



# Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the WA Group  
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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## ORIENTAL CUCKOO IN DAMPIER

**Dates observed:** January 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 22, 23, 24  
1988

**Place:** Dampier: In a large open residential garden on the corner of a main road planted with mixed medium to large trees (Eucalypts, Melaleucas, Poincianas, Ficus and Frangipani). The favourite perch seemed to be small Mango tree with dead branches from which the Oriental Cuckoo flew to ground for large insects or grubs. Sightings were taken each morning between 7.30 and 9 a.m.

**Description:** Distinctive barring across underparts together with yellow eye-ring and yellow legs. The photograph in the Readers Digest Book (p.294) appeared to confirm identification. The bird seemed to be alone. I did not hear it utter any sound. It perched quietly until I would disturb it, when it flew a short distance to another perch, usually to a dead or open branch. After the neighbour, in whose garden the Mango tree is situated, pruned the tree, the bird was not seen again.

P. Walker

**References:** Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds (1979), Readers Digest Services, N.S.W.

[Atlas of Australian Birds, Blakers M., Davies S.J.J.F., Reilly P.N. (1984), R.A.O.U., Melbourne University Press show the only W.A. reporting of Oriental Cuckoo to be north of Fitzroy Crossing i.e. north of the Great Sandy Desert. The Atlas remarks "appearance at any one locality is unpredictable" (p.293) Ed.]



Adult Oriental Cuckoo — Photo by P. Walker

## OBSERVATIONS

collated by 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 sightings. The Atlas of Australian Birds, Serventy and Whittell's Birds of Western Australia and regional lists (e.g. Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Eucla) 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 period from April 1988 to August 1988. Shire names or the nearest known locality 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

**Hoary-headed Grebe** - 4900, 6/3/88, Bibra Lake (Metro) - DJ

**Cape Petrel** - 1, 24/7/88, North Mole, Fremantle - JH

**Short-tailed Shearwater** - 20+, 16/3/88, 1 km off Silver Sands, Mandurah - AD

**Cattle Egret** - 1, 5/5/88, South Lake (Metro) - SMC \* 2, 20/5/88, Yakamia Swamp, Albany - TB

**Little Egret** - 4, 1/3/88, Goegrup Lake (Mandurah) - AD \* 1, 11/5/88, Blue Gum Lake (Metro) - BBa, MC

**Eastern Reef Egret** - 1, 10/5/88, Artificial Boat Harbour, Mandurah - AD

**Little Bittern** - 2, 19/1/88, Herdsman Lake (Metro): nest with two young and one egg - SG \* 1, 16/4/88, Lake Monger (Metro) - BWi, IS

**Australasian Bittern** - 2, 28/7/88, Thomsons Lake (Metro) - PC, BC \* 2, 30/7/88, Kulunilup Lake Nature Reserve (Manjimup) - RV, JH \* 1, 31/7/88, Boat Harbour Lake (Denmark) - RV, JH \* 1, 31/7/88, Owingup Swamp (Denmark) - RV, JH

**Royal Spoonbill** - 1, 22/5/88, Peel Inlet (Mandurah) - PW

**Freckled Duck** - 2, 25/4/88, Monger Lake (Metro) - BWi, IS \* 1, 1/5/88, Herdsman Lake (Metro) - EMc

**Blue-billed Duck** - 600+, 18/6/88, Namming Lake (Gingin) - ABu, BBU

**Osprey** - 1, 15/5/88, Lake Monger (Metro) - BWi, IS

**Little Eagle** - 4, August 88, road to Woodmans Point (Cockburn): flying together - BK

**Spotted Harrier** - 1, August 88, flying over Welshpool (Metro) - SK

**Peregrine Falcon** - 1, 8/6/88, Bayswater Sanctuary (Metro) - PRH

**Brown Quail** - 7, 1/5/88, Anstey Rd, Forrestdale (Metro) - JM (probably aviary escapees or descendants thereof - RV)

**Masked Lapwing** - 1, 9/5/88, Yangebup Lake (Metro) - DJ (seen again on 21/5/88 - BBa, MC, ND)

**Hooded Plover** - 4, 23/4/88, Gracetown (Margaret River) - BBa, MC

**Whimbrel** - 4, 3/7/88, Smiths Beach, Yallingup (Margaret River) - JB

**Terek Sandpiper** - 6, 14/2/88, Serpentine-Murray Delta (Mandurah) - AD

**Black-tailed Godwit** - 1, 1/3/88, Goegrup Lake (Mandurah) AD \* 3, 18/6/88, Guraga Lake (Gingin) - ABu, BBU

**Pectoral Sandpiper** - 1, 24/4/88, Lake Gwelup (Metro) - JH  
'hooded gull sp.' - 1, 20/6/88, Kalbarri rubbish tip - DB (The bird was not observed flying and therefore not possible to determine species. Wing pattern is a very important characteristic to note when viewing 'hooded gulls'. Was this the Franklin's Gull from Lake Monger? - see W.A. Bird Notes No.46 - RV)

