



Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of Birds Australia WA
(Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union)

No 80 December 1996

LITTLE PENGUINS ON PENGUIN ISLAND

One of the WA Group's newest members, Dr Belinda Cannell of Biological Sciences at Murdoch University, is conducting a detailed study of Little Penguins at Penguin Island, and is seeking interested (and trainable) volunteers to help radio-track some of the birds. Belinda has provided the following story for Bird Notes, and can be contacted by prospective volunteers on 09 360 2202 (bus hours) and 09 272 4079 (after hours). Please contact her and help with this fascinating work; Eds.

STUDY ON LITTLE PENGUINS

The Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor* colony on Penguin Island is the only one of significant size on the west coast of Australia, and is estimated to have a current population of about 1000-1200. It is a long-established colony but is very isolated; the nearest colonies of any size are more than 1500 km away. Little Penguins do not breed on the Western Australian mainland and their absence from many islands around Perth (e.g. Rottnest Island) implies that, as well as breeding sites free from predators and disturbance, they require additional resources available only on or near Penguin, Garden and Carnac Islands. The most probable requirement is access to a reliable, year-round supply of small, schooling fish within 5-10 km of their breeding colony.

Evidence from penguin populations throughout Australia indicates that their numbers are declining, particularly those populations close to expanding urban areas. The colony on Penguin Island is only 600 m offshore from the suburbs of Rockingham and thus is the closest WA penguin colony to areas of high density urban development. Growing demand for recreational and commercial access to coastal venues will obviously continue to place pressure upon the small, isolated and unusual penguin colony on Penguin Island. In addition:

- the human population of Rockingham has doubled over the last five years and is projected to treble in size over

the next 20 years;

- the number of recreational boats registered in Western Australia rose from 20 000 in 1970, to 40 000 in 1980 and 70 000 in 1990;
- trawl and beach seine fisheries operate in and around the Marine Park.

The penguins on Penguin Island have been studied by Murdoch University researchers since 1984. In 1986, 55 nesting boxes were placed in areas with different levels of human disturbance. These boxes have been visited weekly since their placement, allowing the collection of information on the condition of the penguins throughout the year, how often they return to nest-boxes, when they breed, how successfully they breed, and in a limited fashion, their diet. However, it is not known where the penguins feed, when they feed, nor whether these habits change throughout the year. Visual tracking of penguins at sea is very difficult and satellite tracking is prohibitively expensive; at present radio-tracking is the best way to determine their foraging patterns.

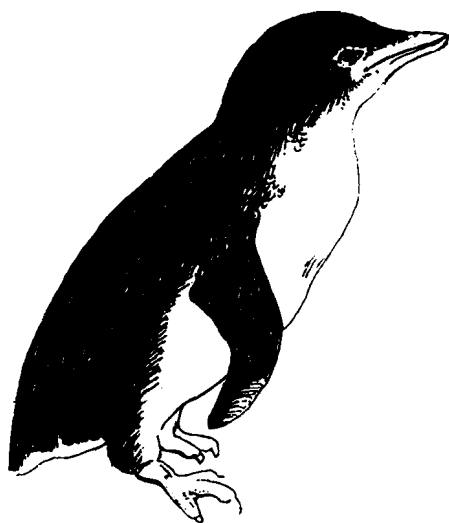
We have joined forces with a local community group — the Friends of Shoalwater Islands Marine Park (FSIMP), and together obtained a grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation. Murdoch University has obtained extra funding from Port Kennedy Resorts Pty Ltd. These funds are also to be used to gather information on the diet of the penguins throughout the year, as well as the location, abundance and size distribution of the prey species (or bait fish) taken by Little Penguins in the project area.

