332 7265 for further details.

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We look forward to hearing from you.

Members' Contributions

USE BY CASPIAN TERN AND OTHER BIRDS OF RECENTLY BURNT GRASSLAND

In late October 2002 lightning started fires on Inverway Station, located on the Great Antrim Plateau just south of the Buntine Highway in the Northern Territory. The fires burnt very extensive areas of grass cover on black soil plains leaving bare soil exposed with a light wind-blown cover of ash. At this time of the year (ie, the dry) the black soil plains have numerous 1-5 cm wide shrinkage cracks that extend to 10-50 cm depth and perhaps deeper. Within a day after the fire small snakes, lizards and several species of arthropod, including at night hundreds of bush cockroaches, emerged from these cracks where they had apparently survived the fire. Grasshoppers were also seen on the burnt areas although these may have flown or been blown from the few unburnt areas of grass or the partially burnt acacia-eucalyptus woodland bordering the grassland.

Within a day of the fire and over the following week numerous birds were observed foraging over the burnt plain (within a 3 km radius of approx 18° 08'S 129° 37'E). Most surprising to me was a Caspian Tern hawking back and forth over the black soil plain in a similar fashion as over water and diving to within a few centimetres of the ground (but not landing) presumably to catch or attempt to catch prey. The main food of Caspian Tern is fish although they have been reported feeding on young crickets in pasture (Higgins and Davies, 1996). The Caspian Tern may have flown from or been in transit to or from Lake Nongra, 15 km to the SE. Other birds seen foraging on the burnt grassland were Brolga, Australian Bustard, Oriental Plover, Australian Pratincole, Singing Bushlark and Richard's Pipit. Black Kite, Brown Goshawk and Nankeen Kestrel also flew over the area in a manner suggesting foraging rather than just being in transit. Brolga, Australian Bustard, Nankeen Kestrel, Singing Bushlark and Richard's Pipit used the grassland prior to its being burnt.

Each day for 5 or 6 days before the fire a flock of 20-25 Oriental Plover was seen during the day roosting in the shade beneath small bushes in an otherwise barren area within the grassland. Each bird had its own bush and if disturbed would move to another bush which, if already occupied, would result in a squabble until one bird left to find another bush. The roosting area was not burnt but after the fire the birds were no longer seen in the area. Oriental Plover were seen however foraging on the burnt grassland, a habitat they have previously been reported using (Marchant and Higgins, 1993). They were also once observed on the burnt grassland at night although whether they were foraging or roosting is not known.

The behaviour of Singing Bushlark was also noted to be different before and after the fire. When walking over the grassland or driving along tracks before the fire they were flushed regularly in ones and twos suggesting that they relatively evenly distributed over the grassland. After the

fire they moved about in flocks of 10-40 birds flying low then landing and foraging in a loose group. It was somewhat sad to see them sheltering beside small irregularities on the barren soil surface and beside soil windrows alongside tracks presumably trying to obtain protection from predators and/or the sun.

It appears that despite the almost total destruction of the grass cover by fire, the black soil plains provide opportunities for foraging by numerous bird species very rapidly after the passage of fire.

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Martin Gole

THE GRIT WAS TOO LARGE

Peter Mawson (WABN 103: 23) was surprised by the size of grit regurgitated by a Western Magpie.

I am surprised, too, because grit that size and type is suitable for the domestic fowl, and some poultry-farmers make it available to their fowls in order to reduce the amount of shell-grit that the birds would otherwise consume. The latter is not only more expensive but too much upsets the calcium-phosphorous balance within the fowl, too much calcium resulting in the leaching of the phosphorous, and vice versa.

Even in the 1950s poultry nutrition was almost a science and the best known of any bird. Then most farmers mixed their own mash and the formula varied with the farmer, each considering that his formula was the best, and many added expensive supplements. Oyster "flour" provided calcium, an oil provided vitamins A and D (birds make their own vitamin C), powdered milk was another supplement and was eaten by the farmhands too and there were other vitamin and mineral additives. Disease-inhibitors were also included but I can't remember if they were true antibiotics or the sulphur-drug compounds that preceded them.

Thus the grit described by Peter is suitable for the fowl but is seemingly much too large for the magpie, and I suggest that the stones were physically unable to enter the bird's digestive system. Birds often consume or ingest surprisingly large articles of food and I once watched a Pied Cormorant swallow two King George Whiting 45 cm in length. It then dived down and took another from the net

but was unable to swallow it because it was already gorged. After several minutes it vigorously shook its head and the fish was flicked out, and then pounced on by some Silver Gulls that had been studiously watching the cormorant.

Also of interest is the diet of the Laughing Turtle-Dove. It decidedly prefers small seeds such as pannicum and millet, both locally and in its native Africa. But here it readily consumes wheat and cage-bird seeds as large as sunflower and maize, the latter being as large proportionately as the grit regurgitated by Peter's magpie. However, the large seeds would presumably become soft and eventually be ground down and digested, and one imagines that the larger beetles eaten by magpies would also need to be physically broken down. So perhaps we needn't be too surprised by Peter's ambitious magpie.

Robert Stranger

RESULT: SPOTTED HARRIER 1 – CAT 0

Whilst conducting a winter tour of the Shorebirds of Roebuck Bay on 27 June 2002 I recorded an unusual, but very welcome, predator prey occurrence.

On approaching Richard's Point on the northern shores of Roebuck Bay 10 km east of Broome, I disturbed an adult Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis*, which flew up from the ground, close to a low shrub only a few metres from the cliff edge.

Spotted Harriers are regularly seen on the Roebuck Plains grassland but I had only seen one so close to the beach before this sighting. On that occasion the bird was flying over the strip of coastal pindan woodland that fringes the north of the bay.

On this occasion the harrier flew about eight metres from me and settled on top of a two metre high dead tree. It was now very close to my car and tour guests so I returned quietly to the car and the bird stayed in place whilst we all obtained great views and photos as close as five metres. Since the views were so good I could actually see that the bird had flesh and fur stuck to its bill. This aroused my interest and after the photos were taken I went back to the spot the bird had flown from. I was surprised (and rather pleased!) to see that the prey that the harrier was feasting on, was a cat. The young tabby cat was bleeding from the neck, had its eyes open and the body was still warm. This and the fact there were no flies, ants or hermit crabs on or near the body convinced me that the harrier had killed the cat and was not scavenging. The flesh had been stripped from the feet of the cat. I estimated the cat weighed approximately 1500 grams. Adult Spotted Harriers weigh approximately 455 grams for males and 670 grams for females. I returned to the corpse the following day and found that the flesh had been stripped from the legs. There were ants and hermit crabs on the body and one eye had been eaten.

I can find no references to harriers taking carrion. They usually feed on ground-dwelling birds and reptiles.

However there are records of Spotted Harriers taking prey of a similar size to cats, including rats, bandicoot species and rabbits when available. I have also seen a Spotted Harrier with a large Black-head Python *Aspidites melanocephalus* on Anna Plains Station in 1996.

Chris Hassell
Turnstone Nature Discovery

COMMON BRONZEWING NESTING ON THE GROUND

It was 22 September 2002. I was checking a report of a pair of Australian Bustard seen amongst recent tree plantings and a wheat crop in the Katanning area. While walking through the plantings, I flushed a Common Bronzewing that was sitting on two eggs on the ground—a simple nest with a few sticks placed around the edge, situated under a one-metre sapling.

HANZAB states 'sometimes on ground' (once on top of a clump of Spinifex!).

I missed out on the Australian Bustard.

David Secomb

ALBANY JANUARY LONG WEEKEND CAMPOUT

The perspective of a 'Birding Widow'

It was great to arrive on the Friday night and to catch up with all the other birders.

Saturday morning dawned and off we set at the ungodly hour of 7:30 am. We widows would much prefer to still be asleep.

First stop was Lake Sepping where I opted to miss out on the promise of mouthfuls of annoying little midges and stayed in the car to read. Lo and behold, the book was so exciting that I must have had about a 1-hour sleep.

Morning tea was great. The spot was perfect complete with a little stalker swimming in the river. Once again the company was great. We proceeded along the foreshore for wader spotting. One of the highlights here was a little emu-wren. What a sight to see, 15–20 birders all standing side by side, all binoculars trained on the one dead twig. No wonder he didn't appear again—where is the respect for a bird's privacy?

Saturday afternoon I teamed up with another birding widow and boy did we have some fun, shopping and sightseeing. The closest we got to birds all afternoon was penguins in WA Salvage, pipit and a New Holland Honeyeater. This was not a disappointment for us as we saw lots more lovely coastal scenery, beaches and lookouts and other air-borne objects, such as the wind farm, kites floating on the lazy breeze and hang gliders sailing on the thermals.

Sunday again passed quite peacefully with a lazy drive to Cosy Corner and a delicious morning tea at the very

peaceful and scenic Torbay Teahouse—yum, who cares about birds. After a lunch and rest back at camp we proceeded to view more of the wonderful coastline and the only other bird we saw was a big large bird as it passed overhead and the underside was motley. We suspected a raptor—but heck what does it really matter? So long as you are out enjoying the countryside and still socialising with a wonderful group of people. It was another very successful weekend from a birding widow's perspective. Thanks to all who organised the fine details.

Mary Secomb

A BUKIT BIRDWALK AND SEWAGE PONDS SAUNTER

In conversations with fellow-BAWAPs around the traps, as a relatively recently-arrived and accredited Perth-based BAWAP myself, I have been struck by a curious phenomenon. (What is a BAWAP? Glad you asked, though you shouldn't have to: among the plethora of acronyms in WA, a BAWAP reads WABN at least in part, belongs to BAWA and by default to BA/RAOU—in short, is a Birds Australia Western Australia Person; (s)he could have been a BAWAM, as in Member, but then we could have confusion as to Men vs. Women—BAWAMs and BAWAWs—barking dogs, etc.)

Back to the subject: my curiosity relates to the fact that many BAWAPs appear to have visited Bali, some more than once, but few seem to have done any significant bird-watching in Indonesia (except perhaps by BAWAMen on the beaches of Kuta!). Why this should be is a bit of a mystery to me, since getting to Indonesia from Perth is arguably easier and cheaper than going to Sydney, Tassie, Cairns or even Broome (of course, I acknowledge that the recent tragedy in Bali has changed the circumstances somewhat).

As a biologist who has spent some 5 years in Indonesia in various periods and locations, I have perhaps a better perspective on the region as a birdwatching destination than most short-term visitors to Bali. Perhaps few local birdwatchers here are aware that Indonesia (the nation as presently constituted) boasts a bird list of around 1700 species—some 17% of the world's total, and more than twice the Australian list. Furthermore, many bird families/groups not found in Australia are represented in Indonesia, for example, peacocks, hornbills, woodpeckers, etc, etc. The tropical latitudes and extended nature of this nation of islands also has allowed greater species diversity

within families, including those that are represented in Australia such as bee-eaters, kingfishers, warblers, sunbirds, flycatchers and others. Also, the number of endemics in the archipelago is very impressive—a fact that led Alfred Russell Wallace in the 19th century to come to conclusions paralleling Darwin's, regarding evolutionary theory.