**Common Tern** - 6, 24/2/88, Artificial Boat Harbour, Mandurah - AD

**Roseate Tern** - 20+, 22/4/88, Mandurah Sea-Wall - DM \* 6, 8/5/88, Robert Point (Mandurah) - AD

**Rainbow Lorikeet** - 1, mid May, Chertley St, Morley (Metro): in flowering Lemon-scented Gum - RS

**Regent Parrot** - 27, 5/5/88, Eyre Bird Observatory - IA, BS \* 9, 28/5/88, Mundijong (Metro) - SvA

**Elegant Parrot** - 108, 2/7/88, west side of Forrestdale Lake (Metro): in one flock - DJ

**Fan-tailed Cuckoo** - 1, 20/6/88, Furnissdale (Mandurah): first seasonal calls - GB

**Southern Boobook** - 1, 25/4/88, Applecross (Metro) - KH

**Barking Owl** - 1, 12/7/88, Bindoon Army Training Area - RSm \* 1, 30/7/88, Kulunilup Lake Nature Reserve (Manjimup) - RV, JH

**Golden Whistler** - 1, 3/7/88, west side of Forrestdale Lake (Metro) - DJ

**Yellow-plumed Honeyeater** - 1, 5/6/88, Bickley Brook (Metro) - MB, KC \* 1, 10/7/88, Kalamunda National Park - MB, KC

**White-cheeked Honeyeater** - 15, 5/5/88, bushland near Kenwick (Metro) - SvA

**Red-eared Firetail** - 1, 17/4/88, near Willowdale Rd, Waroona - DJ

**Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** - 120+, 20/6/88, Herdsman Lake (Metro) - MO

**Australian Magpie (albino)** - 1, May 88, Lake Cooloongup (Rockingham) - TM (unconfirmed report)

### UP NORTH

**Great-billed Heron** - 1, June 88, 10 km up Sale river: making a nest - MHB

**Intermediate Egret** - 3, 4/6/88, 17 Mile Dam, Camballin Station - JMc

**Grey Goshawk** - 1, June 88, 10 km up Sale River - MHB

**White-bellied Sea-Eagle** - 1, 13/5/88, Fitzroy Crossing - JMc \* 2, 5/6/88, 17 Mile Dam, Camballin Station - JMc

**Peregrine Falcon** - 2, July 88, near Tunnel Creek: a pair nesting - BBa, MC

**Orange-footed Scrubfowl** - 1, June 88, St Patricks Island in St George Basin - MHB

**Red-chested Button-quail** - 3, 15/5/88, Roebuck Plains near Broome - RJ \* 8, 18/6/88, Roebuck Plains: male with 7 chicks - BW, GH

**Beach Thick-knee** - 2, 2/6/88, Barred Creek, Broome - BBa, MC

**Mongolian Plover** - 2, June 88, Riddell Beach, Broome - MHB

**Redshank** - 1, 20/4/88, 20/6/88, 18/7/88, Roebuck Bay, Broome - BW, GH

## WATERBIRD STUDIES

**Asian Dowitcher** - 1, June/July 88, Roebuck Bay, Broome - BW, GH

**Oriental Cuckoo** - 1, January 88, Dampier - PWa

**Brush Cuckoo** - 1, 8/6/88, Kununurra Caravan Park - BBa, MC

**Collared Kingfisher** - 1, 29/6/88, Crab Creek, Broome - GT \* 1, 10/7/88, Wyndham Harbour - BBa, MC

**Rainbow Pitta** - 1, June 88, rainforest near Sale river - MHB

**Sandstone Shrike-thrush** - 1, June 88, rainforest near Sale River - MHB

**Broad-billed Flycatcher** - 1, June 88, rainforest near Sale river - MHB

**Clamorous Reed-Warbler** - 1, 3/7/88, Pearl Coast Zoo, Broome: moved in and breeding at the zoo in past six months (Curator) - BW, GH

**Zitting Cisticola** - 2, 10/7/88, Marigu Billabong, Wyndham - BBa, MC

**Black Grasswren** - 3, 22/5/88, between Hanover Bay and Pantajin Station, North Kimberley: 1 juvenile bird observed also - LV \* pairs, June 88, Camp Creek: a tributary near the mouth of the Prince Regent River - MHB

**Star Finch** - 200+, 14/5/88, Derby Sewage Works - JMc

**Pictorella Mannikin** - 1, late June, early July 88, Broome Bird Observatory - BW, GH

**Gouldian Finch** - 8, 29/6/88, behind the shop at Lake Argyle Tourist Village - KO (other reports also received from here during June/July 1988) \* 12, 16/7/88, Wyndham: 2 red and 4 black-headed - KO

