

Western Australian Bird Notes



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



No 109 March 2004

ISSN 1445-3983

Contents

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Observations</i> | p4 | <i>BAWA Reports</i> | p10 | <i>Notices</i> | p23 | <i>Crossword Answers</i> | p35 |
| <i>Letters to the Editors</i> | p6 | <i>BAWA Projects</i> | p13 | <i>New Members</i> | p25 | <i>Opportunities for Vols</i> | p36 |
| <i>Tribute to Past Member</i> | p8 | <i>Members' Contributions</i> | p14 | <i>Excursion Reports</i> | p26 | <i>Calendar of Events</i> | p36 |
| <i>From the CEO's Desk</i> | p9 | <i>What's In a Name?</i> | p20 | <i>Observatories</i> | p29 | | |
| | | <i>Crossword</i> | p22 | <i>Coming Events</i> | p30 | | |

ANTHOLOGY OF HOODED PLOVER BEHAVIOUR (PART 2)



The Myalup Bird Observers Group has kept detailed records on Hooded Plover behaviour at Lake Preston since 2000 (France *et al.* unpublished). The notes contain descriptions of some aspects of Hooded Plover behaviour that supplement our existing knowledge and of others that are new. The conclusions are based on repeated observations and team discussions.

The present notes summarise the more important findings from these studies. Part 1 was published in *WA Bird Notes* No. 108 (December 2003), and covered various aspects of Hooded Plover behaviour. Part 2 deals more specifically with breeding behaviour. The breeding data from Lake Preston for 2000/01 and 2001/02 were summarised by Newbey (2002). The purpose of these articles is to make this information widely available and to encourage an exchange of information between Hooded Plover study groups.

The Myalup Bird Observers Group carried out most of their fieldwork in the south-western part of Lake Preston. Lake Preston is the largest lake within the Yalgourup system. Its length

from north to south is 27.5 km, the widest point of the lake at the southern end is about 2 km and the narrowest about 0.5 km. The length of the lake foreshore that the group surveyed was 18.6 km. Members of the group identified 23 Hooded Plover observation sites, allocated each site a local name and number, and monitored these regularly. Over three seasons, they have recorded more than thirty nesting attempts.

Display Behaviour?

Two Hooded Plovers were at the lakeside, one scooting in circles behind the other. The pair flew off over the lake, circling a few times, one immediately behind the other. Then a wider circle brought them back to the take-off point. This procedure was repeated three times.

Similar pursuit in flight behaviour by different Hooded Plover pairs has been observed on at least five separate occasions including 23/7/02, 25/8/02, 20/9/02, 14/10/02 and late November 2001.

The function of this behaviour is unknown, but it might be part of courtship behaviour.



Juvenile Hooded Plover with adults at water's edge
Photo courtesy Tony France

Rotating Behaviour

On one occasion an adult bird at mid-beach performed slow pirouettes, circling almost on its own axis, before moving off and returning to repeat the exercise. A second adult bird ran towards the circling bird and then away.

In another instance two birds were seen close together. One performed a single revolution on its own axis after which the other bird attempted to mount its partner. This would indicate that at least the female bird performs pirouettes, and suggests that this behaviour may be a mating display.

This behaviour was observed in 2001 (at Upton's Beach) and on 7/10/02 and 10/10/02. The pair eventually nested nearby, both in 2001 and 2002.

These displays may be variations on the "Exaggerated Scraping Displays" described in the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB) (Vol 2, p. 906).

First and Subsequent Nests

At Lake Preston the majority of first nests are begun from the first week in December through to the last week in February.

If the eggs of the first nest are lost, a second nesting attempt is often made. If this too is unsuccessful, a third attempt is sometimes made. In 2001-2, nine pairs were found to have made 14 nesting attempts. Two of these pairs made three nesting attempts; one of the two pairs was successful on the third attempt. In 2002-3 nine pairs were found to have made 12 nesting attempts.

The second replacement clutch of some Hooded Plovers was 11-18 days after the first breeding attempt had failed. However, it was seldom known on what exact day the first egg of a second clutch was laid.

Two Hooded Plovers were observed mating at the "Bay of Islands" southern site on 11 November 2003. By 18 November 2003 a nest with two eggs was discovered there and by 25 November 2003 it was found to contain a third egg.

Nest Sites

Hooded Plover pairs in south-western Lake Preston usually nest between 0.7 and 1.5 km apart.

At Lake Preston the same breeding territories are frequently used year after year and there is evidence that it is the same birds that return to the same sites. One pair that was colour banded early in the 2002 -3 breeding season was in the same territory at the beginning of the 2003 -4 breeding season. A bird distinguishable by its missing foot is now, with an unmarked mate, very near the same site it

nested in last year after having been away from the site for at least four months. It was seen at various locations several kilometres south of its breeding territory, often in a feeding flock of Hooded Plovers. Nests are often located in close proximity to nest sites of previous years.

With few exceptions the birds nest on hard limestone headlands very close to the waterline, or at soft beach sites approximately equidistant from the waterline and the nearest substantial vegetation.

Only three pairs have been discovered nesting amid scattered low vegetation, approximately 30, 80 and 100 metres from the water's edge.



Hooded Plover nest with feathers
Photo courtesy Tony France

Nesting pairs can be versatile in their choice of nesting substrate. Pairs that habitually select a first-nest site at a hard beach and then lose their eggs, will sometimes select a soft-beach site for a second nest that same season.

Hooded Plovers from south-western Lake Preston sometimes use nesting sites in the hollows/cavities formed by a kangaroo footprint left in a soft-mud or silt beach. Opportunistic nesting hollows such as these are

more likely to be chosen by pairs whose first clutch has failed.

Nest Scrapes and Furnishing

HANZAB makes reference to birds shaping out nest hollows with their breasts. A Hooded Plover was only once observed actually in the process of scraping a nest in which eggs were later found.

A nest-scape found at the southeast southern causeway soft-beach site on 30 September 2002 had one egg by 4 October 2002. This nesting pair had used an old steer track for a nest foundation. The nest was sited in one of a row of depressions left by cattle hooves, although the many waders thereabouts had since tramped those depressions on once soggy surfaces. It was believed the Hooded Plover had been rather overwhelmed by the close presence of many moulting Australian Shelduck and had given up nesting. When first discovered, the nest appeared deliberately lined with some large frayed wing-feathers, but the wind had blown some of those moulted feathers into the old cattle tracks (see photograph).

All such soft-mud nest hollows found were smoothed throughout, the rough animal track being moulded to a suitably rounded concave curve.

A lone adult was discovered at the "Wattle-tree" hard-shore site scraping and pecking at the one spot. After the



Hooded Plover nest with *Cokiella* shell base
Photo courtesy Tony France

bird had flown off, the spot was checked for a nest scrape. However, the bird did not return to complete the nest.

A Hooded Plover was observed scraping a hollow on the soft-beach at the “south-western pocket” site on November 26, 2002 and another nearby on 13 December 2002. During subsequent observations, no eggs were found in either nest.

Nests often contain small pink conical *Cokiella* shells (a salt water snail) (see photograph) and occasionally white land snail shells. Another nest was lined with several small, white secondary wing-feathers, possibly Hooded Plover feathers. HANZAB does not list feathers as being used by nest lining, so this would appear to be unusual.

Nesting pairs prepare their initial nests more thoroughly than subsequent nests and a first nest is likely to have more furnishing.

Egg Colouration

Over the last few years, at least a hundred eggs have been seen at Lake Preston. The consistent base colour is an ashy beige, over marked densely at the large end with irregular blotches and specks that range in colour from near black to very dark umber, to medium brown to a watery tan, with diminishing markings towards the small end.

Impact of Hydrology on Nests

Lake Preston is a shallow lake and when strong north-easterlies blow, water surges up its gently sloping beaches. Inadvertent flooding is one of the causes of nesting failures. At least three Hooded Plover nests were lost due to flooding at Lake Preston, in the southwest pocket (2) and at the southern causeway (1). The nest at the southern causeway was flooded on 17 October 2002 due to gale force north-westerly winds and rain.

Wind driven water surges also cause fresh high water marks, sometimes bringing them close to Hooded Plover nests. Silver Gulls forage along tide-lines, a process that often brings them within range of Hooded Plover nests, making these more vulnerable to predation.

Seepage from surrounding land and high water levels in the lake can keep some beaches soggy and damp well into summer. Hooded Plovers have not been discovered nesting

at soft-beach sites until those sites are at least firm, if not absolutely dry, on the surface.

The improved 2003 winter rain average led to a higher lake level for longer into January 2004 than in the previous three years. More ground water than usual is still seeping from the dune lens into soft beaches, of which many still remain waterlogged or just damp. The effect seems to have been that some breeding pairs have delayed nesting this season. Some others have nested later than usual at soft- or hard beaches, regardless.

In 2003, two pairs each chose to nest on then dry, slightly elevated, mud mounds (see photograph). In early December 2003 a pair had made a nest on a mud mound at “Ski-point Bay”. The mud mounds had been created by a bogged vehicle on the beach in the previous year. Another Hooded Plover nest was discovered on top of the remnants of a mud castle built by children in the south west pocket of Lake Preston.

The two mud mound nests and six others have been unsuccessful (December 2003), including one replacement clutch. This is a higher casualty rate compared with the start of the previous three seasons.

Tony France

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Brenda Newbey for kindly providing suggestions and helpful comments on the article, and especially to Marcus Singor for assistance in preparing the material for *WA Bird Notes*. Brenda Newbey, Dick Rule and Bill Russell are thanked for providing their data on Hooded Plovers. Thanks also to the Peel Development Commission and Alcoa Australia for assistance with funding for parts of the work described above.

References

- France, A., *et al.* (unpublished) *Hooded Plover Ecology - S.W. Lake Preston – Yalgorup National Park 2000-2003* — a paper by A.F. (Tony) France of Myalup in conjunction with Neville and Margaret Jones of Cookernup, Margaret Symonds of Harvey, and Beryl Flemming and Marcus Clay of Myalup.
- Newbey, B. (2002) Hooded Plover breeding at Lake Preston over two seasons. *WA Bird Notes* 103: 23-25.



Hooded Plover nest on mud mound
Photo courtesy Tony France

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 a **Grey Wagtail** in Broome, a **Franklin's Gull** in Carnarvon, seabirds off Albany, and more rarities on Christmas Island and Ashmore Reef.

The second Western Australian sighting of a **GREY WAGTAIL** was at the Broome Bird Observatory where the bird stayed for a few days and gave excellent opportunities for study and photographs.

The most interesting sightings in the metropolitan area were **Wandering Whistling-Ducks** at the north end of Lake Joondalup and **Common Noddies** at Penguin Island. The **Freckled Duck** left Herdsman Lake, but two were later found at Lake Claremont. A **Red-necked Phalarope** returned to Rottnest Island for another year. Following on from the first sighting of the season reported in WABN 108, there were more breeding records of **White-winged Trillers** in the metropolitan area.

A pelagic trip off Albany in early November highlighted the potential of this under surveyed area. The major highlights were a **SOOTY ALBATROSS** and a **GREY PETREL**. The trip report is elsewhere in this issue of WABN. Lake McLarty is having another excellent year, further highlighting the major importance of this wetland.

A **Franklin's Gull** was photographed at the Carnarvon sewage ponds. This species is seen about once per year on average somewhere in Western Australia.

Alastair Smith visited Ashmore Reef and found several major rarities including the 2nd Australian record of a **EURASIAN HOBBY**, the 1st Australian record of **PALE WHITE-EYE** away from the Torres Strait where they are resident, and **HOUSE SWIFT**.

Several people visited Christmas Island. A second pond heron was seen for Christmas Island. Like the first record several years ago, the exact identity is hard to confirm but

it is believed to be an immature **JAVAN POND HERON**. A dead bittern was also found and this has been initially identified as a **SCHRENCK'S BITTERN**, a new bird for Australia. The bird has been preserved and is expected to be lodged with the Museum of Victoria. Several reports of **White-throated Needletails** were the first sightings for Christmas Island.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Wandering Whistling-Duck – 2, 4/12/03, north end of Lake Joondalup (Joondalup) – IR (rare in the south west)

Freckled Duck – 2, 30/12/03, Lake Claremont (Claremont) – WM (rare at this site)

Royal Spoonbill – 1, 18/11/03, Perry Lakes (Floreat) – CN (uncommon in the south west)

Buff-banded Rail – 2 adults and 1 chick, 15/11/03, Baghdad Lake (Rottnest Island) – FO, CL *et al.* (1st breeding record for Rottnest)

Red-necked Phalarope – 1, 2/11/03, Pearse Lakes (Rottnest

Island) – BAWA (same bird as previous years?)

Common Noddy – 3, 27/12/03, Penguin Island (Shoalwater) – CS * 1, 05/01/04, Penguin Island (Shoalwater) – RL (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

White-headed Petrel – 7, 2/11/03, pelagic trip (Albany) – CL, FO *et al.* (uncommonly reported in WA)

GREY PETREL – 1, 2/11/03, pelagic trip (Albany) – CL, FO *et al.* (rarely reported in WA)

Wandering Albatross – 9 (subspecies *exulans* and *gibsoni*), 2/11/03, pelagic trip (Albany) – CL, FO *et al.* (uncommonly reported in WA)

SOOTY ALBATROSS – 1, 2/11/03, pelagic trip (Albany) – CL, FO *et al.* (rarely reported in WA)

Cattle Egret – 18, 14/09/03, near Eaton (Bunbury) – CW (high number in the south west)

Baillon's Crake – 1 adult and 3 chicks, 27/11/03, Hotham River near Ranford (Boddington) – NH (few breeding records in the shire)

Australian Bustard – 1, 7/11/03, Wongan Hills to Ballidu (Wongan-Ballidu) – CL, FO *et al.* (uncommon in the south west)

Bar-tailed Godwit – 2, 14/01/04, Wilson Inlet near Hay River mouth (Albany) – RG, WZ, ABo (uncommon in the shire)



Franklin's Gull at the Carnarvon sewage ponds, 14 January 2004
Photos courtesy Les George

Ruff – 2 (1 male, 1 female), 28/12/03, Lake McLarty (Murray) – BAWA (uncommon in the south west)

White-winged Black Tern – 4, 28/12/03, Lake McLarty (Murray) – BAWA (uncommon in the south west)

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo – 7, 8/01/04, 1 km east of Kojonup (Kojonup) – HT (outside normal range)

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill – 3, 9/01/04, Congelin Dam, Dryandra State Forest (Williams) – SvA (outside normal range)

Grey Honeyeater – 1, 8/11/03, 30 km south of Payne's Find (Yalgoo) – CL, FO *et al.* (uncommon in WA)

Pied Honeyeater – 1, 21/11/03, Middle Ironcap (Kondinin) – SG (outside normal range)

ARID ZONE

Little Black Cormorant – 12, 24/11/03, Double Island (Barrow Island) – MC, MB (rare on Barrow Island)

Little Curlew – 1, 25/11/03, Double Island (Barrow Island) – MB (uncommon on Barrow Island)

Ruff – 1, 8/12/03, sewage ponds (Carnarvon) – LG (uncommon in WA)

FRANKLIN'S GULL – 1, 14/01/04, sewage ponds (Carnarvon) – LG (photographs; uncommon in WA)

Oriental Cuckoo – 1 hepatic female, 24/11/03, Double Island (Barrow Island) – MC, MB (rare on Barrow Island)

Banded Whiteface – 4, 10/11/03, road to Austin Downs (Cue) – CL, FO *et al.* (uncommon in WA)

Painted Finch – 3, 24/11/03, Double Island (Barrow Island) – MC, MB (rare on Barrow Island)

KIMBERLEY

Freckled Duck – 2, 15/08/03, Sesbania Creek, Lake Gregory (Halls Creek) – GS (uncommon in the Kimberley)

Banded Lapwing – 10, 15/08/03, Lena Yard, Lake Gregory (Halls Creek) – GS (uncommon in the Kimberley)

Red-necked Phalarope – 1, 7/11/03, Lake Eda (Broome) – AB (uncommon in the Kimberley)

Purple-crowned Fairy-wren – pair nesting, 08/03, Isdell River (Derby – West Kimberley) – KM (rarely reported breeding in the Kimberley)

