

Western Australian Bird Notes



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



No 110 June 2004

ISSN 1445-3983

Contents

<i>Observations</i>	p3	<i>Members' Contributions</i>	p11	<i>New Members</i>	p24	<i>Coming Events</i>	p31
<i>Letters to the Editors</i>	p6	<i>What's in a Name?</i>	p21	<i>Country Groups</i>	p25	<i>Crossword Answers</i>	p35
<i>BAWA Reports</i>	p6	<i>Crossword</i>	p22	<i>Excursion Reports</i>	p26	<i>Opportunities for Vols</i>	p36
<i>BAWA Projects</i>	p7	<i>Notices</i>	p23	<i>Observatories</i>	p30	<i>Calendar of Events</i>	p36

MILLIONS OF PRATINCOLES!

One of the most extraordinary events associated with migratory waders in Australia in recent years occurred in North Western Australia this year. On 7 and 8 February 2004, members of Birds Australia and our special interest group the Australasian Wader Studies Group led by Dr Clive Minton, counted between 2.4 and 2.8 MILLION Oriental Pratincoles at Eighty Mile Beach (Anna Plains Station). The previous estimate of the total Australian population of this bird was 60 000 !!!

An edited extract of Clive's email message on 9 February, advising of this remarkable event, is reproduced here:

When we arrived at Anna Plains on February 2nd it was immediately apparent that an unusual situation existed. For the last 100 km of the journey the bush on either side of the main highway was alive with feeding Oriental Pratincoles. In the late afternoon vast clouds ('smokes') of birds could be seen swirling around over many parts of the plains and these gradually descended towards dusk to roost for the night in quite dense patches all over the agricultural grasslands of the plain.

Next day the daily pattern of the pratincoles became

apparent. From dawn, birds fed extensively all over the grassland of the station and further inland amongst the bush, at least as far back as the Great Northern Highway. As the day heated up (the weather was relatively settled, calm and sunny throughout) the birds gradually moved down to the coast where they collected in huge aggregations on the upper mud flats as the tide rose on the sandy beaches. This process occurred between about 9 am and 11 am. High tides were variously between 10 am and noon. Birds remained on the sandy beaches, or upper mud flats, long after the tide had gone out and did not appear to depart for the coastal plains again until 3 pm or 4 pm. They then fed avidly until dusk before roosting.

There were modest (low 1000s) of Oriental Plovers behaving in the same manner and also two large aggregations totalling at least 30 000 White-winged Black Terns (but few Whiskered Terns), as well as much smaller numbers spread throughout the Oriental Pratincole flocks.

There was no water lying on the plains except for a few puddles during the first day or so from light rain that fell on the 30th January. There had been quite a lot of rain in December, and this had greened up all the vegetation but not caused it to grow significantly, that is most of the grass was still quite short



Oriental Pratincoles on Eighty Mile Beach,
February 2004.

Photo courtesy Chris Hassell

and there were some patches that were still completely bare.

On the next three days we found it very difficult not to catch Orientals Pratincoles when attempting to catch 'grey waders' on the beach, and in six cannon net catches spread over three tides, we caught 250 Oriental Pratincoles. Only 10% of these were first year birds so it has not been an exceptionally good breeding year for them.

On the 5th February we attempted to do a ground count covering the area from Cape Missiessy, the northern most end of Eighty Mile Beach, down to almost the southern limit of Anna Plains Station. This gave us a very rough estimate of a total population between 2.0 and 4.6 million Oriental Pratincoles. 46 000 were counted in one kilometre long section towards the southern end of this count area where the birds were at maximum density.

Given that the previous official population estimate for Oriental Pratincoles in Australia was 60 000 (Watkins 1993) and that the total flyway population was estimated at 67 000, it was felt that a further attempt should be made to obtain a more accurate population estimate. Through the considerable efforts and kindness of John Stoate, the part owner and manager of Anna Plains Station, a plane was obtained and a pilot know well to John (he previously did the cattle mustering at Anna Plains Station) offered to provide his flying time free of charge. Grant Pearson, of the Department of Conservation and Land Management of WA, very kindly offered to cover the costs of hiring the plane.

The aerial survey was carried out on Saturday 7th February between 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. The complete length of Eighty Mile Beach was flown twice. The survey started from the Anna Plains entrance to the beach and proceeded southwards to Cape Keraudren—the southern end of the beach, a distance of 200 km. Birds were again counted on the return journey which proceeded to Cape Missiessy at the northern end of the beach and also to about 15 km beyond this as some pratincoles could also be seen roosting on the beaches there. The plane then returned to the station to drop off the passengers, before going back to Broome. The aerial survey was done by Humphrey Sitters (UK), Peter Collins (Victoria) and Brian Etheridge (UK).

The counts varied between 2.4 and 2.8 million Oriental Pratincoles. There was a noticeable drift southwards of the population of the Oriental Pratincoles during the count, shown up during the count figures and visibly observable from the aircraft. The same southwards movement of pratincoles was also very noticeable to the cannon netting team who were operating on the beach 25 km south of the Anna Plains entrance (they made a successful catch of 235 birds). It is possible that this movement may have been

associated with increasing cloud cover gradually building up in the north-west.

The figures are still being examined to arrive at the most logical estimate of the Oriental Pratincole population, but it will lie in the range of 2.4 to 2.8 million.

We have obviously been speculating as to why such a huge number of birds was present this year but has never previously been recorded. The previous most similar situation was in January 2000 when a minimum of 50 000 Oriental Pratincoles were observed on Anna Plains Station. However, in that year there was extensive water on the agricultural pastureland and birds were not moving to the beach during the heat of the day. No extensive surveys or wider population estimates were attempted or possible at that time.

It would appear that in 2004 conditions have been absolutely perfect to attract the maximum number of Oriental Pratincoles to feed in the area of farmland adjacent to Eighty Mile Beach and that weather and habitat conditions have been the optimum to force them to use the beach during the day where they could be observed and counted. Nevertheless it is still quite a staggering increase over previous estimates of the population of this species, and one that would be difficult to believe by anyone who had not seen this phenomenal sight

of beaches densely covered with pratincoles a kilometre or so wide for stretches tens of kilometres long.

Clive Minton



Pratincole with attitude!
Photo courtesy Humphrey Sitters

FURTHER SPECULATION ON THIS EVENT

I was a member of the Australasian Wader Study Group's expedition to north-west Australia from 24 January to 14 February.

Why were they at Anna Plains Station and Eighty Mile Beach? And why had they never been recorded in these numbers before? We asked ourselves these questions while we were at Anna Plains Station. The conditions were excellent. There had been good rains just before New Year, which led to the plain having a generally good cover of grass, but there had been little follow up rain until a couple of days before we arrived, so the grass was not very high or dense. There were large numbers (but not plague proportions) of Yellow-winged Locusts (*Gastrimargus musicus*). The pratincoles appeared to be feeding on the locusts. We did not see a bird catching a locust, but we could feel them in the crops of some of the pratincoles we caught, and the beach also had a lot of locust wings that we thought must have been discarded by the roosting pratincoles. Pratincoles are generally considered to be crepuscular feeders. That is, they feed mostly early in the morning and late in the afternoon, possibly even after

sunset when there is a full moon. (McNeil *et al.* 1992). The days became increasingly hotter during the week leading up to the aerial survey. We thought that the pratincoles were feeding in the morning until it became too hot, and then flying to Eighty Mile Beach to rest during the hottest part of the day, before returning inland in the late afternoon to feed again and to roost. We had seen this with Oriental Plovers on previous expeditions.

The biggest clue came when someone read the species account in HANZAB (Higgins & Davies 1996) indicating that Oriental Pratincoles may move into an area after rainfall, but that they may leave after persistent heavy rain. This was followed up by contacting the Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology who provided a rainfall map for the three months prior to our sighting. The area from the Gulf of Carpentaria west to the east Kimberley was mostly well above the annual average. But the west Kimberley and the east Pilbara were well below average. Oriental Pratincoles are presumably spread most

years across the grasslands of western Queensland and the Northern Territory. As predicted by HANZAB, we concluded that they had been pushed west by the excessive rainfall in most areas of their normal distribution. These areas are largely inaccessible, especially in the wet season, and we conclude that either much of the population does not normally migrate all the way to Australia (perhaps remaining spread out across Indonesia or the Philippines) and that they have not been counted at that time, or that they do usually migrate in these numbers to Australia but that conditions have not been favourable for congregation in such large numbers. We were in the right place at the right time to witness the event. If we had been there a week later when the birds had moved further south, we would have missed the event. A week earlier and the birds would not have arrived.

Frank O'Connor



Observations



This list has been compiled by the Observations Committee. Metropolitan suburbs or shires are in parentheses. Please report interesting observations to Frank O'Connor (9386 5694 or preferably sightings@iinet.net.au) or to the BAWA office (9383 7749). Sightings are included on the BAWA web site (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 sighting in this edition was the phenomenal number of 2,880,000 **Oriental Pratincoles** found along the length of Eighty Mile Beach in February (see separate article). Two **ROCKHOPPER PENGUINS** found on the south coast, a **HOUSE SWIFT** and a **Great Frigatebird** in Broome, were the major rarities.

The most unusual sighting in the metropolitan area was a **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** at Herdsman Lake. A **Red-capped Robin** and a **Long-toed Stint** were other unusual observations at Herdsman Lake. There was a report of a 'dark headed' gull at the South Mole in April but the identity could not be confirmed. There were very few reports of any crakes during the summer or early autumn.

The rarest sightings in the south west were the **Rockhopper Penguins** at Augusta and Albany. The former was found by a non birder and not reported for a

month and the latter was found dead, so unfortunately very few people saw these beautiful birds. There were excellent counts of some waders at Lake McLarty and Lake Kwooncup. A **Royal Spoonbill** was very unusual SE of Hyden. The **Masked Lapwings** reported previously at Lake Seppings at Albany have increased to five.

In the north west **Franklin's Gull** was still in Carnarvon two months after the first report. A **Common Redshank** was an exciting find during a wader count at the small boat harbour in Carnarvon. There were very large numbers of **shearwaters** and **terns** seen from Point Quobba in March ahead of a cyclone approaching the Pilbara. A large group of **Inland Dotterels** was seen at night close to Tom Price.

A **House Swift** was seen several times over two days at the port in Broome. A male **Great Frigatebird** was the first record for Broome. They breed in small numbers on Adele Island several hundred kilometres to the north, so it is surprising they haven't been reported before. A **Pin-tailed Snipe** mist netted and banded at the Broome sewage ponds caused a lot of local excitement. The yellow leg flag was put on the wrong (left) leg to make it easier to identify in the field. The cyclones passing near Broome in March brought in a few unusual sightings.

Correction. The Bar-tailed Godwits reported in WABN 109 at Wilson Inlet, should of course have been reported as Black-tailed Godwits. Bar-tailed Godwits are regular visitors to the Albany shire.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

- Little Penguin** – 2 (preening offshore about 1pm), 07/04/04, Robert Point (Halls Head) – FO (not often seen)
- Cattle Egret** – 15, 04/03/04, Settlers Village (Ravensthorpe) – BR (numbers still increasing in the south west)
- Whistling Kite** – 16, 17/04/04, ALCOA Wellard Wetlands (Baldivis) – MN (high count)
- Wood Sandpiper** – 5, 12/04/04, North Lake (North Lake) – DBH (late record)
- Long-toed Stint** – 1, 07/04/04, Maurice Hamer Reserve (Herdsman) – FO (late record)
- Silver Gull** – 1 melanistic, 21/03/04, Coogee Beach to Woodman Point (Coogee) – BN, FO (unusual; photographs)
- Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** – 1, 08/03/04, Floreat Waters (Herdsman) – WM (rare in the metropolitan area)
- Red-capped Robin** – 1 immature male, 06/03/04 and 13/03/04, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – BR (unusual in the metropolitan area)
- Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** – 20, 15/03/04, Jackson Street (Bassendean) – GM (high count for the south west)
- Brown Songlark** – 1 male, 01/02/04, North Lake (North Lake) – WM (unusual so close to the city)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

- ROCKHOPPER PENGUIN** – 1, 31/12/03, Barrack Point (Augusta – Margaret River) – TD * 1 (beach washed), late 01/04, Lowlands Beach (Albany) – BK (uncommonly reported in WA)
- White-headed Petrel** – 1 (beach washed), 17/12/03, Cheyne Beach (Albany) – JHB (uncommonly reported in WA)
- Royal Spoonbill** – 1, 25/03/04, Lounge Lizard gold mine (Kondinin) – CW (uncommon in the south)
- Little Button-quail** – 1, 24/02/04, 1.5 km east of Quairading (Quairading) – ED, IR (uncommon in the south west)
- Painted Button-quail** – 2, 12/04/04, Holleaton (Narembeen) – DS (near east edge of range)
- Common Greenshank** – 219, 20/01/04, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high count in the south west)
- Sanderling** – 13, 16/03/04, Wongerup Creek / Hassell Beach (Albany) – MAN (unusual for the shire)
- Red-necked Stint** – 2000, 18/02/04, Lake Kwonnicup (Plantagenet) – MAN (high count in the south west)
- Black-winged Stilt** – 5040, 20/01/04, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high count)
- Banded Stilt** – 1032, 20/01/04, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC * 3280, 18/02/04, Lake Kwonnicup (Plantagenet)



Franklin's Gull, Carnarvon
Photo courtesy Les George

- MAN (high counts at these sites)
- Red-capped Plover** – 1000, 18/02/04, Lake Kwonnicup (Plantagenet) – MAN (high count)
- Masked Lapwing** – 5 (sub-species *novaehollandiae*), 12/04/04, Lake Seppings (Albany) – FAB (uncommon in the south west)
- Australian Magpie** – 1 albino, 14/12/03, Boscabel (Kojonup) – JHB (unusual; photographs)
- ## ARID ZONE
- Wandering Whistling-Duck** – 20, 18/01/04, Ophthalmia Dam (East Pilbara) – FO (uncommon in the Pilbara)
- Freckled Duck** – 2, 18/01/04, Ophthalmia Dam (East Pilbara) – FO (uncommon in the Pilbara)
- Streaked Shearwater** – 15, 24/03/04, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) – CD, TK, CH (uncommonly reported in Western Australia)
- Wedge-tailed Shearwater** – 1500, 24/03/04, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) – CD, TK, CH (high number seen from coast)
- Hutton's Shearwater** – 4000, 24/03/04, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) – CD, TK, CH (very high number in Western Australia)
- Buff-banded Rail** – 1, 04/01/04, Lorna Glen homestead (Wiluna) – GG (uncommon in the interior)
- Common Redshank** – 1, 18/02/04, small boat harbour (Carnarvon) – FO (rare in Western Australia apart from Broome)
- Long-toed Stint** – 1, 18/02/04, Linda's Creek at Lake Macleod (Carnarvon) – CD, TK, LG, CH (uncommon in saline habitat)
- Broad-billed Sandpiper** – 30, 24/03/04, Oystercatcher Flat at Lake Macleod (Carnarvon) – TK (high number south of the Pilbara)
- Ruff** – 1, 18/02/04, sewage ponds (Carnarvon) – LG, FO (still present from January)
- Inland Dotterel** – 21, 14/01/04, near Tom Price sewage ponds (Ashburton) – EP (high number for Western Australia)
- Franklin's Gull** – 1, 18/02/04, near Gascoyne River mouth (Carnarvon) – FO * 1, 18/03/04, sewage ponds (Carnarvon) – CD, TK, CH (still present from January)
- Roseate Tern** – 12 000, 22/03/04, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) – CH, LG * 30 000, 24/03/04, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) – CD, TK, CH (very high number in Western Australia)
- Common Tern** – 500, 24/03/04, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) – CD, TK, CH (high number south of the Pilbara)
- White-winged Black Tern** – 5000, 24/03/04, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) – CD, TK, CH (very high number south of the Pilbara)
- Grey Honeyeater** – 1, 31/01/04, Cedar Street in Tom Price (Ashburton) – EP (uncommon)

Ground Cuckoo-shrike – 1, 11/01/04, Karijini National Park (Ashburton) – EP (uncommon in Pilbara)