Just a 30-minute ferry ride from western Bali into East Java gets you into rather different habitats and faunas than you can experience in Bali itself. Three national parks here each have a bird list of over 200 species and rising (since relatively little work has been done in them). Alas Purwo and Meru Betiri, where the last Javan tiger perished in the early 70s, still have magnificent, though shrinking, forest with leopards, wild cattle (Banteng), deer, monkeys, Green Peacock, two of the big hornbills, and even a few of the 'real Garuda', Javan Hawk-Eagle.

Without leaving the heavily-populated island of Bali, however, it is still possible to get a pretty good bird list. Even a short excursion limited to the drier habitats and hotel gardens on the Nusa Dua peninsula of eastern Bali

will probably surprise you—so let's take an imaginary half-day trip as per the title of this article and see what we can see and hear. An early start ambling about the grounds and vicinity of the Udayana Lodge (an accredited eco-lodge) up on Bukit Jimbaran ('bukit' means hill) at the base of the Nusa Dua peninsula will take us through a dawn chorus with a bewildering cacophony of sounds, and we should see most of the perpetrators: among others, two babbling bulbul species, Common Ioras



Western Pygmy-Possum

Photo courtesy Bea Myers & Ian Tarbin
Eyre Bird Observatory

with their pretty jingle, Javan and Collared Kingfishers screeching from the treetops, a woodpecker drumming, bubbling White-breasted Waterhens near the swimming pool, and perhaps the mellifluous song of the Asian Magpie Robin or the harsh crowing of the Green Junglefowl, sometimes seen skulking around the lawn edges at this time of day. Glancing skyward, we would likely see two kinds of swiftlets and Pacific Swallows which might be joined by other swifts and perhaps a passing group of Blue-tailed Bee-eaters. As the day warms we stop for a quick breakfast on the upper Lodge verandah, from where the massive Gunung Agung, the sacred volcano, is hazily visible in the distance, while in the foreground bulbuls, ioras, sunbirds, flowerpeckers, tailorbirds and prinias forage in the garden trees (over 50 bird and 20+ butterfly species have been recorded around the Lodge).

From the Lodge we take a meandering drive via the plateau and cliff-tops around the peninsula, stopping at a few points including the grounds of some of the fancier

hotels to look for additional species such as seabirds, fantails, trillers, minivets, Long-tailed Shrike, Plaintive Cuckoo and with luck a Racket-tailed Treepie or two. We arrive eventually at the Nusa Dua sewage works near the southern end of the peninsula, a magnificent (to a birdo, at least!) set of Velly Smelly ponds and adjacent mangrove forests that has been protected as a nature reserve.

Sauntering slowly around the settling ponds, we could add a further 30 species or more, including wetland birds such as Purple Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Sunda Teal, Javan Pond Heron, Small Blue Kingfisher and a few waders in season, not to mention a few additional bushbirds such as Pink-necked Green Pigeon and Flyeater.

By now the heat is killing us and we retreat with a 10-minute drive to the Lodge, where we celebrate our bird list with suitable liquids and a light lunch: 50-60+ species, including at least 70-80% 'lifers' if you are new to Indonesia.

Not bad for a morning's bukit birdwalk, peninsular peregrination and sewage ponds saunter—and you still have the rice paddies, the volcano forests and streams, and the Bali Barat National Park to visit!

Rolf Jensen

HOODED PLOVER TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOUR

During a visit to Boundary Lake, Yalgorup National Park, on 17 December 2002 I noticed some unusual behaviour by a Hooded Plover.

The plover was protecting a section of beach at the southeast corner of the lake. It had two methods of territorial aggression.

Firstly, it would fly in as soon as a flock of other waders (mainly Red-capped Plovers but also a few Red-necked Stints) landed on the section of beach or at the water's edge. It would then chase the intruders into the air.

“... it was like the Battle of Britain ...”

Secondly, the Hooded Plover would station itself on the beach and as soon as a flock of waders approached it would launch itself into the air and intercept the intruders before they had a chance to land. It was like the Battle of Britain with one lone spitfire (Hooded Plover) racing to repel the enemy. These actions occurred 13 times in the 20 minutes I was observing the birds. About 50% of interactions were 'in the air' interceptions.

There is usually a pair of Hooded Plovers in this area but I was unable to locate the second bird. It may have been nesting nearby but if so it was well hidden.

Dick Rule

ANOTHER HOODED PLOVER WITH A BAND

On 10 November 2002 the Esperance Bird Observers Group saw a Hooded Plover with a metal band only on the right leg at White Lake (15 km N of Esperance). This lake is on private property near Helms Arboretum. There are no fences around the lake, so cattle wander through the little vegetation that skirts the lake edge. We were about 20 m from the bird and the band was clearly visible with telescopes.

This bird would have been banded either by Mike Weston in 1995 or by myself in 1998. The five birds I banded also had a yellow flag on the left leg, so the bird we observed may have been banded by Mike Weston (assuming the ones I banded have retained their flags).

Allan Rose

WATERBIRDING AT ESPERANCE

The waterbird fancier in the south-west of WA has the choice of three main places to reside—Gingin, Bremer Bay and Esperance. Gingin has many lakes of approachable size with specialities of Freckled Duck and some of the less common waterbirds (Ruff, Royal Spoonbill, Broad-billed Sandpiper, etc). Bremer Bay, also with lakes of reasonable size, mainly fresh, has specialities in breeding birds (Darter, Australian White Ibis, etc) and tiger snakes in great number and of a girth that makes those at Gingin seem anorexic by comparison.

Having spent much time in both the Gingin and Bremer Bay areas, Anne and I decided we had better examine the Esperance possibility and did so 19-24 November 2002, the speciality bird anticipated being the 'rare' Hooded Plover. It was immediately apparent on arrival that many of the lakes are of overpowering extent and/or difficult to survey. We determined to ignore most of these lakes/reserves, especially after finding the recorded Hooded Plover roost area of Station Lake under water, despite a drought year. We noted the presence of 11 Yellow-billed Spoonbills at Woody Lake, only three of which were recorded from the entire 'Warden wetlands' during the four years of the SW Waterbird Survey (1981-1985). The maximum number of this species recorded from Esperance wetlands during the SWWS was four. We recorded 38 during our stay, which may indicate the species has become more common in the Esperance area since 1985.

Despite the loss of a day and a half due to 'drizzle along the south coast' we surveyed nine lakes, seeing 47 species and nearly 17 000 waterbirds. We noted 42 bushbird species as we moved about, but Esperance is not a place for bushbirds—they were in low numbers by comparison with (say) Gingin and more favoured areas. We went first to lakes Carbul, Kubitch and Gore. For a reason that is obscure, lakes Carbul, Kubitch and Gidon (which we did not visit) were treated as one in the SWWS account and their bird numbers were aggregated, making individual lake comparison impossible. Our results were:

Lake Carbul—700 m diameter, easy access, nearly dry, 10 species. Australian Shelduck 78, Pacific Black Duck 114, Grey Teal 26, Chestnut Teal (males only) 2, White-faced Heron 1, Swamp Harrier 2, Common Greenshank 1, Red-necked Stint 5, Banded Stilt 6, Hooded Plover 63.

Lake Kubitch—800 m diameter, easy access, much water. 14 species. Black Swan 10, Australian Shelduck 920, Grey Teal 28, Hoary-headed Grebe 56 (cf SWWS 3 lake aggregate 50), Little Black Cormorant 6, Australian Pelican 28 (cf SWWS 4), Yellow-billed Spoonbill 4 (SWWS nil), Common Greenshank 3, Red-necked Stint 10, Banded Stilt 410, Red-necked Avocet 5, Hooded Plover 2, Silver Gull 46 (cf SWWS 10), Whiskered Tern 16 (cf SWWS 4).

Lake Gore—vast, 3 km in diameter, easy access, much water, 13 species. During the four years of the SWWS the maximum number of Black Swan recorded was 112, so our 1540 was a surprise. Also Australian Shelduck 3500 (many flightless), Grey Teal 126, Chestnut Teal (males only) 72, Australian Pelican 7, Common Greenshank 2, Red-necked Stint 87, Curlew Sandpiper 8, Black-winged Stilt 9, Banded Stilt 256, Red-necked Avocet 30, Red-capped Plover 55, Hooded Plover 87.

We then turned inland. We surveyed three lakes:

Helms Aboretum Lake—750 m diameter, easy access, dry, 2 species. Red-capped Plover 59, Hooded Plover 3.

Lake Benje Benjenup—1.5 km long x 1 km wide (when full), access easy with permission of landowner, very shallow, 5 species. Hoary-headed Grebe 1, Red-necked Stint 22, Banded Stilt 392, Red-capped Plover 147, Hooded Plover 66.

Shark Lake—400 m long x 150 m wide, easy access, 18 species. Shark Lake is unusual in the Esperance area in that it is similar in vegetation and species to many lakes of the SW coastal plain. Little Egret 1 (not seen SWWS), Eurasian Coot 112 (cf SWWS 50) and Whiskered Tern 3 (not seen SWWS) were the species of note.

We then visited three lakes which do not appear to have been surveyed previously.

Lake Quallilip—receives the overflow of Lake Gore (which is 2.5 km north) when Gore is filled by the Dalyup River. Quallilip has no outlet and at times becomes over 7 m deep. It closely resembles Lake Indoon, appearing as though in a fault, surrounded by very steep sides (higher than Indoon) and standing on the bank 20 m above the water (down to which it is possible to walk or, on a steep, narrow track, drive): it makes an impressive sight.

Quallilip is 2 km long and 1.2 km wide, easy access with permission of the landowner, 8 species. Australian Shelduck 340, Chestnut Teal 5, Hoary-headed Grebe 33, Darter 1, Great Cormorant 3, Australian Pelican 2, Silver Gull 1, Whiskered Tern 9.

Lake Magnesia—1.2 km long, 600 m wide, easy access with permission of landowner, very shallow, 20 species. Black Swan 1, Australian Shelduck 154, Grey Teal 255,

Great Egret 15, Australian White Ibis 1, Straw-necked Ibis 9, Black-tailed Native-hen 21, Common Greenshank 1, Common Sandpiper 1, Red-necked Stint 462, Pectoral Sandpiper 3, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 58, Black-winged Stilt 91, Banded Stilt 276, Red-necked Avocet 6, Pacific Golden Plover 3, Grey Plover 1, Red-capped Plover 18, Red-kneed Dotterel 4, Masked Lapwing 1.