**Common Starling** - 1, 3/6/88, Roebuck Caravan Park, Broome: shot by the Agricultural Protection Board - BW, GH

### OBSERVERS CODES

ABu - Anne Buchanan	KC - Kate Creed
AD - Austin Daw	KH - Katherine Highman
BBa - Bryan Barrett	KO - Kimberley Observer
BBu - Bruce Buchanan	LV - Lee Vernon
BC - Brian Clay	MB - Max Bailey
BK - Ben Keeling	MC - Margery Clegg
BS - Bob Smith	MHB - Mary Bremner
BW - Brice Wells	MO - Margaret Owen
BWi - Bev Wilcox	ND - Norma Duff
DB - Don Bellairs	PC - Pauline Clay
DJ - David James	PRH - Peel Howden
DM - Dusty Millar	PW - Peter Wilmot
EMc - Eric McCrum	PWa - Pamela Walker
GB - Gordon Baker	RS - Ray Schulz
GH - Gail Hooper	RV - Rodney Vervest
GT - Graham Taylor	SG - Sue Gordon
IA - Ian Ashton	SK - Steve Keeling
IS - Ian Standring	SMc - Shapelle McNee
JB - John Brooke	SvA - Sean van Alphen
JH - Jack Hunt	TB - Tony Bush
JM - John Malone	TM - Terry Mead
JMc - Jock McLaren	

Thanks to all waterbirders for their continuing efforts with the waterbird research programme. Our data bank is growing rapidly with many hundreds of wetlands now documented. The data bank represents a most effective tool in the efforts to secure the future of W.A.'s waterbirds.

**Chief Wetfoot takes a break.** The Waterbirds Officer, (Roger Jaensch), is currently on leave in Europe and the U.S.A. (returning in September). Meanwhile, the Waterbirds Assistant (Rodney Vervest), continues with the waterbird research programme.

**Ongoing Monitoring.** A report is being prepared on waterbird data to June 1988 and all waterbirders should receive a copy in due course. Participants are hereby asked to put all outstanding data (up to June 30, 1988) on sheets and send them complete to the W.A. Office by September 15, 1988. Please keep up the good work at 'your' wetlands.

**Great Duck Counts.** Reports of the 1986-7 and the 1988 GDC have been published and most participants should have copies. We apologise if an oversight has left you without copies (practically inevitable when dealing with hundreds of observers!). If so, please contact Rodney Vervest and arrangements will be made to send them out.

**Egret Monitoring.** Some of you will be aware of RAOU research involving the Great Egret in W.A. In the past two breeding seasons active colonies have been monitored carefully and intensive ground and aerial searches have been conducted in the hopes of finding new colonies. A major concern to waterbird researchers is that only one breeding colony in the south-west (during this current study) has been in a nature reserve (which is threatened by pollution); all others are in unprotected areas.

As part of your ongoing monitoring work or otherwise, we would be grateful to hear of any information concerning egrets, i.e. concentrations of birds, birds seen roosting in trees, birds showing bright coloured facial skin/legs or birds seen with head plumes. Please contact Rodney Vervest with any information you may have. Such information will be treated in strict confidence if necessary. A small group of 'wild' egrets have bred in pine trees at the South Perth Zoo in past years and interested people could observe breeding characteristics of the Great Egret with relative ease at this location. October and November would be good times to visit.

**Boomer listening surveys.** The 'boomer' or Australasian Bittern is considered a declining species in W.A. and numbers may be perilously low. We are keen to establish a network of observers (listeners) at various bittern sites in the south-west at pre-selected times in order to gain some measure of abundance. The first listening survey will already have been conducted (late July) but further surveys will be conducted in late September and November. Interested people are required to listen in the evening at sites allocated by the co-ordinator on one night during a weekend (date to be advised). If you would like further details on this project please contact Rodney Vervest. (A tape of calling bitterns is kept at the W.A. Office and people are welcome to call in and listen to it.)

**A note of appreciation.** I would personally like to express my thanks to all of you who have donated money to W.A. waterbird research. This money has been used to employ myself as assistant to the research programme, allowing the Waterbirds Officer to devote valuable time to preparation and publication of reports. We have been able to conduct several new projects (some of them unique in Australia) and W.A. continues to set a very creditable lead with volunteer-based waterbird research. Your commitments to the programme thus far have guaranteed its success.

R. Vervest

## REMOTE WETLANDS EXPEDITION - MAY 1988

Initial planning for RAOU's 1988 remote wetlands expedition envisaged the surveying of waterbirds in the Roebuck and lower Fitzroy floodplains i.e. in wetlands roughly within the Broome/Derby/Fitzroy Crossing triangle. It was thought that these wetlands might contain enough waterbirds to be classified as being of international importance for the purposes of the RAMSAR Convention, to which Australia is a party.

As it turned out, very poor rains in 1987/88 in much of the Kimberley region resulted in the early drying up of many of the target wetlands and hence in a change of expedition itinerary. The participants gathered at Broome on the morning of 2 May and set off to cross the Kimberley from west to east and north to south.