Yellow Wagtail – 1, 16/02/04, BHP Billiton entrance (Port Hedland) – FO (uncommon in the Pilbara)

KIMBERLEY

GREAT FRIGATEBIRD – 1 male, 27/03/04, port (Broome) – AB, GMo, JT (1st record for Broome)

Pin-tailed Snipe – 1 mist netted, 31/01/04, sewage ponds (Broome) – AWSG (uncommon in the Kimberley)

Asian Dowitcher – 182+, 13/03/04, Roebuck Bay (Broome) – AB, BBO (high count)

ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE – 2 880 000, 07/02/04, Eighty Mile Beach (Broome and East Pilbara) – AWSG (phenomenal numbers; see article)

Pomarine Jaeger – 1, 27/03/04, port (Broome) – GS, AB (rare in Broome)

Bridled Tern – 4, 26-30/03/04, port (Broome) – AB, GS (uncommon in Broome)

White-winged Black Tern – 50 000, 07/02/04, Eighty Mile Beach (Broome) – AWSG (very high number)

Common Noddy – 6, 26-30/03/04, port (Broome) – AB, GS (uncommon in Broome)

HOUSE SWIFT – 1, 24-25/03/04, port (Broome) – GS, AB (rarely reported in Australia; BARC submission required)

Banded Honeyeater – 1, 18/01/04, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – MR at southern limit in Broome)

Yellow Wagtail – 50+, 23/01/04, Roebuck Plains Station (Broome) – JT, FO (high count)

Barn Swallow – 100, 22/01/04, wharf (Derby – West Kimberley) – FO (high count)

OBSERVERS

AB = Adrian Boyle
AWSG = Australasian Wader Study Group
BARC = Birds Australia Records Committee
BBO = Broome Bird Observatory
BK = Brad Kneebone
BN = Brenda Newbey
BR = Bill Rutherford
CD = Colin Davis
CH = Chris Hassell
CW = Carolyn Wyllie
DBH = David & Barbara Henderson
DS = David Secomb
ED = Elsa Dabbs
EP = Easy Patterson
FO = Frank O'Connor
GG = Gina Gregory
GM = Greg Marston

GMo = Grant Morton
GS = George Swann
IR = Ian Rudd
JHB = John & Hilary Brooke
JT = Joy Tansey
LG = Les George
LW = Leigh Whisson
MAN = Michael & Ada Nield
MB = Michael Bamford
MC = Michael Craig
MN = Mark Newman
MR = Mavis Russell
RT = Roy Teale
TD = Tristan Davies
TK = Tony Kirkby
WM = Wynton Maddeford



Hopetoun campout, Easter 2004. Barry Angus and Mavis Norgard lead the 'pack', Phillips River.
Photo courtesy Molly Angus



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.*

Best of the Kimberley 21 July—5 Aug
Camping trip seeing all the Kimberley icons, differing habitats and
their associated birds—16 days

Kimberley Islands & Inlets Cruise 13—21 Oct 2004
*Lacepede Islands, Adele Islands, seabird breeding colonies, turtles
breeding, Walcott Inlet—Join us on this Kimberley Spring cruise to
experience birding at its BEST !!!*

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

Plus more exciting trips for 2004/2005



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors

Correction

Having read Stephen Debus' letter to the editors regarding the article/ photos in WABN 108 I admit to feeling a little hurt at his suggestions. Not having received my copy of that edition I rely on my memory for its content. For the record, the photo of the adult was taken on 8 July when nest building was in progress, this bird was very much aware of my presence, I approached as close as I dared without putting the subject to flight, it remained after I took all the photographs I wished. I took photos on 31 July when incubation was underway, at a distance of between 30 to 50 metres without disturbing the female. On 6 September when the picture of the eyass (I have since learnt that this is what raptor young are known as) was taken, the female, once again was very much aware of my presence. I was in the area for the said time or approximating, surveying for other birds resident or nesting in the area, the area I covered would have been some hectares. One might be surprised to learn that it can still be quite cool up here in the early morning, even at that

time of year. It was before I intended to return home that I noted the female had left the nest, it was about 11am, I took this opportunity to look inside the nest. I cannot be sure that my activities were not observed by one or both of the adults but I had scanned the skies and surrounding area before setting up the ladder and nothing was seen. I thought the attending adult had decided that the sun had sufficient warmth so as not to cause the young undue stress, the eyass was not panting from heat stress but rather begging for a meal. That it could not tell the difference between me and its kin I cannot be certain either, but food was what it expected. The time spent setting up and climbing the ladder, taking two photographs could not have taken more than two and a half minutes after which I departed the area as earlier intended.

I leave this up to your discretion as to whether or not this is printed, apologies for the lack of double spacing should this be the case. I would like to think that this explanation could at least be forwarded to Stephen as I believe sufficient care was taken to ensure no or at best, minimal disruption was caused to these birds.

Les George, Carnarvon



Birds Australia WA Inc Reports



BAWA INC COMMITTEE REPORT

It's that time already and like the White Rabbit, I'm late! The AGM held earlier this year saw some changes to the Committee, with Liz Walker and Sue Mather stepping down but remaining extremely active (which is much appreciated), and several new faces on the scene. The Committee for 2004 is:

Chair: Mike Bamford
Vice-Chair: Rob Davis
Secretary: Lorraine Marshall
Treasurer: Mary Vaughan
Committee members:
Carol Elliott, Frank O'Connor, Jenny Wilcox, Myles Menz, Les Hogben, Bill Rutherford

I have just come home from a meeting with this committee, CEO Jim Downey and President Henry Nix, in which all sorts of issues of importance to BAWA and Birds Australia in general were discussed. It was a stimulating session for us all. We discussed a wide range of topics: ongoing financial concerns, with some interesting suggestions on changes that may be beneficial

to BAWA; ideas on the membership brochure and on sharing web site and email; discussion on common names; insurance; feral bees and birds; observatories; and Birds Australia's policy on land acquisition (to name a few). Perhaps just as important as what was discussed however, was that we were all in one room discussing them.

Jim and Henry repeatedly made comments about how well BAWA is doing, and I don't think they were just trying to be nice or to avoid other issues. Being at the coal-face, as it were, it is easy not to notice how much is going on around you, so it is really helpful to get someone else's view of BAWA. We do seem to be remarkably active, with projects, excursions, publicity and frequent requests for assistance with anything from serious conservation issues to the identity of a bird seen in someone's garden last week. I think all members of BAWA can be genuinely proud of the sort of organisation we are growing into.

To finish off, I would like to ask members to keep a watch out on something for us. This will also act as a test to see if anyone reads the Committee Report! I recently

had a phone call from a member of the public who reported large numbers of Wedge-tailed Eagles killed on the Great Northern Highway. From 21 –23 April 2004, he recorded 10 between Newman and Kumarina, 11 between Kumarina and Meekatharra, and 2 between Tom Price and Newman. All had been hit by vehicles recently, and he was very concerned about these deaths and wanted to know if there was something we could do. My first thought was that the eagles were probably killed while feeding on kangaroos that had been attracted to fresh growth along the roadside following the recent rains. While tragic, the large number of eagle deaths was probably the result of unusual circumstances and wouldn't normally happen. But what is normal? How many recently-killed Wedge-tailed Eagles normally lie on the Great Northern Highway? If anyone is passing that way, I'd be interested to have counts of dead (and live) eagles.

Mike Bamford
Chair



Active Malleefowl mound, Holleton Easter campout.
Drawing by Pam Agar



BAWA Projects



HOODED PLOVERS

1) Banded Hooded Plovers—Wheatbelt Searches

The Yalgorup Hooded Plover Management Group with Mike Bamford and Julie Raines has now banded 25 Hooded Plovers within the Yalgorup National Park lake system.

At the end of autumn, bird numbers decrease within the park, presumably because some move elsewhere, and we are trying to locate their destinations.

One possibility is that they fly to the inland lakes. Birdwatchers in the wheatbelt, and Perth birdwatchers who are on excursions into the wheatbelt are asked to keep an eye out for banded Hooded Plovers on the inland lakes. The birds have a metal band and coloured band on the left leg and two coloured bands on the right leg.

If sighted, please 'phone Dick Rule on 9581 1894 or Marcus Singor on 9362 2742.

Many thanks.

Dick Rule

2) Bunbury Beach Winter Survey

Hooded Plovers may frequent the Bunbury beaches over winter, according to information obtained by the Hooded Plover Sub-committee.

These unconfirmed sightings relate to the beach areas near the Surf Life Saving Club. We are keen to determine the importance of this area for Hooded Plovers and would like anyone visiting the Bunbury beaches over the coming winter to keep a look out for Hooded Plovers. They have



Julie Raines releasing a Hooded Plover
after colour banding.

Photo courtesy Margaret Jones

been seen at the waterline but most often on the seaward slopes of the dunes.

It is possible that Hooded Plovers move to coastal beaches over the winter months when rising water levels make lakes in Yalgorup National Park unsuitable. Winter observations from all beaches from Yalgorup to Busselton are therefore of interest.

Some Hooded Plovers from Yalgorup are colour banded, so please check the legs of any birds you see, and take a careful note of the number of bands on each leg, and the colour of each band.

Please forward any sightings to the Hooded Plover sub-committee at Perry House.

Marcus Singor

HOODED PLOVER SURVEY, 21 and 22 FEBRUARY 2004



This year the Hooded Plover summer survey was held on Saturday 21 February and Sunday 22 February 2004.

The weather leading up to the February 2004 survey was hot and dry. There was record rainfall in the Goldfields just before and over the weekend of the survey; Laverton received 131 mm on Saturday and Sunday and Kalgoorlie 30 mm on Saturday 21 February. Esperance was the only other region that received some rainfall with 8 mm of rain on 21 February (Bureau of Meteorology). Unfortunately recent rain in the Esperance region made some areas inaccessible and resulted in high water levels in many lakes.

Regional newspapers provided good coverage in the lead up to the survey. For example, *Albany's Weekender* of 14 February 2004 carried an article on the Hooded Plover survey, as did *Midwest Mail* on 19 February 2004 and the *Busselton-Margaret Times* on Thursday 29 January 2004.

Survey Results 2004

The survey covered the coastal beaches from Carnarvon south and east to Esperance. We had good coverage of inland lakes and received observations from as far away as Lake Lefroy near Kambalda. The main survey period was reduced to two days.

The total number of Hooded Plovers counted over the weekend of the 21 and 22 February 2004 was 376, including 50 juveniles.

As the Hooded Plover survey covers extensive inland and coastal areas some allowance was made in obtaining data from these more remote areas of the State. Some locations were counted in the weeks leading up to the survey and some in the weeks following and as a result this survey includes observations made from 7 February 2004 to 7 March 2004. Every effort was made to ensure sites were only covered once.

The end result of the survey was 491 Hooded Plovers, including 79 juveniles (Table 1). The results are comparable to those from recent years, but somewhat lower than those obtained in 1995 and 1996.

Results were variable from region to region during this year's survey (Table 2). Some of the highest concentrations of Hooded Plovers were from the chain of salt lakes to the

Summer survey	No of Adults (Juveniles)	% of Juveniles	Total
January 1995	2093	unknown	2093
Jan/Feb 1996	1555 (131)	8.4	1686
February 1998	514 (39)	7.6	553
March 2002	691 (39)	5.3	730
Feb/March 2003	344 (23)	6.3	367
February 2004	412 (79)	19	491

Table 1: Hooded Plover summer survey results, 1995 to 2004.

north of Cranbrook, extending along the northern boundary of the Stirling Ranges. Sites with high counts included Tom South Lake (74) and Camel Lake (28). A small lake between Starvation Bay and Mason Bay (east of Hopetoun) had 70 Hooded Plovers. The number of Hooded Plovers reported at Yalgorup National Park and the Denmark-Walpole region remained much as they were last year. The water levels of the Esperance lakes undoubtedly influenced that region's count this year. The beaches from Cape Naturaliste to Augusta showed a reduction in numbers compared to last year.

The number of juveniles reported on observation sheets was considerably higher than in previous years, which seems to indicate that Hooded Plovers had a good breeding season this year. The percentage of juveniles recorded for the different Hooded Plover Management regions were:

Yalgorup Hooded Plover Management Region 13%

Naturaliste-Augusta Hooded Plover Management Region 0%

Walpole-Denmark Hooded Plover Management Region 21%

Bremer Bay-Hopetoun Hooded Plover Management Region 38%

Esperance Hooded Plover Management Region 35%

Inland lakes 6%

The only breeding record reported from outside Yalgorup National Park was at the mouth of Fitzgerald Inlet in the Fitzgerald River National Park where, on 3 February 2004; two adult birds and three runners were seen.

Acknowledgements

The participation rate in the survey was extensive and I thank everyone for their valuable time and contributions. Some extraordinary individual efforts were made in collecting data. Christine Wilder covered the south coast from Augusta to Broke Inlet, which took a week. The CALM Donnelly District (Pemberton-Northcliffe) assisted her by generously supplying a ranger and vehicle for part of the journey. John Lauri covered many inland lakes e.g. Lake Deborah (East and West), Chandler Lake, Baandee Lakes and Warrachuppin Lake.

A special word of thanks for the Hooded Plover regional coordinators who organised the volunteers in their districts: Dick Rule (Yalgorup), Tony France (Myalup), Lida Feist (Margaret River), David Edmonds (Walpole), Alan Cohen (Denmark), Anne Bondin (Albany), Anne Gadsby (Bremer Bay), Ken Read (Esperance), and Sue Abbotts for organising the BAWA excursion at Lake Clifton, and members of the Hooded Plover Sub-committee—Phyllis Bentley, John Laurie, Julie Raines and Trevor Stoneman.

The support and assistance received each year from the Department of Conservation and Land Management and their staff is invaluable—in particular Geoff Harnett, Stirling Range National Park; Mark Virgo, Walpole Parks, Garry Carr at Fitzgerald River National Park and the many other National Park Rangers who helped out, thank you.

Marcus Singor
Chairperson, Hooded Plover Sub-Committee

Areas	Numbers of birds
Shark Bay to Perth:	No sightings
Wetlands between Rockingham & Mandurah:	No sightings
Beaches from Mandurah to Leschenault Inlet:	No sightings
Yalgorup National Park (Yalgorup HPMR*):	104 (includes 14 juveniles)
Geographe Bay:	2 adults
Beaches from Cape Naturaliste to Augusta (Naturaliste-Augusta HPMR):	22 adults
Beaches from Augusta to Broke Inlet:	11 (includes 2 juveniles)
Beaches from Broke Inlet (Walpole) to Beaufort Inlet (east of Albany) (Walpole-Denmark HPMR):	28 (includes 6 juveniles)
Beaches from Beaufort Inlet to Hopetoun (Bremer Bay-Hopetoun HPMR):	13 (includes 5 juveniles)
Beaches east of Hopetoun to Stokes Inlet	74 (includes 8 juveniles)
Beaches Stokes Inlet to Cape Le Grande:	2 adults
Esperance Lakes (Lake Gore system to Mullet Lake) (Esperance HPMR)	103 (includes 36 juveniles)
Beaches east of Cape Le Grande:	4 adults
Inland lakes in south-west of the state:	128 (includes 8 juveniles)
Total:	491 (includes 79 juveniles)
*Note: HPMR = Hooded Plover Management Region	

Table 2: Results of dry season Hooded Plover survey, 21-22 February 2004.

HOODED PLOVER MOVEMENTS

Over the past two years, 25 Hooded Plovers have been banded and colour ringed on several lakes in Yalgorup National Park by Mike Bamford and Julie Raines, assisted by many members of the local Hooded Plover interest group. This note records some observations on the local movements of runners banded in February and March 2004.

Lake Pollard

A breeding pair and three runners about two days old were located near the hide on Lake Pollard on 8 February. They remained in the same general area for the next few weeks before two of the runners were caught and colour ringed on 28 February [R16, R17]. The breeding group were still together on the breeding area on 19 March but by 28 March the three juveniles had left the breeding area. Two were with a flock of five non-breeding adults on the other side of the lake, about 700 m away, while the other was on its own about 300 m from this group. The adults remained on the breeding area.