The owners of Lake Magnesia informed us that their neighbours had a lake some 1.5 km due south near their boundary fence. We drove 1.3 km east of the boundary to the homestead and asked to survey their lake, which we indicated as being to the south-west. We were informed that there was nothing to the south-west, as the lake lay to the south-east and that at times there were “a lot of birds there”. Inspection revealed both informants were referring to the same lake.

?Mainbenup Swamp—The lake appears to be nameless, though possibly Mainbenup. We found it to be of U-shape with an uneven length of ‘arms’ and a total distance around the U being some 2.2 km, width about 200 m. There are fringing swamps. The lake was more crowded with birds than we have seen anywhere else, ie, bird numbers to lake size. Because of the narrowness of the lake our survey efforts unavoidably created disturbance among the ducks which sought refuge around the bend of the U. On arrival and finding the location very crowded, the birds would fly/paddle back and the process would continue. Typically the Black Swans were interested in their visitors and many ‘sailed’ up and down to survey us. The Pink-eared Ducks had their own alarm arrangements and between frantic circular feeding would take off chirping loudly every ten minutes or so, taking other ducks with them, before returning to the water. Counting was unusually difficult. There were 24 species.

Musk Duck 1, Black Swan 2700, Australian Shelduck 1200, Pacific Black Duck 20, Australasian Shoveler 38, Grey Teal 42, Pink-eared Duck 2400, Hoary-headed Grebe 290, Little Black Cormorant 3, White-faced Heron 2, Great Egret 1, Australian White Ibis 1 (probably the same individual as at Lake Magnesia), Yellow-billed Spoonbill 23, Black-tailed Native-hen 21, Eurasian Coot 80, Common Greenshank 3, Wood Sandpiper 1, Terek Sandpiper 1, Common Sandpiper 1, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 15, Black-winged Stilt 33, Pacific Golden Plover 2, Black-fronted Dotterel 33, Red-kneed Dotterel 16.

During the course of the survey we observed a Red-kneed Dotterel attack Black-fronted Plovers, the Terek and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, lending support to the idea that ground-feeding birds with black or black-white plumage are aggressive. Why the association?

Waterbirds and bushbirds in flight make a high-pitched whistling/rustling sound, although Australian Shelduck produce a somewhat lower note. Standing at both Lake Magnesia and the un-named lake we heard flocks of Black Swans flying low overhead for the first time. Although we have often seen Black Swans flying and landing they have always been some way off. We found that flying Black Swans produce a noise resembling the sound of a large

truck rumbling in the distance. Indeed, when we first heard the sound we both looked around to see the truck. It was 20 Black Swans approaching low overhead from behind us.

The reason for the passage of the swans was that they and shelduck were (on the day) continually flying to and fro between Lake Gore three km away and the un-named lake. It was about 7:00 am. Such interchange was not occurring when we were at Lake Gore (10:00 am onwards) and it ceased at about that time when we were surveying the un-named lake.

Esperance waterbirding has its charm and several lakes remain upon which there has been no report. They may be as productive as those 'new' lakes we examined.

We also drove the Esperance 'Great Ocean Drive' (formerly Tourist Loop) and saw our first Kelp Gull.

Bruce Buchanan

ROCKING AT SOUTHERN CROSS

Southern Cross is a convenient place to pause on the way to Kalgoorlie. However, the district produces over 250 000 tonnes of grain annually and those who have read of the 'abandonment' of the Southern Cross area for the 'Golden Mile' may be surprised to learn the area now produces over \$250 million worth of gold annually. There are also many large granitic outcrops in the district, the principal of which have been declared as reserves. These make for interesting and scenic birding. After some inspection of the possibilities Anne and I spent five days (21-25 October 2002 inclusive) dividing our attentions between Frog/Jilbadgi Rocks and Baladjie Rock. The Frog and Jilbadgi Rock reserves are separated by a gravel road and are essentially contiguous. They are 35 km south of Southern Cross. Baladjie is 55 km north-west of the town and three minutes north into the next Atlas (1984) square.

Both Frog and Baladjie rocks have wave features similar to that of Hyden, Baladjie being particularly scenic. In a drought year Baladjie, on the northern edge of productive country, did not have much bird life, despite a reputation for it. Thirty species were seen there. Frog Rock, surrounded by farming land, had 43 species.

Noticeable differences between the two reserves were the much greater numbers of Willie Wagtails and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters at Baladjie and the relative absence of the Grey Fantail there, of which there were much greater numbers at Frog Rock.

Strangely the Atlas (1984) does not report Elegant Parrot from the Frog Rock Atlas square, despite these being specifically mentioned in the Shire literature as being resident in the area. We observed them on four separate occasions at Frog Rock.

Another species mentioned by the Shire is Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, a flock of which is said to 'reside' in the Shire. We saw a small number at Baladjie, but encountered the main (?) body (over 90) while driving along the Great Eastern Highway, not far west of Southern Cross.

Species seen at Frog Rock, with those also seen at Baladjie followed by a (B) were:

Brown Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle (B), Brown Falcon, Australian Hobby, Common Bronzewing (B), Crested Pigeon (B), Galah (B), Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Australian Ringneck (B) (*zonarius* only at Frog Rock, but also *semitorquatus* at Baladjie), Mulga Parrot, Elegant Parrot, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Rainbow Bee-eater (B), Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Striated Pardalote (B), Weebill, Western Gerygone, Inland Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill (B), Red Wattlebird, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (B), White-eared Honeyeater (B), Purple-gaped Honeyeater (B), Grey-fronted Honeyeater (B), Brown-headed Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater (B), Red-capped Robin (B), Western Yellow Robin, White-browed Babbler (B), Crested Bellbird, Rufous Whistler (B), Grey Shrike-thrush (B), Grey Fantail (B), Willie Wagtail (B), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Grey Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Grey Currawong, Australian Raven (B), Richard's Pipit (B), Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin (B).

Species seen only at Baladjie were Emu, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, White-fronted Honeyeater, Hooded Robin, Pied Butcherbird and Little Crow.

Rainbow Bee-eaters usually perch near the canopy and fly upwards to catch their prey. At Frog Rock (about 5:45 am) they were catching insects by weaving through the branches beneath the canopy, the first time I have observed such behaviour. Another feature of interest was Richard's Pipit and Purple-gaped Honeyeaters flying to alight on rock with no vegetation, apparently to take insects. Individuals spent some time flying about bare rock in this way.

The Mistletoebird was not reported in the Atlas (1984). We saw none, but observed a substantial quantity of mistletoe at both rocks and also along the Yellowdine Road north of the Great Eastern Highway. Either the other vectors have been very busy or the Mistletoebird is sometimes present. Given that song, beach-washed birds and footprints can be valid evidence of a bird presence, perhaps mistletoe growth could be accepted as showing (at the least) a high level of likelihood of Mistletoebird presence—80%?

The species seen at Frog Rock represent 42% of the species recorded in the entire square, a good result from a reserve comprising only .15% of the square.

Because of the poor season, bird finding was slow work and many species were only recorded once, despite 4 hours walking in the reserves each day. In a better season, both rocks offer good birding and scenic enjoyment, although access by vehicle to each would be difficult to impossible in wet weather. However the distance to be walked from the road at Frog Rock is not great and it appeared as though it would be possible to drive to within walking distance of Baladjie, before salty wet would prevent vehicular progress.

Bruce Buchanan

DIFFERENT SLANT ON "RED WATTLEBIRD"

On 17 January of this year I surveyed Buckland Hill Reserve, Mosman Park, as part of the Perth Biodiversity project.

It soon became clear that there were many more Red Wattlebirds present than in September or November last year when I had previously surveyed there. This time, nearly all of the wattlebirds were in separate *Acacia cyclops* (Red-eyed Wattle) shrubs, feeding on something from the open seed pods.

Acacia cyclops seeds are 5 mm long, black and shiny, and lie in the pod almost encircled by a red, slightly fleshy seed-stalk about 3 cm long.

The Red Wattlebirds were probing into the open seed pods. They were unusually quiet and less wary than usual. A few times, we were within 2 metres of a feeding bird. Despite this advantage, I did not take the time to determine exactly what the birds were eating with such gusto, an opportunity missed.

Two days later, I returned with the intention of finding out what the wattlebirds were feeding on in the Red-eyed Wattle seed pods. Only four wattlebirds were found in the wattles this time. They were more noisy and more wary, but they were again probing into the pods. It seemed as if they were feeding on seed-stalks rather than the hard seeds but I was unable to see this actually happening. There were many seeds without seed-stalks on the footpath below the shrubs.

I was able to record a Singing Honeyeater eating three seeds plus seed-stalks. They had been present on 17 January, but not in increased numbers and their behaviour was not unusual.

Higgins *et al.* (2001) do not mention any seed-stalk as part of the diet and *Acacia* is mentioned only once as 1.9% of the diet of Red Wattlebirds during a study in Imbota Nature Reserve, near Armidale, NSW.

Powell (1990) states that although the Red-eyed Wattle flowers over a long period, all the seeds mature at the same time. It also mentions that several species of bird (including the Red Wattlebird) feed on the seed-stalk when the pods open.

Perhaps someone else has made more complete observations and could fill out the missing detail here.

References

Higgins, P, Peter, J. and Steele, W. 2001. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*. Vol. 5. Oxford University Press. Melbourne.

Powell, R. 1990. *Leaf and Branch*. Department of Conservation and Land Management. Perth.

Brenda Newbey

MORE BLACK-EARED CUCKOOS

We were particularly interested in the record of a Black-eared Cuckoo at Yanchep, as reported in the last issue of *Western Australian Bird Notes*.

We have been watching one feeding on the ground here this afternoon (28 January 2003) on our property roughly E of a line between Kendenup and Tenterden, 34° 24' 47"S, 117° 39' 23" E.

It was hopping across the ground apparently gleaning (insects?) off the ground as it went. On three occasions, it tried to glean from grass tops, hanging onto the stems with its feet and with wings slightly extended as it pecked at the grass heads. It also spent some time perched on a broken twig on the ground, resting. We also have a short video recording of it.

We also have a (written) record of one we saw one about 1 km to the west of here on 27 November 2001. That one stayed in the tree tops.

Bob and Pat Horwood



Oriental Plover

Photo courtesy Bea Myers & Ian Tarbin
Eyre Bird Observatory

WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATERS FEEDING AT FLOWERS OF CHORILAENA

Brown *et al.* (1997) only list four records of pollinators visiting *Chorilaena* (*Chorilaena quercifolia*, Rutaceae). All four records concerned birds: the Western Spinebill, White-naped Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater and New Holland Honeyeater.

Keighery (1976) was the first to point out that this species was bird pollinated, basing his conclusion on flower morphology and observations of White-cheeked Honeyeaters probing flowers for nectar.

On 20 September 2002, at about 0630, we noticed a flock of about 60 White-naped Honeyeaters flying into a large clump of *Chorilaena* which was in full flower. They flew in from the direction of another large clump. As they landed, they began feeding on the flowers in a very 'busy' manner. This continued for about a minute, after which they departed. The site was in Karri forest near the Bibbulmun Track, on the northern boundary of the Nuyts Wilderness, Walpole-Nornalup National Park.

