

Western Australian Bird Notes

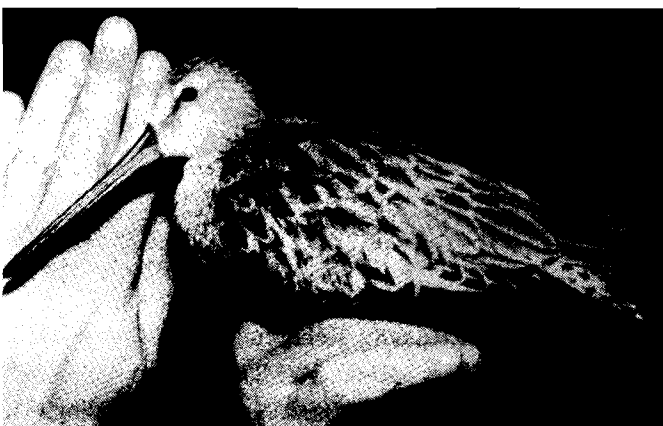
Quarterly Newsletter of the WA Group
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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ASIAN DOWITCHER REACHES SOUTH-WEST

The Asian Dowitcher (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*) is an uncommon wader in Australia, the movements of which are little known (Lane 1987). Occurrences of this species reported in Australia have been fragmented, but it is now considered to be a regular migrant to north-western W.A. Occasional records are known from south-eastern Australia. The following report documents an occurrence of the Asian Dowitcher at Albany, Western Australia.

In early July 1989, Jerry Tolman (an American bird-watcher on tour in Australia) reported seeing an Asian Dowitcher near Emu Point, Albany. The sighting was related to Richard Nowotny of Shenton Park, an RAOU member visiting the area who subsequently located the bird on the 15th of July, 1989. It was observed in company with a group of Bar-tailed Godwit and three Black-tailed Godwit in partial breeding plumage. Early reports, in excellent visibility, noted the overall size differences and the proportions of the bill (the 'dowitcher' being noticeably smaller, the bill straighter and thicker than the godwits, entirely black and bulbous near the tip). The feeding technique was also noted, being more 'up and down with less obvious rooting around' than the godwits. The bird was noted also as having brick-red colouring on the head, neck, back and chest. It was concluded that the bird was an Asian Dowitcher. On the 21st of July 1989, Vic Smith of Albany also made detailed descriptions of the bird at Emu Point (near the boat harbour). On this occasion the bird was roosting and further observations of plumage were recorded. Noted principally



Asian Dowitcher, captured by RAOU NW Wader Expedition, 1983.

Photo: Duncan Parish

were a mottled chestnut-red colouring on the head, nape, mantle, breast and flanks with some fine dark-brown barring on the flank and mantle. Wing coverts were recorded as dark-brown. Noted also was the smaller size and 'dumpiness' of the bird by comparison with the godwits. The same bill features were described as in the previous observation except for the presence of a small pinkish patch at the base of the lower mandible. A pale supercilium, emphasized by a dark line through the lores and a dark crown were seen and when the bird took flight the absence of any wing bar was noted. It was concluded that the bird was an Asian Dowitcher in partial breeding plumage.

My last sighting of the Asian Dowitcher was at Lake MacLeod, near Carnarvon in October 1987. On the strength of the above observations I decided to travel to Albany. Tide was low on the early morning of the 22nd of July 1989 when I arrived at Emu Point. There was already wader activity on the beach. After scanning the area with my telescope and locating a small group of godwits, I proceeded to study each of them carefully. Clearly observed were four Black-tailed Godwit in partial breeding colour and about 20 Bar-tailed Godwit. Other waders in the area included Great Knot, Red Knot (some with red colouring) and a few Grey Plover.

Knowing that good wader habitat existed a few hundred metres to the north-west of the boat harbour, I transferred my effort there and within fifteen minutes or so located something 'odd' in a group of waders. This was at approximately 7.45 am in moderately good light and after careful 'manoeuvres', I reached within 20-30 metres of the birds.

