

Western Australian Bird Notes



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(a division of Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union)



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SIXTH AND SEVENTH CORELLA COUNTS

Introduction

Eighteen counters took part on the 6th of April 2003, and 17 on the 28th of March this year, searching a large number of sites from which corellas have been reported. Unfortunately, I failed to write up the 2003 count at the time, and am therefore including the results in this report.

Results

The results for 2003 are summarised in Table 1, and for 2004 in Table 2, below. As far as possible the results are grouped in neighbouring areas, eg along the Swan River from Guildford downstream. Most observers used a combination of driving, to cover as many separate sites as possible, and walking at specific sites to cover as much area as possible. After some discussion, I believe that all identifications as to which species was seen are reliable, and any duplication between recorders has been identified and allowed for as far as possible.

The ranges in total numbers in Table 1 and 2 are necessary because of possible duplication of counting between two or more observers at different sites, and because in some cases the species of corella was not determined. Observers recorded

the time and direction of any movement of corellas, so that it was possible to draw reasonable conclusions about possible double counting. In relation to undetermined species of corellas, the number was counted in the maximum estimate for both Little and Long-billed Corellas, but included in the minimum and likely total only for the species considered most likely.

For the 2003 count the possible maximum for Little Corellas was about 1775 and the possible minimum about 1100, while the possible maximum for Eastern Long-billed Corellas was about 500, and the possible minimum about 340.

For the 2004 count the possible maximum for Little Corellas is about 2445 and the possible minimum about

2272, while the possible maximum for Eastern Long-billed Corellas is about 800, and the possible minimum about 530. Forty-six Western Corellas were also recorded in the 2004 count.

The possible maximum number of all corellas for 2003 was about 2200 and for 2004 about 3200; the probable minimum numbers



Eastern Long-billed Corella
Photo courtesy Paul Marty

Table 1: Results of the Perth metropolitan corella count, 6/4/2003.

Observers	Sites	Results
Ian and Eleanor Rowley	Parks and open areas on both sides of Swan River from Guildford to Middle Swan Bridge. Ending at Stirling Square, Guildford	About 750 Corellas. (The 'Guildford flock' is well known and the majority are usually Little Corellas, with up to ~ 200 eastern Long-billed Corellas (ELBs))
Robert Schmidt	Swan River, from Point Reserve Guildford down to Sandy Beach Reserve	Up to 150 Corellas in total: Up to 100 Little Corellas and up to 50 ELBs
Tom Delaney	Swan River; Coode St to Burswood Golf Course	No corellas
Tom Delaney	South Perth foreshore; Narrows to Causeway	No corellas
John and Judy Blyth	Point Resolution/Point Walter	No corellas
Bryan Barrett and Marjorie Clegg	Canning River; Kent Street Weir	No corellas
Allan and Michael Burbidge	Lake Joondalup, eastern side	15 ELBs
Neil Hamilton	Neil Hawkins Park, Lake Joondalup	210 ELBs
Brendan Kinsella	Mawson Park, Hillarys	200 Little Corellas
Linda Wotherspoon	Barridale Park	5 Little Corellas; 2 ELBs
Annette Henry	Carine Open Space Lake Gwelup	35 to 60 Little Corellas; 13 ELBs
Mary Bremner	Perry Lakes	38 corellas (probably Little Corellas)
John and Judy Blyth	Lake Monger	No corellas
John and Judy Blyth	Subiaco Primary School	No corellas
Stuart Houghton	Chidley Point Golf Course	No corellas
Stuart Houghton	Seaview Golf Course, Cottesloe and nearby railway reserve.	8 ELBs
Andrew Burbidge and Bill Rutherford	Jackadder Lake, Woodlands	120-380 Little Corellas
Andrew Burbidge	Herdsmen Lake, Floreat	192 Little Corellas (80 of these probably part of flock from Perry Lakes.)
Peter Sandilands	Lake Claremont	No corellas

were 1440 and 2800 respectively and the most likely about 1800 and 3000 respectively (Table 3).

Discussion

Both species of corellas are highly mobile and may turn up almost anywhere around Perth at various times. Thus it is not surprising that there continues to be considerable variation from year to year (Table 3) in the two main species and in overall totals. Note that the very low first count in 1998 should probably be disregarded because of the lateness in the year of that count. Nevertheless, the overall trend in total numbers of corellas around Perth is upwards, despite the fact that the number of counters has been smaller in the last two years than any previous counts except the first.

The 2004 count recorded the highest ever total for Little Corellas (Table 3), confirming the increase of this species around Perth noted in 2002. Given that the number of

counters has been smaller in the last two years, the numbers of Little Corellas were comparatively consistent over the three years from 1999 to 2001, and some birds were culled over the last twelve months, this apparent increase is a cause for concern.

Maximum, minimum and 'most likely' estimates this year for Long-billed Corellas were considerably higher than last year, and second only to the highest count in 2002 (Table 3). However, Lake Joondalup, supporting 225 Long-billed Corellas in 2003, was not counted in 2004, and in both 2003 and 2004 very few birds were recorded on the Canning Flats, at which flocks of up to 300 birds were seen earlier in each year. Thus, although we can't be certain that the Joondalup and Canning Flats birds were not counted at other sites in 2004, that year's figure for this species may be a considerable under-estimate. The addition of just the 200 or so birds at Lake Joondalup (present before and after

Table 2: Results of the Perth metropolitan corella count, 28/3/04.

Observers	Sites	Results
Ian and Eleanor Rowley	Parks and open areas on both sides of Swan River from Guildford to Middle Swan Bridge. Ending at Stirling Square, Guildford	300 to 370 Little Corellas. 100 to 140 eastern Long-billed Corellas (ELBs)
Marian Massam	South Perth foreshore; Narrows to Causeway	About 1000 Little Corellas At least 1 ELB
Clive and Wendy Napier	Point Walter to Leeuwin Barracks; Elvira Road, Palmyra	Total corellas 80 to about 160; 28 to 160 ELBs; 4 Western Corellas; 0 to 130 Little Corellas
Bryan Barrett and Marjorie Clegg	Canning River; Kent Street Weir	At least 12 ELBs
Marion Shaw	Winnacot Reserve, Willagee	At least 70 ELBs
Audrey Turner	Manning Lake	19 ELBs
Gary Grey, Paul Marty	Carine Open Space Lake Gwelup	about 250 Little Corellas, about 250 ELBs
Mary Bremner	Perry Lakes	About 43 Little Corellas, 42 Western Corellas
Sue Abbotts	Lake Monger	No Corellas
John and Judy Blyth	Chidley Point Golf Course	20 corellas (probably ELBs)
Stuart Houghton	Seaview Golf Course, Cottesloe and nearby railway reserve	50 to 60 ELBs
Bill Rutherford	Jackadder Lake, Woodlands	419 Little Corellas 38 ELBs
John and Judy Blyth	Herdsmen Lake, Floreat	170 Little Corellas
Peter Sandilands	Lake Claremont and golf course	3 Little Corellas, 7 ELBs

Table 3: Total numbers recorded during annual counts from 1998 to 2004

Year	No. of counters	Little Corella	Eastern Long-billed Corella (ELB)	Western Corella	Total corellas: most likely
1998	16	About 820	About 140	Nil	About 960
1999	22	1385 - 1580	577-627	7	About 2000
2000	25	939 - 1451	250-374	Nil	About 1400
2001	28	1072 - 1304; 'most likely' about 1150	430-785; 'most likely' about 632	Nil	About 1800
2002	20	1740 to 2395; 'most likely' about 1900	781-902; 'most likely' about 800	5	About 2700
2003	18	1100 to 1775; 'most likely' about 1403	340 to 500; 'most likely' about 398	Nil	About 1800
2004	17	2270 to 2445; most likely' about 2300	530 to 800; most likely about 690	Possible maximum 46	About 3000

the 2004 count) would have made this year's figure for Long-billed Corellas also the highest since the counts began.

The 46 Western Corellas recorded in 2004 is easily the highest number for this species since the counts began, but given the difficulties of identification it is hard to draw any conclusions regarding its status.

I continue to receive anecdotal reports of flocks of 'several tens' or more of corellas from Mandurah, Bunbury, Busselton and Albany so it would be good to have some counters in those centres for the 2005 count.

In summary, the situation looks rather different now to that following the first count when I suggested that the genie

was not yet out of the bottle as far as the two feral corellas around Perth were concerned. While that may still be the case, the spasmodic but apparently continuing increase in both main species, and the increasing number of sites from which they are being reported, suggests that they are both getting to the stage where control will become increasingly difficult.

Once again, many thanks to all of our counters on the day and to those people who have kept me informed of sightings of large numbers of corellas and of possible areas to include in future counts.

John Blyth



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 major highlight was a **Black-bellied Storm-Petrel** seen on a pelagic trip off Albany. This species has been recorded in WA on only a handful of occasions.

The highlights in the metropolitan area were some seabirds from the North Mole during a major storm, a **White-eared Honeyeater** in the Guildford area and some **Square-tailed Kite** sightings which are unusual in late autumn / winter.

The highlights in the south west were on the Albany pelagic trip, plus two more sightings of **White-eared Honeyeater** just off Albany Highway not far from Perth. A **Double-banded Plover** at Lake McLarty is uncommon in WA, especially inland.

In the Arid Zone and the Kimberley, several species were reported from the limit of, or just beyond their normal range, and some seldom seen species were also reported.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Freckled Duck – 1, 29/05/04, Alcoa Wellard Wetlands (Baldivis) – MN (uncommon)

White-headed Petrel – 1, 11/06/04, North Mole (North Fremantle) – BR (very uncommon near Perth)

White-chinned Petrel – 1, 11/06/04, North Mole (North Fremantle) – BR (very uncommon near Perth)

Square-tailed Kite – 2, 30/05/04, Stanhope Road (Kalamunda) – WB, NW * 1, 05/07/04, Bickley Brook Reservoir (Orange Grove) – SvA * 1, 23/07/04, Lesmurdie (Lesmurdie) – AC (uncommon in the south west at this time of year)

Pomarine Jaeger – 2, 11/06/04, North Mole (North Fremantle) – BR (uncommon in the south west at this time of the year)

Lesser Noddy – 1, 12/06/04, North Mole (North Fremantle) – BR (very uncommon near Perth)

Elegant Parrot – 2, 18/06/04, near May Circle (Kings Park) – JW (uncommon in Kings Park)

Barking Owl – 1 heard, 17/06/04, Mabel Road (Lesmurdie) – JS (very uncommon in the south west)

White-eared Honeyeater – 1, 24/05/04, Helena Street (Guildford) – MNo (vagrant in the metropolitan area)

Dusky Woodswallow – 4, 04/07/04, Baldivis Children's Forest (Baldivis) – MN (unusual on the coastal plain)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Kerguelen Petrel – 2, 01/05/04, pelagic trip (Albany) – FO *et al.* (uncommon in WA)

Sooty Shearwater – 2, 01/05/04, pelagic trip (Albany) – FO *et al.* (very uncommon in WA)

Wandering Albatross – 3, 01/05/04, pelagic trip (Albany) – FO *et al.* (uncommon in WA)

BLACK-BELLIED STORM-PETREL – 1, 01/05/04, pelagic trip (Albany) – FO *et al.* (rare in WA; URRF completed; a storm-petrel, viewed from 30-80m, all dark above with a white rump, black tail, a black hood and white underparts, thin black line on the belly seen once very briefly)

Double-banded Plover – 1, 29/05/04, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC * 1, 03/06/04, Lake McLarty (Murray) – TK (rare in the south west)

Common Tern – 4 (*hirundo* subspecies), 18/05/04,
Greenough River mouth (Greenough) – GW
(uncommon in the south west)
Arctic Tern – 1, 01/05/04, pelagic trip (Albany) – FO *et al.* (uncommon in WA)
Long-billed (Baudin's) Black-Cockatoo – 10, 17/05/04,
farm dam / wandoo on Brookton Highway (Beverley)
– FO, MD (uncommon in this habitat)
White-eared Honeyeater – 1, 30/05/04, Summer Track
(Boddington) – BAWA * 1, 30/05/04, Old Coach Road
(Wandering) – BAWA (rare in this area)
Orange Chat – 15+, 19/05/04, Hutt Lagoon
(Northampton) – SM (uncommon)

ARID ZONE

Grey Falcon – 1 immature, 17/04/04, 50 km E of
Roebourne (Roebourne) – MC * 1, 13/05/04, 50 km E
of Roebourne (Roebourne) – MC (species of interest)
Black Falcon – 1, 15/04/04, 50 km E of Roebourne
(Roebourne) – MC * 1, 18/04/04, 50 km E of
Roebourne (Roebourne) – MC (species of interest)
Inland Dotterel – 12, 30/06/04, Mileura Station
(Murchison) – SD * 9, 10/07/04, Roy Hill Station (East
Pilbara) – RT (species of interest)
Flock Bronzewing – 3, 15/04/04, 50 km E of Roebourne
(Roebourne) – MC * 2, 17/04/04, 50 km E of
Roebourne (Roebourne) – MC * 1, 18/04/04, 50 km E
of Roebourne (Roebourne) – MC (uncommon)
Western Yellow Robin – 1, 19/07/04, Denham to Monkey
Mia (Shark Bay) – FO (northern limit of range)
Dusky Woodswallow – 2, 23/07/04, 10 km W of
Overlander Roadhouse (Shark Bay) – FO, IR * 1,
23/07/04, 19 km W of Overlander Roadhouse (Shark
Bay) – FO, IR (near northern limit of range)
Singing Bushlark – 2, 23/07/04, 19 km W of Overlander
Roadhouse (Shark Bay) – FO, IR (southern limit of
range)

KIMBERLEY

Emu – 1, 31/07/04, Argyle Diamond Mine ATD5
(Wyndham – East Kimberley) – FO *et al.* (1st sighting
at Argyle since 1983)
Painted Snipe – 2, 30/05/04, Roebuck Plains Station
(Broome) – CH (species of interest)

OBSERVERS

BAWA = Birds Australia	MC = Michael Craig
WA Excursion	MD = Martin Daniel
BR = Bill Rutherford	(Singapore)
CH = Chris Hassell	MN = Mark Newman
FO = Frank O'Connor	MNo = Michael Noonan
GW = Geoff Walker	NW = Natalie Warburton
(Victoria)	SD = Stephen Davies
IR = Ian Rudd	SM = Sue Mather
JS = John Stewart	RT = Roy Teale
JW = Jennifer Wilcox	TK = Tony Kirkby
LG = Les George	WB = Wes Bancroft



... but which one is
Grandpa?

