

Western Australian Bird Notes



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(a division of Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union)



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EGG-LAYING IN THE BLUE-BILLED DUCK

Introduction

Eggs of the Blue-billed Duck are sometimes found in the nests of other duck species, especially the Pacific Black Duck, and these other species, especially the Musk Duck, may lay eggs in the nests of the Blue-billed Duck. Blue-billed and Musk Ducks "parasitise" one another, and these exchanges of eggs take place fairly frequently.

Of 50 nests examined by Attiwell *et al.* (1981) (cited in Marchant and Higgins 1990) only one had all Blue-billed Duck's eggs. In fact the species is very casual about laying its eggs in the nests of other species, and in the case of a Pacific Black Duck's nest containing eggs of the Blue-billed Duck, the former is then sitting on and incubating both its own eggs and those of the Blue-billed Duck.

Up to several eggs of the Blue-billed Duck may be found in active nests of the Black Duck.

The Blue-billed Duck either likes laying some of its eggs in active nests of the Black Duck, or it is usurped by the Black Duck. Seyfort (1949) observed a Black Duck egg in a nest of the Blue-billed Duck and Marchant and Higgins (1990) verify that such exchanges of eggs occur frequently between it and other species of ducks and waterfowl. At first usurpation of the Blue-billed Duck by the Black Duck would seem to be the more likely scenario, but nest parasitism is also known in the Tribe Oxyurini

(Van Tyne and Berger 1958; Austin 1975), of which the Blue-billed Duck is a member. Furthermore, its South American relative, the Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* is known to be semi-parasitic and lays some of its eggs in the nests of other species of ducks, as does the Red-headed Duck *Aythya americana* which belongs to the Tribe Aythyine.

Further, the Black-headed Duck *Heteronetta atricapilla*, also of South America and the Tribe Oxyurini, is completely parasitic and lays its eggs both in the nests of other duck species and those of rails, coots, ibis, gulls and others (Van Tyne and Berger 1958; Austin 1975), all of which belong to other Orders of the Aves. After incubation by the various hosts and after drying out and becoming active, the ducklings leave the nests of the various hosts and fend entirely for themselves, the true parent, the Black-headed Duck, being completely indifferent to them.

Observations and discussion

Our observations were made on wild birds in the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary.

We have observed that eggs of the Blue-billed Duck in nests of the Pacific Black Duck will hatch about the same time as those of the latter, and that ducklings of the former will remain in the nest of the Black Duck after it and its brood have left the nest. Frith (1982) states that it is normal for the Blue-billed Duck's ducklings



Black Bittern chicks, Warren River, Manjimup
(see Observations)
Photo courtesy Peter Taylor

to remain in the nest for a day, and that they are then lead away from the nest by the female. In the case of Blue-billed Duck ducklings from a nest of the Black Duck here, we can only guess at their fate if they were not taken by us, but the young are always accompanied by an adult or two.

One would imagine that to successfully parasitise the Black Duck the Blue-billed Duck would breed at the same time as the former. But the published data and our own implies that this is not so, that the latter breeds later than the Black Duck, though there is some overlap of the time of breeding, and the Blue-billed Duck can breed opportunistically, and thus be laying at the same time as the Black Duck, if the latter delays its breeding for a month or two. However it is still less likely that the Black Duck would usurp the Blue-billed Duck from its nests. Hence the mystery, but it is clear from Marchant and Higgins (1990) that these casual exchanges of eggs between the Blue-billed Duck and other species, also make usurpation improbable. Parasitism of this type reaches a climax in the Oxyurini, and here the Blue-billed Duck does not lay in the nests of the Grey Teal or Pink-eared Duck, despite ample opportunity and the protracted breeding times of the latter.

The eggs of the Oxyurini are all comparatively large for ducks their size (Austin 1975; Serventy and Whittell 1976), and relative to body size they are the largest of all Anatids. Attiwell *et al.* (1981), (cited in Marchant and Higgins 1990) suggests that this may be correlated to heat-retention or heat-generation because the eggs receive less incubation. We suggest that the yolk-sacs are unusually large and enable the ducklings to survive initially for a longer period, because they remain longer in the nest (Frith 1982), until they search for food. Marchant and Higgins (1990) state that they do not eat much during their first day.

Both Frith (1982) and Pizzey (1984) state that the Blue-billed Duck occasionally uses the old nests of other waterfowl, as do the Black Duck and Pink-eared Duck (Frith 1977, 1982). Serventy and Whittell (1976) also state that the Blue-billed Duck will use the old nests of the Eurasian Coot and Musk Duck and Marchant and Higgins (1990) repeat that it will use the nests of the coot and other waterfowl. But one must wonder if such usage was what it seemed to observers and not some complication of the behaviour of the Blue-billed Duck.

The Musk Duck also exchanges eggs with the Blue-billed Duck, each alternately being host and parasite. Attiwell *et al.* (1981), (cited in Marchant and Higgins 1990) considers that the parasitism between the two results from crowded conditions, and the conditions in this bird sanctuary are definitely crowded, the Black Duck, Grey Teal, Blue-billed Duck and Pink-eared Duck preferring to nest in nesting drums 63% of the time. There are also instances where it seems that more than Blue-billed Duck lays in the same nest (Singleton *et al.* 2006).

Marchant and Higgins (1990) term this parasitism of the Blue-billed Duck as "facultative parasitism".

Conclusion

The Blue-billed Duck is semi-parasitic and casually lays eggs in the nests of other species of waterbirds. In the example of a Pacific Black Duck's nest containing eggs of the Blue-billed Duck, the former is then sitting on and incubating both its own eggs and those of the latter, which hatch at the same time. The fate of these ducklings is unknown.

Conversely, an egg or two of the Pacific Black Duck may be deposited in a nest of the Blue-billed Duck. Elsewhere, the latter and the Musk Duck also exchange eggs, either one being host and parasite in turn, and the Blue-billed Duck will lay in the nests of other duck species and other waterbirds. And one wonders if the Blue-billed Duck's nesting behaviour is what it seemed to observers.

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Eric Singleton, Peter Singleton and Robert Stranger



A perfect fit!

Cartoon by Penny Towells



Dear Editors (via the Secretary)

Birds Australia WA Congress and Campout, Albany, 18-24 October 2006

I feel compelled to write to congratulate BAWA on the wonderful congress and campout in October 2006 at Albany.

This was my 4th congress/campout in the 10 years I have been in Birds Australia and without doubt it was the best organized and possibly more importantly the best peopled event I have been to. The organizers received their deserved plaudits from the stage but it is the members who opened up their hearts with whom I was most impressed. I found your membership's local knowledge and willingness to assist second to none and in the end most rewarding in that I saw all the South West endemics and all the other birds I was hoping to see.

The special highlights for the 3 week trip for me were:

Sighting a Noisy Scrub-bird at Cheynes Beach under the guidance of Wayne Zadow

Locating Western Fieldwren (*Calamanthus*) at Hopetoun

After 3 days of searching in the Stirling Ranges northwards, locating Western Shrike-tit (male and female) at Dryandra (where Alan Danks said they would be!)

A visit to Penguin Island to see Bridled Tern which I had missed on the reef off Queensland several years ago.

Undoubtedly the pelagic trip was also special and the thought of similar trips from Hillary's or Albany in the future give me reason enough (if I needed it) to return.

Yours in birding

Rob Burgoyne
Birds Australia Regional Organiser
Southern NT

Dear Editors

I've got a reply to one of the articles in the recent WABN about a magpie attacking a tiger snake "Courageous Magpie" by Fred Bondin.

On a recent visit to Herdsman Lake I spotted a tiger snake in the shallow water near the picnic tables on Maurice Hamer Reserve. I sat down on one of the tables to watch the snake and observed it creeping along in the submerged grass towards a few Purple Swampheas. Soon it became apparent that the swampheas were aware of the snake by their wary movements, tail flicking and alarm calls. Then to my surprise a swamphean approached the snake and pecked at it, narrowly avoiding being bitten by the snake, which had taken up a threat position and flattened out its neck. The bird continued to harass the snake as it moved off through the shallows and into a thicket.

I'm guessing the snake was looking for a chick to snack on, but there were no very young birds in the vicinity, just three adult swampheas.

The mouselike creature we found is a Mardo (Yellow-footed Antechinus).

Belinda Forbes
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Lake Gregory

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3—10 June 2007

Black Grasswren Accommodated

2—11 July 2007 and 6—15 August 2007.

Best of the Kimberley

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17 July—1 August 2007

Brilliant birding with experienced guide.
Cruises, 4WD safaris, camping & accommodated trips.
Plus many more exciting trips for 2007/8

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 was outstanding in the Kimberley and offshore territories.

There were many reports of interesting sightings in the metropolitan area included on the web site but nothing that was extraordinary. The highlights were a spate of Tawny-crowned Honeyeater sightings. The number of Square-tailed Kite records is also encouraging. Alfred Cove saw some less common species but the numbers of migratory waders continues to be extremely low compared to only a decade ago.

The outstanding record for the south west was a pair of Black Bitterns successfully breeding on the Warren River. This species is now very rarely reported in the south west. Lake McLarty was outstanding in November but it was dry before Christmas. A Ringed Plover seen near Preston Beach is only the second record for Western Australia. A Masked Lapwing at Busselton continues the increasing number of records of this species in the south west. A Black Kite near Albany is outside its normal range. A Little Button-quail found at Dryandra is a species seldom reported in the south west.

The Kimberley had another outstanding period. A Nordmann's Greenshank photographed on 80 Mile Beach is the first documented record for Australia. An Arctic Warbler photographed at



Black Bittern, Warren River
Photo courtesy Peter Taylor

Anna Plains Station is the second record for mainland Australia. Another Grey Wagtail was seen near the Broome Bird Observatory. A Franklin's Gull in Broome continues the trend of at least one record in WA for a number of years. The flock of Fork-tailed Swifts seen in Broome on New Year's Day is the largest for many years.

The annual trip to Ashmore Reef again showed that Bulwer's Petrel, Tahiti Petrel, Matsudaira's Storm-Petrel and Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel are regular occurrences in October. The highlights were further records of Asian Brown Flycatcher, Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler and Oriental Reed-warbler seen the previous year.

Christmas Island saw an influx of at least three (may be as many as seven) individual Blue & White Flycatchers in December. They were all first year birds. There have only been two previous records on Christmas Island, plus a bird at the Broome Bird Observatory in 2003 and a beach washed bird earlier in the Pilbara. Another Common Kingfisher was seen on Christmas Island. There was a second record of Grey Wagtail on Cocos Island, and the report of a small flock of possible Saunderson's Terns on South Island. The photographs are probably not conclusive as they are difficult to distinguish from Little Tern except in breeding plumage.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Royal Spoonbill – 1, 7/01/07, Bridgewater Lakes (Erskine) – RRD *et al.* (unusual in the south west; photograph available)

Spotted Harrier – 1, 02/10/06, Dampier Drive (Golden Bay) – MN (unusual on the Swan Coastal Plain)

Fork-tailed Swift – 15+, 28/01/07, Hilarion Road (Duncraig) – CN (uncommon in the south west)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Wandering Albatross – 1 (beach washed), 16/01/07, William Bay NP (Denmark) – LS (uncommon in WA; photograph available)

BLACK BITTERN – nest (3 eggs), 15/11/06, Warren River (Manjimup) – LF, PT * nest (3 chicks), 26/11/06 to 13/12/06, Warren River (Manjimup) – PT (very rarely reported in the south west; see photographs in this issue)

Black Kite – 1, 13/01/07, Lake Powell NR (Albany) – JM, RG, MM (very uncommon in the south west)

Little Button-quail – 1 (male), 15/12/06, Attunga Road, Dryandra SF (Cuballing) – SvA (uncommon in the south west; caught then released)

Pectoral Sandpiper – 7, 19/11/06, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high count)

Red-necked Avocet – 5000, 19/11/06, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MC (high count)

Ringed Plover – 1, 3-4/02/07, Martin's Tank (Warroona) – BR, AC (2nd record for WA; very good photographs)

Inland Dotterel – 2, 08/10/06, Wandana Road / Coomara Road (Chapman Valley) – RGB (uncommon in the south west)

Masked Lapwing – 1 (subspecies *novaehollandiae*), 20/11/06,

Elmore Street sand bar (Busselton)
– SA (uncommon in the south
west)

Arctic Tern – 1, 14/11/06, Geraldton
Boat Harbour (Geraldton) – RC
(rare in WA; photographs
available)

Budgerigar – 6, 2/11/06, Hassell
Beach Track (Albany) – AFB
(uncommon in the south west)

Fork-tailed Swift – 15, 26/11/06,
Gregory (Northampton) – CHE *
25, 27/11/06, Gregory
(Northampton) – CHE * 1,
28/11/06, Gregory (Northampton)
– CHE (uncommon in the south
west)

ARID ZONE

Asian Dowitcher – 1, 22/09/06, Boat
Harbour (Carnarvon) – LG (rare
south of the Pilbara)

Common Redshank – 1 juvenile,
7/10/06, Boat Harbour (Carnarvon)
– LG (rare south of the Kimberley)

Red-necked Phalarope – 17, 5/10/06,
Lake Macleod north ponds
(Carnarvon) – LG (rare south of the
Pilbara)

KIMBERLEY

Garganey – 1, 28/11/06, Lake
Campion (Broome) – CH, AB
(uncommon in WA)

Streaked Shearwater – 1, 3/01/07,
Broome port (Broome) – AB
(unusual in the West Kimberley)

