

Western Australian Bird Notes



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LAKE MACLEOD SURVEY, 8-12 NOVEMBER, 2004

As many readers will be aware, Colin Davis, Tony Kirkby and others have been surveying Lake MacLeod since 1999 as part of the 'Birdwatch Project', a partnership between Rio Tinto, Dampier Salt Limited (DSL) and Birdlife International – see Davis (2004) for the most recent summary. The present report covers the last time Colin was able to participate and lead the survey with his usual skill, humour and positive approach to life. Despite the very sad loss of Col the surveys will continue with Chris Hassell and Tony working alongside DSL (Kirkby and Singor 2005).

The surveys focused on migratory and resident shorebirds, terns and waterbirds. Other bird species are recorded but not counted. This was the ninth visit to Lake MacLeod.

The continuing population monitoring is producing some very interesting results. The diversity of species, the total number of birds and the numbers of individual species or sub-species is excellent. These data indicate that Lake MacLeod could be nominated for 'Ramsar status', under the long standing International Convention on the

Preservation of Wetlands.

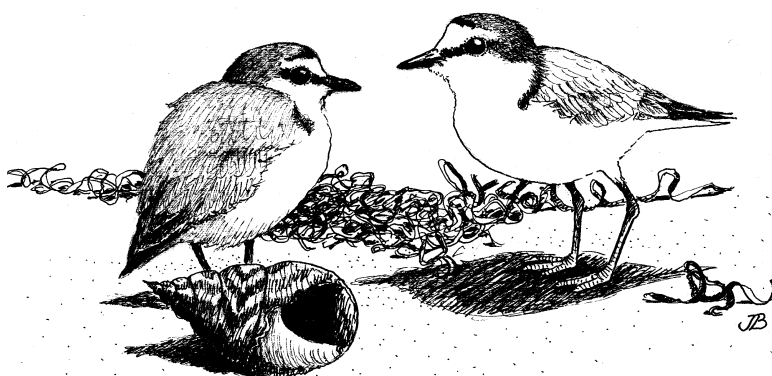
In addition to the above, all except one species of migratory shorebird and all of the terns recorded on the DSL lease are listed in international agreements between Australia and Japan and Australia and China.

The principal findings from this survey at Lake MacLeod were as follows:

- 171 149 migratory shorebirds recorded during the survey period far exceeded the 20 000 required to signify an area as being of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- 45 000 Curlew Sandpipers and 7550 Red-necked Stints were also internationally important counts.

- Twenty-six migratory shorebirds and one tern species recorded during this survey are listed in both the CAMBA and JAMBA agreements.

- A remarkable flock of 100 000 Banded Stilts was also recorded during this survey, which is of national importance.



Red-capped Plovers
Drawing by Judy Blyth

Site Descriptions

The area was divided, as in previous surveys, to where birds concentrated at feeding or roosting sites. Two previously unsurveyed areas (Stilt Flat and Stilt

Lagoon) were added due to higher water levels allowing access to these areas by the boats.

The survey site locations and descriptions are as follows:

SITE	DESCRIPTION
Jacks Vent and adjacent channels	This site incorporates the launch site for the boats and consists of deep channels and ponds, all lined by mangroves and extensive, mostly dry, mud flats with samphire and salt bush vegetation. The majority of the mangroves fringing the water are dead, having been flooded for an unusually long period of time after Cyclone Steve in March 2000.
Pelican Beach	This site is at the SW end of a 1.5 km mud bank running into the NE corner of the central basin. The southern end of this mud bank leads into a wide channel, fringed with dead mangroves. These mangroves provide protection against winds from the SW on the shoreline immediately to the NE.
Godwit Beach to Linda's Creek	This site is a wide mud flat behind Godwit Beach that includes the area running SE to Linda's Creek. Water is blown into Linda's Creek by SW winds then flows out onto the mud bank in a wide shallow sheet. As this water builds up it spills back into the open water via a small channel at Godwit Beach. This process creates an ideal feeding habitat for shorebirds.
Egret Point	Egret Point is situated centrally along the eastern edge of the permanent water body and juts out between the open water of the central basin and Tern Bay. Shallow water and deep mud surround the point making access difficult. A bar at the tip of the point is sometimes exposed by winds from the N and NE. There is a stand of dead mangroves on the southern side of the point.
Oystercatcher Flat	This is that part of the mud barrier sited centrally between Egret Point and the Dogleg Channel. It is a wide, open area of the mud flats scattered with shallow sheets of water. This site provides foraging opportunities for both shorebirds and waterbirds.
Stilt Lagoon	This previously inaccessible site comprised a shallow water body on the mid-eastern side of the lake. At the southern end of the lagoon is a shallow, mangrove-fringed channel 100 m wide. Due to higher water levels than normal in previous surveys, this channel and the lagoon allowed boat access to Stilt Flat.
Stilt Flat	This previously inaccessible site is situated on the mid-eastern side of the lake. This area was an inundated mudflat with the water stretching south in a channel towards Ibis Pond. Access was managed due to the conditions described above.
Dogleg Channel	This site is a shallow channel running from the central basin to within about 500 metres of the southern basin. Wide mudflats are on each side of the channel, which is lined with dead mangroves.

Methods

Accommodation for the team was provided at Quobba Station. Daily trips were made to the lake via the Gnarlloo and Quobba boundary track in 4x4 vehicles. Surveys started at 0500 to maximise the best light for viewing, as heat shimmer can be a problem in the heat of the day, and to use the cooler times of the day to be out on the lake.

Access to the permanent water body of Lake MacLeod is difficult and three small boats with outboard motors were used as the main mode of transport. Due to the shallow water, deep mud, thick algal growth and weed beds in the lake it is often necessary to push the boats and to walk into some areas.

Counts of the lake area were undertaken over three days with a brief reconnoitre of the vents and channels on the first afternoon. Although the lake covers a large area, previous surveys have enabled us to identify readily where the birds concentrate. However, assessing the lake is not an exact science as rainfall and winds can affect different areas in different ways and what is suitable shorebird habitat one survey, or indeed on any given day, may not be

suitable the next. This was evidenced by the identification of two 'new' locations, 'Stilt Lagoon' and 'Stilt Flat', which were inaccessible on previous surveys due to low water levels. These sites were clearly very suitable for Banded Stilts and migratory shorebirds. The majority of birds were seen both feeding and roosting at Stilt Flat. The birds were dispersed over this wide area but with telescopes and some walking we were able to survey the majority of the mudflat.

Counts were done from suitable vantage points, often sitting on the sides of the boats or standing in the shallow water, using binoculars and telescopes. At each site birds were identified to species level and total numbers of each species were recorded on data sheets.

In order to establish an estimate of the minimum number of birds in the survey sites, each day's counts were compiled in a spread sheet and an estimate of the total numbers made at the end of each day and then at the conclusion of the survey. Very small numbers of birds were also identified outside the main survey site areas whilst travelling around the lake and these were incorporated into the main counts.

Key Results from Each Survey Site

SITE	KEY RESULTS
Jacks Vent and adjacent channels	The majority of swans (380), ducks (500) and cormorants (800) were found at this site; many of the swans and some of the ducks (Grey Teal) were flightless due to their annual wing moult. Small numbers of Darters were found breeding in the dead mangroves at the waters edge. For the first time since the surveys began, probably due to the poor condition of the mangroves, the Dusky Gerygone was not recorded in the area.
Pelican Beach	This site was mostly used by Australian Pelicans and Caspian Terns as a regular roost site. A small number of shorebirds used this site for feeding.
Godwit Beach to Linda's Creek	This site was used extensively by shorebirds as a feeding area. Individuals of each species were recorded there. The migratory shorebirds were seen feeding on the softer sediments to the west of Linda's Creek while the Stilts and Avocets fed in shallow water to the east.
Egret Point	A large flock of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (650) was identified feeding at this site. A large flock of Common Greenshanks (57) was seen roosting there. 400 Fairy and Whiskered Terns were identified at this site. The largest concentrations of Red Knots (150) were identified feeding there. The biggest flock of Great Knots (240) was counted roosting just off this area.
Oystercatcher Flat	Large numbers of Curlew Sandpipers (at least 5000 on one count) and other small shorebirds were feeding at this site. Large numbers of small migratory shorebirds (10 000) extended from this area, north to Stilt Lagoon and south towards Dogleg Channel.
Stilt Lagoon	Mostly Avocets (2,000) and a large flock of Banded Stilts (30,000) were observed feeding at this site.
Stilt Flat	This was undoubtedly the 'hot spot' of the survey with over 100 000 Banded Stilts with one single flock of around 70 000 – an awe inspiring sight when they took to the air. The majority of Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints were also feeding in and near this area. All sightings of leg flags were from this area. This site held similar numbers of birds on each day of the counts.
Dog Leg Channel	Approximately 5000 Red-necked Stints and Red-capped Plovers were feeding on the surrounding mudflats. 160 Common Greenshanks were found roosting there. Looking N [approx 3 km] from this site, across Oystercatcher Flat, we could see at least 10 000 unidentified shorebirds.

Summary of the Key Findings

Twenty-five species of shorebirds were recorded, of which twenty were migratory.

The total number of migratory shorebirds recorded during the survey period exceeded the 20 000 required to signify an area as being of International importance under the Ramsar convention.

Under the Ramsar convention two species were in internationally significant numbers: 45 000 Curlew Sandpipers exceeds the current 1% criterion of 1800 and 7550 Red-necked Stints exceeds the current 1% criterion of 3150 (M. Bamford *et al.* in prep).

All 25 of the migratory shorebirds recorded during this survey are listed under both the China and Australia Migratory Bird (CAMBA) and Japan and Australia Migratory Bird (JAMBA) Agreements.

The White-winged Black Tern is migratory and listed under JAMBA and CAMBA.

Banded Stilts were recorded in nationally important numbers (100 000).

Red-necked Avocets were recorded in nationally important numbers (2315).

Red-capped Plovers were recorded in nationally important numbers (3125).

Shorebirds 'flagged' for research / monitoring in Hong Kong, China, Victoria and NW Australia (Broome and Eighty Mile Beach) were seen during the survey.

Banded Stilt Numbers

The very large flock of approximately 100 000 Banded Stilts at the lake was a great surprise. The previous highest count of this species since the current surveys commenced in 1999 was 16 200 during October 2003. In September 1987 a Birds Australia survey of Lake MacLeod identified a flock of 53 100 (Jaensch and Vervest 1990).

This species requires certain conditions to allow it to breed, including high concentrations of brine shrimp and other suitable prey items and sparsely vegetated islands at ephemeral salt lakes. These conditions are not normally available to them every year. When conditions are suitable large colonies can occur. In WA 100 000 birds were breeding at Lake Ballard in 1989 (Minton 1989) and a deserted colony estimated to contain 179 000 nests was found at Lake Barlee (Burbidge and Fuller 1982). It should be noted that during winter this year, it appears that

there was a large breeding event at Lake Disappointment, 900 km east of Lake MacLeod. Large numbers of dead chicks and some living juveniles were seen here on 23 August 2004 (A. Clarke *et al.* personal communication.). There was apparently also a significant breeding event at Lake Carey south east of Kalgoorlie, earlier this year. One or both of these events could be contributing factors for the large flocks at Lake MacLeod.

However to try and estimate a percentage number of juveniles in the flock was difficult as the birds were in differing stages of plumage. About 40% had entirely white underparts, 40% had full chestnut breast bands and 20% were intermediate between the two.

Curlew Sandpiper Numbers

The 45 000 Curlew Sandpipers recorded during this survey is the highest count at Lake MacLeod and far exceeds the 1% criteria for Ramsar status of 1,800. It is not unprecedented to get counts of this magnitude at Lake MacLeod – 41 600 were counted in October 1987 (Jaensch and Vervest 1990), 40 000 were counted in September 2000 and 26 300 in October 2003 (Davis 2004). Also, it is likely that a proportion of the 10 000 unidentified shorebirds from the present survey were of this species.

Lake MacLeod could be vitally important to Curlew Sandpiper populations in Australia due to its current ecological health, remoteness and consequent lack of pollution and human pressures. In one of the species' former strongholds, south east Australia (Victoria and South Australia) Curlew Sandpiper numbers have declined dramatically over the past 23 years from around 40 000 to around 6000 (C. Minton *et al.* in prep.).

Red-necked Stint Numbers

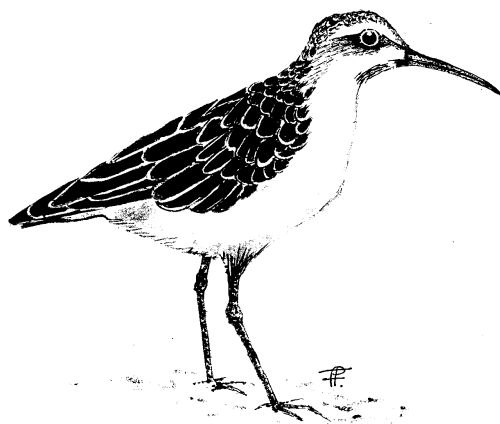
The 7550 Red-necked Stints was the second largest count of this species at the lake, and exceeds the 1% criterion for Ramsar status of 3150, following the count of 8300 in October 1987 (Jaensch and Vervest 1990). It is not unprecedented to get counts of this magnitude at Lake MacLeod, as 6440, 6200, 6000 and 6000 were counted in October 2003, March 2003, September 2000 and March 2004 respectively (Davis 2004). Furthermore, it is likely that a proportion of the 10 000 unidentified shorebirds from the present survey was also of this species.

The Ramsar Convention

Under the Ramsar Convention the numbers of migratory shorebirds present at Lake MacLeod far exceed the twenty thousand figure used for identifying areas of international importance. The ongoing surveys at this site indicate that numbers of this magnitude are a regular occurrence. In addition, Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints were present in numbers greater than the 1% criteria used to determine an area of international importance.

Flag Sightings

Flagging of migratory shorebirds has been conducted in Victoria since January 1990, and at Broome and Eighty Mile Beach (situated between Broome and Port Hedland) and Port Hedland Salt Works since August 1992. The first two projects are ongoing while research finished at Port Hedland in October 2001. More recently this marking method has been used in the countries of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Flagging was commenced in Hong Kong in March 2003 and at Chongming Dao, at the mouth of the Yangtze River, in Shanghai in April 2003. This method of marking birds allows data collection to be made without having to catch a bird more than once.



Curlew Sandpiper
Drawing by Pam Free

Date seen	Species	Flag colour/s	Marking location	Date marked
09/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	Orange	Victoria, Australia	Sometime since January 1990
09/11/04	Red Knot	Yellow	Broome, Australia	Sometime since August 1992
10/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	Orange	Victoria, Australia	Sometime since January 1990
11/11/04	Bar-tailed Godwit	White over Black	Chongming Dao, Shanghai, China	Sometime since April 03
11/11/04	Bar-tailed Godwit	White over Black	Chongming Dao, Shanghai, China	Sometime since April 03
11/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	White over Yellow	Hong Kong	Sometime since March 2003
11/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	White over Yellow	Hong Kong	Sometime since March 2003
11/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	White over Yellow	Hong Kong	Sometime since March 2003
11/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	Yellow	Broome, Australia	Sometime since August 1992
11/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	Yellow	Broome, Australia	Sometime since August 1992
11/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	Orange	Victoria, Australia	Sometime since January 1990
11/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	Orange	Victoria, Australia	Sometime since January 1990
11/11/04	Curlew Sandpiper	Orange	Victoria, Australia	Sometime since January 1990

The small plastic 'flags' are placed on the bird's upper leg and can be readily viewed with a telescope by experienced observers. The fraction of birds marked in this way is, however, a very small percentage of the total shorebird population, so it was very interesting to record the birds below during this survey. All these sightings are believed to be of different birds.

Macro-invertebrate Sampling

During the survey period, Mick Davis was collecting sediment samples from the mudflats, in various depths of water and various sediment types to try and determine the shorebirds' food sources. Sediment containing macro-invertebrates was scooped up in 250 ml jars that were then labelled and stored for preliminary identification back at Quobba. Of particular interest were the areas where the Banded Stilts were observed feeding *en masse*.

Generally, samples were taken from the top 5 cm of the sediment, as that was observed to be the aerobic region. Below this was a silty, anaerobic layer supporting little invertebrate life. All sediment samples were filtered and any invertebrates collected

were then sorted into 50 ml tubes of 70% ethanol for further identification.

A total of eight species of invertebrates was collected from the benthos, including three species of bivalves, two species of worms, two species of crustaceans and one species of mollusc. The most abundant were the crustaceans (comprising an Amphipod and a Cyclopoid Copepod) and a species of clear filter feeding bivalve.

As in previous reports on the invertebrate fauna of Lake MacLeod, the invertebrates collected during this trip indicate a low biodiversity but an extraordinary abundance of each species. It is therefore likely that the waders on the lake feed on only a few species, which occur in the lake sediments in ultra-high numbers.

