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Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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DUCK COUNTERS FIND 250,000 WATERFOWL

Preliminary findings of the 1987 Great Duck Count

More than 220 volunteer observers took part in the second annual Great Duck Count (GDC) in south-western Australia, more than doubling the participation in 1986 when 100 observers were involved. Bird-watchers from Western Australia can be proud that they are setting a good example in co-ordinated monitoring of waterfowl abundance. Close to 800 data sheets have been submitted so far, covering 1125 estuaries, rivers, lakes, reservoirs and farm dams.

In the 1987 GDC, observers were asked to count swans, ducks and coots at wetlands by ten minute blocks of latitude and longitude from Kalbarri to Israelite Bay. Observers were encouraged to find and survey wetlands which had not previously been surveyed for waterfowl and to include a selection of farm dams.

Preliminary analysis of the 1987 GDC data shows figures of 18,800 swans, 201,000 ducks and 26,100 coots - almost 250,000 waterfowl! Significantly lower numbers of ducks (88,000 in 1986) and coots (16,600) were tallied in the 1986 GDC. Interestingly, numbers of swans were much the same in 1986 and 1987 even though 250 more wetlands were surveyed in 1987. A Final Report of the 1987 Duck Count, to be issued to all participants together with the Final Report of the 1986 GDC, will examine the results in greater detail.

Many 'counters' reported substantial concentrations of Pacific Black Ducks in metropolitan wetlands, including small ornamental lakes. More than 39,000 Pacific Black Ducks were counted. Pink-eared Ducks were once again concentrated at Yangebup Lake, a wetland which consistently supports a wide range of duck species. Forrestdale Lake had the greatest number of individuals counted for a metropolitan wetland, with a total of more than 12,000 swans, ducks and coots. More than 60 wetlands were surveyed in the Perth Metropolitan Area.

In country districts, several wetlands appear to be of outstanding importance. Dumbleyung Lake held the remarkable total of 31,000 Australian Shelducks as well as 8000 Grey Teal. These were counted by an aerial survey. Reports from Lake Clifton of 2300 Musk Ducks (a similar number in 1986), confirm that the lake is important for this species. Ground and aerial surveys at Peel Inlet revealed 12,600 Grey Teal.

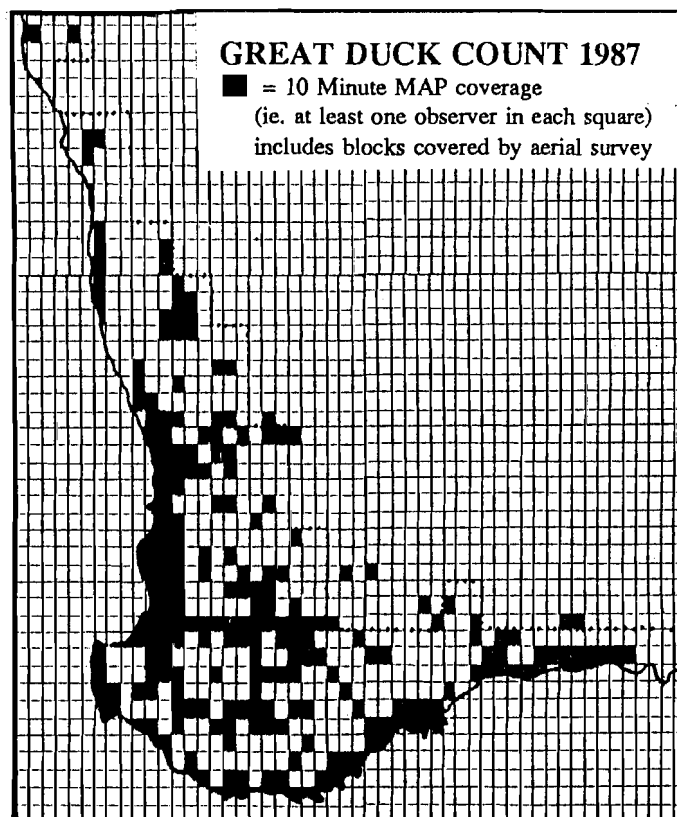
As in the March 1986 Great Duck Count, numbers of Hardhead, Freckled Duck and Chestnut Teal were low. The data suggests that Hardheads are generally scarce in south-western Australia in late summer/early autumn. Despite concerted survey efforts at wetlands known to be attractive

to Chestnut Teal, only 1100 birds were counted. The highest numbers of Chestnut Teal were in estuaries and inlets, e.g. Stokes Inlet (275 birds). Wetlands in the Gingin and Esperance areas again provided sightings of Freckled Ducks though only in low numbers. Eighty-three Freckled Ducks (more than half of the total) were counted at one wetland north of Gingin.

Continued and hopefully greater participation is vital to the success of the Great Duck Count. It and activities like it provide information which enables our native waterfowl to be adequately conserved. The RAOU is grateful to all who have become involved.

Enlist NOW as an RAOU 'Great Duck Counter' for the next survey in March 1988.

Rodney Vervest
RAOU Duck Master 1987



OBSERVATIONS

collated by Roger Jaensch and Rodney Vervest

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 sighting. The *Atlas of Australian Birds*, Serventy and Whitnell's *Birds of Western Australia* and regional lists (e.g. Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne) by the W.A. Museum should be useful guides to records that are unusual with respect to distribution or status.

This series mainly covers the autumn of 1987. Shire names are given in brackets. Where known, the observer is identified by an abbreviation - abbreviations are listed below.

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

Great Crested Grebe - 100, 13/3/87, Jerdacuttup Lake, 14km E Hopetoun (Ravensthorpe) - JL, JMc

Royal Penguin - 1 2/3/87, seen alive at Dead Finish Beach, 3km S Barrack Point, Augusta * one dead, 11/3/87 Seal Island, 1km S Point Frederick, Augusta: in advanced state of moult - MB (This is the first known record of this species in Western Australia. The Royal Penguin is an accidental visitor, mainly to south-eastern Australia (most records from Tasmania). The Royal Penguin is a race of the Macaroni Penguin which has not been recorded in Australia; these birds belong to the family of 'crested penguins'. The Royal Penguin breeds on Macquarie Island and records suggest that the population on the island may be in excess of 2 million birds - 00).

Fleshy-footed Shearwater - 1, 9/2/87, near Green Island (Rottnest): had broken wing - MHB

Cape Gannet - 1, 19/4/87, Augusta: first report for WA - SK

Black-faced Cormorant - 2, 28/2/87, Israelite Bay, E of Cape Arid - RP

Great Egret - 218, 14/2/87, Lake Chittering (Chittering) - BK *22, 10/3/87, Byenup Lagoon (Manjimup) - RV JJ * 34, 15/3/87, Lake Joondalup (Wanneroo) - MHB

Little Egret - 21, 15/3/87, Coodanup (Murray) - PW

Little Bittern - 1, 20/12/86, heard calling, Thomsons Lake *1, 19/1/87, caught in mist net at Thomsons Lake - SG, PC *1, 6/3/87, Westfield Park Primary School swamp - GM

Black Bittern - 1 last year on Murray River Channels near the Old Mill, Peel Inlet - KC

Australasian Bittern - 1, 15/12/86 *1, 20/12/86, heard calling at Thomsons Lake - SG, PC *1 7/3/87, reported from Bayswater Bird Sanctuary (Metro) - ES

Glossy Ibis - 16, 11/4/87, Lilac Hill Park, Guildford (Metro) - AM

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - 48, 5/3/87, Jandabup Lake (Wanneroo) - JD

Royal Spoonbill - 1, 2/4/87, Jandabup Lake (Wanneroo) - RJ

Freckled Duck - 2, 23/11/86, Lake Joondalup (Wanneroo): with ducklings - MHB * 5, 22/12/86, Spectacles Swamp, near Thomsons Lake - PC, BP * 3, 14/2/87, Lake Chittering - BK * 83, 7/3/87, Barrett-Lennards Lake (Gingin) - BB, AB *2, 13/3/87, Jerdacuttup Lake, 14 km E Hopetoun - JL, JMc * 21, 14/3/87, swamp near Wannamal Lake (Gingin) - BB, AB * 18, 15/3/87, Namburup Swamps (Esperance) - RJ

Australian Shelduck - 31,000 15/3/87, Dumbleyung Lake (Dumbleyung) - DM, GP (This count was taken during the aerial survey for the RAOU's Great Duck Count - 00).