Yellow Chat – 100+, 15/08/03, Lena Yard, Lake Gregory (Halls Creek) – GS (high number)

GREY WAGTAIL – 1, 11-15/11/03, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – JT, GS, AB *et al.* (2nd record for WA; photographs; BARC submission being prepared)

Pictorella Mannikin – 500+, 12/07/03, near Timms Creek, Walcott Inlet (Derby – West Kimberley) – GS (high number)

Tree Martin – 4 pairs nesting, 15/08/03, Lena Yard, Lake Gregory (Halls Creek) – GS (rarely reported breeding in the Kimberley)

Little Grassbird – nest with 1 egg, 18/06/03, near Well 36, Canning Stock Route (Halls Creek) – GS * 5+, 15/08/03, Lena Yard, Lake Gregory (Halls Creek) – GS (uncommon in the Kimberley)

ASHMORE REEF

EURASIAN HOBBY – 1, 2/12/03, West Island – AS (2nd record for Australia; photographs (one reproduced on the next page); a report has been submitted to BARC)

HOUSE SWIFT – 1, 5/11/03, West Island – AS (rarely reported in Australia; photographs; a report has been submitted to BARC)

PALE (ASHY-BELLIED) WHITE-EYE – 3, 8/11/03, West Island – AS (1st record for Ashmore Reef; three subspecies occur from the Lesser Sundas to NE Queensland but the origin of this bird is unknown; a report has been submitted to BARC)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Striated Heron – 1, 27/11/03 to 04/12/03, Christmas Island – SP, BB (uncommon on Christmas Island)

(JAVAN?) POND HERON – 1, 15/11/03 to 21/11/03, near Murray Road / Irvine Hill junction – PRB, PDA (2nd record for Christmas Island if accepted; BARC submission required)

SCHRENCK'S BITTERN – 1 dead, 17/11/03, near Kampong – PRB (1st record for Australia if accepted; BARC submission required)

Oriental Cuckoo – 1 hepatic, 27/11/03 to 4/12/03, Christmas Island – SP, BB (uncommon on Christmas Island)

Common Koel – 1 male, 27/11/03 to 4/12/03, Christmas Island – SP, BB (uncommon on Christmas Island)

White-throated Needletail – 6, 3 and 1, 15/11/03 to 21/11/03, Christmas Island – PRB * 2 and 2, 15/11/03 to 16/11/03, rubbish tip – PDA (1st records for Christmas Island)

OBSERVERS

AB = Adrian Boyle
ABO = Ann Bondin
AS = Alastair Smith
BAWA = BAWA Excursion
BB = Barry Buchholz (NT)
CL = Chris Lester (Vic)
CN = Clive Nealon
CS = Claire Stevenson
CW = Christine Wilder
FO = Frank O'Connor
GS = George Swann
HT = Henry Toovey
IR = Ian Rudd
JT = Joy Tansey

KM = Kristy Marshall
LG = Les George
MB = Michael Bamford
MC = Michael Craig
NH = Nicola Harman
PDA = Pam and Des Agnew
PRB = Peter and Rhonda Barrand (Vic)
RG = Ray Garstone
RL = Robert Lambert (UK)
SG = Steve Giles
SP = Stuart Pell (Qld)
SvA = Sean van Alphen
WM = Wynton Maddeford
WZ = Wayne Zadow

The Chairman

Editors' note: This letter was passed on to the Editors by the Chairman for publication.

I wish to thank the people of Birds Australia WA for their part in my pleasure over the past six months of birdwatching in WA while based in Perth for a work assignment.

I went on a number of BAWA outings, from my first half-day outing to Ellis Brook to the Amarillo Pool non-event (which turned out to be a very enjoyable day)—incidentally, both trips were led by the indefatigable Les Harris. A feature of all my trips was the consideration shown by the trip leaders to newcomers such as myself and the friendliness of the other people on the walks.

I spent some time birdwatching on most weekends. The information in the BAWA bird-location pamphlets was very useful as was Frank O'Connor's website. BAWA members were most helpful as well. With this assistance, I was able to see all of the WA endemics apart from my 'jinx bird'—the Crested Shrike-tit.

I also attended some BAWA monthly meetings over my six-month stay. Your informal and friendly style of running the meetings made for a relaxing time and the talks were always interesting.

I think the high class of BAWA people is exemplified by my attempt to see the Noisy Scrub-bird. On the September 2003 Cheyne Beach campout, with Sue Abbotts (leader) and her friend, I stood for over an hour in the cold and wind watching a small patch of thick scrub from which a stream of calls was emanating. The Noisy Scrub-bird did not show itself to us, but somehow it 'escaped' the patch unnoticed and started calling from somewhere else. With Frank O'Connor adding his experience, we stood again, still windy and still cold, surrounding another small patch

of scrub; and again we didn't see the bird. At 5:30 am next morning, I spent another hour in blustery gale-force winds and rain squalls huddled beside a sapling waiting for a sighting—a fleeting glimpse would have sufficed. Again, I gave up without a sighting. Notwithstanding this lack of success, I had a great time with the BAWA group; and also because I really love the wild weather and great ocean scenery; Cheyne Beach had both to extremes that weekend, plus some good birds and whales.

A month later, I decided to try one last time at Cheyne Beach to see the Noisy Scrub-bird and its two 'notorious' endemic companions (I'd missed these, too, at the campout). Armed with the vital information on locations and strategies, I had excellent and prolonged sightings of these three species within an hour. Needless to say, I was thrilled. This magic experience was only possible because of the patience and skills of Sue Abbotts and Frank O'Connor and their willingness to share their expertise on the campout a few weeks previously.

By way of appreciation, I wish to make a donation to BAWA—as enclosed. I would prefer that the money is directed to the Eyre Bird Observatory.

Once again, thank you on behalf of the BAWA members for my many enjoyable birdwatching experiences in Western Australia in the second half of 2003. I extend an invitation to any BAWA members visiting Brisbane to contact me if they would like any birding information or assistance.

Yours sincerely and best wishes to you and BAWA for a successful 2004.

Andrew Walter
Member, Birds Australia and Birds Queensland



Eurasian Hobby, Ashmore Reef
Photo courtesy Alastair Smith

Dear Editors

Concerns at Thomsons Lake

Thomsons Lake, together with Forrestdale Lake, is listed as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. Thomsons Lake Nature Reserve is managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). The water levels at the lake and in the surrounding groundwater are managed by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Recently the Thomsons Lake Draft Management Plan has been released for public comment.

Many local conservationists feel that this management plan and the on-ground management by the CALM and the DEP do not reflect the importance of this wetland. This is most probably a result of the limited resources available to these departments. In 2003 this lack of resources has led to the deaths of approximately 40 cygnets.

The suburbs of Success, Banjup and Atwell to the east of the Lake were proposed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Metropolitan Region Scheme amendment was changed provided that there was adequate drainage management which controlled stormwater and protected water levels in Thomsons Lake and other wetlands in Beeliar Regional Park.

CALM stipulated water level criteria for Thomsons Lake, specifying that for medium rainfall years the lake should dry out between January and April. In 2003 we had a medium rainfall year and the lake effectively dried out in mid-December. If water had stayed in the lake until January, as stipulated by CALM, we may not have seen the demise of approximately 40 cygnets during December. We had plenty of warning of these deaths as the Friends of Yangebup Wetlands estimated that a larger number died during late spring of 2002.

Thomsons Lake receives much less water each year than it has previously. This is not just because of less rainfall but is also caused by changes to drainage patterns within its catchment due to nearby developments (anecdotal evidence by local conservationists). As the lake has much less water in it, the spring and summer weather results in the lake drying out much earlier than it used to. Cygnets do not fly until they are about 6 months old (information from BAWA). When the lake dries out the adult swans fly away to other lakes with water, such as Yangebup Lake and Bibra Lake, but the cygnets are unable to do this. Their survival instinct is to walk towards water. Thomsons Lake is surrounded by cyclone fencing to prevent foxes and cats from entering and destroying fauna in the reserve. This fence also stops the cygnets from walking to Kogolup Lake, which retains water for longer than Thomsons Lake.

In 2002 CALM estimated that about 60 cygnets were lined up at the fence trying to get to Kogolup Lake. CALM staff opened up the gate to let these cygnets get through to water. Unfortunately, when Kogolup Lake dried out a short time later the cygnets, which could not yet fly, could not get through the fence along Beeliar Drive. This meant that they could not get to Yangebup Lake which remains with water all summer. During 2002 and 2003 community members were told on several occasions that during the summer of 2003/2004 the cygnets would be rescued by CALM and taken to nearby lake waters. The Department of Environmental Protection also made assurances that this would happen. When Jeff Spencer (a local conservationist) rang CALM to inform them that the Lake was drying and that the swans were starting to line up at the fence, CALM could not provide resources to rescue the cygnets. This was because relevant staff members were busy fighting fires raging locally and near Wanneroo.

CALM does not have adequate resources to manage the rescue attempts that will always be needed over summer, while they are busy fighting fires. Furthermore the CALM officers responsible for Thomsons Lake are based in Wanneroo! A dedicated CALM officer who is responsible for Forrestdale and Thomsons Lakes, with no other responsibilities, is perhaps a reasonable solution. Failing

this, additional staff and the responsibility of managing Thomsons Lake and Forrestdale Lake could be transferred to the Fremantle based Regional Parks unit.

Resurrection of the technical committee for the Southern Lakes Drainage Scheme is of urgent importance to resolve the long term issues of pressures on the water catchment. Although all of the responsible departments agree that this is required, the technical committee has not met for some time. One option to booster lake levels is to pump water from the Jandakot treatment pond during the winter when nutrients are diluted by rainwater.

I am interested to know if there have been similar problems with cygnets at other metropolitan lakes. Also I believe that the cygnets are a very visible sign of problems with the altered drainage patterns. There surely must be other ecological changes occurring. I am concerned that with the lake drying out earlier than usual that this may reduce use by Long-toed Stints and other CAMBA or JAMBA protected species. Loss of these species, or reduction in their numbers, would, compromise the Ramsar Listing of this precious wetland.

Robyn Pickering

References

Environment Australia (2001) *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*. Third Edition. Canberra.
Department of Conservation and Land Management (2003). *Thomsons Lake Nature Reserve Draft Management Plan 2003*. CALM, Perth.

Editors' note: Robyn Pickering has highlighted some important issues in relation to the management of this important nature reserve. It is interesting, also, to note that there have been substantial changes to the lake through the last century.

In the 1970s, water levels were substantially higher than in recent years, due to inflows via man-made drains at a time of 'normal' rainfall. Rainfall has been less during the last couple of decades. However, in the 1970s there was evidence, in the form of dead stumps and branches (now long gone) of many shrubs in the area that is now bare lake floor. This suggests that water levels were somewhat lower before the drains were constructed, and that subsequent increases in water levels drowned the shrubs. Do other members have memories of, or evidence for, such changes at Thomsons Lake?

Presumably, the lake has always been important for waterbirds, but may be more important for waders now than in the past. In any case, in order for Thomsons Lake to remain as a wetland of conservation importance in the face of increasing pressures from urbanisation, it will require active management based on good data and ongoing monitoring.

The Editors

Obliging(?) Eagles

Regarding the eagle nest and chick in *WABN* 108 (Dec. 2003), p 18: the parents were probably 'away' because

they saw the observer approaching before he saw them, and made themselves scarce for the duration of his visit. These birds, being shy and wary at a nest with young, were probably watching from a distance or height until he departed, and there probably was indeed some disruption to their family life. The duration of the disturbance, ie, three hours, is a concern because the female usually attends a downy chick of that age almost constantly. Note that the

chick in the photo is panting with heat stress. Normally the female would shade the chick from the sun, which can be fatal if the chick is exposed for too long. Observers should intrude only briefly, and be aware that their extended presence might place unprotected nestlings at risk from weather or predators.

Stephen Debus



A Tribute to a Past Member



TONY BENNETT

Allan Jones phoned me in November 2003 for a few words on our previous birding activities. As this article makes obvious three minutes would not cover all this subject, hence this write up.

Our interest in our feathered friends started in Hong Kong in the 70s where our son, who had always had an interest in birds, was due for the long two-month summer holidays from his UK boarding school. So, Tony and I thought we should investigate the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society—the result was we were hooked and James at 16 had an alternative interest in non-feathered birds.

However, he reverted years on and took his new bride to spend their first wedding anniversary at Singapore Serangoon sewage works netting overnight with the Inter Wader Group: Siberia–Singapore–Broome. This was thought sufficiently interesting for the *Straits Times* to include a write up and photo.

So, for us an alternative to sailing at the weekends was walking on the Tai Po marshes and Shatin area and hills of Tai Mo Shau. There was a wide variety of waders and other birds in the marshes: turnstones, Asian Dowitcher, Purple Heron, Spotted Redshank, greenshank, Whimbrel, Imperial Eagle.

From Hong Kong we moved to Kuala Lumpur where the birdwatching was excellent at the Fraser's Hill and Genting Highland Hill Stations and also the surrounding area of the city. Some of the best sightings in Fraser's Hill were the Maroon Oriole, Scarlet Minivet, Mountain Bulbul, Fire-tufted and Black-browed Barbets. The Sultan Tit was a very striking bird with its black plumage and bright yellow crown. This bird caused considerable amusement from our non-birding friends who would say, "the Bennetts are off to find their Sultan Tit again". Many of the various hornbills were always exciting, none more so than the Rhinoceros Hornbill with huge sighs and a deep, resonant honk which even brought our bored teenage daughter's head up out of a book with a "wow"! The seabirds were Crested Sea-Eagle, Amur Falcon and Red-headed Vulture among others.

One of the many pluses of living in Hong Kong and thereafter Kuala Lumpur was that on our annual leave we were able to make stopovers in such places as Delhi,

Kashmir, Seychelles and Sri Lanka, all really wonderfully teaming with birds.

We visited Kashmir three times, the last time taking four families and teenagers with us and were issued with a Japanese tour flag. So having set up those with trekking, climbing and fishing interests, Tony and I would glide in a Shikarat through the shallow waters on the edges of the lakes, the Paradise Flycatcher being the ultimate aim.

We also visited Sri Lanka three times and at one time friends of ours in the UK who had set up a travel business with speciality tours had set me up to take a party of 30 to Sri Lanka. A good friend in the UK compiled a list of all the likely sightings with their ordinary and scientific names, this last not my speciality but I did know where and how to take people. Sadly the civil war interfered with these plans and they had to be cancelled. ("I would doubtless have lost everyone's ticket!") Among the very many birds the two that stick in my memory were the Purple Swampheens padding on the large lily pads on the lakes near the Anuradhapura, Sleeping Buddha rest house and the Black Eagle sweeping around the forests in the hills north of Colombo.

The high spot in the Seychelles was two nights on Bird Island where we lived in open-eaved attap chalets which were very attractive. The Fairy Terns flew around all night, missing the moving fans, and sat on Tony's angle poised shaving mirror to watch the process! At sunset we walked around the giant turtles to a beach where if we were lucky millions of shearwaters would land for the night. It did not always happen so the suspense was terrific and one held one's breath as we watched the waves of birds overhead flying lower and lower. If one or two landed the rest usually followed. The noise was deafening. Then one had to be careful to find a clear spot to put one's foot, to get back to one's gin and tonic. One of the wonders of the world, I believe.

We visited both Praslin and La Digne, where we saw the frigate birds—always exciting watching their habit of flying in twos, one above and one below the other bird that had caught a fish. The bomber bird dived and the hapless twixt and between dropped its prey, which was expertly

caught by the lower partner. Tony actually caught this on film.

And so to our seven years in the Middle East, three in Sudan and four in Saudi Arabia.

Sudan was described to me as hell on earth so I arrived expecting the worst and was very pleasantly surprised. We had a very happy time there, socially and more importantly, birding. The Blue and White Niles have a fantastic range of birds and we often took our tea, thermos and friends, "office life was a fairly leisurely affair", to either river. After two hours the tea was often untouched as it was not possible to put the bino's down, such were the variety and quantity. I mention a few: African Spoonbill, Shoveler, Spur-winged Plover, Terek Sandpiper, African Skimmer in vast numbers.