White-naped Honeyeater normally occur in small flocks or family parties, so this was an unusually large aggregation,

particularly at this time of year, when breeding would normally be in progress. A flock of this size would presumably not be sedentary, and would therefore be expected to be a significant agent of local or regional pollen transfer (and hence gene dispersal).

Chorilaena flowers profusely between August and January (Keighery 1976) and therefore is likely to be a significant source of nectar for honeyeaters in the Karri forest for about half the year.

References

- Brown, E.M., Burbidge, A.H., Dell, J., Edinger, D. Hopper, S.D. and Wills, R.T. (1997) Pollination in Western Australia: a database of animals visiting flowers. Handbook No 15, Western Australian Naturalists Club, Perth.
- Keighery, G.J. (1976) Breeding systems in the Western Australian flora. II. Pollination of *Diplolaena* and *Chorilaena* (Rutaceae). *Western Australian Naturalist* 13: 156-158.

Allan Burbidge and Neil Hamilton

What's In a Name?

'What's in a name?' the teenage Capulet agonised into the night air.

With birds we might ponder even more-so. Well, when all is said and done it comes down to the bird (namee) and the birdo (namer). How the namee looked and what was he/she was doing when the namer came along. Some of us have been aptly given splendid names, others might find in later life that 'Pixie Belle Treasure Drop' doesn't exactly portray the right image on a CV. If our Romeo had been christened Fred—would Juliet have been coyly lingering on the balcony? Or would she have been derisively waiting with a bucket of water while calling "Fred, Fred, wherefore art thou, Fred?"

So it is with birds. Some have been named brilliantly, others perhaps a bit casually. Some namers both scientific and common have, perhaps like A B 'Banjo' Paterson's, good reverend, in a bush christening, had pressing engagements looming, and only a brief glimpse of the namee. Don't scoff, my birding friends, there could be a very wary feathered rarity, with skittled brittle rictal bristles skulking somewhere in our outback, unfortunately named by an imbibing ornithologist (yes, there are some) after an empty bottle of 'Bailly's' or possibly 'Gilbert's' Gin.

For the above reasons, let us delve into some of the oddities we encounter when searching through our field guides. The reader's enjoyment and knowledge will be increased with an understanding of the 'why's' and 'wherefore's' of the nomenclature used in ornithology. The long and apparently unpronounceable Latin names can sometimes discourage us from their usage. However, such words as hippopotamus, rhinoceros and eucalyptus, although strictly scientific names in Latin, are familiar and terms we all use.

The launching pad for these articles came to me after reading F H Kortright's *The Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America*, published by The American Wildlife Institute, 1943. While not endorsing all of F H's philosophies (his love of waterbirds seems to have originated from his dinner plate), his book is well worth

reading for those who are interested in water fowl. Parts of the following article have been adapted from his book.

It is not an ability to pronounce the scientific names that matters; the prime importance of their study is to obtain an understanding of the relationships recognised between species.

The scientific names of birds consist of two or three words; these indicate the relationships which exist between (a) the Genus (plural Genera), (b) the Species, and (c) the Subspecies. The first word in the scientific name denotes the GENUS, the second word denotes the SPECIES, the third word denotes the SUBSPECIES.

The reason it is necessary to have sometimes two or sometimes three terms to each scientific name can be made clear by a simple, homely example. For clarification let us examine an artificial situation in the fictitious family *Dogonidae*.

If you tell your friends you have a dog, you tell them the **Genus** of your pet, but that is all. You might then be asked what kind of dog it is, because they want to know the **Species**. If you say your dog is a Pekinese, you have now told them the genus and the species of your pet. (If your Pekinese were a duck its scientific name would consist of two terms and might possibly be *Dogus pekinesi*, meaning genus dog, species pekinese.) This is an example of a scientific name of two words. If, however, you had said your dog was a setter, this would not be sufficient, as there are several varieties or subspecies of setters, and you would have been asked, *what kind of setter?* If you reply that it is an English setter, their information regarding your pet would be complete. (If your English setter were a duck, its scientific name would consist of three terms and might possibly be *Dogus setteri englishus*, meaning genus dog, species setter, subspecies English.)

It should now be clear why it is that in certain instances a two-termed (binomial) scientific name is sufficient, while in others a three-termed (trinomial) name is necessary. The answer is **Exactitude**. (Lest we be charged with ignorance, and to be fair to the dog, it should be admitted that in his own family he is a species, not a genus. Thanks, Rover!)

Now let us briefly examine the meaning attached to the words Family, Subfamily, Genus, Species, and Subspecies.

FAMILY. A group of birds having enough mutual resemblance to be classed together and apart from all other birds

SUBFAMILY. A group of birds within a Family having enough mutual resemblance to be classed together and apart from those of other Subfamilies.

GENUS. A group of birds within a Subfamily consisting of a number of closely related Species.

SPECIES. A group of birds within a Genus, having common inherited characteristics.

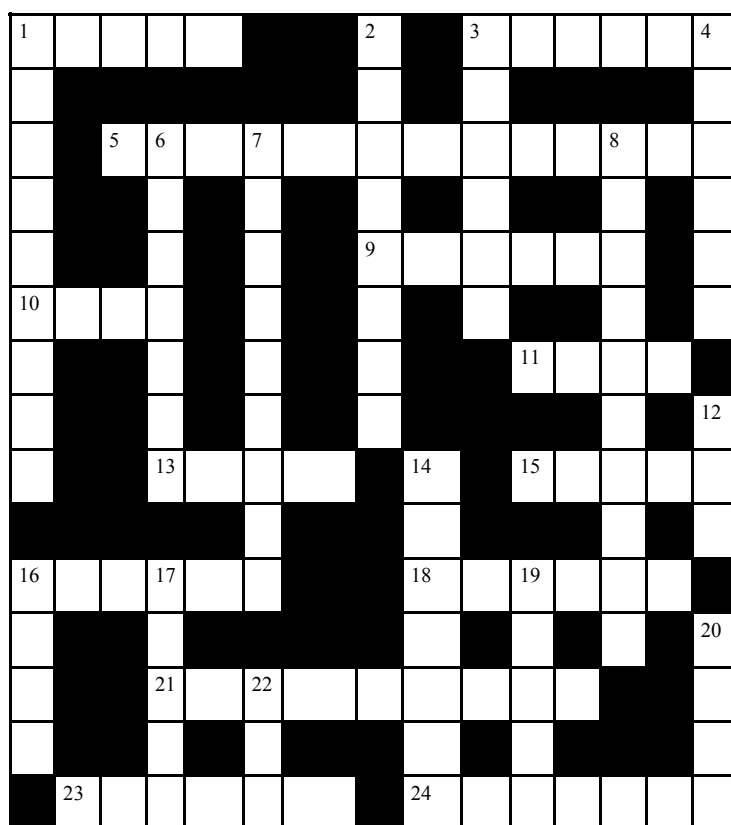
SUBSPECIES. A division of a species: a distinguishable form being part of a species: also called a variety or race.

Let us continue WHAT'S IN A NAME next issue.

'Gerontimus'

Crossword No 32

By Pam Agar



Clues Across

1. Instinctive act of a cuckoo chick.
3. To turn freely.
5. Not songbirds.
9. May be useful before you buy that new field guide.
10. Shape of two markings on face of Brown Falcon
11. To utter characteristic notes.
13. Location.
15. Fencing may ... walkers from entering.
16. Northern polar region.
18. If nest materials are few, birds may do this.
21. Site of Jan '02 campout.
23. Negotiating one may save many birds.
24. Not usually suitable footwear for birders.

Clues Down

1. Development of forms of animals.
2. To explain characteristics.
3. In a car, not a good idea, even to save a bird
4. Smaller of the frigate birds.
6. To many, the nature of report-writing
7. Deriving nutriment from another species.
8. Small magazine.
12. Component of newsletter.
14. Accounts of activities, sightings.
16. Very enthusiastic.
17. May explain data more simply.
19. To gain by experience.
20. Common companions of a particular egret.
22. A raptor may well do this to a duckling.

Notices

NOISY SCRUB-BIRD SURVEYS AND TRANSLOCATIONS

Surveys of Noisy Scrub-bird Darling Range translocation sites will be conducted in late April – early May.

Volunteers with a good ear are invited to participate for as many days as they wish. Scrub-bird calls are very distinctive so no prior experience is required. Most of the surveys in this area are conducted from tracks. We will be staying at the Lake Navarino Forest Resort chalets just out of Waroona. Volunteer food and accommodation costs will be paid.

Volunteers are also invited to participate in the scrub-bird capture and survey program at Two Peoples Bay between late April and September. Participants are asked to spend a minimum of 12 days based at the Two Peoples Bay Research Quarters. A reasonable level of physical fitness is necessary. Food and travel expenses will be partially reimbursed and there is no charge for accommodation.

For further information please contact Sarah Comer on (08) 9842 4500 or email sarahc@calm.wa.gov.au.

WARDENS: EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

The Management Committee of Eyre Bird Observatory is seeking a couple to work as Wardens at Eyre, commencing in October 2003. Set in the mallee woodlands of Nuytsland Nature Reserve on the Nullarbor coast, south of Cocklebidy and 500 km east of Norseman WA, the observatory has a beautiful natural setting close to the coastal dunes.

Wardens must be able to cater for guests, maintain vehicles and a small solar power plant and promote the spirit of Eyre. The work is hard at times and the financial benefits low, but a couple who can share tasks equitably will find this a rewarding adventure.

Please contact either of the following and leave your phone number:

- * Shapelle McNee (08) 9494 1286;
email mshapelle@hotmail.com
- * Rod Smith (08) 9447 3804;
email rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au

SIXTH CORELLA COUNT

Sunday 6 April 2003

Starting 3:30 pm

The first five counts, in June 1998, and April 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 gathered useful data about the spread and numbers of feral corellas around Perth. The number of Long-billed Corellas around the Canning Regional Park at Ferndale/Riverton appears to be even bigger this year. We need to continue to track distribution and numbers, especially to allow meaningful assessment of any control efforts.

See WABN 86, June 1998 for background information and identification hints and WABN 87, (September 1998), 90 (June 1999), 94 (June 2000), 98 (June 2001) and 102 (June 2002) for reports on the first five corella surveys.

If you know of a place that you regularly or often see corellas, or would be happy to be assigned to an area we already know about, please take part in an organised count at as many places as possible on 6 April, 2003. The main focus is still around Perth, but if anyone knows other places, such as Baldivis, Mandurah, Bunbury and Albany that seem to have populations of feral corellas we would really like to have those areas covered as well. Counting begins at 3:30 pm and ends when it gets too dark to identify corellas.