After setting up my telescope and scanning through a group of about 250 knot and Grey Plover I located a larger, actively feeding wader which I estimated to be about 25% larger than a nearby Great Knot. Brownish-red colouring on the head was immediately noticeable as was a prominent supercilium giving a somewhat 'capped' appearance. The bird was feeding busily and was probing the mud with a decisive, 'sewing machine' action. I managed to get a few metres closer to record the following detail:

Crown darkish brown with streaked appearance; from front on, pale supercilia were prominent, extending to bill. Dark loreal mark evident and pale mark noticed near base of lower mandible on the chin.

Bill was long and entirely black, thickened at the base and

distinctly bulbous near the tip; particularly obvious when front on. General aspect of head/bill relationship very 'snipe-like'.

Brownish-red colouring covered the whole neck down to the top of the breast and along the flank following the wing fold, also extending to the mantle. Slight barring on the flanks extending back and becoming fainter towards tail. Remainder of body, from breast to belly and tail, whitish.

Scapulars dark centred with whitish linings giving mottled grey-brown impression.

Legs were longish and black.

The bird was not in company with either species of godwit but the overall 'jizz' was quite unlike those species. Particularly noticeable was the angle of bill to head and body. Whenever the bird was not feeding, the bill was held close to the body giving a very 'heavy' appearance. When feeding the bird often inserted its bill to about three-quarter length and make very rapid up and down movements. On two occasions the bird stretched its wings. The underwing was observed as pale over the whole area. When refolded there was no projection of wing tip beyond the tail and the bird appeared quite 'blunt-ended'. I concluded the bird was an adult Asian Dowitcher in partial breeding plumage.

My observations continued for about 40 minutes until the entire wader flock lifted and circled in tight formation making several sweeps over and around the feeding area until finally flying off strongly in a north-easterly direction.

It is likely that the Asian Dowitcher was an over-wintering bird (i.e. here in W.A. during its normal breeding season in the northern hemisphere), considering the time of year. Asian Dowitchers are more usually known to arrive in the north-west in September (Lane, 1987) though nine Asian Dowitchers were recorded near Broome (Crab Creek) on the 6th of July 1989 (two in breeding plumage) which closely coincides with the first report of this bird at Albany.

The Albany sighting is the most southerly occurrence of the Asian Dowitcher in Western Australia, the previous record being that at Lake MacLeod some 900 km to the north-west.

I am grateful for the very detailed and thorough observations provided by Richard Nowotny and Vic Smith.

R. Vervest

Reference:

Lane B.A. (1987) *Shorebirds in Australia*, RAOU, Melbourne.

OBSERVATIONS

Please send details of sightings to 'Observations Officer' at the W.A. Office of the RAOU. Unusual sightings should be accompanied by field notes. Preliminary checking of the following observations has been undertaken but further scrutiny should be given prior to inclusion in any official or technical report. This list of observations mainly covers the period from May - August 1989.

Compiled by Rodney Vervest.

DOWN SOUTH

Emu - 1, 27/6/89, Poison Gully, Brookton Highway - GMa.

Black-browed Albatross - 1, 12/4/89, Stokes Nat. Park - BN.

Yellow-nosed Albatross - 10, 21/7/89, Wader Beach (Eyre Bird Observatory) - RS.

Southern Giant Petrel - 1, 20/7/89, South Mole, Fremantle -

MO.

Cape Petrel - 1, 21/7/89 - Kanidal Beach (Eyre Bird observatory): beach washed specimen - IA.

Sooty Shearwater - 1, 4/7/89, City Beach, Perth: dead bird with fish head wedged in throat - GM.

Australasian Gannet - 2, 31/7/89, Woodman Point - PRH.

Black-faced Shag - Wilson Inlet, near mouth of Hay River - LH: rarely reported this far west. One Atlas record from 1980 at Augusta * 2, 10/4/89, Stokes Nat. Park - BN.

Red-tailed Tropicbird - nesting, 10/12/88, Pelsaert Island, Abrolhos: bird sitting on two eggs - MHB: according to the Atlas, breeding at the Abrolhos was last recorded in 1954.

