

Western Australian Bird Notes



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



No 123 September 2007

ISSN 1445-3983

Contents

Obituary.....	p3	Crossword.....	p18	Observatories.....	p27
Observations.....	p4	Notices.....	p19	Coming events.....	p30
BAWA reports.....	p5	New members.....	p24	Crossword answers.....	p35
BAWA projects.....	p6	Country groups.....	p24	Opportunities for volunteers.....	p36
Members' contributions.....	p12	Excursion reports.....	p25	Calendar of events.....	p36

SEARCH FOR PAINTED BUTTON-QUAIL ON NORTH AND EAST WALLABI ISLANDS

The Painted Button-quail consists of two subspecies: *Turnix varius varius* occurs on mainland south-eastern and south-western Australia, and the second, *T. v. scintillans*, which is declared threatened (Vulnerable), occurs only on the Abrolhos islands.

Introduction

The Houtman Abrolhos sub-species of the Painted Button-quail occurs naturally only in the northern (Wallabi) group of the Houtman Abrolhos Islands, Western Australia, including East Wallabi and North Islands.

The Tamar Wallaby (*Macropus eugenii*) occurs naturally on East Wallabi Island but has been introduced to North Island in the recent past. The Tammars have thrived on North Island and become very abundant, much more than on East Wallabi Island. There are concerns that the habitat changes being wrought by the wallabies on North Island are having an adverse effect on the Painted Button-quail, and anecdotal reports have suggested that it is now either gone from the island or is very rare.

Survey methods

At the request of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Midwest Region, we spent seven hours between 0700 and 1630 on each of North Island (24/10/06) and East Wallabi Island (25/10/06) searching for Painted Button-

quails and signs of their presence. We covered as much area as possible, walking at spacing between about 25 and 100 metres, across potential buttonquail habitat. The emphasis was on attempting to identify flushed birds and scanning the ground around and under vegetation for the characteristic 'platelets' left by their foraging activities.

In addition, a taped recording of the calls of the species was broadcast in promising habitat four times on each island. DEC provided a long rope in case we felt that dragging through the vegetation may have been a useful way to disturb button-quail. However, on the islands we concluded that in the places where button-quail were most likely the dragging of a rope through thick and very 'twiggy' vegetation would have been extremely difficult and impossible without doing much damage to that vegetation. We also recorded observations of Brush

Bronzewings, a species at the far northern end of its range on these islands.

Results

We found a contrast in numbers of birds and vegetation condition between the two islands that we visited (Table 1).

North Island

Two quail like birds were flushed, one of which was definitely a female Painted Button-quail and the other was indeterminate (that is, it was a fleeting sighting, appeared paler than a Painted Button-



Figure 1: Possible button-quail platelet on North Island
Photo by Pam Agar

Observations	North Island	East Wallabi Island
Painted Button-quail	1	2
Platelets	1 or 2	More than 20 sets, over 50 actual platelets
Tammar	50 - 100	<10
Vegetation condition	Poor over more than half of island	Good throughout
Brush Bronzewing	About ten	About 20

Table 1: Summary of observations from each of East Wallabi and North Islands, Abrolhos Archipelago

quail and could have been a Stubble Quail). Only two possible examples of fairly old button quail platelets were seen (Figure 1), both near an area where the definite identification of a flushed bird was made. This area was towards the far western side of the island, which showed relatively low impact from Tammar Wallabies. No calls of Painted Button-quail were heard, either unprompted or in response to the broadcast of their call.

Much of the island's denser vegetation was obviously affected by the grazing and movement of Tammar Wallabies, especially in the south-eastern part of the island, with little low ground cover or accumulations of litter. Brush Bronzewings were reasonably common.



Figure 2: Vegetation near sighting of button-quail on North Island
Photo by Pam Agar

Significantly, vegetation in the area around which the sighting was made and the platelet was seen was relatively little disturbed by Tammar Wallabies (Figure 2). Elsewhere on the island Tammars were abundant (50 to 100 seen) and the ground layer, including plant litter, heavily disturbed.



Figure 3: Recent button-quail platelet on East Wallabi Island
Photo by Pam Agar

East Wallabi Island

Two definite sightings of flushed Painted Button-quails were made and numerous examples of button-quail platelets were seen (Figure 3), often in patches of litter under low branches where up to ten platelets were close together. No calls of Painted Button-quail were heard, either unprompted or in response to the broadcast of their call. About ten wallabies were seen and the vegetation was much less disturbed than that on North Island. Brush Bronzewings appeared to be rather more common than on North Island.

Discussion

The Houtman Abrolhos Painted Button-quail still occurs on North Island, but our results suggest that it is probably more common on East Wallabi Island. Although there were only two definite sightings on East Wallabi Island and one on North Island, the Painted Button-quail is at most times a secretive bird and actual sightings are rare events for most birdwatchers — actually finding enough birds to make a meaningful comparison of populations between the two islands was always going to be unlikely. However, the much more frequent sighting on East Wallabi Island of the characteristic 'platelets' left by their foraging activity suggested a significantly larger population of button-quails there than on North Island. This was consistent with the apparently better condition of the denser vegetation, especially in the ground-layer, on East Wallabi Island.

Although Brush Bronzewings were moderately common on North Island they seemed to be more so on East Wallabi, again consistent with some adverse effect upon them of vegetation change due to the Tammar Wallabies.

While these results are by no means conclusive, our brief survey suggests that there is a healthier population of Houtman Abrolhos Painted Button-quail on East Wallabi Island than on North Island, and that the species is quite rare on the latter. Visual inspection suggests that the changes brought about by large numbers of Tammars on North Island has altered the low vegetation and disturbed accumulations of leaf litter in ways adversely affecting the button-quails.

Acknowledgements

We thank the Department of Environment and Conservation, Midwest Region and the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council for covering most of our transport costs for this survey.

John and Judy Blyth and George and Pam Agar

Appendix 1: Birds seen on North Island on 24/10/2006

Stubble Quail (*Coturnix pectoralis*) probable sighting
Eastern Reef Egret (*Egretta sacra*) dark morph
Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
Nankeen Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*)
Houtman Abrolhos Painted Button-quail (*Turnix varius scintillans*)
Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)
Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)
Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebula*)
Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)
Pied Oystercatcher (*Haematopus longirostris*)
Sooty Oystercatcher (*Haematopus fuliginosus*)
Red-capped Plover (*Charadrius ruficapillus*)
Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)
Pacific Gull (*Larus pacificus*)
Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*)
Crested Tern (*Sterna bergii*)
Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*)
Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougalli*)
Fairy Tern (*Sterna nereis*)
Brush Bronzewing (*Phaps elegans*)
Richards Pipit (*Anthus novaehollandiae*)
Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*)
Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*)

Appendix 2: Birds seen on East Wallabi Island on 25/10/2006

Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*)
Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*)
Eastern Reef Egret (*Egretta sacra*) dark morph
Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) (feeding chick)
White-bellied Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) (feeding chick)
Houtman Abrolhos Painted Button-quail (*Turnix varius scintillans*)
Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)
Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)
Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)
Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)
Pied Oystercatcher (*Haematopus longirostris*)
Red-capped Plover (*Charadrius ruficapillus*)
Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)
Pacific Gull (*Larus pacificus*)
Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*)
Crested Tern (*Sterna bergii*)
Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*)
Fairy Tern (*Sterna nereis*)
Brush Bronzewing (*Phaps elegans*)
White-browed Scrubwren (*Sericornis frontalis*)
Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*)
Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*)



Obituary



PEEL HOWDEN

Peel sadly passed away in the afternoon of 30 June 2007. Not only will Margaret his partner miss him, but all those who remember him in Birds Australia. My memories of Peel go back to the late 1970s. We walked around one of his favourite haunts, Alfred Cove, he showing me the few nests that he had found that year, always at a distance — I, the young novice photographer, absorbing everything he had to say.

One of his passions was bird photography and in years to come he would ask me where he could find such and such birds to photograph. His last desire when still photographing in his seventies was to find a suitable Peregrine site. I looked aghast knowing Peel's age and the height of those locations that I knew but he was undeterred.

Peel was born to Scottish parents who first emigrated to New Zealand before coming to Australia. Sadly, Peel lost his

mother when he was only eight and his father not long after when he was 11. Such tragedies in early life can influence how one develops in later life but my memories of Peel were of a gentle, unassuming man who seemed unaffected by those early days.

He met Margaret in Sydney before travelling to Tasmania, then finally settling here in Perth. They shared a wonderful life together for 47 years spending most of their time in Attadale near to his favourite walking place, Alfred Cove.

In the birding world there are many fine people who love and care for nature — Peel was certainly one. He will be missed by many that knew him.

Simon Nevill

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.E. (1994) 'The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories' (RAOU Melbourne).

Highlights. The number of unusual sightings is low in this issue, but the quality is extremely high with some very rare sightings. If accepted by BARC, the **Red-legged Crane** at Whim Creek was the second record for Australia (the first was at Broome in the late 1950s) and the **Black-tailed Gull** at Geraldton the second record for WA, and about the fifth for Australia. These two birds saw many people flock to observe them. A **Rockhopper Penguin** and **Fiordland Penguin** were both seen close to Albany. A **Black-bellied Storm-Petrel** seen during a storm at North Mole is also very unusual for WA, especially in winter.

A 'screaming woman' call was heard at Cypress Road, Pinjar on 24 May, and an owl seen — presumably a **Barking Owl**. **Cattle Egrets** are now regularly recorded in the south west. Records of the **Masked Lapwing** and possibly **Royal Spoonbill** also seem to be getting more frequent. Both subspecies of Masked Lapwing have been reported (both *miles* from northern Australia and *novaehollandiae* from eastern Australia) but the frequency of each in SW WA is unclear, so it would be interesting if observers could note this when they do see Masked Lapwings. **Glossy Ibis** are increasing in numbers fairly quickly.

An small unidentified **swiftlet** with a pale belly was recorded by Mike Bamford on West Montelivet Island (East Kimberley) on 27/04/07, but

small swiftlets are notoriously difficult to identify (all small swifts are very rare in WA).

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Flesh-footed Shearwater – 1, 15/07/07, Hillarys pelagic – AC *et al.* (rare in July)

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel – 1, 22/07/07, North Mole (North Fremantle) – AC (rare in WA)

Glossy Ibis – 60, 29/07/07, Maurice Hamer Reserve (Herdsman) – EG (highest count in the south west)

Royal Spoonbill – 2, 08/05/07 and 05/06/07, Bridgewater Lakes (Erskine) – DR * 1, 16/06/07, Bridgewater Lakes (Erskine) – MN * 1, 17/07/07, Len Howard Reserve (Erskine) – MBe (uncommon in the south west)

Masked Lapwing – 2, probably subspecies *novaehollandiae*, 28/07/07, Lake Joondalup (Edgewater) – PJ * 2, subspecies *novaehollandiae* (from eastern Australia), 8/08/07, on grassed sports grounds of Scotch College, adjacent to Lake Claremont (Claremont) – RS (see photograph in this issue)

Common Tern – 1, 02/07/07, North Mole (North Fremantle) – BR (uncommon in south west; rare in winter)

White-winged Triller – 1 juvenile, 14/07/07, Settler's Cottage (Herdsman) – per EG (uncommon in winter; caught and banded)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Rockhopper Penguin – 1, 26/06/07, Shelley Beach (Albany) – GT (rare in WA; photographed in surf)

Fiordland Penguin – 1, 10/07/07, Brambles Beach (Albany) – per JP (rare in WA; photographed; taken in to care)

Cattle Egret – 1, 12/06/07, Middleton Road Northcliffe (Manjimup) – PT (increasing in the south west)

Masked Lapwing – 4, subspecies *novaehollandiae*, 12/06/07, water treatment plant (Bunbury) – DS

BLACK-TAILED GULL – 1 in 1st winter plumage, 06/05/07 to 20/07/07, Fisherman's Wharf (Geraldton) – BRo *et al.* (2nd record for WA if accepted by BARC; see photographs in this issue)

Rainbow Lorikeet – 2 investigating nest hollow, 28/04/07, River Road (Boddington) – GM

ARID ZONE

RED-LEGGED CRAKE – 1, 29/05/07 to 11/06/07, Whim Creek (Roebourne) – GH, MO, ML *et al.* (2nd record for Australia if accepted by BARC; see photograph in this issue)

KIMBERLEY

Painted Snipe – 1, 09-10/05/07, Mt Barnett sewage ponds (Derby – West Kimberley) – DH (uncommon)

OBSERVERS

AC = Alan Collins
BR = Bill Rutherford
BRo = Bruce Robinson (Vic)
DH = Don Hadden
DR = Dick Rule
DS = Dick Shore
EG = Euro Gerbaz
GH = Greg Harewood
GM = Greg Marston
GT = Geoff Taylor



Black-tailed Gull at Geraldton
Photo by Frank O'Connor

Observers, ctd

JP = Jon Pridham
MBe = Mal Beeton
ML = Mathew Love
MN = Mark Newman
MO = Morgan O'Connell
PJ = Peter Jacoby
PT = Peter Taylor
RS = Rod Smith



Red-legged Crake at Whim Creek
Photo by Adrian Boyle



Birds Australia WA Inc reports



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As I write this, I have just returned from a three week trip to South Africa. Besides being an excellent excuse for some good birdwatching (220 species seen!) the trip was primarily to attend and present at the Society for Conservation Biology's global conference. I had the opportunity to inform other scientists from around the world about the importance of the Swan Coastal Plain for a large number of at-risk bird species, and likewise was able to attend an array of interesting presentations on global bird conservation.

A fascinating message seemed to weave itself through many talks focussed on African ecology, and that was the importance of incorporating people in the conservation equation. In stark contrast to Australia, Africa is a densely populated continent, with South Africa hosting a population of 47.4 million in 1.2 million km² compared to WA's 2.05 million in 2.64 million km². That is, in an area more than twice the size of South Africa, WA has a population 23 times smaller than South Africa!

