

# Western Australian Bird Notes



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



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## FOUR URBAN BIRDS

The Swan Coastal Plain was settled in 1829 and many of the birds of the Perth region have undergone striking changes in range and abundance since that time. A number of species are now extinct, or so rare as to be considered so. These include Western Long-billed Corella, Black and Australasian Bittern, Barking Owl and Crested Shrike-tit.

Some birds have declined and are continuing to do so— Western Rosella, Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Yellow Robin, Restless Flycatcher, Grey Shrike-thrush and Golden Whistler.

Others have benefited from clearing for agriculture and urban development and have expanded their range and/or abundance. These include the ibises, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Galah and some of the honeyeaters such as Red Wattlebird, and Singing and Brown Honeyeaters.

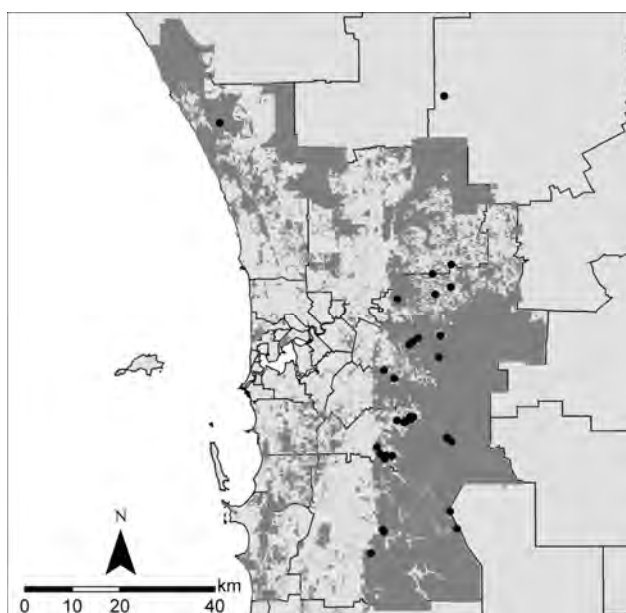
In May this year, Andrew Huggett and Cheryl Gole presented a workshop for Greening WA in the Skills for Nature Conservation series. The workshop

focussed both on landscape ecology as it relates to urban areas and on bird surveys and the management implications of bird survey results in the Perth region. In particular, we looked at the Koondoola Regional Bushland remnant in Koondoola in Perth's northern suburbs. The participants were mostly members of community-based

organisations such as 'Friends' groups, or environmental officers from local councils.

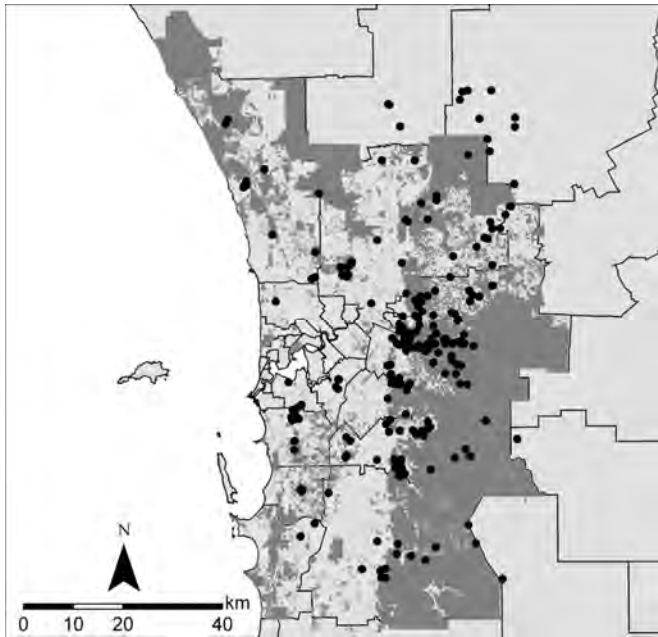
Part of the information we presented to workshop participants was a comparative set of maps of four species of birds from the Perth metropolitan region. Our aim was visually to represent some of the bird distribution patterns that result from the loss of original habitat. Typically, the fragmentation, isolation and progressive degradation of remnant vegetation results in the decline or extinction of some bird species, and the increase in range and/or abundance of others.

In order to show how some of these patterns are



**The distribution of Western Yellow Robin in the Perth Metropolitan Region, based on Birds Australia Atlas data for the period 1998-2002.**

According to these data, the robin is confined to the Darling Range with a single outlier on the Swan Coastal Plain.



**The distribution of Western Thornbill in the Perth Metropolitan Region, based on Birds Australia Atlas data for the period 1998-2002.**

The species is patchily recorded across both the Darling Range and the Swan Coastal Plain but is clearly less common on the plain.

This suggests that its status as declining in this region is well deserved.

manifested in the Perth region we chose four bird species. One—Western Yellow Robin—is now almost extinct on the Swan Coastal Plain but is still present in the Darling Range. Of the bird species known to be still declining on the plain but common in the Darling Range, we mapped two—Splendid Fairy-wren and Western Thornbill. We also mapped the Perth region distribution of the Singing Honeyeater, a species known to have benefited from clearing and urban development and now common in the Perth area. In order to create these maps, we needed reliable bird survey information for the Perth region, and we were able to use surveys from the current national bird Atlas.

The maps are interesting in that they reinforce what we already know about these species but they also tell us something about where people go birdwatching! There are also some interesting gaps.

### The maps

The maps show remnant vegetation (the shaded areas) and major roads. Each dot on each of the maps represents a single location where the species has been recorded in the national Atlas project between August 1998 and January 2003 (the limit of the data available for mapping). In the north-east, the surveys extend beyond the area covered by the vegetation mapping. The current semi-urban development of the eastern Hills area is apparent in the lightly shaded, fragmented vegetation visible in that section of the maps.

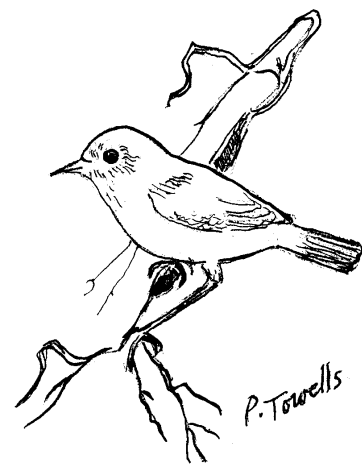
### The birds

Western Yellow Robin is a south-west endemic that declined early in the twentieth century and was extinct in Kings Park by 1935. The map shows that the species is likely to be patchily distributed throughout the Darling Range, with a single record from the Swan Coastal Plain (Yanchep National Park). It would be interesting to know if the species is absent from all the larger coastal plain remnants on the map, or if this apparent absence is an artefact of observer effort.

Although Western Thornbills and Splendid Fairy-wrens are in decline in the Perth region, Splendid Fairy-wrens survive near some wetlands and in some relatively small patches of bush. It is possible that the Western Thornbill requires larger patches of bush, and may still be disappearing from smaller remnants. The maps suggest that the Western Thornbill is less common in the Perth area than the fairy-wrens.

Recently, an observer reported Western Thornbills at Kings Park and the observation caused a flurry of emails to circulate through BAWA, as the species was thought to be extinct there. It now appears likely that the species has always remained in the park. The record was of interest partly because there are no Atlas records for this species at Kings Park. The park is one of those areas infrequently surveyed by birdwatchers, as they assume that everything is already known about such a central and well-visited spot. This interesting record shows that this isn't so—birdwatching (and filling out Atlas survey forms) in urban parks can provide very important information!

Our map for the Singing Honeyeater indicates two interesting possibilities. One is that the bare patchy areas on the Swan Coastal Plain may well result from a lack of surveys in those areas. The other is that the much patchier distribution in the Hills suggests that this species is much more common in developed urban areas, than in the semi-urban or forested Darling Range.



Western Thornbill  
½ metre from Jeff's Nose. It stayed to fossick in the  
twigs for a while, Ellis Brook, 21 June 2003.  
*Drawing by Penny Towells*

### The surveys

Over the last few years, Birds Australia and Birds Australia WA have coordinated a number of general bird survey projects asking people to submit surveys for a number of areas, including the Perth metropolitan region. These include the national Bird Atlas and the Perth-based Suburban Bird Survey and Perth Biodiversity Project bird surveys.

Cheryl has been involved with two of these projects, and finds a fairly common reaction among birdwatchers is that surveys in the Perth area are not of any interest or use as so many people do them. Observers sometimes say that they don't go anywhere 'exciting' or 'interesting' and that their local bird survey efforts might not be of particular value.

One of the 'problems' in birdwatching—one we help to create ourselves!—is that the unusual often gets the most attention in birdwatching publications. Extremely rare birds (eg, first records for Australia or the state), vagrant species, extensions of range and unusually large numbers all vie for attention. The ordinary, everyday birds that live in and near our backyards seem to be of little, or at least of less, importance. This is not true!

The production of these maps is only possible because observers have contributed large numbers of bird surveys to the Bird Atlas project. Part of the reason for reproducing the maps in *WA Bird Notes* is to encourage all observers to consider bird surveys in the Perth metropolitan region to be an important contribution to what we know about urbanising landscapes. If you live in or visit the Perth area, we encourage you to explore remnant bushland and contribute surveys to projects such as the Atlas. You can also participate in projects such as the Perth Biodiversity Project (PBP), which is currently doing intensive surveys in selected Perth reserves. Hopefully, these surveys will assist local government to manage their local reserves for biodiversity conservation. That's the practical outcome of birdwatching!

### Acknowledgements

Blair Parsons (CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems) obligingly and skilfully drew the original maps and then reconfigured them for this article. Andrew Silcocks (Birds Australia Melbourne office) kindly extracted the Atlas data for our use. Atlassers, too many to name, contributed their time and expertise in doing the bird surveys that made this mapping exercise possible in the first place. To all, we are most grateful.

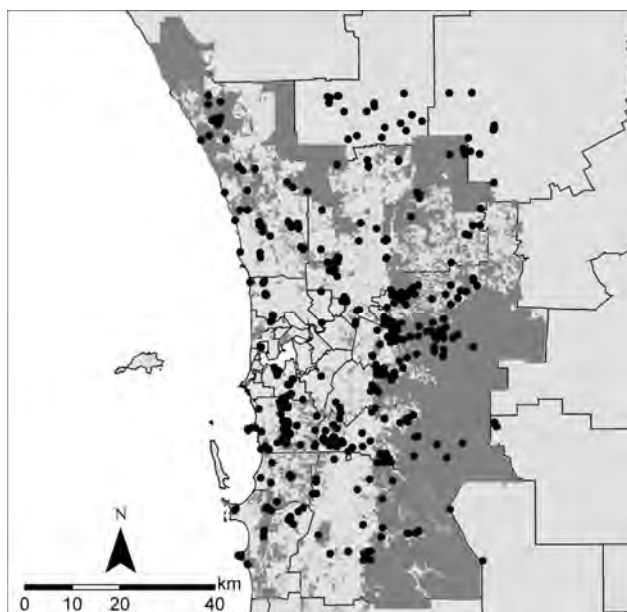
### Further reading

How, R. and Dell, J. (1993) Vertebrate fauna of the Perth metropolitan region: consequences of a modified environment. In *Urban Bush Management*, (ed. M. Hipkins), pp. 28-47. (Australian Institute of Urban Studies, Perth).

Recher, H. F. and Serventy, D. L. (1991) Long term changes in the relative abundances of birds of Kings Park, Perth, Western Australia. *Conservation Biology* 5: 90-102.

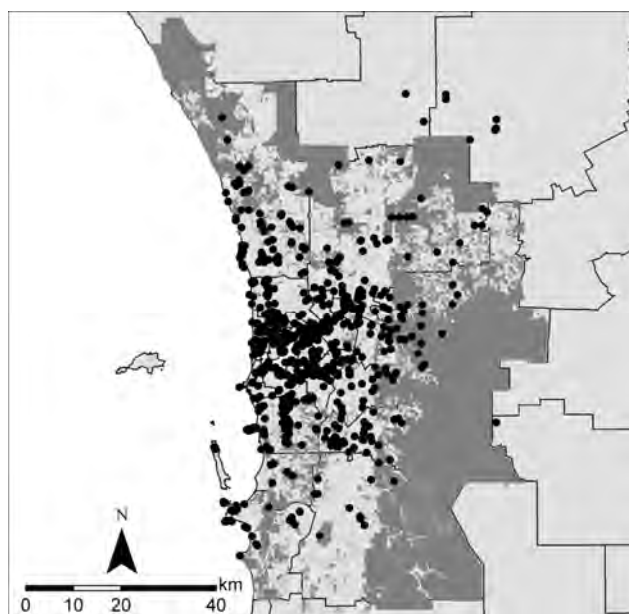
Serventy, D. L. (1948) The birds of the Swan River District, Western Australia. *Emu* 47: 241-286.

Cheryl Gole and Andrew Huggett



**The distribution of Splendid Fairy-wren in the Perth Metropolitan Region, based on Birds Australia Atlas data for the period 1998-2002.**

This species is patchily distributed across the Darling Range and Swan Coastal Plain but is much more commonly recorded than the Western Thornbill, partly because of its persistence near wetlands.



**The distribution of Singing Honeyeater in the Perth Metropolitan Region, based on Birds Australia Atlas data for the period 1998-2002.**

The species is more commonly recorded on the urbanised Swan Coastal Plain than in the Darling Range. Gaps in distribution on the plain are likely to reflect a lack of Atlas surveys in those areas.

## 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 (9383 7749). 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.** The most unusual sightings in this edition were beach washed seabirds after the storms in June and July. A **Fiordland Penguin** was found dead near Hopetoun. A **Fairy Prion** was found dead near Bunbury. A **Light-mantled Sooty Albatross** was found alive on Leighton Beach but died later in care. These three species are rarely seen in WA. Other birds found beach washed included **Cape Petrel**, **Southern Giant-Petrels**, **Little Shearwater** and **Slender-billed Prions** plus reports of **Kerguelen Petrel** and **White-headed Petrel**. Another **Fairy Prion** was seen flying near the Fremantle North Mole for about an hour.

The most unusual sighting in the metropolitan area was a **Masked Woodswallow** in Mt Claremont. There were several other sightings of unusual seabirds off the North Mole. A **Masked Lapwing** was seen at Booragoon Lake in May.

A **Letter-winged Kite** was seen in the Fitzgerald River NP last November.

A **Yellow Wagtail** was photographed in June at the top of the beach near the Eyre Bird Observatory in full breeding plumage. This species is rare anywhere in Australia at that time of year.

**Australasian Shovelers** were seen at several wetlands near Broome and are a new species for the shire. Two **Freckled Ducks** seen at Lake Eda are the first seen at Broome since the Broome Bird Observatory was opened. A **Welcome Swallow** seen at Derby is new for the shire list. A few migratory waders were also seen out of season.

### METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

**Emu** – 2, 04/06/03, The Dell (Paulls Valley) – SvA (uncommon in the Darling Range)

**Musk Duck** – 300+, 15/06/03, Clontarf Bay on Canning River (Waterford) – PGA (high number on a river)

**Freckled Duck** – 5, 12/05/03, Bibra Lake (Bibra Lake) – WM (rare at this site)

**Kerguelen Petrel** – 2, 27/06/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – MC \* 1, 27/06/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – RT, KE (rarely seen inshore)

**Soft-plumaged Petrel** – 1, 27/06/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – MC \* 5, 05/07/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – MC, RT, KE (uncommon inshore off Perth)

**FAIRY PRION** – 1, 05/07/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – MC, RT, KE (rarely seen in WA; full description received)

**Little Shearwater** – 1 beach washed, 05/07/03, near North Mole (North Fremantle) – RT, KE (uncommon in winter off Perth)

**Black-browed Albatross** – 1 immature, 27/06/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – MC \* 1 immature, 05/07/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – MC, RT, KE (uncommon inshore off Perth)

**LIGHT-MANTLED SOOTY ALBATROSS** – 1, late 06/03, Leighton Beach (North Fremantle) – per WAM (rarely seen in WA; taken into care but died later)

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel** – 2, 05/07/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – MC, RT, KE (uncommon inshore)

**Glossy Ibis** – 43, 30/06/03, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – FO (numbers increasing)

**Painted Button-quail** – 3, 13/06/03, west of Nicholson Road (Forrestdale) – DJ (uncommon in metropolitan area)

**Masked Lapwing** – 1 (sub species *miles*), 19/05/03, Booragoon Lake (Booragoon) – GM (sketch supplied, uncommon in the metropolitan area)

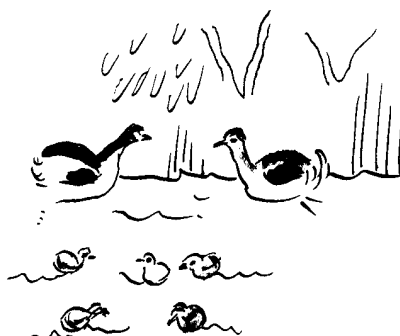
**Pacific Gull** – 1 immature, 20/06/03, Swanbourne Beach (Swanbourne) – ST \* 1 immature, 05/07/03, North Mole (North Fremantle) – RT, KE (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

**Spotted Nightjar** – 1, 25/07/03, Whiteman Park (Whiteman) – MB (2<sup>nd</sup> record for Whiteman Park)

**White-breasted Robin** – 1, 23/06/03, bushland south of Ocean Reef Boat Harbour (Ocean Reef) – RP (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

**Restless Flycatcher** – 1, 25/07/03, Whiteman Park (Whiteman) – MB (3<sup>rd</sup> record for Whiteman Park)

**White-winged Triller** – 1, 06/05/03, Floreat Waters (Herdsman) – WM (late sighting in the metropolitan area)



How many did you count?  
Cartoon by Penny Towells

**Masked Woodswallow** – 1 male, 28/06/03, Alfred Road / Rochdale Road (Mt Claremont) – ST (description supplied, rare in the metropolitan area)

**Grey Currawong** – 2 flying, 23/06/03, Hay Street (West Perth) – TM (uncommon near the city)

## SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

**FIORDLAND PENGUIN** – 1, 24/07/03, West Beach near Hopetoun (Ravensthorpe) – per PW (rare in WA)

**Blue Petrel** – 1, 06/07/03, Cape Naturaliste (Busselton) – FO, WM (uncommon in WA)

**FAIRY PRION** – 1 beach washed, 06/07/03, Belvidere Beach, Leschenault Peninsula (Harvey) – AW (rare in WA)

**Letter-winged Kite** – 1, 29/11/02, Fitzgerald River NP near Whoogarup Range (Ravensthorpe) – SC (rare in the south west) (see note elsewhere in this issue)

**Red-necked Stint** – 3220, 21/06/03, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC, TK (very high number for winter)

**Pacific Golden Plover** – 14, 03/01/03, Beaufort Inlet (Jerramungup) – DJ (high number)

**Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** – 2, 10/07/03, South Western Highway 2 km north of Coolup (Murray) – MB (not reported here before)

