

Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the W.A. Group
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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A NEW DUCK FOR AUSTRALIA

The first record on a Northern Pintail (*Anas actua actua*) in Australia was recently obtained by George Agar. Chandala Swamp, between Muchea and Gingin, has been observed by George Agar for over four years as part of the South-West Waterbird Survey and it was at Chandala that the Northern Pintail was seen on 12th July 1986. Roger Jaensch and Rodney Vervest also saw the bird on 15th July when it was in the company of Australasian Shovelers and Pacific Black Ducks.

The Northern Pintail was of similar size to the Australian Shovelers and Pacific Black Ducks and was a male in full breeding plumage. In this plumage it has a chocolate brown head and neck, a white breast which extends in a line to the side of the neck, dark grey and white back and flanks and long black tail streamers. It is a dabbling and 'up-end' duck usually most active at dawn and dusk.



'Northern Pintail'

(New Colour Guide to Hong Kong Birds by Phillips & Viney)

The Northern Pintail breeds in Iceland, Great Britain, Northern Scandinavia, Russia, Siberia, Canada and west Greenland. It is occasionally seen in Borneo, Java and Papua New Guinea. Northern Pintails usually winter in western Europe, the shores of the Mediterranean, West Africa, India, Burma and Central America. The Chandala bird may either have migrated southward instead of northward in April-May or have over-flown its usual winter haunts, arriving in Australia last spring. Both explanations have been advanced for other migratory duck species that breed in the northern hemisphere and which have been recorded in Australia - Garganey (seen in several states, in the Kimberley and at Yan-chep) and Northern Shoveler (in other Australian states but not yet W.A.).

Chandala Swamp (pronounced as sh and short 'a's) is second only in the South-West to Toolabin Lake for species recorded breeding (20). It is a major breeding site for the Straw-necked Ibis and up to 3000 have been known to congregate there.

MEETING REPORTS

WATERBIRDS - 16 June 1986

The SW Waterbird Co-ordinator, Roger Jaensch, spoke of the five years of the SW Waterbird Project. The project was established to obtain an overview of waterbird populations in nature reserves and to assess whether the present reserve system adequately conserves all waterbird species. These objectives were pursued by volunteers making regular counts on wetlands. The number of reserves investigated was close to 200 covering most wetland types but with few rivers, estuaries or yate swamps.

The information collected is now being compiled in report form with a commentary on each wetland covered. The 'best' wetlands depend on the criteria used in such an evaluation but interestingly the Perth Metropolitan area contains three of the most valuable wetlands in Lake Forrestdale, Thomsons Lake and Alfred Cove. Peel Inlet, a substantially larger area, ranks high.

Waterbird research currently conducted by the R.A.O.U. in W.A. includes the annual Great Duck Count, continuing surveillance of some of the more important areas and increased attention to remote wetlands in the State. The talk was illuminated with slides of habitat and birds and left the conviction that there is still plenty of important waterbird survey work to be done, perhaps something for every taste in bird-watching.

B. Buchanan.

METRO BIRDS - 28 July 1986

Ron Van Delft's enthusiasm and dedication to the Metro Bird Project was very evident at this meeting as he described the setting up of the study and the difficulties encountered in storing the data that has been so willingly contributed by the metrobirders. Ron explained the methods that he had used to analyse the data and gave examples of interesting findings, such as the limits of the Rainbow Lorikeets in the western suburbs. The result of this project will be the publication of 'A Guide to finding birds in Perth' which promises to be a handy guide to local birds and tourists alike.

It was quite a task selecting which 40 sites out of the 118 surveyed should be included in this guide, but Ron based his selection on variety of species, rarities and public access. It is comforting to know that the data obtained from the 78 other sites has not been neglected as it is stored on Department of Conservation and Environment computer and printouts can be made available.

As well as describing good birding spots in the metropolitan area, the book suggests routes through Perth which will take in as wide a selection of sites as possible so that visitors with limited time will be able to see a variety of species and habitats. It will be useful in identifying the birds of Perth as well as bringing together information about parks, reserves and open spaces in the metropolitan area.

B. Hale.

EXCURSION REPORTS

KATHLEEN VALLEY (90 km S of Wiluna): 22-29 June 1986

Owing to seasonal conditions, the bird population at Wanjarri Wildlife Reserve was very low and species seen were mainly the usual residents of the area. On the two day-trips we were able to make into the Reserve in 4WD vehicles from our camp at Jones Creek, we saw 37 species, perhaps the most notable being a Pink-eared Duck swimming with 18 Grey Teal in the flooded yards of the shearing shed.

Searching through spinifex rewarded us with sightings of Grey-fronted Honeyeaters and Hooded Robins. Venturing into a mulga habitat, we took the road to Blue Bore and bogged the Nissan Patrol truck in what had seemed to be firm enough ground. We thought we might spend the night in the soggy embrace of red mud, but luckily Clive's Subaru pulled us out at last.

The threat of more heavy rains on unsealed roads caused our party of eight to break camp mid-week and five of us were then marooned at Sandstone for two days with all exit roads closed. Here we saw the bower of a Spotted Bowerbird and flushed an Owlet Nightjar from a cave in a breakaway. Those who chose to return via Wiluna got through without difficulty and enjoyed good birding at Tuckanarra.

Future visits to Wanjarri would be better made later in the season or in spring, when herbage and flowering plants have reached maturity, to attract a variety of bird species.

A. Survivor

PROPOSED BOONANARRING NATURE RESERVE- 12 July 1986

About 34 people helped to survey birds in this 8000 ha of vacant crown land just to the north of Gingin. The fine weather meant that plenty of birds were about, and a total of 46 species was seen during the day. This included nine species previously unknown for this previously poorly surveyed area, bringing the total known bird species for the area to 63. Highlights of the day included very close views of Wedge-tailed Eagles, excellent views of a Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Hooded and Scarlet Robins, a White-fronted Chat's nest with three eggs, and a Lesser Long-eared Bat caught by Mike Bamford (with his bare hands). Information gained during this excursion will be passed on to CALM to assist in a proposal to acquire the area as a nature reserve.

Allan Burbidge

POINT WALTER - 15 June 1986

A small group of birdwatchers gathered together at Point Walter with light rain threatening to mar the morning and keep the birds hidden from view. Fortunately, the rain eased as we made our way around the bush area adjacent to the Point Walter Recreation camp and the Port Lincoln Ringnecks and Red-capped Parrots brought the scene to life.

Three Kookaburras, perched together, watched our progress as we sighted Striated Pardalotes, Red Wattlebirds and Inland Thornbills.

A great deal of flying activity attracted us to one old Tuart where we identified Brown Honeyeater, Grey Fantail, Weebill, Rufous Whistler and Singing Honeyeater. A Galah watched from a nearby dead tree.

Continuing our walk along the 'old tramway' track to Blackwall Reach several groups of Little Black Cormorants were seen flocking to a vantage area on the Point, while on the rocks at the face of the cliffs a male Darter spread his wings. Near the 'old Cape Horn pub' site on the headland overlooking the Point, a raptor, perched in prominent position allowed the group to have a close-up view. At first thought to be a Goshawk, it was eventually confirmed as a Collared Sparrowhawk as it flew off into the nearby bush.

At the bird count for the morning, 31 species were recorded. Thanks, to those attending for making the morning so enjoyable.

John Taylor

SEA BIRD OUTING TO NORTH MOLE - 15 June 1986

Through the early pre-dawn hours of Sunday morning twenty-seven birders lined their stomachs with heavy breakfast (Bread fried in whale oil is the fodder of the 'real' seabirder), clad their shivering bodies with layer on layer of heavy woolly garments

and ventured to the North Mole. Unfortunately the hoped for icy gales from the southern oceans were absent - indeed the weather was quite clement and the seas calm - a truly disappointing sight for the dedicated seabirder.