Grey Teal - 5500, 14/3/87, swamp near Wannamal Lake (Gingin) - BB, AB

Chestnut Teal - 1, 18/3/87, amongst 300 Teal at Alfred Cove (Metro) - PRH *20, 24/6/86, Thomsons Lake - BP

Pink-eared Duck - 2300, 16/1/87, Guraga Lake (Dandaragan) - BB, AB

Maned Duck - 270, 8/3/87, Emu Lake, Ballajura (Metro) JBr

Musk Duck - 1600, 3/3/87, Lake Clifton (Mandurah) - MHB

Osprey - 1, 28/3/87, Shelley Bridge, Canning River (Metro): actively fishing - MU * 1, 31/3/87, Swan River, Crawley (Metro) - MU

Black-shouldered Kite - 1 26/4/87, Eyre Bird Observatory: rarely reported here - BW, GH

Square-tailed Kite - 1, 11/1/87, Boyagin Rock (Brookton) - RAOU outing *1, 1/2/87, Roleystone - RS * 2, 13/4/87, Rose Hill Golf Course, Guildford (Metro) - AM *1, 24/4/87, Muir Highway (near Manjimup): seen gliding close to canopy in Jarrah/marri woodland - RV, JMcL

Collared Sparrowhawk - 1, 7/2/87, Alfred Cove - IS

Little Eagle - 1, 6/12/86, Kelmscott - GM * 1, 6/4/87, Alfred Cove: seen in samphire near waders; did not seem to be injured - RSh

White-bellied Sea-Eagle - 1,1/3/87, Creery Island, Peel Inlet (Mandurah). An immature (second year) bird with white tail and white patch in underwing-upperwing brownish grey - JH

Peregrine Falcon - 1, Jan 87, Canning River: often seen in this area - BBu * 1, 24/1/87 Cowaramup (Augusta-Margaret River) - IS *1, 8/3/87, NW corner of Herdsman Lake (Metro) - JB * 1, 13/3/87, Ned's Corner Lake: yate and paperbark fringed lake, near Coomalbidup (W of Esperance) - RJ

*15/3/87-15km E of Lancelin, one juvenile (brownish), hunting in front of a rain squall. 5km further, two adults calling and displaying (including claw touching in flight)-JH & SN *1, 26/3/87, Adelaide Terrace in ABC car park, chasing Laughing Turtle-Doves - JH

Painted Button-quail - 7 in a group, 14/3/87, Douglas Rd Reserve, Gosnells (Metro) - EK

Buff-banded Rail - 1, 14/1/87, Lake Claremont (Metro) - EM

Baillon's Crake - 1, 8/3/87, lake S of Victoria Road, Malaga (Metro) - JBr

Australian Crake - 2, 13/3/87, in flooded yate swamp with low bushes, near Coomalbidup (W of Esperance) - RJ

Spotless Crake - 25, 12/3/87, Lake Grasmere (Plantagenet) - LB

Purple Swamphen - 101, 10/3/87, Thomsons Lake - PC

Eurasian Coot - 7000, 4/2/87, Thomsons Lake - PC

Pied Oystercatcher - 9, 7/2/87, Alfred Cove (Metro) - IS

Sooty Oystercatcher - 1, 2/5/87, Woodmans Point: seen in company with 10 Pied Oystercatchers - BBa, MC

Lesser Golden Plover - 50-60, 11/1/87, tidal flats on Blackwood River, Augusta - MB, AB *9, 29/1/87, dry lake bed near The Broadwater (Busselton) - MCr, PL *1, 7/2/87, Alfred Cove (Metro) - IS * 28, 15/2/87, Coodanup (Murray) - PW * 200, 12/3/87, tidal flats on Blackwood River, 5km NE Augusta - MB *5, 14/3/87, Guraga (Dandaragan) - BB, AB

*5, 16/3/87, dry lake bed near the Broadwater (Busselton) - MCr, PL *10, 17/4/87, Guraga - BB, AB

Red-kneed Dotterel - 21, 13/2/87, Lake Claremont - EM

Hooded Plover - 17, 14/3/87, South West tip of Lake Preston (including 5 young) - JH,IS,GA * 140, 16/3/87, White Lake: shallow hypersaline lake, 15km N of Esperance - RJ *1, 18/4/87, Football Lake (Gingin) - BB, AB * 1, early May, Forrestdale Lake - DJ

Mongolian Plover - 4, 15/2/87, Coodanup - PW

Large Sand Plover - 9, 14/2/87, Boat Harbour (Mandurah) - RAOU Outing

Banded Stilt - 10,700, 23/12/86, Walyormouring Lake (Goomalling) - JM *10 immatures, 10/3/87, Jandabup Lake (Wanneroo) - JD

Red-necked Avocet - 1450, 3/3/87, Lake Clifton - MHB

Eastern Curlew - 3, 13/4/87, mouth of Preston River (Bunbury) - RP

Whimbrel - 2, 13/4/87, mouth of Preston River - RP

Wood Sandpiper - 4, 7/2/87, Lake Claremont - RSm *12, 2/3/87, Forrestdale Lake - IS *4, 14/3/87, Mogumber West

swamp (Gingin) - BB, AB * 10, 16/3/87, temporary swamp besides highway at Dalyup, near Coomalbidgup (W of Esperance) - RJ * 13, 2/4/87, Jandabup Lake (Wanneroo) - RJ

Marsh Sandpiper - 7, 16/4/87, Forrestdale Lake - RJ

Terek Sandpiper - 7, 1/3/87, Creery Island, Peel Inlet - JH

Black-tailed Godwit - 1, 29/3/87, Creery Island, Peel Inlet, in part breeding plumage - JH

Gallinago (Latham's?) Snipe - 1, 6/1/87, Quindalup Siding Road, Dunsborough - MB (This is the second sighting from this location: one was seen here in 1985/86 - OO)

Grey-tailed Tattler - 13, 11/2/87, Rottnest: combined count from three separate sites - MHB * 4, 3/3/87, Lake Clifton - MHB * 1, 14/3/87, Utcha Swamp - JT < AT

Great Knot - 771, 15/2/87, Coodanup - PW

Pectoral Sandpiper - 2, 14/3/87, Guraga (Dandaragan) - BB, AB * 3, 16/3/87, temporary swamp beside highway at Dalyup, near Coomalbidgup (W of Esperance) - RJ

Long-toed Stint - 8, 14/2/87, Forrestdale Lake - RJ * 1, 8/3/87, Herdsman Lake (Metro) - JB * 2, 2/4/87, Jandabup Lake - RJ

Broad-billed Sandpiper - 1, 1/3/87, Creery Island, Peel Inlet, foraging on waters edge amongst Red-necked Stints - JH

Silver Gull - 1360, 2/2/87, Lake Monger (Metro) - NB * 1000+, 1/1/87, Alfred Cove - PRH

Kelp Gull - 2, 26/2/87, Esperance - RP * 1, 27/2/87, Lucky Bay - RP

White-winged Tern - 26, late April, Thomsons Lake: 3 in breeding plumage - SK, PCu

Fairy Tern - 2 colonies, 13/2/87, Rottnest: mainly fluffy chicks, few eggs - MHB

Superb Parrot - 1, 22/2/87, Ashfield Flats, Bassendean (Metro): escapee - IS

Regent Parrot - a total of 73 birds seen on three occasions in the period 4/1 to 15/1 1987 in Albany/Manypeaks area - LH * flocks of up to 30 feeding on spilt grain on roadside near Ravensthorpe, early March - RJ (Atlas suggests that as summer progresses congregations of Regent Parrots are apparent in the southern portion of their range; more widespread in spring - OO) * 5, 4/3/87, SW corner of Thomsons Lake - JB

Cockatiel - 1 (male), 26/10/86 * 1, 14/12/86, Wembley (Metro) - IS

Crimson Rosella - 1 (adult), 4/4/87, Woodman Point: in full plumage - ND, MC, BBa (Presumed Escapee): seen again on 2/5/87 - BBa, MC

Blue Bonnet - 16, 28/4/87, Arubiddy Station, 60km NW of Eyre Bird Observatory - BW, GH (This record is of the subspecies *narethae* which appears to be an isolated population living on the northern and north-western edges of the nullabor plain - OO)

Fan-tailed Cuckoo - 1, 10/2/87, N of Salmon Swamp, Rottnest - MHB * 1, 28/3/87, Flynn Road, Mundaring * 1, 4/4/87, Woodman Point - BBa * 10, 2/5/87, Reserve at Woodmans Point - BBa MC

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo - 1, 4/4/87, Woodman Point: heard calling - BBa

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo - 1, 21/3/87, South of Yangabup Lake, young bird with brilliant green back but no bars, totally silent - JH

