

# Western Australian Bird Notes



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



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## NOISY SCRUB-BIRDS IN THE PORONGURUPS?

A misty winter morning in the Porongurup Range east of Mount Barker — a Noisy Scrub-bird is calling repeatedly from a gully near a steep track leading up Millinup Pass. How did this bird get here?

It all began with a lightning strike at Mt Manypeaks in December 2004, which started a devastating wildfire killing half the world's Noisy Scrub-bird population. To ensure the continued survival of this endangered species, it was deemed necessary to establish a new sub-population of Noisy Scrub-birds.

Moist gullies with dense cover and plenty of leaf litter made the Porongurups a prime site for a translocation. Whilst there are no historical records of the

species ever having occurred in the Porongurups, it is known that John Gilbert encountered Noisy Scrub-birds whilst travelling in the Mount Barker area in 1843.

Fast forward to July 2006. After many weeks of hard work, officers of the Department of the Environment and Conservation (DEC, formerly CALM), released four male Noisy Scrub-birds in the karri forest of the Porongurup Range. They

were joined by another four males in early August.

I had the great privilege to release the last bird. When I opened the cage door and the bird made its dash to freedom, another Noisy Scrub-bird was calling nearby. Hopefully these calls will become a familiar sound in the Porongurups.



This male Noisy Scrub-bird was recently translocated to the Porongurup Range.  
*Photo courtesy Alan Danks*

**Anne Bondin**

## BRYAN BARRETT

Birds Australia Western Australia has lost a dear friend, and some of us a teacher, with the passing on 27 June of Bryan Barrett. Many of us learnt a great deal by following Bryan's example on the many walks and campouts he led. Most of us only knew him during the last quarter of his life, but he enjoyed a long and full life exploring most of the aspects of a manly existence common in his era.

He was born in 1915 in Somerset, England, and attended Wye College studying agriculture, with an emphasis on entomology. Wye College is one of the most prestigious colleges of its type in the English-speaking world. During the depression of the 1930s life was far from easy and eventually Bryan tried his hand at that most British of occupations, plantation management. For generations young men such as Bryan have gone out to the Far East and Africa to manage the properties of investors by growing rubber, palm oil, tea and other products. Bryan chose tea in Assam.

Unfortunately World War II intervened and, as one would expect, Bryan enlisted in the Indian Army, rising to the rank of Captain. His duties included guarding the Persian oil installations and other action in the Middle East. At war's end he was discharged in the United Kingdom and put into practice the qualifications he had acquired at Wye. He joined a crop spraying company and eventually started his own spraying company, moving to the use of helicopters for the work. The final phase of this segment of his long life was to work for the international chemical company, Bayer, until retirement in 1981.

During his entire life birding had been his major interest. As most country children did in those days, he started by collecting eggs and he enjoyed roaming the countryside of Cambridgeshire in search of new species. Assam and Persia had given him a love of the wide-open spaces. On retirement he and his wife moved to Perth to be near her daughter.

He joined Birds Australia in 1983 and was soon involved in an organisation that was to be his major interest for the rest of his life. In the 1970s and early 80s Birds Australia in Western Australia, changed from a small group of mainly professional ornithologists to a wider based group of mainly amateur birders. Bryan provided the leadership through which the increased membership enjoyed field excursions of all types. After all if we are to provide reasonably expert birders to assist the professionals we need to train them and

this Bryan did superbly, not formally, but by example. After all it was not until 1981 that Bryan saw his first Australian bird, but he learnt quickly.

The number and variety of excursions grew from one or two per month to five or six and later we even had to introduce SWECOs to cater for the increasing number who wanted to attend campouts. The stories of Bryan's leadership are many, but one that exhibits his often gentle side, was when one evening at the bird call, a member called out that they had seen a particular species which was so far out of range as to be ridiculous. Bryan said nothing and I saw his hand make the motion of ticking off the sighting. I approached him

later and said that such a species could not be seen here and he showed me the card on which there was no mark. "Didn't want to embarrass him", said Bryan, and showed me the art of making a tick with the pencil a millimetre off the paper.

Many of us enjoyed the excursions and we also must pay tribute to Margery for she provided incredible support for Bryan in his work and also in life in general.

Bryan's life had many highs and lows and we are thankful that his time in Perth was largely one of the high spots. He has been sadly missed during his last illness and we are the poorer for his passing.

**Clive Napier**



Bryan Barrett  
*Photo courtesy Judy Blyth*

## MOLLY BROWN OF MIDDLESEX

When Molly Brown died at home on the night of Thursday 27 July 2006, Australian ornithology lost its last link with a remarkable couple and their research career of over 30 years.

Molly was born in Yorkshire, England, in August 1919 and was nearly 87 when she died. She and her husband Dick moved out from Britain in 1969 and after wandering around Australia and New Zealand settled, in 1972, on five acres at Middlesex, 5 km south of Manjimup. Dick had been a farmer in Britain and Molly had worked for many years with the British National Trust.

They soon established a productive smallholding on the fertile soils of the former karri forest, and within a few years were able to claim that all they ever bought in town was tea and tobacco; the rest grew on the property. A cow, a pig, fowls, bees, geese and a very diverse vegetable garden and orchard surrounded the former fettler's cottage (it had been on a timber-hauling rail line) with something close to Eden.

They had always been interested in birds and as the grounds attracted many of the local species and the adjacent dam the waterbirds, the Browns began to study them. Their vision was of a field study centre where they and others could learn more and more about the lives of birds and thereby contribute to their conservation. Their success was spectacular and they attracted researchers from all over Australia, Europe, America and the Middle East. Their publications are quoted both in the European *Birds of the Western Palaearctic* and the local *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*. Molly contributed records to the first *Atlas of Australian Birds* and their publications in *Emu* and *Corella* revealed the care with which they maintained their observations. Indeed Dick asserted that he had a cow so that he "could never spend

a night away from the place". The fruits of his 25 years of daily records were published in 2005 (Brown *et al.* 2005), sadly after Dick had died in 2001, although he knew it was in preparation. These data are currently being analysed by the Bureau of Meteorology to help determine the effect of climate change on the timing of the movements of birds.

Throughout all this time Molly maintained a friendly and welcoming household that fed and often accommodated visiting birders.

The Middlesex Field Study Centre accumulated a magnificent international ornithological library. Over the past two years Molly has donated many books from the collection to the Reid Library in the University of Western Australia.

Unlike Dick, Molly made trips away from Middlesex, describing the work at Middlesex to a conference in Melbourne. She continued watching and recording the birds of her garden until the last day of her life. The birds of Western Australia, Australia and the world owe the Browns a big thank you. The report on their work can be obtained from the Department of Environmental Biology, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA.

### Reference:

Brown, R.J., Brown, M.N., Davis, M.J. and Davies, S.J.J.F.. (2005). Observations on the changes in status and movements of birds at the Middlesex Field Study Centre, Manjimup, Western Australia, based on twenty-five years of daily records. *Curtin University of Technology, Department of Environmental Biology, Bulletin* No. 26.

Stephen Davies

## EDNA MILNE

When Edna Milne died on Wednesday 12 July 2006, Birds Australia WA lost one of its most loyal and effective supporters.

Edna attended the RAOU Congress at Kalgoorlie in 1979 and joined the post-Congress excursion, then, after a rain-damped adventure on the Nullarbor Plain, spent a night or two at Eyre Bird Observatory. Edna was impressed by the observatory and thereafter sought ways of helping young people to experience its magic. For many years she subsidised the costs of students attending courses at Eyre and these students have gone on to become effective biologists in the Western Australian scientific community.

Edna's father was the baker at Norseman — his photo is still exhibited in the Norseman Roadhouse on the Eyre Highway

— and Edna's childhood was spent there. Later the family moved the bakery business to Guildford, where the old house is still in use as a second hand shop. During the time I knew her, Edna lived, with her dog, in a neat cottage near the sea in Cottesloe, but her great delight was to jump into her campervan and join whatever excursion Birds Australia or the WA Naturalists Club were running at the time. She kept notes of her observations and made significant contributions to the first Atlas of Australian Birds. Even when she could no longer go on long trips she remained keen to help BAWA as far as she could and the results of her generosity will benefit ornithology in Western Australia for many years to come.

Stephen Davies



Dear Editors

## Lake MacLeod

In September 2005, Dampier Salt (DSL), the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and WWF-Australia drafted a management plan for their proposed nomination of an area known as the northern ponds within Lake MacLeod as a Wetland of International Importance. This wetland should be listed under the Ramsar Convention (1971).

The special ecological values of this 60 square kilometre wetland that make it worthy of Ramsar nomination are that it is one of Australia's most important habitats for migratory waterbirds, the ocean feeds seawater through subterranean channels to the ponds 10 km inland and wells up from "vents" in the lake floor and these wetlands also support the largest inland community of grey mangroves in the world.

People with an interest in supporting this listing were invited to have input into this draft management plan so that all stakeholders understood the implications and got a chance to have their say. Those that had input were notified that their submissions had been received and consultations took place.

I was notified that discussions regarding this Ramsar listing would be held at Coral Bay in conjunction with a Land Care District Committee (LCDC) meeting on Saturday 18th March 2006. This meeting consisted mainly of pastoralists with at least one member from the media, a small number of other interested parties including myself, and three key speakers. The key speakers were John Taucher, Superintendent-Environmental Approvals DSL, Michael Coote, Co-ordinator, Wetland Conservation CALM (now DEC) and Laura Todd, General Manager Environment-The Griffin Group.

John Taucher answered questions arising from a telephone hook up between the LCDC and DSL on 8 March 2006. Michael Coote also spoke on the proposed listing and mentioned that pastoralists and landholders have found Ramsar listing very beneficial to access available funding programs. Laura Todd from WR Carpenter Agriculture was there to condemn the listing, or rather to promote a memorandum of understanding between pastoralists and the drivers of the proposal. Her stance was that if the whole of the lake were listed there are many more environmental impacts, which trigger the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

It became abundantly clear that the pastoralists were against the proposed listing and the main reasons seemed to revolve around concerns regarding bureaucracy and red tape, the implementation of the EPBC Act, availability of funding toward the management of Lake MacLeod and any mitigation work they may be asked to undertake. In hindsight I believe that most of these concerns were the product of a propaganda campaign initiated from WR Carpenter.

WR Carpenter (formerly the Griffin Group or Collie Coal), the leaseholders of the Minilya pastoral lease, are the drivers behind the disquiet over this proposed listing. I have

speculated as to their interests in a pastoral lease but will not enter into that here.

I spoke to a pastoralist the evening before the LCDC meeting took place and he was well informed as to what the objections to be raised were and named the same two court cases involving the EPBC Act cited at the meeting the following day that were used as a tool to inflame landholders views that Ramsar listing and the EPBC Act would be detrimental to their business activities.

John Taucher pointed out that the biggest threat to the plan is if the pastoralist will not agree with it.

I have spoken to Tony Bramwell, DSL Environmental Officer at Lake MacLeod, to find out if there have been any further advances with regard to this listing, but he was not aware of any. He also gave me an in house document detailing those sites that participated in a national bird watching day in November 2005 across all Rio Tinto sites worldwide. Within this document were detailed descriptions of the surveys carried out by Chris Hassell and others, and he states that all three sites are worthy of Ramsar listing.

Some readers may recall the articles in WA Bird Notes by Chris Hassell and the late Colin Davis regarding previous bird surveys carried out on these wetlands at Lake MacLeod. These sites can and do hold a remarkable number of migratory birds as well as good numbers of more common waterfowl.

I am perturbed that this Ramsar proposal may be overturned by a small number of people that oppose it due mainly to the fallacious arguments outlined at that meeting in Coral Bay. Rio Tinto has formed a partnership with Birds Australia to map Important Bird Areas (IBAs), a very important step in bird conservation in Australia.

I feel very strongly on this subject and feel I must try to make people aware of what has and is happening up here at Carnarvon. There must be some people with the knowledge or political persuasion to turn this around, to get the ball rolling in the right direction, and I would like to call upon everyone to do all they can to help.

**Les George**



Part of a flock of 100 000 Banded Stilts at the northern pond of Lake MacLeod in November 2004.

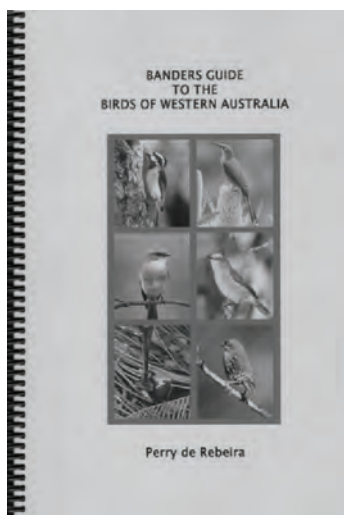
*Photo courtesy Les George*

**BANDERS GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA** by Perry de Rebeira, with contributions by members of the Western Banders Association. CPS and AM de Rebeira, PO Box 113, Glen Forrest, Western Australia, 2006, 232 pp. RRP \$25 plus postage.

In the nineteenth century, a huge upsurge of interest in natural history led to the collection of thousands of specimens of unusual and exotic animals, including the birds of Australia, which were at that time unknown to the western world. While many of these specimens went to private collectors, the vast majority ended up in the museums of the world, where they have since formed the basis of our knowledge of the morphology and plumages of the Western Australian avifauna.

Today, we no longer need to collect a bird in order to study it. In his book *Banders Guide to the Birds of Western Australia*, Perry de Rebeira has shown that just as much, or even more, information can be gained from netting a live bird and releasing it, than from shooting and preserving it. Using data from his own observations and from other members of the Western Banders Association, Perry has put together a comprehensive record of weights and

measurements from over 63 000 individual birds banded in the state. Information is provided for 166 species, and includes criteria for ageing and sexing 159 species. An illustrated methods section covers how to band, measure and record moult. One of the most useful aspects of the book is Perry's advice on how to handle difficult species. For example, he warns that Red-capped Parrots "have a long upper mandible and bite with a vengeance" — obviously the voice of experience; and the Western Shrike-tit "bites as hard as any parrot twice its size. Stress Rating Bird 1/5; Bander 3/5".



This Banders Guide will not only be an invaluable reference for West Australian banders, but also a source of new information for scientists and environmental managers, who previously had to rely on hard-to-access museum data or bander's data from eastern Australia. At last, Western Australian ornithologists have access to up-to-date, locally obtained information from live birds, which, together with existing museum data, will provide guidance on bird movements and longevity for those concerned with the conservation of our western avifauna, in particular the eleven endemic species.

*Review by*  
**Lesley and Michael Brooker**



## Fourth Biennial AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE



Ornithological Society of New Zealand

### Call for Papers and Expressions of Interest

The Fourth Biennial Australasian Ornithological Conference will be held in Perth, Western Australia on 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2007. This conference provides a regular forum for the exchange of information and ideas between avian researchers and conservationists throughout the Australasian region. The venue will be the University of Western Australia, and the Western Australian group of Birds Australia (RAOU) will host the conference.

A post-conference field excursion will be available.

### An Invitation

You are invited to express your interest in attending this conference, and presenting a paper by visiting [www.birdswa.com.au/aoc2007](http://www.birdswa.com.au/aoc2007) or link through [www.birdswa.com.au](http://www.birdswa.com.au) or [www.birdsaustralia.com.au](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au) or by writing to the conference co-ordinator:

**S. Mather**

Birds Australia Western Australia

167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, WA 6014, Australia

Email: [aoc2007@birdswa.com.au](mailto:aoc2007@birdswa.com.au) Telephone: 61 (0)8 9389 6416

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@birdswa.com.au>) or to the BAWA office (9383 7749). Sightings are included on the BAWA web site (birdswa.com.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 period has a few outstanding records. An **Atlantic Petrel** seen at sea well south of Esperance is the second record for WA. A **Chinese Pond Heron** seen on the Cocos Islands is the first pond heron identified to species level because it was in breeding plumage. Two pond herons seen previously on Christmas Island were not in breeding plumage and Javan Pond Heron could not be ruled out. A **Common Kingfisher** seen on Christmas Island is the third record for Christmas Island and Australia.

The unusual climatic conditions have contributed to Lake McLarty having good numbers of migratory waders over wintering, including a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** in breeding plumage, apparently of the nominate western subspecies. This is probably the first time that this subspecies has been identified in Australia. The only subspecies recognised in Australia is *Limicola falcinellus sibirica*.

A **Yellow Wagtail** in full breeding plumage on the Cocos Islands is one of only a few Australian records of the subspecies *macronyx*. The taxonomy of this species group is undergoing revision, and so in order to make accurate identifications it is necessary to make detailed notes of any birds seen in breeding plumage.