Red-backed Button-quail – 1,
16/11/06, Anna Plains Station
(Broome) – FO *et al.* (south of
normal range)

NORDMANN'S GREENSHANK – 1,
2/12/06, 80 Mile Beach (Broome) –
AB, TK (1st documented record for
Australia; photographs available)

Franklin's Gull – 1, 9/01/07, Sewage
Ponds (Broome) – AB (rare in WA;
photographs available)

Bridled Tern – 250, 3/01/07, Broome
port (Broome) – AB (high count
inshore)

Common Noddy – 600, 3/01/07,
Broome port (Broome) – AB (high
count inshore)

Fork-tailed Swift – 6000, 1/01/07,
Broome (Broome) – AB (very high
count)

GREY WAGTAIL – 1, 20/12/06,
Crab Creek Road (Broome) – LB
(rare in WA)

ARCTIC WARBLER – 1, 17-
20/11/06, Anna Plains Station
(Broome) – RR, AWSG, AB (2nd
record for mainland Australia; see
photograph in this issue)

ASHMORE REEF

Oriental Reed-warbler – 1, 27/10/06,
Middle Island – GS *et al.* * 1,
28/10/06, West Island, GL *et al.*
(rare in Australia; see photograph
in this issue)

MIDDENDORFF'S

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER –
1, 27-28/10/06, West Island, TP *et*
al. (2nd record for Australia;
photographs)

ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER –
1, 25-28/10/06, West Island, MCA
et al. (2nd record for Australia; see
photograph in this issue)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Oriental Cuckoo – 1, 18/12/06,
Winifred Beach turnoff – DH *et al.*
(rare on Christmas Island)

COMMON KINGFISHER – 1,
7/12/06, Flying Fish Cove – AR *et*
al. (rare on Christmas Island)

Sacred Kingfisher – 1, 17/12/06, Ethel
Beach – AR *et al.* (uncommon on
Christmas Island)

BLUE & WHITE FLYCATCHER –
1 (1st winter male), 2/12/06, near
Grant's Well – AR *et al.* * 1 (1st
winter male), 03/12/06, Sports
Ground – AR *et al.* * 1 (1st winter
female), 16/12/06, Winifred Beach
turnoff, DH *et al.* * 1 (1st winter
male), 18/12/06, Winifred Beach
turnoff – DH *et al.* (rare on
Christmas Island)

COCOS ISLANDS

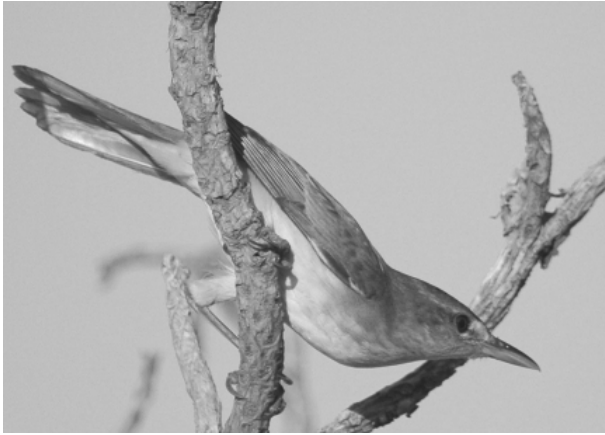
Grey Wagtail – 1, 23/11/06, Bechat
Besar – IM (2nd record for Cocos)



Asian Brown Flycatcher, Ashmore
Reef, 28 Oct 2006
Photo courtesy Mike Carter

OBSERVERS

AB = Adrian Boyle
AC = Alan Collins
AFB = Anne & Fred Bondin
AR = Alan Rogers (NSW)
AWSG = Australasian Wader Study
Group
BR = Bill Russell
CH = Chris Hassell
CHE = Colin Heap
CN = Clive Nealon
DH = Dion Hobcroft (NSW)
DHe = David Henderson
EBO = Eyre Bird Observatory
FO = Frank O'Connor
GL = Gil Langfield (Vic)
GS = George Swann
HF = Helen Frederiksen
IM = Ian McAllan (Vic)
JM = Judy McKinnon
LB = Loyd Berry
LF = Lee Fontanini
LG = Les George
LS = Libby Sandiford
MC = Michael Craig
MCA = Mike Carter (Vic)
MM = Michael Morcombe
MN = Mark Newman
PT = Peter Taylor
RC = Rory Chapple
RD = Rob Davis
RG = Ray Garstone
RGB = Ruth & Geoff Byrne
RR = Rob Robinson (UK)
RRD = Ron Dibbens
SA = Sue Abbotts
SvA = Sean van Alphen
TK = Tony Kirkby
TP = Tony Palliser (NSW)



Oriental Reed-warbler, Ashmore Reef, 28 Oct 2006
Photo courtesy Mike Carter



Lunch, Augusta campout (see Excursions).
Photo courtesy Andrew Hobbs



Birds Australia WA Inc reports



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to what is shaping up to be another successful year for Birds Australia WA. I hope you have all enjoyed a great break both consuming festive birds and doing some watching of native birds! I trust you are all refreshed and energised for the year ahead.

I will be running for my final year as chair at the AGM. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with my committee and our sub-committees this year and would like to thank each and every one of you for the efforts you have put in that enable us to achieve so much for birds and bird conservation.

The dedication and commitment of our members was exemplified last year in a strategic forum convened by the executive committee with 40 key individuals and sub-committee members. The purpose of this forum was to discuss a number of aspects of BAWA including our overall functions, objectives and internal and external relationships. The executive committee started 2007 with a planning workshop to draw out the major themes arising from the forum, and to start putting a management plan in place to implement necessary reforms, policies and procedures. While that all sounds terribly bureaucratic, it has been an extremely worthwhile exercise that has identified a number of strengths in our organisation as well as a number of areas that need improvement. This has catalysed a number of actions and the positive energy and goodwill of all involved has been tremendous. I would like to thank you all for your efforts. We will provide a full report on the outcomes of the forum in due course both in WABN and in meetings. There is still an opportunity for

the membership to be involved and have your say. We invite any members with suggestions for improvement or comments of any sort, to send them to Darryl James via the office or email <dfjames@ca.com.au>.

One of the preliminary outcomes of the forum has been to consolidate my view that Birds Australia is at its core, an organisation focused on the conservation of our native birds and their habitats. Many respondents emphasised the importance of our conservation and research committee and felt that as an organisation we needed to be more responsive and proactive on a range of conservation issues. This will certainly be a focus of the organisation in the coming year and we will implement a range of measures to strengthen our role in this area.

With the continuation of our cross-regional Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project, the initiation of our new Carnaby's South Coast Project, an exciting new Northern Ground Parrot project and continued research, public education and media appearances, BAWA is set for another big year in bird conservation. The culmination of this year will be the Australasian Ornithological Conference that BAWA is hosting. A particular focus of this conference will be the impacts of climate change on our birds, a topic on everyone's minds, and one that will have profound implications for the future of our birds. On the bright side, our grandchildren may well see Black and Pied Honeyeaters on their future bird watching excursions around Perth, if a drying climate means an influx of previously arid zone species as the habitat changes!

Anyway, until next time, happy birding.

Robert Davis

CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE (CRC), ANNUAL REPORT 2006

The CRC has been busy over the last few months considering a wide range of important issues.

At present part of the committee is working towards completing a comprehensive list of IBAs (Important Bird Areas) for Western Australia. The designation of areas as IBAs is an internationally recognised way of indicating their importance for one or more threatened or endangered bird species, and will help in efforts to conserve them. There are specific criteria for determining whether an area qualifies as an IBA and this depends upon specific knowledge of the numbers and types of birds. For many areas the information is known, though often not easily available. Other cases may even rely on gathering more specific information about the area.

Research and conservation projects are an important part of BAWA's activities and CRC responsibilities. Thus the committee has reviewed several research projects including the Station Survey Project and the ongoing Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Projects, provided advice to other currently operating projects and approved the commencement of a Western Ground Parrot Project.

Several development proposals have been reviewed for their impact on birds, in particular on Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos, on the Swan Coastal Plain. In addition we have provided advice to a number of individuals and groups on various aspects of bird research and conservation.

All in all, just some of the issues dealt with in a typical period for the CRC.

Andrew Hobbs

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE, ANNUAL REPORT 2006

As another busy year draws to its conclusion the Community Education Sub-committee would like to thank the Executive Committee for their support. We have been very aware that we are not operating in isolation but have had the committee solidly behind us in all the facets of our work. Thank you.

Our involvement with schools this year has been rather less than in previous years and we are working at addressing the problem in 2007. We visited six schools and worked with 375 students plus teachers and some parents. BAWA members were involved on 17 occasions. We are trying to find a schools officer, preferably an ex-teacher to visit about 20 schools and talk to the principal about visits from BAWA during the year. We also see real benefits in involving parents on these occasions.

We conducted ten bird identification classes during the year involving 281 members of the public with our members involved 36 times. These are proving to be very successful and have helped to boost our membership to over a thousand. Already next year we are committed to seven classes. This will include two classes for more advanced members and will feature Bird Calls, Raptor ID, the Fairy-wrens, Thornbills

and Waders. The other five classes will be done in co-operation with two outside organisations, the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council and Swan Regional Council under the auspices of DEC. We took ten walks with 140 participants involving members 14 times.

There were 15 displays at various places mainly in the metropolitan area but also some country areas. These were generally notable as opportunities to talk to the public and we had converse with some thousands of people. Exact or even approximate numbers are impossible to gauge. They were also an opportunity to improve our selling techniques and we sold over three thousand dollars worth of cards, books, DVDs and videos. The official figure stands at \$3,127.60 with some more to come. This does include generally unsolicited donation. Although we regard this area as somewhat extraneous to our usual activities, it is the most we have raised and is a pleasing result. The sale of field guides is definitely something of real value.

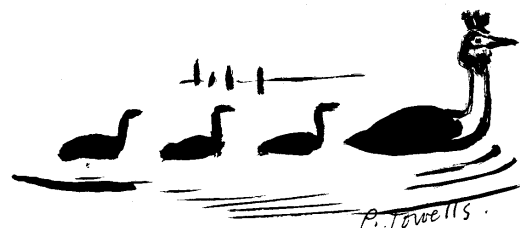
Our collection of laminated pictures of Australian birds continues to grow, although there are a number of notable absentees. This is also true of our slide collection but as the supply of digital images increases (2700 at last count) the use of slides will probably diminish and Power Point presentations increase. We are beginning to look at the use of posters for displays and are fortunate in having Merrian Kuerschner to work in this field. We had hoped to have short paragraphs of interesting information for all WA birds by now but have managed to lose over one hundred, so we have a long way to go.

The Email news has been running for over a year now and seems to be a success but feedback is sparse. We note that less than half the membership is receiving these emails because of a lack of recorded addresses. We also did a number of five minute segments in the monthly meetings and these seemed to have been well accepted.

We are heartened by the support of the membership and they are getting more involved in taking classes, talking to groups and helping with displays but as we seek to increase our involvement with schools and also among handicapped groups in our society we will need a) some more committee members; b) members who will commit to doing one or more tasks during the year; c) members willing to do some training if our dream of working with handicapped groups bears fruit.

In the meantime we're having fun and hope you are as well.

Brice Wells
Chairman



Grebes growing gracefully, Herdsman Lake, 27 Dec 2006.
Drawing by Penny Towells

SIGHTING OF COLOUR BANDED HOODED PLOVER



Peel Development Commission
Government of Western Australia



Birds Australia WA has been conducting research into the distribution and movement of the Hooded Plover population that resides in Yalgorup National Park. Part of that research has involved colour banding local Hooded Plovers.

Their movements were tracked within Yalgorup National Park and the expectation was that some sightings would be reported from outside the Park confirming dispersal routes. In total 27 Hooded Plover were colour banded in Yalgorup National Park from 2 February 2002 till 15 May 2004.

As the years went by Hooded Plover movement within the park was successfully monitored however reports from outside the Park remained elusive.

Then a message came through from David Secomb with the exciting news that during the BAWA Australia Day (27 January 2007) campout at Woodanilling a colour banded Hooded Plover was sighted. It was sighted at Lake Norring about 16 km SSW of Wagin.

The Hooded Plover had a red band over a metal band on the left leg and a red band on the right leg. It is possible one colour band had fallen off as there should have been two colour bands on the right leg. The distance covered from Yalgorup National Park to Lake Norring is around 160 km. Lake Norring at the time of the sighting was about half full of water.

Only four lakes in the locality had enough water to attract birds, the others were dry or almost so. The colour banded Hooded Plover was still present at Lake Norring on Sunday 18 February 2007 when the annual Hooded Plover survey was held. This information confirms that Hooded Plover move at least from Yalgorup National Park to inland salt lakes near Wagin.

Anyone visiting inland salt lakes, particularly the smaller salt lakes around Cranbrook, Wagin, Katanning, Dumbleyung and the Stirling Ranges, is asked to monitor Hooded Plover legs closely, with a scope, for colour bands.

All birds banded had one metal band and three colour bands. The colours used were red, white, yellow, orange and purple.

The Hooded Plover research in Yalgorup National Park is funded by the Peel Development Commission and their support is acknowledged.

Marcus Singor

CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO RECOVERY PROJECT



Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos are a well known sight across the South West of Western Australia as they migrate between nesting and non-nesting habitat. These majestic birds are endangered as they have suffered a 50% population decrease over the last 50 years, predominately due to habitat loss.

Birds Australia has coordinated a Regional Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project since 2001, focusing on raising awareness, identifying and monitoring nesting sites and improving nesting and feeding habitat within the Northern Agricultural Region.

