

Western Australian Bird Notes



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



No 125 March 2008

ISSN 1445-3983

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BIRD SURVEYS OF THE BUSSELTON WETLANDS MARCH 2007–JANUARY 2008

The Busselton Wetlands are a chain of coastal wetlands that stretch approximately 25 kilometres east and west of Busselton along Geographe Bay. The Wetlands include the Vasse and Wonnerup estuaries and the New River and Broadwater wetlands.

Much of the wetland system, particularly that area covered by the Vasse and Wonnerup lagoons, but excluding the Broadwater and New River wetlands, is listed as a Ramsar site. The Busselton area was settled early in post-colonial Western Australia and the wetland system is highly modified by the clearing of adjacent native vegetation, drainage of wetlands and artificial management of water levels, primarily through the Vasse and Wonnerup flood gates. The Vasse and Wonnerup lagoons are former estuaries. Water levels are now managed for the conservation of waterbirds and migratory shorebirds and to minimise flooding of adjacent agricultural areas. Seawater is now largely excluded from the system.

In early 2007, a decision was made to nominate the Busselton Wetlands as an Important Bird Area but it was clear that recent systematic bird survey data were not available to support the nomination. Because of the size of the wetland system, the only way we could do that reliably was to have a number of people doing counts around the wetlands at the same time. Between

11 March 2007 and 13 January 2008, we undertook four surveys of the Wonnerup and Vasse estuaries. One survey included the Busselton Broadwater on the eastern side of the town of Busselton, near the locality of Abbey. Late in January 2008, small groups did additional surveys of the Broadwater and two sites on the Wonnerup and Vasse estuaries to get a clearer idea of the numbers of Australian and migratory waders using the shallow and drying waters in those locations. A total of 13 sites around the Vasse and Wonnerup estuaries, plus the Broadwater, were surveyed. As we didn't have enough observers to effectively survey all areas, and because anecdotal evidence suggested that waterbird numbers were likely to be low, we excluded the New River wetlands from the surveys.

Forty people came to at least one survey, and a number of people came to two or more. BA member Logan Anderson is awarded a few extra brownie points for travelling from Donnybrook and being the only person to attend every organised survey: thanks Logan! Some members of the Busselton Naturalists' Club helped at the first survey, and we are grateful to members of the group for this additional assistance. For each survey, observers were allocated survey sites and provided with site location maps, access instructions and survey forms. Observers



Waterbirds on The Broadwater.
Photo by Jamie Piotrowski



Logan Anderson surveying birds at The Broadwater.

Photo by Jamie Piotrowski

were instructed to count all waterbirds, seabirds and shorebirds.

Opportunistic sightings of bushbirds were also recorded, although bushbirds were not surveyed systematically.

An attempt was made to pair inexperienced and experienced observers. Following the surveys, data were entered into a spreadsheet. All data have since been transferred to the Birds Australia Bird Atlas database, and the data also made available to the Shorebirds 2020 project.

The survey results were interesting. It was clear that at times we had too few observers to adequately cover the areas we needed to survey - the estuaries and associated wetlands areas are extensive and all counts are almost certainly underestimates of the total number of birds in the wetland system at any one time. Nonetheless, we believe the surveys are broadly indicative of the numbers of birds that use this important wetland system and the results provide important data that are now available for conservation and research purposes.

In 1990, the Vasse and Wonnerup estuaries were nominated and listed as a Ramsar site based on the total numbers of waterbirds present (30 000). The Ramsar site was extended to include some additional areas in 2000. The relevant Ramsar Information Sheet notes that the estuaries are particularly important for the numbers of breeding Black Swan and regularly hold more than 1% of Australia's population of Black-winged Stilt and Red-necked Avocet.

The surveys of the Busselton Wetlands undertaken by us in 2007-2008 show that the wetlands still support significant numbers of breeding Black Swans and high numbers of Australian waders such as Black-winged Stilt, Banded Stilt and Red-necked Avocet (see Table 1 for a summary of the survey results). We found that the species diversity of migratory shorebirds was relatively low and counts were also relatively low. As almost 22 000 birds were counted at only two sites on the Vasse and Wonnerup estuaries in late January, it appears likely that the system still carries at least 30 000 birds on occasion.

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) nomination for the Busselton Wetlands will be completed shortly and will include the Vasse and Wonnerup estuaries and the Broadwater, an area currently not included in the boundaries of the listed Vasse-Wonnerup estuaries Ramsar site. Overall, this set of surveys provided good survey data that support the nomination of the area as an IBA, provided useful skills to a number of observers, and provided a framework or network of survey sites that have been mapped and can form the basis of surveys in the future. During the surveys we almost certainly undercounted the numbers of waterbirds around the wetlands; however it is clear that it is worthwhile getting a number of observers to do simultaneous counts around complex and extensive wetland systems.

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) project

For more information about the Important Bird Areas project, go to the Birds Australia website and follow the links from the main page. If you're interested in helping with the nomination of other WA Important Bird Areas, contact Cheryl Gole (cgole@westnet.com.au or Tel: 9293 4958).

Bird surveys and the Birds Australia Atlas

The Birds Australia Atlas is an important source of information for conservation and research. It's also a source of information for birdwatchers and the general community. Increasingly, it is being utilised for monitoring purposes.

We need ongoing records from observers to continue making the Atlas a relevant source of information and the most comprehensive data set of its kind in Australia. If you have never atlased and would like to know how, or you contributed in the early days of the Atlas and would like to contribute again, contact Cheryl Gole, who will provide kits, survey forms and other information. Bird survey records can be submitted from all kinds of sites, including wetlands, and if you do surveys at wetlands, counts of all waterbirds are particularly welcome and useful. Waterbird counts are easy to record on Atlas forms: simply record the number alongside the species name. Counts can also be submitted online via Birddata, the Birds Australia online Atlas database entry project. Go to the Birds Australia website and follow the links from the main web page.

Acknowledgments

The following people helped with at least one survey:

Sue Abbotts, John Blyth, Judy Blyth, Ann Buchanan, Bruce Buchanan, Justine Edwards, Rose Ferrell, Lee Fontanini, Cheryl Gole, Martin Gole, Cecilia Grant, Jenni Jones, Sue Kalab, Paul Marty, John McKernan, Rob Mutch, Rob Neal, Rose Nicholson, David Norrish, Kim Onton, Alyson Paull, Ed Paull, Deborah Perry, Robyn Pickering, Mo Ramsay, Chris Reidy, Diane Reidy, Maxine Robertson, Peter Robertson, Richard Routh, Nora Rugenstein, Bill Russell, Erica Shedley, Dick Shore, John Stewart, Stella Stewart-Wynne, Peter Taylor, Noel Titterington and Andrew Weinert.

The Department of Environment and Conservation provided mapping assistance and vehicle access to one of the sites. The Shire of Busselton provided access information for The Broadwater.

Our grateful thanks to all.

Cheryl Gole, Peter Taylor and Sue Abbotts

Further reading

For more information on the Vasse Wonnerup Ramsar site and other Ramsar sites, go to the Naturebase website and follow the links through the Nature and Biodiversity, and Wetlands pages.

Extensive information about the Busselton Wetlands, including links to a series of maps, is available through the Busselton Wetlands Conservation Strategy at <http://www.wapc.wa.gov.au/Publications/712.aspx>

BirdLife International's IBA website provides extensive information about Important Bird Areas around the globe. Go to www.birdlife.org/.

Date	Highest and significant species count/s (all sites)	Highest total site count	Total count, all sites	No of Observers	Waterbirds, seabirds, wader species (number)	Comments and number of sites surveyed
11 Mar 2007	351 Red-capped Plover	1080 at Tuart Forest National Park	3196	15	36	11 sites around Wonnerup and Vasse estuaries surveyed; total count almost certainly an underestimate; water levels low
28 Oct 2007	5663 Black Swan 1548 Australian Shelduck	5642 at Sabina Nature Reserve	5642	9	27	12 sites around Wonnerup and Vasse estuaries surveyed; water levels very high; high numbers of Black Swan cygnets
25 Nov 2007	1500 Australian Shelduck	1806 at Sabina Nature Reserve	4208	6	52	11 sites around Wonnerup and Vasse estuaries surveyed, water levels falling but still too high for most waders; total count almost certainly an underestimate
13 Jan 2008	12 900 Grey Teal 3290 Black-winged Stilt 727 Red-necked Stint	14 841 at Wonnerup Estuary off Forrest Beach Road	25 419	22	46	11 sites around Wonnerup and Vasse estuaries and The Broadwater surveyed; water levels low and decreasing - large areas drying mud and shallow water
20 Jan 2008	3000 Grey Teal 67 Curlew Sandpiper	7291 at The Broadwater (only 1 site surveyed)	7291	8	24	1 site (The Broadwater) surveyed
27 Jan 2008	11 200 Grey Teal 4000 Banded Stilt 1915 Red-necked Avocet 1800 Black-winged Stilt	20 466 at Wonnerup Estuary (only 2 sites surveyed)	21 822	2	27	2 sites surveyed - Wonnerup estuary site off Forrest Beach Road and Vasse Estuary near Sabina NR; estuaries drying with decreasing areas of drying mud and shallow water; low numbers and species diversity of migratory shorebirds

Table 1: Summary results for bird surveys undertaken at the Busselton Wetlands March 2007-January 2008. Wetlands surveyed included the Vasse and Wonnerup estuaries and the Broadwater, but excluded New River.



Volunteers collating data for the Busselton wetlands surveys.

Photo by Jamie Piotrowski

CORRIGENDUM

In the last issue of *WA Bird Notes* (No. 124) the group photo on page 20 was incorrectly attributed to Charlie Davies. It was actually taken by Pam Lumsden.

The Editors apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.



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This list has been compiled by the Observations Committee. Metropolitan suburbs or shires are in parentheses. Please report interesting observations to Frank O'Connor (9386 5694 or preferably sightings@birdswa.com.au) or to the BAWA office (9383 7749). Sightings are included on the BAWA web site (birdswa.com.au) as soon as possible, and the most interesting are selected for inclusion in the next WABN.

The names and order follow Christidis, L. and Boles, W. (1994) (The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories. *RAOU Monograph No. 2*). **Note:** We will be changing to the new taxonomy in the June WABN.

Highlights. This has been an outstanding period for rarities. There was the annual trip to Ashmore Reef in October with a host of rare sightings. A **Eurasian Magpie** (also known as Black-billed Magpie) at Port Hedland was reported to the authorities in early November. It was ship assisted but could not be relocated. Note that ship assisted birds are included in the new check list. In late November, a **Eurasian Curlew** was found on 80 Mile Beach during the AWSG wader expedition. This is the first documented record for Australia. A **Red-throated Pipit** was found in Broome in early December, the second live record for Australia. Previously one had been found dead on Albany wharf, and a live bird was seen in Broome in the early 1990s. A **Fairy Pitta** found in mid December in a backyard in Derby is the first for Australia. A **White Tern** was found in the Abrolhos Island in mid December during a Landscape expedition. This is the second or third record for WA. Several trips to Cocos Island and Christmas Island resulted in reports of **Malayan Night Heron** and the second record of **Red Collared-Dove**. In January, a **Rockhopper Penguin** was found near Cape Naturaliste, and another near Albany, while a **King Penguin** was found on a beach at Geraldton.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Plumed Whistling-Duck – 3, 20/12/07 to at least 18/01/08, Effluent Evaporation Ponds on Stirling Crescent (Hazelmere) – GH *et al.* (unusual in the south west; photographs)

Sanderling – 1, 29/11/07, Forrestdale Lake (Forrestdale) – RP (unusual inland; photographs)

Grey Plover – 1, 29/11/07, Forrestdale Lake (Forrestdale) – JG (unusual inland)

Black-eared Cuckoo – 1, 08/12/07 to 21/12/07, North Lake (North Lake) – WM (uncommon in the south west)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

KING PENGUIN – 1 immature, 14-15/01/08, Coronation Beach (Geraldton) – per RC (rare in WA; photographs; found dead next day)

ROCKHOPPER PENGUIN – 1, 06/01/08, Eagle Bay to Meelup (Busselton) – AM * 1, 22/01/08, Waychinicup Inlet (Albany) – SN (uncommon in WA; photographs)

Whiskered Tern – 310, 21/12/07, Lake McLarty (Murray) – AC (high count for the south west)

WHITE TERN – 1, 15/12/07, Wooded Island (Abrolhos) – LG, KC, RJ *et al.* (2nd record for WA; photographs)



Eurasian Curlew, 80 Mile Beach
Photo by Rohan Clarke

ARID ZONE

Grey Falcon – 2 adults and 3 fledglings, 14/10/07, Chichester Range (Ashburton) – GS, SF *et al.* (rarely reported breeding in WA)

Dollarbird – 1, 22/12/07, Marie Pool Maitland River (Roebourne) – SC (south of normal range)

EURASIAN MAGPIE (*Pica pica*) – 1, 11/07, Port Hedland (Port Hedland) – per MM (ship assisted; photograph)

KIMBERLEY

Leach's Storm-Petrel – 1 dark morph, 22/10/07, offshore north of Broome (Broome) – GS, AB *et al.* (1st record of dark morph for Australia; photographs)

EURASIAN CURLEW – 1, 24-30/11/07, 80 Mile Beach (Broome) – CH, AWSG *et al.* (1st documented record for Australia; photographs)

Oriental Cuckoo – 2, 26/12/07, Barn Hill (Broome) – SN (south of normal range)

FAIRY PITTA – 1, 13-15/12/07, Derby garden (Derby – West Kimberley) – LF *et al.* (1st record for Australia; photographs)

Orange Chat – 1, 01/11/07, Mt Barnett sewage ponds (Derby – West Kimberley) – DH (outside normal range)

RED-THROATED PIPIT – 1, 02/12/07, new oval (Broome) – AB, RCI *et al.* (2nd live record for WA and Australia; photographs)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

MALAYAN NIGHT HERON – 1 adult, 29/11/07, Blowholes Road – PB *et al.* (5th record for CI and Australia; photographs)

RED COLLARED-DOVE – 1 male, 17/01/08, South Point Temple – MR *et al.* (2nd record for CI and Australia; photographs)

COCOS ISLAND

Great Egret – 1, 20/11/07, North Lagoon – PB *et al.* (2nd record for Cocos)

WESTERN REEF EGRET – 4+, 20-22/11/07, various locations – PB *et al.* (now regularly reported, suggesting they may be resident; photographs)

Black-winged Stilt – 1 subspecies *leucocephalus*, 22/11/07, Horsburgh Island – PB *et al.* * 1 subspecies *leucocephalus*, 20/12/07, Horsburgh Island – DHo *et al.* (uncommon at Cocos)

Red Knot – 2, 23/11/07, West Island – PB *et al.* (1st record for Cocos)

Lesser Sand Plover – 3, 20/12/07, South Island – DHo *et al.* (1st record for Cocos)

ASIAN KOEL – 2 male & 1 female, 20/11/07, Home Island – PB *et al.* (1st koel record for Cocos where species could be determined in the current species taxonomy)

Yellow Wagtail – 1, 22/11/07, Home Island – PB *et al.* (rare for Cocos)

ASHMORE REEF

Brush Cuckoo – 1 barred morph female, 24-27/10/07, West Island –

RL, RCl *et al.* (1st record for Ashmore)

ISLAND MONARCH – 1 adult, 26-27/10/07, West Island – SD, MC *et al.* (2nd record for Ashmore and Australia; photographs)

Grey Wagtail – 2, 25/10/07, West Island – RCl, AB *et al.* (uncommon)

MIDDENDORFF'S

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER – 1, 25/10/07, West Island – RL, RCl *et al.* (3rd record for Ashmore and Australia; photographs)

Arctic Warbler – 1, 24-25/10/07, West Island – GS *et al.* * 1, 26-27/10/07, West Island – GS *et al.* (uncommon; photographs)

Oriental Reed-Warbler – 1, 25-26/10/07, West Island – NH, RCl *et al.* (uncommon)

Pale White-eye – 4, 25-27/10/07, West Island – RCl, AB *et al.* (1st white-eye record for Ashmore where species could be determined)

ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER – 1, 25-27/10/07, West Island – MC, RCl *et al.* (3rd record for Ashmore and Australia; photographs)

OBSERVERS

AB = Adrian Boyle
AC = Alan Collins
AM = Asha McNeil
AWSG = Australasian Wader Study Group
CH = Chris Hassell
DH = Don Hadden
DHo = Dion Hobcroft (NSW)
GH = Greg Harewood
GS = George Swann
JG = John Graff
KC = Kevin Coate
LF = Lachlan French
LG = Les George
MC = Mike Carter (Victoria)
MM = Marion Massam
MR = Mick Roderick (NSW)
NH = Nigel Harland (Victoria)
PB = Peter Barrand (Victoria)
RC = Rory Chapple
RCl = Rohan Clarke (Victoria)
RJ = Ron Johnstone
RL = Richard Loyn (Victoria)
RP = Robyn Pickering
SC = Stephen Clarke
SD = Sandra Dunglison (Qld)
SF = Stewart Ford
SN = Simon Nevill
WM = Wynton Maddeford

**Birds Australia WA Inc reports****CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT****A Year of Partnerships and Growth**

The last year has been a year of growth for Birds Australia WA. Although we have not grown in membership as much as I would have liked (we currently sit at around 1030 members) we have continued to grow as a serious conservation organisation.