Humans have a great impact on wildlife in Africa and many talks were focussed on the impacts on birds of cattle grazing practices, fire and forestry. Education was seen as critically important in conserving Africa's avifauna and a number of talks focussed on community eco-support and education programs in villages bordering forests and reserves that were important bird sites (often IBAs — important bird areas). Despite the daily struggle to survive in many of these villages, residents were often quite aware of the wildlife around them and quick to work with conservation organisations to protect these areas. Villagers were always financially better off under such schemes and as they realised that eco-tourism could provide a valuable long-term income, there had been a drastic reduction in illegal logging and poaching.

What relevance does this have to WA you may ask? Well despite a significantly lower population size, in a much greater area than South Africa, we have had a disproportionate impact on our fauna in a much shorter amount of time. The conservation ethic of West Australians also has a long way to go to match that of its South African counterparts who inherently value wildlife and have built an economy based on it. We are still faced with a largely eco-unaware public many of whom could not identify the birds in their own backyard let alone be aware of what birdwatchers do. By contrast, at many of the places where we stayed, the owners had guessed we were birdwatchers not only from the strange hours we kept, but the fact that birdwatching was a common activity for visiting tourists.

South Africa has already identified 102 IBAs and has an excellent system of birding routes in place that cover much of the country. These routes include birder-friendly accommodation, often in private conservation reserves. These birding routes and bird-research projects are often funded by major petroleum and resource companies and represent a positive partnership between economic and conservation interests in a country that desperately needs jobs and money.

A change of perspective is always refreshing and provides food for thought. What I took from my South African experience is that as a wealthy, economically driven state, we are diverging from recognising our greatest asset — our natural heritage. Birds Australia WA has an important role to play in re-dressing this balance by continuing to educate the public about the importance and joy of birds and helping to build a community that truly values our unique birdlife.

Rob Davis

LIBRARY NEWS

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

The Library now has about 600 items available for loan at Peregrine House — books, videos, tapes etc.

Recent additions include:

Pizzey G. & Knight, 'Field Guide to the Birds of Australia', 8th edition. (Shelf List No. 598.0994 PIZ)

— this well known field guide has been up-dated and revised by Peter Menkhorst

Samarpan, S. 'Photographic Guide to the Birds of India' (598.0953 SAM)

— a convenient pocket guide for anyone visiting the sub-continent. Covers India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh

Moon, L. 'Know Your New Zealand Birds' (598.0993 GEE)

— another field guide

Nielsen, L. 'Birding Australia Site Guide: the South East' (598.0994 NIE)

— covers the area between Newcastle (NSW) and the Flinders Ranges in SA

Geering, A. *et al.*, 'Shorebirds of Australia' (598.3 GEE)

— brings together the latest information on the ecology

and behaviour of shorebirds in Australia, together with colour photographs and distribution maps

Straw, P. Ed. 'Status and Conservation of Shorebirds in the East Asian-Australia Flyway' (593.33 STR)

— proceedings of the Australian Shorebirds Conference held in December 2003

Parsons, H. 'Caring for Australian Native Birds', 2nd ed. (598.07 PAR)

— covers the ethics and principles of caring for wild birds as well as dietary advice on every type of bird from the smallest insectivores to large seabirds

'Australian Bird Bander's Manual', (598.07232)

'Shadows in the Desert' (598.91 YOU)

— another in the series of wildlife videos produced by John Young

Library Hours: Monday to Friday 9:30 – 12.30 pm

Borrowing Period: normally 4 weeks

Stewart Houghton
Hon. Librarian



BAWA projects



ROTTNEST ISLAND WADER AND BUSHBIRD SURVEYS, FEBRUARY AND JUNE 2007

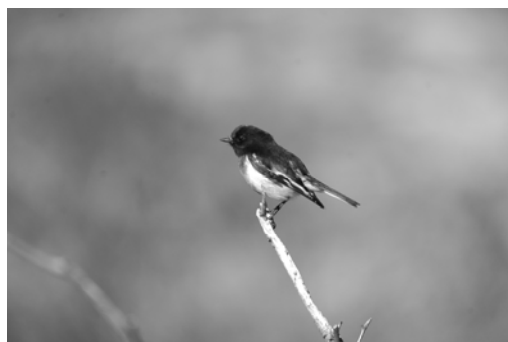
This is the 10th year that Birds Australia volunteers have conducted twice yearly bird surveys of the salt lakes, shorelines and some bush areas of Rottnest Island. The resulting data were used by environmental groups and researchers, including the Rottnest Island Authority's environmental scientists, and were added to Birds Australia's ATLAS, the Western Australian group's and the Australian Wader Study Group data bases.

Wader sites

The 12 wader sites surveyed encompassed all the island's lakes and coastline habitats used by waders (Tables 1 and 2). The total number of waders in the February count was 1687 with 16 species and in June 902 with eight species. Table 3 shows how both the species abundance and density has varied from 1998 to 2007. It was reported that over 1000 Banded Stilts were on the lakes prior to early January when most departed, presumably to take advantage of the flooded lakes inland from Esperance. The importance of this habitat for this species was suggested by the presence of 600 in the June survey.

Bushbird sites

The bushbird surveys (Tables 4 and 5), once again showed the value, for species richness and as a habitat, of the older and larger remnant and revegetated Anniversary Park, Site 1 and Site 2 for Golden Whistler and Red-capped Robin. The continued presence of this latter species in Sites 5, 6 and 7, all to the north and west of Oliver Hill, suggest that this population is becoming well established in this area.



Red-capped Robin (male), Rottnest, July 2007
Photo by Gavin White

Bird species	Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Bar-tailed Godwit													4	4
Common Greenshank														
Terek Sandpiper														
Grey-tailed Tattler											1		3	4
Ruddy Turnstone		10		2	11	25	7			4	9	43	18	129
Sanderling												20	42	62
Red-necked Stint		238		37	213	6	463	138		42	56	7	7	1207
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper														
Curlew Sandpiper		12			1									13
Red-necked Phalarope														
Pied Oystercatcher											4	1	4	9
Black-winged Stilt			2			2								4
Banded Stilt				1		3	150							154
Red-necked Avocet			4				7							11
Pacific Golden Plover				1										1
Grey Plover				1								1	2	4
Red-Capped Plover		20		2	16		14	5		14				71
Lesser Sand Plover														
Greater Sand Plover		1												1
Banded Lapwing		1		1		2			8					12
Whimbrel														
Common Sandpiper											1			1
TOTAL		282	6	45	241	38	641	143	8	60	71	72	80	1687

Table 1: February wader count, 2007

Bird species	Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Ruddy Turnstone		4												4
Red-necked Stint		88			6	27		14					8	143
Pied Oystercatcher						3		2	3		8	5	6	27
Black-winged Stilt								1		4				5
Banded Stilt		597				3				1				601
Red-necked Avocet						2				2				4
Red-capped Plover		50	1		8	7		12						78
Banded Lapwing									40					40
Total		739	1		14	42		29	43	7	8	5	14	902

Table 2: June wader count, 2007

Site 1: Government House Lake
 Site 2: Garden Lake
 Site 3: Serpentine Lake
 Site 4: Causeway/Pearse Lake
 Site 5: Herschel Lake
 Site 6: Lake Bagdad
 Site 7: Lake Vincent
 Site 8: Oval/Golf Links/Airstrip
 Site 9: Pink Lake/Lake Negri
 Site 10: West End Bays
 Site 11: Porpoise Bay
 Site 12: Salmon Bay

Bird Species	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bar-tailed Godwit	4	7	6	5	14	10	11	15	9	4
Whimbrel	1	4	1		1	1	1		1	
Common Greenshank	1	2	1					1	1	
Common Sandpiper	2	2	1	2	2		10			1
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	20	27	6	11	4	2	1		4
Terek Sandpiper		1						1		
Ruddy Turnstone	175	367	285	430	402	299	236	159	211	129
Great Knot				5						
Sanderling	77	125	60	67	121	94	98	87	91	62
Red-necked Stint	438	1125	1504	1324	1380	958	978	791	1331	1207
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper			17					1		
Pectoral Sandpiper			1							
Curlew Sandpiper	90	141	60	345	64	98	46	8	25	13
Red-necked Phalarope			1	1	1		1	2	2	
Pied Oystercatcher	7	11	12	6	7	10	8	4	1	9
Black-winged Stilt	5	2	2	2	6	6	2	7	13	4
Banded Stilt	3284	1107	20	418	5090	7713	7617	5735	4	154
Red-necked Avocet	11	20	9	4	13	8	11	8	11	11
Pacific Golden Plover		1						1	1	1
Grey Plover	12	24	11	14	15	17	13	5	5	4
Red-capped Plover	180	431	111	113	161	162	135	162	89	71
Lesser Sand Plover		1	1	2	3		2	1		
Greater Sand Plover		7	13	3	1	4	2	2		1
Banded Lapwing	24	15	8	13	4	41	37	38	24	12
TOTAL	4312	3413	2151	2760	7296	9425	9210	7029	1819	1687

Table 3: A comparison of Rottnest mid summer water counts, 1998-2007

The Fan-tailed Cuckoo was again recorded in the winter survey suggesting the importance of Rottnest Island for this species known to move seasonally. Their continued winter presence could result from the relative abundance of White-browed Scrubwrens (71), dome shaped nest builders and favoured by the parasitic Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

Incidental sightings

It was considered worth recording species sighted incidentally that were not recorded in the wader and bushbird survey to establish some indication of the avian population on the island (Table 6).

The significant results from this in June were: the numbers of Australian Shelduck (113), mostly sighted around the fresh water springs, but some on the beaches, Osprey (9), and the continued presence of Painted Button-quail (4). There were no Rock Parrots seen although there was extensive searching for this species in their known habitat. The Galah numbers (4) were less than in the summer count (22-30) suggesting that this species moves to and from the island. The Little Eagle, not previously recorded, would be a vagrant.

Birds Australia Western Australia would like to acknowledge and thank the Rottnest Island Authority and the School of

Animal Biology at the University of Western Australia for their assistance with information and facilities. We would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Rottnest Express in providing travel concessions to and from the island.

John Lauri and Suzanne Mather



Immature Red-capped Robin, Rottnest, July 2007
Photo by Gavin White

Bird species	Site	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Common Pheasant		4	3				1	1				1	
Nankeen Kestrel													
Harrier species													
Spotted Turtle-Dove													
Laughing Turtle-Dove		3	1		2	1	1	3				8	1
Rock Parrot													
Sacred Kingfisher													
Rainbow Bee-eater		24	21	10	15	6	16	4					
White-browed Scrubwren		5	30	4	2	6	1	17				2	
Western Gerygone		4	4		2	7		10					
Singing Honeyeater		15	12	1	11	2	5	17	1	1		1	
Red-capped Robin		5	9		5			13					
Golden Whistler			8		1			1					
Australian Raven		6	10	1	12	55	30	7		2		1	1
Silvereye		52	36	21	34	60	36	80		2		12	2
Painted Button-quail		2		2		4							
Richard's Pipit													
White-fronted Chat		5						11					
Galah													

Table 4: February bushbird survey, 2007

Peafowl hen on nest site 1.

2 Rainbow Lorikeets flew over site 1, 1 seen at Settlement.

Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins were observed flying over all 12 sites.

Site 1: Anniversary Park

Site 2: Kingston

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

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

Site 5: Fire site

Site 6: Beekeepers Block

Site 7: West of Oliver Hill

Sites 8-12: Sites north of Forbes Hill

Bird species	Sites	1	2	3 & 4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Common Pheasant						1							1
Little Eagle					1								1
Painted Button-quail				1									1
Laughing Turtle-Dove			1			1		1		4	2		9
Fan-tailed Cuckoo		1	1										2
White-browed Scrubwren		8	31	3	8	4	9	2	1				66
Western Gerygone		11	8		11		3	1					34
Singing Honeyeater		12	10	4	2	3	8	2		2	4	3	50
Red-capped Robin		14	8	2	12	8	5		1				50
Golden Whistler		8	8	1	2	1							20
Grey Fantail					2			1			1		4
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike			2										2
Australian Raven		8	12	4	7	1	13	2		10	2	1	60
Welcome Swallow		6	110				9			9	2	2	138
Tree Martin		2	4										6
Silvereye		9	27	5	11		19		1		4	2	78
Species richness		10	12	7	9	7	7	6	3	4	6	4	

Table 5: June bushbird survey, 2007

Species	Numbers	Wader Survey	Bushbird Survey	Total
Common Pheasant	10		1	11
Indian Peafowl	10			10
Australian Shelduck	21	92		113
Pacific Black Duck	16	26		42
Grey Teal	28	33		61
Pied Cormorant	10	10		20
Little Pied Cormorant		3		3
Australian Pelican	3			3
Osprey	9			9
Little Eagle			1	1
Nankeen Kestrel	1			1
Painted Button-quail	3		1	4
Pied Oystercatcher	5	27		32
Silver Gull	120	344		464
Caspian Tern	6	40		46
Crested Tern	50	220		270
Fairy Tern		6		6
Bridled Tern		9		9
Laughing Turtle-Dove	8		9	17
Spotted Turtle-Dove	2			2
Galah	4			4
Rainbow Lorikeet	1			1
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	2		2	4
Sacred Kingfisher	4			4
Spotted Pardalote	1			1
White-browed Scrub-wren	5		66	71
Western Gerygone	7		34	41
Singing Honeyeater	24		50	74
White-fronted Chat	30			30
Red-capped Robin	4		50	54
Golden Whistler			20	20
Grey Fantail			4	4
Willie Wagtail	4			4
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	1		2	3
Australian Magpie	2			2
Australian Raven	80		60	140
Welcome Swallow	83		138	221
Tree Martin			6	6
Silvereye	40		78	118