Camping in the desert was a favourite activity where there were vultures, Short-eared Eagles, Scops Owl, Hammerkop and Hoopoe. One highlight of birding in Saudi Arabia was the Thursday evening drive on the southern Corniche along the Red Sea. We usually saw many flamingos near Jeddah and a profusion of waders and other birds: Whimbrel, Oortolan, Cretzschmar, Golden Eagle, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Eagle Owl, Black-tailed Godwit, Marsh Harrier, Hen Harrier and Montague's Harrier. Another interesting foray was a 4 am start on Friday (start of the weekend) to the Mecca effluent, an

hour and half's drive—a strong nose was needed for this trip, but well worth it, the outstanding sightings being the wagtails of all types, the Citrine being the top of the chart, also many pipits and Stone Chats. Not many folk have birded in the Mecca effluent!

Last, but certainly not least, to our home in the New Forest in walking distance of the Solent and the Dartford Warbler. Lymington Marshes are one of the main wintering grounds in the UK and had a wonderful collection of birds such as Whimbrel, Barnacle Goose, Brent Goose, curlew and godwit.

And so to Australia, where birding and joining the WA Birds Group were, as ever, a favourite hobby. Tony really enjoyed manning the desk, helping with the Atlas survey and helping secure the government grant for the Camel Trail at Bold Park. Sadly this became too much for him and he had to relinquish.

As apart from birding, Tony's interests were of the sea, we scattered his ashes offshore from Leighton where on the cliff top he happily viewed the shipping and birds, while I walked the dog. As the family flowers were floating on the waves a Flesh-footed Shearwater performed two wing dives over the flowers—a wonderful and fitting farewell, Tony.

Pat Bennett



From the CEO's Desk



Happy New Year to all members.

In between enjoying Xmas and having a break, the festive period and into February has been a very busy time for national office in the area of grants. The last two months have seen us apply for some key grants. Added to this we have had notification of successfully obtaining a number of very important grants.

We have received a grant to develop national standards for bird surveys completed under national environmental legislation. Birds Australia has for some time been concerned there are no national guidelines on what constitutes adequate survey methods to help proponents and consultants determine, for example, whether or not threatened species occur on or near particular sites being assessed under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. As a result bird survey methods used by developers and others have in many instances been inadequate for determining the presence or absence of bird species across all seasons.

This project will seek to provide Government with guidelines on adequate methods that should be adopted.

The second grant we have successfully obtained recently is to install important signage at Newhaven reserve. This will include boundary signs, sacred site protection signs and

vehicle and walking track signage. We expect to start work once the weather becomes a bit cooler in Central Australia.

Thirdly, we have also been contracted by WWF to research and document approximately a dozen case studies on successful shorebird conservation projects from around Australia.

Finally, we have also just heard we are to be contracted by the Federal Government to write up species descriptions for threatened bird listings under environmental legislation. These descriptions will provide the basis for nominations under the Act for better protection. The first three are Yellow Chat (Alligator Rivers sub-species), Chestnut-rumped Heath Wren (Lofty Ranges sub-species) and Masked Owl (Tasmanian).

Recent grants we have also applied for include conservation works at Newhaven (weed eradication, rabbits and installation of botanical walks) and a major national project working with Catchment Management Authorities on birds and biodiversity within rural and regional Australia.

We will keep members informed of further progress.

Jim Downey
Chief Executive Officer

BAWA INC COMMITTEE REPORT

To many members, Birds Australia is still thought of by its earlier common name of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, and a past director of the national body and former Chair of the WA group delighted in pointing out that this is one of the few occasions where the words Royal and Union come together. Whatever name we use however, the organisation is a union of people interested in and concerned about birds and their environment. In Western Australia, this union was particularly productive in 2003, but there were also signs of some quite fundamental changes taking place.

There were some changes to the BAWA committee in 2003, with long-standing committee member and former Chair Clive Nealon taking a well-earned break, although he remained on BA Council. With growth in the group and the range of activities taking place, a lot of effort went into developing a management structure so that the main committee could support our project officers and the various sub-committees responsible for a lot of what BAWA does.

To assist me in the preparation of this report, members of the main committee were asked to list the key projects and activities of BAWA in 2003, and the list, by no means complete and in no particular order, looks something like this:

Projects. Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo, Hooded Plover, Ground Parrot, Perth Biodiversity Project, the continuing Atlas surveys, to name a few. The Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo project received additional funding and therefore continued, with Leonie McMahon kept very busy. A highlight of the year was a symposium on the species, organised by Leonie and Cheryl Gole, which attracted over 100 participants and included researchers, farmers, local government and interested members.

The Office. This continues to be staffed by volunteers up to five mornings a week and the volunteers are kept busy managing general queries from the public and supporting projects, including the national Atlas. Discussions are being held with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority regarding our future accommodation, and construction of their

Ecology Centre adjacent to our existing office in Perry House is well under way. When completed, we will have the convenience of a meeting venue next door to our office, located within bird-friendly gardens.

Excursions. In 2003 the excursions committee organised 56 half-day or day excursions, attended by up to 40 people at a time, eight campouts, two pelagic trips and one long-range trip. Long-standing excursions committee members Bryan Barrett and Margery Clegg retired during the year, while Sue Abbotts stepped forward to help with this key activity.

Meetings. These continued to be held at the Tennis Centre and attract 40-60 people on each occasion.

Public Relations. This is an area of growth, fuelled by the enthusiastic Brice Wells and Elsa Dabbs. There has been an advertisement for BAWA running on Channel 31 (a community TV station), and Brice and Frank O'Connor ran two series of birdwatching workshops for new members and the public. With space for only about 20 people, our office volunteers had to field over 100 enquiries, largely the result of small advertisements in community newspapers. Brice has also been busy presenting talks to schools and community groups, while BAWA has had a stall at various shows and festivals across Perth and in some country areas. Probably because of the active publicity, membership in WA is approaching 1000.

WA Bird Notes and BAWA website. Four issues of *WA Bird Notes* were produced in 2003 and each was packed with articles, reports, sightings and the like. The website continues to be maintained and upgraded and allows people access to our regional bird guides as well as an up-to-date list of recent interesting sightings. Other

publications that appeared in 2003 included reports on the Wanneroo Bird Project and the Perth Biodiversity Project. Local authorities are increasingly seeking BAWA assistance in developing bird guides for their local regions.

Eyre Bird Observatory. During 2003, management of Eyre Bird Observatory was restructured, with the Management Committee coming under the direction of BAWA rather than the National Office. Ironically, this was the situation in the early



Judy Edwards (State Minister for the Environment), presenting a cheque to Mike Bamford (Chair), Leonie McMahon (Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project Coordinator) and Vern Martin

1980s, but the National Office has retained an important administrative function. On the subject of Eyre, BAWA again sponsored three university students to attend a course at the observatory.

Australasian Ornithological Congress 2007. During the December 2003 AOC in Canberra, it was agreed to hold the 2007 event in Perth. This will be an exciting and profile-raising event for BAWA, but promises to be a lot of work. Planning has commenced.

Conservation and Research Committee. This meets regularly, and is intended to provide specialist guidance for project officers and to provide responses to the many requests we receive for comments on management plans and the like.

Schools Art Exhibition. The brainchild of Barry Angus, the inaugural event was held in 2003 and attracted a lot of attention, with a bigger event planned for 2004.

Awards. The Hooded Plover Project received two West Australian Coastal Awards 2002 for excellence in the project, for Peel SW region and South region, and they used these to recognise the work of the volunteers involved in the project.

The above list is something to be proud of. We are not just providing a service to our members but we are making the broader community more aware of birds. However, there are some changes facing BAWA. Our office accommodation is likely to alter in the next 12 months and the venue for our meetings will shift to the Ecology Centre being constructed at Bold Park, while some of the changes being discussed by the committee are more fundamental.

For example, our success sometimes attracts larger numbers of people to excursions than can readily be managed, so we may need to change the way we run excursions to popular venues. Our excursions are a service to members but are also a means to spread the word about birds to new members and non-members. We need to achieve both these aims without compromising either of them.

One of the biggest changes being discussed is the proposal to employ someone, initially on a part-time basis, to help in the administration of BAWA. We are justly proud of the way we operate through volunteers, but at the end of the day BAWA is a business and our customers are people who are interested in birds, or who we can get interested in birds. There is a lot to running a business such as this, and we are getting to the point where it is unreasonable to ask volunteers to carry out everything.

Even if we do employ someone with an administrative role, we will still rely on members to volunteer to watch birds, help other people watch birds and to assist with the various committees. Many of the people who have been the backbone of BAWA joined during the first Atlas, or during the South-West Waterbird Project of the 1980s, and are now retiring from active service. We always need members who are prepared to look at BAWA not just as an organisation that exists to help them, but as an organisation that they can help.

BAWA Committees and Groups for 2003

Main BAWA Committee

Chair: Dr Mike Bamford
 Vice-Chair: Mr Rob Davis
 Secretary: Mrs Liz Walker
 Treasurer: Ms Mary Vaughan
 Committee members: Mrs Sue Mather, Mr Frank O'Connor, Ms Jenny Wilcox, Dr Andrew Huggett, Mr Les Hogben, Mr Vern Martin, Ms Carol Elliott

Excursions Sub-committee

Ms Sue Abbotts, Mr Bryan Barrett, Mrs Margery Clegg, George Agar, Mrs Sue Mather

Public Relations Sub-committee

Mr Brice Wells, Mrs Elsa Dabbs, Mr Wes Bancroft, Mr Barry Angus, Mr Frank O'Connor, Ms Leonie McMahon

Conservation and Research Sub-committee

Mr Rob Davis (convener), Dr Allan Burbidge, Dr Stephen Davies, Dr Mike Bamford, Mrs Cheryl Gole, Mrs Brenda Newbey, Dr Andrew Huggett, Ms Leonie McMahon

WA Bird Notes

Editors: Mrs Sue Mather and Dr Allan Burbidge
 Distribution: Mr Rod Smith
 Typesetting: Mrs Margaret Philippon

Website management and sightings: Mr Frank O'Connor

Office Manager: Mrs Liz Walker

Sales and trading table

Mr Clive Nealon, Mrs Valerie Hemsley, Mrs Barbara Anderson and Ms Robina Jarvis

Grant applications: Mr Allan and Mrs Rose Jones

Eyre Management Committee

Mr Rod Smith (Chair), Ms Shapelle McNee, Mr George Agar, Mr and Mrs P de Rebeira, Mrs Catherine van Delft, Dr Lindsay Hunter, Mrs Liz Walker, Mr Vern Martin, Mr Ken Seymour

Hooded Plover Sub-committee

Mr Marcus Singor, Ms Phyllis Bentley

Project Officers

Ms Leonie McMahon (Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo), Ms Julie Raines (Hooded Plover), Mrs Brenda Newbey (Ground Parrot), Mrs Cheryl Gole (Atlas and Perth Biodiversity Project)

Volunteers

Excursion leaders, Atlas contributors, office volunteers and project participants. Many thanks to all!

Mike Bamford
 Chair

BAWA SLIDE LIBRARY

The BAWA slide collection has been completely sorted, numbered, labelled and is stored in one location. It is catalogued in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet stored on the BAWA web site. There is still some work to do to categorise the quality of each slide, and to finalise the borrowing procedures.

The 1400 slides are stored in hanging file inserts in a large plastic box stored on the bookshelf in the computer room at Perry House. They have been sorted into the current taxonomic order (Christidis & Boles 1994) and they have been numbered using the Atlas numbers (the same numbers used on the WA Database checklist cards), eg, 007/1a is a copy of the first photo of a Malleefowl. The sheet of the Atlas numbers is stored with the slide collection, as we don't expect you to remember the taxonomic order!

The slides for each bird are now all stored together, rather than in a variety of boxes. It is now much faster and easier to choose the best slide for your needs. Simply hold the plastic hanging file insert up to the light and make your choice from all the slides available for a bird.

BAWA members are welcome to borrow the slides for their presentations. You are not permitted to duplicate any of the slides, or to include them in publications without permission of the photographer. If you borrow the slides, then write down a list of the slide numbers in the borrowing book. Please return as soon as you can so that other people can borrow them. The final procedure for borrowing and returning the slides is being determined, and this will be stored with the slide collection.

We have put the catalogue in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the details of each slide, the photographer, the location, the date, etc. Unfortunately we could not find these details for many of the slides. So if you have generously given us slides in the past, then please contact us and we will arrange to identify your slides and then update these details. We certainly wish to acknowledge your generosity, and we ask members who borrow the slides to acknowledge the photographers.

The Excel spreadsheet has been stored on the BAWA web site. Click on the Activities section, and then click on the Image Library section. You can use the spreadsheet to see which birds that we have slides for, and those birds that we are missing. We are very interested in receiving further donations of slides. We can arrange for the slides to be duplicated if you need them back.

We would appreciate your feedback about this project, and how we can further improve the accessibility of the slide collection which has been under utilised.

The next stage of the image library project is to create a digital image library. This has commenced. Also, Brice Wells is cataloguing the collection of laminated bird pictures used for static displays. These are available for BAWA members to borrow.

Frank O'Connor & Heather Galluccio

LIBRARY NEWS

New and Noteworthy

The New Atlas of Australian Birds (NOT for loan)

— represents the results of an Australia-wide survey carried out by members of Birds Australia between 1988 and 2002.

It includes more than 4000 maps showing the distribution of some 650 species, including seasonal patterns and breeding ranges. Among the more interesting features are nearly 250 maps showing changes in the distribution of the more common species between 1984 and 2003.

Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of Australia — David Hollands

— described as 'essential reading for all raptor enthusiasts and for every serious ornithologist'. A personal account of Australia's 24 diurnal birds of prey based on 12 years spent watching and photographing raptors.

Includes 150 colour plates.

A Longstanding Love Affair with Birds — J.S.Pate

— a light-hearted autobiographical account by a former professional botanist who now lives on a hobby farm near Denmark. The author's particular interest is fairy wrens.

Well illustrated and mildly entertaining.

LIBRARY HOURS: 9.30 - 12.30 Monday to Friday

CHRISTMAS SURPRISE



Louise Capewell was most surprised to receive a telephone call from Birds Australia saying she had won the new members competition. Working at the moment in Darwin she had no idea there was a promotion going on. When her working contract finishes in Darwin, Louise hopes to join in the members' activities.

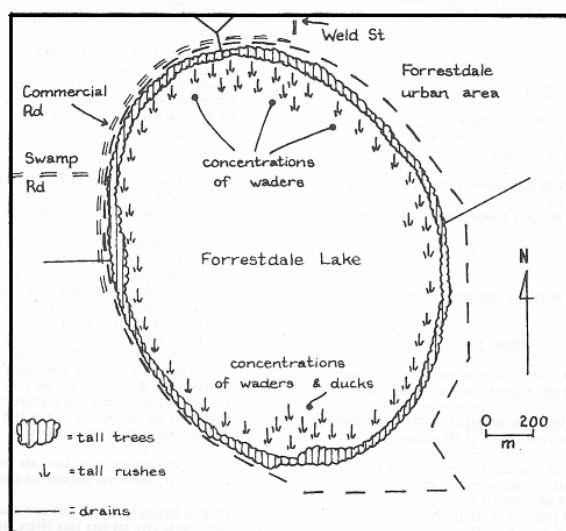


Louise Capewell with Liz Walker (left), Frank O'Connor and Wes Bancroft, Perry House.
Photo courtesy Elsa Dabbs

Home in City Beach for Christmas, Louise was able to come to the Birds Australia Office to receive her prize. Frank O'Connor made the presentation supported by Wes Bancroft and Liz Walker.

The binoculars were a generous donation from Keith Williams, owner of the Binocular, Telescope and Optical World Shop located at 159A Scarborough Beach Blvd, Mt Hawthorn WA 6016. Phone: 9201 0895. Email: btow@iinet.net.au

Elsa Dabbs
Public Relations Sub-committee



Forrestdale Lake
Drawing courtesy R Jaensch

GUIDES TO FAVOURITE BIRDING SITES

I have received a 13-page letter from a visiting English birder with many recommendations for up-dating *Birding Sites Around Perth*. Arnold's main complaint is with maps in our publication.

"You need to prepare detailed, hand-drawn diagrams of the site, prepared by a local birder on his 'home patch' so that there is no ambiguity or vagueness for the visiting birder..."