The Future?

Dampier Salt is currently working with WWF-Australia in pursuing Ramsar listing of the Northern Ponds at Lake MacLeod and is in negotiations with both the State and Federal Governments.

Counts of migratory shorebirds at Lake MacLeod since November 1999

	Nov-99	Sep-00	Oct-01	Jan-02	Sep-02	Mar-03	Oct-03	Mar-04	Nov-04
Family Scolopacidae									
Black-tailed Godwit	14	0	12	0	0	0	0	66	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	386	18	60	54	160	3	26	65	50
Eastern Curlew	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marsh Sandpiper	3	0	43	0	10	2	1	0	3
Common Greenshank	235	300	120	30	40	72	70	62	270
Wood Sandpiper	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Terek Sandpiper	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Common Sandpiper	6	2	5	2	2	7	20	2	11
Grey-tailed Tattler	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	13
Ruddy Turnstone	37	10	50	2	25	2	3	6	38
Great knot	211	39	38	0	75	10	60	83	260
Red Knot	137	8	660	0	515	187	668	150	250
Sanderling	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Little Stint	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Red-necked Stint	2350	6000	4	250	3340	6206	6440	6000	7550
Long-toed Stint	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	214	10	21	3	50	23	205	8	850
Curlew Sandpiper	18392	40000	2000	70	8000	16690	26283	485	45000
Broad-billed Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	30	0
Family Haematopodidae									
Pied Oystercatcher	6	2	2	1	6	6	6	6	8
Family Recurvirostridae									
Black-winged Stilt	5	500	284	530	1000	79	885	230	850
Banded Stilt	2042	8000	0	600	6000	15645	16204	1	100000
Red-necked Avocet	0	70	0	402	346	778	214	28	2315
Family Charadriidae									
Pacific Golden Plover	3	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	4
Grey Plover	31	0	40	0	14	18	5	60	21
Red-capped Plover	114	500	24	70	300	454	442	400	3125
Lesser Sand Plover	3	0	0	0	17	0	4	0	0
Greater Sand Plover	12	0	3	0	35	3	6	0	515
Oriental Plover	33	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	3
Inland Dotterel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Red-kneed Dotterel	0	0	0	0	14	2	5	0	0
Banded Lapwing	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Unidentified waders*	5500	2500	11400	34	40000	7700	8000	0	10000
Yearly Totals	29743	57965	14786	2048	59956	47887	59548	7691	171149

* The 10,000 unidentified shorebirds were probably made up of the smaller shorebird species, namely Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint and Red-capped Plover. They were seen at great distance and in heat haze so an accurate identification to species level was not possible.

Counts of terns and gulls at Lake MacLeod since November 1999

	Nov-99	Sep-00	Oct-01	Jan-02	Sep-02	Mar-03	Oct-03	Mar-04	Nov-04
Family Laridae									
Sliver Gull	292	300	50	20	60	4	8	10	160
Gull-billed Tern	14	30	1	0	30	0	0	0	0
Caspian Tern	346	40	50	20	45	9	46	50	20
Crested Tern	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Common Tern	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fairy Tern	92	5	71	57	40	422	63	110	400
Whiskered Tern	75	50	65	13	90	230	66	10	500
White-winged Black Tern	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	44	10
Yearly Totals	820	434	238	110	268	666	183	224	1090

Counts of waterbirds at Lake MacLeod since November 1999

	Nov-99	Sep-00	Oct-01	Jan-02	Sep-02	Mar-03	Oct-03	Mar-04	Nov-04
Family Anatidae									
Black Swan	15	1	100	178	400	572	582	350	550
Australian Shelduck	0	5	0	0	12	0	0	0	5
Black Duck	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	21
Grey Teal	6	31	4	0	0	504	77	2	500
Chestnut Teal	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Pink-eared Duck	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Hardhead	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	8
Family Podicipedidae									
Australasian Grebe	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0
Hoary-headed Grebe	0	3	3	0	60	96	47	0	60
Great-crested Grebe	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	1	0
Family Anhingidae									
Darter	5	8	12	2	20	20	40	12	50
Family Phalacrocoracidae									
Little Pied Cormorant	0	3	12	8	30	0	1	1	27
Pied Cormorant	502	650	200	150	450	321	321	350	350
Little Black Cormorant	85	200	83	122	300	488	2488	757	550
Great Cormorant	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	1	0
Family Pelecanidae									
Australian Pelican	338	1600	300	100	600	551	402	180	300
Family Ardeidae									
White-faced Heron	18	2	6	4	5	2	2	1	2
Little Egret	22	170	32	20	70	229	69	112	80
White-necked Heron	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Egret	13	150	5	16	30	4	15	10	6
Striated Heron	21	25	8	0	1	0	0	2	2
Nankeen Heron	0	100	3	0	50	2	0	0	0
Family Plataleidae									
Straw-necked Ibis	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0
Family Rallidae									
Buff-banded Rail	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	10
Eurasian Coot	5	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
Yearly Totals	1031	2953	771	602	2119	2790	4046	1784	2525

The list below details the bushbirds recorded during the survey. However, no attempt was made to ascertain the abundance of any species.

Bird Species	Nov-99	Sep-00	Oct-01	Jan-02	Sep-02	Mar-03	Oct-03	Mar-04	Nov-04
Emu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quail sp(p).	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0
Osprey	0	✓	0	0	0	✓	0	✓	✓
Black-breasted Buzzard	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-shouldered Kite	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whistling Kite	✓	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spotted Harrier	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swamp Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	0	✓
Wedge-tailed Eagle	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✓	0	✓
Brown Falcon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✓	✓
Australian Hobby	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✓	✓	0
Peregrine Falcon	0	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	✓
Nankeen Kestrel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
Australian Bustard	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✓	✓	✓
Common Bronzewing	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crested Pigeon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
Galah	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓
Little Corella	✓	0	✓	0	✓	0	0	0	0
Budgerigar	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pallid Cuckoo	✓	0	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	✓	0	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sacred Kingfisher	0	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red-backed Kingfisher	0	✓	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Variegated Fairy-wren	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
White-Winged Fairy-wren	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Redthroat	0	0	0	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓
Rufous Fieldwren	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
Striated Pardalote	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✓	0
Dusky Gerygone	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	✓	0	0	0	✓	0	0	✓	0
Singing Honeyeater	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
Pied Honeyeater	0	0	0	0	✓	0	0	✓	0
Crimson Chat	0	0	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0
Orange Chat	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓	0	✓
Red-capped Robin	0	0	0	0	✓	0	0	0	✓
White-browed Babbler	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
Chiming Wedgebill	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crested Bellbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓
Grey Shrike-thrush	✓	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	0
Willie Wagtail	✓	0	0	0	✓	0	0	0	✓
Grey Fantail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✓	0
Mangrove Fantail	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
White-winged Triller	✓	0	0	0	✓	0	0	✓	✓

Bird Species	Nov-99	Sep-00	Oct-01	Jan-02	Sep-02	Mar-03	Oct-03	Mar-04	Nov-04
White-breasted Woodswallow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Little Woodswallow	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Masked Woodswallow	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Pied Butcherbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magpie-lark	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0	✓	✓
Corvid sp.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0
Little Crow	0	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
Richards Pipit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zebra Finch	✓	✓	0	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Welcome Swallow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
White-backed Swallow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Tree Martin	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✓	0	✓	✓
Clamorous Reed-Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Little Grassbird	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
Brown Songlark	✓	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	✓	✓
Rufous Songlark	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0	0
Yellow White-eye	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Silvereye	✓	0	✓	0	✓	0	0	0	0

Acknowledgments

This successful survey would not have been possible without (DSL) employees Les George, Vicki Hood, Lillian McGinn, Tim Ryan and Angie Ralston. Logistical support and access to the survey site were facilitated by Dave Bauer. Preliminary invertebrate sampling was undertaken by Mick Davis.

The project was overseen by Colin Davis, and he will be missed very much next time we are there. DSL are to place a plaque in his honour at our boat launching site, a very kind gesture and fitting tribute to his tireless work.

References

Burbidge, A.A. and Fuller, P.J. 1982. Banded Stilt breeding at Lake Barlee, Western Australia. *Emu* **82**: 212-216.

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Kirkby, T. and Singor, M. 2005. In memory of Colin Davis. *Western Australian Bird Notes* **113**: 3

Minton, C. 1989. Banded Stilts do breed! *RAOU Newsletter* **80**: 3.

Chris Hassell



My wife's a bit fussy!
Cartoon by Penny Towells

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. This was a quiet quarter for major rarities, but there were many sightings of interest. A male **Blue-billed Duck** at Derby was the first record for the Kimberley. A **Barking Owl** was seen twice near Dryandra. An **Australian Bustard** was seen on Swanbourne Beach. An injured **Laughing Kookaburra** found north of Kalgoorlie near Menzies is the first record for the Goldfields.

The other highlights in the metropolitan area were **Stubble Quail**, **Masked Lapwing**, **Brown Songlark** and a **Hooded Plover**. Apart from the listed sightings, there were continued reports of **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos** on the coastal plain. There were numerous reports of mostly immature **Red-capped Robins** from late March to early May continuing a trend over a few years of sightings at this time of year on the coastal plain. There were reports of large movements of **Red Wattlebirds** in late March. There were several reports of immature **White-bellied Sea-Eagles**. **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** started to return in mid April, slightly earlier than normal.

In the south west, Lake McLarty continued to have exceptional numbers of waterbirds. A **Spotted Nightjar** at Preston Beach is rare, and **Chestnut-rumped Thornbills** at Dryandra are a slight extension of range.

In the north-west, a **Yellow-nosed Albatross** was photographed near Exmouth. This is uncommon this far

north, but to make it more unusual it was leucistic (all white except for the eyes, bill and bare parts). There were several highlights for the Eyre Bird Observatory including an estimated total of 4000 **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** seen moving west during April.

The exceptionally poor wet season in the Kimberley resulted in sightings of **Spiny-checked**, **Pied** and **Black Honeyeaters** plus **Pictorella Mannikin** and **Crimson Chat**. These are more usually seen if at all in the west Kimberley in the dry season. High numbers of **Barn Swallows** on Roebuck Plains included at least two **Red-rumped Swallows** (one had a broken tail streamer). Apart from the listed sightings, there were exceptional numbers of **Richard's Pipits** (1000s including a leucistic bird), **Nankeen Kestrels** (100s), **Brown Falcons** (100s) and **Australian Bustards** (100s) at Anna Plains Station in late February. **Freckled Ducks** were seen on most of the station dams.

A trip to Ashmore Reef found internationally significant numbers of several waders. There were more sightings of **Oriental Reed-Warbler** and **Arctic Warbler**.

A trip to Christmas Island found the first record for the island of **Eurasian Coot**.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Stubble Quail – 1 male, 06/03/05, Lake Monger (Glendalough) – BAWA (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Chestnut Teal – 5, 25/03/05, ALCOA Wellard Wetlands (Baldivis) – MN (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Australasian Gannet – 1, 19/03/05, Mandurah Bypass Bridge (Erskine) – BAWA (unusual away from the coast)

Pied Cormorant – 1200, 28/03/05, off Woodman Point (Munster) – RS (high count)

Little Bittern – 1, 02/03/05, Waterway Avenue / Lakewood Avenue (Maylands) – TD (uncommon in the south west)

Australian Bustard – 1, 15/04/05, Swanbourne Beach (Swanbourne) – DJ (rare in the metropolitan area)

Black-tailed Godwit – 1, 27/02/05, Maurice Hamer Reserve (Herdsmen) – DH * 1, 05/04/05, Alfred Cove (Attadale) – MB (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Long-toed Stint – 1, 07/04/05, Lake Yangebup (Yangebup) – BR (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Pectoral Sandpiper – 1, 25/03/05, ALCOA Wellard Wetlands (Baldivis) – MN (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Broad-billed Sandpiper – 1, 27/03/05, Nairns (Coodanup) – AC (uncommon in the south west)

Greater Sand Plover – 2, 19/03/05, Nairns (Coodanup) – BAWA (uncommon away from the coast)

Hooded Plover – 1, 17/04/05, Bibra Lake (Bibra Lake) – DH (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Masked Lapwing – 1, 31/03/05, north of Neil Hawkins Park (Joondalup) – HvW (rare in the metropolitan area)

Arctic Jaeger – 15, 25/03/05, 3km off Woodman Point (Munster) – JP, LP (high count)

Purple-crowned Lorikeet – 8, 25/03/05, Macleod Road (Applecross) – WM * 5, 23/04/05, The Vines Golf Course (Ellenbrook) – WM (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Elegant Parrot – 14, 20/04/05, Hammond Road (Yangebup) – JS * 2, 24/04/05, Herdsman Lake (Herdsmen) – RP (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Fork-tailed Swift – 5, 17/03/05, Iluka foreshore (Iluka) – HvW

(uncommon in the metropolitan area)

Brown Songlark – 1 non breeding male, 10/04/05, Floreat Waters (Herdsman) – FO (uncommon in the metropolitan area)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Australasian Shoveler – ~800, 31/01/05, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MCr (high count)

Grey Teal – ~10500, 31/01/05, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MCr (high count)

Cattle Egret – 16 (some in breeding plumage), 09/02/05, Corio Road (Murray) – WM * 8, 24/03/05, Lake Powell (Albany) – MAN * 8, 21/04/05, Australind Bypass (Bunbury) – BRu (increasing in the south west)

Australian Bustard – 1, 03/03/05, Elleker (Albany) – MAN (uncommon in the south west)

Red-necked Stint – 11700, 17/02/05, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MCr * 2500, 01/04/05, Lake Preston north (Waroona) – BRu (high count)

Pectoral Sandpiper – 4, 31/01/05, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MCr * 1, 05/02/05, Lake Towerrining (Katanning) – DS, WZ (uncommon in the south west)

Broad-billed Sandpiper – 1, 17/02/05, Lake McLarty (Murray) – JD (uncommon in the south west)

Ruff – 1, 21/01/2005, Lake Towerrining (Katanning) – WZ * 1, 05/02/05, Lake Towerrining (Katanning) – DS, WZ * 1, 19/02/05, Lake Ewlyamartup (Katanning) – DS (uncommon in the south west)

Banded Stilt – 3500, 17/02/05, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MCr (high count)

Greater Sand Plover – 1, 21/04/05, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MCr (uncommon away from the coast)

Oriental Plover – 1, 04/02/05 to 18/02/05, Lake McLarty (Murray) – BRu *et al.* (update from last WABN)

Black-eared Cuckoo – 1, 17/04/05 & 24/04/05, Darkan River Road

(Beverley) – JD, HD (uncommon in the south west)

Barking Owl – 1, 15/04/05, Congelin Camp Ground Dryandra (Williams) – DS * 1, 24/04/05, Congelin Camp Ground Dryandra (Williams) – BAWA (rarely reported in the south west)

Spotted Nightjar – 1, 31/03/05, near Preston Beach (Waroona) – BRu * 1 road kill, 22/04/05, near Preston Beach (Waroona) – BRu (rarely reported on the coastal plain)

Fork-tailed Swift – 6, 23/03/05, Elleker (Albany) – MAN * 2, 24/03/05, lower Denmark Road (Albany) – MNa (uncommon in the south west)

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill – 4+, 23/04/05, Congelin Camp Ground Dryandra (Williams) – BAWA (slight extension of range)

ARID ZONE

Musk Duck – 14, 13/04/05, Kanidal Beach (Dundas) – EBO (uncommon)

Yellow-nosed Albatross – 1 leucistic, 09/04, 1.5km off Bundegi Beach (Exmouth) – MG *et al.* (uncommon this far north; photographs)

Eastern Reef Egret – 2, 03/05/05, Kanidal Beach (Dundas) – EBO (uncommon at Eyre)

Cattle Egret – 2, 01/05/05, Eyre Bird Observatory (Dundas) – EBO (uncommon at Eyre)

Grey Falcon – 1, 06/03/05, Brickhouse Station (Carnarvon) – LG (rare in the Gascoyne)

Oriental Plover – 400, 24/02/05, Beadon Creek Onslow (Ashburton) – JP, RT (high count this far south)

Peaceful Dove – 1, 21/04/05, Eyre Bird Observatory (Dundas) – EBO (uncommon at Eyre)

Elegant Parrot – 2, 15/04/05, McNeil Claypan (Carnarvon) – LG (uncommon in the Gascoyne)

Laughing Kookaburra – 1 road injured, 27/03/05, near Menzies (Menzies) – per LH (1st record for the Goldfields)

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater – 5, 25/03/05, Eyre Bird Observatory

(Dundas) – EBO (uncommon at Eyre)

Orange Chat – 6+, 24/02/05, Onslow Salt (Ashburton) – JP, RT * 3, 06/03/05, Brickhouse Station (Carnarvon) – LG (uncommon in the Gascoyne)