On 10 April, only R16 was on the lake, part of a flock totalling 18 adults and three juveniles. R17 was on Martin's Tank Lake, about 3 km south. The last time any of the ringed juveniles were seen on Lake Pollard was R16 on 12 April but the presumed breeding adults were there on 16 April.

Martin's Tank

On 22 February, one pair, with 2 runners a few days old, were on the west side of the lake just south of the camp site, while a second pair about 700 m further south gave every sign of having either eggs or runners. On 28 February, the first pair had moved about 300 m north while the second pair had three runners and were now about 1 km from the first pair. Both pairs were still in their respective areas on 6 March but on 12 March all five runners were with the first breeding pair and there was no sign of the second pair anywhere on the lake.

By 19 March, one of the runners had disappeared and the second breeding pair had returned to their breeding area. They behaved as if it were a breeding area, becoming

irritated when Red-necked Stints approached too close, although there was no sign of the missing runner.

The four runners were still with the first breeding pair that showed extreme aggression when Red-necked Stints came within a few metres of the runners. When first seen on this day, one adult was with three of the runners and the second adult was about 100 m away with the fourth. This adult flew to join the first group that was moving south towards the fourth runner that was moving towards them. When they joined up, all the runners appeared comfortable with each other and the adults showed no signs of aggression towards any of the runners.

All six birds stayed in the same general area over the next few weeks and all six were caught and colour ringed on 20 March [ads R20, 21; runners R22, 23, 24, 25].

The group remained together until 9 April when R25 was not located. The two adults were very aggressive towards two other juveniles—including R17 which approached too close.

By 12 April, the breeding group had dispersed, with the adults generally keeping close to the breeding area but the juveniles wandering around the lake, sometimes with non-breeding adults and sometime on their own. None of the ringed birds was anywhere on the lake on 16 April but all six had returned by 24 April, scattered through a number of groups. There were a total of 36 Hooded Plovers on the lake, including nine ringed birds.

Colour ringing has demonstrated how mobile these birds are at this time of year, moving around the lakes in the national park. It has demonstrated that not all the juveniles seen in the vicinity of a breeding area were hatched in that area.

One of the adults ringed on Martin's Tank in February 2002 is still around but none has been sighted outside the park. Where do they go?

Bill Russell

CALM STATION SURVEYS

In 2001 Tony Brandis, from the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), asked Birds Australia if it would be interested in carrying out surveys of bird species on a number of stations they had taken over within the Gascoyne/ Murchison Region. This followed a very successful campout organised by Cheryl and Martin Gole at Muggon Station in the previous year.

Good news is never popular with the media thus few people knew that some of the Telstra sale funds had been returned to the states to be spent on the environment. The Western Australian government had decided to buy back numbers of the properties in the above area. These were either not economic or the present leaseholders had become too old and did not have anyone wishing to

succeed them. There were no forced sales. It did allow the present owners an opportunity to retire with at least some funds on which to live.

CALM has since taken back about 22 properties either fully or partially. Many of the old leaseholders have remained as caretakers and are overseeing the gradual restoration of the property to a natural state. CALM wanted to have bird lists relating to the vegetation types so detailed maps were supplied showing the Beard's vegetation areas.

All records are taken using a GPS location and then placed on the maps so that the vegetation type can be correctly assessed. The data are presented showing species, vegetation type, the number of surveys per vegetation type and species richness.

To date we have surveyed two stations, Nanga and Lochada with a full campout group and four with a more specialised group who are all equipped with large 4WDs, GPSs and some experience in outback driving and conditions. Groups of two vehicles set off, usually along an old fence line or mill track, every few kilometres stopping to do a survey. It can be a long day and many kilometres are covered. The evenings are most enjoyable and are usually spent around a campfire.

Our most memorable sighting was a pair of Grey Honeyeaters in the extremity of Doolgunna Station, 140 km north of Meekatharra. The birds moved around in the low trees above our heads for a considerable time allowing all of the group to examine field guides while observing.

2004 promises some excellent birding following rains in the proposed area. Four adjoining stations have been selected in the Mt Augustus area and these will be surveyed in June. Karara and Kadji Kadji, both east of Morawa, will be a general group campout in early October.

This is a useful project and for those interested, a great deal of fun. Congratulations to CALM for commencing such an innovative programme of restoration and I hope our contribution will assist.

Clive Napier

CORYMBIA FESTIVAL

Birds Australia WA was invited by the Kalamunda Shire to attend the Corymbia Festival in Stirk Park, Kalamunda on 6 March.

I arrived early and helped by Jan Rogers and Ian Rudd, managed to erect the shade tent reasonably securely and set up our display. Eunice Pyper joined us during the morning and Stella and Ted Stewart in the afternoon. The attendance by the general public was disappointing. Nevertheless we were still waving the flag for Birds Australia and as always engaged in various conversations with the visitors we had. Brian Wilson gave a lecture and slide show in the pagoda on the birds of Kalamunda.

Unfortunately the light was too bright for good slide viewing. Selling 44 cards and two field guides plus half a dozen RAOU Checklist of Birds of WA covered our expenses.

As we were not busy it gave me an opportunity to visit the other environmental agencies attending and make contact with them. The Eastern Hills Catchment support officer would be interested in our bird classes and contact was made with the Conservation Council of WA, the Phosphorus Awareness Project and the Swan River group. These could all be useful for future events and projects.

Elsa Dabbs
Public Relations Sub-Committee



Corymbia Festival, Kalamunda, Stella and Ted Stewart
and Ian Rudd.

Photo courtesy Elsa Dabbs

SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE

CONSERVATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE is our motto and the Bird Watching for Beginners classes are proving to be a good avenue for leading us to this goal.

We held our third bird seminar at the wonderful venue of Piney Lakes Environmental Education Centre in their new building, built to blend and operate in tune with the environment. Instead of having to crowd 25 people into Perry House we had a room big enough for 40/50 people. Brice Wells and Frank O'Connor once again did a sterling job with the organisation and instructions on the seminar. Their teaching methods and humour were well accepted. The classes operate as follows:

Day 1, lectures on identification, classification, migration, use of binoculars, field guides, reference books, lecturer's personal experiences. Days 2, 3 and 4 cover waterbirds, bushbirds and waders, using a lecture followed by small group walks. There is a tea and biscuits break during the morning. The numbers attending each day varied from 26 to 38.

We were once more lucky to have a front page photograph and news item in the *Melville Times* and news items in the *Seniors*, *Have-a-Go* newspaper, the *Cottesloe Post*, *Nature Base* newsletter, Piney Lakes bush telegraph and of course WABN.

Our feed back evaluation forms had glowing reviews for all the leaders and the course offering many thanks and some suggestions, all of which will be taken into account. It was also noted that we had younger people on this course than previous courses.

Our grateful thanks to the walk leaders, Barry Angus, Rick Curtis, Tom Delaney, Michael Hancock, Valerie Helmsley, Les Hogben, Wynton Maddeford, Sue Mather, Jennifer Muir, Clive and Wendy Napier, Frank O'Connor, Ian Rudd, and Brice Wells, for their time, patience, knowledge and cooperation. We couldn't do it without you.

Elsa Dabbs
Public Relations Sub-Committee



Members' Contributions



EJAH—BIRDS OF THE DESERT FRINGE

In July of 2003 I ventured for the first time into the desert fringe of Western Australia. I saw more than a handful of new birds—new to me, not to science. I saw a fascinating association of Yellow-throated Miners (*Manorina flavigula*) and Grey Butcherbirds (*Cracticus torquatus*). I measured a drought-shortened beak of a Grey Butcherbird, and dealt with a Diamond Dove (*Geopelia cuneata*). I sat atop an ancient laterite breakaway in the Murchison country and watched the moon rise into the crisp and clear-black sky. Then I lay back on the ancient rock and listened to the sound of nothing—except the sound of my blood pulsing through my eardrums.

I was accompanying Professor Stephen Davies to Ejah along with a group of young scientists drawn from the WorldWide Fund for Nature, the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Murdoch and Curtin Universities. We were escaping Perth, the winter and the repetitive coastal squalls. By day, we thawed out under clear blue skies in a luxurious 25°C. By night, we gathered round the hearth in a shepherd's old stone hut and toasted marshmallows. The old stone hut is Ejah, an outcamp at Mileura Station, about 800 km north-east of Perth. Mileura is a sheep station where the sheep graze on uncleared native vegetation. At first glance you notice that there are few sheep or goats, which is a measure of the desert fringes' limited ability to support grazing.

However, a closer inspection reveals selective grazing of the more palatable plants. Threatened Bush Lemons (*Canthium spp.*) were observed devoid of their leaves all but for a few at their tip, presumably goats stand on their back legs and graze as high as they can reach. No young plants were detected. Productivity is slow in the desert

Common Name	Scientific name
Emu	<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>
White-necked Heron	<i>Ardea pacifica</i>
Straw-necked Ibis	<i>Threskiornis spinicollis</i>
Black-breasted Buzzard	<i>Hamirostra melanosternon</i>
Wedge-tailed Eagle	<i>Aquila audax</i>
Australian Hobby	<i>Falco longipennis</i>
Diamond Dove	<i>Geopelia cuneata</i>
Crested Pigeon	<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>
Galah	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>
Mulga Parrot	<i>Psephotus varius</i>
Budgerigar	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>
Pallid Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus pallidus</i>
Black-eared Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx osculans</i>
Variegated Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus lambertii</i>
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza uropygialis</i>
Southern Whiteface	<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	<i>Acanthagenys rufogularis</i>
Yellow-throated Miner	<i>Manorina flavigula</i>
Singing Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus virescens</i>
White-plumed Honeyeater	<i>L. penicillatus</i>
White-fronted Honeyeater	<i>Phylidonyris albifrons</i>
Black Honeyeater	<i>Certhionyx niger</i>
Pied Honeyeater	<i>C. variegatus</i>
Crimson Chat	<i>Epithianura tricolor</i>
Hooded Robin	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>
White-browed Babbler	<i>Pomatostomus superciliosus</i>
Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush	<i>Cinclosoma castaneothorax</i>
Crested Bellbird	<i>Oreoica gutturalis</i>
Rufous Whistler	<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>
Grey Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>
Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>
Black-faced Woodswallow	<i>Artamus cinereus</i>
Little Woodswallow	<i>A. minor</i>
Grey Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>
Australian Magpie	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>
Little Crow	<i>Corvus bennetti</i>
Western Bowerbird	<i>Chlamydera guttata</i>
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>
Singing Bushlark	<i>Mirafra javanica</i>
Zebra Finch	<i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>
Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>
White-backed Swallow	<i>Chermamoeca leucosternus</i>

Table 1. Birds observed at Mileura Station, during this field trip

fringe, plants make the most of modest rains and nutrient deficient soils. Annual rainfall at Mileura is 198 mm; the soils are derived from the much weathered granite and gneiss (Davies 1986). Plant growth is episodic and undoubtedly linked to rain; germination and the establishment of shrubs are rare events (Davies 1986). Thus, a number of the tastiest shrubs struggle to survive.

Before the nets were up I noticed that Yellow-throated Miners were chasing Pied and Black Honeyeaters (*Certhionyx variegatus* and *C. niger*) from flowering eremophilas and other unidentified birds from the area around the hut. However, they were not chasing Grey Butcherbirds that were nesting near the hut, apparently in the Miners' territory. In eastern Australia, Bell Miners (*M. melanophrys*) and Noisy Miners (*M. melanocephala*) have been frequently reported excluding other bird species from their territories (Loyn *et al.* 1983; Grey *et al.* 1998). Furthermore, I have frequently observed that Grey Butcherbirds share a territory with Noisy Miners at Imbota Nature Reserve, near Armidale in NSW. Further research might show if there is an ecological reason for these associations. Perhaps the Grey Butcherbird as a nest-predator may help the Miners maintain a territory, and in return the Miners aid the Grey Butcherbird by driving away competitors and other nest-predators? Noisy Miners excluded Pied Currawongs (*Strepera graculina*) from nest-sites at Imbota Nature Reserve (Fulton and Ford 2001), which may have increased the nesting success of the Grey Butcherbird at that site.

There had been good rain and I was hopeful of snaring some exciting birds in the mist-nets. There was one intriguing re-trap, a Grey Butcherbird with a shorter beak. Its beak was 72.5 mm, 5.9 mm shorter than when it had been previously trapped on 28 June 2001. A possible explanation for the shorter beak is that the birds had been having a tough time with the drought probing the ground for grubs. The grubs might be scarcer and the ground would be harder. Thus, the Butcherbird's beak may have worn down. Mist-netting continued Tuesday through Thursday and on the last day while checking the last net Professor Davies was delighted to discover his first mist-netted Diamond Dove. He has been working at Mileura since 1959 and a first for him is not an ordinary moment. Thus, he banded the bird and I dealt with the measurements. Diamond Doves are not uncommon to the area, but they usually fly under or around mist-nets. All the birds detected on this field trip are listed in Table 1 and none are new to the area.

Ejah is an indigenous word – an expression of surprise in Watagee. The stone hut was originally a shepherd's hut built about 1880 and relocated 25 km to Ejah in 1971. Professor Davies takes a group of students from the Western Australian universities to Ejah annually. Students gain bird and bat handling skills, benefit from networking with one another and learn about a land of low productivity. Where the dominant tree, Mulga (*Acacia aneura*), is well spaced and stand only as high as the leafless skeletons of their immediate ancestors, the skeletons that are still standing from the fire of 1947.

Acknowledgements

I thank Stephen Davies for introducing me to the desert fringe and comments on the manuscript, Teagan Smith for the spaghetti, Carole Elliott for the cookies and Raquel Carter for making me an honorary girl. I wish to acknowledge the station owners Mary, Matcham and Patrick Walsh, and the Watagee people, the traditional owners of the land where my observations were made.

References

- Davies, S. J. J. F. (1986). A biology of the desert fringe Presidential address - 1984. *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia* 68: 37-50.
- Fulton, G. R. and Ford, H. A. (2001). The Pied Currawong's role in avian nest predation: a predator removal experiment. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 7: 154-160.
- Grey, M. J., Clarke, M. F., and Loyn, R. L., (1998). Influence of the Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala* on avian diversity and abundance in remnant Grey Box woodland. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 4: 55-69.
- Loyn, R., Runnals, R. G., Forward, G. Y. and Tyers, J. (1983). Territorial Bell Miners and other birds affecting populations of insect prey. *Science* 221: 1411-1413.

Graham R. Fulton

PIED BUTCHERBIRDS CATCHING A STUBBLE QUAIL

On Saturday 10 April, I was at the Charles Darwin Nature Reserve (formerly White Wells Station) with the WA Naturalists Club. John Luyer and I went looking for an Inland Dotterel that had been seen three days earlier in a paddock about 1 km from the homestead.

Walking through the paddock we heard bird calls that we thought were probably babblers. Two Pied Butcherbirds flew off the ground as we walked to the general area of the calls. I initially thought they had just been squabbling. A third Pied Butcherbird also lifted off dragging a bird in its feet. I tentatively identified the caught bird as a Stubble Quail (and I was glad that it didn't seem to be the Inland Dotterel!).

We slowly followed the butcherbirds to get a better look. They flew a number of times, and it appeared that different birds were carrying the quail. An immature was carrying it at one point. Finally a good view of an adult Pied Butcherbird with the prey on a small fallen log enabled the identification of the prey as a Stubble Quail. The butcherbird then started to feed. I wonder whether this has been previously recorded?

Frank O'Connor

A SINGING HONEYEATER VARIANT

We were casually watching the bird activity around a birdbath in a garden in Shelley. At this time it consisted of a group of Singing Honeyeaters and a single New Holland Honeyeater. We became aware of a predominately pale whitish-yellow bird at the bath, at a distance looking like a canary. Our interest aroused, we moved closer for a more detailed inspection. The bird remained with the group of Singing Honeyeaters at the birdbath for about another five minutes and flew off with them.

On close inspection the beak was relatively fine and slightly downcurved, so definitely not a canary. The size and shape was very similar to that of the Singing Honeyeaters present. The head, nape, back, breast and undersides were white with a very pale yellowish tinge in parts. The wings were brown with a lighter edge and when folded showed a distinct yellow line along the lower margin. The tail was also brown. The eyes were dark and very distinct on the white head.