**Mulga Parrot** – 2, 26/04/03 and 27/04/03, Piesseville (Wagin) – BAWA (western edge of range)

**Fork-tailed Swift** – 50, 23/04/03, Quoin Head in Fitzgerald River NP (Ravensthorpe) – PW (high number in the south west)

**Redthroat** – 1 female, 22/06/03, Darkin Road / Qualen Road (York) – JHD (west of normal range)

## ARID ZONE

**Australian Shelduck** – 2, 03/06/03, Coondiner Pool (East Pilbara) – MC, RT, PK (uncommon in the Pilbara)

**Great Crested Grebe** – 5+, 02/06/03, Fortescue Marshes (East Pilbara) – PK (uncommon in the Pilbara)

**Grey Falcon** – 1, 16/07/03, Stake Well (Cue) – HJB (uncommon)

**Whiskered Tern** – 5500+, 02/06/03, Fortescue Marshes (East Pilbara) – MC, RT, PK (very large number)

**Western Corella** – 6, 15/07/03, Rabbit Proof Fence near White Wells Station (Yalgoo) – HJB (edge of range)

**Yellow Wagtail** – 1 breeding plumage, probably sub species *simillima*, 11/06/03, Kanidal Beach 11 km west of Eyre Bird Observatory (Dundas) – EBO (see article elsewhere in this issue; photograph and description supplied, rare in the south, rare in winter)

## KIMBERLEY

**Hutton's Shearwater** – 240, 08/06/03, 7 km off Coconut Wells (Broome) – AB (high number)

**Freckled Duck** – 2, 01/08/03, Taylors Lagoon (Broome) – AB (1<sup>st</sup> for 16 years)

**Australasian Shoveler** – 9, 22/05/03, Lake Campion (Broome) – AB \* 4, 10/07/03, Lake Eda (Broome) – CH \* 2 males, 17/07/03, Taylor's Lagoon (Broome) – AB (1<sup>st</sup> records for Broome)

**Buff-banded Rail** – 1, 02/08/03, Nimilaica Claypan (Broome) – AB (uncommon in Broome)

**Little Curlew** – 2, 19/07/03, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – AB, CH (unusual in winter)

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** – 1, 16/07/03, Bush Point (Broome) – AWSG \* 1, 23/07/03, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – AB (unusual in winter)

**Oriental Pratincole** – 3, 19/07/03, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – AB, CH \* 7, 23/07/03, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – AB (unusual in winter)

**Arctic Jaeger** – 1, 24/05/03 and 25/05/03, Coulomb Point (Broome) – GS (uncommon in Broome)

**Welcome Swallow** – 1, 30/07/03, sewage works (Derby – West Kimberley) – AB (very uncommon in Derby)

## OBSERVERS

AB = Adrian Boyle

AW = Andrew Walter

AWSG = Australasian Wader Studies Group

BAWA = BAWA Excursion

BM = Brenden Metcalf

CH = Chris Hassell

DJ = David James

EBO = Eyre Bird Observatory

FO = Frank O'Connor

GM = George Miller

GS = George Swann

HJB = Hilary & John Brooke

JHD = John & Hazel Darnell

KE = Karen Edwards

MB = Michael Bamford

MC = Michael Craig

PGA = Pam & George Agar

PK = Peter Kendrick

PW = Peter Wilkins

RP = Ryan Phillips

RT = Roy Teale

SC = Sarah Comer

ST = Sean Tomlinson

SvA = Sean van Alpen

TK = Tony Kirkby

TM = Tim Murphy

WAM = WA Museum

WM = Wynton Maddeford



Red Knot with tag, seen while conducting a wader count at Pelican Point, Carnarvon, 28 June 2003

Photo courtesy Les George

## Letters to the Editors

The Editors

Please note that the photo printed on page 17 of edition No 106 June 2003 is not my photo (the Grey Fantail).

**Molly Angus**

Editors' note: Sorry for the mis-labelling—the photo was from Bea and Ian, the Wardens at Eyre Bird Observatory.

Dear Editors

### **Shark Bay Nature Group**

A small group of dedicated volunteers in Denham are currently trying to establish a Shark Bay Nature or Friends Group with the objective of increasing the knowledge of local residents of, and visitors to, the unique and fragile nature of WA's only World Heritage Area.

Initially we hope to have the group meeting informally to participate in short nature walks or to attend lectures on different values or issues in the area. It is hoped that a natural progression from this will be the group helping to organize and participate in 'hands-on' conservation projects such as Wader Surveys, weed removal or rubbish clean-ups. Some of the people who will be involved have already assisted with Hooded Plover Surveys, Mid-Winter Wader Surveys, Thick-billed Grasswren surveys and Malleefowl nest searches in the area.

As we only have limited knowledge (but great enthusiasm) when it comes to bird identification and issues we would greatly appreciate any assistance we could get from visiting Birds Australia members with presentation of slide shows or organising and leading of bird excursions/campouts in the area.

If any BA members are visiting the Shark Bay Area and could assist in anyway (even to just sit down for a 'cuppa' and a chat about birds) could they please contact Carl Beck on phone (08) 99481125 or email [hcbeck@bigpond.com.au](mailto:hcbeck@bigpond.com.au)

**Carl Beck, Shark Bay**

Dear Editors

### **WADER WATCHING AT CARNARVON**

Date is 29 June and I awake thinking of where I will go birding today; minutes later it is raining. Not unusual for this time of year you may think, but this is Carnarvon where we haven't had a good rain in over two years, that was until 21-22 June when we had about 25 mm and we've had intermittent but good rains since. It had been so dry for so long that even the hardiest of acacias were dying in some areas but now I have to contemplate where I can go due to road closures. We still have many dirt roads in these parts.

My mind swings to yesterday when I spent some time conducting a winter wader count at Pelican Point where I had seen a Red Knot with an orange tag. This was not the reason that I wanted to go there, though I had hopes of spotting it again. I had the urge to go back the very same day but thought better of it because the tide was going out and the birds would be dispersing.

The subjects I was interested in were tattlers. I could not rid myself of the thought that some may have been different from the norm, having noted a number being of a slightly larger size and difference in colouration.

After breakfast and reading John Brooke's account of a possible Wandering Tattler sighting in June Bird Notes I had to return. Predictably I never saw anything but Grey-tailed Tattler. The difference in colouration I

put down to a play of light on the plumage, but the size difference -- ?

Bird numbers were down from yesterday, wet and with wind that was absent yesterday. I only saw one Red Knot and wondered where the others might be. A trip around to the boat harbour, about a kilometre across the water yet several kilometres by road may hold the answer, so off I go. Yes, there are more tattlers and godwits on this side today with the added bonus of an Eastern Curlew and two Whimbrels, two species that were absent when I did a count here on the 26<sup>th</sup>. That should please Colin Davis.

I should mention that I have adopted both he and Tony Kirkby as my mentors. Both have given me considerable help and encouragement. I know of no one else in these parts to aid me when I see something I am not sure about and that is not so uncommon in my case as I have only



Ruff at sewage ponds, Carnarvon, 14 Feb 2003.

*Photo courtesy Les George*

been surveying for two years. I have purchased a camera in the hope that it might aid in identification of some birds if I should be lucky enough to get close enough or that the subject will stay still for long enough to even focus. I have enclosed a photo of the Red Knot with tag, the Ruff that was reported in the February count and listed in the June issue, plus an unknown. The unknown I had already emailed to Tony and unfortunately he cannot give a conclusive judgement, maybe someone else out there could. My observations though limited suggest it was a honeyeater, from the back it was pipit like in appearance and of similar size. Much of the time it was obscured in the foliage of the acacia in which it was photographed and only one picture was taken before it departed, never to be seen again.

Les George



Ruff at sewage ponds, Carnarvon, 14 Feb 2003

Photo courtesy Les George

## Book Reviews

Two recent titles for the Library collection may be of interest to members.

***Tasmania's offshore islands: seabirds and other natural features***, by Nigel Brothers, David Pemberton, Helen Pryor and Vanessa Halley, a Tasmanian Museum publication, is a welcome donation to the Library. The book covers about 280 islands, giving their size, status, vegetation and seabird species found and breeding there. The information is well set out with a separate page or pages for each island. It also has a description and distribution of the major breeding seabird species on the offshore islands, this information given in double page spreads. There are detailed maps on each of the islands and coloured photographs of the seabird species plus their habitats. There is more information in the Appendices, including other fauna and land tenure. Anyone contemplating a visit to Tasmania should have a look at this title. It may be borrowed and is at 598.09946.

Many members participated in the Wanneroo bird surveys during last year. The report on this, ***Birds and reserves of the City of Wanneroo: a survey and review***, by Allan Jones and Cheryl Gole can be borrowed from the Library. This report covers the bird species recorded there, with graphs comparing the number of species in different reserves. It also details and discusses the major habitat types of the area. The appendices give survey site details and the bird species recorded in each reserve. This title can be found at 598.09941.

Suzanne Mather

Robert Stranger has put together a most comprehensive work titled ***The Birds of the Mandurah District, Western Australia***. This is the first bird list for the Mandurah district and covers 295 species. However it is much more than just a list of birds in the area. He has made a detailed search of historical publications as well as more recent databases. As a result the annotated list includes relative abundance figures based on reporting rates, the distribution, the status and a brief discussion of each species recorded in the area.

This is an important region because it includes wetlands such as the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site and even more relevant when it is realised that 75% of the Swan Coastal Plain wetlands have been lost. It is also important because it is an area that has had high human impact dating from Aboriginal time of at least 38 000 years BP. It is an area that is continuing to change, both in its use and structurally, at quite a dramatic rate, for example the Dawsville Cut impact is yet to be fully understood.

There is discussion on the distribution of species, differentiating between those inland species that have established themselves through breeding, such as the Yellow-throated Miner, and those that irrupt briefly such as the White-backed Swallow. There is also discussion on seabirds that have extended their ranges south from the Houtman's Abrolhos Islands.

The different ecosystems such as the Jarrah forest and the Indian Ocean are discussed in relation to the changes over an extended period and the possible evolutionary



influences on avian species of these changes. The work concludes with a comprehensive reference list.

This book is available for borrowing from the Library and is found at 598.09941. However it is also available for purchase from the Book Sales and is a recommended purchase for any members who frequent the wonderful birding sites in the Mandurah district.

Suzanne Mather

## LIBRARY NEWS

Stuart Houghton is taking over responsibility for the Library and the book sales.

I'm sure he would welcome any suggested additions to the Library.

## From the CEO's Desk

The most recent BA Council meeting was held over the same weekend as our annual general meeting and regional groups meeting in Hobart.

Council discussed protocols and arrangements for supplying Birds Australia data to external parties. This is a vital issue for us and we hope to have achieved a balance between protecting one of our largest assets—our data particularly from the Atlas—while at the same time ensuring rigorous research is carried out.

Reports at the meeting included financial, membership, research committee, contracts signed and project reports.

The ongoing Council committee on communication with members further looked at ways to get our message out to members. This discussion focused on news about our ongoing Atlas project and we will be trying even harder through various strategies to ensure members know we are still atlasing and accepting surveys. Council also agreed it was vital we provided feedback to atlasers and we have various strategies in place to do this over the remainder of this year.

Progress at Newhaven was discussed at the meeting (see Newhaven report below).

Council also agreed on the rules and guidelines for the establishment of the Birds Australia Endowment Fund which has been set up to receive bequests and donations with the capital preserved and only part of the interest utilised. More news on that later this year.

Other items included consideration of ways we could work more closely with the Bird Observers Club of Australia through publications and our preferred model for representation on our global affiliate—Birdlife International based in the UK.

Mr Ian Hamilton has been appointed the Birds Australia Newhaven Reserve Manager. Ian recently arrived at Newhaven from his previous hometown of Geraldton, WA, and has launched straight into the many tasks that are required to be completed. Ian's wife Nicola is remaining in

Geraldton until the end of the year to complete her nursing diploma and will then be joining Ian at Newhaven. In the meantime Nicola will be visiting Newhaven for a couple of weeks.

For the period up to 30 June Ian was ably assisted by volunteer rangers Bob and Karolee Woolcott. We would like to thank and congratulate Bob and Karolee for their wonderful efforts. They have been replaced by Don Royal who is now on site with Ian.

Visitation levels at Newhaven are steady and we have received good feedback about members' experiences while there.

Infrastructure installed recently includes upgrades to water and power supply, camping toilets and a rangers demountable accommodation. Birds Australia has also just completed an application to the Natural Heritage Trust for assistance with signage—both interpretive and directional.

A difficult issue at Newhaven has been whether to allow campfires. The committee has just decided to allow campfires between April and September for 2003 at which point we will review the situation. The winters are very clear but cold at night and a warm fire is part of the camping experience, however, the collection of woody debris and firewood can have a detrimental effect on the habitat of birds and other fauna, particularly if it is concentrated in one area over a long period. We will be keeping a close review on the situation and in the meantime, visitors are encouraged to bring their own firewood.

Finally, our other reserve in the South Australian Mallee—Gluepot—has been honoured once more. This time with a Banksia Award—arguably one of Australia's most prestigious environmental awards. The reserve has also just obtained a substantial grant from the South Australian Tourism Commission to upgrade the visitor centre. Congratulations to the superb effort of all Gluepot volunteers.



While on awards – our Atlas project has been accepted as a finalist in the biodiversity category for a Eureka prize next month. Fingers crossed!

Finally, don't forget the upcoming congress and campout and AOC. Check your latest *Wingspan* for dates.

**Jim Downey**

Editors' note: While going to press, we heard that Birds Australia did win one of the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes — the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney Eureka Prize for Biodiversity Research - for the shortly-to-be-published New Atlas of Australian Birds. Congratulations to everyone who contributed!

## **Perth Biodiversity Project FIELD DAYS Perth Metropolitan Region**

**In September, October and November, we are running Field Days for project participants and people who are interested in taking part but would like to find out more.**

The field days will be small group excursions focussed on bird identification skills. We will explore bushland not visited by BAWA on excursions.

**Dates and more information from Cheryl Gole:**

Tel/Fax: 9293 4958

Email: [gole@starwon.com.au](mailto:gole@starwon.com.au)

## **Birds Australia WA Inc Reports**

The business of the committee continues rain or shine and often long into the night, but it can be hard to decide what to put into the committee report as so much appears elsewhere in Bird Notes.

It can also be hard for the committee to keep track of everything that is happening in BAWA, and our meetings often consist of a succession of reports on different projects and activities. There is work being carried out on Hooded Plovers, Ground Parrots and Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, while sub-committees on research and conservation, and on publicity and excursions, get on with their business very effectively. There are even plans to make a 30 second advertisement that will appear on Access 31.

One of the activities that is described elsewhere in this issue of WABN was the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Symposium, and it remains only for me to acknowledge and thank Leonie McMahon and Cheryl Gole, together with their many helpers, for making this happen. This brought over 100 people together to learn and talk about the conservation of this spectacular bird, and was acknowledged as a great success. The day gave Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo a valuable publicity boost and we hope to capitalise on this.

Also on the committee's agenda has been discussion concerning the link between BAWA and Eyre Bird Observatory. All members of BAWA have probably either been to Eyre or would like to go there, and this year we have had eight applicants for our student grants to attend Stephen Davies' course on ornithological techniques. Eyre is a special place to many of us but it is a very demanding place to maintain, both for the wardens and for the Eyre Management Committee. Therefore, we hope to strengthen the ties between BAWA and Eyre.

At the end of May, I represented BAWA at the meeting of the chairpersons of the Regional Groups that was held in Hobart, the day before Birds Australia's Members' Day. These Regional Group meetings take place twice a year and provide representatives of Regional Groups and National Office with the opportunity to exchange ideas and increase the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. One outcome was a proposal to prepare and trial a new membership form for Birds Australia in WA; a form that makes clear the relationship between BAWA and BA. There was actually a lot of discussion about membership that will probably be picked up at the next meeting.

The Members' Day that followed the Regional Groups' meeting show-cased bird research in Australasia, with speakers from most Australian states (including WA) and New Zealand. The day after, there was even a chance to see some of Tasmania's endemics, such as the Forty-spotted Pardalote, Tasmanian Native-hen and Yellow Wattlebird.

Recent correspondence has included several requests for BAWA to be represented in discussions on Perth's future, at an environmental forum organised by a major political party, and at a workshop on the management of several national parks in the south-west. These requests are an indication that while the public face of BAWA is often that of a group of birdwatchers, we are much more than this and are being recognised as more than this. The challenge for the committee and all members is to achieve a balance between recreational birdwatching and being an effective organisation for research and conservation.

**Mike Bamford  
Chair, BAWA Inc.**

## BAWA Projects

### BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS

A social event for members and friends. New members especially welcome.

Many members would be familiar with the twitchathons that are held annually by Birds Australia, but have been held intermittently in WA. Bird-watching for 24 hours straight can be a lot of fun but also a lot of hard work, so we are going to try something different this year. It will be intense bird-watching, but only for a short time, it will be in one place, so once you are there you don't have to drive great distances, it will provide information that will be useful and, best of all, it will be followed by breakfast (or should that be brunch?).

The inaugural event will take place at the Western Power Playground in King's Park (look for the Birds Australia banner) on Saturday 25 October, beginning at 8:00 am. This is during National Bird Week. Teams will be assigned different survey paths within King's Park and will be allowed one hour on their assigned path. The paths will be approximately the same length; some will start from the playground but others will be located elsewhere within the Park.

The aim is for each team to record birds along their assigned survey path in a one hour period. Prizes will be awarded for the team with the most bird species, the fewest bird species, the most unusual bird (decided upon by a show of hands on the day) and in any other categories that we think of on the day.

BAWA will provide tea and coffee, orange juice, croissants and fruit for a healthy breakfast. Rather than provide environmentally-unfriendly paper plates and cups, we ask that all participants bring their own mug and plate and whatever else they think they might need. Those who want a cooked breakfast can bring their own and use the barbeque facilities.

A donation of \$5.00 per person is requested and there will be a door-prize (although, as this is an outdoor event, there will not actually be a door).

#### Rules

- Minimum team size is 4. There is no maximum team size (but be sensible).
- At least two team members must confirm the identity of each bird species recorded.
- Birds can be seen or heard.
- Team members are allowed to leave the path only to identify a bird first seen or heard from the path. They must return to the path before searching for new birds.
- Strictly one hour or you won't get breakfast!
- Please survey the path assigned to you. No discussion will be entered into regarding this.

- All surveys are to be completed by 10.00 am.
- Each team will be provided with a record form; please use it as your records are valuable.
- Teams must be nominated by contacting the BAWA Office (e-mail, snail-mail or 'phone) and providing the names of team members by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. There are limited pathways available, so hurry! If you haven't got a team, call the office anyway as we can take your details and arrange something for you.

While this is intended to be a fun, social event, it also has a serious purpose. The birdlife of King's Park has been documented for many decades, but this event will provide a snapshot of the birds across much of King's Park over a very short period of time. If carried out annually, it may well chart the changing levels of abundance and presence or absence of birds within the Park. If everyone enjoys themselves, it is an approach that we could take in other bushland reserves around Perth, but King's Park seemed like a good place to start!