**Note:** New information has come to light about the **Eurasian Hobby** photographed on Ashmore Reef in December 2003 (WABN 109). The consensus is now that this bird was a (Siberian) Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus calidus*, a very distinct and different form of Peregrine Falcon not previously recorded in Australia.

## METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

**Cattle Egret** – 2, 07/05/06, Lake Joondalup South (Woodvale) – PF (unusual in suburban Perth)

**Little Bittern** – 1, 10am 12/05/06, Lake Monger (Glendalough) – CRF (seldom reported in the metropolitan area)

**Glossy Ibis** – 60, 17/04/06, Lake Joondalup (Edgewater) – PF (highest count for the south west)



Broad-billed Sandpiper at Lake McLarty.  
Photo courtesy Alan Collins

**Pacific Gull** – 10, 23/04/06, Quinns Rock beach (Quinns Rock) – DT (highest count for the metropolitan area)

**Fork-tailed Swift** – 2, 16/05/06, Alcoa Wellard Wetlands (Baldivis) – MN (unusual this late)

## SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

**Pacific Black Duck** – 8000, 06/05/06, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high count)

**ATLANTIC PETREL** – 1, 11/07/06, 100 nautical miles S of Esperance – NJ (rare in Australia)

**Black-tailed Godwit** – 2-3, 14/05/06 to 16/07/2006, Lake McLarty (Murray) – AC *et al.* (unusual to over winter in the south)

**Broad-billed Sandpiper** – 1, 02/07/06 to 16/07/2006, Lake McLarty (Murray) – AC *et al.* (probable 1<sup>st</sup> record of nominate western subspecies in Australia; see photograph)

**Double-banded Plover** – 1, 24/04/06 to 08/07/06, Lake McLarty (Murray) – AC *et al.* (see photograph on page 19) \* 1, 04/06/06, Lake Grace North (Lake Grace) – DS (unusual in WA, especially inland)

**Inland Dotterel** – 8, 22/06/06, 30 km E of Brookton (Brookton) – KM (scarce to uncommon in the south west)

**Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo** – 8, 19/05/06, near Moorine Rock (Yilgarn) – PB (rare now in this area)

**Southern Emu-wren** – 3, 05/05/06, near Flying Fox Mine, Forrestania (Kondinin) – RT (isolated population)

**White-fronted Honeyeater** – 1, 25/02/06, Cape Leeuwin (Augusta – Margaret River) – DH (out of range; photograph provided)

## ARID ZONE

**Australasian Shoveler** – 2, 18/05/06, Roy Hill (East Pilbara) – LG, BD (uncommon in the Pilbara)

**Chestnut Teal** – male, 18/05/06, Roy Hill (East Pilbara) – LG, BD (uncommon in the Pilbara)

**Common Redshank** – 1, 05/06/06, Carnarvon boat harbour (Carnarvon) – LG (rare in the Gascoyne)

**White-breasted Woodswallow** – 1, 10/07/06, Telfer (East Pilbara) – BM (uncommon this far inland in WA)

**White-browed Woodswallow** – 2, 16/05/06, Mulga Downs (Ashburton) – LG, BD (rare in the Pilbara)

**Welcome Swallow** – 3, 09/07/06, Telfer sewage ponds (East Pilbara) – BM (uncommon in the eastern Pilbara)



## KIMBERLEY

**Green Pygmy-goose** – 16, 05/05/06,  
Berkeley River tidal reaches  
(Wyndham – East Kimberley) –  
KC (unusual in this part of the  
Kimberley)

**Welcome Swallow** – 1, 20/06/06,  
Kingston Rest Station (Wyndham –  
East Kimberley) – KC (rare in the  
East Kimberley)

## COCOS ISLANDS

**CHINESE POND HERON** – 1 in  
breeding plumage, 03/05/06, West  
Island – RB *et al.* (3<sup>rd</sup> pond heron  
recorded in Australia; 1<sup>st</sup> identified  
to species; photographs provided –  
see one in this issue)

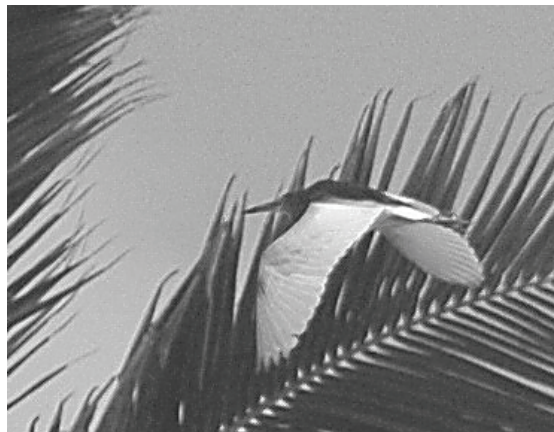
**Yellow Wagtail** – 1 subspecies  
*macronyx* in full breeding plumage,  
03/05/06, West Island – RB *et al.*  
(this subspecies is rare in Australia;  
photographs provided – see one in  
this issue on page 24)

## CHRISTMAS ISLAND

**COMMON KINGFISHER** –  
1, 06/05/06, Casino Cove –  
RB *et al.* (3<sup>rd</sup> record for  
Christmas Island)  
(submission to BARC  
being prepared)

## OBSERVERS

AC = Alan Collins  
BD = Ben Drew  
BM = Brenden Metcalf  
CRF = Colin & Roslyn Ferrell  
DT = David Taggart  
KC = Kevin Coate  
KM = Kim Mills  
LG = Les George  
MC = Michael Craig  
MN = Mark Newman  
NJ = Nigel Jackett (NSW)  
PB = Phyllis Bentley  
PF = Paul Freeman  
RB = Richard Baxter (NSW)  
RT = Roy Teale



Chinese Pond Heron, Cocos Islands  
*Photo courtesy Mike Carter*



## Birds Australia WA Inc Reports



### CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

In the winter that never came, it has still been a busy time for Birds Australia WA. We are looking forward to hosting the annual Congress and Campout from 18 October in Albany and my thanks are due to Bruce Haynes, Lorraine Marshall, Graham Wooller and Clive Napier for their superb organisation of this event. An excellent speaker's program has been compiled and there will be a wide range of exciting walks and events so please register today if you haven't done so already.

Also on things scientific, next year promises to be exciting as we look towards the AOC 2007 to be held in Perth and hosted by BAWA. By the end of 2007, Birds Australia WA will be firmly established nationally as an active and exciting regional group undertaking high quality bird conservation research!

Soon September will bring with it the wonderful blanket of colour of our local wildflowers as celebrated by the Kings Park Wildflower Festival. We have been invited to be a part of this wonderful event again and Eggy Boggs has very kindly agreed again to co-ordinate our involvement. In an increasingly busy world with so many opportunities, we are very grateful to our volunteers such as Eggy, and all those past and present, who do so much for our organisation. Without

these volunteers we simply could not achieve the education and conservation outcomes we have been so successful in working towards.

Although we are very lucky to have so many wonderful volunteers, I can't help but feel we need to do better at attracting younger members into Birds Australia. I am not necessarily talking about children, but about young adults. Whilst there was a brief flare of active participation from younger members (many of them my peers and friends) some 3-5 years ago, this seems to have dropped off once more as people drift into full-time work and fledging their own young. It is likely to be a perennial problem for Birds Australia, but with the exciting and important conservation projects we undertake, I can't help but feel we must be able to attract younger members. As any biologist knows, recruitment is absolutely essential to the long-term persistence of a population, and so too for Birds Australia's future. The young people of today are the scientists, project officers, volunteers, chairpersons and committee members of tomorrow. My challenge to you all is to try and interest a young person in birds and bird conservation today!

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Bryan Barrett. Bryan was an outstanding and long-term member of

Birds Australia WA who was responsible for getting a great many young people interested in birds. Bryan, who sadly passed away in June at age 93, will always be remembered for his strong commitment to birds and as a core member of Birds Australia WA from the early days. Bryan was particularly good at involving new members and young people in birds for the first time and his friendly enthusiasm and good-natured humour will be sorely missed. Bryan's funeral was well attended by his many friends from BAWA and Mike Bamford informs me that he was farewelled by a pair of Australian Hobbies soaring in the skies overhead.

Until next time, happy birding.

Rob Davis

## LETTER FROM COUNCIL

The Council of Birds Australia usually meets in Melbourne, often in a meeting room at a hotel near the airport so councillors can fly in and fly out on the same day. Our most recent Council meeting, however, took place in Darwin in conjunction with the meeting of regional groups, Birds Australia's AGM and the Scientific Day. This was a great opportunity for exchanges of ideas and opinions, and some of us even snuck out before dawn to do a bit of bird watching. The taxi driver had never been asked to go to Buffalo Creek before (that's the place in Darwin for pittas, Chestnut Rail, Black Butcherbird and a couple of gerygones), but he soon entered into the spirit of the day. It turned out he had been a chef at Australia's Antarctic base and was quite interested in wildlife. We didn't quite recruit him as a member, but next time we'll take a handful of membership forms just in case.

Over three days of meetings, some of which extended well into the night, many topics were covered and it is difficult to select the highlights. However, following are some of the key issues that council has addressed or is addressing.

**Regional Groups.** The regional group meeting in Darwin was the first under a new scheme whereby National Office provides an airfare for one representative from each regional group. As a result, the meeting was well attended. Coming from BAWA, with our strong emphasis on birdwatching, it is always something of a surprise to find that most regional groups place as great or greater emphasis on conservation. One of the topics of the meeting was the new scheme for providing a greater proportion of membership fees to the regional groups. This is based on increasing membership above 2005 levels, so there has never been a better time to recruit new members.

**Sale of National Office.** The recent sale of the office in Melbourne will see BA moving to rented (with an option to buy) offices in The Green Building, an environmentally friendly building close to the centre of

the city. The sale has allowed us to retire the loan that was needed to buy the office in Riversdale Road, and puts us in a slightly better financial position.

**Communications Committee.** This group is working through a range of issues from encouraging membership to increasing the profile of BA in the wider community. It is frustrating to many of us that BA is not widely recognised, as such recognition is essentially for our effectiveness in conservation. However, CEO Graham Hamilton was interviewed on the ABC's 7.30 report to comment on the issue of a windfarm and the Orange-bellied Parrot, and John Blyth was interviewed on a commercial radio station in Perth about Night Parrots. On another front, meetings have been held with the coordinator of the Double Helix Club, to see if there are options for involving school children in bird-oriented projects. BA has now employed a Development Manager, Kay Blandthorn, and one of her many roles will be to facilitate communications within BA and between BA and the wider community. One of the big issues discussed under the general heading of communications was **branding**. A big part of gaining wide recognition and improving effectiveness is having an easily recognised image. WWF's Panda springs to mind. BA has a very recognisable image in our Emus and the "Conservation through Knowledge" slogan, but coming from a business background, Kay wryly observed that we don't use it very well. BAWA is one of the few regional groups to use the BA brand. Presenting a united front, so that anything done by BA anywhere is recognisable, is very important as it improves our level of recognition. We also discussed BA's **Web presence**, with all agreeing that a really good website is essential for a business such as ours; but how do we get there?

**Governance.** This word covers all the administration issues that an organisation like BA must address. Under this heading we discussed **Broome Bird Observatory** (a special place for many of us, in a place that is special for birds, but are we making the most of it?), updating BA's **constitution**, issues concerning **occupational health and safety** for staff and volunteers and **finances** (fund raising, sponsorship, a new way of presenting financial statements to council).

On a triumphant note, it was announced in May that HANZAB (The Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds) was complete. HANZAB was one of those massive undertakings that absorbed an enormous amount of money and effort to produce a series of very large books (they take up over half a metre of shelf space) that you'll never see in an airport bookshop. However, HANZAB provides a reference point for Australian ornithology that will still be referred to in 100 years, and it is something of which all members can be proud.

Mike Bamford



## HOODED PLOVER BREEDING RESULTS, 2000-2006



Peel Development Commission  
Government of Western Australia



From 2000 to 2006, a number of observers in the Hooded Plover project submitted survey sheets that also contained breeding records. The information contained in this article is based on 138 separate Hooded Plover (*Thinornis rubricollis tregellas*) breeding records obtained in this way, illustrating the value of the field notes.

For the purpose of this article a breeding record was defined as a nest with eggs or the sighting of a downy and flightless runner. Records of birds sighted in juvenile plumage were not included. Nest sites were separated into two categories: coastal and inland.

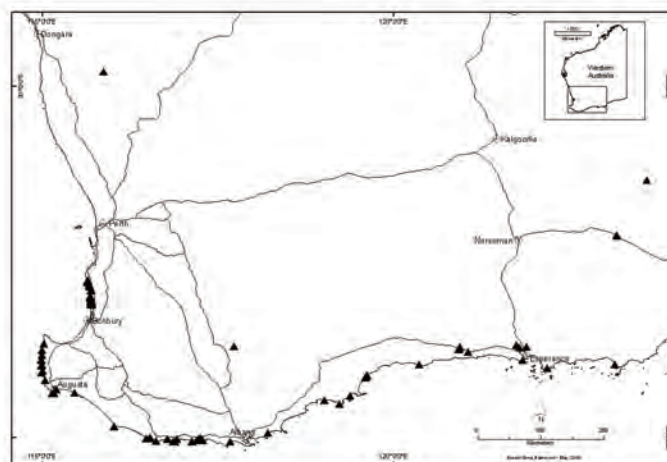


Fig 1: Locations of Western Australian Hooded Plover breeding records (solid triangles) from 2000-2006.

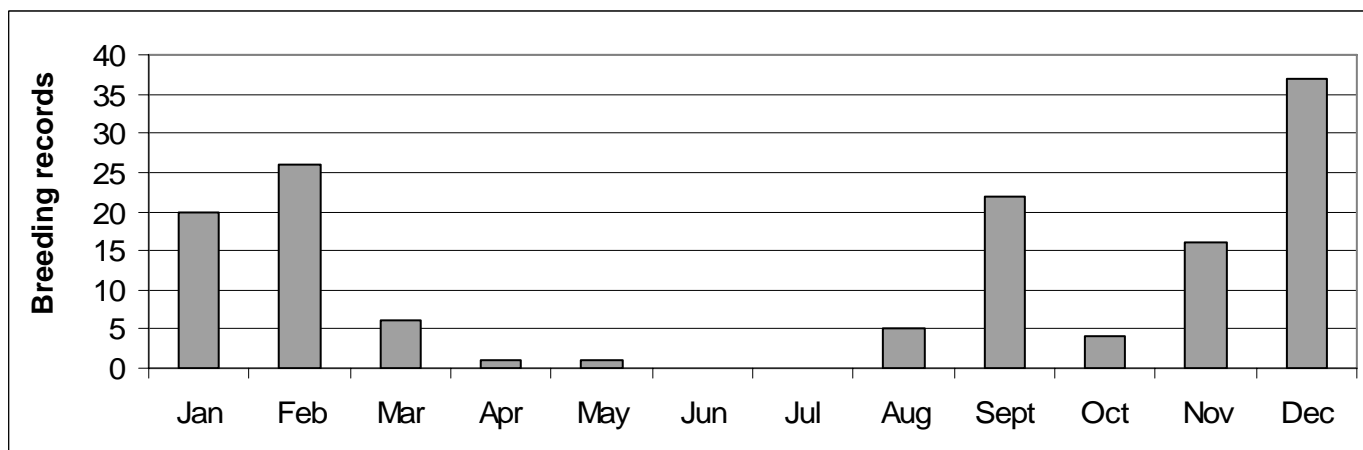


Fig 2: Hooded Plover breeding season in Western Australia, 2000-2006.

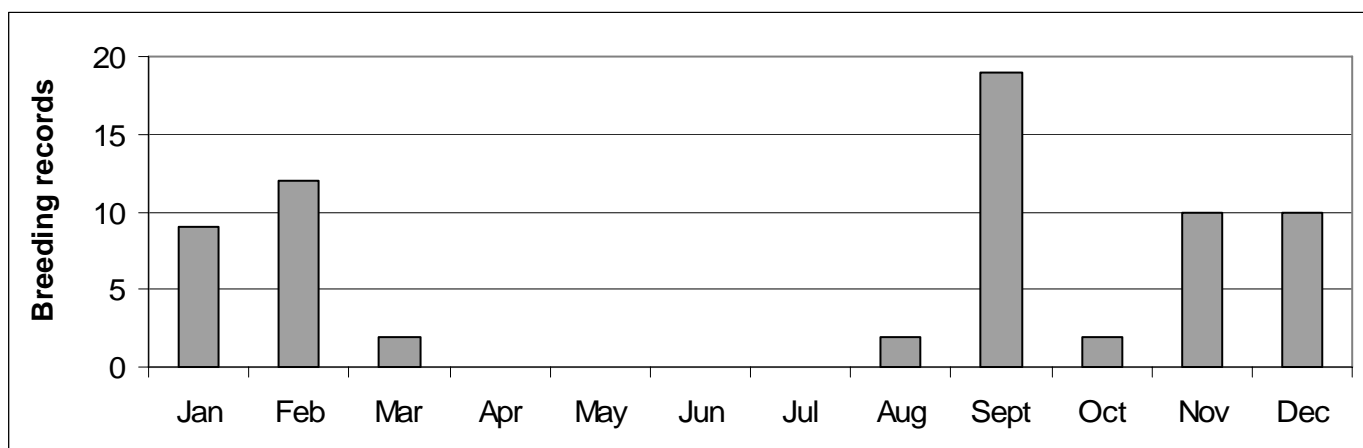


Fig 3: Hooded Plover breeding season on the WA south coast, 2000-2006.

