



Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the WA Group
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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No 62 June 1992

Kite in Kimberley

On Saturday 21 March 1992 I travelled east from Beagle Bay to the very remote area of Disaster Bay, about 150 kms North-East of Broome. I walked about 4 kms south along the sandy beach to the commencement of the mangroves. The time was about midday and the huge tide of 9.3 metres was at its peak and flowing into a nearby creek.

I observed many birds here including terns, waders and 3 Black-necked Stork. Many birds were perched on the clumps of mangroves showing above the high water. Here I observed a Letter-winged Kite, which often hovered a few metres above the clumps of mangroves, appearing to pick off small insects from each. The bird often dipped down like a tern, its wings swept back, grey on top, black bars under, the tail straight and white.

I was amazed that the bird flew to clumps of mangrove bush, going over water to a distance of 100 metres before returning. This was repeated for about half an hour with infrequent rests.

1992 has been an unusual year so far because there has been no real wet season. The Letter-winged Kite is normally absent from the Kimberley. It is interesting that 10 Letter-winged Kite were seen on Adele Island directly North of Disaster Bay in 1953. (1952 was a drought year). Other Kimberley sightings also recorded in Storrs GM (1980) *Birds of the Kimberley Division*, Western Australia, Special Publication 11, WA Museum are A. Keast at Forrest River 1970 (2) and K.F. Keneally at West Island (2) and East Island (25) in 1977.

The land round Disaster Bay is extremely harsh and dry but there are many small trees and bushes.

B. Kane

Coral Bay Summer

We took up residence here in late October 1991 and the bird life has been fascinating. Coral Bay is an oasis of water, green lawn and trees in a desert environment.

A pair of Osprey have a nest atop our 50m Telecom

tower and they seem to go through continuous breeding cycles throughout the year. The last young flew off in November and now in mid-January, the pair are apparently brooding again.

During October and November Galah appeared to be migrating south along the coast, presumably as the hinterland became drier. We would see them in the mornings: two or three flocks would pass over each day with 20-100 birds in each, but by December these flights had ceased.

A few waders are about at all times - a flock of Ruddy Turnstone foraged at the rubbish tip for some months whilst a Bar-tailed Godwit has been jabbing endlessly into the saltine grass in front of the shop every day. It is often accompanied by an Oriental Plover. At the beginning of December a Snipe, gallinago spp appeared on the lawn near our bus, staying for six weeks. It was most active in the mornings and late afternoons, when it would jab away in the wet patches, coming regularly up to our annex. It dashed off into the tamarisks and bushes to hide, presumably when it felt threatened, where it would crouch and freeze.

The birds most obvious to tourists are the pipit and Singing Honeyeater, which are numerous and tame and will readily accept crumbs thrown to them. The honeyeaters will on occasion come to the hand for a morsel.

Around our bus a family of Variegated Fairy-wren is located. They are delightfully tame.

I must mention the Zebra Finch which are about in good number and nest in downpipes and old machinery and even in the engine of a plane which was parked at the airstrip for a few days. The finch drink in flocks around our trickle irrigation system and they regurgitate the seeds which they have recently eaten. These germinate in the moist soil; I wonder if the same process occurs in the bush? The Zebra Finch also nest in the sides of the Osprey nest high in the Telecom tower.

Other birds come and go almost daily - a pair of Sacred Kingfisher, a Peregrine Falcon, a goshawk, lap-wing, the occasional Australian Bustard and for a few days in late January, the Fork-tailed Swift came by in the thunderstorms.

P. Mack

Observations

Compiled by Rodney Vervest, Allan Burbidge
and Roger Jaensch.

SOUTH WEST

Hoary-headed Grebe - 1692, 29/1/92, McLarty Lake - MC
(high count for South-west)

Rockhopper Penguin - 1, 8/2/92, Skippy Rock, Augusta - MBo

Little Bittern - 1, 5/12/91, Quitjup Lake (D'Entrecasteaux N.P.) induced to call by observer's vocalisations of 'bittern advertising call' - RJ * old nest found, 15/12/91, Lake Jasper, W. side - RJ * calling, 22/12/91, Lake Saide, nr Denmark: nest, recently used but now empty, found on 10/1/92 - RJ (NB: this entry corrects that in WABN No. 61)

Glossy Ibis - 29, 29/1/92, McLarty Lake - MC (highest number recorded for South-west)

Blue-billed Duck - 2, 13/3/92, Allora Lake, East of Ravenshorpe - RV (rare visitor to the Eucla Land Division)
Baillon's Crake - 1, 15/3/92, Spectacles Swamp (E. Gingin) - BB

Pied Oystercatcher - 55+, 1/1/92, Alfred Cove - DN, JN, BS, IS

Banded Lapwing - 40+, 12/3/92, Yorkdale Farm, Marchagee: wading in shallow water in paddock - UE (seldom known to wade or in large flocks except in winter)

Pacific Golden Plover - 9, 10/1/92, Boullanger Island, Jurien - MC * 31, 26/1/92, Hardy Inlet, Augusta - MBo

Little Ringed Plover - 1, 21/3/92, McLarty Lake - IS, JB, DW
Mongolian Plover - 1, 12/2/92, Kogolup Lake: photographed - PH

Whimbrel - 3, 22/12/91, Alfred Cove - DN, JN, BS, IS

Marsh Sandpiper - 142, 29/1/92, McLarty Lake - MC (high number for South-west)

Terek Sandpiper - 1, 5/4/92, Alfred Cove - DM

Asian Dowitcher - 1, 21/3/92, McLarty Lake - DW, JB

Black-tailed Godwit - 1, 23/12/91, Herdsman Lake - MC

Long-toed Stint - 96, 8/3/92, McLarty Lake - MC (highest count for Western Australia - possibly Australia)

Sanderling - 60, 1/12/91, Halls Head, Mandurah - JH, TK, MM, IS * 32, 8/1/92, Boullanger Island, Jurien - MC * 58, 6/4/92, beach south of Halls Head - AD

Ruff - 1, 12/2/92, Kogolup Lake: photographed - PH

Oriental Pratincole - 1, 24/11/91, Bookerbidey Swamp - MB

Common Noddy - 1, 11/1/92, Boullanger Island, Jurien: dead bird - MC

Diamond Dove - 1, 8/3/92, Adenia Rd Lagoon, Riverton - FO (presumed aviary escapee)

Tree Martin - 1000+, 12/2/92, Geordie Bay, Rottnest - FO (Tree Martins numbering hundreds up to thousands were reported to the RAOU on a number of occasions during spring/summer of 91/92. The birds were seen during late afternoon, early evening flying above the Geordie/Longreach settlement).