The size, shape, beak, wings and tail were typical Singing Honeyeater. The bird was clearly associated with the group at the bath and left with them. It seems reasonable to assume that this bird was a Singing Honeyeater variant, part albino or a mosaic form.

Bob Fergie
Cliff Whitehouse

GLOUCESTER TREE, PEMBERTON

On the afternoon of Wednesday 10 March, I visited the Gloucester Tree, Pemberton, and found about a dozen other visitors there, together with a flock of Western Rosellas, odd White-breasted Robins, several Red-winged Fairy-wrens and a White-browed Scrub-wren. The birds took no notice of the visitors but foraged about on the ground in the abundant leaf-litter from the huge karri trees and round picnic tables picking up scraps of food. The rosellas in particular were so intent on feeding that you had to be careful not to step on them in the bloom under the trees.

Early next morning I visited again before any visitors arrived. At 6:15 am the area around the base of the Gloucester Tree was full of the same species, but this time they were engaged solely in picking up scraps of food left by tourists. I was dismayed to see rosellas arguing over lumps of bread that visitors had apparently crumbled and spread over tables and the ground under the mistaken impression that these birds were starving. I saw a White-breasted Robin make off with a huge crust. A couple of Rufous Treecreepers and a Red-winged Fairy-wren did the same. A Grey Shrike-thrush turned up and chased off a treecreeper from a piece of bread which the shrike-thrush took for itself.

It was astonishing to see species of birds that normally live on a different diet seizing pieces of white bread (not even healthy wholemeal) and gobbling it down. There must be

some doubt about whether this change of diet is good for these birds. If there are likely to be serious consequences, it may be time for the WA Group to suggest to CALM, which controls this national park and charges admission, to put up notices telling the public not to feed the birds as it is not good for their health. A CALM clean-up at closing time might be useful, too, likewise more rubbish bins.

Brian Wilson

THE SPLENDID FAIRY-WRENS OF BLUE GUM LAKE RESERVE

In *Birding Sites around Perth* the Splendid Fairy-wren is listed as one of six species that are absent from built-up areas.

Blue Gum Lake Reserve in Mt Pleasant is entirely surrounded by suburbia with streets and houses on three sides and tennis courts and the recreation centre on the fourth. Imagine my delight, therefore, in October 2001 when I came across a solitary male Splendid Fairy-wren in full breeding plumage hopping around in the branches and calling, perhaps hopeful for a mate. I saw him several times during the next month, on one memorable afternoon in my back garden, across the road from the lake. In December 2002 he, or another male, turned up in the Reserve again and this time stayed around throughout 2003. I imagine he must have come from Piney Lakes Reserve where there is a well-established colony but I didn't hold out much hope for a female finding her way to join him. Nevertheless, in August 2003 I spotted a female foraging in the same area and in October saw the pair together. On 17 November 2003 they both had nesting material in their beaks and on 30 December 2003 I was thrilled to find them feeding at least one stubby-tailed chick.

The sight of a male Splendid Fairy-wren in his glorious breeding plumage is always a highlight of birdwatching for me and I became curious about the mechanism of change from eclipse to breeding plumage. Most people told me it was by moulting and HANZAB is rather vague on the matter. However a keeper at the Perth Zoo, where there is the opportunity to observe behaviour closely from day to day, told me that the change is hormonal. When a female is put with an eclipse male at the start of the breeding season he will begin to change colour within a day and without losing any feathers—sensible really, as it would not be the best time to go bald! Somewhere, the keeper said, he had seen research which confirmed that there are cells in the shaft of the feathers which activate the colour change.

Valerie Hemsley



Western Whipbird enjoying dense cover in Mallee country, Hopetoun, April 2004
Drawing by Penny Towells

OBSERVATIONS DURING THE MID SUMMER WADER COUNT AT ROTTNEST

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*

Site 2 (Kingston) is one of six sites included in a bird monitoring program conducted by Birds Australia at Rottne Island. The area behind the University of Western Australia's research station is included in this site and contains a small grove of Tuart trees. These trees have been severely pruned, promoting a regrowth of tall straight leafy branches in most of the trees. On 5 February 2004 just before dusk a large number of Rainbow Bee-eaters was noticed flying above and around the Tuarts. The birds called continually while flying. Their behaviour was similar to milling Tree Martins.

Approximately 150 birds were estimated to be in the flock, possibly the entire population of the Island's Bee-eaters. The birds were obviously preparing to settle for the night in the Tuarts as now and then a bird would break from the flock and fly into one of the trees and begin calling to other birds still in the air. Not getting the required response or finding the perch unsuitable, the bird would take to the wing and repeat this behaviour. After two or three attempts a satisfactory roost high in the foliage was chosen and the bird was joined by others from the flock (possibly immediate family members). Before dark the entire flock had settled in the trees. Calling between birds continued for a short while after dark.

Bee-eaters are late risers. The birds did not begin calling the following day until well after sun rise. Following this communication, small parties of birds took brief flights around the trees. After this early morning warm up, birds began leaving the roost area. Small parties started departing to foraging areas, at between 0600 hrs and 0615 hrs. Those with territories to the northeast left first. Birds weren't noticed to fly south.

Although a Rainbow Bee-eater family had a territory near the Tuarts, no birds were seen in or around the trees until dusk.

Observations at various locations around the Island have shown this species to be dispersed throughout the woodland areas. The highest number present at one site is 18 birds, seen in remnant bushland east of Barkers Swamp. Two other observations of interesting species were made during the survey.

Buff-banded Rail (*Gallirallus philippensis*)

Observations at northeast corner of Lake Baghdad February 2004.

Two Buff-banded Rail were observed during the 04 mid summer wader count between the reeds and the edge of the lake at the soak in the NE corner of the lake.

The birds were two adults probably male and female. Another adult bird was seen during the same study, among the reeds on the northern side of the eastern arm of the lake. This species seems to be establishing itself on the island.

Painted Button-quail (*Turnix varia*)

Painted Button-quail were seen at four sites during the summer program.

- Three birds were seen at site five "Fire site"
- One bird was seen at site four "East Barker Swamp"
- Three birds were seen at site two "Kingston"
- One bird was reported at site seven "West of Oliver Hill"
- One bird was seen at West End Personal observation
Wes Bancroft early Jan ?

This species seems to be successfully established on the island.

Colin Davis

Editor's comment: No Rainbow-Bee-eaters were seen during repeat surveys in late March at the most western remnant woodland, but two Painted Button-quail were seen there.

KUNDIP NATURE RESERVE

Our thanks to Bruce Buchanan for his timely article on the Kundip Nature Reserve in the March WABN. The group attending one of the Easter campouts, held at Hopetoun, made good use of his observations and visited the area twice during the weekend.

Nearly all the species seen by Bruce and Anne were also seen by at least some of the 30 members who attended. The Western Bristlebird was seen as was the Southern Scrub-robin. A group of about eight members heard the Western Whipbird most clearly in a patch of heath on the western edge of the Reserve and on returning to the cars played the tape of its call to confirm the record. It called loudly from within 20 metres several times but would not show itself.

We could only add a couple of species to Bruce's list for Kundip. One was a pair of Western Yellow Robin and the other a family of White-browed Babblers.

Both of these, together with numerous other species, were seen on the Heritage Trail, which runs east of the road and follows the old rail line.

Kundip is an interesting reserve and thanks again to Bruce and Anne for alerting us to its value.

Clive Napier


PARROTS FEEDING IN GARDENS

With reference to G F Mees' article, *Parrots Feeding on the Seeds of Liquidambar* in the March 2004 edition of *WA Bird Notes*, I can report that, in addition to Australian Ringnecks, I also have Red-capped Parrots feeding in my large tree in Perth. They have been doing this for many years, usually starting in January.

Prior to this, the parrots have another source of food at my place. Some ten years ago a friend advised me to plant sunflowers in my garden—assuring me that they would be sure to attract Red-capped Parrots. I was somewhat sceptical, since my house is pretty much in the middle of suburbia and has no nearby native bushland. Nevertheless, I did plant a patch in a sunny place in my garden in late winter. I was unable to find a shop which sold seed packets of the large flowered variety at the time, but found what I needed as 'cocky' seed at a pet store. Sure enough, the 'Red-caps' came to dine on the seeds of the mature flower heads over a number of weeks in early summer and have returned every year since then. For the first few years they came very timidly, and only at dawn and dusk, but lately they come more often and at any time of the day.

Ringnecks visit occasionally, but it is the 'Red-caps' who come daily, usually one or two at a time, although I have seen three. The birds seem to turn up a little earlier each year to check on the progress of each new crop by taking a bite out of the odd flower, sometimes before any petals have opened.

Mavis Norgard



Mixed works from nature to
2 July
Paintings, prints and
photographs by Mike Bamford,
Kevn Griffiths, Lyn Jolley,
Stuart Miller, Peter Slater,
Chris Spiker, Martin
Thompson and Lynne Tinley

Flightless From 4 July to 3 September
Studies in watercolour and pencil by Mike
Bamford. The exhibition includes all plates
commissioned for the Oxford University Press
publication "Ratites and Tinamous"

Stuart and Jan Miller have established **Kingfisher
Gallery**. The gallery specialises in the
photographic and fine art inspired by the flora,
fauna and wilderness landscape of Australia and is
an extension of Stuart and Jan's interest in natural
history and conservation.

51 Colin Street, West Perth, Western Australia,
6005 Telephone: 08 9321 3685
Mob: 0408 511 723
Email: kingfishergallery@iinet.net.au
Website: www.kingfishergallery.com.au
Opening hours: Wednesday to Friday 1pm to
5pm Sunday 1pm to 4pm

BLACK-WINGED STILT FATALITIES

In February 1998, the Western Australia Wader Study Group began conducting mid summer wader surveys at Rottnest Island. It soon became apparent how valuable the Island is as a refuge to Banded Stilt (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*). Previous studies (Saunders & de Rebeira) had shown it to be a common visitor to the Island, particularly during the summer months. Peak numbers were recorded in March 1983 with a count of 3192 birds. Our studies indicate the population as increasing since 1984 with an average count over the seven-year period of 3607 birds per year. This includes the presence of only 20 birds during the February 2000 survey.

Although Banded Stilt usually reside at Rottnest during early summer, we have sometimes found the birds on the Island during our winter counts. The birds are commonly found in flocks, feeding on the brine shrimp living in the salt lakes. Government House Lake, Lake Herschell, Lake Bagdad and Lake Serpentine are the most favoured sites. The birds move between the lakes with fluctuating wind changes. These conditions often occur after dark, resulting in large-scale night-time movement of 1000 or more birds.

During the second survey it became obvious that Banded Stilt were being lost due to night-time collisions with the aerial cables running beside the causeway between

Government House Lake and Lake Herschell (Bird Notes No 90 June 1999). This problem was recognised at the same time by the Rottnest Island Authority's environment personnel, who initiated a study of the problem.

The findings revealed losses of a significant number of birds. Part of their report stated:

The power lines alongside the causeway have over the years resulted in many hundreds if not thousands, of bird deaths. The birds flying between the lakes often don't see the power lines in time and the resulting collision can mean serious injury or death.

Various solutions were put forward resulting in the installation of a number 'bird diverters'. These are flapping plastic devices clamped on the middle cable of the three phase line and spaced at one every eight metres. The majority of the diverters are red but the third one is white and luminous, therefore showing up at night.

Monitoring of bird deaths is part of the management plan. The results, showing a marked reduction in collisions since the diverters were installed, are seen in the table below. Birds Australia commends the Rottnest Island Authority for this solution and its implementation. There is no doubt many birds have been saved by this action.

Colin Davis

Rottnest causeway power line bird fatalities					
	Banded Stilt	Crested Tern	Silver Gull	Shelduck	Galah
January 2002	16	0	0	0	0
February	8	0	0	1	0
March	0	0	0	0	0
April	1	0	0	0	0
May	3	0	0	0	0
June	1	0	0	0	0
July	1	0	1	0	0
August	0	0	0	0	0
September	0	0	0	0	0
October	4	0	0	0	0
November	5	0	0	0	0
December	1	0	0	1	0
January 2003	6	1	1	0	0
February	2	3	0	0	0
March	0	0	0	0	0
April	0	0	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0	0
June	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	0	0	0	0
September	0	0	0	0	0
October	3	0	0	0	0
November	2	0	0	0	0
December	2	0	0	0	1
					08/02/04 Midsummer wader count 7517 Banded Stilt
January 2004	3	1	0	0	0
February					17/02/04 heavy rain fall at WA inland locations 19/02/04 only 150-200 Banded Stilt on Rottnest (BertCenat)

Table: Rottnest causeway power line bird fatalities.

HALTING THE TICKS

Bushland without kangaroo ticks is no good some informed sources tell us. True or false, probably true as they cause us quite a bit of discomfort at certain times of the year. My wife and I have yet to discover an even half decent spray or cream that keeps them at bay.

After years of coming off second best to these amazing little creatures that can spend months in sealed jars and still emerge as large as life, we happened upon a solution to the problem. For a couple of years we were excavating holes in the laterite soils of Julimar (Toodyay Shire). While we were resting, having a cup of tea, my wife Ginny, noticed minute reddish specks moving over my legs. They proved rather difficult to remove from amongst the hair. We had a roll of masking tape on the table. I tore a strip off and applied it to the insects. Off they came, along with the hair, and that was that!

During late spring of 2003, we thought it might be an idea to use masking tape around our ankles. The tape should be applied to socks or pants sticky side outwards. We found that for stationary pursuits such as birdwatching, hide work or having lunch in the bush, it is just about fool proof. Now we have no worries about our feet being in the leaf litter. Indeed, we even have competitions to see who catches the most ticks! Ginny holds the record with 14.

The double-sided tape may be superior, but is more expensive. If put tightly the single sided is just as effective. The tape may need to be changed now and again if one is walking through low undergrowth or along dusty trails. We have found that the tape is far less expensive than sprays or creams. We always keep a roll in our backpacks nowadays. The minute pepper ticks that are looking for a host whilst clinging to blackboy or dryandra for example require different tape placement depending on the height of the shrubs. One can stick tape across the shoulder and/or chest. This method is also very effective and stops the ticks from reaching the head. The upper parts are a bit more difficult to defend due to the nature of our clothing. The ticks we found only managed to move about 5-10 mm onto the tape. The larger ticks sometimes made it to the centre of the 25mm tape. Once on, they remain there all day or until the tape is removed.

Jay Barnett

SPINY-CHEEKED HONEYEATER AT HERDSMAN LAKE

On a cool but glorious early sunny autumn morning (8 March 2004) I arrived at the Floreat Waters section of Herdsman Lake at 0740. After 64 minutes I had seen 50 birds and was then attracted to an acacia tree that contained a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and another bird that the cuckoo-shrike appeared to be interested in.

I was able to approach within five metres of the other bird and was pleasantly surprised to find it was a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. I am familiar with this honeyeater

and immediately noted its distinctive pink gape and bill, tipped black. This honeyeater is usually associated with more inland and northerly habitats and this is the first time I have seen this honeyeater on the Swan Coastal Plain. It is also possibly a first for Herdsman Lake.

I had an excellent view of the bird for five minutes, during which it captured a spider from the foliage and was making a crude and poor attempt to produce a sound that could remotely be considered to resemble a song. This indicated it was a juvenile bird and from memory I also thought it lacked the bright yellow/buff throat and upper breast. However on checking the field guides back home, the juveniles evidently should also have the adult yellow/buff throat and upper breast. The juveniles are normally identified by having yellow cheeks and the adults have white cheeks.

As if to prove the bird was 'foreign', the cuckoo-shrike maintained its unusual interest in this newcomer and only departed a minute before the honeyeater eventually flew quickly out of the tree.

A total of 63 species was recorded in the two and a three quarter hours at the lake; that also included some time spent at the Maurice Hamer Park and Wildlife Centre sections. This is the highest number I have recorded at the lake in one visit. Using the formula based on detailed statistics obtained at North Lake over a 22-year period, I have estimated the Herdsman Lake total bird list would be in the vicinity of 190.