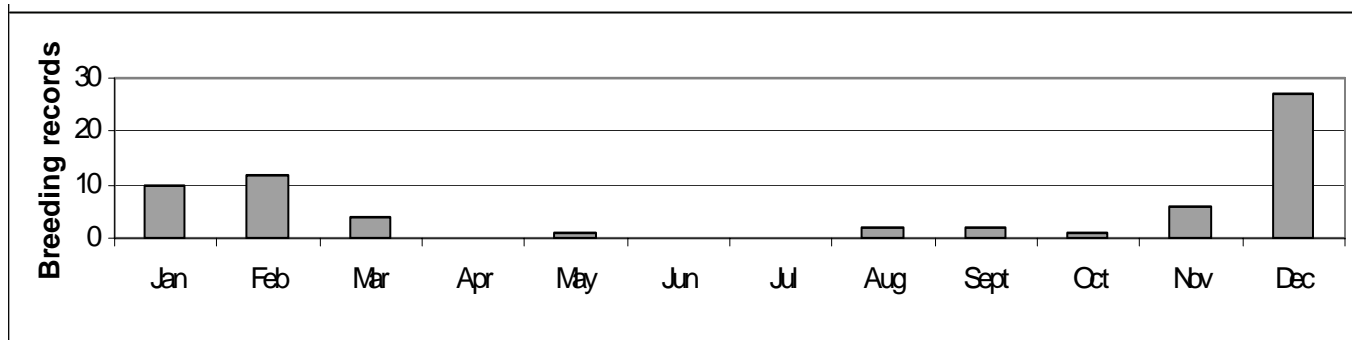


Fig 4: Hooded Plover breeding season in Yalgorup National Park, 2000-2006.

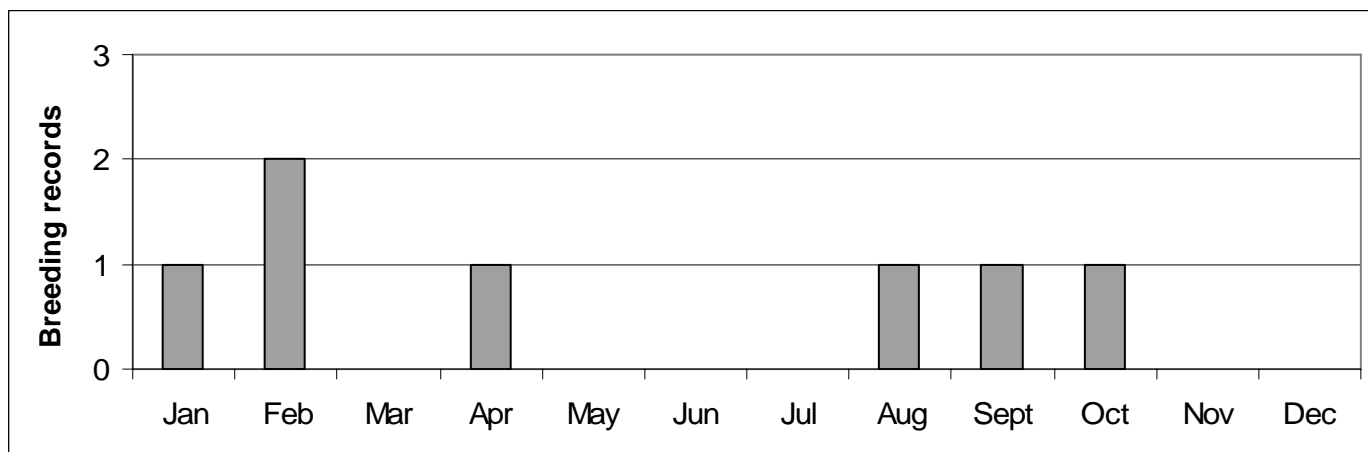


Fig 5: Hooded Plover breeding season at inland sites in Western Australia, 2000-2006.

## Results

The highest concentrations of breeding Hooded Plovers came from known sites such as Yalgorup National Park, the Cape to Cape region, the coast line between Walpole and Denmark and around Esperance (Fig 1).

The breeding season in Western Australia in 2000-2006 is shown in Fig 2. The main breeding season extended over the summer months, November through to February, with an earlier peak in September. The September peak can be traced to the earlier start of the breeding season along the south west coast (see Fig 3). December was the main month in Yalgorup (Fig 4).

The number of inland breeding records (Fig 5) was low and this was attributed to a lack of surveys. However, our record from Lake Harris, about 200 km east of Kalgoorlie/Norseman, extends the eastern limit of the known Hooded Plover breeding range.

Details of some of these records are listed below.

### Nest Sites

The location of Hooded Plover nests along the coastal shoreline varies considerably.

A description of the locations where nest sites were found along the south west coast follows.

Nest was located 5m above high water mark on limestone rock, sand scree (Esperance) (see Fig 6).

At top of dune (Denmark).

Nest on dune face, nest on metre high ledge on dune face (Windy Harbour).

Nest in cup shaped sand in dune 5m above ocean level (Windy Harbour).

Nest 3-4m from dunes, no cover and 100m from high water mark (Mandalay).

Nest found on small rise, 30-40 m from water, 1m from base of small dune with seaweed around (Cliffy Head Beach).

Nest 30 m from dunes, 20 m from high water mark, hollow in sand, no cover (Bellanger Beach).



Fig 6: Hooded Plover nest with two eggs, high up on the dune face, Fourth Beach, Esperance. Note the distance to the beach. (Photo courtesy Anne Buckman)

Nest was on sand ledge 2 m high up on primary dune face and 2-3 from high water mark (Cape Leeuwin).

Nest located in open sand 30 m from dunes and 100 m from high water mark (Margaret River).

Nest situated on ledge 2 m above beach and consisted of cup shaped scrape in sand (Augusta).

Nest 5 m from dunes, egg on mound (Smith's Beach, Yallingup).

Nest 3 m from dune face, 10 m from high water mark (Dead Finish Anchorage Beach).

Nest 2 m above high water mark, on higher point, hollowed out sand nest amongst prostrate daisy on a 600 mm sand bank above the beach (Kilcarnup Beach).

Nest 30 m from drying Mary River (Fitzgerald River National Park).

Nest 7-10 m from dunes, 50 m off last rocks (Fitzgerald River National Park).

Scrape at base of primary dune (Dead Finish Anchorage Beach).

Nest 100 m from water on broad sand ledge against sand dune, eggs amongst sparse broadleaf plants (Mandalay Beach).

Edge of dunes, 50 m from high water mark; broken wing display (Mandalay Beach).

Nest situated between rocks and shell grit (Peaceful Bay) (see Fig. 7).

Nest on small sand mound almost bare ground, some seaweed (Redgate Beach).

Nest high up on beach (Back Beach).

Nest with 2 eggs, 5 m from primary dune, 35 m from water. Sitting bird giving soft single note calls when person near nest (Gas Bay, north of Boodjidup).

Nest with 2 eggs excavated in sand with small raised ridge; no shells or stones, just sand, very exposed (near Fitzgerald Inlet).

Where nest sites were found at inland lakes, the following descriptions were provided.

Nest located on small island of sand 0.5 m square, 15 m from shoreline (Helms Lake).

The same nest a fortnight later, nest on small rise of sand with small vegetation, some samphire and surrounded by wet sand (Helms Lake).

Nest scrape adjacent to samphire about 2 m from water's edge (Munglinup).

Eggs in scrape, very exposed, lake surrounded by Melaleuca (Munglinup).

Nest with 3 eggs located amongst small granite rocks on flat granite rock area (Helms Aboretum).

## Runner Behaviour

Following are some of the comments received in relation to runner behaviour.

Runner at salt lake edge sitting behind foam and froth build up (Benje Benjenup Lake).

Adult and runner near fresh water stream (Mandalay Beach).

Hooded Plover were walking on the beach and occasionally retreated to cover of dune edge among saltbush and marram grass as Silver Gulls watched runners with interest.

The runners were at end of their downy stage (2 adults plus 3 runners) (Normans Beach).

At Salmon Gums Nature Reserve adults seen, after 45 minutes of observation runners appeared from small samphire bush near water.

Duck Pond, Yalgorup National Park. At first no runners were seen but the behaviour indicated that runners could be hidden nearby. After 5 minutes one walked from the fringing vegetation to the water's edge. After another 10 minutes one was seen 'frozen' under a samphire clump (D.Rule, personal communication).

Parents had hidden the young one amongst dune vegetation, under cover of low vegetation near edge of dunes.

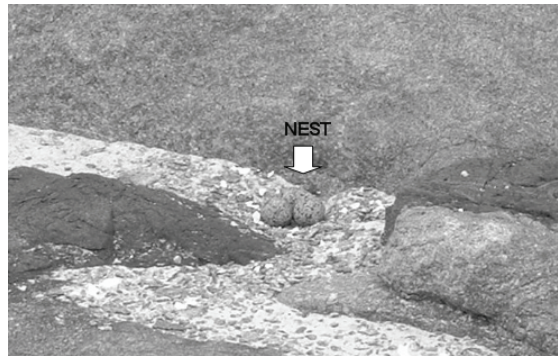


Fig. 7: Hooded Plover nest between rocks in shell grit, near Salmon Beach camp, Peaceful Bay. (Photo courtesy, Wayne Berridge)

## Behavioural Aspects of Hooded Plovers

Hooded Plover walked away from observer for about 30 m and then circled back around and went straight to the nest.

Second time Hooded Plover seen on rocks 10 m above water level of sea.

Bird perched on top of a metre high rock at Augusta.

Hooded Plover feeding on washed up kelp on beach (Margaret River).

Hooded Plover on reef at low tide, reef adjoining beach.

At Denmark a fox was noticed to patrol the high water line in September 2000.

Hooded Plover feeding on tidal mudflats at low tide (Wellstead Inlet).

Hooded Plovers were feeding in a muddy area that was exposed by northerly winds at Inland Lake.

## Acknowledgements

Greg Harewood is to be commended on his excellent work in producing the map with breeding locations.

**Marcus Singor**



## CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION

This is the Public Relations Sub-committee's third year of visiting Baldvis Children's Forest, which provides children's activity days for the Baldvis District schools.

Baldvis Children's Forest is an area of 19.79 ha located at Lot 660 Mandurah Road, Baldvis, Western Australia. It includes remnant Tuart woodlands and a portion of the conservation category wetlands Outridge Swamp at the eastern boundary. In an area that is rapidly changing from rural to urban, the Baldvis Primary School is endeavoring to preserve the natural heritage of this reserve. Supported by a committee that includes the City of Rockingham, local schools and industry, Landcare Australia, community and voluntary interest groups, development of the site is proceeding, including the organizing of activities on-site.

Grant applications and corporate sponsorship have enabled the employment of a part-time education officer. An outdoor classroom and community function area is nearing completion. 630 students from four local schools have visited this year to plant seedlings, explore the forest with a Nyoongar guide, and take part in science, art, fauna, and drama-related activities. Birds Australia WA provides the walk leaders, taking small groups of students to help identify birds and provide surveys for the area. Black-cockatoo and possum nest boxes, which students will monitor in the future, are being installed to provide nesting habitat for displaced local fauna.

It is a pleasure to be assisting with this project, ensuring that schoolchildren have the opportunity to be made aware of the importance of the environment and its implications in all our lives. Thanks to Barry Angus, David and Joyce Ballard, Ron Dibbons, Ray Flanagan, Frank O'Connor, Ian Rudd and Brice Wells for your time and continuing support for this project.

**Elsa Dabbs**  
Public Relations Sub-committee

## BIRD SEMINAR FOR BEGINNERS—PART 2

We always have a good attendance in the hills area and most of the people on this seminar had been on a waiting list from last year. The first part of the seminar, 9 April at Kalamunda (as reported in WABN 118) was a lecture only, given by Brice Wells to a group of 68 people. On 27 May, 47 people attended the Chidlow seminar, for a lecture by Frank O'Connor on bush and water birds followed by a walk at Lake Leschenaultia. It was the perfect sunny day for a walk and with ten walk leaders we were able to keep the groups small, giving maximum time to identify birds with individuals. We identified 32 species at Lake Leschenaultia adding Australian Shelduck, Spotted Pardalote, Wedge-tailed Eagle and Grey Shrike-thrush, to our survey list.



The new outdoor classroom at the Baldvis Children's Forest, with Frank O'Connor, David and Joyce Ballard.

*Photo courtesy Elsa Dabbs*

The bird seminars in the hills area are presented in conjunction with the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council who provide the venues and morning tea. We provide the expertise, have the opportunity to sell our cards, books, DVD's and CD's and impart our knowledge and conservation values to a new group of people. I hope in the future to also extend our areas into the Armadale and Cockburn areas in partnership with their Councils.

Thank you to all the walk leaders, David and Joyce Ballard, Tom Delaney, Ray Flanagan, Darryl James, Allyson and Ed Paull, Frank O'Connor, Ian Rudd, Rod and Joyce Smith, and Stella Stewart-Wynne for your support.

**Elsa Dabbs**

## THE 'GREAT COCKY COUNT': A GREAT SUCCESS!



The 'Great Cocky Count' is a phrase that anyone interested in conservation and environmental issues on the Swan Coastal Plain will undoubtedly have heard. The first of its kind, the count was part of the new Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo project on the Swan Coastal Plain that was aimed at determining how many Carnaby's Cockatoos there are and where they are in the Swan Region.

The Count was conducted by people from all walks of life, anywhere within the region and over a 2.5-hour period during the afternoons of 12 February, 26 March and 14 May 2006. The count received tremendous support and has been extremely successful in engaging local communities. Over 600 volunteers observing for Carnaby's Cockatoos spent an estimated 2080 hours; 186 volunteers covered 122 sites in May, 273 people covered 153 sites in March and 428 people covered 243 sites in February. The presence of Carnaby's

Cockatoos over the three surveys was recorded at 26% to 43% of observation sites.

Results from the Cocky Count are currently being collated and analysed. They will be released as soon as possible, and a seminar is planned for Thursday 12 October (see advert for details).

I would like to extend a big thank-you and congratulations to all the volunteers who participated in the 'Great Cocky Count'. Thanks also to all the Volunteer Coordinators for

their help and dedication. The coordination of such a large number of volunteers is no mean feat and couldn't have been achieved without them!

Keep up to date with all the latest information and news by visiting the project website on [www.carnabyscockatoo.org](http://www.carnabyscockatoo.org).

**Bansi Shah**  
Swan Coastal Coordinator



## Members' Contributions



### WHERE HAVE ALL THE SILVEREYES GONE?

Serventy and Whittell (1976) detail the abundance of the Silvereye in the orchards near Perth at the end of the 19th century and comment that in the Perth area it was perhaps the commonest small bird. It was still so in the Perth suburbs from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, either in groups of 5-10 or flocks of 15-20. Its liking for soft fruit, figs, grapes, mulberries and ripe plums made it a pest, not so much for what it ate but its habit of piercing a fruit three or four times and then moving on to another.

They readily entered traps baited with sliced fruit, soft bread, soft cake and sugary biscuits, and once one bird had entered a trap and was seen to be feeding, several more would usually follow. I must have banded hundreds of them, but retraps were rare and all recoveries were in the (then) metropolitan area.

The birds were a feature of Perth's suburbs and the calls of roving bands summonsed many boys armed with shanghais. Most people called them "greenies". After an absence of a year or two in some part of Australia where there were no Silvereyes, it was always a joy to return to Perth and see and hear them again. Some local ornithologists, however, scathingly maintained that like the introduced turtle-doves, they were not birds and should not be included in birdlists or studied!

