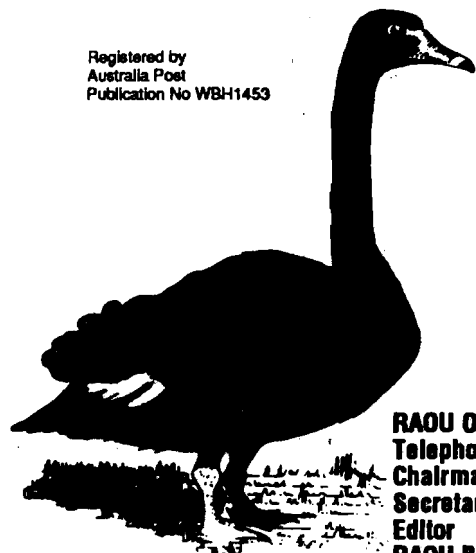


Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the WA Group
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union



RAOU Office in WA
Telephone
Chairman
Secretary
Editor
RAOU Birding Hotline

Room 218, 15 Oglvie Road, Canning Bridge 6153
(09) 364 6202
B Wilson, 46 Farrant Street, Gooseberry Hill 6076, Telephone (09) 293 1094
C Wilder, 28 Craigie Drive, Craigie 6025, Telephone (09) 401 8329
Bruce Buchanan, 2 Jarman Avenue, Manning 6152
(09) 364 7349

A RAPTOR DINNER PARTY

Lake Yangebup is about 30m beyond my window. In recent years the water level has risen killing trees and bushes whose skeletons now stand mirrored in the water. At present the Lake is being pumped down so that there is a strip of muddy shore. It was here that the following drama took place.

On 21 February 1990 at about 5.00 p.m. I looked out and saw a Marsh Harrier at the edge of the water with an Eurasian Coot in its talons. A second Marsh Harrier appeared to harass it momentarily. The second Marsh Harrier perched on a dead branch over the water, while the first dragged the Eurasian Coot along the shore a short way, before settling to tear bites off it, ripping and swinging its head forward and up so that feathers flew. In the next few minutes two Whistling Kites and two Australian Ravens flew low and harassed the feeding Marsh Harrier, but it paid little attention. Now and again, however, it would crouch and spread its wings low over the Eurasian Coot like a tent, as if it were trying to hide itself and its prey. This went on for some time.

Suddenly a Little Eagle swooped down. The Marsh Harrier took off immediately and flew away. The change-over was so smooth it was like the passing of a baton in a relay race. The Little Eagle settled on the Eurasian Coot, then dragged it through the water to a small island about a metre across and a

metre offshore. At this stage the Eurasian Coot was still alive and flapped feebly whenever the big birds stopped standing on it with their full weight. The Little Eagle settled to feed in much the same way as the Marsh Harrier had.

Twice two Black Swans sailed past about ten metres further out. When this happened the Little Eagle would crouch and tent its prey. After perhaps half an hour two Whistling Kites appeared. One flew down close enough to touch the Little Eagle and flapped its wings. The Little Eagle showed no concern, and the two Whistling Kites settled in dead trees over the water and remained there for a long time. An Australian Raven landed on the Little Eagle's island, close enough to touch. The Little Eagle postured, then resumed its feeding. The Australian Raven remained for a long time, unperturbed. At times the Little Eagle had its back to the Australian Raven which was almost touching the Little Eagle's tail; at other times the Little Eagle would half turn and feed, as if to keep an eye on the intruder.

I watched this spectacle for an hour. Then I left for 15 minutes. When I returned all the birds were gone except one of the Whistling kites still sitting in its tree over the water.

A.J. Peacey

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 February to April 1990.

Correction in WA Bird Notes No 52 December 1989, 1 Osprey reported at Lake Monger on 15/5/88 not 15/5/89.

Compiled by Rodney Vervest.

DOWN SOUTH

Hoary-headed Grebe - 340, 8/4/90, Lake Walyungup - JH
Cattle Egret - 6, 15/3/90, Wiese Lake, Williams - LR * 2, 27/3/90, Kogolup Lake - JH

Little Egret - 1, 7/3/90, Blue Gum Lake - MC * 21, 1/4/90, Peel Inlet, Mandurah - RN

Eastern Reef Egret - 1, 23/3/90, Cape Leeuwin - GL

Rufous Night Heron - 8, Mar.90, nr. Bicton Water Polo Club: with 2 immature birds - PA

Australasian Bittern - 1, 13/2/90, Thomsons Lake - GMc

Glossy Ibis - 2, 3/3/90, Lake McLarty - RAOU excursion * 2, 11/3/90, Herdsman Lake - RN * 1, 25/4/90, Hurstview Lake - BBu

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - 21, 14/2/90, Forrestdale Lake - GMc * 100, 10/3/90, Lake Mealup - PW * 1, 16/3/90, Hammond Park, Kalgoorlie - GB * 14, 23/3/90, Molloy Island, Augusta - GL * 220, 1/4/90, Lake Mealup - DJ * 32, 28/4/90, Mullet Lake - CN, WN

Freckled Duck - 3, 16/12/89, Lake Chittering - BK * 2, 11/3/90, Northam Town Weir (Avon River) - JMa

Pacific Black Duck - 1800, 15/4/90, Tordit-garrup Lagoon - MB

Chestnut Teal - Pair, 20/3/90, North Lake - SN

Australasian Shoveler - 100, 18/3/90, Mogumber N.R. - JB

Osprey - 1, 27/3/90, Kogolup Lake - JH

Square-tailed Kite - 1, 28/10/89, Flynn Rd. The Lakes - IS et al * 1, 6/1/90, Greenmount - IS et al * 1, 30/3/90, over Roleystone Shopping Centre - JS, HS * 1, 4/4/90, Canning River, Riverton - JH

White-bellied Sea-Eagle - 1, 3/3/90, Lake McLarty - RAOU excursion * 1, 3/4/90, nr. Lake McLarty - JM

Spotted Harrier - 1 immature, 14/3/90, Lake Cooloongup - JH, GMc

Marsh Harrier - 1, 4/4/90, Canning River, Riverton - JH * 1, 12/4/90, Welshpool - JH

Peregrine Falcon - 1, 29/1/90, Lake Cooloongup - GM * 1 immature bird, 13/2/90, Thomsons Lake - GMc * 1, 2/4/90, Pindathuna Stn, Murchison - PM

Australian Hobby - 2, 15/3/90, Craigie - CW

Mallee Fowl - 1, July/August 89, Great Northern Highway, nr. Ninghan Station - CP * 3 (1 pair & 1 single bird), 1/4/90, Dryandra - JS, HS

Buff-banded Rail - Pair, 7/2/90, Riverton Bridge: with 5 young - JH

Baillon's Crake - 2, 22/3/90, Thomsons Lake - JH * 1, 30/3/90, Lake McLarty - JH

Australian Crake - 2, 30/3/90, Lake McLarty - JH

Spotless Crake - 1 dead bird, 19/1/90, Westfield Park Primary School Swamp, Kelmscott - GM * 1, 25/2/90, Westfield Park Primary School Swamp, Kelmscott - GM * 1, 7/3/90, Lake Monjingup nr. Esperance - GB

Purple Swampphen - 200+, 22/3/90, Thomsons Lake - JH, TK

Australian Bustard - 2, 12/11/89, Sheoak Rock - IS et al

Bush Thick-knee - 2, 13/3/90, Dryandra - BW

Hooded Plover - Pair, 18/3/90, Lake Preston: with 2 very young chicks - BB * 1, 25/4/90, Bodey's Swamp, Wannamal - BBu * 45, 5/5/90, Stokes Inlet - CN, WN

Large Sand Plover - 1, 13/3/90, Lake Cooloongup - GM

Black-fronted Plover - 54, 17/3/90, Nth Kogolup Lake - DJ * 52, 27/3/90, Kogolup Lake - JH * 67, 8/4/90, Amarillo Pool - JH, TK