Table 6: Incidental sightings, June 2007, including wader and bushbird species outside survey sites



Wildlife & Natural History Tours

George Swann,
Kimberley Birdwatching
P O Box 220, Broome, W A 6725
Email: info@kimberleybirdwatching.com.au
Ph/Fax: (08) 9192 1246
www.kimberleybirdwatching.com.au

*Offering the most authoritative birdwatching tours
in North Western Australia.*

***Black Grasswren Accommodated
Best of the Kimberley
Pelagic Trip to Ashmore Reef
Fly/Drive Mitchell Plateau
PLUS MORE MORE MORE***

Contact us for tour details 2007/2008

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

STATION SURVEYS, 2007

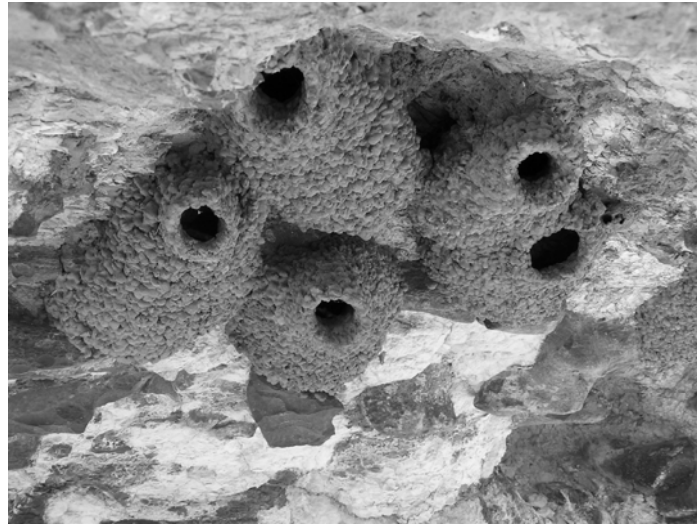
Earaheedy and Lorna Glen

Seventeen members gathered at the rough camp on Earraheedy Station 250 km north east of Wiluna on 10 June to hear John Luyer explain the new survey procedure to be used on the selected DEC research sites. Pam Agar, Alison Paull and Ruth Luyer organised the daily schedule. Life in the rough camp was much improved by the toilet facility provided by George Agar. Roads to the stations were excellent and station tracks were in good condition with few punctures or scratches on members' cars.

We were accompanied on the first day's survey by Karl Brennan from the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Kalgoorlie office (the first active involvement of a DEC officer since station surveys began six years ago). Karl returned later bringing fuel and water and he was presented with a can of lemonade to show our gratitude for his 200 km round trip. Erica Shedley did not get much chance to watch birds as she was busy doing a vegetation survey at each site on Earraheedy.

The highlights of the Earraheedy surveys (98 on the bird list) were Michael and Lesley Brooker's location of a Rufous Fieldwren, good sightings of Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, and Robina Haynes' sighting of Orange Chats for all to enjoy. A side trip to Sydney Heads provided a good look at a Western Bowerbird bower and Sandra Hogben's sighting of eight Bustards.

The Overdue Persons Procedure devised by Ed Paull was not activated even though Bruce Haynes managed to take a



Fairy Martin nests on Earraheedy at a small breakaway.

Photo by Pam Agar

wrong turn on the main road between the stations and Les Hogben got so disoriented that he thought the sun was in the south!

A DEC team led by Mark Cowan was trapping at Lorna Glen in conjunction with a cat-baiting program and we surveyed their sites twice to provide data for their research and a station list of 76 birds — even though a lack of water severely limited the number of waterbirds. Mark expressed appreciation on behalf of DEC for the contribution made by the BAWA

survey team (equivalent to 10% of the man-hours of the DEC Goldfields Region conservation staff).

The highlights of the Lorna Glen surveys were a pair of nesting Black-breasted Buzzards and George Agar's flushing of a Tawny Frogmouth which, when he followed it, was found killed by a Brown Falcon.

The facilities at Lorna Glen included hot showers, flush toilets, kitchen and BBQ that were enjoyed by all after a week of rough camping. The caretakers were most helpful and Mrs Mack joined the survey on the last day. BAWA members are welcome to stay at Lorna Glen and camp under the tall trees with their Galahs, Australian Ringnecks, Pied Butcherbirds, Australian Magpies and Barn Owls.

Members interested in participating in the 2008 station surveys should contact John Luyer, Pam Agar or Ed Paull for further information.

Robina and Bruce Haynes



Western Bowerbird's active bower, complete with Northern Sandalwood nuts, bones, glass and bullet-shells! At Sydney Heads Pass, Earraheedy.

Photo by Pam Agar



Little Button-quail egg-shells, Earraheedy.

Photo by Pam Agar

NIGHT PARROT SIGHTING FOR WA: A FIRST FOR AUSTRALIA

As many Birds Australia WA members will be aware, Brenden Metcalf and I saw two Night Parrots on 12 April 2005 near the Fortescue Marshes in the Pilbara.

Now here's some good news — after nearly a year of deliberation, this sighting has been accepted by the Birds Australia Rarities Committee (BARC) and represents the first sighting of the species ever accepted by that committee. Detailed descriptions were written independently by both of us immediately following the sighting and these were provided to BARC. The detail was sufficient to allow a thorough investigation of the case and subsequent acceptance.

The sightings occurred at dusk at Minga Well, in a very dry period with little significant rainfall for the six months prior. Minga Well is a permanent soak on the Cloudbreak lease of Fortescue Metals Group Ltd. Two Night Parrots were observed drinking from the soak, on a bank opposite the two observers. During several minutes of observation, the distinctive features were noted, including the dumpy appearance and distinctive plumage consisting of a dull greenish colour with a yellowish green colour on the breast. The plumage was distinctly black-flecked giving a streaked appearance of the feathers.

Follow-up trips were undertaken by a team including members of the Department of Environment and Conservation, Mike Bamford and others, but did not record any further concrete evidence of Night Parrots. Surveys are ongoing.

As all members will know, there have now been two dead specimens of Night Parrots recovered from Queensland in 1990 and late 2006. Sightings from Western Australia have been scarce but ongoing since the first Atlas and a number of these have come from the Pilbara.

Any birdwatchers travelling to the Pilbara should be alert and vigilant when travelling at dawn, dusk and night, and any sightings of Night Parrots should be recorded and reported immediately, with as much detail as possible on the appearance of the birds as well as an accurate locality. Sightings can be reported to Allan Burbidge at the Department of Environment and Conservation (tel 9405 5109, email allan.burbidge@dec.wa.gov.au).

Rob Davis

MISSING TERNS

While cruising up the Kimberley coast from Broome to Wyndham, our group, led by Maurice O'Connor, had numerous sightings of Beach Stone-curlews on lonely beaches. When seen in flight, their unfamiliar shape puzzled us at first. White-bellied Sea-Eagles were seen each day of our 12-day trip, and at Careening Bay, two Ospreys were seen on their nest, which was on a basalt rock at the sea's edge.

While exploring mangroves in Camp Creek on the Prince Regent River, we saw Chestnut Rails on the exposed mud flats, and a Grey Goshawk flying overhead.

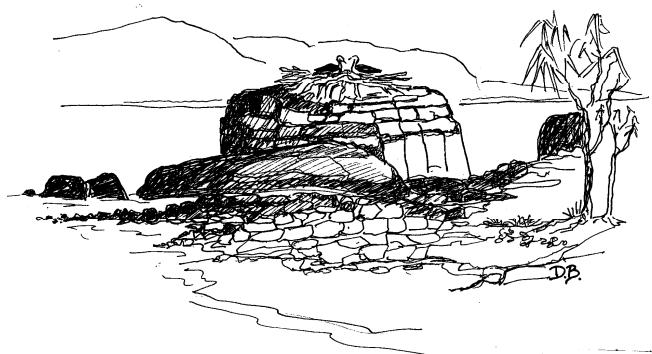
On St Patrick's Island, the noise of a helicopter overhead startled a Pied Imperial Pigeon out of its rainforest thicket.

We sailed on to Sterna Island (Admiralty Gulf), hoping to see a colony of Roseate Terns, which had bred there in past years, but at this date, 9 May, there was no sign of any seabird colony there, nor at Low Rocks.

On the plateau above King George Falls we saw a White-quilled Rock-Pigeon fly off its nest on a low sandstone ledge.

Further north, while exploring tidal creeks on the Berkeley and Helby Rivers, we had great views of Red-headed Honeyeaters, Mangrove Golden Whistlers and Shining Flycatchers and were given a beautiful dawn chorus by two Lemon-bellied Flycatchers perched on top of some mangroves.

Diane Beckingham



Ospreys nesting at Careening Bay
Sketch by Diane Beckingham

HOVERING HARRIER

Around 9:00 am on Saturday 16 June, my husband and I were having a cup of coffee and doing a bit of birdwatching at the south eastern corner of Lake Monger when we noticed a bird of prey patrolling the eastern shoreline.

It became clear after watching it for a while that it was a juvenile Swamp Harrier. It then started patrolling across the water

and when it was roughly in line with us in the Grantham Street car park closest to the freeway, it started hovering like a Black-shouldered Kite, even managing to hold its position without flapping.

Below the bird there was considerable splashing at regular intervals. At first we could only see the hint of the top of a head amid a spray of water but we then saw a Musk Duck



Nest and eggs of White-quilled Rock-Pigeon
(above King George Falls)
Photo by Diane Beckingham

head emerge for a split second before submerging with a big splash. There seemed to be two Musk Ducks frantically trying to stay below the water while the harrier hovered overhead.

After five minutes or so, and a couple of attempts by the harrier to drop, legs extended, and grab a duck, the ducks seemed to have moved out of its direct line of sight and were a bit behind and ahead of it, but still staying submerged only emerging very briefly amid a big spray of water every now and then. After a few more minutes of this stalemate the harrier gave up and cruised back to the shoreline, glided up and down a couple of times and then flew across the lake to the south western corner where we lost sight of it.

We had been watching the harrier and did not see what the Musk Ducks did after the harrier left. We didn't notice any more splashing in that area and unfortunately I didn't think to scan the area for them.

We found this observation particularly interesting as we had seen a Swamp Harrier-sized bird of prey hovering over Lake Monger a few months ago, when the lake was at its lowest. We had stopped at the lake on our way home to check the water level when we saw the bird of prey hovering above an area of water that looked as if it was boiling with fish, as though a school of fish was trapped in a small area. However, we did not have binoculars so could not have a close look at the bird to identify it positively.

And in view of what we saw on Saturday, we now wonder if in fact the furious splashing could have been caused by a group of waterbirds trying to evade the hovering predator.

I was wondering if anyone had seen anything similar or could shed some light. We have never seen the Swamp Harrier hovering like this and none of our bird books make any reference to this behaviour.

Liz Grant

Editors' note: Marchant and Higgins (HANZAB Vol. 2) report this behaviour, which often results in the prey birds being harassed to exhaustion.

CRAKES AND SNIPE IN THE KIMBERLEY

A glance at the *Atlas of Australian Birds* shows very few sightings of crakes and snipe for the Kimberley. A recent sighting of a Painted Snipe at the Mt Barnett sewage ponds has prompted me to put together my observations of these species along the Gibb River Road.

Painted Snipe: One was seen on 9 and again on 10 May 2007 at the Mt Barnett sewage ponds. I was able to obtain a distant photograph.

Baillon's Crake: One bird was seen and distantly photographed on 2 December 2006, also at the Mt Barnett sewage ponds.

Australian Spotted Crake: One bird was seen on 19 and 20 March 2005 at Mt Barnett sewage ponds. These are the only sightings of this species despite my visiting these ponds almost daily.

Spotless Crake: This species is present in a wetland near the community at Gibb River. I don't visit this area very often but I have heard its diagnostic and unique, loud, motorbike-like trilling 'purr' during January and February 2007.

White-browed Crake: This species arrived during the wet season. It was found at both the Mt Barnett sewage pond outlet and the Gibb River community wetland. It nested and then when the overflow pond at the Mt Barnett sewage ponds dried up, it departed until the next wet season. On 30 March 2006 I found a five egg nest and the next day, while quietly watching the area, saw an adult leading four half grown chicks. In February 2007 the White-browed Crakes returned but there was then a long dry spell and they left without nesting. However at the Gibb River community wetland on 14 February three occupied nests containing three, four, and four eggs respectively were found. On 15 February the nests had the same number of eggs. I didn't visit again until 11 March when all three nests were empty.

Don Hadden



White-browed Crake nest
(see also photo on next page)
Photo by Don Hadden

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITES AT WHITFORD NODES

Over recent weeks I have been observing a pair of Black-shouldered Kites that occupy some of the Whitford Nodes area. They have a regular perching place in a tree near the corner of Whitfords Ave and West Coast Road, Hillarys.

Last Sunday, 1 July around 8:00 am, I observed one of the pair hovering close to where they perch and then dropping down on to prey. I was unable to see exactly how the prey was taken, either on or near the ground, but I saw the bird about one minute later on the perch devouring a fledgling Singing Honeyeater.

I can confirm it was a Singing Honeyeater as the parent bird was only a couple of metres away on the next branch in a very agitated state trying to coax the Black-shouldered Kite away. The parent bird hung around for several minutes before moving off.

Feathers left behind also confirmed it was a young Singing Honeyeater.

Laurie Martin



White-browed Crake in the Kimberley
(see text on previous page)
Photo by Don Hadden

AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT AT LORNA GLEN

On 22 June I was involved with surveys on Lorna Glen. While making use of free time during a lunchbreak at Sandstone Bore, I flushed a bird from the ground.

I expected a Spotted Nightjar but, because of its overall grey colouring, I realised the bird was a Tawny Frogmouth.