Cattle Egret - 7, 30/5/89, Joondalup Lake - JH * 1, 3/6/89, small pond N of Bibra Lake - PRH * 2, 15/7/89, near Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve - RN * 1, 31/7/89, south of Bibra Lake on Forrest Road: immature - PRH.

Little Egret - 1, 22/7/89, Lake Joondalup - NH, AB.

Glossy Ibis - 8, 30/5/89, Lake Joondalup - JH.

~~Sacred Ibis - 14, February 1989, swamp on farmland, Tenterden - TH * 6, 1/4/89, Stokes Nat. Park - BN * 3, May-June 1989, Kalgoorlie (in town) - AC: there are no records of Sacred Ibis in the Atlas or in Storr's list for the Kalgoorlie area and it is evident that this species is spreading east as well as south * small group, 23/7/89, standing in flooded paperbarks with Straw-necked Ibis off Lower Denmark Rd, east of Albany (possible colony?) - RV.~~

Freckled Duck - 1, 14/5/89, Namming Lake - BBu.

Chestnut Teal - 4, February 1989, swamp on farmland, Tenterden - TH.

Musk Duck - 1, 6/7/89, Wittacarra Creek, Kalbarri - NT: northern limit for this species?

Osprey - 1, 18/7/89, Canning Bridge: flying overhead and being 'mobbed' by Silver Gulls - RV.

Square-tailed Kite - 1, 19/6/89, Albany Highway, near Wungong Gorge - JH.

Whistling Kite - 2, 31/7/89, Kogolup Lake: at nest - PRH.

Little Eagle - 1, 4/7/89, Canning River near Mt Henry Bridge - PA.

Peregrine Falcon - 1, 29/5/89, Bentley: on top of wheat silo - JH.

Malleefowl - 1, 19/7/89, Microwave Tower (Eyre Bird Observatory) - IA, PC.

Painted Button-quail - 1, 24/6/89, off Baldvis Rd, Baldvis - GM.

Baillon's Crake - 1, 15/4/89, Warburton sewage pond: seen dead on 18/4/89 - DP.

Dusky Moorhen - 82, 14/5/89, Perry Lakes - DM.

Bush Thick-knee - 2, 16/6/89, 8 km SE Northam: resident in the vicinity and breeding - LM.

Grey Plover - 2, 31/7/89, Woodman Point - PRH.

Hooded Plover - 2, 19/2/89, Margaret River mouth - RN * 273, 30/3/89, Lake Gore and Lake Gage, Esperance (91 on Station Lake, Esperance on 11/3/89 also) - JE.

White-winged Tern - 1, 20/4/89, Thomsons Lake - GM.

Roseate Tern - 17, 25/6/89, Mandurah Sea-wall - GM.

Little Corella - 1, 16/6/89, Kelmscott - GMa.

Rainbow Lorikeet - 50-60, 30/5/89, Bateman - DN.

Regent Parrot - 5, 3/4/89, 80 km N of Zanthus Siding (Trans Aust. Railway) - DP.

Pallid Cuckoo - 1, 23/4/89, Wannamal (Gingin district) - BBu.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo - 1, 28/4/89, Lake Cooloongup - GM.
White-back Swallow - 6, 19/6/89, Herdsman Lake - RSh * 12, 20/6/89, Claremont Lake - TY.
Ground Cuckoo-shrike - 8, 29/5/89, Eyre Highway, near turn-off to Eyre Bird Observatory - BBa, MC.
White-breasted Robin - 20-30, 18/5/89, Wungong Gorge - MW.
Chestnut Quail-thrush - 3, 30/5/89, Newman Rock (Eyre Highway): male, female and sub-adjut - BBa, MC.
Dusky Grasswren - abundant, early/mid April 1989, Jamieson, Cavenagh and Blackstone Ranges, 60-90 k E of Warburton: in spinifex grassland on rocky hillsides - DP * 1, April 1989, Walter James Range, 30 k NE Giles Met. Station - DP.
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater - 4, 16/1/89, Lake Cooloongup: one immature - GM * 7, 16/6/89, Christmas Tree Well, Brookton Highway - GL.
Spotted Pardalote - 9+, 2/4/89, Stokes Nat. Park: flying north: 2 seen in yate swamp same area on 10/4/89 also - BN: this is about the eastern range limit for this species.
Striated Pardalote - many flocks, 20/7/89, Eyre Bird Observatory: one count of 92 made - RS.
Zebra Finch - 1, 24/4/89, Kelmscott - GMa.
Pied Butcherbird - 1, 18/6/89, Claremont Lake: seen and heard singing - NB.