The members of the expedition fell into several groups. The first, consisting of Simon Nevill of Falcon Tours and those he took from Perth to the Kimberley and back in his stretched Toyota Landcruiser and trailer, set off for the north on 28 April. Nora Brockman, Ben Carr (who left us in Broome for the Department of Conservation and Land Management "duck truck"), Ros Denny (who joined us in Broome), Barbara Hale, Peel Howden, "Jake" Jacobs, Rose Jones, Sophia Le Faucheur, Bill McRoberts, Richard Stone (who joined the group in Broome), Rodney Vervest and the writer made up the company.

There were many highlights to the journey up the Great Northern Highway - Cinnamon Quail Thrush on top of the breakaway near our Mount Magnet campsite, the prolific birdlife around Bilyuin Pool on the upper Murchison River where we lunched on 29 April, the numerous Wedge-tailed Eagles along the road in mulga country, the huge iron ore trains on the railway linking Newman and Port Hedland, the interesting old buildings at Cue, the frequent Brown Falcons by the roadside as we drove through the Pilbara and on to Broome, the bright green spinifex on the red Pilbara hillsides following recent rain, the dawn chorus of Blue-winged Kookaburras and other northern bird species around our campsite on the De Grey river, the open expanses of the Roebuck Plains with the odd Spotted Harrier as we approached Broome and, finally, meeting Bryce Wells and Gail Hooper at the RAOU's new Bird Observatory outside the town. The Observatory lacked telephone, plumbing and water supply facilities, but Brice and Gail are cheerful pioneers.

At Broome the other individuals and groups began to join us. Roland and Hazel Hill had come up from Carnarvon in their Landrover and were staying at the Observatory, while Ros Denny and Roger Jaensch had flown up from Perth; and Richard Stone, who was visiting Australia from his home in Wales, had come across from the Northern Territory. The three had been out birding before our arrival and had seen, among other interesting species, a Yellow Wagtail. Richard, moreover, had narrowly avoided a large Mulga Snake. A smaller Mulga Snake later sped past the writer's feet after dark at the Observatory; Broome seems to be a good place to meet the species.

On the morning of 2 May, the weather warm and humid and the mosquitoes of previous nights still a vivid memory, those who had spent the night at the Observatory went into the centre of Broome to do last minute shopping and meet the CALM duck truck with its trailer, loaded with two aluminium dinghies and two motorbikes. Don Munro and Kate Creusot had driven the duck truck up from Perth and all was now ready for waterbird surveying to begin.

After leaving Broome, we searched part of Yeeda Station south of Derby for waterbirds with little success owing to the dry conditions and the expedition, now augmented by two more four wheel drive vehicles containing John and Judy Blyth

from Perth and Jock McLaren and Kim Edmonde from Derby, camped beside Chestnut Pool on a branch of the Fitzroy River. While some members of the party checked out a few nearby wetlands, finding few birds apart from 70 Royal Spoonbill, others did their birdwatching around the campsite. A Black-breasted Buzzard on a large nest across the pool raised hopes of a breeding record, but the nest probably belonged to raptors of another species. A pair of Weebill appeared startlingly yellow by comparison with their southern counterparts and a number of bird species found in Western Australia only in the north included Red-winged Parrot, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and White-gaped and Yellow-tinted Honeyeater.

After a morning interesting not only for its birdlife but also for the finding of part of the saw of a sawfish of the genus *Pristis*, we moved to the Camballin irrigation scheme and camped close to the 17 Mile Dam. Surveys of Moulamen Swamp, two-thirds of the 17 Mile Dam and one other dam yielded a total of 5,716 waterbirds, of which Grey Teal (1747), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (501), Australian Pratincole (395), Black-winged Stilt (365) and Black Swan (350) were the most numerous. Unusual records were those of Great Crested Grebe (2) and Long-toed Stint (7), with 27 Yellow Chat to remind us that in the Kimberley their species is local rather than rare. Flocks of up to 600 Flock Pigeon were, as Roger Jaensch pointed out, an increasingly uncommon sight and we saw our first Black-necked Storks as well as numbers of Brolga and Australian Bustard in the huge open paddocks between the irrigation channels. Around the 17 Mile Dam were seen, among other species, Crimson, Star and Zebra Finch, Black-tailed Native-Hen, Red-winged Parrot, large numbers of Restless Flycatcher and all three of the *Geopelia* doves (Bar-shouldered, Peaceful and Diamond). Not far from the nest of a White-bellied Sea-Eagle towards the top end of the Dam was a colony of flying foxes in the freshwater mangroves. Swimming was extremely popular despite the presence of freshwater crocodiles nearby and we celebrated Sophia's birthday with a party.

The morning of 5 May saw us visit the Fitzroy Weir which diverts water to Camballin and those who penetrated the narrow belt of riparian forest were rewarded by seeing Great Bowerbirds, Variegated Fairy-wrens and White-gaped Honeyeaters. Next came a call on Liveringa Station with its historic homestead, where we missed seeing the occupants of the homestead but encountered Spinifex Pigeons. During the afternoon more waterbird surveying was done.