### CARNABY'S COCKATOO CONSERVATION SYMPOSIUM

On 2 July 2 108 people from the south-west of the state attended a symposium on the conservation of one of WA's threatened endemic bird species, Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. Entitled *Conserving Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo: Future Directions*, the symposium aimed to bring together all stakeholders in the bird's conservation. The event was jointly hosted by Birds Australia WA and the WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit from the Department of Conservation and Land Management (DCLM).

The Symposium provided a rare opportunity for people involved with the conservation of the cockatoo to meet each other and a range of stakeholders presented papers and attended the symposium as participants. Stakeholders included individuals, landcare groups, a rural shire, government agencies, community-based and non-government organisations and students and academics. All members of the Carnaby's Recovery Team were present, including Dr Denis Saunders, the symposium's keynote speaker and well-known for his research on the cockatoo.

Topics covered during the Symposium included research and conservation history, the recovery plan, the management of captive stocks and implications of the clearing of the Gnangara pine plantation on populations of the cockatoo that over-summer on the Swan Coastal Plain. Speakers also presented papers on the problems of the identification of White-tailed Black-cockatoos, the practical planning of planting programs in the wheatbelt and Birds Australia WA's on-ground recovery project. The

session *Perspectives from the Bush* gave speakers from the Shire of Moora, Land for Wildlife, Woodland Watch, the Coorow farm *Koobabbie* and the landcare group *Cockies for Landcare* an opportunity to share their experiences and visions for the cockatoo's recovery with other participants.

At the end of the day, Denis Saunders summarised the day's proceedings by detailing gaps in research and conservation actions that became evident during the Symposium. One of the gaps was geographical—almost all papers were directly concerned with work done only in the northern part of the cockatoo's range. A number of research gaps were identified, together with a requirement for easily accessible information for landholders.

One of the hallmarks of the Symposium was the willingness of people to travel long distances to attend an event such as this. The day also attracted a number of sponsors, and the organisers are grateful to Birds Australia WA, Birds Australia, the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Binocular, Telescope and Optical World, the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project, CSIRO and the Million Trees Project for their support. Speakers continued their generous support of the Symposium by contributing written papers for the published proceedings.

A great many people, too many to name here, assisted in the organisation of the day. Without them, the Symposium would not have been possible.

**Cheryl Gole**

*Proceedings from the Symposium 'Conserving Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo: Future Directions' will be available in hard copy or on CD by late August 2003. The proceedings are available free of charge to all Symposium participants, and to individuals, community groups and government agencies that can demonstrate an involvement in the conservation of the cockatoo. Additional copies are available at cost price. Contact Cheryl Gole for more details. Tel: 9293 4958. Email: [gole@starwon.com.au](mailto:gole@starwon.com.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 or soon after.

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 positive 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* Shapelle McNee

(08) 9494 1286; email [mshapelle@hotmail.com](mailto:mshapelle@hotmail.com), and leave your phone number.

## **CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO RECOVERY PROJECT**

### **Special request to Birds Australia WA members**

At the recovery team meeting in July 2003 it was agreed that a tracking program would be trialed this breeding season. CALM officers will mark the tail feathers of chicks at some breeding sites in the Northern Wheatbelt for the purpose of determining where the birds travel to after they fledge from the nest. The white tail panels will be marked with special paint on the underside only. Different colours will be used for different breeding areas.

If you see a Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo marked as described please let us know. You can record your observation by:

Calling the Birds Australia office on 9383 7749; or  
Emailing me on [ljmcmahon@bigpond.com](mailto:ljmcmahon@bigpond.com)

The sort of information we need:

- Date and time of observation
- Colour of paint
- Number of marked birds
- Number of birds accompanying marked birds
- Location (be as specific as you can eg place name, property location number, distance from closest road intersection, GPS reading if you have it, distance and direction from nearest town)
- Your contact details

The marked chicks will probably also be banded so please look for this too. If you happen to have your telescope handy and you happen to be observing an obliging cocky and you happen to be able to read details on the band ... please record them and send us that information too.

Generally Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos breed in the wheatbelt from late winter through spring and sometimes into summer. They then tend to congregate in feeding flocks on the coastal plain. Chicks will start fledging in late spring at the earliest. It is possible the paint may last all through their first year so you may see marked birds through summer, autumn and into the following winter. The rural communities at the breeding sites concerned will also be asked to participate.

By the next edition of WABN I will be able to pass on more details of the program, including colours used and numbers of chicks marked.

### **Monitoring of breeding sites**

Those wishing to get out into the Wheatbelt this spring can also take part in our main monitoring program, which is quite separate to the chick tracking program. Monitoring at key breeding sites is being carried out to determine the size of breeding populations, to identify specific breeding hollows and to identify corresponding breeding sites. At times it may be necessary to track birds over some distances while at other times it will be a case of staking out particular areas to identify active hollows. This work is

Date from	Date to	Location	Approx traveling time from Perth city	Accommodation
Wed 27 Aug	Fri 29 Aug	Walebing	2.5 hrs north	Shearers' quarters
Mon 1 Sep	Wed 3 Sep	Gillingarra	2 hrs north	Visitors' house
Tue 30 Sep	Wed 1 Oct	Calingiri	2 hrs north	Wyening Mission
Tue 28 Oct	Thu 30 Oct	Nyabing	3.5 hrs south	TBA
Wed 5 Nov	Fri 7 Nov	Walebing	2.5 hrs north	Shearers' quarters
Tue 18 Nov	Thu 20 Nov	Gillingarra	2 hrs north	Visitors' house
Mon 1 Dec	Wed 3 Dec	Nyabing	3.5 hrs south	TBA

Table: Monitoring dates for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project

commonly done early in the morning and late afternoon to early evening.

Dates and preliminary details are as above.

Anyone who would like to take part in monitoring or assist with rural shows please contact me on 08 9287 2448 or by e-mail at [ljmcmahon@bigpond.com](mailto:ljmcmahon@bigpond.com).

**Leonie McMahon**

watching the birds. It will take time to finish the video, but should be on Channel 31 by late spring. My thanks to all the volunteers who gave their time in helping create the video for Birds Australia.

**Elsa Dabbs**  
**Publicity Group**

## ONE FINE DAY

After three nail-biting weeks of watching the weather reports for a fine weekend, it was decided to take a chance and set up the day for the shooting of the video commercial we were organising for Channel 31, Perth.

I was up early and cautiously opened the blinds hoping that my optimism would win through. It was just breaking dawn and I was greeted with a beautiful sky layered in hues of pink and blue. My spirits rose and, knowing that the weather was going to hold good for us, I quickly dressed and was on my way. Collecting my grandson Sam, who had volunteered to come along, we arrived in good time to greet everyone at the northern end of Herdsman Lake.

Tony and Jill Luha from VideomakersWA arrived at the same time and busily set up their cameras. Fourteen Birds Australia volunteers turned up and we began. Several different scenes were taken. First we did the last part of a bird walk and sat down for a bird count. Then there were shots of people looking through the 'scope, checking the bird guide and walking to the next point. On a small grassy promontory overlooking the lake, complete with shady tree and bench, we reverted to being real bird-watchers when a Swamp Harrier flew over being chased by a raven. It was such a lovely morning and so clear for bird watching that we forgot about the cameras and enjoyed the day. It was only Tony requesting that we move down and be looking in the tree that brought us back to our mission.

Anyone who would like to take part in monitoring or assist with rural shows please contact me on 08 9287 2448 or by e-mail at [ljmcmahon@bigpond.com](mailto:ljmcmahon@bigpond.com).

After shooting plenty of video, which has to end up as a 30 second commercial, Tony and Jill left and we carried on

## NOW THE GOOD NEWS!

### 1. GROUND PARROTS AT CAPE ARID

There was no good news about Western Ground Parrots (WGP) for the June edition of Bird Notes. However, it is with much pleasure that it can now be said that this has changed.

Until 1989 Ground Parrots were known to occur in Cape Arid National Park but, despite several searches, some intense, no records were confirmed since then. It seemed that a combination of fire, flood and foxes had led to the demise of that easternmost population. In October 2002, fire again burnt extensive areas in the park and its surrounds. Two hundred thousand hectares of country was burnt leaving only relatively small areas of potential Ground Parrot habitat unburnt.

The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team realised that searching the much reduced available habitat area could determine whether or not the population there really did still exist. BAWA Inc. became the contractor with NHT funds provided by the Department of Conservation and Land Management. A team of four (Joan and Tony Bush, Shapelle McNee and Brenda Newbey) was signed on and we were very fortunate that two volunteers (Anne Gadsby and Arnold Morales) also agreed to assist. Allan Rose, the Ranger-in-Charge at Cape Arid National Park, worked hard to ensure that we made best use of our time, and that we lived in a higher than expected level of comfort.

Searching was carried out in four main areas, two in Cape Arid National Park (CANP), one in unallocated Crown Land along Balladonia Track and one in Nuytsland Nature Reserve (NNR) which is east of CANP. Only one of these areas had been surveyed previously for WGP. It was positive in the 1980s, but negative thereafter.

The result was a great relief. A total of at least 25 Western Ground Parrots was found in three of the four areas: both of the CANP sites and the NNR site. Several of the birds were calling well and all seven surveyors eventually heard birds. Two of the sites were further east than WGPs had ever been recorded. There were some differences in calling patterns from the other better-known populations. Usually much of the evening calling is after the other diurnal birds fall silent, and in the morning WGPs give the wake-up calls. But during this survey, most of the calls occurred while other birds were calling. In one of the CANP areas, calling consistently began 10 to 20 minutes before sunset as against at least 10 minutes after sunset which we have come to expect. The 'buzzing' call which has been noted in both of the other WGP populations but not as far as we are aware in other Ground Parrot subspecies, was not heard.

Buoyed by early success and helped by fair to excellent weather conditions, the team of seven worked very consistently to accomplish as much as it did. There were a few complications. Some of the Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters gave excellent renditions of Ground Parrot calls, and there was a cicada (we think) that caused confusion for a time with its repeated bird-like sound. Some tracks were quite hazardous (ask Anne), and the extent of the burnt country was depressing though there was no spare time to dwell on this.

It is a much rosier outlook knowing that WGPs occur in three main areas rather than two, and there is the hope that the population in each of these areas can increase under good habitat management. The heaths of the south coast will always be susceptible to fire but better management should be able to ensure that fires are not so extensive. The results of our recent survey will provide a valuable basis for improved management decisions relating to WGPs in the Cape Arid area.

Reports detailing the Cape Arid Survey 2003, and the 2002-3 Waychinicup surveys are now available for borrowing from the BAWA library and from the Albany Bird Group.

To learn more about WGPs and their recovery and perhaps become involved, consider joining the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot. Contact Anne Bondin (9844 1793) or Brenda Newbey (9337 5673), or visit the BAWA Website, clicking on 'Projects' then 'Western Ground Parrot'.

**Brenda Newbey**

## 2. NEW GROUND PARROT PROJECT

The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team has been successful in getting NHT funding through the South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team (SCRIPT) for some exciting developments with the Ground Parrot.

The project will be co-ordinated by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, but will rely heavily on input from the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot.

We will be employing a full time project officer for a year, mainly to liaise with volunteers and co-ordinate surveys, monitoring and a trial translocation. The person will also contribute to a new recovery plan. The position has already been advertised, and we hope to have someone in place by late September.



Western Ground Parrot  
*Drawing courtesy David McFarland*

With the translocation, the intent is to move a small number of birds from Fitzgerald River National Park to a site near Walpole. This site is within the historical range of the species, but in an area where there have been no records for 40-50 years, despite a number of small-scale searches in suitable habitat. Hopefully, this trial will be a first step in re-establishing Ground Parrots west of Albany, which would lift their survival prospects significantly.

However, we need help! Monitoring and survey are only effective if there are a number of people at the same site at the same time, in order to get adequate coverage. There will also be lots to do in connection with the translocation. So, if you would like an interesting challenge and an opportunity to assist in the conservation of one of our rarest birds, please contact either Sarah Comer (9842 4513,

sarahc@calm.wa.gov.au), Brenda Newbey (9337 5673 or sfryc@iinet.net.au) or Anne Bondin (9844 1793 or albanyparrots@hotmail.com). We will need help from late September to December, and again in autumn. If you can assist any time during that period, we would be most appreciative.

**Allan Burbidge**

## LAKE MACLEOD SURVEYS 2002-2003

Since 1997 Dampier Salt Limited (DSL) has been conducting an ecological research program in and around the permanent wetland areas of Lake MacLeod. This research is focused on four main aspects of the wetlands—the mangrove community, water chemistry, aquatic life and bird life.

Various university and non-government bodies have been enlisted to assist DSL staff with these programs. In November 1999 Colin Davis and Tony Kirkby were asked to join an expedition to the northern ponds to identify and count the migratory waders and waterbirds. Subsequent trips to the lake have been made each year at dates pertinent to migratory and resident wader cyclical life patterns. Since the September 2000 survey, visits have been made to the lake in October 2001, January 2002, September 2002 and March 2003. These surveys have been undertaken by the Wader Study Group (WSG), Birds Australia WA (BAWA) and DSL.

Waterbird and bushbird species have also been monitored during these surveys. An article on the 1999 and 2000 surveys was published in 2001 (WA Bird Notes 98: 1-6).

Previous surveys have been reported on separately, but figures from those surveys are also reported below to allow comparisons. Locations surveyed were essentially in the same general area of Lake MacLeod as previous surveys and are listed below (see also map). We use the terms 'migratory' or 'migrant' to denote species that migrate to points beyond Australia for part of the year (in the case of waders /shorebirds, to nesting grounds in the Northern Hemisphere). 'Non-migrant' refers to Australian breeding species, many of which are nomadic or undertake regular/irregular movements within the continent.

Curlew Sandpipers breed in the central high-artic coastal tundra regions of Siberia in June and July and move to their non breeding summer feeding grounds between July and September. Banding Programs have shown birds using the East Asian Australasian flyway arrive at staging areas on the north-west coast before continuing their journeys to more southerly destinations. The RAOU 1987 Jaensch and Vervest Waterbirds in Remote Wetlands expedition reported 41 606 birds at Lake MacLeod during their September 1987 visit, and established the lake as an important staging area for Curlew Sandpipers on their southward migration. Our 2000, 2001 and 2002 surveys substantiated these findings when large numbers of Curlew Sandpipers were found during September and October visits.

To determine whether the birds used the lake as a staging area during their northern migration it was necessary to visit the lake in March or April. DSL were approached and readily agreed to an additional survey whereupon arrangements were made for a trip to the lake between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2003.

This report is a summary of the September 2002 and the March 2003 surveys.

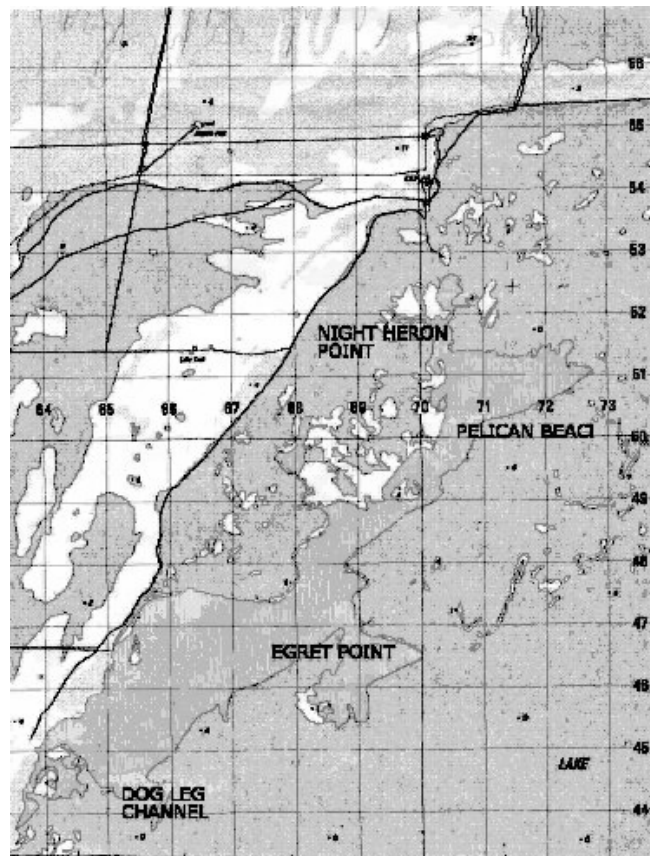


Figure 1: Survey locations in the area of permanent water at Lake MacLeod.

## Study Sites and Methods

In 2002 (as in 1999), a flight over the lake by fixed winged aircraft was made to locate bird flocks before observations in the field commenced. Surveys on the ground were made by three survey parties, each comprising one BA member and one Dampier Salt employee. Access to aquatic study sites was by inflatable and aluminium dinghy; other sites were visited by four wheel drive vehicle or on foot.

Study sites previously established at the mangrove channels, vents and mudflats were revisited to assess bird populations and behaviour. Waterbird species of the open water and accessible mudflat areas were counted.

Wader habitats along the mudflats of Cygnet Pond (Central Basin) were investigated for non- migratory and migratory birds, and new locations east and north of The Panhandle were investigated.

A variety of habitats between the edge of the lake and west of the access track were visited to survey bush birds.

For the 2003 survey, a base was set up at Quobba Station and daily trips were made to the lake in the early morning to ensure a dawn start on the channels. Access to the various sites was by a glass bottom aluminium dinghy. Movement on or across the mud banks was achieved on foot. Waterbird and wader habitats established on previous visits were visited and all bird life monitored. However, due to the obvious importance of the wetlands to migratory

birds we have focussed our observations on wader species. These surveys have been conducted mainly at the central basin (Cygnet Pond) areas shown on the map. There is no doubt additional wader habitats exist to the north and north east of the southern basin (Ibis Pond) but, due to difficulties encountered attempting to access these areas, we have concentrated the surveys at locations within the central basin wetlands. The study areas are the mudflats for wader habitats and the mangrove channels and open water areas for waterbird habitats.

### Personnel

Personnel involved in September 2002 were Colin Davis, Tony Kirkby and Rolf Jensen (BAWA/WSG) and Stuart Simmonds, Sarah Fraser and Dave Bauer (DSL). In March 2003, the area was surveyed by Colin Davis and Tony Kirkby (BAWA/WSG) and Dave Bauer and Les George (DSL).

### Major sites

Our observations have revealed the largest congregations of bird life occur at the six following sites.

**Site 2: Night Heron Point** Lat. 23° 55.274'S, Long. 113° 39.425'E

Description: Mangrove lined channels between the vents and open water areas

Bird life: cormorants, ducks, night herons, egrets, swans, pelicans

Small mangrove species: Dusky Gerygone, White-breasted Woodswallow, Yellow White-eye, Little Grassbird, Mangrove Grey Fantail, Orange Chat

**Site 3: Pelican Beach** Lat. 23° 56.167' S Long. 113° 39.763'E

Description: Sandy beach with open mudflats and low, halophyte growth to east

Bird life: pelicans, swans, cormorants, Fairy Terns, grebes and terns.