Rufous Treecreeper - 1, 11/2/92, Swan River foreshore, Dalkeith - JB * 1, 6/3/92, Point Resolution Reserve, Dalkeith - MBo

PILBARA, MURCHISON AND ARID ZONES

Yellow Wagtail - 1, 31/3/92, lawn verge in Port Hedland - RP

KIMBERLEY

Garganey - 1, 7/12/92, Lake Campion - GS

Peregrine Falcon - 2, 1/2/92, Argyle Sewage ponds - FO

Black-tailed Native-hen - 6, 2/2/92, Broome Sewage ponds - BK, GS

Australian Pratincole - 4, 30/11/91, Argyle Airport: 2 nesting pairs - FO

Oriental Cuckoo - 1, 28/2/92, nr Argyle Village: dead - FO

Barn Swallow - 100, 30/1/92, Broome Zoo - GS

Ground Cuckoo-shrike - 1, 28/2/92, near Argyle Village: area with few trees, very stony ground with sparse spinifex - FO

Painted Firetail - 8, 31/1/92, near Argyle Village - FO

Pictorella Mannikin - 20, 19/2/92, near Argyle Village - FO

Yellow-rumped Mannikin - 1, 25/2/92, near Argyle mine-site - FO

OBSERVERS

AD = Austin Daw

JH = Jack Hunt

BB = Bruce Buchanan

JN = Jane Newsome

BK = Brian Kane

MB = Mary Bremner

BS = Bev Standring

MBo = Marie Bougher

DM = Dusty Millar

MC = Michael Craig

DN = David Newsome

MM = Marion Massan

DW = Doug Watkins

PH = Peel Howden

FO = Frank O'Connor

RP = Rob Parr

GS = George Swan

RV = Rodney Vervest

IS = Ian Standring

UE = Una Edwards

JB = John Blyth

TK = Tony Kirkby

Notices

OFFICE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Note the new RAOU Centre Address in the information box on page 3.

HELP PLEASE

I am sure there are many members who regularly walk in interesting birding areas and who are just waiting to be asked to show other members these sites. If you have a favourite birding spot and would like to show it to others, please contact me. Spring is an exciting time in the bush and most people are eager to look at new areas.

Bryan Barrett, Excursions Organiser

BLACK BITTERN

The Department of CALM have an active interest in gathering information on the Black Bittern in South-Western Australia. Observers are encouraged to read the Black Bittern article in WABN No. 58 page 3 and contact Rodney Vervest for more details.

PLUMRIDGE LAKES EXPEDITIONS

Four expeditions will be made to the Plumridge Lakes area north of Rawlinna to collect information for the RAOU Nest Record Scheme. The dates of the expeditions will be June 10-19, June 29-July 8, August 5-14 and September 7-16. Numbers will be limited for each expedition. Please bring sleeping bag, tent, eating utensils. The cost ex-Eyre will be \$500 per person per trip (all inclusive). Cost will be adjusted for those using their own 4WD vehicle.

Write to Eyre Bird Observatory, c/- Cocklebidy, via Norseman, 6443, telephone (090) 393450; or ring RAOU Office, telephone (09) 383 7749 or Chris Wilder, telephone (09) 401 8329.

Members Contributions

LIGHTNING STORM EFFECTS

During an Annual Duck Count at Lake Bryde on 12 March, 1992 the behaviour of waterbirds during a fairly severe local thunderstorm was observed.

Despite loud thunderclaps and lightning flashes both Black Swan and Australian Shelduck remained on the water and appeared only mildly agitated. Grey Teal and Pink-eared Duck appeared to ignore thunderclaps but flew and circled the lake after each flash of lightning.

After the storm I tested the birds' response to the slamming of a vehicle door. All four species merely swam closer to cover. However, when the vehicles headlights/spotlights were flashed towards them the Grey Teal and Pink-eared Duck re-acted by again taking flight, whilst the Black Swan and Australian Shelduck remained un-moved as before.

Of course, this probably means - nothing! but is of interest.

M. Graham

DO NAMES MATTER ?

Mr Lesser, who thought it would be rather amusing to sponsor the Lesser Golden Plover for the forthcoming volume of the Handbook, searched the recent sponsorship list in vain. Lesser Golden Plover was gone — replaced by Pacific Golden Plover. Mr Lesser's chagrin notwithstanding, this may be some improvement despite the continued tri-nomial, for there is no Bigger or Greater Golden Plover in the Australian world. What is unfortunate is that the change should spring on us as it did, unheralded and unexplained. So it was with Sacred Ibis, transmuted to the ghastly tri-nomial Australian White Ibis by the Handbook, Volume 1.

Ordinary nomenclature, that is the common or English name, is a matter of great consequence to the ordinary bird watcher. Indeed the EMU Volume 77 Supplement of May 1978 specifically says "Scientific names do not really suit their purpose and we think that bird-watchers or even bird-lovers ought to be taken into consideration in these matters" (p.248). The invisible nomenclature deciders for the Handbook do not feel likewise; thus far their changes have been without considering the bird-watcher/lover.

Pursuant to their statement above, the 1978 nomenclature changers not only gave their names (so they could be reviled personally) but also set out the principles and reasons for their changes. The principles numbered seven and were (in brief) — to use traditional Australian names, to use internationally accepted names for species extending beyond Australia, to use the most fitting name if species were combined, to change any Australian name which duplicated a well established overseas name, to alter any misleading or inaccurate name, to have a name to reflect the taxonomic species affinity and not to use a group name (ie Cormorant) without qualification where more than one species occurs. These seem unexceptional and reasonable principles.

When it came to the application of the principles in actual name changes, a variety of additional considerations

seem to have affected their decisions. Some of these were, a dislike of the "unnecessarily esoteric", of eponyms, of the "cumbersome" and "clumsy", a rejection of any possible flippancy (ornithology being a *serious* matter), a dislike of "tongue-twisters" and a rejection of a name as "few people now seem to know the meaning" (p.292)

The word known only to few was "Nankeen", despite being in the English language since the 18th century. The nomenclature deciders obviously believed bird-watchers and bird-lovers poorly read (see David Copperfield for several uses of the word) or was it that they were poorly read themselves? Whichever, the consequence was that birders lost the interesting Nankeen Kestrel in favour of the dreary Australian Kestrel. Not content with having struck down an interesting and historic word, the 1978 group favoured the introduction of *Hylacola* on the ground, inter alia, that the word "could enrich the language" (p.303), despite it sounding like a name for a soft drink rejected by an advertising agency.

1978 also produced the appalling Black-necked Stork, a cacophonous monstrosity akin to a sobriety test before the breathalyser. Mudlark was condemned as it might convey an impression of flippancy: consequently we have the long, ordinary Australian Magpie-lark, although neither lark nor magpie.