Cartoon by Penny Towells



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Birds Australia WA Inc Reports



BAWA INC COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee has been busy as always but I am happy to report that a lot of what the committee discusses is dealt with elsewhere in Bird Notes. This is largely a reflection of the efficiency of our project officers, sub-committees and those individuals who do things in the name of BAWA. It remains to me to mention some of those committee items of business that may be of interest to members and that are not covered by someone else.

Our role in conservation can often be overlooked in the day-to-day business of organising excursions, meetings and such mundane matters as cleaning out the shed, but it is central to what BAWA is about. It is therefore a pleasure to be able to report that we contributed to the reconsideration of development plans for the Shenton Park Bushland. We have also been approached to contribute to discussions concerning the control of Rainbow Lorikeets in Perth and the South-West, and have been invited to have representation on an advisory committee for the control of Common Starlings in Western Australia. We are already represented on other conservation fronts, such as the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Team, and being asked to be involved on these sorts of panels reflects well on our standing as a scientific and conservation organisation. Meanwhile, we actually need to have people who can fulfil these roles. This can be difficult when meetings are held during the working week, as a lot of our regular representatives work full time. I would be delighted to hear from anyone with a bit of common sense and a little knowledge about birds, who feels able to attend the occasional meeting as a BAWA representative.

For the first time in longer than I care to admit, I attended a BAWA half-day excursion; but only by being asked if I would lead it! Having worked around The Spectacles when an undergraduate in 1980, with only occasional visits since then, it was great to be able to revisit old haunts with a group of both regular members and non-members. There has been considerable discussion about excursions in recent months, and we are undergoing something of a transition towards an excursion programme in which some of our excursions are being publicised to attract new members and non-members. It is very important to achieve a balance, but it is also very important for BAWA to "spread its wings" in this area. It is in our own interest, and the interest of birds, for us to spread the word about birds and their needs. Personally, I get a lot of pleasure from showing a familiar and favourite bird to someone for whom that bird is unfamiliar. It is a bit like introducing them to a favourite piece of music.

Bill Rutherford has recently been leading committee discussions on the subject of an annual bird report, something that Geoff Shannon produced in 1983 but which no-one has attempted since. We aren't sure how this is going to work, but hopefully it will happen and provide a concise summary of observations that are currently spread across WA Bird Notes, Atlas record forms and assorted databases; or simply lost in notebooks.

Finally, on the accommodation front we are still negotiating with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, so until further notice we will continue to have meetings at the State Tennis Centre and our office in Perry House.

Mike Bamford



BAWA Projects



A VERY ACTIVE GROUP

Another year marches on and the Public Relations Sub-Committee continues to find new ways to involve the community in the study, enjoyment and protection of our native birds and their environment.

The beginners' classes at Piney Lakes were another repeat success of the 2003 classes. One student was so enthused by the content of the course that she returned to her country town and formed a bird group. They already have their first bird list printed.

The next beginners' class is in early September. This is funded by the Department of Education and Training as part of Adult Learners' Week.



Members have returned from Shark Bay where they organised walks and evenings for visitors and locals. What a lovely way to spend a holiday at the Bay! A special thank you to Healthway for funding these courses, which will continue in future holidays. The walks were promoted as part of a far wider range of activities organised by CALM for the school holidays at Monkey Mia and Denham.

In 'Have A Go Day' in October, Brice and his merry team will again be at Burswood to take seniors' walks and spread the word of the wonderful world of birds as a hobby for those in the prime of life. This is being funded by a grant from Bankwest Seniors Week.

And don't forget the young people. This year as part of the 175th year of celebrations of settlement in Western

Australia, the Public Relations Sub-Committee has advertised for schools to prepare a report on their project to protect and rehabilitate a reserve or wetland near their school, a big project and a great idea. The Western Australian Government has provided a grant for this project. More on this in the December edition of WABN. The Public Relations Sub-Committee's activities have increased this year by including more visits to schools. Most of the visits have been to primary schools where they have given a 'walk and talk' for the classes. This is a wonderful opportunity to spread the word and introduce birds to children. Another project with children was done in cooperation with Greening Australia at Piney Lakes, where a total of six BAWA members helped with walks over four days.

Many visits with a talk and slide presentation have been done at the Rotary and Probus Clubs. A new project for this year has been to set up displays in libraries for the general public. Several other ongoing projects include the updating and laminating of pictures for displays, the updating of slides for the image library and the digital library. Roger Watson is producing a promotional video for Birds Australia WA. It will include all the aspects, scientific projects and members' activities of BAWA. Attendance at community shows is done when time permits. One member of the publicity group is assisting in a fund raising event in September for Eyre Bird Observatory.

On 10 September, Brice and Elsa will attend a dinner at the end of Adult Learners Week for the presentation of awards to the successful active community organisations. We have entered our group for this award.

How do they achieve all this? A very lively, committed committee, a large band of capable volunteers and indispensable support from grants. This cooperative approach is a feature of the BAWA Inc.

Thanks to you all

Allan K Jones, Liz Walker
Grants Sub-committee

BIRD WALKS AT SHARK BAY



CALM in Shark Bay asked Birds Australia WA if we could provide leaders for bird walks at Monkey Mia during the school holidays. With funding from Healthways to cover travelling costs, Tina and Bob Smith from Denmark covered the first week and Ian Rudd and I covered the second week of the July school holidays. CALM provided accommodation at the Peron Homestead.

Scheduled for Sunday and Wednesday mornings at 9 am, the walks were promoted as part of a far wider range of activities organised by CALM.. They were very well

attended with up to 19 people per walk, except for the second Wednesday when only five people braved the drizzly weather. BAWA provided binoculars for people who didn't have their own.

The walk, covering different habitats, was along the marked Monkey Mia Walk Trail. Leaving the visitor centre it passes over a sand ridge, near a small dam with a bird hide, through Acacia dominated vegetation, to the beach to view birds feeding on the mud flats and roosting on a sandy spit. The walk generally took 90 to 105 minutes.

There were about 40 species of birds seen along the walks during the fortnight. It is always difficult to show a largish group of people bush birds, many of which are quite shy by nature. We had mixed success in showing people the birds, but we gave information about each species and this seemed to keep most people's interest. The bird highlights included many views of Thick-billed Grasswren, White-browed Babbler, Southern Scrub-robin, Crested Bellbird, Chiming Wedgebill, Variegated Fairy-wren, Black-eared Cuckoo, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Red-capped Robin and a flock of Pied Honeyeaters passing overhead.

The remaining time during the week was free. I helped out one morning with the radio tracking of Woma Pythons. Birding at the Peron Homestead was excellent with Malleefowl, Black-eared Cuckoo, nesting Brown Goshawk, Thick-billed Grasswren, Variegated Fairy-wren, White-winged Fairy-wren, Southern Scrub-robin, Chiming Wedgebill and Crested Bellbird, many giving good photographic opportunities. I also travelled further afield to complete Atlas surveys. Highlights included Banded Lapwing, Crimson Chat, Brown Songlark, Singing Bushlark, Dusky Woodswallow, Western Yellow Robin, Rufous Fieldwren, Hooded Robin and White-backed Swallow.

The walks in the October school holidays will be covered by Gail and Brice Wells. We hope that CALM will wish to continue this activity, and that we can get further funding to cover travel costs for future years. I can highly recommend this opportunity for other members of BAWA. We again thank Healthways for the funding, and CALM for the opportunity and accommodation.

Frank O'Connor
Public Relations Sub-Committee

BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS

On Saturday 25 October 2003 the inaugural 'Breakfast with the Birds' was held in King's Park. The day was beautiful and a good number of people turned up. However, if you look at Table 1, you will note that transects 1, 2 and 3 are missing! This is because we only had enough people for seven teams. This year, it would be great to be able to survey all 10 transects (see NOTICES for details of Breakfast with the Birds 2004).

Overall, 37 species were recorded, but 15 of these were only recorded by one survey group. A few species that would normally be expected in the Park were not recorded, such as the Western Spinebill and New Holland Honeyeater. The average number of species seen on a transect was 16.1, and the most species recorded in any one transect was 22, so well done to that group! A few species were very common and were recorded on every transect: Australian Ringneck, Red Wattlebird, Brown Honeyeater, Australian Raven and Australian Magpie.

It is good to see that the two introduced dove species were only recorded on one survey. Unfortunately, the Rainbow Lorikeet, that introduced eastern states pest, was seen on five of the seven transects, and the Laughing Kookaburra was seen on three of the seven transects.

The Variegated Fairy-wren was only recorded on one transect. This elusive species is often hard to spot, even if you know it is there. It is thought that the Variegated Fairy-wren was absent from the Park until a few years ago, but now it can be found in a few spots around the Park where there is dense understorey. The Western Wattlebird and Yellow-rumped Thornbill were also only recorded on one transect. Other thornbill species have become rare or are extinct in the Park, so it is worth keeping an eye on the Yellow-rumped Thornbill to ensure it remains in the Park.

After the bird surveys, everyone partook in a delicious breakfast, organised by Sue Mather (Yum!).

Table 1: Birds observed in King's Park on transects 4 to 10 on the 25th October 2003.

Species	Transect number							No. of records
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Pacific Black Duck			+					1
Australian Wood Duck			+					1
Australian Pelican				+				1
White-faced Heron						+		1
Collared Sparrowhawk						+		1
Brown Goshawk	+	+						2
Australian Hobby						+		1
Spotted Turtle-Dove				+				1
Laughing Turtle-Dove				+				1
Galah	+		+	+		+	+	5
Rainbow Lorikeet	+	+	+	+	+			5
Australian Ringneck	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	7
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo		+			+			2
Laughing Kookaburra			+	+		+		3
Sacred Kingfisher						+		1
Rainbow Bee-eater	+				+		+	2
Variegated Fairy-wren					+			1
Striated Pardalote	+	+		+				3
Weebill	+	+	+	+	+	+		6
Western Gerygone	+			+	+			3
Yellow-rumped Thornbill					+			1
Red Wattlebird	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	7
Western Wattlebird							+	1
Singing Honeyeater	+	+	+	+	+	+		6
Brown Honeyeater	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	7
White-cheeked Honeyeater	+	+	+	+	+			5
Rufous Whistler	+	+		+	+	+	+	6
Grey Fantail				+		+		2
Restless Flycatcher					+			1
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		+		+			+	3
Magpie-lark		+	+				+	3
Grey Butcherbird			+	+			+	3
Australian Magpie	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	7
Australian Raven	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	7
Welcome Swallow				+				1
Tree Martin				+				1
Silveryeye	+		+		+			3
Number of species:	16	15	16	22	17	15	12	

THE FIRST STEP FOR A GROUND DWELLING PARROT

After a very successful season in the Fitzgerald River National Park (FRNP) we have completed the first stage of the Western Ground Parrot Project objectives. This project was made possible using Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding obtained through the South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team (SCRIPT), and has involved collaboration between the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), Friends of the Western Ground Parrot and BAWA.

Over the past five-months, researchers and volunteers completed the full complement of survey trips. These expeditions have seen 41 people attend one of seven 10-day surveys. The resulting volunteer effort has provided 2,800 hours of time from people who arrived from as far away as Switzerland and Canada. Most volunteers were local Albany and Perth residents with people of all ages and professions getting involved. Community groups such as Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park, Friends of the Western Ground Parrot and BAWA were among the many willing participants.

Western Ground Parrots were found to occupy 2000 hectares of the FRNP. Most of this was in stable 15-year (post-burn) vegetation, with a high level of sedge and heath and sparsely dispersed mallee. Two sub-populations were historically known while two sub-populations were located for the first time. Information gathered has assisted park managers to protect critical habitat for the continued presence of these birds. Birds were found to move into, and even roost, in vegetation that was burnt by wildfire in 1998. Critical habitat has been mapped and indicates areas where birds may disperse in the future. Through its continued presence and full complement of volunteers the project was able to assist other fauna groups. Trapping was conducted on behalf of, and in conjunction with, the Save the Endangered Dribbler Project. Western Whipbird and Western Bristlebird survey data was also collected for the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team. This reduced shared costs and minimised vehicle presence in this sensitive environment.

Research effort will now be directed towards Cape Arid National Park (CANP) and work towards understanding the conservation needs of the Western Ground Parrot across its known range. Different community groups have started to survey their local area for the presence of remnant populations. The assistance of these groups in their endeavours is a high priority in the next few months. The Western Ground Parrot Project is committed to continuing this high level of volunteer involvement in the future. There are lots of opportunities for people to get involved. If you are interested in assisting from September to November please contact Brent at CALM.