Black-winged Stilt - 800+, 13/2/90, Thomsons Lake - GMc

Banded Stilt - 12, 14/2/90, Forrestdale Lake - GMc * c.1000, 28/4/90, Mullet Lake - CN, WN

Red-necked Avocet - 1, 27/1/90, Hurstview Lake - BBu * 350, 3/3/90, Lake McLarty - RAOU excursion

Eastern Curlew - 5, 17/2/90, Leschenault Inlet - DW, TK

Whimbrel - 1, 23/3/90, Cape Leeuwin - GL

Wood Sandpiper - 1, 11/2/90, Yangebup Lake - GMc * 38, 3/3/90, Lake McLarty - RAOU excursion * 22, 12/3/90, Hurstview Lake - BBu * 24, 14/3/90, Amarillo Pool - JH, GMc * 2, 15/3/90, Kogolup Lake - PH * 1, 17/3/90, Lake Claremont - DM * 10, 22/3/90, Thomsons Lake - JH

Marsh Sandpiper - 15/3/90, Thompson Lake - PH

Black-tailed Godwit - 14, 3/3/90, Lake McLarty - RAOU excursion * 17, 30/3/90, Lake McLarty - JH

Red Knot - 12 (3 in breeding plumage), 5/5/90, Stokes Inlet - CN, WN

Pectoral Sandpiper - 1, 3/2/90, Amarillo Pool - JH et al * 1, 14/3/90, Amarillo Pool - JH, GMc

Long-toed Stint - 1, 7/1/90, Lake Cooloongup - GM * 3, 14/3/90, Amarillo Pool - JH, GMc * 5, 8/4/90, Amarillo Pool - JH

Ruff - 1, Feb 90, Forrestdale Lake - DJ, TK * 1, 24/2/90, Namming Lake - BBu

Australian Pratincole - 1 pair, 8/10/89, 18km E of Reid on Nullarbor - JR

White-winged Black Tern - 120, 13/2/90, Thomsons Lake - GMc * 150, 27/3/90, Thomsons Lake - JH * 3, 5/4/90, Wonnerup Estuary - RP

Gull-billed Tern - 1, 17/2/90, Leschenault Inlet - DW, TK

Roseate Tern - 12, 1/4/90, Golden Bay - GM * 8, 1/4/90, north of Singleton Beach - RN

Brush Bronzewing - 1, 15/4/90, Dwellingup - GA

Little Corella - 180+, 22/4/90, Bayswater - TA

Regent Parrot - 50, 13/4/90, Dawsville - JM

Elegant Parrot - 40+, 10/3/90, Pinjarra - JS, HS

Pallid Cuckoo - 1, 2/4/90, Pindathuna Stn, Murchison - PM * 1, 9/4/90, Lake Joondalup Nth - GL, CW

Fan-tailed Cuckoo - 1, 27/4/90, Beermullah Lake - BBu

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo - 1, 11/2/90, Yangebup Lake - GMc

Southern Boobook - 1, 6/3/90 & 7/4/90, Yokine - IS, BWi

Spotted Nightjar - 2, 11/11/89, Sheoak Rock - IS et al * 3, 15/4/90, Boyagin Rock Nature Reserve - GM

Fork-tailed Swift - 200+, 10-14/3/90, Geraldton Lighthouse - AS * 50, 18/3/90, Kelmscott Scarp - GM * 7, 18/3/90, Neerabup National Park - CW * 178+, 23/3/90, Drummonds Cove - PM * 6, 31/3/90, Yokine - IS, BWi * 20, 1/4/90, Yokine - IS, BWi * 200+, 1/4/90, Craigie - CW * 150, 1/4/90, Beldon - JP * 8-10, 1/4/90, Roleystone - EK * 200+, 1/4/90, Roleystone - SN * 3, 1/4/90, Bold Park - RN * 15-20+, 1/4/90, Peel Inlet, Mandurah - RN * 60+, 1/4/90, Lancelin - DB * 150, 9/4/90, Lake Joondalup Nth - GL, CW * 50, 10/4/90, Roleystone - EK * 100+, 18/4/90, Queens Park - JH * 50+, 19/4/90, Canning Vale - JH

Red-backed Kingfisher - 1, 9/11/89, Junction of Southern Cross-Lake King-Hyden-Norseman Rds - IS et al

Sacred Kingfisher - 1, 8/10/89, 12km E of Reid on Nullarbor - JR * 1, 19/10/89, Loonganna Townsite - JR

Rainbow Bee-eater - 44, 28/1/90, Drummonds Cove - PM

White-winged Triller - 2, 11/2/90, Yangebup Lake - GMc

Scarlet Robin - 1 (male), 17/10/89, Forrest Aerodrome - JR

Crested Shrike-tit - 1, 28/10/89, Flynn Rd. The Lakes - IS et al * 1 female, 11/11/89, Junction of Southern Cross-Lake King-Hyden-Norseman Rds - IS et al * present, 13/3/90, Dryandra BW * 1, 29/3/90, Shannon River National Park - GL

Gilbert's Whistler - 1 male, 8/11/89, & 1 male, 1 female, 11/11/89, Junction of Southern Cross-Lake King-Hyden-Norseman Rds - IS et al * 1 female, 10/11/89, Lake Johnston - IS et al

Crested Bellbird - 1, 29/3/90, Shannon River National Park - GL

Chestnut Quail-thrush - 3, 9/11/89, Junction of Southern Cross-Lake King-Hyden-Norseman Rds - IS et al * 4, 10/11/89, Lake Johnston - IS et al * 2, 10/11/89, Scamp Rock - IS et al

Cinnamon Quail-thrush - 1, 2/4/90, Pindathuna Stn, Murchison - PM

Red-winged Fairy-wren - 9-10, 6/1/90, Wungong Gorge - BB et al

Southern Emu-wren - 1, 24/2/90, Ellis Brook, Martin - DJ
Redthroat - 2 pairs, 14/12/89, Hamersley Inlet, Fitzgerald River National Park - RP

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater - 2, 29/3/90, Shannon River National Park - GL * 1, 2/4/90, Stony Brook, Roleystone - RS

Grey-fronted Honeyeater - 1, 28/4/90, Wannamal townsite - BBu

White-cheeked Honeyeater - 6, Feb.90, Hollywood Reserve - AM

White-fronted Chat - 10, 13/3/90, nr. Westfield Park Primary School Swamp, Kelmscott - GM

Spotted Pardalote - 5+ including 2 immatures, 2/12/89, Wungong Gorge - IS et al

Red-eared Firetail - 7+ including 2+ juveniles or immatures, 2/12/89, Wungong Gorge - IS et al * 10-12, 6/1/90, Wungong Gorge BB et al * 4+ immatures or juveniles, 27/1-29/1/90, Dwellingup IS et al * 2, 24/2/90, Ellis Brook, Martin - DJ * 20-30, 24/3/90, Wungong Gorge - BB, MC

Australian Magpie-lark - nesting, 2/4/90, Gabyon Stn, Murchison PM

Grey Currawong - 2, 3/3/90, Wandi Reserve, Wandi - DJ

UP NORTH

Blue-billed Duck - 2 females or immatures, 30/12/89, Lake Eda, Broome - IS et al

Black-breasted Buzzard - 1 dark phase, 22/12/89, 100km south of The Overlander Roadhouse - IS et al

Sanderling - 1, 25/12/89, Cable Beach, Broome - IS et al

Gull-billed Tern - 2, 24/12/89, De Grey River crossing on Great Northern Highway - IS et al

Little Bronze-cuckoo - 1, 31/12/89, Broome Sewerage Works - IS et al

Yellow Wagtail - 2, 25/12/89, Roebuck Bay Caravan Park - IS et al

Cinnamon Quail-thrush - 2, 5/1/90, The Granites, Mt Magnet - IS, BWi

Slaty-backed Thornbill - 4-5, 5/1/90, The Granites, Mt Magnet - IS, BWi

Black-chinned Honeyeater - 2, 4/1/90, Marble Bar - IS et al

Banded Honeyeater - 1, 1/1/90, Barred Creek nr. Broome - IS et al

Painted Firetail - 60+, 23/12/89, Ashburton River crossing - IS et al * in small groups totalling 60+, 4/1/90, Marble Bar - IS et al