A basis for names which has initial appeal is the translation of the scientific name. If the describer of a bird gives a nomenclature, it would seem appropriate to use it. This would enable us to have the memorable and descriptive Bloody Corella, a title which also has claim to being traditional Australian — for Little Corella. The Handbook reverted to the scientific for Salvin's Prion (eponym notwithstanding), but the fact is that the great majority of scientific translations are not appealing and are often obscure. Consider having Eye-marked

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Notes For Contributors

The Editor requests contributors to note :-

- *material concerning WA birds may be published
- *sightings in respect of non - WA birds will not normally be published
- *contributions should be written or typed with Double Spacing
- *WABN uses RAOU recommended English names
- *copy will be edited where appropriate
- *contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary

**Deadline for the September Issue
31 July 1992**

Tesselated Pavement (Red-eared Firetail) or Great-billed Bigbeak for Bush Thick-knee, a name bad enough in itself. As the 1978 Supplement puts it, "scientific names do not really suit their purpose" (p. 248).

Another reason for not using the scientific name is that ornithologists expect, as the 1978 Emu Supplement states (p. 247), that "the function of scientific nomenclature is not necessarily to remain stable but to reflect taxonomic judgement" and they go on to raise the hope that when a set of English names is established they "need not be changed" (my emphases.) It is the more surprising therefore to find that less than 13 years later the English names are being changed in the volumes of the Handbook.

If the RAOU is to expand membership (as is planned) it needs take account of the fact that it will not recruit more ornithologists, but ordinary persons. Such persons do not want multi-syllabic, multi-worded names, but ones that are simple, euphonious, memorable and if possible, descriptive. For example the clumsy Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (neither cuckoo nor shrike) could be replaced by the existing alternative of Shuffewing, a name which, unlike the present one, meets all desirable criteria.

The continued frequent use of Jabiru and Major Mitchell illustrates the point. Despite the 1978 change to the impossible Black-necked Stork, Jabiru continues in use such that the Handbook finds it necessary to condemn our moral turpitude and declare that Jabiru is "wrong". Suitably chastened presumably, we are henceforth to stumble through the unamenable recommended name. In 1978 Major Mitchell was rejected (as having a "rather curious and cumbersome eponym" p.297) in favour of the feeble Pink Cockatoo.

Both the above ornithological name preferences (and many others) reveal a persistent tendency to utilise colours and characteristics in common names. This results in such laborious descriptor names as White-tailed Black-Cockatoo and the oddly jaundiced Yellow White-eye. It can only be assumed that the nomenclature deciders believe that colours/characteristics names are an aid to identification, although the briefest consideration shows this to be not the case — consider Pacific Black Duck.

Psychology has not finally determined how the human memory operates. What is clear however is that eidetic images, or clear mental images, are holistic. Such images are not composed of parts which are fitted together mentally as if in a visual jigsaw: the image springs up whole and entire.

When a bird is seen, it is not seen as a collection of colours and characters. If a familiar bird is seen (that is, one where the image has been internalised), the name comes to mind immediately without effort. Most will have experienced a situation however when a bird seen is not familiar (ie the bird image in it's context is not internalised) and the image does not receive an immediate name from the memory. When this occurs, we do not search a memorised list of colour/characteristic descriptors for identification and even less do we recall all names with relevant colours or characteristics. While such a list may be made (usually known as field notes), these are usually used to assist in identifying the bird in question while looking through an illustrated field guide — a process that reinforces the internalisation of old and new whole images.

Colour/characteristic descriptors are therefore of minimal or no value for identification purposes. The Gang Gang Cockatoo, Dollarbird, Darter, Osprey, Brolga and Eastern

Curlew are as readily identified as the Black-fronted Plover, Red-kneed Dotterel, Pink-eared Duck and Little Eagle, to choose a few at random.

This being the case there is no reason for the use of polysyllabic descriptors. There is by contrast every reason for having ordinary names which accord with the desirable criteria — simple, euphonious, memorable and where possible, descriptive. There is no reason why these attractive criteria should not accord admirably with the 1978 principles.

Too many present names are long, weak and without appeal. Thus far the Handbook nomenclature changes have given no indication of improvement or real consideration of the bird-watcher/lover. The opportunity to have names which are brief, interesting and memorable in accord with the approach of the larger numbers to which the RAOU looks for its future ought not be lost. Let us not have another "Australian White Ibis".

B. Buchanan

ARGYLE SPINIFEXBIRD

Argyle is at the northern limit of known distribution of the Spinifexbird.

One was observed beside the road to the old Smoke Creek camp in January 1992. It was calling from a branch in the middle of a dead woody shrub about 5 to 10 metres away. The area is very stony with a lot of spinifex. It was about the size of a Red-backed Fairy-wren but with a longer more pointed bill, a shorter, wider and less cocked tail and a flight similar to a wren but stronger. It had a tan/brown crown with a pale eyebrow, a brownish back, rump and tail, and it was paler underneath. It did not move or stop calling as I first approached. It flew several times to other dead shrubs, or to the top of clumps of spinifex probably chasing insects.

Another seen in and flying low over spinifex in early February 1992.

F. O'Connor

LAKE ERIE

Lake Erie (the name of the property) or Lake Eyrie (the name on the Albany—Denmark map) is situate on the Hay River Road. This joins Narrikup to the Mt Barker—Denmark Road. It is some seven kilometres west of Narrikup.

Passing along the road in March (9th) and seeing the Lake, which is easily visible from the road, I decided to investigate. The owner?/manager? of the property (it was marked as being for sale) kindly told me to drive the 500 metres or so to the Lake edge. Here was revealed a large, mainly shallow Lake of about 800 metres diameter, with clumps of *Baumea articulata* and *typha* species at the east and north. At high water it is clear the Lake becomes much larger.

I observed 32 waterbird species, a single visit number not often found at "small" wetlands. The species were:—

Hoary-headed Grebe (182), Australasian Grebe (14), Australian Pelican (6), Little Black Cormorant (12), Little Pied Cormorant (4), White-faced Heron (18), Sacred Ibis (19), Straw-necked Ibis (119), Yellow-billed Spoonbill (30), Black Swan (30), Australian Shelduck (30), Pacific Black Duck (52), Grey Teal (181), Australasian Shoveler (87), Marsh Harrier (1), Spotless Crake (6), Purple Swamphen (15), Eurasian Coot (238), Red-kneed Dotterel (1), Red-capped Plover (38), Black-

fronted Plover (1), Black-winged Stilt (62), Red-necked Avocet (12), Wood Sandpiper (6), Greenshank (4), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (5), Red-necked Stint (1), Curlew Sandpiper (9), Little Grassbird (3).