Wynton Maddeford

AN IBIS PREENING A TEAL?

On Friday 6 February I was in the observation hide at Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary and witnessed an unusual scene. On the eastern sandbank a Grey Teal was seated in a few centimetres of water. An Australian White Ibis stood over the Grey Teal and appeared to be preening it. I was perhaps, 70 metres away, and had been watching with binoculars for roughly 10 minutes as the teal moved its erect neck in different directions, as though inviting the ibis to continue. Black-fronted and Red-kneed Dotterel, along with Black-winged Stilt were walking bank and forth feeding, totally unconcerned with what was happening about half a metre from them.

There were no other Grey Teal in the immediate vicinity and after another ten minutes had elapsed the teal's head and neck started to flop up and down with more time being spent in the horizontal. It was at this point that I realised the teal was in serious trouble and not just having an hour at the beauty salon. I left the observation hide and made my way along the walk path in order to obtain a better vantage spot. I found one about 40 metres from the now dead bird. The ibis had vanished. I can only conclude that the unfortunate Grey Teal had been injured and that the ibis was taking maggots from its body.

Jay Barnett

ALBINO MAGPIE NEAR KOJONUP

Hilary and I were investigating patches of scrub in the vicinity of Boscabel about 25 km north-north-east of Kojonup on 14 December 2003. These areas are written up (area 6) in Birds Australia's *Birdwatching around Kojonup* notes as a Crested Shrike-tit location. Note that the sketch map therein is diagrammatic; better detail of the minor roads is shown on Map 31 of the StreetSmart *Travellers Atlas of Western Australia*.

We were driving southwards along Harrison Road just past the intersection of Roseneath Road when we saw a motley collection of birds—magpies, parrots, etc—by the roadside ahead of us. Included in this collection was a pure white bird which I initially assumed to be a domestic pigeon, possibly with other non-white individuals. When we got close enough to see that there were no pigeons at all, the identity of the white bird became a mystery. It wasn't a corella. With its heavy bill, it reminded me of pictures I had seen of the Yellow-billed Sheathbill, a South American sub-antarctic species! At last we got close enough for a decent look, and realised that it was an albino form of something. The sheathbill-like impression was due to the prominent dark-splotched pink bill. The eyes and legs were black.

The bird took off and flew towards a deserted homestead, with me following close behind. By this time we had realised that it was an Australian Magpie, *Gymnorhina tibicen*, possibly an immature bird. It behaved like a magpie, even though the other magpies had deserted it. It obligingly called for me, supporting the identification, and moved far enough into a burnt-out paddock that I could get the enclosed photograph unencumbered by fencing wire!

John Brooke



Albino Magpie, near Kojonup
Photo courtesy John Brooke

BIRDS OF THE PLUMRIDGE LAKES AREA

The remote Plumridge Lakes area is not often visited by birders, but a number of us were lucky enough to be able to make detailed observations there during a Desert Discovery project in September-October 2002.

Desert Discovery Inc is a non profit organisation that runs projects in remote areas every two years. People with expertise in natural history and some other relevant fields are invited in to study a broad area and produce a report for the public record. Other people wishing to share the experience may also attend. The 2002 project was held at

Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve and the following report details sightings associated with this project. Anyone interested in finding more about Desert Discovery should contact Ken Harris on (03) 9561 6863 or harrisv@netlink.com.au.

Bird studies during the Plumridge Lakes Project were conducted principally by Ken Harris, Keith Johnson and Sue Charles. They arrived at base camp within Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve (Lat 29° 37' 50" Long 125° 02' 46") on 23 September 2002. Fairly extensive surveying was conducted within a radius of 2 km of base camp. A side trip was conducted on 27 September as far as Lindsay Hill, 92 km north towards Lake Rason. The above group then left base camp on 29 September and travelled to Queen Victoria Spring via the direct easterly track and then south via Officer Basin PNC camp site. From Queen Victoria Spring they then travelled on to Laverton via Lake Minigwal. Keith and Ken then returned to base camp via Lake Rason on 5 October and remained there until 8 October when they departed easterly via Leech Lakes. The sightings recorded below cover all birds seen by these three from 23 September until 8 October except birds seen only within Laverton township area. Additional sightings have been added by other attendees at the project.

Prevailing Conditions

During a reconnaissance in May 2002 there was a little water and Gwynne Creek was flowing. However the appearance of the country during the actual project

indicated there had been little or no rain since. The whole of the area covered was exceptionally dry. No water was found although some damp salty spots were found around Gwynne Creek and the Lake system in the north of Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve. There were indications of a water source at Leech Lakes (presence of a small number of species needing water, eg Galah). Queen Victoria Spring was dry even where fairly recent digging had been done to a depth of over one metre.

Habitats

Habitats were varied and included —
extensive areas of mallee (various species),
extensive areas of mulga,
occasional rocky outcrops mainly to the north of base camp and west of Lake Rason.
mostly flat country with some dunes and
dry salt lakes.

Many areas contained small amounts of flowering mallee. However flowering of different species appeared to be either just beginning or just finishing and only a small number of sites were found with sufficient blossom to attract even moderate numbers of honeyeaters.

A small number of sites were encountered that had been recently burned and contained fresh herb type growth either in flower or seeding. Experience from an earlier project at the Cooper Hills raised hopes that these areas might contain large numbers of birds but they were in fact barren due apparently to lack of water.

Summary of Sightings

Overall, bird species and numbers were low principally due to the lack of water and therefore a lack of seed eaters. The fact that the breeding season was almost completed led to an absence of cuckoos. The modest degree of blossom probably led to fewer insects and therefore reduced numbers of insectivores. These reduced numbers led in turn to reduced numbers of raptors such as Spotted Harrier and Australian Hobby. Many birds that were expected were either not seen at all or were seen in very small numbers.

For example, there were no sightings of Little Button-quail, Inland Dotterel, Banded Lapwing, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Cockatiel, Budgerigar, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Southern Boobook, Rufous-crowned Emu-wren, Striated Grasswren, Rufous Fieldwren, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Zebra Finch or Rufous Songlark.

For a number of other species, there were very few sightings: Emu (2 sightings), Spotted Harrier (1), Bustard (2), Pallid Cuckoo (1), Black-eared Cuckoo (2), Australian Owlet-Nightjar (1), Spotted Nightjar (1), Splendid Fairy-wren (2), Variegated Fairy-wren (1), Redthroat (1), Slaty-backed Thornbill (1), Crimson Chat (1), Hooded Robin (3), Mistletoebird (3) and Brown Songlark (1).

Of the birds seen there were no exceptional sightings. Common birds were Yellow-throated Miner, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Ringneck, Weebill, Inland Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Striated Pardalote and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike.

Abundance of Yellow-throated Miners and Australian Ringnecks

During the survey period the numbers of both Yellow-throated Miners and Australian Ringnecks were a surprise to the observers. It had been assumed that water as part of the habitat was a strong preference for the former and an absolute necessity for the latter. In previous surveys done further north and east in the Great Victoria Desert the Yellow-throated Miner was less common and generally associated with a water source. The presence in numbers of both these species in an apparently dry area was put to three members of Birds Australia with specialist knowledge of them, ie, Jon Starks, Rhidian Harrington and Rohan Clark. The view on the **Yellow-throated Miner** was that it will drink water if available but being primarily

insectivorous, water is not essential to its survival. This led to consideration of other factors influencing the distribution and it was noted that further north and east their presence was often associated with eucalypt species. Eucalypt, especially mallee species, are common throughout most of the area surveyed within this project but become less common to the north and east within the Great Victoria Desert. It seems likely that vegetation type is the factor influencing distribution rather than the water.

All literature on the Australian Ringneck indicates it requires water for its survival. This was confirmed in discussions with the above mentioned. It was suggested that if there were sufficient large succulent fruits available this may supplant the need for water. Whereas there were numbers of Quandongs in fruit it was considered highly unlikely that these would provide moisture in sufficient quantities. It was suggested that these birds could travel in excess of 20 kilometres to water and perhaps there were still isolated rockholes or soaks supporting these birds. In the light of no other explanation this one must be accepted. However the following facts remain —

No sign of water was found throughout the project except for some dampish spots on the creek line to the north of the base camp and these did not constitute a supply for drinking.

Other birds requiring water were almost completely absent except at Leech Lakes 60 km south east of our base camp. No search was mounted but indications were that a water source was available north of the track.

The territory to the south and west of Plumridge Lakes appears almost devoid of rocky outcrops that could hold a long term water supply. Ground level rockholes that were examined, eg, Mulga Rockhole, appeared to have been dry for some time as had claypans and springs, eg, Queen Victoria Spring.

Australian Ringnecks were seen on every day (14) except the one on which the team rested at base camp. By comparison with other parrots, Mulga Parrots were seen on two days and only a single Budgerigar was seen (at Leech Lakes).

Impact of Camels on Bird Numbers and Species

A number of camels were seen and there were signs everywhere of their recent presence. Estimates of their population in the Great Victoria Desert alone range as high as 700 000. Obviously this large number of camels is causing available water to disappear at a much quicker rate than prior to their existence. This presumably reduces significantly the holding capacity of the land for bird numbers and limits breeding. The impact of camels was noticed in an earlier project and cannot be ignored at Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve, Queen Victoria Springs Nature Reserve and the whole of the surrounding country. The latest Australian Bird Atlas data shows a number of birds dropping in numbers. Many of these are seed eaters such as Emu, Bustard and Inland Dotterel. The latter is now rarely seen away from the Cooper Basin. It seems highly likely, a major contributing factor to the drop in

numbers of these birds at least in the western, arid part of their range is the camel.

Birds

Emu: A group of four seen between Mulga Rockhole and Lake Minigwal and a pair near Laverton.

Spotted Harrier: One bird seen near the lake system to the north of base camp.

Brown Goshawk: One bird seen near base camp and another just south of the reserve on the Cable Haul Rd.

Collared Sparrowhawk: One bird seen near Queen Victoria Spring.

Wedge-tailed Eagle: Not common. Seen once near base camp and occasionally on trips to the north or west. Seen on seven separate days.

Little Eagle: Not common. Single birds seen on four occasions.

Brown Falcon: Moderately common. Seen on most days by people doing trips from base camp and occasionally close to base camp.

Australian Hobby: Uncommon other than a nesting pair near base camp.

Peregrine Falcon: Seen on two occasions—once near the airstrip and once near base camp.

Nankeen Kestrel: Moderately common. Usually seen on trips out of base camp as for Brown Falcon.

Australian Bustard: Uncommon other than several sightings, presumably of the same group, of up to three birds on the airport track. Also a sighting of three birds 50 km north of Queen Victoria Spring Nature Reserve.

Galah: One sighting only at Leech Lakes.

Australian Ringneck: Common. Seen on most days in most habitats.

Blue Bonnet: One sighting 25 km east of the Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve boundary.

Mulga Parrot: Uncommon. Seen on three occasions outside the Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve, once to the north, once to the west and once near Leech Lakes.

Budgerigar: Uncommon. A single bird seen near Leech Lakes.

Bourke's Parrot: Uncommon. A small flock seen near Leech Lakes.

Pallid Cuckoo: Uncommon. A single bird heard at Queen Victoria Spring.

Black-eared Cuckoo: Uncommon. Seen occasionally on the track to the claypan south of base camp and seen once at Queen Victoria Spring.

Tawny Frogmouth: Heard and seen on several occasions at base camp and a pair flushed near Mulga Rockhole.

Spotted Nightjar: One bird only heard calling south of the Laverton Rd en route to Queen Victoria Spring. Some night driving was done and no birds seen.

Australian Owlet-Nightjar: Uncommon. Heard on two nights at base camp.

Red-backed Kingfisher: Uncommon. One bird seen in the same area on several occasions at base camp and two sightings between Laverton and base camp.

Rainbow Bee-eater: Migration noted to be occurring. Three birds observed 40 km north of Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve on 5 October whereas no birds were present at this site on 27 September. Later in the project also seen at base camp and one other sighting 100 km east of Laverton.

White-browed Treecreeper: Uncommon. Single bird seen on two occasions in casuarina along the track to the clay pan south of base camp. Several birds seen near Coggia Mine.

Splendid Fairy-wren: Uncommon. Seen north of base camp, at Queen Victoria Spring and 70km east of Laverton. Males in breeding plumage.

Variegated Fairy-wren: A party including coloured males seen near Toppin Hill west of Lake Rason.

White-winged Fairy-wren: Moderately common in preferred habitat. Sightings in typical dry salt lake habitat - near lake system in north of Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve, en route to Queen Victoria Spring, near Lake Minigwal, Lake Rason and Leech Lakes.

Striated Pardalote: Common around base camp and anywhere else there was mallee.

Red-browed Pardalote: Uncommon. One bird calling near base camp on 26 September and three other sightings—one at Queen Victoria Spring and two others just to the north.

Redthroat: One sighting only, 70 km east of Laverton.

Weebill: Very common. Seen wherever there was mallee.

Inland Thornbill: Common. Seen on all days throughout the project and wherever there was reasonable shrub growth.

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill: Common. Seen on all days and was usually present wherever there was mulga.

Slaty-backed Thornbill: Seen once just north of Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve Boundary in company with Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and Inland Thornbill.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill: Seen once in Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve towards northern border. Seen several times between Plumridge Lakes and

Lake Rason, at Queen Victoria Spring and from there en route to Laverton.

Southern Whiteface: Uncommon. Seen once west of Lake Rason.

Red Wattlebird: Moderately common. Seen most days and seemed to favour mallee habitat. Seen as far north as Lat 29° 02' 28", 80 km east of Laverton.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater: Moderately common. Seen most days and more often in mulga habitat.

Yellow-throated Miner: Very common - the most common bird. Seen in all habitats.

Singing Honeyeater: Surprisingly uncommon apart from a few birds along the stretch between Laverton and Lake Rason. Other than that seen once only within Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve near the lake system north of base camp and once to the north towards Lake Rason.

Grey-fronted Honeyeater: Uncommon. Seen regularly in one area near base camp. Occasional sightings between Laverton and Lake Rason.



Australian Bustard, seen at Arubiddy near Eyre.
Photo courtesy Karina Harris

Brown Honeyeater: Uncommon. In good numbers at Queen Victoria Spring and near Laverton but no other sightings.

White-fronted Honeyeater: Common but not in large numbers. Seen in most habitats in most areas.

Black Honeyeater: Uncommon. Seen at Streich Mound in Queen Victoria Spring and three sightings between Laverton and Lake Rason.

Pied Honeyeater: Uncommon. Two sightings within 100km east of Laverton.

Crimson Chat: Uncommon. Seen once between Laverton and Lake Rason in company with Masked Woodswallows (an association seen frequently before).

Jacky Winter: Uncommon. Occasional sightings near base camp and one sighting north of Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve. A nest with two eggs was found early in the project near base camp but the nest was later abandoned.

Red-capped Robin: Moderately common. Seen in a small number of surveys every day. Early in the project a pair were observed on several occasions feeding young in a nest near base camp. The nest was no longer active on 6 October.

Hooded Robin: Uncommon. Three sightings only - between Plumridge Lakes and Queen Victoria Spring, Mulga Rockhole (NE from Queen Victoria Spring) and west of Lake Rason.

White-browed Babbler: Uncommon. Seen at Queen Victoria Spring and just to the north of there. A small number of sightings between Laverton and Lake Rason and also seen near Leech Lakes.

Crested Bellbird: Reasonably common. Seen on most days, particularly in mulga.

Rufous Whistler: Moderately common throughout eucalypt and mulga habitats.

Grey Shrike-thrush: Moderately common. Seen often in association with Rufous Whistler but less common.

Willie Wagtail: Uncommon. Recorded once near base camp and occasionally between Laverton and Lake Rason.

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike: Common throughout the area in most habitats. A flock of 20+ seen moving steadily southwards on 30 September approximately 60 km north of Queen Victoria Spring. Presumably these birds were on migration.

Ground Cuckoo-shrike: Seen several times over two days *en route* from Queen Victoria Spring to Lake Minigwal.