While attempting to find the bird again I became aware that a party of Yellow-throated Miners ahead of me seemed very agitated. I made my way to a clump of taller trees where 15 to 20 miners, up to 12 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, a butcherbird and some Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters were all making a fuss.

I approached the trees, expecting to see a Tawny Frogmouth cowering within them. As I moved closer the smaller birds took off but there was still no sign of a frogmouth. Suddenly a Brown Falcon flew up from the base of the trees.

The falcon moved gradually higher and higher as I approached but seemed reluctant to leave the area. I suspected it had a kill and checked the base of the tree, to find a Tawny Frogmouth, freshly killed.

I examined the carcass, which had barely a feather out of place. I contemplated taking it back to show the others but considered the Brown Falcon deserved its meal and left him to it.

George Agar

THE WHITE-WINGED FAIRY-WREN IN PERTH

The White-winged Fairy-wren was first seen locally in the coastal dunes at Burns Beach in 1931 and subsequently in the coastal dunes at City Beach in 1949 (Serventy and Whittell 1976). I observed it in the same habitat within the Swanbourne Rifle Range during the 1950s. At that time it did not occur inland from the coastal dunes and I never located it further south or anywhere south of the Swan River.

The White-winged shared its habitat with the Variegated Fairy-wren but the two species avoided each other and did not mix. The Splendid shared the dense coastal wattle inland of the dunes with the White-browed Scrub-wren and the

occasional Silvereye. But the Splendid rarely ranged to the coastal dunes and did not mix with the other two species of fairy-wrens. I can't remember how far inland the Splendid ranged but I think it did so into the Tuart, even if rarely.

The White-winged Fairy-wren was first observed on the Swan River at Heirisson Island in 1948 and subsequently at the Causeway marshes and Pelican Point, Crawley (Serventy and Whittell 1976). It was seen at Maylands by John Malone

in June 1979 (Anon, 1982), and by Ray Schulz, Doug Watkins and Roger Jaensch in October 1983 (Anon 1983), and in December of 1983 I observed a fully-plumaged male at Maylands too. I subsequently determined that two colonies occupied the western half of the peninsula and on four occasions saw males in the riverside vegetation south of Clarkson Road (Stranger 1991). I last saw the species at Maylands in May of 1987 but it may have persisted there until the formation of the golf-course, which was largely completed by October of 1989.

Storr and Johnstone (1988: 63) cite it as being casual on the Swan River but my observations at least, suggest that it will become resident in suitable areas, especially where there are sedge and samphire communities. It may have formerly been resident at Heirisson Island and the Causeway too, because it will utilise and range over a wide variety of habitats (Stranger 1991).

During 1983 to 1987 I searched the riverside areas between Heirisson Island and what is now the Redcliffe Bridge, but failed to find any fairy-wrens. They simply were not there! However the White-winged has now been seen at Bennett Brook, and at the Bayswater Bird Sanctuary in 1995. The Splendid Fairy-wren has also been seen at Bennett Brook (Cooper *et al.* 1999) but as far as I know it does not occur closer to Maylands.

It seems that the White-winged Fairy-wren is an aggressive wanderer and capable of residing in and utilising a wide

variety of habitats, and this undoubtedly partly accounts for its continuing expansion of range in the Perth area and south along the coastal plain, and where it has been observed at Naval Base and Manjimup, and even near Dwellingup on the Murray River (Little 1990). Perhaps the latter birds however arrived there from the east.

References

- Anon. (1982). More on White-backed Swallows near Perth. *Western Australian Bird Notes* **21**, 6.
- Anon. (1983). General observations. *Western Australian Bird Notes* **28**, 10-11.
- Cooper, N.K, Dell, J. and Cowan, M.A. (1999). The vertebrate fauna of Bennett Brook and Success Hill Reserve, Caversham. *Western Australian Naturalist* **22**, 179-190.
- Little, J.G. (1990). White-winged Fairy-wren at Lane Pool Reserve, near Dwellingup. *Western Australian Bird Notes* **54**, 6.
- Serventy, D.L. and Whittell, H.M. (1976). 'Birds of Western Australia'. (UWA Press: Nedlands, WA.)
- Storr, G.M. and Johnstone, R.E. (1988). Birds of the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent seas and islands. *Records of the Western Australian Museum* Suppl. No 28.
- Stranger, R.H. (1991). Occurrence of the White-winged Fairy-wren at Maylands, suburban Perth, Western Australia. *Western Australian Naturalist* **18**, 215.

Robert Stranger

CARNABY'S DRINKING HABITS AT BOUNDARY LAKE

On 30 May, we were counting at Boundary Lake in Yalgorup National Park. More than 300 Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos were flying around and across the lake, in both directions and in smaller groups. We then observed that they were flying from the east side of the lake to seepage coming from the reed beds in the north west corner. As we got closer we observed them drinking in groups of 20 to 40 birds at the seepage pools (see photo).

Afterwards they flew east to the other side of the lake, where some appeared to be feeding on or in the new shoots of the samphire vegetation. A smaller group was also feeding in or on the samphire at the northern end.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos have been seen in previous years drinking at the seepage on both the west and east sides of the lake and at a small soak west of the western reed beds. Although the lake is hyper-saline at this time of the year, the seepage is fresh to brackish until it enters the lake. Have others observed Carnaby's feeding on new samphire shoots?

The area between Boundary Lake and Duck Pond to the north is a favoured habitat for these cockatoos through the summer.

Dick Rule and Bill Smart



Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, Boundary Lake
Photo by Dick Rule

MALLEEFOWL OBSERVATION IN 1930

I have recently received from the United Kingdom a bundle of letters written by my father when he was an immigrant working on a farm in Wyalkatchem. On 19 January 1930 he wrote the following to his sister in Lancashire concerning various types of wildlife that became meals:

... kangaroo is a real treat — not to mention wild turkey & pears especially juicy & mallee hens.

The latter by the way build a stack of sticks about 4 feet cube. Put some small twigs in middle lay their eggs on these & cover over with sand and then forget about them. But the very day they come out the Mallee Hen is there & uncovers them & protects them from snakes & crows ...

As a 26-year old Lancashire lad this must have been a fascinating time for observing the wild life in this strange country he soon learned to call home.

Molly Angus (observation by Bruce Moncrieff)

GREY CURRAWONG ON THE ALBANY HIGHWAY

Mary Bremner has suggested that there has been an explosion of Grey Currawongs along Albany Highway this year. She recorded 260 on the side of the road between 0700 and 0730 on 16 June. Then between Sullivan Rock and 25 km north, she saw a further 180 birds and 80 birds between Sullivan Rock and Serpentine River. She reports that the last explosion of Grey Currawongs in this same area was when 90 birds were seen in mid June 2002.

(Editor)

MAGPIE-LARK BREEDING AND FLOCKING

Magpie-larks *Grallina cyanoleuca* are well established throughout the Perth metropolitan area and even breed in the Central Business District.

Nest building material

A ready supply of nest building material is probably a pre-requisite for establishing a territory and I have often wondered where these birds get their nest building mud in built up areas. The following observations show how they have adapted to this changing environment.

In Carlisle and Belmont building material was gathered from storm water sumps and muddy potholes. A pair of Magpie-larks was seen building a nest in a Jacaranda tree from 13 – 28 September 2001. This was a dry year. Roof gutters often contain water long after it has stopped raining so anyone who has cleaned out their roof gutters would be familiar with the muddy sediment and decaying leaf litter that builds up over time. A Magpie-lark was seen gathering building material out of the roof gutter of a nearby house many times over. The material collected, however, lacked cohesion and soon fell to the ground when applied to the chosen nest site.

On another occasion a completed nest fell to the ground during a storm and showed that a range of man-made materials had been incorporated into the nest construction. In addition to the common materials used to make the nest such as grass fibres, leaves, plant material, mud, sand and feathers, the nest walls contained pieces of string, insulation wool, material mesh, cotton lint, newspaper and other synthetic fibres. The cup was lined with feathers and grass.

The commencement of nest building is dependent on suitable rainfall that creates mud for construction. This varies from year to year. I have observed Magpie-larks building nests from June till October (Table 1).

Tree species used for nest sites

My records have Magpie-lark nests in a variety of tree species: Norfolk Island Pine, Jacaranda, pine, Plane trees, Tuart, Lemon-scented Gum, Tasmanian Blue Gum and several other *Eucalyptus* species.

Nest site fidelity can last for many years. The Tasmanian Blue Gum next door has had a Magpie-lark nest for the past nine years. At Lake McLarty I found a gum tree that had three nests on the same branch. They often lose nests during heavy spring rain or storms and will build a second nest.

Metropolitan Magpie-lark roosts

Magpie-larks assemble into roosts, most notably over the winter months. Serventy and Whittell (1976) mention that some winter flocks may attain large proportions,

as at Northam where aggregations of about 500 birds have been seen. However, observations made around Perth southern suburbs suggest that they form roosting flocks all year round. The tendency to form large flocks was not a feature of the Perth area at the time. Most of my records relate to the Cannington roost, which contained 40-100 birds.

In spring the males begin to pay more and more attention to their own territory and are joined eventually by their females, the roosting flock remaining only of immature unmated birds.

When John Gilbert was studying the local birdlife in 1839-42 he found large concentrations of Magpie-larks "on the banks and muddy flats of the lakes around Perth". Subsequently the species declined around the metropolitan area and elsewhere, and at least from 1890 to the early 1920s only two nesting areas were known, one at Guildford and the other at Cannington. The species increased considerably afterwards (Serventy and Whittell 1976).

Some records in *Western Australian Bird Notes* (WABN) list sightings of large numbers of Magpie-larks, for example a record of 60 birds at Northampton on 20 May 1993 suggests that this was probably a migratory or nomadic flock (WABN 67). There was also a record of 200 birds at Oakford (Armadale/Kelmscott) on 25 April 1994 (WABN 70). (Johnstone and Storr 2004) note the occurrence of wandering flocks of up to 100 birds, mostly immatures, in the south-west.

Observations for this study were made at four different roosting sites:

1. A large solitary pine tree behind the Cannington Chiropractic Centre at 11 Cecil Avenue Cannington (1998).

Date	Status	Location	Tree
28 June 2005	Completed nest	Lake McLarty	Rivergum
28 June 2005	Completed nest	Lake McLarty	Tuart
13 July 2003	Commenced building	Carlisle	Tasmanian Blue Gum
August 2003	Nest building	Tomato Lake	<i>Eucalyptus</i> species
2 August 1997	Nest, freshly built	Thornlie	Rivergum
22 August 2001	Nest nearly complete	Thomsons Lake	<i>Eucalyptus</i> species
29 August 1997	Sitting on nest	Thornlie	Rivergum species
7 September 1998	Commenced building	Carlisle	Tasmanian Blue Gum
13 September 2001	Nest building	Carlisle	Jacaranda
14 September 2002	Storm blown juvenile	Carlisle (ground)	Tasmanian Blue Gum
14 September 2003	Nest with 2 young	Welshpool	<i>Eucalyptus</i> species
16 September 2003	Nest with 2 young	Lake McLarty	Tuart
29 September 2002	Sitting on nest	Thomsons Lake	<i>Eucalyptus</i> species
4 October 1998	Nest nearly complete	Thomsons Lake	<i>Eucalyptus</i> species
7 October 1997	Juvenile ready to fledge	Langford	Lemon-scented Gum

Table 1: Observations of Magpie-lark nests from June to October, 1997 to 2005.

2. Several pine trees next to the cycle/walk track in Charles Paterson Park located alongside the Swan River between Burswood Casino and the Causeway (1998).
3. Two stands of pine trees to the west of Sevenoaks Senior College along Sevenoaks Street, Cannington (2001, 2002, 2003).
4. A young Morton Bay Fig on an industrial property in Queens Park.

Magpie-larks showed a preference for roosting in trees with dense foliage. Trees selected were pine, Morton Bay Fig and Lillypilly. The foliage of the Morton Bay Fig and Lillypilly was so dense that you could not see the birds once they had flown inside the tree.

These tree species were probably selected because they provided better protection from the elements, in particular wind and rain. In addition they would have provided a relatively warmer or cooler micro climate inside, depending on the season.

How to find a roost

There are some tell tale signs to look for when trying to locate a roost.

What initially drew my attention were the large number of Magpie-larks seen in certain locations. Groups were seen on power lines, feeding on grass ovals or along verges and sitting on lampposts, particularly if these observations were made in the late afternoon or early morning. These are an indication that a Magpie-lark roost may be in the neighbourhood.

For example, one late June afternoon 22 Magpie-larks were seen feeding along the Great Eastern Highway near the Burswood Casino. Further investigation showed they were flying towards the pine trees along the Swan River, which turned out to be their roosting site. It may take several attempts to find a roost as birds travel in from a fair distance.

Arrival pattern

Most of these observations related to the Cannington roost sites.