The morning yielded good views of Gannet - sub-adult and adult- Arctic Jaegers and a single Arctic Jaeger pursuing a Great Skua.

By 9.30am we gave up and repaired to a local coffee house to swap yarns of better days.

Steve Keeling

METRO BIRDER NEWS

Congratulations are due to the RAOU for an AWARD OF MERIT received for the Perth Metropolitan Bird Project from the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation. The Award of Merit was received for the project's initiative in combining a recreational pursuit with the collection of information useful to park managers and for increasing visitation to parks and reserves. The Director, Dr. Stephen Davies, received the award on behalf of the RAOU at the Institute's Annual General Meeting on August 21st 1986.

During the last three months I have had much pleasure from writing and re-drafting "A guide to finding birds in Perth", which is based on over 2000 Metropolitan Bird Project surveys. Everything is going to schedule and I expect to have the final draft of the text at the publisher by the end of August. Special thanks must go to the volunteers who offered their professional skills to type and proof-read the first drafts. They will be acknowledged by name in the book.

When planning the book I thought that once the publishers had the text there was little more to do. This is not so. After the publishers receive the text it is re-typed into their machine, we check for typing errors or omissions, then they cut and paste the text and we again check for errors or omissions. After the cut and paste has been proof-read there is a final chance to check that the publishers did not miss any corrections. If anyone is willing to help me in this task of checking text, please call me at the office.

While the project is almost completed, the next stages are extremely important. These are to organise the launch of the book and then to SELL as many as possible. Good sales will not only please us but also the individual and corporate sponsors who helped make the project possible. Details of the final stages will be in the next edition of W.A. Bird Notes.

RON VAN DELFT

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

NEW WARDENS FOR EYRE

In January 1987 we will be leaving Eyre having completed one of our most worthwhile years. Working at Eyre has been the opportunity of a lifetime where we have learnt a lot and gained a great deal of satisfaction. The experience of providing the hospitality and sharing with the guests the joys of this magnificent wilderness area have been most rewarding.

We believe that the attributes required for the wardens positions are a love of the natural environment, a deep commitment to its conservation and an enthusiasm to share these feelings with the guests. A high level of commitment to the work of the RAOU at Eyre, a caring attitude towards one's fellows and a sound knowledge of birds (not necessarily a professional ornithological background) are needed.

Please don't hesitate to contact us (090-393450) or Doug Watkins if you are interested in learning more about the positions and the possibilities.

Rob and Jan Hill, Wardens, Eyre Bird Observatory

EYRE REPORT

Course report - 'Eyre's Furry Friends'

At the end of June seven wide-eyed and willing students presented themselves at the microwave tower to absorb all they could of the pleasures of Eyre. Directed by Doug Watkins and

hosted by Jan and Rob Hill, the Course started on a sunny note and finished that way, but we had to brave the rain for most of the time in-between.

Line pits and Elliot traps were set amongst the mallee along the north track, and another set of line pits were placed in the dunes above the house. Initially slow to respond, the small mammals eventually came to the party, showing a decided preference for the pit traps. Western Pygmy Possums were the main catch. If you haven't experienced this almost-weightless bundle of attractive brown and white fur, be assured that it is something of a wonder. Initially curled tight, head and ears down, eyes closed and tail spiralled, the possum gradually awakens from its torpor as it is rolled from hand to hand, examined, measured and weighed. Being inside the right warm jumper is also an inducement to come to life. Doug made such an impression on the last one that it refused to leave him, bounding delicately after the adopted father-figure as Doug backed away, even managing to climb up his leg.



"Pygmy Possum at Eyre" by R. Smith.

Other trapped mammals were Mitchell's Hopping-mouse and the Dunnart. The highly-strung hopping-mouse is amusing to watch. It quickly and effectively departs with its long tail, tufted at the end and extended horizontally, acting as a counterbalance as the little mechanism on spindly legs bounces away from its spectators. As a farewell gesture a Death Adder lazed nearby in a loose coil to remind us not to wander bare-footed in the bush.

Chocolate Bats were caught at Murra-el-Elevyn Cave near Cocklebidy. Gaining entry to the cave was by suspended ladders followed by a long rough climb down over rocks and through thick layers of powdery bat guano. Not many bats were present, but the mist net collected enough to keep our cold hands busy. Later in the week we searched for bats and bones at Pannikin Plains Cave and at Tommy Graham's Cave. The bones were sorted and examined later in the comfort of the fire-warmed lounge. One item of significance was the lower jawbone of a small bandicoot which no longer lives in the area.

On the last night, Jan made us the proud recipients of awards for notable achievement in a formal ceremonial occasion. We left Eyre well-feted and well-fed. Congratulations must go to Rob and Jan who maintain their fine reputation as excellent hosts and to Doug who conducted the course with enthusiasm and a lively sense of fun.

Next year it's on again. Set aside a week in March for a stimulating course at Eyre.
Rod Smith

Relief Wardens

From time to time relief wardens are required at Eyre while the regular wardens are on holidays or attending seminars and conferences. We are making a list of possible relief wardens. A return bus fare from Perth and free accommodation during the relief period is provided. If you would like your name placed on the list, please let us know, giving the times of the year you could be available with a contact address and phone number.

Rob and Jan Hill

Help!

The wardens at Eyre need a volunteer to do odd jobs in Perth - such as photocopying and delivering parcels to the Bell Freightlines yard in Guildford. Although not frequent, jobs often need to be done at very short notice. If you are able to help please contact Jan and Rob Hill at Eyre Bird Observatory..

EYRE COURSE PROGRAMMES

All courses run from Sunday afternoon to the following Saturday morning. Cost of courses is \$150 which includes food, accommodation and transport between Cocklebidy and Eyre. Families are most welcome.

ART WORKSHOP : 21-27 September 1986

Leader: Donna Reid

Drawing and painting the unique scenery, flora and fauna of Eyre, concentrating on acrylic painting, ink and pastel.

BIRDWATCHING FOR BEGINNERS : 28 September - 4 October 1986

Leaders: Rob and Jan Hill

This course is designed to give beginners a knowledge of how to set about identifying birds. The use of binoculars, note-taking in the field and the proper use of reference guides and books will be covered. Birds nesting in spring will make this an ideal time to visit Eyre.

FIELD ORNITHOLOGY : 7-13 December 1986

Leader: Dr. Stephen Davies

This course, led by the Director of the RAOU, will cover a variety of aspects of field ornithology including banding, census and bird behaviour.

1981-85 WATERBIRDS REPORT

Progress with the big report has been steady and we are not far from sending the manuscript to the publishers. Having a full-time workload with new projects is certainly a handicap. As you can imagine, writing a 100,000 word book is not a task that can be rushed, and we still have to haggle over production details with the government publishers! Consequently we cannot estimate when the report will be finalised - please be patient!

RODNEY RETURNS

Our stalwart Waterbird Assistant, Rodney Vervest, has returned to the W.A. Office. Funds ran out in about April, but the national RAOU fund-raising exercise realised sufficient money to employ Rodney again (part-time) until about November. Rod will take responsibility for the Regular Monitoring and Byenup Lagoon projects and will assist in other areas such as finishing the Report. Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to the RAOU appeal.

1986-87 SEASON

Wetlands are looking good for the 1986-87 waterbird breeding season! The Gascoyne and Murchison Rivers have each flooded at least once and Lake Aneen (near Meekatharra) has filled for the second time in three years. Does anyone know about water levels in other inland lakes? In the south of the State, some wetlands are as full as they've been for many years and could still rise higher.