UP NORTH

Flock Bronzewing - late April/early May, Camp Nifty, W of Telfer on edge of Great Sandy Desert - JB.
Dollarbird - 1, 19/4/89, Wyndham, in town: last sighting for the season - KO.
Spinifexbird - 1, 21/4/89, Bungle Bungles - KO.
Painted Firetail - 10, 23/4/89, Bungle Bungles - KO.

KEY TO OBSERVER CODES

AB - Allan Burbidge	LM - Lindsay Milhinch
AC - Andy Chapman	MC - Margery Clegg
BBa - Bryan Barrett	MHB - Mary Bremner
BBu - Bruce & Anne Buchanan	MO - Margaret Owen
BN - Brenda Newbey	MW - Mark Whackett
DM - Dusty Millar	NB - Norah Brockman
DN - Doug Nash	NH - Neil Hamilton
DP - David Pearson	NT - Noel Tyrer
GL - Graham Little	PA - Peter Anson
GM - George Miller	PC - Peter Congreve
GMa - Greg Marston	PRH - Peel Howden
IA - Ian Ashton	RN - Richard Nowotny
JB - John Brooke	RS - Rod Smith
JE - Jack Ewert	RSh - Ray Shulz
JH - Jack Hunt	RV - Rodney Vervest
KO - Kimberley Observer	TH - Tom Hordacre
LH - Lesley Harrison	TY - Tim Yates

WATERBIRD STUDIES

SCOPEWEST: Swan Coastal Plain Wetlands Study Begins

I've stepped into the waders of retiring Chief Wetfoot, Roger Jaensch and am currently wading through the initial tasks of setting up the new waterbird project. Roger has migrated north and it is with pleasure that I announce the beginning of

SCOPEWEST (Swan Coastal Plain Wetlands Study).

As outlined in the previous issue of W.A. Bird Notes (No. 50) this project is part of a multi-disciplinary study (about five projects in all) principally funded by the Water Authority of W.A. The SCOPEWEST study will provide species lists and counts, detailed breeding information and through banding studies, details of waterbird movements in the study area. The projects will examine many aspects of wetland ecology and hydrology.

As the project title implies, the research is confined to the Swan Coastal Plain. This area is bounded in the north by the Moore River, in the south by Bunbury and the east by the Darling Range. With CALM officers I have been busy travelling by road and air over most of the study area and have completed selection of about 250 sites for survey.

There are four scheduled survey periods each year: **October, January, April and July** and observers will have the whole month in which to carry out surveys. This is an important research project designed to provide accurate and readily usable information for managers which will be of vital importance to the conservation of our wetlands and waterbirds. Please register your positive intent in assisting with SCOPEWEST to Rodney Vervest at the W.A. Office. Recruitment slips will be sent out soon and a survey kit will be provided to participants. **The first SCOPEWEST survey will be in October 1989.**

REGULAR MONITORING PROGRAMME

For those observers outside the SCOPEWEST study area who have been collecting waterbird data on nature reserves or other wetlands, please continue with counts. Data sheets should be sent in as usual and will be stored at the W.A. office. The information will be used and acknowledged appropriately though no formal RAOU report will be published. For observers living in the SCOPEWEST study area, I would encourage you to 'join up' and focus your efforts on the new project. If you have a particular wetland you are monitoring and wish to continue with (i.e. one that is not included as a SCOPEWEST wetland), please continue and the RAOU will store the data.