Star Finch – 20, 24/02/05, foreshore gardens Onslow (Ashburton) – JP (uncommon in Onslow)

KIMBERLEY

Blue-billed Duck – 1 male, 10/02/05, sewage overflow (Derby) – AW *et al.* (rare in the Kimberley)

Little Eagle – 20+, 17/04/05, Crab Creek (Broome) – CS (high count)

Common Bronzewing – 1, 06/02/05, near Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – AW *et al.* (rare in the West Kimberley)

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater – 1, 13/03/05, Crab Creek (Broome) – RC, CS (uncommon in the Kimberley)

Black Honeyeater – 2, 13/03/05, Port Drive to Riddell Beach (Broome) – GS (uncommon in the Kimberley)

Pied Honeyeater – 25, 13/03/05, Port Drive to Riddell Beach (Broome) – GS (uncommon in the Kimberley)

Pictorella Mannikin – 9, 11/03/05, Roebuck Plain near BBO (Broome) – GS (uncommon in Broome)

Red-rumped Swallow – 1+, 08-20/02/05, Roebuck Plain near BBO (Broome) – AW *et al.* (rare in WA)

ASHMORE REEF

Red-footed Booby – 220, 25/01-03/02/05, Ashmore Reef – GS, MC (high count)

Grey-tailed Tattler – 1780, 25/01-03/02/05, Ashmore Reef – GS, MC (high count)

Ruddy Turnstone – 1680, 25/01-03/02/05, Ashmore Reef – GS, MC (high count)

Sanderling – 1180, 25/01-03/02/05, Ashmore Reef – GS, MC (high count)

Pacific Golden Plover – 770, 25/01-03/02/05, Ashmore Reef – GS, MC (high count)

Grey Plover – 1500, 25/01-03/02/05,
Ashmore Reef – GS, MC (high
count)

Oriental Reed-Warbler – 1, 25/01-
03/02/05, West Island – GS, MC
(rare in Australia)

Arctic Warbler – 1, 25/01-03/02/05,
West Island – GS, MC
(uncommon in Australia)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Nankeen Night Heron – 1, 18/04/05,
Hugh's Dale – DA (uncommon on
Christmas Island)

Eurasian Coot – 1, 15/04/05,
Blowhole Road turnoff – DA (1st
record for Christmas Island)

Black-winged Stilt – 1, 15/04/05 to
17/04/05, Blowhole Road turnoff –
DA (uncommon on Christmas
Island)

OBSERVERS

AC = Alan Collins
AW = Andrew Walter (Qld)
BAWA = BAWA Excursion
BR = Bill Rutherford
BRu = Bill Russell
CS = Chris Sanderson
DA = David Adams (NSW)
DH = David Henderson
DJ = David Jones
DS = David Secomb
FO = Frank O'Connor
GS = George Swann
HD = Hazel Darnell
HvW = Hank van Wees
JD = John Darnell
JP = Jane Prince
JS = Jeff Spencer

LG = Les George
LH = Linda Houston
LP = Laurie Poole
MAN = Michael & Ada Nield
MB = Mike Bamford
MC = Mike Carter (Vic)
MCR = Michael Craig
MG = Merran Gunn
MN = Mark Newman
MNa = Margaret Nash
RC = Ricki Coughlan
RP = Ryan Phillips
RS = Rod Smith
RT = Roy Teale
TD = Tom Delaney
WM = Wynton Maddeford
WZ = Wayne Zadow



Birds Australia WA Inc Reports



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As the new chair (and possibly the youngest ever), I have a debt of gratitude to those who have come before me and contributed so much to our organization. Immediately before me I would like to thank Dr Mike Bamford. As a close friend, I am particularly aware of the many weekends and hours of personal time Mike dedicated towards advancing BAWA at both the state and national level and raising the profile of birds in the community. He has certainly left me with rather big shoes to fill and is now looking forward to being able to undertake some BAWA projects he has been planning for some time. I see before me now, an enthusiastic and dedicated group of individuals united by a common passion and interest in birds. We have countless numbers of individuals who dedicate their time to various committees, office work and projects. I am also particularly grateful to the past and present BAWA committee that has the often unenviable task of making decisions varying from the small and inconsequential to critical issues affecting our group such as our new accommodation at Peregrine House. I hope you will take the opportunity to welcome our

enthusiastic new committee for 2005, and support them in their efforts to advance BAWA.

I am aware that one of Mike's key interests as chair was furthering the membership of BAWA and unifying us as a national organization. I too am acutely aware of the strength that comes from the national organization of Birds Australia, and although some members may disagree, it is important to remember how much more can be achieved for birds and public education, from working together as a unified national organization. I will be attending the regional groups meeting and AGM in Cairns in May and am looking forward to discussing a number of issues with other regional groups, including the proposed new funding methods for regional groups. BAWA is always perceived at these meetings as the most active group, and a model group in our organisation. I am honoured to be part of such an exciting group and I look forward to meeting the diverse spectrum of our membership in the coming year and encourage all of you to continue to pursue your interests and passion for birds.

Rob Davis

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DEC 2004
(as presented at the annual general meeting, February 2005)

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

BALANCE SHEET	\$	\$	\$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Total Cash on Hand	65 075		
Total Stock on Hand	<u>18 894</u>	83 969	
Non-current Assets			
Investments	131 980		
Equipment on Hand	<u>9 880</u>	<u>141 860</u>	
Total Assets			225 829
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
GST Liabilities	1 263		
Grants Various	<u>42 779</u>	<u>44 042</u>	
Total Liabilities			<u>44 042</u>
Net Assets			<u>181 787</u>
Accumulated Funds			
Prior Years Surplus/(Deficit)		116 574	
Retained Earnings		52 231	
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit)		<u>12 982</u>	
Total Accumulated Funds			<u>181 787</u>
INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR 2004			
Income			
Total Trading Table		5 916	
Total Books		376	
Total <i>WA Bird Notes</i>		-336	
Donations including Bequest		6 920	
Interest & Investment Rollovers		6 743	
Other Income – Fees \$3 055 + Grants \$5 883		<u>8 938</u>	28 558
Expenses			
Audit & Bank Charges		574	
Donations		1 106	
Functions		1 009	
Rent		1 818	
Office Expenses (Phone, Stationery, Postage, etc)		10 113	
Regional Group Travel		426	
Library Expenses		530	
Total Expenses			<u>15 576</u>
Net Surplus/(Deficit)			<u>12 982</u>

BRIEF RESUMES OF YOUR NEW BAWA COMMITTEE

Robert Davis is the BAWA Chairperson. He is also Chairperson of the BAWA Conservation and Research Sub-Committee, and is keen to promote the importance of bird conservation and research. Robert is a keen birdwatcher, and BA member for 8 years. He has recently completed his PhD in Zoology at UWA, and is committed to the conservation and research of Australian birds. One of Robert's aims as BAWA Chairperson will be to further integrate conservation and education with birdwatching, and to build on and improve the communications and interactions of Birds Australia WA Inc with the National Office.



Frank O'Connor, the Vice-Chairperson, has been on the BAWA Committee since 2002. Frank is the Sightings Officer, the Web Site manager and a member of the PR Sub-committee where with Brice Wells he helps to organise the Bird Identification Workshops. He has catalogued the BAWA slide and image collections. He organises the Perth pelagic seabird trips. He assisted Allan Jones with the development of the Bird Guide brochures. He assisted Liz Walker with the office relocation. Frank's main goals for being on the committee are to ensure that BAWA maintains its solid financial basis, continues to increase its membership, and finds better ways to recognise its volunteers.



Lorraine Marshall is the secretary. My love of birds started as a child when I joined the Gould League in the early 60s inspired by the legendary Harry Butler. I joined BAWA in 2003 and was seconded to the committee having volunteered to be the minute secretary in 2004. My formal reduction in working hours has now enabled me to pursue this passion. With many years publishing as a research scientist with a PhD in Medicine I intend to help facilitate the scientific research component of our organisation. I am committed to encouraging new scientists to this organisation and providing a forum to progress and air their work.



Mary Vaughan has been BAWA's book keeper since 1998, with advice from Greg Wylie, who arranges end of year adjustments and the audit of the accounts. Mary has book keeping training, has been treasurer for two years, and is conversant with GST requirements. She loves birdwatching, which she has been doing for 25 years.



Dr Michael Bamford has been a member of Birds Australia since 1979 (yes, he joined during the first ATLAS). In addition to that project, he has been involved in the activities of the Australasian Wader Study Group and the South West Water Bird Project. He has been on the WA Committee since 1995 and chairperson for the last three years. He has stepped down from this role but has continued on the committee. Occasionally, he even goes on bird walks, and regrets not having more time to go more often. He is self-employed as an environmental consultant, specialising in fauna studies, but also lectures in Zoology, wrote a science column for the *West Australian* and prepares scientific illustrations, including some for HANZAB.



Michael Craig



Robina Haynes joined Birds Australia five years ago, and has a lifetime love of birds, thanks to a grandmother in New Zealand. When I became a resident of Australia, living in Perth, I decided to pursue this love, especially the bushbirds and parrots. I became involved as an office volunteer from the time of joining, also in the selling of our bird cards, which plays a large part in the group's income. I have attended many weekend walks and campouts, all of which have been enjoyable and fun. Birds in Australia are beautiful, but can be confusing with their many different calls. I have also been involved in the station surveys.



Myles Menz became a member of Birds Australia in mid 2003, shortly before receiving a student grant to attend the ornithological field techniques course at Eyre Bird Observatory. He has recently completed a Bachelor of Science at UWA, majoring in Zoology and Marine Biology and has been working as an environmental consultant since March 2004. Myles has been interested in birds for a number of years, and spends a large amount of time birdwatching.



Myles is currently in training as a c-class bander, and has been involved in a number of projects. He is an observer for the ATLAS Project, as well as rounds 2 and 3 of the Perth Bio-diversity Project, and has been involved with bird surveys for the Living Landscapes Project and the WWF Bioblitz. He has also been a leader for one of the Birds WA identification workshops.

Myles was a member of the Conservation and Research Sub-committee in 2004. As part of his involvement with BAWA, his primary aim is to promote and raise awareness of Australia's birds, and of Birds WA, especially amongst university students and graduates, as well as the general public.

Bill Rutherford. Bill developed a passion for birds early in his life and it naturally followed that he pursued a career with birds and their conservation. He studied Ecology & Conservation at the University of London, and Conservation Management at Farnborough. He entered into the conservation industry in 1982 with the RSPB.

Bill joined Birds Australia in 2000, shortly after arriving in WA. He has since devoted much of his time to studying the birdlife of WA, having travelled to many parts of the state leading bird tours and carrying out survey work. Whilst employed by BA at the Broome Bird Observatory, Bill developed a personal commitment to the organisation's goals and objectives. He values the opportunity to help with the realisation and delivery of the group's aims.

Liz Walker has been a member of Birds Australia for about six years, and enjoys walks and campouts, learning from the company and knowledge of other birders. I have recently become an observer in the Perth Bio-diversity Project. As an active member, I have taken part in the management of the BAWA office, first as an office volunteer, and for several years managing the office, assisting the volunteers, and serving on the BAWA committee, and more recently on the Eyre Bird Observatory, Grants, and Excursions Sub-committees. I recently took a major part in the BAWA office relocation, along with Frank O'Connor.



BAWA MOVES TO PEREGRINE HOUSE

After two years of discussions with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA), on Friday 11 February Birds Australia WA moved into its new premises, a wooden transportable building next door to the old location at Perry House in Bold Park, Floreat.



BAWA's new premises, Peregrine House
Photo courtesy Eggy Boggs

BAWA is looking at a timeframe of 10 to 20 years in the new premises. The new building will give BAWA a more professional image in the community, and provide better working conditions for the office volunteers and project officers. This includes air conditioning, better furniture, a better meeting area and improved office facilities including computers, telephones, storage, etc.

Liz Walker and Frank O'Connor were delegated to look for the most suitable furniture and equipment, and the budget was allocated from the Ruth Millhinch legacy that BAWA received in 2003. Two weeks looking at office furniture, computers and telephones was time well spent, and the result is that we now have a smart, well equipped and furnished, air-conditioned office, with double the space of the old one.

We acquired two new computers. One replaced the oldest computer that we used to access the internet. The second computer was purchased for use by the Project Officers working on the Carnaby's Cockatoo, Hooded Plover, Ground Parrot, ATLAS and Perth Biodiversity projects. A LAN router was added to connect the computers and to facilitate the better backup of data. The telephone and the fax machine were also replaced.

There is a spacious entrance area, conference room, library, storage area and a large workroom. The reception includes displays of our bird guides, greeting cards and books for sale. The conference room can handle meetings of 14 people. Stewart Houghton very quickly organised the library, and it looks great with an expanded collection of books for the membership. The storage room allows for the storage inside of our stocks of greeting cards. The large workroom contains the two new computers, photocopier and printer. We added some work tables where groups such as Brice Wells and his Public Relations Sub-committee can work in comfort instead of standing in the cold, draughty garage.

Moving day was quite an experience, with many enthusiastic volunteers dashing backwards and forwards with trolleys laden with boxes of books, files and an amazing array of things emerging from long unexplored cupboards. Removalists helped with the big equipment, and with Frank O'Connor the main director of the operation, most things went very smoothly. The main hitch was with the transfer of the telephones, which took two weeks, during which patient volunteers trekked backwards and forwards between old and new premises answering the phone in one, and greeting visitors in the other. We are continuing to negotiate with the BGPA to improve the signage and to get the letterbox moved. There is still some work to be done in clearing out the accumulated mass of old records, computer parts and odds and ends, but it will be done eventually.

The new building has been named Peregrine House, and 167 Perry Lakes Drive is our new address. From July, our monthly meetings will move to the WA Ecology Centre next to our office. We will open the office at 18:45 before each meeting to allow you to use the office facilities, including having tea or coffee before the meeting.

The BAWA Committee thanks everyone who helped with the move on the day, and subsequently when assistance was required. A special thanks for the patience of the office volunteers, Liz Walker for ensuring that the office continued



George Agar in the library at Peregrine House.
Photo courtesy Eggy Boggs

to operate throughout the move, and Frank O'Connor for assisting Liz and coordinating the move.

It is a joy to have such a light and airy place to work, looking out on the greenery in Bold Park, with birds flying past the windows and alighting on the verandah rails. We encourage you to visit the office and experience it for yourself.



BAWA Projects



BIRD SEMINAR In the Darling Hills

It was time again to organise a Bird Seminar. Our previous seminars have been very well received in the Perth central area but what about the hills communities? I remembered meeting a tall, dark, handsome man (wouldn't you) who worked for the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council. While attending a festival at Kalamunda (which turned out very disappointing), I had time on my hands to visit the other environmental groups present. Craig Wansborough of the



Bird Seminar, Darling Hills
Photo courtesy Elsa Dabbs

EMRC had a very interesting display and also a list of workshops that they ran. Would they be interested in a bird identification workshop I asked? We agreed to get in touch the following year and so this seminar was organised.

The EMRC provided the venues, accepted the bookings and arranged for morning tea. As usual we were able to get a photo in the local community paper and bookings rolled in. The first meeting is always lectures on basic identification, field guides, bird notes, habitats, migration and binoculars. We normally get around 30-35 people but this venue was big enough to hold around 75 people, so I said no need to limit the numbers. To my surprise and delight 68 people booked in. It was the largest turnout for the EMRC and us at any of the workshops. Brice Wells enthralled the audience with his knowledge and wit, holding them in the palm of his hand. The enthusiastic audience asked many inquiring questions. We sold 5 field guides, 4 books—*Birding sites around Perth* and 69 cards plus donations for BAWA. The EMRC provided an excellent morning tea and cakes. We received many comments praising the course. The remaining two days will be challenging; 50 people have booked for the lectures and field walk. With the help of our walk leaders they should prove interesting.

We will be arranging to visit the area again so as not to disappoint the people who were unable to book on to the second and third days. Due to the success of this venture, I

must always remember to talk to tall, dark, handsome young men.

**Elsa Dabbs, Publicity Officer
Public Relations Sub-Committee**

RESULTS OF HOODED PLOVER SURVEY, 19 and 20 FEBRUARY 2005

The Hooded Plover summer survey was held on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 February 2005.

It is timely to mention the objectives we aim to achieve by holding our annual survey. The survey results provide an insight into the distribution and movement of Hooded Plovers in Western Australia, which in turn helps us identify key conservation areas. We get an update on the health of the Hooded Plover population and its sustainability. The number of juvenile Hooded Plovers seen provides an indication of the success of the past breeding season. Identification of breeding sites is of special interest.

Surveys are held in February each year for several reasons. The beaches are quieter after the peak holiday season and it is still possible to identify juvenile birds. Hooded Plover populations congregate at coastal lakes and beaches during the summer. In February they are still present and haven't yet dispersed to inland sites.