Masked Woodswallow: Seen on one occasion only west of Lake Rason in association with Crimson Chats.

White-browed Woodswallow: A single bird seen near Toppin Hill west of Lake Rason. Possibly in company with Masked Woodswallows but unable to verify due to difficult conditions.

Black-faced Woodswallow: Occasional sightings. Less common than expected. Seen on 9 of 15 days including Base camp and Queen Victoria Spring.

Little Woodswallow: Seen at Mt Dennis approximately 70 km SE of Laverton.

Grey Butcherbird: Very common throughout the Project area in all habitats. Adults were observed feeding mobile young near base camp.

Pied Butcherbird: Very common in all habitats throughout the Project area. Slightly less common than Grey Butcherbird.

Australian Magpie: Seen on nine of 15 days. Seen once in the north of Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve, once on the airport track and occasionally *en route* between Queen Victoria Spring, Laverton and Lake Rason. Also seen just beyond eastern boundary of Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve. One flock of six seen and another of 12, the latter appearing to be all males.

Grey Currawong: Seen at Queen Victoria Spring then occasionally between there and Laverton.

Little Crow: Moderately common. Recorded on all but two days in most habitats. A flock of 60+ seen just north of Queen Victoria Spring.

Richard's Pipit: Occasional sightings throughout the area when suitable habitat found. Recorded on six of 15 days.

Mistletoebird: Observed on three occasions only—near base camp, about three kilometres north of the Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve boundary and at Queen Victoria Spring.

White-backed Swallow: Observed on two occasions, once north of the base camp and once east of Laverton.

Brown Songlark: Observed once about 10 km north of the Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve boundary.

Ken Harris



What's in a Name?



Readers of Bird Notes who leaf through these pages to read "What's In a Name" will be sadly disappointed as the June deadline came and went with out a word from the avian advocate Geronticus

Sarcastic suggestions for the scribe's silence have been irreverently bandied. Pre-migration migraine was mentioned as were the flutters, crop dust, feather fallout; another rude comment claimed duck pond dementia. One member with veterinary connections diagnosed broodiness as a definite possibility but ruled out an egg bound theory. The most

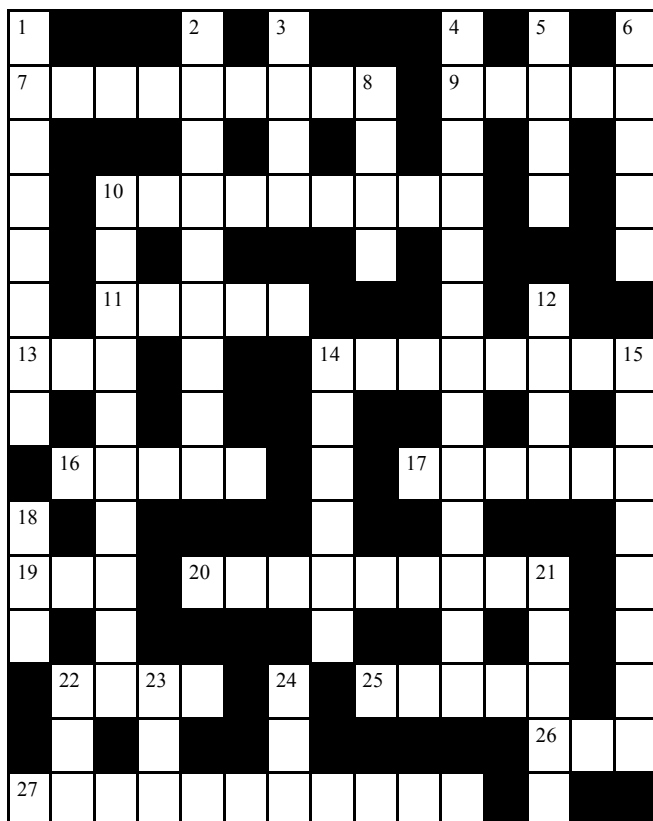
credible evidence comes from Mrs Geronticus who stated, "No he's not here. It's a male thing. He's been having trouble with his tripod. Flew off north foraging for fish, or was it the Eighty Mile Beach, bonding or banding, something beginning with B any way, what's in a name? I'm busy." Quoth she and hung up.

It seems, dear readers, "The bird is on the wing".

Geronticus



By Pam Agar



Clues Across

7. Those who watch.
9. Perching spot.
10. Outing.
11. May allow closer access to waders.
13. To employ.
14. Retrieval.
16. Width of view.
17. Caretaker of observatory.
19. Evasive response of young wader.
20. Nature of crakes.
22. Ridge containing nostrils of a bird.
25. Likely location to see a Red-capped Robin.
26. Not needed after lunch for a keen birder.
27. Grain eating.

Clues Down

1. Birding area on Peel Inlet.
2. An efficient, physical manner.
3. To perceive sound.
4. Movement from one site to another.
5. Even this may sustain waterbirds.
6. Small wader.
8. A swallow does this to drink.
10. Helps to identify birds more quickly.
12. Do this to gain more knowledge.
14. To note details.
15. Good lake for waterbirds and waders.
18. Possible state of lakes in summer.
21. An occasion.
22. Means of transport.
23. Moved at a fast pace.
24. No. of hectares in smallest Atlas survey site.



On Roebuck Bay
Shorebird Capital of Australia.

Birds of the Broome Region

**September 13 – 17th &
October 11 – 15th 2004**

Discover the best birding areas in the Broome region. Welcome the waders returning from the northern breeding grounds. Over 300 species recorded locally.

\$780 fully inclusive

Ph: 08 9193 5600 or
Email: bbo@birdsaustralia.com.au



Funny shape but we manage!
Cartoon by Penny Towells



Bunbury Beach Winter Survey

The Hooded Plover Sub-committee has received anecdotal information that Hooded Plover frequent the Bunbury beaches over winter.

These unconfirmed sightings relate to the beach areas near the Surf Life Saving Club

We are keen to confirm this information and would like anyone visiting the Bunbury beaches the coming winter to keep a look out for Hooded Plover.

They have been seen at the waterline but most often on the seaward slopes of the dunes.

It is possible that Hooded Plover trans-locate to coastal beaches over the winter months when rising water levels make lakes in Yalgorup National Park unsuitable.

Remember that some Hooded Plover from Yalgorup are colour banded and to check their legs.

Winter observations from all beaches from Yalgorup to Busselton are in this case of interest.

Please forward any sightings to the Hooded Plover sub-committee at Perry House.

Marcus Singor

SUPPORTING EYRE OBSERVATORY

A FUND RAISING EVENT is being planned for the Eyre Observatory on **Sunday 19 September 2004**.

It will be held at the Castledare Miniature Railway at the Canning River end of Bungaree Road in Wilson. The theme will be based on a grandparent/grandchild walk and train ride. There is a picnic area and walks by the river so you can plan a day out with the grandchildren or children (we are not all grandparents). Other activities will be included during our planning operation and details will be in the next *WA Bird Notes*.

SO PLEASE **MARK THE DATE ON YOUR CALENDARS** (Sunday 19 September).
COME OUT AND SUPPORT EYRE.

Elsa Dabbs
Public Relations Sub-Committee

Courses at Eyre Bird Observatory



The next few months offer interesting opportunities at Eyre:

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

This is the first week of the school holidays. Take advantage of the friendly, family atmosphere to encounter Eyre's birds with Ken and Karina on hand for assistance. The cool winter mornings quickly give way to pleasant conditions to observe birds in this unspoiled environment.

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

Mike is an experienced biologist who can guide you to a first-hand experience with Eyre's small (and some large) mammals, its reptiles and of course its many species of birds. For the last couple of years the Western Pygmy Possum has been an easily-found attraction.

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

Special rates are available to working parties for these important re-vegetation projects. Please contact the BAWA office for the current opportunities.

October 3 – 9: Bird Banding
Rod Smith

Banding at Eyre has produced a remarkable set of data, some of which has provided significant guidance for the understanding of movement, and of differentiation in sex and ageing indicators.

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

Escape to Eyre and become involved in a study of the gradation of bird species between the Eyre Highway and the Nullarbor coast. This long-term study is conducted by Peter Sandilands.

November 7 – 13: Watercolours at Eyre
Elizabeth Rippey

Elizabeth is a talented watercolour artist with an interest in botany and natural history. During this course a few hours each day will be devoted to drawing, and painting in watercolour.

Nov 28 – Dec 4: Field Techniques in Bird Studies
Stephen Davies

Stephen is an ornithologist with many years' experience in matters pertaining to birds, and has contributed to Eyre's development since its beginning. You will be assisted with bird identification skills and take part in on-going census and recording procedures.

AUSTRALASIAN WADER STUDIES GROUP

ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIA WADER AND TERN EXPEDITION 2005

12th February to 6th March 2005

The objectives of this expedition include a fieldwork program which will principally consist of regular banding and appropriate counting of waders and terns at two locations (Broome and 80-Mile Beach).

If you are interested in participating please contact one of the leaders as soon as possible. A team of 22-25 experienced people is considered the optimum for this expedition. Previous wader banding or expedition experience is not essential.

Joint leaders

Clive Minton <minton@ozemail.com.au>,
Rosalind Jessop <rjessop@penguins.org.au>,
Pete Collins <moonbird@waterfront.net.au>,
Humphrey Sitters <hsitters@aol.com>,
Chris Hassell <turnstone@wn.com.au>.

175th ANNIVERSARY OF WA COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME

The Public Relations Sub-committee has been granted money from the above grants scheme to conduct a competition among Govt schools in WA "For the study of and participation in restoration and maintenance of a habitat, wetland, reserve or bush remnant in the vicinity of the school."

Because of the lateness of the proposal's acceptance we will find it difficult to cover the participating schools in the time allotted. We need some volunteers to come with us into schools to help assess their project. We do not make the final assessment, that will be done by qualified judges. If you believe you can help please contact Brice Wells or Elsa Dabbs as soon as possible.

Brice Wells

Chairman, Public Relations Sub-committee

DRUMMOND SYMPOSIUM Toodyay Naturalists Club

To celebrate the work of James Drummond, first Government Botanist in Western Australia.

To be held at the Memorial Hall, Toodyay, Friday
27 August 2004, excursion Saturday 28 August
2004

For further details, contact Carole Elliott
9334 0447 (w) 9451 9441 (h)

TESS KLOOT COLLECTION

In October 2003 the State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000, accepted my extensive collection. This consists of ornithological and biographical files (567), newspaper cuttings (164) and an album containing photographs of people who have contributed to Australia's natural history (ca. 145). A separate component holds considerable biographical and pictorial material on Tom Iredale and his wife Lilian Medland.

The entire collection is housed in a series of archive boxes. An alphabetical catalogue accompanies the material.

At the suggestion of Mr Jock Murphy, Manuscripts Librarian, it stands as the TESS KLOOT COLLECTION.

Anyone seeking information covered by this collection is advised to contact the State Library. The reference number is PA 03/107.

Any information used for publication must appear with acknowledgment.

Tess Kloot

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 February to 30 April 2004. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

A Anderton, M Beaton, P & F Carney, F I Carty, P Curry, B J Dawson, C Dunster, R J Edwards, J Fisher, S Ford, D Gagliardi, ME & R Geary, B & R Haynes, J Henderson, K Jedla, P La Brooy, G Lourvanij, M McCall, S McMillen, D Moon, E D Pigott, J E Purvis, D Stanaway, J D Steggall, D Sullivan, J Wishart, N G Wooller



ALBANY BIRD GROUP

February Outing, Wilson Inlet

As in previous years, the group volunteered to take part in the annual summer wader count. Compared to the windy and drizzly days the south coast experienced throughout much of January, the weather conditions were ideal. With water levels fairly high, the number of waders was correspondingly low. Just over 2 000 shorebirds were counted with the largest number of birds being found on Lake Nenamup, a wetland connected to the eastern part of Wilson Inlet.

The number of Red-necked Stint in particular was unusually low with only 17 birds found on Morley Beach and a further 390 at Lake Nenamup. Yet, last year Wilson Inlet hosted more than 3400 stints, exceeding the 1% level of their world population. At Albany's Oyster Harbour on the other hand, a higher than usual number of stints has been recorded this season.

The sightings of a lone Wood Sandpiper and a single Lesser Sand Plover were highlights. The two Black-tailed Godwits we had seen in January, however, proved elusive. A total of 13 wader species were observed. Other waterbird species seen included a large number of Black Swan, several Great Crested Grebe, Chestnut Teal, Australasian Shoveler as well as Whiskered and Fairy Tern.

A Red-capped Plover displaying the broken wing act alerted us to the presence of a runner; a further three juveniles were discovered in the course of the morning.

To top things off, a rare form of a banksia was discovered. Not a bad day!

Anne Bondin

March Outing, Narrikup

Twenty of us met at Narrikup on 9 March—a fine but dull day. We hoped to go to Lake Eyrie, on Spencer Road, which we have visited most years and had very rewarding sightings. Unfortunately the farm has been sold and the new owners were not happy about us walking through their property and around the lake so we gave it a miss.

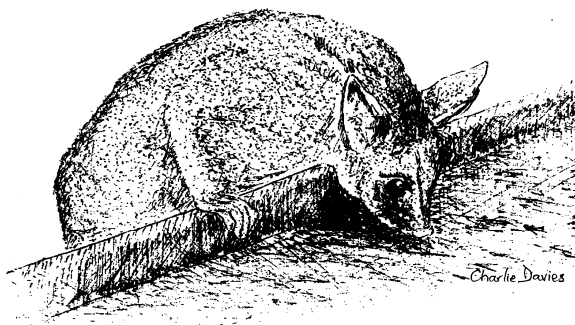
As a result we proceeded along Spencer Road, where a flooded paddock revealed quite a good number of waterbirds, including a Black-fronted Dotterel and a number of Australasian Shoveler.

At the junction of Healy and Pass Roads we saw a few birds, before continuing down Pass Road to the Hay River crossing. Here we had quite a long walk and saw a good number of bush birds. Some people were lucky enough to see a Painted Button-quail.

After lunch we went to the Hay River mouth, where we saw rafts of avocets and many other waterbirds. We all had a beautiful view of an Osprey who sat in a tree across the river watching us.

The final count was 60 species.

Liz Davies



Ring-tailed Possum seen at the Rotary camp, Eden, near Bunbury, during the Australia Day campout.

Drawing by Charlie Davies



WARDENS: EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY



The Management Committee of Eyre Bird Observatory is seeking a couple to work as Wardens at Eyre, commencing early in October 2004.

Set in the mallee woodlands of Nuytsland Nature Reserve on the Nullarbor coast, south of Cocklebidy and 500 km east of Norseman WA, the observatory has a beautiful natural setting close to the coastal dunes. Wardens must be able to cater for guests, maintain vehicles and a small solar power plant and promote the positive spirit of Eyre. The work is hard at times and the financial benefits low, but a couple who can share tasks equitably will find this a rewarding adventure.

Please contact Rod Smith (08 9447 3804); email <rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au>, and leave your phone number and email address.



Excursion Reports



GARVEY PARK, ASCOT, 13 November 2003

After the heat-wave of the previous few days, it was a pleasure for seven of us, including two new members, to be birding in pleasant temperatures of low 20's and cool, gentle breezes.

Before most of the party arrived, two 'early birds' enjoyed an overhead altercation between a Collared Sparrow-hawk and a Little Corella in which, initially, the Sparrow-hawk was the aggressor. The tables suddenly turned however, and the corella attacked the Sparrow-hawk, which then got the message and flew away.

With our leader Jan Rogers, we first walked downstream noting several species of waterbird along the river including a Great Egret in breeding plumage, and several bush bird species in the adjacent riverine woodland, including a Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

We then headed upriver, where there are several isolated pools surrounded by riverine woodland. On one of the pools was a nesting pair of Australasian Grebe which may have had eggs, as an Australian Raven was showing considerable interest in the nest. This was further suggested when the parent moved away, as it placed litter over the nest possibly to conceal eggs. To ensure we did not disturb the nest, we did not go closer to see if eggs were present.

Other breeding observations were of Magpie Lark and Yellow-rumped Thornbill, both sitting on nests. Again, it was not determined whether or not eggs were present.