Volunteers are always needed to join this dynamic and active team. All survey trips are fully supported with food and group equipment and some assistance towards transport. Research trips into CANP and FRNP are planned for September/October. Weather permitting,

ongoing surveys are conducted in Waychinicup NP on Thursday evenings (departing Albany). Please contact Brent Barrett on ph. 0429 842 451 or <brentb@calm.wa.gov.au> for further information on dates and participation. To assist the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot, or simply to obtain further information, contact Brenda Newbey on tel. 9337 5673, e-mail wgparrot@iinet.net.au or Anne Bondin on tel. 9844 1793, e-mail albanybirds@hotmail.com.

Brent Barrett

MID-SUMMER, MID-WINTER WADER COUNTS 2004

Summer and winter wader surveys were conducted in 2004. The summer count data were sent in by observers reporting from Western Australian coastal locations between Esperance and Wyndham and inland locations ranging through the south-west.

Ideally the count is held on the same day at all sites. The diversity of tidal change, weather and distances encountered around the state necessitates a flexible approach to the date at country sites. This year we have included some observations taken during the Hooded Plover count outside our normal time frame. This was to obtain records of Sanderlings and other species along the south coast. Thanks to the "Hoodies" for this contribution.

The mid- winter count was conducted in June, on a smaller scale, at selected sites with known winter wader populations.

The results of the summer count are shown in Table 1.

Table 1A compares wader numbers for 12 species taken between Kanidial Beach and Kalbarri since 2000. Data from locations north of Kalbarri will be assessed separately at a later date.

This Table shows the effect of inland rains on the coastal Banded Stilt flocks. It also shows a five yearly cycle in this species' movement.

Table 2 gives the results of the winter count.

Observers reported the movement of Pied Oystercatchers and Banded Lapwings to nesting sites and the overwintering of some migratory species.

As previously mentioned the observer list is growing. We appreciate the efforts of all members who participated and would encourage others to become involved. Special thanks to the Department of Conservation and Land Management personnel, Rottnest Island Authority environment staff, Dr Jane Prince, University of Western Australia Zoology staff, Vicky Hood, Dampier Salt Limited and the Esperance, Albany and Mandurah birding groups.

Colin Davis

Table 1: Mid summer Wader Count, WA, 2004

LOCATIONS																			
Esperance Coast	South Coast	Albany		Wilson Inlet		Bustin Inlet	Lesc Inlet	Yal NP Preston	Lake Mclarty	Peel Inlet	SEMP	Wdrms Pt	Rottnest Is	Metro Lakes	Inland lakes	Shark Bay	Carvn sites	Total no of birds per site	
		Royal	Oyster	Inlet	Inlet	Inlet	Inlet												
13	14	13	12	12	12	12	10	11	15	10	6	18	8	12	23	28	17		
Species at each site																			
SPECIES																			
	0	1	11	21	2	0	26	0	0	88	3	0	11	0	0	323	503	304	1293
Black-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Black-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	2	23
Eastern Curlew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whimbrel	0	0	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	14	90	1	118
Little Curlew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Common Greenshank	10	7	3	21	52	0	16	4	187	78	18	0	0	5	3	122	24	2	552
Marsh Sandpiper	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	16	44
Wood Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	0	22
Common Sandpiper	0	4	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	5	0	0	10	0	1	2	16	2	46
Grey-tailed Tattler	0	0	11	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	20	350	36	426
Terek Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	26
Asian Dowitcher	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ruddy Turnstone	0	0	7	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	236	0	0	16	1	106	374
Red Knot	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	81	11	0	97
Great Knot	0	0	79	225	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	59	67	0	430
Sanderling	196	6	0	0	0	79	0	0	0	0	0	0	98	0	0	24	61	0	464
Red-necked Stint	410	400	345	760	407	107	50	2847	4500	98	283	5	978	88	2006	187	504	1115	15090
Little Stint	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Long-toed Stint	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	980	16	2	0	0	0	5	1	2	610	1638
Pectoral Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Broad-billed Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curlew Sandpiper	1	1	0	0	67	1	0	1	225	0	25	0	46	0	1	20	130	100	618
Ruff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Red-necked Phalarope	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pied Oystercatcher	7	5	2	81	4	10	2	0	0	12	73	3	8	0	0	73	6	0	286
Sooty Oystercatcher	15	7	7	1	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41
Black-winged Stilt	19	16	0	0	293	36	33	1282	3500	989	104	0	2	1069	203	20	108	45	7719
Banded Stilt	1372	518	0	4	132	0	0	9093	5785	2413	0	0	7617	50	5013	0	1	997	32995
Red-necked Avocet	221	6	0	0	767	0	84	595	211	100	6	0	11	732	20	1	0	146	2900
Pacific Golden Plover	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Grey Plover	0	2	23	30	2	0	31	0	0	40	34	4	13	0	0	9	6	0	194
Red-capped Plover	627	77	4	0	302	90	10	537	830	131	58	17	135	119	1137	32	37	97	4240
Lesser Sand Plover	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	10	240	0	252
Greater Sand Plover	0	0	0	65	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	22	10	106
Hooded Plover	64	77	0	0	0	24	0	115	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	291
Red-kneed Dotterel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Black-fronted Dotterel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	6	1	2	20	0	31
Banded Lapwing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	43
Unidentified small																16	1500		1516
Unidentified large					1											21			22
Site total	2944	1127	509	1220	2040	368	261	14483	16243	3986	606	34	9210	2083	8402	1058	3765	3592	71923

Table 1A: South-west Mid-summer wader counts, 2000-04: Kanidal to Kalbarri for 14 selected species

Table 1A Species	Year				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Bar-tailed Godwit	41	120	126	87	163
Eastern Curlew	14	9	1	4	12
Common Greenshank	351	259	263	270	404
Grey-tailed Tattler	37	23	29	18	20
Ruddy Turnstone	304	448	464	363	267
Great Knot	337	549	391	430	304
Red Knot	72	170	97	114	5
Sanderling	430	552	581	461	379
Red-necked Stint	5430	7956	7290	20292	13284
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	378	88	78	245	1025
Curlew Sandpiper	954	726	310	900	368
Banded Stilt	38	1412	7915	27150	31997
Grey Plover	174	175	253	166	179
Red-capped Plover	1597	1327	1203	2710	4074
Yearly Totals	10157	13814	19001	53210	52481

Table 2: Mid-winter shorebird count: Carnarvon to Albany, 2004

Table 2 Species	Location					
	Albany	Lake Preston south	Mandurah	Rottneest	SEMP	Carnarvon
Bar-tailed Godwit	8	0	5	0	0	158
Black-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Curlew	0	0	0	0	0	3
Whimbrel	1	0	0	0	0	1
Common Greenshank	0	0	4	0	1	12
Grey-tailed Tattler	0	0	0	0	0	235
Terek Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	4
Red Knot	10	6	0	0	0	0
Great Knot	15	0	0	0	0	10
Sanderling	0	0	0	0	0	39
Red-necked Stint	21	185	16	117	9	92
Curlew Sandpiper	0	1	0	1	0	1
Pied Oystercatcher	105	0	0	28	10	2
Sooty Oystercatcher	8	0	0	0	0	0
Black-winged Stilt	0	6	0	4	31	24
Banded Stilt	0	0	0	9	0	1
Grey Plover	0	0	4	4	4	2
Red-capped Plover	0	141	34	16	7	13
Greater Sand Plover	0	0	0	2	0	93
Hooded Plover	0	13	0	0	0	0
Black-fronted Dotterel	0	0	0	0	0	4
Banded Lapwing	0	0	0	22	0	0
Total birds each site	168	352	63	203	62	694

Note: SEMP - Swan Estuary Marine Park

CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO RECOVERY PROJECT

Painted tail trial

Two sightings of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo chicks with painted tails were made in Perth in April 2004. These records indicate the chicks travelled about 160 km from their nesting hollows in the months after fledging.

Readers of the December edition of WABN may recall a trial was being conducted to test a tail-painting method to see how successfully it could be used to track Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos, and to gather information about where cockatoos from particular breeding populations travel to after they leave their nesting sites.

Between November and December 2004, 29 Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo chicks from four different breeding sites in the Northern Wheatbelt had the white panels on their tail feathers painted. The paint was a lanolin-based spray paint and the colours used were blue, green, orange and red.

From December 2003 to June 2004 a publicity campaign was carried out to encourage members of the public to report any sightings of painted tails and searches were conducted by Birds Australia WA volunteers and other individuals.

Eight potential sightings have been recorded to date, of which one has been confirmed and two others are highly feasible. The confirmed sighting occurred in Moora shortly after the chick fledged and was made only a short distance (900m) from the nesting hollow. This chick later died. A sighting some days earlier in Moora could have been the same chick or another.

The two highly feasible sightings, both of cockatoos with red-painted tails were in the Perth Metropolitan area (Cottesloe and Wanneroo). The Cottesloe sighting was made by BAWA member Erin Paul.



Volunteers prepare for a day of surveying near Katanning during the 2003 breeding season

Photo courtesy Niel Adams



A Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo chick having its tail painted in the 2003 breeding season.

Photo courtesy Rick Dawson

Two other sightings were most likely Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos and two other records are inconclusive.

At the July 2004 Recovery Team meeting it was concluded that the trial provided us with some valuable observations but the extensive time and effort required to conduct it don't justify its continuation. As a result we won't be marking tails this breeding season.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the BAWA members who kept an eye out for cockies with painted tails, Erin for reporting her sighting, and a particular thanks to Tom Delaney, Dot Kingston, Kathy Vallence and Phyllis Bentley who accompanied me on the surveys. Your help was greatly appreciated.

And now the 2004 breeding season is upon us.

Once again we will be conducting surveys between September and December at Carnaby breeding sites in the northern wheatbelt and Great Southern. The objectives of the surveys are to identify active hollows and feeding sites that correspond to the breeding sites. Anyone interested in taking part please let me know. The trips will be between three and five days duration. Accommodation is provided though volunteers must provide their own food and bedding. For further information about these and other volunteer opportunities please contact me on 9287 2448, or on my mobile (0438 678492) or email <ljmcmahon@bigpond.com>.

Thanks

Leonie McMahon

UNUSUAL SIGHTING OF BUFF-BANDED RAIL

Summer of 2003/2004 in the interior was very hot and very dry. There had been no significant rain for months.

Lorna Glen was a pastoral lease and is now managed by CALM, prior to it being declared a conservation reserve. Situated 156 km north east of Wiluna, it encompasses several different land forms, two lake systems which fill with fresh water during the summer/autumn rains drying through winter and spring, a large and diverse plant population, 58 known species of terrestrial invertebrates, a number of native and feral mammals, and has a good representation of inland bird species.

When the rains arrived in April 2003 all the windmills were shut off as part of the plan to allow the area to return to its natural state, which hopefully will not be too difficult as Lorna Glen was not occupied until the 1920s. Throughout its history of cattle and sheep production it has been relatively kindly treated.

Many bird species bred on Lindsay Gordon Lagoon, the last of the Black Swan and Australian Shelduck families departing in mid October.

By January 2004 the only water available was in the birdbaths we kept in the homestead yard. These attracted many birds we had not previously seen so close to the house.

On the morning of 3rd January I caught a glimpse of a new bird skulking around the sheds, about 150 m from the house. As I moved so also did this bird, running quickly, stopping very briefly, tail flicking, disappearing into bush. He was much too fast for me to keep up on rough ground.

A search through my field guide gave me a few ideas, but with little to go on, all I could do was resolve to have my



Buff-banded Rail, Lorna Downs
Photo courtesy Gina Gregory

binoculars with me and be on the lookout the next morning.

All was revealed at 5am the next day when I saw, very clearly, this delightful little fellow and identified the Buff-banded Rail.

The bird took up residence under our house. How it managed to live there with at least 10 sand goannas (*Varanus gouldii*) wandering around is beyond me.

The rail stayed around regularly paddling in the water containers on the ground, pecking in the grass, and allowing us to see and photograph him, so long as he could pretend we could not see him.

We left Lorna Glen 12th January and he was still there, remaining for another week or so as far as we know.

Gina Gregory



Buff-banded Rail, Lorna Downs
Photo courtesy Gina Gregory

SOME GOOD NEWS FOR THOMSONS LAKE

In the March 2004 edition of WA Bird Notes I outlined some of the problems at Thomsons Lake and with the management of this important Ramsar site. Since writing that letter some positive changes to management of the lake have occurred. This has resulted from the Beeliar Regional Park Community Advisory Committee and several individuals actively bringing the matter to the attention of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), the Conservation Commission, the

Department of Environment (DoE) and the Water and Rivers Commission.

The good news is that Thomsons Lake is now being managed by the Regional Parks group which is based in Fremantle. This will allow better response to issues and easier management than when it was managed from Wanneroo. This not only allows CALM to better maintain and manage the area but allows local conservationists easier access to the managing authority to report problems.

A meeting was held in May 2004 to discuss water levels at Thomsons Lake, which have been affected by changed drainage patterns, urbanisation, ground water abstraction and decreased rainfall. Attendees at the meeting included CALM, DoE, the Water and Rivers Commission, Mike Bamford and Professor Phillip Jennings (Chairman of the Beeliar Regional Park Community Advisory Committee). The upshot of the meeting was that the authorities agreed to recommend to CALM that drainage water from the Jandakot Mound would be pumped into the lake during the winter months. This water would be sourced from the sub-soil drainage of the

South Jandakot Drainage Scheme, which has very low concentrations of nutrients during the heavy rain periods of winter. It is hoped that the Water Corporation will be able to implement this plan in winter 2004. This pumping should result in the lake drying out roughly a month later than it would otherwise (hopefully in January rather than November or December). This will provide for better use of this Ramsar

wetland by migratory waders as well as allowing more cygnets to mature to 'flight stage' prior to the lake drying out.