Anyone who has done any radio-tracking will agree that it is a very costly exercise, both in monetary terms and the number of hours over which the animals must be tracked, and hence the large number of personnel required. We will be attaching temporary lightweight and streamlined transmitters on ten birds and tracking them concurrently from three sites over a 10-day period. The tracking sessions will occur at four

different stages in the annual breeding cycle of the penguins, repeated for three years. As the penguins leave the island before dawn and return after dusk, each tracking station will be operated from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm (the times will vary according to season) and each bird will be tracked every ½-1 hour. Two people are needed at each station for a period of approximately three hours. A person will not be required to do more than one shift a day, and ideally, we would like to use the same people over a series of days. However, this is not an absolute requirement. Volunteers have currently been recruited from FSIMP, the CALM volunteer group, and a few from Underwater World, but **many more people are desperately needed.**

Hopefully at the end of this three-year project, we will have determined where the Little Penguins from Penguin Island feed, how these locations are affected by their breeding cycle, what they eat, and the location and abundance of their prey at different times of the year. Such information, of course, will help us to determine any impacts that developments in the area are likely to have on this very special population of penguins.

Belinda Cannell



Little Penguin
Drawn: Val Talbot

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined the RAOU (WA Group) between 1 August and 25 October 1996. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

Central South Naturalist Club (Secretary), G Assan, B Cannell, S and B Carmody, M Dorn, R N Galbraith, I Gale, G and J Graham, A Hall, P and A Milberry, B Millen, P Peters, B Phillips, J Sherry, R Teale.

Observations

Compiled by the Observations Committee. Shires are in brackets. Names and order follow Christidis, L. and Boles, W. (1994) *The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories*. RAOU Monograph 2.

Observers are reminded that, for rarely seen or difficult to identify species, adequate documentation is required for inclusion in WABN. For example, new records, or records of species rarely recorded in the south-west should be accompanied by a description of what was *actually seen* and reasons for the identification. Note that a statement to the effect that what was seen fitted a description in a field guide is a statement about what is in a field guide, and does not tell the editors what you actually saw. Providing extra details also assists the editors to provide extra information to readers.

Interesting reports this time include a Little Curlew in the south-west, two Arctic Terns at Fremantle (details next issue), further reports of Little Terns breeding, a Little Ringed Plover near Broome and a Pied Imperial Pigeon in Broome. Also sent in were some exciting seabird records from a pelagic trip out of Broome, including Matsudaira's Storm-Petrel, Bulwer's Petrel, and possible Jouanin's Petrel - these are not recorded below but details will be in the next issue.

SOUTH-WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Malleefowl - 1, 28/7/96, reserve No. 16491, 2.4 km NE of Canna Siding on Canna North-East Road, ca 40 km N of Morawa (Morawa) - BL * 1, 2/9/96, 6.6 km S of Burakin-Kulja road on road to Koorda (Koorda) - BL, TL

Great Crested Grebe - 38, 25/10/96, Lake Coogee (Cockburn) - JC, DC

Kerguelen Petrel - 11, 18/8/96, ca. 45 km W of Perth - PPT * 100+ on various occasions, 6/96 and 7/96, with 150+ over 7 hours on 16/7/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

Great-winged Petrel - present 5/96 to early 6/96, with highest number 30+ on 25/5/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP * 30, 14/9/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP, FO

White-headed Petrel - 30 over 6-7 hours, 8/5/96 and 16/7/96, with smaller numbers on many other days, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP (large number for this species)

Soft-plumaged Petrel - 17, 18/6/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP * 12, 18/8/96, ca. 45 km W of Perth - PPT

White-chinned Petrel - small numbers 5/96 to 7/96, with up to 15+ on several days in 7/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP * 13, 14/9/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP, FO

Grey Petrel - small numbers, 5/96 to 7/96, with 15+ on 17/5/96, 2/6/96, 3/6/96 and 11/6/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP (generally uncommon visitor to the south-west coast)

Streaked Shearwater - 2, 8/5/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP (southernmost WA record)

Fluttering/Hutton's Shearwater - 15+ over 7 hours, 16/7/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP * 35

(Hutton's), 18/8/96, ca. 45 km W of Perth - PPT * 60, 15/9/96, Bunker Bay, Cape Naturaliste (Busselton) - FO (some birds can be confidently identified to species in the field, but many are difficult even in the hand)

Little Shearwater - 2, 15/9/96, Bunker Bay, Cape Naturaliste (Busselton) - FO * 2, 18/9/96, Cape Leeuwen (Augusta-Margaret River) - FO

Shy Albatross - 1, 18/8/96, ca. 45 km W of Perth - PPT * 3, 14/9/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP, FO * 1, 27/9/96, ca. 20 km W of Dongara - MC (long way N for this species)