We will identify the species of all corellas seen, and count the number of each species, at each site at approximately the same time on the same day. Please record details of roosting sites; location and number of birds. If birds move away from your area please note the direction of movement and the time at which they leave. Similarly, with corellas that come to your area during the count note the direction from which they come and the time of arrival.

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

by phone (work 9405 5161 – home 9381 6293);
facs 9306 1641
or email johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au

Graphics Editor/Typesetter

Over the last 9 years, BAWA has produced over 70 illustrated Bird Guides, which are available in paper format on the BAWA website. A volunteer is required to undertake production of future guides from prepared drafts, plus occasional maintenance of existing guides. The work involves typesetting the guides, scanning and editing bird images and drawing maps of bird locations. The person would need to be proficient in the use of Coreldraw 10 software, which would be provided specifically for bird guide production. Expenses would be reimbursed.

Contact the Secretary, Liz Walker at Perry House
Tel: 9383 7749
Email: birdswa@iinet.net.au

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 August 2002 and 31 January 2003. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

L Back, G Brennan, P Buchanan, Cockburn Public Library & Information Service, K Darcey, L C Darlington, R Darlington, V de Wolfe, A Edwards, A Edwards, J Elliott, H Evans, E Frost, J Gross, J Heggart, A Henry, C Hunter, L Joseph, R & R Junckerstorff, P Kileff, H Leech, S McLeod, A W Miller, N Miller, R Miller, E Monk, T F Murphy, K Parkin, J Penning, K M Pougher, V Read, B Richardson, S Robinson, H Romundt, L Scrutton, M Sharp, P Smith, B J St John, K Treasure, H Walker, C A M Walkley, S Walsh, E Wild, F Williams, B Wilson, H Wilson, P Withers

WESTERN GROUND PARROT

scarce, secretive

and being surveyed April 1 - 12

Base camp at Cheyne Beach Caravan Park

Good hearing is needed

If you cannot be there consider joining the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot to keep up-to-date with what is happening and to help ensure that it is not all bad news.

No joining fee.

For the survey: Brenda Newbey 93375673
sfryc@iinet.net.au

For the Friends: Anne Bondin 9844 1793
albanybirds@hotmail.com

Black Swan Project— Wellard

On behalf of Greenskills Inc, Men of the Trees, The Peel Harvey Catchment Council and the Rockingham Regional Environment Centre we are coordinating the **Project Black Swan**—a strategic and comprehensive revegetation initiative to rehabilitate a degraded wetland and create a valuable environment for the Black Swan whose habitat has been greatly reduced in the local region through excessive clearing and drainage works. In addition the site is critically important as it is part of a major Point Source Pollution Site for the Peel Harvey Estuary, contributing major amounts of the pollutants, Nitrogen and Phosphorus into this waterway. The proposed planting of 14 000 native trees, shrubs and rushes will help significantly to reduce this problem and create valuable Black Swan habitat as well as becoming a valuable Carbon Sink for the area—taking carbon from emissions and thus helping to reduce Global Warming.

Major Tasks

- ◆ Planting 12 000 locally endemic trees and shrubs
- ◆ 2000 sedges and rushes
- ◆ Organise our major community Tree planting festival—"Activate" with City Farm; this will include design of promotion and planting layout and management
- ◆ Rock pitching 'armouring' of drainage line detour into the wetlands
- ◆ Bird surveys

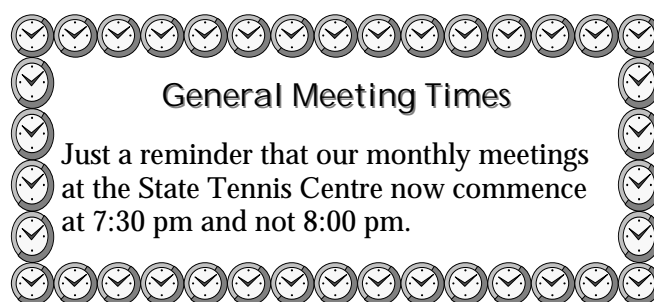
Timeline

- ◆ Mid June to Early July—main planting
- ◆ Mid August - to Early September—planting of rushes and sedges

Volunteers

We need volunteers to help plant seedlings at the site! We would also welcome Birds Australia to visit the site and provide advice on design of the revegetation (ie, to meet the habitat requirements of Black Swans and other waterbirds that utilise the area) and identify other waterbird species.

For more information, please contact Tracey or Donna at Green Skills on 9529 3820.



General Meeting Times

Just a reminder that our monthly meetings at the State Tennis Centre now commence at 7:30 pm and not 8:00 pm.

Country Groups

ALBANY BIRD GROUP

November 2002 Outing

On 12 November 2002, 19 of us met at Bakers Junction. After a long journey to South Stirlings and Quarderwardup, a salt lake that was completely dry, we had a bird count of 31, including Stubble Quail and a Spotted Harrier. The country was as dry as a chip, and it was hard work finding birds.

After lunch a survey of Lake Chillinup revealed a flock of 21 Hooded Plovers and 22 other bird species.

Charlie Davies

December 2002 Outing

Early on 10 December 2002 a few people reconnoitred Lake Powell to make a final decision on a site for a proposed bird hide for which funding has been promised. Then at 8 am they met the rest of us at Elleker store.

As it was a very windy day, it was decided to go to the Torbay Hall area, which is reasonably sheltered and usually quite rewarding for bush birds. We saw 33 species, including a Nankeen Night Heron.

We then went on to Torbay Inlet for our Christmas shared lunch for 18 of us under the shade of Peppermint trees. A few more birds were seen in this area. All in all, it was a very enjoyable day.

Liz Davies

January 2003 Outings

The group does not generally have an outing in January, because it coincides with the Albany Summer School, but this year we had two.

On 20 January, 16 of us met at the Fishing Boat Harbour at Emu Point for a birdwatching cruise around the islands in King George's Sound. It was a perfect day, sunny with a very calm sea, - but the bird-watching wasn't great. However the trip was a very enjoyable one. Winter seems to bring more birds.

We visited Rushy Point on 21 January, a week later than our normal outing date. Before venturing out on the mud flats, 14 of us met on the corner of Bay View Drive and Frenchman Bay Road, where several Buff-banded Rails were seen, including young.

The tide was very low, and we walked a long way to see 24 more species of waterbirds, including seven Pacific Golden Plovers and a tattler. For at least ten minutes we watched a White-necked Heron having great difficulty with a fish it was trying to swallow. A good morning's viewing.

Charlie Davies

February outing, Wilson Inlet, 11 February

Having agreed to carry out the annual summer wader survey at Wilson Inlet, 19 of us met at Morley Beach early in the morning of 11 February. With slight drizzle and large flocks of distant birds, we were faced with a daunting task. However, keen to provide the best possible results, the more experienced members of the group 'adopted' a bird each and started to count. Less experienced members scanned the shorebirds for leg flags, but like in previous years none were found.

Wader numbers were up by nearly 45% compared to last year's count resulting in a total of 5510 birds counted. We suspect the drought is forcing large numbers of Banded Stilt and Red-necked Avocet towards coastal areas.

The highlight of the survey was definitely the sighting of a Long-toed Stint, a bird most of us had never seen before. Michael Morcombe had alerted us to the presence of the species during a recent visit to the South Coast, but we were not particularly hopeful in spotting the bird amongst thousands of waders. What a delight it was when we spotted the lone bird having a bath at the water's edge! And no, we didn't manage to get a good look at the long toe.

Sadly, the White-winged Black Tern some of us had sighted at Morley Beach last month was nowhere to be seen this time.

Ann Bondin

STOP PRESS!

Following our AGM on 24 February, our new Committee comprises:

Chairperson:	Mike Bamford
Vice Chair:	Robert Davis
Secretary:	Liz Walker
Treasurer:	Mary Vaughan
Committee:	Les Hogben
	Andrew Huggett
	Suzanne Mather
	Frank O'Connor
	Jennifer Wilcox
	Carole Elliott

We thank these members for their willingness to contribute to the operations of BAWA.

Excursion Reports

COODANUP, 24 November 2002

Twenty-one members and visitors attended a field trip at the northern end of the Peel-Harvey Estuary on Sunday 24 November 2002.

Sighting conditions were initially good and the sandy beaches of Nairns and Coodanup very firm and accessible. By midday, the southerly wind had freshened to the extent that less exposed viewing points were requested. These were readily available in the vicinity of the Bypass Road Bridge and at the boardwalk that runs north from it across samphire flats.

A reasonable number of wader species was observed, although numbers were down on previous years. Of waterside birds, Spotless Crake, Little Grassbird and White-fronted Chat were 'firsts' for several visitors. A total of 67 species was recorded.

Frank Pridham

WATERFORD FORESHORE, 7 December 2002

Sixteen bird watchers enjoyed mild summer weather during the morning's bird watching along the Waterford foreshore. The habitats included a small area of tidal river flat, fringing river vegetation of reeds and Salt Water Paperbark (*Melaleuca*) and artificial lakes bordered by residential properties.

In total 45 species of birds were seen. The most notable species were Red-necked Avocet, Common Greenshank and Buff-banded Rail. We usually observe spoonbills in the shallow pools in the swampy foreshore but, alas - the ponds had almost completely dried out. However the rail and greenshank found the pond to their liking.

The larger artificial lakes, constructed during the subdivision development of Waterford, provide a good environment for breeding birds. Each lake has a central island and Australian Wood Ducks, Pacific Black Ducks, Eurasian Coots and Purple Swampheens had young. On the river a cygnet was seen with adult birds. In the fringing vegetation Silvereye were observed feeding young and a Brown Honeyeater was observed "stealing" material from one nest to add to its nest.

It is interesting to compare Jack Donohoe's records of sighting of 1978-85 and 1993 with this outing's sightings. From 1978-85 Jack saw nine species of raptors. The number of raptor species sightings in 1993 was reduced to four. No raptors were seen during our walk although Richard and I very occasionally sight an Australian Hobby and an Osprey. There is an Osprey's nest on a *Melaleuca* at the river's edge to the right of the observational jetty but, as yet, no successful breeding has been observed.

All in all it was a successful morning's birdwatching. Should anyone contemplate a walk in the Waterford area, be aware that there are no public toilets in the area.

Lorraine Chyne

WOODMAN POINT, KOGOLUP SWAMP AND YANGEBUP LAKE, 15 December 2002

On a fine, sunny summer morning Les Harris led our group along the foreshore at Woodman Point to view waders and seabirds. We were able to find the usual Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling, with a few Red-necked Stints and Grey Plovers. The area is still being disturbed by the public walking their dogs off leads, in spite of notices requesting owners to restrain their pets in the nature reserve. Fairy Terns and Red-capped Plover were either absent or in very small numbers. We have got rid of the 4WDs—now we have got dogs!