Magpie-lark gathered near their roosting site a couple of hours before sunset. Small groups foraged in surrounding gardens, along street verges or in car parks, sat on power lines and in nearby trees. Numbers slowly increased as the afternoon wore on. At Sevenoaks Street they gathered on the playing fields at Coker Park. Earliest gatherings recorded

Date	Location	Sunrise	First call	Dispersal	Number	Weather
18.6.98	Cannington	7.15 am	7.10 am	7.15 am	42	Very overcast
22.6.98	Cannington	7.16 am	7.00 am	7.15 am	40	Mainly clear
27.6.98	Burswood	7.17 am	7.08 am	7.24 am	43	Clear, 7C
3.7.98	Cannington	7.17 am		7.15 am	57	Rain, windy
4.7.98	Burswood	7.17 am	7.20 am	7.32 am	19	Overcast, windy
9.7.98	Cannington	7.16 am	7.05 am	7.07 am	62	Clear, cold
5.8.98	Cannington	7.03 am	6.50 am	6.50 am	46	Overcast, windy
20.8.98	Cannington	6.47 am		6.34 am	42	Slightly overcast
18.9.98	Cannington	6.11 am	5.55 am	5.58 am	53	
29.6.01	Sevenoaks	7.18 am	7.07 am	7.12 am	53	Partly cloudy
17.7.01	Sevenoaks	7.14 am	7.05 am	7.10 am	70	Clear, cold
30.12.01	Sevenoaks	5.13 am	4.56 am	4.58 am	48	Clear
5.1.02	Sevenoaks	5.17 am	4.56 am	5.06 am	52	Cloudy
17.02.02	Sevenoaks	5.55 am	5.45 am	5.45 am	66	Easterly, clear sky
16.3.02	Sevenoaks	6.17 am	6.00 am	6.05 am	56	Fine, overcast
7.4.02	Sevenoaks	6.31 am	6.19 am	6.20 am	49	Grey skies
5.5.02	Sevenoaks	6.51 am	6.36 am	6.38 am	55	
19.6.03	Sevenoaks	7.14 am	7.00 am	7.02 am	61	Cold, clear, 1.7 C
13.7.03	Sevenoaks	7.16 am	6.50 am	7.04 am	108	Clear sky, calm

Table 2: Roost dispersal pattern of Magpie-larks. Sunrise times are from the Bureau of Meteorology

were several hours before roosting. Arriving birds called but their main activity was foraging, often in small groups.

Just before sunset flocks flew into the roosting trees. This process took place in silence. Magpie-larks flew up onto the lower branches of the pine trees and then shuffled slowly upwards and clustered near the tree tops where they were difficult to detect once settled. The last birds arrived just before sunset and the birds sat close together.

Departure pattern

The departure pattern was different to the arrival pattern. A typical winter morning at a roost unfolded as follows.

At the beginning of observations, the roost was still cloaked in darkness and silent. Around ten minutes before sunrise birds started calling from the roost site. Usually only a few birds made short calls. This was always a good sign when trying to check on the roosting site. The Magpie-larks started shuffling, fluffing, preening and moving towards the outer trees of the roost. The occasional bird left the roost followed by the first wave of departing birds in groups of 20-30 birds. Generally the roost emptied out quickly, and this happened about ten minutes before sunrise. At Cannington they moved to a row of nearby trees and power lines before moving off in small groups. A second wave followed and any other birds left shortly thereafter and within about 20 minutes the Magpie-lark had dispersed in all directions. The dispersal was very quick in the winter months, within ten minutes, but more drawn out in summer.

Roosting observations were made in the months January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, November and December. This indicated that the roosts were active all year round though larger congregations were present in winter.

References

Johnstone, R. E., and Storr, G. M. (2004). 'Handbook of Western Australian Birds. Volume II. Passerines (Blue-winged Pitta to Goldfinch)'. (Western Australian Museum: Perth.)

Serventy, D.L and Whittell, H.M. (1976). 'Birds of Western Australia', Fifth Edition. (University of Western Australia Press: Perth).

Western Australian Bird Notes (1993), Issue 67, p.2.

Western Australian Bird Notes (1994), Issue 70, p.2.

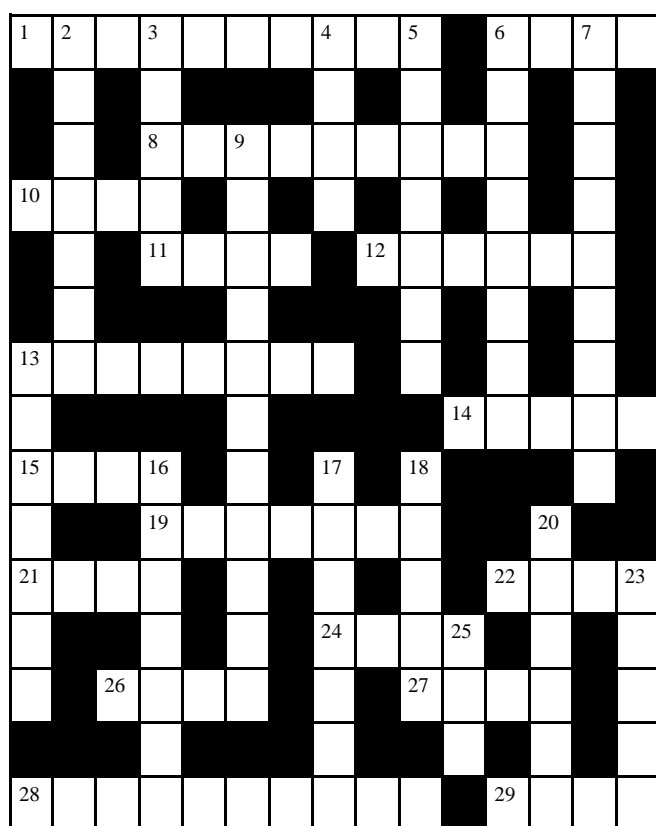
Marcus Singor



Crossword No. 50



By Pam Agar



Clues across

1. Often mulga or spinifex country.
6. May dictate presence of waders.
8. Fabled bird of early sailors.
10. May indicate an intruder.
11. Survey area.
12. Robust.
13. Excursion site on Serpentine River.
14. Questioned.
15. Break in activity.
19. Water-dwelling.
21. Improved by talons.
22. Placid.
24. May consist of seed, fruit or insects.
26. Long and curved in a honeyeater.
27. Small water body.
28. To gather in large numbers.
29. Close relationship.

Clues down

2. Site of 2007 summer campout.
3. Food of Wood Ducks.
4. Possible problem for sea-birds.
5. Harrier body marking.
6. Shearwater nest sites are often among them.
7. Representatives.
9. Not a true quail.
13. Sea-going excursion.
16. Wader often in grassy areas.
17. Needed by long-distance migrants.
18. Likely to be a meal for a Raven.
20. Good woodland birding area.
23. Nest of megapodes.
25. Pitch of bronzewing call.

Australasian Bittern Survey on the Swan Coastal Plain

Volunteers are needed for a series of dusk surveys to verify the use of Swan Coastal Plain wetlands by the Australasian Bittern. The primary aim of the survey is to determine whether this bittern is still present at Thomson's Lake in Beeliar, as there have been no confirmed sightings of this species at Thomson's Lake during the past 15 years. Clarification of this issue will allow the IBA nomination of this important lake to be progressed. However, if there are enough volunteers, the survey will be expanded to other wetlands on the Swan Coastal Plain where the Australasian Bittern has been previously recorded.

When: The surveys are planned to be conducted from 30 minutes prior to sunset until one hour after sunset on the following Sunday evenings: 23 September, 7 October, 21 October, 4 November and 18 November.

Where: Thomson's Lake Nature Reserve. Other wetlands will be included in the survey if there are enough volunteers.

Please register your interest by contacting Robyn Pickering by email :

pickyang@smartchat.net.au
(preferred)

or by telephoning on
9417 2820.

It is important to register so that we can put together small teams of experienced and less experienced volunteers for safety and to ensure correct verification of any calls.

Please volunteer for one or more surveys.

Indian Ocean Seabird Conference Christmas Island

INDIAN OCEAN SEABIRD CONFERENCE 19- 22 April 2008 Christmas Island, Indian Ocean

This will be the inaugural conference of the Indian Ocean Seabird Group and is being organized with the assistance of the Christmas Island Tourism Association (CITA) and Island Explorer Holidays.



Join us on Christmas Island between 17 and 25 April 2008.

The official conference programme will take place between 19 and 22 April 2008.

Day	Symposia / Field Trips
Saturday, 19 April	Population dynamics of Indian Ocean seabirds
Sunday 20 April	Seabirds and fisheries in the Indian Ocean
Monday 21 April	Impact of climate change on Indian Ocean seabirds
Tuesday 22 April	Threats to seabirds on Indian Ocean islands

For Conference Registration, the call for papers and Christmas Island travel and accommodation bookings please visit www.christmas.net.au/iosgconference.php or contact Linda Cash at the Christmas Island Tourism Association via email: marketing@christmas.net.au or telephone +61 (0) 439215001.

For questions on the program/symposia, presentations and proceedings please contact Dr Nic Dunlop via email: tern@git.com.au

We look forward to welcoming you to Christmas Island.

Sunday 16 December: BAWA Christmas barbecue



A barbecue will be held on
Sunday, 16 December
at Peregrine House,
commencing at 6:00 pm.

BYO meat, drinks, and salads
— all members are welcome!

Gold coin donation for hire of the barbecue
would be appreciated.

For members and guests only.

Hoodies need help!



The Hooded Plover Sub-committee obtained a grant from the Lotteries Commission to conduct an expedition to the Nuytsland Nature Reserve to search for Hooded Plovers, and the results are reported in this issue of *WABN*.

After the event some funding was left over and the Lotteries Commission has kindly agreed that this can be used to conduct further inland Hooded Plover surveys.

A subsidy is available to Birds Australia WA members (country and metro) who conduct a Hooded Plover survey at inland salt lakes between June and November 2007.

Your trip/campout does not have to be solely orientated on Hooded Plovers as long as you comprehensively survey some salt lakes for Hooded Plovers and supply observation sheets.

Aim

To survey inland salt lakes.

Locations

Coastal lakes around Hopetoun,
and between Hopetoun and
Esperance
Lake Ronnerup, Bennetts Lake
Salt lakes around Cranbrook
Salt lakes north of the Stirling
Ranges
Yarra Yarra Lakes
Salt lakes near Leeman
Salt lakes east of Perenjori
Lake Grace and many more.

Subsidy

The amount of funding will depend on the length of the trip and areas covered, and is mainly to help defray the cost of fuel. You will need to supply receipts of your expenditure and discuss your plans with the Hooded Plover Sub-committee beforehand.

Contact

Hooded Plover Sub-committee
E-mail: msingor@iprimus.com.au
Tel: 9362 2742



Malleefowl Camp Out

Volunteer Malleefowl Survey Bush Walk

Date: 30th September - 12th October

Area: North Ongerup

Requirements: Good degree of fitness essential

Camping self sufficiency preferred

Min registration period – one week

***Limited shearing quarters beds available**

***BYO food/sleeping bag/pillow**

Registrations Close: Friday 14th Sept

For further information and an application form contact Project Coordinator,
Susanne Dennings ph: 98282083 Mob: 0420107415 (a/hrs)

email: sdennings@bigpond.com



COMBINED CHARITIES' CARD SHOP

Trading at Home Building Society

111 St George's Terrace, Perth

Monday-Friday

5 September - 31 October 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

1 November - 19 December - 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

Telephone: 0439 364 886

www.charitycardswa.com inquiries@charitycardswa.com

Fourth Biennial

AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE



Ornithological Society of New Zealand

Call for Papers and Registration

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

Post-conference field excursions will be available.

An Invitation

You are invited to register for this conference, and present a paper or poster by visiting www.birdswa.com.au/aoc2007 or by writing to the conference coordinator:

S. Mather
Birds Australia Western Australia
167 Perry Lakes Drive
Floreat, WA 6014 Australia
Email: aoc2007@birdswa.com.au
Telephone: +61 (0)8 9389 6416

Other conferences in Perth at this time:

- **The Australian & New Zealand Society for Comparative Physiology & Biochemistry**
1st and 2nd December 2007. <http://www.zoo.latrobe.edu.au/anzscpb/>
- **The Ecological Society of Australia 2007.**
26th to 30th November 2007
<http://www.ecolsoc.org.au/>



A SAMPLE OF PAPERS TO BE PRESENTED AT AOC2007

The conference website, under the PROGRAM heading is updated regularly so it is possible to see the papers that may interest you. The invited plenary and keynote speakers are in bold type.

Carlos Martinez del Rio, University of Wyoming	Birds and neutrons: stable isotopes in ornithology
Sue Nicolson, Uni of Pretoria	Plant nectars
Ian Newton, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology	Highlights from a long-term study of Eurasian Sparrowhawks
Bryson Bates, CSIRO	Climatology
Steve Williams, James Cook University	Climate change and rainforest birds
George Divoky, Uni of Alaska Fairbanks	The response of seabirds to three decades of increasing temperatures in Alaskan arctic
David Winkler, Uni of California	Dispersal and migration in birds. Can a northern perspective illuminate movements in Australia
Linda Chambers, Bureau of Meteorology Research Centre	The impact of a changing climate on migration and breeding in Australian birds
Carol Devney, JCU	Climate change — a tern for the worse?
Andrew Huggett, InSight Ecology	Re-building the Buntine-Marchagee Catchment (Western Australia) landscape for birds: an overview
Jim Radford, Deakin Uni	Predicting the conservation value agricultural landscapes for woodland birds in southern Australia: overview of the Deakin studies
Andrew Bennett, Deakin Uni	Temporal change and avifaunal conservation: dynamics of a woodland bird assemblage over a decade
Greg Ford, Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc.	Conserving birds in production landscapes: tools and training support for land managers
Geoff Barrett, CSIRO	Colonisation, breeding and survival of birds in revegetation in an agricultural landscape in south-eastern Australia
Steve Murphy, Aus. Wildlife Conservancy	The impact of fire management practices on bird communities in the Kimberley, Western Australia
Rohan Clarke, Deakin Uni	Landscape-level benefits of revegetation to birds in an agricultural system
Martine Marron & Allan Burbidge	Questions for research and guidelines for management: how can we do it better?
Robert Gosford, Centre for Resource & Environmental Studies, ANU	The value of secondary research material for ethnobiology —a case study in Warlpiri ornithology
Leo Joseph, CSIRO	Ornithology in the Australian region: a microcosm of modern evolutionary study
Pete Spencer	Black cockatoos and endemism in Western Australia
Nick Dunlop, Cons Council WA	Central place foraging in breeding seabirds. Insights from stable isotope analyses
Iain Taylor	Use of temporary wetlands by shorebirds in Australia
Danny Rogers	Growing up slowly by the sea-side: age of first northwards migration of shorebirds from Australian non-breeding grounds
Clive Minton, AWSG	Migration routes and destinations of a wide range of migratory waders in the east Asian-Australasian flyway
Jim Rivers, University of California Mark Hauber, University of Auckland	The role of experience with brood parasites in explaining the apparent loss of behavioural anti-parasite strategies
Brian Gill, Auckland Museum	The Australasian Museum collections as a resource for ornithology
Adam Leavesley, ANU	The influence of fire on the distribution of mulga birds in central Australia
Rob Davis, UWA	Keeping birds in a rapidly urbanising city: Perth
Jodi Mansell-Fletcher & Sue Mather	Diversity in an urban matrix: bird use of Bold Park
Annemarie van Doorn, U of Florida & Tropical Savannas	Ecology and management of Purple-crowned Fairy-wren
Richard Noske	Tropical Australian birds
Mike Perrin, Uni. of Kwazulu – Natal	Ecology and conservation biology of southern African parrots
Jessica van der Waag, UWA	Malleefowl life history and conservation
Hugh Ford, University of New England	Progressive loss of sub-populations of Hooded Robins and Brown Treecreepers — NSW

CRUISING THE MURRAY RIVER

Proud Australia Nature Cruises have offered BAWA members this fantastic opportunity to explore the lower Murray River at an attractive rate and with a significant financial benefit to BAWA.