A third positive outcome is the DoE announcing that it is to conduct a full review of the Jandakot Water Mound and is developing a groundwater management plan for the mound. Obviously once these documents are drafted it will be important for conservationists to review and make our comments to the DoE.

I would also make some comments about the stumps and branches within the lake perimeter that were noted by the editors (WA Bird Notes March 2004) to be present during the 1970s. If these stumps were smallish (say less than 20 cm diameter) and branches not exceeding three metres, they may have been from *Melaleuca teretifolia* which

grows well within lakes. I questioned my father (Jeff Spencer) about this and it was the only explanation he could think of. He has been stomping around "Thomo" for 50 years or so and did not remember any evidence of a receded lake edge. I would be very interested if the stumps and branches were larger or suggested growth of trees rather than water borne shrubs.

Robyn Pickering

WESTERN STAR FINCH AT CARNARVON

A fire raged through Water Supply Island, an area in the Gascoyne River at Carnarvon, in early September 2003. I was devastated by this news as the island and its surrounds comprised portions of two of my favoured birding areas,

the permanent pools of Tucker's Pump and Chinaman's Pool, the latter being a nature reserve.

Water Supply Island bounds these pools on their northern sides and by local standards is bountiful in bird life. My thoughts were for these birds and any other wildlife, as the accounts of the incident as related to me were of fierce winds driving an inferno. As the local Bush Fire Brigade was unable to get

wheel drive vehicles onto the island through the river sand, there was nothing anyone could do. Local rumour and speculation have it that the fire was deliberately lit. The memory of this time still stirs my emotions.

The area had been in drought since 2002 and even the hardiest of Acacias were dying, although we did get one good rain close to the coast in June, about 30 mm from memory. A wildfire on top of the drought was likely to be devastating for wildlife. Another of my concerns was the time of year that this fire occurred. As most of our land birds breed around then, all nests, eggs or nestlings would have perished.

The following day I went there to survey the damage. My fears were well founded, as only small pockets of shrubs remained where there had been insufficient fuel to carry



Star Finch at Tucker's Pump, Carnarvon, on 24 July 2003

Photo courtesy Les George

the fire to them, and larger trees and tree stumps were still burning or smouldering. The most evident birds were kestrels, feasting on dead or dying small reptiles or those that may have survived the fire but were now without cover.

A species that I was particularly concerned about was the Western Star Finch (*Neochmia ruficauda clarescens*), which is listed as 'Near Threatened'. My first sighting of these birds was at a friend's place, a small plantation not far from Tucker's Pump. He had told me that they visited him fairly regularly but it was some time before I saw these lovely little birds. After that first sighting I found I was seeing them regularly and knew of three general areas where they could usually be found, including the two pools.

The largest numbers I had seen occurred at Chinaman's Pool, and on every occasion that I saw them there they were on the island, in an open area with scattered shrubs close to the pool. Fairy-wrens and the seemingly ubiquitous Zebra Finch also favoured this same area. Surveying after the fire it could be seen that vegetation in this area was almost totally destroyed, with not a bird to be seen and those bushes that contained the many finch nests were gone or were black skeletons. I searched for a long time to find anything other than a kestrel but in vain, they were all gone. Had they escaped the fire and moved on or perished? This could be devastating for the Star Finch, already rare in this area. Could our local population survive? My hopes were buoyed that first day I searched, as two were seen on the southern bank of the river in the Chinaman's Pool area—at least they still existed. Another search around the same locality a week or so later revealed a single finch where I had hopes that the numbers might have increased but, sadly, not so. I have only ever seen Star Finches on the southern side of the river even though there are some areas that would seem to be suitable on the north side, but a lot of plantations on that side extend virtually to the riverbank.

In November I met Hans Riesch, a visiting German 'birdo', and I spent a day with him trying to find some of the birds he wished to find in our area. He related to me that he had seen Star Finches on three consecutive days, 15–17 November 2003, with the largest number being 25, and at three different locations, one of them being Chinaman's Pool. The only location that was not bounded by the river was at Bibbawarra Bore, an artesian flow of hot water with saline content that was discovered while drilling for coal years ago. This is located some kilometres to the north of town. Here he saw only four birds. I tried in vain to find some myself, regularly visiting two of the areas on the river where he saw them. I was beginning to doubt his claims.

It was not until March 2004 that I saw one, and then only one, at my friend's place where I had my first sighting. Then in late April—early May I observed a pair, perhaps more, with Zebra Finches, further up river than previously seen. I returned there on more than one occasion and saw them each time. However, it is unlikely they had always

been there. Star Finches are never far from water, and the Gascoyne River had only recently been in flow, breaking the longest running drought or length of time without a river flow of two years. Once again I searched around Chinaman's and Tucker's Pump to no avail. Then on 17 May 2004 I was birding around the sewage farm and decided to look in an area that had also previously held Star Finches, this time seeing approximately 20 birds, at least five of them juveniles. This was the first indication of breeding activity that I had seen, and was the first sign of a population increase. I was most aggrieved to learn that this area has been nominated for tourist accommodation development under the draft Carnarvon–Ningaloo Coastal Strategy. I put in a submission opposing this as I viewed this area as an important feeding/breeding ground for this species. River frontage within the town precinct is some of the last remaining refuge for this species in the Carnarvon area as grazing and fire are seen as the biggest threats to their continued survival. Grazing of river frontage is listed as having a greater impact, both for loss of seed and cover. The pastoral lease, Brickhouse Station, lying just east of the North West Coastal Highway bridge, is heavily grazed, and as such does not provide suitable habitats.

Later surveys of the area near the sewage farm have shown a further population increase, last seen to be approximately 60 birds, with 20–25 % of them juvenile. The juveniles were all red-billed and some were beginning their first moult.

On 12 July I was surveying on Water Supply Island in the area that once held the largest colony of Star Finches and where a lot of grass has re-grown. Some of the bushes burnt in the fire have begun regenerating from ground level so the roots, at least, survived the fire. It will still take a long time to get back to the status that they once had. Moving through the area I came across a flock of Zebra Finches, and then more finches, almost immediately dismissing them as more 'Zeb's'. However, they were Star Finches, and with no characteristic red faces so they were juvenile. They moved off and I pursued them until locating them again. I tried to gauge their numbers. More appeared, flitting from one area to another. There were two generations of juveniles, black billed and red billed, and together with the five adults I saw, the group numbered about 20. I saw one of the adults drive off some of the youngsters. Reasons for this were unclear, but perhaps it was to encourage independence, I thought. Then I saw one of these adults with a feather in its beak so I knew that nest lining was in progress. Watching for a while, I learned of the direction this material was being taken and eventually the nest site. This nest was placed in a wild passion fruit vine covering the charred remains of a dead shrub, the nest itself being very difficult to locate. Normally I consider this plant to be a pest as it has the ability to kill off some vegetation by covering it and choking out the necessary sunlight, but in this case it has not caused the death of the shrub and is of benefit to nesting birds.

This nesting behaviour shows that our local population of Star Finches has proven that they can make a comeback but any further loss of habitat can only serve to increase

the likelihood that we may one day witness the demise of this endearing little bird around Carnarvon.

There is little in the way of historic records of this species being found around Carnarvon. Johnstone *et al.* (2000) describe it as a rare visitor but perhaps their numbers have been increasing. I would be interested to hear from anyone who may have sighted this species around the locality of Carnarvon, when, where and approximate numbers.

Reference

- Johnstone, R.E., Burbidge, A.H. and Stone, P. (2000)
Birds of the southern Carnarvon Basin, Western
Australia: distribution, status and historical changes.
Records of the Western Australian Museum,
Supplement No. 61: 371-448.

Les George

SOME WELCOME VISITORS

Our backyard macadamia nut tree (about 6 m high) produces a small quantity of nuts each year, but as they are very difficult to crack we don't usually crack the small-sized ones. In mid-July last year (2003) when we returned from a holiday we were surprised to find some nuts lying on the ground, cracked open and the kernels removed. About a week later the culprits appeared very early one morning—they were about 25 white-tailed black-cockatoos foraging under the tree and having no problems cracking the fallen nuts. We were pleased to have been singled out for this visit to our suburban garden, almost adjacent to Garden City.

About 7:00 am on 13 July this year (2004) I enjoyed seeing seven or eight of the cockatoos visiting the tree and the bird bath. They did not stay long, and I went for my early morning walk. According to my wife, nearly 40 of the birds returned during my absence. They stayed for about 20 minutes, foraging (and a few bathing) before flying away. Were the first few a scouting party that went away to fetch the rest of the flock?

Max Reynolds

COCKATOOS AND LIQUIDAMBAR

Further to my article in the June edition of WABN in which I reported Australian Ringnecks and Red-capped Parrots feeding on the seeds of my Liquidambar tree, I have since seen Galahs and white-tailed black-cockatoos doing likewise. It may be that Liquidambars provide a valuable food source for these seed-eating birds living in suburbia rather than bushland.

Mavis Norgard

THE DECLINING BIRDLIFE OF WOOROLOO

Introduction

During 1951-1953 the late Eric Sedgwick (1955, 1956) observed 82 species of birds in and around Wooroloo. Almost all his observations were within 8 km of the town, and it was a comprehensive survey and typical of his enthusiasm and skill.

When living at Wooroloo myself between late October 1985 and mid February 1986 I made a weekly diary of the birdlife. My study area was a varied one and consisted of the buildings of the old TB sanatorium, their gardens, exotic trees of considerable age and size and a sporting oval, all of which was surrounded by remnant Jarrah forest with some Wandoo.

All my observations were made within 1.5 km of the town. My birdlist of 45 species is a very poor one compared to Sedgwick's, but because it was made 33 years after Sedgwick, it is worthwhile comparing the abundances of those species that we observed in common.

The Birds

Those seemingly commoner in the 1980s than the 1950s:

Laughing Turtle-Dove. Now well established. (The Spotted Turtle-Dove was not observed by me).
Laughing Kookaburra. Well established in the woodland.
Mistletoebird. Observed throughout my stay.
Welcome Swallow. Several birds in early February 1986.
Tree Martin. Flocks of up to 40 observed throughout my stay.

Those with small or no change in abundance:

Collared Sparrowhawk. One bird, once.
Common Bronzewing. No flocks now.
Pallid Cuckoo. Heard calling on three occasions.
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo.
Australian Owlet-Nightjar. A few birds on 12 January 1986.
Sacred Kingfisher. Observed irregularly and infrequently.
Rainbow Bee-eater. A flock of 25 in early February 1986.
Western Gerygone. Heard calling throughout my stay.
Brown Honeyeater. Observed throughout my stay.
New Holland Honeyeater. Observed throughout my stay.
Yellow-rumped Thornbill. Observed throughout my stay.
Rufous Whistler. Observed regularly and frequently.
Grey Shrike-thrush. Observed frequently.
Grey Fantail. Observed continually throughout my stay.
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike. Observed continually throughout my stay.
Australian Magpie. Observed continually and frequently.
Australian Raven. Observed continually, small numbers.
Silvereye. Observed throughout my stay.

Those seemingly rarer in the 1980s:

White-faced Heron. One bird, once, on the sporting oval.
Wedge-tailed Eagle. One bird, once.
White-tailed black-cockatoo sp/spp. Six birds once, heard calling once.
Australian Ringneck. Small numbers.
Red-capped Parrot. Small numbers, not as abundant as the previous species.

Tawny Frogmouth. Heard calling at night on two occasions.
 Splendid Fairy-wren. Small numbers throughout my stay.
 Striated Pardalote. Observed regularly and frequently.
 Weebill. Observed in late October, early November and early December 1985.
 Inland Thornbill. Observed in late October and early November 1985.
 Red Wattlebird. Only observed in late October and early November 1985.
 Western Wattlebird. Observed throughout my stay, small numbers.
 White-naped Honeyeater. Observed on four occasions.
 Western Spinebill. Observed throughout my stay.
 Scarlet Robin. Observed irregularly and infrequently.
 Magpie-lark. Observed on three occasions.
 Willie Wagtail. One bird in early February 1986.
 Dusky Woodswallow. Two birds once, one bird once.
 Richard's Pipit. One bird once, on the sporting oval.

Species not observed by Sedgwick (1955, 1956).

Black-shouldered Kite. One bird, once.
 Galah. One observation of two birds, one of six.
 Barn Owl. One secondary quill found.

Discussion

Of the 45 species observed by me, five (11%) were seemingly commoner in the mid-1980s than in the early 1950s, the abundance of 18 (40%) seemingly remained the same, or little changed, and 19 (42%) were rarer. Three were only observed by me and two of them, the Black-shouldered Kite and Galah, may have come in to the district after Sedgwick's time.

Thirty-three (73%) of the 45 are typical of and occur throughout the Jarrah forest, which is to be expected because the area is set in the northern part of it. Four species (9%), the Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Rufous Whistler, Australian Magpie and Welcome Swallow, are atypical of the forest today (Stranger 1999) but are considered by Abbott (1999) to have been part of it at the time of settlement. Another three (7%), the Willie Wagtail, Magpie-lark and Richard's Pipit are alien to the area and have intruded into it after settlement. Two species, the Laughing Turtle-Dove and the Laughing Kookaburra are introduced, and three species were only recorded by me (see above).

Of the five species seemingly commoner the Laughing Turtle-Dove and Laughing Kookaburra are introduced, and the Welcome Swallow data is scanty.