Most notably, this year has been one of forming strong partnerships. We are fortunate enough to now have a committed working relationship with WWF-Australia, recognised with a MOU between Birds Australia and WWF at a national level. BAWA has been a model in driving this partnership through our association with Liz McLellan and Cheryl Gole of WWF-Australia. Liz now undertakes line management of our Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project. Our strong association with WWF has allowed the exchange of knowledge and skills, and ultimately improved our capacity to undertake conservation and research on this species. Our South Coast Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project Officer Raana Scott is also working closely in

Albany with Greening Australia, the Department of Environment and Conservation and Gondwanalink staff.

To top off the year of partnerships, representatives from BAWA met with staff of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) and we will be working to assist them in the monitoring of birds in AWC reserves throughout south-western Australia. BAWA also continues to work closely with, and receives funding from, natural resource management groups including the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council, South Coast NRM and Avon Catchment Council. If Birds Australia is to achieve its goal of conserving Australia's unique birdlife, such partnerships are essential, and will continue to be important in the future.

By the time you read this report, my term as chair will be up and I will be enjoying a slightly less busy existence. I have immensely enjoyed my time at the 'helm' but couldn't have achieved anything without the inspiration and commitment of the executive committee, BAWA sub-committees and all those other fantastic BAWA volunteers who are so passionate about birds and bird conservation.

BAWA would not exist without your dedication, so thank you all, and I look forward to seeing you in the future during my ongoing commitment as a member of the executive committee.

Finally, I would like to conclude by thanking the staff of national office, particularly CEO Graeme Hamilton with whom I have immensely enjoyed working and have been inspired by. Also the hard-working councillors and their President Alison Russell-French, for your advice and support for the past three years.

Below I present a summary of our major activities and achievements during the past year, as an annual report for BAWA.

Executive Committee

It has been a very busy year for the BAWA Executive Committee. Amongst our biggest achievements have been addressing all of the initial objectives of the "BAWA Directions" forum we held a few years ago to map out future directions and strengthen our organization. We met with all of the major sub-committees and have instigated new procedures to enable greater communication in the future. We have also worked with most sub-committees to complete draft terms of reference. Another big challenge has been securing the safety of BAWA and its members by instigating new risk assessment procedures. These have been worked on in conjunction with our sub-committees and we are grateful to Sue Abbotts and the excursions committee for helping us pioneer this process.

Excursion Sub-committee (Chair: Sue Abbotts)

In 2007 a total of 73 excursions were arranged, six more than last year. There were nine campouts to Augusta, Woodanilling, Rottneest twice for wader counts, Mount Barker, Lake Grace, Dongara, Cheyne Beach and Lancelin. The 64 walks around Perth and environs included a mid week walk each month and a walk open to the public each month.

The excursions continue to support various scientific endeavours such as Hooded Plover and wader surveys, atlassing and the BAWA database.

Volunteer hours are about the same as last year:

Committee and associated activity	200 hours
Volunteer leaders	2800 hours
TOTAL	<u>3000</u>

In 2007 the Attendance Record and Sign on Form was implemented for all excursions and campouts to ensure that those attending are covered by Birds Australia insurance.

Thanks go to the 45 volunteer leaders for taking excursions and campouts. Particular acknowledgement is made of Liz Walker's contribution as secretary to the sub-committee over the last four years and we will miss her services.

Eyre Bird Observatory Committee (Chair: Alma de Rebeira)

This year has been extremely busy at Eyre Bird Observatory (EBO). The current committee continues to work to keep the needs of the volunteer caretakers met in maintaining the high standard of scientific observation and care for the many visitors.

The committee members for 2007 were Shapelle McNee, Caroline Comstock, Alma de Rebeira, George Agar, Wendy

MacGibbon and Mary Molloy; Liz Walker left the committee and was replaced by Graham Wooller.

Life Membership was awarded to Graham and Gwen Goodreid, former caretakers of Eyre Bird Observatory. This provides free accommodation at the observatory as a reward for the extraordinary support provided by them throughout the years.

Work to stabilise the encroaching dunes continued with the Dune Restoration Course in January. Shapelle, supported by George, has coordinated the dune restoration program, having acquired the funding, acquitted the grant and maintained the resources and equipment.

Through the investigation and recommendations of Gwen and Graham Goodreid, the change from wardens to short term (three months) volunteer caretakers has proved to be successful. In 2007 the Volunteer Caretakers were:

Gina & Norm Gregory – September 2006 to February 2007

Beverley & John O'Brien – March to April 2007

Bill Wakefield & Els Hayward – April to June 2007

Helen Gee & Bob Graham – July to September 2007

Beverley & John O'Brien – October 2007 to February 2008

Caretakers have been arranged up to June 2009.

Every three months, a two week handover period ensures the new volunteer caretakers confidently complete the daily, weekly and monthly bird logs that have been continuously kept for close to 30 years. Other tasks include the completion of three daily weather reports, caring for daily and nightly visitors and entering the data and diary on the appropriate spreadsheets and documents. Broadband access ensures that the monthly caretakers' reports and diaries are available for the monthly review by the EBO Committee.

The Caretaker's Manual for the EBO, is continually under review. It is printed, and is a great resource/reference document for current and future caretakers.

Figures for visitors to the observatory for 2007 are not yet available but in December 2007, 175 visitor nights were recorded with 502 people on day visits.

Many of the visitors volunteer to assist with work including providing expertise. The following projects were carried out during 2007:

- Catherine van Delft coordinated the successful application to Australian Government Water Grants - Community Water Fund for a composting toilet that was installed in September.
- Vince O'Brien began the restoration of the heritage building as recommended in the Conservation Plan. A Lotteries grant is funding this.
- All exposed wooden floors have been treated with Tung oil, a task carried out beyond the call of duty by caretaker John O'Brien.
- All beds and mattresses have been replaced with funding from 'Friends of Eyre' and accommodation fees.
- A barbeque and a large compressor have been acquired by donations from 'Friends of Eyre'.

- A Lotteries grant assisted with the replacement of the aging vehicle. A new Hi-Ace has been ordered and possession should be in January 2008.
- Courses were run successfully on a number of themes.

Visitors to Eyre Bird Observatory and readers of Eyre Waves "Wish List" regularly choose to support the observatory by generously donating money, materials, expertise and time, sometimes all of the above. The 270 Friends of Eyre addressees on the mailing list has steadily grown over 2007. Eyre Bird Observatory Committee gratefully acknowledges their support.

Alma de Rebeira publishes, coordinates and posts 'Eyre Waves' quarterly to Friends of Eyre. Reports are produced and forwarded for each issue of WABN and advertisements are placed in Wingspan. No further advertising is deemed necessary as the observatory is running to capacity.

Research at Eyre is ongoing. Bird observations are made daily and recorded in the Daily Bird Log. Monthly reports are forwarded to the committee. Eight Atlas sites are monitored when time permits. A Kanidal Beach count is carried out weekly. Records of washed up animals and birds are forwarded to the Western Australian Museum. Malleefowl reports and whale sightings are also reported. Beach clean-up is carried out quarterly. The collection is tabulated, weighed and measured. Licensed banders carry out bird banding and this is the second longest running banding project in Australia.

Support for Eyre Bird Observatory comes from across Australia and Friends of Eyre are worldwide. We would sincerely like to thank them and acknowledge their contribution. Klaus Tiedemann (Department of Environment and Conservation WA) has provided long term support, the management and staff of Cocklebidly Roadhouse refrigerate our supplies, assist with distributing information about EBO and direct visitors, the Shire of Dundas has provided financial support for work on the building this year and Arubiddy Station owners Barbara and Peter Brown, our nearest neighbours, have long provided support to our caretakers.

The Volunteer Caretakers who welcome the continual flow of visitors and who maintain the records are a vital part of the operation of the observatory. The transition from Wardens to Volunteers has proven a smooth process leading to a stable financial future. We are, therefore, indebted to the people who commit to the task of caretaking and wish to express our thanks to them. Finally, the Eyre Bird Observatory Committee, who meet monthly, work continuously between meetings to keep the observatory functioning, help meet visitors' interests satisfactorily and collate scientific data, are to be commended for their work.

Community Education Sub-committee (Chair: Brice Wells)

The Community Education Sub-Committee (CES) has had another incredible year and a full report of its activities is included elsewhere in this issue.

Cards Sub-committee (Valerie Hemsley)

The Cards Sub-committee has had a busy year and has branched out into lapel/hat badges. The Splendid Fairy-wren badge has proved very popular with members and the Birds Australia logo badge was sold at the AOC trading

table. This trading table gave delegates the chance to buy our cards and other BAWA items as souvenirs or gifts. As well as our usual sales through the office, Kings Park Wildflower Show and the Combined Charities Card Shop, we had extra sales thanks to the Community Education Sub-committee's workshops and displays.

Conservation and Research Sub-committee (Chair: Andrew Hobbs)

The Conservation and Research Sub-committee (CRS) has had yet another busy year. It started with the major submission on the Western Australian State Biodiversity Strategy. Since then it has made a number of submissions on specific conservation issues regarding birds. These issues include:

- the Department of Fisheries Draft Management Plan for the Abrolhos Islands
- a housing development in Underwood Avenue near Bold Park
- an industrial development in Neerabup
- trapping of Western Rosellas in the south-west
- DEC on the Esperance Coastal Reserves Management Plan
- National Heritage Listing of a number of reserves, particularly Beekeepers-Lesueur-Coomallo area, due to the possibility of Western Ground Parrots occurring
- the draft Management plan by the Department of Water for Stokes Inlet
- as well as many other issues.

Due to limitations of time and resources we were unable to respond to a large number of other issues. Some of these were quite important such as the Worsley Alumina projects application to mine a large area south of Armadale. Other issues such as the development of management plans for various areas of importance to birds, were not considered due to the same lack of time and resources.

When considering such responses, one important factor that has become overwhelmingly obvious is the lack of survey data for bird populations in Western Australia. The CRS has recognised that there are many areas where our lack of knowledge of bird life has hindered even basic conservation considerations. The Atlas data is useful as a first step to show where birds might occur. However continuing data collection is important. This includes collecting more data at a local scale, the need for more current data to allow for examination of changes over time as well as quantitative abundance data, especially for threatened species and waterbirds.

Hooded Plover Project (Marcus Singor and Mike Bamford)

Birds Australia's Hooded Plover project was successful in securing two grants, one from Lotterywest and one from the Peel Waterways Centre. The Lotterywest grant facilitated a number of inland expeditions, notably to Nuytsland Nature Reserve.

Hooded Plovers in the Yalgorup Lakes area form a local population that is quite accessible and numbers over 100 birds. At times, flocks of up to 90 birds can be seen. A colour-banding project has been running for several years

and we are learning about movements of individuals, faithfulness of partners to each other and longevity. Among the interesting observations has been the record of one of the individually colour-banded birds appearing on a wheatbelt wetland.

The annual Hooded Plover surveys are helping build up a solid database and have assisted in defining Important Bird Areas in Western Australia.

South-West Waders (Mike Bamford and Mike Craig)

Wader studies in south-west WA have been ongoing. Monthly counts at Lake McLarty continue (M. Craig) and a Shorebirds ID workshop was undertaken on December 1st as part of the Shorebirds 2020 project. Shorebirds 2020 is the re-launched national wader monitoring program. Wader flagging has been ongoing through 2007. This is part of an international study with participants throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. We now know that the Red-necked Stints that visit the Perth-Rottnest-Mandurah area seem to stay in this area when in the south-west. We have had sightings of them during migration on the 80 Mile Beach, Java, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Yellow Sea. These may represent the major stopover points for "our" stints.

Western Ground Parrot (Brenda Newbey)

The Western Ground Parrot (WGP) is Critically Endangered and in 2007 work by the DEC WGP Project made it clear that it is still in decline.

Several of our members assisted the DEC project team with survey work in south coast sites. BAWA members have continued to be active members of the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team, and also keep the two-monthly Friends of the WGP newsletters going. In 2007 the Friends also produced new T-shirts and had a display at the Albany show, all towards increasing awareness of this elusive bird.

The BAWA Conservation and Research Committee acquired funding from an anonymous donor to run a project to search for WGPs in the northern sandplain where they had historically been but had not been searched for. Again there was invaluable volunteer support from some BAWA members. No birds were found though the trail was still warm. A few new records within the past eighteen years were turned up.

Kings Park Wildflower Festival (Eggy Boggs)

This year the format was different and all the marquees were housed in the top car park. The Department of Agriculture, thanks to Marion Massam, kindly allowed us to share their tent with them. We had a lot of space and it was in a good position. The finished stall looked inviting and interesting and our DVD again attracted a lot of visitors. Our new Birds Australia poster that unrolls into a standing unit was great and our boards with the pictures of birds were very popular as were our brochures. BAWA is very grateful for the many volunteers who gave their time.

BAWA Office (Liz Walker)

The central office of BAWA is staffed by around 20 volunteers, rostered fortnightly. They deal with phone calls, incoming mail and e-mails, local and interstate visitors, providing competent information and advice on local birds and birding. They assist Project Officers and Committees with photocopying, and deal with sales of

books and cards, the main source of our income. They provide the backbone of the day to day operations of the organisation.

BAWA Library (Stewart Houghton)

The BAWA library continues to grow and this year has also seen a big increase in the volume of books ordered for resale, reflecting the amazing activities of the Community Relations committee.

Australasian Ornithological Conference 2007

A full report on this can be found elsewhere in this issue. The AOC was an outstanding success. A range of interesting papers were presented, and combined with engaging plenary speakers, it all made for an enjoyable congress. Many positive comments have been received, particularly regarding the speaker's program and the conference dinner and BAWA would like to thank Sue Mather and her organizing committee for putting together an impressive and memorable event.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project (Dejan Stojanovic)

There have been a few changes in staff and some modification to the project structure. Helen Pitman has moved on to a new role with WWF-Australia in NSW, and Dejan Stojanovic has taken up the role of Cross Regional Project Officer. Liz McLellan, WA TSN Coordinator for WWF-Australia, is providing management support to the project, and is freeing up the project officers to engage in more on-ground work. Raana Scott continues in her role as project officer on the south coast, and Sally McPhee, WWF-Australia's Avon Community Engagement Officer is assisting with work on Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos in the Avon catchment.

A Project Advisory Group has been formed to offer guidance and support to the project officers. This group meets quarterly, and is instrumental in strategic planning and review for the recovery project.

The 2007 monitoring season has come and gone, with interesting results at all sites monitored. Because of staff changes occurring late in the year, organizing volunteers to monitor sites was not feasible, so monitoring was conducted by the project officers. Sixty-eight hollows had birds in attendance across the Northern Agricultural Region. At several properties, trees were climbed to confirm nesting activity, and at one property, we climbed trees to check nests and found that twenty-nine nests contained the eggs or chicks of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos!

On the south coast, Raana has identified forty-three active nesting hollows, and a further 45 potential nests across the region. Interestingly, the artificial hollows erected in earlier phases of the project are being used extensively by the cockatoos. For example, at one property, Carnaby's Black Cockatoos, despite the presence of nearby unoccupied natural hollows, occupied seven artificial hollows out of nine.

A review of monitoring data collected to-date is underway, and we will report on some preliminary results in the next edition of Cocky Notes. This review will hopefully reveal some basic trends in the populations of cockatoos at our monitoring sites, and will be used by the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project Advisory Group to inform decisions about the strategic direction of our monitoring program.

If you wish to keep updated with news on the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project, please get in touch with Dejan to register your details to receive Cocky Notes.

Grants (Alan Jones)

An action policy has been prepared by the Grants Sub-committee to assist applicants for grants to follow the correct procedure consistent with the policy of Birds Australia and the Western Australian Group. The Grants Sub-committee also keeps members advised of grants currently available and gives assistance where required in the preparation of grants.

Bird Guides (Alan Jones)

The Bird Guide Sub-committee under the project coordinator has continued to assist rural and metropolitan members and various local organizations in the preparation of a variety of bird guides for local areas. The project is financed by both local organizations such as local government and by grants from a number of sources, many being financed by the Lotteries Commission of WA through its environment section. We are currently seeking a replacement coordinator for this project which has been one of our most successful.

Rob Davis
Chair



King Penguin, Geraldton
(see Observations).
Photo DEC

AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE, DECEMBER 2007

The fourth Australasian Ornithological Conference, held in Perth in early December 2007, attracted 285 delegates, mostly from Australia but with a good contingent from New Zealand and a smattering from South Africa, the USA and Europe. About 180 papers were presented on a wide array of ornithological topics. The three plenary speakers covered diverse topics: Carlos Martinez del Rio took us from the beginning of the universe on a tour through some exciting studies relating molecules (stable isotopes) to bird ecology and physiology, Ian Newton described an amazing long term data set on goshawks and how it could be used to explain changes in their status, while Leo Joseph challenged us all with an array of questions relating to bird evolution in Australia. Several keynote speakers and another 170 or so papers made for an interesting and successful conference.

A number of awards were presented, including a series of awards to outstanding students attending AOC. The WA Department of Environment and Conservation provided \$5000 for travel awards for students to attend the conference, and this was split between six students from Australia, one from New Zealand, and one from South Africa.

There were four awards for outstanding student spoken papers, one of which went to a Western Australian, Liz Fox from UWA.

This was the biggest AOC to date, and was an outstanding success due to the efforts of many BAWA members. Sue Mather ably led the AOC 2007 Organising Committee, beginning preparations more than two years before the event. Numerous others — too many to mention — added their efforts along the way. Many thanks to all those who assisted.