ANNUAL WATERFOWL COUNT

The **NOVEMBER COUNT** is scheduled to run from **18 - 26 November 1989.**

Our last count in March this year produced a 'bumper' total of ~~348,000 waterfowl~~ and a near perfect coverage of the study area. This is great credit indeed to all waterfowl counters and we hope you will be available to survey your block in November. Recruiting forms will be coming your way in late September. Current participants, please notify Rodney Vervest (Duck Master) at the W.A. Office if you are *unable* to survey your block.

OBSERVATORY REPORTS

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

We have two pairs of nesting Black-necked Stork; one pair is easily accessible, the other not so. Two chicks in one nest have been observed regularly.

This year our wintering population of waders appear to have a greater number of birds in part or full breeding plumage which has helped to make the identification of species much easier.

Lake Eda has a great supply of water this year and the area continues to delight those willing to undertake the 50 km trip. Thousands of ducks, many raptors and Brolga in huge numbers are the highlights.

We have been pleased to see many WA members of the RAOU here this year. We wish you all many happy returns and for those who have not made the great northern trek include us in your next holiday plans. The observatory is a great starting point to the delights of the Kimberley. Let us help you become familiar with the birds first.

G. Hooper & B. Wells
Wardens

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

WARDENS REQUIRED

Ian Ashton will be leaving Eyre in January 1990 after almost two years as Warden. The RAOU is seeking a couple to take over the running of Eyre and would be pleased to hear from interested people.

Eyre Bird Observatory is operated in an old telegraph station on the Great Australian Bight. It is 30 km south of Cocklebidy which is on the Eyre Highway, 1100 km east of Perth. The stone house has accommodation for the two staff and 16 visitors.

Eyre runs courses on birds and other natural history subjects. It maintains a biological research programme in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve that includes weekly wader counts along the beach and bush bird counts in the mallee. Eyre is also an official weather recording station, sending reports twice a day to Perth.

The Warden's position involves organising meals, accommodation and activities for visitors, on whose fees the Observatory depends for its income. Eyre presently caters for 1000 visitor nights per year. The Warden also maintains the Observatory's plant, which includes two vehicles and other equipment necessary to operate a field station at a remote locality.

The combined salary package for the two staff is \$13,080. The position is an interesting and challenging one, calling for skill while providing many rewarding moments. The vital qualification is that staff enjoy the work. Terms of appointment as short as one year are acceptable because of the high level of commitment that is required for the position. A term of two years is preferred. Further information may be obtained from: Doug Watkins, Chairperson, Eyre Management Committee, Lot 25 Kinley Road, BANJUP 6164 Ph (09) 417 2422.

MALLEEFOWL MOUND SEARCH - EYRE

A search for Malleefowl mounds at Eyre Bird Observatory was organised in the week commencing July 16th. Eleven course participants booked for a week's hard work, so with Ian, Peter and Simon joining in when possible it was not difficult to ensure an effective number of search groups.

5.6 square kilometres of mallee were searched along the North Track by small groups walking a kilometre east or west of the track in lines 50 metres apart. We had immediate success when George and Pam Agar found the first: an active mound, crater-shaped, which had a huge pile of damp plant material inside, in the centre of which had been dug a steep-sided chamber. Surrounding the mound was an area which had been recently scratched clear of litter.

By the third day in this area nine mounds were discovered. Two

were active, one probably active this year and the others old.

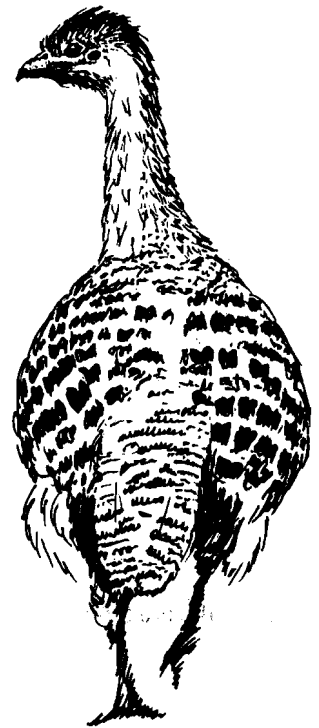
Another morning was spent searching near the microwave tower and that got off to a bright start with the sighting of a Malleefowl. Twelve mounds were found, one an active mound which was enthusiastically photographed.