Of the 18 species showing no change, 17 are typical of the Jarrah forest, while the other, the Pallid Cuckoo, is atypical. The 17 then have continued to survive despite the clearing of the forest and settlement.

Of the 19 species seemingly rarer, 15 are typical of the forest. The other four, the White-faced Heron, Willie Wagtail, Magpie-lark and Richard's Pipit, have followed

settlement into it. The 15 then have suffered adversely because of clearing and settlement.

Thus overall, 33 (73%) species of the Jarrah forest are surviving here, even though half of them are now rarer.

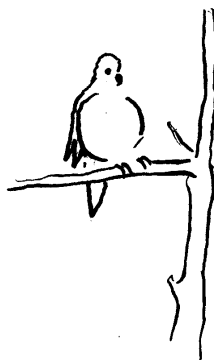
Conclusion

Forty-five species recorded at Wooroloo between October 1985 and February 1986 were compared to the records made by Eric Sedgwick during 1951-1953, a time lapse of 33 years. Almost half have declined in abundance, and two species may have intruded into the area since Sedgwick's time.

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 Stranger, R.H. 1999. Birds of the Banksiadale area in the 1960s. *Western Australian Bird Notes* 90: 14-17.

Robert H Stranger



Senegal Dove
 Cartoon by Penny
 Towells

CORVIDS NEAR CARNARVON

The most common corvid in the Shark Bay–Carnarvon area is the Little Crow, which is particularly common around towns and homesteads, but also occurs throughout the landscape. Torresian Crows are less common, and occur mainly along the river systems.

In the past, it was believed that the northern limit of the Australian Raven was near Nerren Nerren, about 100 km south of Shark Bay (Storr 1985). However, more recently, there have been several reports from north of Nerren

Nerren. Johnstone *et al.* (2000) listed one report from the base of Shark Bay, and several from Meedo Station, on the Wooramel River, east of Shark Bay. The first of these was a bird that I saw flying over the Useless Loop road, 41 km west of the Denham road, on 21 August 1991, and identified on the basis of call and flight pattern. At Meedo, Ron Johnstone found the species on the Wooramel River on 14 October 1994, and I saw and heard the species nearby the following May.

A few reports of Australian Ravens in this area were submitted to the second BA Atlas, but it is not clear which of these are reliable, as some of these reports appear to be based on insufficient information to be sure of the identity of the birds in question.

Further reports come from Frank O'Connor, who saw a small group of corvids on and near the tall radio mast on

the edge of Denham on the Peron Peninsula in June 1999. He identified the corvids on the mast as Australian Ravens on the basis of size, throat hackle and calls. They were in loose association with some Little Crows that were nearby on the ground. On 17 July 2004, Frank heard and then saw two probable Australian Ravens flying overhead at a windmill 10 km west of the Overlander Roadhouse, just to the south-east of Shark Bay. However, Frank considered that he did not have enough details (two short calls from birds in flight) to support an URRF and submitted it as 'corvid sp.' on the Atlas sheet.

Interestingly, Les George reported an unusual corvid at Carnarvon on 13 July this year. Les lives in Carnarvon and, being used to hearing the local corvids, when he heard this one he recognised it as being unusual for the area. He quickly located the bird to identify it. He has provided the following description:

"With binoculars raised it was very easy to see the long hackles extending when it called. I moved in with the intention of taking photos but it could not be approached, taking off again, but only so far as the next power pole where it continued to call. The call, as best I can describe it was 'ahrr, ahrrr, ahrrrrrrr', with the last long and drawn out. I know the Torresian is similar but has a nasal quality. I can't say I noted anything distinctive in its flight, it never flew far. Mostly flapping, but with short glides, upsweeping to land."

On the basis of the description provided by Les, this bird appears to have been an Australian Raven.

A number of experienced observers have worked in this area over past decades without having recorded the Australian Raven. However, the above reports suggest that perhaps this species is expanding north.

Observers in the Shark Bay area therefore, should be very careful when identifying corvids, as three different species could be encountered. It is worth taking very careful note of calls, flight pattern and behaviour. If possible, it is also useful to make direct comparisons with other corvids in the area. Careful observations will lead to a better understanding of the current distribution of the Australian Raven, and shed light on whether it really is expanding northwards, or whether the above reports simply represent vagrant birds.

References

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Allan Burbidge



What's in a Name?



By Geronticus

Yes readers, the bird has been on the wing. During this most enjoyable break I found myself sojourning in northern climes; some of my time was spent repairing a recalcitrant tripod at the Carnarvon sewage ponds, but mostly relaxing in the sun on a fishing boat. From time to time various seabirds passed close to our vessel. What particularly claimed my attention was the appearance of three magnificent Lesser Frigatebirds and some Brown Boobies. These two kleptoparasitic species have prompted this episode that I'm tempted to label "A probe into the pirates" or "A bash at the buccaneers".

What ever title we use, their preference for warmer tropical locations and bully boy tactics tell us frigatebirds and boobies would be quite at home with Captain Hook or Long John Silver. Let us begin recruitment with *Sula dactylatra* the **Masked Booby**, a bird that lives for the open seas away from the sight of land. A fresh breeze and the sun at your back, a jug of ale and a tasty wench... "Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum, arr me hearties". Hmmm ... all this is fine but let's get down to the real facts.

Depending on your source *Sula* has two origins: Old Norse and Greek. Old Norse *Sula*, was the name for the *solan* goose, which was perceived to be almost the same as a gannet or a greedy person. Now let's have a gander at the Greek version. *Sula* we are led to believe is Greek for plunderer and *dactylatra* means black fingered. At least the name black fingered plunderer suggests an immediate admission to any pirate crew. This bird is the largest of the boobies. It has a white head with a conspicuous black face, hence the familiar prefix masked. Its main diet consists of fish and squid. While the Masked Booby has been known to resort to piratical behaviour, it normally obtains food by plunging onto its prey from height. This can mean, we are told, a dive from between 12 and 100 metres. For good measure it partakes of this meal while still under water. Booby is probably derived from the word boo, a word often used as an expression of contempt at football matches and in ornithological circles when one '**wouldn't or couldn't say boo to a goose**'. Apparently a booby was the name seafarers gave to a fool or a "Lubbly Lout". We won't get into lubbards or louts; suffice to say none of

these terms are complimentary. Apparently our swashbuckling plunderer received the humiliating name Booby, due to the ease with which it allowed itself to be captured. This should not really come as a surprise, having spent the morning diving from 100 metres or so into the ocean and consuming live fish while under water. I would think it safe to say one would be in a bit of a daze and not seeing too well. The bird would probably be in a permanently concussed state — its black face could well be the result of sustained bruising.

The next member of our crew is the **Brown Booby**, *Sula leucogaster* the white-bellied plunderer. This brings to

“... a picture of a rather rotund old sea dog...”

mind a picture of a rather rotund old sea dog, reclining in a hammock, humming shanties and sipping a glass of rum. A retired pirate telling yarns or selling maps leading to buried treasure. This comparison suits the Brown Booby quite well as, unlike the previously mentioned species, our bird is quite at home over shallow in-shore waters. This plunderer is likely to be found loafing on channel markers, buoys and the rigging of anchored ships. Now don't let his demure appearance fool you, readers —old white belly is on record as being a bully that can relieve other birds of their hard earned food.

Our next crew member is *Sula abbotti*, plundering Abbott or **Abbott's Booby**. Is this plunderer named after a wayward man of the cloth, a seafaring Friar Tuck taken aboard to appease denizens of the deep? Or to ease the conscience of the crew after a bit of plank walking or other dastardly high jinks? Does this bird have a balding pate or some other physical attribute to associate it with a man of the cloth? Was a flock of gannets given as a medieval tithe to a short-sighted ecclesiastic in days gone by? Well after consulting HANZAB the nearest we can get to a religious connection is a behavioural pattern that some of us might have experienced in a pew on a Sunday morning, that is ritualized (false) sleeping. This crafty little trait is the way the bird deals with unwanted behaviour from other birds. Sadly all efforts to establish a religious connection to this bird failed. We find that Abbott's Booby, is the name given to the bird after its discovery on Consumption Island in 1892 by Mr W L Abbott.

Our last Booby is *Sula sula* the plundering plunderer or **Red-footed Booby**. One would think of the plundering plunderer as the ultimate pirate's pirate. After all, it's the most numerous of the boobies, foraging throughout the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. Its eye catching crimson feet could suggest a cutthroat wallowing in gore. Its plumage being the most varied of the *Sula* clan would enable it to fit in with any motley band of buccaneers.

Sorry, *Sula sula* is the least piratical pirate. It's hard to find any record of it beating up and stealing from other avian seafarers. It confines its aggression to its own kind and is most likely to be found roosting in a tree beside its doting mate after a day out on the briny with the lads.

Finally we come to frigatebirds. Specifically *Fregata ariel* the **Lesser Frigatebird**, the most common of the Western Australian Fregatidae. Equipped with a large hooked bill, long wings and deeply forked tail these birds effortlessly patrol the tropical skies. Supreme aerialists, they can out manoeuvre other birds and steal their food. They'll gobble up hatching turtles, other bird's eggs and chicks and harass the daylights out of other species. To come across a band of these on the way home is any seabird's nightmare. When watching this brigand of a bird wheeling the skies, one would consider its common name Frigatebird, or Man-o-war Hawk very apt. We would think science too, possibly had in mind a flying pirate when coining *Fregata ariel*. Not so, HANZAB would have us believe the bird is named because of its fairy-like qualities and our Ariel is a fairy spirit supposedly taken from Shakespeare or Milton.

Well “Hello sailor!” Now, what sort of crew do we have here, Mister Christian?



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.

September: Wildlife and Landscape Works

Artists: Jenny Preston, Flo Coughlan, and Debbie Sullivan
Photographer: Stuart Miller

October: Sea and Landscapes from south-west Western Australia

Solo Exhibition by Artist Lyn Jolly

November: Landscape Inspirations

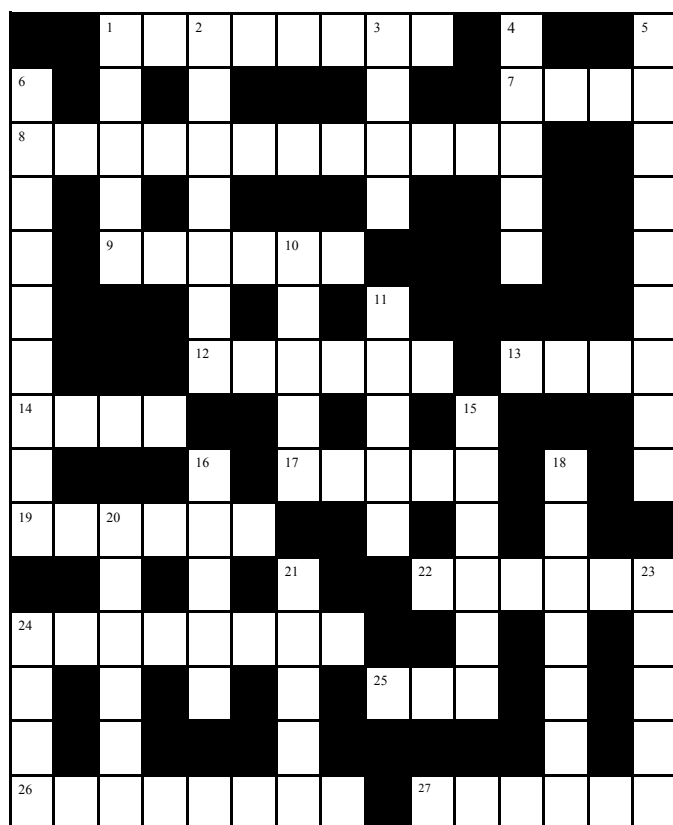
Solo Exhibition by Artist Printmaker Barbara Bennett

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

By Pam Agar



Clues Across

1. Common Australian tree.
7. Facial organ of Musk Duck.
8. Condition of being at one's disposal.
9. Necessary for long haul to Siberia.
12. Entrance to a Bee-eater's nest.
13. Genus name of some owls.
14. Soft warm feathers.
17. Predator of birds.
19. Regular campout period.
22. Important reference of Australian birds.
24. Uncommon duck visitor to northern WA.
25. Food of summer visitor to South-west WA.
26. Interesting woodland reserve SE of Perth.
27. Black and white robin of inland areas.

Clues Down

1. To avoid.
2. Potential nest site of Fairy Martin.
3. Light colour.
4. Road visited on many an excursion.
5. Manner of conduct.
6. The fairy-wren and grass-wren family.
10. Sub-group of scientific family.
11. State of deterioration.
15. Useful ponds in dry areas.
16. Postpone.
18. Large raptor.
20. Collect data to form a comprehensive view.
21. Discourage.
23. To construct.
24. Organisational framework.



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Volunteers required!

KINGS PARK WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL

30/9 - 4/10/04

BAWA has once again been invited to host a display stall as part of the science tent at the annual Kings Park Wildflower Festival from 30th September to 4th October 2004. Last year we had a successful inaugural presence with great public interest in our display, which included competitions, information, bird walks, advice on bird friendly gardens, fact sheets and even a stuffed Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo!!

This is probably the most important event BAWA will ever be part of, with an estimated exposure to 40 000 people!

We need your help to "man" the stall for a day or half day. You will need to be enthusiastic with members of the public and able to deal with a wide range of questions as well as promoting Birds Australia WA and its activities. The stall will be hosted in pairs.