Next AOC: Armidale, NSW, 29 November to 2 December, 2009.

Allan Burbidge



BAWA projects



DARLINGTON ARTS FESTIVAL 3 & 4 November 2007

Wind was predictable, however the force was such that erecting display stands was a waste of time. Even the cards had to be viewed horizontally. Apart from this trying aspect, the weekend was fun, and beneficial, financially to BAWA, and hopefully informative to interested people.

Thanks to the few dedicated people who spent many hours at the 'show' on both days. Couldn't do it without you.

Stella Stewart-Wynne

WESTERN GROUND PARROT

I'm sad to say that my time on the Western Ground Parrot Recovery Project is at an end. It's been an amazing experience and an incredibly challenging species to work

with (or even to see). However, it's been very rewarding as well. I am lucky to have worked with some wonderful people in some spectacular landscapes. A big THANK YOU to all those who have assisted me along the way, providing much needed support and encouragement.

As I move on to new adventures back on the east coast, I'll be taking with me some great memories of the time spent on the WA South Coast. Some brilliant work is going on here in conservation and threatened species recovery and I look forward to hearing how it progresses. With that in mind I'd like to be within an e-mail's reach ... my personal e-mail after 14 December 2007 is barth_mike@yahoo.com.au. Feel free to drop me a message any time.

Also, I'd like to welcome the new project officer, Abby Berryman. Abby has quite a history working with South Coast threatened birds out of Albany (5 ½ years now). She has assisted with survey work for Western Ground Parrots, Noisy Scrub-birds, Western Bristlebirds and Western

Whipbirds, assisted with translocations of both Noisy Scrub-birds and Western Bristlebirds and conducted a PhD study on Noisy Scrub-bird songs. I think she's more than qualified to take on the role and I hope she finds working with ground parrots as rewarding as I have. I also hope she will receive the same support that I've had — please make her feel welcome. She may be contacted by e-mail at abby.berryman@dec.wa.gov.au.

Mike Barth

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Community Education Sub-Committee (CES) had its most successful year since its inception that saw every area of its program substantially increased. The 2007 sub-committee members were Brice Wells, Elsa Dabbs, Merrian Kuerschner, Rod Smith, Barry Angus, Sue Keogh, Julia Wates and Ruth Greble. At our last meeting of the year, we were joined by Margaret Prickett, a new member who we welcome. Merrian Kuerschner, who has been a tower of strength with her computer skills and clear thinking, is returning to Queensland. We will miss her cheerful, sleeves rolled up demeanour, and we thank her for her contributions.

In line with the outcomes of the last BAWA forum, we moved to appoint a Schools Liaison Officer to drive what we saw as the single most important aspect of the sub-committee's terms of reference. Rod Smith has taken up the challenge, and he has proved to be an inspired choice. We made 40 visits to 30 schools seeing a total of 1716 students plus 138 teachers or parents. Other BAWA members assisted us on most of these visits. Instead of the somewhat sporadic method of taking one session per school in the class or the schoolyard, we endeavoured to do a classroom presentation including a lesson on binocular use, followed by another binocular lesson and a bird walk around the schoolyard or a nearby location. Rod Smith went to a number of schools to talk with the principals. We also found that our training classes, displays and other presentations became fertile fields for attracting the interest of teachers. Our volunteers are now required to have their Working With Children Checks.

We continue to take up every opportunity to give presentations / talks to any interested organisations who contact us. Many of the speakers are not members of the CES, and we thank them for their commitment and enthusiasm. There were 18 presentations involving 28 members. We sell cards, books, CDs, etc, when possible. In addition to talks at several Probus and Rotary Clubs, we also spoke to three lung impaired groups and a group of retired ministers. 583 participants enjoyed these presentations.

We conducted 25 walks, outside the large number organised by the Excursions Sub-committee. We are pleased to advise that a number of the casual walkers have become members and are regulars on the advertised walks. We were assisted by 44 BAWA volunteers. We organised people to lead bird walks at Monkey Mia during the school holidays. We would like this to continue but we no longer have funds to assist the

increasingly expensive travelling costs of the volunteers. Accommodation is provided, and the birds are exciting, so we hope to find more volunteers to continue this activity.

We decided two years ago to become involved with other organisations to broaden our outreach, and to become more widely known to the public. These organisations organise the events. This has worked exceptionally well with the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council, but it has failed a few times when the cooperating organisation didn't get its act together. We will continue to promote these associations in 2008.

We continue to promote Bird Identification classes for members and the public, and we have added more advanced classes mostly for members. There were 12 classes in 2007 which involved 326 participants and seven group leaders, with assistance of 52 BAWA volunteers.

We were involved in 11 displays at various shows which involved 42 volunteers. Eight members assisted in erecting and dismantling displays in seven libraries, which are well received and help to promote BAWA in the wider community. We have two standard displays for parrots and raptors. We would like more displays, and to involve more libraries but our resources are stretched. A Library Displays Officer would be beneficial.

We maintain an image library (digital, 35mm slides and laminated photos) for use in our displays and presentations and other BAWA activities. We have created a number of PowerPoint displays and laminated posters. We have plans for several more when we have the resources. PowerPoint has been used for the majority of our presentations for the first time. The digital image library now has more than 3600 images, an increase of nearly 1000 during the year. We still have gaps and welcome people giving us more images. We are developing a form to get permission from the photographers for the use of their images for a number of purposes.

We are the stewards for the BAWA equipment that we require for our activities. The data projector and laptop are now vital to many of our activities. We have reached the point where a second data projector would be useful, and we would be in trouble if we had any equipment failure. We hope to find a grant to provide this. We have 51 pairs of binoculars of varying states. Even this number has been too few at times when we have simultaneous activities, especially when we need binoculars for public excursions, Stirling Range, Shark Bay, etc. Thanks to the BAWA Committee we will soon have another 16 pairs.

We raised more than \$6200 during 2007 through sales, class fees and donations. We sell books, cards, CDs, etc, at every available opportunity. We charge a nominal amount for our courses, and we ask for a small donation for the use of our binoculars to go towards their repair and replacement.

Other CES activities include advertising the excursions for the general public, putting together the packs for the leaders of these walks, and occasional radio broadcasts.

We haven't kept fine details of the time that our volunteers have contributed during 2008, but a conservative estimate is a minimum of 3500 hours for the year.

2008 and the future. We plan to continue to get bigger and better. We need a Library Displays Officer to coordinate this activity, and hopefully to gain entry into the library seniors groups. We would like to increase our involvement in the country with displays, presentations, school visits and bird walks, and we have begun to plan for this. We will present two advanced classes in May and June / July. We hope to reach out to the outer metropolitan area with our bird ID courses. We hope that our school activities will involve more than 2000 students in 2008. We plan to produce more posters and PowerPoint presentations.

Volunteers working at CES-planned activities (walk leaders, display helpers, presenters, planners, etc)

Pam Agar, George Agar, Barry Angus, Molly Angus, Mike Bamford, Pat Bennett, Graham Bown, Beth Broun (Coorow), Rick Curtis, Elsa Dabbs, Tom Delaney, Ron Dibbens, Ray Flanagan, David Free, Ruth Greble, Sally Hoedemaker, Joyce Hegney, Valerie Hemsley, Sue Keogh, Merrian Kuerschner, Bill McAtee, Maureen Robinson, Clive Napier, Wendy Napier, Lorraine Marshall, Frank O'Connor, Alison Paull, Ed Paull, John Peck, Ian Rudd, Dick Rule (Mandurah), William Smart (Mandurah), Robert Wroth (Mandurah), Bill Rutherford, Rod Smith, Stella Stewart-Wynne, Ted Stewart-Wynne, Margaret Liston (friend of Stella), Mary Vaughan, Julia Wates, Liz Walker, Brice Wells, Gail Wells, Fiona (Coorow).

Brice Wells,
Chairman, Community Education Sub-committee

SHARK BAY — MONKEY MIA WALKS, 9–20 JULY

For several years BAWA has supported CALM (now DEC) in providing volunteers to conduct bird walks from the Dolphin Centre at Monkey Mia during the school holidays. CALM initially assisted the volunteers by contributing towards their travel costs from Perth and allowing them to stay at the Francois Peron Homestead near Denham. While the travel subsidy has stopped, the volunteers have not, perhaps because Monkey Mia is such a nice place and the DEC staff there so relaxed and friendly.

Monkey Mia and the Peron Peninsular, while not exactly a birdwatcher's paradise in terms of sheer quantities of birds to be found there, is located in a transitional zone that is on the



Malaysian Night Heron, Cocos & Christmas Islands (see Observations).

Photo by Peter Barrand

margin of a number of species' ranges both from the north and the south — the Yellow White-eye from the north and the Silvereye from the south are examples. The peninsular would be a good location from

which to study, for instance, the effect of climate change on the distributions of some of these birds that currently inhabit the margins of their ranges.

The daily walks from Monkey Mia attracted 35 adult and 23 of their children. A disappointing 36 bird species were seen over the period and those came in dribs and drabs. Amongst those birds seen, however, was a single Little Egret that was present for two days. This bird, strangely enough, has not been recorded on the walks before and is not on BAWA's list of birds in the area. It is hard to fathom the reason why the birds were so thin on the ground or in the water, apart from the ubiquitous Pied Cormorants of the area; perhaps recent unusually good rains in the area might have had something to do with it. A further 28 species plus an Echidna and a Bilby were sighted on the rest of the peninsular.

Paucity of birds notwithstanding, the trip was worthwhile and a relaxing chance to escape the winter cold in Perth.

Ian Rudd

**TECHNIQUES IN BIRD STUDIES — EYRE
COURSE REPORT AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS,
2007**

Each year a group of students, many funded by Birds Australia WA, come down to Eyre for a course on birds, run this year (December 2007) by Stephen Davies and Silver Kenny. There were nine people taking part. Although rainfall for the previous two months was poor there was good flowering of mallees and New Holland Honeyeaters were abundant. The weather during the course was variable, mostly calm, sometimes windy, with a very hot day (45°C) and spectacular lightning on the last evening.

Our mist netting on the first day was very fruitful, especially in the eucalypts east of the observatory (beyond site 28) and at sites 4 and 7 near the southern dunes. Mist-netting is intended to give people close contact with the birds they will be watching during the rest of the course. In the event we caught 70 birds of nine species, including a seven year old New Holland Honeyeater.

The wader count on the beach was interesting with three transequatorial migrants, Grey Plover, Red-necked Stint and Common Greenshank. We also saw Red-capped Plovers (no runners), many Pied Oystercatchers, Caspian and Crested Terns, Pacific and Silver Gulls, Pied Cormorants, Pacific Black Ducks and many Richard's Pipits. A great excitement was a dead Minke Whale *Balaenoptera bonaerensis*, washed up near 9 Mile. It was 9 metres long and, with a pruning saw, we dissected a piece of flesh out of it for DNA analysis at the WA Museum. The blubber was 10 cm thick and the intestine appeared devoid of food remains.

Over the years the results of bird counts on these courses have given us a long term picture of the changes in bird numbers around the observatory. In some years there are many honeyeaters and Silvereyes, in others very few. Point counts are good indicators of these mobile birds. On the other hand the mapping technique gives good figures for resident,

territorial species, and provides indicators of change in the abundance of these species.

Here is a summary of the results of the various counts that we made at Eyre.

Point Counts Comparing the figures with previous years, some consistency can be seen in them. For the Point Counts along the West Track we calculated (by graphing and calculation) the densities of nine species (Table 1).

Australian Bird Counts (ABC counts) were made in six areas — the standard three observatory areas, 1, 2 and 3, and also areas east and west of the track that runs down to the beach over the top of the dunes and on the old rehabilitation site west of the house. Some species were seen only in the undisturbed areas and others only in the rehabilitated areas. Using a χ^2 test showed a significant preference by the Welcome Swallow and Blue-breasted Fairy-wren for the recently rehabilitated areas, and a preference by the Australian Raven for the undisturbed areas (Table 2).

Mapping Results of the mapping exercise are shown in Table 3.

Counts at Bird Baths We watched for about an hour at a bird bath and every three

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Birds/ha								
Spotted Pardalote	12.8	0.32	0.05	0.28	0.90	1.91		1.21
Inland Thornbill	0.52	1.46	0.50	0.01		3.82		4.80
Weebill	3.18	4.98	1.84	3.11		1.60		0.53
White-browed Scrubwren	2.12		0.07	1.10	2.10	1.66	2.53	4.50
Singing Honeyeater	3.18	5.61	0.46	2.90	1.60	1.04	8.78	0.69
New Holland Honeyeater						5.70	3.82	8.02
White-eared Honeyeater							0.56	
Red Wattlebird	0.30	1.38	4.19	3.00	4.00	7.30	1.91	1.60
White-browed Babbler			0.32	3.20	2.52			
Grey Shrike-thrush	1.06	0.31		0.15	3.70	0.57	0.83	0.15
Silvereye	2.12	40.0	7.14	2.00	8.50	5.65	2.55	7.24
Grey Butcherbird		0.11	0.27	0.42	2.70	0.35	0.27	0.17
Grey Currawong			0.12	0.16	0.50		0.21	0.35

Table 1: Estimated densities of birds derived from point counts at Eyre Bird Observatory

	Standard	Rehabilitated	χ^2	P
Brush Bronzewing	8 (1.3)	2 (0.33)		
Welcome Swallow	3 (0.5)	18 (3)	6.14	P>0.05
Tree Martin	4 (0.66)	4 (0.66)		
Grey Shrike-thrush	2 (0.33)	3 (0.5)		
White-browed Babbler	0	2 (0.33)		
Weebill	2 (0.33)	0		
Inland Thornbill	0	2 (0.33)		
White-browed Scrubwren	3 (0.5)	4 (0.66)		
Blue-breasted Fairy-wren	0	8 (1.33)	4.54	P>0.05
Spotted Pardalote	0	1		
Silvereye	8 (1.33)	12 (2)	0.20	ns
Singing Honeyeater	8 (1.33)	9 (1.5)		
New Holland Honeyeater	7 (1.16)	2 (0.33)		
Red Wattlebird	3 (0.5)	0		
Grey Currawong	2 (0.33)	0		
Australian Raven	8 (1.33)	0	4.54	P>0.05
Striated Pardalote	0	2 (0.33)		

Table 2: Comparison of bird abundances in disturbed and undisturbed areas at Eyre Bird Observatory using ABC counts (approximate densities/ha in brackets)

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Birds/ha										
Spotted Pardalote			0.57	0.23	0.40	0.35	0.40	0.23	0.57	0.75
Striated Pardalote										0.46
Inland Thornbill	0.51	0.34	0.30	0.30	0.46		0.34	0.74	0.29	0.80
Weebill	0.51	0.11		0.23	0.46		1.03	0.29		1.00
Spiny-cheeked H'eater									0.17	
Blue-breasted Fairy-wren	0.69	1.09	0.63	0.69	0.74	0.70	0.63	0.69	0.63	0.55
White-browed Scrubwren	0.80	1.84	0.69	0.80	0.80	1.03	1.59	1.03	1.60	1.30
White-browed Babbler	0.34	0.51	0.91	0.86	0.74	1.50	1.20	0.57	0.51	0.60
Grey Shrike Thrush	0.34	0.46	0.46	0.29	0.34	0.50	1.20	0.23	0.29	0.30
Grey Butcherbird					0.40	0.70	0.10	0.23	0.17	0.15
Grey Currawong							0.17		0.40	0.35

Table 3: Densities of birds near Eyre Bird Observatory as estimated by mapping.

Species	Population index
Singing Honeyeater	228
New Holland Honeyeater	612
Silvereye	868

Table 4: Populations of three species at the bird bath at Eyre, estimated using the Lincoln Index.

minutes recorded how many of each kind of bird was drinking at the time and how many were banded. Populations of birds using the bird bath were estimated using the Lincoln Index (Table 4).

The total counts at the bath (banded and unbanded) were Silvereye 31, New Holland Honeyeater 34 and Singing Honeyeater 38. The ratios of number of each species using the bird bath calculated from these figures differed somewhat from those calculated from density measures on the Point Counts and numbers from the ABC counts. The ratio of Silvereyes to New Holland Honeyeaters varied as shown in Table 5.

Site	Ratio
Bird Bath	0.91:1.0
Point Count	0.90:1.0
ABC	2.22:1.0
Undisturbed ABC area	1.14:1.0

Table 5: The ratio of Silvereyes to New Holland Honeyeaters at four sites near Eyre

The ratios from Point Counts and bird bath agree, but the Silvereyes appeared to use the rehabilitated areas proportionately more than the New Holland Honeyeaters. When the counts from these rehabilitation areas were excluded, the ABC ratios match those of the Point Count and Bird Bath. Comparison of ratios involving the Singing Honeyeater emphasise that many of this species were coming to the bird bath, and probably coming from farther away, that day because the proportion of this species was much higher than in the Point and ABC counts.

Mist Netting During mist netting we caught five Spotted Pardalotes, eight Striated Pardalotes, one Inland Thornbill, two White-browed Scrubwrens, seven Singing Honeyeaters, 41 New Holland Honeyeaters, one Brown-headed Honeyeater, one Grey Shrike-thrush and four Silvereyes.

Comparing all the counting methods shows some agreement in trends, but usually it is best to compare the results from a count method with the results for the same method from a previous year to get an idea of trends for individual species.