**Site 4: Godwit Beach** Lat. 23° 57.379'S Long. 113° 39.172'E

Site Description: Wide, water covered mudflat adjacent to channels and open water. Scattered pockets of dead stunted mangroves with low halophytes on the eastern side.

Favoured feeding habitat for trans-equatorial waders.

**Site 5: Egret Point** 23° 58. 00'S Long. 113° 38.371'E

Site Description: A series of exposed banks backed by shallow mudflats and larger mangroves. This is a prime roosting area for all species: ie, waders, terns, cormorants, egrets and pelicans. Over 100 Egrets were found nesting at this site in September 2000.

**Site 6: Oystercatcher Flat** Lat. 23° 58.663'S Long. 113° 37.568'E

Site Description: A large mud bank barrier adjacent to site five extending SW into the Southern Basin with no

mangrove background. Scattered flocks of waders forage between the mud bank and the southern basin.

Favoured habitat for Banded Stilt and Red-necked Avocet.

**Site 9: Dogleg Channel** Lat. 23° 59.794'S Long. 113° 36.696'E

Site Description: Shallow channel running from the central basin to within approx 500 metres of the southern basin

Wide mudflats on each side of the channel extend south to the southern basin. This is another habitat favoured by smaller waders, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. We recorded Little Stint and Broad-billed Sandpiper in this area in 1999 and again in 2002.

### Weather

Conditions during the September survey were sunny and fine. There were light SE winds each morning increasing to 25 m/hr by mid afternoon. Temperatures ranged from 13°C in the mornings to 25°C near midday. Full moon occurred on 21st September.

Weather conditions during the March survey were hot and oppressive. In early March Cyclone Inego had developed in the Indian Ocean before crossing the Pilbara coast as a rain bearing depression. Prior to our visit there had been north to north-easterly winds and some rain in the east Pilbara region.

### Observations 2002

#### 1. Channels and vents

Observations at the channels and vents revealed an increase in waterbird species since the January 2002 survey, particularly in the numbers of Black Swans, cormorants and pelicans. The high numbers of flightless Black Swans present, suggest that the channel areas are a refuge for these birds during their moulting period.

A return of small mangrove dwelling specialists Dusky Gerygone and Mangrove Grey Fantail was also evident after reductions in numbers following the year 2000 cyclonic event.

At Night Heron Point (site 1) Nankeen Night Herons were rebuilding old nests in the mangroves.

Between Pelican Beach and Linda's Creek foraging wader species intermingled along the mudbanks in scattered groups, comprising mainly larger wader species, the Bar-tailed Godwit, Great Knot and Common Greenshank, plus both stilt species and small numbers of Curlew Sandpipers.

#### 2. Cygnet Pond (Central Basin)

On the open waters of Cygnet Pond observers found relatively high numbers of fish eating species including pelicans. Pied and Little Black Cormorants, Grey Teal, Hoary-headed Grebes, Australasian Grebes and Black Swans were also found throughout this area. Caspian, Fairy, Whiskered, White-winged Black and Gull-billed Terns were foraging over the open water or loafing on the mudbanks.





Table 1: Bushbird Species Lake Macleod, ctd

### 3. *Oystercatcher Flat*

The large open mudflat between Cygnet Pond and Ibis Pond proved to be a favoured habitat for high numbers of non migrant wader species. Banded Stilts, Red-necked Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and two Pied Oystercatchers usually found inhabiting this site were once again seen.

On 22 and 23 September large flocks of migratory waders were located between Dogleg Channel **and the mudflats fringing** the southern basin. The most abundant species was the Curlew Sandpiper.

A mixed flock of waders flying distantly on 22 September was estimated to be at least one kilometre long; it was estimated to comprise approximately 50,000 birds, probably mostly Curlew Sandpipers. Smaller flocks (probably parts of the subsequent breaking up of the original large flock) were counted at closer quarters on this and following days.

### 4. *Ibis Pond (Southern Basin)*

Counts were made of scattered groups of mixed waders and waterbirds found feeding on the southern edge of the mudbank dividing Cygnet Pond and Ibis Pond. 2000 Banded Stilts were swimming/ foraging (feeding probably on brine shrimp) in the open water of Ibis Pond south of Dave's Flat. Considerable numbers of migrant waders were also seen flying into the distant, inaccessible north-eastern mudflats.

### 5. *Area east of Tripod Hill*

These interesting habitats revealed areas of unstable mud dissected by mangrove fringed vents and pools. Movement in this location is extremely hard going. Australasian Grebes, Great Egrets and White-faced Herons were found here plus the small mangrove specialist species, including Dusky Gerygone, Mangrove Grey Fantail and White-breasted Woodswallow. An Australian Hobby (Little Falcon) was also seen here.

### 6. *Northern locations*

Two areas of fairly easily accessible permanent water occur at approx 19.5 km from the fence line north of The Panhandle. We found five vents feeding the lagoons in this area. Darters, Little Egrets and Pied Cormorants were found in the lagoons. A Whistling Kite and small flocks of Silvereyes were seen in the fringing mangroves. Red-

capped Plovers and Common Greenshanks were present on the open mud.

### 7. *Bushbirds*

The various landforms / habitats adjoining the western edge of the lake comprised low open shrubland, rocky limestone breakaways and closed coastal heath. 35 species of bush birds were found in these areas. (see Table 1).

Four species not recorded on previous surveys were added to the bush bird list. These were the Rufous Fieldwren, Pied Honeyeater, Crimson Chat and Red-capped Robin.

### 8. *Breeding evidence*

Nankeen Night Herons were building nests at Night Heron Point (Site 1). Osprey fledglings were observed at the mine site nest, and two adult Red-capped Robins were seen feeding a fledgling.

### Discussion

The September 2002 survey revealed a noticeable increase in bird numbers at the lake when compared to the post Cyclone Steve *programs of 2001-2002*. *Four waterbird species and one wader not seen on previous visits* were found during the September 2002 survey. These were the Great Crested Grebe, Australasian Grebe, Hardhead, Straw-necked Ibis and Red-kneed Dotterel.

These birds bring to 63 the total number of wetland species found at the lake since the first November 1999 survey.

The loss of cover afforded by the mangroves fringing the channels has caused some bird species to abandon the lake for more suitable habitat; however there are indications of a return of some birds, notably the smaller mangrove specialists.

The large numbers of migratory species between Oystercatcher Flats and **Dog Leg Channel confirms previous** survey findings for these wetlands as a site of prime importance, particularly so for the Curlew Sandpiper on its West Australian migration route.

The significance of lake MacLeod is re-enforced by the continued presence of a variety of waterbirds including Australian Pelicans, Pied and Little Black Cormorants (fish eaters), Black Swan, Grey Teal, (plant eaters), three species of grebe (aquatic plant life feeders) and five tern species plus a variety of small mangrove dwellers.



Table 2: Lake Macleod, Waterbirds, 1999-2003, ctd

The mudflat barrier between the Cygnet Pond and Ibis Pond supported high numbers of non-migrant waders during our survey period, notably Banded Stilts, Black-winged Stilts and Red-necked Avocets. The lake is of obvious value to these species, particularly during years of little or no rainfall when the inland lakes dry out.

Higher than usual numbers of Grey Teal and Black Swans plus the three species of grebe were indications of a recovery in the overall health of the lake following the 2000 cyclone.

#### Location of species 2003

In 2003, large well spread out flocks of Curlew Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints and Red Knots were found at sites 4, 5, 6 and 9. Curlew Sandpipers comprised an even mix of male and female birds. Most of the Curlew Sandpipers and some of the Red Knots were in full breeding plumage. Some of the Red-necked Stints were showing partial breeding plumage. A small number of immature Curlew Sandpipers in non-breeding plumage were seen among the coloured birds.

**Behaviour:** These Curlew Sandpipers were feeding or loafing and not inclined to fly even when approached, and birds that took flight did not move far before resettling. No wheeling airborne flocks were seen.

Very few of the larger wader species were found among these Curlew Sandpipers (see Table 2).

Coincidentally at the Carnarvon Boat Harbour on 18.03.03 (a coastal location), there were no Curlew Sandpipers and only one Red-necked Stint among a flock of approximately 1500 waders comprising Whimbrels, Bar-tailed Godwits, Great Knots, Terek Sandpipers and Grey-tailed Tattlers; these birds were also in various stages of breeding plumage.

The discovery of large flocks of plump-looking adult Curlew Sandpipers in full breeding plumage and plump-looking Red-necked Stints in partial breeding plumage, suggests that Lake Macleod is an important staging area for these species during northern migration.

#### Resident Species

Resident species found during the March 2003 survey included the Banded Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Black-winged Stilt and Red-capped Plover. Banded Stilts were found in small numbers scattered throughout the central basin habitats but the larger flocks preferred the open areas adjacent to Oystercatcher Flats (site 6).

Small groups of Red-necked Avocets were observed feeding at various wader sites, with concentrated flocks loafing at Heron Point (site 5).

Black-winged Stilts were found in small scattered groups of between two and twenty birds at mangrove channel fringes and open mudflat areas. Two birds were possibly breeding at the back of Night Heron Point.

Red-capped Plovers were found at most wader sites in association with the smaller migratory species.

#### Terns

In 2003, both adult and immature Caspian Terns were present. 422 Fairy Terns (our highest count) were found between sites 5 and 6. These birds were not as vocal as they are during the September - October surveys. Whiskered Terns were noticeably active and some birds were in breeding plumage.

#### Additions to bird list

In 2003 we saw two species not seen during any of our previous visits to the lake. One Chestnut Teal male in partial eclipse plumage was seen amongst a flock of Grey Teal at Night Heron Point (site 2). This bird was considerably north of the usual range of this species. A single immature Swamp Harrier was watching a feeding wader flock (possible intended prey?) from vantage points between two dead stands of mangroves at the southern end of Oystercatcher Flat (site 6).

#### September-October Surveys

Most of our visits to the lake have been in either September or October. During these months water levels

are generally high, allowing the best conditions of access to sites and the easiest opportunities to observe the newly arriving migratory flocks.

The first returning birds arrive in mid-September. These are high density mixed species flocks of between 20 000 and 50 000 birds and are predominantly made up of Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints. These large flocks fly into the open areas to the north east of the southern basin, then break up into smaller foraging flocks and disperse into the mudflats of the central basin. After this settling, the larger species, notably Bar-tailed Godwits and Great Knots, are generally found feeding and roosting separately from the smaller waders. An exception is found at the Heron Point roost where there is a congregating of all species including waterbirds and terns.

Although small scattered groups of waders can be found throughout the Cygnet Pond mudflats, the largest wader flocks are found at sites 4, 5 and 9.

#### **Mid Summer** 18<sup>th</sup> - 21st January 2002

Only one mid summer survey has been conducted. This was during a period when post cyclonic effects to the lake's ecology were still evident. Additional summer counts should be conducted before conclusions are made regarding a summer migratory wader population.

Water levels were low during the 2002 January survey making access difficult particularly to those sites to the south of the central basin. No records were made at the southern basin.

Observations revealed a total of 2015 waders comprising 411 trans-equatorial migrant species and 1604 resident species. Small groups of foraging migratory waders were found scattered over the exposed mud banks but no large flocks of Curlew Sandpipers were seen.

#### **Mid-winter survey**

Although it is important to conduct a mid winter survey at the lake, as no mid-winter surveys have yet been held. Weather conditions are unpredictable and local winter rain tends to make access to the lake difficult at this time of the year. These uncertainties create survey planning problems that have yet to be tackled.

The program has reached a stage where a winter survey should be planned to determine the presence of over wintering birds (probably in June 2004).

#### **Cyclonic damage**

Extensive cyclonic flooding at the lake in June 2000 caused various changes including the drowning of many of the mangrove trees. These changes were still evident during the September 2002 survey. Our observations in March 2003 revealed some encouraging indications of a recovery to pre-cyclone conditions. Our visits to the lake have enabled us to observe some of the effects of the flooding and the subsequent recovery, as follows, year by year.

#### **2000**

Mangrove trees were dying, with withered leaves. There was an explosion of fish numbers (small fry, and Grunters; Ox-eye Mullet in channels) and an increased area of mud flat flooding into previously dry edges of the lake. Amongst the birds, there was an increase in numbers of fish eating species (cormorants, egrets, pelicans, and terns) and an increase in wader numbers, particularly Banded Stilts, Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints.

#### **2001**

Dead mangroves were more obvious. Water conditions had changed and there had been a decrease in aquatic plants. The inundation of previously dry areas had caused a change of habitats in the flood plain.

Black Swan numbers had increased, but the over-all bird count was down, with waders spread out in small flocks.

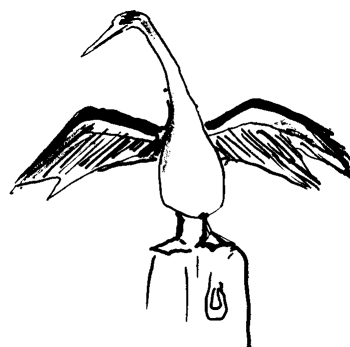
#### **2002 Summer**

There was evidence of a small recovery of mangroves. The water was still murky and there were few birds.

#### **2003 March**

There was evidence of a slow return to pre-cyclone conditions. There were high numbers of Black Swans, indicating a build up of aquatic plants. The muddy waters were clearing and foliage growth of some mangroves indicated a slow recovery of this unique flora. Mud flats contained large flocks of Banded Stilts plus similar numbers of Curlew Sandpipers (most in breeding plumage); these were accompanied by smaller numbers of Red-Necked Stints and Red Knots (see Table 2).

**Colin Davis**



Just hanging out!  
Cartoon by Penny Towells

## WADER STUDY GROUP LEG FLAG PROGRAMS

The report in WABN June issue by the EBO wardens Bea Myers and Ian Tarbins of the sighting of eight Red-necked Stints with orange flags at Kanidal Beach has prompted this short article. The intention is to kindle members' interest in monitoring leg-flagged birds.

To complement their existing bird banding program, researchers of the AWSG began in 1992 attaching coloured plastic flags to the legs of migratory birds. These flags are quite visible particularly with the aid of binoculars or telescopes, thus enabling easy monitoring in the field. Prior to this development a bird had to be trapped or be found dead to access information contained on a metal band attached to its leg.

Today flagging is conducted at locations around Australia and around the world. A variety of colours are used to identify the area or country where the flags were originally attached to the bird, eg, North-west Australia: Yellow; Victoria: Orange; Northern Japan: Blue.

At some locations birds are tagged with two flags, and just to confuse the issue some locations such as South Australia

and south-west Western Australia share the same colours. The combination for the south-west of Western Australia is, Yellow over Orange. The flags are attached to the right leg of the bird, ie, **Yellow on the tibia orange on the tarsus**. The South Australian birds are also tagged on the right leg however the combination is reversed to show orange over yellow, ie, **Orange on the tibia and yellow on the tarsus**. **It is obvious therefore that care should be exercised by observers when reporting sightings of leg-flagged birds.** To facilitate this WAWSG have produced an easy to fill out form to be used by those members who are interested in logging their sightings. If you wish to add to your birdwatching enjoyment by participating in these surveys phone Colin Davis 9330 1482 a/hrs for further details.

Below is a table of members' leg flag sightings.

The SW banding program is conducted on the South Perth foreshore at Milyu by Mike Bamford. Interesting results have already been obtained on our Red-necked Stint population with two overseas leg flag sighting reports, one in 2002 from Taiwan and a second in May 2003 from Hong Kong.

Colin Davis

Species	Finding details				Banding details				
	Flag	Date	Location	State	Date	Location	Min dist	Bearing	Observer/s
	Colour	Found	Found		Banded	Banded	Moved	Moved	
Red-necked Stint	Orange	11/11/99	Rottnest	Live	s - Jan 1990	Victoria	2754 km	275°	D & P Agnew
Red Knot	Yellow	9/11/99	L Macleod	Live	s - Aug 1992	NW WA	1020 km	237°	Kirkby & Davis
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Yellow	3/01/99	L McLarty	Live	s - Aug 1992	NW WA	1647 km	201°	Kirkby & Darnell
Red-necked Stint	Orange	30/01/00	Rottnest	Live	s - Jan 1990	Victoria	2752 km	275°	R & I Chyne
Red-necked Stint	Orange	30/01/00	Rottnest	Live	s - Jan 1990	Victoria	2757 km	275°	B Newbey et al
Red-necked Stint	Orange	30/01/00	Rottnest	Live	s - Jan 1990	Victoria	2752 km	275°	M Vaughan et al
Red-necked Stint	O/yellow	30/01/00	Rottnest	Live	s - Apr 1999	Sth Aust	2762 km	77°	R & I Chyne
Red-necked Stint	Orange	11/03/01	L McLarty	Live	s - Jan 1990	Victoria	2709 km	274°	Kirkby & Davis
Large Sand Plover	Yellow	22/11/01	W/mans Pt	Live	s - Aug 1992	NW WA	1589 km	202°	Davis & Harris
Red-necked Stint	Orange	10/02/02	Rottnest	Live	s - Jan 1990	Victoria	2754 km	275°	R & I Chyne
Red-necked Stint	O/yellow	10/02/02	Rottnest	Live	s - Apr 1999	Sth Aust	2319 km	279°	Jensen & Walker
Curlew Sandpiper	Yellow	23/09/02	L Macleod	Live	s - Aug 1992	NW WA	1030 km	236°	Jensen & Davis
Ruddy Turnstone	Yellow	26/09/02	Dampier	Live	s - Aug 1992	NW WA	568 km	246°	Kirkby & Davis
Curlew Sandpiper	Orange	29/12/02	L McLarty	Live	s - Aug 1992	NW WA	2709 km	274°	Darnell & Jensen
Red-necked Stint	Orange	12/01/03	Alfred Cv	Live	s - Jan 1990	Victoria	2713 km	275°	Tony Webster

Table: Members' leg flag sightings.

## Members' Contributions

### LETTER-WINGED KITE IN SOUTH-WEST

I saw a single Letter-winged Kite on a field trip to the wilderness area in the Fitzgerald River National Park, on 29 November 2002.

I was listening for bristlebirds in the area north of Woolbernup Hill, at 1505 hrs. I first noticed the bird hovering approx 200 m away - and on first glance thought it was a Black-shouldered Kite. The bird then flew overhead and hovered quite close. As it flew over I noticed the underwing markings were quite different from a Black-shouldered Kite - a dark band on the under wing ran from approximately the middle of the wing next to the body, out to the carpal joints. As a result the white band on the leading edge of the underwing/coverts was quite pronounced. I probably watched the same bird, through binoculars, flying and hovering for about 10-15 minutes before it flew out of sight.

I've never seen a Letter-winged Kite before, but presumed this was what I saw as the markings were so different to the Black-shouldered Kite (have seen plenty of these!).

**Sarah Comer**

### KELP GULLS VERSUS PACIFIC GULLS

For years I have been inspecting Pacific Gulls *Larus pacificus* in the vain hope of finding a Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*. On an interstate trip in April 2003, Hilary and I were fortunate enough to find a pair of Kelp Gulls while walking along an isolated beach at Discovery Bay east of Nelson in Western Victoria.