As far as I can ascertain, Lake Erie has not been reported upon previously. Being just under 40 kilometres from Albany (closer than Pleasant View) it appears to be a good wetland to include on the visiting list.

As a further attraction, some 10 kilometres from Lake Erie is Lake Brown, although dry in March 1992. For those interested in the pioneering days, if visiting Lake Brown (access through the property of the name), look for the remains of the small brick building behind the new homestead (erected on the site of the old) which is the remains of the original ice-house. Large blocks of ice were delivered and remained frozen for most of the year. The early owners sought relief there on hot days and had Christmas celebrations "on ice".

B. Buchanan

ENEABBA ALBINO

On Wednesday 11th March 1992 as I approached one of the dams on our property, a dozen or so ducks flew. Not unusual, except one of a pair of Grey Teal was almost completely white! Have albino Grey Teal been reported previously? I have never seen a duck of this colour before.

It is also good to see that the Wedge-tailed Eagle appears to be making a come-back in this area.

Also today 16th March I saw a Great Egret. I have never seen one here before. The Australian Shelduck have been paired off for a month now, so maybe we are in for a wet season.

Our farm is approximately 50 kms inland from Eneabba.

K. Broad

REACTIONS TO PREDATORS

Living on the edge of a swamp at Wannamal gives opportunity to observe the differing reactions of waterbirds to different predators. The most interesting aspect is not that reactions differ, but that with the relatively high mortality of waterbirds, their reactions appear to remain stable over time.

Whistling Kite, which breed around the swamp margin and are seen and heard every month of the year over the swamp, rarely evoke any reaction from waterbirds. Whistling Kite usually fly relatively slowly at low to medium height over the swamp and surrounding areas and only very occasionally do waterbirds seem to show alarm by scattering over the water. This usually seems to be because the Whistling Kite has appeared unexpectedly from behind a tree.

By contrast Marsh Harrier, usually flying low at slow speed, cause virtually all waterbirds to scatter hurriedly across the water and/or to take flight. Even Black Swan and Australian Pelican are disturbed and a burst of Eurasian Coot and Hoary-headed Grebe "pattering" over the water, while ducks, spoon-bill and egrets fly, is frequently the herald of an airborne Marsh Harrier. All waterbirds seem to be able to fly faster than the Marsh Harrier, not one of which I have seen take chase.

Peregrine Falcon, most common in summer, fly over the swamp fast and low. The waterbirds do not then fly, they bunch together or paddle into denser melaleuca. As a result, one of the methods used by Peregrine Falcon to overcome the reluctance of the waterbirds to fly is to perch quietly near the swamp margin and wait for another raptor or event to put the waterbirds

into the air. The Peregrine Falcon then dashes into the circling flying ducks in search of prey. I have triggered off this sequence more than once while walking through the swamp. Obviously the falcon can fly faster than the waterbirds.

Evidently waterbirds distinguish readily between their three main predators. (Other predators which appear more irregularly over the swamp - Square-tailed Kite, Australian Kestrel, Black-shouldered Kite, Collared Sparrowhawk, Brown Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle evoke no response.) Presumably the younger birds take their reaction from older experienced birds.

B. Buchanan

Eyre Report

Eyre had a wet month of March: April has been even wetter with 61.2 mm to date! Everything looks green and lush with new shoots appearing everywhere. The Dodonaea, Hakea, Halgania, Pomaderris, Styphelia and Templetonia bushes are flowering.

The Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters have returned, perhaps because of the promise of masses of blossom on the mallee trees. Mistletoebird are feeding on the mistletoe berries and a flock of Regent Parrot were recorded recently. Leek orchids (*Prasophyllum nigricans*) with their minute little flowers were found at Burnabbie not far from the old homestead.

Reptiles appear to be enjoying the brief bursts of sunshine. A Dugite managed to tangle itself in one of the mist nets. Although the net had to be cut, the snake was successfully extricated and relocated away from the banding site. At Burnabbie, a Death Adder slithered off under a bush when it became aware of our presence. A number of sightings of small Master's snakes have been recorded.

Mammals have also been in the limelight. On a recent trip to Twilight Cove we watched eight Dolphins displaying their remarkable talents in moving effortlessly through the water. A New Zealand Fur Seal posed for the keen photographers and a Hopping Mouse was seen in the rocks near King Skinks. On the return journey we examined the carcase of a Whale washed onto the beach. During the Animals on Plants Course held recently a Pygmy Possum and a Honey Possum were successfully trapped, weighed, measured and released.

Due to the abundant supply of water the Brush Bronzewing, Australian Raven and Pink Cockatoo are not drinking at the birdbaths. However a Brown Goshawk and a Collared Sparrowhawk visited the pool, enabling us to get a really good look at the toes! The Collared Sparrowhawk middle toe really is noticeably long.

Our most current birdwatching event was the sighting of an orange-tagged Red-necked Stint on 22/4/92, just one week later than last year's sighting (15/4/91). A Great-crested Grebe also appeared at the 9 Mile - records indicate a sighting in 1972, 1982 and now 1992.

It's 'Never a Dull Moment at Eyre' and with an exciting programme of Courses, together with the Nest Record Expeditions coming up in the near future, who knows what may be seen and found.

G. and G. Goodreid and T. Hunt

B B C B Q

Changes to bird distribution may well be continuously occurring. The following questions all concern the dates at which changes occurred on the Swan Coastal Plain. Answers can be in decades ie 1940's.

On the Swan Coastal Plain:—

- 1) Yellow-billed Spoonbill were first reported ?
- 2) When were Sacred Ibis first reported ?
- 3) When did Banded Plover become established ?
- 4) Pink-eared Duck were rare and infrequent before ?
- 5) By when had White-naped Honeyeater largely disappeared ?
- 6) Crested Pigeon were first seen on the Swan Coastal Plain at Regan's Ford. When ?
- 7) When was Little Eagle first reported ?
- 8) Tree Martin commenced breeding at Rottneest — ?
- 9) When were Little Egret first recorded ?
- 10) Australian Magpie-Lark were first recorded to breed on the Plain - when ?

Answers on page 11

Waterbird News

SCOPEWEST

The analysis of SCOPEWEST data is complete with writing-up now in full swing. By the time this issue reaches you, the report should be well advanced.

The report will present general abundance and species richness information along with data concerning physical, chemical and morphological attributes of wetlands. Chapter 3 of the report will be of most interest to RAOU participants dealing with summary statistics, methodology, data on seasonal changes, breeding and historical information.

As with all joint RAOU/CALM publications, participants in the project will receive free copies of the report as soon as it is completed.