All sightings are recorded in our data base for reference and research.

Status of Inland Lakes

There were numerous reports of dry lakes. All the lakes in the Stirling Range National Park were dry, except for Kojaneerup Springs, which was at its lowest level in eight years. Lake Kworncup was virtually dry but 58 Hooded Plovers were reported, which confirms previous observations that you can still find Hooded Plovers on lakes when they are

nearly dry. The water levels of lakes around Esperance were the lowest they had been for years. Lake Dumbleyng, and lakes east of Narrogin were dry and those south of Wagin were mainly dry. All lakes round Hyden and surrounding districts were dry.

The Hooded Plover survey was mentioned in the *Great Southern Herald*, *Wagin Argus* and *Albany Advertiser*. The publicity received was due to the promotional efforts of our regional volunteers.

The following table provides a comparison of data collected over our previous summer surveys.

Summer survey	Adults and (Juveniles)	% of Juveniles	Total
January 1995	2093		2093
Jan/Feb 1996	1555 (131)	7.7 %	1686
February 1998	514 (39)	7 %	553
March 2002	691 (39)	5.3 %	730
Feb/March 2003	344 (23)	6.3 %	367
February 2004	412 (79)	16 %	491
February 2005	548 (75)	12%	623

Survey Results, 19 and 20 February 2005

Members of the Birds Australia excursion committee went to great lengths to arrange field trips that coincided with the Hooded Plover survey. These excursions enabled us to gain additional coverage of inland lakes and coastal regions around Esperance and Windy Harbour.

A team of 11 led by Phyllis Bentley and Suzanne Mather, covered the southern coast from Hamersley Inlet to Quagi Beach and the Lake King area. Their field trip lasted from 26 February 2005 to 4 March 2005.

Dick Rule and Steve Dutton arranged a survey on 4 March 2005 covering the beach from White Hills road to Myalup. This is the coastline that runs parallel to Yalgorup National Park. In stark contrast to the large number of Hooded Plovers observed in the park, none was seen along this 47 kilometre stretch of beach.

A number of breeding events was recorded. These were at Yalgorup National Park, Wellstead Estuary, Torbay Inlet and near Mason Bay.

It was rewarding to learn that some of the conservation measures Birds Australia WA had previously put in place at Wellstead Estuary have paid off. Birds Australia members with the assistance from Bremer Bay volunteers had installed bollards at Wellstead Estuary. These were located along the north estuary foreshore and protected



Phyllis Bentley, Merle Bennett and Ruby Johnson looking for Hooded Plover along the south coast.

Photo courtesy Stella Stewart-Wynne

Hooded Plover habitat from vehicular traffic. Two runners were observed in the protected area during the survey.

Earlier in the season breeding had been confirmed at Redgate Beach and Yandy Beach. Juveniles were sighted at both locations during the survey.

There was a number of high counts. In the beach area between Bremer to Fitzgerald/Dempster Beach there were 100 Hooded Plovers including 13 juveniles reported. An outstanding effort by Anne Gadsby and Garry Carr.

Lake Kwonnicup (Plantagenet) supported 58 Hooded Plovers on a dry lake bed and 50 birds were seen at Stokes Inlet.

Gordon Inlet held little water in the river bed and on 4 March 2005 around 100 Hooded Plovers were present on a wide expanse of damp sand. This record was not included in the final count.

The Margaret River-Augusta coastline is coping with an ever increasing flow of tourists. Nearly every survey sheet from this region included comments on the increase in beachgoers and dogs. One surveyor commented that a Hooded Plover sign at Dead Finish Beach had been knocked down twice. Nevertheless there were reports from that same region indicating that Hooded Plovers were holding their own. A report from Redgate in January mentioned that Hooded Plovers were seen when there were quite a lot of people on the beach. Over summer two Hooded Plovers were seen at the Gnarabup boat ramp. The observer was amazed to see them there with all the activity that goes on at such a site.

The observation sheets we receive often contain little anecdotes. Some relate to behavioural patterns and are worth mentioning. Some examples follow:

- Hooded Plovers were observed sheltering in tyre ruts in windy weather at Boat Harbour Beach, Jerramungup.
- At Stokes Inlet Hooded Plovers were bathing, feeding and sheltering at the mouth of a creek entering the inlet.
- Hooded Plovers were observed feeding among Sooty Oystercatchers at Pallinup Estuary.
- Hooded Plovers are often mentioned in association with oystercatchers.
- At Yandy Beach Hooded Plovers were having a bath in a rock pool and then seen preening on the sand beside it.
- One of our Hooded Plover conservation signs had been used for target practice with a bullet hole showing.
- Some Hooded Plovers were seen resting in the water 1-2 metres from the lake's edge at Kojaneerup Springs, Albany.

- Feral cats were believed to be a problem around Mandalay Beach.
- An observation was made of birds feeding from seaweed at Stokes Inlet.
- A Hooded Plover was sitting on the beach in the company of four seagulls at Gas Bay.

The presence of a fresh water creek flowing across the beach seems to provide a coastal habitat that often results in Hooded Plover sightings. Fresh water creeks entering the ocean were evident at several locations. Examples include Normans Beach, Perkins Beach, Lights Beach, Mandalay Beach and the mouth of Margaret River.

Acknowledgements

The participation rate in the survey was extensive and I thank everyone for their valuable time and contributions.

Carl Beck, CALM's District Nature Conservation Officer at Katanning was able to rally a large number of locals who participated in the survey.

We received assistance from many new quarters, including the Dumbleyung Landcare Centre, Pemberton Discovery Tours and the Margaret River Permaculture Group.

Christine Wilder covered part of the south coast from Augusta to Broke Inlet and assisted with the Windy Harbour outing.

Many Birds Australia members made a valuable contribution.

A special word of thanks to the Hooded Plover regional coordinators who organised the volunteers in their districts: Dick Rule (Yalgourup), Tony France (Myalup), Lida Feist (Margaret River), David Edmonds (Walpole), Tina Smith (Denmark), Anne

Bondin (Albany), Anne Gadsby (Bremer Bay), Mike Gibbs (Esperance), Sue Abbotts for organising the BAWA excursion covering the beaches at Windy Harbour and Suzanne Mather for the Esperance/Lake King field trip.

Thanks also to the members of the Hooded Plover sub-committee, Kate Creed, Stewart Houghton, John Lauri, Julie Raines and Trevor Stoneman.

The support and assistance received each year from the Department of Conservation and Land Management and its staff is invaluable. In particular, to Geoff Harnett at Stirling Range National Park, Allan Rose at Cape Arid National Park, Garry Carr at Fitzgerald River National Park and the many other national park rangers who helped out, a sincere thank you.

Marcus Singor
Chairperson, Hooded Plover Sub-Committee



Phyllis Bentley and Sue Mather at Jerdacutup planning the next day's program for one of the south coast Hooded Plover surveys.
Photo courtesy Stella Stewart-Wynne

NEW INFORMATION SHELTER AT MYALUP

The inauguration of the Myalup Information Shelter took place on Sunday 20 March 2005.

The shelter is located at the beginning of Lake Preston Road, at the Myalup entrance into Yalgorup National Park.

Dignitaries, community leaders and sponsors attended the official unveiling that was covered in the *Harvey Reporter*.

The shelter has four large panels containing information on Yalgorup National Park and local walks. This information covers the wetlands and their importance to migratory waders, bushbirds found in the area and Hooded Plover, including how to protect this threatened species.

The shelter was made possible through the contributions of the Bunbury Port Authority, Myalup Bird Observers, Myalup Community Association, Myalup Volunteer Fire Brigade, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Harvey Shire, Alcoa and Birds Australia WA.

Full credit goes to Tony France whose Herculean effort brought all the participants together. He was the driving force behind the completion of this momentous project.

The project is further testimony to the achievements possible with, in this case, a community partnership and local government agencies.

Marcus Singor



Myalup community members celebrate the launch of their information shelter.

Photo by Marcus Singor



Members' Contributions



INFORMATION FROM LAKE MCLARTY

Lake McLarty is, for its size, arguably the most important wetland in the southwest of Western Australia. Despite its small size, it has held up to 40 000 waterbirds and has recorded the highest counts in the southwest for several species (Burbidge and Craig 1996). Due to its importance, there has been an unofficial group of people in BAWA that has taken a keen interest in this site and has been involved in on-ground improvements to reduce potential impacts from a nearby housing estate and provide inputs in CALM's management plans. With the Perth-Bunbury highway likely to be built in the next few years, passing within 2 km of Lake McLarty, threats to the lake are only likely to increase. If we are to manage the lake effectively, we need accurate

information on the number and diversity of birds present there. We currently hold a database of birds recorded at Lake McLarty but it is incomplete. There have been many records from Lake McLarty this summer and, I presume, in years past also. If you have any sightings at all from Lake McLarty, including bushbirds, sightings of single species, lists or counts, from any year, we would be most grateful if you could send them to:

Michael Craig
School of Biological Sciences
Murdoch University
Murdoch 6150
Ph: 9360 2605 (W) or 9272 2608 (H)
Email: mcraig@myrealbox.com

You can either post your sightings, send them in the body of, or as an attachment to, an email or ring me with details of the sightings. Please send all your sightings no matter how commonplace they seem, as many common birds are relatively infrequent at Lake McLarty. Only through a thorough knowledge of the importance of the lake to all birds can we accurately work to ensure it is conserved for future generations.

Reference

Burbidge, A. and Craig, M., 1996. Lake McLarty: an important Ramsar wetland, *Western Australian Bird Notes* 78; pp. 10-13.

Michael Craig

BIRD LISTS

I have not thought much about bird lists previously. They are useful to indicate the species that may be expected in an area or place, although experience shows it to be difficult in the course of any short visit to see but a small proportion of birds listed.

Recently I decided to visit the drier eastern side of the Stirling Range National Park. I found a bird list for the park on the internet with over 160 species, as usual much more extensive than I expected to see. Among the species listed was Ground Cuckoo-shrike and furthermore, it is shown as breeding in the park. It so happens that despite travelling between the north Kimberley and Albany and from the coast to Carnegie in the east, I have yet to see a Ground Cuckoo-shrike.

However, before becoming too taken with the prospect of seeing a bird that has long eluded my binoculars, I examined the *New Atlas of Australian Birds*. This reveals that between 1998 and 2002, the most southerly Ground Cuckoo-shrike reported was between 31°–32° south and the furthest most southerly breeding record to be between 27°–28° south. As the internet latitude given for the park is 34°18' it would appear there has been no sighting record of my elusive bird for at least six years in the park, in which time the nearest such sighting has been over 200 km northwards and the nearest breeding record in excess of 600 km to the north.

I recently encountered a similar 'problem' in a bird list for an area within the 30°–31° south 118°–119° east *Atlas* square. The list contained Grey Falcon. It was noticeable that some of the species in the list had outdated common names, such as would have been familiar to Cayley and Whitlock, suggest (at the least) that the list derived from observations over many years. The *New Atlas* shows no Grey Falcon report south of the 27°–28° square. Fortunately for me, I have already seen a Grey Falcon—one only, about 20 years ago in the Pilbara.

After encountering these two lists it occurred to me that a birding visitor from interstate (or more especially from overseas where twitching seems a widespread disease) who was desirous of seeing a specific bird, would be more than put out to discover that a target bird from a list was last sighted over six years previously. It is bad enough when one is informed a species was present the day before, but six years or more!

Possibly a protocol for bird lists needs be devised. The essential aspect should be that a date (month/year) would be required to be shown for any species in a list that may be regarded as 'unusual' or 'uncommon' in that area/Atlas square. Some bird lists (and bird books) use words such as unusual and uncommon, but firm definitions of these terms are lacking. It should be possible, using *New Atlas* information, to determine 'rules' for the 'unusuality' or 'uncommonness' of a species in any area and thereby require a date for such a sighting. This would overcome the 'mis-information' inherent in current bird lists. Time for list action.

Bruce Buchanan

GRADUATION FROM THE BIRD BATH

As a brand new member from Jarrahdale forest area, I feel I have now graduated from the pleasure of my patio birdbath to a wider field.

For four years I have breakfasted and sundowned with my small feathered visitors around the bird bath. As my

knowledge grew from, "What a pretty red/green/blue/spotted bird", I began to take notes and bought myself a bird book. Patterns began to emerge of who came to bathe or drink and what hour and season they visited. I noted who brought their fledglings and who made my grevilleas and hibiscus—HOME.

My most common, everyday/all day friends are the blue wrens, Brown Honeyeaters and copious Silvereyes, who all bring their squawking babies to be fed. A hanging bird feeder with half a Granita biscuit is quite unnecessary but keeps them all coming for a free lunch. The New Holland Honeyeaters come in bunches of a dozen emptying both bird baths with their vigorous splashings.

Scarlet Robins used to be occasional visitors, but have now decided to bring up their chicks in my safe environment and I have the pleasure of watching the young males colouring up. Inland Thornbills and White-browed Scrubwrens are also resident, pecking about the flowerbeds and grass with their families. Pardalotes, both Spotted and Striated try to kill themselves on our window panes. Evenings and mornings see my acrobatic Grey Fantails and Willie Wagtails visiting the bird baths for a well earned drink and splash.

Occasional visits from a pair of Western Spinebill in March and April when water is hard to find, plus White-naped



Birds bathing at Jarrahdale.
Sketch by Sheila Twine

Honeyeaters around Christmas time are a bonus. This March a Pallid Cuckoo called me from the kitchen with its 'queep-queep'.

My two poodle dogs lie on the paving of the patio with the blue wrens and thornbills pecking around them in complete trust. However when a feral pigeon alights on the birdbath or a Brown Goshawk is overhead in the trees, a cacophony of barking sees them off!

Larger birds use the sheep troughs, which have sturdy branches, for easy access. Seasonally Red-capped Parrots and Australian Ringnecks come for ripe grapes. Sacred Kingfishers, butcher birds and Common Bronzewing come during the hotter months. Red and white-tailed black cockatoos enjoy the marri nuts, but don't stay around. I'm sure there are many more which I haven't yet noticed.

My graduation (joining Birds Australia in March) was due to Judy McKinnon, who helped identify my friends at the birdbath and encouraged me to become a member. My aim now is to broaden my knowledge and perhaps in time, become a useful member. I have already enjoyed three wetlands excursions with BAWA.

In April, Jarrahdale's heritage walking group took a path through our only piece of virgin forest. The guided walk split into two groups with me taking those with binoculars around their necks. We spent two happy hours with experienced BAWA members, Ron Dibben and Judy McKinnon, plus new member Irene Benson and myself. I saw my first Golden Whistler. What joy!

Sheila Twine

BONUS AT BEELIAR

Since 1996 the birdwatching enthusiasts of the Friends Group of the Education Centre at Bibra Lake have regularly visited Bibra, North, South and Little Rush Lakes, all part of the Beeliar wetlands.

Over the 2004/5 summer, North Lake almost dried up and large areas of mudflats were exposed at the other three lakes. This was particularly so at Bibra where the areas of exposed mud exceeded that of water.

During the period from 9–30 March we have seen several types of birds uncommon at Bibra and South Lakes. Others have been present in much larger than usual numbers.

Bibra Lake

Our bonus began on 9 March with a lunchtime observation of three Fairy Terns perched on a branch of exposed mud about 75 m from the western bank of the lake.

Saturday 12 March was one of the routine waterbird counts at Bibra Lake by the Friends. This happens every four months and one or two friends together count allocated areas as the lake is large.

Waterbird 'specials' on that morning included:

- a sighting of a Fairy Tern
- a sighting of a Whiskered Tern (the fork of its tail was very shallow)
- many tiny birds on the mudflats a long distance from shore (alas we had no scope)
- 83 Red-necked Avocets
- 16 Banded Stilts
- 40 Pink-eared Ducks
- two medium-sized, plump, stationary waders standing with water up to their bellies beside the southern shore. They were like Sanderlings but had mottled brown plumage on their upper parts!

Monday 14 March, 10:00 am—on returning with a scope to this spot on the southern shore I found four waders similar to the previous two. This time I could discern far more detail including a downcurved black bill on one. The bills of the other three appeared straight but they were fairly immobile and otherwise similar to the one. As the dark brown primary feathers had beige edging I concluded that all four were juvenile Curlew Sandpipers. Previously, I have sometimes missed the downcurve of a Curlew Sandpiper at first view.

Wednesday 16 March—in hot, blustery weather, three Whiskered Terns were flying fast and low with intent from north to south over the 'water channel' beside Bibra's western shore. As they approached an outcurve of the shore they rose slightly higher and flew back to the northern end. This 'circuit' was repeated several times. One was in breeding plumage, one was a nonbreeding adult and the third was immature. Another immature perched further offshore on a branch exposed on mud.