Tawny Frogmouth - 3, 11/1/87, Boyagin Rock (Brookton) - AM

Fork-tailed Swift - 30+, j8/2/87, Point Moore, Geraldton - PM * 20-30, 15/2/87, flying S over Geraldton - AS * 4, 2/3/87, flying over Kingston Barracks, Rottnest - DC

Rainbow Bee-eater - 63, 4/2/87, just E of Kalamunda: roosting in trees - MHB

Western Yellow Robin - 20, 15/3/87, Roleystone - RS

Slender-billed Thornbill - 8, 28/4/87, Arubiddy Station, 60km NW of Eyre Bird Observatory - BW, GH

Singing Honeyeater - 1, 5/4/87, Bickley Brook: the first sighted here since monthly surveys began 2 years ago - RS

White-fronted Chat - 70+, 28/3/87, Monger Lake (Metro) - MU

Zebra Finch - three reports totalling five birds, Feb/Mar 87, Westfield Park Primary School swamp - GM

Little Crow - 7, 25/3/87, Gooseberry Hill - RS

UP NORTH

Great Egret - 20-30 pairs, **Intermediate Egret** - 40-50 pairs and **Cattle Egret** - 60-70 pairs, mid Feb. 1987 breeding Lake Kununurra - MH

Baillon's Crake - 2, 7/2/87, seasonal lakes near Derby - DK

Australian Crake - 1, 22/2/87, seasonal lakes near Derby - DK

Comb-crested Jacana - 4 (2 adult, 2 immature), 7/4/87, swamp 20km S Derby - KO (Rarely recorded in the West Kimberley - OO)

Terek Sandpiper - 50, 2/4/87, Derby mudflats - KO

Little Bronze-Cuckoo - 3 (2 male, 1 female), Derby Jetty: in a casuarina tree - KO

Dollarbird - 2, 5/4/87, Napier Ranges - DK

Crested Bellbird - 12, March 1987, Thangoo Station, S Broome - DK

Gouldian Finch - 2, 1/3/87, Mt Barnett Station - KO

AB = Anne Buchanan

AM = A.J. Malcolm

AS = Alex Scarff

AT = A. Taylor

BB = Bruce Buchanan

BBa = Bryan Barrett

BBu = Bob Burking

BK = Brad Kneebone

BP = Barbara Porter

BW = Brice Wells

BWi = Bev Willcox

DC = Dan Carter

DJ = David James

DK = Dot Kingston

DM = Don Munro

EK = Elizabeth King

EM = Edna Milne

ES = Eric Singleton

GA = George Agar

GH = Gail Hooper

GP = Grant Pearson

GM = Greg Marston

IS = Ian Standring

JB = John Boughiey

JBR = John Brooke

JD = Jack Donohoe

JH = John Hansen

JL = Jim Lane

JM = Jim Masters

JMc = J. McVicar

JMcL = Jock McLaren

JT = J. Taylor

KC = Kevin Coate

KO = Kimberley Observer

LB = Lola Broadhurst

LH = Lesley Harrison

MB = Marie Boughiey

MC = Marjory Clegg

MCr = M. Craigie

MH = Mike Howell

MHB = Mary Bremner

MN = Margaret Nash

MU = Murray Unkovich

NB = Norah Brockman

ND = Norma Duff

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PC = Pauline Clay

PCu = Peter Curry

PL = Peter Lambert

PM = Peter Mack

PRH = Peel Howden

PW = Peter Wilnot

RJ = Roger Jaensch

RP = Ross Payton

RS = Rod Smith

RSh = Ray Shulz

RSM = Robert Smith

RV = Rodney Vervest

SG = Sue Gordon

SK = Steve Keeling

SN = Simon Nevill

WJM = Dusty Millar

RECORDED MESSAGE SERVICE

RAOU BIRDING HOTLINE

A recorded message service has been established at the RAOU office, Canning Bridge. This innovation will be used to report up to date information on interesting sightings, excursions and special events.

Since commencing on 4 May '87 the Hotline has resulted in valuable publicity for the RAOU.

The Birding Hotline number is 364 7349

WATERBIRD STUDIES

1987 REMOTE WETLAND EXPEDITION

Lake McLeod and Shark Bay are probably of international importance for waterbirds, particularly waders, but we do not have comprehensive data to support this claim. Counts of waterbirds at these wetlands have only been made opportunistically and ground surveys of the wetland areas have not been undertaken.

During the last week of September and first week of October

1987 (probably Monday 28 September to Friday 9 October 1987), an RAOU expedition to Lake McLeod and Shark Bay will be undertaken. (The precise dates and destinations will depend on conditions and resources and will probably be finalised in August). The aim of the expedition will be to obtain counts of waterbirds present in order to clarify the importance of Lake McLeod and Shark Bay for waterbirds.

The expedition will be run on a similar basis to the 1986 Expedition to Lakes Argyle and Gregory. It will be coordinated by the RAOU Waterbirds Officer and will have technical support from CALM. Volunteer participants for the expedition team are needed; their tasks will be to observe and count waterbirds, record data, drive vehicles and/or undertake camp duties. Participants must provide their own transport (some assistance may be possible), preferably 4WD, and be self-sufficient with food and camping accommodation. Fuel costs during surveys will be covered by the RAOU.

Lake McLeod is a unique wetland, supporting inland mangrove stands which are maintained by underground seepage of sea-water. Shark Bay is well known for its stromatalites and good fishing! Waterbird Expeditions are primarily for research purposes, but enjoyable camping with other birdwatchers, access to remote sites and the spectacle of large number of waterbirds are also part of these expeditions.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Rodney Vervest at the RAOU Office before 14 August 1987.

Roger Jaensch
RAOU Waterbird Officer

NESTING BOXES FOR WATERFOWL IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

by R.C. Burking and L.O. Burking

Western Australian Field and Game Association Research Section

Introduction

Throughout southern Australia Wildlife Protection Authorities and the Field and Game Association of Australia have assisted in the production of waterfowl by the installation of nesting boxes in a variety of Lakes and swamps in many areas.

In Western Australia however waterfowl usage of the nesting box design selected by the then Fisheries and Wildlife Department, was very disappointing with figures below 1%. The Research Section of the Western Australian Field and Game Association looked at the basic design of the Black 21 L PVC drum and felt that modifications may improve the usage by waterfowl. An approach was made to the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife to undertake a research programme to evaluate nesting box designs.

Method

Lake Wannamal located some 120km north of Perth was selected as a Research site. The wetland holds large populations of waterbirds and a variety of waterfowl are known to use the lake as a breeding habitat.

Nesting Box Designs

Three types of boxes were selected for the trial (a) PVC 21 L drums modified and (b) singleton 21 L metal drums, and (c) unmodified PVC drums.

(a) The black 21 L PVC drum used earlier by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife was closely examined and it was felt that usage may have been reduced due to a number of factors which included:

- * Black in colour - producing a heat build up.
- * a single entry/exit hole leading to a predator risk situation as well as a lack of flow-through ventilation.
- * The existing entry/exit hole appeared to be too high above the nest situation to allow the ducklings to evacuate the drum.

* The Jarrah (wood) sawdust may have been undesirable

to the waterfowl species as a nest lining.

The following modification to the drums were undertaken.

- * Painting of the drum exterior with a light green paint to reduce heat build up and provide a more natural situation.
- * The cutting of a second entry/exit hole to allow flow-through

ventilation and an alternative escape from predators.

(b) In addition to the 10 modified PVC boxes, 10 of a second design 20 L drum (Known as the "Singleton box" were included as an alternative. These boxes were manufactured from 20 L metal drums with entry /exit holes provided at each end.

(c) As a control, 4 original (unmodified) black 21 L PVC drums were installed adjacent to the trial site.

Nesting Box Installation

Various positions for the boxes were selected to include various heights above the high watermark in both open water and in dense vegetation situations. PVC drums were installed in both the vertical and horizontal positions, and the "Singleton" boxes in the horizontal position.

In the first year (1981) 6 of each box design were installed and prior to the 1982 breeding season the box numbers were increased to 24 boxes, 10 of each trial type together with 4 original black drums (unmodified as a control).

Waterfowl Usage

Surveys commenced in August 1981 some 4 weeks after the installation of the boxes at 3 weekly intervals waterfowl usage is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Nesting box usage

Year : Modified PVC : Singleton : Standard PVC			
1981	3*(1)	0	N/A
1982	2	1	0
1983	4	3	0
1984	6	8*(2)	0
1985	7*(2)	7	0
1986	9	6*(1)	0

* Usage by Welcome Swallows

Nesting box usage according to species is provided in Table 2.