Our destination on 6 May was the Parry floodplain near Wyndham. It was decided that the duck truck, accompanied by Jock McLaren and Kim Edmonde in their vehicle, would make the long journey in one day, while the Falcon Tours people would camp the night at Mary River and arrive the following day. Stopping at Fitzroy Crossing for a quick bit of shopping and lunch at the Crossing Inn, we duly made Mary Pool on the Mary River after a hot day's travelling. The campsite was well used by both people and cattle and the pool itself was in a far from inviting condition. The vegetation consisted mainly of River Red Gums and thorny thickets of *Acacia farnesiana*, a shrub we had already met at the 17 Mile Dam, and was frequented by Red-winged Parrots and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.

The next day was hotter and we noticed that the Ord River was dry at the road crossing, although the Dunham River still held some water. Our campsite at Parry Creek lay among baobabs and tall grass near a long pool where three female Green Pygmy-Geese swam among the blue waterlilies. It was good to find that there were no crocodiles in the pool and that we could cool off in it.

We started off early at 6 am on 8 May to survey the Parry floodplain. Flo Robinson from Wyndham accompanied us and, after we had received our instructions on a hill which had

once had buildings on it and which overlooked the claypans and billabongs we were to look at, we broke up into separate teams to cover our allotted areas. The writer was pleased to spot his first Zitting Cisticola since leaving Africa ten years before and to see all three ibis and four Comb-crested Jacana on the claypans. That afternoon we paid a brief visit to Wyndham, too brief to allow a drive up to the Five Rivers Lookout and the celebrated view of Cambridge Gulf and the rivers flowing into it.

On 9 May we again rose early to have another look at the Parry floodplain and the writer had the good fortune to see the other Australian cisticola, the Golden-headed. Roger Jaensch pointed out distant Australasian Shoveler and Garganey, the former a new Kimberley record and the latter an uncommon(?) and easily overlooked migrant to the Kimberley being given to lurking in inundated vegetation. Bill McRoberts found the nest of a Yellow Chat with two young in it and we came across some Painted Snipe feathers without laying eyes on their owner. During the afternoon some members of the expedition visited Kununurra, where a White-browed Crake was seen and on the way back called in at the Grotto, a sandstone chasm with water at the bottom, where White-quilled Rock-Pigeon were seen. Those who remained behind did a few chores and saw, among other birds, Blue-faced Honeyeaters and a Yellow-tinted Honeyeater feeding from a waterlily flower.

The Parry floodplain wetlands produced some 18,914 waterbirds, though not all areas of water could be checked. (One inaccessible claypan was, however, surveyed from the air). The most plentiful species seen were Grey Teal (6980), Australian Pratincole (1685), Black-winged Stilt (1210), Masked Lapwing (929) and Magpie Geese (906). Whistling-duck were in smaller numbers than we had expected (69 Wandering and 698 Plumed). Interesting sightings included Australian Crake (40) *Gallinago snipe* (4) and Black Bittern (1). There were also 85 Yellow Chat.

The morning of 10 May saw another early start, this time to make the long journey to Lake Gregory. After Hall's Creek we turned south off the bitumen and reached Mulan Settlement after dark. There we made our presence known to an official of this Aboriginal settlement before pushing on to Lake Gregory. Simon Nevill's party, the duck truck crew and Jock McLaren and Kim Edmonde had already settled in when Roland and Hazel Hill were guided to our encampment by the bookkeeper from Mulan after mechanical trouble had delayed them on the road.

The morning of 11 May was windy, with swarms of flies ready to take advantage of any lull. The two boats went out on reconnaissance and Simon Nevill's party noted Orange Chat and probably Yellow Chat in the herbage along the shoreline. The water level was down considerably on that of 1986, but the lake was still an impressively large area of water in an arid setting. During the afternoon we visited Sturt Creek several kilometres above the point where it enters Lake Gregory and saw extensive rafts of duck and cormorant which promised well for the morrow. A dingo, which appeared to have been feeding on the corpse of a Brolga at the water's edge ran off at our approach and back at camp that evening we heard dingoes howling, as they did the following evening also.

As we breakfasted the next morning, dingoes were seen going down towards a belt of dead acacias situated between us and the Lake. The presence of so many flies and so many dingoes was no doubt explained by the numbers of cattle carcasses littered along the Lake shore. Counting of waterbirds continued throughout the day for some, while others who finished earlier were able to enjoy the luxury of a wash under the overflow from a bore tank! Again, Orange Chat and probably Yellow Chat were seen. (The nearest known locality for Yellow Chat is some 300 km north of Lake Gregory). The flies continued to plague us during the day, but a cold wind at

night kept mosquitoes away.