In 2006 the Birds Australia Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project was extended to the South Coast with funding from South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team (SCRIPT) and assistance from Greening Australia and the Department of Environment and Conservation. The project covers the SCRIPT NRM region which extends from Walpole in the west, to east of Esperance and north to the Lake Gilmore area, Lake King and Broomehill.

The South Coast Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project aims to raise awareness about the plight of the endangered Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, identify and conserve important nesting and associated feeding areas and to rehabilitate and fence key areas on private properties. Hollow repair and hollow competitor control will also be carried out along with cataloguing food and nesting tree species.

Initial findings have suggested the following:

- Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos on the South Coast may nest in coastal and inland woodlands, unlike the northern birds that mainly nest inland. The challenge here is to identify the main tree species used for nesting and their availability as a resource.
- Suitable hollows are generally in short supply, and further study will have to be carried out to see if the associated feeding areas are sufficiently close or not.
- Feral bees are a major competitor for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo nesting hollows, and once eradicated leave the hollow unsuitable for the cockatoos due to wax hive remnants. It is unknown whether Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos will re-use the hollow at all after a bee nesting attempt.

Unlike in the Northern Agricultural Region, on the south coast there has been little Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo research conducted. A few of the challenges faced include:

- Identification of nesting habitat from the north of Jerramungup to Salmon Gums in the east.
- Identification of nesting and feeding species as it is suspected these will differ from the species used by northern Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos.

- Differentiating between Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo and Baudin's Black-Cockatoo in the areas where their ranges overlap (from Albany to Walpole, and north to Cranbrook). The two species are virtually identical, differing only in their call, beak length and feeding habits.

The South Coast Project Officer is based in Albany and working throughout the South Coast NRM Region, if you have any information, particularly regarding potential nesting sites, or would like to volunteer in the project, please contact Raana Scott, South Coast Project Officer, email: <r.scott@birdsaustralia.com.au> or ph: 9842 0011.

**Raana Scott – South Coast Project Officer
and Helen Pitman –Regional Coordinator**

BRINGING CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO BACK FROM THE EDGE IN THE AVON



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Exciting plans are well underway to carry out Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo recovery initiatives in the Avon River Basin.

As part of the Avon Catchment Council's (ACC) Natural Resource Management Strategy 2005, the Department of Environment and Conservation and WWF-Australia are working together to deliver 'Back from the Edge', a project focused on the recovery of threatened species and natural ecological communities most at risk in the in the Avon River Basin (ARB).

With investment from the Australian and West Australian Governments through the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, recovery of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo will form part of 'Back from the Edge'. This project will complement the existing works already undertaken by the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project, Birds Australia WA and other local community groups.

The project will initially focus on identifying and monitoring key feeding and nesting sites of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo within the ARB. WWF-Australia and DEC will then work with the community to carry out on-ground activities such as revegetation, fencing and hollow repairs to preserve these sites.

Conservation activities for other near threatened Wheatbelt birds such as the Bush Stone-Curlew, Western Rosella and Western Shrike-tit will also be incorporated into the project to enforce the message of 'conservation before recovery'.

There will be plenty of great opportunities to get involved and anyone interested can contact Gen Farrelly, Avon Community Engagement Project on Ph: 98819213, Mob: 0429202753 or E-mail :<gfarrelly@wwf.org.au>.

**Gen Farrelly
Avon Community Engagement Project Officer
WWF-Australia**

NEW SEARCH FOR WESTERN GROUND PARROTS



There have been many searches for the elusive and critically endangered Western Ground Parrot. In 2007, thanks to an anonymous donor, a different locality will be the focus of a search. Although all known Western Ground Parrot locations are on the south coast, east of Albany, this search will be to the north of Perth. The base will be Jurien Bay.

Why search there?

Old records suggest that the Western Ground Parrot did extend along the coastal plain northwards from Perth. A collection was made at Wongan Hills and there are old records from Perth, Badgingarra to Jurien Bay, Dongara and Watheroo. Although any population that was in these places was severely depleted as early as 1890, there has never been a thorough search in suitable remnant bushland within this part of the historic range.

In 1984, a very brief survey was made in two locations in promising habitat near Cervantes and south of Badgingarra. Five of the total of seven listening points were surveyed once only in poor conditions, and the other two in good conditions. All results were negative.

Although development is occurring in the Hill river area, there is a lot of reserve land bounded by Jurien, Cervantes and Badgingarra.

Is there any hope of a positive result?

Western Ground Parrots are extremely cryptic and it is possible to overlook them. This difficulty is exacerbated when the population is very small.

A record from the Hill River mouth in 2001 was very interesting in that the bird seen seemed more likely to have been a Ground Parrot than any other species. Although the habitat at that site is not ideal for a Western Ground Parrot to live full time, it is very like places that dispersing Eastern Ground Parrots have been known to visit.

The project

This search is what could be a last ditch effort to attempt to determine whether Ground Parrots have persisted in the northern part of their range.

Volunteers will be sought and training will be provided. This will include a survey pack which will be sent before the survey.

The project will be run in very close co-operation with DEC, Jurien Office.

The survey

The first survey period is set for 20 to 29 April, inclusive. It covers two weekends. It is hoped to attract some short-term volunteers who won't be able to come for the full period.

A second and final (for this project) survey period is yet to be arranged.

Evaluation of success

Volunteers are essential for the success of the project. The project will be deemed successful if a significant area of

potential habitat for Western Ground Parrots has been identified and mapped in the northern sandplain heathland and a significant subset between Cervantes, Jurien and Badgingarra has been surveyed in good conditions by people adequately trained to detect Western Ground Parrots.

Contact: Brenda Newbey, project co-ordinator. 9337 5673; email: <wgparrot@westnet.com.au>.

FIRE IN THE FITZ — WESTERN GROUND PARROT HABITAT BURNS IN WILDFIRE



Department of
Environment and
Conservation



South Coast Regional
Initiative Planning Team



Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Help Australia

On 16 November 2006 a lightning strike ignited a wildfire in the Fitzgerald River National Park within just a couple kilometres of a sub-population of the critically endangered Western Ground Parrot (WGP). Fire crews were on-site that day in an attempt to contain the fire at its origin. Access to the site was limited and the terrain rugged. By the time I arrived at midday on the 17th, the fire had burnt north-eastward into the southern end of the WGP habitat. Water bombers were actively dropping on the fire and a spotter plane circled above. At 1400 it looked like the fire crews might be able to track the fire in a NW direction, possibly saving some of the 50+ year old mallee/heath WGP habitat. Unfortunately, conditions deteriorated quickly as strong south-westerly winds picked up and blew the fire quickly northward, burning all the old growth vegetation along the western side of the north/south running road which bisects this population of WGP.

All this was happening at the same time that another larger fire was burning in the Cocanarup area along the South Coast Highway and posing a potential threat to Ravensthorpe town site. Resources were therefore very precious and spread thin. The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) incident controller on-site and the fire crews (including air support) should be commended on their efforts to save the WGP habitat despite the trying conditions. It is through their efforts that the critical habitat on the eastern side of the road was untouched by fire, as it could have easily jumped the track if they had not been there to slow its progress.

At 1630, while observing the fire front as it moved steadily northward, I watched a WGP walk out of the heath onto the gravel road approximately 50 m ahead of the flames in a swirling cloud of grey smoke. It hesitated in the centre of the road and turned around as if to walk back to where it had come from, but then turned and quickly ran across to the eastern side of the road and disappeared into the vegetation. We also observed dozens of small mammals (mostly Honey Possums), a Bearded Dragon and a Bardick snake scurry across the road to the unburnt east side.

At 1830, we walked around in the burnt area near some permanent WGP listening sites and noted numerous *Hakea*

and *Banksia* species with seed pods split open. The fire appeared to have burnt hottest in the denser mallee thickets but only moderately hot elsewhere, allowing most seeds to withstand the burn. We listened for WGPs on the unburnt eastern side of the road from sunset at 1845 to 1900 but did not hear any WGPs calling.

It was difficult to watch such valuable habitat go up in flames. However, it seems like this was inevitable with such heavy fuel loads there. Our last survey effort of this area was in March 2006 and at that time we found that most WGP activity was on the east side of the road which escaped the fire. Judging by breeding observations elsewhere in the park, any young should have fledged by November and would have been as capable of escaping the fire as the adults. This fire represents yet another opportunity to learn more about the WGP and its relationship to its fire prone habitat. With the permanent listening sites and vegetation plots already in place, we will be able to continue monitoring any recolonisation by WGPs into the burnt area, just as was done on the eastern side of the road after the 1989 and 1998 fires which burned that side.

The fire was contained on the 18th and fire crews remained on site through the 20th to tend any flare ups and mop up the burn area.

For information or if you'd like to assist the recovery project, please contact: Mike Barth — Project Leader; phone (08) 9842 4519 or e-mail: <michael.barth@dec.wa.gov.au>.

The Western Ground Parrot Recovery Project is funded by SCRIPT (South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team) through the Australian and State Government support of the Natural Heritage Trust and National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

Mike Barth



Fire heading into Ground Parrot habitat in Fitzgerald River National Park, November 2006
Photo courtesy Dave Chemello

**PUBLICITY AND EDUCATION – JUDY BLYTH'S
'ANECDOTE' FOR BAWA MEETING, 24 JULY 2006**

When Darryl asked me a few days ago if I could do this talk, I agreed — but asked what topic she could suggest. Thinking of my involvement in the peace movement I suppose, she offered “Birds and Peace”. I thought of the poor old peace dove, battered and bloodied in today’s world ...NOT a good topic at all. Then, what about “Birds and War”? Maybe I could talk about the demilitarised zone between the two Koreas where landmines have been sown to keep out soldiers and vehicles. The absence of humans has meant that birds have thrived there — but I could hardly make five minutes out of that.

So I thought instead I’d talk about my old job with Birds Australia (WA) (or RAOU as it was when I started) as Publicity/Education person for eight or nine years. Allan Jones had been doing it, along with 101 other things for our group — so I agreed to take on that bit. There were four basic components — Media, Displays and Trading Table, Public Walks and Talks, and Schools Liaison.

Allan immediately coached me in how-to-do-media by providing a lengthy list of print media contacts, a very important means of letting the public know when we were offering free bird walks and so on.

Allan had started a resource file of bird photos for displays, and I simply built that up further, with many thanks to numerous members who supplied me with wonderful bird photos from their old calendars. For each photo, I made a small accompanying label showing the common, and Latinised, name of that bird plus an Australian map with red to indicate its distribution. These bits, plus large headings for thematic displays and a few simple interpretive statements, all had to be laminated, ‘velcro-ed’ and stored in order in Perry House’s old garage when not in use.

I compiled many displays starting with ‘Threatened Birds of WA’, and then ‘How to Attract Birds to Your Garden’. These were followed by many others like ‘Enraptured with Raptors’, ‘Parenting in the Bird World’, ‘Honeyeaters of Australia’, ‘Transequatorial Waders’ (I did an accompanying brochure for that one after a request by dear old Bryan Barrett who was thinking hard about how to protect Alfred Cove’s annual avian visitors). I can say that of all the many displays, the one that was most requested was ‘Birds of Your Local Area’. This of course needed to be compiled separately for each area and the database for WA birds was invaluable for that. I remember George Agar faithfully entering onto the office computer piles of data from checklist cards from members.

The thematic displays turned up in local libraries, shopping malls, hospital corridors and of course schools — and formed the backdrop to our trading table at many community events like Spring Fling — and also around the veranda of Perry House during Bird Week when we had Open House.

I had to fill out the roster for trading table and bird walk events — I remember so often standing out the front at monthly meetings asking for those volunteers. Members really got a lot out of helping on those occasions which were opportunities to share with the public their interest and passion for birdwatching and conservation. Quite often new members were recruited this way.

Public requests for bird talks would be referred to me by our office ‘vollies’. Clive Napier was magnificent in taking on most of the talks to adult groups — and I only had to fill in gaps when he and Wendy were away. One such request, and a very challenging one, came from the Institute of the Blind in Maylands! For this, I recorded calls of local wetlands birds (from the BOCA tapes) and described the birds as we listened. I was even asked to mention their colours and to bring along BIG photos of the birds to be passed around and peered at closely by those who had partial vision. There were many great smiles as they linked the familiar calls with Pacific Black Ducks, Darters and so on.

For me, the best bit of my Birds Australia (WA) job was the interaction with primary school kids. I’d take around a thematic display requested by the teacher or school’s librarian — and usually that would be borrowed for some time for children’s bird projects. There were many lively sessions as I showed the children the photos telling them something about each bird, and of course the children eagerly relating stories of their own bird experiences. If the children were aged eight plus, always a suitcase full of Birds Australia’s binoculars would accompany my visit and we would first have a session on how to use them — including a warning to little boys not to unscrew anything! Then we’d be off — around the school campus — or some local bush remnant or lake — to watch anything feathered. It was a great joy to be with a child in that moment when the binoculars really started to WORK and the child would see for the first time the lustrous eyes of a Welcome Swallow gathering mud for its nest, or the Red Wattlebird quaking with its raucous call or whatever.

Eventually I had to give up my Birds Australia (WA) job because my work with Medical Association for Prevention of War just became too time-consuming. I am still so grateful to Rob Mather for taking over curating the Resource Library with all the display materials. As a retired geologist, he had soon revolutionised my old system (comprising several battered old expandable cardboard files). In new boxes, each component stood to attention so it all looked like a regiment of well-ordered soldiers. I was also most grateful to Brice Wells who took on the Displays and Education side. He just hit the deck running, knowing instinctively what to do — and he’s still doing it. However probably like me, he’ll be unable to do it forever. Maybe sometime down the track, YOU might like to take on this interesting job!