Table 2.

Nesting box usage by waterfowl species

Year	Modified PVC			Singleton		
	PeaD	GyTl	W.S	PeaD	GyTl	W.S.
1981	2	0	1	0	0	0
1982	2	0	0	1	0	0
1983	3	1	0	3	2	0
1984	4	2	0	4	2	2
1985	2	3	2	3	4	0
1986	2	7	0	4	1	0

PeaD = Pink-eared Duck, GyTl = Grey Teal,

W.S. = Welcome Swallow

During the evaluation period, with the exception of 1 "Singleton" box which rusted out after the first season, each nesting box of both designs were used at least once during the trial with the exception of the unmodified black PVC drums.

Hatchability

Of the two waterfowl species which utilised the artificial nesting boxes clutch sizes ranged from 5-8 eggs with Pink-eared Duck and for the Grey Teal 6-9 eggs. Throughout the evaluation period 100% hatchability was recorded by both

species. In comparison, the natural nests that were located and monitored within the wetland area, the clutch figures are similar - Pink-eared Duck 5-7 eggs and Grey Teal 5-8 eggs however a number of nests were abandoned during the period Pink-eared Duck 2 nests 5 and 7 eggs in 1983 and Grey Teal 4 nests 6, 5, 9 and 7 eggs respectively in 1984. With the exception of one nest which was flooded no other reason could be provided. Further research work is required.

Comments and Recommendations

It is interesting to record that as the evaluation trial progressed, nesting box usage by waterfowl increased. Hatchability of species was excellent and showed a better result than the natural nests that were inspected. It is of special interest to note that the unmodified black PVC boxes were not utilised by any species during the evaluation, however it may only be assumed that both the modified PVC and the Singleton boxes were more acceptable.

The usage figures of the box designs up to 90% modified PVC and 80% "Singleton", it is very encouraging and further work should be undertaken to provide alternative nesting habitat. Wannamal Lake is an important breeding area for Freckled Duck and in the northern section of the wetland some habitat damage has occurred to vegetation through inundation and increased salinity. (Jaensch, R.P. in prep). It is strongly recommended that further evaluation work with nesting boxes be undertaken in this section of the wetland.

References

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Norman, F.I. and Riggert, T.L. (1977). "Nest boxes as nest sites for Australian Waterfowl". J. Wildlife Management 41(4): 1977.

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NEST BOXES

In the Northern Hemisphere the use of nest boxes by birds is well documented and many people provide appropriate nest boxes for the birds that frequent their gardens. This is an important conservation work.

In W.A. very little work has been done to determine which species will use nest boxes and the type of nest box that is preferred. RAOU members could help to collect this information by constructing and placing nest boxes in their gardens and recording which species use them and whether they breed successfully. For designs you could try, write to me at the WA RAOU office. If you find a successful design (or an unsuccessful one) please let me know so we can provide the information to members and so encourage more birds to use areas with few natural nest sites.

Ma. Bamford

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

FROM THE WARDEN

In February Gail and I arrived at Eyre to begin our intensive ten day induction under the aegis of Rob and Jan Hill. By the end of that time what initially appeared to be an impossible task had assumed its proper formidable proportions and we felt almost able to cope. On 1st February we were on our own, a delightful situation which lasted for six days. We have scarcely been on our own since then. Having heard of

Eyre's many attractions people come to find that it is wonderful, with birds for those who look.

Highlights of our time so far include our first course led by Doug Watkins, with ten participants. We banded 130 bats on one memorable afternoon and evening. We saw an estimated 2,000 Fork-tailed Swifts heading S.E. on the morning of 1st March and had a female Zebra Finch at the front birdbath for six days.

After the Kimberley the number of raptors is small but we have seen a Peregrine Falcon on two occasions. A Fairy Martin appeared among the Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins for two days on 1 and 2 April. Finally that shadowy and formerly disputed bird, the Common Bronzewing made two more appearances at the underground tank bird tray. Gail and Doug Watkins saw one bird on the morning of 22 March and Gail and I saw another single bird in the evening of 2 April.

B. Wells

CHRISTMAS AT EYRE

Birdwatchers, artists, naturalists and family combined to make a most cohesive, friendly and enthusiastic group for Christmas 1986. The activities included birding, outings, mammal trapping, swimming, drawing, eating and lots and lots of laughing. A great deal of fun was had decorating and preparing for the Christmas banquet to which the participants wore fancy dress. A short and very obese Father Christmas was in attendance. Thanks to those who attended the Christmas course for making it one of the most enjoyable and different Christmases we have had.

J. & R. Hill

BIRDING BRUSH-UP AT EYRE

The Birding Brush-up Course got off to such a good start that a Ground Cuckoo-shrike was seen before the leader arrived!

The course was led or rather propelled by the inimitable Steve Keeling who not only expected us to see and identify birds during the day, but also kept our eyes open till far into the night while we were taught every aspect of ornithology.

Our bird list of 56 species was in keeping with the number of species seen at Eyre during each January since 1979. Over 30 mms of rain recorded the previous week may have made it less necessary for birds to come to the water troughs around the Observatory.

Few waders were seen - there were Red-capped Plover, Sooty Oystercatcher, Common Sandpiper and one Red-necked Stint. But on the other hand we saw Emus adjacent to the beach, a Collared Sparrowhawk, Southern Scrub-robin and Chestnut Quail-thrush, not to mention a shark close in and dolphins, seals and sting-rays every time we went swimming. At Twilight Cove we were fascinated by the sight of a lizard catching the drips from our plastic water carrier which had been left on the beach. An excellent week enjoyed by all.

M. Bailey

SEA-BIRDER NEWS

BLACK-BROWED ALBATROSS

Diomedea melanophrys

A description with comments on the bird's occurrence in waters off Western Australia.

Possibly the most numerous of all the albatrosses this Mollymawk is about 10% larger than the Yellow-nosed and is, contrary to previous reports, commonly seen from the shore in the South West of W.A. In the Eastern States it is the commonest albatross. However in the West it is outnumbered by the Yellow-nosed.

The two species are frequently seen together scavenging

scraps from the cray boats off Cape Leeuwin. In Australian waters the Black-browed Albatross becomes scarcer as water temperatures increase and is rare in the tropics. By contrast in the North Atlantic the Black-browed Albatross is to be observed as far north as the British Isles.

Banding studies indicate that there is a strong migration of different populations to different areas. Most birds seen off W.A. are juveniles which are commonest in winter.

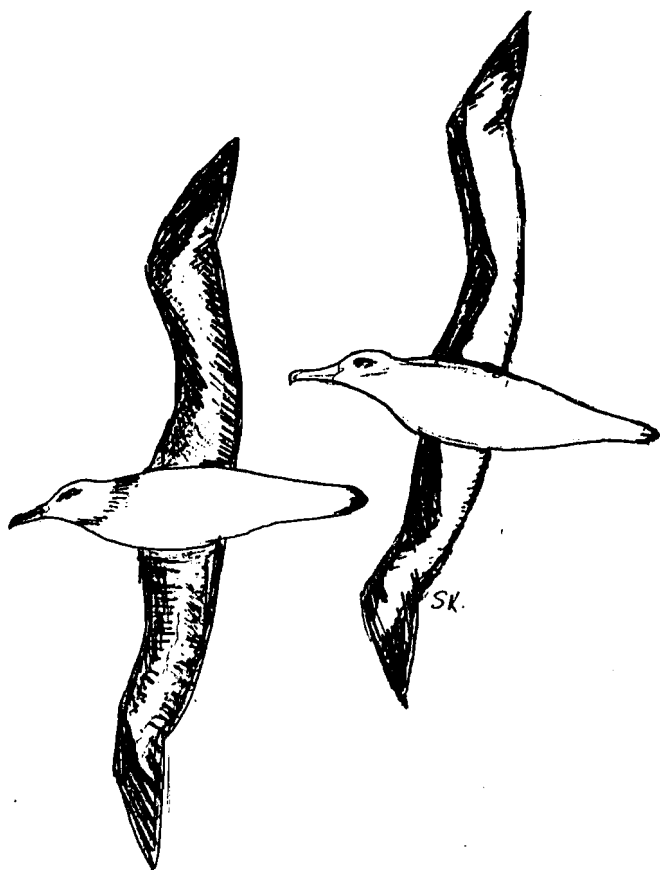
The nominate race is commonly seen off W.A. and breeds on Staten, South Georgia, Falkland, Kerguelen, Heard, Antipodes and Macquarie Islands. Banding recoveries have all been from Heard and Macquarie Islands where possibly hundreds of thousands of birds breed.