Nine pit traps were opened for four days. We recovered a dead *Lerista picturata*, saw many sand dragons *Ctenophorus maculatus* and several barking geckoes *Underwoodisaurus millii*. We also saw a dugite and a bobtail. On Friday we attempted to find the site of Malleefowl mound 18, but failed. We did, however visit Burnabbie and found several birds nesting there, including Rainbow Bee-eaters, a Dusky

Woodswallow nest with two babies and a Jacky Winter with recently fledged young.

Stephen Davies and Silver Kenny

BREMER BAY STARLING SEARCH CAMPOUT, 4–10 NOVEMBER 2007

Introduction

Competing priorities reduced the number of personnel that the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) were able to assign to the 2007 DAFWA/BAWA starling search, which in turn reduced the number of Birds Australia members required. This was made easier by a number of participants becoming unavailable shortly before the search commenced.

The 12 members involved had all arrived at the Bremer Bay Beaches Tourist Resort Caravan Park by late afternoon on Sunday 4 November including one who had gone to the other caravan park by mistake to be told that they had no BAWA/DAFWA booking.

Garry Gray, Rob Parr and Chris Powell from DAFWA put on a fine welcome barbecue before providing a comprehensive briefing on the following week's activities. Although the aim of the search was to determine the presence of Common Starlings in the area, it was hoped that none would be found (see results of the search below). Maps of the areas to be searched, forms for recording the presence/absence of starlings and essential equipment items were then distributed to the groups ready for a smooth departure the next morning.

Routine

Groups departed from the caravan park at 5.30 am each day to be in their locations by approximately 6 am. The emphasis was on surveying wetland areas where starlings had occurred or been controlled in the past. After approximately three hours at the locations, groups were collected and returned to the caravan park between 9.30 and 10 am. By this time most participants were ready for morning tea, which was enjoyed in the briefing tent while the bird call and other administration was undertaken.

Between morning tea and lunchtime, many members were busy birdwatching, identifying wildflowers and sightseeing. The early afternoon was quieter with some enjoying a refreshing siesta.

Everyone re-assembled at 3.30 pm ready for the evening session which commenced at approximately 4 pm. Fencelines, powerlines, stockyards and paddocks were scanned while lakes and swamps were searched in an effort to determine whether starlings were in the area or not (Figure 1). Groups returned to the caravan park between 7.30 and 8 pm.

After each search, a starling observation record sheet was completed – even if no starlings were seen – to provide a written record for the Vertebrate Pest Research Section. Results of the search from the department's point of view are given below.

Results of the search

Two sightings of individual Common Starlings were made at different locations. Clive and Wendy Napier spotted what they consider to have been a juvenile starling on a small swamp near a cattle feed lot on the second morning. We adjusted our planned survey roster and put in many more hours (41 person hours) trying to confirm this sighting to no avail.

The other sighting was made by Gwen and Graham Goodreid at a farm closer to Bremer Bay on the Wednesday morning. This location happened to be where the last known starling was shot at the end of the eradication program in 1991. This sighting was of an adult bird in breeding condition (black with a yellow beak) sitting on a dead paperbark. The bird flew off and was also seen by Rob Parr (DAFWA) who also considered it likely to be a starling based on its colour, shape and flight pattern. More hours were put in to surveillance at this location in attempting to further establish this sighting without success. DAFWA starling control team members Colin Parry and Lisa Jolly were called in to take over at this location leaving us to cover other areas as planned.

The Department does not normally confirm sightings until supported by two starling team members. However, as this was a clear sighting by people with the expertise of the BAWA observers, a public announcement of the sighting was made. To date, following many more hours of observation by DAFWA staff, no further sightings of this bird have been made. The need for on going surveillance in this area is clearly demonstrated.

In trying to confirm these sightings BAWA volunteers gained an understanding of how Department staff routinely monitor starling movements and behaviour prior to doing control work. Many hours of careful, covert and static observation are required to confirm the bird's presence and movements and plan control operations. The Department is appreciative of the efforts and patience of the searchers in this static and possibly somewhat less than exciting observation role.

No starlings were seen at any of the other properties including those in close vicinity to where the sightings were made.

The camp site

Since our previous visit in February, more bush had been cleared from around some of the cabins and the friendly Scarlet Robins could not be found. However, the Australian Ringneck, Red-capped Parrot, Grey Fantail, Australian Magpie and Silveryeye were still present in good numbers while Striated Pardalotes had a nest in a tree outside one of the cabins.

The caravan park was well below capacity, which contributed to a quiet, relaxed campout. Weather conditions were cool most of the time with some mornings and evenings being quite bitter due to strong south-westerly winds.

The birds

A competition to guess the total number of species that would be seen during the campout was held with the prize of a bottle of wine going to the winner. Knowing the total from the previous search in February (133 species) helped many to remain in contention until the last day. The first day produced an astounding 91 species, leading some to think that they had set their totals too low. However, the following days saw only small increments added, taking the total to 125 species. Chris Powell won the prize with his "guesstimate" of 126 species.



Ever vigilant. The lot of a starling searcher. The warm clothes were required, as it was extremely cold that evening. The trees to the left of the observer are the edge of a swamp while the mound directly behind is cattle dung from the feedlot.

Photo by Paul Marty

During the February search Red-winged Fairy-wrens were seen at some of the locations visited (Sandilands 2007). The species was noted again this time and photographic proof obtained (see article elsewhere in this issue).

Large numbers of waterbirds, particularly Australian Shelduck, Grey Teal and Hoary-headed Grebe, were seen on many of the wetlands visited even though water levels were lower than during the February search. Around the muddy edges, small wading birds such as Red-capped Plovers and Black-fronted Dotterels were found as well as some migratory species. A wetland visited on the last day held more than 200 Red-necked Avocets in one flock with approximately 80 Banded Stilts and 50 Black-winged Stilts in another.

Straw-necked Ibis were often seen feeding on locust hoppers during the morning and evening travelling to search locations.

Canola that had been swathed ready for harvest made progress difficult for the observers on some farms but attracted Galahs, Australian Ringnecks, Common Bronzewing and Red-capped Parrots. Members commented on the large numbers of the latter species, which was recorded at most locations visited. Quite a few Restless Flycatchers and White-winged Trillers were also recorded.

Species recorded breeding during this search included Red-capped Plover, Elegant Parrot, Yellow-throated Miner, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and Grey Currawong.

A list of species recorded at each of the properties visited has been compiled and passed on to the DAFWA staff and all BAWA members who participated.

Social aspects

Apart from the welcome barbecue on Sunday evening, a Melbourne Cup function was held at Misti's Restaurant in the

caravan park. Ross Marshall ably organised a sweep which provided interest for everyone in the group. This was won by Chris Powell with Rob Parr second and Graham Goodreid third. Clive Napier got his money back for having the horse that ran last.

An extended morning tea was had on the Friday morning with all present enjoying some tasty cake provided by Robina Haynes. That night, after the last search had been completed, everybody gathered at Misti's Restaurant for a wine and pizza farewell dinner. The opportunity was taken to make presentations to a number of people including Garry Gray for his handling of the organisational and political aspects of the search.

References

Sandilands, P. (2007). Red-winged Fairy-wrens at Bremer Bay. *Western Australian Bird Notes* **122**, 21-22.

Peter Sandilands (Leader) and Garry Gray
(Technical Officer, DAFWA)



Fairy Pitta, Derby (see Observations).
Photo by Sohn Tan



Members' contributions



Editors' note: Due to the large number of contributions submitted recently, some articles have been held over until the next issue.

A NOISY SCRUB-BIRD SIGHTING

Did this article come with no heading? YES: mp Correct no heading so this should cover it.

My daughters think my choice of birdwatching as a hobby is curious, as they know I prefer to sleep in every morning. I assure them that there are birds to be seen and enjoyed during the day and sometimes I see something really special.

However, on the long weekend excursion to Cheynes Beach, I dutifully crawled out of bed each morning at a time my body-clock refuses to believe exists, in search of the desirable Big Three: the Western Bristlebird, Western Whipbird and Noisy Scrub-bird. And there they were, calling loudly, just like on the recording but unfortunately, always out of sight. I did catch a glimpse of a bristlebird — at least, that's what they told me it was — as it dashed across the path, a blur of brown disappearing into the undergrowth. And I'm told a Noisy Scrub-bird ran across the track behind me but my attention at the time was captured by an energetic whale leaping half-a-dozen times out of the water in the bay below.

After everyone else had left for home, Ray Flanagan took pity on me and, late in the afternoon, we cruised up and down the road in her car until we located a Noisy Scrub-bird calling enthusiastically. When it started to move to the left, she parked the car at the top of the next track that it was heading for. As we stood waiting the calls came nearer and nearer until it was in a bush only a few metres below us. There it went through its entire repertoire of songs, several times. Then silence, and it began again from a clump of reeds further down the track. A reprise of all the songs it knew and then silence, and when it began again it had moved away

from us! Was it going to cross the road behind us? No, after a while it returned to the first bush. More song, more silence — and I saw it as it slipped into the clump of reeds. Another burst of song, silence, and suddenly, there it was on the track! It paused, to let us have a good look at it, and then trotted to the other side with its tail in the air. We both started to breathe again. What a fantastic sighting! And at ten past six in the evening; no need for all those early mornings. I'll be eternally grateful to Ray for such a special encounter with such an elusive bird.

Valerie Hemsley

SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL ON ROTTNEST ISLAND

(This item has been forwarded to us by Bert Genat, a bus driver on Rottnest Island, who has a keen interest in birds and may be known to many of you. *Editor*.)

In early September Dr Denis Saunders (co-author of *Birds of Rottnest*) and his wife stayed on the island for a week or so. I ran into them and spent one of my days off (Thursday 6 September 2007) tramping around Rottnest with Denis. He is extremely knowledgeable about Rottnest birds and I enjoyed my day hugely and learnt a lot.

Perhaps our most interesting find was a large bird's leg bone, some webbing between the toes and with a bright yellow plastic cylinder around the bone with what we thought was a radio transmitter attached.

Denis Saunders followed up on the transmitter and initial contact stated the leg was that of a sea bird banded in a

British Antarctic Survey. Now that's a bird a long way from home!

Further e-mails, from which I will quote directly, contained considerably more detail. What we thought was a radio transmitter was actually a geolocator.



Southern Giant-Petrel
Photo by Bert Genat

"This device takes a recording of daylight intensity at regular intervals and also has a salt water switch which records when the bird is settled on the water, and a clock. The data is highly compressed and the logger can go on recording for up to 3 years (if we are lucky).

"From the time of sun rise and sun set we get a rough estimate of longitude and from the total day length we get an estimate of latitude.

"That is basically how the thing works. So we should be able to track the bird's passage from here to there. Had the bird survived it would in a number of years (perhaps half a decade) have turned up back on the island having collected data during its juvenile years, about which we currently know relatively little. We are interested in this device ...

"The bird was a southern giant petrel juvenile, which received a geolocator at Bird Island (South Georgia - southern Atlantic Ocean - 54°01S: 38°03W) on 19 April this year, prior to fledging. Quite remarkable for one of the 27 birds which carried geolocator devices this season to be found. We certainly were not expecting to be recovering these devices so soon! The bird was also ringed with a metal BTO ring on the opposite leg: 5223736."

So this bird lived for perhaps another four months after fledging, flew halfway around the world and for what ever reason died on Rottneest Island.

Bert Genat

A DISPLAY IN THE SPLENDID FAIRY-WREN PHOTOGRAPHED

Sedgwick (1956) observed an unusual display in the Splendid Fairy-wren at Wooroloo. In the display the ear coverts projected out from and at right angles to the head and the forehead and crown feathers were erected in a disc-like shape. The same display was observed twice by myself (Stranger 1992) near Banksiadale in the late 1960s. Now the display has been photographed by Slater (2007), though the display seems less pronounced than I remember it.

Robert Stranger

References

Sedgwick, E.H. (1956). Birdlife at Wooroloo – 2. *Western Australian Naturalist* **5**, 63.

Slater, R. (2007). An eye for a wren, *Wingspan* **17**(4), 11.

Stranger, R.H. (1992). A display in the Splendid Fairy-wren, *Western Australian Naturalist* **19**, 66.

COURSE REPORT – Book Binding & Bird Banding EYRE — nothing to equal it!

As a person with an appreciation of, and interest in the natural world, I have always kept an eye on the birds that visit my garden and those which I see out in the bush.

When I moved up to the hills to teach at Darlington in 1992, I was fortunate indeed to become a colleague of Alma de Rebeira. Every time Alma and Perry planned a trip to Eyre, an invitation was issued. "Sorry, Alma," I would say, "I just can't; too many animals to look after!" And so it has been for the last 16 years. 2007 was different, though.

Two things I have said I would like to learn before I die: how to make shoes and how to bind books. So when, over a holiday morning tea, Alma said that Perry was running a book-binding course coupled with bird-banding at Eyre in November, I didn't hesitate. "Count me in!" I said, and I'd work round any complications later.

November 9th was a usual, busy day at school but I was out like the shot from a gun when the bell rang at 3.05. Dogs to the kennels at 5 pm and I was on the road by 7.45 heading for Yellowdine to meet up with the forward party.

I had last been out that way in 2003 when I rode my horse on the Golden Pipeline Centenary Trek from Mundaring Weir to Kalgoorlie. The journey was a great memory jogger, but oh how quickly those towns flashed by in the dark under a different sort of horsepower. I had dashed off in 4½ hours what it had taken us the best part of a fortnight to ride!

True to her word, Alma had left out the ice-cream container markers just through Yellowdine. I turned in and followed the track until I came upon the silent campsite, hoping the car hadn't made too much noise. I rolled out the swag on the ground and crawled in; enjoyed a quick look at the starry night sky and was asleep before my head touched the pillow.

Saturday dawned and we were up with it: life lived more in time with nature. A quick and easy breakfast, camp struck and we were on the road again. By morning tea time just beyond Coolgardie it was substantially warm and the bush flies were plentiful. I felt my bird skills were terribly elementary as Alma was able to separate individuals from the merry twittering chorus and put names to them all. I knew that it would take me a long time to be that good!

The stretch of country ahead was all new yet familiar ground to me; the red earth and the mallee trees; then suddenly the expanses of salt lakes as we neared Norseman. The turn there onto the Eyre Highway heralded the approach of the Nullarbor — now that was something new. By 5.30 we were looking for a campsite and the radio communication suggested 'somewhere before the trees run out.' We found such a spot and settled in for the night. It left us a relatively short run in the morning to get to Eyre. The 148 km of dead straight road, then Caiguna and Cocklebidy, those places

hitherto only names on a map, revealed themselves as roadhouses that punctuated long stretches of open landscape. Australia is a BIG place!

The turn off the highway to the coast was something of a liver-shaker but nonetheless quite easily negotiated. Then the top of the scarp dropped down to the sand plain below. 10 kilometres, well vegetated, lay before us with the track cutting a clearly visible line through the greenery. The distance blurred in a sunny haze. What a view! I left my car and transferred my belongings into Jen White's 4WD for the last lap out to the coast.

The lovely limestone house with wide verandahs all round, was our home for the week. It has been restored to heritage specifications over the years, and further extensive stonework repairs, beginning with support for the back verandah, were underway during our stay.

Our introduction to Eyre was a sudden environmental disaster. Hundreds of shearwaters had been washed up either dead or dying on the beach. A number were collected and frozen, to be taken back to Perth for toxicological investigation. We saw many bodies along the beach on our beach count excursion later in the week. It was very sad and disturbing.

That first evening saw us wade in to the rudiments of book binding, starting with jotter pads made from recycled paper. Under Perry's expert and patient tutelage we soon became comfortable with presses, glues and their appropriate uses and squaring-off using the plow. By the following day we had all made a fair fist of jotters and were raring to go at something more complicated!

The bird-banding started on Monday morning with the mist nets erected before breakfast then opened afterwards and checked every 20 minutes thereafter until lunchtime. I was the only complete greenhorn amongst the group; Jenny, Chris and John wanting to increase their tallies of birds to get nearer to achieving licensed status. I saw how the birds are extracted from the nets — a delicate and essentially rapid procedure — to ensure the least possible stress to the captives. Into the calico bags they went, and I was entrusted as a runner to get them to the banding table ASAP.

There, I learned how to hold a bird correctly and the order of processing. First, to identify the bird; select the correct-sized band; apply the band and read the number to the recorder; head-bill measurement; wing length; tail length; sex and age; breeding status; plumage condition and finally, weight, before release. I became more confident as the week progressed and was entrusted to the recording position on a number of occasions, where quick, neat notation and accuracy were essential. I was also able to process a New Holland Honeyeater and a Silvereye myself. The morning's work was always fast and furious with 20 minutes barely time to clear the decks before the next influx from the nets was upon us.

It was just beautiful to be in such close contact with the birds and to be able to examine them in detail; from the tiny scrubwrens and pardalotes, weighing only a few grams, to the Grey Currawong, our largest captive. This was something you could get to do only in this situation. It was an amazing privilege to be in on the count!

Our book binding continued and we ventured into sewing sections together to make a notebook with the spine properly strengthened and a cover of fine marbled paper with reinforced corners. The sense of achievement was positively euphoric!

Evening walks along the dunes to see the sunsets was a lovely way to end the days.