Waterbirds revel in flood conditions and quickly exploit wetlands that have been dry in preceding years. Productivity of waterbird food items is particularly high in wetlands that hold water after dry periods (less so if water also held in subsequent seasons), providing ideal conditions for successful breeding of waterbirds.

The Waterbirds Officer is keen to hear about wetlands (and waterbirds using them) that have 'appeared' this year or are exceptionally deep. This information helps our overall understanding of wetland conditions for 1986-87, which will guide the planning of surveys such as the 1987 Great Duck Count.

REGULAR SURVEYS

We have had a good response to the request for observers to regularly monitor waterbird populations at important wetlands in W.A. Vacancies still exist at the following wetlands:

WETLAND	SHIRE	FREQUENCY OF SURVEYS
Canning River	Canning	quarterly
Namming Lakes	Dandaragan	every 2 months
Guraga	Lake Dandaragan	quarterly
Toolibin	Lake Wickepin	every 2 months
Jilakin	Lake Kulin	occasionally
North Lake Grace	Lake Grace	occasionally
Poorarecup Lake	Cranbrook	occasionally
Yellilup Swamp	Jerramungup	occasionally

If you would like to be involved in this vital study, **please write to me at the RAOU Office** - note that I will be unable to attend to your mail until the third week in September. Information gathered by the RAOU is used in making important planning and management decisions for the wetlands and waterbirds of our State.

Roger Jaensch

XMAS AT EYRE : 21-27 December 1986

Rush to escape the rush - join the Eyre Escape.

A delightful place to spend Christmas. There will be abundant birdlife, pleasant weather and a magnificent Xmas feast. Enjoy Christmas at Eyre with the help of an enthusiastic group of young naturalists.

NEW YEAR AT EYRE : 28 December - 3 January 1987

Your New Year Resolutions must be:

1. Come to Eyre.
2. Birdwatch.
3. Learn some local history.
4. Visit the local sites.
5. Swim.
6. Beachcomb.
7. Stargaze.
8. Eat good home cooked food.
9. Relax.
10. Enjoy a week at Eyre.

Leaders: Mike and Mandy Bamford

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR DISCOUNT: 10% discount for deposits received by the end of September.

LIMITED PLACES. BOOK EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

DUNE STABILIZATION WORK PARTY 5-24 January 1987

Cost: 1/2 price

Why not go on a working holiday? Get fit, healthy and tanned. All you need to do is enjoy 1/2 of each day planting seeds, breathing the fresh sea air and appreciating the panorama from Irene's Peak. A bargain difficult to resist. This is a most important project currently relying on several dedicated people who desperately need helpers. Eyre's future may depend on your assistance.

In 1987 courses will cost \$160 or \$150 for those who pay one month in advance. Cost includes accomodation, food, tuition and transport within the reserve.

Format: Courses commence with lunch on Sunday and finish with lunch on Saturday.

BIRDING BRUSH-UP : 25-31 January

Leader: Steve Keeling

Following the highly informative and entertaining Easter course led by Steve in 1986 we have invited him to return to Eyre. Steve, a professional ornithological consultant, has run bird tours in Turkey, Cyprus and Australia. His extensive birding experience on six continents and his enormous enthusiasm for teaching will ensure a most rewarding week. Come along and extend your birding knowledge and have loads of fun. Beginners welcome.

BIRDS BY DAY, BATS BY NIGHT AND THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE DARK 15-21 March

Leader: Doug Watkins

Intensive birding in the day and bat banding at night. You

will at last have the chance to view, at close quarters, those squeaking creatures which whiz past in the dark. This course offers a wide variety of exciting experiences including some caving while searching for bats. Doug, a past warden at Eyre, and a professional ornithological consultant has an excellent knowledge of the area so that you will have a stimulating and most enjoyable and entertaining holiday.

OTHER COURSES BEING ORGANIZED FOR 1987 :

Photography
Entomology
Botany
History
Caving

WATERBIRD USAGE

VASSE ESTUARY

This important wetland is threatened by proposed urban and recreational developments. Although various developments have been proposed in this area in the past, the latest plans have a great deal of support. Our concern is that the proposals may affect waterbirds directly through disturbance and indirectly through changes to the wetland. In an earlier issue of *W.A. Bird Notes* we revealed that more than 10,000 ducks and swans use the wetland in summer. A survey on 29 May 1986 realised 9300 ducks and swans on the recently filled wetland.

Protection of the Vasse-Wonnerup Estuary System requires continued observations of waterbirds together with representation to planning and local authorities. If you would like to assist in any way, please write to Roger Jaensch at the RAOU Office. Further support from local residents would be especially valuable.

EGRET PERSONS REQUIRED

One of the projects being tackled by the Waterbirds Officer under the new contract with CALM is an **annual assessment of the breeding status and breeding success of the Great Egret in Western Australia**. This will take the form of visits to known breeding colonies by the Waterbirds Officer and several assistants in late spring. Great Egrets are not abundant and their colonies are few - hence the species is vulnerable. Australia has international obligations to protect this (and other) species because of an agreement with Japan.

To assist our survey, we would welcome any information about egret colonies in your area, including the north of W.A. Surely colonies exist unknown to the RAOU! The best-known colonies are at Australind, Chandala, Toolibin and Ludlow.

It would be especially helpful if one or two persons volunteered to be EGRET OFFICERS. Their role would be to collate published information about egret breeding in W.A. and to assist the Waterbirds Officer in coordinating the 1986 survey. If interested, please write to Roger Jaensch at the RAOU Office.

WA SEA BIRD NOTES

June saw the start of the seabirding season for 1986 with the typical somnambulant seabirder stirring from summer hibernation. We got the thing going by running a seabird slide evening for the RAOU at the Herdsman Wildlife Centre. Steve Keeling spoke of identification problems with albatross and Chris Foot showed some very good slides of the seabirds of North Rankin A. Peter Curry gave an excellent impromptu discussion on identification of skuas, with special reference to the Great Southern Skua which has recently been reported off The Gap at Albany. June 26-27 saw a movement of WASB to check out Cape Leeuwin, staying at the Margaret River Guest House. In spite of the heavy rains the countryside was magnificent and perhaps all the better for being 'out of season'. The Cape turned up one or two surprises. None had seen so many albatross before. It was impossible to estimate accurately but there were several hundred. In addition there were good sightings of both species of Giant Petrel and a single Cape Pigeon (following a crayboat). Other

highlights of the trip were thousands of Purple-crowned Lorikeet and a pair of Square-tailed Kite.

The most notable sea bird sightings were:

- Yellow-nosed Albatross - 300+
- Black-browed Albatross - 1+
- Shy Albatross - 1+
- Southern Giant-Petrel - 1
- Northern Giant-Petrel - 1
- Wilson's Storm-Petrel - 1
- Cape Petrel - 1
- Great Winged Petrel - 1
- Gannet - very large numbers of adult and sub-adult birds
- Pied Cormorant
- Sooty Oystercatcher - 1
- Great Skua - 1
- Pacific Gull - 1 adult

SEPTEMBER SEA TRIP

We hope to take a boat out from Augusta on the 27th of September. We shall stay at the Margaret River Guest House and hope (weather permitting) to get out on a crayboat for the morning. This will be on a first-in-best-dressed basis with limited room on the boat. Bookings and deposits (\$30) to S. Keeling please. Preference will be given to WASB members.

Hopefully we shall have some really dreadful weather this winter with lots of lovely raging southerly winds. When this happens please give S. Keeling a call on 2917592 as we shall get a beach watch going and spend ages trying to identify the corpses.