There are two sub-species *Diomedea melanophrys melanophrys* and *Diomedea melanophrys impavida*. *Diomedea melanophrys impavida* is known only to breed on Campbell Island. It is *Diomedea melanophrys melanophrys* that is regularly seen off W.A. so I restrict the physical description to this bird.

As with all the Mollymawks the single most important field characteristic is the underwing pattern. In *D.m. melanophrys* look for the very dark underwing, which is darker still with juvenile birds. Young birds also have a muddy grey coloured beak quite unlike the distinctive yellow-orange of the adult bird. The eye has a dark brow although this is less distinct than that of the Shy Albatross. Young birds often have a dark collar and care must be taken not to confuse them with immature Grey-headed Albatross (which is rare in W.A.).

In the next issue of WA Bird Notes I shall discuss the Shy Albatross, last of this group of Mollymawks.

S. Keeling



Juvenile

Adult

NOTICES

ART EXHIBITION

The poster enclosed with WA Bird Notes advertises the August Exhibition and Sale of Paintings. Members are asked to try to arrange for the display of the poster - in mid July - in a suitable public place, shopping centre, craft centre etc.

BROINOWSKI PRINTS

Gracius Joseph Broinowski (1837-1913) whose prints are advertised on the enclosed broadsheet was commissioned by the NSW Government to supply pictures of birds for the NSW schools. This led him to the publication of "Birds of Australia" in 1887, 40 years after Gould published in London.

RECENT REPORTS now at Canning Bridge Office

- * Booragoon Lake - Management Plan, City of Melville
- * Kangaroo Management in Western Australia, - K.J. McNamara and R.I.I. Prince
- * Breeding Seabirds on the Shore Terraces Christmas Island, Indian Ocean - Report no. 12, Dec. '84. Eric J. Woehler, RAOU.
- * Lane-Poole Reserve Draft Management Plan - April '86, Vol 1 to 3, CALM
- * Forrestdale Lake Chironomid Study - Davis et al, Jan. '87, - Murdoch University.

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTION

NORTH LAKE RESERVE SURVEY

During the course of collecting data at North Lake Reserve for the Waterbird Usage Study I decided to make a detailed assessment of the intensity of breeding taking place.

I undertook this study as water levels in the Lake and its associated wetlands were considerably higher in 1986 than usual, with a significant increase in the water surface area especially in a seasonal swamp 200 m to the east of North Lake. The Waterbird Usage Study while yielding data, will not cover the level of breeding activity at each site.

Apart from Roe Swamp, the wetlands of the North Lake Reserve consist largely of open water with sections of emergent shoreline vegetation consisting of *M. Rhamphophylla*, *M. terretifolia* and *Baumea articulata*. However, to the east of the Lake the seasonal rise of water levels creates an isolated stand of paperbark trees (*M. rhamphophylla*) with some bulrushes (*Typha sp.*). These conditions provided little difficulty in observing the young of most waterbird species using the area, excepting Roe Swamp which was not surveyed because of its inaccessibility.

To estimate breeding intensity, weekly observations were made, noting the approximate location of each clutch of newly-hatched young, the number per clutch and the species. It was possible to determine which young were newly hatched and had not been counted previously, by the number per clutch, the location and the degree of development. In some cases active nests were observed until the young hatched.

About equal numbers of young were produced in North Lake and the seasonal wetland to the east. However, there were species differences in breeding - Eurasian Coot and Australasian Grebe favoured the eastern wetland, and Purple Swamphen and Blue-billed Duck confined their breeding to North Lake. No breeding took place on Hope Road Swamp.

The combined data are shown in the Table which is

condensed into fortnightly counts. Breeding commenced in early September and continued to December. No new hatchings were recorded after 14 December although observations continued.

A total of 235 young, representing 12 species were counted. The most prolific were Pacific Black Duck, Eurasian Coot and Grey Teal.

Although I have not studied breeding in the North Lake Reserve to this extent before, it is my impression that the level of activity here reported is higher than in the previous four seasons. This may be due to an increase in the number of suitable nesting sites. Any plans for regeneration work in the Reserve should consider the possibility of improving waterbird habitat for breeding purposes.

SIGHTINGS OF NEWLY HATCHED DEPENDANT YOUNG (1986)

Fortnight ending:		21/9	5/10	19/10	2/11	16/11	30/11	14/12	Total	Mean Clutch size Aust.
Aust. Grebe	clutches					2		4	6	
	young					4		7	11	1.8
Black Swan	clutches	1			1				2	
	young	2			5				7	3.3
P. Black Duck	clutches	2	2		1	1	3	3	12	
	young	23	15		6	3	16	20	83	6.9
Grey Teal	clutches					2	5	1	8	
	young					11	25	6	42	5.3
Aust. Shoveler	clutches							1	1	
	young							5	5	5.0
Hardhead	clutches					2		1	3	
	young					9		4	13	4.3
Maned Duck	clutches			1					1	
	young			5					5	5.0
Blue-billed Duck	clutches						1		1	
	young						3		3	3.0
Musk Duck	clutches	1							1	
	young	1							1	1.0
Dusky Moorhen	clutches				1	1		2	4	
	young				2	2		5	9	2.3
Purple Swamphen	clutches		1		1				2	
	young		1		2				3	1.5
Eu. Coot	clutches	1	3		4	3	5	2	18	
	young	6	8		11	13	12	3	53	2.9
Total	clutches	5	6	1	8	11	14	14	59	
	young	32	24	5	26	42	56	50	235	4.0

PIPIDINNY ROAD REPORT

Since 1984 a team of 5 amateur birdwatchers have studied the Pipidinny area. The composition of the group has changed from time to time, but there has always been a constant factor of two, to ensure continuity. We have studied three types of habitat - heath, swamp and forest, and kept detailed records of the birds seen, their movements, nests and locations. The areas adjoin one another so that they can all be easily studied on any one visit. They provide a diversity of habitat to accommodate a wide variety of bird species, most of which appear to stay within their chosen localities. To date we have a bird list of 103 species.

The swamp is by far the most important of the three areas when it holds water - which in our experience it does most of the year - for it gives sanctuary to at least 29 species of birds. There are species which are 'resident', (e.g. Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Eurasian Coot, Purple Swamp Hen), and those which are "occasional visitors" Yellow-billed Spoonbills and Black-winged Stilts. On 20/12/86 we observed 4 Little Pied Cormorants, 4 Little Black Cormorants, 11 Pacific Herons, 12 White-faced Herons, a Rufous Night Heron (a rare species for the area), 5 Great Egrets, 7 Sacred Ibis, 4 Straw-necked Ibis, 2 Yellow-billed Spoonbills (firsts), and a Darter (another first), as well as Pacific Black Duck, Musk Duck, Black Swan, Eurasian Coot, Dusky Moorhen and Purple Swamp Hen with their offspring. It is not a big swamp, and despite adjacent small holdings appears little disturbed by human intrusion.

We have watched two sections of heathland, the first being

part of the area burned in 1983/84 to the left of Pipidinny Road (going west). This area is remarkable for its honeyeaters which (in season) feed from the flowers of *Dryandra squarrosa* which is abundant in the area. Three species can generally be found: White-cheeked, Tawny-crowned and Brown honeyeaters. Quail are known to be present as are White-winged Trillers. These are not found on the second heath which is located on the dip slope of the escarpment overlooking the swamp. Common to both areas are populations of White-winged Fairy-wrens, each family group numbering ± 20 individuals. White-backed swallows nest each year in the sandy banks along either side of Pipidinny Road.

The forest is of elderly Tuart and Jarrah, many of which provide hollows suitable for birds use. We have, in the late winter, watched Port Lincoln Ringnecks and Red-capped Parrots, Galah and Maned Duck all apparently looking for suitable nesting sites. In places the understorey is exceptionally thick, providing seclusion to breeding sites for small passerines.

Three species of cuckoo can often be found or heard in one or other locality and young of both the Shining Bronze and Horsefield's Bronze have been seen.

From a 'birdwatcher's' point of view it is an ideal area, being only less than an hour's drive from the centre of Perth. The destruction of the area, by building a major road complex through it would in our opinion cause irreparable damage to the environment of Pipidinny.