Amusingly, we spotted the gulls from well over a kilometre away, and joked that they were our long-sought after Kelp Gulls. As we got closer, and it became apparent that they were indeed *dominicanus*, we were amazed by how different from *pacificus* they really were. Most of the differences are hidden in the fine print in the guide books, especially Morcombe's *Field Guide to Australian Birds*, but I thought it would be helpful to highlight the distinguishing features for readers, as both gulls can turn up on Western Australia's southern coast. Indeed, some reports suggest that *dominicanus* is expanding its range.

The birds were not particularly timid, and allowed good observation before flushing. We noted six major differences between the two species in adult plumage.

The first feature we noted was leg colour—a dull grey-green which apparently becomes yellowish in breeding plumage. Pacific Gulls have bright, almost glossy yellow legs.

Another feature observable from some distance was the white tips to the outer primaries which at rest show as a row of white spots on the folded wings in *dominicanus*. *Pacificus* by contrast looks all dark with perhaps a white margin to the secondaries.

The bill of *dominicanus* is pale yellow, and very much finer than the absolutely massive bright golden yellow bill of *pacificus*. In addition, the red spot is pale and quite small, and close to but not at the tip of the lower mandible only. Pacific Gulls have a huge bright red tip to both mandibles.

In flight the obvious difference is the lack of black in the tail of the adult Kelp Gull. However, this alone is not diagnostic, as some Pacific Gull plumages may also lack a dark band.

Finally, both gulls in flight show a white wing border, but in *dominicanus* the trailing edge is wider and more dominant.

In addition, but scarcely a feature for positive identification, the Kelp Gull is slightly smaller and more delicate, with a smaller, more rounded head. We did not see any immature birds, but understand that bill size and shape are the main discriminants. Having seen the adults, I believe differentiation on this alone should not be difficult.

In summary, if you only think you have a Kelp Gull, you probably haven't, because when you have, the differences are such that you will be certain.

**John Brooke**

Editors' note: For readers wanting to see good illustrations of the above feature, Plate 29 of HANZAB Vol. 3 will be of interest.

### SEA-EAGLE FEEDING

At Lake Yangebup on 16 May, my wife and I decided to walk around the lake, as we usually do. This was despite the inclement weather. It was too windy to take umbrellas so we hoped the small break in the weather would hold. Naturally it did not rain until we were well away from any shelter.

Just after it started to rain we saw a large bird by the side of the lake but we were too far away to identify it. When we got closer, it conveniently flew up a little and we could see it was a large White-bellied Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*). It had the broken colouration of an immature moulting to its adult plumage. It quickly settled again on what we realized was its prey.

By this time the weather had deteriorated into heavy rain and strong winds that seemed to unsettle the bird. It flew



up and tried to snatch the prey off the ground but was unable to do so in the wind. It tried to manoeuvre in to position twice and failed and on its third attempt it gave up and flew off out of sight. I quickly went down to see what it had caught. To my surprise I found it was one of the large, adult feral geese that had taken up residence on the lake weeks ago. It was laying on its back, with its wings out, but I did not want to disturb it because I was sure the eagle would soon return once the low pressure front had passed through. The goose had extensive damage to its head and neck region and was missing both eyes. It was still just breathing, so I quickly finished it off. The previous day, the geese had all looked healthy and in good condition.

I made my way back to the path and we waited for a little while but as we were cold and wet we decided to finish our walk. Later we found a hatchling Long-necked Tortoise on the path so I picked it up and walked it down to the lake's edge. One life ended, one just beginning.

Note: The goose had been picked clean by the time we went for our walk the next day. I cannot be sure it was the eagle or other birds but I am convinced, by the state and position of the carcass, that a dog or a fox was not involved.

Derek Mead-Hunter

### CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO FORAGING

At about 0800 am on 17 July I came across a group of six Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos foraging quietly in young Tuart trees (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) at Nowergup Nature Reserve, south of Yanchep.

They were pulling bark from Tuart limbs that were about 4-5 cm diameter. They were working in areas where some of the bark was old and a bit loose, but they were also

removing fresh bark. The birds were very intent on what they were doing, and allowed me to approach closely.

I watched one bird with a telescope for several minutes before the whole group flew off. This bird pulled bark from all around the limb, effectively ring-barking that limb. It pulled the old bark off easily, but had to put much more effort into removing the newer bark. However, as the bird continued to remove bark, I could see that the limb had already been damaged, apparently by wood-boring insects.

I did not see a bird obtain a food item, but the intensity of the activity, and the presence of indications of invertebrates, suggested to me that the birds were actively seeking food.

It is well known that Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos search out invertebrate larvae in Banksia cones. Invertebrates are mentioned in HANZAB as important food items for this species, but foraging on Tuarts is not mentioned. It would be interesting to know what other plant species are used in this way, and at what times of year.

Allan Burbidge

### INTRODUCED DOVES IN PERTH

When I first became interested in birds as a 12 year old Perth schoolboy, two of the first birds I came to know very well were the two introduced doves, the Laughing Turtle-Dove and the Spotted Turtle-Dove. However back in the 1960s they were then known respectively as the Senegal Dove and the Indian Turtle-Dove and due to this form of imprinting, I still find it easier to refer to these doves under their old names.

I still find it rather surprising when a first time visitor to Perth is always keen to see the Laughing Turtle-Dove ('Laughing') as WA is the only State in Australia where this dove can be seen. For a bird that I have seen on a daily basis for 35 years and at times in flocks of more than 100, it always seems surreal that a long time Australian birder will never see this dove until they venture to the west.

Due to my former interest in aviculture there was always some leftover or spare seed that could be spread out on the back lawn for the doves to consume at our house. This practice became somewhat addictive and led to the practice of a regular and daily feeding of the doves that continues today as my mother still resides in the same Mt Pleasant house.

Back in the sixties through to the eighties by far the more common dove was the Laughing. From my early records and memory I would estimate that the Laughing would represent about 96% of the total doves that visited the backyard for their daily morning feed.

Over the past 15 years or so when I have visited my mother's house I have noticed a major change in the frequency of occurrence of the two doves. I estimate that the Laughing would now only comprise about 65% of the



Dining at Eyre Bird Observatory.  
Photo courtesy the Wardens

doves, with the Spotted Turtle-Dove ('Spotted') comprising some 35% of the total doves seen.

This change is due to both an apparent decline in the numbers of Laughing and an increase in the numbers of Spotted doves. The main habitat change in the district has been a major reduction in the size of the backyards and associated trees and other vegetation. It appears the Spotted is able to adapt better to a more artificial and built up environment and this is supported by the fact the Laughing has spread out into the open country farmlands to a far greater extent than the Spotted.

The nesting habits may also be a factor as generally speaking the Laughing tends to nest lower and in more open and artificial situations than the Spotted, whose nests are often higher and located in more dense trees and bushes. The regular habit of Laughing Turtle-Doves attempting to nest in hanging baskets, pergola frames and awnings suggests that they are losing natural nest sites and are forced into locations that are more likely to suffer from a number of events that may be adverse to successful breeding. Hence predation on the eggs and nestlings by cats, ravens and general human and other disturbance such as due to inclement weather should be greater in the Laughing than the Spotted.

Perhaps it may also be partly due to a change in seed as in earlier times the doves were mainly fed a small seed mix suitable for finches, compared to the current handout of mainly wheat. The larger wheat seed may be more compatible for the larger Spotted and less appropriate for the smaller Laughing.

The infrequent sightings of the Spotted in earlier times was not necessarily widespread in the Perth metro area, as I can recall that our visits to my grandparents' house in Nedlands would always reveal the Spotted was more common than in Mt Pleasant.

The Laughing may have declined around the Mt Pleasant area and may never again reach some old time record highs of 140 plus birds coming for their morning feed. They are, however, still in good numbers and, along with the Spotted, my mother has advised that up to 100 doves often turn up for their by now very regular feed. I have calculated the number of morning feeds is now in excess of 12 775!

It appears the very high numbers at the morning feeding usually occur during the winter, possibly due to the reduced amount of wild growing grass and weed seeds at this time of the year, perhaps resulting in the doves becoming more dependent on provided seed.

It will be interesting if any other members have experienced any similar or other major changes in their suburb over a period of time. Although both doves are introduced, they appear to have had little negative impact in and around Perth and have become a familiar sight around the suburbs and have given considerable pleasure to many Perth residents.

**Wynton Maddeford**

Editors' note: Ten years ago, Spotted Turtle-Doves were very rare in Wanneroo. They are now commonly found, though in nowhere near the numbers of Laughing Turtle-Doves. Have other observers noticed similar trends?

## **THE URBANISATION OF THE SINGING HONEYEATER IN PERTH, WA**

In the early days of colonisation John Gilbert mentioned in his notes that in Perth was a "honey-sucker" that hopped over the ground.

Major Whittell, when reading Gilbert's notes, couldn't reconcile these two facts and thought that Gilbert may have been referring to the Yellow-rumped Thornbill. However these two facts combine to identify the Singing Honeyeater—of course, for surely everyone has seen this honeyeater hopping over the ground like a sparrow.

The Singing Honeyeater formerly occurred over the coastal plain from the foothills of the Darling Scarp to the coastal dunes. It could be seen in King's Park at anytime

### **Perth Biodiversity Project**

### **Observers needed**

#### **And ... opportunities to brush up your skills**

BA WA is an important partner in the Perth Biodiversity Project, and we will be doing bird surveys in the Perth area until the end of 2004. Sites are surveyed for a maximum of one year, and then we change focus to other sites. In this way, we maximise the information we gather on the distribution of birds across Perth's important remnant bushland. The project also provides valuable information on the status of some of some declining bird species in the Perth region.

To help us continue this important work, we need some additional help. If you haven't yet participated, this is a good opportunity to do so. Surveys are not difficult and are generally done once every two months, with two sets of observers alternating monthly for each site. You may do them alone or with a small group.

**In September, October and November, we will have Field Days for project participants and people who are interested. The days will be small group, half day excursions focussed on bird identification skills. Dates and more information from Cheryl.**

Are you interested in participating? If so, contact

Cheryl Gole, Tel/Fax: 9293 4958  
Email: [gole@starwon.com.au](mailto:gole@starwon.com.au)

and the calls of the fledglings were a feature of the park and make me think of summer rather than spring. But I am certain that it never occurred in the bushland between southern Wembley and the coastal dunes in the 1950s, except for a narrow strip of vegetation bordering the coastal dunes, where only a few birds occurred. My first memory of it in southern Wembley was in the late 1950s. It must have been winter for our plum tree was bare of leaves and four birds flew into our backyard and perched in the tree. I knew what they were because I was familiar with them in Kings Park and on the coast.

Serventy (1948) stated that: "This resident species has taken very kindly to suburban trees and city parks" and since then it has invaded and colonised every Perth suburb as it has developed. The Singing Honeyeater is hardy, resourceful, pugnacious and omnivorous, and seems able to survive independently of surface water. Perth was a veritable oasis for it, offering a milder environment and one that was not regularly burnt by the Aborigines. The street trees and gardens provided shelter and roosting places, water was now freely available and the Perth metropolitan area offered it a smorgasboard of insects, spiders, fruit—even olives—and flowering plants, both native and exotic. It seems to prefer the more robust flowers such as Jacaranda and Hibiscus and doesn't care much, if at all, for the native bottlebrushes.

As Gilbert noted, it hops over the ground, searching for the ground fauna, and this behaviour is facilitated in the suburbs by a lack of cover for such fauna. Everyone has seen it hopping and foraging over our lawns, but it also hunts aerially and, like the Red Wattlebird, will snatch spiders from under the eaves of houses. But unlike the Brown Honeyeater, it has no hovering ability, a few feeble flutters being all it can manage.

The Singing Honeyeater avoids the Jarrah forest but follows European settlement into it, and has been recorded at Wooroloo and Jarrahdale (Sedgwick 1956, Abbott 1999). Before European settlement it would also have occurred within the forest where it had been opened up by the firing practices of the Aboriginal people and suitable habitat had been created.

In Perth the species really does sing during the spring, much to the complete amazement of ornithologists in the eastern States. In the east it merely utters calls that are somewhat harsh, as it does in the coastal vegetation locally and outside the south-west, and causes those fellows over east to wonder how the species ever got its name.

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**Robert Stranger**

## YELLOW WAGTAIL—ANOTHER REPORT FOR EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

For 10 months, each week we have driven 13 km west of Eyre Bird Observatory along Kanidal Beach to do the weekly beach count, counting species of birds in each separate kilometre. At first we had to stop and look at almost every bird in the binoculars to make a positive identification but, with time, becoming more familiar with the resident birds, their position and behaviour becomes enough to identify them. Therefore when a bird is different to the usual it is noticed immediately.

On 11 June 2003 we were at the 10th kilometre when we noticed a small bird flying along the edge of the primary dunes, with a quick undulating flight, after which it perched on bushes and tree roots that protruded from the sand. There were no other birds nearby to enable a size comparison, but we judged it to be about the size of a Purple-gaped Honeyeater. We both positioned ourselves to have a good look at the bird. The bright yellow underparts were a striking feature and clearly visible, and the back and rump were olive.

The Pizzey and Knight and Morcombe field guides were consulted and the bird identified as a Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) male in breeding plumage.

One of us (Bea) then exited the car and moved along the back of the primary dunes hoping to get a closer look and good photograph of the bird. Because it was very flighty, it was not possible to get a close up photograph but the bird was seen at closer quarters. It also flew overhead several times as it moved up the beach. It had an undulating flight, with quick wing beats, then gliding with closed wings. It called 'sweet, sweet' while in flight, but was not heard calling while perched.

On our return trip along the beach we saw the bird again and, this time a little closer, noted that there was no dark patch under the throat as breeding male Grey Wagtails. It was definitely yellow under the chin and throat, not white. The eye-stripe was not yellow but more of a cream colour and, we believe, more through the eye than above it. The bird looked most like 'race' *simillima* in the Pizzey and Knight field guide.

**Bea Myers and Ian Tarbin**  
Wardens Eyre Bird Observatory

Editors' note: There are two previous reports of Yellow Wagtails from Eyre. One, in December 1983, is only a possible sighting, as inadequate details were observed. Indeed, there are few details for the current report, but those details reported above are consistent with Yellow Wagtail. However, the bird observed by Nick Dymond on seaweed banks on the beach near Eyre on 8 August 1984 (WA Bird Notes 32: 4; plus unpublished notes) was present for an eight day period. Detailed and careful observations documented during this period led to the conclusion that it clearly was a Yellow Wagtail, and may have been *M. f. macronyx*, a subspecies previously not recorded in Australia.

## What's In a Name?

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

(Continued from last issue)

In the last episode of "What's in a Name?" we departed slightly from the Latin meaning of our duck subjects and delved into the history of that bizarre bird the Musk



Duck. In this issue let us endeavour to keep strictly to the subject matter as we continue our didactic duck dissections with the genus *Chenonetta* pronounced (ken'-on-et-ah).

***Chenonetta*** (Latin meaning: goose duck). Another duck that is the only member of its genus. Here we have the scientific name and the common name being almost the same, in this case the Maned Goose or Australian Wood Duck, ***Chenonetta jubata* (maned goose duck)**.

This combination of two names leads us to deduce a dilemma at the christening. Obviously, Donald wanted to perpetuate the duck side of the family, while Daisy seemed rather impressed by his long necked cousins. The cause of all this conflict is the rather colourful, small-beaked, webbed-footed, dark-headed, greyish-plumed, black-tufted, grass-eating, tree-nesting, goose duck. Well, is it a goose, or is it a duck, or is it a bit of both? HANZAB, it seems, would like to call the bird a **Maned Duck**. They tell us the bird is not closely related to the American wood ducks (Genus *Aix*), nor is it a goose, leaving us to make up our own minds. So let's take a quick look at the American Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*. Aristotle, over two thousand years ago, gave us *Aix* as a kind of water fowl. The Latin meaning for *sponsa* is betrothed, as in wedding dress. I won't probe into the goings on down at the swamp, but it seems the Americans, in spite of their flair for catchy abbreviation, have the same naming quandaries we have.

Indeed to find a nomenclaturist having difficulties with avian parentage is a heartening sign to all of us who at one time or another have had a problem with identification. The dangers in this perceived naming vagueness, however, is in our puzzled interpretations and understandings of the original nomenclaturist's circumambulations. One can probably handle a goose-duck scenario but might struggle with magpie-goose liaisons or even more complicated pairings as we progress with species featured in future episodes. For me, I'll stick with wood duck.

Now let's take a gander at another duck with the distinction of being the sole representative in its genus. This time it's that colourful little fellow *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*, the **membrained soft-beak**. I kid you not, this is the scientific name for the Pink-eared Duck. It puts bird watchers into the same category as big game hunters or deep sea divers. The mind boggles at the thought of an approaching flock of 500 'membrained soft beaks'. One

wouldn't know who to call, the "Men in Black" or the "Men in White". Not really bedtime story material for the kiddies.

Let's move on to another unlucky member of the Anatidae clan, whose story is somewhat similar to the aforementioned *Biziura lobata*. It all came about during the heady days of our early history when botanic bounty hunters roamed the colony bagging and boxing anything and everything from a quokka to a quandong and sending packages off to museums and collectors all over the world. Our unfortunate duck became part of one such package when in 1840 he was delivered to the doorstep of that doyen of ornithology John Gould. Mr Gould after a period of quill sucking (no pencils in those days) named the bird *Stictonetta*, **Freckled Duck**. After an even more careful examination he added *naevosa*. Latin *naevus* means mole on body. Now that is being thorough. Such is the standing of the man that no one has trifled with this description and these days we still know the Freckled Duck by the excellent name given to the bird by Mr Gould, *Stictonetta naevosa*. Now far be it from me to find fault with the naming of the Freckled Duck, unless, well you know dear readers, I have previously mentioned exactitude, maybe he could have named the bird *Stictonetta cygnus brevicollis*.

Some names roll off the tongue and evoke the imagination. Carmelita could suggest a rather exciting tango in the moonlight. Phillippia or Suzzanna a frolic in the surf, while Nigella gives the impression of a good time in the kitchen. Hollywood had Kevin Costner dancing with wolves. Could not we perhaps dance with a duck? The name *Dendrocygna arcuata* while not arousing the senses in quite the same way as a Carmelita, does possess a certain poetic musical resonance. It might be rather disappointing then to find this is the name for the **Wandering Whistling-Duck**. The long-necked, long-legged, large-footed, after dark dabbler, a fickle, somewhat gregarious bird known to maintain a constant twittering whistle. Ah, but what's in a name? .... Gentlemen, change partners!

by Geronticus OK

Geronticus moves on to other species in our next issue.

### SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR IMAGES FROM OUR GREETING CARDS

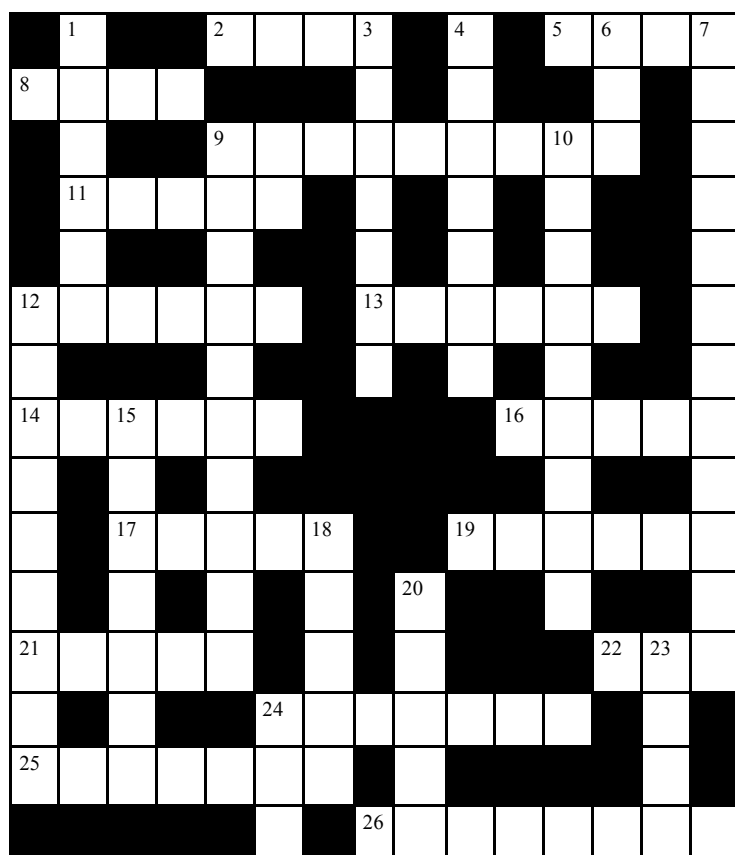
<http://birdswa.iinet.net.au>

Please support BAWA by purchasing our greeting cards  
Cards cost \$1 ea incl envelope – all are blank inside

**Place your order through our Perry House office**  
71 Oceanic Dr, Floreat WA 6014  
9383 7749      birdswa@iinet.net.au

## Crossword No 34

By Pam Agar



### Clues Across

2. Needed for a twitchathon.
5. Good conditions for bird-watching, unless you want unusual sea-birds.
8. Nest site of Little Terns.
9. Support from this makes a huge difference.
11. Provider of funds.
12. To hatch.
13. May help jog your memory later.
14. If nesting materials are scarce, some birds may do this.
16. Volunteers may be called at this stage of project.
17. Lots of calls at once may suggest this.
19. Professional life.
21. Often the first indication of a bird's presence.
22. Period of time.
24. May be a consideration if you intend banding.
25. Manner of searching, especially early in the day.
26. Literally 'big foot'.

### Clues Down

1. This search may be less thorough.
3. Imitation.
4. Vital for most projects.
6. No matter which.
7. Cause of wasting disease causing death in young ringnecks.
8. When waders meet prior to migration.
10. Area controlled by a breeding pair.
12. One area checked for Hooded Plovers.
15. Forward edge of the wing in flight.
18. Not good viewing weather.
20. An eagles' nest.
23. Sudden incursion to steal nest materials, chicks.
24. Some think a characteristic of ravens.

## Notices

### AUSTRALASIAN RAPTOR ASSOCIATION (ARA), WA REPRESENTATIVE

ARA is a Special Interest Group of Birds Australia. Its aim is to promote the study, conservation and management of diurnal and nocturnal raptors in Australasia. It has, in the past, published a newsletter, 'Circus', and a biennial journal, 'Boobook', for members. The new ARA committee is seeking a Western Australian representative. If you are interested in nominating or would like to know more about the association, please contact Michael Brooker (9293 4757 or email [LesMikeBrooker@bigpond.com](mailto:LesMikeBrooker@bigpond.com)).

### Twitchathon, 25 October

Breakfast with the birds at Kings Park!

A social event for members and friends.

New members especially welcome.

See details elsewhere in this issue.

## COURSE AT BROOME

We have a course, "Birds of the Broome Region", planned for 22-26 September 2003. At this time, we still have some vacancies on this course.

### Broome Bird Observatory

*Birds of the Broome Region*  
September 22nd - 26th 2003

With over 300 species on the Broome Region bird list, the North West is an extraordinary place for birding. Be exposed to the myriad of habitats that sustain and support such a diversity of birdlife. Discover the world of migratory waders and learn to separate and identify. Experience the return of the waders on migration. Explore the bush, plains, samphire, mangroves and inland lakes. Discover all the best birding sites in the Broome Region.

The course includes talks and slideshows by Broome Bird Observatory Wardens on Wader Identification. During the week participants will take part in research activities conducted by the Observatory, Bird Log, Atlassing and Mud-ding (yes, even more fun than it sounds!!).

The exact course timetable has yet to be finalised (dependant on tides and remaining wetlands at the end of the dry).

Be prepared for a week of learning and fun as we immerse ourselves in the world of birds.

Cost for the week is \$780 per person.

The Observatory has binoculars and telescopes available for course participants or you may use your own birding gear.

The weather in Broome in September can be very hot and humid, so bring appropriate clothing. Also bring old clothing and shoes suitable for walking through mangroves and mudflats.

**Joy Tansey, Warden**

## BAWA WEB SITE FAQs (HELP NEEDED)

I am trying to collate a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) that people ask the BAWA office. I hope to put the questions and our preferred response on the BAWA web site. I will also print a copy to put in the office volunteers file. The aim is to make it easier for the office volunteers to answer the questions, and to try to ensure that everyone gives a consistent response. In the longer term, people can look up the answer for themselves on the web site.

Please send to me (9386 5694 or foconnor@iinet.net.au) any questions for which you think that we should have a standard response, and I will collate a list. Example questions that I have thought of:

- \* What plants should I grow to attract birds?
- \* Why shouldn't I feed waterfowl?
- \* What should I do with an injured bird?
- \* What should I do with a dead bird?
- \* What should I do if the bird has a band on it?
- \* What should I do if I see a bird with a leg flag?
- \* What should I do if I see a House Sparrow, etc?
- \* What are we doing about Rainbow Lorikeets in Perth?
- \* How can I build a nest box?

The list of questions may be the easy part. The harder part is possibly writing the best answer. Assistance with this is also welcome.

**Frank O'Connor**

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ARE THORNBILLS DECLINING IN AND AROUND PERTH?

In two of the three bushland sites for which I have records, the numbers of Western and Yellow-rumped Thornbills appear to have declined over the last 20 years. I would like to find out if similar or different changes in abundance have occurred at other locations in and around Perth and to try to determine if there are any common factors associated with the changes.

I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has regularly censused birds at any location near Perth in the last 15 - 20 years. I can be contacted on 9293 4757 or by email Les-MikeBrooker@bigpond.com.

**Michael Brooker**

## HELP WANTED!

Enthusiastic and willing volunteers are required to assist with running a display at the Kings Park Wildflower festival from 25 to 29 September.

Must be able to interact with the public and talk enthusiastically about birds. This is a superb opportunity for Birds Australia to promote itself to a wide audience.

Volunteers are also requested to assist with leading a daily birdwalk in Kings Park during the Wildflower Festival.

To assist please contact **Carole Elliott** between 5 and 8pm on 9451 9441  
or e-mail: carolee@calm.wa.gov.au

### BAWA IMAGE LIBRARY (HELP NEEDED)

BAWA is developing a series of identification workshops. We will soon be introducing a 5 minute bird identification segment for each monthly meeting. BAWA gets requests to give presentations. BAWA members need photographs for talks that they give, or reports that they are putting together. For these needs to be met, we need to improve our image library.

BAWA already has a reasonable slide library, but there are significant gaps. We have also decided to create a digital image library, and this has commenced. I am in the process of cataloguing these images. The image catalogue (not the images themselves) will be posted on the BAWA web site so that members can check to see if BAWA might have suitable images for their needs.

The digital images will be put on a CD-ROM, and this and the slides will be available to be borrowed from the office.

We are asking people to donate their images to the library. We can duplicate the slides if you want them back, and we can scan prints. Digital images can be sent on a CD-ROM (we prefer images in JPG format). All images will be added to the catalogue, and the photographer will be acknowledged. You may put conditions on the use of the photographs (eg, cannot sell the image; cannot use the image in printed reports, brochures, etc). We prefer to know the date and location of the photograph. We also need a representative selection of habitat photographs (e.g. mulga, mallee, heath, mud flats, grasslands, lakes, etc). These habitat photographs will be used in presentations and reports. Photographs of good birding locations (e.g. Herdsman Lake, Alfred Cove, Lake McLarty, etc) will also provide an excellent comparison of changes at the location in the future.

We also need an Image Librarian to look after the image library, and to maintain the catalogue. If you can help out, then please contact the office.

Frank O'Connor

### BAWA WEB SITE—WHAT BIRD IS THAT?

BAWA is sometimes sent photographs of birds to be identified. Sometimes this is easy, and sometimes it is not quite so easy. In the latter case, the photograph is passed around, or if the photograph has been sent by email, then it is forwarded on to a select few people for their opinions. Recent photographs have included a juvenile Pacific Gull, a Yellow Wagtail, an immature White-winged Triller, a Kelp Gull, an unusual hybrid duck, etc.

I have decided in future to put these photographs on the BAWA web site for everyone with internet access to look at. This will hasten the identification for some birds, and it will also give people with internet access the chance to test their identification skills, to contribute their opinions and to learn from others. It will also encourage people to visit the other sections of the web site.

So if you have a photograph of a bird that you would like to be identified, then send it to the office, or if possible send it by email to sightings@iinet.net.au and I will put it on the web site as soon as possible, and email people who are interested. You can then check periodically for new photographs, or if you let me know then I will include you on the email list and notify you when there is a new photograph.

Frank O'Connor

### MONDAY 8 DECEMBER SPECIAL MEETING

#### State Tennis Centre, Burswood

Pat Free, a birdwatcher and resident of Kenya, will speak about and show slides of birds of Kenya.

(This is a special meeting to take advantage of Pat's coming visit to Perth.)



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**Plus more exciting trips for 2003/2004**



### Help Needed for Data Entry

Are you familiar with Microsoft Access?  
Do you have data entry skills?  
Are you willing to volunteer some time to enter data for an important project?  
If so, then we may have just the job for you!

#### **The Job Involves**

- \* Working in your own time, either at home or in the Birds Australia office
- \* Entering data such as bird survey data, observer details and site information
- \* Updating information when required

Currently, about 40 surveys per month are entered in the database

#### **The job requires**

- \* Attention to detail
- \* Willingness to enter data regularly (e.g. monthly)
- \* If working at home you will need a computer, Microsoft Access and a CD burner (to back up copies of the database)

If you are interested, please contact

Cheryl Gole Phone: 9293 4958 Email:  
gole@starwon.com.au

### WESTERN GROUND PARROT

#### Translocation Program

(FIRST EVER)

*We need your help!*

**Tasks:** surveying, bird care, mistnetting, radio-tracking

**When:** October, November and December

**Locations:** mostly Fitzgerald River National Park and Walpole

**Accommodation:** Self-sufficient camping

Dates are not definite yet, but if you could give an indication of when and where you may be available, and preferred tasks, it will be much appreciated. There will be some subsidy for volunteers' expenses.

Contact to register or for more information:

- \* Sarah Comer (DCLM Albany, 9842 4513 or sarahc@calm.wa.gov.au)
- \* Anne Bondin (9844 1793 or albanys-birds@hotmail.com) or
- \* Brenda Newbey (9337 5673 or sfryc@iinet.net.au).

### SCHOOLS' PAINTING COMPETITION

The Publicity Committee of BAWA is conducting a pilot Schools' Painting Competition, which has been directed at year 8 students. The Schools that have agreed to participate are Wesley College, Como Senior College and Penrhos College.

The students have been asked to paint a picture of a bird of their choice, preferably one seen around their respective home or school, and include with their painting a brief comment on the selected bird and why the bird was chosen.

The date for the completion of the paintings is Friday 19 September. On the following Thursday, 25 September, the paintings will be placed on show at the Como Uniting Church Hall, McDonald Street, Como. The display will be assembled during that afternoon and early evening the judging will take place. Michael Bamford has agreed to be one of the judges and another person, yet to be finalised, will support him. After the judging the display will be open to students, parents, friends and the public. Members of BAWA are encouraged to support the project.

Later in the evening the winners will be announced and awards presented. Michael Morcombe has generously donated two of his field guides, signed, as two of the awards. Each student will receive a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of their participation in the project.

There will be light refreshments available during the evening, which it is anticipated will conclude not later than 9 p.m.

*For further information contact Barry Angus on 9313 4575 or E-Mail rbamca@v-app.com.au*

### COMMUNITY GRANT

The Publicity Group committee would like to acknowledge receipt of a community grant from the Department of Education and Training for Adult Learners Week.

This was awarded for innovative and creative activities that promote lifelong learning opportunities for members of a community or region. The grant will be used to provide an Introduction to Birdwatching for Adults during Learners' Week, which is the first week in September.

A four-day course is being held mainly at Perry House, on 2 – 5 September. Each day will have a tutorial session followed by a walk to identify birds. The sessions will cover waterbirds, bushbirds and waders. It is an opportunity for anyone interested in learning about birds. Bookings can be made through the BAWA Office. Tel: 9383 7749

## BIRD IDENTIFICATION SEMINARS 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2003

The Public Relations Committee, working on behalf of the BAWA Committee and membership have organised four seminars and outings on the above dates, especially for the benefit and encouragement of new and inexperienced members and some members of the general public, to help them become more accomplished birdwatchers.

The first seminar is a general introduction to birding, featuring such things as binocular and field guide use; identifying field marks and the relevant features of a bird; different habitats, etc. It will run for two hours from 0900 – 1100 am at Perry House.

Seminar 2 will be held at the Wildlife Centre, Herdsman Lake, featuring waterbirds. It will consist of an introduction and slide presentation, followed by a bird walk along the lake. Sue Mather will be the leader.

Seminar 3 will be back at Perrh House and will follow a similar format with Cheryl Gole as the leader.

Seminar 4 will be held at Alfred Cove, again with a similar format. Colin Davis will lead. The slide presentation for Alfred Cove will be held at Atwell Gallery, 586 Canning Hwy, Alfred Cove.

We plan to have a short break during each seminar, hopefully with a cup of tea. There will be a small charge of \$5 for the series to help defray incidental costs.

If you are interested in attending these seminars, please contact the office to book your place. We are looking for a maximum of 15 participants per seminar, so early booking is essential. We will give new members preference. We plan to hold similar series in the future, looking at more specialised groups like Raptors, Pelagics, honeyeaters, thornbills, Gerygones, or at specific sites like Dryandra or the Stirling Ranges.

**Brice Wells**  
**Chairman, Public Relations Committee**

## NEW MEMBERS

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

J Armstrong, P D Barr, D Bennett, P Gresele, J M G Hansen, D Hansen, P J Hislop, S Jacobs, G Kenway, K J Liversidge, F Mansfield, M Menz, L Nicholson, S O'Loughlin, P Rakela, E Slee, A Smurthwaite, J Smurthwaite, B Sorensen, S Tomlinson, S Tulip, P J Waddell, M White



Grey Butcherbird being checked for wing condition, Eyre  
*Photo courtesy the Wardens*

## “WHAT’S NEW?”

Birds Australia WA has a new Publicity Group committee. The committee members are Brice Wells, Frank O'Connor, Leonie McMahon, Sara Crook, Barry Angus and Elsa Dabbs.

Our mandate is to create more awareness of Birds Australia by publicising the aims and activities and thereby increase the membership or, as Brice would say, “to be more effective in our reaching out” which I believe sums it up. To this effect we have been very active and at present have three new ongoing projects:

**Project 1.** An art competition, a bird painting, is being organised in two high schools.

**Project 2.** A series of bird lessons for beginners to be held in October. There will be one a week, for four weeks starting 4 – 25 October. **See a separate notice for more details.**

**Project 3.** A commercial video made in cooperation with VideomakersWA to produce a commercial for the local Channel 31, Perth.

We are also continuing the usual projects which include talks, school events, community event displays and agricultural shows. The weekly walks will be advertised in the appropriate community newspaper, so if you see someone looking a little lost on a walk, give them a Birds Australia welcome and say hello. From time to time we may need additional help with projects and will be grateful for any support from the members.

**New Member Competition** One lucky new member will receive a new pair of binoculars donated by Binocular Optical and Telescope World, to help us in our membership drive. It will either be a draw from the hat or a decided number: i.e., the 100th member. Details to be announced.

## The Eyre Bird Observatory Management Committee needs more help!

The Eyre Bird Observatory Management Committee invites interested, keen enthusiastic people to come on to the Eyre Bird Observatory Management Committee. The EBO Management Committee needs more help to assist in the many tasks to be done for Eyre to operate effectively. Below is a list of tasks that need to be done on a regular basis which are currently undermanned. Please contact us if you feel you have the skills needed and would like to take on any of these tasks. Also, please contact us if you would like to help Eyre and the management committee in other ways not listed here.

The EBO Management Committee operates cooperatively as a team and needs to work closely with the Wardens at Eyre. Committee Meetings are held, however, much of the work is done between committee meetings with communication maintained via phone and email with other committee members and Wardens. There are opportunities for interested people to assist as a member of the management committee or as an auxiliary member to the committee (such as when involvement may only be for a short period of time for a specific project).

People are urgently needed for the following:

- \* **Promotion of Eyre Courses** – involves the distribution of Eyre courses brochures and the promotion of Eyre courses each year.
- \* **Production of Eyre Reports** – involves collating material, coordinating writers, setting deadlines, some editing and design.
- \* **Database Coordinator** – involves design of access database programs for specific projects and surveys. Also organising the entry of data (there is a back log of 25 years).

\* **Promoting research work at Eyre** – involves promoting the research and survey work done at Eyre and the potential for biological research work to be done at Eyre – to management committee, Wardens, Birds Australia, Universities and Government organizations. (Will be in liaison with Database Coordinator).

\* **Fund Raising** – this is a new direction for Eyre. Any ideas and skills in fund raising for Eyre would be a great help.

\* **Financial Adviser** – to work closely with the Treasurer, management committee members and Wardens.

Please contact Shapelle McNee email: [mshapelle@hotmail.com](mailto:mshapelle@hotmail.com), Ph: (08) 9494 1286

or Rod Smith email: [rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au) Ph: (08) 9447 3804.

\* **On the ground work plans for Eyre** – involves establishing maintenance programs and plans for the upkeep, replacement and addition of support systems at Eyre. Includes solar hot water system, two vehicles, diesel generator, two solar hot water systems, water pump, buildings, water tanks, septic tank, grease trap, radios (UHF), to name some.

\* **Donation Coordinator** – involves overseeing, keeping tabs on donations, both general and those for specific purposes. Will work closely with the Treasurer, Wardens and Chair.

\* **Financial Advisor** – involves working closely with all members of the Management Committee, including the Treasurer. Overseeing financial analysis, cash flow and budgets.

### NEW BOOK

*The Birds of the Mandurah District,  
Western Australia*

by Robert Stranger

Available through the **Book Sales**

– approximately \$25

### Where are our artists and photographers?

We need your drawings and photos for WABN, especially if they relate to an article.