Lake Gregory surveyed by land, air and water, produced the biggest bird tally of our survey areas, some 75,524 birds, and, as the 1986 expedition had found, the species composition (Grey Teal excepted) differed markedly from that of Kimberley wetlands to the north. The five most numerous species were Grey Teal (21,015), Little Black Cormorant (15,480), Hardhead (9936), Pink-eared Duck (9423) and Black Swan (4027). Also well represented were Eurasian Coot (3407), Whiskered Tern (1795), Plumed Whistling-Duck (1750), Pied Cormorant (1340) and Pacific Black Duck (1198). The importance of Lake Gregory for Freckled Duck was again demonstrated by the presence of 52.

We left Lake Gregory on 13 May and the Falcon Tours Party decided to visit Wolf Creek Crater National Park before returning to the Great Northern Highway. A few kilometres before the turnoff to Carranya Station and the National Park we came across a marsupial road kill which may have been a Spectacled Hare Wallaby. Enlargements of photographs taken at the scene by the writer have led mammal experts at the Western Australian Museum to agree that the corpse was probably that of a Hare Wallaby, but damage to the head and the absence of a sample of the animal's pelt make it impossible for them to commit themselves to a species identification. Many marsupials in the size range to which Hare Wallabies belong are endangered or have become extinct since European settlement of Australia, so it is important that specimens, whether of the whole animal or of fur, be preserved and brought to the W.A. Museum if at all possible. Wolf Creek Crater, which some expedition members had visited in 1986, was worth the detour, although the sunshine was too strong for the red of the soil and rock and the greens of the vegetation within the crater to be properly appreciated. Chris Done from CALM at Kununurra confirmed that *Grevillea wickhamii* and *Cassia venusta* were flowering close to the excellent National Park information board on which they were depicted.

The long haul back to Perth took the Simon Nevill contingent via Hall's Creek, where Richard Stone left us for Kununurra, the Mary River campsite, Willare, where we lunched in riverine forest by the Fitzroy and saw Great Bowerbirds, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and a Bar-breasted Honeyeater, the Sandfire Roadhouse camping ground, Port Hedland, the Sherlock River where we had lunch, Roebourne, a campsite at the Red Rocks 20 km southwest of Nanutarra, Carnarvon, a campsite by the Murchison River and Geraldton to Perth. Of interest on the journey home were some Ground Cuckoo-shrike near the Cadjabut Mine turnoff between Mary River and Willare, and the degraded state of the mulga country along the North West Coastal Highway.

Looking back on this 1988 expedition, the international importance for waterbirds of the Parry floodplain and Lake Gregory was confirmed, but a proper assessment of the lower Fitzroy floodplain awaits a wet season with rainfall closer to the average. It is to be hoped that there will be another opportunity to census waterbirds in the Broome/Derby/Fitzroy Crossing triangle. In all, 69 waterbird species were recorded out of a grand total of 213 species noted by expedition members. The Falcon Tours party conducted a BOP watch along certain sections of the drive north and the raptors of the north certainly came up to expectations, with 19 diurnal birds recorded, but not a Grey Falcon.

Thanks go to Roger Jaensch for his leadership under sometimes difficult survey conditions, to Simon Nevill for hard work in driving the Falcon Tours vehicle and still finding time to look after his charges in camp, to Rodney Vervest for helpfulness beyond the call of duty and to each and every companion in our odyssey for the cheerfulness and willing co-operation which made it so memorable.