N.Godfrey

PIPIDINNY BIRD LIST

Birds recorded since 15/12/84 by Brice Wells, Norma Duff, Margery Clegg and Bryan Barrett. In 1984 the area was visited twice in December only. In 1985 visited 8 times - 27/4, 15/6, 6/7, 10/8, 7/9, 21/9, 9/11, 19/12. In 1986 visited 10 times - 4/1, 8/2, 15/3, 24/5, 5/7, 23/8, 27/9, 4/10, 15/11, 20/12, i.e. 20 visits.

SPECIES	Sightings (Greatest no.)	Remarks
Emu	3(11)	5 imm. 10/8/85
Australasian Grebe	3(2)	
Australian Pelican	4(3)	
Darter	1(1)	20/12/86 only
Little Black Cormorant	6(6)	
Little Pied Cormorant	19(13)	
Pacific Heron	14(23)	
White-faced Heron	20(15)	
Great Egret	6(5)	
Rufous Night Heron	2(1)	
Australasian Bittern	3(1)	
Sacred Ibis	7(7)	
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1(2)	(11 on 14/2/87)
Black Swan	13(8)	3 imm. 15/12/84 Nest 23/8/86 7 imm. 4/10/86
Australian Shelduck	7(4)	
Pacific Black Duck	18(73)	8 known broods hatched '86
Grey Teal	15(26)	
Australasian Shoveler	5(6)	
Maned Duck	15(30)	Bred '85 and '86 in tuart forest
Musk Duck	9(4)	3 imm. seen 4/10/86
Black-shouldered Kite	9(3)	
Whistling Kite		on BW's list only, i.e. prior to Dec. '84
Brown Goshawk	7(2)	Nest located in tuart forest '84/'85
Collared Sparrowhawk	1(1)	
Wedge-tailed Eagle	10(2)	
Little Eagle	8(2)	
Marsh Harrier	4(1)	
Peregrine Falcon	2(1)	
Brown Falcon	2(1)	
Australian Kestrel	16(3)	
Quail		
(?Little Button-quail)	2(5)	9/11/86 and 4/1/86 only
Buff-banded Rail	1(1)	8/2/86 only
Spotless Crake	2(2)	27/4/85 and 15/6/85 only
Black-tailed Native-hen	4(23)	21/9/85 to 4/1/86 only
Purple Swamphen	10(7)	Imm. seen '86
Dusky Moorhen	18(15)	Imm. seen '85, '86
Eurasian Coot	10(12)	Imm. seen '86
Black-winged Stilt	1(2)	15/11/86 only
Laughing Turtle-Dove	7	
Common Bronzewing	3	
White-tailed Black Cockatoos	16	Flights of 50 or more
Galah	12	Breed in tuart forest
Red-capped Parrot	5	

Port Lincoln Ringneck	20	Breed in tuart forest
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	9	
Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo	8	Imm. seen in area '85 and '86
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	3	1 Imm. seen '85 and '86
Sacred Kingfisher	6	Imm. seen 8/2/86
Laughing Kookaburra	20	
Rainbow Bee-eater	8	Known to breed in area
White-backed Swallow	15	" " " " "
Welcome Swallow	15	
Tree Martin	15	" " " " "
Richard's Pipit	10	Breeds on heath
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	17	
White-winged Triller	4	
Scarlet Robin	9	At least one pair since 10/8/85, bred '86
Red-capped Robin	1	2 seen by BW 27/4/85 on heath only
Golden Whistler		On BW's list prior to Dec. '84 only
Rufous Whistler	20	Breeds in area
Grey Shrike-thrush	11	
Crested Bellbird	1	Female seen by BW 27/4/85 on heath
Grey Fantail	20	
Willie Wagtail	12	Nest found 15/11/86
Clamorous Reed Warbler	17	Several pairs heard and seen yearly in typha
Little Grassbird	3	27/12/84, 17/9/85, 3/12/86 only
Rufous Songlark	2	16/8/85, and 28/8/86 only
Brown Songlark	1	15/11/86 on heath
Splendid Fairy-wren	18	3 family groups known
Variegated Wren		Recorded by BW prior to heath fire March '84
White-winged Fairy-wren	20	3 family groups known up to 20 in group
White-browed Scrub-wren	4	4/1/86 to 15/5/86
Weebill	8	
Western Gerygone	14	Imm. seen 15/11/86
Inland Thornbill	8	
Western Thornbill	5	
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	7	Nests found '85 and '86
Varied Sittella	6	
Red Wattlebird	19	
Little Wattlebird	20	
Singing Honeyeater	15	
White-naped Honeyeater		Recorded by BW prior to Dec. '84 only
Brown Honeyeater	20	

New Holland Honeyeater	14	
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	16	
White-cheeked Honeyeater	17	Imm. birds observed 15/11/86
Western Spinebill	3	15/6/85, 15/3/86 and 5/7/86 only
Crimson Chat		Recorded by BW prior to Dec. '84 only
White-fronted Chat	1	9 overflow heath 15/11/86
Mistletoebird	2	A pair on 27/9/86m a female 20/12/86. A lot of mistletoe in forest.
Spotted Pardalote	1	On 8/2/86 several birds seen together
Striated Pardalote	20	Breeds in forest
Silvereye	20	Seen to be taken by peregrine over heath A very common bird over heath and in forest
Australian Magpie-Lark	7	
Black-faced Woodswallow	14	On heath only
Dusky Woodswallow	2	in further light bush only towards Yanchep
Grey Butcherbird	20	
Australian Magpie	20	
Australian Raven	20	

B. Barrett

BLUE-BILLED DUCKS CHAPERONE SNAKE

On 11.4.87 while photographing Musk Ducks at Bibra Lake I noticed a group of five female Blue-billed Ducks swimming together some 75m out from the edge of the Lake. I took a closer look with the aid of my camera telephoto lens, and noticed there was a snake swimming about 1m in front of the ducks. The snake was swimming towards the shore with the five ducks following closely behind. The ducks maintained their close watch on the snake until it disappeared into the *typha* on the shore of the lake. The birds remained at the edge for about thirty seconds and then returned to open water.

I was not able to identify the snake as only part of it was visible above the waterline. However, I assume it was a Tiger Snake since these are common in the area and are known to swim well. Snakes may take the eggs and young of Blue-billed Duck and I may have seen the ducks chaperoning the snake away from the nesting areas.

M. Unkovich

THE RETURN OF THE BUSTARDS

During January 1984 an extensive wildfire decimated some 114000 ha of the Beekeepers' Reserve 24496 and adjacent banksia woodlands. The fire ranged from Jurien in the south to Cliff Head in the north and east through Arrowsmith Lake to Mt Adams Road in the NE.

Extensive areas of coastal heath were severely burned and for the next two years bird life was greatly depleted. However, with good winter rains vegetation re-growth gradually provided new habitat for many species. Of considerable interest has been the increasing number of bustards in the area. A total of 26 sightings have been made since June 1985, ranging from Sandy Point north of Jurien to Leeman and Coolimba and to the limestone areas west of Woodada Hill. Most sightings have been of single birds but in

two cases a pair have been seen. In October 1986 2 adults with two young were observed north of the Leeman-Eneabba Road feeding on wingless grasshoppers adjacent to regeneration areas.

R.C. Burking

BANDED STILTS AT LEONORA

We have received a report from Mrs L. Boladeras of Youdal Station, Leonora, by courtesy of the Gould League of large numbers of Banded Stilt in the area in September 1986. The numbers were sufficiently large for deaths to occur from motor vehicles along the road.

The station homestead area has many Spotted Bowerbirds with bowers nearby.

CAMP AT COWARAMUP

During the long weekend in January, nine of us camped on a bush block near Grace Town (courtesy of Peggy and Dick Kennedy). The block is some 200 acres of open paddock backed by natural bush which has not had a fire for at least 20 years and many fine eucalypts offer numerous nesting hollows for a prolific parrot population of Elegant Parrots, Western Rosellas, and Regent Parrots.

We obtained a bird list of 56 species in three days, highlights being the sighting of a pair of Little Eagles and their nest and an overflying Peregrine Falcon. Other nests and young seen included Sacred Kingfishers, Dusky Woodswallows and Scarlet Robins. Two Shining Bronze Cuckoos were being fed by Inland Thornbills.

B. Barrett

BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER AT WOODMAN POINT

On a cool overcast slightly windy morning on 11th January 1986, I, Margery Clegg and Norma Duff were walking along the shore line at Woodman's Point. We saw a lone - and to all of us - unusual wader among the seaweed but were not sufficiently sure of an identification (in spite of immediate reference to Pizzey) to report our sighting to the RAOU. As far as we could judge, we saw a Broad-billed Sandpiper.