MARCH WATERFOWL COUNT

Preliminary figures for the March Annual Waterfowl are to hand and thanks are due to all duck counters.

The March count was preceded by widespread rainfall causing waterfowl to disperse. Thousands of ducks were reported on wetlands in the Goldfields region and other inland areas outside the study area.

Coverage for the count was again excellent with around 1220 wetlands surveyed. This figure represents more than a 97% coverage rate.

The preliminary total of waterfowl was 212,532 birds. The dispersal due to rainfall prior to the count had a major impact on waterfowl numbers and the preliminary grand total is well down on the previous March count

(refer WA Bird Notes, Issue 58).

The following totals are only preliminary and readers are requested to consult the final report of the November 91/March 92 report to be published later.

PRELIMINARY TOTALS - MARCH 1992

Black Swan	14,965
Freckled Duck	88
Australian Shelduck	42,946
Pacific Black Duck	26,977
Grey Teal	78,634
Chestnut Teal	6,964
Australasian Shoveler	3,586
Pink-eared Duck	3,356
Hardhead	433
Maned Duck	2,636
Blue-billed Duck	691
Musk Duck	2,812
Eurasian Coot	28,444

212,532

Four wetlands in South-Western Australia held more than 10,000 waterfowl. These were Peel Inlet 21,826, Dumbleyung Lake 15,636, Coyrecup Lake 15,594 and Yealering Lake 13,493.

The report of the November 90/March 91 waterfowl count is being printed and will be posted to all participants shortly.

Again, many thanks to all participants for your efforts in supporting waterfowl counts.

R. Vervest, RAOU Waterbirds Officer

Beach Patrol

This scheme was described in the December 1991 issue of *Wingspan* and volunteers were invited to co-ordinate the search for specimens. The WA Committee has agreed I should undertake this responsibility for WA: Ian Standing will co-ordinate the Perth metropolitan area.

The first step consisted of writing to 30 RAOU members living on or near our coastline from Koolan Island in the north to Esperance on the south coast. Members were asked if they would be prepared to organise beach searches along their own stretch of coastline, whether they would co-ordinate the results and be responsible for forwarding specimens to Ron Johnstone of the WA Museum.

To date we have received 12 replies, all of whom expressed interest and asked for the necessary instructions. A kit has now been forwarded to them. It consists of a set of condensed instructions taken from those received from RAOU in Melbourne and forms to be completed.

Beach co-ordinators are asked to forward specimens either by post or in bulk, deep frozen, by suitable transport. Ron Johnstone has agreed to accept all material

sent to him and to confirm identification. Notification of material forwarded to the WA Museum will be supplied to the RAOU office by the co-ordinators. We intend keeping in close contact with Ron and will publish results in WA Bird Notes from time to time.

This scheme is intended to be low-key birding in which anyone can take part. We hope that over the next few years more knowledge of our pelagic birds will be gained. Although some members are being allocated beaches which they will patrol regularly, it is hoped that everyone will look for beach-washed birds whenever they walk along any part of our very extensive coastline.

B. Barrett, Co-ordinator

Metropolitan Beaches

Some members in the metropolitan area will probably have obtained their beach patrol kits from Melbourne and will have identified a beach that they intend to patrol. I would be grateful if they would contact me so that I know which beaches are being covered.

If anyone around the Perth metropolitan area is interested in participating, please contact me and I will send you a kit. You can patrol the beach of your choice, although some flexibility would be appreciated should the beach have already been chosen or allocated. Monthly patrols are preferred, although any visits will be welcome. You can also patrol any beach at any time you happen to be there (whether in the metropolitan area or 1000 km from Perth).

I may be contacted at 116 Virgil Avenue, Yokine, WA, 6060, telephone 275 4394 (h).

I. Standring, Metropolitan Co-ordinator

Books considered

The Western Australian Museum published *Birds of the South-West Division of Western Australia* in 1991. The introduction informs the reader that "this is the last in a series of regional avifaunas covering Western Australia". In its unpretentious guise as Records of the Western Australian Museum Supplement No. 35, knowledge of this title might not reveal the value of this 150 page book.

With this volume GM Storr completes his series of bird guides to Western Australia. Others in the invaluable series cover the Kimberley Division (publ 1980), North-Eastern Interior (1981), Pilbara (1984), Gascoyne (1985), Mid-Eastern Interior (1985), South-Eastern Interior (1986) and Eucla Division (1987). In addition, with Johnstone RE and Griffin P, Storr published *Birds of the Houtman Abrolhos, Western Australia* in 1986 and more importantly for the majority of bird watchers, in 1988 with Johnstone, the *Birds of the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent seas and islands*.

This is a substantial achievement. The regional avifaunas set out to summarize for each species and subspecies our knowledge of present and past distribution, ecological status, relative abundance, whether the species feeds alone or in groups, habitat preferences, breeding season, clutch size, movements and changes in

status following European settlement. This is done as far as knowledge is available in each of the volumes in the series and in the case of the latest addition, pleasure is enhanced by its presentation on good quality paper and with an attractive cover.

Like the earlier volumes the latest contains much important and interesting information that is not readily available elsewhere and is a book which should be on the shelves and often in the hands of all WA bird watchers. The price, a mere \$10.00, would put this book into the "super bargain" category on most bookseller racks, but unlike such it is not mere ephemera, but an important addition to your bird library.

When combined with *Birds of the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent seas and islands*, the *Birds of the South-West Division of Western Australia* becomes the most informative, useful and up-to-date work on the birds of that part of WA most visited by bird watchers which is available. And for only \$20.00 !

The series, now drawn to a fine conclusion will, it is to be hoped, receive periodic updating. Inevitably there are additional species and changes of habitat, distribution etc being seen across the whole of WA even if only because bird watcher numbers slowly increase, especially in the more distant parts of the state. For example, Garganey is not mentioned for the Kimberley Division book, it being published before the Garganey presence in the Kimberley was clearly established.

GM Storr is to be highly complimented on his valuable pioneering work and the WA Museum also for its publication at a price readily affordable to all.

B. Buchanan

Excursion Reports

ALFRED COVE 15 Feb 1992

An overcast showery day greeted more than 20 keen birders on this our second introduction to shorebirds.

Although difficult to identify, shorebirds can be an irresistible challenge. Once one learns the common, identifying the not-so-common is made a little easier.

Most people were seeing shorebirds close up for the first time and in no time were able to identify for themselves a few of the larger species. Great and Red Knot proved most difficult to separate, but most were able to identify our two common species of sandpiper in next to no time.

With a little practice, we hope some will go on to become regular wader-watchers.