J. Talbot

# RAOU REMOTE WETLAND EXPEDITION 1988

## SUMMARY OF NUMBERS COUNTED

Species	Number Counted in each Wetland Area			Total Counted
	4-5 May Camballin Area	7-9 May Parry Floodplain	11-12 May Lake Gregory	
Great Crested Grebe	2		77	79
Hoary-headed Grebe	1		47	48
Australasian Grebe		10		10
Australian Pelican	331	55	824	1210
Darter	35	14	684	733
Pied Cormorant	10	3	1340	1353
Little Black Cormorant	200	21	15480	15701
Little Pied Cormorant	21	35	10	66
Pacific Heron	6	25		31
White-faced Heron	26	29		55
Pied Heron		90		90
Great Egret	19	76	35	130
Little Egret	1			1
Intermediate Egret	5	4		9
Rufous Night Heron	100	12		112
Black Bittern		1		1
Black-necked Stork	8	6		14
Glossy Ibis	29	240		269
Sacred Ibis	12	95	2	109
Straw-necked Ibis	125	490	56	671
Royal Spoonbill	119	79	16	214
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	15	22	2	39
Maggie Goose	19	906	3	928
Wandering Whistling-Duck		69		69
Plumed Whistling-Duck	305	698	1750	2753
Black Swan	350		4027	4377
Freckled Duck			52	52
Radjah Shelduck		17		17
Pacific Black Duck	72	624	1198	1894
Grey Teal	1747	6980	21015	29742
Australasian Shoveler		2		2
Garganey		2		2
Pink-eared Duck	10	400	9423	9833
Hardhead	67	407	9936	10410
Maned Duck			105	105
Green Pygmy Goose		93		93
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	4			4
Marsh Harrier	1	9	4	14
Australian Crake		40		40
Black-tailed Native-hen	8	5		13
Purple Swamphen	2	1		3
Eurasian Coot	43	79	3407	3529
Brolga	63	293	499	855
Comb-crested Jacana		105		105
Masked Lapwing	310	929	8	1247
Red-kneed Dotterel	1	504		505
Red-capped Plover	8	131	116	255
Black-fronted Plover	80	88		168
Black-winged Stilt	365	1210	18	1593
Banded Stilt			9	9
Red-necked Avocet	15		174	189
Little Curlew	1	14		15
Wood Sandpiper	2			2
Greenshank	52	38		90
Marsh Sandpiper	16	85		101
Gallinago Snipe		4		4
Black-tailed Godwit	52	25		77
Bar-tailed Godwit	8			8
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	501	540	10	1051
Red-necked Stint	100	1	100	201
Long-toed Stint	7			7
Curlew Sandpiper		3	10	13
Australian Pratincole	395	1685	16	2096
Silver Gull			486	486
Whiskered Tern	10	51	1795	1856
Gull-billed Tern	2	54		56
Caspian Tern	5	50	760	815
Clamorous Reed-Warbler	3			3
Yellow Chat	27	85		112
unidentified duck		1200	2000	3200
unidentified wader		180	30	210
Totals	birds	5716	18914	75524
	species	53	55	36
				100154
				69

## COMING EVENTS

Excursions are usually held on the second weekend of the month on either the Saturday or Sunday. The RAOU and CALM have agreed upon a National Parks project whereby individuals and/or groups are asked to compile a bird list each time a National Park is visited.

Any members willing to show beginners (members of the public, juniors, new club members) around their metropolitan bird site please contact Ian Standring on 344 3651 (home).

Have country members any suggestions for outings in their areas?

Meetings are generally held on the fourth Monday in the month.

### Friday 9 September - Slide Evening

Princess Margaret Hospital Lecture Theatre, Roberts Road, Administration Block adjacent to Hospital: 8 pm

"Exploring the Kimberleys" with Kevin Coate.

Tickets: \$7. On sale at RAOU office and at the door. Bring your friends: Refreshments served. To help BBO.

### Saturday 10 September - Day Excursion

Boyagin Rock Nature Reserve.

An interesting Reserve. Mainly Powderbark Wandoo. Moderate to easy walks with the Rock itself more strenuous. An early start as the Reserve is near Brookton. Meet 7.20 am just past the intersection of Brookton Hwy and Canning Road, Karragullen, leaving here 7.30 am latest or at the Rock car-park about 9 am or lunchtime.

### Sunday 11 September - Bird walk

Perry Lakes/Bold Park. In conjunction with the City of Perth (see Notices). Meet at 6.50 am at Children's Adventure Playground. Proceed west along Underwood Ave and turn right into Perry Lakes Drive. Take first turn right to playground. Walk ends at 8.30 am.

### Saturday 24 September - Saturday 1 October - Campout Nallan Station near Cue.

There has been a change in the accommodation arrangements for Nallan Station. **The shearers quarters will not be available to us.** The only accommodation for those not camping is one 3-bedroom twin share basic "cottage". Therefore if you did not intend camping it is important that you contact Ian Standring: 344 3651 (H) before proceeding in case your accommodation requirements cannot be met. There is plenty of room for campers. No pets! An unstructured, informal excursion.

Book with Nallan Station direct. Phone: (099) 63j1054 (David and April Petersen) or write: PO Box 24 Cue WA 6640. Mention you are with RAOU.

### Sunday 25 September - Saturday 1 October - Eyre Bird Observatory "A Springtime Megatwitch" Leader: Steve Keeling

Join Steve in his search for the rarer species of birds of Eyre. Phone Steve for details 291 9561.

### Monday 26 September - Meeting

Herdsmen Lake Wildlife Centre 8 pm.

Bert Keefe, a country member who has lived for many years at Mullewa, will talk about the many changes he has observed in the birdlife there during that time. Phyllis Robertson will show some slides of her Antarctic trip including shots of Penguins.

### Sunday 2 October - Bird walk

Perry Lakes/Bold Park

Meet at 6.50 am at Children's Adventure Playground, near corner of Perry Lakes Drive and Underwood Ave. Ends 8.30 am.