We would also love to hear from anyone interested in leading a bird walk for members of the public, as well as anyone with ideas for competitions, displays or information for the public.

If you can help with this exciting event (for which you will also receive free entry to the wildflower festival!) please contact **Robert Davis** preferably by e-mail on rob@graduate.uwa.edu.au or on 6488 1493 (work) or 9285 8870 (home) and indicate how you wish to assist.

Australia Day Weekend Campout

There is no such thing.

Due to changes to our calendar the Australia Day Holiday is to be taken on the actual Day, 26 January. In order not to clash with school holidays we have decided to have the campout on the following weekend. This will be 29-31 January 2005. Naturally all are welcome to arrive early and stay late as the Campout will be at Albany where the summers and the birding are both excellent.

The normal Albany Campsite has been fully booked by other groups and we will stay at the Kalgan River Chalets and Caravan Park. This is also far more convenient for the most active Albany members and is closer to the sites to which they will lead us.

The Caravan Park has an excellent website:

<www.caravan-wa.com.au/krcpp.html>.

This provides all the information you require. Their phone number is 9844 7937. As usual you must ring and make your own bookings.

The Albany group will take us out early one morning on a search for the elusive Western Ground Parrot and we may also see Western Bristlebirds and other wonders of the South Coast.

I will be running the general organisation and Anne Bondin and Ray Garstone and friends will look after the excursions.

Ring me for further details up to 24 September and after 22 October. We will arrive in Albany no later than 27 January.

Clive Napier 08 9332 7265

SQUARWK

Got something to say? We sure have! The Eyre Bird Observatory Management Committee is holding a Family Fun Day at Castledare on Sunday 19 September.

We are planning to hold a raffle on the day and are desperately seeking donations of items suitable to raffle!

If you can assist by donating something, we will be happy to collect.

Please call:

Birds Australia WA office - 9383 7749 or Catherine Van Delft - 9279 9913 or Rod Smith - 9447 3804.

SQUARWK, THANK YOU.

Breakfast with the Birds

The next **Breakfast with the Birds** will be held on **Sunday 31st October 2004**. Meet at the BAWA sign in the Western Power Playground at **8:00 am**.

Teams will be assigned different survey paths (transects) within King's Park and will be allowed one hour on their assigned path. The paths are approximately the same length, and they are the same paths that were used last year.

The aim is for each team to record birds along their assigned survey path in a one hour period. Prizes will be awarded for the team with the most bird species, the fewest bird species (but no cheating!), the most unusual bird seen (decided by a show of hands on the day) and in any other categories that we can think of on the day.

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

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

Rules

- * Minimum team size is 4. There is no maximum team size (but be sensible!).
- * At least two team members must confirm the identity of each bird species recorded.
- * Birds can be seen or heard.
- * Team members are allowed to leave the path only to identify a bird first seen or heard from the path. They must return to the path before searching for new birds.
- * Strictly one hour or you won't get breakfast!
- * Please survey the path assigned to you.
- * All surveys are to be completed by 10:00 am.
- * Each team will be provided with a record form; please use it as your records are valuable.
- * For planning purposes (so we know how many people to expect!), it would be appreciated if teams could contact the BAWA office by Friday 22 October.

As we said last year, this is intended to be a fun, social event! However, the data we collect provide a snapshot of the birds of Kings Park over a short period of time, and we can compare these snapshots between years. If we continue 'Breakfast with the Birds' annually, for the coming years and decades, we may begin to chart changes in abundance or presence and absence of birds within the Park.

Hope to see you there this year!

Jennifer Wilcox and Mike Bamford



*On Roebuck Bay
Shorebird Capital of Australia.*

2005 COURSES

Wave The Waders Goodbye

April 6th- 10th or

April 21st- 25th

Learn to identify waders. Participate in migration research. Discover the best Broome birding areas.

Birds of the Broome Region

September 16th- 20th or October 2nd- 6th

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Sunday 19 December: Christmas function, Perry House

A barbecue will be held on Sunday
19 December at Perry House commencing
5:00pm.

BYO meat, drinks and salads—all members
welcome!

Lake Muir /Unicup wetlands and surrounding Nature Reserves

Bird Campout

Friday 19th to Sunday 21st November

The Lake Muir /Unicup wetlands and surrounding nature reserves are situated approx 70 km east of Manjimup in the beautiful south west of WA. The area is renowned for its natural beauty and the wetlands are listed under the Ramsar convention.

Bird surveys have been done in the past and it is now time to update the species lists for the wetlands and reserves to determine if any of the wetlands are declining or improving. We may also be able to determine if species compositions are changing. Let's see if we can add some new birds or extend some distributions!!

You can just census wetland birds if that is your specialty or you can focus on forest /heath birds, or everything!! There will be some canoes available for the intrepid.

The survey will also entail some night work looking for nocturnal birds in the forest /heath areas as well as the wetlands. Some groups will be specializing in playback using recorded owl calls. Masked Owls have been recorded in the area. Local leaders, who have undertaken owl surveys before, will assist us in our night ramblings.

The area also has records of Australasian Bittern, last recorded in 1983/84, so we are keen to find out if this species is still persisting in the area.

CALM will be providing some vehicles to ferry people around to the reserves and wetlands. A house is available with sleeping facilities, a bunkroom, showers, toilet, kitchen, etc. There is plenty of room to pitch tents around the house.

Leaders: Peter Taylor, Ian Wheeler, along with other CALM personnel with many years of experience.

People wishing to register their interest should contact Ian Wheeler on tel 9771 7959 or e-mail <ianwh@calm.wa.gov.au>.

Ian Wheeler will be away between the 17th Sept and 20th Oct; during this time the contact person will be Roger Hearn, tel 9771 7936 or e-mail <rogerh@calm.wa.gov.au>.

An information sheet will be sent out upon registering your interest and a follow up information sheet just prior to the GREAT event.

Species in the Spotlight: Grey Falcon

Our second rarest birds of prey, the Grey Falcon is little known and understood. To date no systematic study of the species has been conducted. Even seemingly basic facts such as the size of the breeding territory are unknown, not to mention the total number of the population.

Not surprisingly there is more speculation around than profound knowledge. To get a better idea of their biology and ecology I have started a research project with the title 'Movements and Genetics of Grey Falcons'. Now the main question is, "where are they"? The combination of their scarcity and the remoteness of their preferred arid habitat makes the search a challenge. Further, sightings and especially breeding are probably more often recorded than reported.. Still today the threat by falconers and egg-collectors has to be taken seriously.

The main objective of the project is to study the movements of individual birds. Both short-term movements such as during breeding, and long-term

movements over extended periods of time are of interest. Birds will be marked individually with a combination of coloured metal bands, one band on each leg. If it seems difficult to find the birds in the first place, the hard bit will be to relocate the marked individuals. Although it is said that they rarely use the same nest twice, there might be a chance that the adult birds will come back to the same general area to breed. They are known to use old nests of corvids or other raptors such a Black Kites rather than building their own nest.

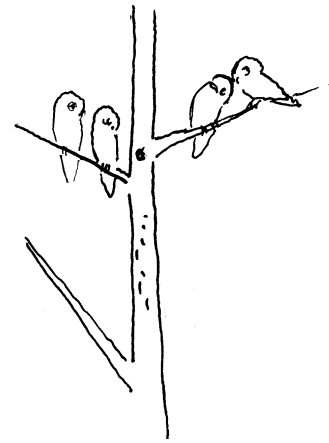
I would be very interested and grateful for every record, anywhere in Australia. Certainly all information will be kept strictly confidential. Please send all information to me directly:

Jonny Schoenjahn,
PO Box 5493, Cable Beach WA 6726
T: (08) 9192 7707, F: (08) 9192 7708,
E: jonnybird@bigpond.com

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 May to 31 July 2004. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

South East Regional Centre For Urban Landcare, City of Rockingham, Friends of Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre, Blackwood Environment Society, E Adams, N & E Adams, D & C R Andersson, C R & D Andersson, A Berryman, J Checker, K George, M & H Jessop, H Jessop, B Lister, J E Longman, L McLellan, Nykiel Family, E D & S Pigott, K Raiter, Z Reed, L Rosenberg, M Walker, R Watson, J Woodings



Us noisy? Never!!
Cartoon by Penny Towells



A convoy of 4WDs going to the Port Gregory campout, June 2004
Photo courtesy Molly Angus



Country Groups



ALBANY BIRD GROUP

May outing

Considering the weather forecast was appalling, a surprising number of twenty of us met at Lake Powell on 11 May.

We saw quite a few birds from the bird hide, but unfortunately there was a high wind and the water was quite choppy so most of the birds seemed to be on the other side of the lake and we didn't get very good views.

We then went to Lowlands Reserve, where BA members Brad and Jill Kneebone have been doing quite a bit of work with various environmental groups. They have fairly recently built a straw house on a large property adjoining the reserve, and wanted help with a bird survey of the area. We also looked for suitable Western Ground Parrot habitat, as there was an unconfirmed sighting in 1999.

Our surveys in the reserve were carried out as a part of the fauna surveys proposed by the Lowlands Reserve Management Plan. Including Lake Saidie, we saw 34 species in the reserve, and 50 for the day. We were lucky the rain kept off until we were ready to leave.

Liz Davies

July 2004 outing

Nineteen of us met at Lake Seppings and walked the newly constructed path that now circles the lake. The weather was cold but clear. Musk Ducks were displaying, but there were not many other duck species except Blue-billed Ducks with their beautiful blue bills. We saw a lot of other birds, and the final count was 49 species, including Sacred Kingfishers and Red-eared Firetails.

Liz Davies



Excursion Reports



MODONG NATURE RESERVE, OAKFORD, JANDAKOT REGIONAL PARK, 26 April

Several new members, children and regulars made up the large group of 45 that attended the morning excursion. The fine weather of no cloud or wind provided the perfect conditions for us to tally up a good bird list of 38 species.

We walked the central firebreak from east to west and then south along the western boundary break, returning the same way. This was the best route as the understorey here is almost impenetrable. Good sightings, especially for new members, were of Scarlet Robin, Rufous Whistler, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater and Splendid Fairy-wren, with a Little Eagle overhead.

A good introduction for the first time visitors to this site that demonstrated the importance of these banksia woodlands for species not seen now in the inner suburban areas.

David James

ALBANY PELAGIC TRIP, 1 May

The trip set sail from Torbay near West Cape Howe (west of Albany) with cloudy skies and moderate conditions. Southerly winds during the previous three days meant that expectations were high. It was three hours to get to the shelf. We quickly started seeing Flesh-footed Shearwaters, with a few Hutton's Shearwaters and a Little Shearwater, plus our first Australasian Gannet, Yellow-nosed Albatross, Shy Albatross and Great Skua. There were good numbers of White-faced Storm-Petrels and Soft-plumaged Petrels.

As we approached the shelf break we started seeing Great-winged Petrels and we stopped the boat in 300 metres of water and started burleying. There was nothing of great excitement for nearly an hour, but Black-browed Albatross and Wilson's Storm-Petrel were added to the list. The next two hours were two of the best hours of seabirding we have had on Western Australian trips, with Kerguelen Petrel, Black-bellied Storm-Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Wandering Albatross and Arctic Tern being seen.

This confirms that Albany is an excellent place for pelagic trips, following on from the pelagic in November 2003 where Sooty Albatross, Grey Petrel and White-headed Petrel were seen. The next Albany trip is likely to be on Saturday 16 October. Contact Frank O'Connor at <foconnor@iinet.net.au> or 08 9386 5694 for details.

Frank O'Connor

WANDOO HEIGHTS & NOBLE FALLS, 2 May

Thirty-two people saw 20 species of birds at Wandoo Heights and Noble Falls on 2 May.

The day was dry and very windy indeed, which could explain numbers.

We divided into three groups and enjoyed exhilarating walks with marvellous views. Several families of fairy-wrens were seen. Great views of a Wedge-tailed Eagle and close-ups of a pair of Common Bronzewing were enjoyed.

After morning tea, we went to Noble Falls and fared a little better here, counting 27 different species, well, I should say, seven extra! Easterly winds were very much in evidence. It was great fun, however. We saw Scarlet Robins, both Rufous and Golden Whistlers and generally felt happy despite conditions and lack of blossom.

Some new members and overseas visitors were in the party, enjoying it all greatly.

The sun shone throughout and we all thank Sue Mather for a 'beaut' half day's bird spotting.

Penny Towells

BURSWOOD OPEN SPACE, 13 May

Eight brave souls fronted up at 8:00 am on this, our coldest day of the year. But the birds were not too worried, though the Willy Wagtails were all fluffed up trying to get warm.

A total of 50 birds seen shows the importance of these green oases, next to the river, for the survival of our wildlife. Also, many people such as bike riders, walkers, dog walkers, joggers and families at the children's playground, use this old rubbish dump site. For a weekday it was surprisingly busy.

All the expected duck species (except the Freckled) were seen, which shows the quality of the water in the ponds. The pipits were not seen until the rougher areas beyond the bridge, possibly because of too many dogs off leads on the grass, despite the signs asking for dogs to be kept on leads. Maybe this is not policed.

The best sighting was the Little Eagle, which we were told is trying to keep the coot population down. This would be necessary as there were a lot there. Also the pair of Peregrine Falcons who live in the city and patrol this site, presumably keep the pigeons and doves in check.

There may not have been many of us but the enthusiasm shown overall made up for numbers.

Mary Vaughan

LAKE RICHMOND, 16 May

In spite of the cold (some would say freezing) conditions 19 or so diehards turned up for an enjoyable walk around the lake.