However, on 10 January, 1987, purely coincidentally we were walking again at Woodman's Point on a similar type of day and behold, in front of our eyes, a small wader alighted amongst the banks of seaweed. We watched for some 5 minutes with binoculars and telescope from some 35 metres whilst the bird remained stationary. Checking again in Pizzey, and later in "Shorebirds", we were certain we had been watching a Broad-billed Sandpiper.

This time we submitted a report to the RAOU office, together with our field notes. Soon after the Wader Group caught (for the first time) a Broad-billed Sandpiper during a banding session. The same bird?

We shall endeavour to visit Woodman's Point in early January 1988 and perhaps 1989, just in case.....

B. Barrett

BEATING THE HEAT - SWALLOW STYLE

Geraldton 23 February 1987

Over the weekend strong easterly winds and very hot weather have brought about a gathering of swallows in Geraldton. A sojourn by the sea to escape the heat?

In Geraldton on Saturday evening - February - the Tree Martins gathered in a grove of Tuart growing on a hilltop in the centre of the town and 800 plus fluttered across the treetops into the wind, before wheeling round to repeat the approach over and over again. They may have been feeding on insects but it seemed more like a game.

The occasional Fork-tailed Swift has been seen but on the afternoon of 2 February, some 150 plus looped and dipped in random formations for the whole of the afternoon near the Point Moore Lighthouse, with the top of the tower the focus of attention.

Fork-tailed Swifts appeared on February 24 in 1984 and again on February 24 in 1985. None were seen in 1986 but this year they arrived two days early in larger numbers than previously.

Contributed

EXCURSION REPORTS

BOYAGIN ROCK NATURE RESERVE- 11 January 1987

We were blessed with a fine, mild to warm day for this mid-summer outing.

Around the Rock and picnic area there were some interesting sightings. A Common Bronzewing was sitting on a nest; there were excellent views of 2 Tawny Frogmouths (which later proved to be 3) and Mistletoebirds were flying and calling. Good views of a Square-tailed Kite were obtained by some as it flew about at tree top level and directly overhead.

In an area of wandoo close to the Rock a Brown Goshawk swooped to strike at a Port Lincoln Ringneck which lost a number of feathers but not its life. An immature dead Rainbow Bee-eater, a White-winged Triller and Varied Sittellas were identified. In another part of the Reserve the nest of a Blue-breasted Fairy-wren was located with the male bringing food to the nest. At least 2 quail of unidentified provenance were flushed. Rufous Treecreepers and Yellow-plumed Honeyeater were common. Within the Reserve boundaries 49 species were seen.

I. Standing

PEEL INLET - 14 February, 1987

The RAOU outing to Mandurah saw large numbers of both Banded Stilts and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers near Coodanup and Creery Is. - possibly 2,000 of each. Fifty Caspian Terns were seen where Serpentine River enters Peel Inlet.

A Large Sand Plover was seen near the small Boat Harbour as was the obvious success of the Fairy Tern nesting project where numerous young Fairy Terns of various ages were being fed by adults, while other adults were sitting on nests and being fed by their partners.

A. Daw

LAKES CLIFTON AND PRESTON - 14 March 1987

Over 30 people attended a whole day excursion which started on a high note at Lake Clifton Roadhouse when four Regent Parrots came to drink 25 metres away. Thanks to the participation of members with good local knowledge we were directed to the best access ways to the Lake. A good number of shorebirds and waterbirds were seen as well as bush birds in the surrounding woodlands.

We also noted with interest the formation of stromatolites which are protected in the Yalgorup National Park which takes in all of Lakes Clifton and Preston.

Lake Newnham and the North of Lake Preston were visited and a total of 59 species were seen during the day. Some of the more interesting sightings were:- Pied Cormorants amongst large groups of Great Black, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants at Lake Clifton - hundreds of Musk Ducks as well as numerous Great Crested Grebes at Lake Clifton-Scarlet Robin, Western Yellow Robin, Golden and Rufous Whistlers, Grey Shrike-thrush, Varied Sittellas, Splendid Fairy-wren and Western Spinebill were all seen at the north end of Lake Clifton. At Lake Newnham we had good views

of two Hooded Plover. Near our picnic spot, (north of Lake Preston) we disturbed a Southern Boobook which then perched to allow good views with a telescope. A very enjoyable day.

J. Hansen

MANNING LAKE - 28 March, 1987

"Lake" is really something of a misnomer as Manning Lake is more like a seasonal swamp. There was only a small amount of water in the middle, which was brought to the surface by the Council's ornamental fountains. (It was quite odd to see the fountains playing in the middle of a dry swamp). Waterbirds, of course, were as scarce as the water and only one Purple Swamphen was recorded. August-September would be a more rewarding time.

We were treated to a wonderful aerial display by the raptors. At one time there were three species circling above us, Little Eagle, Brown Goshawk and Australian Kestrel. The Little Eagle was a new entry to my list for the area. A charming interlude was spent sitting watching the Splendid Fairy-wrens, Silver-eyes, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Grey Fantails all hopping around together on the grass.

My thanks to the 14 people who joined me on a very relaxing 2 hour stroll around the "Lake". In all 21 species were recorded.

H. Fermaner

SHANNON RIVER - 25/27 April 1987

Eleven RAOU members camped at the old Shannon townsite on the ANZAC Day long weekend to conduct a survey of the bird species of the proposed Shannon National Park. It appeared quite an awesome task, bearing in mind the area under consideration and the number of people available, but observations were generally consistent with the vegetation type, which didn't vary a great deal. Away from the public facilities it consists mostly of karri and jarrah forest with thick undergrowth. Consequently, it was almost a relief to discover in open areas and at wetlands those species which were not typical of the surrounding forest; Richard's Pipit, Emu and Red-capped Parrot for example.

Activity was greatest during the morning with the prize for the greatest attention-seekers going to the numerous Purple-crowned Lorikeets. Both Bronzewings were seen as were Southern Boobooks. One was unwise enough to fly into a tree claimed by Red Wattlebirds resulting in an aerial riot. There were very few raptors, Weebills, Western Thornbills, Western Gerygones or Splendid Fairy-wrens, but it wasn't long before 49 species had been sighted and amongst them were some expected but valued sightings: Restless Flycatcher, Crested Shrike-tit and Red-eared Firetail. White breasted Robins were fairly common.

Those at the camp were diligent in their efforts and stuck to the task for almost all of the daylight hours, travelling great distances to cover much of the Shannon area. The atmosphere at the camp in the evenings was, as usual, friendly. Amongst us were birders from Bunbury (Kim), Albany (Eileen), Northcliffe (Leslie), Denmark (Lola) and Walpole (Angela).

R. Smith

SUMMARY OF EXCURSIONS TO BOYAGIN ROCK NATURE RESERVE

Excursions were made to Boyagin Rock Nature Reserve on 8 March, 9 August and 8 November 1986 and 11 January, 1987. The aim was to compile a species list over the seasons. Our knowledge of the bird species to be found in the Reserve is preliminary given the limitations of four one day visits over a period of a year. A further limitation was the poor weather during the November excursion. If anyone has other lists for Boyagin, please send a copy to the office where it will be gratefully received.

Bird List for Boyagin Rock Nature Reserve

Australian Shelduck	A	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	ABCD
Pacific Black Duck	A	Varied Sitella	ABD
Grey Teal	A	Rufous Treecreeper	ABD
Maned Duck	A(Nel2)	Red Wattlebird	ABC
Square-tailed Kite	B	Little Wattlebird	ABCD
Whistling Kite	A	Singing Honeyeater	ABCD
Brown Goshawk	AC	White-eared Honeyeater	ABC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	ABD	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	ABD
Brown Falcon	B	Brown-headed Honeyeater	AC
Painted Button-quail	AB	White-naped Honeyeater	ABD
Common Bronzewing	A(N)BCD(N)	Brown Honeyeater	ABCD
White-tailed Black-Cockatoo	B	New Holland Honeyeater	ABCD
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	AB	White-cheeked Honeyeater	ABCD
Red-capped Parrot	AB	Tawney-crowned Honeyeater	AB
Western Rosella	ABCD	Western Spinebill	AB(N)
Port Lincoln Ringneck	ABCD	Black Honeyeater	A
Elegant Parrot	ABD	Mistletoebird	AD
Pallid Cuckoo	A	Spotted Pardalote	B
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	AB	Striated Pardalote	ABCD
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	A	Silvereye	ABCD
Southern Boobook	AB	Australian Magpie-lark	B
Tawney Frogmouth	A B D	Dusky Woodswallow	A(dy)BC
Aust. Owllet-nightjar	A	Australian Magpie	ABD
Laughing Kookaburra	ABCD	Grey Currawong	ABD
Rainbow Bee-eater	AC(N)D	Australian Raven	ABCD
Tree Martin	ABD		
Richard's Pippit	ABCD		
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	AB D		
White-winged Triller	C		
Scarlet Robin	ABCD		
Red-capped Robin	ABCD		
Western Yellow Robin	ABD		
Crested Shrike-tit	B		
Golden Whistler	ABCD		
Rufous Whistler	ABCD		
Grey Shrike-thrush	ABCD		
Restless Flycatcher	AD		
Grey Fantail	ABCD		
Willie Wagtail	ABD		
White-browed Babbler	A		
Splendid Fairy-wren	ABD		
Blue-breasted Fairy-wren	AC(NY)		
White-browed Scrubwren	ABCD		
Weebill	ABCD		
Western Gerygone	ABCD		
Inland Thornbill	ABCD		
Western Thornbill	ABCD		