### Sunday 2 - Saturday 8 October - Eyre Bird Observatory "What's in a Song?"

Leader: Dr Thelma Volger

### Saturday 8 October - Day Excursion

East Gingin Shire Wetlands

Meet 8.30 am at Wannamal Rest Area, on Wannamal-Moora-Mogumber road. Turn left 200 metres beyond Bindoon Hotel on Gingin Road, then turn right at signpost 4.5 km on to Wannamal-Mogumber-Moora road. Travel 22 km to Wannamal and Rest Area on right side of road. Sign-posted. Rest Area is nearly opposite Wannamal Community Hall and tennis courts. One and a half hours drive from Perth GPO. If desired, campers can stay overnight at Rest Area, toilets, wash-basins, BBQ. Bring wading shoes/boots. For further information contact Bruce Buchanan phone 350 7060 (W) or write to 2 Jarman Ave Manning 6152.

### Sunday 23 October - Bird walk

Perry Lakes/Bold Park

Meet at 6.50 am at Children's Adventure Playground near corner of Perry Lakes Drive and Underwood Ave. Ends 8.30 am.

### Sunday 23 - Sunday 30 October - Bird Week

See NOTICES for information.

### Sunday 23 - Saturday 29 October - Eyre Bird Observatory "History of the Eyre Telegraph Station".

Leader: Bill Graham

### Monday 24 October - Meeting

Herdsmen Lake Wildlife Centre 8 pm

"Penguin Island and Its Birdlife".

Speaker: Nick Dunlop

### Sunday 30 October - Bird walk

Perry Lakes/Bold Park

Meet at 6.50 am at Children's Adventure Playground near corner of Perry Lakes Drive and Underwood Ave. Ends 8.30 am.

**Sunday 13 November - Excursion**

**Peel Inlet**

Meet at 8 am at the southern end of Wanjeep Street, Coodanup. Follow the Mandurah-Pinjarra Rd and turn right into Wanjeep Street soon after leaving Mandurah. If you reach the Serpentine river bridge before turning right you have gone too far. Bring hat and other sun protection and wading boots. A very good area for waders, Little Egrets, Regent Parrots etc.

**Saturday 26 November - Twitchathon: 5 am - 5 pm**

The aim is for teams to identify as many species as possible during the 12 hours. Each species to be identified by at least two team members. Teams members must keep together as a group and no air travel is allowed during the 12 hours. Use National Parks RAOU checklist to record species - small cross in box. If you visit a National Park please keep a separate list so that the information can be recorded in the National Parks Project. There are no restrictions on distance from GPO and you may visit any sites you wish. You must however go to one particular site which will be announced later. Cost \$2 per person. After the event you may like to meet at the barbeque area at the Ernst Wittwer (Children's Playground) area at the corner of Saw Avenue and May Drive, Kings Park. BYO meat, salad, drinks. Intending participants should contact Ian Standing (344 3651) by 4 November.

**Sunday 27 November - Saturday 3 December - Eyre Bird Observatory**

"Ornithology With a Leader in the Field".

Leader: Dr Stephen Davies

**Monday 28 November - Meeting**

Herdsmen Lake Wildlife Centre 8 pm

**Wednesday 21 - Tuesday 27 December - Eyre Bird Observatory**

Christmas at Eyre.

**Wednesday 28 December 1988 - Tuesday 3 January 1989**

Eyre Bird Observatory  
New Year Resolutions.

**Sunday 8 - Saturday 21 January 1989**

Eyre Bird Observatory  
Dune Stabilization Work Party Period.

**Saturday 11 February 1989 - Social Event**

See NOTICES for information.



# FALCON TOURS

## SPECIALISTS IN BIRD TOURS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA

Small Group Tours to:  
Mitchell Plateau . Bungle Bungle . Darwin - Cairns  
Iron Range - Lakefield National Park . Atherton  
Tablelands . Nullabor . South West  
Send for Brochure

38 Pether Road, Manning, Perth. W.A. 6152. 09 450 2460

Tour Code F.T. 26  
Nullabor - Bird Observatory 14 days  
Perth - Dragon Rocks - Peak Charles - Islands of the  
Recherche - Cape Le Grande - Balladonia - Nullabor - Eyre  
Bird Observatory - Newman Rocks - McDermid Rock -  
Dryandra - Perth  
October 29 - November 11 1988 Cost A\$ 750.00  
**Seats still available!**

## TOUR GUIDE 1989

### Camping Tours

Tour Code F.T. 40 14 days  
West Australia - Kimberley Region 1  
Perth to Kununurra  
Monday May 1 - Sunday May 14 Cost A\$ 924.00

Tour Code F.T. 40 14 days  
West Australia - Kimberley Region 2  
Kununurra to Perth  
Tuesday May 16 - Monday May 29 Cost A\$ 924.00

Tour Code F.T. 50 20 days  
South West, Nullabor  
Perth to Perth  
Sunday September 3 - Friday September 22 Cost A\$ 1168.00

### Camping/Hotel Tours

Tour Code F.T. 46 14 days  
Northern Safari  
Perth to Darwin  
Sunday June 11 - Saturday June 30 Cost A\$ 1480.00

Tour Code F.T. 47 14 days  
North - South West Safari  
Darwin to Cairns  
Sunday July 9 - Friday July 28 Cost A\$ 1480.00