Judy Blyth

BLACK-WINGED STILTS BREED AT BLUE GUM LAKE

Although I have frequently seen juvenile Black-winged Stilts at Blue Gum Lake in Mt Pleasant during the ten years I have been observing the birds there, I have never seen them breed and can find no record of them having done so.

On 7 November 2006 I noticed a Black-winged Stilt sitting in the remains of a tree-stump at the southern end of Blue Gum Lake. As I watched, she stood up and I could see at least two eggs in the hollow. Over the next few weeks I checked on her nearly every day; when she began sitting, this end of the lake was almost dry and she was surrounded by a sea of mud. By the beginning of December she was in the middle of a meadow of grass and other weeds and another Black-winged Stilt, presumably her mate, was always feeding nearby. Late in the afternoon of the third of December the nest was empty and both the stilts were calling incessantly some distance away. At first I couldn't identify the cause of their agitation, then my daughter pointed out that, following closely behind one of the adults, were four tiny grey-brown balls of fluff on matchstick legs.

Despite my fears of predation by Purple Swamphens, tortoises, Australian Ravens and domestic animals, all four youngsters have survived to date. The family soon moved to the northern end of the lake where there is still some water remaining and the young ones ventured further and further away from their parents although these were always on the look-out and chased away any ibis or Pacific Black Duck that happened to come too close. Approaching Christmas, the young ones had developed white breasts and grey backs and with the New Year they were taking short flights. When fire destroyed almost all the bushland on the eastern side of the lake on Boxing Day afternoon, I found the family still feeding around the edge of the water under a pall of smoke.

Although three of the young ones usually feed fairly closely together, the fourth is a loner, often on the opposite side of the lake to its siblings. On a couple of occasions I have seen one of the adults approach it in an aggressive manner and chase it a short distance, however there is usually one of the adults keeping watch not far away from it. Today, 29 January, although the water level is still going down, all six Black-winged Stilts are still feeding on the mud around the water's edge.

Valerie Hemsley



Black-winged Stilt at Blue Gum Lake
Photo courtesy Wynton Maddeford

BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL BEHAVIOUR

It can take some deliberation as to which of my many haunts I should go birding in, as it has been so dry that both bird numbers and diversity are lower than otherwise might be. I decided to go inland to one of the closer pools in the

Gascoyne River and, as this country is under pastoral lease, permission should always be sought before entering.

Rocky Pool, 40 km inland is the exception. Water draws both birds and beast together in greater numbers during dry times and the surroundings are rarely a pretty sight. The earth becomes powdered from the many feet coming for water and most vegetation is heavily grazed, not nearly ideal habitat but much birdlife still persists. Diversity is diminished though — only 29 species were seen while in the area,

with Little Corellas numbering in the hundreds.

Of those more dependant on water were White-faced Heron, Common Greenshank, Grey Teal, Common Sandpiper and Black-fronted Dotterel. I had to walk around to the northern side of this pool in order to ascertain numbers of Black-fronted Dotterels. I record all numbers of the birds I see and dotterels can be difficult to pick out at a distance, and I always try to check for leg flags on all migratory waders, in this instance, the Common Sandpiper.

While looking at the dotterels I noted that one had what appeared to be a maggot in its bill. There was a carcass of a young Emu close by and I guessed that it had come from here.

I went over to investigate and though nothing was seen I was sure that this was the source. I sat on the river sands some distance away to watch. As soon as I was sufficient distance away a number of birds returned and before much time had lapsed I saw the first take a pale object from the damp sand and run with it to the waters edge. Not all foraging could be seen as it was done on the far side of the carcass but I knew when something had been located as each bird made off toward the water or, on some occasions, just moved away a short distance. I believe that both maggot and perhaps pupae were being taken as on many occasions the



Dotterel feeding.
Photo courtesy Les George

prize looked smaller and more rounded, perhaps the larvae of a different insect.

Of the birds that had moved closer to this area, only two seemed to be feeding on this resource, both sub-adults, one with a slightly less full breast band. Then an adult appeared and drove off the bird with the fuller breast band. Whether hungry or determined this young bird returned many times and was driven off repeatedly. Sometimes it was chased on foot; on other occasions, it made a short distance flight. When approached on foot by the adult the young bird would face the water side-on to its attacker and slightly drop its left wing, the adult would stand parallel to the young bird at varying distances but not closer than 1.5 m. All the time this was going on the other sub-adult was allowed to feed freely. A small number of sheep came to drink, interrupting the stand off momentarily and the young bird located a food item, then the quarrel continued. Then for reasons unknown the adult allowed the young bird back, and a number of times this bird took food. Had the adult relented or was it otherwise distracted? Whatever the reason, this quarrelling resumed and on one occasion the two birds clashed head on in mid air, the adult with feather down in bill. This did not deter the youngster and the joust continued.

On occasions a Common Sandpiper was allowed to cross this feeding area, and it also made some forays around this carcass and located food items that it swallowed on the spot. It didn't seem as adept at locating larvae as the dotterels, although on some occasions I couldn't see what it had taken. It may not have presented much competition as it did most foraging at waters edge.

There was a bit of a lull after a time, and all three dotterels that actively fed in this area began preening, the evicted still at a distance. I had also noted that the adult had not taken as many food items as either of the young birds. Was this because the young birds required a higher intake? They were still to gain full adult plumage. Was it because the adult was so intent on driving off the other young bird? This youngster was very determined, preening halted and the duel began again. On one occasion the adult approached on the right hand side of the young bird and I noticed the same drooped wing, but this time on its right hand side. This seemed to be held as might a shield; it certainly wasn't a sign of submission.

Why was one youngster allowed to feed and the other driven off? I concluded that one driven off may have been from a different family group, as there were 10 present, suggesting two family groups. Perhaps it was an adult male pursuing a young male. I watched for an hour before discomfort from sitting on the sand got the better of me.

I still had to marvel at nature. It was saddening to see that a young Emu had died, probably from starvation, but this in turn had provided sustenance for others. I had seen corvids, a Wedge-tailed Eagle, Whistling Kite and Little Eagle in the area, and all could have fed from this bird before it reached the current state of decay. Now that insects had invaded to clean up the remains, they too become a food resource. I left here feeling strangely contented.

Les George

RUFIOUS TREECREEPERS AND A PYTHON

We were at our farm Gravelotte in December when I heard the Rufous Treecreepers making a very big noise that reminded me of the calls birds and our monkeys used to make when they spotted a snake. We have never seen a snake on the farm so far but I had a look and there was a snake hanging out of a hole half way up a Powderbark Wandoo tree and the Rufous Treecreepers were going crazy. It was hanging half in and half out of the hole, was very thin, except the bulge where it was hanging out of the hole. I could see it was a python and I think it is a Stimsons Python but am not sure. I watched for quite a while and it didn't move. I went into the house to put something down and when I came out it had gone and I never saw it again. I was thrilled as any new wildlife is welcome. I hope this will interest members as it did me and I am thrilled I got the photo.

Since then a pair of Collared Sparrowhawks have been hanging around the house and in the trees in front and whistling all the time. I hope they are nesting close by. I have never seen them there before.

Eggy Boggs



The treecreepers and a python.

Photos courtesy Eggy Boggs

GULLS AND TERNS AT QUOBBA

I have been contemplating Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in what I think of as "my patch", the rather extensive Gascoyne region. There are no doubt many birders who pass through this region, surveying its birdlife and perhaps completing Atlas forms but many areas still remain data deficient. This is one of the stumbling blocks I have come up against when considering IBAs.

One area that may be worthy of nomination is Point Quobba, an area popular to tourist and locals alike for fishing and recreation and better known to many as "the Blowholes". There is a small island off this point that often is used as a roosting area for many gulls and terns and has even been utilised as a breeding site by Crested Terns and to a lesser extent by Roseate Terns. It was for Roseate Terns that I believe this area may be important, as I have seen large numbers of them here on a number of occasions. On 22 March 2004, Tony Kirkby, Chris Hassell and I estimated there to be 10 000 birds and on the following day, Tony and Chris estimated perhaps as many as 15 000. In 2005 I did not

make records of numbers but on 1 March 2006 there were at least 2000 Roseates but it was much more difficult to assess as there were similar numbers of Common Terns and without close up views they are not easy to separate. Similar numbers were seen again on 11 March.

On 8 Dec 2006 I felt compelled to make the 70 km journey north of Carnarvon just to see what numbers might be there. On arrival I noticed it was low tide, so low that the surrounding reef was fully exposed and the island could be readily accessed on foot. No terns at all were evident; in fact bird life in general was minimal. I did survey and record what was there before travelling northward again to an area known as "Two Mile", north of Quobba homestead. Here again bird numbers were minimal, 40 Crested Tern being the highest number though there were more species. Walking southward along a small sandy beach to get a closer look at these other birds feeding on a shallow reef, I found Sooty Oystercatcher, Grey-tailed Tattler, Grey Plover, Eastern Reef Egret and a solitary immature Pacific Gull. The tattler and plover were not about to allow me too close, always keeping their distance, but the Reef Egret was more concerned with my presence than looking for prey.

I couldn't help but notice some of the marine life in the water as one has to watch one's footing walking on reefs. Most notable was the number of sea-urchins, mostly the black or dark purple variety but one or two green ones were seen as well as a number of Collector Urchins *Tripneustes gratilla*. These collect small pieces of coral, rocks and shells to adorn their backs as camouflage. It would seem that this is not terribly efficient as I observed the Pacific Gull take one of these urchins from the water and fly away. Try as I might I couldn't see what the oystercatchers were feeding on, then the Pacific Gull returned, head and shoulders beneath the water and took another urchin. I then found one of these creatures and picked it up to assess the difficulty of removal. It was much easier than trying to prize off the other varieties. The Pacific Gull returned once more, landing, taking off, perhaps its prey was too deep or maybe it was something else. It wasn't long before it located and removed another urchin. This time I watched what it did as I had wondered how it broke into the urchins shell. It was simple — the bird flew up almost vertically to about 6 or 7 m above the rocky coastal strip and dropped it, then alighting to feed on the contents. Many old shells could be seen on the rocks above this bit of reef, some bleached white in the sun while others were more fresh. I was somewhat surprised to see this gull return yet again, take another urchin and repeat the process. A voracious appetite I thought, even for a bird of that size. Perhaps it was just exploiting the opportunity that existed while the morning tide was so low, something that is not so regular. The following day the lowest tide would be 0.1 higher, no doubt inhibiting the removal of some of this resource with greater water depth.

I had never seen a Pacific Gull feed in this manner before, I had previously only seen them scavenging on washed up remains or feeding on fish that perhaps something else such as an Osprey might have caught.

Les George

WAGTAILS RETURN

I recall my mother, in the early 1990s, delightedly saying that Willie Wagtails were beginning to re-appear in Perth gardens after a long absence. In the 1960s and 70s, widespread spraying of poisons was used to combat the plague of introduced Argentinean ants.

Perhaps wagtails are representative, and this activity caused the disappearance of other insect-eating creatures, eg, garden skinks and birds and mammals.

Now 15 years on, thankfully Willie Wagtails are plentiful.

Sue Kalab



Wagtail Capriccio
Drawing by Sue Kalab

WILLIE WAGTAIL WITH BROWN!

This picture below was taken on 28 January at our primary school in Westminster. For two and a half years I have been keen to photograph it, but the bird only ever came within range when my camera was not at hand. Though it is basically black and white, there is quite a lot of brown amongst the areas of the body that are usually black, particularly the mantle and the tail. However, the new feathers appearing in the tail are very dark compared to the full-sized feathers.

From its plumage, it is unclear how old the bird is; there seems to be no certain way to age this bird without severe surgery.

Apart from its odd appearance, this bird behaves and sounds just like any other Willie Wagtail.

Rod Smith



Willie Wagtail, Westminster, 28 January 2007
Photo courtesy Rod Smith

METROPOLITAN OBSERVATIONS OF THE WHITE-BACKED SWALLOW

The White-backed Swallow is progressively extending its range south down the Swan Coastal Plain (Serventy and Whittell 1976: 60, 322). It nested at Wanneroo in 1969, at Leeming in 1978 (Storr and Johnstone 1988: 56), and was seen in the Rockingham district in 1983. However its invasion southwards is spasmodic, it having occurred in these southern areas for perhaps a decade or so but then retreating north again. Its presence then absence in the Maylands area was clearly evidenced during 1982-1997, as the following observations clearly show.

I began observing on the Maylands Peninsula in October 1982 but did not observe the White-backed Swallow until March 1983. It was subsequently observed in April and July 1983, on four occasions in June 1984, in January 1985, twice in April and twice in May 1985, three times in July 1985, five times in August 1985, three times in September 1985, and then only once in February 1986 and once in May 1987. Thus it was only observed in four consecutive years in the 15 year period.

The species ranged over most of the southern half of the peninsula but primarily over the clay-pits (now developed into lakes). It was usually seen in small numbers of one to three, but five were present on 23 April 1985 and 7 on 27 May 1987. The species was also observed at the Bayswater Sanctuary in June and October 1984 and on five occasions at West Belmont (now Ascot Waters) in June, August and September 1985. Thus primarily it was observed at West Belmont and Maylands during July to September of 1985 and generally from 1983 to 1987 during the period 1982 to 1997.