With a resident Ecologist passengers experience unique Nature Cruising & encounter The River at its best. Take a journey into history at Ngaut Ngaut Aboriginal Conservation Park. On a small boat, glide through the lagoons and inlets to see prolific birdlife. The Nocturnal Discovery is an insight to abundant wildlife, including the Southern Hairy Nosed Wombat and as dusk falls, enjoy a bush BBQ on the golden sands of the River bank.

Catering for a maximum of only 36 passengers, this boutique product provides the ideal environment for passengers to relax, cruise & unwind and spot birds. The well appointed bar, lounge and dining area provides the perfect location for indulging in the culinary delights of our executive chef, while viewing the passing Australian scenery. The vessel boasts 18 spacious Riverview rooms. Each cabin has twin or double beds, individually controlled air-conditioning units, private en suite, tea & coffee making facilities and hair dryers. All rooms offer spectacular Riverviews & open on to balcony areas.

This unique '7 day Bird Watching & Outback Nature Cruise' will include:

- Air travel from Perth to Adelaide return including all Taxes
- 1 night's accommodation in Adelaide staying at the City Stamford Plaza, Hotel Dinner and Breakfast included
- Adelaide City, Seaside Glenelg, and Mount Lofty, in the Adelaide Hills sightseeing tour
- A 5 night River Murray nature cruise aboard MV Expedition – with **all meals**, ensuite/riverview accommodation & daily nature based shore excursions guided by an ecologist such as:
 - *Onshore BBQ campfire night with live Aussie entertainment*
 - *Reedy Creek Environmental Park.*
 - *Lagoon trips aboard a small boat through the backwaters and inlets guided by a qualified ecologist, a perfect, unspoilt place to spot the river's most famous birds*
 - *Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park*
 - *Murray Aquaculture*
 - *Nocturnal Tours*
- All meals and transfers as stated in the itinerary

This 7day holiday will sell from **AUD\$2350 per person**, fully inclusive. **Nothing else to pay!** This offer will be exclusive to BAWA members, with a suggested departure date during June - July 2008, to allow for sufficient lead time.

The BAWA office holds a DVD and further information on this expedition for anyone interested.

The financial benefit to BAWA is the offer to:

- Provide a royalty payment of AUD\$100 per booking for all bookings received through BAWA.

Based on 15 bookings received in total		
15 bookings @ an average of AUD\$2350 per person	AUD\$35,250.00	
Financial Return to BAWA		
Royalty payment of AUD\$100 per booking received	AUD\$1500.00	
Estimated value of FREE holiday		
'7 Day Bird Watching & Outback Nature Cruise'	AUD\$2350.00	
TOTAL FINANCIAL RETURN TO BAWA		AUD\$3850.00
Based on 30 bookings received in total		
30 bookings @ an average of AUD\$2350 per person	AUD\$70,500.00	
Financial Return to BAWA		
Royalty payment of AUD\$100 per booking received	AUD\$3000.00	
Estimated value of 2 FREE holidays		
'7 Day Bird watching & Outback Nature Cruise'	AUD\$4700.00	
TOTAL FINANCIAL RETURN TO BAWA		AUD\$7700.00

If you are interested in this offer please contact Brice Wells, telephone: 08 9255 3710 or the BAWA office.



What bird is that?

It's good to see that the Shire of Mandurah is concerned about birds, but this sign in South Yunderup suggests that maybe they can't tell the difference between a chook and a duck. While it's nice to see the Malleefowl getting its image around, it seems we have a little way to go yet, in terms of public awareness.

Photo by Marcus Singer.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY WHEN AT A MEETING OR AN EXCURSION HOW DO WE CONTACT YOUR FAMILY?

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT MEMBERS WRITE A CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER ON THE BACK OF THEIR BIRDS AUSTRALIA NAMETAG.

THIS CAN THEN BE USED IN CASE OF ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Nannup Visitor Centre, P Atkins, B Barnett, L Bignall, G Blagden, R & L Breen, B Catcheside, B Chapman, J Clark, A Gwynne, R Hanley & S Fleck, R Jones, A Kendrick, R Lyons, G McCrae, K Onton, P Phillips, P Setchell, E Skillen, B Smart, G Steytler, R Weir & C Gillam, G & C Williams



Country groups



ALBANY BIRD GROUP

June 2007 outing

It was a perfect winter's day on 12 June when 20 of us met at the bird hide on Lake Powell. There was quite a variety of birds as the water was very low and there were extensive mud flats. A Spotless Crake was heard, but kept itself hidden in the reeds. We also saw quite a few bushbirds, including a Red-eared Firetail, butcherbirds and fairy-wrens. A Whistling Kite flew low over us to see what we were all doing there.

After this we went to Michael and Ada Neild's property nearby where a Brown Falcon was being mobbed by a family of Australian Magpies. At North Road near Mutton Bird Island we had a good view of a White-bellied Sea Eagle and its nest. At Mutton Bird Island we saw Australasian Gannets diving, as well as Sooty Oystercatchers on the beach. The day's tally was 62 — one of the group's highest totals.

Charlie Davies

July 2007 outing

Eighteen of us met on a cold but sunny day at the Lower Kalgan Bridge, where a pair of Australian Hobbies live. An Osprey was also there, and a few other waterbirds.

We went on to Goodga Creek and Black Cat Creek on the Two People Bay Road. The Coccinea were just coming out — the bush was beautiful — but not as many birds as we had hoped. There were plenty of Western Spinebills, and lovely views of Scarlet Robins. We had lunch on the banks of the Kalgan, and the bird count was 54 species.

Liz Davies

STAR SWAMP, 17 May

A group of 12 people, including one visitor, gathered in North Beach for this walk. After the arson attack on Star Swamp on 31 December 2005, another fire was lit in the evening of Australia Day this year. The outlook for a bird walk in this reserve was therefore not encouraging but the weather was cool, still and sunny, giving good opportunities to find the birds that were still there.

The intervening five months had rejuvenated the bush somewhat, even if large open areas remained and insufficient rain had fallen to replenish the swamp. Unburnt Menzies Banksias attracted Western Wattlebirds while the sky above had an endless supply of Rainbow Lorikeets. Amongst the patches of large Tuarts the small birds were found, seemingly content in their surviving habitat.

In all, 27 species were recorded. That included a goshawk (or sparrowhawk), which remained unidentified.



Welcome Swallows, Dongara campout.

Photo by Molly Angus

Rod Smith

LAKE RICHMOND, 21 May

Over 40 people gathered to see the birds around the receded waters of this lake. Included were at least ten visitors from the surrounding suburbs willing to learn about their local birds.

Fifty-four species were seen with only four waders, Common Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Red-capped Plover and Black-winged Stilt. This was thought to be because there was very little shallow water; the central area of the lake is very deep. More sightings were made of the Spotted Pardalotes that had moved into the area two weeks previously.

It was pleasing to have so many keen birdwatchers make the effort to come into my area. Thank you one and all.

Mary Vaughan

BICKLEY VALLEY, 27 May

Nineteen people, including a visitor from Germany assembled in the car park below the reservoir wall on a cool damp morning. We walked past the reservoir, along the track to the old Mason and Bird timber tramway bridge and then returned. On the way we deviated down to the creek through the old Scout Association campsite.

There were good views of Elegant Parrots and Western Rosellas. A White-naped Honeyeater posed in a tall dead shrub for the photographers in the group. Some saw the Red-eared Firetail. Forty-two species of birds were recorded for the morning.

Ruth & John Luyer

DONGARA CAMPOUT, 2 – 4 June with Japanese visitor

There was great excitement amongst the 22 birders and our leader Sue Abbott as we had a rare visitor to our shores — more on that later!!

We rallied at 8:00 am on Saturday to walk east of the town bridge on the southern shore of the Irwin River. It was quieter than on previous birding outings but the Silvereyes feeding on the ground were in abundance and kept us alert. Our main sightings were Singing

Honeyeaters, Western Gerygones, White-cheeked Honeyeaters and, lastly, a brilliant Mistletoebird

In the afternoon we headed to Geraldton, hopefully to see our Japanese visitor. Sue had heard about a juvenile Black-tailed Gull in and around the fishermen's wharf. This bird has been a rare visitor, seen only once in Melbourne and once in Darwin we believe. We met up with Kath, a Geraldton birder, and scanned the gulls along the jetties. There were the usual Silver Gulls, Crested Terns, and Pacific Gulls. Being likened to a smaller version of the juvenile Pacific Gull there were a few disappointed people when the slimmer-billed Black-tailed Gull was not there. We scoured the inner harbour to no avail and returned to the outer jetty and to everyone's delight we found it. The telescopes gave us a marvellous view and the gull even did a fly past to show us its finer points. A big 'thank you' to those who brought 'scopes along for the weekend. It provided us with many opportunities to see wonderful details of different birds including this one.

We then went on to Lighthouse Beach, where we saw an Osprey's nest with Osprey, Red-capped Plovers and Red-necked Stints. Then on to the Greenough River mouth, where a beautiful White-bellied Sea-Eagle swept by and there were Ospreys again. We saw seven different raptor species over the weekend.

On Sunday morning we did a 4.5 km circuit of the river, using the new boardwalk. Here, we saw a few waterbirds including Great Egret, some ducks and swans and a spoonbill. At Ellendale Pool we were delighted to see two

Peregrine Falcons perched on two different cliff ledges. The telescopes gave us a detailed view of the strong facial features and even the striped feathered trouser legs. A walk to the river ford gave us a chance to see nine species in the farm paddocks. Along the river we saw Variegated Fairy-wrens, Musk Duck, cormorants, Golden Whistlers, and a great view of a Clamorous Reed-Warbler flitting along the opposite bank. On Sunday night we all had a meal together in the camp kitchen, which was our meeting place each night for the bird count, wine and nibbles.

Our Monday morning trip to Burma Road Reserve was disappointing since there had been a fire one or two years ago in all but a small section. It was slowly regenerating, but we were lucky to see Red-capped Robins again and White-winged Fairy-wrens.

Our final count was 87 species at lunchtime Monday and yours truly won the bottle of red wine, which was shared with our leader that night.

A super weekend thanks to Sue and capped off by four blue-sky days and our Japanese visitor.

Ray Flanagan

FLYNN ROAD, 16 June

Twenty-four people met at the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway in breezy and somewhat chilly conditions. The first site visited had recently been burnt but there were still birds about, although things were fairly quiet early. Rufous Treecreeper and Varied Sittella provided early highlights, while Weebill were prominent throughout. At one point, the group split in two, with both groups seeing Elegant Parrot and Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. Just before the groups joined up again, one birder found at least three Crested Shrike-tits. These were relocated and most people experienced great views. Several people also saw a couple of Restless Flycatchers, a Western Yellow Robin and more Elegant Parrots, including a flock of at least ten birds. A Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring overhead was the only raptor for the day. A couple of people who returned to the cars early were treated to sightings of a Hooded Robin.

About half the group continued to a second site. After lunch, we went searching for more birds and were able to add Western and Yellow-rumped Thornbill to the list while several people enjoyed wonderful views of a male Hooded Robin. Paul Marty then led a couple of people to a patch of heath, where some flowering plants had attracted large numbers of Tawny-crowned, White-cheeked and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters. All up, 45 species were recorded for the day. Thanks go to Charles Merriam for leading a most enjoyable excursion.

John Graff

LITTLE RUSH LAKE, 14 June

A crisp morning saw a small group of seven walkers visit Little Rush Lake. The area was more like a dry mud patch



Irwin River estuary, Dongara campout
Photo by Molly Angus

covered with samphire in both its green and red stages. Despite a dearth of waterbirds (we only saw two Black-winged Stilts and one White-faced Heron in the mud and a lone Australian Pelican flying overhead) the bushbirds were active. We saw a total of 32 species in two hours.

Highlights were a good sighting of two Little Eagles, Rufous Whistlers, New Holland Honeyeaters on the red banksia flowers, Grey Butcherbirds singing happily on high branches of dead trees and a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike enjoying the sun.

Some alert eyes saw two Red-capped Parrots and Yellow-rumped Thornbills. Two new birds to the area were seen — a Common Bronzewing and a Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

All in all, a good morning!