Our new members also enjoyed good views of Rufous Whistler and Sacred Kingfisher, in both cases while the birds were calling, providing an opportunity for our newcomers to learn to recognise the calls. Striated Pardalote and several other species were also calling.

Many thanks, Jan, for leading us on an enjoyable excursion.

Jennifer Muir

FLOREAT WATERS, HERDSMAN'S LAKE RESERVE, 15 February 2004

Nineteen birdwatchers beat the heat with an early morning start to our walk. Over 20 species were seen from the car park as we gathered and also welcomed some English visitors—a total of 54 bird species for the day.

Nankeen Night Herons were seen coming back to roosting trees. Several Yellow-billed Spoonbills were perching precariously in treetops in the strong breeze. They were joined by Australian White Ibis and the occasional Straw-necked Ibis. Several raptors were seen but one remained a 'species' as it was too high for positive identification. Only

a few Rainbow Bee-eaters were around and their vacant nesting holes were visible at the top of the sand hill. Three White-winged Trillers were seen—probably a male in eclipse and females, as they were all brown birds. No crakes or rails, except for swampheens and moorheens.

There were a few muddy areas present, but many commented on the high water levels—possibly related to earthmoving and building activities in the area. Despite this, Red-capped Plovers and Black-fronted Dotterels are still present, along with eight duck species.

Claire Gerrish

CHEYNE BEACH CAMPOUT, 28 February – 1 March

It was a beautiful weekend when around 20 seasoned birders gathered on Friday evening at the Cheyne Beach Caravan Park. The aim of the weekend was to look for the Noisy Scrub-bird, the Western Bristlebird and the Western Whipbird. The Park itself was full of birds, obviously used to people, from the groups of Brown Quail to the White-browed Scrubwren and Red-eared Firetail walking almost underfoot. Many other birds were seen, including 10 species of honeyeater and 10 raptors.

Serious birding began the next morning with a walk towards the beach, where the Noisy Scrub-bird has been heard regularly, but this weekend it was unaccountably quiet. An Osprey and the ubiquitous New Holland Honeyeater were seen, as well as White-breasted Robin and Silvereye. In the afternoon, there was a drive to Waychinicup with a walk up the river through picturesque scenery and with several death-defying leaps from boulder to boulder.

On Sunday some of the group explored the areas up the hill and around the park, hearing but not seeing the Western Whipbird, but more raptors, honeyeaters and Southern Emu-wren. The Red-winged Fairy-wren was seen in splendid colour, and constantly overhead about 600 Carnaby's Cockatoos, apparently roosting nearby.

A small group walked about 6 kilometres up a very sandy track through the heath leading to a beach area, hard going, but not as hair-raising as driving down the same path later in the 4WDs. Sue Abbotts showed amazing prowess in negotiating the deep sand in her new car, only getting bogged once when she was hauled out by other members and causing a minor traffic jam on the track. From the cliffs we could see a Yellow-nosed Albatross, but not much else. Later in the day, we checked out some small lakes which gave us our first good numbers of water birds—Pink-eared Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, and others.

However the highlight, after much patient watching, was seeing not one but two Western Bristlebirds on a track near the Caravan Park. Celebrations were therefore in order as this brought Margery's species total to 600. Later, we added the Purple-gaped Honeyeater to our list of 89 species for the weekend.

Many thanks to Sue Abbotts for a great weekend.

Liz Walker

BIBRA LAKE, 29 February

As the temperature was forecast to reach 38°C the 18 attendees all agreed we were glad to have a relatively early 0730 start. Evidently due to the large size of the lake previous walks had not attempted a complete circumnavigation so with bottles full of water, broad brimmed hats and sunblock we commenced our walk. Prior to commencing our walk however we were delighted to see about 150 Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos flying across the lake to the SW.

The lake, although beginning to show some wide exposed muddy margins, still had a good covering of water and this provided an ideal habitat for about eighty Red-necked Avocets and ten Yellow-billed Spoonbills. Along the eastern side sightings were made of a single and then two Chestnut-breasted Mannikins near a thick Typha stand.

Things were hotting up weather wise and bird wise when we arrived at the boardwalk and hide as a Little Egret was observed dashing and darting around in characteristic fashion. Two waders were seen, a Common Greenshank and another similar looking wader. However the second bird appeared slightly slimmer, had a shorter and thinner bill with no upturn, and when it flew was silent. The general consensus of opinion was that it was a Marsh Sandpiper.

We arrived back at our start point much later than anticipated at 1100, but due to the birds seen it did not seem as if we had been birding and walking for all this

time. The final count was 59 species, which is a typical number for this Lake at this time of the year.

Wynton Maddeford

WOODMAN POINT, 8 March

What a magical day it was! March 8th dawned, bright and perfect. Twenty-seven birders set out on the shore line towards Wapet Groyne near Jervoise Bay Sailing Club. We saw many gulls, cormorants, etc, as expected, but also, tiny Fairy Terns nestled into the drying kelp and were made to look even smaller by the huge scarlet-billed Caspian Terns sharing their spot. Many immature Caspian Terns sat about with 'non painted' beaks.

We saw Ruddy Turnstones, their colouring also brilliant and the gentler hued Grey Tattlers, while Red-necked Stints were abundant.

An acrobatic display by Arctic Jaegers kept us all fixed on the sky at the end of the groyne. One bird would pick out a gull and harass it enough to obtain from the full crop a 'free flight fast food' package.

Everyone enjoyed a 'cuppa' together and the final count was around 32 species. Thanks, Les Harris, for a great morning's magic birding.

Penny Towells

ERIC SINGLETON BIRD SANCTUARY, BAYSWATER, 13 March

Fourteen birdos turned up on a nice and sunny morning to walk around this bird sanctuary.

Highlights of the walk were a Black-shouldered Kite and a kestrel chasing one another, good sightings of a Buff-banded Rail, a Spotless Crake (thanks to David's telescope), an immature Brown Goshawk and some duck species.

The herons and ibis were well represented in species but were low in numbers.

Unfortunately, the water level was still too high for this time of the year, therefore there was only one species of wader, the Black-winged Stilt.

In the swamp next to the sanctuary we saw four Nankeen Night Herons indicating that the small colony of these birds still exists here.

In all, we recorded 49 species of birds.

That anything can happen with birdwatching was shown again on this occasion: during the 'roll call' two 'new' birds—a White-winged Triller and a Mistletoebird—showed themselves. These two birds obviously wanted to make sure they were included in the bird count.

Hank van Wees



Birders at work, Hopetoun, April 2004, Fitzgerald National Park

Photo courtesy Penny Towells

GARVEY PARK, 18 March

Visitors from Malaysia, Canada and England plus two local prospective members were welcomed by 12 regular members on this mid-week walk.

We had a rather quiet walk, seeing 43 species but not a single raptor. The long, dry spell has had an effect with many commonly seen species absent. The migrants had all gone. The highlights were a pair of Mistletoebirds and two Buff-banded Rails.

Still, it was an enjoyable walk and quite interesting for our overseas friends.

Tom Delaney

Eighteen people attended the walk, dampened slightly by a trace of rain. Highlights were a flock of Black-winged Stilts which put on some good aerial displays, an unidentified flock of small waders providing a discussion point for members and a single Little Egret. Three large raptors seen from a distance were not identified. Yellow-billed Spoonbills were the most common of the waterbirds. A flock of 12 were seen feeding at the edge of the lake some distance away.

Tom Delaney

YANGEBUP LAKE, 21 March

Once again very veteran leader Clive Napier produced the goods (or should I say birds).

Thirty enthusiastic observers between them saw 57 species. And it wasn't only quantity but also quality. We had some visitors from far away Siberia, Red-necked Stint. One had managed to get itself netted somewhere in the south-west and was prancing around with an orange and a yellow band around one of its legs (the height of fashion). We also had some Rainbow Bee-eaters that had possibly flown in from Indonesia or thereabouts and were now thinking about their long journey back.

Undoubtedly though the highlight of the walk was a Spotless Crake skulking in the shadows of some reeds and causing a great deal of jostling, craning (no pun) and crouching amongst the assembled watchers anxious for a glimpse.

Good views of some White-fronted Chats and a Little Eagle being harassed by small fry added to the day's enjoyment. I was left in no doubt as to what the non-birdwatching fraternity was missing out on.



Weebill nest, Holleton campout,
Easter 2004

Drawing by Pam Agar

Ian Rudd

LAKE JOONDALUP, 27 March

Species count well down! Considered by many to be Perth's best birding spot (by the number of species seen), Lake Joondalup was well down on previous years. Two years' ago we saw 69 species, today only 46. This compares badly with Lake Yangebup where 56 species were recorded the previous Sunday.

Water levels were well down and possibly too polluted to provide food for several commonly seen duck species and Great Crested Grebes. This is the first time I have not recorded the grebes on this Lake.

JARRAHDALE, GOORALONG BROOK, 4 April

We met at the foot of Serpentine Falls on a fine warm day and left some of the cars at the park, then proceeding to the top of Gooralong Brook in Jarrahdale, 20 minutes away.

After the driest summer on record even the creek had dried up to a couple of pools. Initially we could hear Red-tailed and White-tailed Black-Cockatoos as usual in this area and after 30 minutes started seeing the bushbirds particularly the Red-eared Firetail, seen on five occasions through the day allowing everyone excellent views. White-breasted Robin, Scarlet Robin, Australian Ringneck, Red-capped Parrot and Western Rosella were also present. At the small weir we came across a tiny pool of water and many birds were coming down to drink including Red-winged Fairy-wren, White-browed

Scrubwren, Western Gerygone, Western Thornbill, Inland Thornbill, Silvereye, Western Spinebill, White-naped and Brown Honeyeater much to the delight of all but particularly to our two English visitors.

Gooralong Brook flows through the Serpentine National Park and the track, moderately rough in part, follows it to the junction of the Serpentine River. We crossed the Serpentine River over a new little bridge disturbing a White-faced Heron, Little Pied Cormorant, Black Duck and Yellow-rumped Thornbill. Judy Mackinnon showed us the restored Spencers Cottage, built in the 1850s and continuously occupied until the 1950s. We then followed the Serpentine River down to the base of the falls. A late lunch in the Jarrahdale camping area was interrupted by a Brown Goshawk harassing an Australian Magpie. 40 species were seen.

Most of us then went onto Webbs Lease which also had a little water in pools but few birds. Many thanks to Judy for her local knowledge and expertise.

Sue Abbotts

HOLLETON CAMPOUT, EASTER 2004

An old mining area approximately 80 km ENE of Narembeen was selected as an alternative site for the Easter campout. The original townsite provided ample space for the group of 24 to camp comfortably and the stands of York Gum, Salmon Gum and Gimlet surrounding the area provided some good birding. Several other areas within the timber reserve were also visited as well as sand-plain heath and Mt Hampton Nature Reserve, a granite outcrop roughly 40 km further north.

Rain just prior to the weekend meant a couple of boggy patches and threatening storms sent us scurrying back to camp earlier than planned one afternoon. However the weather held and a weekend total of 68 was considered very respectable. The count for the Holleton Block alone was 58.

Probably the most impressive sighting for everyone was the active Malleefowl mound very close to the campsite. When we arrived the mound had been built up but showed no signs of recent work. However on a subsequent visit the top section was opened up and later the mound was lowered considerably and opened out. Some were lucky enough to see two birds working on the mound together and others reported a third bird in the vicinity.

Among the other interesting sightings were Western Yellow Robin and Southern Scrub-robin close to camp, Redthroat, Painted Button-quail (not often recorded in the area) and excellent views of Shy Heathwren in an impressive area of mature gimlet. Eleven different species of honeyeater were also recorded.

Weebills were particularly common in the timbered areas and a nest with young was recorded not far from camp. A moderately large dam provided two more species including a pair of Australasian Grebe with young.

Thanks, Cheryl and Martin, for a very well-planned and well-organised campout.

Pam Agar

HOPETOUN CAMPOUT, EASTER 2004

A marvellous birding weekend is recalled as we're travelling home from Hopetoun.

It was great—30 people, and enthusiasm abounded. A good sense of camaraderie prevailed with serious birding and a lot of fun.

We went to Kulin Nature Reserve, the Hammersley Inlet and Fitzgerald National Park. We covered varied terrains, enjoying marvellous views with the Southern Ocean as a backdrop. Botanists were rapt, especially in the Fitzgerald where amazing shapes and colours were the foreground for hilly contours.

We saw 110 species of bird and give a big thank you to Clive and Wendy leading us so well, having battled flu bugs recently. What a fine Easter!

Jeff and Penny Towells

CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK, 15 April

Nineteen people turned up for a leisurely amble along the Canning River from Kent Street Weir upstream to Greenfield Street Footbridge and return. A few die-hards visited Wilson Park Lake after morning tea.

Forty-three species were seen on the main walk and Wilson Park Lake an extra five species. Although nothing out of the ordinary was seen everybody enjoyed the outing. Thanks to George Agar for leading this walk.

Pam Agar

BOLD PARK, 18 April

A group of 34, roughly half 'old hands' and half 'new birders', enjoyed a leisurely walk despite the heavily overcast conditions. A tally of 32 species was satisfying, with the highlights being Tawny-crowned Honeyeater (not often recorded here) and, thanks to information from two runners, great views of a Southern Boobook and two Tawny Frogmouths close to the path.

Thanks, Neil, for ably leading this walk.

Pam Agar

For Sale!

Prices as below or by negotiation

1. BUSHNELL 45° "SPACEMASTER" TELESCOPE with 60 mm objective lens and both 20X-45X Zoom and 25X fixed eyepieces \$200

2. SLIK "GAZELLE" 95D lightweight tripod to suit the above. Will sell separately \$20

3. I also have a manual Pentax SV 35 mm SLR camera with adaptor to fit the telescope. This is an old camera, but with first class optics not seen in more modern cameras. There is also a 135 mm Takumar (Asahi) telephoto lens and extension tube set to fit the camera By negotiation

4. LEICA P255IR SLIDE PROJECTOR. German-made with Hektor- P2 1:2.8/85 lens and Universal magazine. Suitable for large screen but with manual operation only \$60

Please contact John Brooke on (08) 9386 2718



Observatory Reports



BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY



Migration watch is a fabulous time at the Broome Bird Observatory. The numbers of birds on Roebuck Bay are at their greatest in March and April, and they have their breeding plumage on and look stunningly beautiful. This year, over 18 000 birds were seen departing Roebuck Bay on their northward migration (Broome is about the only place in Australia where you can actually witness this phenomenon). During the migration period it is not unusual to find flocks of the less common species, for example Broad-billed Flycatcher, Lesser Sand Plover, and one stunning flock of 182 Asian Dowitcher, nearly all in breeding plumage.

Whilst the focus may be on the Bay, it is not quiet out on the plains. After a good wet season, the Port Hedland Highway where it crosses Roebuck Plains is a massive maternity ward with birds gathering from miles around to take advantage of the freshwater wetlands. Black-wing Stilt and Whiskered Tern are the most common species breeding (thousands of each), both Australasian Grebe and Hoary-headed Grebe abound, Magpie-Geese are raising young as are both Whistling Duck species and several other duck species. Raptors patrol the area (12 species is a usual count), large flocks of ibis appear briefly before disappearing into the long grasslands, crakes and rails meld into the verges and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper gather in flocks in anticipation of migrating. But perhaps the most spectacular of all is the several hundred White-winged Black Terns in full breeding plumage, roosting on muddy patches or circling overhead when disturbed.

Much of this good birding can be attributed to Cyclone Fay, coming through in March and dumping lots of water. The associated strong winds and weather saw a Broome 'twitch' of three people out in the cold (yes, cold), wind and rain looking for House Swift, a Pomarine Skua off the Port, Bridled Tern and Common Noddy around the coast and a first Broome record of a Greater Frigatebird. Lesser Frigatebird were everywhere and were even seen flying over the BBO itself. There's nothing like a bit of a blow to create some excitement.

There's no doubt that Broome is one of the top locations for birding in Australia—regardless of the time of year or the weather. And of course, the BBO is the top spot in Broome.