Star Finch - 150-200, 4/1/90, Marble Bar - IS et al

KEY TO OBSERVER CODES

AM - Aubrey Moore	JB - John Blyth
AS - Alex Scarff	JH - Jack Hunt
BB - Bryan Barrett	JM - John Malcolm
BBu - Bruce Buchanan	JMa - Jim Masters
BK - Brad Kneebone	JP - Julian Pegler
BW - Brian Wilson	JR - John Rodger
BWi - Bev Wilcox	JS - John Start
CN - Clive Napier	LR - Lawrence Rose
CP - Colin Payne	MB - Mary Bremner
CW - Chris Wilder	MC - Margery Clegg
DB - Diane Beckingham	PA - Peter Anson
DJ - David James	PH - Peel Howden
DM - Dusty Millar	PM - Peter Mack
DW - Doug Watkins	PW - Peter Wilmot
EK - Elizabeth King	RN - Richard Nowotny
GA - George Agar	RP - Ross Payton

GB - Greg Barrett
GL - Graham Little
GM - George Miller
GMc - Gordon McDonald
HS - Helen Start
IS - Ian Standring

RS - Rod Smith
SN - Simon Neville
TA - T. Austin
TK - Tony Kirkby
WN - Wendy Napier

WATERBIRD STUDIES

WATERBIRD STUDIES

TWELVE MONTHS IN THE PITS

Recent negotiations between the Waterbirds Officer and ALCOA of Australia have resulted in a 12-month waterbird study at ALCOA's Wellard clay-pit. This follows from recommendations made earlier by the RAOU (see RAOU Report No. 26, 1986).

Local ornithologist, Ben Carr has been employed as Project Officer and detailed surveys of waterbirds and bush birds have already commenced.

Included in the regular survey work are some spot-lighting surveys (for nocturnal birds) and (later in the year) evening listenings for crakes and bitterns.

Any people interested in helping out with these surveys or simply interested in visiting this unique wetland, should contact Rodney Vervest at the RAOU office.

SCOPEWEST

Analysis of the October, January and April data is now underway and a preliminary report will be posted soon.

There have been many reports of wing-tagged spoonbills, ibis and egrets along with nasal-tagged ducks. These reports are giving us important information on movements of birds and the types of wetlands they use at different times.

Chris Wilder and Sue Kelly have contributed much to the data entry aspects of SCOPEWEST and I am most grateful for their willing help. Allan Burbidge from CALM devised the computer program to accept the data and this is running smoothly. Thanks Allan!

Once this initial batch of data is analysed I hope to be able to report back to you more frequently. The next SCOPEWEST survey is in July and I look forward to your participation then.

ANNUAL WATERFOWL COUNT

Once again thank you all for your efforts with this project.

Data entry and partial analysis for March 1990 will be completed soon. If you do have outstanding data, it is not too late to send it in but please do so promptly.

As many of you will be aware, early rains dispersed waterfowl far and wide and it will be very interesting to note the effects this has had on numbers. Dumbleyung Lake provides an example in that counts in March 89 were over 33,000 and in March 90 less than 1,000 birds were tallied.

Parts of the Esperance, Ravensthorpe and Bremer Bay districts had more water in March than in November. One observer in Esperance reported '30 feet' of water over the track leading to one wetland.

There is a wealth of anecdotal information supplied on data sheets, a lot of which would probably make an amusing book!

One observer conducted a 1.1/2 hour survey wearing only 'hat and binoculars', due to the necessity of being 'dry' at a meeting in a country centre. Such fortitude has rarely been paralleled.

Tales of encounters with snakes, bulls and dogs are common but all invariably handled with the deftness and 'fleet of foot' acquired through being an RAOU duck counter.

The technical attributes of the Waterbirds Officer himself were recently demeaned in the eyes of his colleagues, when his vessel sank some distance from shore. The decision to go 'public' with this information is done in an effort to head off a steady and progressively widening flow of jocularly aimed at the Waterbirds Officer from certain circles.

Please note, the vessel has since been recovered.

Rodney Vervest
Captain, Duck Brigade

LOCAL RAOU AUSTRALIAN BIRD COUNT ACTIVITIES

Stephen Ambrose, Co-ordinator of the ABC Project, will be in Perth 16-24 July (inclusive). This will be your chance to catch up with him in connection with the ABC Project by taking part in one or more ABC activities.

9.30 am - 2.30 pm (approx.), Tuesday 17 July 1990

Venue: Meet at King's Park War Memorial

Activity: Bird counts in King's Park

Will suit people who like to bird watch in a leisurely manner, as well as the active birder. Bring your own lunch.

9.00 am onwards, Sunday 22 July 1990

Venue: Meet outside entrance to Sloane Cottage, Wellard Road, Leda.

8.00 pm, Monday 23 July 1990 - RAOU Meeting

Stephen will be presenting the results of the honeyeater banding trip to the Nullarbor. However, he will also talk about the progress of the ABC Project (using examples from WA counts) with the help of Michelle Christy.

NOTICES

RAOU CONGRESS 1991

The Conservation of Australian Birds

Notification of the Congress was given in the previous issue of WA Bird Notes but the dates were inadvertently omitted.

Please note the Congress is from Friday 20 September to Sunday 22 September 1991. The campout is from Sunday 22 September until Friday 27 September.

RAOU CONGRESS 1991

- Friday 20 September - Sunday 22 September

The Conservation of Australian Birds

It is requested that those who wish to present papers at the Congress contact Allan Burbidge as soon as possible. The task of co-ordinating papers is one which has to be attended to promptly in order that other deadlines may be met. At this stage of planning a brief statement of intent is all that is required.

Please contact Allan at: **Room 218, 15 Ogilvie Road**
CANNING BRIDGE WA 6153

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY - WARDENS FOR 1991

Gwen and Graham Goodreid, currently wardens at Eyre, will complete their term in January 1991. New wardens will then be required. Anybody who is interested in an interesting post is invited to contact:

Eyre Management Committee
Room 218, 15 Ogilvie Road
CANNING BRIDGE WA 6153
(09) 364 6202

Early contact with prospective wardens is desirable.

LOGO COMPETITION - RAOU CONGRESS 1991

Next year's Congress in Perth requires a logo. The organisers invite those who are interested to submit drawings of the subject, the Western Spinebill, incorporating into the design some aspect of its natural environment such as a food plant. Other requirements are that it should be readily reproducible in black and white, and it will be for the exclusive use by the RAOU. Entries must be received no later than Friday 13th July. The results will be published in the September 1990 issue of WABN.

The prize for the winning entrant will be free registration for the Congress. Artwork and queries are to be directed to:

The Organiser

RAOU Congress 1991

Room 218, 15 Ogilvie Road

CANNING BRIDGE WA 6153

SEABIRD SLIDE LIBRARY

The WA Group has been informed of the availability of a catalogued list of slides of seabirds being offered for mail-order sale. Interested readers should note that the service is based in the UK and the birds are of that region.

Details may be obtained by ringing **364 6202**.

THE FORKTAIL-LEICA AWARD

Leica UK have generously donated 500 pounds sterling for this award in 1990. The Forktail-Leica award will be given to a project which fits one or more of the following categories:-

1. A forest survey useful for conservation.
2. A survey or study of globally-threatened species.
3. A study of a little-known protected area.
4. Conservation education which has an emphasis on birds.

Project applications are welcomed from individuals and non-affiliated groups, as well as groups organised by a conservation organisation or university. Applications from nationals in the Orient region (which can include the support of an on-going project) are particularly encouraged.

The closing date for applications is 15th August 1990. The winning project will be announced in December.