Saturday 19 March, late morning—mounting the scope on drying mud in front of Adventure World (the western side of the lake), I saw at least 400 small birds on the mud towards the lake's centre. Many were Red-capped Plovers and others were the size and shape of stints. Due to distance, heat haze and inexperience I could not complete a reliable count of the two species.

Wednesday 30 March, a few hours before rain fell over Perth (36 ml at Mt Lawley)—I returned at 9:00 am with scope to the site of 19th. I counted approximately 200 small birds on the distant mud in the south-western corner and a similar number spaced out a little to the north. Many were Red-capped Plovers and others with stint size and shape showed grey backs, a lighter grey bib and, in some cases, dark grey legs. I concluded these were Red-necked Stints.

Saturday 2 April—no such small birds were seen on the mud at Bibra. Since the rain, stretches of water had spread and other waterbirds were flying, splashing and enjoying themselves.

Wednesday 6 April—no small birds were seen on the mud. Bibra appeared drier than on 2 April.

Thursday 14 April, 8:00 am—over 200 Red-capped Plovers and 30 Black-fronted Plovers, including an immature, were seen on mud in the same area as on 19 March towards the lake's centre.

South Lake

South Lake is about 500 m aerial distance from Bibra. On Saturday 19 March it still held a large surface of water but there were large areas of exposed mud. Over 60 Australian Pelicans were perched on partly submerged branches or swimming in the lake's centre. We think these came from Bibra Lake for only two of its large colony were seen there that day.

Using the scope we had definite sightings of:

- 30 Curlew Sandpipers
- 2 Black-tailed Godwits
- 66 Red-necked Avocets
- 46 Banded Stilts
- 116 Black-winged Stilts
- 65 Pink-eared Ducks
- 1 White-necked Heron which flew in for a short stay.

We have not previously seen such numbers of Red-necked Avocet, Banded Stilt or Pink-eared Duck at South Lake and never Black-tailed Godwits nor Curlew Sandpipers.

Early in February about 60 Pink-eared Ducks and 20 Banded Stilts were seen at North Lake. We presumed these had moved on to Bibra Lake for such numbers were seen there soon after.

Little Rush Lake

Our special treat during our count on Saturday 26 March was the arrival of a flock of 30 Black-fronted Plovers. Two immature birds were among them.

Conclusion

This late summer influx of waterbirds is exciting. Probably as other locations dried up these Beelihar lakes presented temporarily available conditions that suited our mobile guests.

Marion Shaw
Member BAWA and Friends Group of Cockburn
Wetlands Education Centre

BROADWATER NATURE RESERVE—A CHALLENGE FOR MEMBERS

The counting of birds for what became known as the South-west Waterbird Survey (SWWS) began in 1981. It is not too much to say that it was the SWWS which laid the foundation for the development and prosperity of the present Birds Australia Western Australia (Inc), while also having a considerable positive impact on the national body.

No doubt a suitable party will be held by BAWA in 2006 to mark the 25th anniversary of the inauguration of the SWWS, particularly as (to my surprise) there remain 59 WA members surviving from those heroic days. Unless the party is held in 2006 there may be rather fewer to attend. All are a little older now, but can recall the spirit of that time.

The resources of BAWA today are such that the SWWS could be readily replicated and it is very possible that such a project would reveal many changes, if the results of Anne and myself as set out below are usual—as is likely.

In March 2001 and with the support of Jim Lane of CALM, Anne and I set out to obtain up-to-date data for the Broadwater Nature Reserve at Busselton. After a number of visits revealed rather different results to the SWWS we determined to replicate the SWWS for the reserve.

A large reserve of some 63 hectares and requiring at least four kilometres of mostly difficult walking to survey, the condition of Broadwater appears essentially unchanged since 1981 (unlike other wetlands we have visited), although residential housing is rapidly encroaching on the surrounding areas. Given the increasing proximity of houses and therefore inevitably persons, small boys and dogs, we feared the worse, but thus far there are three saving features. These are: often wet surroundings, tufted grass not easy to traverse and

“... the condition of Broadwater appears essentially unchanged since 1981 ...”

possibly the most important, a sufficiency of Tiger Snakes. Nevertheless, more human interference seems probable and will materially affect the birdlife.

Unfortunately, important areas of the wetland are not within the current reserve boundary and it is to be hoped a satisfactory solution to this will be found before the developers stake their claims. Anne and I encountered considerable suspicion and hostility when we unknowingly made ourselves known to a developer in the area, he believing up-to-date information about the waterbirds might be used to impede his residential development.

The three SWWS observers made visits in all months, surveying Broadwater 39 times between October 1981 and May 1985. Anne and I visited in all months, 36 times between March 2001 and February 2005, with no birds recorded on two visits (March 2002 and April 2004) when the reserve was dry, it drying wholly each year.

In general terms Anne and I recorded more waterbirds at each visit and in total and significantly more species than the SWWS. Outline results follow; the full detail is held by CALM. Our results are given first, the SWWS results are shown in square brackets [] following.

We recorded 46 species, excluding a Pacific Black Duck hybrid, compared with the SWWS total of 36 (a rise of 27.7%) and the highest number of waterbirds recorded on one survey was 7783 (14 January 2003) compared with 6125 of the SWWS (January 1983). It is of interest that our January 2003 total exceeded the maxima of all the species recorded during the SWWS of 7602. (The maxima of all species is rather confusingly termed the ‘minimum number of

waterbirds' in the SWWS account.) Our comparable 'minimum number' was 11 783, a rise on the SWWS figure of 54.9%.

A monthly maximum species analysis shows we recorded higher numbers of species on 10 out of 12 months—a striking change: Jan 25 [18]; Feb 8 [9]; Mar 5 [1]; Apr 0 [3]; May 7 [5]; Jun 8 [7]; Jul 13 [8]; Aug 16 [12]; Sep 26 [13]; Oct 20 [8]; Nov 23 [17]; Dec 22 [19].

The highest numbers for each species we counted were: Blue-billed Duck 1 [2]; Musk Duck 34 [18]; Freckled Duck 2 [1]; Black Swan 519 [281]; Australian Shelduck 464 [1000]; Australian Wood Duck 4 [150]; Pacific Black Duck 950 [875]; Australasian Shoveler 119 [700]; Grey Teal 2445 [2000]; Pink-eared Duck 8 [24]; Hardhead 117 [300]; Australasian Grebe 26 [2]; Hoary-headed Grebe 414 [3]; Little Pied Cormorant 4 [34]; Pied Cormorant 17 [32]; Little Black Cormorant 2 [0]; Australian Pelican 8 [12]; White-faced Heron 31 [125]; White-necked Heron 6 [0]; Little Egret 0 [2]; Great Egret 27 [11]; Nankeen Night Heron 0 [2]; Glossy Ibis 2 [0]; Australian White Ibis 54 [67]; Straw-necked Ibis 210 [150]; Yellow-billed Spoonbill 71 [15]; Purple Swamphen 2 [0]; Black-tailed Native-hen 0 [9]; White-bellied Sea-Eagle 1 [0]; Swamp Harrier 3 [0]; Eurasian Coot 2209 [190]; Common Greenshank 31 [35]; Wood Sandpiper 15 [0]; Common Sandpiper 2 [0]; Red-necked Stint 410 [430]; Pectoral Sandpiper 4 [0]; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 607 [180]; Curlew Sandpiper 23 [0]; Black-winged Stilt 937 [480]; Banded Stilt 49 [0]; Red-necked Avocet 657 [1]; Pacific Golden Plover 4 [0]; Red-capped Plover 91 [370]; Black-fronted Plover 2 [16]; Red-kneed Dotterel 1 [19]; Banded Lapwing 8 [0]; Silver Gull 783 [66]; Caspian Tern 1 [0]; Crested Tern 2 [12].

Some of these changes are particularly striking, especially Eurasian Coot, Black-winged Stilt, Red-necked Avocet and Silver Gull. It is apparent that usage by shoreline waders, especially Sharp-tailed Sandpipers has increased.

The reasons for the considerable changes are unclear. Much of the survey period of Anne and myself was during a period of lower than usual rainfall in the south-west, but this would not explain the waders and some of the others.

Anne and I enjoyed our surveys. A section of the unfenced Broadwater boundary is currently a kangaroo farm and the sight of over 300 large kangaroo 'charging' in line towards us is not readily forgotten. Equally memorable was the total panic among the waterbirds induced by the appearance of a White-bellied Sea-Eagle (on four separate occasions, compared with nil in the SWWS) and of a gallant Pacific Black Duck, which having escorted three of its brood to safety, flew violently with a strange croaking sound at a Swamp Harrier that had just struck down a fourth duckling.

Our results lead us to believe there are likely to be many significant changes to waterbird distribution in WA since the SWWS. It is time to do it all again.

Bruce Buchanan

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Chris looks forward to hearing from you.

PIED PARROT PECKS PROSTRATA

In the early evening of 12 April I went down to South Lake (next to Bibra Lake) to see if there was anything of interest around. A flock of about 150 Short-billed Black-Cockatoos (Carnaby's) flew in and landed in some tall *Eucalyptus rudis*. After a while they flew across the lake and descended onto a stand of *Banksia attenuate* and *Hakea prostrata*, on which they began to feed (on the seed capsules). While I was watching the nearest group, something very different appeared amongst them. It was a leucistic bird which I was able to get a good look at, as it foraged. Most of its body, including all of its head, neck, chest and belly was white. Splashed over this were single and small patches of black feathers that gave the bird a pied effect. The main flight feathers were the normal black colour but there seemed to be some white feathers amongst the coverts. The tail had a wider

white bar than normal and also had one or two entirely white feathers in it. Unfortunately the flock flew off before I could get any more details.

The water level of the lake was low, as is usual for this time of the year. Feeding in the remaining water was a single Grey Teal, two Yellow-billed Spoonbills, a White-faced Heron, more than 30 Red-necked Avocets and at least 40 Black-winged Stilts. There were also 16 Black-fronted Dotterels feeding over the exposed mud. A flock of 15 Australian Pelicans flew in and landed as I was leaving.

I also recorded a single male Red-capped Robin amongst the usual small bushbirds. This may be the same bird that has been reported a couple of times from Bibra Lake lately.

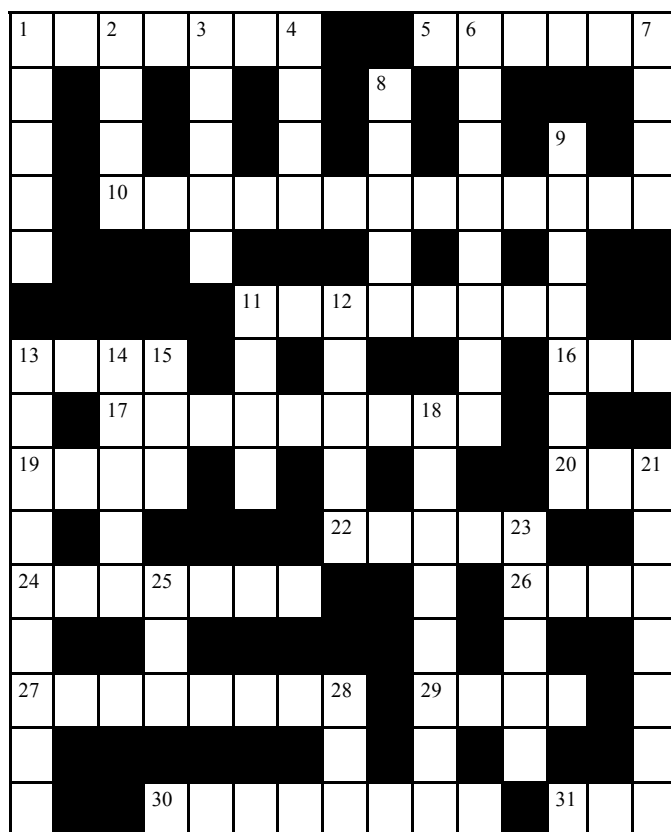
Derek Mead-Hunter



Crossword No 41



By Pam Agar



Clues across

1. Unpaid birdwatcher.
5. Swift, long-tailed parrot.
10. May limit extent of surveys.
11. May limit development.
13. Less common finch of NW of WA.
16. An egg's broader one is often speckled.
17. Significant autumn date for waders.

19. Scrutinized.
20. The present.
22. Crest colour of Western Bowerbird.
24. Siberian migrant to coastal WA.
26. To acknowledge sounds.
27. Allows data storage.
29. A good time to see nightjars.
30. Medium-large wader of coastal WA.
31. Useful identification feature.

Clues down

1. Shows distributions of birds.
2. Destination of many waders.
3. Expel.
4. Woodswallows are often seen in these.
6. Alternative to accurate count.
7. Size of young.
8. Little-known wader of freshwater wetlands.
9. Secretive bird of reeds and shore.
11. May be a meal for a heron.
12. Extremely important.
13. May be provided by gannets diving.
14. Skilled.
15. Leg colour of Oystercatchers.
18. Crake and Rail family.
21. Small songbird.
23. To pursue.
25. Haunt of scavengers.



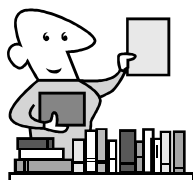
New Venue for Monthly Meetings

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE



As from July, the monthly meetings for members will be held at the **WA Ecology Centre**, next to our new office at Peregrine House, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat.

Meetings will continue to commence at 7.30 pm, but the office will be open from 6.45 pm.



Members are welcome to visit the office and browse and borrow from our ever-growing library, familiarise themselves with the new office and the resources there, and have a cup of tea or coffee.



BIRD SEMINAR AT DRYANDRA

And a visit to BARN-MIA

We are joining Avril Baxter; Land for Wildlife Field Officer, CALM and friends from the Narrogin area for a Bird Seminar at Dryandra Village on September 10th to 11th.

All BAWA members are welcome to attend. Four cottages, each cottage with 12 bunk beds, 3 bedrooms each, at Dryandra Village must be booked through the BAWA office, Tel: 9383 7749. Cost \$20 per head, Friday night, the 9th, can also be booked. Bring your own linens and breakfast. Meals, lunch and BBQ dinner will be catered for by CALM on Saturday, costs to be arranged but must also be booked, or bring your own. **You must book your own camping sites**, which are available at Congelin Dam, 11 km from Dryandra Village. There are 2 gas BBQs, toilets and a rainwater tank at the campsite. It costs \$5/head /night.

Schedule for the weekend will be:

* Saturday – early morning bird walk, identification workshop, lunch, identification workshop, tea break, bird walk, dinner. After dinner we will have the privilege of visiting **Barna-mia**. This CALM sanctuary is named after an aboriginal word meaning home for straying animals. The facility was purpose built by CALM to help educate people on many of the rare and beautiful creatures that live in the forest here. By spotlighting we hope to see some of these creatures in their natural environment.

* Sunday – early morning walk, tea break and question time session. Seminar ends at lunchtime.

Places are limited to accommodation available so do book early. For any further information, contact Brice Wells, Tel. 9255 3710.

A Bird Seminar for New BAWA Members is being organised for Oct/ Nov 2005, watch for details in the next Bird Notes.

**Elsa Dabbs, Publicity Officer
Public Relations Sub-Committee**

Eyre Bird Observatory

VOLUNTEER CARETAKERS NEEDED

- ◆ The position is VOLUNTARY (unpaid).
- ◆ Food and accommodation is FREE!
- ◆ You need to have a demonstrated interest in birds and birding and/or the natural environment.
- ◆ Two adults (preferably a couple) are a necessary requirement.
- ◆ It is preferable that you have stayed at Eyre Bird Observatory for more than a day-visit.
- ◆ Be prepared to commit to a minimum of a three-month stay. Although occasionally there is a need for short-term staff. Would you consider a short term, say 2-4 weeks?
- ◆ Have an interest in people and hospitality. Be prepared to cook and clean!
- ◆ Able to cope with isolation, remote conditions, i.e. ordering supplies weekly, limited water and power, NO easy shopping. The nearest supermarket is at Norseman, about 400 km to the west.
- ◆ Ability to communicate with a wide range of people

We particularly need caretakers for the period 1st August to 31st October 2005, or any part of this period.

*If you are interested please contact
EBO management committee:
<caro@iinet.net.au>*

Thomsons Lake Reserve

Thomsons Lake Reserve will be locked up from about early May for up to three months. This is being done so that pest animal control tasks may be undertaken effectively.

For further information on the timing of this it is suggested that you contact Brendan Dooley at the Department of Conservation and Land Management regional parks office in Fremantle.