From Woodman, with its interesting side-lines like a roost of Nankeen Night Heron in the trees around the sailing club compound, we drove on to Kogolup Swamp, which is under the protection of the Water Board. The area is now fenced and people were asked to respect the rehabilitation which is taking place there. This swamp is always a good area in which to find several crake and rail species, as well as other waterbirds, although it dries out every summer. Nonetheless, we found a further 25 species before going over to look at nearby Yangebup Lake and have a 'cuppa' in the shade of the large trees at the Osprey Drive end.

The three sites produced 28, 25 and 28 species respectively—a thoroughly enjoyable morning's birding. Many thanks to Les for his leadership.

Bryan Barrett

ALFRED COVE, 28 December 2002

A group of 22 walkers turned up at Troy Park and the action kicked off immediately with the sighting of a Buff-banded Rail near the car park.

As we ventured into the cove, we had excellent views of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Grey Plover and Black-winged Stilt. A Black-shouldered Kite landed on the radio mast and then entertained us with a prolonged demonstration of its hovering skills. Next on the scene were a pair of Osprey landing on the top of the mast, and they remained in the vicinity for the rest of the morning.

The group then moved to the new fence and we had a close look at a rather young Pallid Cuckoo. Despite the high tide, numerous waders were visible, including Curlew

Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Pied Oystercatcher and Red-capped Plover.

The trees near the road contributed to the tally, producing a pair of Sacred Kingfisher, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Striated Pardalote and a Laughing Kookaburra accompanied by some rather agitated Willie Wagtails. The morning finished with some excitement caused by the rapid fly-by of a Peregrine Falcon.

Thanks to Les for another entertaining walk that produced 54 species.

Stan Broom

ASCOT WATERS, 4 January 2003

A mild, humid, cloudy day as forecast, very comfortable conditions for birding. And so it proved. Birds were there in good numbers and variety. Birders were there, too—19 of us, beginners, newcomers and veterans, relaxed and enjoying ourselves.

Brown Songlark were probably of greatest conjecture and interest, but rail, raptor, cormorant, coot and grassbird were staple diet. Adding spice to our outing was seeing Nankeen Night Heron flying late home to bed, and a Little Black Cormorant in hot pursuit of something in the water. A Spotted Crake was a good reward for the diligence of one group, and some saw a quail (sp?).

Forty-nine species in all. Special thanks to those golden oldies, Les and Hank, for their support.



Tawny Frogmouths at Moorialup
Nature Reserve
Drawing by Pam Agar

John Stewart

CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK, 12 January

Forty people met at the Kent Street Weir on 12 January for a walk along the Canning River. Following several weeks of very hot weather the morning turned out fine and pleasantly mild.

As predicted few birds were calling and the large group had to use their eyes more than usual in the conditions. The total of 60 species seen was as many as had been seen in the area on any previous walk. The cool conditions encouraged everyone to observe at leisure and all the usual species were seen. While nothing extraordinary was observed nothing was omitted. Excellent views of a well coloured Nankeen Night Heron and good sightings of a

Buff-banded Rail with chick were enjoyed. All four species of cormorant and Darters were recorded.

One pair of visitors from the UK expressed amazement that so many birds could be seen at an inner city venue in such a short time.

Clive Napier

MANNING LAKE, 15 January

An enthusiastic group of 13 birders met in the car park at 7:30 am for this mid-week excursion. We walked around the lake, which unfortunately was dry, except for a small pond at the southern end. There was sufficient water here to attract a few ducks, namely, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal and a single Australian Shelduck. The most numerous waterbirds seen were Purple Swamphen.

Several more energetic members of the group raced up the nearby hill to the lookout but were only able to add a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike to our list of birds.

During the walk we saw 32 species, one of the more interesting being an Australian Hobby which flew past while we sat in the shade for a drink and bird call. As we left, Rainbow Bee-eaters could be heard flying high overhead.

Bryan Barrett

ALBANY CAMPOUT, 25-27 January

On the January long weekend the Albany Group organised a variety of excursions for local members and about thirty members from Perth. It was a great opportunity to meet and share expertise with like-minded people from another area.

Lake Seppings, always a worthwhile stop, was visited on Saturday morning but the hordes of insects were somewhat of a deterrent on this occasion.

Next stop was Prideaux Road Reserve, an area of woodland just north of King River. Honeyeaters were prevalent and we were shown nests of emu-wren, Splendid Fairy-wren and Red-eared Firetail.

Everyone enjoyed sightings of an Australian Hobby preening at the Lower King picnic area before we moved

on to the esplanade nearby. Close views of Southern Emu-wren were a surprise among the foreshore vegetation. A quick visit to the jetty further round Oyster Harbour enabled good comparisons of four species of cormorant.

The afternoon was spent at Morley Beach, on the north-east side of Wilson Inlet, where large groups of waders provided plenty of challenges. Two Ospreys were seen. Red-necked Stint and Black Swan were very common and there were several rafts of Banded Stilt, but perhaps the most interesting sighting was that of a non-breeding White-winged Black Tern.

On Saturday evening a strange insect-like trill from the tall trees around the camp buildings had us all out searching. The result: three young Southern Boobooks which stayed around long enough for everyone to have a look.

On Sunday we drove north to the Porongurups to be shown around the proposed Twin Creeks Nature Reserve by Anne Burchell. The area includes a range of vegetation / habitat types: heath, jarrah-marri woodland, some cleared areas, casuarinas, a long dam and the currently dry creeks near the northern boundary. A variety of bushbirds were seen, as well as Little Pied Cormorant and Hoary-headed Grebe on the dam. Most people had good views of a Square-tailed Kite.

Moorialup Nature Reserve was visited on the way back. The highlight here was amazing views of two Tawny Frogmouths, perfectly camouflaged as they perched motionless close to the trunk of a Marri.

Sunday morning at Rushy Point meant a crash-course in wader identification for some. Thanks to those with scopes we had great views of both Pacific Golden and Grey Plover, Greater Sand Plover, Grey-tailed Tattler, Bar-tailed Godwit and Whimbrel. Great Egret, White-faced Heron and Fairy Tern, as well as Red-necked Stint, were there in large numbers.

From there we drove to North's property on the Torbay Inlet. There were large numbers of Black Swan and

Eurasian Coot. A pair of Osprey, a Swamp Harrier and three Whistling Kites were impressive but the find of the morning had to be both Australian Spotted and Spotless Crake feeding together. Seen in the scope from about 30 metres away, we could make excellent comparisons.

Due to the sheer dedication of some people, the official total for the weekend was 147, exceeding the previous record by 12. Now *there's* a challenge for the next campout!

Many thanks to all those concerned with planning and directing the weekend, and to those who so willingly shared their knowledge of the local area. Special thanks are due to Viv McCormick, Anne Bondin, Ray Garstone and Wayne Zadow.

Pam Agar

BAYSWATER BIRD SANCTUARY, 15 February

Hank van Wees led a group of 27 members around Bayswater Bird Sanctuary on Saturday 15 February. Eric Singleton also met and walked with the group. It was great to have special additions to the area pointed out by the original designer. A short introduction was followed by the group agreeing to split in two, each going in different directions around the lake.

The bird hide which was one of the stopping points has been designed to give an up close view of the lake and its occupants. Many minutes were spent in this recording many of the 49 birds species seen by the two groups. There was a reasonable variety of waterbirds including the usual Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal and Black-winged Stilts, to the not so commonly seen Buff-banded Rail and Black-fronted Dotterel. Pink-eared Ducks, Australasian Shovelers and Hoary-headed Grebes were also seen. Two Nankeen Night Heron were spotted skulking in undergrowth, several Yellow-billed Spoonbill and a Great Egret showed themselves also.



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Small birds observed that could be considered significant were a Sacred Kingfisher, a Mistletoebird and an Inland Thornbill. Small birds were constantly wary, as a pair of Brown Goshawks were operating in the area.

Thanks to Hank van Wees and Eric Singleton for a most enjoyable walk.

Brendan Kinsella

Observatory Reports

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

“Time flies when you’re having fun”—it sure has—we’ve now been at Eyre for six months.

One of the highlights for us and also many of our guests is our weekly beach count. We drive 13 km along Kanidal Beach counting the birds in each km, then walk the last km. We quite often see the most birds in the last km as they like to feed around the weed bank and on the reef. Flocks of Silver Gull, White-faced Heron, Grey Teal, Crested and Caspian Tern, Sooty Oystercatcher, Pacific Gull are regulars.

Recently, White-fronted Chat have been seen on several occasions. Two Oriental Plovers were seen on the beach not far from the observatory, one Lesser Golden Plover was spotted almost perfectly camouflaged in amongst the seaweed at Nine Mile and Grey Plover were seen regularly for several weeks.

One of the most memorable sightings was a Light-mantled Sooty Albatross resting near the water’s edge; unfortunately it was found beach washed the next day.

On a day out at Burnabie we discovered a Brown Goshawk nest with 2 downy chicks; on a return trip 12 days later an almost fledged chick boldly perched on the edge of the nest for us to see. A pair of Collared Sparrowhawk has frequented the birdbaths of late. Recently on a hot day the female came in for a bath, and was in no hurry to leave; the other birds became impatient especially a Welcome Swallow. The swallow swooped past the sparrowhawk who on the second pass snatched the swallow from the air with lightning speed. She then hopped up to a branch and devoured the bird in front of us.

This same sparrowhawk took a Brush Bronzewing from the birdbath. She has a pair of fledged young to feed so is taking advantage of the easy prey.

A now regular visitor to the birdbath is ‘Eddie’ the Emu. No one knows of any other Emu drinking from the birdbaths at Eyre in the past and even though we have sighted Emu and prints close to the observatory, Eddie is the only one to come in for a drink. He doesn’t even seem that bothered when he has an audience, as long as we all remain quiet and still.

Malleefowl have been sighted on several occasions in the past few months. With the help of guests we have checked known Malleefowl mounds sites and found two to be active.

The weather at Eyre this summer has been mild with the daytime average being in the mid to high 20s. We have had only two days over 40 degrees, and for those who find this

too warm the house is usually cool. Being 1 km from the beach the sea breeze cools things down quickly when the wind swings around to the SE.

January was a busy time at Eyre with 13 enthusiastic workers participating in the ‘Dune Restoration Project’ working bee. The team was enthusiastic collecting spinifex seed heads and planting them in the area where they had spread seaweed (which act as a mulch as well as stabilising the sand). They also collected the seeds of *Acacia Cyclops* for future planting. The

weather was kind with the maximum temperature each day only in the mid 20s.

Quite a number of families have visited Eyre with children ranging in age from 12 months to teenagers. Some have stayed for a week of their holidays, others only a night or two. The children don’t get bored as there is endless beach for them to burn off some energy and build sandcastles. Many of the children have become keen birdwatchers during their stay and attend the bird log each evening with list in hand ready to add to the tally. They are often found bright and early, quietly sitting peering out the window at the birdbath ready to add a tick to the species list of birds coming to the bath. We encourage all our guests to add



Light-mantled Sooty Albatross
*Photo courtesy Bea Myers & Ian Talbin
Eyre Bird Observatory*

their name to the visitors' book, especially the children (they have a special book)—they are so creative and honest.