AN ITEM OF INTEREST

Oceanic Birds of South America/ Matthews (1935) says that Mollymauk, according to a learned commentator (Newton, 1896) is a sailors' corruption of an English word which was corrupted from a German word corrupted in turn from the Dutch. It was originally a name of the Arctic Fulmar, the vast flights of which reminded the Dutch Whalers of "mallemugge," the tiny midges that whirl around a lamp; but today it is applied by mariners of nearly all nations to the smaller albatrosses of the southern oceans. Steve Keeling says that as heard on the whaling brig 'Daisy' in the Roaring Forties, it would be pronounced "Mollymoke".

WADER STUDY GROUP

Waders; remember them? Despite the absence of a WSG column in Bird Notes over the past 12 months, neither the Group nor the birds have gone away. Wader counts at a number of sites around Perth and elsewhere in the south-west are still being carried out as part of the national wader count programme. Wader counts take place twice a year and you are invited and encouraged to join us and assist us to identify these difficult birds. Contact me to find out arrangements. Wader banding also continues, and it is hoped to go out once a fortnight during the coming season (September - March) to various sites around Perth. If we have time, this will include Rottnest Island, where we may be able to get cheap accommodation.

Everyone is welcome to join in the activities of the WSG, so do come with us to see the waders and get "hands-on" experience of a banding project. Please contact me - my new home number is 444 0482, or speak with me at the next meeting.

Mike Bamford

SEARCHES FOR COLOUR-DYED WADERS, AUGUST-DECEMBER 1986

As part of the RAOU's Northern Australian Wader Study Expeditions this year, a trip has been organised to the Broome-Port Hedland area of Western Australia in August-September to study the arrival in Australia of waders migrating southwards. During this expedition, some species of waders will be colour-dyed bright yellow in the hope that they will be seen elsewhere in Australia and New Zealand during and after the southward migration. The species involved include Red-necked Stints, and Curlew and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, which migrate to Southern Australia,

and Red Knots which probably migrate along the north coast of Australia and on to New Zealand, some touching down in Queensland on the way.

Information about the movements of these species obtained from this exercise can be maximised if searches for colour-dyed waders are made at as many places and as regularly as possible. If anyone is able to assist in this project by searching their local wader haunts for dyed birds this would be greatly appreciated.

For instructions and observation recording sheets, please contact:

Brett Lane,
c/o Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union,
21 Gladstone Street,
Moonee Ponds, 3039, Victoria.
Ph. (03) 370 1272.

OBSERVATIONS

The following records have been partly vetted and should receive further scrutiny before publication in RAOU Reports or in technical journals. Observers are encouraged to submit copies of field notes with all accounts of unusual sightings. The *Atlas of Australian Birds*, Serventy & Whittell's *Birds of Western Australia* and regional lists (e.g. Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne) of the W.A. Museum should be useful guides to records that are unusual with respect to distribution or status.

This series mainly covers the winter of 1986. Shire names are given in brackets. Observations that appear in other articles in this newsletter may not be repeated here.

Please send details of sightings to 'The Observations Officer' at the W.A. Office of the RAOU

DOWN SOUTH

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Lesser Broad-billed Prion (?) | - 1, 28/6, back-yard in Mt Pleasant (Metro). |
| Great Egret | - 40, 13/4, Joondalup Lake (Wanneroo). |
| Australasian Bittern | - 1, 8/2, Pipidinn Swamp (Wanneroo). |
| Glossy Ibis | - 10, 1/6, Joondalup Lake (Wanneroo). |
| | - 8, July, Herdsman Lake (Metro). |
| | - 2, July, Perry Lakes (Metro). |
| Royal Spoonbill | - 1, 2/6, Hartfield Golf Course (Metro). |
| Yellow-billed Spoonbill | - 25, 30/5, Garrett Rd - old Belmont Tip area (Metro). |
| Freckled Duck | - 30, 12/4, Barrett-Lennard property, W of Gingin. |
| Chestnut Teal | - 1, 16/5 & 16/6, Alfred Cove (Metro). |
| | - 1, 31/5, Gooninong Swamp, S of Wannamal (Chittering). |
| Pink-eared Duck | - 1500, 18/6, Yangebup Lake (Metro). |
| Blue-billed Duck | - 196, 18/5, Bambun Lake (Gingin). |
| | - 522, 11/7, Dumbleyung Lake (Dumbleyung): highest count from any inland lake. |
| Musk Duck | - 320, 11/7, Dumbleyung Lake (Dumbleyung). |
| Osprey | - 1, 10/5, Causeway, Swan River (Metro). |
| | - 1, early June, Canning River, Mt Henry (Metro). |
| White-bellied Sea-Eagle | - 1, April 1985-May 1986, 'Marra', Pallinup River (Jerramungup). |
| Spotted Harrier | - 1, as above. |
| Peregrine Falcon | - 1, 21/6, Wellard Clay Pits (Rockingham). |
| Spotless Crake | - 1, 6/2, Mary Carroll Park (Metro). |

Australian Bustard	- 2, 30/3, S of lakes between Jurien Bay and Sandy Cape (Dandaragan).
	- 8, 7/5, 26 km NNW Dongara.
Grey Plover	- 1, 19/5, Nightingale Road (Waroon).
Hooded Plover	- 10, 11/6, Leschenault Inlet (Harvey).
	- 1, immature, 18/5, Lancelin.
	- 1, 15/6, Football Lake, Wannamal (Gingin).
Banded Stilt	- 70, 30/3, between Jurien Bay & Sandy Cape (Dandaragan).
Grey-tailed Tattler	- 3, 8/6, Rushy Point, Albany.
Budgerigar	- 1, April 1985-May 1986, 'Marra', Pallinup River (Jerramungup).
Blue-Bonnet	- 7, 29/6, Newman Rock near Balladonia.
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	- 4, 5/4, 5 km S of York Road (York?).
Barn Owl	- carcass, 23/6, Yangebup Lake (Metro).
	- 1, 8/7, flew across Great Eastern Highway, Redcliffe (Metro).
	- 1, 13/7, Benger Swamp (Harvey).
	- 1, 13/7, South-West Hwy between Harvey & Pinjarra.
Hooded Robin	- 3 pairs, 29/3, Flynn Rd, near The Lakes (Northam?).
	- 2, 17/5, 5 km S of York Road (York?).
Western Yellow Robin	- 20+, 22/3, Flynn Rd, near The Lakes (Northam?).
Crested Shrike	- tit - 3, 28/6, as above.
Orange Chat	- 3, 29/6, Newman Rock near Balladonia.
Spotted (Western) Bowerbird	- 1, 13/6, 16 km S of Mullewa.

UP NORTH

Cattle Egret	- 2, 6/7, Lake Eda, E of Broome.
Black Swan	- 10, 23/6, Koolan Island.
	- 3, 2/7, Mary River near highway.
	- 12, 9/7, Ord River at Kununurra.
	- early July, near Wyndham.
Whistling-Ducks	- scarce in SW Kimberley in July.
Square-tailed Kite	- 1, 21/6, Mount House.
	- 1, 4/7, Broome, near port.
Black-breasted Buzzard	- 14, 17/4-22/6, Broome area.
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	- 2 at nest, 21/6, Dunham R, Kununurra.
Black Falcon	- 1, 6/7, Lake Eda, E of Broome.
Chestnut Rail	- 7, 1/6, Prince Regent River.
Australian Bustard	- 41, 21/6, Beverley Springs.
Red-necked Avocet	- 59, 25/6, Crab Creek near Broome.
Eastern Curlew	- 50, 29/3, tidal mudflats E of Derby.
Little Curlew	- 210, 15/4, Derby School Oval, feeding on cut-worms.
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	- 1, 2/6, St Patrick's Island.
Partridge Pigeon	- nest with 2 eggs, 30/5, Prince Regent R.
White-quilled Rock Pigeon	- adult with young, 14/5, Sale River.
Rainbow Pitta	- 2, 14/5, Sale River.
Welcome Swallow	- 12, 22/7, Broome Rubbish Tip.
White-browed Robin	- 1, 21/6, Beverley Springs.
Purple-crowned Fairy Wren	- 4, 26/7, Geikie Gorge.
Black Grasswren	- 6, 1/6, Prince Regent River.
Yellow Chat	- 22, (late May?), Lake Eda, E of Broome.
Gouldian Finch	- July, 'Fish Hole', Gibb River Rd.