Applications, which should include a summary of objectives and details of implementation, should be sent to **The Conservation Officer, Oriental Bird Club, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL, UK.**

SURVEY GRANTS

Information on the habitats, status and migration routes of many Oriental birds, and the threats they are facing, is urgently required for use by Departments of Wildlife Conservation and National Parks, by national bird clubs and by other non-governmental societies and organisations. OBC members can make valuable contributions by undertaking surveys. Examples include:

1. Contributing to check-lists of poorly-known protected areas held on national database.
2. Surveys of habitat types which are currently unprotected in the country concerned.
3. Surveys of threatened or little-known species.
4. Identification of migration stop-over sites.

There are opportunities for surveys lasting from a few days to a few months. Oriental Bird Club members visiting or living in the Oriental region are asked to consider undertaking a survey. The OBC will award small grants each year to facilitate and encourage such survey work. The grant will be towards

alleviating the extra expenses incurred in reaching remote areas, hiring local guides etc, and is unlikely to exceed 250 pounds sterling. Applications, which should include a summary of the survey's objectives and details of implementation, will be considered at any time during the year.

OBC MEMBERSHIP

RAOU members may be interested in joining the OBC which publishes two informative bulletins and an excellent journal, 'Forktail', annually. The Membership Secretary's address is OBC c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL, UK.

MT LESUEUR BROCHURE

The Chairman would like to thank members who have made a donation towards the cost of producing the brochure being prepared by the Mt Lesueur Forum in opposition to the proposed coal mine/power station.

PHOTOGRAPHS NEEDED

Jim Lane of CALM's Wildlife Research Centre (Woodvale) is seeking high quality photographs of albatross in flight, preferably Wandering Albatross, and Australian Kestrel hovering, for use in the next issue of 'Landscape'. If you can assist, contact Jim on 405 5100.

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

MORE AUSTRALIAN RAVEN STORAGE BEHAVIOUR

After reading the article on unusual behaviour of an Australian Raven by G. Marston in the March 1990 issue of WABN No. 53 I thought the following observation may be of interest.

While sitting in our car at the picnic area at The Loop on the Murchison River near Kalbarri, we saw an Australian Raven being thrown food scraps by other picnickers. After a short time the bird had apparently eaten its fill. It then proceeded to walk a few metres with the surplus food in its beak. It then scraped a small hole in the loose soil with its beak, dropped the food into it, then covered it with soil and placed a small stone or stick on top of it. This it did several times, selecting a different spot each time.

H.B. Gibbs

INTERESTING BIRD SIGHTINGS AT CAPE ARID NATIONAL PARK

As part of the expedition organised by Stephen Ambrose to band honeyeaters on the southern edge of the Nullarbor, we spent the 5th to 21st of January in Cape Arid National Park.

The National Park is quite large (about 310,000 hectares), but we concentrated our efforts in two areas: The Boolenup Walk Trail, near the coast in the south-western corner of the National Park, and at Mt Ragged which is about 50km from the coast and reached only by 4WD.

Most of our time was spent catching and banding birds, but during the 17 days of our stay we recorded 62 of the approximately 170 species which have been recorded in the park. The most interesting of our records are listed below.

Square-tailed Kite - one foraging low over mallee woodland (*Eucalyptus cooperiana*) about 3km southwest of Mt Ragged (15th January) and one (or possibly two) foraging low over Swamp Yates (*E. occidentalis*) and *Banksia media* on the Boolenup trail (16th and 18th).

Hooded Plover - several sightings including a group of three

adults and three immatures on the beach at Yokinup Bay on the 9th.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo - 10-15 flying over the Boolenup Trail on the 7th; this is an eastern range extension of about 25km from the limit noted by Storr (1987) where he states that the easternmost known record is from 20km ESE of Condingup.

Purple-crowned Lorikeet - 100's in flowering mallees (*Eucalyptus cooperiana*) 3-5km southwest of Mt Ragged (10th and 15th) in an area where very few had been recorded in previous visits during spring and autumn.

Sacred Kingfisher - two near the waterhole at Junana Rock (about 10km north of Mt Ragged) (10th) and one about 6km south west of Mt Ragged (15th), near the limit of its usual range in the south-west.

Richard's Pipit - on the 15th we saw about 100, including one flock of about 50, one of about 20 and two of about 10, on the road within a distance of less than 30km, near the junction of Fisheries Road and the Balladonia road (in farmland outside the park) in an area where less than 10 were seen on the 10th.

Rufous Songlark - one at Junana Rock was an unusual record for this area (in the National Park it has only been recorded at Junana Rock and Pine Hill).

Scarlet Robin - an immature male on the Boolenup Trail; this is within five km of the eastern limit for this species in Western Australia.

Western Yellow Robin - several records at Mt Ragged and at the Boolenup Trail.

Blue-breasted Fairy-wren - about 5km southwest of Mt Ragged and at Junana Rock on the 10th; these are the only two localities known for this species in the park.

Purple-gaped Honeyeater - common at Mt Ragged. **White-cheeked Honeyeater** - at Mt Ragged on the 14th; this is the farthest inland record for this part of the bird's range.

Red-eared Firetail - one (or, probably, two) on the Boolenup Trail; this is within five km of the easternmost limit for this species.

As the National Park is currently being surveyed by research staff from CALM, any information from other observers is also of interest. If you have any information, please send any bird-lists to Clive Napier for the RAOU National Parks Birdlists project, or else contact Allan Burbidge.

A. Burbidge & J. Talbot

Reference: Storr J M (1987) *Birds of the Eucla Division of Western Australia*, Records of the Western Australian Museum Supplement No 27, WA Museum.

EARLY MORNING ENCOUNTER

At about 7.30 a.m. on Tuesday March 13th 1990, I was on an early morning walk near the settlement at Dryandra State Forest when I saw a Bush Thick-knee standing and looking at me from about 20 metres away from the middle of the track at the back of the caretaker's cottage. The track lies about 100 metres from the cottage. Obviously wary, the bird ran in small bursts away from me, to disappear in low bushes with a second bird which I had not previously noticed. I assumed that the birds would then scurry away in the undergrowth and that this was the last I would see of them. To my surprise, when I reached the bushes, the two birds (with a low squawk) took flight from the point where they had entered, with each bird going in a different direction. The one that I followed with binoculars flew along the line of cottages and appeared to land about 150 metres away, but was not to be seen when I followed

up. An unexpected encounter.

B. Wilson

FORK-TAILED SWIFTS AT BREMER BAY

Three friends undertook to count ducks for the March 1990 Duck Count in the Bremer Bay area. Arriving the night of the 5th March, we agreed to an early start as a cyclone was approaching from the north.

With this weather pattern in mind we had made a mental note to watch for Fork-tailed Swifts during the day. These birds are often associated with atmospheric disturbances.

At just after 9am we sighted two swifts over a small wetland. Soon after another 30 were seen in the same place. A short time after this we returned to our base (Bremer Bay Caravan Park) and there we observed Fork-tailed Swifts were passing close by continuously. We endeavoured to keep a tally.

There appeared to be one large group of Fork-tailed Swifts moving through slowly. At any one time there were approximately 150 in sight and the precession was apparently endless.

During the remainder of the day we saw Fork-tailed Swifts all over the Bremer Bay area and whilst we were looking for seabirds from the cliffs in later afternoon, swifts were flying so low above our heads that we did not need our binoculars.

We had no way of knowing how many birds were present but whatever the number it was a sight we will never forget.

J. Hunt, G. Little, C. Wilder

BROWN FALCONS HUNTING

On 14th April, while boating on the Blackwood River about 1km downstream from Wild Horse Swamp Nature Reserve, a Pacific Black Duck flew upstream at about 30 metres high. It was being followed by a Brown Falcon which was about 75 metres behind. Their speeds were well matched but every time the duck turned the falcon cut the corner and gained a little.