They ranged freely from the Jarrah forest to the coastal wattle thickets, which they shared with the White-browed Scrubwren and the occasional Splendid Fairy-wren. I guess that Perth has become too large and parts of it too sterile for them now, and in 15 years at Maylands (1982-1997) only two flocks of 15-20 birds were encountered and otherwise only small numbers were infrequently seen, and mostly in the "winter" months at my flat in East Street.

The birds also ate small soft-bodied insects and some were once seen eating the small, ripe, black berries of the local Nightshade. They also attended flowering Banksia and after feeding on mulberries their droppings would be purplish-black and readily stained any clothes hung out to dry. They can mimic Canaries and many native species of birds, such as the Grey Butcherbird and Australian Ringneck, and have one

call similar to the common call of the Scarlet Robin, and which I think is not mimicry. After breeding, family groups would combine into flocks of 25-50 and roam extensively. I miss them!

**Robert Stranger**

### TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOUR OF COMMON SANDPIPERS (*ACTITIS HYPOLEUCOS*) DURING THE NON BREEDING SEASON

Since 1988 I have observed Common Sandpipers during the summer season, on a section of the eastern shore of the Peel Estuary at Soldiers Cove, Mandurah, at 32°32'23"S, 115°45'20.6"E.

There is obviously a prime feeding area between jetties 1 and 3, (See Fig. 1), which has been defended vigorously most years, particularly after the spring arrival. This area, which I have called the prime territory, is about 130 m in length and is comprised of exposed mud flat with occasional exposed limestone. It varies between 5 and 10 m in width at low tide but is flooded at high tide. Normal defence in the past has been by the dominant 'Alpha' bird chasing any interloper away over the water. This year I have been fortunate to observe, on four occasions, territorial confrontations on the shoreline, from soon after the birds arrived on the 23 August 2005 to 2 November 2005.

On 25 August 2005 two sandpipers were observed chasing (?) each other over Soldiers Cove west of jetty 7. My first thought was that one was chasing the other, but the ducking and diving made it hard to work out who was chasing whom. This went on for at least ten minutes and I came to see that one bird was not so much chasing the other, but imposing itself between the other bird and the prime territory. It was a classic AFL shepherd! After ten minutes both birds settled on the sea wall between jetties 6 and 7, but soon flew off chasing each other as before for another 5 minutes.

They again landed on the sea wall and began to slowly circle one another. They had their heads lowered and their knees

slightly bent (the classic sumo wrestler stance—wide second incident). At the same time the tails were fanned sideways and slightly depressed and there were piping calls from both birds. This went on for about five minutes until one bird flew off northwards and landed some distance away. It was pursued by the Alpha bird for a short distance. After searching the reference books, and in hindsight, the call resembled the loud rapid “kitti-kitti-kitti-kitti” when fighting (Sage 1957 cited in Cramp 1983 p. 602).

A second territorial incident was observed about 1630 on 14 August 2005. In this incident the confrontation took place on a narrow strip (about 1 to 1.5 m) between the reed bed and the water's edge and between jetties 4 and 5. Bird 1, assumed to be the Alpha bird, was always positioned between Bird 2 and the prime territory. Bird 2 was stationary—either in a squatting or submissive position or almost squatting in the ‘sumo wrestler position’ (vide incident 1). Bird 1 moved east and west rapidly across the narrow strip of beach with several agitated rushes northwards towards Bird 2 but without making contact. Eventually, after some minutes, Bird 2 drew itself up as tall as possible and fluffed its feathers to make itself as imposing as it could. At the same time it fanned its tail feathers and held them at about 45° to the ground. Bird 1 continued to rush east–west and lunge northwards at Bird 2. Its tail was also fanned and at 45° to the ground but it was crouched in the sumo attack position.

Using a schoolyard analogy it appeared that Bird 1 had drawn a line in the sand and refused to let Bird 2 cross it! Bird 2 continued to challenge Bird 1 by standing with its toes almost on the line.

After about 7 or 8 minutes Bird 2 flew onto the facing board of jetty 4 followed by Bird 1, which landed on the decking about 1.5 m away and continued in the sumo attack position with occasional challenges at Bird 2 but always stopping 0.5 to 1 m away.

Bird 2 continued to stand tall but did not move till about 3–4 minutes later when it flew to jetty 5. It stayed there for about 3 minutes while Bird 1 paced up and down jetty 4.

Eventually Bird 2 flew to the peninsula but returned 15 minutes later to perch on the rip-rap north of jetty 5 while Bird 1 continued to patrol jetty 4.

A third incident took place on 10 October 2005 between jetties 3 and 4. Again Bird 1 was on the south (prime territory side) of Bird 2. Both birds were in the crouched sumo

position about 0.75 to 1 m apart. Nothing happened for 6–7 minutes until Bird 1 drew itself to its full height, fanned its tail at 45° with the end almost touching the ground, and began to move slowly towards Bird 2. There was none of the agitated movements seen in incident two. Unfortunately, a passer-by disturbed both birds and they flew to the frame of an old lobster pot under jetty 4. While balanced on this frame there was an aggressive confrontation with both birds at full height and both wings raised and fully extended. I felt this was an aggressive move and not a double wing salute. Both

birds were lunging at each other as well and calling rapidly ‘kitti-kitti-kitti-kitti...’ as previously reported (Sage 1957 cited in Cramp 1983 p. 600).

Bird 2 flew off eventually to jetty 5 and Bird 1 flew to jetty 4 and stationed itself there until Bird 2 flew away.

The fourth incident took place at 0640 on 02 November 2005 between jetties 3 and 4. As I peered over the reeds I could see two Common Sandpipers about 0.5 to 1 m apart at the edge of the reeds. I was unable to see any movement or confrontation. As I moved closer the birds were disturbed and flew to jetty 4 where Bird 2 landed on the northern face board (for a quick escape northwards?) and Bird 1 landed in the middle of the adjacent decking. Bird 2 then raised itself to its full height and fanned its tail. Bird 1 also drew itself up and both birds raised wings upwards over the heads and at full height leapt at each other with mouths gaping. I could

hear no calling. After 25 to 30 seconds of leaping at each other Bird 2 disengaged and flew to jetty 5 and Bird 1 patrolled jetty 4 until Bird 2 flew away to the north-west.

Neither bird was banded so my assumption is that the owner and obvious defender of the territory is Bird 1 and the interloper is Bird 2.

Since that time it is presumed that Bird 1 has occupied the prime territory at lower tides and sometimes a second bird has been to the north or the south of this area. In those instances Bird 1 has always been at that end of the territory. This pattern has been seen in previous years.

All confrontations have been seen at low tide where an area of mud flat has been exposed. Birds are not often seen at high tide although a bird has been seen at jetty 4 or crouched in the reed bed edge at higher tides.

The northern area of the prime territory appears to be between jetty 3 and jetty 4 which is the northern end of the exposed mud flats. The southern end is 30 m south of jetty 1.

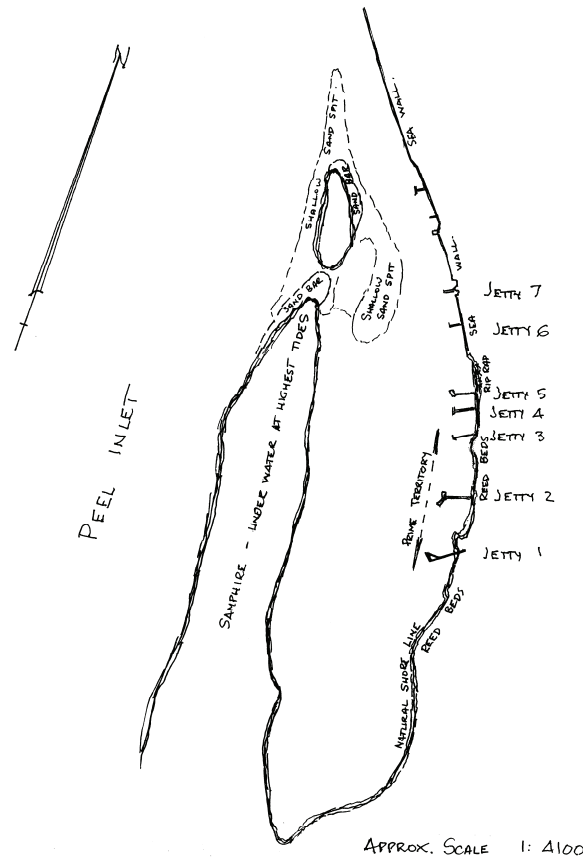


Fig 1: Soldiers Cove, Mandurah.



Marchant and Higgins (1993) do not refer to territorial behaviour in Australia.

Acknowledgements. I am indebted to Bill Russell for the loan of the following reference books.

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#### Dick Rule

### CURRAWONG CALCULUS (ARTAMID ARITHMETIC)

Between Easter and early May 2006 I had several opportunities to travel the Albany Highway between Bedfordale and Crossman. The first of these journeys was just after dawn and I was struck by the large number of Grey Currawongs and Australian Ravens fossicking in the gravel of the road verge.

I had always seen Grey Currawongs along this stretch in the past, but never in such (apparently) large numbers. So when, several days later, I travelled the path again I made sure I kept count of the birds on the road verge along the way. In the 39 km between Canning Dam Road (Bedfordale) and Pike's Road (just south of Mount Cooke), I counted 114 Grey Currawongs and 41 Australian Ravens along Albany Highway on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2006. That's at least one Grey Currawong every 350 m! The birds were mostly in pairs or threes, and these small groups seemed to be clustered in favoured (?) patches along the highway. It was common for a group of one species to be closely aligned to a group of the other. There were also a handful of other birds on the road verge, including Australian Ringnecks and Common Bronzewing.

The last volume of HANZAB conveniently arrived in my letterbox just recently, so I have been able to easily check the natural population densities of Grey Currawongs. For a range of locations throughout Australia recorded densities ranged from 0.02 to 2.58 birds per ha. Unfortunately there were no estimates for Jarrah forest. Those densities represent one bird every 0.39 to 50 ha. That means that, for my 39 km transect along the Albany Highway, the Grey Currawongs would have had to come in from between 11 m and 1500 m away to achieve the previously reported densities. I suspect, although I have absolutely no empirical proof, that the actual value is likely to be somewhere in the middle of this range, that is the birds fly in from a few hundred metres away. Either that, or we have a huge number of Grey Currawongs living in very close proximity to some of our major highways.

Anyway, aside from all my extrapolations, I'd be really interested to hear if other people have seen these birds and this behaviour, and whether it is a regular event, a seasonal event, or something a bit unusual.

Wes Bancroft

### UNUSUAL PIED OYSTERCATCHER BEHAVIOUR AT SOLDIERS COVE

As usual Pied Oystercatchers bred on the island at Soldiers Cove in 2005.

On 01 September 2005 two adults and 2 two young hatchlings, only a few days old, were seen. On 02 September 2005 two adults and two hatchlings were seen again on the island. But by 05 September 2005 the two adults and one hatchling were seen on the mowed area behind the Elderly Citizens Centre, the east side of the estuary, with one downy young in the freeze position.

There were distraction displays by both parents, which included the broken wing act and belly dragging along the ground accompanied by sharp alarm calls. These calls attracted another adult who had been seen around the island for some weeks, and had been warned off repeatedly by the pair. The displays lead me to believe the other chick was hidden in the grass but I was unable to locate it without distressing the adults. The cryptic colouration was so good it took me three or four minutes to locate the first chick, even though I had seen it go to ground from a distance. On 7 September 2005 both youngsters were seen in the same area and also on the next three days. They were then not seen in the area for over a week, although one or two adults had been seen feeding on the island. On 18 September 2005 a parent and the two chicks were seen again on the island.

The only way the two youngsters could have crossed the water would be by swimming south to avoid the sea wall and the rip-rap wall, then finding a gap in the reed bed, at least 150 or more (see Fig. 1, page 14 of this issue).

Previous records suggest that "Non-flying young run into the sea, swim and dive to 50 cm if pursued" (Ford cited in Johnstone & Storr 1998) and "chicks are able to swim from c14 days old" (Marchant & Higgins 1993, p. 722).

#### References

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Dick Rule

### INTERESTING WETLANDS—OWINGUP SWAMP NATURE RESERVE

Owingup Swamp Nature Reserve, located approximately 30 km west of Denmark, was visited by members of the Albany Bird Group in late March. Asked to carry out a bird survey on behalf of Green Skills in Denmark, we spent two full days exploring this wetland of national importance.

Apart from freshwater lakes and marshland, the reserve also contains heathland and a small area of karri forest near the mouth of the Kent River. Our main task was to identify the waterbird species using the lakes and swampy areas. After a season of good rains extending into early summer as well as more recent heavy rainfall, the water levels were high, exposing only small areas of muddy shoreline. Compared to previous surveys of the area, the number of waterbirds found was low with a considerable number of species including Eurasian Coot and Hoary-headed Grebe absent. We did not locate Australasian Bitterns, which had been recorded in the past. However, given the size of the swamp, the species may have gone unnoticed. Including bushbirds, we observed a total of 68 species.

Relatively unknown amongst birdwatchers, Owingup Swamp is well worth a visit. After a short drive along Boat Harbour Road, a good track opposite the caravan park leads to the main part of the wetland. In summer and early autumn a wide variety of waterbirds including Black Swan, Musk Duck, Great Egret and Yellow-billed Spoonbill should be encountered. Spotless Crakes, Little Grassbirds and Clamorous Reed-Warblers are quite easily spotted amongst the rushes. White-bellied Sea-Eagles, Ospreys and Whistling Kites are often present. In drier years expect to find waders along the shoreline; Red-necked Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and Black-fronted Dotterels have been recorded amongst others. White-fronted Chats and Red-eared Firetails are found along the fringes of the swamp.

The adjoining heathland which is presently recovering from a series of bushfires in 2004 and 2005 should offer sightings of Red-winged Fairy-wren, Southern Emu-wren and a good variety of honeyeaters. Emus also frequent the area.

Beyond the caravan park, Boat Harbour Road is 4WD only. It passes several smaller freshwater lakes before reaching the coast at Boat Harbour.

Several picnic tables make this an ideal stop for lunch. Seabirds can often be seen in the distance with Sooty Oystercatchers and Pacific Gulls resting on nearby rocks.

**Anne Bondin**

## GREENSHANK AT GREENSHANK COVE, MANDURAH

For the nine years to December 2005, Common Greenshanks were recorded at a site on the Peel Estuary at Mandurah. An earlier study, from August 1997 to December 1997, published in September 1998 (WABN 87) indicated that this locality, named locally *Greenshank Cove*, was of particular significance to the species.

## Method

Greenshank Cove is located on the Peel Estuary's western shore, midway between the estuary (or bypass), bridge and the Mandurah Quay development. It lies on the fringe of the Creery wetlands and measures approximately 700 m by 150 m.



Owingup Swamp.

*Photo courtesy Anne Bondin*

The record is the result of more than 300 visits from August 1997 to December 2005, apart from 1998 when no consecutive observations were made.

Each year had five recording months, August to December. Each of these months was divided into three recording periods of ten, occasionally 11 days, giving each year 15 possible counts.

Most visits were made before 10:00 am, and always on foot. The highest count in each 10 day period was recorded. This was an arbitrary decision. It was considered that daily counts

would blur any overall pattern, whereas recording in 10 day blocks would emphasise it.

No leg-flagged birds were observed.

Because the birds, especially the large flocks, were placid, the figures were reliable counts rather than general estimates.

## Results and Conclusions

Table 1 shows counts of Common Greenshanks for the period August 1997 to December 2005. Birds arrived at the site between mid-August and early October. I draw no firm conclusions from my figures other than that the locality remains of regular significance to migrant Common Greenshanks.

The figures show September, October and November as peak months, with October pre-eminent. Local birdwatchers would, of course, have known this already.

Comparisons between years show:

1999 was a late season.

2000 may be construed as having twin peaks. Other years show this to a degree, also.

2002: A poor breeding season in the north? Did I miss something?

2005 was a long season in comparison to 2004, which had an early cut-off.

If the twin peaks of 2000 are real, might they stem from birds coming from different sources or could possibly be explained by a wave of adults followed by a wave of younger birds.

## Other Species

Greenshank Cove was not particularly rich in other species with the following exceptions:

Month	Aug	Aug	Aug	Sep	Sep	Sep	Oct	Oct	Oct	Nov	Nov	Nov	Dec	Dec	Dec
Date	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-30	1-10	11-20	21-31
1997		2	12	2	45	67		<120	105	45	30	10	2	5	
1998															
1999							14	135	8	95	35	48	23		
2000					110	<100	90		<35	52	22	155	110	12	
2001				7		10	144	62	84	124	95		68	4	3
2002					28	80	23	37	12		22				
2003			21	54	58	155	180	12	140	167		25	2	1	2
2004			72	52	145	72	22	1	70				5		
2005		11	25		128	41	122	140	20	26	30	2	2		
Average		6	32	28	85	75	85	72	59	84	39	48	30	5	2

Table 1: Common Greenshank recorded between August and December at Greenshank Cove, 1997-2005.