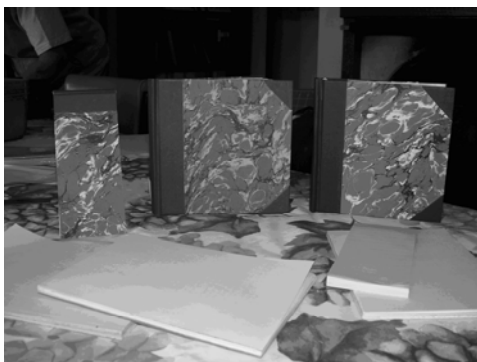
All this peace and tranquillity together with good company, excellent food and Bev's celebratory 50th birthday to boot. It was worth the wait. Thank you Alma and Perry,

Bev and John, Jenny, Chris and Marie for making it a week to remember.

A quote from James Joyce's otherwise incomprehensible 'Finnegan's Wake', sums up the Eyre Experience to a T —

'No birdy aviar soar any wing to eagle it.'

Sue Edmonds (Course Participant)



The sense of achievement was euphoric.
Photo by Sue Edmonds

PEREGRINE VERSUS IBIS

My husband Alan and I have lived in Margaret River for over 15 years. We moved to our 26 hectare farm in Rosa Brook in 2005. I take an interest in the birdlife on our property and my sister Christine Wilder and I keep records of the bird species seen here.

During this time I have had several sightings of Peregrine Falcons. Once on the front lawn I watched a pair have a dispute over a downy Southern Boobook chick.

One afternoon in November 2007 I was inside the house and heard a falcon calling a loud, agitated call. It was persistent so I looked out of the window and saw a Straw-necked Ibis in the paddock next to the fenceline. A Peregrine Falcon was attacking the ibis repeatedly, each time calling loudly as it flew directly in a swoop or dive, hitting the ibis and knocking it to the ground. The ibis struggled to stand each time this happened. Eventually the falcon flew off.

I walked over to see the condition of the ibis. It was bleeding from its head and breast and looked stunned and in shock. I watched it for a short time to see what might happen and then I picked it up to carry it closer to the house where I could watch it. I was a little wary as it was large and I thought it might strike out but it was dazed when I handled it. After I had left it for a few minutes it seemed to revive and then it flew off.

Jennifer Hunt

GREY CURRAWONGS – ATTACKERS AND ATTACKED

During the recent starling search held in the Bremer Bay area (see separate report in this issue), I noticed a pair of Grey Currawongs attempting to raid a Red Wattlebird's nest containing at least one chick. As the currawongs clambered up the narrow stems of the tree the nest was in, they were repeatedly swooped by the parents of the chick. Their almost continuous calling attracted another pair of wattlebirds, some nosey Australian Ringnecks and the local colony of Yellow-throated Miners, approximately 12-15 strong.

Apart from the parrots, the remainder joined the assault on the currawongs with some birds actually hitting their larger adversaries. Others began to grab the currawongs' tail and wing feathers, causing them to lose their balance and fall to the ground, where they were pecked repeatedly until they regained their balance and could use their powerful beak to defend themselves. This happened several times before the currawongs withdrew, returning to try again a few minutes later. This time they managed to reach the nest despite the determined defence. The leading bird reached into the nest with its large beak and grabbed the chick. It was then hit by four or five miners and wattlebirds all at once causing it to lose its balance and fall out of the tree. As it did so, the chick was released from its grip and fell to the ground some 6m below, seemingly unnoticed by the other birds. By this time the second currawong had reached the nest and proceeded to break it up with its beak until it too was knocked out of the tree by the defenders. As this was occurring, the first currawong returned unnoticed along the ground, where it caught and killed the chick before walking off into the undergrowth with the body. The second currawong did not return and the noise from the miners and wattlebirds gradually subsided as they drifted away leaving just one wattlebird near the ransacked nest.

Peter Sandilands

DAMNED IF THEY DON'T? DAMNED IF THEY DO?

After the author agreed early in 2000 to adopt at first only 10, later 22, km of beaches for survey along the western shoreline of south western Lake Preston, he settled on common names for several Hooded Plover sites he had already found. He dubbed one site Upton's or Tarmac beach, because that site fronted a section of privately sealed, but elsewhere unmade, part of Lake Preston Road. So much for good-birder housekeeping, the house has since changed hands, and the Shire of Harvey is now sealing much of the rest of the dirt road.

So regular were my Lake Preston 'Hoodie' nests discoveries, from each early summer since 2003, that I posted a Temporary Breeding Beach (HPTBB) sign at Uptons and eleven others, each at a known HP site. However, this article should serve also to caution any regular observer against becoming too blasé, habitually working during a succeeding season greatly in response to any pattern hitherto of observed 'Hoodie' behaviour on their home turf. Indeed, I failed last season to find even one 'Hoodie' nest, either in peak summer

breeding season, or later. Matters hardly improved in the 2007/2008 season as only one clutch of 'Hoodie' eggs was found at the Uptons site from an average of four observation patrols weekly.

Probably the same Uptons 'Hoodie' pair regularly nested at this location in seasons before 2000 although with mixed success, based on my observations. Attempts since 2002 to capture and band the pair by day and one attempt by night proved unsuccessful. Even so, probably it's the same Tarmac 'Hoodie' pair throughout which has proved closely faithful each year to its nesting location, with the nest I found in mid December 2007 consistent with that pattern.

But, the author could have easily missed the Upton pair's nest this time, having almost misdirected himself. Past evidence showed that 'Hoodies' had not nested at Lake Preston's soft beaches when those sites were very wet or simply soggy, while other pairs sometimes would nest on hard substrata in similarly adverse conditions, although a small minority of pairs chose to nest on mounds amid impossibly soggy surrounds. Anyway, parents brooding eggs at those prominent nests were easily spotted.

Uptons beach shares some of its natural characteristics with some other soft sites at west Lake Preston. During and after winter rains, a fresh-water lens under the wooded dunes west of the Uptons site at first streams and later steadily seeps water across the up-beach margin and across Upton's mud beach well into mid summer. Nevertheless, in the first week of December 2007, I began to see the Uptons pair quite regularly on site.

On December 8, one adult sat as if incubating eggs, but the following morning I found an adult bird 'pale and loitering', near the same spot, but still I did not credit the possibility of a nest.

It was only when finding one adult bird on December 12 sitting at the same spot with another loafing nearby, I gingerly 'squidged' across the oozy mud approach. What first caught my eye was a single egg glistening on the surface, then found nearby the nest proper, with two eggs. The two eggs in the nest bowl seemed dry, although the tatty and uneven nest appeared damp and soggy.

I could not account for the one egg's displacement, nor find any avian or mammalian tracks anywhere nearby. I reasoned from my local experience that the singly and greatly exposed egg would almost certainly attract some predator, most probably Silver Gulls. Nevertheless, I was loath at first to use invasive methods, to replace the single egg back with the others.

Quickly fortified by my present Department of Environment and Conservation license to deploy Predator Exclusion Cages, and encouraged by previous information that 'Hoodie' carers in the eastern states had replaced 'Hoodie' eggs found spilled from nests without hindering successful incubation, I popped the displaced egg back into the nest. I might still be damned by some for what I did, but I felt all three eggs might have been damned if I hadn't.

Although I knew past 'Hoodie' nests found well back from the then settled water line to soft and almost level beaches, occasionally had been wiped out later by waterline surges

driven by strong easterlies, on the one hand I still held out some hope that perhaps any improved weather might well favour this Uptons nest. On the other hand, I had registered repeatedly over previous seasons that 'Hoodies' at south west Lake Preston are extremely mobile, and again proved so during the present series of strong easterly winds for most of the day.

So, what with an unusually cool start to summer 2007, and with the weather forecast for wind and rain that occurred overnight on December 16 and 17, I felt obliged to check closely the Uptons 'Hoodie' nest on the afternoon of the 17th. Conveniently, both adult birds were found loafing distant from the nest, which was partly flooded. I reckoned at once the eggs probably were damned, possibly the chill, moreover, the same wild easterlies might have destroyed other 'Hoodie' nests yet to be discovered. At least two Red-capped Dotterel pairs abandoned their two-egg nests, although I discovered another Red-capped Dotterel sitting on a two-egg nest on the morning of December 18.

On the morning of December 19, both Upton parents were foraging close to the nest, and I hoped one of the pair had resumed brooding the eggs. Next morning a parent was sitting on the nest. My hopes began to rise when I found the parent birds again on December 19 close to the nest spot, with one parent at the nest on December 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27. But on December 28 I observed both birds some 250 metres south of the nest, with fresh and distinct adult fox tracks at the immediate approach to the nest. All three eggs were missing.

From a research point of view, this was a lost opportunity to discover how resilient 'Hoodie' eggs may be to cold and wet exposure for what number of days, and the effect of interrupted incubation. My past, but limited, finds of abandoned 'Hoodie' eggs suggested survival chances diminished in proportion to how far advanced the embryos were when inclement weather or some other dire circumstance intervened.

Although lacking any evidence that the Uptons 'Hoodie' pair had earlier produced, unnoticed, its first clutch that year, and

despite finding the eggs missing, I derived some hope from previous experience that, if at first they don't succeed, commonly, our Lake Preston 'Hoodies' and Red-capped Dotterels will breed again shortly after losing the first clutch. Yet so far, out of a total in some past years of about 13 nesting pairs along west Lake Preston, this year only four other pairs have been observed sporadically occupying their usual sites of south west pocket, boat ramp, south main-spit beach, and bay of islands.



The Eyre track ahead was clearly visible (see Members' contributions).

Photo by Sue Edmonds

It was not until January 1, 2, 5, 7, 9 and 10, 2008 that the Uptons pair were again on site, on the last two occasions not far from the pair's original nest location. I was reasonably sure that the birds had not bred again anywhere along the highly exposed Upton beach. But a considerable beach disturbance closer to the waterline beyond the lost nest site caught my attention. I found there several raised mud disc patties and a separate mud castle, with numerous bare footprints of children, despite the site being only about 60 metres beyond the HPTBB sign I posted at the bank. Damn!!!

However, on December 2, at the south main-spit beach site, during the absence of an adult 'Hoodie' pair, a well-advanced, lone 'Hoodie' juvenile estimated as having hatched in about July 2007 was seen. Who knows? Many more Yalgorup 'Hoodie' pairs than before may have started to favour mild winter conditions for breeding, suggesting more of the same as climate change develops further. Bonded 'Hoodie' pairs might be damned if they don't take advantage of global climate change. On the other hand, if they do breed outside peak summer seasons, they might still be damned by floods, feral animals, or careless or ignorant human activity.

A. F. (Tony) France

MORE ON RED-WINGED FAIRY-WRENS AT BREMER BAY

During the February 2007 starling search held in the Bremer Bay area a number of observations of Red-winged Fairy-wrens were recorded (Sandilands 2007). In November 2007, another starling search was held in the same area (see separate report in this issue) and a number of definite sightings of Red-winged Fairy-wrens were made during that time. Two of these were at a location where they had been seen previously while the remainder were at locations that had not been visited in February or where they had not been recorded before.

Details of the sightings are as follows:

Location 1:	34° 23' 13" S, 119° 12' 00" E
Date:	5 Nov 2007
Sightings:	2
Observers:	Gwen and Graham Goodreid, Robina Haynes
Status:	Seen at this location in February. Splendid Fairy-wrens were also recorded here.
Location 2:	34° 22' 52" S, 119° 03' 54" E
Date:	6 Nov 2007
Sightings:	3
Date:	8 Nov 2007
Sightings:	1
Observer:	Peter Sandilands
Status:	Not seen at this location when visited in February. Splendid Fairy-wrens were also recorded here.
Location 3:	34° 18' 32" S, 119° 03' 14" E
Date:	9 Nov 2007
Sightings:	3
Observers:	Gwen and Graham Goodreid, Paul Marty, Peter Sandilands

Status: This was a new location for the team, with good views of the species.

It was at this last location that Paul Marty was able to photograph an immature male, showing the grey crown and deep red wings. This has been forwarded to the scientific sub-committee as proof of the species existence in the area. Unfortunately, the photograph was unsuitable for black and white reproduction with these notes. Splendid Fairy-wrens were also recorded at this location.



Red-winged Fairy-wren
Photo by Paul Marty

Some observers noted that the crown and ear coverts were of similar pale silvery blue colour. However, I noticed on two occasions a perceptible difference between the ear coverts, which were pale silvery blue, and the crown, which was a slightly darker blue; that is, one did not blend smoothly into the other as is so often the case. On both occasions, the presence of black-billed, red-lored females provided that much need additional confirmation of species identity.

Now, after two major campouts in the area, both the Splendid and Red-winged Fairy-wrens have been positively identified. The species that many references (see list in Sandilands 2007) indicate should be in the area, the Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, has yet to be sighted.

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Sandilands, P. (2007). Red-winged Fairy-wrens at Bremer Bay. *Western Australian Bird Notes* **122**, 21-22.

Peter Sandilands

FLYING INSECTS IN THE KIMBERLEY

After around eight weeks of air temperatures in the low 40s, the first of the wet season storms finally passed over Fitzroy Crossing during the afternoon of 8 December 2007.

As we sat on our front verandah watching the storm and rain falling and enjoying the sudden drop in temperature, flying insects (ants) commenced emerging out of the ground in our house yard area. Within minutes the air was filled with hundreds of the flying insects. Grey-crowned Babblers that were in the house yard feeding mostly on the ground prior to the insects emerging, were seen feeding on these flying insects as they came out of the ground. There were a number of other birds that enjoyed this short-lived food. A Great Bowerbird was feeding on them, occasionally taking some on the wing. Other birds seen feeding on the flying insects were Zebra Finch, Double-barred Finch, White-breasted Woodswallow, Brown Honeyeater, Red-throated Honeyeater, White-gaped Honeyeater, Yellow-tinted Honeyeater, Willie Wagtail and Magpie-lark.

The flying insects emerged out of the ground for about 15 minutes and during that time there was a lot of activity as birds caught the insects on the wing or moved over the ground feeding on the flying insects. Both finch species would fly up from a perch for about a metre before catching a flying insect. This was very unusual behaviour compared with their normal feeding on grass seeds obtained from the ground or pulling grass stems down to the ground and then feeding on the seeds.

Allan and Sandy Rose

MOLLY'S CAMPOUT CAKE

This article of gastronomic magnificence made its first appearance following an Augusta campout that I had the honour to lead many years ago. It was Darryl's first attendance at a BAWA campout and to ensure that said young lady was in good hands her mother Molly accompanied her. Molly was most impressed by the group and realising that the campers took their cuisine very seriously she thereafter sent Darryl off each time with The Cake. Now the cake was not sent to feed the peasants because there was no bread as was maliciously and incorrectly attributed to the Queen of France but, as I have most recently been advised, it was to placate those peasants so that they would not be unduly unkind to the daughter no matter what she did or said. The mother obviously knew things which at that early stage were hidden from us...!

The Cake became a fixture over the years as did The Daughter but despite many requests we have been advised that cakery is NOT hereditary and only the following recipe is being passed forward. Therefore it is up to you campers to sharpen your stirrers and BRING THE CAKE.

Remembering Molly Parkin, 1917-2008, with thanks from the BAWA Campers.

Clive Napier

Recipe

Ingredients

Tin (Green) of Golden Circle crushed pineapple including juice

125g of butter 1 teaspn baking soda

375g Sunbeam mixed dried fruit 1 teaspn allspice

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sugar

Method

Line cake tin with Glad Bake and use Pure and Simple. Combine all above ingredients in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Turn down and simmer for 3 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat. When cool (at least an hour) add 3 eggs, and fold in 1 cup SR Flour, 1 cup plain flour. Pour into prepared cake tin and cook in moderate oven for one and a half hours.

Icing

Icing sugar Vanilla

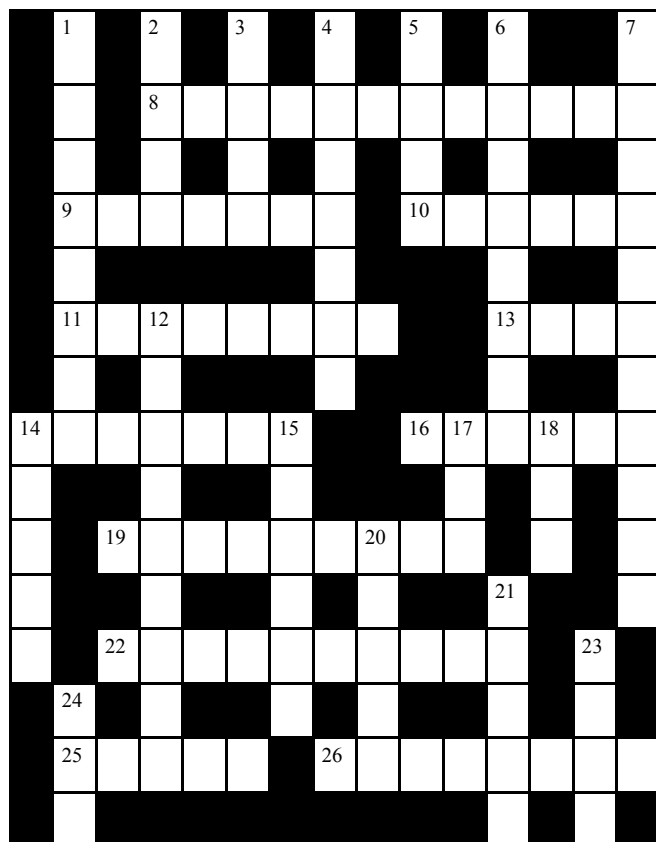
Knob of butter Water

Combine carefully, cover top of cake with the mixture and decorate with a fork pattern.