We will be running a course from 13 – 19 July this year, (the second week of the school holidays) titled *The Birds Of Eyre*, the focus being encouraging children to learn how to identify birds, where to find them, how to use and care for binoculars, how to use a field guide and start their own bird log at home. We invite families with primary age children to come and enjoy the peaceful surrounds of Eyre this July.

Other courses are held throughout the year including Bird Banding, Field Techniques in Bird Studies, Small Mammals: Pygmy Possums and Others, Watercolours at Eyre, and Bats, Birds and Beachcombing.

For more details and a course brochure please contact the wardens on 9039 3450 or eyrebirdobs@bigpond.com.

During our time as wardens at Eyre we have had the opportunity to see the changing faces of Eyre, with the flowering of the Mallee, the shifting of the sands, the colours and spectacle of mother nature. We have also observed the behaviour of a variety of birds and wildlife. A collection of over 250 photographs capturing the 'Images of Eyre' is now available on CD for \$22.00. Money from the sale of this CD will help raise funds for the purchase of equipment needed at Eyre. For more details contact the wardens.

We look forward to seeing you at Eyre soon.

Bea Myers & Ian Tarbin
Wardens

Coming Events

Important Note re Campouts

Members anticipating attending campouts must notify the BA Office (9383 7749) 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.

New Members

Please let the leaders know that you are a new member and don't hesitate to ask for assistance with bird sightings.

Sunday 9 March—Half-day Excursion, Lake Joondalup

Meet at 8:00 am at Neil Hawkins Park, in the car park at the end of Boas Avenue. At the same time last year 69 species of birds were seen. There are always lots of waterbirds and bushbirds to be seen around this large lake, and there could be waders as well. Bring your telescope if you have one.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Saturday 15 March—Evening Walk, Reg Bond Reserve, Viveash

Meet at 5:30 pm in the car park at the end of Bernley Drive. Going north on the Great Eastern Highway, turn left into Morrison Road, Midland; left into Frederic Street and follow it to the end. Turn left again into Muriel Street and go past La Salle College, left at Bernley Drive and follow this right to the end (StreetSmart Map 316 4B). It terminates in the Reg Bond Reserve car park. Be careful of the last speed hump! This park is at the northern end of the John George walk trail which starts at Ray Marshall Park.

There is a double-sided BBQ at the reserve for those wishing to use it; or bring a light meal. We will eat early

before walking along the John George walk trail beside the Swan River. The evening walk last year from Ray Marshall Park was very successful as a Tawny Frogmouth and a Southern Boobook were seen, and Owlet Nightjar heard.

Leader: Jan Rogers

Wednesday 19 March—Mid-week Morning Excursion, Burswood Open Spaces

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park near the Tourist Centre on Resort Drive. We will look at the bird life which has returned to the public parks, lake and gardens that occupy the site of the former Rivervale Dump.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Sunday 23 March—Late Afternoon Excursion, Alfred Cove

Meet at 4:30 pm at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale. A last chance to look for waders in the late afternoon to avoid having to look across the water into the sun. Hopefully some of the birds will be in their breeding plumage. Bring your telescope if you have one.

Leader: Les Harris

Saturday 29 March—Half-day Excursion, Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale

Meet at 8:00 am at the first car park for Wungong Dam, at the end of Admiral Road (off Albany Highway), Bedfordale. Over 90 different species of birds have been recorded here including Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren. Several raptors have also been seen.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

Saturday 5 April—Half-day Excursion, Bibra Lake

Meet at 8:00 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake, off Progress Drive. Bibra Lake is part of the Beeliar Wetlands Chain and a large number of water and bush birds can be seen here. A total of 119 species has been recorded, and a number of raptors are usually seen, as well as several crakes and rail species.

Leader: Brice Wells

Sunday 6 April — Fifth Corella Count

Time: 3:30 pm to dark. We aim to locate, identify and count as many as possible of the three species of corellas present in feral populations around Perth or in other coastal towns such as Mandurah, Bunbury and Albany. Contact John Blyth to be allocated a site or suggest one of which you know.

Leader: John Blyth

Thursday 10 April—Mid-week Morning Excursion, Piney Lakes Reserve, Winthrop

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park off Murdoch Drive. Turn off Leach Hwy or South Street into Murdoch Drive at the lights. From Leach Hwy take the second turn right, across the dual carriageway, into the grassed park area to the car park. It is approximately 700 m from Leach Hwy.

This is a new excursion venue for the metropolitan area. It used to be part of a pine plantation which now contains two artificial lakes, and one natural permanent lake. The Spotless Crake and numerous other waterbirds frequent the area. There is a considerable area of natural bushland around the lake and this is home to the usual local species.

Leader: Clive Napier

Augusta/Albany Pelagic

Is anyone interested in a pelagic seabird trip from Augusta or Albany? I am happy to organise the trip (all costs shared) if enough people are interested. I would need at least 10 people interested. Also suggestions for the best time of the year for the trip? I plan to ask the Augusta Tourist Bureau if the trip goes ahead. Possibly late autumn (May), winter (July), early spring (September) or summer (December). In case the trip needed to be deferred due to weather, it will probably require driving down on Friday and returning on Monday. I would prefer the trip to be from Augusta, but Albany could be better if we need to wait a day or two for the weather to settle, as there is better birding nearby, and it might be easier to find a suitable boat in Albany.

The aim of the trip would be to find seabirds and cetaceans that we do not normally see on the Perth pelagics from Hillarys. e.g. unusual albatrosses, White-chinned Petrel, White-headed Petrel, Grey Petrel, Blue Petrel, Blue Whale or something even rarer like Common Diving-Petrel, Southern Fulmar, Fairy Prion, South Polar Skua, etc. May is reported to be a good time for Blue Whale, July for many seabirds, September for migratory seabirds such as shearwaters, and in summer the weather might be better. If you are interested, then please contact Frank O'Connor at foconnor@inet.net.au or (08) 9386 5694.

Sunday 13 April—Half-day Excursion, Mindarie Keys

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park on the southern side of Mindarie Keys. Travel north along Marmion Avenue, turning left into Anchorage Drive, left into Long Beach Promenade and the car park is on the only track on the right at the Tuart Grove picnic area (StreetSmart Map 189 B6).

This will be a two to three hour walk along the coast looking for seabirds and bushbirds. Variegated and Splendid Fairy-wrens and White-browed Scrubwrens should be seen.

Leader: Neil Hamilton

Friday-Monday 18-21 April—Easter Campout, Jaurdi State Forest, Shire of Coolgardie

Jaurdi, a former pastoral lease, was purchased by CALM in 1989 for conservation and research. It is north of the old Boorabbin townsite. It has proved to be an excellent birding location because of its size, diversity of land forms and vegetation habitats. On two previous visits by Birds Australia, over 60 species of birds were seen, including Dusky and Little Woodswallow, Redthroat, Southern Scrub-robin, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Gilbert's Whistler and, in 1994, large numbers of Purple-crowned Lorikeet were common.

Accommodation available at the field centre has been booked for us from Friday 18 April to Tuesday 22 April. It consists of three shearers' units, a BBQ, kitchen, rainwater tank, a flush toilet, and a bathroom with a hot shower! There is plenty of room for caravans and campers.

For directions to Jaurdi, please contact either the Birds Australia office (9383 7749) or Clive Napier (9332 7265) and up-to-date details will be sent to you.

Booking is essential and accommodation in the shearers' units will be on a first come first served basis. Please contact the office (9383 7749) and let us know when you will arrive, how many in your party, and what type of booking you require.

Leader: Clive Napier

Friday-Sunday 25-27 April—Anzac Day Campout, Piesseville, Shire of Wagin

We have been invited by Rae and Bob Clark to visit their block, "Sandpatch", in the Piesseville area, 18 km north of Wagin. There is a variety of habitat including a mallet reserve, some rocky outcrops, and an area of lucerne trees, which are renowned for honeyeaters. Bird species seen in the area are Restless Flycatcher, Western Yellow and Red-capped Robin, several honeyeaters, Painted Button-quail and some night birds, so some night spotting will be on the programme.

This will be a campout for campers only and there will be plenty of space for tents, etc. Campers must be completely self-sufficient, including gas stoves--no camp fires will be

allowed due to the very dry season. Numbers for this camp will be limited to 25, so members wishing to attend must notify the office (9383 7749) and directions will be forwarded to you.

Leaders: Rae and Bob Clark

Monday 28 April Meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 7:30 pm

Marion Massam, Technical Officer, Agriculture Western Australia, will speak on “Risk assessment and risk management of exotic birds in WA”.

Saturday 3 May—Full day Excursion, Flynn Road, The Lakes

Meet at 9:00 am at the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about one kilometre on the Perth side of ‘The Lakes’ turnoff, i.e. the York Road turnoff. Hopefully we will have better weather than on our last visit when it rained the whole morning! We will look at several areas of Wandoo woodland where three species of robin are often seen, and perhaps Crested Shrike-tit.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Sunday 11 May—Full day Excursion, Yanchep National Park

Meet at the Boomerang Gorge picnic area, inside the Park, at 9:00 am. At the entrance gate say that you are a Birds Australia volunteer and there will be no charge. Also check for directions to the meeting place. We will leave the cars here as there is nowhere to park along Wanneroo Road.

Derek will lead the group into an area east of Wanneroo Road which we have not visited before. We will follow the new CALM Yanchep Rose Trail through Ridges bushland which includes woodland, heath, open forest and mallee. There are views of the coast and many significant flora and orchid species. Some birds recorded in the area are Southern Emu-wren, three species of thornbill, Golden Whistler, Scarlet Robin, several honeyeaters and Grey Shrike-thrush. The walk will take two to three hours and we will return to the Park for lunch.

Leader: Derek Newton

Thursday 15 May—Mid-week Morning Excursion, Pickering Brook

Meet at 9:00 am at the golf course on Pickering Brook Road. We will visit the home of Will and Allison Hepburn at 51 Woodbine Street. We will look mainly in their wonderful garden, but we will also search the surrounding bush.

To get there, drive through Kalamunda along Canning Road until it turns right. The road that goes straight ahead becomes Pickering Brook Road—follow that and you will go past the Pickering Brook store, then the golf course, both on the right. We will wait at the golf course to guide people to the house. For any latecomers, continue down Pickering Brook Road, taking care to bear left at Carinyah Road, go past Cunnold Street and Merrivale Road, both on

the right, then bear left again when you come to Kings Mill Road. Woodbine Street is the next right, but some distance further on. No 51 is on the right hand bend half way down Woodbine Street (StreetSmart Map 439 E2). Drive in until you come to the parked cars.