If sending in drawings, please do them in black pen-and-ink as this format scans clearly for reproduction.

## Country Groups

### ALBANY BIRD GROUP

#### May Outing

On 13 May arrangements had been made to have a tour of a wonderful bushland property on Shadforth Road at Denmark, and 20 people turned up.

This mostly Karri bushland of over 40 hectares has had winding pathways put through over the last few years by the owners Professor John Pate and his wife Elizabeth. They have also developed a beautiful garden around their relocated group settlement home that they open to the public in the springtime.

While it is always difficult to see birds in the tall karri trees, many birds could be heard, including an Australian Owlet-nightjar as John lead us over the sometimes steep terrain to the swampland area and then back to the house garden. Here we had lunch with many birds, including Splendid Fairy-wrens, Red-winged Fairy-wrens, New Holland Honeyeaters and White-breasted Robins flitting around us.

We left after lunch to go to the mouth of the Denmark river where dozens of Little Black and some Little Pied Cormorants have been nesting over the last few years. Some birds could be seen around the old nests. The resident pair of Ospreys was seen, and large rafts of Hoary-headed Grebes out on the inlet. Also seen on the spit near the mouth of the river and later closer to ocean beach were some Little Egrets that were seen last year but are not generally common in this region.

Though the day had started with drizzling rain, it cleared and we again had a most enjoyable outing.

**Tina Smith**

#### June Outing

A small group of nine met at Bakers' Junction on a day with a forecast of rain, but we were lucky and had a good, dry walk around Riverview Golf Club, with 19 species seen.

We then went down the Chester Pass Road and stopped at a road verge that Charlie, myself and Viv McCormick surveyed in the late 1990s for the Road Verges Survey program. It was always our most rewarding site, and we counted 12 species, while the many plants of *Hakea laurina* were a magnificent mass of blossom.

We finally went to Kambellup, where we encountered our first and only light shower of rain. Here we saw plenty of Elegant Parrots, a Brown-headed Honeyeater, and two Restless Flycatchers, amongst a total of 23 species.

**Liz Davies**

#### July Outing

On 8 July, 17 of us went to Norman's Beach on a mostly overcast day, but the rain kept away until after lunch.

We had quite good viewing at Norman's Beach. Out in the bay there was a muelle boat that was attracting lots of Australasian Gannets, and a skua was seen. Under the paperbarks beside the inlet we had excellent views of Red-eared Firetail, and Red-winged Fairy-wrens.

Walking up the hill, a Collared Sparrowhawk was flushed, apparently eating a rabbit. Emu-wrens were seen, and Noisy Scrub-birds and bristlebirds were heard.

We then went to Betty's Beach, where we again heard a Noisy Scrub-bird as well as bristlebirds and a whipbird. A large group of Crested Terns were, as usual, resting on the rocks near the beach. Altogether 48 species were recorded for the day.

**Charlie Davies**

### LAKE POWELL BIRD HIDE



Looking for waterbirds in the Albany area hasn't always been easy. Until just recently one of the area's prime waterbird sites was notoriously difficult to access. Tired of getting our feet wet, the Albany Bird Group had been lobbying for the construction of a bird hide at Lake Powell for some years. As expected it took some time to get the project started.



The Lake Powell bird hide built by Green Corps for the Albany Bird Group.

*Photo courtesy Charlie Davies*

Late last year, after forming a partnership with the Torbay Catchment Group, we were finally successful. To assist with the Torbay Watershed Project we agreed to monitor the lake's birdlife. The construction of a bird hide was to facilitate this task.

Being an 'A' class Nature Reserve, permission for the construction of the hide had to be obtained from the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

Once CALM gave their approval, funding was sought through a LotteryWest grant. In July Monty House formally presented the Torbay Catchment Group with a \$4,430 cheque from LotteryWest. We are very happy to report that the bird hide was recently completed by a local Green Corps Team.

Lake Powell Nature Reserve (located 15 km west of Albany off the Lower Denmark Road) is an important wetland on the South Coast. It is home to numerous species of waterbirds and it is regularly visited by nomadic and migratory species. Elusive species such as the Australasian Bittern and Baillon's Crake have also been seen here. Summer and autumn, when water levels are lower, are probably the best time for a visit.

We encourage visitors to e-mail us their Lake Powell sightings. Please contact the Albany Bird Group at: [albanybirds@hotmail.com](mailto:albanybirds@hotmail.com)

**Anne Bondin**



View from inside the Lake Powell  
bird hide.

*Photo courtesy Charlie Davies*

## Excursion Reports

### **FLYNN ROAD, 3 May**

This full-day walk attracted 30 members and guests, several of whom were there for the first time, and others who have walked with us in past years. We were therefore able to split the group into three parties, each under an experienced leader.

Although the day was fine and bright with no wind, we found birds difficult to locate as few are calling at this time of year. Even so, several people saw the elusive Crested Shrike-tit, and we believe most had good views of the three robins, namely Scarlet, Western Yellow and Hooded.

During the day 33 species were recorded out of the 92 that we have seen over the past 20 years. We hope a springtime walk will produce more species.

**Bryan Barrett**

### **LITTLE RUSH LAKE, 17 May**

The skies looked threatening as 16 people joined Molly and Barry for the circumnavigation of Little Rush Lake.

As we stepped out of our cars, all the species of honeyeaters seen for the day were awaiting us in the blossom-filled trees and banksia, including a White-naped Honeyeater.

Waterbirds were not numerous on the lake.

Only four species of duck were seen but the usual coots, heron, grebes, etc, were found on and around the water's edge.

The few showers we had were brief and not very heavy. The gerygones were busy in the trees but were not calling and the Splendid Fairy-wrens put on a display as they

hopped through the piles of rusty steel mesh along the boundary fence.

Early on in the walk in poor light, a low swooping unidentified raptor had everyone puzzled until an Australian Hobby was seen while the bird count was being conducted; species number 46 was crossed off the list.

Thank you to Molly and Barry for an interesting walk.

**Coral Lukies**

### **MARKET GARDEN SWAMPS, 25 May**

It was a welcome sight to visit a swamp that had a good amount of water in it after the lack of water in the swamps and lakes that we had observed in the early part of the year.

The day was warm, with 23 birders keen to discover the bird life to be seen. When we arrived many Australian White Ibis were roosting in the dead trees making them look like trees covered in large white flowers. Six different species of duck were observed, as well as many Black-winged Stilts, all busy feeding and swimming among the beautiful reflections on the clear, cool water. In fact, one reflection of a Dusky Moorhen made it seem as though it was upside down in the water walking along a stick.

Three different types of raptors were busy circling over the swamp, and the Magpie-larks were very agitated trying to chase them away, as were the Australian Ravens, but not with quite the same persistence. Many varieties of little bush birds were busy in the trees.

Forty-two species were seen during the morning. Our thanks to Les for leading us on our walk.

**Lyn Sellers**

**GREENOUGH RIVER CAMPOUT, 30 May-2 June**

Thirty-eight members arrived at the Greenough River Caravan Park for this weekend, in spite of rather cold, wet weather.

Fortunately it cleared somewhat the next few days, and an early walk along the very pretty Chapman River Valley with some local birders was rewarded with good views of White-cheeked Honeyeaters, White-browed Babblers, a Grey Shrike-thrush, all the cormorants, an egret, Hoary-headed and Australasian Grebes and a Black-shouldered Kite, the first of the raptors seen.

In the afternoon, most of the group took a leisurely cruise up the Greenough River, and had excellent close up views of two Whistling Kites, perched by the river. Darters, Nankeen Night Herons, and kingfishers were plentiful. The rest of the group walked along the beach, seeing Ospreys, Black-winged Stilts and other water birds.

On Sunday, we headed for the Burma Rd Reserve heathland, where White-fronted Chats abounded, and two more raptors, Nankeen Kestrel and Australian Hobby were seen, plus Richard's Pipits, Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, Splendid Fairy-wrens, Yellow-throated Miners and Red-capped Robins. On to Ellendale Pool, and some drizzle, but plenty of bushbirds around — Mistletoebirds, White-breasted Robins, Rufous Whistlers, a Little Grassbird, and a rare view of a Spotted Nightjar. No peregrines, however, which was disappointing.

On Monday, an old Water Dept dam, at Whicherina, although almost dry, yielded very good sightings of Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, more Mistletoebirds, Red-capped Robins, and both Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo and Pallid Cuckoos. A Little Eagle flew close above, and the wing pattern could be clearly seen. On to Dongara, where two more species, Golden Whistler and Inland Thornbill, were added, making a grand total of 100 species for the weekend. Darryl James won the prize.

Thank you to Clive and Wendy Napier for a well organised, interesting and enjoyable weekend.

**Liz Walker**

**NOBLE FALLS, RED HILL PICNIC AREA AND WANDOO HEIGHTS, 7 June**

One of those perfect winter days—fine, sunny and still—ensured 25 people enjoyed a pleasant full day excursion to three areas that have been regularly surveyed for the last ten months, as part of the Perth Biodiversity Project.

Most of the morning was spent at the Noble Falls site where 34 species were seen in Wandoo/Blackbutt country beside Wooroloo Brook. All of the species seen had been recorded on at least some of the previous surveys but of interest was the variety of honeyeaters seen: White-cheeked, Brown, White-naped, New Holland, Yellow-plumed and both the Little and Red Wattlebird.

At the much smaller Red Hill Picnic Area 13 species were recorded, the most interesting being a Little Pied Cormorant which was disturbed from the water now filling the disused quarry. This was the first time any species had been observed using the water component of the area. Western Spinebill, feeding on flowering *Dryandra sessilis*, was also a new species for the area.

The afternoon was spent at Wandoo Heights, a 22 hectare property now vested in the Shire of Swan. Originally purchased by Revd Harry Hyde, Miss Adela Hyde and Miss Olive Gear in 1960, with a view to conserving wildflowers, the area has never been cleared or used for agricultural purposes due to its steep, rocky sections. The property was managed by the two surviving partners until 1988 when it was entrusted to the local shire.

Twenty-two species were seen in this area which is comprised mainly of Wandoo and Sheoak. Two species were added to the records for this area: Golden Whistler and White-browed Scrub-wren.

Sue's competent leadership was appreciated by all, as were Rob's efforts with the signs to make sure we all reached the next survey site with minimum fuss.

**Pam Agar**

**JANDAKOT REGIONAL PARK, FORRESTDALE, 18 July**

On a chilly but otherwise perfect Saturday morning 12 'birdos' started out walking up Skeet (formally Hale) Road alongside the reserve. Aside from the usual honeyeaters and other bush birds, we heard and saw two Grey Shrike-thrushes serenading each other. It was the most varied song I had heard from this species.

Up in the tall melaleuca trees on our left were two juvenile Black-shouldered Kites and a Little Eagle flew overhead. On the paddocks nearby were Pacific Black Ducks and Australian Shelduck, and flying over was a group of Australian White Ibis.

Eight species of honeyeater were seen, including White-naped, White-cheeked, Western Spinebill and Tawny-crowned. The last was heard more often than seen, but we did get a few good looks – this does appear to be a good site to observe this species as each time I have been here over the last year or so I have seen it.

Several other bush birds were seen, including the Rufous Whistler, Inland, Yellow-rumped and Western Thornbills, Splendid Fairy-wren, Crested Pigeon and Red-capped Parrot. And the elusive quail seen on several previous occasions was identified as a Brown Quail.

All up we saw 41 species.

**Debbie Walker**

## Observatory Reports

### BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

Life continues the same at BBO—birding, birding, birding, and then for a change, more birds.



The winter(?) months saw many thousands of waders, too young for the breeding experience, remain on Roebuck Bay. Up to four Asian Dowitchers and two Common Redshanks regularly seen on tour kept southern birders excited. Winter also meant that the surrounding countryside dried up enough for Kidney Bean Claypan to become accessible. Yellow Chats were again reliable at this location. Late July and August at Kidney Bean also provided some excitement with Oriental Pratincoles and Little Curlews present in very small numbers and a long way in advance of when they would normally be expected.

July was manic with the AWSG in attendance, a total of 14 persons, with 50% being from overseas. In total there were nine banding days on Roebuck Bay and seven at Eighty Mile Beach. 6771 waders were counted on Roebuck Bay and a further 33 700 at Bush Point, while 41 500 were counted at Eighty Mile Beach. 1505 waders (17 species), 174 terns (four species) and 15 gulls were caught during the three week expedition. The main objectives of the expedition were achieved with aging criteria, based primarily on moult, being satisfactorily confirmed/developed and with marked differences in the age structure of the different species of waders being determined.

Highlights for local birders were provided by Australasian Shoveler first appearing on Lake Champion and then being regularly seen around the inland lakes. Initially spotted by Adrian Boyle, this was a first sighting for the Broome region. Just to try and outdo himself, a few weeks later Adrian spied a pair of Freckled Ducks at Taylors Lagoon. Unfortunately these have proved a little more elusive, and have not been seen since. Unusually, an Arctic Jaeger was seen off Coulomb Point by George Swann. It reportedly stayed around for about a week.

The next report from here should be detailing all the highlights of return migration and the season when anything could turn up. Don't wait to read about it, pay us a visit and be part of the excitement!

**Joy Tansey**

### EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY



Why is it boys like to watch birds? We have discovered since being wardens at Eyre Bird Observatory through talking to many guests, that many men seem to have developed their interest in bird watching from a young age, they may get a bit side tracked in their teens and start watching birds of the featherless variety, but after the hormones have settled and the peer pressure gone they return to an interest from their childhood.

This sends out a strong message that education and encouragement needs to start with children, as they are the future not only of mankind, but also for birds and the environment we all live in.

If you know of any school groups or clubs and associations that may be interested in bringing a group of children to EBO on an educational excursion please contact the wardens.

A rarity for Eyre, a Yellow Wagtail was sighted on 11 June, 10 km west of the observatory while doing the weekly bird count on Kanidal Beach. The undulating flight first caught our attention, then the bright yellow. Looking through our Leicas at this bird

Silvereye in the hand, Eyre.  
*Photo courtesy the Wardens*

perched on a bush with the backdrop of the primary dunes it could only be a Yellow Wagtail. We got another better look on our return and also heard the call, what a magnificent little bird.

Several newly fledged birds (New Holland, White-fronted and Brown Honeyeaters, Mistletoebird) were seen around the observatory in early July; maybe due to good rain in April and May (over 100 mm, which is a third of our annual rainfall) the conditions were right for an early start to the breeding season.

There is always something in flower at Eyre. In July the mallees were heavy with bud and just waiting to burst into flower, providing an abundance of food for the many honeyeaters and the Western Pygmy Possum (*Cercartetus concinnus*). In 1987, as part of a study on these house mouse size possums, a variety of nesting boxes were placed in several mallee species so that the movement of the possums could be monitored. Boxes were inspected regularly. Pygmy Possums used 38 of the 51 boxes; 31 boxes were used by males and 33 by females. Boxes not



used on a regular basis were sometimes taken over by other creatures, such as breeding huntsman spiders (Hooper and Wells, Eyre Report 5 1986-1987). Many of the old boxes have fallen into disrepair, but in January 2003 three of a new prototype nesting box were placed in mallee trees close to the observatory. These have now been used on a regular basis by males, breeding females and their young. These boxes (poly pipe tubes) offer protection from predators, especially feral cats, and should stand the test of time.

Apart from the blossoms, the birds breeding, the cool mornings and sun-shiny days Spring is time for bird banding at Eyre Bird Observatory. This year from 28 September to 4 October nets will be unfurled, scribes ready with pencil poised for band numbers, weights and measurements and others with cameras clicking. Why not come banding at Eyre and enjoy six nights of dinner by an open fire and the company of other like minded people? Contact the wardens on 9039 3450 or [eyrebirdobs@bigpond.com](mailto:eyrebirdobs@bigpond.com) for details.

Bea Myers and Ian Tarbin

**Wildflower Society  
Of Western Australia (Inc)**

# Spring Fling

CELEBRATION OF THE BEGINNING OF SPRING

**Demonstrations & Displays**  
Know what soil is in your backyard  
Floral Displays

**Childrens Activities**  
Make gum nut toys  
Paint sand pictures

**Plant Sale**  
Unusual native plants

**New Publications**

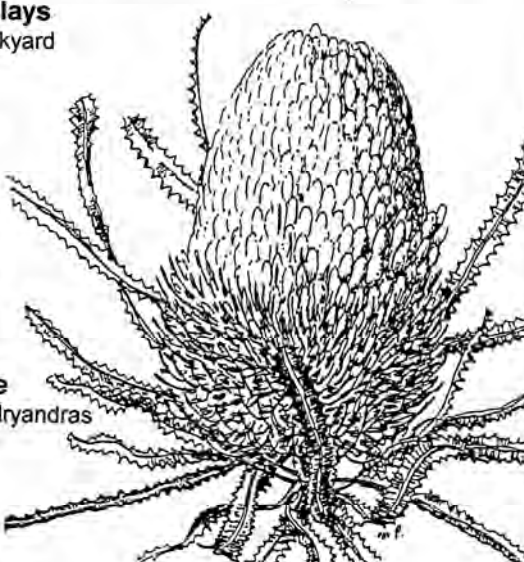
**Cut Wildflowers for Sale**  
Geraldton wax, verticordias, dryandras

**Identify Wildflowers**

**Souvenirs for Sale**

**Light Refreshments**

**Wildflower walks and Bird Spotting walks**  
A walk every half hour



**SUNDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2003**  
**9.30 AM – 4.00 PM**  
**PERRY HOUSE 71 OCEANIC DRIVE FLOREAT PARK**

ALL ENQUIRIES TO WILDFLOWER SOCIETY OF W.A. (INC) PH 9383 7979  
 Email [wildflowers@ozemail.com.au](mailto:wildflowers@ozemail.com.au)

After hours SYBIL SPEAK PH 9444 1495

## 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 will know 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 7 September—Half-day excursion, Lower Helena Catchment Area**

Drive through Midland east along the Great Eastern Highway. Once you have begun to climb Greenmount Hill watch for Scott Street—Welbourne Park Hall is on the corner. Turn right and continue until you come to the roundabout just past tennis courts on your right. Turn left into Clayton Road and drive to the end. Turn right into Victor Road and continue until you reach a locked gate. You have arrived! (StreetSmart Map 348 A8).

Meet here at 8:30 am. Turn round and park on the right hand side of the road. Bring morning tea and we will have it at the Pipehead Dam.

*Leader: Brice Wells*

### **Sunday 14 September—Spring Fling, Perry House/Bold Park, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm**

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

### **Saturday 13 September—Full-day excursion, Lowlands Estate, Serpentine**

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

Meet at the entrance to the property at 8:30 am. Lowlands is approximately one hour from Perth. Turn off Thomas Road, Oakford, into Kargotich Road, then travel south for 14 km to the T-junction with Lowlands Road (a 'No Through Road') (StreetSmart Map 615 B7). Turn right—the entrance to the property is approximately 3 km further on. Please arrive promptly as this is private property.