Darryl James



By Pam Agar



Clues across

8. Cause of death of many young birds.
9. Old hand.
10. To be indecisive.
11. Small swift-flying parrot.
13. Attribute of wagtail nest.
14. A little at a time.
16. Conspicuous attribute of many birds.
19. Species where female is most colourful.
22. Forms a soft feather-dressing.
25. Language used in scientific names.
26. Farming practice, bonus for Galahs.

Clues down

1. Large-billed duck of south-west WA.
2. Deposited sediment.
3. Equal in standing.
4. Useful tool perhaps on a long-range trip.
5. Parched.
6. Cockatoo on guard duty.
7. Instinct, strongest during breeding season.
12. Small, shy, ground-feeder of inland.
14. Widespread black cormorant.
15. Flycatcher of north-west WA.
17. Single.
18. Nocturnal family with excellent senses.
20. Scientific grouping.
21. Cryptic bird of marshy areas.
23. Introduced tree, little used by local birds.
24. Abbreviation for altitude.



White Tern, Wooded Island, Abrolhos Is. (see Observations)
Photo by Kevin Coate

Conservation Forum

Due to circumstances, the Conservation Forum scheduled for February 16th was deferred. We apologise for any inconvenience this might have caused. The Conservation and Research Committee is working towards rescheduling the Forum for a date later in 2008.

Notice of the new date will be advertised in *WA Bird Notes* at the appropriate time.

Andrew Hobbs
Chair, BAWA, Conservation and Research Subcommittee

Digital photos

When submitting electronic images, please use a medium to high resolution, eg, 300 dpi, as this provides a clearer reproduction.

EQUIPMENT LENDING/ PLANNER CALENDAR FOR THE BAWA OFFICE

To all the members who borrow equipment from the BAWA office, a new lending/planning calendar is now in operation. Gone is the multitude of books located on the office counter and a brand new planner is installed in the computer room.

Please read the new instructions, which we hope, will simplify the system. Future bookings of equipment can be made on the planner.

The equipment lending is the responsibility of the Community Education Sub-committee.

Elsa Dabbs
Secretary, CES

Community Education Sub-Committee



2008 promises to be another busy year

— would you like to assist?

The committee's purpose is to promote birding in the community.

CES volunteers visit schools, clubs, libraries, environment groups and other interested organisations. Our volunteers prepare displays for libraries and community shows, sell cards and books etc, and lead birdwalks. Bird identification classes are run, both for experienced birders and for beginners. We encourage people to become members of BA and to take part in the birding activities conducted by BAWA.

If you are prepared to do one or more of the following:

- speak to schoolchildren or groups of adults
- lead short birdwalks
- prepare a *PowerPoint* or slide presentation (we have thousands of images)
- man a public display
- create publicity posters or other resources
- perform clerical tasks
- arrange or co-ordinate CES visits and other activities
- prepare or set up or pack up outdoor displays
- etc,

then we ask you to join us — even once is helpful!

Please contact Brice Wells 9255 3710 or
Elsa Dabbs 9454 3119 or
Rod Smith 9447 3804

Note: a *Working With Children* card is required when visiting schools, or other groups of children.

MALLEEFOWL MOUND MONITORING

at Eyre Bird Observatory, August 2008



70 Malleefowl mounds with known co-ordinates are required to be monitored this year as part of an on-going Malleefowl study at Eyre. Opportunities exist for volunteers who are interested in bushwalking and data recording. This will occur from Sun Aug 10th to Sat Aug 16th.

The cost of accommodation at Eyre is \$560 for six nights. An application for funding support has been made but the outcome is not yet known.

Enquiries: Rod Smith 9447 3804 (rodjoyce@bigpond.net.au)
Bookings: Eyre 9039 3450 (eyrebirdobs@bigpond.com)

BIRD IDENTIFICATION SEMINAR FOR BEGINNERS

The Community Education Sub-committee of BAWA will be presenting Bird Identification workshops for beginners at THE COCKBURN WETLANDS CENTRE, BIBRA LAKE on the following dates.

Saturday March 15th – 9.00am – 12.30pm, BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS

This fascinating introductory seminar will equip you with all the necessary basic knowledge including bird identification, field guides, equipment familiarity common terms and jizz.

Sunday March 16th - 9.00am – 12.30pm, WATER BIRDS AND WADERS

The wetlands of Bibra Lake are home to a variety of native and migratory birds. Explore the rich variety of species and learn more about bird habitat, physiology and the importance of conservation. Presentation and a field exercise.

Saturday March 29th - 9.00am – 12.30pm, BUSHBIRDS

Have you ever walked a forest trail and caught a glimpse of a bird or heard its song and wondered what it is? This final seminar in our bird series will assist with identification of native and "weed" bird species, and provide knowledge on how to seek out those top birding spots. Presentation and a field exercise.

VENUE: COCKBURN WETLANDS CENTRE, 184 HOPE RD, BIBRA LAKE, WA 6163

COST: \$10 Per Session—includes morning tea, to be paid at the first session on March 15th.

For the field exercise, binoculars can be provided – a gold coin donation is appreciated.

TO BOOK FOR THE WORKSHOP: Phone the Birds Australia Office, 9383 7749, during Office Hours, Monday To Friday 9.30am – 12.30am or e-mail, mail@birdswa.com.au.

State the names, the number of people attending, a contact number, and the date of the sessions you wish to attend.

Brice Wells, Chairman
Community Liaison Officer
Community Education Sub-committee

Eyre Bird Observatory



COURSES ON OFFER

The following courses have been scheduled and more are planned. Please contact the current caretakers, Roger & Cheryl McCallum, if you would like to attend.

BUSY BEE Special price! **2nd – 8th March 2008**

Facilitated by Caretakers

A busy bee is organised to assist the caretakers with maintenance and other small jobs around the observatory. We charge \$60 per day for food and accommodation for 4 hrs work each day. The rest of the time is yours to enjoy. You may wish to stay for the full duration OR just a few days. This is possible if caretakers are informed.

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 of gutters and verandahs. Busy bees are popular so book in early with the caretakers and avoid disappointment.

AN INTRODUCTION TO NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY **11th – 17th May 2008**

Facilitated by Simon Nevill

Simon is a well-known WA photographer and naturalist, who has a long list of Natural History publications to his name. I'm sure this one will be rapidly booked out.

MALLEEFOWL MONITORING AT EYRE **10th – 16th August 2008**

Facilitated by Rod Smith

If you've not done this before you're missing something special.

You are invited to join a party of searchers to monitor the state of the known Malleefowl mounds at Eyre in 2008. The mapping of Malleefowl mound locations at Eyre has been taking place since 1989. The total found is now 71.

Those taking part will need to be fit enough to walk, in small groups, up to 10 km per day. GPS receivers will be used. Instruction in their use will be given where necessary. It may be possible to subsidise some costs for participants but this will not be known until mid-July. Otherwise the advertised course rates will apply.

FIELD TECHNIQUES IN BIRD STUDIES **7th December – 13th December 2008**

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.

Rangeland surveys 2008

This year's Rangeland (or Station) Surveys are expected to be held at the former pastoral stations of Goongarrie and Credo from 16 to 31 August. These locations may change if some adverse event occurs at Credo or Goongarrie.

For a report on last year's Rangelands Surveys see the September 2007 Issue of *Western Australian Bird Notes*, page 11.

Goongarrie is located off the Goldfields Highway between Kalgoorlie and Menzies and the building we will be based at is normally accessible by two wheel drive vehicles with caution; however 4WD will be needed to access our survey points. There is very limited unisex sleeping accommodation, showers and toilets.

Credo is located north of Coolgardie on the Coolgardie North Road near Rowles Lagoon Conservation Park and the road is expected to be usable by two wheel drive but not the tracks to the survey sites. Credo has only recently been acquired by the Department of Environment and Conservation. Accommodation there is expected to be better than that available at Goongarrie.

Whilst Credo can be reached from Goongarrie using the Davyhurst - Goongarrie Road most will probably want to travel via Kalgoorlie to pick up additional fuel and food supplies.

Due to the survey methodology, the organised birding (in which everybody is expected to participate) is not always in the best birding locations, which can be frustrating. However social interaction at lunch times and evenings is strongly encouraged. One day near the middle will be designated a "free day".

This year's surveys are closer to Perth than normal making it an ideal opportunity for "first timers". While first timers should be experienced birders, they do not need to be experienced travellers or campers. There may also be two or three jobs available for non-birding partners.

To attend you need to speak with a member of the organising committee. Applying sooner rather than later will be an advantage but does not guarantee a place. Note one or two of the organisers expect to be undertaking extended trips so if you do not get a response from one please try another.

The organisers are:

Ed and Alyson Paull (9299 6283)
Pam and George Agar (9457 2292)
Ruth and John Luyer (9384 2098).

Winter Volunteer Rangers at Newhaven Sanctuary

Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary is now managed through a partnership between Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) and Birds Australia. For more information about AWC visit www.australianwildlife.org.

In August this year Danae and I became the Sanctuary Managers at Newhaven. We are both residents of Central Australia and share a love for the bush. We are pleased to have the opportunity to spend time looking after this beautiful part of the country. We also look forward to further developing the Sanctuary to enhance each visitor's experience of Newhaven.

In 2008 we plan to re-establish a system where between April and August there is a resident volunteer Ranger/ Campground Caretaker. Some of the Ranger's duties would involve liaising with visitors, maintaining the small campground and participating in other projects on the Sanctuary. Of course there would be time to look for the Night Parrot! The Ranger/s would be offered accommodation in the self-contained two-bedroom unit and assistance would be given to reach Newhaven from Alice Springs if required. We would prefer Ranger/s to stay for a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of four weeks, however alternative arrangements could be made.

If you are interested in spending some time at Newhaven in this role, or would like some more information, please contact us by email: newhaven@australianwildlife.org or phone (08) 8964 6000. In order to have a roster ready by April we would like to begin confirming dates early. This way we can work on a time that best suits us all.

Josef Schofield and Danae Moore
Newhaven Sanctuary Managers
Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary
PO Box 4427 Alice Springs NT 0871
Phone: 08 8964 6000 Fax: 08 8964 6011
E-mail: newhaven@australianwildlife.org
Web: www.australianwildlife.org

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 November 2007 and 31 January 2008. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings:

H Allen, D T & Dr R C Bell, J Broomfield,
K Coulthard, L Davey & J Sumpton, W Eddy, S Ford,
K Gates, A J Graff, M Hamilton, R Hansen, A Jones,
D Jones, A Kilshaw, J Millar, L Miller, C Nicholson,
H Ohsawa, M Overheu, N Pond, M & B Shortland-
Jones, N Willmott

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 7-day 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.



Country groups



ALBANY BIRD GROUP

November 2007 outing

Seventeen of us met at the bird hide on Lake Powell. A Buff-banded Rail was spotted in the drain leading to the hide and on the sand bar were Red-capped Plovers, a Black-fronted Dotterel and Red-necked Stints.

We then went to Torbay Hall and had quite a long walk through the bush. Among many bush birds, we saw a lone Varied Sittella and a pair of Grey Shrike-thrushes nesting. We finished the day at Torbay Inlet where two Banded Plovers were spotted on the beach. The day's count was 56 species.

December 2007 outing

Our Christmas outing was one of the warmest days we have had — which isn't saying much. Twenty-five of us went to various sites on Wilson Inlet, which was very full as the bar hasn't been breached this year. In fact some paddocks are flooded, and we saw a number of water birds, including Yellow-billed Spoonbills and White-necked Herons. We did not visit Morley Beach, which usually has large flocks of waders on the mud flats. The beach is now covered by water, so there will be no wader count there this year. We stopped on Lights Road to climb to Monkey Rock, where White-browed Babblers were heard, which is unusual, and Peregrine Falcons were seen. The total count was 56 species.

January 2008 outing

Twenty-two of us met at Eden Road and drove to the Nullaki Peninsular. On the way we stopped along the Wilson Inlet where we were lucky enough to spot two White-bellied Sea-Eagles displaying together. Next stop, after going through the electronic gates, was at the jetty, followed by a good walk along the Bibbulmun Track, where we saw a few bushbirds. We finished up having our lunch at Brad Kneebone and Jill Williams' place, registered a "Land for Wildlife" property, near Lowlands Beach.. They have a lake in front of the house with Eurasian Coots and Australasian Grebes nesting. The coots had young and were still adding to their nest. A very enjoyable day with a total count of 58 varieties.

Elizabeth and Charlie Davies



Red Collared Dove, Cocos & Christmas Is.
(see Observations).
Photo Sohn Tan



Excursion reports



PAGANONI SWAMP AND PORT KENNEDY BEACH, 28 October 2007

On a cold spring morning 18 keen birdwatchers gathered at Paganoni gate, the first day of daylight saving which only caught two people. Birds were active and 34 were seen. Highlights were a Square-tailed Kite and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos.

We then went on to Port Kennedy beach where the cold wind kept the 11 birds who continued on quite active. Twenty-eight birds were seen, the highlights being the Lesser Sand Plover and three birds of prey, including the Peregrine Falcon.

Mary Vaughan

CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK, 10 November 2007

Nineteen eager 'watchers' took part in our circuit walk along the Canning River. In all, 50 species of birds were observed, 11 of them before we even walked over the weir wall.

Amongst the highlights for the morning was a female Darter on her nest with two babies almost the same size as she was. In all, we saw three Darters sitting on nests and several pairs sitting on branches together.

A Sacred Kingfisher was darting down from an overhead branch for small fish and each time was being chased by two Australasian Grebes that must have had a nest nearby. Needless to say, the kingfisher had its fill and took no notice of the grebes.

A Grey Butcherbird landed on a branch in front of us, broke and ate a wild fig that it had in its beak, then wiped its beak from side to side, swish swish on the branch, and flew off.

A Striated Pardalote flew into a hollow in a tree then sat on the edge with just its head and chest out displaying its lovely colours before flying away, allowing the photographers a great photo opportunity.

We were thrilled to see a large number of White-winged Trillers flying amongst the trees and calling to us. The Rainbow Bee-eaters were also showing off their beautiful colours as they floated around from tree to tree feeding. A Buff-banded Rail gave us excellent views as it fed along the opposite side of the river under a grassy bank. In one area of about three metres we saw Darter, Dusky Moorhen on a nest, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Grebe, Sacred Kingfisher and Purple Swamphen.

Great birding, great weather, great leaders. Thank you, George and Pam.

Lyn Sellers

THOMSON LAKE, 14 November 2007

Seven people enjoyed a walk in good weather from the Branch Circus car park to the north end of Thomsons Lake. Throughout the excursion Sacred Kingfishers were heard calling. However, it was in the car park at the beginning of the walk that we had the best views of a male Sacred Kingfisher on the power line. Shining Bronze-Cuckoo and Rufous Whistlers were also heard calling during most of the walk.

The four raptors seen were Australian Hobby, Nankeen Kestrel, Whistling Kite and Swamp Harrier. Good views of White-faced Heron were a highlight as was a flyover by a flock of Glossy Ibis. As we walked from the lake bed back into the bush a Laughing Kookaburra surprised us by popping his head up above the grass where it was probably feeding. It sat and watched the birder procession file by.

It was an enjoyable walk with a total of 56 species recorded.

Robyn Pickering

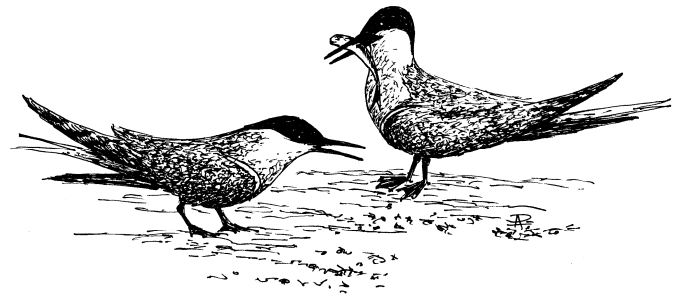
LANCELIN CAMPOUT, 23–25 November 2007

A variety of experiences marked this short weekend campout, the first time the area had been visited since 1997.

The 21 participants all arrived on the Friday, ready for an early start on Saturday, but no-one anticipated the heavy fog that persisted until about 8:00 am, even well inland.

Once it lifted Doopiter Swamp provided small numbers but a variety of birds, despite the low water level. Highlights were five Long-toed Stints, Red-capped, Red-kneed and Black-fronted Dotterels, a small flock of Wood Sandpipers, a flock of Straw-necked Ibis and breeding Little Pied Cormorants.

In the middle of the day people had time to enjoy the local beaches where White-winged Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrub-wrens and Ruddy Turnstones were seen regularly.



Courting Roseate Terns, Lancelin Island.

Sketch by Pam Agar

Later in the afternoon Karakin Lake was visited. As the lake was dry, bushbirds predominated here. A flock of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos was seen feeding on Banksias not far from the lake.

Sunday morning was spent on Lancelin Island, thanks to the generosity of the Lancelin Angling Club and Sea Rescue. Beaches and a boardwalk to the other side of the island meant we were able to observe hundreds of graceful, trusting Bridled Terns at close quarters, as well as Common Noddies, both nesting at the time. Gulls, terns, cormorants, a Common Sandpiper and a Buff-banded Rail were also seen but perhaps the sighting of the weekend was the little group of courting Roseate Terns. Several fish were offered to prospective mates and we were able to see clearly the pink flush on some of the birds.

At the campsite, the Osprey family, which nested on Edwards Island, kept us entertained as they regularly visited the water tower beside the caravan park. Fish were brought in for the young birds and the tower was used as a roost for much of the time. A trio of Rock Parrots, feeding on seed among the caravans each day, provided excellent close views, too.