All group members showed a keen application to the task and co-ordinated well. Recording the positions on a map and on the track will be a straightforward job because of their effective work.

The last day was spent on an outing to Twilight Cove. Even though travel along the beach was next to impossible we managed to sight seven whales and a party of ten Yellow-nosed Albatross. Ian's trained eye was sharp enough to spot a Cape Petrel which had been washed up.

It was a week which all enjoyed. Apart from the kindness of the weather we were favoured by the hard work and good humour of Ian, who had only just returned from a two weeks' break, and the pleasant co-operative spirit of Eyre's guests.

R. Smith



Malleefowl

ROGER JAENSCH

RAOU Field Officer WA 1981-1989

WA Bird Notes No. 18 May 1981 recorded the arrival of Roger Jaensch to be field officer for a "new and exciting project" (p.2), the "Waterbird Usage Survey". By WA Bird Notes No. 19 in September 1981 the new project was entitled the South West Waterbird Project and volunteers were being summoned. Roger also became joint editor of WA Bird Notes (with Graeme Chapman) from No. 19 to No. 28 (December 1983) inclusive, when the departure of Graeme Chapman to Canberra left Roger as sole editor for Nos. 29 to 36 (December 1985) inclusive. Pressure of other birding work then necessitated Roger handing over as Editor to another, but Roger continued as "Observations Officer" until his departure from WA in July 1989.

Roger Jaensch soon became well known to all bird-watchers in WA. His patience in training and encouraging others brought many more closely into bird-watching, particularly waders and waterbirds and by virtue of tireless effort he became well acquainted with an enormous range of wetlands through the whole of the south-west.

Always well organised, he was a popular leader of outings, excursions and expeditions. His quiet diplomacy grew the more assured as the years passed and his leadership ability became the more evident. During his time in WA, membership of the RAOU grew from about 60 to 600, an increase for which much is owed to Roger Jaensch. He has now taken up the challenge of an opportunity for leadership in the Asian Wetland Bureau in Malaysia. We thank him for his great contribution and wish him well for the future.

THE RAOU AUSTRALIAN BIRD COUNT

THE ATLAS WITH NUMBERS!

The most exciting and challenging national bird project - the RAOU Australian Bird Count (or ABC) is here at last! The RAOU invites you to enjoy the fun and thrill of being a CABBIE (short for Counter of Australian Birds)!

The ABC aims to investigate seasonal and year-to-year changes in the abundance of land-birds in a broad range of habitats throughout Australia. The project has immense conservation and scientific value because it will be the first of its kind to identify on a national scale those bird species which are endangered, common or even those which have reached pest status. Secondly, it will help identify those habitats which should be conserved to ensure proper management of all our birds. Analyses of results will also improve our understanding of seasonal bird movements within Australia, which are poorly known at the moment.

The ABC is a 5-year project, at least. It is now possible for all contributors to the Atlas Project, plus others who missed out on all that fun, to help the RAOU achieve the goals of the ABC by counting birds regularly in the same location or opportunistically in remote areas.

Benefits

You will learn first-hand about the status of Australian land-birds on both a local and national scale. You will be given regular and frequent feedback on the project's progress through published articles, reports and seminars at local and national bird meetings. You will contribute to knowledge of our birds, particularly in the area of conservation. You can make each survey an enjoyable social event by taking a few friends and/or relatives along with you.

Involvement

Observers are asked to count birds regularly in defined areas, using identical procedures on each visit. The survey site can be in your local area, but the emphasis is on nature reserves, national parks, state forests or any other site where the natural vegetation is uniform and of stable tenure. The **minimum** number of surveys per site we request from each observer is **two in spring/summer and two in autumn/winter**. You are free to survey your sites more frequently, if you wish; there are already some enthusiastic volunteers who have started on a programme of monthly surveys. However, it is entirely up to you if you wish to survey your sites more frequently than the minimum level. Each visit to your site will require at least three 20-minute surveys. If you think you can commit yourself to a few hours of bird counting at the same site throughout the year, then you are the ideal person for this project! Few people will be able to make regular surveys in remote areas, but information from such locations is still important. Therefore, even single 20-minute counts will be valuable, in a specified habitat (e.g. mulga or spinifex/mallee), in a remote area. If several people make such counts at different times of the year (albeit in different but precise areas), a picture should emerge of gross seasonal changes in particular habitats.