About half a minute later they flew, at the same height, downstream, but this time there were two Brown Falcons in pursuit. The Pacific Black Duck had managed to do a 180 degree turn without being caught and we could not imagine how. All disappeared downstream and we felt the duck had little hope of escape. But we were wrong.

About two minutes later both Brown Falcons reappeared flying upstream in hot pursuit of a Little Black Cormorant which, just before it reached our boat, plunged straight into the river and disappeared.

The Brown Falcons circled and gained height before flying downstream again. A little later, as we rounded a bend in the river, we saw a number of duck on the water with both Brown Falcons perched in a dead tree nearby. The duck seemed quite unconcerned. Are they safe while on the water or were the Brown Falcons just resting before renewing the hunt?

J. & H. Start

OPPORTUNISTIC USE OF INLAND OCCASIONAL WETLANDS

During the March Great Duck Count because of the increased rainfall during January and February 1990, many unusually dry lakes and occasional wetlands yielded many surprises.

Travelling west from Dowerin along Sanders Rd about 200m from Cemetary Road junction 31 12 117 06 the road was impassable. There were 50 Red-tailed Black Cockatoos screeching overhead when suddenly, having been disturbed by our car, a large cloud of over 300 ducks rose from the water and swirled back and forth just above the treetops. They eventually settled back on the water: an area of about 150m square. There were 350 Grey Teal together with a few Australian Shelduck,

Chestnut Teal, Pink-eared Duck and Pacific Black Duck. On this newly formed wetland there were also 40 Black-winged Stilt and two to ten each of Pacific and White-faced Herons, Sacred and Straw-necked Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Australasian Grebe and Black-fronted Plover.

Other surprises because of the higher water levels resulted from submerged and newly emerged sandbanks. Gone was the sandbank on Lake Walyormouring which often holds up to 10,000 Banded Stilts, but a new sandbank on Lake Nambling to the south held 800 Banded Stilts and 700 Red-necked Avocets.

Of interest also were the Fork-tailed Swifts: eight flying over at Lake Walyormouring and fifteen at Bookerbidey swamp to the south.

M.H. Bremner

LANE POOLE RESERVE

Recently my wife and I spent 2 days camping at Tony's Bend in the Lane Poole Reserve near Dwellingup.

Late on the first day, Ingrid reported seeing a wren of different colouration to others seen around the campsite (Splendid and Red-winged Fairy-wrens) - dark in colour with white wings. She identified the bird as a White-winged Fairy-wren from a reference book.

Twice the following day what appeared to be male White-winged Fairy-wrens crossed in front of the car, about three and eight kilometres from the campsite.

Later that day when I went to the river for water, a male White-winged Fairy-wren flew onto the path ahead of me, pecked around briefly, flew up into a bush and paused for some seconds before flying off. I was about 3 metres from the bird - it being clearly visible for about 15 seconds.

According to Blakers M, Davies S J J F and Reilly P N (1984) "The Atlas of Australian Birds", RAOU, Melbourne University, these wrens are "absent from eucalypt forest, but does enter some open woodland" (p441). The three possible and one definite sighting we made, however, were in dense, heavily re-grown eucalypt forest with thick understorey.

Considering the distance between the sightings (all male birds) and the time intervals, three or possibly four birds were seen.

It is possible, therefore, that there is a small colony or colonies of the White-winged Fairy-wren existing in an area of the south-west from where they have not been previously reported.

J.G. Little

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE

In response to R.J. and M.N. Brown's query on the decline in numbers of the Australian Magpie, I think that the decline has not been slow but rather rapid.

In South Perth numbers have fallen in the last one and a half to two years. Now I only see the odd lone bird, compared to five years ago.

In 1986 there were at least half a dozen, possibly more, family groups based on the Royal Perth Golf Course. In Hensman Street itself there was one group which regularly fed on the nature strips. I have not seen these birds since July last year.

There is a large amount of parkland at Royal Perth Rehabilitation Hospital. The number of Australian Magpie here has decreased sharply since September last year.

There appears to have been an increase in the population of Australian Raven and this may account for the decline in Australian Magpie numbers.

M. Whackett

MORE ON COLLARED SPARROWHAWKS

I am indebted to Stephen Debus for some comment and information on Collared Sparrowhawks in relation to the article in WA Bird Notes No. 53 March 1990. One feature of the observations reported was the protracted period of nest occupancy and clutch failure was suggested. Debus writes "A possible explanation for the apparent delay in hatching at your nest is that the birds simply occupied the nest for a few weeks before laying. They will sometimes brood on an occupied nest before laying".

Collared Sparrowhawk watchers will also be interested in Metcalf E C & R (1989) Further Notes on Collared Sparrowhawks in a Canberra Park, Canberra Bird Notes 14(2), which has data on the post fledging period.

B. Buchanan

GURAGA

In March 1990 Guraga was completely dry. Enquiry among local residents reveals this is the first time for about fifteen years.

The absence of water revealed a flat lake bottom sloping slightly from north-east to south-west. Damper patches showed where the water dried out last and these revealed lower areas as indicated in the sketch in WA Bird Notes No 51, September 1989 - except that the "central" deeper water shown is not evident on dry visual inspection and the largest area shown appears less extensive than that illustrated in September. In any event, far from being significantly deeper, as I thought, the differences between the "deeper" areas and those adjacent are quite small and not such as would appear to have any effect on the behaviour of diving birds. The attraction of the areas is therefore most probably not the slight extra depth but, for some reason, concentration of food sources at those areas.

B. Buchanan

FORK-TAILED SWIFTS: GERALDTON

On 28 February 1990 I observed several hundred Fork-tailed Swifts wheeling about the top of the Point Moore lighthouse, Geraldton. Their calls could be heard easily and at about half minute intervals the group swooped towards the lighthouse.

On the 5 March I observed a similar number of Fork-tailed Swifts around the lighthouse behaving in a similar way.

It appeared on both occasions that the birds were feeding but close observation with binoculars from the front of the lighthouse did not reveal any insects. On occasion a few of the birds appeared to attempt to alight on the wall of the lighthouse.

During late February/March Geraldton experienced an unusually heavy infestation of cut-worm moths which may have been attracted to the lighthouse at night. However no Fork-tailed Swifts were present when I returned to the lighthouse at sunset to check this on the 5 March.

The appearance of the Fork-tailed Swifts coincided with the unsettled weather associated with cyclone Vincent.

A. Scarff

(See a similar report in WA Bird Notes No 42, June 1987 p.10. Editor)

SQUARE-TAILED KITE WITH PREY

During the RAOU field trip to Mt Lesueur from 9-10 September 1989 I was walking with others along a track in an area of heath with patches of wandoo when the calls of some White-tailed Black-Cockatoo were heard. Looking around we saw a raptor which we identified as a Square-tailed Kite. It came closer and we had exceptional views as it passed low overhead, with long upswept wings in a shallow "V"

prominently barred, spread "fingertips", longish square tail, buff patch at the base of the primaries, white face and rufous breast boldly streaked darker.

The Square-tailed Kite flew around a patch of wandoo at canopy height, sometimes just above, before perching about 10 metres up, when its pale shoulder patch in an otherwise dark wing was noted. After watching for several minutes we left as it was nearly 2 pm and our hunger called.

While walking back, about ten minutes later, we saw (probably) the same bird appear from behind another patch of wandoo. As we were training our binoculars, the Square-tailed Kite landed about eight metres up at about 30 metres distant. We soon noticed it appeared to have something dark in its talons (which I guessed to be a marsupial) which we could not make out. The Square-tailed Kite sat for several seconds only after alighting before it reached down with its beak to its left talon and took up the prey. We then realised the prey was a bird and that there were two taken. The first was swallowed whole - after a few gulps to get it down the throat. Shadows falling on the prey made it difficult to see them but they appeared dark if not black. Two pale legs were seen and I felt sure they were nestlings. The second nestling in the right talon was not swallowed whole but was picked at, pieces being torn away and eaten over a period of a few minutes. I did not see any feathers and did not see any falling.