J. Hunt

ELLIS BROOK 1 Mar 1992

On a fine morning with a strong blustery wind, 18 members and two guests from New Zealand met to be conducted around the precipitous hill tracks which dominate Ellis Brook Reserve. The walk is not for the faint-hearted - the tracks being mostly composed of loose stone and gravel - one either walks uphill or down, but seldom on a level surface, so that seeing birds as well is something of an achievement.

With Les Harris' guidance we walked for three hours or so and found thirty-six species. The 'bird of the day' was an

Australian Owllet-nightjar, perched at the entrance to a hollow in a dead tree-trunk some 25 metres above the track along which we walked. At first there was some controversy to the identity. As the bird disappeared on several occasions in the hollow before returning to the opening and sun itself we could all watch it's movements and confirm identification.

We also obtained a close look at a Collared Sparrowhawk and saw a group of Red-eared Firetail.

Les Harris is to be commended on his knowledge of the area and unflagging energy in leading people to safety down the steep gorge to their cars.

B. Barrett

BUNGENDORE 22 MAR 1992

As a new member of R.A.O.U. and very much a beginner in the art of watching and listening, I was delighted to be able to join the "beginners" group at Bungendore Park. Thank you Simon Nevill and indeed the whole group for being so ready to impart knowledge.

Highlights of the morning for me were the sightings of the Splendid Fairy-wren, Scarlet and White-breasted Robin, Western Rosella and Western Spinebill.

M.D. Waller

KOGALUP 23 Mar 1992

A hotline call encouraged 13 R.A.O.U. members to visit Kogalup swamp, principally to view waders.

Unfortunately there had been shooting the previous night and the birds were less numerous than expected. We did see some Wood Sandpiper and a Long-toed Stint. The Ruff, which had previously been seen by some members was absent. However it was recorded on film across the road at Yangebup Lake a week previously.

A total of 40 species were recorded.

P. Howden

WILGARUP 28 Mar 1992

Wilgarup Swamp lies some 12 km north of Manjimup in the locality of Palgorup. The lake basin is surrounded by pasture and remnant woodland on lateritic ridges. Panoramic views of the wetland can be obtained from a hillside to the west.

The wetland and it's associated buffer of vegetation covers about 180 ha and includes an island of pristine forest, graced in its centre by a grove of ancient blackboys. The shore of the island has a thin stand of paperbarks with isolated patches of *Baumea articulata* just offshore.

Some of the group (24 in all) arrived early and set camp in bushland to the south of the lake. The following morning we began the first survey of the southern section of Wilgarup. Although waterbirds were not abundant, some had excellent views of Spotless Crake near the edges of the rush beds. (These same rush beds are known to support breeding Australasian Bittern though none were seen or heard during our stay). The island being at one point only 10-15 metres offshore and with water only 300 mm deep separating it from the mainland, an afternoon survey was decided on and those who crossed added Chestnut Teal to the bird list.

To gain an overview of the wetland, we climbed the western hillside and after briefly birding in some marri/banksia woodland, descended to the lake and began a survey at the northern end. Here we encountered flocks of duck including Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal and Pacific Black Duck. A group of 25-30 Yellow-billed Spoonbill roosted on a fallen tree

at the edge of the island. During our survey a Little Eagle (light-phase) flew low overhead seemingly oblivious to a group of Australian Magpie that darted at it from every direction.

After dinner and campfire recounting of various adventures and happenings (I was particularly engrossed by a deftly illustrated technique for pinning down a sheep prior to terminating its life in preparation for the table!), we settled to the night and sounds of the swamp.

Another bright morning saw us heading off to some small wetlands nearby. Before exploring the first site we were addressed by Geoff Lodge from nearby Boyup Brook who has extensive knowledge of the area. Geoff spoke of earlier days when he surveyed Wilgarup with the late Major H.M. Whittell. I was released from a long-standing and personal mystery in relation to the whereabouts of Whittell's collection of the now extinct (?) in W.A. Lewin's Rail. It was Wilgarup Swamp, which understandably for many of us, instantly took on a new perspective.

Rather than rushing off with renewed ambition to find a bird that has eluded many since the early 1930's, we surveyed Mersea State Forest. After an hour or so birding we reached a total of 81 species for the weekend.

Our stay was all the more enjoyable for the hospitality of Eric and Yvonne Phillips, owners of Wilgarup who made us welcome and freely shared their knowledge of the area. We wish them all the best with their efforts to ensure that Wilgarup is preserved forever.

I hope to return to Wilgarup in late spring to listen for the elusive bittern. Watch Coming Events.

R. Vervest

TOODYAY 4 Apr 1992

About 40 people assembled outside Toodyay where we were observed by a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagle. The party then travelled to the property of Doug Morgan near Goomalling where two quite deep lakes, which have appeared in depressions in the sandplain country as a result of clearance around the turn of the century, were examined. A narrow belt of banksia woodland connecting the two lakes provided a good example of remnant vegetation.

The weather was perfect but, unfortunately, from a bird observer point of view, recent rains had resulted in a drop in the number of waterbirds present. However, nine species of duck were recorded, including Australasian Shoveler, Pink-eared, Hardhead and Blue-billed. A Musk Duck, with two young riding on her back, was also seen. Inspection of several nearby swamps yielded the Black-tailed Native-hen, Purple Swamphen, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Little Grassbird and White-winged Fairy-wren, while many of the commoner bush birds were spotted in adjacent areas of woodland. Altogether, a total of 51 species were recorded at the two sites.

After lunch, the party moved to the property of Jim Masters in the Avon Valley, where they were treated to an excellent example of country hospitality in the form of afternoon tea. Jim also provided much detailed information on the construction of an artificial wetland and on variations in local rainfall, river levels, and water salinity over a considerable period of time. A further 32 species were recorded in a relatively short time here, including a pair of Whistling Kite and a Mistletoebird in the garden. Among the water birds on the dam were a group of Yellow-billed Spoonbill while, along the river, we saw several Darter and an Australian Pelican. Sincere thanks go to Doug Morgan and Jim Masters and his family for

a very informative excursion.

S. Houghton

LAKE MONGER 12 Apr 1992

Eleven RAOU members and an English visitor, Philip Haskell, enjoyed a morning's walk around Lake Monger and then a brief visit to Herdsman Lake. Of interest were 80+ Australasian Shoveler and 130+ Blue-billed Duck including 4 juveniles. It was curious that there were no Australian Shelduck.

At Herdsman Lake, several immature Great-crested Grebe were seen resting in shallow water at the lake's edge, rather than more typically in deeper water.

I. Standring

Coming Events

During the winter months we hope to make impromptu visits to the North Mole in Fremantle. Very often uncommon seabirds are blown into the harbour after winter storms. Notice of these visits will be put on the Hotline (09) 387 8412 a few days in advance. So keep in touch!