Joining In

Firstly, you should write to me and become a registered cabbie. Provide your name and address, and the name(s) of the site(s) you wish to survey. I will then send you out the Project Kit complete with instruction booklet, data sheets and a list of other

project participants in your local area. This is an invitation to ALL birders.

The Project Office is set up at the Australian Museum. Correspondence can be sent to me:

C/- Department of Vertebrate Ecology, The Australian Museum, 6-8 College Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

The ABC Project is an exciting and challenging concept and the benefits gained will be far-reaching. It has the potential to contribute as much to Australian ornithology as did the Atlas Project, if not more. The success of the project depends on YOU, so sign up today and become a CABBIE right now! Happy Birding!

Stephen Ambrose

(Coordinator)

NATIONAL PARKS PROJECT REPORT

After nearly two years of operation it is time for an account of the Project.

Over 14000 records have been received and entered into the database. These have come from 82 Parks, Reserves or sites. It was decided some time ago to extend the scope of the Project to cover any easily identifiable area in Western Australia and we now have numerous records for places members have visited on a regular basis over several years. State Forests, Nature Reserves, Lakes, Shire Districts, farming properties etc as well as the National Parks are covered.

We still will be providing C.A.L.M. with data for Checklists for the various Parks, but it became obvious that the data had a wider long term value for research and so the scope has been extended both in locality and in time.

The value of such a database increases greatly with both time and volume. In ten years when there will be 100,000 records it will be a really worthwhile source of information when submissions for Government are being prepared and due to its size and age will carry considerable weight.

The computer programme can provide some useful and interesting printouts already. Below are samples of information available. The first is the normal list of species observed in a particular area (Peak Charles) with the number of times birds have been sighted. The summary at the end of the Report shows the number of CARDS which have been received for the area. Comparing sightings with cards can indicate the possible rarity of a species or more positively the ease of seeing it. The second printout shows the distribution of a particular bird (Crested Shrike-tit). It shows where it has been seen and when. Both Reports can be given for the full period of the Project or for any specified period. This last feature is useful in investigating migration or nomadism.

The above Reports are available to Members who require them for their own research or interest at no cost. They are sold to others who use them professionally. It takes some time to print out these Reports so don't rush in to the Office on the day you want one!

New record CARDS are now printed. Your eyesight and ours should benefit. The numbers against the birds are the R.A.O.U. Atlas numbers and are used for recording. We have not been sending out replacement cards recently due to the new cards being prepared but all contributors should soon receive some new cards. New members who want to send in records please contact the Office for details. There is a list of locations presently being used but if you are in doubt, determine your own location and send us the parameters with the list. The surest method is to use the Travellers Atlas and give a Latitude and Longitude reference and a nearby town or feature.

Remember to keep those cards rolling in. One record card for a locality is good but regular cards for the same locality are even better. Make it routine to note any sightings on a card and send them to the Office. We will record them for posterity.

Finally, thanks to the many dedicated birdwatchers who have sent in the 14,000 records and particular thanks to Sandra Fincham who not only sends in many records but has spent long hours at the computer entering the data.

C. Napier
Project Coordinator

NOTICES

NEW PUBLICATION

The latest volume in an interesting and valuable series on the regional distribution of Western Australian birds has been published by the WA Museum. This is, Storr G.M. and Johnstone R.E. (1988) *Birds of the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent seas and islands*, published by the WA Museum. It is Supplement 28 of the Records of the Western Australian Museum from where it may be purchased (\$5). It is dedicated to the memory of one of WA's outstanding ornithologists,

Julian Ford.