The sand bar at the north end is always frequented by Australian Pelicans, terns, gulls, Pied Oystercatchers, Black-winged Stilts, White-faced Herons and egrets.

Occasionally, Black-winged Stilts move into the cove in numbers. Also, their young frequent the cove on emerging from nests in the adjoining samphire.

In winter the cove is visited by rafts of Hoary-headed Grebes and occasionally by Australasian Grebes.

Ospreys nest regularly on the western shore of Greenshank Cove and currently a high profile pair produce regular thriving offspring.

The cove hosts small parties of Grey-tailed Tattlers from time to time.

### Acknowledgment

To Marcus Singor for his interest and advice.

**Frank Pridham**

### A MARRI FEAST

February 2005 was a bumper flowering season for Marri, *Eucalyptus calophylla*, the trees being covered in blossom accompanied by the almost deafening hum of bees. This explosion of blossom lasted over a period of six weeks. However, in February 2006 there was very little blossom with just a few scattered patches and now, even in June, there are a few scattered patches of blossom.

This has been the story at Piesse Brook just east of Kalamunda on a property 250 m by 290 m where the *E. calophylla* are well watered from nearby citrus trees, and are 20 to 30 m high with a crown cover often in excess of 8 m. Interspersed in this woodland are *Eucalyptus marginata*, *Banksia grandis*, *Allocasuarina fraseriana* and various hakea species.

On 7 June 2006 at 10:00 am there was an increasing raucous crescendo of 'whee-la' as 400 black-cockatoos approached from the west. On arrival they divided into groups of 20 to 40 birds and alighted on these huge Marri trees. Soon there was just a busy chatter accompanied by artillery fire at minute intervals, 'plonk-plonk' as the 4 cm 12 month old immature green honkey nuts were thrown to the ground.

At intervals of approximately 20 minutes these groups, again bursting into 'whee-la' mode, changed places on the Marri trees. Some occasionally visited the *Hakea undulata* shrubs where they cracked only the old nuts that had not already split.

This feeding frenzy continued for two and a half hours, until 12:30 pm, without an interval of quietness. Then at 12:30 pm they all departed as one flock as quickly as they had come two and a half hours before. Although there are many pine trees on the property, these were shunned, despite the fact that earlier in the summer these pine trees were visited frequently, but for short periods only. Also the Jarrah and *Allocasuarina* were not visited on this occasion.

The ground was left littered with these few green honkey nuts that were still malleable. The discs were pierced and the nut excavated to 3 cm. There were just a few nuts with the disc only cracked and not pierced.

**M H Bremner**

### WHAT AM I DOING RIGHT?

Recently I have taken some photographs around my place. The solo Tawny Frogmouth was taken on the roadside of the road that links the 50 5-acre blocks of El Caballo Heights.

I noticed the frogmouth at the end of last September during the morning constitutional that my dog takes me on six days a week. Sometimes the Tawny Frogmouth had a partner;



sometimes perhaps after a 'lover's tiff', they were on separate branches. The next day they had 'kissed and made up' and would be side by side again.

I hadn't seen them for quite a long time, and three weeks ago their roosting trees in a row of Eastern States Black Wattle, had been severely trimmed (the whole row) and their roosting branches had gone.

A week after that, while exercising the dog, which entails hitting a high density rubber ball with a tennis racquet, I went to have a look at my *Eucalyptus caesia* which I planted nine years ago and flowers this time of the year. Approaching the tree I had been looking at the ground for weeds and on looking up, I noticed these two characters sitting in the open. I raced back to the house, collected the camera, returned and 'snap'. Why I raced back I don't know, as they are not likely to go anywhere during daylight. I then zoomed in for the close up. They are still with us, but more circumspect and park closer to the trunk in amongst the foliage.

This other fellow we call Charlie, the Collared Sparrowhawk, we have only seen three times in ten years. The first time was standing knee deep in a normal birdbath we have amongst the trees – that's the bird, not me. The second time he nearly clobbered us as he was chasing a New Holland Honeyeater. The honeyeater escaped into a dense fir tree. The third time was in the other photograph — he had come round for an early Christmas present.

These were taken 20 m away through the laundry window, which was closed and across a 6 m patio, hence the hanging basket. This is a small three-tiered water feature for the smaller birds, Common Bronzewing down to Yellow-rumped Thornbills. The wattlebirds do ungainly swallow dives (probably because they are not swallows), into the larger ½ m deep 3 m round pool behind. One would have got a very low score had we been there – we weren't, he drowned, we buried him.

Arthur Blundell

### OPPORTUNISTIC *Phalacrocorax carbo*

In mid May 2006 on the western side of Herdsman Lake from 100 m away loud raucous croaks gradually became louder until there, at 31°55'13": 115°49'59", sitting on a barge, were 35 Great Cormorants displaying white thighs, white faces and a few with nuptial plume. This barge was used in March 2006 and is to be removed within 12 months.

There were 13 visible nests occupied on the western and eastern outlet pipes of the barge and many heads were visible between these two pipes indicating more nests. All nests had a sitting bird and often with a second bird standing on the edge of the nest. A few of the birds sitting on nests and others just sitting on the outlet pipe would display with tail and head pointing skywards, constantly huffing. Some birds were swimming with red reeds in their beaks. These were taken up



Tawny Frogmouths  
Photos courtesy Arthur Blundell



Collared Sparrowhawk  
Photo courtesy Arthur Blundell

to the nest and a few arrived at the nest with eucalypt branchlets.

There appeared to be many individuals guarding against a Swamp Harrier that was constantly circling. Many adult Great Cormorants (some in breeding plumage), Darters, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants were on the overhead wires. On the surrounding melaleuca trees, within the foliage, and on dead trees, were Yellow Spoonbills, egrets and many Australian White Ibis (up to 30 birds at a time). Swimming around the barge were Eurasian Coots, Dusky Moorhens, Hardheads and Pacific Black Ducks.

On 11 June a pair of Great Cormorants were displaying their mating ritual at the end of one of the outlet pipes, preening each other from their respective oil glands at the base of their tails, and then entwining necks.

On 24 June, a very still morning, five weeks after egg laying, a lone parent, with head in the nest, was murmuring softly to the eggs followed by a "cheep cheep" response. Other observations on this date were: birds still swimming, bringing red reeds to the nests, or flying in with a eucalypt branchlet; on the west side, four nests had been destroyed. One week later these first two nestlings were keeping the parents busy with their constant red gapes that were filled with three regurgitations to each on every feed.

On 1 July the first hatching on the west side occurred, two very young unfeathered chicks. Next to the nest the cormorant display (CD) occurred with head and tail skywards, wings flapping and huffing.

On 7 July the first east hatchlings (FEH) were two weeks old, both half the size of the adults and were standing on the side of the nest. On the east side two more nests hatched with two young in each. On the west side the second hatchlings were both well feathered.

On 13 July the raucous croaks were much less. On the east side the FEH were now three weeks old and three quarters the size of the adults. The two nests abutting one another had both produced two nestlings, rather crowded with four adults and four young. On the west side there were four new nests with young, three of which had two young and one with four young. One of the previously discarded nests had been taken over by a displaying bird (CD).

On 17 July, on the east side the FEH were now four weeks old, full adult size, with fully feathered wings, both flexing their wings and the general plumage not shiny and with speckled chest.

On 21 July on the east side the FEH were now five weeks old, had left the nest and were perched on wires above the barge. One adult was at the nest. Fifteen minutes later one juvenile returned. The three other nests still had two young each, the youngest only one week old. On the west side the birds in the nest contained four birds over a week old. One nest contained only one young and at the last visit, and there were heads of young on the nests between the two barge pipes, an estimated six heads.

Despite no overhead protection, this breeding colony over these nine weeks had weathered the cold nights, often -1° to 4° C, gales and heavy rains, not forgetting the ever-present raptors.



Double-banded Plover at  
Lake McLarty.  
*Photo courtesy Alan Collins*

**M H Bremner**

## LAKE MCLARTY'S WINTER WADERS

In winter Lake McLarty is usually either full or rapidly filling up. This year was different.

The winter of 2006 started out as one of the driest on record as summer like conditions continued throughout June and July with virtually no rain at all. The lake therefore remained only half full with large shallow areas around the perimeter.

The dry winter resulted in some unusual wader sightings at Lake McLarty. Red-capped Plovers were still found breeding in May with sightings of both runners and nest with eggs on 5 May 2006. Throughout June and July 2006 a Broad-billed Sandpiper was present. A Double-banded Plover that was first seen in April 2006 was still being observed in July 2006

(see photo). A few Curlew Sandpipers were showing their rusty red breeding plumage.

In June wader numbers were:

Black-tailed Godwit (2), Marsh Sandpiper (10), Common Greenshank (45), Red-necked Stint (490), Curlew Sandpiper (547), Grey Plover (1), Red-capped Plover (255).

In July wader numbers were:

Black-tailed Godwit (2), Marsh Sandpiper (8), Common Greenshank (34), Red-necked Stint (360), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (1), Curlew Sandpiper (373), Grey Plover (3).

Flocks of Black-winged Stilts, Red-necked Avocets and Banded Stilts were present.

To the south, in Yalgorup National Park, 14 Grey Plovers and 40 Red-necked Stilts were seen at Linda's Lagoon on 19 July 2006. This, together with the McLarty records, suggests that the dry conditions may well have resulted in higher numbers of waders staying behind on the Swan Coastal Plain.

Thanks to Alan Collins, Michael Craig, and Dick Rule for contributions.

**Marcus Singer**

## BOLD BIRD STUDY

Since the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA) assumed

management responsibility of Bold Park in 1998, there have been a few attempts to assemble a representative bird list for the site. In my recent role as Planning Officer for the Bold Park Management Plan 2006-2011, I discovered that an impressive 133 bird species have been recorded in Bold Park and immediate environs over the past century. For comparison, that figure is 97 for Kings Park. This high number of species is undoubtedly due to the diversity of habitats Bold Park provides and the Park's proximity to Perry Lakes and the Indian Ocean.

With the help of respected Perth ornithologists John Dell, Rob Davis and Boyd Wykes, the list generated from past studies was reviewed. Based on the latest recorded information and similar studies in Perth, it was considered probable that 91 of the total 133 bird species may still exist within the current boundaries of the Park. The list included seven introduced bird species and a number of vagrants, migrants and nomadic species that are likely to occur sporadically. Opportunistic observations suggested that a number of bird species are on the decline, for example Splendid Fairy-wren and Purple-crowned Lorikeet, while other species such as Painted Button-quail, Carnaby's Cockatoo and Rainbow Bee-eater are being seen more commonly. Assuming these are accurate observations, these shifts may be a result of climatic change in Perth, a response to recent fires in the Park, loss of habitat and an increase in

feral species. Given the importance of the information to management, a more scientific approach was required.

One of the problems facing managers trying to determine what can be done to conserve biodiversity in urban environments, is a shortage of professionals to identify and monitor the distributions of organisms in those areas. Standard methods for carrying out a census are time consuming and resource intensive. Conserving biodiversity encompasses such an immense task that it is often difficult to assign priorities and generally, rehabilitation projects around the world focus initially on vegetation and flora. As conspicuous, highly mobile and easy to count components of the environment, birds and bird communities have often been used as indicators of environmental change. It has also been recognised that some highly useful information may be gleaned from large-scale efforts using volunteer bird watchers (Erhrlich, in review), notably the New Atlas of Australian Birds and the Perth Biodiversity Project.

Together with Birds Australia, the BGPA undertook a project designed to survey the birds of Bold Park across the four seasons between October 2005 and July 2006. Firstly, the Park was divided into seven sections considered representative of the diversity of the Park's vegetation and covering as far as possible the full extent of the Park's area. Experienced bird watchers and members of Birds Australia were sought to act as team leaders for each of the seven transects. I use the term transect loosely as the survey type uses an adaptation of the temporal area search, a methodology tested during my honours study (Mansell 1997). Basically the transect was designed to maximise the observers' contact with birds in the different vegetation types evident within each of the seven areas.

Each of the four surveys were met with great enthusiasm by members of Birds Australia, allowing teams of 3-5 persons to be assigned to each of the seven transects. The varied transect lengths were then walked slowly, with all bird observations recorded, including species presence data, flock size, breeding notes and a pre-determined vegetation habitat category. The duration of each survey differed according to the specific characteristics of each transect, but generally it was considered that all bird species present were recorded within 2-3 hours. Each group met back at the Western Australian Ecology Centre for a lovely morning tea, collation of data and discussion about each transect and the birds seen.

While the statistical analysis has not yet been conducted, it is clearly evident that the surveys have been a great success, for the BGPA, Birds Australia and most importantly the birds of Bold Park. A total of 56 bird species was recorded over the four mornings. The highest species richness was recorded during spring (45) and the lowest in autumn (37), although each survey resulted in an average of 42 bird species recorded. Twenty-seven species were recorded in the Park across all four seasons. The Brown Honeyeater, White-cheeked Honeyeater and Silvereye were the only species to be recorded on all seven transects during all four counts.

There was one new addition to the previous lists, the Common Bronzewing, and the continued survival and presence of the all three fairy-wren species (Variegated, White-winged and Splendid), as well as the Purple-crowned Lorikeet, was confirmed. Breeding activity of Brown Goshawks, Australian Shelducks, Painted Button-quails, Varied Sittellas, Striated and Spotted Pardalotes and White-browed Scrubwrens were the subject of delight. There was disappointment expressed that the Sacred Kingfisher, Mistletoebird, Western Rosella and Inland Thornbill were not recorded and dismay and concern over the proliferation of the introduced Rainbow Lorikeets, Little Corellas and Galahs.

All volunteers involved were supportive of the concept to repeat the counts in five years thereby enabling trend analysis and comparisons over time. The possibility of conducting a similar activity in Kings Park was also discussed. I would personally like to thank all of the volunteers involved, with particular mention to Sue and Rob Mather for their time and effort. I look forward to sharing more details of any interesting findings in the future.

Erhrlich, P. (in review) Countryside biogeography: a decade of comparing the avifauna of a Sydney suburb and reserve. *Pacific Conservation Biology*

Mansell, J. (1997). The Birds of Perth's Urban Parks: factors influencing their distribution and community attitudes towards them. Honours thesis, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia.

**Jodi Mansell-Fletcher**  
Projects Officer, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority



## COMBINED CHARITIES' CARD SHOP

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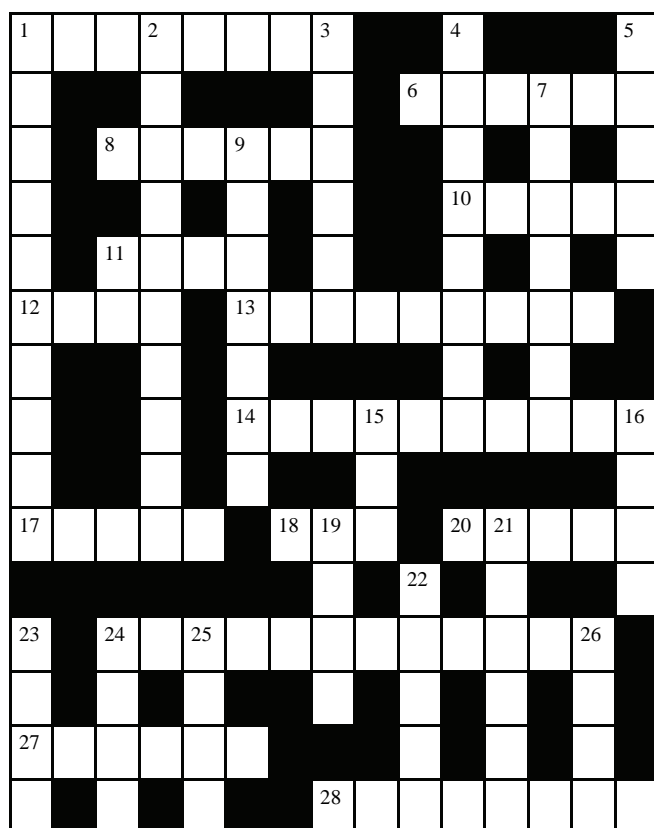
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By Pam Agar



## Clues across

1. Feral species on south coast.
6. Small water source.
8. Developing life.
10. To go to.
11. Part of eye.
12. Facial marking.
13. To try.
14. Open to attack.
17. Part of face.
18. Unusual.
20. Useful in water-bird surveys?
24. Full range of life forms in an area.
27. Regurgitated indigestible parts.
28. To spread out.