Robyn Pickering

CALL FOR PAPERS AND POSTERS: BIRDS AUSTRALIA SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS AND CAMPOUT Bendigo, Victoria October 2005

Challenges for Bird Conservation in the 21st Century: Birds in a Changing Environment

Birds Australia Victoria invite spoken and poster presentations for a 2-day scientific congress at La Trobe University, Bendigo, on Sat/Sun 1-2 October 2005. You are invited to submit contributions relating to any aspect of the Congress theme. The location of the Congress particularly lends itself to presentations relating to box and ironbark forests and woodlands, mallee ecosystems, grasslands, and the Murray River system and wetlands. The program committee have tentatively proposed sessions based around:

- birds and water
- changes to forest, woodland and mallee landscapes
- restoration, revegetation and recovery
- programs and strategies for responding to landscape change
- student research

Spoken papers

Presentation timeslots generally will be for 15 minutes. Time for questions and discussion will be allocated after groups of speakers have presented. Presentations by research students are particularly welcome. Please send an abstract of your presentation to the program committee chair (see below) by 1 July 2005. Abstracts should include a title, author(s) names, affiliation(s) and address, and a maximum 200-word summary of the paper. Give attention to including objectives and major outcomes in your abstract. Where possible, please submit abstracts by email. The program of spoken presentations will be prepared by August and speakers then will be notified of their place and instructions for preparing the presentation. We aim to include as many papers as possible, but if there is not room for your paper you are welcome to submit it as a poster.

Poster papers

Please submit an abstract of your poster (for inclusion in the Congress booklet) by 30 August 2005. Abstracts should include a title, author(s) names, affiliation(s) and address, and a maximum 200-word summary of the content of the poster.

Program Committee contact

Dr Andrew Bennett
email: Andrew.Bennett@deakin.edu.au
ph. 03 9251 7609

Further information

More information about the Congress, including location, accommodation and activities is available on the Congress website <www.birdsaustralia.com.au/congress/index.html>.

Tim Dolby
Birds Australia - Victoria

NOISY SCRUB-BIRD SURVEYS

As a result of recent wildfires in the Albany area there will be opportunities for volunteers to participate in post-fire surveys of Noisy Scrub-birds, Western Whipbirds and Western Bristlebirds on the south coast.

In addition there will be work on the Noisy Scrub-bird translocation program during this time. All work will be conducted between April and November.

Volunteers will need to have a reasonable level of personal fitness.

Accommodation will be provided at Two Peoples Bay Research Quarters, and volunteers are asked to participate for at least a week.

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

Australasian Ornithological Conference 2005



Birds Australia

is committed to holding biennial conferences that provide a regular forum for the exchange of information and ideas between avian-based researchers and conservationists throughout the Australasian region.

**Blenheim, New Zealand
6–10 December 2005**

This conference is a joint Ornithological Society of New Zealand and Birds Australia initiative to promote ornithology. The Australasian Wader Studies Group will hold their two-day conference immediately following the AOC 2005 at Nelson, from 11th to 13th December. The ASC is the conference of the Australasian Wader Study Group and is focused on shorebird research and conservation.

Both conferences will have post-conference field excursions. Following the AOC these include boat trips off Kaikoura to see seabirds, Marlborough Sounds launch trips to see inshore seabirds and rare forest species surviving on predator-free islands, and the opportunity to visit a Department of Conservation Mainland Island project. After the ASC a two-day trip to Farewell Spit will be run. People attending both conferences will be in a position to join AOC field trips before the ASC conference.

You are invited to express your interest in attending these conferences, and presenting a paper by visiting the OSZN web site, or by writing to the conference co-ordinator:

Sue Bell
35 Selmes Rd, RD 3, Blenheim, New Zealand
<wmilblenheim@clear.net.nz>

Gouldian Finch Conservation

WWF and TSN have recently produced the *Gouldian Finch Sightings Kit* which provides information about current project work aimed at securing populations of this endangered bird, and gives tips on how to identify Gouldians in the wild, where to find them, and how to record sightings of the birds. As part of the national Gouldian finch Recovery Team WWF hopes to solicit recent sightings information to help clarify current distribution and paint some sort of picture of numbers in the wild.

A PDF version of the booklet (there are a very limited number of hard copies produced which have been circulated to some key individuals and organisations in the Top End and Kimberley regions) is also available on the WWF website:

<www.wwf.org.au/News_and_information/Publications/PDF/Conservation_gui/de/gouldianfinchsightingskit.pdf>

As I am currently finalising the latest version of the national recovery plan for this species I would appreciate hearing from anyone who has recent (the last 10 years) records of Gouldians in the wild which may not have been included in other official databases. And if you are getting out and about in Gouldian habitat in this coming dry season, I would really like to hear from you if you do see any Gouldians—information about what key bits of data to record is included in the kit.

Colleen O'Malley

TSN Coordinator - Arid Rangelands
PO Box 2796, Alice Springs, NT 0871
Phone: (08) 8951 2 1541 Fax: (08) 8953 2988
Mobile: 041 7887226
Email address: <tsnnt@ozemail.com.au>
Website: <www.wwf.org.au/tsn>

The Threatened Species Network is a community based program of the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust & WWF Australia.

SHARK BAY

A working holiday for bird lovers

Our thanks to the BAWA members who travelled to Shark Bay last year to work with CALM on a community project of bird talks and leading walks. We hope that the grant we have applied for will enable us to continue the project this year. If the grant is approved then accommodation and travel expenses will be available for the following dates:

July 4th – 15th 2005
Sept 26th – Oct 7th 2005
Apr 17th – Apr 30th 2006.

Any BAWA members wishing to spread their wings and travel to Shark Bay please contact Brice Wells, Tel: 92553710, for further details. This project is sponsored by Healthways.



Elsa Dabbs, Publicity Officer
Public Relations Sub-Committee
Birds Australia WA

GREAT CORMORANTS— HELP WANTED

Up until 2000 a breeding colony of approximately 50 pairs of Great Cormorants had nested every year during the autumn and winter at Booragoon Lake in suburban Perth. However due to the lake drying out completely during the autumn of 2001 and invasion by Australian White Ibis, the cormorants abandoned this long term breeding location and somewhat surprisingly immediately took up breeding residence on an abandoned dredging barge on Floreat Waters at Herdsman Lake.

A similar number of pairs nested successfully on this dredge from 2001 to 2004 where most pairs raised three young. However after the 2004 breeding season the dredge was prepared for operation and this meant the dredge had to be cleaned—that unfortunately involved the destruction of the nests.

I contacted CALM re the possibility of placing a floating pontoon near where the dredge was located, but it appears that CALM are reluctant to do this for various reasons, one of the main reasons being their opposition to introducing an artificial structure to the lake.

The reason why this breeding colony is important is that it may be the largest breeding colony in the Perth region and possibly it could also be the only breeding colony in Perth. Hence if the cormorants cannot locate another alternate breeding site, this species will suffer a major decline in numbers around Perth.

Assistance is required to establish if the Booragoon Lake/Floreat Waters Great Cormorants have re-established a new breeding site and to identify any other sites where Great Cormorants are currently breeding in the Perth metro area.

Feedback will be forwarded by myself to CALM to attempt to determine the extent of all known current breeding sites. For example if it is determined that there is no other significant breeding colony, then the possibility of any future pro active action to be taken is enhanced.

Please direct all Great Cormorant current breeding information in the Perth area to myself

via email: <wynton@nw.com.au>
by phone: 9364 8757
or by mail: PO Box 1236, Canning Bridge
Applecross WA 6153

Thanks in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Wynton Maddeford

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 February to 30 April 2005. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

Shane Adams, Michael Coote, Brian Cordes, Tom Curtis, Ben Drew, Peter Dunn, Colin Fletcher, Dirk Gildenhuys, Colleen Hayes, Lynton Hayes, Geoffrey Kuerschner, Merrian Kuerschner, Margaret Linden, Stella Lynch, Elizabeth McGill, Jane Mulcock, William Smart, Sheila Twine, Michelle Walker, Mr Watson, Kristel Wenziker, Sue Wiggins, Cressida Wilson



ALBANY BIRD GROUP

February Outing

The February outing concentrated first on the waders at Morley Beach on Wilson Inlet. These had been counted by Anne Bondin, Ray Garstone and a few helpers the previous weekend. They found pretty good wader numbers at Wilson Inlet, - just under 4800, the fifth highest count since 1982. The group also saw a good number of species, both waders and other waterbirds.

We had been approached to do a bird survey of the Denmark Community Park, one of the controversial sites chosen for the new hospital. We saw over 30 species, but nothing unusual. It's a very pleasant place to walk, partly along the banks of Denmark River, bordering the old Agricultural College, which is being restored as the Centre for Sustainable Living, and will be available quite soon for group bookings.

We then went to Rivermouth Caravan Park for lunch, where we had a good view of an Osprey, and the usual waterbirds.

Charlie Davies

April Outing

On 12 April 17 of us were allowed to go to the Water Corporation Reserve at Angove Creek, near Two People Bay. It is a large reserve, and supplies some of Albany's water from the pumping station there.

There had been a bad fire about four years ago, but the bush has now regenerated, and looks very healthy and beautiful after the monumental amount of rain which fell ten days ago. We had one bit of excitement when Ray Garstone had to get out his axe to remove part of a fallen tree which was blocking the track.

Surprisingly, there weren't a great many birds around, but we did see several Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, a Brown

Falcon, and a Rufous Whistler, which is fairly rare in this area. We hoped to find Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Whip-bird or Bristlebird, but none were seen or heard.

Liz Davies

KATANNING BIRDERS OR THE BADGEPUB BIRDING BODS

We are a very loose group of like-minded people who enjoy observing birds and nature in general. Being a rural area, the timing of the outings is dictated by the farming calendar and so outings are often thrown together at short notice.

On 9 April ten of us visited the Datatine area. Datatine is about midway between Dumbleyung and Nyabing. Meeting at the hall site, historically the community centre and now remembered by a plague and building remains, Sue McDougall told us stories of this area. We noticed that Australian Ringnecks, Galahs, Regent and Elegant Parrots were busy in the Salmon Gums and Red Morral. Bushbirds were harder to find. Tree Martins sunned themselves in the treetops. White-eared and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters teased us.

After morning tea we headed down the road to a patch we called Browne's Bush. Heading towards a Restless Flycatcher we were immersed in a huge feeding flock, Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, Rufous Treecreepers, Jacky Winters, Dusky Woodswallows, Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters and Varied Sittellas. But we didn't see the flycatcher. Some people had a glimpse of a Blue-breasted Fairy-wren but we all had great views of Western Yellow and Red-capped Robins. We all agreed that this was a fantastic patch of bush that needs a second visit soon.

David Secombe

A 'tree' problem, Angove Creek,
Two Peoples Bay.
Photo courtesy Liz Davies



ROTTNEST BUSH BIRD AND WADER COUNT 3 FEBRUARY 2005

Twenty Birds Australia members conducted bushbird surveys on 12 regeneration sites on Rottnest Island, seven of which have been monitored over the past few years. The regeneration program is improving habitat for the birds (and

making it more difficult for bird observers “positive difficulty”). Although the observed number of Painted Button-Quail was about the same as in 2004 their presence in the form of round cleared feeding scrapes has increased significantly and they appear to be extending their spread on the island. Table 1 summarises the observations on bushbirds.

ROTTNEST BUSHBIRD SITES SUMMER 2005 (4 AND 5 FEBRUARY)												
	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6	Site 7	Site 8	Site 9	Site 10	Site 11	Site 12
Common Pheasant	5	13	1	3	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	0
Nankeen Kestrel	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harrier (Spec)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spotted Turtle Dove	0	0	0	0	1*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laughing Turtle Dove	6	3	12	0	3	8	0	0	1	1	0	0
Rock Parrot	4 Fly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sacred Kingfisher	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rainbow Bee-Eater	16	18	15	12	2	9	2	3	0	0	0	0
White-Browed Scrubwren	3	10	4	1	8	0	15	0	3	0	0	1
Western Gerygone	2	2	2	1	11	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Singing Honeyeater	27	16	11	6	7	9	11	1	2	0	1	0
Red-Capped Robin	4	13	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Golden Whistler	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Raven	13	20	5	17	15	7	6	8	2	0	3	0
Silvereye	120	46	18	25	70	7	50	15	2	0	1	1
Painted Button-Quail	0	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Welcome Swallow	Present	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Tree Martin	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

* = breeding record

Site 1: Anniversary Park

Site 2: Kingston

Site 3: East of Barker Swamp north side of centre line fence

Site 4: East of Barker Swamp south side of centre line fence

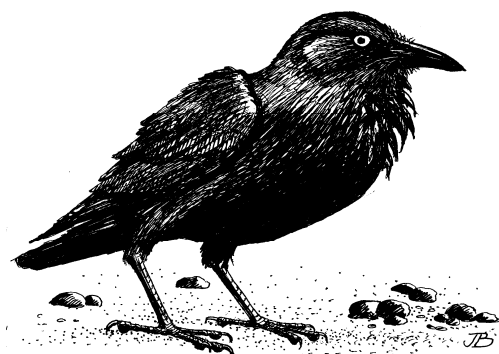
Site 5: Fire site

Site 6: Beekeepers block

Site 7: Location west of Oliver Hill, Old Barracks/Lighthouse swamp

Sites 8-12: Forbes Hill area, near rubbish tip

Table 1: Results of the bushbird count at each Rottnest Island survey site, summer 2005.



Australian Raven
Drawing by Judy Blyth

On Sunday 6 February, over a two-hour period, the Summer Wader Count was carried out by 20 volunteers who covered

all the Island's lakes and much of the coastline used by waders (Table 2).

ROTTNEST WADER COUNT, 6 FEBRUARY 2005														
	Gov House Lake	Garden Lake	Serpentine Lake	Causeway Lake	Herschel Lake	Lake Bagdad	Lake Vincent	Oval Airstrip	Pink Lake	West End Bays	Porpoise Bay	Salmon Bay	Total	
Bar-tailed Godwit		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	10	15
Common Greenshank		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Terek Sandpiper		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grey-tailed Tattler		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ruddy Turnstone		9	1	22	14	21	24	4	0	4	8	21	31	159
Sanderling		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	12	50	87
Red-necked Stint		140	143	66	27	142	182	40	0	27	16	2	6	791
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Curlew Sandpiper		1	0	0	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Red-necked Phalarope		0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Pied Oystercatcher		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
Black-winged Stilt		0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Banded Stilt		670	47	607	27	736	3616	32	0	0	0	0	0	5735
Red-necked Avocet		0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Pacific Golden Plover		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grey Plover		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	5
Red-capped Plover		51	1	15	0	21	52	14	0	6	1	0	1	162
Lesser Sand Plover		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Greater Sand Plover		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Banded Lapwing		6	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	38
Total		877	204	713	69	920	3885	90	32	37	57	38	107	7029

Table 2: Results of wader count at each survey site, summer 2005.

The number of Banded Stilts present on Rottneest in early February continued to drop from its recent peak of 7713 in 2003 down to 5735 in 2005. Curlew Sandpipers also continued to decrease with only eight seen this February compared with 345 in February 2001. Two Red-necked Phalaropes were seen this year, up from the lonely one observed in most past years.

John Lauri

PELICAN POINT, 12 February

There have been weekly bird surveys on Pelican Point since 1972 thereby establishing useful data on the shorebird species using this sand spit and adjacent wetland on the Swan River.

Charles Merriam, who is a member of the current survey group, talked to the 12 people attending this early morning walk, of the changes that have occurred, both in species presence and numbers in that time. The declining shorebird numbers at this site perhaps reflect a worldwide trend that results from loss of habitat for these trans migratory birds. Whilst only three of the 31 species seen were shorebirds, the site is used by bushbirds including a population of Variegated Fairy-wrens.

The walk was followed by a breakfast barbecue at nearby Matilda Bay. Thank you, Charles, for a great summer's morning.

Sue Mather

BIBRA LAKE, 20 February

Amongst the first birds to be seen on our walk was a resting group of ten Whiskered Terns perched on a fallen branch some twenty metres into the lake in front of the main picnic area. This uncommon sighting set the scene for a very interesting walk around the lake that, due to the number of birds seen, took three and three quarters of an hour to circumnavigate.

Things hotted up even more when approaching the walkway to the eastern shore hide as a very dullish looking juvenile robin was detected feeding amongst the bushes and muddy margins. Luckily we had Michael Morcombe with us and he readily identified it as a Red-capped Robin due to its unique habit of opening and closing its wings to frighten and flush out any unsuspecting insect or other small prey item. It also appeared to lack any buffy feathering to its forehead that would have distinguished it as a young Scarlet Robin.

Nearby and feeding in the shallow waters, were over 25 Banded Stilts. Earlier in the walk we had seen numerous Black-winged Stilts, Red-necked Avocets, Yellow-billed Spoonbills and two Glossy Ibis. Other waders seen were a Common Greenshank and a Common Sandpiper. Some members of our group also heard a Spotless Crake calling.

Over the traditional cups of tea and bottles of water the bird tally was recorded, revealing an impressive tally of 62 species, one of the highest ever counts for this walk. We also had a fleeting glimpse of a Southern Brown Bandicoot near the margin of the lake at the main picnic area. It was good to see some new members and faces amongst the 16 who

attended this enjoyable and rewarding walk.