We had excellent views of the Square-tailed Kite, the white face, the rufous breast streaked dark and dark narrower streakings on the head. A slight crest was also raised and wing feathers protruded well past the tail.

The major prey of the Square-tailed Kite is nestling birds, particularly those of honeyeaters which build suspended nests in foliage (Debus & Czechura 1989) and it is described as a treetop harrier (Slater et al 1986). The apparent large size of the nestlings is perhaps explained by the Square-tailed Kite having small or weak legs (Hollands 1984) or feeble legs and feet (Pizzey 1980) so making the nestlings appear comparatively large. The long wings and weak legs are perhaps adapted to spending time on the wing while hunting small prey from outer foliage. Evolving this method of feeding, the Square-tailed Kite has less need for powerful feet and legs that a similar sized raptor hunting larger prey would require.

Help in identification of the Square-tailed Kite is given in Badman & Debus 1987.

I. Standring

References:

Badman, F J & Debus, S J S (1987), *Field Identification of the Black-breasted Buzzard and Square-tailed Kite*, Australian Bird Watcher, 12, 112-117.

Debus, S J S & Czechura (1989), *The Square-tailed Kite: A Review*, Australian Bird Watcher, 13, 86 (81-97).

Hollands, D (1984), *Eagles, Hawks & Falcons of Australia*, Nelson, Melbourne.

Slater P, Slater P & Slater R (1986), *The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds*, Rigby, Sydney.

EXCURSION REPORTS

LAKE MCLARTY - 3rd March 1990

Twenty-nine people attended the outing to this excellent wetland. Lake McLarty is known for its large numbers of wildfowl and trans-equatorial migratory waders and rarities on occasions.

Moving up the eastern edge of the Lake close views were obtained of Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints feeding in the shallows. Thirty-eight Wood

Sandpipers were seen in the rushes close by, and a Red-capped Plover's nest containing 2 eggs was also discovered.

A large group of Red-necked Avocet were found to have fourteen Black-tailed Godwit among them. Close views were obtained of all these birds. A White-bellied Sea Eagle put on a fine display of gliding as it passed overhead.

As we made our way back two Glossy Ibis nearly hidden from view in the long rush were seen.

A very enjoyable day.

J. Hunt

RETURN TO MT LESUEUR AREA

Over 30 people attended the weekend camp at Jurien on the 5th and 6th May. Members of the RAOU and the Australian Conservation Foundation made use of the wonderful weather to pursue their individual interests in the Mt Lesueur area with the assistance of Joy, Don and Trevor Williams from the local wildflower group. Our thanks to Joy, Don and Trevor for giving up their time.

RAOU members spent Saturday on the eastern side of Mt Lesueur and Mt Michaud and north near the coal seam. Brown, Tawny-crowned and White-cheeked Honeyeaters did not appear to be as abundant as on our spring visit, however a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater was seen this time. Hooded Robin were seen by a number of observers and several Brown Falcon and Wedge-tailed Eagle recorded throughout the day.

A climb to the top of Mt Lesueur on Sunday morning provided a marvellous view of up to 5 Wedge-tailed Eagles making use of the thermals on the edges of Mt Lesueur and distant Mt Michaud. White-backed Swallows, seen the previous day in two areas, were also performing for us and Tawny-crowned and White-cheeked Honeyeaters were to be found in vegetation on the top. 15-20 Straw-necked Ibis were sighted flying south.

During lunch in Cockleshell Gully, a White-breasted Robin was seen near the creek bed and a flock of approximately 300 White-tailed Black Cockatoo flew noisily past us. Crested Pigeon, Pallid Cuckoo and Grey Currawong had not been recorded on previous visits.

In Jurien during the weekend, an Eastern Reef Egret and several Pacific Gull were sighted and a White-bellied Sea Eagle seen on the outskirts of town.

Set out below is the list of birds for the Mt Lesueur area recorded on three visits by members of the RAOU:

	10-11 July 1989	9-10 Sept 1989	5-6 May 1990
Emu		X	X
Little Pied Cormorant		X	
Straw-necked Ibis		X	
Black-shouldered Kite		X	X
Square-tailed Kite		X	
Brown Goshawk		X	X
Collared Sparrowhawk		X	X
Wedge-tailed Eagle	X	X	X
Little Eagle		X	
Peregrine Falcon		X	
Australian Hobby	X	X	
Brown Falcon	X	X(B)	X
Australian Kestrel	X	X(B)	X
Quail (sp.)	X		X
Australian Bustard		X	
Common Bronzewing	X	X	X
Crested Pigeon			X

White-tailed Black Cockatoo	X	X(B)	X
Galah	X	X(B)	X
corella (sp.)	X	X	X
Regent Parrot		X	
Port Lincoln Ringneck	X	X	X
Pallid Cuckoo			X
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	X	X	X
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	X	X	
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	X	X	
Southern Boobook		X	
Australian Owlet-nightjar		X	
Laughing Kookaburra	Heard	X	X
White-backed Swallow		X	X
Welcome Swallow		X	X
Tree Martin	X	X	X
Richard's Pipit		X	
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	X	X	X
Scarlet Robin		X	X
Hooded Robin		X(B)	X
White-breasted Robin	X	X	X
Golden Whistler		X	
Rufous Whistler	X	X(B)	X
Grey Shrike-thrush	X	X	X
Grey Fantail	X	X	X
Willie Wagtail	X	X	X
Splendid Fairy-wren		X	X
Variegated Fairy-wren	X	X	X
White-winged Fairy-wren	X	X	
Southern Emu-wren	X		
White-browed Scrubwren	X	X	X
Calamanthus		X	
Weebill	X	X	X
Western Gerygone	X	X	X
Inland Thornbill		X	X
Western Thornbill		X	X
Yellow-rumped Thornbill		X(B)	X
Red Wattlebird	Heard	X	X
Little Wattlebird		Heard	
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater			X
Singing Honeyeater	X	X	X
Brown-headed Honeyeater		X	
White-naped Honeyeater		X	X
Brown Honeyeater	X	X	X
New Holland Honeyeater		X	X
White-cheeked Honeyeater	X	X	X
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	X	X(B)	X
Western Spinebill	X	X(B)	X
White-fronted Chat		X	X
Mistletoebird		X	
Striated Pardalote	X	X	X
Silvereye	X	X	X
Australian Magpie-lark		X	
Black-faced Woodswallow	X	X	X
Dusky Woodswallow	X	X	
Grey Butcherbird	X	X	X

Australian Magpie	X	X	X
Grey Currawong			X
Australian Raven	X	X	X

X = species recorded

B = breeding evidence recorded

If you have visited the area on other occasions, the office would appreciate receiving your bird lists, to enable the information to be added to our National Parks Database.

C. Wilder

BBCBQ

1. A banded Red Knot has been observed to travel 5,640 kilometres over how many days?
2. Feral Pigeons experimentally displaced from their nests a distance of 1,620 kilometres have returned in how many days?
3. What Australian bird is probably the champion annual long- distance migrant?
4. What is the relationship between the wingbeat and heart rate of the Budgerigar?
5. How fast can an Emu run?
6. What is the maximum recorded age of a wild Eurasian Coot?
7. Do most birds have a sense of smell?
8. What is the highest speed recorded for what bird?
9. How many wingbeats per second are made by the Great Cormorant?
10. Standing on one leg and placing the head and neck under a wing, reduces bird heat loss by what percentage?

ADVICE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Editor requests contributors to note the following -

- * copy concerning W.A. birds may be published; sightings etc in respect of birds outside W.A. will not normally be included.
- * write legibly or type, DOUBLE SPACED.
- * use RAOU recommended English names for W.A. birds - a list is available at the W.A. RAOU Office.
- * copy will be edited where considered appropriate.

DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER 1990 ISSUE IS 20TH JULY 1990

PUBLICATIONS

YOU CAN BUY THE FOLLOWING at the RAOU Office. Add the cost of postage and packing if you are not calling to pick up purchases. Items are also usually available for purchase at RAOU meetings and excursions.