## Clues down

1. Methodical.
2. Exceptional.
3. Elusive parrot of south coast of WA.
4. One which lives on.
5. Destructive species.
7. Visits to nest sites may do it.
9. Retained area of bush-land.
15. Head movement.
16. Direction.
19. Seed-eater of NW.
21. Unexpected visitor to Eyre in June 2005.
22. Nesting material.
23. Mouth, especially of young birds.
24. Park surveyed seasonally in 2005-6.
25. A nest ... water may be safer.
26. Makes a puppy-like call.



## THE GIFT OF CONSERVING WA'S NATURAL HERITAGE FOR YOUR CHILDREN AND THEIRS...

A gift to the Conservation Council in your Will is one way you can contribute to protecting WA's environment. With your support we can continue to commit to crucial environmental campaigns long into the future.

If you would like further information regarding leaving a bequest, please visit our website [www.conservationwa.asn.au](http://www.conservationwa.asn.au) or contact the CCWA Director: **Chris Tallentire**

Phone: (08) 9420 7266

Email: [chris.tallentire@conservationwa.asn.au](mailto:chris.tallentire@conservationwa.asn.au)

Your enquiry will be handled in the strictest confidence.

There are many ways to offer your support, please visit our website and help us to provide *A voice for the environment.*

## Birds Australia Congress October 2006, Albany

If you are attending the Congress and are proposing to fly from Perth to Albany by Skywest on 18 October and return from Albany to Perth on 21 October a discounted fare is available of \$364.60, if sufficient members are interested. The contact at Skywest is Holly Leach on  
<holly.leach@skywest.com.au> or tel 08 94778304 or Fax 08 9478 9928.

Graham Wooller

## BIRDS AUSTRALIA CONGRESS and CAMPOUT

**Albany Town Hall 18 – 20 October 2006**  
**Emu Beach Holiday Park 21 – 24 October**

Planning for the Congress is well advanced and members are invited to see the program of papers on the website [www.birdswa.com.au](http://www.birdswa.com.au).

The opening on Wednesday evening is a public session featuring a Forum on Conserving Bird Habitat.

The Campout, including a pelagic trip, promises to be an interesting and enjoyable experience with Clive Napier as leader.

Members wishing to fly to Albany for the Congress on 18 October, returning 21 October, should contact Holly Leach at Skywest on <holly.leach@skywest.com.au> or telephone 08 9477 8304 or fax 08 9478 9428. The group airfare is \$364.60 return.

## CONGRATULATIONS

**David James**, an active member of Birds Australia was included in the Western Australian honours list for the Conservation Council of Western Australia awards 2006. This honour was in recognition of his dedicated volunteer work in the Jandakot and Forrestdale area.

BAWA also benefits from this dedication in that David regularly leads walks around Forrestdale Lake and regularly submits Atlas records.

Congratulations and thank you, David.

## The 'Great Cocky Count': So how many are there?

**Date:** Thursday 12 October 2006  
**Time:** 6.00 – 7.30pm  
**Location:** WA Ecology Centre, 167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat



© B. Shah



© E. Lehmann



© B. Shah



The 'Great Cocky Count' is a phrase that you've undoubtedly heard. In fact, you may have been one of the 600+ volunteers that spent an estimated 2,080 fun hours observing for Carnaby's Cockatoos!

Come and hear about Birds Australia's Carnaby's Cockatoo Project on the Swan Coastal Plain, including results from the 'Great Cocky Count'.

- 6.00 pm Meet Rennie the famous Carnaby's Cockatoo and friends.  
(Live display by the Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre).
- 6.30 pm The 'Great Cocky Count': so how many are there?  
(Presentation by Bansi Shah, Swan Coastal Coordinator).
- 7.00 pm Drinks & nibbles provided.  
(Mingle with fellow enthusiasts and volunteers).

**RSVP by Thursday 5 October 2006.** Please include your name & number of people attending.  
Email: <seminar@carnabyscockatoo.org> Tel: 0428 946 001.

## WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL IN KINGS PARK

28<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October

It is that time of the year again and Birds Australia has been asked to participate again with a presence and by mounting a display. Our display has proved very popular in the past. We will have the same position in the same tent as last year. The credit for the idea of a continuous visual display with DVDs and videos must go to Sue Mather and Elsa Dabbs.

Eggy Boggs will be organising the stall again. The roster will be going up shortly and it would be helpful to have two people at a time for each session. Shirts and passes are provided as well as chairs. It is a lovely way to interact with the visitors to the festival, many of whom come from overseas.

Birds Australia has a very good reputation, and the organisation is becoming better known. Our presence at this festival helps with this.

Eggy would love a few more stuffed birds, as our Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo was very popular. If you know of anyone who could lend BAWA some of these specimens, we would appreciate hearing from you.

Please put a note in your diary and, even if you can't help, come along and enjoy the festival.

Eggy Boggs

## CONSERVATION COUNCIL of WA FOCUS

The current focus of your Conservation Council includes:

- **Halt the Salt** – Working to prevent a huge environmentally damaging salt mine being established on Exmouth Gulf.
- **Mid West Mining Mania** – Seeking to temper the damage being caused by the massive mining boom to many unique ecological communities in the Mid-West.
- **Gorgon Gas Project on Barrow Island** – Backing up the EPA's decision **not** to approve this huge project on an island that has so far been saved the devastating effects of extensive development and the inevitable risk of feral fauna and flora establishment and habitat destruction.
- **Save Yarragadee** – Working towards turning Water Corp and the Government away from the environmentally hazardous mining of this south-west aquifer to more sustainable water conservation, recycling and other systems to supply water to a burgeoning population with ever-increasing demands for this resource.

The Council is the State's foremost non-profit, non-government conservation organization to which over 70 groups including BAWA are affiliated. For nearly 40 years they have been an outspoken advocate for conservation in WA. Their role is to educate, campaign and lobby on environmental issues.

For information on these or other conservation issues contact the CCWA on 9420 7266 or visit [www.conservationwa.asn.au](http://www.conservationwa.asn.au)

## 'Auria Information Day'

Sunday 22nd October 2006

1.00pm – 3.00pm

*Auria - Australia of the future - without salt. TM*

'Auria', Old Koorda Road, Dowerin, WA

Entrance located 400m north of the intersection with Underwood Flat Road.

If you are interested in growing trees - for environmental projects or as commercial crops - you are invited to come to 'Auria' and discover the benefits of companion-planting.

As a result of the work being undertaken, the fauna is increasing and it is planned to turn 'Auria' into a wildlife sanctuary.

Dr David Deeley (BSc, Grad Dip NRM, MSc, PhD)  
(Landscape Ecologist 30 years experience in WA)

Plant establishment, survival and growth rates achieved by David at 'Auria' are outstanding. Any established research organisation would be proud of the successes observed in trials at 'Auria'. The fact that they have been implemented by an individual farmer, is truly remarkable.

Charles Peaty BScForestry - with 50 years experience:

*David defies all good forestry precepts by planting through to early summer and, refusing to use chemical weed control, fertilisers or pest control. His trees have nevertheless developed astonishingly well in their first few years, even on the worst parts of the site!*

**Be kind to the environment and use the bus, departing 10.30am sharp, 'Centrepont' car park, (opposite Midland railway station). Hire of bus and fuel will be shared: \$25 - \$30 per person.**

A stop will be made at the Dowerin Roadhouse, for people to purchase sandwiches, drinks, etc, for lunch.

**BOOKING BY MONDAY OCTOBER 16TH IS ESSENTIAL.**

**Phone: (08)9448 0473 Mobile: 0427 600 024**

**Email: <[info@auria.net.au](mailto:info@auria.net.au)>**

**NOTE.** For those travelling independently, a 'comfort-stop' in Dowerin is strongly recommended. Bring your own water bottle, hat, suitable footwear, etc.

**Under no circumstances is the presence of any individual to be interpreted as either them or their employer endorsing the research being undertaken at 'Auria'.**

Many thanks,

David Kennett.

*'Auria' - Australia of the future, without salt.*

PHONE: (08) 9448 0473 MOBILE: 0427 600 024

EMAIL: [info@auria.net.au](mailto:info@auria.net.au)

WEB SITE: <[www.auria.net.au](http://www.auria.net.au)>



## NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 May to 31 July 2006. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

N & D Allbeury, M Barth, T & J Brown, R M T Clare, J Curran, A Holm, M Lauva, M J Lawley, T Leech, K L Maute, T J McWhorter, G Morgan, J Mulby, J Mulheron, R Pearce, I H Reynolds, B Rosslyn, K Rowe, U Schierhorn, J M Talbot, P van de Ven, D Varden, N Way, M Weerheim, A Wittering, L Wood, W & M Woodhouse



Yellow Wagtail subspecies *macronyx*, Cocos Islands (refer Observations).

Photo courtesy Richard Baxter



## Country Groups



### ALBANY BIRD GROUP

#### April Outing

This month 17 of us had the opportunity to visit a farm in the Torbay area owned by the brother of one of our members. Retaining remnants of bushland, the farm offered a variety of birdlife.

We had good views of Scarlet Robin, Golden Whistler, Spotted Pardalote, Grey Shrike-thrush and all the parrot species commonly found along the south coast. White-breasted Robins and Splendid Fairy-wrens entertained us closer to the farmhouse.

We were intrigued listening to the Australian Ringnecks, their call being quite different from the "twenty-eight" we usually hear to the north and the east of Albany.

The Wedge-tailed Eagle's nest we discovered had been used in previous years, we were told. It was good to see that this local farmer recognised the value of retaining bushland for wildlife.

A total of 36 species were found on the farm.

**Anne Bondin**

#### May 2006 Outing

Twenty of us met at Bakers Junction and drove to Betty's Beach. It was a lovely day with no wind. On the way we stopped to survey a fence line off Homestead Road. The highlight here was a group of nine Banded Lapwings. Otherwise we found the usual bushbirds. At a second stop some people had excellent views of Southern Emu-wrens.

At Betty's Beach and Norman's Beach we heard Noisy Scrub-birds, Western Bristlebirds and Western Whipbird calling, though there were no good sightings. The total count for the day was 48 species.

**Charlie Davies**

#### June Outing

Fifteen of us had a great day birdwatching at Kambellup, just north of the Porongurup Range. The weather was perfect, in spite of the forecast. There was no wind, and the sun stayed out all day. The country is very dry, but we saw a good selection of bushbirds, 43 species, with really good sightings of Striated Pardalotes and a Sacred Kingfisher, who posed for us.

**Liz and Charlie Davies**

#### July Outing

It was a cold, wet and miserable morning when 11 of us, including two visitors from Perth, met for a day's birdwatching. We saw quite a few bushbirds along a firebreak off Prideaux Road. At the Lower King Bridge for morning tea, we were rewarded with an Australian Hobby watching us from a nearby tree and a White-bellied Sea-Eagle flying slowly by against the wind.

We walked from the fish traps in Oyster Harbour, and up the hill to the Bondin's house, where we saw an owlet-nightjar in a hollow opposite their house.

Lunch was on the banks of the Kalgan further upstream, and here we saw a couple of Swamp Harriers.

We counted 53 species altogether, and had a very successful day with none of the expected rain.

**Liz and Charlie Davies**

## RAY MARSHALL PARK, VIVEASH, 22 April

This is one of the most pleasant walks in the BAWA list of outings. The easy walking, big Red Gums, the calm waters of the Swan River — plus a good variety of bush and water birds — make this a popular outing.

About 20 people arrived for the walk at the easy hour of 8:30 am. We walked along the river for about 1.5 km, enjoying the sight of many Tree Martins flying around the upper branches of the Red Gums. On the way back we visited a wetland, which was rather quiet but still provided a few extra species. Large flocks of screeching Little Corellas provided an authentic Aussie sound background.

Highlights were the corellas, Tree Martins and a single Sulphur-crested Cockatoo which for a lot of people was a new bird, seen in the bush rather than at a zoo.

An immature Collared Sparrowhawk seen while we were having morning tea provided an identification challenge, satisfactorily answered by Paul Marty who had a closer view.

The total for the day was 44 species.

**Tom Delaney**

## THE SPECTACLES, 7 May

A beautiful autumn morning saw 21 people turn up to walk the trails at The Spectacles. Tracks near the car park have undergone renovation since last year's walk. However, there is still evidence of the storm damage. There were very few waterbirds to be seen so the day turned out to be a pleasant bush birding experience. Forty five species were recorded and this included four birds of prey.

The morning started with excellent views of Striated Pardalotes inspecting a knothole and finished with a Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring high above the group as we had morning tea and the bird call. Although nothing unexpected was seen there was a good representation of birds across the family groups. Thanks to Paul for leading the walk.

**Merrian Kuerschner**

## AVON NATIONAL PARK WALK, 12 May

It was a beautiful morning for the Avon National Park walk. The arrival of 23 'birdies' was tremendous as it was an early start for most. The first stop was very disappointing because of the lack of birds compared with the previous Saturday when there had been an abundance. But as the day progressed so the birds appeared. There were lovely sightings of Mistletoebird, Rufous Treecreeper and Western Spinebill. Sittellas were in abundance as were Rufous and Golden Whistlers, Brown-headed, Tawny, White-naped, White-cheeked, Singing and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters that were

seen by all. A couple of Wedge-tailed Eagles circled us most of the day.

Whilst having lunch in the campground area, we saw a variety of birds including the Red-capped Parrot.

A further five species were added to the list as the two leaders were discussing the day's walk in the campground. One, an Australian Hobby, dived into the tree above the two leaders to retrieve its dinner! Probably a Weebill!

A total of 47 species was the count for the day and this was pretty good, given the very slow start.

**Robina Haynes**

## BIBRA LAKE, 21 May

Nineteen people attended this morning walk around Bibra Lake including an overseas visitor to Perth.

The walk got off to a good start as a very obliging Striated Pardalote afforded excellent views of its rich and bright plumage as it cleaned out the contents of a hole in a paperbark trunk, presumably in readiness for breeding. This is the earliest evidence of apparent breeding activity by this species I have recorded and is possibly due to the very mild and dry autumn weather being experienced.

Incidentally as the Striated Pardalote has a very long breeding season from winter to summer and often have up to four breeding attempts and can have up to four young, it is possibly Australia's most prolific passerine breeding bird. Some pairs may raise around 15 young each season.

As we continued our walk the number of raptor species kept on growing and by the end we had recorded various raptors including Australian Hobby, Collared Sparrowhawk, Whistling Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Little Eagle and Swamp Harrier. Other notable sightings were a small flock of Pink-eared Ducks, at least two Chestnut-breasted Mannikins and a male Splendid Fairy-wren, almost in full blue breeding plumage, somewhat earlier than usual. A male Musk Duck in full vocal and visual display was also another highlight.

Due to some out-of-season summer rainfall, the water level was comparatively high and hence there were practically no wading birds seen.

The tally at the end of the enjoyable walk came to 56 species, confirming Bibra Lake to be a valuable bird habitat in the metro area.

**Wynton Maddeford**

## PERENJORI WEEKEND, 2–5 June

Quite cold nights and beautiful sunshine each day made our weekend in Perenjori very good. About 20 people enjoyed

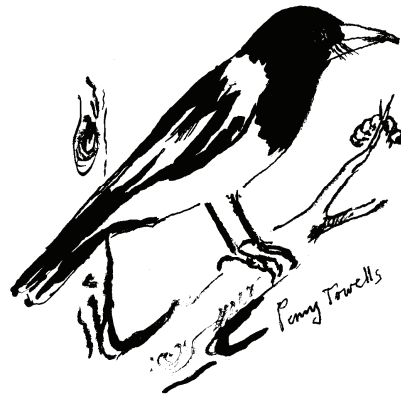
birding together as we worked hard with great results. Being very dry in most areas, our total of 61 species, excluding water fowl, we thought was fine.

One highlight was a Malleefowl mound in use, but no birds were seen. We saw Redthroats, Zebra Finches, a couple of quick views of the Chestnut Quail-thrush, and many Pied Butcherbirds.

We were spoilt at the camp by an enthusiastic park-carer who made a wonderful log fire for us each evening and on Saturday evening a tasty pot of pea and ham soup.

Everyone enjoyed every minute, I'm certain, and thank you Wendy and Clive once more for guiding us so well.

**Penny Towells**



Pied Butcherbird  
*Drawing by Penny Towells*

### **MARKET GARDEN SWAMP, 8 June**

Nine happy birders walked around the many areas of water at Market Garden Swamp on 8 June.