Wynton Maddeford

JOONDALUP LAKE, 26 February

With Tom Delaney as our leader 12 birdwatchers had a most interesting walk at Lake Joondalup.

The lake level was very low and although 53 species of birds were seen there were no large groups of any particular species.

The morning was overcast and we did experience several short sharp showers of rain. We walked for about 300 m past the lookout down to the lake and to an excellent spot where you could sit and watch the bird activities. It was there that we saw two Spotted Crakes and one Black-tailed Native-hen. The raptors seen were Peregrine Falcon, Swamp Harrier and Whistling Kite.

A lot of the common birds were not seen on this walk so we were very pleased with the number of species recorded.

Lyn Sellers

Brook Dam, 5 km out of Pemberton, for a walk around the lake, again seeing plenty of bushbirds, a Little Eagle and a Whistling Kite. Waterbirds were massed at the top end of the lake, Eurasian Coots, Hardheads, Australian Shelducks, and Musk Ducks among others. Fifty-three species were recorded for the day.

Sunday's main agenda was a trip coordinated by Chris Wilder to Windy Harbour, looking for Hooded Plovers, on four beach areas. Only one juvenile was found near the dunes on busy Castle Rocks Beach, where children and dogs played close by. Not surprisingly there were few waders, but a few Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers, and Pied Cormorants were seen. A walk around the caravan park area yielded more bushbirds and Splendid Fairy-wrens. After lunch we headed for Mount Chudulup, walking up to the granite outcrop for splendid views. An Australian Hobby and more bushbirds were seen on a visit to the Twin Karri Trees, then we headed back to camp. Seventy-five species were recorded, plus two more when a Tawny Frogmouth and a Collared Sparrowhawk were seen at the caravan park.

Monday saw numbers much reduced, but the remaining people had enjoyable walks around the Cascades and Beedelup Falls areas, seeing a flock of Long-billed White-tailed Black-Cockatoos, demonstrating characteristic behaviour and calls. A rewarding and enjoyable weekend, and many thanks to Sue Abbotts for her excellent organisation and leadership.

Liz Walker

PEMBERTON CAMPOUT, 3–6 March

About 24 people arrived at the Pemberton Caravan Park on Friday evening, including several people from country areas, and later, two day visitors.

We were greeted on Saturday morning with Red-winged Fairy-wrens hopping around on the verandah. The weather stayed fine, and the weekend started with a pleasant walk up the wooded hillside adjoining the park, the karri trees magnificent. Many bushbirds were seen, including Red-eared Firetails, Common Bronzewing, Western Rosellas, and White-tailed Black-Cockatoos overhead. New Holland Honeyeaters and Grey Fantails were everywhere, and many more Red-winged Fairy-wrens, White-breasted Robins and White-browed Scrub-wrens. In the afternoon, the group visited Big



A happy group at Pemberton.
Photo courtesy Elsa Dabbs

MINDARIE KEYS, 12 March

Nine people started out on our walk through the sandunes and scrub at Mindarie Keys. Tom Delaney took the walk and, much to his dismay, it turned out to be the smallest bird count he had ever had. Now he holds the record for the most birds and also for the least birds on a morning's walk. Sixteen birds were seen and of them, Australasian Gannet, Silver Gull, Red-capped Plover and Pied Cormorant were seen on the beach in the last half hour of the two and half hour walk.

The easterly wind was strong and because the birds were not showing themselves in the scrubby dunes two people decided to turn back early on the walk. Singing Honeyeaters and White-browed Scrub-wrens were the most prevalent birds observed.

Perhaps it is too early in the year to hold a walk there. Even though the birds were scarce the views along the beach were spectacular.

Lyn Sellers

GARVEY PARK, ASCOT, 16 March

After the heat of the previous few days, it was a pleasure for nine of us, including two new members, to be birding in pleasant temperatures of mid-upper 20's with refreshing breezes, which did, however, become stronger as the morning progressed.

The morning started off very well with a good sighting of a Peregrine Falcon perched in the upper dead branches of a tree overlooking the river. Continuing downstream, we saw waterbirds including Chestnut Teals, a Great Egret and Buff-banded Rail, noting a few bushbirds in the adjacent riverine woodlands..

A flock of eight White-tailed Black-Cockatoo was seen flying due west. It wasn't determined whether they were Baudin's (long-billed) or Carnaby's (short-billed), but the sighting will be reported to Cockatoo Care as both species are threatened/ endangered, and the subject of a research project (<www.cockatooocare.com>) by WA Museum and Water Corporation on these species and Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, to assist in their protection.

Walking inland to several isolated pools surrounded by woodland, we saw more waterbird species including Hoary-headed and Australasian Grebes, Pink-eared and Pacific Black Ducks, Hardheads and three Yellow-billed Spoonbill.

To nicely cap off the excursion, we had an excellent view of a Little Eagle circling above us while we did our bird count.

Many thanks to Hank van Wees for leading us on an enjoyable excursion.

Jennifer Muir

PEEL INLET, 19 March

The day started off with good cloud cover, which was a relief after the recent hot weather. We walked to the Bridgewater lakes near the car park where six species of duck were seen but not the Chestnut Teal that frequents this area. Good views of Spotless Crake and a tree full of Darters. We then proceeded through the bush to The Chimneys, a headland that looks out over the estuary towards Creery Island, seeing the Ospreys and their nest and bushbirds along the way. At The Chimneys, Australasian Gannet were seen and there were about 20 Nankeen Night Heron roosting in the big marri trees nearby. A walk back to the cars along the estuary yielded Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Sacred Kingfisher, Common Bronzewing, and five species of parrot including Purple-crowned Lorikeet.

After morning tea we went to the new bird hides at Mariner Cove where we found thousands of Banded Stilt, a Little Grassbird, Black-winged Stilt, Splendid Fairy-wren, Red-necked Stint and White-fronted Chat. After lunch at Coodanup we walked along to Nairns where more waders were seen including Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Greater Sand Plover and Great Knot.

A total of 74 species was seen, an excellent day's birding. Thanks to Jim Howell from the Mandurah Group for leading.

Sue Abbotts

MARGARET RIVER CAMPOUT, 25–28 March (Easter Weekend)

Apart from great birding we were blessed with a knowledgeable, fun loving leader in Christine Wilder, a bird and people friendly campsite on Tingrith farm made available to us by Felicity Haynes; and perfect weather—no rain!

We had 20 birders. Colin Henley, who guessed 96 species, won the Easter Bunny. However our final total came to 101, or 103 if you counted the Guinea Fowl and the Khaki Campbell Duck.

During the weekend we visited Canebreak Pool where we were delighted to see Southern Emu-wrens, a pair of Red-eared Firetails and Long-billed Black-Cockatoos (Baudin's).

In the marri and Jarrah woodland of the newly declared Margaret River National Park we saw some of the more common bushbirds.

A visit to Scott River and the BHP Billiton's Beenup Rehabilitation Ponds had been arranged for Saturday. We were fortunate to have Wendy Cusack (Closure Co-ordinator) and Bill Lyon (Project Advisor for BHP, previously the mine manager) to show us around the wetlands. There were six ponds and we saw many waders, waterbirds and bushbirds.

Our itinerary also took us to Augusta, Nuralingup Gardens and Ellenbrook Homestead where we saw a variety of species including Western Spinebill and Red-winged Fairy-wren.

On Monday we were invited out to Pat and Tim Negus's property called Swallows Welcome. Pat's botanical art in the mud brick 'Chapel of the Flowers', the glorious garden with birds all around us and Tim's wine tasting were a finale to our weekend and a delightful 'taste' of Margaret River hospitality.

Ray Flanagan and Mavis Norgard

MOUNT BARKER, Easter Campout

The Easter campout at Mount Barker was yet another of Clive and Wendy Napier's well planned birding excursions, enabling the 23 people attending to visit a wide variety of vegetation habitats.

Good Friday outings included visits to Terry Proctor's landscaped garden on the edge of town, Mt Barker (the hill), a nearby nature reserve, and the north Woogenellup area. On Saturday we visited the large Wambellup Nature Reserve south-west of Mount Barker, a wandoo reserve to the west and Lake Poorarecup, one of the few lakes in the district with plenty of water.

On Sunday morning, we were joined by Ray Garstone at the Twin Creeks Conservation Reserve which is about 500 hectares of privately owned land secured by the Friends of the Porongurups. It is located a few kilometres north of the Porongurups townsite. Wendy Napier's keen spotting provided the highlight of the visit for us (and possibly many others) with a particularly clear view of a Barn Owl sitting on an exposed branch about three metres above ground level. An afternoon walk through karri forest at Judith McKinnon and her husband's property on the south side of the Porongurups followed.

Monday saw us at the Kamballup Reserve, on the Chester Pass road, midway between the Porongurups and the Stirling Ranges. A big surprise for us was the big pool of water (with ducks) hidden away in the otherwise dry Kalgan River. Once again David Secombe's sharp eyes spotted a distant Peregrine Falcon.

Overall, a total of 120 species were recorded for the campout, including 15 new sightings for the Shire of Plantagenet. Special thanks go to Terry Proctor, Luccia Queary of the Friends of the Porongurups, Ray Garstone and Judith McKinnon.

Barbara and Trevor Stoneman

HERDSMAN LAKE, 27 March

As substitute leader for this walk, it was a pleasant surprise to have 28 keen birdos for company, especially when the early morning cloud produced a drizzly rain.

Thankfully, the entire walk was fine. No Freckled Duck were found despite keen efforts and sharp eyes. Black-tailed Godwit was the most unusual bird with the Black-fronted Dotterels dashing around on the mudflats being the cute component.

The total of 70 birds was due to the overall expertise of the group, with a high content of very experienced watchers.

A very enjoyable walk, certainly as far as the leader was concerned.

Mary Vaughan

ELLIS BROOK, 10 April

On this excursion Les Harris organised a walk through Hillside Farm, adjacent to Ellis Brook. Steve Toghil talked to the 25 people attending the walk about the education program on the farm and his current work on mapping the

nest sites of the numerous birds found there. Steve showed the group a number of nests, speaking knowledgeably about particular species. He also showed us the rehabilitation work being carried out in the area.

After seeing 52 birds we then viewed a superb video of bushbirds found there. This area, farmland and remnant of 20 000 ha, on the fringe of urban development, and adjacent to the Ellis Brook Reserve, is an important habitat for species not often seen in the city such as Golden Whistler and Tawny-crowned Honeyeater.

Thanks to Les for a great day.

Sue Mather



White-browed Babbler
Drawing by Judy Blyth

DENNIS DE YOUNG RESERVE, BANJUP, 17 April

Thirty-one people attended this bushland location excursion. The area is a banksia and paperbark woodland frequented by a number of bushbirds. In 2004 it had been surveyed under the Perth Biodiversity Project.

This morning, we recorded 32 species, including Elegant Parrots, Scarlet and Red-capped Robins, Yellow-rumped, Inland and Western Thornbills and a Little Eagle.

Thanks to everybody for a pleasant and enjoyable morning of birdwatching.

Sue Keogh

GLENEAGLES REST AREA, 1 May

Despite threats of showers 18 people joined Frank O'Connor for a walk through the forest around Gleneagles Rest Area. Fortunately, the weatherman was mistaken and by the time the walk commenced, we were bathed in sunshine.

This site has a good reputation for many of the southwest endemics and it wasn't long before everyone was treated to excellent views of both White-breasted Robin and Western Rosella. Spotted Pardalotes were numerous, although often difficult to sight in the canopy. A large patch of logged forest provided large numbers of Dusky Woodswallow and a lone Fan-tailed Cuckoo. The area proved to be a haven for robins, with Western Yellow, Scarlet and a juvenile Red-Capped

seen in addition to the numerous White-breasted Robins. Frank pointed out a Collared Sparrowhawk's nest in the crown of a pine tree, although the birds were not present.

At the end of the walk, the bird count stood at 33 species. On the endemics side, White-breasted Robin, Western Rosella, Red-capped Parrot, Long-billed Black-Cockatoo (Baudin's), Western Thornbill, Western Spinebill were all recorded and several lucky people saw a male Red-winged Fairy-wren, resplendent in breeding plumage, before it ducked for cover.

Many thanks to Frank for leading the walk and sharing his knowledge of the area with us.

John Graff



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Observatory Reports



BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

The annual wader migration has come to an end and things are much quieter on Roebuck Bay. Where just six weeks ago hundreds of thousands of waders could be found either roosting or foraging on the shores of the bay, we are down to hundreds and thousands (still amazing, but I guess we're all just so spoilt here!). Not so long ago we also enjoyed the wonderfully festive sight of thousands of gorgeously coloured waders in their breeding plumage and now we are back to the sight of the more drab "grey waders" when we visit the shores. Interestingly, there are still some coloured individuals here and



there. These are the "stay-overs", birds who for reasons of health, age or bad timing, did not join their fellows in the amazing northward migration. Their hormones are telling them that they're in Siberia, but here they are, still enjoying some good old Aussie invertebrate tucker under a southern sky instead!

The failure of this year's wet season has been a mixed blessing. We missed the influx of hundreds of thousands of waterfowl, as they would normally be seeking a place to breed on the flooded plains. However, the drier conditions inland are turning what are usually the movements of smaller groups of birds northwards and coastwards into a major influx.

In recent months, we have had several sightings of some great "Broome rarities", including Grey Falcons, sizeable flocks of Budgerigars, Pictorella Mannikins, Pied Honeyeaters, Black Honeyeaters, Banded Honeyeaters, White-faced Honeyeaters and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters. Others that show up each season, but this year in much larger numbers are Painted Finches and Cockatiels.

Perennial favourites, Yellow Chats are now in great numbers on Roebuck Plains, to the rear of the Observatory. Many guests are now enjoying the sight of hundreds of these birds as they flit about the salt marshes. With the cooler weather, we are now preparing for the next big migration, humans!

Ricki Coughlan
Warden

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

In the last edition of *WA Bird Notes* EBO Management Chairman Rod Smith introduced my partner Brian and myself to you. We stayed at Eyre from early February onward, but unfortunately our (first) period as the first couple of Volunteer Caretakers of the Eyre Bird Observatory has come to an end in late April. Departing from Eyre after almost three months was sad indeed! Not only did we have to leave the welcoming community around Cocklebidy, but also some interesting occurrences in the local avifauna.



In March we counted over 4000 Purple-crowned Lorikeets passing by. Most flocks were heading west, although a small number of the lorikeets have set up camp in the mallee above the escarpment. Also, a Peaceful Dove was seen drinking from one of the birdbaths. Although four sightings of Chestnut Quail-Thrushes and one sighting of a Malleefowl were very exciting for us, the puzzling highlight was the presence of Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters. Throughout the years only two sightings of them have been recorded around the observatory! This year sightings of as many as five individuals were recorded from 25 March onward. From 10 April onward we had the privilege of observing up to three individuals in the birdbaths on a daily basis. White-fronted, Yellow-plumed and Purple-gaped Honeyeaters have also been seen occasionally around the old Telegraph Station. This is in addition to the vast numbers of regulars, such as New Holland and Singing Honeyeaters. Additionally, the number of sightings of Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds has greatly increased in early April.

In accordance with the change of seasons Pallid and Fan-tailed Cuckoos have arrived in late April.

Instead of the regular weekly beach count we went to the beach almost every day and were rewarded with some quite amazing sightings. Apart from surfing Dolphins and the omni-present Red-capped Plovers (so cute!) we watched Australasian Gannets plunge-dive, we saw an exhausted White-chinned Petrel swimming very close to the shore after a storm, observed one lonely Black-winged Stilt following a Common Greenshank wherever the Greenshank went. We also regularly saw Banded Stilts hop on one leg, as if they were too slack to lower the other (tucked up) leg in order to walk instead. Although a Pink-eared Duck swimming in the surf pleasantly surprised us, this sight was beaten by a flock of six Rock Parrots feeding on the vegetation on the foredune. One day in mid-April we encountered 96 White-fronted Chats on the beach.

Concerning non-avian wildlife, we had the opportunity to observe the swarming of three species of large Jewel Beetles in late February and early March. It was the first time since 1996 that this phenomenon was recorded in Eyre. The beetles were seen in their hundreds on flowering eucalypt and melaleuca. So far, hardly anything is known to science about their life cycles and the factors that trigger the swarming.

Apart from the changes in the bird population, some other changes have taken place and will take place in the near future. Brian has installed the new stove. Telstra have upgraded the existing telephone line to a satellite connection. Between looking after guests and the beach I had the chance to re-establish two Atlas sites. In the September school holidays Brian and I will lead a *Birding for Beginners* course.

In early May roadwork is scheduled on the escarpment track. CALM will widen the track and (hopefully) it will be somewhat smoothened.

Special thanks go to John Hanrahan, Murray Kornweibel and Rob Perrin. They came to Eyre in order to find out how they can help the observatory. Amongst other tasks they will upgrade the kitchen, pantry and bathroom.