The birds must have been a bit put out by the weather too as there weren't a huge number to be seen, especially bush birds. Still, 44 species were recorded and there were enough about to keep us looking. And anyhow, it's not just about ticking off birds but getting out and about and enjoying the company of people with similar interests.

After the walk, some of us had a look around the Naragubup Environmental Centre constructed in the main from recycled materials and manned (sorry ladies!) by dedicated volunteers concerned, like most bird people, about the environment. It is worth a visit if you are nearby.

Ian Rudd



Hutt River in full flood, June campout, Port Gregory

Photo courtesy Molly Angus

OLD COACH ROAD, SERPENTINE RIVER, 30 May

Twenty-five members and friends met at 8:30 am at the turn off to Summer Track on the Albany Highway. The morning was quite chilly with a cold wind blowing. We set off in two groups and managed to find a reasonable number of birds along the Serpentine River by lunch time. CALM had given permission for four vehicles to enter the Disease Restricted Area along Old Coach Road. We travelled about 6 km east along the Old Coach Road; it was still basically wandoo country with low scrub on the lower damper areas. In all we saw 32 species including four species of robin, Rufous Treecreeper and Painted Button-quail. White eared Honeyeaters were also seen in two locations. This was an interesting record, as they are drier country birds and this was rather out of their usual territory. It was a very pleasant day and our thanks go to our leaders, Cheryl and Martin Gole.

Many thanks to CALM Dwellingup for permission to enter the Disease Restricted Area for the day.

Sue Keogh

PORT GREGORY CAMPOUT, 5–7 June

Twenty-two people drove north to the Port Gregory campout and escaped the cold winter weather of the south. Rain did not interrupt the weekend at any time but quite good falls occurred on the Friday night. The caravan park was simple but suitable for our needs and there was a useful outdoor meeting area with BBQs and seats.

This was the first BAWA excursion to this venue and thankfully it went without a hitch. Eighty-three species of birds were observed comprising a mixture of sea, lake and bush types.

The Hutt River provided an interesting assortment of egrets, herons, cormorants and other estuarine species while six raptors were recorded. In summer more waders would be present as there are considerable areas of marsh and lake associated with the Hutt Lagoon.

Irene Perry won the prize for guessing the correct number of species but if the area is visited again the winner will need to lift the number now that the best locations are known. An interesting sight was to see the Hutt River overflow into the ocean following the rains. We were fortunate to be at the sand bar at the time and one group of our members were almost cut off from the rest as the bar was eroded and they got very wet feet in their escape.

Thanks to all who attended and made the Campout a success.

Clive Napier

LITTLE RUSH LAKE, YANGETUP, 16 June

At 8.30 am, 12 birders (ten 'old' and two 'new') met for a walk in cool, cloudy conditions, around Little Rush Lake, Yangebup, under the guidance of Molly and Barry Angus. Molly and Barry kindly handed to all a list of birds sighted on 12 visits to the lake since November 2000. This was a useful guide to what we could expect to see on our visit.

Very few birds were seen by us on the lake, although it had a good level of water, some aquatic vegetation, some exposed muddy margins, and surrounding bushland vegetation close to the water in some areas. On the water

surface were Pacific Black Ducks, Grey Teal and Musk Ducks, in very low numbers. Dusky Moorhens and Purple Swamphens, also in low numbers, were observed around the margins.

A White-faced Heron landed in a tree above the lake. Pelicans, Black Swans, Australian Shelduck, and Australian Wood Duck flew overhead but didn't land.

It is interesting that so few water birds were recorded at Little Rush Lake this early in the rainy season, as it would be expected that many alternative wetlands would still be at summer low water levels, and thus the surface water birds, such as ducks, would tend to be concentrated in the lakes with remaining higher water levels.

In the bushland surrounding the lake we recorded 23 species, including a flock of 20 or more New Holland Honeyeaters in the upslope woodland. Three Red-capped Parrots were also recorded, and a Striated Pardalote was heard but not seen. Rainbow Lorikeets were present in very low numbers.

A highlight of the excursion was a large flock of 20 or more mainly female plumage Splendid Fairy-wrens in the woodland. At least one non-breeding male was seen.

A total of 35 species was recorded during the excursion.

Many thanks Molly and Barry Angus for an interesting and enjoyable outing.

Jennifer Muir

KARNUP AND BALDIVIS RESERVES, 19 June

On a brisk but fine winter's morning approximately 20 members of BAWA enjoyed seeing (until about 10 am) 28 birds at the lovely bushy Karnup Reserve. Not all members saw the Western Yellow Robin. It was mainly chased up by one or two quieter seekers. The Mandurah Group members who joined us were among the keener ones.

Then approximately 12 members went on to Baldavis Nature Reserve. This is larger and is scattered around the sports complex and the school. Unfortunately it has suffered too many fires resulting in weeds. Twenty-seven birds were seen here including a pair of Whistling Kites, perching and flying. One was a juvenile which confused the identification a little.

After lunch at the Baldavis picnic area, the fine weather inspired six members to go on to Lake Cooloongup where another 28 species were seen. Not much was seen on the Lake, only Australian Shelduck and Red-capped Plovers around the edge. Good views of Scarlet Robins, Splendid Fairy-wrens and another juvenile Whistling Kite were the top birds here. It was good to have such fine weather to enjoy the outdoors.

Mary Vaughan

SHENTON BUSHLAND, 10 July

An enjoyable morning was had by all as the weather turned on a sunny and cool morning for us. Sixteen people attended this new location and most were previously unaware of its existence in the heart of the western suburbs! We saw 24 species with highlights being great views of friendly Weebills, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, nesting Striated Pardalotes and both a Nankeen Kestrel and Black-shouldered Kite. The Variegated Fairy-wrens were heard but not seen. Thanks to all for a pleasant and enjoyable morning's bird-watching (apart from all the screeching corellas and Rainbow Lorikeets!).

Rob Davis

BLUE GUM LAKE, 15 July

About 20 people braved a cold but sunny morning for this walk around Blue Gum Lake Reserve in Mt Pleasant, half-a-dozen being beginners (two from Holland) attracted by notices in local newspapers.

In the banksia woodland very little was calling except Silvereyes and Australian Ravens. There was neither sight nor sound of the Splendid Fairy-wrens. The lake has only recently partly refilled and there was very little stirring apart from a few Pacific Black Ducks, Purple Swamphens and Dusky Moorhens. A count at the car park, however, netted a surprising 28 species: the usual bushbirds and parrots, including Rainbow Lorikeets feeding noisy chicks in a dead tree.

The party then drove up the road to Booragoon Lake, which has been dry until the recent rains, and in contrast was teeming with life. From the boardwalk could be seen three kinds of ducks, two kinds of cormorants, all the Eurasian Coots which had forsaken Blue Gum, and the usual gathering of White Ibis. For a final encore, a flock of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos gave us a fly-past.

Valerie Hemsley

KINGS PARK, 18 July

A chilly morning had people putting on extra layers of clothing for a morning wander through Kings Park. Thirteen people got out of their warm beds to take a walk through the bushland between May Drive and Lovekin Drive.

Many common inhabitants of Kings Park were seen, such as White-cheeked Honeyeaters (feeding on the few remaining Banksia blooms), Brown Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds and Weebills. A less common species, the Elegant Parrot, was represented by two individuals flying (at speed) over our heads, emitting their characteristic screech. Good views of a male Rufous Whistler were had, while it called and foraged in the sunlight.

A fleeting glimpse of what was probably a Painted Button-quail was had by a few. While scouting a suitable track for the walk the day before, we had seen a Painted Button-quail in an area of rehabilitation. A walk up towards the reservoir added a couple of ducks (Australian Wood Duck and Australian Shelduck) to the list, and the discovery of 'bottle-grebes'. A half-filled beer bottle floating in water does a very good impression of a small grebe!

On the way back from the reservoir two Spotted Pardalotes were very obliging and started to forage in low-hanging eucalypt foliage. At times the birds were only a couple of metres off the ground and mere metres away from observers, all the while singing their melodic song.

A nice morning walk yielded us 26 species and some gentle exercise. What more could we ask for!

Jennifer Wilcox

SPECTACLE SWAMP, 31 July

Everyone stayed in their cars at the start of this excursion as the rain poured down and it was a wonder that anyone

even turned up. However, minutes later the rain ceased and while it wasn't actually a sunny morning, it was still and very pleasant walking weather.

The turn-out of 23 included nine non-members who mixed well with the regulars, and they were rewarded with some quality birds for a site only minutes from the Freeway. The 45 species seen included Varied Sittella, Crested Pigeon, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Spotted and Striated Pardalotes and Grey Currawongs but surprisingly few waterbirds. The currawongs were a special delight, as to my knowledge this is the only site on the coastal plain near Perth where they occur regularly (that is bound to make someone write in to inform me otherwise!!). Furthermore, they were not present in the early 1980s when I spent a lot of time around The Spectacles. Western Wattlebirds were abundant and a pleasing feature of the bird list was that it contained only one introduced species: the Laughing Kookaburra. Raptors, however, were in short supply, with only a Whistling Kite and a distant Swamp Harrier.

This was an advertised excursion and thanks to the members who came along to introduce non-members to the birds.

Mike Bamford



Observatory Reports



BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

What a confusing year it has been. Rain right through the month of May meant a delayed start to the dry season and all the wetlands on the plains refilled.

Cannon-netting was cancelled in favour of mist-netting, Bush Bird Tours were finding Asian Dowitcher and Shorebird Tours were out in the paddocks as every bird left the bay in favour of the plains. And it was cold!

Just as we started to get nervous, and wondered if everything was ever going to get back to normal, sanity returned. The plains began to dry out and the birds gradually returned to the bay. Interesting was the very high number of Red Knots in breeding plumage that stayed over winter. Some estimates counted 400 Red Knots and estimated up to 75% in breeding plumage. An attempt to catch them in July was unsuccessful, and it is not known whether they are adult birds that did not migrate or second year birds having a dress rehearsal.



And now, it is dry enough again to access the lakes. Highlights have been Yellow Chats accessible within 3-4 km of the Observatory, glowing in the setting sun as they sit on the top of the saltmarsh. Counts of birds have turned up ridiculous numbers: 15 000 Black-winged Stilts, 500 Purple Swamphens, 300 Magpie Geese, 300+ Brolgas. If there is one thing we do in Broome really well, it is big numbers!

In to August and we are looking for signs that the waders are returning. Common Sandpipers are the first to reappear in July, having been completely absent for the past few months. Wood Sandpipers are at the lakes – but were they hiding when we couldn't get in? When will be the first breeding plumage Grey Plover? The first Oriental Pratincole or Little Curlew? There is a sense of anticipation and excitement as we look for old friends, and hope for new surprises.

Come up and join us at this exciting time of the year.

Joy Tansey
Warden

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Ken and Karina Harris will be leaving Eyre on September 1st after nearly eleven months. Their replacements will be Keith and Alice Thompson, who are making their way to Eyre from Queensland.



Cold mornings have been reported this winter—even frost on the sand dunes. Some significant changes at Eyre recently include CALM staff's work on the replacement of sections of the verandah floorboards and the provision of new signs; the donation of a dining table by Neil McCulloch from Esperance, and the replacement of the gas freezer which broke down after many years of good service. In August

notification of a successful funding application for dune work was received.

We wish Ken and Karina well for their future, and welcome Keith and Alice to the delights of Eyre.

Rod Smith
Chairman

Eyre Bird Observatory Management Committee

Correction: In the Eyre report in WABN 110, p30, it was reported that a Grey Wagtail was seen. This should have been reported as a Grey Fantail.



Coming Events



Important note re campouts

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

New Members

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

Sunday, 5 September: Pipidinnny Rd, Eglinton Half-day Excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Wanneroo and Pipidinnny 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.

For members and general public.

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 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 there. Wildflowers should be excellent at this time of the year. Participants should ring the BAWA office for directions and a mud map.

Leader: Clive Napier

Sunday, 12 September: Bedforddale Hill, Armadale Half-day Excursion

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. For members and guests only.

Leader: David Ballard

Thursday, 16 September: Pinnaroo Memorial Park, Padbury Mid-week Morning Excursion

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.

For members and general public.

Leader: Hank van Wees

Saturday 18 September: Campbell Barracks, Swanbourne

Half-day Excursion

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.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Boyd Wykes

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

Note: A week earlier due to public holiday on 27 September.

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 on Kakapo recovery for the Department of Conservation in NZ.

Sunday, 26 September: Lake Leschenaultia

Full day Excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the Hotel in Chidlow. Travel to Mundaring, and continue along the Great Eastern Highway for 10.5 km. Turn left into Old Northam Rd, and it is 2 km into Chidlow. It costs \$5 per car to get into the Lake area, so we will car pool at Chidlow. At Lake Leschenaultia there is a good picnic area that has been developed, but a 6 km walk on an excellent track takes us through Jarrah, Marri and Wandoo woodland. This is the first visit for Birds Australia to this location.

For members and general public.

Leader: Sue Abbotts (Phone 9444 1607)

Friday 1 October to Monday 4 October: Queen's Birthday Holiday Weekend Campout at Karara Station

(Participants limited to 25)

This sheep station, which is situated approximately 60 km east of Morawa, has been taken over by CALM and is being restored as a nature reserve.

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

There are limited facilities available at the old homestead on the station. Water will be available for drinking and washing, but all participants will need to be fully self-contained. All food and fuel must be taken into the station.

The property contains a variety of habitats including woodlands, lakes and heath.

The list is now full and those on the list have now been sent a map and further instructions. However, those who wish to, may add their names to the waiting list.