MEMBER' CONTRIBUTIONS

RUDALL RIVER NATIONAL PARK

Rudall River was named after a surveyor, A.F. Rudall, who explored much of what is now the Rudall River National Park in the late 1890s. Rudall was the leader of an expedition searching for two missing explorers and the river was discovered by a fellow surveyor and second in command of the expedition, H.S. Trotman, who named the river after his colleague. Rising in no specified range of hills but deriving from surrounding breakaways, the river and its tributaries are wholly within the southern part of the Great Sandy Desert. The Rudall River National Park, a very large area around the river, is all within The Great Sandy Desert.

Recently we spent (together with another WA birdo and one from Victoria) five days and four nights in the Park - as the tourist brochures would say.

Although Trotman described a "waste and desolate land", "brittle and blackened trees, every ounce of moisture wrung from their heat twisted limbs, strained in weird shapes away from the sun" * and "pitiless" and "unbearable" heat, he travelled in December. The brittle blackened and heat twisted trees may still be seen but in July the evenings and nights were cool and we even experienced some light rain. The plant and tree life is much greater than the image conjured by the Great Sandy Desert and trees grow well near water. The size of the Rudall was of interest. When in full spate it must be very impressive. Dry during our visit, the bed shows that it reaches 50 metres wide and 4 metres deep, while named tributary creeks range from the size that might be expected by the name creek, to 30 metres wide and 3 metres deep. However, it seemed that water had not flowed significantly for at least two years.

The rivers and creeks are lined with River Red Gum (*E. camuldensis*), unfortunately not in flower at the time of our visit and they form a sharp contrast to the bare stony soil of the breakaways and sparse vegetation of the sandy plains. At one time I thought we would see more camels than anything else but diligent bird watching (two hours careful looking to see one bird for example) gradually resulted in a list of 31 species though with no surprises among them. Australian Bustards were reasonably common and the White-plumed Honeyeater seems present along all water courses in good numbers. A male and a female Black Honeyeater were seen during a long afternoon seeing no other birds but a few White-plumed Honeyeaters. Except after rain it seems likely that the Rudall River Park is disappointing from a bird viewpoint. However, judging by the number of old nests along water-courses, after rain (which could make access difficult) it would be an exciting place. In the surrounding country the Black-faced Wood-swallow was by far the most common bird. The general paucity of life doubtless contributed to the seeing of two raptors only, a Brown Falcon and an Australian Kestrel. We were pleased to see a group of Spinifex birds which passed our camp at lunchtime, and to get a good view of a Red-browed Pardalote - a few of which called from time to time. There was a variety of flowers especially of *Eremophila* species, which gave interest when birds were absent.

More exciting birding was available on the journey to and from the Park. A Grey Falcon gave us a good viewing south of Marble Bar while working over an area with a Spotted Harrier, 1000+ Little Corellas at Green Hole on Miningarra Creek south of Bamboo, 200+ Hardhead (with Swan and egrets etc.) at Carawine Gorge on the Oakover River (the upper De Grey), and most interesting of all a Tawny Grassbird at Coppin Gap, a river gorge leading from the hills (the Dyke Range?) to the plains bordering the De Grey. When the river is not running the Gap contains permanent pools with the biggest and deepest lined with *Baumea* and *Great Rush*. The Tawny Grassbird was sighted in this pool margin and it not only climbed up obligingly to view the intruders but then proceeded to sing before giving warning calls and dropping into cover. It repeated this performance after flying low, just over the reeds to their most distant extremity (30 metres).

* Smith E. The Beckoning West, St. George, Perth 1985. pp68-9.



This Tawny Frogmouth successfully raised two chicks in a pine tree during December 1985. The nest was located in Bickley.

Photograph by Brian R. Tullis, 101 Railway Road, Kalamunda 6076.

The Tawny Grassbird is usually seen in the Kimberley and northwards, cut off from the Pilbara by the Great Sandy Desert. Only one was seen.

On the journey south-bound, a Jacky Winter and an Australian Hobby came to our camp, still in the Desert, just outside the Park boundary (previously unreported from that particular Atlas 1 degree block) and a Black-breasted Buzzard near what appeared to be its nest was spectacular on the middle Gascoyne River at Three Rivers Station (also previously unreported from the Atlas block).

Travelling with our party you would have concluded that the Crested Bellbird was the most common species in the State. It was heard (but never seen) at all our camp sites near Marble Bar, on the De Grey, Rudall, in the south of the Desert, on the Fortescue, Gascoyne, Murchison and north of Kalgoorlie at Niagara.

A. and B. Buchanan

BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPERS AT GORDON INLET (FITZGERALD RIVER NATIONAL PARK)

Sightings of the Broad-billed Sandpiper have been rare in the southern parts of Australia. In the "WA Naturalist" Vol. 16, No.1, Roger Jaensch records observations at Esperance and Perth. On the 12th September, 1985, two Broad-billed Sandpipers were seen at Gordon Inlet during a biological survey of the Park.

The sandpipers were feeding with 25 Red-necked Stints and 4 Curlew Sandpipers, and were seen at a distance 18-25 metres. We had binoculars and Pizzey, which was hurriedly opened to Plate 34. The size of each species accorded with Pizzey - the Broad-billed Sandpipers being intermediate between the other two species. In shape the Broad-billed sandpipers were very similar to the Red-necked Stints, with short legs and necks. However, their beaks were proportionately longer and sturdier. The Red-necked Stints were in non-breeding plumage and the Broad-billed Sandpipers had a very similar distribution of white and colour, and in this respect matched the illustrations in Pizzey. We failed to notice whether the eyebrow of the Broad-billed Sandpiper was forked. They had a darker edge to the wing than the stints and it, the dark part, seemed both broader than in the illustration and continuous rather than with a gap. The sandpipers' legs appeared darker than in the Pizzey illustration though not as black

as those of the Red-necked Stint. We could not be certain of the down-turn of the beak-tip as the beaks were in constant use. The length of the beak seemed right. All three species were feeding - moving briskly and probing frequently. The Broad-billed Sandpipers moved and fed in the same way as the Red-necked Stints with rapid vertical probes.

B.Newbey.

BIRD AWARENESS IN COUNTRY SCHOOLS

Last year I ran a series of school visits with the aim of increasing awareness of birds. The ten schools visited were between 10 and 170 kms from home. (Home is a farm in the southern wheatbelt of WA). It was done free of charge though I was paid for the travelling and overnight stays involved from funds made available by the Priority Country Areas Programme. Some schools received two visits, some one; some classes I saw twice for up to one and a quarter hours each time, some only once for an hour. But all schools offered the visits accepted.