Thanks, Clive and Wendy, for another memorable, well-organised campout.

Pam Agar

BULL CREEK WETLANDS, 5 December 2007

Despite the forecast of rain, a dozen people turned up for this walk. However, it was a beautiful day with no wind. In all, 26 species were identified. The highlights were good views of a pair of Tawny Frogmouths (regulars here, according to Sue), two males and one female Splendid Fairy-wren and the calls of a White-winged Triller. A Rufous Whistler never seemed to tire of calling its cheerful call.

It is a shame that so much native bush has gone and now been replaced by veldt grass.

The get-together for morning tea after the walk was most enjoyable.

Thank you, Sue Keogh, for leading the walk and compiling the bird list.

Hank van Wees

BIG CARINE LAKE, 9 December 2007

About 20 people met at Big Carine Lake in blustery and cold conditions. Water levels were low and a recent fire had affected some areas but with 49 species recorded the birds were obviously not too bothered. The temperature gradually became more agreeable and a good morning's walk was had by all.

Highlights included a nesting Striated Pardalote, a couple of White-necked Herons in flight, a high flying Whistling Kite being molested by a Nankeen Kestrel and a binocular shy Spotless Crake that put in a brief but very welcome appearance.

Once again, White-winged Trillers were seen, suggesting that these birds seem to be having a good year. A few people also had a good view of a Little Grassbird.

Peter White

AOC POST-CONFERENCE FIELD TRIP TO EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY, 10–14 DECEMBER 2007

Upon arrival at Eyre, the visitors' eyes are normally caught by the towering white sand dunes and the magnificent old building that is the Observatory. This year it was different. The outstanding feature as one approached the Observatory was a modern day version of Dr Who's TARDIS, a green machine towering over the nearby vegetation. Not really — it's just the new Rota-loo composting toilet. It was the subject of comment by everyone that arrived — favourable for its environmental aspects, unfavourable because its location is not in accord with the conservation plan (Sauman *et al.* 2005) and the fact that water comes under the door when it rains.

There hadn't been much rainfall for some months and the vegetation was showing the effects of that with considerable areas in poor condition and very little in flower. Bird numbers and species were lower than what is often experienced at this time of year, particularly amongst the honeyeaters. Because of this the original programme was modified to meet the conditions prevailing each day.

The first day commenced with a bird walk to the east of the observatory where good views were obtained of a number of species including two species of pardalote (Striated and the yellow-rumped sub-species of the Spotted) feeding in the same tree. However, the highlight of the morning was seeing a Collared Sparrowhawk carrying off its recently caught prey, a New Holland Honeyeater. After lunch, sightings to the west of the observatory were rather sparse although a pair of Chestnut Quail-thrush made it all worthwhile.

On the second day bird banding was undertaken to contribute to ongoing local projects and show participants some of the local species up close. Unfortunately very strong winds made

the nets highly visible and the activity was suspended later in the day.

Early on the morning of the next day the sound of rain was heard on the corrugated iron roof. This continued intermittently throughout the day. Bird activity was less than on the previous fine days with very few species seen or heard. The builders engaged on restoration works at the observatory went fishing late in the afternoon, providing fresh fish for dinner that evening.

More banding was conducted on Thursday with greater success than the Tuesday. Participants were able to appreciate the fine feather patterns and colours of a number of species including a Singing Honeyeater that had been banded four and a half years earlier. In the afternoon all participants and the builders travelled to the old Burnabbie Station homestead, taking in the history of the area as well as the birds before enjoying a barbecue dinner in the bush. Species seen included Rainbow Bee-eater flying to and from their nest holes, a Dusky Woodswallow nest with three young, Jacky Winter with young and a Willie Wagtail building its nest.

Friday dawned overcast and warm and by eight o'clock there was thunder and lightning to the north-west of the observatory. Within half an hour heavy rain was falling and the new gutters that had just been fitted to the building were being used for the first time. The rain continued for the next two and a half hours when the decision was made to conduct the beach count and "see what we could find". Even though there was some more rain during the count, a number of species were seen including Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey-tailed

Tattler, Grey Plover, Red-necked Stint, approximately 70 Crested Terns, an Australian Pelican and, unexpectedly, a Little Penguin that had come ashore.

More heavy rain fell in the afternoon refreshing the vegetation and adding to the rainwater tanks but bush birds continued to be scarce.

When departing for Perth two days later, the microwave tower road was still wet and boggy in places. However, the roadside pools were attracting a number of species including Galah, Australian Ringneck (uncommon in this area) and Mulga Parrot. Three Australian Bustards were also seen.

During the field trip, 49 species of birds were recorded with the New Holland Honeyeater being the most common near the Observatory and the Spotted Pardalote the most common elsewhere.

Reference

Sauman, J., Sauman, D. and Hutchinson, D. (2005). 'Eyre Bird Observatory (Former Eyre Telegraph Station) Conservation Plan'. (Prepared for Birds Australia and the Department of Conservation and Land Management). (Kelsall Binet Architects: Fremantle).

Peter Sandilands (Leader)



Little Penguin at Nine Mile rocks
Photo by Jeff Winter

KING'S PARK, 15 December 2007

On yet another blustery morning about 15 members met with Charles at King's Park. Conditions weren't the best with strong winds and the occasional rumble of thunder in the distance. The bushbirds seemed to be lying low but after a while a Peregrine Falcon appeared overhead putting on a fast flying aerial display.

Another highlight later on was a flock of lively Varied Sittellas moving from tree to tree with a few juveniles among them. The wind and the light cloud producing a glary background made conditions difficult and the general consensus was that 20 species would be a good result, so the final tally of 26 wasn't too bad at all.

Peter White

BIBRA LAKE, 30 December 2007

By the 7:30 am start time some 14 attendees had gathered for our planned four-hour walk around the lake. The attendance was lower than normal but was due to either many of the regulars being away on holidays or simply suffering from bird burnout and were waiting for 2008.

Unlike our March 2007 walk the entire lake was covered with water and the expected 30° C maximum temperature indicated it would be a pleasant walk with plenty of water and bushbirds to be seen.

Some of the highlights included a Spotless Crake, a nesting pair of Rainbow Bee-eaters and a Crested Pigeon. Only a single Sacred Kingfisher was seen and it confirms my opinion that this lovely kingfisher is declining in and around Perth.

As most of the water level was rather shallow, there were Black-winged Stilts, Red-necked Avocets, Great Egrets, Yellow-billed Spoonbills and a Common Greenshank. Seven native ducks were recorded, namely, Musk Duck, Australian Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck and Hardhead.

The eastern side of the lake provided some good raptor sightings and these included Whistling Kite, Brown Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Australian Hobby, Swamp Harrier and Australian Kestrel.

We arrived back at our start point at 11:30 am and were all impressed when the bird count came to a rather unexpected 70 species, a recent record for the lake. It was a very enjoyable and productive walk and confirmed Bibra Lake to be an important area for both water and bushbirds along the coastal plain.

Wynton Maddeford

GARVEY PARK, 17 January 2008

One of the best places to see and hear Mistletoebirds in January is Garvey Park, Guilford. Along the river near the bush area adjacent to the wetland, these birds called

constantly, giving many people their best views of this species. Of interest was an Australian Hobby flying through, and two Buff-banded Rails that paraded along a dropped log for all to see.

With a day of strong east wind and temperatures later recorded at 41°, the attendance of 15 members was commendable. In two hours the total species list amounted to 39.

Michael Hancock

HERDSMAN LAKE, 20 January

Sixteen members and six visitors met at 7.30 am at the southern end of Lakeside Drive Churchlands, and most completed the approximately eight km walk right around the lake in time for an early lunch. Although it felt as if there were few special birds (perhaps the Peregrine Falcon being the least usual at this site) the final count was 69 species, a good half day total. This included ten native ducks, the three grebes, three ibises, Buff-banded Rail (present in significant numbers for the last 18 months or so and breeding this year) and Spotless Crake. White-winged Triller and the two regular summer migrants from the north, Rainbow Bee-eater and Sacred Kingfisher, were also seen. It seems that the increasingly natural edges resulting from very successful reshaping and revegetation with native species around much of the northern and eastern sides of the lake is making those parts much more suitable for dabbling ducks and the crakes and rails.

John and Judy Blyth

COALMINE, WALPOLE, Australia Day campout, 26–28 January

Around 40 keen birders gathered at the Coalmine caravan park for the Australia day long weekend. It was a well chosen spot, good amenities and shade and we could have got close to half our eventual tally without leaving the park!

The large numbers meant splitting into two groups, alternating morning and afternoon locations. We climbed mountains, scrambled on rocky beaches, boated across the estuary (almost without casualties) and generally saw, recorded and photographed birds wherever we went. The final tally was 97, without even satisfying Clive's yearning for a turtle dove. He had to be satisfied with beating off White-breasted Robins with a stick.

Many thanks to Clive and Wendy for a very well organised and run campout. Also thanks to Andrew and Andrew for stepping in to lead when requested.

Maris Lauva

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EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

November 2007 to January 2008
WHY NOT "POP IN" TO EYRE BIRD
OBSERVATORY



A toothache can be a real nuisance in the city, but when it occurs at Eyre, things get a little complicated. John O'Brien, Voluntary Caretaker, was experiencing a severe toothache and his wife Beverley asked if I would stay on (I was participating in the Bird Banding/Book Binding course) to assist her whilst John drove to Esperance to visit the dentist. The dental receptionist didn't comprehend why John was unable to wait at home and "**pop in**" when they 'phoned back with a vacancy.

November and Federal Election Day was looming. I'd left my postal ballot papers in my vehicle parked at the escarpment car park before heading down to Eyre. My intention was to vote absentee at Norseman on my way home to Margaret River after attending the course. Now it was far too late to make a postal vote as the mail is collected once a week from Cocklebidy. A quick phone call to the Australian Electoral Commission (the operator was on the Gold Coast) to obtain further instructions. I did not fancy driving 450 kilometres to Norseman or over 200 kilometres to Eucla and return to the observatory. "Do you know where Cocklebidy is?" I asked. She hadn't a clue but was most helpful just the same. I tried my best to explain the logistics, the reason why Cocklebidy was not a Polling Place (only 7 residents) and why it was difficult to "**pop in**" to register my vote.

In the meantime complications had set in with the Broadband satellite connection in the office. Bev was on the phone to the Telstra technician, graduating from Level 1 to Level 2 (whatever that is!) and spent around 6 hours all up of precious time talking and pressing keys, unplugging and plugging in leads etc. "I may have to "**pop in**" and check it out" said the technician! Ha Ha!

My first visit to Eyre in 1986 to attend a course got me hooked and I have been "**popping in**" ever since. A journey down the track to meet up with bird banders following the Honeyeater Banding Expedition organised by Stephen Ambrose in January 1990, then a short period as relief warden later in 1990 and during the '90s when operating bird tours, I made several visits to Eyre with groups of birdwatchers.

On my return after twelve years I find the atmosphere unchanged. The caretakers as before provide a wonderful home with hearty meals and good company along with the varied travellers who stay over or attend a course. Thank you to those who refurbished the old Telegraph Station back in the seventies and created an amazing observatory for us to enjoy.

Why not "**pop in**" and take a look for yourself or make a return journey?

Christine Wilder

December at Eyre Bird Observatory

An interesting month, as are all months at Eyre. We had many wonderful observations to thrill us. One was the black-headed gull; three of us saw it but unfortunately we didn't get a photograph to substantiate our sighting as it was just too quick. We looked further along the beach that day and the next but to no avail — oh, well, that's birdwatching, — you win some and you lose some! That one didn't make it to our daily bird log!

We had a course here, Field Techniques in Bird Studies, facilitated by Professor Stephen Davies, that was a great success with a great bunch of students. Many species were noted and there were also many species in the hand during the bird banding sessions. This really put our bird numbers up for this month. It makes a difference when there are many sets of eyes on site.

Another course, Post Conference Bird Studies, facilitated by Peter Sandilands, was not well attended unfortunately but very successful nevertheless. One highlight was to see a Collared Sparrowhawk carrying a New Holland Honeyeater — quite dramatic.

Christmas at Eyre this year was quite different as we had a group of herpetologists stay for five days. They managed to list 21 reptile species. Another amazing passion and really not all that different from birds. To find reptiles you mostly look down and to find birds you mostly look up! We did have lots of fun and they did add to our bird log as well!

The Major Mitchell's Cockatoos have been visiting frequently always a delight to watch. They are particularly aggressive with the Australian Ravens giving them the signal to get away from "their" birdbath. They are quite possessive and very entertaining!

As always we will be sad to leave but will be back again at the end of July for another stint as caretakers. Eyre does get to you and casts a magic spell and lives in your veins forever!

John and Beverley O'Brien
Caretakers October 2007 to February 2008

BIRDS STRANDED ON KANIDAL BEACH AT EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

On Saturday 10 November 2007 three of us were travelling back from Cocklebidy on our supplies run. Along the track we met up with day visitors Karen and Brian Ashton from the UK. They mentioned they had earlier in the day seen two dead black birds on Kanidal Beach. At 4:30 pm we drove to the beach to recover the dead birds. Almost immediately we could see that there were more than two birds and some form of stranding of seabirds had occurred. At first we discovered several darkish birds dead and dying on the beach near the entrance to the observatory. Our immediate thought was the same species of shearwater from the jizz of some birds we could see flying over the ocean and the birds we were seeing on the beach and in the water. As we proceeded

east along the beach we realised there were more and more birds. It was getting late so we decided to drive two kilometres to the east and two kilometres to the west, to pick up some birds for identification and count all birds seen.

When we eventually returned to the beach entrance we had picked up 24 dead specimens, and counted the following:

Birds still alive on the beach (these appeared totally exhausted)	12
Birds on the water	15
Birds flying strongly close to shore and over beach	7
Dead birds left on the beach	28

The next day passing fishermen reported they had counted more than 80 birds without specifying whether dead or alive.

Back at the observatory a weather report was obtained from the internet for the previous 24 hour period. This did not show any unusual weather pattern in the Southern Ocean and the weather at the observatory had been warm and overcast with winds of around 5 knots.

We proceeded to take measurements of 20 dead birds, referring to the *Beach Patrollers' Guide to Stormcast Seabirds Found in New Zealand* (Rowe and Plant 1989) We noted down the description and referred to several other guides including HANZAB (Marchant and Higgins 1990), Harrison (1985) and Serventy and Whittell (1976). We also referred to an old copy of Simpson & Day (1996) to find a match for the bill (found in the front and back cover).

The description we noted from the above birds is as follows:

Head: Darkish grey to black graduating to a lighter chin.

No	Body Length	Wing Span	Wing Length	Tail	Culmen	Tarsus	Middle Toe/Claw
1	410	930	266	82	33	54	63
2	410	934	268	81	33	53	63
3	410	967	279	85	33	56	68
4	400	927	270	86	33	56	63
5	400	917	270	84	32	52	64
6	390	944	270	83	34.5	54	64
7	400	950	273	81	33	52.5	64
8	390	954	283	88	33	53	66
9	380	916	267	80	33	53.5	63
10	390	937	266	82	31	52.5	63
11	410	940	271	82	34	52	65
12	415	947	277	86	32	55	64.5
13	415	950	272	82	33	54.5	66
14	390	895	255	79	32.5	52	65.5
15	395	915	264	81	33	51	63
16	405	975	275	80	33	55	65
17	405	920	265	81	35	53	64.5
18	400	945	267	81	33	54	66
19	375	955	275	82	33	54	64
20	400	933	270	82	33	52	63

Table 1 – List of Measurements taken from freshly dead shearwaters on Kanidal Beach, near Eyre, November 2007.



Twenty birds were measured.
Photo by Chris Wilder

Throat: Pale to mid silver grey although a few appeared almost light grey to white.

Bill: Narrow, two-tone steel grey and black.

Legs: Grey or black with a pink tinge and longer than the tail in flight.

Breast: Soft silver grey with base of feathers lighter grey to whitish.

Mantle and top of head: Darkish grey to black.

Underwing: Leading edge black and underwing whitish/grey. Narrow darkness to trailing edge. No apparent streaking on axillaries.

Tail: Soft wedge shape, not sharp; almost chunky.

Flight pattern: Mostly gliding like a cross and almost rigid in flight with little flapping. Strong flight.

We also referred to Alma and Perry de Rebeira's *Birds of Eyre – An Annotated List*, which lists the species of shearwaters recorded at Eyre as Flesh-footed, Sooty, Short-tailed, Fluttering, Hutton's and Little. We were lucky enough to have Alma and Perry arrive on Sunday to assist us with the measurements and description. We discounted almost all shearwaters except Sooty and Short-tailed when comparing the measurements. Descriptions in the guides differed and created some confusion.

Our conclusion on colour, jizz and measurements was that the species were all Short-tailed Shearwaters. An email was sent to Ron Johnstone of the Western Australian Museum for his opinion and we shall send some specimens to him for examination along with photographs we have.

On Monday 12 November 2007 we returned to the beach and counted 20 dead birds for 2 kilometres east and 55 dead birds for 2 kilometres west. We checked all birds for any bands. No birds were seen flying out to sea. Klaus Tiedemann from the Department of

Environment and Conservation reported that birds had recently been found at Esperance, Cape Arid and Eucla.