In WABN there are records from Morley in 1974 and Maylands in 1979, and another 15 records in the Perth metro area during the 1980s. Most observations were made between March and September and sometimes the birds' tunnels were noted too. Thus it has extended its range from Yanchep to Perth in 80 years, i.e. 1902 to 1980, and Storr and Johnstone (1988: 56) suggest that this could be due to the proliferation of nesting places, e.g. sandy road cuttings and quarry walls.

The species readily mixes with flights of Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins and thus presumably feeds on the same insect prey as them. But the fewer observations in the summer months could indicate a partial retreat of the White-backed Swallow then to more northern areas. The largest numbers seen locally are 20+ at Herdsman's Lake in May 1987 and 15-20 at Thomson's Lake in 1988, these numbers being some four to five times those usually seen.

In the 1990s it was scarce again locally, there being only four records in WABN: Craigie (March 1991), Cockburn (August 1994), Thomson's Lake (June 1996) and Herdman's Lake (June 1999). Thus I urge anyone with observations south of Yanchep in the 1990s to publish their data.

I apologise to all observers for not citing your names or details but your observations were noted and are very valuable, and hopefully observations will continue to be published in WABN and this swallow's story elucidated.

References

- Serventy, D.L. and Whittell, H.M. (1976). *Birds of Western Australia.*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth.
- Storr, G.M. and Johnstone, R.E. (1988). *Birds of the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent seas and islands*, Records of the Western Australia Museum, Suppl. No. 28.

Robert Stranger

AN ABUNDANCE OF BUDGERIGARS ON THE NULLARBOR

During the last week of September 2006, we were in the enviable position of driving and camping across Australia on a journey from Perth to Armidale, NSW. We say enviable, because it is always a fantastic journey full of amazing scenery, interesting people and, above all, often unexpected and interesting birds and other animals.

On 21 September 2006, we drove from Newman Rocks (where we were awoken in our tents the night before by howling Dingoes, and were greeted in the morning by Emus) to the Western Australian border with South Australia. Unfortunately, it was a rather hot day, and not many birds were about. Arriving at the border village to stay in the comparative luxury of a cabin compared to the week's previous camping in the south west of WA, we were greeted by small numbers of Silvereyes and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters. On the morning of 22 September however, we were awoken just prior to dawn by flocks of Budgerigars flying through and around the border village. Approximately every 2-3 minutes, flocks of between five and 70 Budgerigars rapidly flew through the village, all flying in a general east to west direction. After leaving the village, we continued to see flocks of the Budgerigars, and at all of the Great Australian Bight lookouts, we saw at least 10-20 flocks of Budgerigars per minute, many of them flying 50-100 m out to sea over the Bight, but the majority of them flying over the heath vegetation. Once again, every single bird was travelling from east to west. The weather on the day was clear with no clouds, with temperatures in the high twenties to low thirties. The weather either side of this day was not particularly wet, hot or unusual in any sense.

We cannot be sure whether these flocks were limited to the coastal fringe or whether they were also travelling west further north of the Eyre Highway, so estimating numbers is purely subjective, but we estimate that we saw between 10 000 and 15 000 Budgerigars. Once we had travelled about 30-40 km into South Australia, the number of Budgerigars petered out to just a handful. Are numbers like these common in this section of the Nullarbor? Were any found at Eyre Bird Observatory on that day or later in the week? Or had they settled by then or travelled north? Apart from travelling twice previously across the Nullarbor, one of us (JC) has also travelled to Eyre Bird Observatory from Perth on a number of occasions in all seasons and has never seen Budgerigars in this region. Being now situated on the east coast, we would be interested in knowing where these Budgerigars were heading or were subsequently seen? It truly was an extraordinary morning that we will not forget too soon!

Jarrad Cousin and Mark Dollin



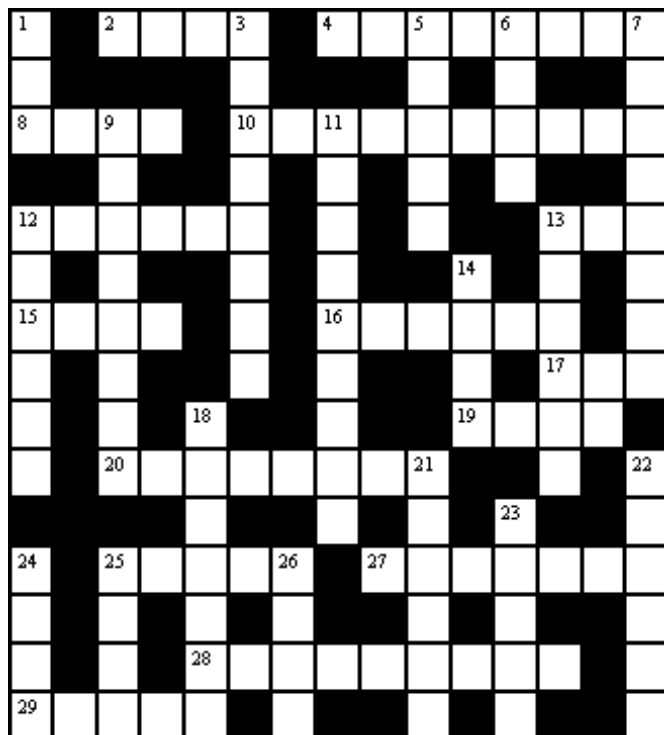
By Pam Agar

Clues across

2. Birder's temporary home.
4. Bristles round mouth.
8. Track.
10. One-off record.
12. Area of trees.
13. A short one isn't always quicker.
15. To plunder.
16. To journey.
17. To be indebted.
19. Approx. no. of eggs laid by Emu.
20. Nectar-eating parrot.
25. Display area.
27. Having erectile feathers on head.
28. Ecological unit.
29. Dull, pale.

Clues down

1. Nest shape.
3. Unspoiled.
5. Alphabetised list.
6. Quail of Kimberley area.
7. Welcome if trying to locate an elusive bird?
9. End bar of tail.
11. Grouped together.
12. To search for.
13. Breeding group.
14. River home of WA's Mute Swan.
18. State of nesting colonies.
21. Songbird, not in WA.
22. Concealed.
23. To shepherd.
24. Uncommon wader visitor to southern WA.
25. Strong link formed by swans.
26. Might shelter burrow entrance.



Birding, Nandoo Station during the 2006 DEC station surveys (see also Notices this issue for the next round of surveys).

Photo courtesy Robina Haynes

BIRD IDENTIFICATION SEMINAR ADVANCED CLASSES

The Community Education Sub-committee will be holding more advanced classes for those interested in furthering their identification skills.

DATES: June 9th – Raptors aloft and bird calls
June 16th – Fairy-wrens, Thornbills and Waders

TIME: 9.00am to 12.30pm

VENUE: Western Australian Ecology Centre
167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, WA 6014

BOOKING: Call the Birds Australia WA office on 9383 7749 during office hours,
Mon – Fri 9.30am to 12.30pm

If you would like some input on the subject covered, come to the AGM Monday February 26th at the WA Ecology Centre, Floreat, to make your views known.

Brice Wells, Chairman
Community Education Sub-committee
Tel: 9255 3710

Rottneest Winter Wader/Bushbird Count

Saturday 16th to Monday 18th June

This survey is part of the twice-annual continuing survey of shorebird sites and bushbird presence in the revegetated sites.

Accommodation is approximately \$16.50 per night at the UWA Research Station at the eastern end of the airstrip. This offers cooking facilities, utensils, refrigerators and bathrooms. You need to bring your own food or buy it on arrival.

Transport around the Island and to the accommodation will be provided. We will apply for some concession on the ferry fares.

Numbers are limited to 16 people.

If you are interested in attending

please contact me on 9389 6416
or email <sma12577@bigpond.net.au>.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Mather

BAWA Digital Image Library

The BAWA digital image library now contains almost 2700 images. BAWA is very grateful for the many people who have provided images for the library. The library is only used for educational purposes. We will not use the images for publication, or pass them on to other organisations without the approval of the photographer. However, members can use the photographs for talks and presentations. The list of images is available on the BAWA web site <birdswa.com.au> under 'Activities'.

We still require photographs of many species, as well as birds in flight, plumage variations (male, female, juvenile, immature plumage, etc) and nests. We can use digital images (preferably JPG). Individual images can be emailed to me at <foconnor@iinet.net.au> but larger numbers of images should be sent on a CD or contact me and I can transfer them with a memory stick. 35 mm slides and prints can be scanned in the office. Contact me for details.

Frank O'Connor

Become a FRIEND OF EYRE



Eyre Bird Observatory is a not for profit facility and is self-funded.

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Donations to Friends of Eyre help to raise money for research, maintenance and the upgrade of equipment.

To become a 'Friend' a donation is required. You will then receive the quarterly newsletter *Eyre Waves*, informing you of all the happenings at the observatory and events in which you can participate.

Birds Australia members receive a discount on accommodation at the observatory. Check our website...eyrebirds.org...for more information.

Simply send your name, address and donation to:

Eyre Management Committee
c/o PO Box 113
GLEN FORREST WA 6071

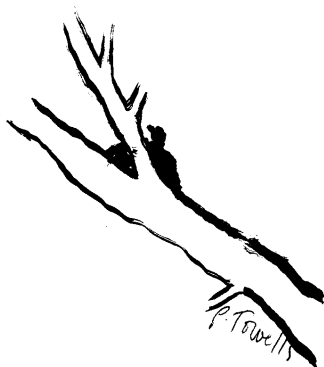
Assistance Needed

The Community Education Sub-committee is putting together digital presentations to use on visits to schools and other community groups. The BAWA image library has a few gaps and we would appreciate photographers who are willing to share their digital images to contribute to the library. All photos are acknowledged in the catalogue and used for educational purposes only. We are in urgent need of representative photos of the following birds but would also appreciate any photos you are willing to share.

Red-capped Parrot female and immature
 Pallid Cuckoo adult and immature
 Sacred Kingfisher
 Rainbow Bee-eater
 Striated Pardalote in tree
 Weebill
 Western Gerygone
 Yellow-rumped Thornbill
 Red Wattlebird
 Yellow-plumed Honeyeater
 White-plumed Honeyeater
 White-naped Honeyeater
 White-cheeked Honeyeater
 Western Spinebill male and female
 Scarlet Robin female
 Red-capped Robin male
 Hooded Robin male
 White-breasted Robin
 Grey Shrike-thrush – SW form
 Grey Fantail
 Australian Raven
 Tree Martin
 Silveryeye – SW form

We do have capacity to scan 35mm slides. If emailing images please consider file sizes, with JPG format preferred. If you are sending a number of large files please post on CD to the office.

Email one or two images to Frank O'Connor:
 <foconnor@iinet.net.au> or phone 9386 5694.



We were close! Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike's nest,
 Bodkin Park, 7 Dec 2006.
 Cartoon by Penny Towells

DEC Station Surveys Project for 2007

In August 2006 BAWA members surveyed the former pastoral leases of Muggon (54 surveys and a total 80 species), Woolgorong (40 surveys and a total 83 species), Narloo and parts of Twin Peaks and Yuin (37 surveys and a total of 64 species). Clive Napier coordinated the surveys with plenty of cooperation and enthusiasm from the other participants. Sightings included the Bush Stone-curlew and the Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush.

In 2007 it is planned to undertake surveys of Earraheedy and Lorna Glen, which adjoin each other about 150 km north-east of Wiluna. For much of the time it is likely that we will be based at Lorna Glen, where good facilities are available for camping, caravans and limited station accommodation. To survey the northern portions of Earraheedy however, it will be necessary to camp out with no facilities. Participants are expected to arrive on Sunday 10 June and be ready to start surveying the following morning. We plan to finish surveying about 26 June.

The stations to be surveyed may change due to weather events or other circumstances beyond the control of BAWA.

Participants are expected to provide their own four-wheel drive transport, to be experienced in outback birding and to be self-reliant. Vehicle pooling is encouraged to reduce both damage to tracks and fuel use. Vehicles should carry a range of spares including a minimum of two spare tyres. A puncture repair kit is one of the essentials. UHF CB radio is desirable.

Further details and information are available from:

Pam and George Agar (9457 2293)
 Ruth and John Luyer (9384 2098)
 or Ed and Alyson Paull (9299 6283).

Numbers are strictly limited, so contact one of the above as soon as it is practical, the closing date being 27 April 2007.

John Luyer

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 November 2006 to 31 January 2007. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

H Brooke, M Burn, M Clunies-Ross, J Donegan,
 JM Hill, S Hubeck, A Hubeck, C M Jeeves,
 J Lillywhite, C & J Martins, S McCabe, R McCartney,
 M O'Connell, D Pople, K Robinson, M Schmidt,
 H Sitters, D Smith & P Whitehead, E Tan, R Vogwill,
 L Walters, M A Wheeler, S L Young, C Young,
 LJ Young



Country groups



ALBANY BIRD GROUP

Cheyne Beach, November 2006

For part of the group the day began very early with a search for Western Ground Parrots. Whilst we did not find any ground parrots, some of us were rewarded with excellent views of a Western Bristlebird hopping on a sandy track near the caravan park.

Very strong easterly winds made birding in the heathland surrounding Cheyne Beach rather difficult, so we decided to try our luck along Hassell Beach Track. We kept our eyes peeled for a small flock of wild Budgerigars that had been observed in this area during the previous week, but they had moved on. Honeyeaters including Western Spinebill and Western Wattlebird were the most common birds seen, but we also found Red-eared Firetail, Golden Whistler and Grey Shrike-thrush. A kestrel was circling overhead.

With no hope of the wind easing, we opted for an early lunch and a presentation about the Western Ground Parrot in which project officer Mike Barth showed us the latest video clips of the elusive bird.