Aids were a few stuffed specimens from our local museum; six common but contrasting nests - Magpie, Mudlark, Willie Wagtail, Singing Honeyeater, Fieldwren, Yellow-rumped Thornbill; a clutch of blown Banded Lapwings eggs that had been deserted during cropping on the farm; a Bustard feather; some owl pellets; a few Emu droppings plus the unlikely looking food items that they revealed that the Emus had been eating; some nectar filled blossoms; and a small selection of taped birdcalls. Last but not least was the Bird Observers' Club contribution. This comprised slides, the cassette set "Day in the Life of a Magpie", and some pamphlets. Of course not everything was used for every class.

Topics touched on included interesting aspects of local birdlife and what you could see if you were more observant. Children learned readily to distinguish between male, female and immature Mudlarks for example. It was emphasised that the local birdlife is interesting, diverse, right there for the learning, unique, and much is yet unknown. Depending on the age of the students, which ranged between 5 and 15, such things as social organisation, territories, food, flight, migration, nomadism, changes in bird species as the environment has changed, were discussed. All were related to local examples and preferably common local examples.

If the weather was good, and it frequently wasn't, some time

was spent outside. Usually about ten species could be found. At one school everyone got to see Purple-crowned Lorikeets properly - just by looking - but they had never really tried before.

Much enthusiasm was generated and many children had questions and stories to relate. I especially remember one boy in grade 4 who put up his hand just to make one comment: "I like birds".

The B.O.C. slides were a most valuable asset to the programme. Perhaps someone else who lives in an area where this sort of thing has not been done could try something similar.

Brenda Newbey, Ongerup W.A.

SPLENDED FAIRY-WREN IN KINGS PARK

(from a letter by Dr. Wycherley, Park Director)

The records on the attempt to reintroduce the Splendid Fairy-wren into Kings Park have been checked out.

With the permission of the then Department of Fisheries & Fauna on Saturday 19 May 1973, twelve birds of this species were captured by members of the Naturalists' Club mist netting on a property east of Blackwood River near Augusta, where the natural habitat was about to be destroyed by clearing. One of the birds was sickly on capture and died during transport the next day. The other eleven were safely brought to Kings Park on Sunday 20 May 1973. The birds had immature plumage, although it was thought that both sexes were represented.

The eleven birds were placed in an aviary with shelter from sun and wind at the margin of the bushland near the Second Rotunda on Law Walk on the eastern boundary of the botanic Garden, where the scarp falls away steeply. The birds were fed daily with live mealworms and an artificial high protein formula devised by Mr. A Pepper. It had been intended to keep the birds captive for three or four weeks or as long as seemed necessary. However, the decision when to release was taken out of our hands when vandals cut the netting on 2 June 1973.

No attempt was made to recapture the birds, although food continued to be supplied on a tapering off basis for several weeks more. A month later, i.e. about 30 June 1973, the birds had broken into two groups, one of six birds and one of five, the two parties took up territories, one mainly in the Wattle and Mediterranean sections of the Botanic Garden and the other mainly in the Scarp bushland rich in *Dryandra sessilis*.

There were sightings of birds of this species in this general area, presumably the introduced individuals, until at least early 1976. However, on no occasion were dominant males or any breeding or nesting activities observed.

ROLEYSTONE BIRD SURVEYS

Since January 1985, four Metropolitan Bird Project sites in Roleystone have each been surveyed monthly, producing a total of 76 reports up to July 1986. 65 species were recorded, 44 of those being included on at least four reports.

The accompanying table shows the total number of recordings for each of the 20 most commonly seen birds, and the frequency of reporting each of the species on each block.

Species	Total No of Reports	% per BLOCK			
		A	B	C	D
Western Thornbill	70	x	x	y	y
Western Gerygone	70	y	y	x	x
Western Spinebill	68	x	x	x	
Grey Fantail	67	y	x		x
Australian Magpie	67	x	x	y	z
Grey Shrike-thrush	61	x	x		x
Australian Raven	61	x	x	x	
Inland Thornbill	60	y	x		y
Red-capped Parrot	57		y		z
Brown Honeyeater	56		y	y	
Striated Pardalote	56		z	z	y
White-naped Honeyeater	54	z	y		z
Golden Whistler	52	z	x		x
Silvereye	51		z		x
Western Yellow Robin	45	x	x		
Common Bronzewing	45		x		
Varied Sitella	43		y		
Scarlet Robin	40				y
Tree Martin	37		y		
New Holland Honeyeater	36		y		

x = 95%-100%, y = 84%-90%, z = 74%-79%

An interesting aspect of these surveys is the complete absence of the Singing Honeyeater, Welcome Swallow, Willie Wagtail and Australian Kestrel. In November the doves arrived but have been noted only occasionally. Only from October to January was the Laughing Kookaburra frequently reported, and for the first time, Galahs were reported on a block in July 1986.

The survey blocks each have an area of about a square km except for C which is smaller. All are well-elevated. A and B are about 2km east of the escarpment, adjacent to each other and fairly level. C and D are close to the escarpment. All but C are well covered in jarrah/marri, A and B having she-oak as well, D having a large area of wandoo and C only a small area of trees. *Dryandra* and *melaleuca* shrubs are the predominate of trees. *Dryandra* and *melaleuca* shrubs are the predominate vegetation of C. Block D is a steep-sided ridge which has a creek.

The Western Yellow Robin appears to prefer the she-oak and the distance from the coastal plain, while the infrequent sightings of Grey Shrike-thrush, Golden Whistler, Inland Thornbill and Varied Sitella at C are probably due to the lack of trees. Difficult to account for is the complete absence of the New Holland Honeyeater from A, considering the frequent sightings in the neighbouring block in similar conditions.

Rod Smith

ESCAPED NUN BIRDS COULD POSE A THREAT

(this article is reprinted from the 'West Australian', 17 June 1986)

"A search has begun for 10 black-headed nuns missing from the Perth suburb of Carlisle. No, not a walkout by a group of women from a religious order. Rather the Agriculture Protection Board expressing its fears over the escape of birds from an aviary. The nuns which are also known as Black-headed Mannikins or Black-headed Munia, are considered a threat to native finches through competition for feed and nesting sites. Board inspector Don Wilson said that once established in WA, they would be hard to eradicate. The birds are small, about 10cm high with black heads, necks and breasts. They have prominent silver-grey bills. Anyone spotting them can contact the APB on 368 3333."

Black-headed Mannikins are illustrated in Simpson and Day, 'The Birds of Australia', and in Slater, 'A Field Guide to Australian Birds (Passerines)'. They are not illustrated in Pizzey. An introduced species they are now established south of Sydney NSW. Simpson and Day state their habitat is reed beds, and Slater, grassland with scattered trees. (Ed)

MUCHEA SIGHTING

On 26 July, Norma Duff, Margery Clegg and I saw a mixed flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos (11 birds) and Little Correllas (15 birds) feeding on wild melon near Muchea. One of the Cockatoos had been colour dyed with a red spot on both sides of the neck. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos have not previously been reported from this Altas one degree block.

Bryan Barrett.

BOOK NOTE

Bird Life of Murdoch - a guide to local species

Edited by Barbara Porter, published by Murdoch University.

This is a delightful small book designed to whet the appetite of potential birdwatchers and to provide a guide to the species of birds that may be seen on the campus of Murdoch University.

Notes on the selected species are well written and pleasantly informal while containing a great deal of information on the appearance and habitats of the species. The authors have included many of the non-RAOU English names in the text and so not left the newcomer wondering if a 'mudlark' is the same as a 'peewee'. Michael Bamford's lively pen and ink drawings complement the excellent photographs which are up to the standard of those 'coffee table' bird books.