Molly and Barry Angus

VICTORIA RESERVOIR, 23 June

Despite the weather forecast, a small party of six joined Joyce and David at the Victoria Reservoir car park, and enjoyed a very pleasant walk. We managed to find shelter during the worst showers, so only got very wet and not drowned!

A list of 29 birds was called and we were all surprised by the number of robins about. These included Scarlet, Western Yellow and White-breasted.

Morning tea was taken in our cars due to the hailstorm, which caused much amusement.

Thank you very much to Joyce and David, Cora, John, Alan and Ted for a very pleasant, if wet, excursion.

Maureen Cawley

BURSWOOD OPEN SPACES, 11 July

There were only three birdos, with no new members or visitors, joining this mid-week walk. As it turned out it was a

beautiful, sunny morning with lots of bird activity in the Coral Trees that were blooming. Rainbow Lorikeets, wattlebirds, Brown and Singing Honeyeaters abounded.

We walked along the lakes and back along the river. Species numbers were down due to recent rains probably resulting in waterbirds leaving to breed in other wetlands. Regular rarer birds, Great-crested Grebe and Little Egret, were missing.

We saw 34 species and had a thoroughly enjoyable walk. This walk, however, would probably be better timed for February or March when other wetlands are dry.

The newly established heliport with associated noise and air activity would probably have caused a reduction in bird numbers, also.

Tom Delaney

PIESSE BROOK RESERVE, KALAMUNDA, 21 July

Continual heavy rain was forecast. Four intrepid and courageous people joined me in what appeared to be sheer madness.

However, rain stayed in the clouds, the sun shone and we had a great walk for a couple of hours. The pale bark of the Wandoo against the dark, threatening sky, decorated with sparkling drops on the vegetation, was beautiful.

Fifteen minutes before our return to the car park the heavens opened and that was that!

Eighteen species of birds added to the enjoyment.

Stella Stewart-Wynne



Observatory reports



BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

The ebb and flow of human beings is mirrored by the flow and ebb of the birds. Although there are still a lot of migratory shorebirds in Roebuck Bay at this time of year there are far fewer than when the people leave due to the increase in heat and humidity. Among the shorebirds in breeding plumage at this time of year are Red Knot, Great Knot, Bar- and Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper and even Asian Dowitcher. Around the freshwater lakes early returning Wood Sandpipers have been noticed already. A surprising long staying Beach Stone-Curlew has been seen on a regular basis just down from the observatory, and on several occasions it has been seen with a friend, raising the possibility of a happy event.

Rarities have lived up to their name as they have proven pretty rare. There have, however been a few birds that have caused a stir, beginning in April when an Oriental Cuckoo was seen on several occasions in and around the Observatory. Reports of White-throated Needletails from the Broome mangroves were treated with circumspection because they are rarely reported here. Nine Pied Herons also caught the attention of several birdwatchers a few weeks later. These were spotted on the flooded area of Roebuck Plains in the company of thousands of White-winged Black Terns, many in full breeding regalia, and many hundreds of Glossy Ibis. For several weeks there was a very spectacular sight to be seen along the Port Hedland road until the area dried up; some birds departed north to their breeding grounds while others took refuge in the inland lakes. Also in April a single Banded Honeyeater was found in a Coconut Well garden. It stayed just long enough to be appreciated by the April course participants.

May was extraordinary in that it was so quiet on the birding front. A Great Crested Grebe was the only bird to make it onto the 'any other birds' page of the daily bird log. A Little Curlew was found on the rapidly drying Roebuck Plains and an Oriental Plover was found in the same area. Both these species should have been long gone, but the sick and injured are often left behind. We



hope that they will survive the dry season. Most of the White-winged Black Terns had now gone but surprisingly two remained along with a few sad looking Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. One thing we have learnt while doing this job is to always expect the unexpected: six Plumed Whistling-Duck ducklings were found wandering along the middle of Crab Creek Road without a care in the world and no parents in sight. We assumed they knew where they were going.

By June, the areas around Kidney Bean and the lakes had dried out and both were quite easily accessible. The sad remains of a Buff-banded Rail were found on one of our Yellow Chat forays. It appeared to have been killed by a cat; the following week the cat chose a male Painted Snipe for its dinner. In the same area it seems that Magpie Geese had bred in the wetland.

July saw some additions to the 'Any Other Bird' page, namely Welcome Swallow, an unusual bird for this area. A Grey Falcon seen whizzing around the office was subsequently seen perched in the campsite above a very pleased looking birdwatcher. A Radjah Shelduck was first found at Lake Campion and was refound at Lake Eda a few weeks later. As a large group of prospective cannon netters was about to leave the observatory a flock of 16 Varied Lorikeets, again an unusual species for this area, did a flyby salute. Another interesting sighting came from the middle of Broome when an Australian Ringneck was seen flying due east, maybe looking for its homeland — some caravanners can be very careless with their pets. The opening of the new Crocodile Park coincided with the spectacle of 10 000 whistling ducks flying above the Mangrove Hotel.

No matter what time of year there is always something unusual to see in the Broome area. The September course is full but there are a few places left on the October courses. If you want to get involved in some of the best birding in Australia please contact us to find out more or to make a booking.

Pete Collins and Holly Sitters

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Who's been taking care of us?

We have been busy at the observatory over the past few months waving goodbye to John and Bev O'Brien from Camden NSW and welcoming Els Hayward and Bill Wakefield from Tasmania for their three-month stay. Helen Gee and Bob Graham who are also from Tasmania have recently relieved Bill and Els. Bob and Helen were caretakers last year and enjoyed the experience so much that they have returned for another stint this year. As soon as John and Bev left Eyre they also signed on again for later this year and will see us through the Christmas period. Obviously, caretakers find the place as fascinating as we, the committee, do.

Shortly a new composting toilet will be installed making us even greener than we already are. With only solar power and rainwater available and the building set in a pristine wilderness environment, the observatory is attracting people who are eco-friendly and concerned for the environment.

Alma de Rebeira, Eyre Committee



Eyre Bird Observatory
Sketch by Pam Agar

What's been happening on the bird front?

Caretakers' report

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo are appearing in generally increasing numbers through the months with Brush Bronzewing, Grey Shrike-thrush and White-browed Babblers daily in evidence. This month commenced with a predominance of Singing Honeyeaters while by the end of the month the New Holland Honeyeaters were far more numerous.

A Banded Stilt, four Black-winged Stilts and an Eastern Reef Egret were observed at Nine Mile, and Caspian and Crested Terns, in small numbers, on Kanidal Beach. On Wader Beach we observed at one time 31 birds (eight species) standing on the shore in one group: 12 Silver Gulls, four Pied Cormorants, two Little Black Cormorants, seven juvenile Pacific Gulls, two Crested Terns, two Sooty Oystercatchers, one Pied Oystercatcher and one Great Cormorant. Numbers of Red-capped Plovers are starting to build as the month advanced, 38 being observed on 25 July along Kanidal Beach.

On the Hampton Tableland Banded Lapwings were present, as well as increasing numbers of Mulga Parrots, Australian Ringnecks and Yellow-throated Miners. At Tommy Graham's cave we have seen Nankeen Kestrels and Striated Pardalotes. An Australian Bustard was seen on the Pannikin Plains. At Burnabbie, below the escarpment, the White-browed Scrubwren, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and Spotted Pardalote were in evidence as well as the Weebill, Willie Wagtail and White-browed Babblers.

On the Roe Plain, in-coming visitors have twice observed an Emu with chicks, and the Chestnut Quail-thrush is occasionally seen. A Malleefowl was seen approx 2 km NNW of the observatory on 31 July.

All together 78 species have been recorded at EBO in July. In the next few months the wader numbers should start to increase and bush birds will begin breeding.

Coming Up at the Observatory

BUSY BEE: 16 – 22 Sep 2007 facilitated by the Caretakers

What's to be done

Work to be carried out will include: a beach clean up, weeding around the house, collection of seaweed and seeds for dune restoration work, as well as firewood collection and general cleaning. Book in early with the caretakers. There will be reduced rates of \$60 per person.

You are asked to work for just 4 hours per day. The rest of the time is yours to explore the wilderness (includes full board and pick-up if required).

FIELD TECHNIQUES IN BIRD STUDIES

25th November – 1st December 2007 facilitated by Stephen Davies

One of our longest running courses and always well attended. On this course you learn a variety of methods to study birds and be introduced to a range of census techniques. You will also be assisted with

bird identification skills, encouraged to participate in bird banding and take part in on-going recording procedures at the observatory.

POST CONFERENCE BIRD STUDIES

7th December – 12th December 2007 facilitated by Peter Sandilands

This course will follow the Australasian Ornithological Conference held from 2 – 5 December 2007

See our website www.eyrebirds.org for details and programme.

Helen Gee & Bob Graham, Caretakers



Orange Chat, Eerahardy survey
Photo by Mike Bouette

CAMERALAND **camerahouse**

& Duty Free

For the most affordable to the most elite brands of binoculars and spotting scopes, visit Cameraland Camerahouse.



Bushnell
tasco



Come in and see us for a free demonstration.

201 Oxford St. Leederville 6007 (Opposite tafe)

(08) 9242 1855

sales@camerahousedutyfree.com.au



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.

Disclaimer

Birds Australia provides insurance cover between the ages of 16 and 80 for members undertaking activities officially organised and controlled by the organisation. Members of the public are also covered under the same terms when participating by invitation in an officially organised and controlled Birds Australia activity.

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.

Saturday 1 September: Lake Gwelup, Stirling Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the corner of Stoneman Street and Huntriss Road, north of Karrinyup Road. We should see waterbirds and bushbirds, and often raptors can be seen here. The lake did dry out in the summer, but should be reasonable after some winter rain.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Sunday 9 September: Karnup and Baldvis Reserves Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking area just around the corner in Karnup Road off

Baldvis Road. Follow Kwinana Freeway until it becomes Safety Bay Road. Turn left at Baldvis Road roundabout, and travel approx 6 km to Karnup Road on the left. Western Yellow Robins have been seen here. Returning back along Baldvis Road towards Perth, it is 8 km to Baldvis Reserve, where there are shady picnic tables and toilets. We can do more birding in that reserve. Both reserves are being monitored for the Biodiversity Study.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Thursday 13 September: Lake Claremont, Swanbourne Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the northern end of

Stirling Road, Claremont. We will look for waterbirds and bushbirds around this pleasant suburban lake.

For members and the general public.

Leader: David Free

Sunday 16 September: Wungong Gorge and Bungendore Nature Reserve, Bedfordale Full day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the first car park for Wungong Dam at the end of Admiral Road, off Albany Highway. Over 90 species of birds have been recorded here, including Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren. Several raptors have also been seen.

Those who wish can continue on to Bungendore Nature Reserve. This is a good place to see a variety of parrots, including Elegant and Red-capped Parrots. It is also the best place near Perth to see the Rufous Treecreeper.

Bring your lunch.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Ian Rudd

**Sunday 23 September:
Forrestdale Lake
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:30 am at Moore Street car park. From Perth, drive down the Freeway, turning left at Armadale Road. Continue on across Nicholson Road, then just over 1 km along turn right into Weld Street, then second left into Lofties Street, then right into Moore Street.

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

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

For members and guests only.

Leader: David James

**Monday 24 September: Tamala Hall,
Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm**

Joe Froudust, a member, will give an illustrated talk entitled "The Antarctic scene and its birds":

**Friday 28 September to Monday 1
October:
Cheynes Beach, Albany
Long weekend campout**

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

Cheyne Beach Caravan Park, 12 Bald Island Road, Cheynes WA 6328.

The Waychinicup Park has a good selection of bird species, including the hard to find endemics, such as the Western Whipbird, Western Bristlebird and Noisy Scrub-bird. We cannot guarantee seeing all of the above, but it



Black-tailed Gull at Geraldton (see Observations)

Photo by Frank O'Connor

will be fun trying. Wildflowers should be great at this time of the year. For those wishing to stay in cabins or chalets, please book early to avoid disappointment. Activities will be organised from Saturday morning to Monday midday.

For members only.

Leaders: Ann Bondin and Ray Garstone

**Friday 28 September to Monday 1
October:
Jaurdi State Forest, Shire of Coolgardie
Long weekend campout**

Jaurdi Station, a former pastoral lease, was purchased by DEC in 1989 for conservation and research. It is north of the old Boorabbin townsite. It has proven to be an excellent birding location because of its size, diversity of landforms and vegetation habitats. On two previous visits, over 60 species of birds were seen, including Dusky and Little Woodswallow, Redthroat, Southern Scrub-robin, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Gilbert's Whistler and, in 1994, large numbers of Purple-crowned Lorikeets.

We will meet at Jaurdi Station on the evening of Friday 28 September. The turnoff to the north from Great Eastern Highway is signposted: BAWA signs will be in place. The area has been reserved for BAWA for the weekend, and bookings are essential. There is some accommodation available in shearers' quarters, and plenty of camping and caravan space, with showers and toilets.

Further directions can be obtained from the Birds Australia WA office (9383 7749) or from Clive Napier (9332 7265).

After the weekend, members also have the option of continuing towards Coolgardie on the Tuesday. Up to six vehicles could join this further tour.

Tuesday: visits to Victoria Rock and Rowles Lagoon North. We will stay two nights at the Coolgardie Caravan Park and one night at the camp ground at Rowles Lagoon.

Friday: head south towards Peak Charles, staying overnight at Moir Rock (no facilities).

Saturday, and possibly Sunday: overnight at Peak Charles where there are toilets.

Monday: head west to Frank Hann National Park, where we can stay overnight if desired. At the western end of the park we will be back on sealed roads and go through Lake King.

All roads are negotiable by 2WD with care, provided rain has not been too heavy, but participants must be fully equipped for camping or caravanning, although refuelling can take place at Norseman. We will return to Perth via the wheatbelt for birds and wildflowers, taking as much time as desired, returning about Friday 12 October.