We especially liked the beautiful Red-capped Parrots perched on grey, dead branches against a pale, blue sky — spectacular! Against the same dead wood lower down, Grey Teal and Pacific Black Ducks were hard to see and made us more observant.

Sunny conditions made everything very pleasant as we counted 40 species. Thank you, Molly and Barry for a very good outing.

**Penny Towells**

In total we scored 26 species, even with a friendly black cat following us along the track for luck. The highlight on the walk was meant to be the Southern Boobook, which the leader had been checking for weeks in the same tree for this event. On the day, with all eyes looking, it was not to be seen. When we prepared for the count, along came a stranger who asked if we'd seen the owl. "No, we hadn't", we all said. "I'll show you then". It was in its usual tree, different branch.

Not having seen enough birds for the morning, seven members then went to Ocean Reef Harbour to check for fairy-wrens. Here they encountered a juvenile Pacific Gull, an Osprey on a sign post for photo opportunities, and a Little Eagle, with some Variegated Fairy-wrens (one male and others).

**Michael Hancock**

### **STINTON CASCADES NATURE RESERVE, 17 June**

Surprisingly, about 20 people turned up for this walk after a record-breaking cold night. Not surprisingly, the birds were very quiet, especially at the start. Despite the lack of blossom, we saw five species of honeyeaters including White-naped Honeyeaters and Western Spinebills. Only one robin was seen, the Scarlet Robin. This was one of the few times that there wasn't a Rufous Whistler. Neither were there any raptors.

Despite the cold weather, we still managed to identify 31 species of birds in just over two hours, which I think is pretty good.

We all enjoyed our morning tea in glorious warm sunshine.

**Hank van Wees**

### **STAR SWAMP, 13 July**

Starting at 8.00 am on a 2 degree morning probably wasn't the best way to start a bird excursion, but that didn't deter the ten members who did attend.

### **NORTH MOLE, 15 July**

Nineteen members and guests arrived at North Mole to be greeted by a beautiful winter's morning, for humans. Unfortunately the clear skies and light offshore breeze was absolutely useless for seabirds! Still, we persevered for an hour and were rewarded with a couple of very close fly-bys by Australasian Gannets. Unusual sightings for North Mole included flocks of Black Swans, Pacific Black Ducks, Grey Teal and an Australian Raven. There was also a very distant sighting of two Great Skuas. After an hour most members decided to move on to Woodman Point. Birdlife was scarcely more prolific there, but we saw both Whistling and Black-shouldered Kites. We also saw more Australasian Gannets, a slightly less distant view of a Great Skua and enjoyed the sight of a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins.

We saw 14 species at North Mole and 20 species at Woodman Point. While the birdlife was not abundant, the company was excellent and everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable morning.

**Michael Craig**





The group birding at Woodman Point  
*Photo courtesy Michael Craig*



BIRD TALK: "Spiders are quite handy"  
*Cartoon by Penny Towells*



## Observatory Reports



### BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

The quiet season for shorebirds is the busy season for birders; during the Dry season (May – October) the observatory becomes inundated with visitors escaping the cold south. In Broome, recent temperatures have been unseasonably low, but night time minimums of 4 °C have not deterred people from walking the Malurus Trail. Red-chested and Red-backed Button-quails have been reported dust bathing along the fence line.

The recent influx of visitors was supplemented by a large group of researchers and volunteers involved in a benthos expedition. Roebuck Bay is the richest intertidal mudflat in the world, and its invertebrates have been studied by groups from Australia and overseas for the past ten years. One focus of the June expedition was to evaluate shorebird site preferences and feeding hot spots. The expedition was a great success and it was good to catch up with old friends and to meet new ones.

Despite the relatively low numbers of shorebirds in Roebuck Bay at this time of year, the species diversity remains impressive. Several birders have had to pay the 'twitchers tax' for Broad-billed Sandpiper, Asian Dowitcher and an obliging Redshank that stood amongst a flock of 3000 birds. At the moment, an interesting wader watching puzzle is posed by the many birds of several species in almost full breeding plumage. The reason that these birds occur here at this



time of year is not fully understood but several theories have been put forward over a convivial beverage or two in the Shadehouse.

The Mangrove Golden Whistler has been very quiet lately, but its cousin, the White-breasted Whistler, has compensated by calling loudly at all times of the day. During one mist netting session at Crab Creek, 19 White-breasted Whistlers, almost all of which were juveniles or sub-adults, were caught in a few hours. Waterbirds such as spoonbills and egrets are appearing in large numbers as the plains dry up, and the Black-necked Storks have brought their young ones down to take their toll of mud skippers and crabs.

The birdbaths continue to attract large numbers of passerines and wallabies. The Double-barred Finches must have had a spectacular breeding year because they even outnumber Brown Honeyeaters in the mist nets. They present a great challenge to the trainee mist netter, and have become known as net mice because they weave intricate patterns in the net. Grey Fantails have also appeared regularly, and in higher numbers than ever recorded before in the bird logs. No doubt they are also refugees from the chilly south.

If you haven't managed to visit Broome this year, we encourage you to make a booking for 2007! Also, keep a look out for more information about next year's courses.

We look forward to seeing you in the near future.

**Pete Collins and Holly Sitters**

## EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

## Volunteer Caretakers' Report

*Two Tasmanians have been caretaking Eyre Bird Observatory for the months of June and July 2006. Here's what Helen Gee and Bob Graham have to report.*



We have truly loved our experience at Eyre, and pay respect to the original inhabitants, the Wonunda Mirning people who were here since ancient times, until the 1930s, and who are remembered by many features in the landscape. We have learnt so much here and have been inspired by the sheer number of individuals and groups who make the place so vibrant by volunteering their expertise.

Above all we have been inspired by the ethic of Eyre: here at the observatory we have such a special time capsule; a base self-contained in energy and communications, surrounded by a vast wild landscape; a comfortable base for a large range of people to participate in all the observatory has to offer. With our passion for history and bushwalking, we have managed to fit in a lot of exploration of old telegraph lines and tracks, once trodden by the telegraph maintenance crews, surveyors, prospectors and other travellers who frequented the old homesteads and wells. Walking through the treed dunes to the Wurrengoodyea Hills, as we did one lovely day, one can go back in time. Perhaps it is the old Aboriginal rock holes on the scarp that cause us greatest reflection.

Today Eyre is a real paradise for those who love a homely base in an isolated stretch of country, on a wild Southern Ocean coastline extending some hundreds of kilometres along the western side of the Great Australian Bight. At the foot of the impressive Baxter Cliffs we have watched up to seven whales at rest with their calves, while a sea lion surfed in at our feet.

As Tasmanians, many birds here are new to us: This is the first time we have observed a male Blue-breasted Fairy Wren; a Collared Sparrowhawk bathing or a White-faced Heron flying over a dune. Major Mitchell's Cockatoos hanging by, alternately, a beak or a claw, has to be trapeze entertainment hard to beat!

The chance to observe up to 50 species of birds in a month has stimulated a new interest in birds, and we are learning how to listen. When we first arrived, in May, previous caretakers Norm and Gina had a trip to sea with a local cray fisherman: our Bird Log that day included Black-browed Albatross (15) as well as Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Shy Albatross, Yellow-nosed Albatross (2) and a Flesh-footed Shearwater.

Some sightings around the observatory of great note: in early July, a Diamond Dove, not seen at OBE since 1994, was observed by BA Victoria's Roger Richards; and two immature Sacred Kingfishers perched near the observatory in mid-July.

On our weekly Beach Count Surveys, we recorded up to 12 species. These included resident pairs of Pied Oystercatchers and Red-capped Plovers and, occasionally, Australasian Gannets, Ospreys, the Eastern Reef Egret, a Grey Plover, a White-faced Heron and a Red-necked Avocet, the latter not sighted since April.

Past Wardens of EBO, Graham and Gwen Goodreid, led an enthusiastic team from Nannup on a Dune Rehabilitation Course in June when 17 tonnes of seaweed in 23 loads was spread over about an acre of eroding dune. Fifteen buckets of locally sourced seed were spread, including *Acacia cyclops*, *A. anceps*, *E. angulosa*, *E. diversifolia*, *Nitraria billardieri*, *Spinifex hirsutus* and *Santalum acuminatum*.

An extended visit from Coralie Hortin and Judith Morris of the Albany Herbarium was particularly enjoyable.

They have the Eyre plants in the card file now colour-coded for flowering which will aid identification for amateurs. In flower here in June: *Melaleuca lanceolata*, *E. diversifolia* and *Templetonia retusa*.

Our weekly trip to Cocklebidy for stores involves driving through a different habitat range; the interface between the mallee and the Blue Bush Plains is particularly rewarding. Here we saw in July White-browed Babblers, Mulga Parrots and Magpie-larks, Whistling Kites, Fork-tailed Swifts, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Dusky Woodswallows, Yellow-throated Miners and Purple-crowned Lorikeets.

On Wednesday 14 June we recorded an overnight temperature of  $-5.9$  degrees C and  $-7.0$  degrees C ground temperature at Eyre. This was an all-time record in WA south of the Murchison district. The death of trees in a valley mid-way along the North Track suggests it may have been even colder there. The continued low temperatures gave us huge publicity for a week or two. The thick ice on the bird baths was all the verification we needed as novice weather recorders!

On our early morning walks up the dunes we see the birds at their best; fresh for the day. One day we watched a "multi-story apartment block", a huge tree, *Eucalyptus diversifolia*, laden with golden blossom and filled with birds: babblers and fairy-wrens feeding on its lower limbs and Singing Honeyeaters busy above. At the base of the tree a pair of Spotted Pardalotes entered a tiny hole in the sand, flies and moths in their beaks to feed their young; a magic moment.

We read in the EBO Conservation Plan (2005) that a Monitoring Programme for litter washed ashore from the Southern Ocean was instigated here by the late Dr Nigel Wace (ANU) and conducted for several years up until 1993. We recommend it be continued and together with new caretakers, Mary Molloy and Arpad and Zac Mencshelyi, we have recorded and displayed the flotsam and jetsam collected between the 4 and 5 km markers of Kanidal Beach in July. We wish these

"... a base self-contained  
in energy and  
communications ..."

enthusiastic new caretakers as splendid an experience as ours and thank the Committee members who have patiently tutored us in the art of EBO-ing.

Must end, as it's time for the sunset and another EBO ritual — a quick dash up the nearest dune to look out to sea, and along the shadowy dunes and up into the great open sky where a magnificent ever-changing silent drama of subtle colour-play unfolds.

**Helen Gee and Bob Graham**

## EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY'S WEATHER

With the report on television weather programs of Eyre's minus 6° on 14 June 2006, further public attention was drawn to its climate. The temperature that day was exactly minus 5.9°, the lowest ever experienced at Eyre. Significantly, the sub-zero mornings continued for six consecutive days and even more have been reported since. More comfortable mornings were experienced in June 2005 when only one day was below zero. There have been 22 mornings with a minimum of minus 4° or colder at Eyre Bird Observatory in its 24 years of weather reporting. Half of those were in July but others were recorded in all five months from June to September.

Minus 5.9° is pretty cold. It was 0.8° colder than Eyre's previous lowest, both in June 1986 and August 2002, and the lowest ever experienced in the southern half of Western Australia, until Collie East had minus 6.0° only three days later. Western Australia's record minimum was reported at Boolgooro Spring (60 km north of Carnarvon) in July 1969. That temperature was minus 6.7°.

The 13 days with minimums of zero or below in June 2006 more than doubled the number of such minimums in previous EBO weather reports for June, from 1984 to 2005. The next highest was six, in 1986 and in 2000. The average number of zero or below days for June in that period is 2.6, though June 2006 raises the average to 3.0. Eleven of those years had two or less.

Such extremely cold weather in June tends to occur on consecutive days. This was the feature of 11 of the 14 years with more than one day below zero. All five of the cold days in 2003 were one after the other, and there were sequences of six, then five, cold days in June 2006. July's below zero days are slightly more frequent but are usually not on consecutive days.

Weather reporting at Eyre has occurred, with significant breaks, since 1885. The limited data available indicates that Eyre's average minimum temperatures are slightly lower (0.4°) since comprehensive weather information was first provided in 1983 from the bird observatory, than in the period 1899 – 1926. Much data from the earlier Eyre Telegraph Station days is not readily available, residing in the National Archives Office in Melbourne. Other comparisons between the two eras are therefore limited.

Average maximum temperatures appear to have increased. The monthly average is 0.7° greater during the life of the bird observatory than in the period 1899 – 1926.

Temperature ranges on any one day are also interesting. On rare occasions just two or three degrees can separate minimum and maximum temperatures, but equally rarely the range is 30° or more. Australia's largest-ever diurnal temperature range occurred at Eyre on 29 November 1996. After a minimum of 3°, the maximum then reached 41°, a range of 38°. You can imagine the morning commotion at the bird baths! About five weeks later a maximum temperature of 47° was reached after the temperature climbed 33.5° during the day. In between those dates were a couple of December days whose range was only 5°. Just six days before Christmas last year it was 47.5°. The record maximum (47.6°) was reached on January 16<sup>th</sup> 1998.

Rainfall appears to have increased at Eyre. The historical average is 306.8 mm per year, though the 42 years from 1885 averaged 290.5 mm. As a bird observatory, Eyre's average is now 47.2 mm higher. If only the wettest ten years of each era are considered then averages of 399.3 mm (1885 – 1926) and 430.4 mm (1978 – 2005) are obtained. That latter period includes 620 mm in 2000, the wettest year of all. A comparison of the ten driest years of each era show that life must have been a challenge at Eyre Telegraph Station during its 42 years, nine of those years were drier than any recorded in the present era.

Rainwater tank storage is the only source of water so those who look after the bird observatory at Eyre share the concerns of farmers. They are reassured by the sound of rainwater trickling into the tanks.

lowest minimum temperature	- 5.9°	14 Jun 2006
highest maximum temperature	47.6°	16 Jan 1998
highest annual rainfall	620.0 mm	2000
lowest annual rainfall	132.5 mm	1913
average annual rainfall 1885 - 1926	290.5 mm	
average annual rainfall 1978 - 2005	337.7 mm	
average annual rainfall 1885 - 2005	306.8 mm	

Much of this article deals with extremes. In spite of the foregoing, Eyre's weather is typically comfortable. When it is cold the log fire warms, and the thick stone walls insulate from the summer heat during the occasional hot weather. It should be reassuring to know that Eyre's weather tends to be moderate (February's average maximum is 26.4° and the July average minimum is 6.2°).

**Rod Smith**





## Code-of-Conduct for Campouts

This code-of-conduct is designed to make BAWA Campouts pleasant, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

1. Members shall notify the BAWA office if they plan to attend a campout, leaving name, address, phone number, and an emergency contact.
  2. The leader is responsible for gaining consent from the owners or public authorities to visit proposed birding areas prior to the visit.
  3. Family pets should not be taken on campouts. If children are taken on the campout, then parents shall take full responsibility for them and will be held accountable for their behaviour.
  4. While the Leader generally seeks consensus on the arrangements for the day's events, if a final decision is required then this rests with the leader. Their directions should be followed, especially in public land or parks.
  5. A compass and whistle can be invaluable if lost, or, to raise an alarm.
  6. Participants should treat each other and the facilities provided with respect.
  7. Participants wishing to leave any activities early should ensure the leader is advised.
  8. Campfires can only be used if permitted at the time and must be fully extinguished prior to leaving the camp area.
  9. Rubbish shall be disposed of properly, and if no suitable bin is provided then the rubbish shall be taken home.
  10. Members should ensure that their vehicle is in roadworthy condition and they have adequate food, water and fuel, and suitable clothing including footwear. Daily checks can be undertaken using the 'POWER' check guide, ie, P = petrol/diesel fuel, O = oil, W = water, E = electrical/battery, R = rubber/tyre pressures.
  11. When travelling in convoy having your vehicle 'lights turned on' and always keeping the vehicle behind you in sight, especially at turns is good practice. If they stop, check if help is required and advise the Leader.
  12. The environment should be left in its pristine condition, and care should be taken not to disturb the wildlife or stock animals. Always leave gates as you have found them, ie, if they are open then leave them open, if closed then close them.
- Note: Communication can be enhanced when travelling in convoy and when walking through bushland to call-in interesting sightings by carrying handheld two-way CB/UHF radios.

## Important Note re Campouts

Members anticipating attending campouts must notify the BA Office (9383 7749) of the number in their party and when they will arrive. 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.