- * The Atlas of Australian Birds \$49
(produced by the RAOU:
shows distribution of bird species)
- * overlays for the Atlas \$6
- * A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, \$19
by G. Pizzey (1985 reprint, paperback;
small format) Postage in Zone 15
\$2.60 plus 40c envelope

- * Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, \$22
by Simpson & Day, small format
- * A Field Guide to the Birds of WA \$15
by Storr & Johstone
(WA Museum 1985 edition;
solely birds of WA)
- * The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds \$28
- * Shorebirds in Australia, Brett Lane \$45
(Postage in Zone 15 \$2.60 plus 55c envelope)
- * Shorebirds, by Hayman, Marchant & Prater \$49
- * The Great Australian Birdfinder \$55
by Michael Morecombe
- * Waterbirds in Nature Reserves of \$35
South-Western Australia 1981-1985
by Jaensch, Vervest and Hewish
- * Birdlife of Murdoch, ed. B.D. Porter \$6
- * Birding Sites Around Perth, Ron Van Delft \$10
- * A Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the \$10
Rockingham Offshore Islands and
Cape Peron W.A. Naturalists' Club (KRMB)
- * The Birdlife of Rottnest Island, \$8
by Saunders and de Rebeira
(1985; text; colour plates; maps)
- * Where to Find Birds in Australia, \$30
by John Bransbury
- * Western Australian Bird Notes \$3 per issue
- * A Pocket List of Australian Birds 70c
(a handy checklist; produced by
Canberra Ornithologists Group)
- * RAOU check list of Birds of WA \$1 for 10
- * Methods for Censusing Birds in \$5
Australia-1982 (produced by the
WA Group, RAOU)
- * Eyre Bird Observatory Report 1981-83 \$5
- * Eyre Bird Observatory Report 1986/87 \$6
- * Birds of Australia Logbook, Simpson & Day \$11
- * Report of the Middlesex Study Centre \$5
- * WA Bird Report 1982 \$5
- * New Colour Guide to Hong Kong Birds \$13
by Viney & Phillips
- * Parrots of the World, Forshaw & Cooper \$95
- * A Birders Guide to Japan, J.W. Robinson \$25
- * Bird-call tapes \$11
(3 choices; mostly WA birds;
announced version)

If you have suggestions for titles that we could obtain, please give details to the WA Office. Please bear in mind that the WA Group is reluctant to spend money on bird books that do not sell readily. As few local publishers/distributors give a discount on bird books, our choices are rather limited.

Other Items for Sale

- Bird-call tapes (4 choices; \$11
mostly WA birds; announced version)
- RAOU Emu badges \$3
- RAOU ties (Navy blue or maroon) \$15
- Cards, packs of 8 \$6
- Car stickers (Large \$1.50 Small \$2)
- How to Attract Birds to a W.A. Garden 50c (or \$1 posted)

Videos for hire from RAOU office

- Eyre Bird Observatory
- The Language of Birds
- World of Birds Osprey
- Short-eared Owl
- Seabirds
- The Masterbuilders
- The Petersfinger Cuckoos
- Kingdom of The Lyrebird
- The Secret Reeds
- COST \$5 each plus postage

COMING EVENTS

EXCURSION CONVENER'S NOTES

It was with enthusiasm that I accepted the position of Excursions Convener.

While some members are content to read about the exciting world of birds through WA Bird Notes and other RAOU magazines or contribute to bird conservation through the RAOU, many others are keen to go birding in the field in small groups with people who have local knowledge of a site, some insight into the life of birds or both! Excursions often combine the pleasures of bird observation with opportunity for sharing with congenial companions.

Three excursions are of particular interest in the next few months - see the excursion notes for 3 and 10 June and 19 August. We will also be having a joint excursion with the Toodyay Naturalists Club and an excursion to assist in the preparation of a management plan for the new Serpentine National Park.

I expect that the number of excursions planned will ensure that group sizes are not too large, so that each person can enjoy quality birdwatching on the excursions and meet with the excursion leader.

For the period September to December 1990 I would like to have excursions to Peel Inlet, Rottnest Island, Thomsons Lake and Busselton. Any offers to run excursions to these or other places would be most welcome. Potential leaders should contact me on 279 9913 in the evenings. I will also try to achieve a better balance between Saturday and Sunday excursions for this period.

If you know of a great birding site but are unsure about how to lead bird walks, I can send you a copy of my leaflet to make you an instant success and bird expert, or organise someone experienced in leading bird walks to assist you.

I look forward to meeting you in the future.

Ron Van Delft

Sunday 3rd June

Half day excursion - Yellagonga Regional Park Survey No 1

Yellagonga Regional Park is the new name for the chain of lakes from Lake Goollellal to Lake Joondalup. During the next three months it is proposed to hold an excursion every second Sunday of the month to discover what birdlife lives in this Park.

Bird lists from these surveys will be sent to the Department of Planning and Urban Development to assist them in preparing a draft management plan for the Park. Our birding efforts will be concentrated on Lake Goollellal and Walluburnup Swamp because the RAOU has little information on these areas, although Walluburnup is rumoured to be a good site.

Meet at 8.30 am on the section of Bindaree Terrace nearest Lake Goollellal.

Leader: Ron Van Delft

Sunday 10th June

Half day excursion - Black Ducks are not boring

Usually at this time of year Black Ducks perform a variety of courtship displays, which - if you know what to look for - makes watching the goings on most interesting. Mandy Bamford intends to point out such behaviours as grunt-whistles, nod-swimming and head-up-tail-up.

Anybody interested in volunteering to assist in the bird behaviour study at Capel (see excursion July 7 and 8) is encouraged to attend this excursion because it is intended to use the bird behaviour observation sheets that will be used for study

at Capel. Behaviours such as feeding, diving and loafing are to be monitored.

Please bring something to sit on in case the grass is wet. This excursion suits the lazy birdwatcher with an active mind. Meet at 8.30 am at the Herdsman Lake Floreat Waters car park near the junction of Lakeside Road and Heron Place, Churchlands.

Leader: Mandy Bamford

Sunday 17th June

Half day excursion - Bickley Reservoir

Meet at 8 am at the car park just below the Bickley Brook Reservoir wall. From Perth travelling on the Tonkin Highway, turn left into Gosnells Road East (Reservoir is signposted), then left into Reservoir Road and right into Maddington/Hardinge Road to the car park.

Leader: Rod Smith

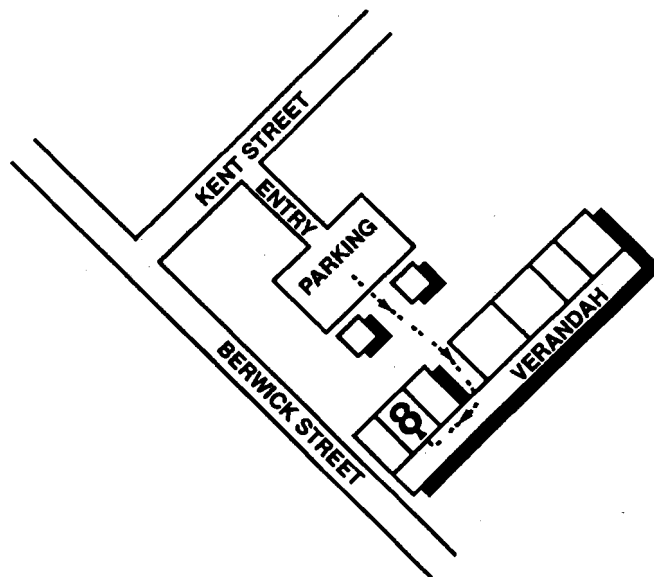
Monday 25th June

Meeting - Note change of venue to Kent Street Senior High School, 8 pm (see map below - enter from Kent Street to parking area, walk through to verandah, turn right - Room 8)

The concept plan for The Spectacles wetlands near Kwinana

Speaker: Dr Owen Nichols

Alcoa and CALM have developed a Development Plan for these wetlands and Dr. Nichols will discuss the plan and any input will be greatly appreciated.