Efforts to arrange boat trips for seabirding (at reasonable rates) have so far been unsuccessful. If however, outings can be arranged, details will be put on the Hotline.

B. Barrett, Excursions Organiser

Wednesday 3 June Mid-week walk - Blue Gum Lake Meet at 8 am at the carpark on the corner of Moolyean Road and Canning Avenue. A visit to this interesting lake area which has a variety of water and bush birds.

Leader: Allan Jones

Tuesday 9 June Official Opening of new RAOU Centre (Office), Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive, Wembley, WA 12.00 pm (Note time)

The new centre will officially be opened by Bill Oddie. Invitations are being sent to members of Perth City Council, Wildflower Society, WA Group Committee and sub-committees and government and business representatives. Should you wish to attend please contact (09) 364-6202.

The limited parking space near the Centre will be reserved for official guests.

Wednesday 10 June Evening with Bill Oddie - Social Science Lecture Theatre, UWA 8 pm

Bill Oddie's adventures and slides. \$7 including supper. Tickets from 218/15 Ogilvie Road, Canning Bridge, WA 6153, telephone (09) 364 6202.

Saturday 20 June Full day excursion - Stinton Cascades Nature Reserve, Karragullen

Meet at 8.30 am in Gardiner Road, off Brookton Highway (200 metres down). This is a new CALM reserve of Jarrah which is a good area for birds.

Leader: John Start

Monday 22 June Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Ron Johnstone, who has collected bird and other fauna for the WA Museum throughout the State and who has visited several parts of Indonesia in this work, will speak about the birds of the Lesser Sunda Islands.

Saturday 27 June to Sunday 28 June Campout - Trayning

Members of the RAOU will join with 'Men of the Trees' to plant 6000 understorey seedlings in shelter belts on a property near Trayning (about 3 hours drive from Perth), to promote food and habitat for birds. Billyacatting Reserve is nearby and will be visited during the weekend, Yorkrakine Rock on the return journey.

Directions: Drive 17 km south of Trayning (on the Trayning-Kellerberrin Road), turn right (west) along Barnes Road. Drive exactly 5 km along Barnes Road, then turn left to the homestead (you will see a small bus shelter).

Accommodation: Your own camping equipment or caravans. A nice camping spot in a large patch of mallee for protection is available on the farm and the roaring camp fire and good company will keep everyone nice and warm. You can go back after the evening meal to the local hall, if this is more to your liking.

Bring food, camping equipment, spade (well marked with your name), bucket, raincoat, water bottle. Maurice Barnes (owner of property) will provide plenty of lamb chops for the evening BBQ.

Contact Chris Wilder telephone (09) 401 8329 or Mike Norman ("Men of the Trees") telephone (09) 448 1978 if you will attend. Car pooling can be arranged and full petrol costs will be reimbursed for any car bringing more than two willing planters.

This project is sponsored by Greening Western Australia under the Federal Government's Billion Trees Programme.

Thursday 2 July Mid-week walk - Lake Claremont

Meet at 8 am at the southern end of Stirling Road, Claremont, for a look at a variety of waterbirds on this suburban lake.

Leader: Norah Brockman

Sunday 5 July Half day excursion - Lesmurdie Open Spaces

Meet at 8.30 am at carpark 4.3 km east along Welshpool Road from junction with Tonkin Highway. Carpark is up a gravel track just beyond Crystal Brook Road almost opposite BP Garage. Look for RAOU sign.

An area of low scrub which is the habitat of Southern Emu-wren. These birds are extremely shy so sightings in a group may be difficult, but they have been seen here regularly. Sturdy footwear recommended.

Leader: Jeremy Talbot

Sunday 19 July Half day excursion - Woodvale Wildlife Research Centre

Meet at 8.30 am at the entrance to the Centre on the old Ocean Reef Road, near the turnoff to the Mitchell Freeway. Allan will show us around this small reserve

surrounding CALM's Research Centre.

Leader: Allan Burbidge

Sunday 26 July Full day excursion - Serpentine National Park

Meet at 8.30 am at the junction of the Southwest Highway and Falls Road (the turnoff to Serpentine Falls). A visit to several sections of the park not developed for the general public.

Leader: Rod Smith

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

Roger Jaensch on "Argus to Baza, birdwatching in Malaysia".

Sunday 9 August Full day excursion - "Karakamia" Sanctuary, Gidgegannup

Meet at 10 am at the Sanctuary entrance at Lot 201, Lilydale Road. From Perth, travel along Toodyay Road, through Gidgegannup, turn right into Lilydale Road and continue for 6.5 km. The Sanctuary is on the righthand side just before Clark Road.

"Karakamia" means 'home of the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo' and is being set up as a sanctuary for endangered native species indigenous to the Darling Range. It is based on Warrawong Sanctuary in South Australia which is renowned for successfully breeding small endangered native mammals.

A round trip of approximately 95 km from Perth.

A small donation may be requested.

Leader: Boyd Wykes

Wednesday 12 August Mid-week walk - Lake Gwelup

Meet at 8 am at the carpark on the corner of Stoneham Street and Huntriss Road (north of Karrinyup Road). A large permanent lake with lots of waterbirds and a variety of bushbirds in the adjacent forest.

Leader: Len Talbot

Saturday 15 August Full day excursion - Brookton Highway Reserve

Meet at 8 am at the corner of Canning Mills Road and Brookton Highway, Karragullen, from where we will travel to the reserve. On the edge of the Avon Valley, this attractive CALM reserve exhibits a blend of forest and wheatbelt species. We will be developing a bird list during the winter.

Leader: John Ashford

Monday 24 August Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Mike Brooker, well known for his work on Wedge-tailed Eagle, Splendid Fairy-wren and other birds and stationed at Helena Valley in the CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology, will speak to us on the subject of cuckoos.

Saturday 29 August Full day excursion - Avon Valley National Park

Meet at 8.30 am at the Park entrance. From Perth travel via Toodyay Road, through Gidgegannup and

Noble Falls, turn left into Morangup Road, proceed 5 km and left into the carpark at the Park entrance. RAOU signs will direct you.

The Avon Valley slopes steeply down the Darling Scarp to the Avon River. The valleys are forested with Wandoo and the birding should be good. A round trip from Perth of approximately 120 km.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Saturday 5 September Half day excursion - Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park, Padbury

Meet at 8.15 am at the first carpark off Whitfords Avenue (on the righthand side through the entrance). The Park has Tuart and banksia woodlands and coastal heath. It is one of the few sites near Perth where Yellow-throated Miner can be seen.