ROAD WORK VOLUNTEERS, EYRE

Bill Graham has some volunteers for help to improve the scarp descent to Eyre. More are needed. Accommodation at Eyre for volunteers will be half price - an opportunity to visit an outstanding birding area, get some gentle exercise in the open air and cheaply. Contact Bill Graham, PO Box 101, Scarborough 6019, Tel 341 5389.

WILDFLOWER EXHIBITION

We are hoping to have a display and to be able to sell RAOU cards again at the Kings Park Wildflower Exhibition which is from September 29 to October 3 (9 am - 7 pm). We would be very grateful for as many volunteers as can give their time to help. Please ring the RAOU office and give your name and telephone number if you would like to join us.

It has also been suggested that an R.A.O.U. display should be set up and cards sold for one day at each of the larger shopping centres during Bird Week which begins on 22nd October. All volunteers will be welcome.

The trading table will be at the Busselton Wildflower Exhibition from September 20th to 23rd and the Darlington and Kalamunda Festivals both late in October.

M. Wilson

EGRET WATCH

The Shortland Wetland Centre at Wallsend NSW is seeking observers across Australia to take part in their Project Egret Watch, which is investigating the breeding biology, migration and ecology of all four species of egret in Australia. Observers can either look for colour banded birds (legs) or wing-tagged birds and/or report any sightings whether banded/tagged or not.

The banding/tagging is being done in Queensland and NSW and it is probably unlikely that many banded/tagged birds will reach south-west WA. However, there are interesting results thus far, with birds sighted up to 2500 kilometres from their place of banding/tagging.

Should you see a banded/tagged egret please note the colour sequence of bands top down on both legs or the shape and colour (top down) of wing tags and inform the RAOU Office. If you wish to participate write to Shortland Wetlands Centre, PO Box 130, Wallsend, 2287 NSW.

GREY FALCON

I am presently examining the ornithological literature in an attempt to glean any records of Grey Falcon sightings in the South-west of W.A. In addition, I am hoping to unearth some unpublished records and it would be appreciated if observers could hunt through their field records for any Grey Falcon sightings.

I would be most grateful if the details of any sightings were forwarded to Murray Unkovich at 80 Clarence Street, Brunswick East, Victoria 3057.

COOMBERDALE LAKES

Ron van Delft is seeking people interested in accompanying him to the Coomberdale Lakes area, approximately 20 kms north of Moora, in mid November, as part of the Great Duck Count. Ron envisages a small group helping count in the many lakes of the area. If you are interested please contact Ron on 279.9913.

BIRD WEEK 23-27 OCTOBER, 1989

We hope to draw public attention to birds and their environment during Bird Week 23-27 October 1989. The public libraries in W.A. are being invited to mount displays. If you wish to help with Bird Week please go and talk with the librarian in your local public library. The librarians may appreciate your knowledge - and your extra pair of hands (to help set up a display).

The second thrust is an offer of assistance to schools to talk to students about birds during Bird Week. A limited number of slides can be made available for these school visits. If you wish to participate send/telephone your name, address and telephone number to the RAOU office. Thank you in anticipation.

Rod Smith
Margaret Owens
Dot Kingston

RAOU SCIENTIFIC DAY 27 MAY 1989

The Australasian Wader Studies Group organised the Scientific Day. Speakers delivered papers on various aspects of wader study, including Clive Minton's summary of the RAOU effort in the North West since 1981. His paper stressed the importance of the Broome-Port Hedland coastline to waders, where up to a third of the total peak wader population of Australia may congregate. Scientific data from capture and from radar studies have helped to determine the distance and direction of travel of many species. Other papers of interest to WA birders dealt with wader studies in South-East Asia and with the perplexing matter of the location of breeding sites. Cassettes of speeches are available from: RAOU, 21 Gladstone Street, Moonee Ponds, 3039.

PROSPECTIVE LEADERS

Are you interested in knowing more about becoming a better excursion leader. An informal afternoon is to be arranged to discuss the finer points with experienced leaders on hand to answer any questions.

Please contact Chris Wilder (401.8329) if interested.