Total: A(55), B(64), C(80), D(49)

Total no. of species: 73.
26 species (35.6%) were recorded on each of the 4 occasions.
18 species (24.7%) were recorded on 3 visits.
11 species (15.0%) were recorded on 2 visits.
18 species (24.7%) were recorded once only.

Symbols

A seen on 8/3/86
B seen on 9/8/86
C seen on 8/11/86
D seen on 11/1/87
N nesting
dy feeding dependent young
Ne nest with eggs and no. of eggs
Ny nest with young
n carrying nest material

I. Standring.

4 MAY MEETING

The RAOU past, present and future were outlined in an entertaining talk given by the Director of the RAOU Dr. Stephen Davies. Highlights of the past were establishment in 1900 as AOU (becoming royal with the patronage of King George V and Queen Mary), the publication of EMU in 1901, commencement of bird banding in 1930, setting up of branches in the 1940's, publication of W.A. Bird Notes 1944 and alteration of the Constitution in the 1960's which provided the basis for the developments of the 70's and 80's. The International Congress was held in Canberra in 1974, the first RAOU building was purchased in 1975 and the Atlas of Australian Birds commenced.

Present and future objectives are to develop 5 programmes for

- (1) membership, including newsletters etc.
- (2) co-operative studies including the Handbook of Australasian Birds
- (3) endangered species e.g. Red Goshawk
- (4) observatories - including new sites e.g. Broome
- (5) RAOU reserves.

A pleasant evening concluded with slides illustrative of the major programme developments of the RAOU.

M. Borthwick

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 1987 --- \$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 --- \$2.50 per issue
- * New Colour Guide to Hong Kong Birds by Viney and Phillips --- \$13
- * Shorebirds, by Hayman, Marchant and Prater --- \$49
- * The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds --- \$28
- * The Great Australian Birdfinder by Michael Morecombe --- \$55

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.

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 or legibly written with **DOUBLE** spacing.
- * text should be paragraphed, 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 RAOU recommended English Names for Australian birds: these are given in a pocket list available at the W.A. Office,

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

for September 87 issue - 24 July, 1987

COMING EVENTS

Sunday 14 June - Excursion: Julimar State Forest.
Meet at 8.30 am at Bullsbrook in Chittering Valley Road.
Leader: Clive Napier

Monday 22 June - Meeting
Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8pm. Nests and the Nest Record Scheme.

Wednesday 1 July - Extraordinary meeting
Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8pm. Jacques Van Esbroeck retiring General Secretary of the Belgian Ornithological Society AVES will talk about ornithology and the protection of birds in Belgium. The talk will be illustrated with slides and include migration along the North coast of continental Europe, unusual sightings, the fight against commercial bird netting and the conservation of wetlands.

Sunday 5 - Saturday 11 July - RAOU Excursion to Eyre

Saturday 11 July - Excursion; Moore River National Park
Meet at 9am at the main picnic park area in Gingin.

Monday 27 July - Meeting
Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8pm.

Sunday 9 August - Excursion: Rottnest Island (seabirds).
Combined RAOU/WA Seabird Group excursion. Take the earlier of the morning ferries from Perth. At the time of writing the proposed winter schedule is departing Perth 8.45 and 9.40 am. (Fremantle 9.30 and 10.15 am). Both depart 4pm from Rottnest. If you catch the 9.40/10.15 ferry or arrive by other means e.g. private jet or submarine we will be found at the western end of the island (after visiting the bakery).

NOTE: Check departure time and fare, currently \$26 return (but about \$20 in winter is proposed by the ferry operators) closer to excursion date. Each person to buy their own ticket.
Leader: Steve Keeling

Friday 14 August - Wednesday 19 August : RAOU Art Exhibition Perth Concert Hall

Friday 21 - Monday 24 August - Campout: Lewana Cottage
Two cottages have been reserved at the Lewana settlement 17 km from Balingup on the Blackwood River. For \$18 for accomodation you can have splendour and bush birding for 3 nights. Bring your own food. No tents or vans.
To reserve a place (14 only), ring the RAOU office.
After 20 July contact Diane Beckingham (organiser) ph 381 9035 for details.

Sunday 23 August - Excursion: Whiteman Park
Meet at the Mussel Pool picnic area car park (western side) at 9am.

Monday 24 August - Meeting:
Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8pm. "Journal Club":
Various members will discuss reviews of relevant literature of the last 12 months, including papers from Corella, West Australian Naturalist, Australian Wildlife Research, Emu and others.

Saturday 12 September - Excursion: Pipidinny Road, Eglinton
This is an interesting area of varied habitat - heath, wetlands and tuart forest. Take Wanneroo Road on the way to Yanchep. Meet at the junction of Pipidinny Road and Wanneroo Road, Eglinton at 8am. If you reach Yanchep National Park you have gone too far.
Leader: Bryan Barrett

Monday 28 September - Meeting:
Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8pm. David Bennett of CSIRO will talk about conservation and farming.

Sunday 4 - Saturday 10 October - Campout: Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve and other wheatbelt reserves.
A week's campout will be held at the above locations (listed in the December 1986 Bird Notes). A person who proposes going on this campout is needed to volunteer to work out an itinerary and liaise with CALM regarding exact reserve locations, boundaries, maps etc. Please phone Ian Standing on 387 7326 (h) if you are able to help. A leader is also needed to organise the day to day activities.

Sunday 11 October - Excursion: Wongamine Nature Reserve

Saturday 17 - Sunday 18 October - Campout: Eneabba wetlands

Sunday 18 - Sunday 25 October - Bird Week
This year in W.A., Bird Week will focus on the role of people's gardens in providing refuges for native birds. We will aim to encourage the planting of nectar-producing plants and those that attract insects to improve the supply of food for birds in both cities and in cleared country areas. The effect on birdlife would be considerable if we could persuade every household in Perth to plant just one Grevillea or Eucalypt in the garden! We shall need your help to encourage your schools, libraries, councils, neighbours and friends to make our gardens more attractive places for birds. For further information contact Mandy Bamford, RAOU Office, 30/15 Ogilvie Road, Canning Bridge.

Sunday 1 November - Twitchathon: 6am to 6pm.
This year we would like everyone to join in the spirit of the 1987 Twitchathon. Certain members will not be allowed to combine to form 'super' twitcher teams so other people will have a good chance of being in a winning team. Several prizes are to be won for various ornithological feats. So please form a team - it will be good fun. Full details in the next newsletter.

Sunday 8 November - Excursion: Alfred Cove

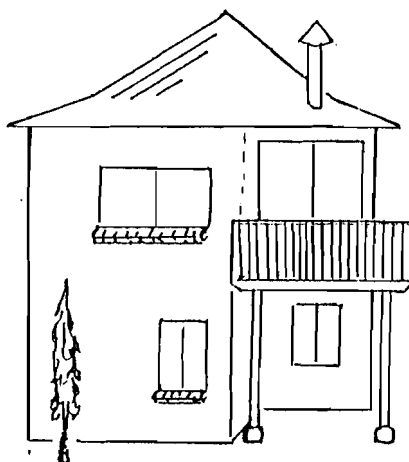
Saturday 14 - Sunday 15 November - Campout: Woodanilling

Saturday 5 December - Social Night.

ADVERTISEMENT

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Modern 3 bedroom house with all amenities available for renting - weekly and weekend rates; on the river front with a view of Blackwood estuary. Swimming, surfing, bushwalks, bird watching, exploring caves, winetasting etc.



For details contact:
Stella Stewart-Wynne 271 5606