Anne Bondin

Lake Powell and Torbay, December 2006

A large group of 27 of us met at the bird hide on Lake Powell on 12 December. There were not that many birds on the lake, but a few Red-necked Avocets were on a sandbank and Australasian Shovelers were swimming past. There were some Red-eared Firetails and other bushbirds on the walk to the hide.

We then drove to the area around Torbay Hall, always quite good for bushbirds. A few less able people who sat waiting

for the birds to come to them saw almost as many as those who went along the walks. We all shared a Christmas lunch in the shade of the trees. It was a most enjoyable final outing for 2006, and a total of 58 species was seen.

Charlie Davies

Lake Seppings / Emu Point, January 2007

A visit to one of Albany's most popular birding sites kicked off this year's birding season. Calls of Clamorous Reed-warblers greeted us at the start of the walk. We were surprised to see only a relatively small number of ducks, which included Musk and Blue-billed Duck. Two Australasian Grebes presented themselves close to the boardwalk, offering excellent views.

Whilst we were unable to locate the two Masked Lapwings that had returned to the lake in November, we heard the calls of Southern Emu-wrens near the causeway. A highlight was the sighting of a Spotless Crake. Even though quite a common resident, they are not always readily seen. Other favourites included Red-eared Firetail, Red-winged Fairy-wren and White-breasted Robin.

After morning tea we visited the mudflats at Emu Point where we saw an assortment of waders. A Common Sandpiper near the car park showed little fear and allowed us to approach quite closely. Grey Plover, Common Greenshank, Red-necked Stint and Bar-tailed Godwit were quite easy to identify. However, without a spotting scope, we found it difficult to tell the distant knots apart. Other waterbirds included Caspian Tern, Pied Oystercatcher, Pacific Gull and numerous pelicans.

Anne Bondin

CAPE TO CAPE BIRD GROUP

Saturday 24 March: Half-day excursion, grounds of Ellensbrook Homestead including Meekadarribee Falls and the beach.

Meet at 8:00 am in car park at Ellensbrook Homestead (via Caves Road and Ellensbrook Road).

For members and the general public.

Wednesday 18 April: Half-day excursion, Ten Mile Brook Dam Trail, Margaret River

Meet at 8:00 am in car park at Rotary Park (near Old Kate) just north of the Margaret River Bridge.

For members and the general public.

For further information or directions for these outings please contact Christine Wilder on 0427 312 848 or email at <cwilderone@yahoo.com.au>.

FORRESTDALE LAKE, 23 September 2006

Seventeen people met at Moore Street car park for a cold, breezy, overcast walk at Forrestdale. Using the light to our best advantage for the 'scopes, we walked along the lake edge to the east side. In the record low shallow water this year, we had good sightings of two Wood Sandpipers amongst chenopodium weed, 25 swamphens near the Typha, 180 swans scattered around and two Whistling Kites and a Marsh Harrier overhead.

Returning to Moore Street via the Banksia woodland trail, we saw a pair of White-winged Trillers and enjoyed the high vantage view over the lake.

Driving then to the south-west corner of the lake, we walked through a lot of Typha out onto the exposed mudflat (due to the SW wind) to see 70 Red-capped Plovers and a Yellow-billed Spoonbill. A Little Grassbird called from the Typha.

Our morning walk produced 38 species of which 26 were bushbirds. With this drought year, the lake reached only 80 mm maximum depth to benefit only a few waders before drying.

David James

BLACKBOY RIDGE/ CHITTERING LAKES, 11 November 2006

Blackboy Ridge was a site surveyed monthly for the Perth Biodiversity Project. However the local bird group has continued to survey this 68 ha reserve and many of them joined Birds Australia for this walk, making the attendance for the day 39. It was noted that Painted Button-quail were still present and that at least 100 Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos were seen either in the reserve or the adjacent paddocks. Breeding records of Varied Sittella, White-winged Triller and Rufous Whistler were also reported. Thirty-seven species were listed for this site.

The group then travelled to Chittering Lake with access through privately owned land. The water level in the lake was high and into the trees, so there was limited opportunity to see the abundance of waterbirds on the lake.

Sue Mather

LITTLE RUSH LAKE, 16 November 2006

A total of 13 people walked the Little Rush Lake circuit on this Thursday excursion.

Early sightings of a Whistling Kite and a Swamp Harrier were followed by a search for bushbirds in the area between the lake and the railway line. A Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike was the first to be seen. Good views of both male and female Splendid Fairy-wrens had the cameras working overtime. Down by the lake we recorded the waterbirds — a sighting of a Glossy Ibis was a new bird for this area.

As we walked round the lake we noticed that a lot of planting had been done quite recently and also several nesting boxes had been placed high in the eucalypts. A White-faced Heron flew overhead and landed in the grass nearby and one alert walker saw an airborne Great Egret. Also in the air were many Australian White Ibis and some soaring Australian Pelicans. A pair of Galahs was seen high in a tree — maybe they were eyeing off the nesting boxes!

At morning tea time the final count was 44 species. Three of our number had files of bird photos taken with their digital cameras — some excellent pictures.

Molly and Barry Angus



Bush Stone-curlews at Dryandra Settlement
Photo courtesy Pam Agar

LAKE CLAREMONT, 19 November 2006

At the civilised hour of 8:30 am for a Sunday morning, 15 good people assembled for a walk around the lake.

It's a very pleasant location, but the lake at this time of year is hardly worthy of the name. There is still some water, but mainly a large area of mud, typha and grass interspersed with dead bushes and fallen logs. To

add to the potential excitement is the hazard of walking adjacent to the golf course with the usual quota of low flying objects.

With the varied habitat we saw or heard 39 species, which included an unimpeded view of a Striated Pardalote at its nesting hole, a male Chestnut Teal, Buff-banded Rails and a single unhappy looking Long-billed Corella. Some saw an Australian Hobby and we found nests of Willie Wagtail and Magpie-lark. The photographers bringing up the rear may also have had a good morning.

Max Bailey

DRYANDRA SHORT WEEKEND CAMPOUT, 25-26 November 2006

On a warm weekend 15 people braved the locust swarms in the central wheatbelt to attend a campout in an extensive area of woodland, predominantly Wandoo, with varying densities of understorey.

On Friday evening a short session of spotlighting on the way across to the settlement provided good views of a Tawny Frogmouth for some.

The first official outing was on Saturday morning when the group walked from the northern end of Mangart Road, near the western side of the reserve, back to the campsite. We had the best views we are ever likely to get of a pair of Jacky Winters, flitting about close to the road.

Following morning tea we explored the areas near the campground and, after lunch, drove to several other sites in the Congelin area. One of these, along Marri Road, provided what was probably the highlight of the trip for many people, three Crested Shrike-tits calling and feeding busily in Wandoo.

The evening bird-call was combined with an hour of watching various species come in to drink at the Congelin Dam, a good opportunity to see Grey Currawong and several parrot species out in the open, as well as both species of bronzewing.

Sunday morning was spent in the vicinity of the Dryandra Settlement, where we had good views of Australasian Grebe with a young one, a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike on a nest and Restless Flycatchers feeding young in their tiny, neat nest. A Varied Sittella was also seen feeding recently-fledged young and some saw Australian Wood Duck with young on another dam.

Only two raptors were seen over the weekend but we recorded seven species of parrot, seven species of honeyeater and four species of robin (including the Jacky Winter). Grey Shrike-thrush, Rufous Tree-creeper, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater and Weebill were all seen frequently.



Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike nest, Waterford.

Photo courtesy Barry Angus



Birding in Wandoo woodland at Dryandra

Photo courtesy Pam Agar

Those who stayed in the cottages had regular views of the resident Bush Stone-curlews and were able to point them out to the others following the final tally, a satisfying 67 species.

Other bonuses included Numbats, Woylies, wallabies and Brush-tailed Possums, with one of the latter methodically cleaning the caretaker's car of insects. A number of species, birds and lizards in particular, were seen feeding on locusts.

Our thanks go to David for his leadership and keen sense of hearing, and for carrying his scope on most of the walks, allowing us excellent views of nesting birds and comparisons between similar species.

Pam Agar

BODKIN PARK, WATERFORD, 7 December 2006

Twenty people met on Thursday 7 December 2006 in perfect weather for a Waterford bird walk. Our start was earlier than usual! The lake sparkled, bushbirds jubilantly chorused, two Rufous Whistlers competing with the Brown Honeyeaters. We enjoyed background music from the Clamorous Reed-warblers especially.

A young person from Canning Shire came with us to learn more of the area for interpretive signs and brochures. Seven people from the United Kingdom were with us, too.

Forty-two species were spotted and we had good long views of a Black-shouldered Kite against a grey, green background. It posed perfectly.

Everyone enjoyed watching the Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes feeding their twin babies that were housed in a "stuck on" nest — it looked far too small for our eyes.

Australian Magpie juniors were being fed. They sounded desperate, but looked well cared for. Australian Wood Ducks sat in the sun with their five offspring beside the pink-lilied lake. Altogether a great walk and we thank Molly and Barry for taking us.

Penny Towells

PS: Seven of the party continued the walk by visiting Salter Point further west along the river. The usual birds were observed but we were all pleased to add to the list an Osprey on a nest, a Great Cormorant, a Rainbow Bee-eater and a Mistletoebird in all its glorious colour.

A wonderful view of a Black-shouldered Kite enjoying lunch was another highlight. A total of 22 species were seen.

Molly and Barry Angus



Rainbow Bee-eater, Salter Point
Photo courtesy Barry Angus

not be added to the list. I think either would have been an addition to the Joondalup list. Another possible was the Western Corella. This was rejected.

Particular thanks to Clive Nealon and Paul Marty for their assistance on this excursion.

Tom Delaney

PELICAN POINT, 18 January 2007

On a cloudless summer's morning 17 members and visitors perambulated around this section of the Swan Estuary Marine Park.

The tide was very low indeed with a large expanse of mudflats, but not a single migratory wader and this an area that was created a class A reserve 40-odd years ago for its summer population of migratory waders. Two Red-capped Plovers tried to make amends.

What was of interest was the nesting colony of Fairy Terns which arrived in December 2006 and now had small chicks trying to look inconspicuous. A Peregrine Falcon flew overhead twice. Mistletoebirds were seen and fleeting glimpses of Variegated Fairy-wrens.

A total of 27 species was recorded.

Max Bailey

LAKE JOONDALUP, 21 January

Twitching record broken!

A new unofficial record of 75 species, seen on an average BA half-day walk, was established on Sunday 21 January.

The previous record of 69 species, jointly held by Lake Joondalup and Herdsman Lake, was smashed by a great effort from the large (25-30 people) group of enthusiastic birdos.

Thanks to Clive Nealon for suggesting the group be split into two. This enabled everyone to get a good look at most species and gave a thorough coverage of the different sites visited.

Apart from the large number of species seen, the highlight was definitely seeing five raptors in the air at the same time. Two other species were seen later, making a total of seven raptors.

Other highlights were the large number of Glossy Ibis, Great Egrets and Yellow-billed Spoonbills. Splendid Fairy-wrens were common in places. A possible sighting of a Blue-breasted or Variegated Fairy-wren was not decided so could

AUGUSTA CAMPOUT, 26-28 January

Thirty participants attended the campout at Flinders Bay. Extremely windy conditions meant our first stop on Australia Day was at the sheltered yacht club on the Hardy Inlet where we found terns, cormorants, swans, pelican and Common Greenshank. The Marri bushland was quiet but managed to produce a number of the more common species. Good views of Scarlet Robin, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Splendid Fairy-wren and Red-capped Parrot were seen by most.



White-breasted Robin, Augusta campout

Photo courtesy Andrew Hobbs

Everyone at morning tea enjoyed Darryl's mother's traditional cake before we moved on to the Leeuwin Lighthouse and Waterwheel where a few lucky birders caught glimpses of a Southern Emu-wren and Rock Parrot.

Unfortunately no seabirds were seen on this particular morning.

After lunch we drove to the Molloy Island ferry where I had arranged to meet up with local resident Brian Combley. Entry to Molloy Island is restricted to residents and guests only so it was great to have the opportunity to look at the birdlife there. We "walked" across on the ferry and after a short introduction from Brian, groups of six people headed off to explore the island. Thirty eight species including Baudin's (Long-billed) Black-Cockatoo, Western Thornbill and Varied Sittella were recorded in two hours. This was reasonably good considering the hot/windy conditions.

Boranup Forest was on the program for Saturday morning. This area of Karri forest is a good spot for Crested Shrike-tit. We spent all morning here enabling everyone to explore all the tracks. No shrike-tit but specials included Red-eared Firetail, Rufous Treecreeper and Square-tailed Kite. There

were many Western Rosellas around as well. My friends Dorothy and Bob James at Nuralingup Gardens had kindly invited the group to call in for our lunch stop. This is a fantastic place for really good looks at White-breasted Robin, Red-winged and Splendid Fairy-wren. Over the past week a Nankeen Night Heron had been roosting in a large tree in the cool gardens and everyone managed to get great views.

The day was warming up and so a walk on the heathland towards the Augusta Cliffs was arranged for later in the afternoon. Around 4.30 pm we drove to Hillview Lookout to get a 360 degree vista of the cape and then a walk down a nearby track where the Southern Emu-wren was found once again.

A road-killed Little Eagle in pristine condition was picked up by Les Hogben and everyone was able to see the diagnostic features of this beautiful bird. It was packed in ice and successfully delivered by Andrew Hobbs to Ron Johnstone at the WA Museum.