What an excellent idea! If you agree, let me know your favourite site(s) and that you are willing to prepare a mud-map. These will be published and made available in booklet form for members and visitors.

Reproduced here is an example of a suitable and appropriate map, from *Waterbirds in Nature Reserves of south-western Australia*, and drawn by Roger Jaensch. There are also excellent examples in John Bransbury's *Where to Find Birds in Australia*.

Except for a very few instances we will not use symbols, to avoid having to look them up. We suggest only the following that can be included on each page: P= parking, T = toilets, 4WD only.

Get cracking! Send maps to Guides Sub-committee at the office or contact Allan Jones on 9364 3974, email <alrose@iinet.net.au>

Allan K. Jones
Guides Sub-committee



BAWA Projects



WESTERN GROUND PARROT RECOVERY PROJECT



A new direction is being taken in the conservation of the Western Ground Parrot. In 2004 a survey will be conducted that is unprecedented in the history of this species. Never before has such a complete survey been undertaken for Western Ground Parrots in the Fitzgerald River National Park (FRNP). The goal of the project will be to completely survey all habitats identified as critical for the survival of this species.

The area targeted is estimated to be greater than 30 000 ha. To successfully complete this survey ten trips will be taken to strategic sites within FRNP. These trips will typically be of ten days in length. We intend to conduct these

surveys from mid February until late July (weather permitting). Teams will consist of approximately seven researchers. The initial surveys will be on a large scale with successive surveys focused on key Ground Parrot areas identified from initial surveys. The essential survey time will be April-May when the weather conditions are optimal for listening.

The areas surveyed will include those for which historic records exist and areas never surveyed before. Locations such as the Wilderness Area (southern FRNP) will only be accessed with approved permits. This is a terrific chance to see a unique and splendid region (the Fitzgerald Biosphere) and to do something monumental for a species that is at high risk of extinction. Knowledge of the total population spread and relative abundance of Ground Parrots in this area will aid us in future conservation

processes such as predator and fire control in the park. As the FRNP has long been thought to contain the last major stronghold of the species, we cannot afford for this population to decline any further.

Ongoing surveys are also being conducted in Waychinicup NP (including Cheyne Beach) to attempt to relocate this recently declined population. Surveys are conducted for one-hour after sunset every Wednesday or Thursday (weather permitting). Transport and equipment for up to seven is provided from Albany.

In the FRNP we are in need of appropriately skilled volunteers for this entire survey period. Some skills are essential while others are desirable. Good hearing, enthusiasm and the ability to wilderness camp are essential. Knowledge of general WA birds calls is desired as is any experience with listening for Ground Parrots (Eastern or Western). There is a major deficit in numbers of skilled Western Ground Parrot surveyors so if you possess these skills please consider offering your services. As there are now no local areas of high calling abundance, training prospective surveyors has become the most limiting factor.

If you want to show your support for Western Ground Parrots but are unable to participate in any of the surveys

please consider joining the community group Friends of the Western Ground Parrot. This is a group formed by concerned WA residents.

A display is currently on exhibit in the Albany Residential Museum. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the plight of this struggling species and to put a face to the name. The intention is to turn this into a travelling exhibit so watch out for it in your local area.

Those interested in volunteering their time for the project can contact me directly. If you are interested in more information or would like to become a member of the Friends group contact any of the numbers below. Thank you.



Brent Barrett
Research Scientist
Western Ground Parrot Recovery
Project, CALM

Contacts

- * Brent Barrett (08) 9842 4519 brentb@calm.wa.govt.au
- * Brenda Newbey (08) 93375673 wgparrot@iinet.net.au
- * Anne Bondin (08) 9844 1793 albanybirds@hotmail.com



Members' Contributions



PARROTS FEEDING ON THE SEEDS OF LIQUIDAMBAR

The note by Kenneally (2002, W.A. Nat. 23: 224-225) about Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* feeding on the seeds of *Liquidambar styraciflua*, is probably more concerned with the bird, which is currently in the focus of attention, than with this particular food.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to know that other parrot species also use this seed as a food. In the literature I found only a single record of Western Rosellas *Platycercus icterotis* feeding on *Liquidambar* in a garden in Harvey (Sedgwick, 1988, Aust. Bird Watcher 12: 224).

In Busselton, Australian Ringnecks *Barnardius zonarius* feed regularly on the seeds of a large *Liquidambar* tree in a neighbour's garden, in the months March to June. They are most conspicuous in the later part of this period, when the tree has lost its leaves, making the birds and their feeding activity easy to observe. A bird will lean over to a seed-pod, grasp and pick it with the bill (see photograph) and transfer it to a foot. With the foot held up, the bill reaching down, the pod is gradually demolished. I did not see the complicated foot-work involving both feet, described from

cockatoos by Kenneally, and there is no deliberate biting off of twigs. The parrots usually come in pairs, sometimes two pairs simultaneously, not in flocks.

G F Mees



Australian Ringneck feeding on *Liquidambar* seeds,
27 May 1996, Busselton
Photo courtesy G F Mees

I'M HOOKED ON BIRDS

(Especially for new members)

When I came to Western Australia 20 months ago and joined Birds Australia I never in my wildest dreams imagined becoming a member of the Public Relations Sub-committee and being so involved in encouraging others to enjoy the same activities and learning experience that I am now involved in.

Joining in the bird walks became a top priority. "What is that bird?" became a familiar cry. It seemed confusing that the shelduck in Australia was not the same colour as the shelduck in England. The Australian Magpie is a different shape, but can be as mischievous and annoying as the English one but where was the beautiful blue on the wing? Would I ever learn all those 'little brown jobs'? A saving grace I find is that the birds here are so much more colourful which helps when searching through the field guide for that bird you have just seen and haven't a clue what it is.

Remembering the names becomes a challenge, especially when the Brown Honeyeater looks more olive green than brown. I find out it was named after a Mr Brown. The Singing Honeyeater—well if it were a person they would say "Don't give up your day job". But how can you forget the beautiful male Golden Whistler, the Red-capped Parrot, the colourful Rainbow Lorikeet, and the friendly Willie Wagtail, which really does wag its tail. One day when walking along the river near Riverton bridge, I saw a duck whose shape was somewhat different and had a huge growth on its neck. Upon closer inspection I realised that this appeared normal as the duck was not in any kind of distress with this growth and could even expand it. My field guide revealed that this was the Musk Duck and all was well. *I musk remember that!*

So the learning progress goes on and when my friend from England came to visit recently, in the short time she was here, I was able to identify 80 birds for her and then one realises the identifying process is slowly sinking in. I happily go on as many bird walks as possible, attend the monthly meetings and enjoy the campouts which not only bring new birds but through which I have made many new friends and acquaintances sharing their knowledge and experiences for the benefit of all.

I will never have the scientific knowledge of members like Cheryl Gole and Leonie McMahon who run their special projects, the lifetime knowledge of Brice Wells and Frank O'Connor, the scientific and artistic abilities of our chairman Mike Bamford and many, many more members but I will continue with my own capabilities of enjoying the experience and encouraging others, because **I'm hooked on birds.**

Elsa Dabbs
Public Relations Sub-committee

KUNDIP NATURE RESERVE

Kundip Nature Reserve lies halfway between Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun. The reserve has an irregular triangular shape of about 2300 hectares, which seems odd when all the boundaries are surrounded by similar heath country as far as the eye can see and extending to the west as far as the Fitzgerald River National Park.

Anne and I visited the reserve daily 22 and 26 December 2003 inclusive, confining our observations within the boundaries, except in a few cases of birds on the other side of a road, where the road forms the boundary. Many of the shrubs and the dominant eucalypt (Tallerack, *E. pleurocarpa*), were in bloom, which were attractive to honeyeaters and it was noticeable that Kundip was markedly warmer during the day than Hopetoun (up to 8° C).

The *New Atlas*, like the first, is a splendid achievement. The inclusion of seasonal maps adds much to the usefulness and interest of the book, so it is a pity that these maps should also tend to indicate the paucity of observers. At Kundip we saw ten species that the *New Atlas* does not record in summer, ie, between 15 December and 15 February. One of these was Crested Bellbird, seen or heard on all the days we visited, usually more than one bird, with a maximum of four. Essentially a sedentary bird, it usually ceased calling at Kundip after 8:00 am and we find it difficult to believe that there were no Crested Bellbirds—or any of the nine other species—in the area between 1998 and 2002 during the summer. It seems more likely that such observers as were in the area failed to visit early enough in the day.

An interesting phenomenon on our first day was the presence of over 400 Welcome Swallows over and close to the reserve. We examined these carefully expecting to see at least one Tree Martin, but without success. The next day (and for the subsequent days of our visit) the Welcome Swallow flock wholly vanished to be replaced by Tree Martins in equal numbers. For the first time in our experience some of these fluttered close about us, within a metre, very like the occasional habit of the Grey Fantail.

Another first day experience was the sighting of two Western Bristlebirds (33.43.29-120.15.23, *New Atlas* please note). One of these perched in full view some 15 metres away and sang loudly, being answered by the second bird, which was close but more hidden. Further visits to the area on subsequent days were unsuccessful in finding this species again.

The *New Atlas* does not show the Western Bristlebird within the one degree grid square and most literature (eg, Brouwer J and Garnett S (1990) *Threatened Birds of Australia*) does not place the species further east than the Fitzgerald River National Park. Given that the same habitat extends from the Park to Kundip and further east, it seems possible the Western Bristlebird is resident in the Kundip area which, as is apparent from our sightings, has not been much visited in the past. To this is added the density of the heath, which necessitates the presence of clearings or trails, for seeing birds can be difficult enough without the problems of pushing through the bush.

Other birds we observed at Kundip which are recorded in the *New Atlas* grid square, but not in summer, were (in addition to the bellbird and bristlebird) Emu, Spotted Harrier, Elegant Parrot, Shy Heathwren, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater and White-browed Babbler.

Species seen which are shown in the summer *New Atlas* map were Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Australian Ringneck, Red-capped Parrot, Splendid Fairy-wren, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Spotted and Striated Pardalote, White-browed Scrubwren, Weebill, Inland Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Red and Little Wattlebird, Yellow-throated Miner, White-naped, Brown, New Holland and Tawny-crowned Honeyeater (the last thought to be in decline, but frequent at Kundip), Southern Scrub-robin, Golden Whistler (also common), Grey Shrike-thrush, Restless Flycatcher, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Grey Currawong, Australian Raven, Red-eared Firetail, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin and Silveryeye.

Kundip yielded a total of 48 species. The Jerdacuttup River and tributaries flow close to the reserve (but not within) and had Musk Duck*, Black Swan*, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Hardhead*, Hoary-headed Grebe, Little Pied Cormorant and Eurasian Coot. The three species marked with an asterisk are not shown on the *New Atlas* summer map.

The Hopetoun beach area had a flock of Red-necked Stints and at Flathead Point there were two Hooded Plovers. The point appeared suitable for breeding, but as is so often the case at the south coast, as Christmas Day approached, people, dogs and vehicles drove all about the point and the Hooded Plovers moved elsewhere.

Kundip appears to be an area worthy of closer scrutiny.

Bruce Buchanan

ALBANY PELAGIC TRIP, 2 November 2003

After unsuccessfully, due to gale force winds, trying to schedule two pelagic trips from Albany in September, Chris Lester from Victoria organised a trip for Sunday 2 November 2003 for a group of friends visiting the south-west. I quickly booked a place, but doubted that we would see very much of great interest this late in the year. The forecast of moderate north to north-east winds lowered my expectations further.

The *Chivers Regal*, operated by Spinners Charters, left from Emu Point at 7:00 am. We were told that it would be two and a half hours to the shelf, about 52 km from the harbour. The seas were slightly choppy as we cleared the heads an hour later and saw the first Flesh-footed Shearwaters.

Heading further out the conditions were reasonable with up to 50 Flesh-footed Shearwaters visible at any time, but very little else apart from distant views of a few Yellow-nosed Albatross and a Shy Albatross. Glimpsing a large albatross, I felt certain it was a Wandering Albatross and a few minutes later we stopped the boat on reaching the shelf. The shelf is very dramatic with the depth going from less than 100 metres to over 1000 metres within one to two kilometres.

Stopping the boat we threw over some fish scraps, fish oil and burley, hopefully to attract the birds. The Flesh-footed Shearwaters quickly landed nearby, with several Shy Albatross and a Yellow-nosed Albatross. And then the moment I was waiting for as the first Wandering Albatross

came in and finally landed on the water, soon followed by two others. The first was a stunning 'snowy' albatross, and the other two were younger. It was easily apparent from the size differences that we had two sub species *exulans* and *gibsoni*. This alone made the trip worthwhile for me as this was the first time I had seen this bird up close. The Wandering Albatross has always had a mythical quality for me as it is the largest seabird in the world.

The shout went out for a Sooty Albatross as I was busily trying

to get good photographs of the Wandering Albatross. This was a bird that I hadn't expected to see on the trip. It approached the stern a few metres above the water giving stunning views as it passed. Unfortunately it didn't land or stay around, but we had excellent views of the white line on the bill, white around the eye, and an even coloured back. This is a very beautiful bird and it will remain a memory for a long time.

A couple of Soft-plumaged Petrels (including a dark morph) and a White-faced Storm-Petrel passed the time, and then the shout went out for a Grey Petrel. This was a bird that I had a slight hope we would see. The bird approached from the starboard side and flew past the stern. It flew around briefly but did not land and soon departed. The field guides do this bird an injustice.

Other birds that we saw were a few Great-winged Petrels (I had expected this species to be far more common), several White-headed Petrels (another highlight) and a Wilson's Storm-Petrel.

We moved out deeper but saw nothing different, and finally it was time to make the long trip home. A great day,



Flesh-footed Shearwater, Albany pelagic trip, November 2003

Photo courtesy Frank O'Connor

and it left me with thoughts of what the trip might have been in September. So I am now more determined than ever to organise more pelagic trips from Albany. I would like to try for May and October 2004, but I will organise the trip for any time for 10-12 people. So if you are interested, then contact me by email foconnor@iinet.net.au or by phone 9386 5694.

Frank O'Connor

UPDATE FROM SOLDIERS COVE AND FALCON

The following waterbirds have nested at Soldier's Cove during the spring of 2003:

- Two Pied Oystercatchers nested on the island in August 2003 and one nestling was sighted on 01.09.03 and raised successfully with the three birds seen regularly up to 23.01.04. This is the fourth year they have nested in the area.
- Two pairs of Black-winged Stilts nested with three nestlings seen on 05.10.03 and another clutch of two nestlings was seen on 31.10.03. All five survived to maturity.
- Buff-banded Rails were observed a few times in August and September 2003 lurking on the edge of the reed beds, and on 10.11.03 two nestlings were sighted and intermittently since.
- At least two families of Pacific Black Duck were raised with the maximum number of ten ducklings in one brood
- White-faced Heron breed in the trees adjacent.

The following were interesting breeding observations made at Falcon:

- On 30.10.03 two Tawny Frogmouths were observed nesting with what was thought to be one nestling. Later checking of photographs and sightings proved there were two. BA was advised. The four birds have hung around the area and the adult birds are now



Wandering Albatross, Albany pelagic trip,
November 2003
Photo courtesy Frank O'Connor

nesting in the same nest again on the weekend 10.01.04. I was advised that two eggs were found under the nest the following weekend. Grey Currawongs are suspected.

- In a tree within ten metres a pair of Grey Currawongs were also nesting and had one nestling in the nest on 30.10.03.

Dick Rule

KOGOLUP CRAKES

When summer starts to heat up and the ephemeral lakes on the Swan Coastal Plain start to dry out, you know time has come to search for crakes.

Typha (*Typha orientalis*) beds around lakes and wetlands are favourite crake habitat. As water levels recede, a muddy base forms around the Typha beds and these slowly expand over summer. Typha is better known as Bulrush. It is this muddy boundary, often covered with a layer of dead tangled leaves, between the Typha and the water's edge, where crakes will be found.

You often see shadows flit around inside the shady interior of Typha stands. Most likely these are crakes and with a bit of patience you will be able to see them move out of the twilight zone into the open. Early morning and evening are good times to observe them but I have seen them during the day feeding a metre away from cover.