### Sunday 3 September: Serpentine National Park Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the junction of the South West Highway and Falls Road (the turn off to Serpentine Falls). We will walk along a ridge overlooking Serpentine Falls and also with views across the plain to the ocean. The bush in this area has both Marri and Wandoo and usually yields a good number of bird species.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Sue Abbotts*

### Thursday 7 September: North Lake, Melville Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park on Progress Drive, just off Farrington Road. We will walk around this small lake where

about 80 species of waterbirds and bushbirds have been seen.

For members and the general public.

*Leader: Clive Napier*

### Sunday 10 September: Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale Full day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in 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 16 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 (the York Road turn off). We will look at several areas of Wandoo woodland, where three species of robin are often seen, and perhaps a Crested Shrike-tit.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Charles Merriam*

### Saturday 23 September: Forrestdale Lake Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the Moor St car park. From Perth, drive down the freeway, turning left at Forrest Road, continue across Nicholson Road, into Armadale

Road. Just over 1 km along turn right into Weld St, then second left into Lofties St, then right into Moore St.

There should be plenty of waterbirds, bushbirds and possibly some raptors. The wildflowers should be good, too.

Bring morning tea, 'scopes if you have them, and rubber boots, as it may be muddy.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: David James*

**Monday 25 September: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Mrs Toots, an American birdwatcher, ecologist, and author of photographic wildlife books, will give an illustrated talk on Hummingbirds.

**Saturday 30 September to Monday 2 October: Campout at Wongan Hills, Shire of Wongan-Ballidu**

Wongan Hills, in the wheatbelt, is approximately 185 km north-east of Perth. The surrounding area includes habitat such as bushland, flat-topped hills, rocky areas and salt lakes. There should be wildflowers to enjoy as well.

Accommodation is available at the Wongan Hills caravan park. Please phone 9671 1009 to make your own reservations.

A combined BBQ, with the local Bush Care group, is tentatively planned for the Saturday evening. Please be prepared to BYO meat and a salad to share.

For members and guests only.

*Leaders: John Luyer and George Agar*

**Sunday 1 October: Darling Scarp, Kelmscott Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park of the Cohuna Wildlife Park, Mills Road East, Gosnells (courtesy of the owners). This is an area of mixed vegetation, but mainly Jarrah and Marri with granite outcrops and plenty of wildflowers.

For members and the general public.

*Leader: David Ballard*

**Sunday 8 October: Collins Road, Brookton Highway, Beverley Half-day excursion**

Meet at 9:30 am on Collins Road. Park on the left hand side of Collins Road about half a kilometre from Brookton Highway. The Collins Road turnoff is about 50 km from the junction of Brookton Highway and Canning Road, on the right hand side coming from Perth. If you reach the turnoff to Beverley you have gone too far! We will walk through this area of Wandoo woodland where 61 species have been recorded, including Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and Crested Shrike-tit.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Michael Brooker*

**Thursday 12 October: Alan Anderson Park, Darling Range, Walliston Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park near Alan Anderson Park between Lawnbrook and Pomeroy Roads, Walliston. It is easily accessed from Welshpool Road. This is a two-hour walk on fairly level terrain, covering 34 hectares. Sixty-four species of birds have been counted here.

For members and the general public.

*Leader: Michael Hancock*

**Sunday 15 October: Dennis de Young Reserve, Banjup Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am at the end of Oxley Road at the south-east corner of the reserve. To reach the reserve, drive south down the Freeway, turning left at Armadale Road, then right into Liddelow Road. Travel south to Oxley Road, and drive to the end. The walk takes us through banksia and paperbark woodland, an excellent birding area for at least six species of honeyeater and lots of other bushbirds.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Sue Keogh*

**Monday 16 October: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Dr Guy Dutson, working on Important Bird Areas (IBAs) for Birds Australia, will give an illustrated talk on *Important Bird Areas in the World and in WA*.

**Note:** There will be no meeting on Monday 23 October which overlaps the Congress and Campout 18-24 October.

**Saturday 21 October: King's Park Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am in the Botanic Gardens car park across the road from the Pioneer Women's Memorial. We will visit several areas in the Park. There should be a variety of species of birds in the area.

For members and the general public.

*Leader: Charles Merriam*

**Sunday 29 October: Bootine Road Nature Reserve, Gingin Full day excursion**

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

This reserve has supported up to four species of fairy-wrens. The outing should provide a reasonably good selection of bushbirds, as well as some experience in separating fairy-wrens of the chestnut-shouldered group.

For members and guests only.

*Leaders: John & Judy Blyth*

**Saturday 4 November: Walyunga National Park Full day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park at the end of Walyunga Road (off Great Northern Highway, Upper Swan, near Bungarah Pool). Be prepared to pay an entrance fee into the Park. The National Park lies along the Darling Scarp. The Avon River bounds one part of the planned walk which includes good areas of Wandoo, so we should see an excellent variety of birds.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Clive Nealon*

**Saturday 11 November: Blackboy Ridge Reserve, Chittering Lakes**  
**Full day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park for Blackboy Ridge Reserve, Chittering. Turn east off the Great Northern Highway at Blue Plains Road. This is north of the Muchea turnoff. Travel along Blue Plains Road to the T-junction with Chittering Road. Turn right then travel south and turn right again into the car park of the reserve. This is one and a half hours drive from Perth city.

With the Chittering Bird Group, we will take about a three-hour walk through parts of this reserve which was one of the Perth Biodiversity Project sites in 2005. The 68 ha reserve has Wandoo woodland and thickets of dryandra and heath.

We will then travel south to the Chittering Lakes where there are toilet facilities at the farm on the south-east side of the lake. Guided by Katarina Neve we will walk around the edge of the Lake. There is no path there but the Chittering Bird Group surveys this site regularly. Lunch, and then more time round the lake as necessary.

For members and the general public.

*Leader: Sue Mather*

**Thursday 16 November: 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 bushbirds. Fifty species of birds have been seen here. Bring morning tea.

For members and the general public.

*Leaders: Barry and Molly Angus*

**Saturday 18 – Sunday 19 November: Boyagin Rock**  
**Short weekend campout**

This nature reserve contains impressive stands of Powderbark Wandoo as well as Marri, casuarina and some Jarrah. Seventy-three species of birds have been

recorded, including Black Honeyeater and several owls. Walks are moderate to easy, but optional walks over the rock can be testing. Numbats have been seen here, and at this time of year wildflowers should be everywhere.

To reach the campsite at the base of Boyagin Rock, travel along the Brookton Highway to the intersection of the York-Williams Road, turn south (right if coming from Perth) and proceed to Boyagin Road, which enters from the left. The road from here to the rock will be sign-posted with BAWA signs. There is a bush toilet but please be self-sufficient for all other items, such as food, water, tents, etc. It is possible to enjoy a single full day excursion, but it will be necessary to leave home early to take part in group activities. The round trip is 250 km. The leader will be on site on Friday afternoon.

Please advise the Birds Australia office if you plan to attend, and note if single day or camping. For further details contact the leader, Clive Napier on 9332 7265.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Clive Napier*

**Sunday 19 November: Lake Claremont, Swanbourne**  
**Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am at the northern end of Stirling Road, Claremont. We will look for waterbirds and bushbirds around this pleasant suburban lake.

For members and the general public.

*Leader: Max Bailey*

**Saturday 25 - Sunday 26 November: Dryandra Woodland State Forest**  
**Short weekend campout**

Dryandra is one of the most important remnant reserves in the wheatbelt, and has mostly birds typical of the wheatbelt woodlands. See the article in the July 2006 issue of *Western Australian Bird Notes*. Members have the option of either camping at the Congelin Dam Camp ground, or using one of the cabins or cottages, about 13 km away in the Dryandra Settlement. The main entrance is on Wandering/Narrogin Road. If cabins or cottages are required, please book directly with Dryandra on 9884 5231.

The Congelin Dam camp ground is off the York/Williams Road, past the most southerly entrance to Dryandra. Here there are camping bays, toilets and barbecue facilities. There are two parts. We hope to be in the group section. A small CALM camping fee will be charged (about \$10 per couple).

Dryandra is 164 km south-east of Perth, and 22 km north-west of Narrogin. There are signposts on the Albany Highway at North Bannister, and on the Great Southern Highway at Cuballing and at Narrogin.

For those interested, there is a very good guided walk in the Barn Mia enclosure. If interested contact the Dept of Environment and Conservation (DEC) office in Narrogin on (08) 9881 9200.

The leader will be at the camp ground by late afternoon of Friday 24 November.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: David Secomb*

**Sunday 26 November: The Spectacles**  
**Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am in the main car park on McLaughlan Road. Proceed along the Kwinana Freeway to the Anketell Road crossroads, some 30 km south of Perth. Travel about 2 km then turn left into McLaughlan Road. Over 100 species of birds have been recorded here. The walk takes about three hours, so bring a snack and drink to have along the way.

For members and the general public.

*Leader: Paul Marty*

**Monday 27 November: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat**  
**Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Paul Marty, a member, will give an illustrated talk on birds.

**Sunday 3 December: Beermullah Lake, Gingin**  
**Full day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am at the Beermullah Road West turnoff, approximately 13 km north of the Dewar Road turnoff into Gingin. This is the northern entry to Gingin from the Brand Highway. The turnoff is just past the Bootine Road turnoff which will be familiar to those who have been on the



Bootine Road excursion. Bring lunch and drinks as there are no facilities at the lake. If time permits, other lakes in the vicinity may be visited. Tracks around the Lake are sound and should be suitable to all types of vehicle. At the last visit Freckled Ducks were seen as well as a good list of water birds.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Ian Rudd*

**Thursday 7 December: Waterford Foreshore, Salter Point, Manning Half-day excursion**

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

For members and the general public.

*Leaders: Barry and Molly Angus*

**Sunday 10 December: Rottnest Island Full day excursion**

Meet at 8:15 am on Rottnest at the Tourist Bureau at the end of the jetty.

The Rottnest Express leaves at 7:30 am from 'C' Shed, Victoria Quay, Fremantle. Advice from the ferry companies is to make your own booking before September.

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

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

Most ferries leave the Island about 4:00 pm.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Alan Collins*

**Saturday 16 December: Alfred Cove, Melville Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast) off Burke Drive, Attadale. There should be plenty of migratory waders and waterbirds round the river, and there are always bushbirds in

the park. Buff-banded Rails have been seen here.

For members and the general public.

*Leader: Clive Napier*

**Sunday 17 December: BAWA Christmas Barbecue**

A barbecue will be held on Sunday 17 December at Peregrine House, commencing at 5:00 pm. BYO meat, salads and drinks. All members are welcome.

For members and guests only.

**No monthly meeting in December.**

**Sunday 31 December: Bibra Lake, Cockburn Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake off Progress Drive. Bibra Lake is a part of the Beeliar Wetlands chain and a large number of bushbirds and waterbirds can be seen here. Bring water, hats, suitable footwear, etc. Snakes have been seen around here.

For members and guests only.

*Leader: Hank van Wees*



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The exhibition at Kingfisher Gallery opens from Sunday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> until Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006

**Kingfisher Gallery** 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 51 Colin Street, West Perth

Gallery hours Wed – Friday 1-5 pm, Sunday 1-4 pm

Ph 9486 9822, Mob 0408 511 723

kingfishergallery@iinet.net.au

www.kingfishergallery.com.au

## TTFN Travel

Unit C3, 118 Railway Parade,  
West Perth WA 6005

PO Box 1756, West Perth WA 6872

T: 61 8 9321 2127 F: 61 8 9321 2987

E: [Kathleen@ttfn.com.au](mailto:Kathleen@ttfn.com.au)

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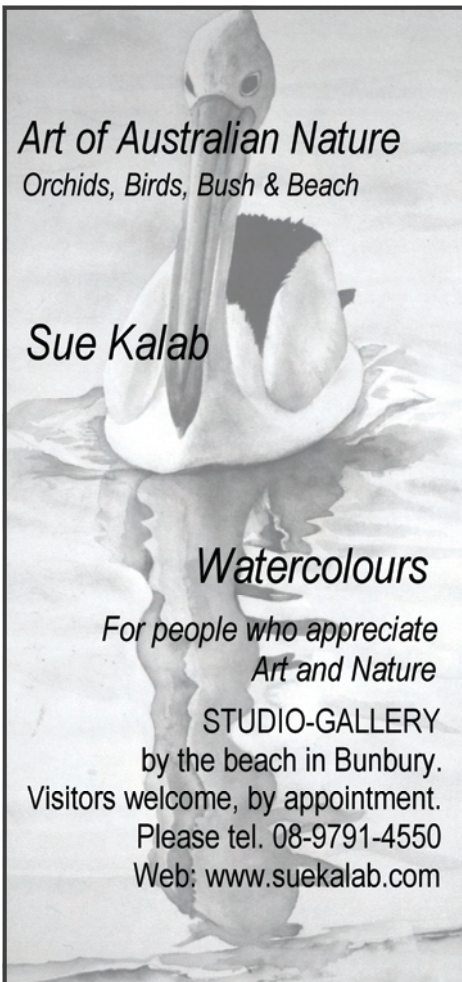
### Drakensberg Mountains

Monks Cowl National Park  
Champagne Valley  
Drakensberg Boys Choir

### Dates for 2007

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## Crossword Answers No 46

### ACROSS

#### Across

1 starling, 6 puddle, 8 embryo, 10 visit, 11 iris, 12 mask, 13 endeavour, 14 vulnerable, 17 cheek, 18 odd, 20 boats, 24 biodiversity, 27 pellet, 28 disperse.

#### Down

1 systematic, 2 remarkable, 3 ground, 4 survivor, 5 pests, 7 disturb, 9 reserve, 15 nod, 16 east, 19 dove, 21 oriole, 22 grass, 23 gape, 24 bold, 25 over, 26 yaps.

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

### Western Australian Bird Notes Subscription Form

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

5/2006





## Opportunities for Volunteers



This section gives members an avenue to advertise for voluntary assistance with projects, surveys, initiatives, office.

- ◆ **Atlas** – surveys for this are continuing – contact Cheryl Gole  
Phone 9293 4958, e-mail <cgole@westnet.com.au>
- ◆ **Monthly Meeting Speakers** – contact Brian Wilson 9293 1094
- ◆ **Excursion Leaders** – contact Sue Abbotts 9444 1607,  
e-mail <suechat@bigpond.net.au>
- ◆ **Public Relations Sub-committee** – 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 Project**— the Swan Coastal Plain  
project still requires volunteers. Roost surveys are ongoing until  
the end of June and feeding information is still urgently required,  
as is assistance with data handling in the office. If you are  
interested, please contact Bansi on  
<b.shah@birdsaustralia.com.au> or 0427 707 047. Further details  
on website <www.carnabyscockatoo.org>
- ◆ **Kings Park Wildflower Festival**, 28 September -- 2 October --  
volunteers needed - contact Eggie Bloggs on 9386 4790.

## Calendar of Events

### Birds Australia Western Australia Inc

Office: **Peregrine House**

167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat WA 6014

#### NOTE NEW INTERNET DETAILS!

Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 12.30 pm  
Telephone: (08) 9383 7749  
Facsimile: (08) 9387 8412  
Email: mail@birdswa.com.au

**Birds Australia WA Home Page:**  
<http://birdswa.com.au>

**Chairman:** Dr Rob Davis  
8 Ridgeway Place, Mahogany Creek WA 6072  
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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)

December 2006 issue: 1 November

March 2007 issue: 1 February

June 2007 issue: 1 May

September 2007 issue: 1 August

#### Advertising Rates

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

- Sun 3 Sep:** Serpentine National Park, Half-day excursion  
**Thu 7 Sep:** North Lake, Melville, Half-day excursion  
**Sun 10 Sep:** Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale, Full day excursion  
**Sat 16 Sep:** Flynn Road, Mundaring, Full day excursion  
**Sat 23 Sep:** Forrestdale Lake, Half-day excursion  
**Mon 25 Sep:** Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting,  
7:30 pm  
**Sat 30 Sep to Mon 2 Oct.:** Campout at Wongan Hills, Shire of  
Wongan-Ballidu  
**Sun 1 Oct:** Darling Scarp, Kelmscott, Half-day excursion  
**Sun 8 Oct:** Collins Road, Brookton Highway, Beverley, Half-day  
excursion  
**Thu 12 Oct:** Alan Anderson Park, Darling Range, Walliston, Half-  
day excursion  
**Sun 15 Oct:** Dennis de Young Reserve, Banjup, Half-day excursion  
**Monday 16 Oct:** Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat,  
Meeting, 7:30 pm  
**Sat 21 Oct:** King's Park, Half-day excursion  
**Sun 29 Oct:** Bootine Road Nature Reserve, Gingin, Full day  
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