For members only.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

**Sunday 30 September: Dell Forest,
Kalamunda
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am at Dell Forest, just off Mundaring Road, 9 km from Kalamunda along Mundaring Weir Road. Park in the picnic area on the left hand side of the road, just after the Dell Forest sign. This

area has been surveyed since 1987, and is predominantly jarrah forest with stands of wandoo along the gully. Over 70 species have been recorded in the area, including Emu, Painted Button-quail, and many of the south-west endemics. The excursion will finish about 1:00 pm, so bring lunch if you wish.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sean Van Alphen

Saturday 6 October: Herdsman Lake, Stirling
Bird banding
Half-day excursion

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

For members only.

Leader: Bill Rutherford

Thursday 11 October: Alan Anderson Park, Darling Range, Walliston
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park near Alan Anderson Park between Lawnbrook and



Masked Lapwing at Lake Claremont
(see Observations)
Photo by Rod Smith

Pomeroy Roads, Walliston. It is easily accessed from Welshpool Road. This is a two-hour walk on fairly level terrain, covering 34 hectares. Sixty-four species of birds have been counted here.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Michael Hancock

Sunday 14 October: Beermullah Lake, Gingin
Full day excursion

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

Bring lunch and drinks as there are no facilities at the lake. Tracks around the lake are sound, and should be suitable for all types of vehicle. Freckled Ducks have been seen here in the past, and there is usually a good selection of waterbirds.

For members only.

Leader: Ian Rudd

Saturday 20 October: Lightning Swamp, Noranda
Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the gate in the SE corner of the bushland, on Della Road. Lightning Swamp, part of Noranda Open Space, is an area of seasonal wetlands and banksia woodland. The area supports

some waterbirds, and cormorants have bred here. The bushland supports a range of species, including some that are uncommon in smaller reserves, such as the Western Thornbill, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and Red-capped Robin. Entry to some areas will be restricted due to the presence of dieback. We will be joining the Friends of Lightning Swamp.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Paul Marty

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

Rob Davis, chairman of the WA Group, will give an illustrated talk entitled "Liaisons with larks: birding Western South Africa".

Sunday 28 October: Paganoni Swamp, Karnup
Half or Full day excursion

Meet at 8:30 a.m. Take the left hand turn off Mandurah Road onto Paganoni Road. This is after the right hand turnoff, from Perth, to Golden Bay.

Proceed 1.3 km until the Paganoni Swamp sign on the right (there are power lines here).

Parking is along Paganoni Road.

We will be looking for Western Yellow Robins and Grey Currawong among many others in this area of diverse habitats.

First circuit will take approximately 2 hours. Another walk across the road will take us up to lunch time.

There is a lunch area, with toilets. Those who wish can continue on to the Anstey Swamp area, off Fletcher Road in the afternoon.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Sunday 4 November to Saturday 10 November
Starling Search, Bremer Bay

An opportunity has arisen for experienced birders to join the search for Common Starlings in the Bremer Bay area. The search is part of an ongoing effort by the Department of Agriculture and Food to monitor the incidence of this invasive pest species and protect our primary industries. By determining its presence, and therefore its control, we can help to reduce the negative effect that the species may have on our native birds, particularly the hollow-nesting species. Some locations that have been searched before will be checked again, as well as sites that were not visited in February. Searching at this time gives us a chance to do surveillance at a different time of the year and pick up any breeding or juvenile activity.

The cost of accommodation will be met by the Department and includes powered sites for those who wish to bring their own caravans or vans. A mix of on-site vans, cabins and chalets will be available for the rest. A fuel subsidy of \$100 per vehicle is also being offered by the Department. However, car-pooling to reduce that outlay is encouraged.

Members will be responsible for their own food and other necessities of life.

A reasonable level of fitness is required to negotiate the thick scrub and muddy edges around the lakes and swamps that will be visited. Intending participants are advised to read the article on the previous Starling Search in the BAWA Projects section of the June 07 WA Bird Notes before nominating for this activity. As there is a specific number of sites to be covered, all participants are expected to be available for the entire period. There is a limit of 20 people for this campout.

When nominating, please leave the following details with the office volunteers.

- * Name(s)
- * Contact address, phone number, or e mail
- * Whether you intend to bring your own caravan or van and require a powered site to be booked for you.

Once all places have been filled, names will be placed on a waiting list in case there are any cancellations. Further information will be e-mailed or posted to successful nominees when details have been finalised.

For members only.

Leader: Peter Sandilands



Lunch at Ellendale Pool, Dongara campout
Photo by Molly Angus

Sunday 4 November: Collins Road, Brookton Highway
Half-day excursion

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

For members only.

Leader: Michael Brooker

Saturday 10 November: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 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 Crake.

For members only.

Leaders: George and Pam Agar

Wednesday 14 November: Thomson's Lake, Beeliar
Half-day excursion

Meet at 9:30 am at the car park on Branch Circus. From the Kwinana Freeway turn west into Beeliar Drive and then left (south) into Hammond Road. Travel approximately 300 m and turn right into Branch Circus. Continue 800 m down Branch Circus to the car park on the right.

There is a good variety of bushbirds and we should see some of the 12 raptors that have been recorded in the reserve in recent years. If there have not been extensive spring rains there

should be a variety of waders and other waterbirds. The Little Bittern has been recorded recently at this end of the lake, although daytime records of bitterns always require some luck.

We will finish at lunch time so bring lunch, your scope (if you have one) and rubber boots or old sneakers.

For members and the general public.

Leaders: Robyn Pickering & Paul Marty

Sunday 18 November: Walyunga National Park, Swan
Full day excursion

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

For members and the general public.

Leader: Clive Nealon

Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 November: Lancelin
Short weekend campout

We will be based at Lancelin Caravan Park. We will visit local lakes, coast and heath land as well as Moore River fringes. Possible short boat trip to offshore islands to be arranged. Rock Parrots, Roseate Terns and Common Noddies are sometimes seen. Not visited since 1997.

Book your own powered sites. 3 ONLY on-site vans are available and NO cabins. On site vans on hold for BA until early September. Ring Caravan Park owner Brian on 9655 1056.

If possible arrive Friday evening for early start Saturday.

For members only.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

Sunday 25 November: Serpentine National Park

Half-day excursion

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

For those who wish to extend the day, bring along lunch and we can explore Webbs Lease near Jarrahdale after lunch.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Paul Marty

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

Malcolm Plant, Customs Service, will give an illustrated talk on the illegal trade in smuggled birds in WA.

Sunday 2 December: Alfred Cove, Melville

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park in Troy Park next to the Oval, off Burke Drive, Attadale. There should be plenty of migratory waders and waterbirds round the river, and there are always bushbirds in the park. Buff-banded Rails have been seen here.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Clive Napier

Wednesday 5 December: Bull Creek Wetlands,

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00am at Brockman Park Reserve, Bull Creek. Travel along Leach Highway and turn south into Karel Avenue, then turn right into Brockman Avenue. At the roundabout take the third exit, which is Stringfellow Drive, then first right into Mossman Crescent. The walk follows Bull Creek, which winds in behind the playing fields of All Saints College. It continues through Reg Bourke Reserve and finally around Richard Lewis Park which is a Lions Club rehabilitation project and memorial Arboretum.

The creek has Flooded Gums, Jarrah, Marri, paperbarks and casuarinas along its banks. Splendid Fairy-wrens, Western Wattlebirds, White-faced Herons and Yellow-rumped Thornbills have been recorded here.

Bring water, sunscreen and morning tea.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Sue Keogh

Sunday 9 December: Big Carine Lake, Carine

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park off Beach Road, Carine. Over 80 species have been recorded at this lake, including the three ibis, Buff-banded Rail, several species of duck, and various raptors. Bring your telescope if you have one.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Paul Marty

Saturday 15 December: 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 of Lovekin Drive. There should be plenty of bushbirds in the area.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Charles Merriam

Sunday 16 December: BAWA Christmas barbecue

The annual Christmas barbecue this year will be, as usual, at Peregrine House, at about 6:00 pm, on the lawn at the rear of the building. Bring your own food and drink, and chairs if possible.

We have hired a barbecue so would appreciate a gold coin donation to cover the cost of this.

All members are welcome.

Sunday 30 December: 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 Beeliar Wetlands chain and a large number of bushbirds and waterbirds can be seen here. Bring water, hats and suitable footwear.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Wynton Maddeford



Osprey at dinner, Troy Park,
12 June 2007.

Sketch by Penny Towells



Trying to decide whether they were button-quail or quail-thrush egg-shells, Eerahardy station survey (see BAWA Projects).

Photo by Pam Agar



Irwin River lookout, Dongara campout

Photo by Molly Angus

Crossword answers No 50

Across

1 rangelands, 6 tide, 8 albatross, 10 fuss, 11 site, 12 strong, 13 Paganoni, 14 asked, 15 lull, 19 aquatic, 21 grip, 22 calm, 24 meal, 26 bill, 27 pond, 28 congregate, 29 bond.

Down

2 Augusta, 3 grass, 4 nets, 5 spotted, 6 tussocks, 7 delegates, 9 buttonquail, 13 pelagic, 16 lapwing, 17 stamina, 18 scrap, 20 wandoo, 23 mound, 25 low

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

Western Australian Bird Notes Subscription Form

Are you joining Birds Australia for the first time, or renewing your membership?

Do you wish to receive *Western Australian Bird Notes*?

If so, please complete the section below and send the appropriate fee to the national office with your membership application.

Title: First name:

Last name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone (H):

(W):

Email:

WABN subscription rates per annum

(please cross out whichever is inapplicable)

WA Members	\$12.00
Interstate Members	\$15.00
Overseas Members	\$20.00

Note: WABN subscription is only available with a Birds Australia membership. For membership rates contact Birds Australia.

Payment Details

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to 'Birds Australia'
OR

Debit my ☐ Mastercard ☐

Visa ☐

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

...../.....

Expiry date

.....

Signature

*Concession card number(s)
(Full-time student, Health Care or Pension card)

Post to: Birds Australia Membership
60 Leicester St, Carlton VIC 3053

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 <cgoale@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 <dabchic6@bigpond.net.au>
- ◆ **Excursion leaders** — contact Sue Abbotts 9444 1607, e-mail <suechat@bigpond.net.au>
- ◆ **Card Committee** — BAWA's bird cards provide an important income for the organisation; assistance needed with marketing of cards, eg, possible outlets and distribution — contact Valerie Hemsley ph 9364 6573
- ◆ **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 re 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.

Birds Australia Western Australia Inc

Office: *Peregrine House*

167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat WA 6014

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

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

Chairman: Dr Rob Davis
8 Ridgeway Place, Mahogany Creek WA 6072
Tel: (08) 9380 1493 (w)
Tel: (08) 9295 3319 (h)
Mob: 0429 702 973
E-mail: robjen@inet.net.au

Joint Editors: Allan Burbidge
Tel: (08) 9405 5109 (w)
Tel/Fax: (08) 9306 1642 (h)
Fax: (08) 9306 1641 (w)
E-mail: allanb99@bigpond.net.au

Suzanne Mather
Tel: (08) 9389 6416
E-mail: sma12577@bigpond.net.au

Production: Margaret Philippon

Distribution: Rod Smith

Notes for Contributors

The Editors request contributors to note:

- WABN publishes material of interest to the WA Group
- contributions should be written or typed with **double spacing**—a copy on disk or emailed would assist, especially if in MSWord as a document **without** styles; **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)

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

Advertising Rates

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

Calendar of events

- Sat 1 Sep:** Lake Gwelup, Stirling, Half-day excursion
Sun 9 Sep: Karnup and Baldvis Reserves, Half-day excursion
Thu 13 Sep: Lake Claremont, Swanbourne, Half-day excursion
Sun 16 Sep: Wungong Gorge and Bungendore Nature Reserve, Bedfordale, Full day excursion
Sun 23 Sep: Forrestdale Lake, Half-day excursion
Mon 24 Sep: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm
Fri 28 Sep to Mon 1 Oct: Cheynes Beach, Albany, Long weekend campout
Fri 28 Sep to Mon 1 Oct: Jaurdi State Forest, Shire of Coolgardie, Long weekend campout
Sun 30 Sep: Dell Forest, Kalamunda, Half-day excursion
Sat 6 Oct: Herdsman Lake, Stirling, Bird banding, Half-day excursion
Thu 11 Oct: Alan Anderson Park, Darling Range, Walliston, Half-day excursion
Sun 14 Oct: Beermullah Lake, Gingin, Full day excursion
Sat 20 Oct: Lightning Swamp, Noranda, Half-day excursion
Mon 22 Oct: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sun 28 Oct: Paganoni Swamp, Karnup, Half or Full day excursion
Sun 4 Nov to Sat 10 Nov: Starling Search, Bremer Bay
Sun 4 Nov: Collins Road, Brookton Highway, Half-day excursion
Sat 10 Nov: Canning River, Regional Park, Wilson, Half-day excursion
Wed 14 Nov: Thomsons Lake, Beeliar, Half-day excursion
Sun 18 Nov: Walyunga National Park, Swan, Full day excursion
Sat 24 and Sun 25 Nov: Lancelin, Short weekend campout
Sun 25 Nov: Serpentine National Park, Half-day excursion
Mon 26 Nov: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sun 2 Dec: Alfred Cove, Melville, Half-day excursion
Wed 5 Dec: Bull Creek Wetlands, Half-day excursion
Sun 9 Dec: Big Carine Lake, Carine, Half-day excursion
Sat 15 Dec: King's Park, Perth, Half-day excursion
Sun 16 Dec: BAWA Christmas barbecue
Sun 30 Dec: Bibra Lake, Cockburn, Half-day excursion

Printed by Executive Press: Tel (08) 9275 8044