Sunday 1st July

Half day excursion - Serpentine National Park

During the last two years the Serpentine National Park has increased significantly in size and now includes attractive areas of open wandoo woodland, casuarina woodland, heath and areas of Jarrah/Marri forest in varying condition. This excursion offers members access into new sections of the park which have not been developed for the general public.

Bird lists from this excursion will be given to the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) which is currently preparing a management plan for the Park.

Meet at 8.30 am at the junction of the South West Highway and the turnoff to Serpentine Falls. Please bring some money as there may be a fee to get into the park.

Leader: Allan Burbidge

Weekend 7th and 8th July (and school holiday days by arrangement)

Campout - Artificial Wetland Project, Capel

The RAOU has a contract with AMC Mineral Sands Ltd to develop an artificial wetland specifically as habitat for birds from a former mining area. This project involves many facets including designing the shape and depth of the wetland, planting suitable vegetation and monitoring the success of the wetland as bird habitat. Frank Doyle is employed by the RAOU full time for this project.

This excursion is to assist in the planting of the second section of 'wet woodland'. The emphasis will be on planting trees, rushes, reeds and brush areas of the wetland. Some birding at nearby wetlands and inspection of previous plantings by RAOU members is likely.

Frank is considering arranging accommodation at the nearest caravan park, which is the Peppermint Grove Holiday Village. Bunbury and Busselton are both within 20 minutes drive of Capel.

It is also intended to undertake a feeding behaviour study to provide information which will assist in wetland design following the weekend excursion. The excursion on 10th June will provide insight as to what is intended to be done for this study. Members wishing to assist in the feeding behaviour study should contact Frank Doyle.

Frank Doyle can be contacted on 097-27-2675 (after hours) to discuss the meeting place and time.

Leader: Frank Doyle

Sunday 8th July

Half day excursion - Yellagonga Regional Park Survey No 2

See information under Sunday 3rd June.

Meet at 8.30 am on the section of Bindaree Terrace nearest Lake Goollelal.

Leader: To be organised

Tuesday 17th July

See earlier article re ABC Project

Sunday 22nd July

See earlier article re ABC Project

Sunday 22nd July

Full day excursion - Wongamine Nature Reserve

This will be a joint excursion with the Toodyay Naturalists Club so, although birds will be the main interest of the excursion, other things such as plants and animals may be identified.

The Wongamine Nature Reserve is about 600 ha and contains some spectacular scenery as well as a good variety of wheatbelt birds. Past excursions to Wongamine have recorded up to 50 different species of bird.

Meet at 9 am at the information bay where the Northam Road meets the Toodyay (or Red Hill) Road. This junction is about 6 km out of Toodyay.

Leader: Jim Masters

Monday 23rd July

Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Stephen Ambrose will be presenting the results of the honeyeater banding trip to the nullarbor. However, he will also talk about the progress of the ABC Project (using examples from WA counts) with the help of Michelle Christy.

Saturday 28th July

Half day excursion - Bells Rapid Reserve

Meet at 8 am at Bells Rapid Reserve carpark. From Midland Town Hall travel 11 km along Great Northern Highway, turn right into Cathedral Avenue, continue over railway line, past Brigadoon Fire Station on right and State Equestrian Centre on left. At Y junction bear left onto gravel and continue along edge of river to car park (5.2 kms from Great Northern Highway).

Leader: Chris Wilder

Saturday 11th August

Half day excursion - Mount Helena

Many excursions are based on members with local knowledge of an area leading walks. This walk will be lead by Dr Stephen Davies, who regularly goes birdwatching in bushland not far from his house. Dr Davies will be well known to long-standing RAOU members or keen readers of ornithological literature.

Meet 8 am on Hummerston Road, about half way between Lion Road and Johnston Street. It is intended to begin birdwatching on the south side of Hummerston Road, so late risers may be able to find us until about 9 am!

Leader: Dr Stephen Davies

Sunday 12th August

Half day excursion - Yellagonga Regional Park Survey No 3

See information under Sunday 3rd June.

Meet at 8.30 am on the section of Bindaree Terrace nearest Lake Goollelal.

Leader: To be organised

Sunday 19th August

Birding Hotline Mystery Excursion

The Birding Hotline is a service which allows birdwatchers to phone in details of interesting or unusual sightings to the RAOU office (Phone 364 6202 all hours), which then are placed on a recorded message each week by volunteers. Items of interest sent in the past include the arrival of migratory birds, unusual numbers of birds and the presence of uncommon species.

Members can ring the hotline, which is updated each Thursday, to find out what has been seen where. The hotline recording also provides details of the next RAOU excursion or meeting and therefore allows for the occasional impromptu gathering of members.

Members are requested to make a special effort during the week 9-16 August to phone in details of sightings. On the basis of these sightings an excursion will be organised and advertised on the Hotline.

The meeting place and time will be provided on the birding hotline - phone 364 7349 after Thursday 16 August for details. The excursion is expected to begin sometime between 8-9 am on Sunday morning, the time being decided on the basis of the distance of the meeting place from Perth.

A twitchers delight!

Leader: Graham Little

Saturday 25th August

Half day excursion - Wungong Gorge

Wungong Gorge is well known to many keen birdwatchers; the habitat and topography around the gorge make it a good place to seek Red-eared Firetails, White-breasted Robins and birds of prey.

If the weather is fine a picnic may be held in the barbeque area afterwards. BYOP/BM (Bring Your Own Picnic/

Barbeque Meat!).

Meet at the first carpark for Wungong Dam along Admiral Road, Bedfordale at 8.30 am.

Leader: Ron Van Delft

Monday 27th August

Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Part 1 - Eyre video

Part 2 - Members will speak on Ospreys

Sunday 2nd September

Full day excursion - Boyagin Rock

This wheatbelt nature reserve has been visited by the RAOU over a number of years and continues to be a favourite site for excursions. Many interesting bird sightings have been recorded and plants of the area are of interest during periods when birds are few.

The excursion departs at 7.15 SHARP from the southern junction of Canning Road and Brookton Highway at Karragullen.

Leader: Ian Standring

Sunday 9th September

Half day excursion - Yellagonga Regional Park Final Survey

See information under Sunday 3rd June.

Meet at 8.30 am on the section of Bindaree Terrace nearest Lake Goollelal.

Leader: To be organised

FOR SALE

Zeiss 10x40 B Dialyt

Central Focusing Binoculars - NEW \$1250.00 ono
(recommended retail price - \$1750.00)

Zeiss 8x20 B Dialyt Binoculars - NEW \$500.00 ono

Ring Mr Lefebvre on 364 3708 for price

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5/1/91 - 11/1/91

Iron Range and Reef bird islands cruise

19/1/91 - 26/1/91

Outer Reef bird islands - Raine Island, Moulter Cay
nesting Frigatebirds, Tropicbirds, Boobies, Terns etc
17/11/90 - 24/11/90

Gulf (Normanton) wetlands, Mt Isa and Lawn Hill
gorge Lilac-crowned Wren and nesting Sarus Cranes,
Brolgas, Geese and Ducks, and the fabulous
Karumba plain
16/2/91 - 23/2/91

Full details from:

G.R. Beruldsen

PO Box 387, Kenmore, Qld 4069 Australia
07-374-1253

BBCBQ - ANSWERS

1. 8, 705 km per day

2. 1.1/2, 1,080 km per day

3. Arctic Tern, 36,000 km per year

4. They are synchronized

5. 50 km per hour

6. 19 years

7. No

8. Peregrine Falcon, 290 km per hour in stoop

9. 3.9

10. 12%

References:

Questions 1-6 inclusive Welby J C (1975) The Life of Birds,

W B Saunders Co, Philadelphia.

7-10 inclusive Dorst J (1974 translation) The Life of Birds,

Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London.