I have two minor criticisms. First, I dislike the practice of divorcing names from illustrations. If there is room for a number under the photograph, then surely the name could be printed there. For those who are not familiar with the birds, it must be annoying to have to constantly refer to the list in the corner of the page.

Secondly, in the List of Species at the end, the column for status makes no entry against 50% of the birds. An analysis of the 'abundance' data may lead to a correct conclusion but the addition of a few extra symbols indicating vagrants, regulars, visitors etc. would have helped.

Despite these minor criticisms, the authors and Murdoch University are to be congratulated on a first class production. 'Bird Life of Murdoch' should become the model for similar works for similar specific areas such as a park or even an area frequented by tourists such as Albany.
C. Napier.

NOTICES

ART EXHIBITION

The W.A. Group's Art Exhibition in the foyer of the Perth Concert Hall was opened on Friday July 25th by His Excellency the Governor, Professor Gordon Reid, who, in his address to the 450 invited guests, drew attention to the set of 8 cards of W.A. birds printed for the W.A. Group by the W. A. Museum from original tempera paintings by Mrs. Joan Jordan, a local artist. Well over 100 exhibits (paintings and sculpture) were entered in the exhibition by local artists. Not only was this response gratifying, but the generally high standard of the art works received favourable acclaim; over 40% were sold. There was also brisk business at the trade tables, helped by concert-goers to the concerts on July 25th, 26th and 28th. The exhibition finished at 5 p.m. on July 30th, having achieved one of its objects by publicising the W.A. Group and the R.A.O.U., as well as raising funds. All those who helped organise and run the exhibition, which required attendants every day, are congratulated and thanked for their fine effort.

CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The Conservation Sub-Committee (Brian Wilson, Peter Curry, Steve Keeling and Boyd Wykes) are still engaged in the long process of drawing up lists of places of ornithological importance in WA. These are handed over from time to time to the relevant officer of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, in the hope that the areas nominated will be declared as Class A reserves. The material for the lists comes partly from suggestions by WA Group members and partly from recommendations contained in Systems 1 to 12.

The aim is to secure the declaration as a reserve (and therefore a degree of immunity) before an area is threatened. Once an area is threatened, it is often too late to do anything to preserve it. If an area is worthwhile preserving, it needs to be legally declared as soon as possible bearing in mind that the process takes ages to accomplish.

Please send your suggestions for reserves to Brian Wilson - telephone 293 1094.

NATIONAL RAOU PROJECT TO MONITOR BIRD POPULATIONS AND MOVEMENTS

A lack of detailed knowledge about bird movements and population trends is hindering the development of effective conservation programmes for Australia's birds. Which species are increasing and which declining? How do the species use the different parts of their geographical range? A national project is needed to record and elucidate population movements and changes, to distinguish short-term changes from long-term ones, and local from national events. The Atlas of Australian Birds has shown the enormous value of harnessing the skills and energies of Australia's many birdwatchers in such a project. The network of observers established through the Atlas could now be used for a follow-up study of bird movements.

The Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service has recently funded the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union to examine ways of running such a project. I have been asked by the Union to contact interested people and prepare a report on the feasibility of the project and the different approaches that could be used. The report will then be circulated and a workshop held at Adelaide University on 11 and 12 December 1986, just prior to the RAOU

Congress. It may then be possible to get the project itself under-way next year.

If you have any ideas for the project - what we should be trying to achieve and how to go about it - please contact me. Reverse-charge calls will be willingly accepted. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the report or attending the workshop should also contact me. The project will only be successful if it has wide support and involvement, not only during the fieldwork but in the planning stages as well.

Peter Smith, 44 Hawkins Parade, Blaxland N.S.W. 2774. Ph (047) 39 5312

PUBLICATIONS

YOU CAN BUY THE FOLLOWING ITEMS at the RAOU Office, Suite 30, first floor, 15 Ogilvie Rd, Canning Bridge 6153, W.A. Don't forget to add the cost of postage and packing if you are not calling to pick up purchases. Items are usually available for purchase at RAOU meetings and excursions.

This arrangement provides a service for members and much needed funds for the Group.

- * The Atlas of Australian Birds \$49
(produced by the RAOU : shows distribution of bird species)
- * overlays for the Atlas \$6
- * Methods for Censusing Birds in Australia - 1982 \$5
(produced by the W.A. Group, RAOU)
- * Report of the Middlesex Study Centre \$5
- * A Pocket List of Australian Birds 70 c
(a handy checklist ; produced by Canberra Ornithologists Group)
- * A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, by G. Pizzey \$17
(1985 reprint, paperback ; small format)
- * The Birds of Australia, by Simpson and Day \$30
(1984, large format ; text and plate facing each other)
- * Every Australian Bird Illustrated \$22
(large format ; 563 colour photos)
- * In Quest of Bower Birds, by N. Chaffer \$26
(large format ; text and photographs of all species)
- * A Field Guide to the Birds of W.A., by Storr and Johnstone \$14
(W.A. Museum 1985 edition ; solely birds of W.A.)
- * New Zealand Birds \$17
(1983 edition ; large format ; text and photographs by several authors)
- * The Birdlife of Rottnest Island, by Saunders and de Rebeira \$8
(1985 ; text ; colour plates ; maps)
- * Eyre Bird Observatory : Report 1981-83 \$5
- * RAOU Calendar 1986 \$8
- * Bird- call tapes \$10
(3 choices ; mostly W.A. birds ; announced version)
- * RAOU Emu badges \$3
- * RAOU ties (navy blue or maroon) \$10
- * Western Australian Bird Notes \$1.50 per issue

If you have suggestions for titles that we could obtain, please give details to the W.A. Office. Please bear in mind that the W.A. Group is reluctant to spend money on bird books that do not sell readily.

Also, few local publishers or distributors are prepared to offer a discount on bird books. Consequently our choices are rather limited.

It is likely that in the next few weeks copies of "New Colour Guide to Hong Kong Birds" by Clive Viney and Karen Phillipps will become available at a price of about \$15. This excellent soft-cover field guide (text and illustration face each other) is the standard bird book for Hong Kong which has a bird list of 350 species, largely migrants in the northern winter. Clive Viney is the chairman of the HK Bird Watching Society, and Karen Phillipps is a well-known bird artist in HK.

ADVICE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The editors of W.A. Bird Notes would like to ask those contributing written material to the newsletter, to note the following points:

- * copy should be typed with double spacing;
- * text should be broken into paragraphs, preferably containing not more than four or five sentences;
- * careful attention ought to be given to use of upper and lower case letters: e.g. 'a flock of unidentified cormorants', or 'a flock of Great Cormorants'.
- * a suggested method for recording dates and localities is, e.g. '11 May 1984, seven km SW of Moora' (i.e. spell out one to nine, then use figures).
- * use the English Names for birds recommended by the RAOU for use in all publications about birds in Australia: these are given in the pocket list available at the W.A. Office,

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

for December 86 issue - third Friday in October (17th).