The Spotless Crake, Australian Spotted Crake and Baillon's Crake are all regularly seen at Kogolup Lake over summer. The amount of water present seems to dictate when they leave. Once the last puddles of water have disappeared, so do the crakes. Tables 1 and 2 list my sightings of crakes and other waterbirds at this lake. Sometimes the Spotless Crake is the most abundant of the crakes, but at other times the Australian Spotted Crake is the more common. The reasons for this are unknown.

When visiting Kogolup it is interesting to recall some of the lake's history. These are the recollections of two of the region's early settlers.

"Kogolup Lake was full of large paperbarks. The paperbarks were of an enormous diameter. The paperbarks and the swamp gums were cleared with brute strength.

Kogolup Lake had white sand areas, as did other lakes, which indicated the presence of springs. The lake would always stay boggy except when it was a terrible drought. The frogs lived in the lake and there would always be a little bit of water at the deepest point, but that's all.

There were stacks of swans and they would breed prolifically on the eastern side of Kogolup Lake. There were quail, bush turkey (bustards) and 'smoko' parrots (Regent Parrot), all of which have long since vanished.

Market gardeners arrived in this area in the late 1800s. The State Government built a drain from Yangebup through Kogolup

to Thomsons Lake to assist the market gardeners to become established.

One local man made a living in the early years trapping possums and native water rats for fur, as they were so abundant. To catch the water rats he put a little raft out with a trap on it and he'd catch them for their coats. I think he trapped them right out because I haven't seen one for ... 40 years at least.

Wildflowers and orchids were prolific. You could find a patch of orchids as big as a room and you couldn't put a pin between them. Now I can't find one in the district".

These recollections are from Violet and Jeff Spencer. The Spencer family was one of the earliest to settle near the Lakes (Drake and Kenneally 1995).

Black Swans still breed at Kogolup Lake and I counted up to 180 in May 2003. Glossy Ibis, Wood Sandpiper and other waders are regular visitors as the lake dries out. It is one of the few sites that I know where you can find Wood Sandpiper.

The Water Corporation implemented major drainage and sewage works around the lakes in the Kogolup area from

November 1999 to the middle of 2001. The aim of the works was to bring significant environmental benefits to Thomsons Lake and Kogolup Lake by diverting drainage water to maintain water levels and protect them from nutrient inflow. Maximum levels of these two Lakes as well as Yangebup Lake are controlled to protect vegetation around the fringes.

Away from Kogolup, I have noticed that crakes sometimes turn up in unexpected places. On 9 February 2003, I had an Australian Spotted Crake feeding along the muddy bank of a brackish pool located in samphire wetlands near Creery Island.

Crakes are generally ground feeding birds. However, in March 2000 some interesting feeding behaviour by Spotless Crakes was observed at Lake McLarty. On this occasion Spotless Crakes were seen feeding five feet above the ground in paperbark trees. They may have been feeding on dragonfly nymphs that had climbed up to pupate (T. Kirkby; personal communication).

There are a number of other sites around Perth where you can see crakes and rails. Some of these are North Lake,

| | 1997 9-Feb | 1997 10-Feb | 1997 12-Feb | 1997 15-Feb | 1997 16-Mar | 2000 11-Jan | 2000 30-Jan | 2001 27-Jan | 2001 11-Feb |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Buff-banded Rail | | | | | 1 | 3 | | | |
| Baillon's Crake | 1 | | | | | | | 6 | |
| Australian Spotted Crake | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 3 | 2 |
| Spotless Crake | 4 | 3 | | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 2 |
| Glossy Ibis | | | | | | 4 | | | 13 |
| Common Greenshank | | | | | | | 14 | | 7 |
| Wood Sandpiper | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 11 | | 2 |
| Red-necked Stint | | | | | | | | | |
| Long-toed Stint | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Curlew Sandpiper | | | | | | | | | |
| Black-winged Stilt | present | present | present | 45 | >100 | 8 | 126 | | >600 |
| Banded Stilt | | | | | | | | | |
| Red-necked Avocet | >100 | present | 100's | 246 | >100 | | | | |
| Black-fronted Dotterel | 12 | | 15 | 22 | | | | 12 | 32 |
| Red-kneed Dotterel | 3 | 1 | | 2 | | | | | |
| | 2001 16-Feb | 2002 13-Jan | 2002 18-Jan | 2002 2-Feb | 2002 3-Jun | 2002 29-Dec | 2003 14-Jan | 2004 13-Jan | 2004 19-Jan |
| Buff-banded Rail | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Baillon's Crake | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Australian Spotted Crake | | 4 | 6 | 7 | | 2 | | 8 | 3 |
| Spotless Crake | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| Glossy Ibis | | 5 | 5 | | | 1 | | | |
| Common Greenshank | 6 | 12 | 20 | 22 | | 9 | 12 | 20 | 5 |
| Wood Sandpiper | 4 | | 1 | | | | | 1 | |
| Red-necked Stint | | | 6 | | | | | | 3 |
| Long-toed Stint | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| Curlew Sandpiper | 12 | | | | | | | | |
| Black-winged Stilt | 120 | 36 | | | 131 | 55 | 76 | | 10 |
| Banded Stilt | 3 | | 2 | | | 31 | 49 | | 26 |
| Red-necked Avocet | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Black-fronted Dotterel | 36 | | 11 | | | | | 2 | 4 |
| Red-kneed Dotterel | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Red-capped Plover | | | | | | | | | 2 |

Table 1: Summer observations at Lake Kogolup.

Herdsmen Lake, Floreat Waters, Maurice Hamer Park, Ascot Waters, Lake Joondalup, Lake Monger, Blue Gum Lake, Forrestdale Lake, Lake Gwelup, Lake Jandabup, Yangebup Lake, Lake Cooloongup and there are many more. The best time to see these birds is during the summer months, when water levels have receded and the muddy base around Typha beds is visible.

Marcus Singor

Reference

Drake, Cathy and Kenneally, Shona. (1995). *Recollections of the Beeliar Wetlands*.

IN PURSUIT OF THE SUPREME AERIALIST

Imagine a clear blue sky, a golden sun and an uneventful and still morning. It's early summer, somewhere in the Wandoo Woodlands of Dryandra State Forest.

Imagine three combatants, three aerial greyhounds ready to spring into action after a hapless rabbit, in this case a ponderous white butterfly.

However, this butterfly could avoid predators to some degree better than most.

Perched atop an upright branch high in the bare wood on a Wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) is a vibrant multi-coloured Rainbow Bee-eater.

Perched on another dead wandoo branch that curves crescent-like toward the ground and swept up again, is a Dusky Woodswallow, its soft-downy plumage contrasting with its steely-blue beak, and a Willie Wagtail, resplendent in its tuxedo of black and white, is taking respite from its restless sallies on the dead ground wood.

Enter the white butterfly and eight eyes immediately sight it in the otherwise still of the morning. Two of the eyes were mine.

Unsurprisingly the perpetual Willie Wagtail was first off the mark, setting about chasing it back and forth less than 10 metres directly in front of me. This was an individual I was familiar with, and was a male as judged from its aggressive behaviour. I could hear the Willie Wagtail's wings beat the air as it looped, twisted and dipped in hot pursuit. The Rainbow Bee-eater wasted no time in deciding that this might make a tasty 'brunch' as it dived straight and true with considerable speed toward the butterfly. The insect turned and so did the Rainbow Bee-eater. As it did the Dusky Woodswallow joined the life and death chase—life and death for the butterfly that is. For an eternity of more than 10 seconds there was a chaotic melee of birds, wings and blurs of colours, as the birds turned themselves

inside out, each combatant determined to be triumphant in their pursuit of this would-be prey.

So which one do you think would prove to be the most supreme aerialist, at least on this occasion? No, it wasn't the white butterfly. If you guessed the Rainbow Bee-eater then you would be right. It emerged the victor with its prize the juicy white butterfly, which it softened on a leafless dead branch before finally consuming its well earned prey.

The three birds involved in this aerial competition showed no aggression towards their rivals during the chase, nor during the many observations made during the breeding season. It was the last summer of the drought (2002) and prey had been relatively scarce. All three birds had active nests within 30 metres of the chase, although their nest substrates varied. The Willie Wagtail had a nest on the lowest branch in a leafy patch of Wandoo, the Rainbow Bee-eater had a burrow on flat sandy ground and the Dusky Woodswallow was nesting in a high, comparatively exposed branch of a larger Wandoo.

The moral of the story is, that it's tough to constantly compete for limited resources in the woodland, but it's tougher to be the only white butterfly on a glorious blue-skyed summer morning.

Graham R. Fulton



Crake habitat, Kogolup Lake
Photo courtesy Marcus Singor

SHOREBIRD CAPITAL OF THE WORLD?!

Broome, and specifically Roebuck Bay, is often referred to as the shorebird capital of Australia. That accolade is well deserved and

unchallenged. We are now beginning to think we should upgrade this to the Shorebird Capital of the World!

On 7 December and 9 December 2003 we undertook the summer census of shorebirds at our two regular monitoring sites. On the 7th we surveyed 30 km of the Eighty Mile Beach on the shores of the Anna Plains pastoral lease and then on the 9th the northern shores of Roebuck Bay, including the Town Beach area between the Broome Jetty and Town Beach itself.

For those of you who are engaged in the shorebird census elsewhere in Western Australia you may wonder why we do ours outside of the 'official' date. The reason is that once the summer rains arrive here in the north-west huge numbers of birds can move inland to flooded areas or roost on flooded salt pans behind the mangroves fringing the bay. These areas are inaccessible and hence the count is undertaken in late November early December prior to the arrival of heavy rain. The summer count at Roebuck Bay previously produced about 32-35 000 birds but we now get 42-45 000. This is obviously going to give us a better

understanding of the numbers of birds and the different species utilising Roebuck Bay.

This year's total was 46 650; this compares closely to the previous two years' counts of 49 880 in 2002 and 46 511 in 2001. The species diversity was, as ever, most impressive with 29 species being identified. All the species that are common at Roebuck Bay were present. The most numerous, in order, were

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Bar-tailed Godwit | 16 635 |
| Great Knot | 11 072 |
| Greater Sand Plover | 4334 |
| Red-necked Stint | 3900 |
| Black-tailed Godwit | 2120 |
| Terek Sandpiper | 1840 |
| Curlew Sandpiper | 1830 |
| Red Knot | 1100 |

Nothing can ever be taken for granted with field work and some unusual counts occurred on the day. Only 70 Whimbrel were seen on the count day whereas a few days before well over 300 were visible on the northern shores. This species will roost in mangroves so that is possibly where they were on the count day. Only 400 Grey-tailed Tattlers were seen; there is very often more than this in the mid-winter so where they were hiding on this day, who knows? This is another species that will roost in mangroves. We only saw one Asian Dowitcher, but presumably more were in the massed ranks of godwits but during a count of 46,000 birds there isn't the time to scan for a few rarities. No redshanks were seen, but this is not

unusual as they are almost exclusively seen feeding on mudflats in front of the Crab Creek mangroves, and not on beach roosts, at this time of year. The 100 Broad-billed Sandpipers was a larger count than usual, possibly as we had such close views on the stints, sand plovers and Curlew Sandpipers that made up the flock with them.

Later that day we moved on to Lake Eda for a nocturnal mist net session followed by a cannon net catch. We knew the drying lake bed had been hosting numerous exciting birds including Red-necked Phalarope, Pectoral Sandpiper, Ruff and Swinhoe's Snipe. The phalarope and Pectoral Sandpiper had moved on but we got great views of the Ruff and three, possibly four, snipe. In addition to these birds were northern regulars, Little Curlew and Oriental Pratincole, with about 1500 of each species. More common inland resident shorebirds like Masked Lapwing, Black-fronted Dotterel and Black-winged Stilt made a total of 37 species of shorebird seen in a day at just two sites only 40 km apart. I don't think that can be done anywhere else in Australia and possibly not in the world. If you care to add the phalarope, Pectoral Sandpiper and Redshank, all seen in the previous week, it seems no exaggeration to call Broome the shorebird capital of the universe!

Chris Hassell and Adrian Boyle

Editors' note: While this issue was going to press, we heard that Clive Minton and others had reported about 2.5 million Oriental Pratincoles on Eighty Mile Beach. We hope to bring you more details next issue.



What's in a Name?



WHAT'S IN A NAME (Continued from last issue)

Under scrutiny in this issue is the family PLATAEIDAE specifically the sub family Threskiornithinae, represented in Australia by three species. Two have received sacred orders (Threskiornis being Greek for religious) and one associated with making hay in the wheat field (Plegadis being Greek for sickle). *Threskiornis molucca* the White Ibis and *Threskiornis spinicollis* the Straw-necked Ibis represent the spiritual side of the family.

However to keep them in their correct order we'll tackle the agrarian representative first, *Plegadis falcinellus*. The Small Scythe Sickle-bill, or the name we are most familiar with the **Glossy Ibis**. This bird could be termed the teenager of the ibis clan. For a start it displays the flair of youth in its plumage. Who but the younger set would be seen attired in shiny black with splashes of deep reddish bronze, set off with an iridescent sheen of purple and green, then add the crowning glory, a white vee streak from the eyeball to the bill? To complete the image, unlike its two bald relatives, the glossy displays a healthy feathering from neck to bill. Its voice is described as grunting, honking, chattering, bleating like a calf, croaking

and cooing. This vocalising can be accompanied by head bobbing (all that's missing is a guitar). Glossy Ibis are said to gather in groups then travel in long lines and compact flocks that often dash about erratically with sudden ostentatious dives and glides. Like many of today's younger set the Glossy is often found in out of the way places. It's been reported by overseas travellers as mixing with the local bird life at exotic watering holes in Asia, Europe, Africa and America. The bird is also quite erratic by any standard; unpredictable, it will visit a site one year and be absent for the next two. To me it's the Little Fickle Sickle-bill and with that, we'll end the glossology of the Glossy.

Birds have long shown mannerisms and traits similar to humans. We observe that being as graceful as a swan or as wise as an owl, as pretty as Polly, or even going to bed with the chooks somehow adds prestige to the persona.

In this day and age the **Australian White Ibis** *Threskiornis molucca*, has not to my knowledge been associated with any of the virtuositities that some of us might hopefully wish to attain. Now this is a pity as this bird has been around almost as long as the swan and longer

than the owl. While our ibis might not be as graceful as the swan, I would argue it is wiser than both the aforementioned species.

History tells us the ancient Egyptians were highly impressed by the ibis. Obviously they were quick to note the noble gait of the bird as it strutted purposefully on the banks of the Nile. They probably observed, as it circled overhead, its disdainful if not vulgar response to the glare of the sphinx. What ever the reasons, numbers of ibis were embalmed and chosen to accompany the pharaohs to a higher plane. Well, why not? *Threskiornis aethiopica*, the African Sacred Ibis, could predict the rise of the River Nile, apparently preserve Egypt from plagues and famines and sort out snakes and serpents. On top of this the best ornithologists of the day proclaimed the ibis could not live outside Egypt. Yes, they were stuck with the bird. So to keep on the right side of these winged wonders, they were linked with the deity Thoth and encouraged to take up abode in the temples. Digressing awhile. Thoth was the one with the head of an ibis, who taught the Egyptians to calculate and write. He was also the god of magic, science and invention but sadly could only show affection with others by rubbing noses.

It's not hard to deduce that the burning of incense would have quickly followed the Egyptian introduction of the ibis into these temples, making the bird partly responsible for the establishment of the deodorant industry. Now I'm not suggesting we pop an ibis into the coffins of our heads of state, although some of them would probably feel quite at home with a parrot or goose. No let us find a simile that would link the ibis with some credence, a virtue or a skill. It would then come as no surprise to find the weatherman as having the intuition of an ibis, or a politician being as enigmatic as an ibis. If, finding ourselves blowing into a plastic contraption, we would need the insufflations of an ibis and indeed hope the constable in attendance had the indulgence of an ibis, particularly if the subsequent reading proved one to be as inebriated as an ibis.

Today we might understand the reverence in which the bird was held if we study its noble bald head and impressive long bill, as we can see the marks of dignity and intelligence that distinguishes the finer gentlemen among us with similar physical attributes.