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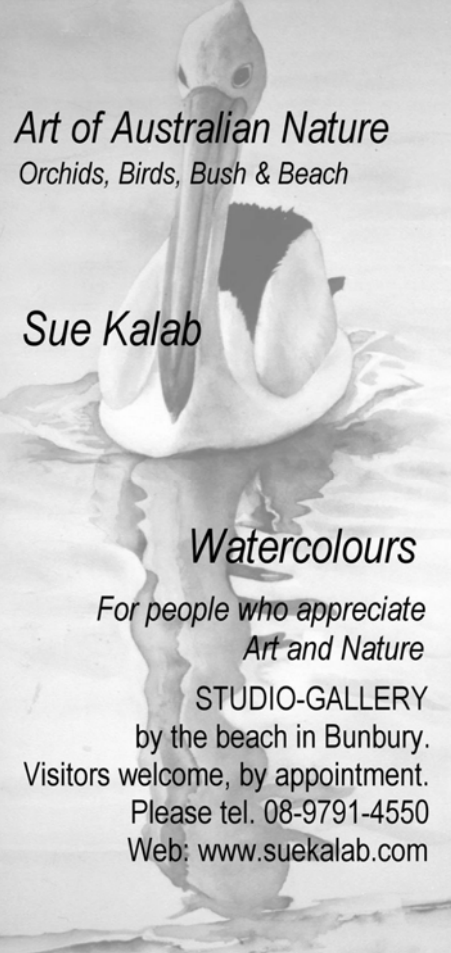
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Beverley and John O'Brien - Caretakers, Eyre Bird Observatory, and Christine Wilder, Course Participant



One of the birds that was still alive.
Photo by Chris Wilder



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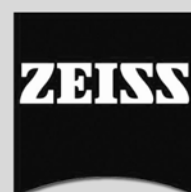
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Code-of-conduct for campouts

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. If you are unsure, put your name down as you can always cancel.
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 to Monday 3 March: Long weekend campout, Pemberton

It is three years since we had a campout at Pemberton in the cooler southwest. The caravan park is situated in lovely Karri forest with Red-eared Firetail and White-breasted Robin along the creek. Besides the Karri forest, we will also visit coastal heath and some more accessible parts of the D'Entrecasteaux National Park. A trip is planned to Windy Harbour covering some of the south coast for the Hooded Plover count.

Booking for camping sites and cabins by ringing the Pemberton Caravan Park on 9776 1300.

For members only.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Sunday 2 March: Bibra Lake, Cockburn Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake off Progress Drive. Bibra Lake is a part of the Beeliar Wetlands chain and a large number of bushbirds and waterbirds can be seen here. Bring water, hats, suitable footwear, etc. Snakes have been seen around here.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Sunday 9 March: Yangebup Lake, Cockburn Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am on the new road near the Lake Yangebup entry point. Turn

into Hammond Road from North Lake Road, drive along about 600 m, turn right into Yangebup Road. Travel 400 m to the Lake Yangebup entry point, and park along the new road beside the newly developed industrial area.

There may be muddy areas so wear rubber boots if possible and bring scopes if available. There should be good varieties of waterbirds and waders, and three species of crane have been sighted here. If time permits we will visit Kogolup Lake.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Clive Napier

Thursday 13 March: Ascot Waters, Ascot Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the

end of Tidewater Way. To reach the area from Great Eastern Highway, turn into Stoneham Street, then into Resolution Drive, and left into Tidewater Way. Continue through two roundabouts, over the bridge, and up to the car park at the top of the rise. This is getting better as the thousands of shrubs and trees that have been planted start to mature and blossom. A wide variety of habitats can provide shelter for many birds and it is well worth a visit to this promising site.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Sunday 16 March: 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 Rail has been seen here.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Abbotts & Alan Collins

Monday 17 March: Bold Park EcoCentre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm

Note revised date as 24 March will be Easter Monday.

Nicole White, a PhD student in Biological Sciences of Murdoch University, will describe her work on white-tailed black-cockatoos. This talk will complement but not overlap the talk on 21 January.

Friday 21 to Monday 24 March: Easter Campout at Quaalup Homestead in Fitzgerald River National Park

The Fitzgerald River National Park is recognised as an area of international significance, and has been classified as a Biosphere Reserve. It contains 20% of the plant species occurring in Western Australia, including the magnificent Royal Hakea. Many plants that are found here occur nowhere else.

One hundred and eighty four bird species have been listed, including rarities such as Western Ground Parrot, Western Bristlebird and Western

Whipbird. There is excellent birding around Quaalup Homestead and at Bremer Bay.

Quaalup Homestead has camping facilities, cabins and on-site vans. Easter is a busy time and they expect to be fully booked for this time of year so it is important to call and make a reservation as soon as possible.

Phone 9837 4124 and check their web site

www.whalesandwildflowers.com.au or email: richelmann@web.de. Further information will be sent to you when you have registered at the BAWA office on 9383 7749.

For members only.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Sunday 23 March: Lake Monger, Cambridge
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the most westerly car park off Lake Monger Drive. This is a good opportunity to see many species of ducks, waterbirds and some bushbirds.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Max Bailey

Sunday 30 March: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson
Half-day excursion

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

For members and guests only.

Leaders: George & Pam Agar

Saturday 5 April: Bold Park, Cambridge
Half-day excursion

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

For members and the general public.

Leaders: George and Pam Agar

Wednesday 9 April: Point Walter, Bicton

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park at the end of Honour Avenue (west) adjacent to Point Walter sand spit for a pleasant walk along the Swan River. The walk will include both waterbirds and bushbirds at Point Walter, Point Walter Reserve and Attadale Reserve.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Eric Pyatt

Sunday 13 April: Ray Marshall Park, Viveash

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park of Ray Marshall Park. Go to the end of First Avenue, off Great Eastern Highway, just east of Governor Stirling Senior High School. We will take a morning walk along the John George Trail that runs beside the Swan River. On the return walk, we will divert to a swampy area 250 m off the track, and this will usually add up to six extra species to the list.

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

For members and guests only.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Sunday 20 April: Ellis Brook, Gosnells
Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the corner of Gosnells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin. There are three walks in this area, and we will look at one of these on this visit. It is a popular area where a variety of bushbirds can be seen, some of them not often seen near Perth, such as Red-eared Firetail, Red-browed Finch, and Red-capped and Scarlet Robin.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: George and Pam Agar

Sunday 27 April: Lake Richmond, Rockingham

Half-day excursion

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

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

For members and the general public.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Friday 25 to Sunday 27 April: Anzac Day Long Weekend Campout, Stirling Ranges

The campout will be based at the Stirling Ranges Retreat (Caravan Park) which has a range of chalets and camping facilities.

There are always wildflowers here and it is well known for its rich diversity of flora and fauna. The area has a long bird list and we will visit local lakes and some of the many different habitats in and adjacent to the ranges.

Book your own accommodation as soon as possible as this is a popular area. Phone 9827 9229.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Wayne Zadow

Monday 28 April: Bold Park EcoCentre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat Meeting, 7:30 pm

John Blyth (formerly of the now re-named Department of Conservation and Land Management and also a former chairman of the WA Group) will give an illustrated talk entitled, "The South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Program — an update".

Sunday 4 May: Helena Valley, Boya Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am near the locked gate in Victor Road. Park on the right-hand side of the road. Bring morning tea and we will have it when we return to the cars. Drive through Midland east along Great Eastern Highway. Once you have begun to climb the Greenmount Hill watch for Scott Street. Turn right into Scott Street, and continue until you reach a roundabout just past the tennis courts on the right. Turn left into Clayton Road, and drive to the end. Turn right into Victor Road, until you reach the locked gate.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Andrew Hobbs and Paul Marty

Sunday 11 May: Bindoon Defence Training Area

Half-day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the Dewar's Pool Road turn-off from the Great Northern Highway (entry to Bindoon Agricultural College), top of Bindoon Hill past Bindoon. We will drive from there to the 19 500 ha Training Area which supports a complex mix of Northern Jarrah Forest and Avon-Wheatbelt Region vegetation. The extensive old growth woodlands provides ideal habitat for hollow nesting birds and bats and the site is one of the most significant breeding areas for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. Defence Environment Manager Boyd Wykes will lead a three hour walk along moderate grade tracks in the south eastern section, away from the artillery range templates of the Training Area. There are tables at the camp ground where we will park and return to for lunch. Numbers will be limited to 30 people and names submitted prior to the excursion for security purposes. Call the office to put your name on the list on 9383 7749.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Boyd Wykes

Thursday 15 May: Wungong Gorge Half-day excursion

Meet at 9.30 am at the first car park for Wungong Dam at the end of Admiral Road, off Albany Highway. Over 90 species of birds have been recorded here including Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Robyn Pickering

Sunday 18 May: Gleneagles Rest Area Half-day excursion

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

For members and the general public.

Leader: Frank O'Connor

Saturday 24 May: Bickley Brook, Orange Grove Half-day excursion

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

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

For members and guests only.

Leaders: John and Ruth Luyser

Monday 26 May: Bold Park EcoCentre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat Meeting, 7:30 pm

Wes Bancroft (ecological consultant and former Committee member of BAWA) will give an

illustrated talk entitled, "The love life of muttonbirds: making the earth move".

Saturday 31 May to Monday 2 June: Foundation Day Long Weekend, Mt Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary

This campout is in collaboration with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) who have owned and managed Mt Gibson Station as a wildlife sanctuary since 2001. AWC, with assistance from the Department of Environment and Conservation, have been controlling feral animals on the station and monitoring the effects on wildlife.

The turnoff to Mt Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary is 74 km north-east of Wubin along the Great Northern Highway heading for Paynes Find. The homestead is 27 km from the main road. Two-wheel-drive vehicles are able to get into the sanctuary, but four-wheel-drives will be needed when moving around. Fill your fuel tank at Wubin. Bring warm clothes and sleeping gear as it gets cold inland at this time of year.

Accommodation: AWC has agreed to waive all camping fees.

There is a visitors centre which has five single dongas with two showers/toilets and cooking facilities. Nearby there is a shearing shed with an additional five beds.

The camp site is currently 2 km from the shearing shed and has drinking water and two pit toilets. However, by June the camp site may have moved to a new location. It is likely to have similar, but more salubrious facilities.

We plan to carry out surveys in different vegetation types around the station. The bird watching is good for dry land species such as Southern Scrub-robin, Chestnut and Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Mulga and Bourke Parrot, honeyeaters, Redthroat and Malleefowl, all of which have been seen recently. It is eight years since BAWA has had a campout at Mt Gibson Station.

To book the dongas or the shearing shed beds call caretakers Stan and Mary at Mt Gibson on 9963 6518. Numbers will be limited so please call the BA office to put your name on the list.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: John and Ruth Luyer and George and Pam Agar

Sunday 1 June: Lake Coogee, Munster Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in Fawcett Road, 100 m from Mayor Road. Nearly 100 species of birds have been seen on and around the lake, including nine raptors. It is a large lake and has a path right around it so some people may wish to do the full circuit.

There has been a lot of development in the area and Lake Coogee hasn't been visited by BAWA since 2003. We may go on to another site after morning tea.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Paul Marty

Sunday 8 June: Avon Valley National Park Full day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the turnoff to the park at the corner of Toodyay Road and Morangup Road, 42 km from Midland Junction. There is a sign for Avon Valley National Park at this turnoff.

For anyone arriving late, we will be travelling along Morangup Road to the National Park entry, which is again signposted, then along Forty-One Mile Road. This will lead to the valley camp site overlooking the Avon River.

There will be some waterbirds on the river, and many other species in good Jarrah, Marri and Wandoo (Whitegum) woodland. Bring your lunch, as there are no supplies within the park. Roads in the park are gravel but safe for two-wheel-drive cars, and there are the usual facilities.

For those who wish to make a weekend of it, we will be camping

on Saturday night at the group camping area. Contact the office for further details and to register.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Robina Haynes and Paul Marty

Wednesday 12 June: Piney Lakes Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park off Murdoch Drive. Turn off Leach Highway or South Street into Murdoch Drive at the lights. From Leach Highway take the second turn right, across the dual carriage way, into the grassed park area to the car park. It is approximately 700 m from Leach Highway. This park used to be a pine plantation, and has two artificial lakes and one natural permanent lake. Spotless Crakes and numerous other waterbirds frequent the area. There is a considerable area of natural bushland around the lake and this is home to the usual local species.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Clive Napier

Saturday 14 June: Flynn Road, Mundaring Half-day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about 10 km past Sawyers Valley or 1 km on the Perth side of The Lakes (the York turnoff). We will look at several areas of Wandoo woodland, where three species of robin are often seen, and sometimes a Crested Shrike-tit.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Charles Merriam

Sunday 22 June: Harrisdale Reserve, (Jandakot Regional Park), Forrestdale Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am opposite Carey Baptist College on Wright Road, Forrestdale.

This reserve is fenced but has a swing gate at this location. There are good tracks throughout with varied vegetation including wetland areas that may have some

water in them if we get early winter rain. Many bushbirds have been seen including Scarlet Robin, Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Spinebill, White-browed Scrub-wren, Grey Shrike-thrush, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Red-capped Parrot and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, to name just a few. Wetland species are also a possibility. Wear old shoes/gumboots just in case.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Debbie Walker

**Sunday 29 June: Talbot Road, York
Full day excursion**

Meet at 9:00 am at The Lakes turnoff to York after travelling along Great Eastern Highway. For those arriving late, we will travel along the Great Southern Highway 13 km, turn right into Yarra Road for 2 km, then left into West Talbot Road for 23 km, then left into Talbot Road for 5 km, then right into Talbot Hall Road for approximately 3 km, then right into McDougall Road. The entrance to the property is on the right; watch for the BAWA sign. We are visiting the property of Eggy and Rob Boggs, which has been visited on a number of occasions by BAWA members. Tea and coffee making facilities will be available. Bring your own lunch. Barbeque facilities are also available.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Paul Marty

Crossword answers No 52

Across
8 inexperience, 9 veteran, 10 dither, 11 lorikeet, 13 neat, 14 gradual, 16 colour, 19 phalarope, 22 powderdown, 25 Latin, 26 cropping.

Down
1 shoveler, 2 silt, 3 peer, 4 spanner, 5 arid, 6 sentinel, 7 territorial, 12 Redthroat, 14 Great, 15 leaden, 17 one, 18 owl, 20 order, 21 snipe, 23 pine, 24 alt.

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

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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 <cgole@westnet.com.au>
- ◆ **Monthly Meeting Speakers** — contact Brian Wilson 9293 1094
- ◆ **Community Education Sub-committee** — members willing to visit schools, set up displays, attend shows and help with administration — contact Elsa Dabbs e-mail <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

Calendar of events

- Sat 1 to Mon 3 Mar:** Long weekend campout, Pemberton
Sun 2 Mar: Bibra Lake, Cockburn, Half-day excursion
Sun 9 Mar: Yangebup Lake, Cockburn, Half-day excursion
Thu 13 Mar: Ascot Waters, Ascot, Half-day excursion
Sun 16 Mar: Alfred Cove, Melville, Half-day excursion
Mon 17 Mar: Bold Park EcoCentre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm
Note revised date as 24 Mar will be Easter Monday.
Fri 21 to Mon 24 Mar: Easter Campout at Quaalup Homestead in Fitzgerald River National Park
Sun 23 Mar: Lake Monger, Cambridge, Half-day excursion
Sun 30 Mar: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson, Half-day excursion
Sat 5 Apr: Bold Park, Cambridge, Half-day excursion
Wed 9 Apr: Point Walter, Bicton, Half-day excursion
Sun 13 Apr: Ray Marshall Park, Viveash, Half-day excursion
Sun 20 Apr: Ellis Brook, Gosnells, Half-day excursion
Sun 27 Apr: Lake Richmond, Rockingham, Half-day excursion
Fri 25 to Sun 27 Apr: Anzac Day Long Weekend Campout, Stirling Ranges
Mon 28 Apr: Bold Park EcoCentre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sun 4 May: Helena Valley, Boya, Half-day excursion
Sun 11 May: Bindoon Defence Training Area, Half-day excursion
Thu 15 May: Wungong Gorge, Half-day excursion
Sun 18 May: Gleneagles Rest Area, Half-day excursion
Sat 24 May: Bickley Brook, Orange Grove, Half-day excursion
Mon 26 May: Bold Park EcoCentre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sat 31 May to Mon 2 Jun: Foundation Day Long Weekend, Mt Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary
Sun 1 Jun: Lake Coogee, Munster, Half-day excursion
Sun 8 Jun: Avon Valley National Park, Full day excursion
Wed 12 Jun: Piney Lakes, Half-day excursion
Sat 14 Jun: Flynn Road, Mundaring, Half-day excursion
Sun 22 Jun: Harrisdale Reserve, (Jandakot Regional Park), Forrestdale, Half-day excursion
Sun 29 Jun: Talbot Road, York, Full day excursion

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Notes for Contributors

The Editors request contributors to note:

- WABN publishes material of interest to the WA Group
- contributions should be written or typed with **double spacing**—a copy on disk or emailed would assist, especially if in MSWord as a document **without** styles; **do not** embed pictures or graphics in MS Word.
- WABN uses Birds Australia recommended English names
- except for Observations, contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary.
- Full Editorial Policy is stated in WABN 74:10-12

Printing Deadlines (at the BAWA Office)

June 2008 issue: 1 May
September 2008 issue: 1 August
December 2008 issue: 1 November
March 2009 issue: 1 February

Advertising Rates

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

Printed by Executive Press: Tel (08) 9275 8044