To sum it up, Brian and I had an exciting time at Eyre! We immensely enjoyed the work with the birds and the time we spent with our guests and neighbours. It was great to be able to share our enthusiasm for this patch of paradise with like-minded spirits.

Now the observatory is in the capable hands of Rhonda and Leon Sherwood, who will be looking after it until August, when Brian and I will return. As always, you are more than welcome to join us at Eyre! We are all looking forward to seeing you there.

Victoria Kleber
Ex- and future Caretaker



Coming Events



Important Note re Campouts

Members anticipating attending campouts must notify the BAWA Office (9383 7749) of the number in their party and when they will arrive. When members arrive without notice it makes it difficult for leaders who have made arrangements only for the people on the list, so if you are unsure, put your name down. You can always cancel, and then we can advise the next person on the waiting list. With this information we will be able to ensure 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.

NB: In WA Bird Notes for March, No. 113, the date for the walk at Jandakot in June was incorrect. It should be: Sunday 12 June.

Saturday 4 to Monday 6 June: Warriedar Station

Foundation Day campout

This is a station recently acquired by CALM, and they have asked that we do a bird survey, as for the many other stations they have bought in recent years. This will be a 'campers only' excursion as there are NO facilities available for us to use. The property is approximately 218 km NE of Wubin on the Great Northern Highway. Turn off to the left 5 km past the Ninghan Station turn off. Station tracks are all dirt and 4WD is desirable to reach all areas to be surveyed. Those taking part need to be fully self-contained regarding fuel, food and spares. On completion of the Warriedar survey those with the time can carry on to Kadji Kadji Station to the west, to carry out a bird survey on this property.

No more than 30 members can be accommodated so it is essential to book early. Please indicate if you intend moving on to Kadji Kadji. BAWA signs will be in place.

For members and guests only.

*Leaders: Alyson and Ed Paull,
Pam and George Agar,
Clive and Wendy Napier*

Saturday 4 June to Monday 6 June Rottnest winter wader count Foundation Day weekend

This survey has previously been carried out by a small group, but at Colin Davis' suggestion the opportunity is being offered to all members to attend this campout. Accommodation at

approximately \$16.50 per night will be at the UWA Research Station at the eastern end of the airstrip. This offers cooking facilities, utensils, refrigerators, and bathrooms. Numbers are limited to 16 people.

If you are interested in attending please leave your name, phone number and e-mail address at the BA office. You will be contacted to confirm your attendance and be sent more information.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Mather

Sunday 12 June: Jandakot Regional Park, Forrestdale

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Ranford Road and Skeet Road (formerly Hale Road), opposite the poultry farm. We will walk around bushland/swampland where Tawny-crowned and other honeyeaters, Splendid Fairy-wrens, several raptors and many other species have been seen – 46 so far. Wear old shoes or gumboots.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Debbie Walker

Wednesday 15 June: Bickley Brook, Gosnells

Half-day excursion

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

For members and the general public.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 19 June: Burley Park, Bullsbrook

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park/barbecue area to the right off Smith Road. Burley Park is a 19 ha bushland remnant part of which is listed under Bush Forever. From Bullsbrook on the Great Northern Highway take the Chittering road and turn right into Smith Road. Burley Park will be immediately on your right. 47 species have been recorded here with the Perth Biodiversity Project surveys, including Mistletoebird, Dusky and Black-faced Woodswallow, Varied Sittella and Splendid Fairy-wren.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Sue Mather

Sunday 26 June: Yarra Road (Christmas Tree Well), Brookton

Full-day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the Christmas Tree Well car park on the left hand side of the Brookton Highway, heading east. The turn-off is sign-posted and about 0.5 km short of the Yarra Road turn-off. The area is about 45 km from the junction of the Brookton and Albany Highways in Kelmscott.

Good bush birding in Wandoo woodland.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Pam and George Agar

Sunday 26 June: Pelagic Trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour

This is your chance to see albatross and petrels close up. Bring your camera. The trip leaves at 7am and we return at about 3:30pm. We head nearly 60 km offshore to the trench west of Rottnest to look for seabirds and cetaceans.

There is a limit of 30 people. The cost will depend on the number of people. \$75 if 23 people, \$65 if 30 people. Book by contacting Frank O'Connor on foconnor@iinet.net.au or 9386 5694.

Monday 27 June: State Tennis Centre, Burswood

Meeting, 7:30 pm

Marion Massam, Technical Officer, Agriculture Western Australia, will speak on *Control of exotic birds and animals, including Rainbow Lorikeets*.

Saturday 2 July: North Mole, Fremantle

Half-day excursion

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

For members and guests only.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 10 July: Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park, Padbury

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the first car park off Whitfords Avenue, Padbury. Turn left at the roundabout and then left again into the car park. This is an interesting park where gardens and lawns are flanked by natural woodland of tuarts and banksias. About 80 species of birds have been identified in the area, including Splendid Fairy-wrens, Scarlet Robins and Varied Sittellas.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Hank van Wees

Tuesday 12 July: Craigie Open Space, Joondalup

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am on the far side of the car park, near the entrance to the reserve.

Craigie Open Space is a Bush Forever 53.7 ha reserve, adjacent to the Craigie Leisure Centre. To get there, drive north on the Mitchell Freeway to Whitfords Avenue, exiting left. Take the first turning on the right from there, to the Leisure Centre, turning left into the car park.

A pleasant morning walk through the banksia woodland should find Little

Wattlebird, Rufous Whistler, Weebill, and some honeyeaters.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Liz Walker

Sunday 17 July: Piesse Brook, Kalamunda

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the junction of Hummerston Road and Schipp Road at the southern end of Kalamunda National Park. Take Mundaring Weir Road from Kalamunda, and turn left into Hummerston Road. We should see Golden Whistler, perhaps the introduced Red-browed Firetail, and other bush birds.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Brian Wilson

Saturday 23 July: Lake Gwelup, Stirling

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the corner of Stoneham Street and Huntriss Road, north of Karrinyup Road. We should see plenty of waterbirds and bush birds, and often raptors are seen here.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Clive Nealon

Monday 25 July: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, 167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat

Meeting, 7:30 pm
Stuart Miller, a member, will give a talk entitled *Photographic glimpses of the nature of the Fitzgerald River region*.

Note: New venue – this will also apply to subsequent meetings.

Sunday 31 July: Pelagic Trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour

This is your chance to see albatross and petrels close up. Bring your camera. The trip leaves at 7am and we return at about 3:30pm. We head nearly 60 km offshore to the trench west of Rottnest to look for seabirds and cetaceans. There is a limit of 30 people. The cost will depend on the number of people. \$75 if 23 people, \$65 if 30 people. Book by contacting Frank O'Connor on foconnor@iinet.net.au or 9386 5694.

Sunday 31 July: Whiteman Park, Whiteman

Full day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the gate 5 km north of the Marshall-Beechboro Road intersection, (NOT at the main gate). Look for the Birds Australia signs. The gate will be locked at 8:45 am, so be punctual.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Wes Bancroft

Sunday 7 August: Wellard Wetlands, Baldivis

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the entrance to Wellard Wetlands on the northern side of Zigzag Road (also marked as Bertenshaw Road) 1 km from St Albans Road. Coming from Perth, turn left off the Freeway into Mundijong Road, then right into St Albans Road. There should be plenty of bush birds and waterbirds here, as well as several species of raptors.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Les Harris

Thursday 11 August: Little Rush Lake, Yangebup

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am near the playground on the western side of this small wooded lake. Little Rush Lake is part of the Beeliar Regional Park. To reach the area, turn right off North Lake Road, travelling south, into Osprey Drive, then right into Dotterel Way, then right into Grassbird Loop. There is a path around the lake, and we should see plenty of waterbirds and bush birds. Fifty species of birds have been seen here. Bring morning tea.

For members and the general public.

Leaders: Barry and Molly Angus

Saturday 13 August: Helena Valley, Kalamunda

Half-day excursion

Meet near the locked gate in Victor Road at 8:30 am. Park on the right-hand side of the road. Bring morning tea and we will have it at the Pipehead Dam. Drive through Midland east along the Great Eastern Highway. Once you have begun to climb Greenmount Hill watch for Scott Street, Wellbourne Park Hall is

on the corner. Turn right, and continue until you reach a roundabout just past the tennis courts on the right. Turn left into Clayton Road, and drive to the end. Turn right into Victor Road, until you reach the locked gate.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Wendy Napier

Sunday 21 August: Serpentine National Park, Serpentine-Jarrahdale Full day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the junction of the South-West Highway and Falls Road (the turn off to Serpentine Falls). About 80 species of birds have been seen in this area, and we hope to visit areas of the Park not normally accessible to the public.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Monday 22 August: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat Meeting, 7:30 pm

Dr Belinda Cannel, Environment, University of WA, will give a talk entitled *Little Penguins and large boats : a tale of co-existence*. This relates to Garden Island. The talk will be introduced by Dr Boyd Wykes who is responsible for the upkeep of the environment in Defence Department lands in WA.

Sunday 28 August: Pipidinny Road, Eglinton Full day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Pipidinny and Yanchep Roads, an hour's drive from Perth. Be prepared to pay a small fee to enter the picnic area for lunch. We will look at four habitats during the day: the coastal dunes for Variegated Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrub-wren, etc; the heath for White-winged Fairy-wren, Tawny-crowned and White-cheeked Honeyeater; the swamp for waterfowl; and a part of the Yanchep National Park which few people visit.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Brice Wells

Sunday 4 September: Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale Full day excursion

Meet at 8:00 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 10 September: Flynn Road, Mundaring Full day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about 1 km on the Perth side of "The Lakes" turn-off, i.e. the York Road turn-off. We will look at several areas of wandoo woodland, where three species of robin are often seen, and perhaps Crested Shrike-tit.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Charles Merriam

Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 September: Short weekend campout at Dryandra

The Publicity Sub-committee, in conjunction with Land for Wildlife and CALM, are holding a bird seminar focused on bird identification, and BAWA members are invited. The weekend includes a visit to Barna-mia. For more information see Notices. Contact Brice Wells on 9255 3710.

For members and local people.

Leader: Brice Wells

Thursday 15 September: North Lake Half-day excursion

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

For members and the general public.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

Sunday 18 September: Ellis Brook Reserve, Gosnells Half-day excursion

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

For members and the general public.

Leader: Les Harris

Sat 24-26 September: Lake Unicup and Lake Muir, Manjimup Long weekend campout

The Lake Muir/Unicup wetlands and surrounding nature reserves are approximately 70 km east of Manjimup. Due to many requests this campout is a repeat of last year's, but we plan to try and survey some of the reserves we didn't have sufficient time for last year.

This area has records of Australasian Bittern, last recorded in 1983/84, so we will be keen to determine if this species is still persisting here. The endangered southern subspecies of the long-billed Western Corella (Muir's Corella) is common in the area.

A house is available with sleeping, cooking and toilet facilities. There is plenty of room for tents and caravans around the house. All roads and tracks are accessible to 2WD vehicles.

People wishing to register their interest should notify the office leaving contact details. An information sheet will be sent out when you register your interest. This was a great weekend last year.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Peter Taylor and Sue Mather

Sunday 25 September: Karnup and Baldivis Reserves Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the parking area just around the corner in Karnup Road off Baldivis Road. Follow Kwinana Freeway until it becomes Safety Bay Road. Turn left at Baldivis Road roundabout, and travel approx 6 km to Karnup Road on the left. Western Yellow Robins have been seen here.

Returning back along Baldivis Road towards Perth, it is 8 km to Baldivis Reserve, where there are shady picnic tables and toilets. We can do more birding in that reserve. Both reserves are being monitored for the Perth Biodiversity Project.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Sat 24-26 September: Cheyne Beach, Albany

Long weekend campout

Cheyne Beach is a fishing village on the edge of the Waychinicup National Park, east of Albany. It has a caravan park, with some chalets and cabins as well as the usual caravan and camping facilities. The telephone number for the caravan park is 9846 1247, and the postal address is Cheynes Beach Caravan Park, 12 Bald Island Road, Cheynes WA 6328.

The Waychinicup Park has a good selection of bird species, including the hard to find endemics, such as the Western Whipbird, Western Bristlebird, and Noisy Scrub-bird. We cannot guarantee seeing all of the above, but it will be fun trying. Wildflowers should be great at this time of the year. For those wishing to stay in cabins or chalets, please book immediately to avoid disappointment. Activities will be organised from Saturday morning to Monday midday.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

Crossword Answers No 41

Across

1 amateur, 5 regent, 10 accessibility, 11 covenant, 13 star, 16 end, 17 departure, 19 eyed, 20 now, 22 lilac, 24 tattler, 26 hear, 27 computer, 29 dusk, 30 Whimbrel, 31 bar.

Down

1 atlas, 2 Asia, 3 evict, 4 rows, 6 estimate, 7 tiny, 8 snipe, 9 bittern, 11 crab, 12 vital, 13 spectacle, 14 adept, 15 red, 18 Rallidae, 21 warbler, 23 chase, 25 tip, 28 rob

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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.

- ◆ **Eyre Bird Observatory volunteer caretakers** – contact
 - * Caroline Comstock Phone 9450 5086,
e-mail <caro@iinet.net.au>
 - * or Rod Smith Phone 9447 3804,
e-mail <rodjoyce@optusnet.com.au>
- ◆ **Atlas** – surveys for this are continuing – contact Cheryl Gole
Phone 9293 4958, e-mail <cgoale@westnet.com.au>
- ◆ **Excursion Leaders** – contact Sue Abbotts 9444 1607,
e-mail <sabbotts1@bigpond.com>
- ◆ **Monthly Meeting Speakers** – contact Brian Wilson 9293 1094
- ◆ **Noisy Scrub-bird** – contact Sarah Comer (see details under Notices)
- ◆ **Public Relations Sub-committee** – graphic artist, members willing to visit schools, set up displays, attend shows and help with administration – contact Elsa Dabbs e-mail <dabchic5@bigpond.net.au>
- ◆ **Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project** – a range of assistance is required including attendance at agricultural shows, databasing, surveys – contact Leonie McMahon 9287 2448, e-mail <ljmcmahon@bigpond.com>

Birds Australia Western Australia Inc

Office: **Peregrine House**

167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat WA 6014

NOTE NEW ADDRESS!

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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 the BAWA Office)

September 2005 issue: 1 August
December 2005 issue: 1 November
March 2006 issue: 1 February
June 2006 issue: 1 May

Calendar of Events

NB: In WA Bird Notes for March, No. 113, the date for the walk at Jandakot in June was incorrect. It should be: Sunday 12 June.

Sat 4 – Mon 6 Jun: Warriedar Station, Foundation Day campout

Sat 4 – Mon 6 Jun: Rottnest winter wader count, Foundation Day Weekend

Sun 12 Jun: Jandakot Regional Park, Forrestdale, Half-day excursion

Wed 15 Jun: Bickley Brook, Gosnells, Half-day excursion

Sun 19 Jun: Burley Park, Bullsbrook, Half-day excursion

Sun 26 Jun: Yarra Road (Christmas Tree Well), Brookton, Full-day excursion

Sun 26 Jun: Pelagic Trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour

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

Sat 2 Jul: North Mole, Fremantle. Half-day excursion

Sun 10 Jul: Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park, Padbury, Half-day excursion

Tue 12 Jul: Craigie Open Space, Joondalup, Half-day excursion

Sun 17 Jul: Piesse Brook, Kalamunda, Half-day excursion

Sat 23 Jul: Lake Gwelup, Stirling, Half-day excursion

Mon 25 Jul: **Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat**, Meeting

Sun 31 Jul: Whiteman Park, Whiteman, Full day excursion

Sun 31 Jul: Pelagic Trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour

Sunday 7 Aug: Wellard Wetlands, Baldivis, Half-day excursion

Thu 11 Aug: Little Rush Lake, Yangebup, Half-day excursion

Sat 13 Aug: Helena Valley, Kalamunda, Half-day excursion

Sun 21 Aug: Serpentine National Park, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Full day excursion

Mon 22 Aug: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting

Sun 28 Aug: Pipidinnny Road, Eglinton, Full day excursion

Sun 4 Sep: Wungong Gorge, Bedforddale, Full day excursion

Sat 10 Sep: Flynn Road, Mundaring, Full day excursion

Sat 10 & Sun 11 Sep: Short weekend campout at Dryandra

Thu 15 Sep: North Lake, Half-day excursion

Sun 18 Sep: Ellis Brook Reserve, Gosnells, Half-day excursion

Sat 24–26 Sep: Lake Unicup and Lake Muir, Manjimup, Long weekend campout

Sun 25 Sep: Karnup and Baldivis Reserves, Half-day excursion

Sat 24–26 Sep: Cheyne Beach, Albany, Long weekend campout

Advertising Rates

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