Let us move on to the **Straw-necked Ibis** *Threskiornis spinicollis*. This is the gregarious cousin of *T. molucca*. These are the ibis that travel the skyways in well organised vee formations, selecting freshly turned or green grassed paddocks upon which to descend and methodically seek out insect pests. They can also be seen festooning the branches of large dead trees in communal after dinner gatherings. Now although being of the genus *Threskiornis*, they do not seem to have attained the religious connections of the White or Sacred Ibis. As far as I know they have never been invited into places of worship, nor have they ever demonstrated any magical or miraculous accomplishments. They are known to sort out a spider or two and turn toads onto their backs, but serpents and snakes, sorry, not their department. They are known plain and simply as Straw-necked Ibis. The fact that they make annual pilgrimages into our farmlands to rid farmers of weevils, grasshoppers and their ilk is not considered startlingly important. Do we see them brawling on the rubbish tips with their cousin the Australian White Ibis and other avian riff raff? Of course not. In fact theirs is a true monastic life. A life spent circling with their brethren in the heavens, of early morning matins in an old tuart and the true ecclesiastic serenity of life among the flock. Their pious traits sadly are not acknowledged.

Maybe some of the birding fraternity have observed they could benefit with a shave. Others might have named them Dry-weather Birds, Farmer's Friend, Letter-birds or Straw-necks, but then... what's in a name?

Geronticus

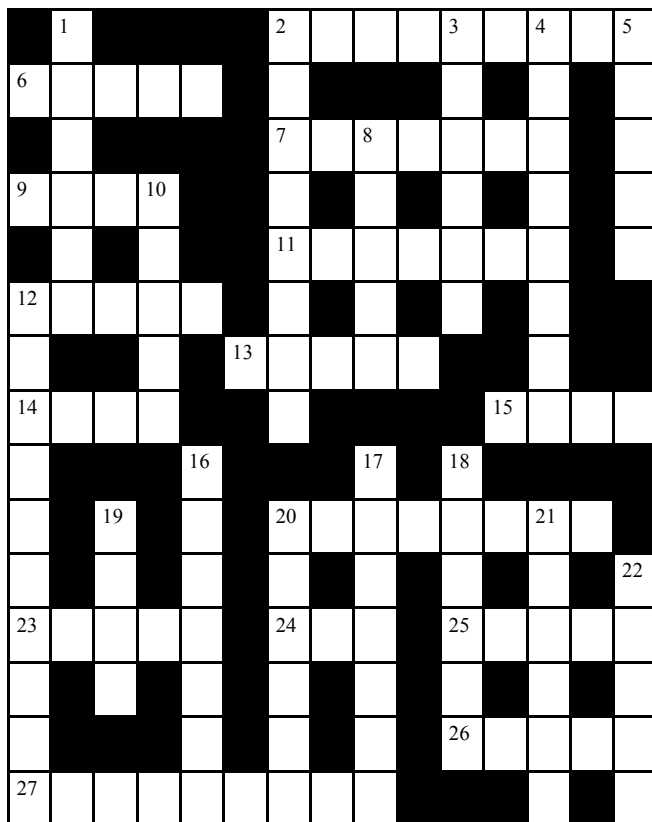


Australian Spotted Crake, Kogolup Lake
Photo courtesy Marcus Singer

For Sale!

Copies of all the more important
field guides to Australian birds
as well as a selection of
audio-cassettes of bird sounds
are for sale at Perry House
at discount prices.

By Pam Agar



Clues Across

2. Young bird, ready to fly.
6. Necessary for any institution.
7. Able to be heard.
9. Small colourful member of honeyeater family.
11. Not the best time of day for birding.
12. Nature of waders before leaving Broome.
13. Tuft of feathers on head.
14. Spinifexbirds prefer these areas.
15. Need to be harmless for marking birds.
20. Duck seen more commonly in metro area in 2001/2.
23. Provide opportunities to explore new areas.
24. Chest colour of male Mistletoebird.
25. The illegal version encourages smugglers.
26. May seem long if viewing from a cramped hide.
27. A thornbill may have done this to its nest.

Clues Down

1. Crest found at nape.
2. Eaten by grebes.
3. Stony plains.
4. Some can do it purely by call.
5. Makes it difficult to see clearly.
8. Important part of records.
10. Nature of crakes and rails.
12. Graceful, wader-like bird of plains.
16. Pursuing.
17. Likely haunt of Little Grassbird.
18. May add extra information.
19. Spotted Pardalote has a chestnut one.
20. In WA, usual habitat of Crested Shrike-tit.
21. Genus name of small hovering kites.
22. Description of a well-used breeding area.



Bird Cards!

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

Place your order through our Perry House office

71 Oceanic Dr, Floreat WA 6014
 9383 7749 birdswa@iinet.net.au

BIRD IDENTIFICATION SEMINARS 23rd – 24th – 25th – 26th March 2004

After the success of last year's classes, the Public Relations Sub-committee has again organised four seminars on the above dates. While initially for the general public, to encourage new members, new and inexperienced members of Birds Australia are welcome to join in and become more accomplished bird watchers.

All the classes will be held at Piney Lakes Environmental Educational Centre, Leach Highway, Murdoch. 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 three hours from 0900 am – 1200 pm. Registration from 0900 – 0930am.

Seminar 2 will feature waterbirds and consist of an introduction and slide presentation, followed by a bird walk at Bibra Lake. It will run for 3 hours, 0900 am – 12.00 pm.

Seminar 3 will feature bushbirds and will follow a similar format as above.

Seminar 4 will feature waders and will be followed by a walk at 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 dollars per class payable on the first day.

If you are interested in attending these classes, please contact the office to book your place.

Brice Wells
Chairman, Public Relations Sub-committee

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY COURSES 2004/2005



2004

January 4 – 10: Greening the Dunes – *George Agar*
January 25 – 31: Focus on Birds (Summer) – *Peter Sandilands*

March 14 – 20: Birding for Beginners – *Ken and Karina Harris (Eyre wardens)*

April 18 – 24: "B"ing Eyre – Birds, Bats and Beachcombing – *Doug Watkins*

July 11 – 17: The Birds of Eyre – *Ken and Karina Harris (Eyre wardens)*

August 15 – 21: Eyre's Animals – Mammals, Birds and Reptiles – *Mike Craig*

Aug 29 – Sep 4: Dune Rehabilitation – Working Bee – *George Agar*

October 3 – 9: Bird Banding – *Rod Smith*

October 10 – 16: Focus on Birds (Spring) – *Peter Sandilands*

November 7 – 13: Watercolours at Eyre – *Elizabeth Rippey*

November 28 – December 4: Field Techniques in Bird Studies – *Stephen Davies*

December 22 – 28: Christmas at Eyre – *Ken and Karina Harris (Eyre wardens)*

2005

January 2 – 8: Greening the Dunes – *George Agar*

March 13 – 19: Birding for Beginners – *Ken and Karina Harris (Eyre wardens)*

April 17 – 23: "B"ing Eyre – Birds, Bats and Beachcombing – *Doug Watkins*

BIRDS AUSTRALIA VIDEO

Work has commenced on a promotional video that will show the activities of BAWA and identify the current projects. If you have any photos or videos taken on camps, bird walks, exhibitions, meetings or project activities please advise:

Roger Watson on 9316-1324

or

rogmar@tpg.com.au

If you are involved in any activities in the coming months and own a digital still camera or digital video camera, material captured during the activities would be highly appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation of any help you can offer.

Elsa Dabbs
Birds Australia WA Volunteer
Public Relations Sub-committee

A HOLIDAY AT THE BAY

Carl Beck of the Shark Bay CALM office is planning a program for each term of the school holidays during 2004.

The program requires the help of leaders and Carl has asked Birds Australia WA if there are any interested members who would like a short stay in Shark Bay for all or part of these periods. During 2003, three of our members acted as guides during the introduction of the program and enjoyed the experience. Here is the plan for 2004:

- * Periods – April 9 –16, July 10-26, Oct 2-17
- * Duty Hours – minimum of one activity every second day, afternoon or evening.
- * Activities – guided walks, slide shows, displays.

Publicity Planning – all done by CALM.

- * Accommodation – free at Peron Homestead, each group 2+ persons.
- * Travel – a generous contribution towards vehicle expenses will be provided.

Further details – contact Brice Wells 9255 3710 or email <oddcouple18@bigpond.com>

Vehicle – 2WD to all locations for activities

Interested? Then contact **Brice Wells** NOW so that firm bookings can be made for the April period.

Broome Bird Observatory



Courses 2004

About Us

Broome Bird Observatory, on the shores of Roebuck Bay, was established in 1988 by Birds Australia to facilitate research into migratory shorebirds. The bay has international significance, boasting the highest diversity of migratory waders in Australia. It is considered to be one of the best locations globally for the viewing of these amazing international travellers.

For more information and to register for our courses please contact us at:

**PO Box 1313
BROOME WA 6725**
Phone (08) 9193 5600 Fax (08) 9192 3364
e-mail <bbo@birdsaustralia.com.au>
or access our website through
<www.birdsaustralia.com>

Wave the Waders Goodbye

March 19–23 or April 3–7

Experience the departure of the waders as they migrate in their thousands to the Northern Hemisphere. We explore the variety of habitats that support many types of waders and some other top birding spots.

Birds of the Broome Region

September 13–17 or October 11–15

Why is the North West so good for birding? Come and find out as we visit a multitude of ecosystems and expose the best birding areas in the region.

Research Techniques – New in 2004

June 7–11

Increase your knowledge of the various methods used to study bird behaviour, distributions and demographics. Gain hands on experience by participating in BBO research.

Cost (includes accommodation and meals)
5 day Course \$780 pp

FOUND!

A Kowa lens cap was left by “Bob” in Dick Rule’s vehicle during the excursion at Mandurah on 6 December 2003. Bob has recently arrived in WA from Queensland. As we have been unable to find contact details this lens cap is being held at the BAWA office in the Bird Notes Editor’s box.

Where are our artists and photographers?

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

SEVENTH CORELLA COUNT

Sunday 28th March 2004

Starting 3:30 pm

The first six counts have gathered useful data about the spread and numbers of feral corellas around Perth. The apparently continuous increase in the number of Long-billed Corellas was not repeated last year with the flock of over 300 previously present around the Canning Regional Park at Ferndale/Riverton not seen. However, last year also saw a decline in the number of counters on the day of the count.

Control of feral corellas around Perth has now begun and it is important for as large a number of counters as possible to continue to track distribution and numbers that will help to monitor the effectiveness of this control program.

See WABN 86, June 1998 for background information and identification hints and WABN 87, (September 1998), 90 (June 1999), 94 (June 2000), 98 (June 2001) and 102 (June 2002) for reports on earlier corella surveys. (The overdue report of the 2003 count will be incorporated with that for 2004).

If you know of a place that you regularly or often see corellas, or would be happy to be assigned to an area we already know about, please take part in an organised count at as many places as possible on 28 March. The date is a week or so earlier than any previous counts to try to ensure that non-breeding flocks have not yet dispersed. The main focus is still around Perth, but if anyone knows other places, such as Baldivis, Mandurah, Bunbury and Albany that seem to have populations of feral corellas we would really like to have those areas covered as well. Counting begins at 3:30 pm and ends when it gets too dark to identify corellas.

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

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

by phone (work 9405 5161 – home 9381 6293)
facs 9306 1641

or email <johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au>

Twin Creek Conservation Reserve

Over the years land clearance has reduced much of the natural vegetation between the Stirling Range and the Porongurups. The establishment of the Twin Creeks Reserve is creating an important bush corridor between the two national parks as well as providing a permanent home for many creatures. The reserve, funded by private donations and a grant from the Natural Heritage Trust, was officially launched on 4 October. Many thanks to those members of Birds Australia WA who assisted with donations.

Located off Knights Road north of the Mt Barker–Porongurups Road, the 500 hectare reserve has a wide range of vegetation types providing habitat for many different species of birds. Heathlands support numerous honeyeaters, fairy-wrens and thornbills while Western Yellow Robins, Striated Pardalotes, Weebills and Rufous Whistlers can be found in areas of Wandoo woodland. Declining species such as the Rufous Treecreeper and Restless Flycatcher have also been observed. Wedge-tailed Eagles regularly nest in the woodland. Both Red-tailed and Short-billed Black-Cockatoos have been recorded at the reserve but there is no evidence of breeding. Purple-crowned Lorikeets can be easily seen when the mallees are bearing blossoms.

Anyone interested in visiting the reserve should contact Ann Burchell, the president of the Friends of the Porongurup Range, whose tireless efforts saved the land from being cleared. Contact details: Ph (08) 9853 1153 or E-mail <porongurup.friends@westnet.com.au>

Anne Bondin

NEW MEMBERS

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

L E Anderson, B Barton, V M Bennett, F Blakeway, R Boardman, K Botteon, G Bown, R Burton, G Butto, L & A Butto, L Capewell, I M Clear, C Coggin, P Croft, I Duderija, N A Gilchrist, S Green, J C Griffin, P Hewson, S A Kiely, S Kirsbrunner, J Laurie, C Lehmann, D Morton, E P Mulcock, J Nicholls, J O'Neill, W O'Sullivan, N Omomo, G Price, N I Thom, K Vallenge, J Walsh, B A Wells, D J White, M Willett, R Wise



Excursion Reports



JULIMAR FOREST CAMPOUT, 8-9 November 2003

Sixteen people came to this campout, which was situated in a magnificent piece of predominantly old Wandoo woodland.

On the first morning Les Harris, as enthusiastic as ever, had most of us up at 4:30 am and out birdwatching by 5:15! There were still a few pools of water in the creek and some flowering eucalypts attracting Yellow-plumed, Brown, New Holland and White-naped Honeyeaters. The Rainbow Bee-eater and Sacred Kingfisher were also present and one of the most common birds was the Rufous Treecreeper. The remainder of the day was spent trying to keep cool as we sweltered in one of the hottest November days on record. Later the group ventured out in the cooler afternoon, having excellent views of the Mistletoebird and Elegant Parrot feeding in the shrubs along the creek. The large snake under the toilet trailer created some excitement.

The following day was also an early start and we followed a family of Western Yellow Robins for about 30 minutes. The Little Wattlebird, Rufous and Golden Whistler and Western Spinebill were also encountered. The heat certainly affected the number of birds seen and we had a total of 40 species, but not the difficult to find Crested Shrike-tit.

A special thanks must go to Ted and Stella Stewart-Wynne who towed the chemical toilet up and back from Perth at very short notice. The weekend could not have gone ahead without it as CALM no longer allows 'long drop' loos at Julimar.

Thanks to Les for his enthusiasm and foresight in getting us out of bed so early in the morning to beat the heat.

Sue Abbotts

MANDURAH, 6 December 2003

Frank Pridham welcomed 31 people from Perth and the local group in perfect weather at Coodanup and we then visited Nairns, Mariners Cove Sanctuary on the Creery Wetlands and Samphire Cove Reserve on the western end of the Estuary Bridge.

As all these are estuary environments, the majority of the 58 species were waterbirds with Nairns producing 53 Bar-tailed Godwits and some Red-necked Stints, Red-capped Plover and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers as well as cormorants and ducks.

At Mariners Cove there was another flock of Bar-tailed Godwits on the far side (over 50) and numerous 'Sharpies'. The Osprey also appeared for us.

The bushbirds included wrens, honeyeaters and parrots including young Regent Parrots. Three Whimbrels were seen at Samphire Cove.

Dick Rule

HERDSMANS LAKE, 11 December 2003

Starting at 8:30 am, 12 of us had an enjoyable walk along part of the lake. Fifty-one species in total were seen with Les Harris walking a little further than the rest of us. Les' expertise, and that of Brian Wilson, enabled us to gain valuable information in recognising different birds. We had excellent views of many of the waterbirds. An adult Red Wattlebird was seen feeding a juvenile Red Wattlebird. A Great Crested Grebe had a nest in some dense reeds. Several of us saw 'bits' of a wader fly away from the water's edge. As all the 'bits' came together, the bird became a Wood Sandpiper. A Glossy Ibis was seen, too, and an immature Black-winged Stilt. However, no Freckled Duck.

Claire Gerrish

WUNGONG GORGE, BEDFORDALE, 14 December 2003

A group of 28 members and guests met at Wungong on a slightly muggy but not too hot Sunday morning. Thanks to Bill McRoberts for leading the outing and sharing his local knowledge gleaned from more than 50 personal surveys in this area, which is renowned for its diversity of endemic species.

Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos were overhead early and were ever-present throughout the walk. Rufous Whistlers were elusive at first, but sheer weight of numbers enabled most to get good views. Red-capped Parrots were in good numbers, and other sightings included Splendid Fairy-wren, White-breasted Robin, Scarlet Robin, Brown Goshawk and Golden Whistler.

The final tally of 35 species was enhanced in no small manner by Bryan who remained in the BBQ area opposite the car park and added Western Rosella and Painted Button-quail to our list.

Stan Broom

LAKE MCLARTY, 28 December 2003

The 100 km trip, 7:30 am start, and threat of impending rain, did not deter 21 members driving to Lake McLarty. Once again the lake lived up to its reputation as one of WA's best bird habitats. Those who made the journey were rewarded with a perfect day's birding. Light cloud, a cool breeze, no flies or mosquitoes and a satisfying species count contributed to this enjoyable day. Although some observers ended up spending part of their time in the lake, the consensus of new members and those of long standing was, that it was well worth the wet feet, and contributed to an atmosphere of "well used bins and grins on chins" among the group.

Reasonable water levels on the western side of the lake provided plenty of open water for large numbers of waterbirds, while on the eastern side, areas of shallow water and fringing mud created an ideal habitat for waders.

Black Swan, grebe, heron, egret, spoonbill, ibis, duck and two tern species were evident on the open water. Long-toed Stints, Pectoral Sandpipers, Large Sand Plovers, a Black-tailed Godwit and a Ruff were seen among the 15 wader species present. An additional 31 bushbirds were tallied around the edges of the lake, making a total of 71 species seen by the group, at the end of the day.

Black Swans with cygnets, and a creche of Black-winged Stilts, provided breeding evidence. Sighting of an immature **White-bellied Sea Eagle** proves the lake continues to be part of the territory of at least one pair of these relatively rare raptors.

Evidence of large areas of couch grass and some *Typha orientalis* incursion on the edges of the lake are a cause of concern. Any threat of degradation to this wetland should be investigated by the Birds Australia Western Australia committee.

Colin Davis



Participants at Eaton campout, 24–26 January 2004
Photo courtesy David Ballard

ALFRED COVE, 4 January 2004

Under the able leadership of bird watching guru Les Harris and the watchful eye of the resident Osprey perched high upon his radio mast, a mob of some 25 enthusiasts aged 8 to 80 gathered for their first excursion of 2004. With the Cove on its right and an expanse of manicured lawn and then shorn grass on its left the group set off—most eyes and optical instruments pointing right.

Wader watching always is a challenge and this was no exception with a bunch of Great Knots in the shimmering distance providing one such and some Greater Sand Plovers lurking amongst Red-necked Stints another. A lone Bar-tailed Godwit proved more obliging by prodding away in the mud close by seemingly oblivious to the watching mob on the bank above. Oh, and the lawns to the left did at least provide habitat for some, as a few Richard's Pipits have apparently laid claim to it.

The group returned to base via melaleucas and other trees fringing the area and there – surprise, surprise – a cockatiel was seen amongst the upper foliage. How ever did he get there? In all 54 species were seen or heard—not a bad effort.

Ian Rudd

BLACKWALL REACH/POINT WALTER SAND SPIT, 15 January

All 13 adults and two children were on time. The response from the advertising and article in the local community newspaper was noticeable and even though three did not have time to complete the walk, they enjoyed participating and observed what birding was all about. A little later on the children tired so, with their Mum, left us but re-joined us at the end for the bird count. The youngsters showed genuine interest and were well behaved.

After a brief address on what lay ahead, Eric pointed out that what had been a nesting hollow was now full of bees—a tragic problem. The family of White-cheeked Honeyeaters never let us down. They have been there at least 30 years. How many generations would have passed by?

Usually the four cormorants and Darter are present but we missed out on the Great Cormorant. We thought we saw the resident kingfisher but were not sure enough to record it. The Common Sandpiper, at first, didn't behave like a Common Sandpiper but there was no doubt.

Eric pointed out a regular nesting hollow for the unusually matched pair of a Long-billed Corella and a Galah. After explaining that they hadn't been around for quite a while, we startled them among a flock of Galahs—disturbed feeding on the open lawn. Their progeny have not been seen recently around the area.

Despite the risk that it might be a bit hot it was decided to walk the Point Walter sand spit. This was very worthwhile,

with the highlight being the performance of the Red-capped Plover feigning injury to distract us from the nest that we couldn't find anyhow. Both the Crested and Fairy Terns were noted feeding their young. The Black-shouldered Kite has been there for a while. Eric pointed out, across the bay, a dead tree at the left of the Claremont cliffs where the Ospreys nest, but there was no sign of them.

It was pleasing to see 35 species. We missed out on a few possibilities but we cannot place our expectations too high in the inner suburbs. Let's be thankful that our White-cheeked Honeyeaters survive the pressure and give us so much pleasure. What more can we do to help them, and all others of their ilk, to survive the expansion and encroachment imposed on them by the human being? This is a lovely part of the river and our heritage. We've done a good job so far but we have got to keep the pressure on to do it better.

A pleasant and enjoyable morning spent by all.

Eric Pyatt

WELLARD WETLANDS, BALDIVIS, 18 January

On a pleasant sunny summer morning, with temperature 25°C, and no wind, 23 people arrived for a bird walk around the Wellard Wetlands. These were established by Alcoa for clay extraction some years ago and some retain permanent water through most years. The Kwinana Freeway passes close by.

At 7:15 am, a few 'early birds' saw 20+ White-tailed Black Cockatoos flying overhead. It wasn't determined if they were Baudin's (long-billed) or Carnaby's (short-billed), but both species, endemic to WA, are threatened/endangered. This record will be lodged with Cockatoo Care <www.cockatoocare.com>, a project by WA Museum and Water Corporation to obtain reliable data from interested persons, on these species and Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, for research to assist CALM in the protection of these species.

With our leader, Les Harris, and several spotter scopes, we visited bird hides and the shores of several wetlands between 7:15 and 10:15 am.

Among the waterbirds recorded were Great Crested, Hoary-headed and Australasian Grebe, Blue-billed Duck, a juvenile Nankeen Night Heron (perched with its head

pointed skywards in rather bittern-like alarm manner), Straw-necked Ibis (numbers of which appear to be reducing on the Swan Coastal Plain) and Black-fronted Dotterel.

Raptors recorded were Whistling Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle and Swamp Harrier.

Of the bushbirds seen,, Australian Ringneck, Splendid Fairy-wren, Grey Fantail, Western Gerygone, Rufous Whistler and Silveryeye frequently called around us. Crested Pigeon was reported, as were Rainbow Bee-eater, Weebill, Striated Pardalote, Inland and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, and White-winged Triller.

A total of 59 species was recorded during the walk.

A few keen birders then went with Les to the nearby WA Water Ski Park, where, with the kind permission of "the lady in the shop", we edged towards a modified side lake adjacent to the main ski lake. Several waterbirds were recorded on the side lake, including Pink-eared Duck and Straw-necked Ibis, as well as Red-necked Stint and Red-capped Plover (both in very low numbers), and Common

Greenshank. The absence of shorebirds was noticeable.

More species and larger numbers of individuals had been observed at this location in previous years.

Many thanks, Les for leading us on an interesting, enjoyable excursion.

Jennifer Muir



The hide at Big Swamp, Bunbury
Drawing by Pam Agar

AUSTRALIA DAY WEEKEND CAMP, EATON

The Rotary Campsite at Eaton on the Collie River proved to be a pleasant venue for the Australia Day Weekend campout with plenty of shade and grass for campers and

caravans and very acceptable dormitory accommodation for non campers. One camper counted 15 birds at the campsite and early arrivals saw a family of four Buff-banded Rails on an island in the river.

On Friday afternoon, the early arrivals visited Pelican Point and opened the count with a good number of waterbirds and several waders including Common Greenshanks, Pied Oystercatchers, Eastern Curlews, Black-winged Stilts and Red-necked Stints. The Leschenault Estuary was dotted with elegant Great Egrets and all four species of cormorant were seen during the weekend.

On Saturday morning the group visited four areas near Bunbury—an area of mud flats where a pair of Whistling Kites were standing in the mud next to all the gulls, the mangrove area which proved disappointing for birds, the Cut where there were more dolphins than birds and the Big Swamp area where our list of species grew quickly with the sighting of several species of duck as well as swampheens, coots, Hoary-headed Grebes and Dusky Moorhens.

That afternoon the enlarged group revisited Pelican Point and added to the list with an excellent sighting of a Terek Sandpiper and several busy White-fronted Chats as well as Bar-tailed Godwits and an Osprey.

On Sunday morning our convoy followed Clive to an area at the end of the Collie River Road where we walked along the irrigation channel to the small diversion dam. The birds were fairly quiet although some alert birders saw a Scarlet Robin, a Red-eared Firetail and fairy-wrens. Everyone was impressed by five Wedge-tailed Eagles circling overhead.

That afternoon we visited the reserve next to the Inorganic Chemical Factory on Australind Drive and were astounded

to see at least 30 Nankeen Night Herons leaving their roosting sites ready for their night time foraging. A lone Common Bronzewing was also seen as it quietly walked under the trees.

On Australia Day we drove to the west side of the estuary which is rich in the early history of the Fenian escape as well as the property called Belvidere where horses were bred in the early days for service in the Indian Army. On the drive out we saw two splendid Australian Hobbys high in a tree (did Russell's photo turn out as well as we all hoped?) and six Regent Parrots preening above our heads. Several more species were seen to boost the total for the weekend to one hundred and one (101) giving Wendy Napier her first win at a campout and narrowly beating Darryl James (100) and Wendy Gager (102).

The camp ended on a happy note. A total of 36 people attended, coming from Albany, Mandurah and Boyup Brook as well as the suburbs of Perth. Once again a big THANK YOU to Clive and Wendy for their friendly and knowledgeable leadership. It was a good weekend.

Molly Angus



Observatory Reports



BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

A birding climax to 2003 was provided by a Grey Wagtail that was resident at BBO for 11 days in November. This was only the second record for mainland WA.

Lake Eda in November was interesting with a Ruff, Red-necked Phalarope and a Pectoral Sandpiper all being seen on the same day. All -night mist-netting sessions failed to catch them all, but did not disappoint with two Swinhoe's Snipes and a Ruff being caught. Little Curlews and Oriental Pratincoles proved their intelligence and largely avoided cannon-netting attempts.

January and the start of the wet saw Common Sandpiper turning up in the pindan at puddles on the road. At times the access road more closely resembled a river, with Yellow Wagtail, Plumed Whistling Duck and Pacific Black Duck also making use of the new water source. A large flock of 50+ Yellow Wagtails out on Roebuck Plains at the back of the observatory was unusual.

The descent of the AWSG on 24 January marked the advent of the research season. Cannon-netting each day (weather and tide permitting) and a picnic mist-netting session at the sewerage ponds on Saturday night. Highlights were catches of 13 Sooty Oystercatchers, 16 Pied Oystercatchers, 97 Terek Sandpipers and 152 Greater Sand Plovers and three Pacific Golden Plovers and a Pin-tailed Snipe at the sewerage ponds.

As the new year gets under way, many of the grey waders are starting to change their feathers into the reds of

breeding. For more sedentary species, however, breeding is well under way. Rufous-throated Honeyeaters have built fragile nests either side of the Woodside block and are currently feeding three chicks in each. Nearby, young Pied Butcherbirds can be heard practicing their singing and sometimes missing the high notes. Three immature Restless (Paperbark) Flycatchers caused some confusion with twitchers, a family of two adult and two immature Dollarbirds colonized the birdbath for a day and the young goshawks have fledged and now dispersed, to the relief of the smaller birds.

All in all, it is shaping up to be a great birding year. Perhaps we will see you?

Joy Tansey



Grey Wagtail, Broome, November 2003
Photo courtesy Adrian Boyle



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.

Please note that at Easter and the June long weekend there will be two campouts offered.

New Members

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

Saturday 28 February to Monday 1 March: Cheyne Beach

Labour Day Campout

As this campout was so popular last year it has been decided to repeat the weekend.

Cheyne Beach is a fishing village on the edge of the Waychinicup National Park east of Albany. The purpose of the campout is primarily to look for 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

Sunday 29 February: Bibra Lake

Half-day Walk

For those who will not be going on the campout!

Meet at 7:30 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake, off Progress Drive (StreetSmart Map 462 A2).

Bibra Lake is a part of the Beeliar Wetlands chain and a large number of water and bushbirds can be seen here. The complete walk around the lake could take over two and a half hours so bring water, hats, etc, as it may be quite hot. Also, have suitable footwear as there are plenty of 'Snakes have been seen in this area' signs around the lake!

Leader: Wynton Maddeford

Sunday 7 March: Woodman Point, Munster

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park at Woodman Point on Jervoise Bay (StreetSmart Map 490 B3). This is now a bitumen road. Turn off Cockburn Road, south of the caravan park, along O'Kane Court, turning left towards

the entrance to the Jervoise Bay Sailing Club, then left to the car park. We will walk along the beach to Wapet Groyne to look for waders and sea birds. Bring your telescopes.

Leader: Les Harris

Saturday 13 March: Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, Bayswater

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:00 am at the small parking area at the entrance to the Sanctuary, at the end of King William Street, Bayswater (StreetSmart Map 344 C6). There are two more parking areas which can be found by turning left at the entrance to the Sanctuary into the road that leads to the river.

This Bird Sanctuary was founded by Eric Singleton in 1977 in conjunction with the Bayswater Council. It consists of waterways, paved paths (suitable for wheelchairs), a bird hide and an artificial island. Many waterbirds breed in the reserve, and we could see crakes and rails, as well as some raptors. The total species list is about 100.

Leader: Hank van Wees

Thursday 18 March: Garvey Park, Ascot

Mid-week Morning Walk

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 21 March: Yangebup Lake, Yangebup

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park on the south-west end of Parkes Street, between Osprey Drive and Hammond Road (StreetSmart Map 462 C9). Wear rubber boots or old shoes as there could be some muddy areas.

This is a good area for waterbirds and waders. Three species of crakes have been seen here. Bring a 'scope, if possible. If time permits, Kogolup will also be visited.

Leader: Clive Napier

Monday 22 March: State Tennis Centre, Burswood, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Arlene Moncrieff of Greening Australia will give a talk entitled *Stepping Stones Creating Healthy Habitats*.

Saturday 27 March: Lake Joondalup

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:00 am at Neil Hawkins Park, in the car park at the end of Boas Avenue (StreetSmart Map 221 A6). There are always lots of water and bushbirds to be seen around this large lake, and there could be waders as well. Bring your telescope if you have one.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Sunday 28 March: Annual Corella Count

Contact John Blyth, by telephone (work 9405 5161 – home 9381 6293), faxes 9306 1641 or email johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au

Leader: John Blyth

Sunday 4 April: Jarrahdale

Full-day Walk

Meet at 8:00 am at the junction of the South West Highway and Falls Road (the turnoff to Serpentine Falls). We will leave some cars in the car park at Serpentine Falls and then do a car shuttle to Gooralong Brook in Jarrahdale. The walk follows down Gooralong Brook, which flows all year and through Serpentine National Park, across the Serpentine River to the base of the Falls. It is approximately 6 km though downhill all the way.

Serpentine National Park has a species list of about 80 birds including Red-eared Firetail and White-breasted Robin. Wear suitable shoes and carry a day pack with water and a snack. There will be a small cost for entering Serpentine Falls.

Leaders: Sue Abbotts and Judy Mackinnon

Friday 9 April–Monday 12 April: Hopetoun and Fitzgerald River National Park

Easter Campout

The campout will be held at the Hopetoun Caravan Park, on the south coast. There is good birding in the surrounding area, which includes the Fitzgerald River National Park, the ocean and the estuary. This is also a chance to see one or two of the south coast rarities.