Leader: Robyn Shaw

Saturday 12 September to Sunday 13 September Campout - Stirling Range National Park

Morning birdwatching walks will be held on Saturday and Sunday, an orchid walk on Saturday afternoon and a slide show on Saturday night. Camping sites or accommodation in on-site caravans, cabins or chalets should be booked early at the Stirling Range Caravan Park on (098) 279229.

Leader: Jan Hill from whom more details may be obtained on (09) 293 1321.

Monday 21 September Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Geoff Lodge, who farms near Boyup Brook and has studied the birds of his area since the early 1930s, will talk to us about those birds, including the possibly extinct Lewin's Rail. This speaker to be confirmed.

Monday 26 October Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Neil Hamilton, the Section Keeper of Birds at the Perth Zoo, will discuss the conservation in zoos of rare and endangered bird species.

Monday 23 November Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Gordon and Joan Campbell, who are enthusiastic photographers of bower birds, quail thrushes and other Australian birds, will show and comment on their slides.

Nest Longevity

Peter Anson reports on five nests:—

Last Used	4 yrs ago	4 yrs ago	4 yrs +	4 yrs	3 yrs
Nest Type	Large stick c.17m high	Stick c.15m high	Stick c.17m	Small stick c. 17m	Stick
Species	Prob. A. Raven	Poss A. Magpie	? A. Raven	?	Used by A. Raven in 4th year
Tree	Tuart	Tuart	Tuart	Tuart	Flooded Gum

Publications for Sale

Australian Waterbirds-Fieldguide	Kingsford	\$15.00
Beach Patroller's Guide	Rowe & Plant	\$7.00
Birders Guide to Japan	Robinson	\$15.00
Birding Sites around Perth	Van Delft	\$10.00
Birdlife of Murdoch	Porter	\$6.00
Birds of Australia-Logbook	Simpson & Day	\$11.00
Birds of W.A.	Serventy & Whittell	\$12.00
Check List of Birds of W.A.	10 for	\$1.00
Field Guide to Birds of Australia	Pizzey	\$23.00
Field Guide to Birds of Australia	Simpson & Day	\$25.00
Field Guide to Australian Birds	Slater	\$25.00
Field Guide to Birds of W.A.	Storr & Johnstone	\$20.00
Great Australian Birdfinder	Morecombe	\$55.00
Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the Rockingham Offshore Island and Cape Peron	W.A.	\$10.00
Attracting Birds to a W.A. Garden	Naturalists	.50
Methods of Censusing Birds in Australia	Davies (ed)	\$5.00
National Photographic Index Books		
Parrots and Pigeons		\$71.00
Seabirds		\$61.00
Shorebirds		\$61.00
Honeyeaters and Allies		\$64.50
Wrens and Warblers		\$51.00
Robins and Flycatchers		\$68.00
Waterbirds of Australia		\$61.00
Parrots of the World	Forshaw	\$60.00
Pocket List of Australian Birds	Schodde	\$1.50
Portrait of a Peninsula	Smith	\$9.00
Save that Song	Hutchinson	\$25.00
Seabirds- Identification Guide	Harrison	\$64.00
Shorebirds in Australia	Lane	\$45.00
W A Bird Notes	per issue	\$3.50
Waterbirds in Nature Reserves of S.W. Australia 1981-85	Jaensch Vervest & Hewish	\$35.00
Waterbirds at Remote Wetlands Parts 1 & 2	Jaensch & Vervest	\$12.00 each
Where to Find Birds in Australia	Bransbury	\$30.00

Other items for purchase :—

Audubon Squeakers	\$12.50
Bird-call tapes	\$11.00
RAOU Emu badges	\$3.00
Car stickers - Splendid Fairy-wren	\$2.00
Gift Items are also available — including	
tea towels	
gift packs	
all purpose cards	for 8 \$6.00

B B C B Q Answers

- 1) 1954
- 2) 1952
- 3) 1920's
- 4) 1952
- 5) 1948
- 6) 1964
- 7) 1929
- 8) 1983
- 9) 1965
- 10) 1915

Big Bird's Clever Birdo Quiz is derived from Storr GM & Johnstone RE (1988), *Birds of the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent seas and islands* Records of the WA Museum Supplement No. 28 WA Museum Perth.

To see the Chestnut-breasted Whiteface or the Gibber Chat, or any of the other special arid region birds you would go to the Strezlecki in late winter.

Why? The countryside is at its best regenerating with the winter rains and before the heat parches the flora. And this is the nesting season there when the birds are most active.

To see the Red-lored Whistler or the Mallee Emu-wren or any of the other special Mallee birds you would go to the Little Desert in spring.

Why? Again this is the time of flora regeneration after the winter rains and before the heat makes the Mallee uncomfortable. Again this is the nesting season when the birds are most active.

If you want to look for birds in the alpine country you would go in the early summer.

Why? Earlier than that there is too much snow around and by the end of summer most of the birds have finished their breeding cycle and are thus more difficult to find.

To see the Red-bellied Pitta, the Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, the Yellow-legged Flycatcher, and all of those other special Cape York birds you go in January.

Why? Its 'spring time' for the flora. Lush and green with the Cape York lilies and other wild flowers in full bloom.

And its "spring time" and nesting time for the birds, the period of greatest activity.

And with the arrival of the first showers leading up to the wet season, (February/March) the migrants arrive to breed.

And when it rains it usually rains at night.

And its NOT HOT, (the cloud cover keeps the temperature down), rarely over 30° C; cooler than many summer days in Melbourne. The hot months are the late dry season months of October to December.

Earlier than January and its too hot and dry and everything is listless and hard to find.

Later than January and it gets a little wet underfoot.

And - the top of the Cape is outside the cyclone region.

CAPE YORK BIRD WEEK : January 1993

If you want to see the best of the birds on Cape York and be comfortable, January and Cape York Bird Week is the time to go.

This year Cape York Bird Week will include a stopover at Iron Range so you won't miss out on the Eclectus Parrot, Red-cheeked Parrot, Fig Parrot, Black-winged Monarch and Green-backed Honeyeater.

A PELAGIC trip into the CORAL SEA : July 1992

CAPE YORK TRAVERSE : June/July 1992

Cairns to Lakefield National Park via Cooktown, then across the Cape to the west coast, then back to Chillago, Mt Surprise and the Atherton Tableland.
Perhaps 250 species of birds, a wide variety of habitats plus the Undara Lava Tube Caves.

IRON RANGE : November 1992

Fly-in/Fly-out, fully accommodated, (or drive out and see the Golden-shouldered Parrot)

**For information write: Gordon Beruldsen
Free as a Bird Holidays, PO Box 387
Kenmore, Qld 4069
Phone (07) 374 1253**



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