Joy Tansey, Warden

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY



This quarter started slowly with only a few sightings of rarities, 20 Common Sandpiper on Kanidal Beach, a small group of Grey Teal, a Western Yellow Robin juvenile near the telegraph station, a Little Crow, but nothing to get excited about. The birding might have been slow but who cares, the weather was brilliant, and the visitors were better.

On our weekly bird count along Kanidal Beach we were aware that winter was coming with the Pied Oystercatchers and Red-capped Plovers fully fledged and the Caspian Terns coming out of breeding plumage.

With overnight temperatures dropping to single digits the bird baths are being less frequented by Major Mitchell's Cockatoos and some of the honeyeaters but there are still enough birds to keep the visitors happy. Also conspicuous by their absence are the Rainbow Bee-eaters with no sightings since 14 March. On the other hand we recently had the year's first sighting of a Grey Wagtail, so you lose some and you gain some.

Early in March we ran our *Birding for Beginners* course which was very successful, with every participant twitching over 30 new species. The course ran for a week and what a week it was. One of the days was dedicated to finding Malleefowl mounds. Seven or eight mounds were visited and the last one was found to be very recently active, with fresh scratching that hadn't been flattened by the rain two days before.

The next day we visited Arubiddy Station to look for Inland Dotterel and/or Blue Bonnet Parrot. Driving along one of the roads on Arubiddy someone asked, "What is that bird way over there sitting on that dead stick?" We stopped and set up the spotting scope and low and behold it was a Nullarbor Quail-thrush. Wow! Seeing it through the spotting scope was a lot easier than getting near enough to take a photograph.

Other good sightings on the course were Chestnut Quail-thrush and Bustard.

A Western Yellow Robin was seen when picking up two visitors and we stopped to look at two Chestnut Quail-thrushes that ran across the road.

Days are getting shorter and the mallee is flowering. The average daily count of Red Wattlebird, raucously making the most of the mallee flowers, is around 150. Log fires are beginning to be lit in the evenings as we look forward to our next quarter at Eyre Bird Observatory.

Ken Harris, Warden



Coming Events



Important note re campouts

Members anticipating attending campouts must notify the BA Office (9383 7749) of the number in their party and when they will arrive. With this information we will be able to make sure the group will be together and when to expect people.

New Members

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

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 Woodman Point View Road. Turn off Cockburn Road,

south of the caravan park, along O'Kane Court, turning left into Jervoise Bay Cove Road, then right along Woodman Point View Road 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 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

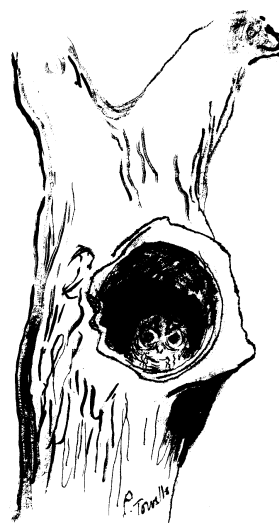
Saturday 19 June: Karnup and Baldvis Nature Reserves

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.



Owlet-Nightjar on dead Yate stump,
Hopetoun campout, April 2004
Drawing by Penny Towells

Returning back along Baldivis Road towards Perth, about 8 km along we can visit Baldivis 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

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, Hillarys Boat Harbour

Full-day

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.

Sunday 4 July: Yanchep National Park, Wanneroo Full-day walk

Meet at the Boomerang Gorge Picnic area inside the Park, at 9:00 am. At the entrance gate, say you are with Birds Australia and there should be no charge. Also, check for directions to the meeting place. We will walk into an area east of Wanneroo Rd, following the Yanchep Rose Trail through Ridges Bushland, which includes woodland, heath, open forest and mallee. There are views of the coast, and many significant flora and orchid species. Birds recorded in the area are the Southern Emu-wren, three species of thornbill, Golden Whistler, Scarlet Robin, several species of honeyeater, and Grey Shrike-thrush. The walk will take

about two to three hours, and we will return to the Park for lunch.

Leader: Rod Smith

Saturday 10 July: Shenton Park Bushland, Nedlands Morning Walk

Meet at 8:30 am at the entrance to the bushland off Lemnos Street (turn off Selby St), directly opposite the Cat Haven. Park on the grassed area of the kerb, outside the wall of the nature reserve. There should be a good array of bushbirds, including Variegated Fairy-wrens, in this little-surveyed reserve. Walking is on sealed paths.

Leader: Robert Davis

Thursday 15th July: Blue Gum Lake, Brentwood Mid-week Morning Walk

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park behind the Scout Hall in Rountree Rd, Brentwood. We will walk around Blue Gum Lake for about two hours. There are plenty of bushbirds, which have included both wattlebirds, Silvereye, Red-capped Parrot and Western Gerygone, and if there is water in the lake, a variety of waterbirds. The Southern Boobook has also occasionally been seen here.

Leader: Valerie Hemsley

Sunday 18 July: Kings Park, Subiaco Morning Walk

Meet at 8:00 am at May Drive between Saw and Frazer Avenue, inside King's Park. Some of the tracks may be sandy, so wear appropriate footwear. We will look in some of the areas where the Variegated Fairy-wrens are sometimes seen, and there should be plenty of honeyeaters if the Banksia trees are flowering. It is usually a good area for bushbirds.

Leader: Jennifer Wilcox

Saturday, 24 July: North Mole, Fremantle Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am at the end of North Mole, near the lighthouse. North Mole has recently been re-opened after damage from last winter's storms. We will look for seabirds, and may go on to look at the birds at Woodman Point. Bring telescopes if you have them.

Leader: Les Harris

Monday 27 July: State Tennis Centre, Burswood Meeting, 7:30 pm

Jiri Lochman, a well-known wildlife photographer based in Perth, will show slides of Australian birds.

Saturday, 31 July: The Spectacles, Kwinana Half-day Walk

Meet in the main car park on McLaughlan Rd at 8:30 am.

To get there, drive along the Kwinana Freeway to Anketell Road, about 30 km south of Perth. Turn right here, and drive along for about 2 km then turn left into McLaughlan Rd. Over 100 species have been seen here.

Leader: Mike Bamford

Sunday, 1 August: Jandakot Regional Park, Forrestdale

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Ranford Rd and Skeet Rd, (formerly Hale Rd) Forrestdale, next to the poultry farm. We will walk round areas where the Tawny-crowned and other Honeyeaters, Splendid Fairy-wrens and several raptors have been seen.

Leader: Debbie Walker

Saturday 7 August: Thomson's Lake, Beeliar

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park off Russell Rd, between Pearse and Hammond Roads. This is a good area for bushbirds and waterbirds.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Thursday 12 August: Waterford Foreshore, Salter Point, Manning

Half-day Walk

Meet at the Curtin University Boat Shed at 8:30 am. To reach the parking area travel along Manning Rd and turn into Elderfield St, which is on the western side of the Trinity College playing fields. Proceed to the end of this street and the parking area is on the right side. The walk will proceed along the river front for about 1km and return via a nearby park. Several species of water and bushbirds have been seen. Bring morning tea and, if time permits, we will move on to Salter Point, where other species can be seen.

Leaders: Barry and Molly Angus

Sunday 15 August: Ellis Brook, Gosnells

Half-day Walk

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

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday, 22 August: Talbot Rd, York

Full-day Walk

We will visit the property of Eggy and Rob Boggs, that has been visited previously by BAWA members. To reach the property travel along the Great Eastern Highway to the Lakes turn off to York, then continue along the Great Southern Highway to Cut Hill Rd, before reaching York. Turn right into Cut Hill Rd, then right into Talbot Rd. Travel for about 10 km, then watch for the BAWA signs. Follow these to the entrance to the property, to arrive there at 10:00 am. Bring your lunch.

Leader: Clive Napier

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

Jim Lane of CALM, Busselton, will speak and show slides of birds to be seen in the proposed Whicher National Park in the Blackwood District.

Saturday, 28 August: Helena Valley, Kalamunda Half-day Walk

Meet near the locked gate in Victor Rd at 8:30 am. Park on the right-hand side of the road. Bring morning tea and we will have it at the Pipehead Dam.

Drive through Midland east along the Great Eastern Highway. Once you have begun to climb Greenmount Hill watch for Scott Street—Wellbourne Park Hall is on the corner. Turn right, and continue until you reach a roundabout just past the tennis courts on the right. Turn left into Clayton Rd, and drive to the end. Turn right into Victor Rd, until you reach the locked gate.

Leader: Wendy Napier

Sunday, 5 September: Pipidinny Rd, Eglinton

Half-day Walk

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Wanneroo and Pipidinny Rds, about an hour's drive north from Perth. There is a small fee to enter the picnic area for lunch. We will look at four habitats during the day—the coastal dunes for Variegated Fairy-wrens and White-browed Scrub-wrens; the heath for White-winged Fairy-wrens, Tawny-crowned and White-cheeked Honeyeaters; the swamp for waterfowl, and lastly, a part of Yanchep National park which few people visit.

Leader: Brice Wells

Saturday and Sunday, 11 and 12 September

Short Weekend Campout at Billyacatting

The Billyacatting Reserve is a large area of natural wheatbelt bushland about 270 km ENE of Perth. Travel via Toodyay, Dowerin, Trayning and Kununoppin. The Reserve is about 18 km ENE of Kununoppin. There are no facilities but good camping sites. This is a mid-spring campout and the leaders will be there on Thursday evening. The campout will conclude when the last person leaves.

This is a venue which has not been visited for many years and little is known about it. 59 species of entirely bushbirds have been recorded there. This includes Black and Pied Honeyeater, as well as six other honeyeater species. A considerable number of raptors have also been seen. Wildflowers should be excellent at this time.

Participants should ring the BAWA office for directions and a mud map.

Leader: Clive Napier



*A bit clumsy, but wait ...
Cartoon by Penny Towells*

**Sunday, 12 September: Bedfordale Hill, Bedfordale
Half-day Walk**

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park of the Cohuna Wildlife Park, Mills Rd, Gosnells (courtesy of the owners). This is an area that has not been visited for several years, but Greg Marston has given me his list for this area, which he visited monthly from 1988 to 1994, so it will be interesting to compare the results. The area has mixed vegetation, but mainly Jarrah and Marri with granite outcrops and plenty of wildflowers.

Leader: David Ballard

**Thursday, 16 September: Pinnaroo Memorial Park, Padbury
Half-day Walk**

Meet at 8:30 am at the first car park off Whitfords Ave, which is on the left-hand side of the entrance road, after the roundabout and next to the Administration Centre. An interesting park where gardens and lawns are flanked by natural woodlands of Tuarts and Banksias. 80 species of birds have been seen in the area.

Leader: Hank van Wees

**Saturday 18 September: Campbell Barracks, Swanbourne
Half-day Walk**

Meet at 8:30 am at the entrance to the Swanbourne Rifle Range, left off the West Coast Highway and first turn past the Alfred Rd lights. Parking is at the shed where banding occurs. We will look at the nets which will be set earlier, seeing some birds in the hand. Then we will walk for a couple of kilometres on gravel and sand tracks around the property. In the event of the Barracks being off limits that day, an alternate walk will be organised around Mt Claremont.

Leader: Boyd Wykes

**Monday 20 September: State Tennis Centre, Burswood
Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Note: A week earlier.

Brent Barrett of CALM, Albany, will speak on the latest developments on the recovery plan for the Western Ground Parrot in WA, and on the Kakapo in New Zealand. He formerly worked for the Conservation Department in NZ on the recovery plan for the Kakapo.

**Sunday 26 September: Lake Leschenaultia
Full-day Walk**

Meet at 8:30 am at the hotel in Chidlow. Travel to Mundaring along the Great Eastern Highway and continue a further 10.5 km and turn left into Old Northam Road and it is 2 km into Chidlow. It cost \$5 per car to get into the Lake so we will car pool at Chidlow.

A 6 km walk on excellent track takes us through Jarrah, Marri and Wandoo woodland where 77 species have been recorded.

Leader: Sue Abbotts (Phone: 94441607)

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.

Friday 1 October to Monday 4 October: Queen's Birthday Holiday Weekend Campout Karara and Kadji Kadji Stations
(participants limited to 25)

These sheep stations, which are situated approximately 60 km east of Morawa, have been taken over by CALM and are being restored as nature reserves.

We propose to conduct bird surveys during the weekend to determine avian species present on the properties so that a comparison can be made after some time after stock removal.

There may be some limited facilities available on one station but all participants will need to be fully self contained.

All food and fuel must be taken in to the Station but water should be available. The properties contain a variety of habitats including woodlands, lakes and heath. There are several possible campsites and entry roads. Those wishing to attend MUST put their names on the list as usual and a map and further instructions will be mailed.

Leaders: Ed and Alyson Paull

Monday 25 October: State Tennis Centre, Burswood
Meeting, 7:30 pm

To be announced.

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

John Brooke, a member, will speak and show slides of birds and scenery of Alaska and Western USA.

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER.

Crossword Answers No 37

Across: 7 observers, 9 roost, 10 excursion, 11 point, 13 use, 14 recovery, 16 field, 17 warden, 19 run, 20 secretive, 22 cere, 25 fence, 26 nap, 27 granivorous.

Down: 1 Coodanup, 2 practical, 3 hear, 4 translocation, 5 pond, 6 stint, 8 skim, 10 experience, 12 read, 14 record, 15 Yangebup, 18 dry, 21 event, 22 car, 23 ran, 24 two.

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 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
- ◆ **WA Community Grant Scheme grant for schools competition** re habitat — volunteers to assess school projects — contact Brice Wells 9255 3710 or Elsa Dabbs 9351 8446, PR Sub-committee

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)

September 2004 issue: 1 August
December 2004 issue: 1 November
March 2005 issue: 1 February
June 2005 issue: 1 May

Advertising Rates

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

Calendar of Events

Sat 5–Mon 7 Jun: Foundation Day Campouts—

- (1) (Port) Gregory
- (2) Beringbooding and Elachbutting Hills

Sun 13 Jun: Half-day Walk, Woodman Point

Thu 17 Jun: Mid-week Half-day Walk, Little Rush Lake, Yangebup

Sat 19 Jun: Half-day Walk, Karnup & Baldvis Nature Reserves

Sat 19 Jun: Half-day Walk, Bibra Lake, Cockburn

Sun 27 Jun: Half-day Walk, Bickley Brook, Gosnells

Sun 13 Jun: Woodman Point. Half-day Walk

Thu 17 Jun: Little Rush Lake, Yangebup, Mid-week Half-day Walk

Sat 19 Jun: Karnup and Baldvis Nature Reserves, Half-day walk

Sat 19 Jun: Bibra Lake, Cockburn, Half-day Walk

Sun 27 Jun: Bickley Brook, Gosnells, Half-day Walk

Sun 27 Jun: Pelagic Trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour, Full-day

Mon 28 Jun: State Tennis Centre, Burswood, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Sun 4 Jul: Yanchep National Park, Wanneroo, Full-day walk

Sat 10 Jul: Shenton Park Bushland, Nedlands, Morning Walk

Thu 15 Jul: Blue Gum Lake, Brentwood, Mid-week Morning Walk

Sun 18 Jul: Kings Park, Subiaco, Morning Walk

Sat, 24 Jul: North Mole, Fremantle, Half-day Walk

Mon 27 Jul: State Tennis Centre, Burswood, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Sat, 31 Jul: The Spectacles, Kwinana, Half-day Walk

Sun, 1 Aug: Jandakot Regional Park, Forrestdale, Half-day Walk

Sat 7 Aug: Thomson's Lake, Beeliar, Half-day Walk

Thu 12 Aug: Waterford Foreshore, Salter Point, Manning, Half-day Walk

Sun 15 Aug: Ellis Brook, Gosnells, Half-day Walk

Sun, 22 Aug: Talbot Rd, York, Full-day Walk

Mon 23 Aug: State Tennis Centre, Burswood, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Sat, 28 Aug: Helena Valley, Kalamunda, Half-day Walk

Sun, 5 Sep: Pipidinn Rd, Eglinton, Half-day Walk

Sat/Sun, 11/12 Sep: Short Weekend Campout at Billyacatting

Printed by Executive Press: Tel (08) 9275 8044