Spotlighting was on the agenda and we met at the Pioneer Cemetery at dusk for a walk around the Karri/Marri forest. Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos were roosting in the trees on the roadside but it was rather quiet until a Southern Boobook was heard way at the top of a Karri. An adult boobook along with a juvenile were found soon after.

On Sunday morning we set off in 13 cars to travel to the BHP Billiton Rehabilitation Ponds at Scott River.

I had arranged for us to meet up with Wendy Cusack, the Rehabilitation Coordinator, to explore this exciting birdwatching area. Previously a sand mining operation, this is a huge area consisting of six very different wetlands surrounded by paddocks, all of which have been revegetated over the past six years.

With such a large group it was difficult to count the birds here but an attempt was made. We spent all morning surveying the ponds with excellent views of Musk Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Hardhead, Australian Shelduck, Baillon's and Spotless Crake, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Hoary-headed Grebe, Purple Swamphen, Black-winged Stilt,



Looking for emu-wren.
Photo courtesy Andrew Hobbs

Straw-necked and Australian White Ibis, Great Cormorant, Elegant and Red-capped Parrot, Wedge-tailed Eagle and Swamp Harrier. One Little Grassbird was heard and a family party of Southern Emu-wren was most cooperative in full view on several occasions. Also we had a good look at male and female Darters with nestlings.



Rufous Treecreeper
Photo Andrew Hobbs

After an exhilarating morning we headed for some shady pine trees for lunch. Final bird call was certainly an accomplishment with three lists going simultaneously and a thunderstorm overhead. The final tally for the weekend was 98 species. This now brings the combined number of species seen over the last three campouts held in the Augusta-Margaret River Shire to 135 species.

Many thanks to Brian Combley, Dorothy and Bob James and Wendy Cusack for allowing us to invade their weekend. Thanks also to the participants and particularly my co-leader Sue Abbotts.

Christine Wilder

WOODANILLING CAMPOUT, 26–28 January

Last year's campout in cool conditions over four days at Woodanilling resulted in an impressive bird list of 118 species sighted by the 37 observers. This year, with gale force winds and temperatures close to 40°C forecast for all three days, a huge turnout for the Australia Day weekend campout seemed unlikely. However an intrepid group totalling 11 over the three days (dwindling to three hardy souls by Sunday morning!), braved the torrid conditions and recorded a very creditable 108 species.

The big rains of 2005 had left many lakes flooded but, despite poor rains in 2006, many still had plenty of water and broad, muddy margins — perfect conditions for waterbirds and waders alike. Led again by local birder, Dave Secomb and wife Mary, we visited a range of nearby lakes and had superb views of Hooded Plover, Pectoral, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpiper and Long-toed Stint all at Norring Lake. Even more exciting, was a Hooded Plover with a leg band, later identified as a bird that had been banded at Yalgorup. The Wagin Sewage Ponds yielded Common Greenshank and four Wood Sandpipers while Lake Coyrecup hosted over 3000 Banded Stilt. Back at the Avalon Camping Ground in Woodanilling, a young Boobook Owl swooped and rasped above the tents at night while an Owlet-nightjar was seen getting respite from the heat of its tree hollow at Coyrecup to add to the interest.

By the end of the count we had recorded nine species of duck, nine birds of prey, ten honeyeaters and 14 waders and counted several thousand birds! Thanks go to Dave and Mary for hosting the weekend and showing us around an area of WA rarely seen in this condition.

Peter Taylor

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BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY



The humidity of Broome's climate from October to April normally results in a lull in the number of visitors to the observatory. However the uncomfortable weather did nothing to deter the group of 32 wader enthusiasts from Australia and overseas who participated in the AWSG's (Australasian Wader Studies Group) 26th Wader and Tern Expedition. The team had little difficulty in reaching its scientific objectives despite the particularly warm weather; on several days the temperature on the beach was over 40°C. Shorebirds were caught and banded almost every day during the three week period, and on the days that tides were unsuitable for catching shorebirds the team turned their attention to bushbird banding. Altogether more than 4000 birds were banded, representing a major contribution to the group's long term study of annual breeding productivity; eight waders previously banded in China and two from Japan generated particular interest and excitement.

The group's non-wader highlight was undoubtedly the Arctic Warbler seen near 80 Mile Beach. It constituted only the second record for mainland Australia. Amazingly, this record was eclipsed a few weeks later, when Adrian Boyle found and photographed a Nordmann's Greenshank, the first for Australia, during a count of 80 Mile Beach!

Several other unusual sightings also deserve a mention. The relatively small and innocuous Cyclone Isobel brought Bridled and Sooty Terns to the port with the rarer Common Noddy. An Arctic Skua made a brief appearance and a Franklin's Gull seen at the sewage works is also worthy of note. Other interesting sightings include an out of season Welcome Swallow seen at the observatory by Assistant Warden Naoko Takeuchi, and a lonely Red-rumped Swallow that flew around the solar panels for a few minutes before heading north. More bizarrely, everyone was startled to hear and later see a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo in the campground. It stayed for an hour before disappearing. Although Koels are not uncommon just north

of Broome they are rarely seen here, but one put in a brief attempt at extending their range.

Bar-tailed Godwits and Large Sand Plovers are already developing their breeding plumage ready for the annual journey to the party grounds, and other species are likely to follow their lead shortly. Indeed it is tempting to speculate that the Oriental Pratincoles that have been seen flying northwards over Broome are already on their way to their breeding grounds in Northern China, Taiwan and Mongolia.

We anticipate considerable change at BBO during 2007. A public appeal has been launched by Birds Australia in order to:

- * develop a new interpretive centre to house educational displays about shorebirds and the importance of monitoring and conserving shorebird habitats;
- * improve visitor and residential facilities; and
- * expand research facilities.

The observatory was established in 1988 through the donation of buildings and materials, and no small amount of enthusiasm and goodwill on the part of its AWSG founders and the local community. Since then, it has developed international acclaim among bird lovers, conservationists and scientists. Maintenance of its deteriorating buildings and infrastructure over 18 years has proven challenging and costly. We hope that the public appeal will provide sufficient funds to enable the observatory to forge ahead, not only meeting its goals with respect to conservation, education and research, but also providing a comfortable base for visitors wanting to explore the area and its birdlife.

In the meantime we are taking bookings for our two regular 5-day courses, *Wave the Waders Goodbye* and *Birds of the Broome Region*, as well as the new course *Birding for Beginners*. Please don't hesitate to contact us for more information:

08 9193 5600 or <bbo@birdsaustralia.com.au>.

Pete Collins and Holly Sitters



Arctic Warbler, Anna Plains Station, 20 Nov 2006
Photo courtesy Adrian Boyle

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Volunteer Caretakers' Report



Over the past couple of months things have been ticking along at Eyre, with some not so good situations and weather conditions, but mostly pleasant and enjoyable.

Birding has been unremarkable, with the usual suite of species regularly appearing.

The most exciting sightings have been two individual sightings of Malleefowl, the first only about 200 m north



Sooty Oystercatchers on weed bank
Photo courtesy Gina Gregory

of the observatory, and the second about 6.5 km north, not far from where an active mound was found in October.

Chestnut Quail-thrushes are regularly being seen around the area 2 km north.

The welcome rain — 52 mm a week before Christmas — filled the much depleted tanks and brought smiles to our faces. That was followed by a further 22 mm deposited by the January storms.

We luckily escaped the worst of the storms, but did have strong winds almost continually for two days, which blew a few branches over the track, but nothing that had to be removed in a hurry.

When starting to write this report I planned to tell how the numbers of some birds seem to be less than at this time last year, but decided I'd better check that this is accurate. I was surprised to find many differences and many similarities. I have therefore included a chart showing the incidences of the most common species seen at Eyre for January 2005, 2006 and to 21 January 2007. These figures do not allow for any variables, but are pure numbers from the daily bird log. See next column.

We will be leaving Eyre at the end of February and look forward to birding in a different place. We have certainly learned a lot, being here, and especially about the waders.

Gina & Norm Gregory
Volunteer Caretakers



White-bellied Sea-Eagle on rocky fore-dunes
Photo courtesy Gina Gregory

**COMMON BIRD SPECIES
OF EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY
for the month of January**

SPECIES	2005	2006	2007
Emu	49	4	0
Malleefowl		1	1
Pacific Black Duck	13	0	0
Grey Teal	10	0	6
Little Pied Cormorant	11	2	0
Pied Cormorant	36	20	39
Little Black Cormorant	8	1	1
Whistling Kite	3	0	1
Wedge-tailed Eagle	9	6	13
Collared Sparrowhawk	0	2	1
Nankeen Kestrel	1	1	3
Red-necked Stint	14	0	7
Pied Oystercatcher	30	15	4
Sooty Oystercatcher	47	0	14
Black-winged Stilt	20	0	2
Red-capped Plover	161	62	60
Silver Gull	38	3	96
Pacific Gull	92	80	31
Caspian Tern	3	16	12
Crested Tern	8	3	0
Brush Bronzewing	681	567	606
Galah	75	3	15
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	515	287	154
Australian Ringneck	2	183	34
Mulga Parrot	0	9	10
Rainbow Bee-eater	84	172	24
Blue-breasted Fairy-wren	68	114	155
Spotted Pardalote	45	3	44
White-browed Scrubwren	65	130	113
Weebill	28	21	58
Inland Thornbill	7	54	3
Red Wattlebird	73	130	103
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	5	49	12
Yellow-throated Minor	114	25	108
Singing Honeyeater	545	328	481
White-eared honeyeater	101	10	34
Brown-headed Honeyeater	84	3	59
Brown Honeyeater	17	13	15
New Holland Honeyeater	1416	254	539
White-browed Babbler	95	130	53
Chestnut Quail-thrush	1	0	1
Varied Sittella	0	10	46
Golden Whistler	3	9	0
Grey Shrike-thrush	38	70	40
Magpie Lark	2	3	12
Willie Wagtail	16	13	24
Black-faced Woodswallow	4	1	9
Dusky Woodswallow	7	7	24
Grey Butcherbird	41	27	67
Australian Magpie	1	7	12
Grey Currawong	360	105	89
Australian Raven	485	253	341
Richard's Pipit	50	3	61
Welcome Swallow	610	1616	1762
Tree Martin	236	24	158
Silvereye	2204	510	877



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.
An emergency contact number should also be provided in case of accident.

New members

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

Friday 2 to Sunday 4 March: Mount Barker Long weekend campout

The Mount Barker Caravan Park has campsites, cabins and chalets, and will suit members who prefer good accommodation. Opposite the Caravan Park is an excellent motel with views of the Porongurups, and there are two other hotels with motel style accommodation.

The excursion will radiate from Mount Barker to several lakes and a variety of habitats, including a day trip to the Porongurups. Various woodland areas will be visited ranging from White Gum to Karri, and sandplain areas should provide further variation.

Members should book their own accommodation: phone 9851 1691. The leaders know the area well, and can find

the best birding spots. **If you wish to participate in this campout, please notify the office (9383 7749) of the number in your party and when you expect to arrive.**

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

Sunday 11 March: Yangebup Lake, Cockburn Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00am on the new road near the Lake Yangebup entry point. Turn into Hammond Road from North Lake Road, drive along about 600 metres, then turn right into Yangebup Road. Travel 400 metres to the Lake Yangebup entry point, and park along the new road beside the newly developed industrial area.

There may be muddy areas so wear rubber boots if possible and bring 'scopes if

available. There should be good varieties of waterbirds and waders, and three species of crane have been sighted here. If time permits we will visit Kogolup Lake.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Jan and Dave Crossley

Saturday 17 March: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the Kent Street Weir car park. The walk follows a 5 km circuit along the Canning River, viewing a large selection of bushbirds and waterbirds, hopefully with sightings of the elusive Spotless Crane.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: George and Pam Agar

**Thursday 22 March: Heirisson Island
Half day excursion**

Meet at 9.30 am at the Heirisson Island car park that can only be entered when travelling from the city on the left hand side of the causeway. We will walk around the island then visit the two newly developed lakes on the Swan River where the Woodside building used to be. Expect a variety of both water and bush birds. Bring morning tea.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Robina Haynes

**Sunday 25 March: Bibra Lake,
Cockburn
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake off Progress Drive. Bibra Lake is a part of the Beelir 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 the general public.

Leader: Wynton Maddeford

**Monday, 26 March: Tamala Hall,
Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Jacqui Richards, Regional Ecologist of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, will speak on the work of the Conservancy including birds.

**Sunday 1 April: Lake Monger,
Cambridge
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am in the most westerly car park off Lake Monger. This is a good opportunity to see many species of ducks, waterbirds and some bushbirds. Bring your telescope if you have one.

For members only.

Leader: Claire Gerrish

**Friday – Monday 6–9 April: Easter
Campout
at Lake Grace**

Lake Grace is in wheatbelt country, down in the Great Southern region, 347 km south-east of Perth. This area has a variety of habitats to offer including mallee, heathlands, woodlands and a large lake system. Birds that may be seen include Mulga Parrot, Shy Hylacola, Rufous Fieldwren, Redthroat and Southern

Scrub-Robin. Lake Grace hit the news in January 2005 when it experienced extensive flooding. It is not known if any lakes will be holding water by Easter.

The camp will be based at Lake Grace Caravan Park (Tel: 9865 1263) that offers powered sites for \$17, unpowered sites for \$12. Alternate accommodation includes motel, hotel and farm stay (which is a bit out of town).

Those wishing to attend must book their own accommodation and **notify the office (9383 7749) of numbers and time of arrival**. Additional information will then be forwarded.