COMING EVENTS

- September 13** Day Excursion
NEERABUP/JANDABUP
Neerabup National Park and Lake Jandabup are near Wanneroo. Neerabup has some prime Tuart forest. We visited this area in February 1986 and it will be interesting to compare sightings from each outing. Meet at the corner of Church Street and Scenic Drive, Wanneroo at 8.30 a.m.
- September 21-22** Camp out
PETRUDOR ROCK, PITHARA
Organiser - Diane Beckingham
Petrudor Rock is about 270 km from Perth and 30 km due east of Pithara on the road to Kalannie. Allow 4 hours from Perth and join us at the picnic area of the rock on Saturday. Self-sufficient camping, bring own water. We should see Mulga Parrots, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and perhaps Scrub Robins and Shy Hylacolas. Last year we saw Black-eared Cuckoos and Spotted Pardalotes.
For those who can extend the trip, a pleasant circuit of station country will be possible, continuing to Rothsay, Fields Find, Paynes Find from Monday 22 to Friday 27. Please phone Diane for more details and indicate your intentions. 381 9035 (5-8pm weekdays)
- September 22** Meeting
HERDSMAN LAKE WILDLIFE CENTRE.
8.00 pm
The New Zoo, New Initiatives
Speaker - John de Jose, Director of the Zoological Gardens, Perth
- September 27-29** Campout
TUTANNING NATURE RESERVE
Located some 20 km East of Pingelly this Reserve of 2089 hectares is on the old Dutarn Range. The vegetation is a mixture of Wandoo, open woodland and casuarina thickets with breakaways and granite outcrops. Num-bats are said to occur there. As a result of our last visit in June 1985, 14 species were added to the Reserve bird list which now totals 85. We have permission to camp on farming land near the CALM quarters. Toilet facilities will be available. An officer from CALM will accompany our party. Pingelly is 154 km from Perth - allow enough driving time for a rendezvous at Pingelly Post Office at 9.15 a.m.

October 12

Day Excursion
BUCKLAND PARK near NORTHAM
Leader - Geoff Shannon
We have been invited to visit this property 12 km N.E. of Northam, about an hour and a half's drive from Perth. The house can be reached either from Northam on the Goomalling road and bearing left soon after leaving the town and following the brown Historic Site signs to Buckland House, via Irish Town. It can also be reached via Toodyay, again on the Goomalling road turning right at the Buckland sign a few kilometres along that road. Meet in the house car park at 9.30am. I have arranged for there to be BBQ's available from about noon onwards. The house will also be open for those who wish to visit this beautifully restored mansion. A visit is well worth the cost. Bird wise it could be interesting, as during a brief walk in mid-winter 33 species including Zebra Finch, Rufous Songlark and White-browed Babbler were seen.

October 19

National Bird Week begins
Three different Metro Birdwalks
1. KALAMUNDA NATIONAL PARK - Bushbird Hunt
Meet at 8.00 am at the parking area on Schipp Rd (off Hummerston Rd) in Piesse Brook.
2. LAKE JOONDALUP - Waterbird Waddle
Meet at 10.00 am at Hawkins Park (next to Wanneroo Shire Offices)
3. ALFRED COVE - Wader Watch
Meet at 3.00 pm at carpark off Burke Drive (Troy Park)

October 21

Public Meeting
KINGSLEY HALL, KINGSLEY DRIVE, KINGSLEY. 8.00 pm
Bird walks in Wanneroo -
Speaker - Geoff Shannon
An introduction to all the best bird spots in the Northern suburbs.

October 25-26

24 hour event
NATIONAL TWITCHATHON & BIRD-WEEK BBQ.
The aim of this event is to record as many species as possible within a 24 hour period. Participants may form teams of two or more. However each bird must be seen or heard and verified by at least two team members for a record to be valid. There will be no restriction on the distance on land from the GPO that a team may travel - this is left to your own judgement - though no air travel within the 24 hours is allowed, except to Rottnest. No boat travel further from the coast than the western end of Rottnest Island is allowed. The Twitchathon starts at 12 midday Saturday 25 October and finishes at 12 midday Sunday 26 October 1986. There is a fee of \$2 per team.
At the conclusion you are invited to a BBQ at Ron and Catherine Van Delft's house at 18 Troy Street, Bassendean (phone 378 2161). BYO food and drink.(BBQ provided). Don't forget your bird list!
Those who would like to participate must COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED FORM AND RETURN IT (WITH \$2) TO THE RAOU OFFICE not later than 9am Monday 6 October, 1986.

October 27 Informal Meeting
HERDSMAN LAKE WILDLIFE CENTRE.
8.00 pm
A mini Symposium on the Red Wattlebird
Leader - Geoff Shannon
This evening promises to be most interesting
with talks by
people who have made studies of these com-
mon garden birds.
Bring along your observations so we can build
up a picture
of wattlebird movements and behaviour.

October 29 Film Evening
STATE FILM LIBRARY. 5.30 - 7.30 pm
Admission Free
The Films - "The Eyeopeners" (Noddy's and
terns on the Abrolhos Islands)
Silver Gull
Malleefowl
Bob Goodale, who was involved in making
these films with the
Film Centre, will also talk about the work in-
volved in making
wildlife films. This should prove to be an in-
teresting evening
for birdos.

November 1-2 Day Excursion OR Campout
KARAKIN LAKE, WANERIE
SANCTUARY
Organiser - Diane Beckingham 381 9035 (5 -
8 pm weekdays)
Meet at 8.30 a.m. at the Moore River bridge
on the Lancelin road (1 1/4 hours ex Perth).
We will look for Emu-wrens in coastal heath
and lunch at Karakin Lake. Those who wish
to stay overnight may camp at Wanerie Sanc-
tuary on Cowalla Road West Gingin. Contact
the organiser.

November 8 Day Excursion
BOYAGIN ROCK NATURE RESERVE
Leader - Doug Watkins
We visited this interesting reserve in March and
August this year, one of our objectives being
to record species found at particular sites in the
different seasons. Meet just past the intersec-
tion of Brookton Highway and Canning Road
Karragullen at 7.30 a.m.

November 23 Day Excursion
BALDIVIS/WELLARD CLAYPIT and
ROCKINGHAM LAKES
Leaders - Mike and Mandy Bamford
Alcoa and the RAOU have been rehabilitating
a clay extraction pit at Wellard to make it more
attractive for waterbirds. From Baldivis Road,
Baldivis turn into Zig Zag Road (refer
Metropolitan Street Directory). Meet at the
gate to the clay pit about 1 km along Zig Zag
Road at 8.00 am. Afterwards we will visit
Lakes Cooloongup and Walyungup.

November 24 Informal Meeting
HERDSMAN LAKE WILDLIFE CENTRE.
8.00 pm
Bird Banding in Israel - some aspects of bird
migration.
Speaker - Steve Morgan

December 6 Day and Evening
THREE PARK SEARCH and SOCIAL
EVENING
Last year's search and social night were
popular and successful. This year teams will
again choose three parks from a list of seven
and try to find as many birds as possible there
during a twelve hour period. The number of
species seen at each site will be totalled to deter-
mine the winning team. To minimise recon-
naissance, sites from which you may choose
will not be disclosed until a few days prior to
the event. Boundary maps of locations will be
provided to each team. An entry fee of \$2 is
payable to cover postage and photocopying
costs.
This event will be followed by a "Christmas"
party (BYOG). Geoff and Ann Shannon are
again allowing us to hold this social evening
at their home at **29 Waldemar Street, Gwelup**.
Cost is \$12 for adults, \$5 for secondary school
children . Primary school children free.

IN ORDER TO ORGANISE AND CATER FOR BOTH OF
THESE EVENTS THE FORM INSERTED IN THIS
NEWSLETTER MUST BE COMPLETED AND SENT TO
THE PERTH RAOU OFFICE NOT LATER THAN 9am FRI-
DAY 28 NOVEMBER. A MONEY ORDER OR CHEQUE FOR
THE FULL AMOUNT MUST ACCOMPANY THE FORM TO
ALLOW ADEQUATE CATERING. NO late applications will
be accepted.
Intending social participants are asked to bring seating for
themselves if possible.

January 1987 long weekend - Campout
BREMER BAY is the likely location
Plans are underway for this long weekend. Fur-
ther information will be in the December edi-
tion of WA Bird Notes.