Make your own bookings at the caravan park, phone 9838 3096. Accommodation is available: cabins-sleeping 4-6, smaller cabins for two and on-site vans. As it is school holiday time, bookings for these must be for at least one week. There are plenty of powered and unpowered sites, and a camp kitchen is available. Bookings should be made as soon as possible. Preference will be given to Birds Australia members. If the caravan park is full, there is a new motel in town with comparable prices.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier (Phone 9332 7265)

Friday 9 April–Monday 12 April: Holleaton Easter Campout

Holleaton is an abandoned mining town site in a large

remnant of bushland in the eastern wheatbelt, approximately 80 km ENE of Narembeen and 90 km SSW of Southern Cross. It features a number of habitat types, including woodland, mallee shrubland and sandplain heath. A number of interesting birds, including Shy Heathwren and Western Yellow Robin, have been seen here. We will look for Gilbert's Whistler, a species now almost extinct in the wheatbelt.

During the campout, we will explore the bushland and one of the many reserves nearby. There are no facilities but plenty of space for camping. Be fully self sufficient for everything, including water, food and vehicle fuel. Note that participant numbers will be limited to approximately 25 people. Track access from south suitable for 2WD vehicles. Mud maps and access instructions from Cheryl and Martin.

Leaders: Cheryl and Martin Gole (Bookings 9293 4958)

Thursday 15 April: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson

Mid-week Morning Walk

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

Leader: George Agar

Sunday 18 April: Bold Park

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am at the Camel Lake car park, which is at the southern end of Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, for a walk in Bold Park. This is a pleasant and interesting walk close to Birds Australia's back door.

Leader: Neil Porteous

Monday 19 April: State Tennis Centre, Burswood Meeting, 7:30 pm

Mavis Norgard, a member, will give a talk and show slides of Australian birds.

Note: This meeting is a week earlier than usual because 26 April is a public holiday.

Monday 26 April: Modong Nature Reserve, Oakford Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of King and Thomas Rd, Oakford. This reserve is a CALM managed Nature Reserve, part of the Jandakot Regional Park. The walk will be along firebreaks through banksia woodland.

Leader: David James

Sunday 2 May: Wandoo Heights, Noble Falls Full-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am at Wandoo Heights. Follow the Toodyay Rd about 3 km past the Roe Highway junction. Turn left

into Campersic Rd, then right into Loton Rd to the intersection with Range Rd. The block is on the NE corner of this intersection, and the gate, which will be open, is on Range Rd. Wandoo Heights is an uncleared 22 ha block, vested in the Swan Shire, and has a range of habitats.

After morning tea we will travel further east on the Toodyay Rd to Noble Falls, which is on the left, and signposted just past Gidgegannup. The walk will follow the creek line north, then we will return through the woodland area to the car park for lunch.

Leader: Sue Mather

**Saturday 8 May: Piney Lakes Reserve, Winthrop
Half-day Walk**

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park off Murdoch Drive. Turn off Leach Highway into Murdoch Drive at the lights. From there take the second turn right across the dual carriageway into the grassed area to the car park. It is approximately 700 m down from Leach Highway. The Reserve used to be part of a pine plantation, which now contains two artificial lakes and one natural permanent lake. The Spotless Crake and numerous other water birds frequent the area. There is a considerable area of natural bushland around the lake, and this is home to the usual local species.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

**Sunday 9 May: Maurice Hamer Park, Herdsman Lake
Two-hour Walk**

Meet at 8:00 am at the eastern most car park. Turn off Pearson Street into Falcon Avenue and turn right into Lakeside Road. This walk is especially suitable for new and potential members and beginners. Binoculars can be provided if you do not have your own.

Leader: Les Hogben

**Thursday 13 May: Burswood Open Spaces
Half-day Walk**

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

Leader: Mary Vaughan

**Sunday 16 May: Lake Richmond and the Naragubup
Environmental Centre at Rockingham
Half-day Walk**

Admission to Centre: \$4.40 concession.

Meet at 8:30 am at the Naragubup Centre car park on Safety Bay Rd, Rockingham, opposite the western side of Lake Richmond. The walk around the lake will take about 2-3 hours, followed by morning tea at Naragubup. 125 species have been recorded at the lake, including 14 species of raptor seen regularly. Another interesting feature of the lake is thrombolites.

Following morning tea, Bob Goodale will talk about the Centre, and members can walk through the absorbing educational displays. There are picnic facilities in the grounds of the Centre but you need to bring your own lunch.

Leaders: Dave and Jan Crossley

**Saturday 22 May: Kings Park
Half-day Walk**

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the northern end of Forrest Drive opposite the Botanic Gardens near the junction with Lovekin Drive. There should be plenty of bushbirds in the area.

Leader: Frank O'Connor

**Monday 24 May: State Tennis Centre, Burswood
Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Sarah Comer of CALM, Albany, will speak on the recovery programme for the Western Ground Parrot.

**Sunday 30 May: Old Coach Road, Serpentine River
Full-day Walk**

Meet at 8:30 am on the corner of Summer Track and Albany Highway. From Armadale, travel south along the Albany Hwy. Summer Track is approximately 32 km south from the corner of Jarrahdale Road and Albany Hwy. Watch for the Serpentine River crossing (signposted) over the Albany Hwy. Summer Track is immediately south of the river.

We will explore the Serpentine River and various habitats along the Old Coach Road. Four species of robin (Hooded, White-breasted, Scarlet and Red-capped) have been seen here. We will look for Western Yellow Robin to take the total to five. The area features Wandoo woodland and Jarrah forest birds, and Red-winged Fairy-wrens along the stream line. If it is extremely wet prior to the excursion, we may walk along the tracks instead of driving. Bring lunch and a thermos, and a day pack, snacks and drink bottle in case we walk.

Leaders: Cheryl and Martin Gole

**Saturday 5–Monday 7 June: (Port) Gregory
Foundation Day Campout**

A new venue is being tried for this year's campout.

This small township is on the coast 48 km NW of Northampton and 100 km north of Geraldton. The road is all sealed.

Birding will include coastal and Hutt Lagoon sites as well as bushland. A day trip to Kalbarri, only about 50 km north, can be organised on the new sealed road.

The caravan park has powered sites as well as camping facilities, onsite vans and two levels of cabins. There is a camp kitchen with fridge and gas BBQ.

Those intending to participate must book their own accommodation and ensure that their name is on the BA Office list. Caravan park 'phone 9935 1052

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

Saturday 5 – Monday 7 June: Beringbooding and Elachbutting Hills

Foundation Day Campout

Beringbooding and Elachbutting Hills are large granite outcrops on the fringe of the north-east wheatbelt, approximately 50 km NE of Mukinbudin and approximately 400 km from Perth. They feature a range of habitats including woodland, mallee and breakaway country. Fairy Martins, songlarks and Crested Bellbirds have been seen on previous visits.

There are no facilities but plenty of space for camping. Some roads in the area are gravel but they are suitable for 2WD. Be fully self sufficient for everything including water, fuel and food. Final details including a mud map will be available from BAWA office or the leader in early May. Note participant numbers will be limited to 25 people. Please indicate intention to the leader with contact phone number and email address (if available).

*Leader: Les Hogben 93839661
email <LKHogben@bigpond.com>*

Sunday 13 June: Woodman Point

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park at Woodman Point on Jervoise Road. Turn off Cockburn Road, south of the caravan park, along O'Kane Court, turning left towards the entrance to the Jervoise Sailing Club, then left to the car park. We will walk along the beach to Wapet Groyne to look for seabirds. Bring a telescope if you have one.

Leader: Les Harris

Thursday 17 June: Little Rush Lake, Yangebup

Mid-week Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am near the playground on the western side of

this small wooded lake. Little Rush Lake is part of the Beeliar Regional Park. To reach the area turn right, going south, into Osprey Drive off North Lake Road, then right into Dotterel Way and right into Grassbird Loop. There is a path around the lake and we should see plenty of both water and bush birds. Fifty species of birds have been seen on previous visits here.

Leaders: Molly and Barry Angus

Saturday 19 June: Karnup and Baldvis Nature Reserves

Half-day walk

Bring lunch if you wish.

Meet at 8:00 am in the parking area in Karnup Rd, just around the corner from Baldvis Road.

Follow the Kwinana Freeway, which becomes Safety Bay Rd, then turn left at the roundabout into Baldvis Rd. Travel approximately 6 km to Karnup Road, turning left then sharp right into the parking area. This reserve has Western Yellow Robins.

Returning back along Baldvis Road towards Perth, about 8 km along we can visit Baldvis Reserve, which is on the left. There are shady picnic tables and toilets. More birding in that reserve. Both reserves are currently being monitored for the Perth Biodiversity Project.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Saturday 19 June: Bibra Lake, Cockburn

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:00 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake off Progress Drive. Bibra Lake is a part of the Beeliar Wetlands chain and a large number of bushbirds and waterbirds can be seen here. This walk is especially suitable for new and potential members and beginners. Binoculars can be provided if you do not have your own.

Leader: Wynton Maddeford



Wildlife & Natural History Tours

George Swann,
Kimberley Birdwatching
P O Box 220, Broome, W A 6725
Email: kimbird@tpg.com.au
Ph/Fax: (08) 9192 1246
www.kimberleybirdwatching.com.au

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

Black Grasswren 5–14 July 2004
Best of the Kimberley 21 July–5 Aug
Old Mornington 9–13 Aug
Kimberley Islands & Inlets Cruise
13–21 October 2004

*Brilliant birding with experienced guide, cruises, 4WD
safaris, camping, accommodated.*

Plus more exciting trips for 2004/2005

Sunday 27 June: Bickley Brook, Gosnells

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park just past the children's camp at the reservoir. Follow Maddington Rd and Hardinge Rd to the reservoir. There are good prospects of seeing both Red-browed Finch and Red-eared Firetail, Southern Emu-wren and a fair selection of other bushbirds.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 27 June: Pelagic Trip

Full-day

Hillarys Boat Harbour

I will organise two boat trips from Hillarys on Sunday 27 June and Saturday 14 August. We head nearly 60 km offshore to the trench west of Rottnest to look for seabirds and cetaceans. This is your chance to see albatross and petrels close up. Bring your camera. The trip leaves at 7:00 am and we return at about 3:30 pm. There is a limit of 30 people. The cost will depend on the number of people: \$75 if 22 people, \$65 if 30 people.

Bookings: Frank O'Connor

<foconnor@iinet.net.au> or 9386 5694

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

Andre Schmitz of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy will speak on the work of the Conservancy throughout Australia, including its two sanctuaries in WA at Karakamia and Paruna.



Stuart and Jan Miller are delighted to announce the opening of **Kingfisher Gallery** for photographic and fine art.

Kingfisher Gallery is focused on the art inspired and stimulated by nature. The gallery is an extension of their love for nature and their commitment to its conservation.

Stuart and Jan wish to exhibit artists who paint or photograph our flora, fauna and landscapes. Artists who share this same passion and are interested in exhibiting are invited to contact Jan.

All are welcome to visit the gallery.

Kingfisher Gallery is situated in the professional area of West Perth at 51 Colin Street.

Gallery Hours are 12 noon – 5 pm Monday to Friday excepting public holidays.

Phone / Fax: 08 9321 3685 Mobile: 0408 511723

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 2005, 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/ for more details, or contact Chris direct:

Tel: (08) 9192 8585

E-mail: 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 eight 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

Email compete@anzangnature.com

Telephone/Fax +61(0) 8 9321 3685

Postal address ANZANG Nature
GPO Box 2828
PERTH Western Australia 6001

Crossword Answers No 36

Across

2 fledgling, 6 audit, 7 audible, 9 chat, 11 hottest, 12 plump, 13 crest, 14 arid, 15 dyes, 20 freckled, 23 camps, 24 red, 25 trade, 26 hours, 27 elongated.

Down

1 nuchal, 2 feathers, 3 gibber, 4 identify, 5 glare, 8 dates, 10 timid, 12 pratincole, 16 chasing, 17 reedbed, 18 sketch, 19 rump, 20 forest, 21 Elanus, 22 messy.

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*?

If so, please complete the section below and send the appropriate fee to the national office with your membership application.

| | | | |
|------------|--|-------------|--|
| Title: | | First name: | |
| Last name: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| | | Postcode: | |
| Phone (H): | | (W): | |
| Email: | | | |

WABN subscription rates per annum

(please cross out whichever is inapplicable)

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| WA Members | \$12.00 |
| Interstate Members | \$13.00 |
| Overseas Members | \$20.00 |

Note: WABN subscription is only available with a Birds Australia membership. For membership rates contact Birds Australia.

Payment Details

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to 'Birds Australia'
OR

Debit my Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐
||||| ||||| ||||| |||||

...../.....
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
- ◆ **Eyre Bird Observatory relief wardens** — contact
 - * Shapelle McNee Phone 9494 1286, e-mail <mshapelle@hotmail.com>
 - * or Rod Smith Phone 9447 3804, e-mail <rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au>
- ◆ **Noisy Scrub Bird** — contact Sarah Comer Phone 9842 4500, Email <sarahe@calm.wa.gov.au>
- ◆ **Atlas** — surveys for this are continuing — contact Cheryl Gole
Phone 9293 4958, e-mail <gole@starwon.com.au>
- ◆ **Excursion Leaders** — contact Sue Abbotts 9444 1607, e-mail <sabbotts1@bigpond.com>
- ◆ **Monthly Meeting Speakers** — contact Brian Wilson 9293 1094
- ◆ **Western Ground Parrot Project** — contact:
 - * Brent Barrett 9842 4519 e-mail <brentb@calm.wa.gov.au>
 - * Brenda Newbey 9337 5673 e-mail <sfryc@iinet.net.au>
 - * Anne Bondin 9844 1793 e-mail <albanybirds@hotmail.com>
- ◆ **Public Relations Sub-committee** — graphic artist, reporter — contact Brice Wells 9255 3710

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

Birds Australia WA Home Page:

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

Chairman: Mike Bamford
23 Plover Way, Kingsley WA 6026
Tel: (08) 9309 3671
E-mail: mabce@ca.com.au

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

Suzanne Mather
Tel: (08) 9389 6416
E-mail: mather@cygnus.uwa.edu.au

Production: Margaret Philippon

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)

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

Advertising Rates

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

Saturday 28 February to Monday 1 March: Labour Day Campout at Cheyne Beach

Sunday 29 February: Half-day Walk, Bibra Lake

Sunday 7 March: Half-day Walk, Woodman Point, Munster

Saturday 13 March: Half-day Walk, Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, Bayswater

Thursday 18 March: Mid-week Morning Walk, Garvey Park, Ascot

Sunday 21 March: Half-day Walk, Yangebup Lake, Yangebup

Monday 22 March Meeting: State Tennis Centre, Burswood

Saturday 27 March: Half-day Walk, Lake Joondalup

Sunday 28 March: Annual Corella Count

Sunday 4 April: Full-day Walk, Jarrahdale

Friday 9 April–Monday 12 April: Easter Campouts—
(1) Hopetoun and Fitzgerald River National Park
(2) Holleaton

Thursday 15 April: Mid-week Morning Walk, Canning River Regional Park, Wilson

Sunday 18 April: Half-day Walk, Bold Park

Monday 19 April: Meeting, State Tennis Centre, Burswood

Monday 26 April: Half-day Walk, Modong Nature Reserve, Oakford

Sunday 2 May: Full-day Walk, Wandoo Heights, Noble Falls

Saturday 8 May: Half-day Walk, Piney Lakes Reserve, Winthrop

Sunday 9 May: Two-hour Walk, Maurice Hamer Park, Herdsman Lake

Thursday 13 May: Half-day Walk, Burswood Open Spaces

Sunday 16 May: Half-day Walk, Lake Richmond and the Naragubup Environmental Centre at Rockingham

Saturday 22 May: Half-day Walk, Kings Park

Monday 24 May: Meeting, State Tennis Centre, Burswood

Sunday 30 May: Full-day Walk, Old Coach Road, Serpentine River

Saturday 5–Monday 7 June: Foundation Day Campouts—
(1) (Port) Gregory
(2) Beringbooding and Elachbutting Hills

Sunday 13 June: Half-day Walk, Woodman Point

Thursday 17 June: Mid-week Half-day Walk, Little Rush Lake, Yangebup

Saturday 19 June: Half-day Walk, Karnup & Baldivis Nature Reserves

Saturday 19 June: Half-day Walk, Bibra Lake, Cockburn

Sunday 27 June: Half-day Walk, Bickley Brook, Gosnells

Printed by Executive Press: Tel (08) 9275 8044