Numbers will be limited.

For members only.

Leader: David Secomb



Black-shouldered Kite, Salter Point
(see under Excursions).

Photo courtesy Barry Angus

**Saturday 7 April: Ray Marshall Park,
Viveash
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park of Ray Marshall Park. Go to the end of First Avenue, off Great Eastern Highway, just east of Governor Stirling Senior High School. We will take a morning walk along the John George Trail that runs beside the Swan River. On the return walk, we will divert to a swampy area 250 m off the track, and this will usually add up to six extra species to the list.

The walk includes big river redgums, waterbirds along the river, and the walk to the swamp mentioned above.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Hank van Wees

**Wednesday 11 April: Hyde Park, Perth
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Throssell Street and Glendower Street, Perth. This is a small but very pleasant park with lakes. As it is autumn, some of the waterbirds will have dispersed, but it is still worth a visit.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Max Bailey

**Sunday 15 April: Ellis Brook, Gosnells
Half-day excursion**

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

For members and the general public.

Leader: Ian Rudd

**Friday 20 to Sunday 29 April: Jurien
Bay
Search for Western Ground Parrots**

Contact: Brenda Newbey, project co-ordinator. 9 337 5673; email: <wgparrot@westnet.com.au>

**Sunday 22 April: Bold Park,
Cambridge
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am at the Camel Lake car park, which is at the southern end of Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, for a walk in Bold Park. This is a pleasant and interesting walk close to Birds Australia's back door.

For members and guests only.

Leader: George and Pam Agar

**Monday 23 April: Tamala Hall,
Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm**

John Dell, Ecologist in the Department of Environment and Conservation, will give a talk entitled "Conservation of declining birds on the Swan coastal plain".

Saturday 29 April: Helena Valley, Boya
Half-day excursion

Meet near the locked gate in Victor Road at 8:30 am. Park on the right-hand side of the road. Bring morning tea and we will have it when we return to the cars. Drive through Midland east along Great Eastern Highway. Once you have begun to climb Greenmount Hill watch for Scott Street; Wellbourne Park Hall is on the corner. Turn right, and continue until you reach a roundabout just past the tennis courts on the right. Turn left into Clayton Road, and drive to the end. Turn right into Victor Road, until you reach the locked gate.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Wendy Napier

Saturday 5 May: Wambyn Nature Reserve, Shire of York
Full day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the junction of York Road and Great Eastern Highway just past The Lakes service station on the York Road. The reserve is approximately 35 km beyond the junction. It has good stands of Wandoo and breakaways, etc, where birding should be interesting. Bring morning tea, lunch and water.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Clive Napier

Sunday 13 May: Gleneagles Rest Area
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the Gleneagles Rest Area approximately 25 km down Albany Highway from Armadale. We will look first for the White-breasted Robin, Western Yellow Robin, Red-winged Fairy-wren, Western Spinebill and Little (Western) Wattlebird. After morning tea, we will look on the other side of the highway for Scarlet Robin, Western Thornbill and possibly Rufous Treecreeper.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Frank O'Connor

Thursday 17 May: Star Swamp, North Beach, Stirling
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the end of Mary Street, Waterman. To get there, turn off West Coast Highway at Mary

Street, and drive to the car park. Alternatively, from Marmion Avenue, turn left into Beach Road, left into Ethel Street, then left into Mary Street.

Species that may be found here include Variegated Fairy-wren, White-winged Fairy-wren, Southern Boobook and Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. Star Swamp has Tuart and banksia woodland, Prickly Moses and heath. A variety of raptors and bushbirds can be seen.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Rod Smith



Waterford/Salter Point excursion.
Photo courtesy Barry Angus

Saturday 19 May: Lake Richmond, Rockingham
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am on Safety Bay Road, Rockingham, opposite the Naragubup Centre on the western side of Lake Richmond. The walk around the lake will take 2 – 3 hours. One hundred and twenty-five species have been recorded at the lake, including 14 species of raptor seen regularly. Another interesting feature of the lake is thrombolites.

There are picnic facilities at the Centre, but you need to bring your own lunch.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Sunday 27 May: Bickley Brook, Orange Grove
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the Hardinge Park public car park, Hardinge Road. There is a limited number of bays. Red-browed Finch, Red-eared Firetail, Southern Emu-wren, and a reasonable range of other

bushbirds have been recorded on previous excursions to the area.

Participants may wish to take advantage of the free gas barbecues which are provided (from 8:00 am to sunset) at the conclusion of the walk.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: John and Ruth Luyer

Monday 28 May: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm

Frank O'Connor, Chairman Designate, will give an illustrated talk entitled "Seabirds of WA". Frank is the leader of pelagic seabirding trips for the WA Group.

Saturday 2 June: The Spectacles, Kwinana
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the main car park in McLaughlan Road. Drive down Kwinana Freeway to the Anketell Road crossroad, some 30 km south of Perth. Turn right, and travel about 2 km, then turn left into McLaughlan Road. We will not return to the car park during the walk, so carry your drinks and snacks with you. The walk can take up to three hours.

Over 100 species of birds have been sighted here.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Paul Marty

Saturday – Monday 2-4 June: Foundation Day Long Weekend Campout, Dongara

Dongara is 358 km north of Perth. We will stay at the Seaspray Caravan Park, Church Street, which is on the ocean beach front near the mouth of the Irwin River. To reach the caravan park, turn off Brand Highway into Moreton Terrace, Dongara, which runs into Church Street.

Eighty-six species of birds have been seen in the area, which includes riverine woodland, low heath and banksias. Some places to be visited will be Ellendale Pool and Burma Road Nature Reserve.

Villas for \$130 for 2 people per night, budget cabins (without en suite) \$60 for 2 people per night, powered sites \$25 per night. Please make your own bookings — phone 9927 1165.

Please register with the office on 9383 7749 as numbers will be limited to 25.

For members only.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Sunday 10 June: Jandakot Regional Park (Harrisdale Swamp), Forrestdale
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8.30 am opposite Carey Baptist College on Wright Road, Forrestdale. This is an area that the leader has walked in many times. It has many good tracks and fairly diverse vegetation, and is fenced on three sides. It includes a large area of wetland, which should be interesting if there has been reasonable winter rain beforehand. Many of the regional bushbirds should be seen including Splendid Fairy-wren, several honeyeaters, Grey Shrike-thrush, Rufous Whistler, raptors and cuckoos, and possibly wetland species. Wear old shoes or gumboots.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Debbie Walker

Sunday 10 June – 26 June: DEC Station Survey

It is planned to undertake surveys of Earacheedy and Lorna Glen stations, 150km north-east of Wiluna.

See Notices in this edition.

For members only. The closing date is 27 April 2007.

Thursday 14 June: 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, 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 16 June: Flynn Road, Mundaring

Half-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 turnoff (off the York Road turnoff). 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 – Monday 16 – 18 June: Rottneest Winter Wader/Bushbird Count

This survey is part of the twice-annual continuing survey of shorebird sites and bushbird presence in the re-vegetated sites.

Accommodation is approximately \$16.50 per night at the UWA Research Station at the eastern end of the airstrip. This offers cooking facilities, utensils, refrigerators and bathrooms. You need to bring your own food or buy it on arrival. Transport around the island and to the accommodation will be provided. Numbers are limited to 16 people.

If you are interested in attending please contact Sue Mather on 9389 6416 or e-mail: <sma12577@bigpond.net.au>.

For members only.

Leader: Sue Mather

Saturday 23 June: Victoria Reservoir, Canning Mills
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park beside the information board at the entrance to the dam. From Perth, travel east along Welshpool Road to the T-junction at Canning Road, turn right and travel for about 200 m to Masonmill Road. Continue along this road for several km, following the signs to the dam past the rose nursery, to the entrance to the car park. We will follow several walking tracks in this area, which is not normally open to the public at the weekend.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: David & Joyce Ballard

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

Stuart Miller, a member, will give an illustrated talk, with his own slides, entitled "Photographic windows north and south of WA".

Sunday 1 July: King's Park, Perth
Half-day excursion

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

For members and the general public.

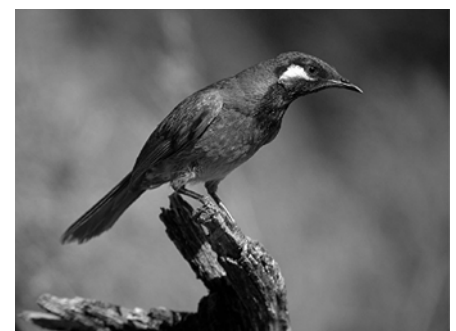
Leader: Sue Mather

Monday 23 July: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm

Joe Tonga will give a talk entitled "Nest boxes for wild animals", showing the nest boxes that he makes for different species of birds and other animals, eg. bats.

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

Tim Simmons, a post-graduate student of Curtin University, will speak on "Using birds as a management tool in Jarrah forests".



White-eared Honeyeater,
Eyre Bird Observatory
Photo courtesy Michael Bouette

Looking for New Birds



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Crossword answers No 48

Across

2 camp, 4 whiskers, 8 path, 10 incidental, 12 forest, 13 cut, 15 raid, 16 travel, 17 owe, 19 nine, 20 lorikeet, 25 bower, 27 crested, 28 ecosystem, 29 faded.

Down

1 cup, 3 pristine, 5 index, 6 King, 7 solitude, 9 terminal, 11 clustered, 12 forage, 13 colony, 14 Avon, 18 crowded, 21 thrush, 22 hidden, 23 usher, 24 Ruff, 25 bond, 26 root.

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02/2007



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 9293 4958, e-mail <cgole@westnet.com.au>
- ◆ **Monthly Meeting Speakers** – contact Brian Wilson 9293 1094
- ◆ **Community Education 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>
- ◆ **Western Ground Parrot Recovery Project** – volunteers needed to assist with ground parrot surveys along the South Coast from March through June. Training and food provided. For information and trip dates contact Mike Barth, Dept of Environment & Conservation, 9842 4519, e-mail <michael.barth@dec.wa.gov.au>
- ◆ **Avon Community Engagement Project.** Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo recovery initiative in the Avon River basin - anyone interested can contact Gen Farrelly, on Ph: 9881 9213, mob: 0429 202 753 or E-mail: <gfarrelly@wwf.org.au>
- ◆ **Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project** - the South Coast Project Officer is based in Albany and working throughout the South Coast NRM Region; if you have any information particularly regarding potential nesting sites or would like to volunteer in the project, please contact Raana Scott, South Coast Project Officer, e-mail: <r.scott@birdsaustralia.com.au> or ph: 9842 0011.
- ◆ **Northern search for Western Ground Parrots** - a new BAWA project seeks volunteers for Ground Parrot survey 20 - 29 April, Jurien Bay - contact Brenda Newbey 9337 5673, e-mail <wgparrot@westnet.com.au>

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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; **do not** embed pictures or graphics in MS Word.
- 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)

June 2007 issue: 1 May
September 2007 issue: 1 August
December 2007 issue: 1 November
March 2008 issue: 1 February

Advertising Rates

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

Calendar of events

Fri-Sun 2-4 Mar: Mount Barker, Long weekend campout
Sun 11 Mar: Yangebup Lake, Cockburn, Half-day excursion
Sat 17 Mar: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson, Half-day excursion
Thu 22 Mar: Heirisson Island, Half day excursion
Sun 25 Mar: Bibra Lake, Cockburn, Half-day excursion
Mon, 26 Mar: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Mtg, 7:30 pm
Sun 1 Apr: Lake Monger, Cambridge, Half-day excursion
Fri – Mon 6-9 Apr: Easter campout, Lake Grace
Sat 7 Apr: Ray Marshall Park, Viveash, Half-day excursion
Wed 11 Apr: Hyde Park, Perth, Half-day excursion
Sun 15 Apr: Ellis Brook, Gosnells, Half-day excursion
Fri 20 to Sun 29 Apr: Jurien Bay, Search for Western Ground Parrots
Sun 22 Apr: Bold Park, Cambridge, Half-day excursion
Mon 23 Apr: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Mtg, 7:30 pm
Fri 27 Apr: Station Surveys Lorna Glen & Earacheedy - last day to register for this Jun event.
Sat 29 Apr: Helena Valley, Boya, Half-day excursion
Sat 5 May: Wambyn Nature Reserve, Shire of York, Full day excursion
Sun 13 May: Gleneagles Rest Area, Half-day excursion
Thu 17 May: Star Swamp, North Beach, Stirling, Half-day excursion
Sat 19 May: Lake Richmond, Rockingham, Half-day excursion
Sun 27 May: Bickley Brook, Orange Grove, Half-day excursion
Mon 28 May: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Mtg, 7:30 pm
Sat 2 Jun: The Spectacles, Kwinana, Half-day excursion
Sat – Mon 2-4 Jun: Foundation Day Long Weekend Campout, Dongara
Sun 10 Jun: Jandakot Regional Park (Harrisdale Swamp), Forrestdale, Half-day excursion
Sun 10 – 26 Jun: DEC Station Survey
Thu 14 Jun: Little Rush Lake, Yangebup, Half-day excursion
Sat 16 Jun: Flynn Road, Mundaring, Half-day excursion
Sat – Mon 16 – 18 Jun: Rottnest Winter Wader/Bushbird Count
Sat 23 Jun: Victoria Reservoir, Canning Mills, Half-day excursion
Mon 25 Jun: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Mtg, 7:30 pm
Sun 1 Jul: King's Park, Perth, Half-day excursion
Mon 23 Jul: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Mtg, 7:30 pm
Mon 27 Aug: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Mtg, 7:30 pm

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