*Leader: David James*

### **Saturday-Sunday 13-14 September—WWF Koorda Bioblitz, Moningarín Reserve**

BAWA will again participate in the annual Bioblitz organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). A Bioblitz is a biodiversity inventory 'sample' done over a 24-hour period. This year's Bioblitz is at Moningarín Reserve, 20 km NE of Koorda. BAWA will do bird surveys for the Blitz, although you may switch to other activities if you wish (eg, plants, reptiles). Bird surveys will be done by 4-5 teams.

Camping accommodation for tents, campers and caravans is available at the tennis courts at the reserve. Some accommodation is available at the Koorda Hotel (make your own bookings). Be self-contained. Water, BBQ plates, fire and toilet facilities available. Arrive Friday evening or Saturday morning, for a late Saturday morning start. Finish: early Sunday afternoon.

Total number of participants limited to 20. Team leaders needed. Please contact Cheryl Gole (9293 4958) to have your name put on the list.

### **Thursday 18 September—Mid-week excursion, North Lake**

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park on Progress Drive, just off Farrington Road (StreetSmart Map 432 A10). We will walk round this small lake where about 80 bush and waterbirds have been seen.

*Leader: Bryan Barrett*

### **Sunday 21 September—Full-day Excursion, Albany Pelagic Trip**

A pelagic seabird trip has been organised from Emu Point, Albany. We will be heading out to the continental shelf, 26 nm offshore. 10 to 20 pelagic species are expected with several species of albatross, petrel and shearwater assured.

The trip leaves at 7:00 am and returns at 4:00 pm. There is a limit of 12 people. Booking is essential. The cost is expected to be \$105.

*Leader: Frank O'Connor  
(9386 5694 or foconnor@iinet.net.au)*

### **Sunday 21 September—Full day walk from Nanga Bridge along the Murray River**

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

This will be about a 12 km undulating walk down a creek and along the Murray River. We will follow a good track through Jarrah, Marri and Banksia, with beautiful views of the river.

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

Bring lunch and a minimum of 1 litre of water. Sue will boil a billy at lunch-time for everyone.

*Leader: Sue Abbotts (9444 1607)*

**Monday 22 September Meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood**

Leonie McMahon, BAWA Project Officer, will speak about her work on Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo.

**Saturday 27 to Monday 29 September—Campout at Cheyne Beach**

Cheyne Beach is a fishing village on the edge of the Waychinicup National Park east of Albany. The campout is primarily to see the Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Bristlebird and Western Whipbird. Ground Parrots have been heard and seen here at a recent survey, but in much reduced numbers. These birds are notoriously secretive and difficult to see so the campout is strictly limited to 20 people.

For bookings and more information contact the leader on 9444 1607.

*Leader: Sue Abbotts*

**Saturday 4 October—Full day excursion, Bootine Road Nature Reserve, Gingin**

Meet at 8:00 am at Bootine Road Nature Reserve on the northern side of Bootine Road 8.4 km west of the Brand Highway (at A, 0.5, Map 69, in the Western Australian Travellers' Atlas). Park in the cleared limestone area (near first gate) on right of road before crossing creek. A hand-painted 'CALM' sign is visible on a large tree near the gate and nature reserve sign, about 100 metres past the creek crossing. The Bootine Road turnoff from the Brand Highway is well signposted, about 100 km north of Perth city, and is virtually opposite the Boonanarring Road turnoff. Bring lunch, lots of water and long pants or gaiters to protect against snakes and grass seeds.

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

*Leaders: John and Judy Blyth*

**Sunday 12 October—Half-day excursion, Ray Marshall Park, Viveash**

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

of the Governor Stirling Senior High School (StreetSmart Map 316 A8).

*Leader: Jan Rogers*

**Thursday 16 October—Mid-week excursion, Alfred Cove, Attadale**

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale (StreetSmart Map 401 E8). We will look for the newly-arrived waders round the river, and for bushbirds. Buff-banded Rails are also often seen in the area.

*Leader: Les Harris*

**Saturday 18 October—Half/Full-day excursion, Brookton Highway**

Meet at 9:30 am 1.5 km down Collins Road from Brookton Highway to the first corner where there is room to park at the junction of Collins Road and Brookton Highway. The Collins Road turnoff is about 50 km from the junction of Brookton Highway and Canning Road on the right hand side coming from Perth (Travellers Atlas Map 54 D2). If you reach the turnoff to Beverley you have gone too far! Michael will show us this area of Wandoo woodland which contains many species including Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and Crested Shrike-tit.

Bring your lunch if you wish to continue in the afternoon.

*Leader: Michael Brooker*

**Saturday 25 October, Twitchathon—Breakfast with the Birds, King's Park**

Meet at 8:00 am at the Western Power Playground. A social event for members and friends. New members especially welcome. See details elsewhere in this issue.



We're chatting!  
*Cartoon by Penny Towells*

**Sunday 26 October—Half-day excursion, Ellis Brook, Gosnells**

Meet at 8:00 am at the corner of Gosnells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin (StreetSmart Map 436 D5). Be there promptly as we will drive on to a more suitable parking area!

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 Firetail, Red-browed Finch, Red-capped and Scarlet Robin.

*Leader: Les Harris*

**Monday 27 October Meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood**

Ron Johnstone, WA Museum, will speak on the new issue of *The Handbook of WA Birds*.

**Sunday 2 November—Full day excursion to Rottnest Island**

Meet at 10:00 am on Rottnest at the Tourist Bureau at the end of the jetty. Boats leave from 'B' Shed, Victoria Quay, Rous Head, Fremantle, and Hillarys. Advice from the ferry companies is to make your own booking before September.

Rottnest has a variety of habitats including the shallow salt lakes, the coast, fresh water swamps, woodland and heath. Over the last few years, a Red-necked Phalarope has been seen here regularly at this time. There are 49 species that are regularly seen and 112+ when vagrants are included.

We will walk down to the salt lakes where we should have good views of the waders, then across the golf course where pheasants and Red-capped Robins are often seen. We will return to the Settlement for lunch, after which we will walk to Bickley Swamp near the Barracks for more waders and one of the better chances to see Rock Parrots.

Most ferries leave the Island at about 4:00 pm.

*Leader: Sue Abbotts (phone 9444 1607)*

**Saturday 8 November to Sunday 9 November—Short Weekend Campout, Julimar Forest**

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

Arrive Friday evening, 7 November, or Saturday morning. There will be night spotting for owls and nightjars.

*Leader: Les Harris*

**Thursday 13 November—Mid-week excursion, Garvey Park, Ascot**

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park (next to the rowing club) at the western end of Fauntleroy Avenue, off Great Eastern Highway (StreetSmart Map 345 A5). This area has a good variety of waterbirds and bushbirds. Sixty-seven species have been recorded here since 1997, including Buff-banded Rail, Spotless Crake and Mistletoebird.

*Leader: Jan Rogers*

**Sunday 16 November—Full day excursion, Amarillo Pool, Baldvis**

Meet at 9:00 am at the entrance to Amarillo Farm on the Serpentine River. Travel south on Mandurah Road, turning left into Paganoni Road. Travel several kilometres then turn right into Vine Road (StreetSmart Map 671 E9). Look for the BA signs.

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

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

*Leader: Les Harris*

***North Lake Birds (1980-2002)***

86 pages

**An Annotated list based on 200 visits  
over 22 years.**

- \* Summarises relationship re water levels and birds.
- \* Detailed notes on 143 recorded species.
- \* Ready reckoner re species estimation for wetlands.

\$11.00 from Perry House  
(part proceeds to Birds WA)

and \$14.00 if posted.

*Further enquiries to Wynton Maddeford*

(08) 9364 8757

PO Box 1236, Canning Bridge, Applecross WA 6153

**Saturday 22 November—Full-day excursion, Pipidinnny Road, Eglinton**

Meet at 8:30 am on the corner of Yanchep and Pipidinnny Roads (StreetSmart Map 128 E1)—an hour's drive from Perth. Be prepared to pay a small fee to enter the picnic area for lunch.

We will look at four habitats during the day--the coastal dunes for Variegated Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, etc; the heath for White-winged Fairy-wren, Tawny-crowned and White-cheeked Honeyeaters; the swamp for waterfowl, and a part of Yanchep National Park which few people visit.

*Leader: Brice Wells*

**Monday 24 November Meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood**

BAWA member, Clive Napier, will speak on "Birding in the Pilbara".

**Sunday 30 November—Half-day excursion, Canning River Regional Park, Wilson**

Meet at 8:00 am at the Kent Street Weir car park, near the Canning River (StreetSmart Map 404 C7). We will cross the Weir and follow the river upstream to the first footbridge, cross the river again and walk back on the other side. So we should see plenty of waterbirds and bushbirds in this large Regional Park.

*Leader: Clive Napier*

**Monday 8 December Special Meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood**

Pat Free, a birdwatcher and resident of Kenya, will speak about and show slides of birds of Kenya. (This is a special meeting to take advantage of Pat's coming visit to Perth.)

**Saturday 6 December—Full day excursion, Mandurah**

Meet with the Mandurah Group at 8:00 am in the car park at the southern end of Wanjeep Street, Coodanup, on the shores of Peel Inlet. From Mandurah Road in Mandurah turn left into Pinjarra Road and travel 1 km until you reach the Wanjeep Road turnoff on your right. Following a survey of Coodanup on Peel Inlet we will then move on to Mariners Cove Board Walk, the Nairns, and the Samphire Cove board walk.

The return trip distance from Perth is about 180 km.

*Leaders: Frank Pridham and Dick Rule*

**Thursday 11 December—Mid-week excursion, Herdsman Lake**

Meet at 8:30 am in Maurice Hamer Park. Turn off Pearson Street into Falcon Avenue, turn right at the T-intersection into Lakeside Road. Continue to the car park at the end of the road. This is a good spot for viewing waterbirds. Bring your telescope if you have one.

*Leader: Bryan Barrett*

**Sunday 14 December—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) (StreetSmart Map 527 D5). 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*

**Sunday 14 December—Christmas function, Perry House**

A barbecue will be held on Sunday 14 December at Perry House commencing 6.30 pm. BYO meat and drinks—all members welcome!

**Sunday 28 December—Full day excursion, Lake McLarty**

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

Take your lunch, Wellington boots/old shoes, sun hats, insect repellent, water and telescopes. There should be a variety of waders at the lake, as well as many waterbirds and bushbirds.

*Leader: Colin Davis*



White-browed Babbler, head bill measurement, Eyre.  
*Photo courtesy the Wardens*



## Australasian Ornithological Conference 2003



Manning Clarke Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia  
Wednesday 10 to Saturday 13 December 2003

### Keynote speakers

Andrew Cockburn — *Evolutionary ecology*  
David Lindenmayer — *Landscape ecology*  
Trevor Worthy — *Paleoecology*

### Call for Abstracts

The program allows for 45 speakers, including symposia. Selection of spoken presentations and symposia will be made by the organising committee on merit. Delegates unsuccessful in gaining a place in the spoken sessions will be offered the chance to present a poster in the poster session. Notifications will be sent out 10 September 2003.

**Closing date for receipt of abstracts: 20 August 2003**

### Conference information

Please direct enquiries to:

Penny Olsen, email: penny.olsen@anu.edu.au,  
School of Botany and Zoology, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200

Denis Saunders, email: denis.saunders@csiro.au

and Nick Nicholls, email: nick.nicholls@csiro.au,  
CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, GPO Box 284, Canberra City, ACT 2601

### New Zealand contacts

Kerry-Jayne Wilson Wilsok@lincoln.ac.nz

Paul Scofield pscofield@cantmus.govt.nz

The Australasian Wader Studies Group will hold their 2-day conference immediately following AOC 2003, at the same venue. Contact Phil Straw: pstraw@optusnet.com.au for details.

AOC website:  
[www.birdsaustralia.com.au/aoc/](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/aoc/)



Join Chris Hassell of

## TURNSTONE NATURE DISCOVERY



and you will have the opportunity to share his enthusiasm and intimate knowledge of the birds of Broome and **beyond!**

In conjunction with Odyssey Travel, Chris is hosting a tour, in February 2004, to the fantastic Island of **Sri Lanka** and annually offers his 8-day **Birding in Broome** program during peak southward migration.

Visit [www.turnstonenaturediscovery.com.au/](http://www.turnstonenaturediscovery.com.au/) for more details, or contact Chris direct:  
Tel: (08) 9192 8585  
E-mail: [turnstone@wn.com.au](mailto:turnstone@wn.com.au)  
PO Box 3089, Broome, WA, 6725

Chris continues to offer exciting birdwatching experiences around Broome including:

- Shorebirds of Roebuck Bay
- Mangroves and Mudflats
- Wetland and Woodlands
- Grasslands and Claypans

*Chris is an excellent field ornithologist. He has over seven years experience guiding and researching in the Broome area. This experience and his infectious enthusiasm makes him an outstanding interpreter.*

**Chris looks forward to hearing from you.**



## ANZANG Nature and Landscape Photographer of the Year-2004

**ANZANG Nature** is organising an annual international nature and landscape photographic competition and subsequent exhibition at state museums and other high profile venues. To enter the competition photographs or digital images must be of subjects taken within the bioregion of **Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and New Guinea**. Cash prizes totalling **SEVENTEEN THOUSAND AUSTRALIAN DOLLARS** are available for winning entries.

ANZANG Nature wishes to encourage excellence in nature and landscape photography. Profit from the exhibitions will be donated to nature conservation organisations that are actively purchasing and managing natural habitat in the region for the express purpose of providing sanctuary to native flora and fauna.

There are nine sections in the competition

- ◆ Animal Behaviour.
- ◆ Animal Portrait.
- ◆ Botanical Subject.
- ◆ Underwater Subject.
- ◆ Wilderness Landscape.
- ◆ Threatened or Endangered Animals or Plants.
- ◆ Black and White Photography.
- ◆ Digital Camera Photography.
- ◆ Junior Photography.

### Entries close 1/5/04

For competition rules, entry forms and further information contact

Website [www.anzangnature.com](http://www.anzangnature.com)

Email [compete@anzangnature.com](mailto:compete@anzangnature.com)

Telephone/Fax +61(0) 8 9321 3685

Postal address ANZANG Nature  
GPO Box 2828  
PERTH Western Australia 6001

## Crossword Answers No 34

### Across

2 team, 5 calm, 8 sand, 9 community, 11 donor, 12 emerge, 13 record, 14 pilfer, 16 start, 17 alarm, 19 career, 21 noise, 22 era, 24 storage, 25 eagerly, 26 megapode.

### Down

1 random, 3 mimicry, 4 finance, 6 any, 7 megabacteria, 8 congregate, 10 territory, 12 Esperance, 15 leading, 18 misty, 20 eyrie, 23 raid, 24 sly.

**Birds Australia Western Australia (Inc)**  
(A DIVISION OF ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION)

## Western Australian Bird Notes Subscription Form

Are you joining Birds Australia for the first time, or renewing your membership?

Do you wish to receive *Western Australian Bird Notes*?

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Last name:			
Address:			
		Postcode:	
Phone (H):		(W):	
Email:			

### WABN subscription rates per annum

(please cross out whichever is inapplicable)

WA Members	\$12.00
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**Note: WABN subscription is only available with a Birds Australia membership. For membership rates contact Birds Australia.**

### Payment Details

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OR

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...../.....  
Expiry date Signature

\*Concession card number(s) .....  
(Full-time student, Health Care or Pension card)

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

8/2003

## 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](mailto:gole@starwon.com.au)
- ◆ **Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project** — contact Leonie McMahon  
Phone 9287 2448 or 0438 678492,  
Email [ljmcmahon@bigpond.com](mailto:ljmcmahon@bigpond.com)
- ◆ **Eyre Bird Observatory relief wardens** — contact  
\* Shapelle McNee Phone 9494 1286, Email [mshapelle@hotmail.com](mailto:mshapelle@hotmail.com)  
\* or Rod Smith Phone 9447 3804,  
Email [rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au)
- ◆ **Noisy Scrub Bird** — contact Sarah Comer Phone 9842 4500,  
Email [sarahc@calm.wa.gov.au](mailto:sarahc@calm.wa.gov.au)
- ◆ **Atlas** — surveys for this are continuing — contact Cheryl Gole  
Phone 9293 4958, Email [gole@starwon.com.au](mailto:gole@starwon.com.au)
- ◆ **BAWA Committee** — we need a full Committee — contact the  
Secretary, Liz Walker Phone 9444 8920

## Calendar of Events

### Birds Australia Western Australia Inc

#### Office, Perry House

71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat WA 6014

Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 12:30 pm  
Telephone: (08) 9383 7749  
Facsimile: (08) 9387 8412  
Email: [birdswa@iinet.net.au](mailto:birdswa@iinet.net.au)

#### Birds Australia WA Home Page:

<http://birdswa.iinet.net.au>

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**Distribution:** Rod Smith

#### 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)

December 2003 issue: 1 November

March 2004 issue: 1 February

June 2004 issue: 1 May

### Advertising Rates

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

**Sunday 7 September**—Half-day excursion, Lower Helena Catchment Area

**Sunday 14 September**—Spring Fling, Perry House/Bold Park, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

**Saturday 13 September**—Full-day excursion, Lowlands Estate, Serpentine

**Saturday-Sunday 13-14 September**—WWF Koorda Bioblitz, Moningarin Reserve

**Thursday 18 September**—Mid-week excursion, North Lake

**Sunday 21 September**—Full-day Excursion, Albany Pelagic Trip

**Sunday 21 September**—Full day walk from Nanga Bridge along the Murray River

**Monday 22 September Meeting**—State Tennis Centre, Burswood

**Saturday 27 to Monday 29 September**—Campout at Cheyne Beach

**Saturday 4 October**—Full day excursion, Bootine Road Nature Reserve, Gingin

**Sunday 12 October**—Half-day excursion, Ray Marshall Park, Viveash

**Thursday 16 October**—Mid-week excursion, Alfred Cove, Attadale

**Saturday 18 October**—Half/Full-day excursion, Brookton Highway

**Saturday 25 October, Twitchathon**—Breakfast with the Birds, King's Park

**Sunday 26 October**—Half-day excursion, Ellis Brook, Gosnells

**Monday 27 October Meeting**—State Tennis Centre, Burswood

**Sunday 2 November**—Full day excursion to Rottnest Island

**Saturday 8 November to Sunday 9 November**—Short Weekend Campout, Julimar Forest

**Thursday 13 November**—Mid-week excursion, Garvey Park, Ascot

**Sunday 16 November**—Full day excursion, Amarillo Pool, Baldivis

**Saturday 22 November**—Full-day excursion, Pipidinn Road, Eglington

**Monday 24 November Meeting**—State Tennis Centre, Burswood

**Sunday 30 November**—Half-day excursion, Canning River Regional Park, Wilson

**Monday 8 December Special Meeting**—State Tennis Centre, Burswood

**Saturday 6 December**—Full day excursion, Mandurah

**Thursday 11 December**—Mid-week excursion, Herdsman Lake

**Sunday 14 December**—Half-day excursion, Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale

**Sunday 14 December**—BBQ Perry House

**Sunday 28 December**—Full day excursion, Lake McLarty

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