Leader: Brice Wells

Saturday 17 May—Half-day Excursion, Little Rush Lake, Yangebup

Meet at 8:30 am near the playground on the western side of this small wooded lake. Little Rush Lake is part of the Beeliar Regional Park. To reach the area turn right, going south, into Osprey Drive off North Lake Road, then right into Dotterel Way and right into Grassbird Loop (StreetSmart Map 462, B7). There is a path around the lake and we should see plenty of both water and bush birds. Fifty species of birds have been seen on previous visits here.

Leaders: Molly and Barry Angus

Sunday 25 May—Half-day Excursion, Market Garden Swamps, Cockburn Shire

Meet at 8:30 am on the corner of Pennlake Drive and Brenzi Court (under the power lines), on the edge of Market Garden Swamps. This is a new reserve for our group and already over 30 species have been seen here.

Leader: Les Harris

Monday 26 May Meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 7:30 pm

John Dell, Environmental Officer, Conservation Branch, Department of Environmental Protection, will speak on a subject to be announced.

Saturday-Monday 31 May-2 June—Foundation Day Campout, Greenough River

The Greenough Rivermouth Caravan Park has been selected as the base for this excursion. Brochures are at the BAWA office, giving rates for the various types of accommodation. Visits will be made to such places as Ellendale Pool, Coalseam National Park and Burma Road Nature Reserve. The first excursion will be for the Saturday morning as most will be on site by then. However, we will return by lunch to collect late arrivals.

Please make your own bookings at the Caravan Park and advise them that you are with the BA Group. As this is a holiday weekend it is essential that you book early to get your desired type of accommodation. On-site vans, chalets, cabins, camp and caravan sites, powered and unpowered, are available. The shop at the Caravan Park has a considerable range of stores and some prepared food. Please ring the BA Office (9383 7749) and advise of your attendance. The Caravan Park phone number is: 9964 9845 or 9921 5845.

Leader Clive Napier

Saturday 7 June—Full day Excursion, Noble Falls, Red Hill Picnic Area and Wandoo Heights,, Shire of Swan

Meet at 8:30 am at the Noble Falls parking area. This is about 1 hours drive from Perth city, along the Toodyay Road , left past Gidgegannup to the signposted reserve. The walk will follow the creek line to the north, then return through the woodland area to the carpark for morning tea.

After morning tea we will drive to the Red Hill Picnic area for a brief survey of this 3ha site. This site is on the left side of the Toodyay Road going west and is just past the turn off to the Red Hill disposal site.

We will then drive further back towards Perth to the Wandoo Heights house. The gate will be open. This is a 22 ha uncleared block vested in the Swan Shire. It is 13 km from Midland off the Toodyay Road. Travelling west, turn right into Campersic Road, then right into Loton Road to the intersection with Range Road. The block is on the north-east corner of this intersection and access is from Range Road (Streetsmart Map 257 D10). Take morning tea and lunch.

Leader: Sue Mather

Sunday 15 June—Half-day Excursion, Webb's Lease, Jarrahdale

Meet at 9:00 am in the car park. Travel from Armadale on the South-west Highway. Turn left into Jarrahdale Road and go through Jarrahdale township. After approximately 5.5 km, turn right into Acacia Road (the next right turn past Blue Rock Road). Keep to the left to get to the car park. Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren are regularly seen here.

Leader: Dave Crossley

Crossword Answers No 32

ACROSS

1 evict, 3 swivel, 5 non-passerines, 9 review, 10 tear, 11 call, 13 site, 15 deter, 16 Arctic, 18 pilfer, 21 Bremer Bay, 23 treaty, 24 sandals

DOWN

1 evolution, 2 describe, 3 swerve, 4 lesser, 6 onerous, 7 parasitic, 8 newsletter, 12 art, 14 reports, 16 avid, 17 table, 19 learn, 20 cows, 22 eat

Saturday 21 June—Half-day Excursion, Ellis Brook Reserve, Gosnells

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Gosnells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin. There are now three walks in this area and we will look at one of these on this visit. It is a popular area where a variety of bushbirds can be seen—some of them not often seen near Perth such as Red-eared and Red-browed Firetail, Red-capped and Scarlet Robin.

Leader: Les Harris

Monday 23 June Meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 7:30 pm

A speaker from Perth Zoo will talk about the Zoo's collection, including its birds.

Sunday 29 June—Half-day excursion, North Mole and Woodman Point

Meet at 8:30 am at the end of North Mole, near the lighthouse. We will look for seabirds here, and may go on to look at the birds at Woodman Point. Bring telescopes if you have them.

Leader: Les Harris

Kimberley Coastal Camp

Is anyone interested in birding for 5 days at the Kimberley Coastal Camp on the coast opposite Point Walsh just east of the Mitchell Plateau? I am happy to organise the trip (all costs shared) if four or five people are interested. The trip would begin and end in Kununurra. We fly to and from the KCC by seaplane. I would prefer the trip to be in early October when most of the migrants have arrived, but the weather will be hot. You need to be reasonably fit as the going in the vine thickets and some of the sandstone areas is hard.

I have been to the KCC once and the birding was sensational. I saw all the northern mangrove specialties such as Chestnut Rail, Grey Goshawk, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Shining Flycatcher, Lemon-bellied (Kimberley) Flycatcher, Mangrove Robin, Large-billed Gerygone, etc. There are a number of remnant vine thickets and rainforest where I saw Rufous Owl, Rainbow Pitta, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Rufous Fantail, Green-backed Gerygone, Little Shrike-thrush, Varied Triller, etc. Other birds seen included Great-billed Heron, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, White-lined Honeyeater, Beach Stone-curlew, etc. And the mammals, fishing and Liz's cooking are exceptional too.

I would be happy to stay on for a few more days in Kununurra to show you birds in the Kununurra / Wyndham area if you cover my costs.

If you are interested, then please contact Frank O'Connor at foconnor@iinet.net.au or (08) 9386 5694.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project

Call for volunteers

Birds Australia WA is working closely with the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Team to implement recovery actions for this endangered species. As the public becomes more aware of the issues faced by this highly visible and well-known cockatoo, community interest in securing its future is growing. More than ever we need the support of Birds Australia members to help with the project. Are you interested in:

- ♦ Monitoring at key sites during the breeding season (August to December);
- ♦ Taking part in Carnaby-specific tree plantings in the northern wheatbelt;
- ♦ Assisting at field days, open days, rural shows etc;
- ♦ Organising events;
- ♦ Computer work; or
- ♦ General office assistance

If so please contact Leonie McMahon, Project Officer: Phone: 9287 2448 or 0438 678492 or Email ljmcmahon@bigpond.com

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Website: www.silentgrove.iinet.net.au

Email: merron@iinet.net.au

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Signature

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Post to: Birds Australia Membership
415 Riversdale Rd, Hawthorn East, Vic 3123

6/2002

Opportunities for Volunteers

This new section gives members an avenue to advertise for voluntary assistance with projects, surveys, initiatives, office.

- ◆ **Office — manning the desk** — contact Wendy Napier
Phone 9332 7265
- ◆ **Perth Biodiversity Project** — contact Cheryl Gole
Phone 9293 4958, Email gole@starwon.com.au
- ◆ **Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project** — contact Leonie McMahon
Phone 9287 2448 or 0438 678492,
Email ljmcmahon@bigpond.com
- ◆ **Eyre Bird Observatory relief wardens** — contact
* Shapelle McNee Phone 9494 1286, Email mshapelle@hotmail.com
* or Rod Smith Phone 9447 3804,
Email rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au
- ◆ **Western Ground Parrot**, 1-12 April — contact Brenda Newby
Phone 9337 5673, Email sfryc@iinet.net.au
- ◆ **6th Corella Count, 6 April** — contact John Blyth Phone Wk 9405 5161 Hm 9381 6293, Email johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au
- ◆ **Graphics/Editor/Typesetter** — contact Liz Walker at office
Phone 9383 7749, Email birdswa@iinet.net.au
- ◆ **Noisy Scrub Bird** — contact Sarah Comer Phone 9842 4500,
Email sarahc@calm.wa.gov.au
- ◆ **Atlas** — surveys for this are continuing — contact Cheryl Gole
Phone 9293 4958, Email gole@starwon.com.au
- ◆ **Perth Biodiversity Project** — contact Cheryl Gole Phone 9293 4958, Email gole@starwon.com.au
- ◆ **CALM Station Surveys** — early June — contact Clive Napier
Phone 9332 7265

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Birds Australia WA Home Page:
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Notes for Contributors

The Editors request contributors to note:

- WABN publishes material of interest to the WA Group
- contributions should be written or typed with **double spacing**—a copy on disk or emailed would assist, especially if in MSWord as a document **without** styles.
- WABN uses Birds Australia recommended English names
- except for Observations, contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary.
- Full Editorial Policy is stated in WABN 74:10-12

Printing Deadlines (at Perry House)

June 2003 issue: 1 May
September 2003 issue: 1 August
December 2003 issue: 1 November
March 2004 issue: 1 February

Advertising Rates

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

Calendar of Events

- Sun 9 March**—Half-day Excursion, Lake Joondalup
- Sat 15 March**—Evening Walk, Reg Bond Reserve, Viveash
- Wed 19 March**—Mid-week Morning Excursion, Burswood Open Spaces
- Sun 23 March**—Late Afternoon Excursion, Alfred Cove
- Sat 29 March**—Half-day Excursion, Wungong Gorge, Bedforddale
- Sat 5 April**—Half-day Excursion, Bibra Lake
- Sun 6 April**—Fifth Corella Count
- Thu 10 April**—Mid-week Morning Excursion, Piney Lakes Reserve, Winthrop
- Sun 13 April**—Half-day Excursion, Mindarie Keys
- Fri-Mon 18-21 April**—Easter Campout, Jaurdi State Forest, Shire of Coolgardie
- Fri-Sun 25-27 April**—Anzac Day Campout, Piesseville, Shire of Wagin
- Mon 28 April Meeting**—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 7:30 pm
- Sat 3 May**—Full day Excursion, Flynn Road, The Lakes
- Sun 11 May**—Full day Excursion, Yanchep National Park
- Thu 15 May**—Mid-week Morning Excursion, Pickering Brook
- Sat 17 May**—Half-day Excursion, Little Rush Lake, Yangebup
- Sun 25 May**—Half-day Excursion, Market Garden Swamps, Cockburn Shire
- Mon 26 May Meeting**—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 7:30 pm
- Sat-Mon 31 May-2 June**—Foundation Day Campout, Greenough River
- Sat 7 June**—Full day Excursion, Noble Falls, Red Hill Picnic Area and Wandoo Heights,, Shire of Swan
- Sun 15 June**—Half-day Excursion, Webb's Lease, Jarrahdale
- Sat 21 June**—Half-day Excursion, Ellis Brook Reserve, Gosnells
- Mon 23 June Meeting**—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 7:30 pm
- Sun 29 June**—Half-day excursion, North Mole and Woodman Point

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