Leaders: Ed and Alyson Paull

Sunday 3 October: Dell Forest, Kalamunda

Half-day Excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at Dell Forest just off Mundaring Road, 7 km from Kalamunda. Park in the picnic area on the left of the road, just after the Dell Forest sign. This area has been surveyed since 1987 and is predominantly Jarrah forest with stands of Wandoo along the gully. Over 70 species have been recorded in the area including Emu, Painted Button-quail and many of the south-west endemics. The excursion will finish at about 1:00 pm so bring lunch if you wish.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sean Van Alphen

Saturday 9 October: Alfred Cove

Half-day Excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale. There should be plenty of migratory waders and waterbirds around the river, and there are always bushbirds in the park. Buff-banded Rails breed here in September so they should also be seen.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 17 October: Bootine Road Nature Reserve, Gingin

Full day Excursion

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

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

For members and guests only.

Leaders: John and Judy Blyth

Thursday 21 October: Bold Park

Mid-week Morning Excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the Camel Lake car park, which is at the southern end of Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, for a walk in Bold Park. This is a pleasant and interesting walk close to Birds Australia's back door.

For members and general public.

Leader: Les Hogben

Sunday 24 October: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson

Half-day Excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the Kent Street Weir car park, to explore the varied bird life of the Canning wetlands. We will cross the weir and follow the road upstream to the first footbridge, cross the river again and walk back on the other side. We should see plenty of waterbirds and bushbirds in this large Regional Park.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Carol Elliott

**Monday 25 October:
State Tennis Centre,
Burswood**

Meeting, 7:30 pm

Malcolm Plant, Australian Customs Service, Fremantle, will speak on control of smuggling wild birds from WA and measures to control it.

**Saturday 30
October: Wambyn
Nature Reserve,
Shire of York**

Full day Excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the junction of York Road and Great Eastern

Highway (i.e. 'The Lakes' service station). The reserve is approximately 35 km beyond the junction. It has good stands of Wandoo and breakaways, etc where birding should be interesting.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 31 October: Breakfast with the Birds, Kings Park.

Meet at 8:00am

See Notices for details.

Saturday 7 November: Pickering Brook

Half day Excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the golf course on Pickering Brook Road. We will visit the home of Will and Allison Hepburn at 51 Woodbine Street. We will look mainly in their wonderful garden, but we will also search the surrounding bush.

To get there, drive through Kalamunda along Canning Road until it turns right. The road goes straight ahead and becomes Pickering Brook Road—follow that and you will go past the Pickering Brook store, then the golf course, both on the right. We will wait at the golf course to guide people to the house. For any late comers, continue down Pickering Brook Road, taking care to bear left at Carinyah Road, go past Cunnold Street and Merrivale Road, both on the right, then bear left again when you come to Kings Mill Road. Woodbine Street is the next on the right, but some distance further on. No 51 is on the right-hand bend half way down Woodbine Street. Drive in until you come to the parked cars.

For members and general public.

Leader: Brice Wells



Birders leaving a good sighting spot, Hutt River, June campout, Port Gregory

Photo courtesy Molly Angus

For members and general public.

Leader: Les Harris

**Saturday 13
November: Flynn
Road, The Lakes**

Full-day Excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about one kilometre on the Perth side of 'The Lakes' turnoff, i.e. the York Road turnoff.

We will look at several areas of Wandoo woodland where three species of robin are usually seen and, with luck, Crested Shrike-tits could also be seen.

**Wednesday 17 November: Forrestdale Lake
Half-day Excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am at the corner of Swamp and Commercial Roads, Forrestdale. The walk will last until about late morning. Bring 'scopes if you have them.

For members and general public.

Leader: David James

**Friday 19 to Sunday 21 November:
Lake Muir /Unicup wetlands and surrounding nature
reserves**

Campout organized by CALM — see details under
'Notices'

Leaders: Peter Taylor, Ian Wheeler and others

**Saturday and Sunday, 20 and 21 November: Boyagin
Rock Nature Reserve**

Short Weekend Campout

This Reserve (WA Travellers Atlas Map 55, ref. C4)
contains impressive stands of Powderbark Wandoo and has
a list of about 73 species. There are moderate to easy
walks, with some more strenuous ones
around the rock. We should also find
orchids at this time of the year, and
several numbats were seen on previous
campouts.

To reach the camp site at the base of
Boyagin Rock, travel along the
Brookton Highway to the intersection
of the York-Williams Road, turn south
and proceed to Boyagin Road and turn
left. The road to Boyagin Rock will be
sign-posted. There is a bush toilet but
please be self-sufficient as regards
water, food, tents, etc. If you wish you
may come for a day trip on either
day—a round trip of about 250 km. I
will be on site late Friday afternoon.

Please advise the Birds Australia office
(9383 7749) if you wish to attend.

Leader: Clive Napier

**Sunday 21 November: Herdsman
Lake, Floreat**

Half-day Excursion

Meet at 7:30 am in Maurice Hamer
Park. Turn off Pearson Street into
Falcon Avenue and turn right into
Lakeside Road. Continue to the car park at the end of the
road.

This walk is especially suitable for new and potential
members. Binoculars will be provided if you don't have
your own.

For members and general public.

Leader: Les Hogben

**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.

Saturday 27 November: Paruna Sanctuary

Half day Excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the closed gate about 5 km down Utah
Rd. Take the Toodyay Rd., turn left into Utah Rd, which is
about 12 km east of Gidgegannup. From this gate we will
drive down to the site (Red Swamp Brook) together. Utah
Rd. is gravel but suitable for 2WD.

Paruna is a 2000 ha sanctuary situated along the Avon
River near Gidgegannup about an hour east of Perth. It is
owned by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC).
The sanctuary creates a vital wildlife corridor between
Walyunga and Avon Valley National Parks.

BAWA has previously visited the sanctuary and
contributed greatly to the current bird list of 83 species.

This year we would like to take the
group through the more inaccessible
eastern end of the sanctuary, which has
not been surveyed though there have
been reports of the Red-eared Firetail
and we would like to confirm these
reports as it is an extension of the
known range of the species.

For members and guests only.

*Leaders: Trish Gardner and Sue
Mather*



Golden Whistler. This bird had a
white chest and belly, with a
pale lemon wash.

Photo courtesy Paul Marty

**Sunday 5 December: Lake McLarty,
Murray Shire**

Full day Excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the gate into the
Lake McLarty Reserve- look for the
BAWA sign. Travel on the South West
Highway through Pinjarra, turning right
along the old Bunbury Rd (5 km south
of Pinjarra), then right into Mills Rd
(fourth road). Continue along Mills Rd
for approximately 10 km until you see
the BAWA sign on the right. Take your
lunch, Wellington boots/old shoes, sun
hat, insect repellent, water and
telescope if you have one. There should
be a variety of waders at the lake, as

well as many water birds and bushbirds.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Colin Davis

Thursday 9 December: Bibra Lake, Cockburn

Mid-week Morning Excursion

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. Binoculars can be
provided if you don't have your own.

For members and general public.

Leader: Clive Napier

**Sunday 12 December: Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale
Full day Excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am at the first car park for Wungong Dam, at the end of Admiral Road (off Albany Highway). Over 90 species of birds have been recorded here, including Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren. Several raptors have also been seen.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

**Saturday 18 December: Herdsman Lake–Bird Banding
Half-day Outing**

Meet at 7:00 am at the car park near the tennis courts off Herdsman Parade (take the first right turn after turning into Herdsman Parade from Jon Sanders Drive). We will spend the morning with the Herdsman Lake banding group studying this fascinating aspect of ornithology. Both passerines and non-passerines are expected to be caught. Birding opportunities will arise during lulls in catching.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Bill Rutherford

Sunday 19 December: Christmas function, Perry House

A barbecue will be held on Sunday 19 December at Perry House commencing 5:00pm. BYO meat, drinks and salad—all members welcome!

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER.

*Where are our artists
and photographers?*

**WE NEED YOUR DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS
FOR WABN, ESPECIALLY IF THEY RELATE TO AN
ARTICLE.**

**IF SENDING IN DRAWINGS, PLEASE DO THEM IN
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your copy**



Little Corellas at Riverside Drive in early March 2004.
They were not observed at this site during the corella count.

Photo courtesy Marcus Singor



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\$25 (post inc)

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The Combined Charities Card Shop

The Combined Charities Card Shop has changed its address for 2004.

The new address is:

StateWest Credit Union
111 St George's Terrace, Perth 6000

This is on the corner of William Street and close to the Busport.

From the beginning of September, Birds Australia WA **Christmas cards** will be on sale as well as cards from 28 other charities at very reasonable prices.

For further information contact
Valerie Hemsley
9364 6573

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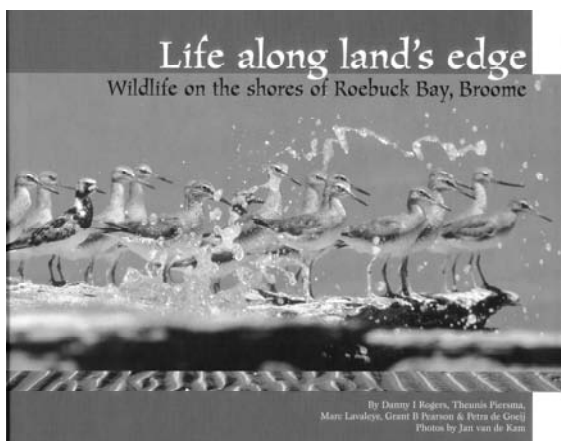
Tel: (08) 9192 8585
E-mail: turnstone@wn.com.au
PO Box 3089, Broome, WA, 6725

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.



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by Danny Rogers, Theunis Piersma,
Marc Lavaleye,
Grant Pearson and Petra de Goeij

Lovers of wildlife will be thrilled by the great breadth and depth of information to be found in this book, which describes the life cycles of migratory birds that visit Roebuck Bay and the many other forms of wildlife on which they depend. With photographs by Jan van de Kam, 'beautiful' and 'breathtaking' are barely adequate descriptions.

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Ph: 08 9193 5600, fax 08 9192 3364
or email <bbo@birdsaustralia.com.au>.
(Postage: \$9.00 for up to 2 copies
anywhere in Australia)

Crossword Answers No 38

ACROSS

1 Eucalypt, 7 lobe, 8 availability, 9 energy, 12 tunnel,
13 Tyto, 14 down, 17 snake, 19 Easter, 22 HANZAB,
24 Garganey, 25 bee, 26 Dryandra, 27 hooded.

DOWN

1 evade, 2 culvert, 3 pale, 4 Flynn, 5 behaviour, 6
Maluridae, 10 genus, 11 decay, 15 sewage, 16 delay,
18 buzzard, 20 survey, 21 deter, 23 build, 24 grid.

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

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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 <sarahc@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 <wgparrot@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

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Birds Australia WA Home Page:

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

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Distribution: Rod Smith

Notes for Contributors

The Editors request contributors to note:

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

Printing Deadlines (at Perry House)

December 2004 issue: 1 November

March 2005 issue: 1 February

June 2005 issue: 1 May

September 2005 issue: 1 August

Advertising Rates

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

Calendar of Events

Sun, 5 Sep: Pipidinny Rd, Eglinton, Half-day Excursion
Sat/Sun, 11/12 Sep: Short Weekend Campout at Billyacatting
Sun, 12 Sep: Bedforddale Hill, Armadale, Half-day Excursion
Thu, 16 Sep: Pinnaroo Memorial Park, Padbury, Mid-week Morning Excursion
Sat 18 Sep: Campbell Barracks, Swanbourne, Half-day Excursion
Mon 20 Sep: State Tennis Centre, Burswood, Meeting, 7:30 pm (A week earlier due to public holiday on 27 Sep)
Sun, 26 Sep: Lake Leschenaultia, Full day Excursion
Fri–Mon 1–4 Oct: Queen's Birthday Holiday Weekend Campout, Karara Station
Sun 3 Oct: Dell Forest, Kalamunda, Half-day Excursion
Sat 9 Oct: Alfred Cove, Half-day Excursion
Sun 17 Oct: Bootine Road Nature Reserve, Gingin, Full day Excursion
Thu 21 Oct: Bold Park, Mid-week Morning Excursion
Sun 24 Oct: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson, Half-day Excursion
Mon 25 Oct: State Tennis Centre, Burswood, Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sat 30 Oct: Wambyn Nature Reserve, Shire of York, Full day Excursion
Sun 31 Oct: Breakfast with the Birds, Kings Park, 8:00 am
Sat 7 Nov: Pickering Brook, Half day Excursion
Sat 13 Nov: Flynn Road, The Lakes, Full-day Excursion
Wed 17 Nov: Forrestdale Lake, Half-day Excursion
Fri–Sun 19–21 Nov: Lake Muir /Unicup wetlands and surrounding nature reserves, campout
Sat/Sun, 20/21 Nov: Boyagin Rock Nature Reserve, Short Weekend Campout
Sun 21 Nov: Herdsman Lake, Floreat, Half-day Excursion
Mon 22 Nov: State Tennis Centre, Burswood, Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sat 27 Nov: Paruna Sanctuary, Half day Excursion
Sun 5 Dec: Lake McLarty, Murray Shire, Full day Excursion
Thu 9 Dec: Bibra Lake, Cockburn, Mid-week Morning Excursion
Sun 12 Dec: Wungong Gorge, Bedforddale, Full day Excursion
Sat 18 Dec: Herdsman Lake–Bird Banding, Half-day Outing
Sun 19 Dec: Christmas function, Perry House, barbecue, 5:00 pm
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