Wilson's Storm-Petrel - 1, 6/96, ca. 50 m offshore, near James Street jetty, Esperance (Esperance) - Joan McIlroy per KD

Australasian Gannet - varying numbers between 1/5 and mid-July, with highest (150+) on 17 and 18/6/96, Point Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

Little Curlew - 1, 20/10/96, Woodman Point (Cockburn) - SN, RD and 14 UK birdwatchers (rare visitor to the south-west)

Terek Sandpiper - 1, 16/9/96, Gnarabup Beach, Margaret River (Augusta-Margaret River) - FO (not often recorded in the far south-west)

Red-necked Phalarope - 1 female, 17/10/96, Government House Lake, Rottnest Island - AB * 1, 21-25/10/96, Pearse Lake, Rottnest Island - KM, BM * female in breeding plumage, Government House Lake, Rottnest - RL

Banded Stilt - ca. 10000+, 29/9/96, Yarra Yarra Lakes NR (Three Springs) - BN * 7000, 20/10/96, south of Austin Bay, Peel Inlet (Murray) - JB, JuB

Lesser Sand Plover - 2, 29/9/96, with ca. 60 Red-capped Plovers and ca. 30 Red-necked Stints, Yarra Yarra Lakes NR (Three Springs) - BN

Hooded Plover - 2, 12/5/96 and 27/5/96, Gull Rock, Cape Naturaliste (Busselton) - RP * 1 adult, 16/9/96, Flinders Bay, Augusta (Augusta-Margaret River) - FO * 2 adults, 18/8/96, Hamelin Bay (N of Augusta) (Augusta-Margaret River) - FO

Arctic Tern - 2, 5/8/96, South Mole, Fremantle (Fremantle) - IS, BW (description and photos taken; article being prepared for next issue of WABN)

Bridled Tern - 1 young, 8/95, exhausted, on grass near beach, Esperance townsite (Esperance) - Joan McIlroy per KD (a long way south and east for this species and at an unusual time of year)

White-winged Black Tern - 16-18, 1/9/96, Alfred Cove (Melville) - BBa, MCI

Short-billed Black-Cockatoo - a "flock", 4/9/96, 30 km N of Wubin (Dalwallinu) - MB

Sacred Kingfisher - 1, 25/5/96 and 17/8/96, Beaconsfield (Fremantle) - IS * 1, 18/8/96 and 25/8/96, South Mole, Fremantle (Fremantle) - IS (overwintering birds, possibly from further south)

Probable escapees: Eastern Rosella - 1, 15/4/96 and 22/4/96, Belmont (Belmont) - IS * **Canary** - 1, 21/1/96, Doubleview (Stirling) - IS * **European Goldfinch** - 1, 14/10/96, Fremantle (Fremantle) - IS

ARID ZONE (including the Pilbara, Gascoyne, interior and Nullarbor)

Lesser Frigatebird - 1, 14/7/96, Monkey Mia (Shark Bay) - RS

Australian White Ibis - 25, 4/9/96, Mt Magnet, flying northwards (Mt Magnet) - MB

Square-tailed Kite - 1, 7/96, 20 km N of Kumarina (S of Newman) (Meekatharra) - SN (see article elsewhere in this issue)

Little Eagle - 17-20, 22/9/96, 0.5 km N of Mt Padbury Station HS (Meekatharra) - MG

Peregrine Falcon - at nest with 2 young, 24/10/96, ca. 30 km S of Coolgardie (Coolgardie) (nest on ledge in hollow salmon gum) - JW

Roseate Tern - ca 3500, 23/4/96, Point Quobba (Carnarvon) - AT

Fairy Tern - 8-10 000, 15/8/96, Varanus Island - TK

Princess Parrot - 4, 14/7/96, N of Joanna Springs (Bikarung) at 19o45', 124o10.5' (East Pilbara) - JG per MBa

Grey Honeyeater - 2 plus nest with 1 young and 1 (probably infertile) egg, 17/9/96, N of Wiluna (Wiluna) - MG (see article elsewhere in this issue)

Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush - 1 roadkill, 12/7/96, 123 km N of Mullewa (Murchison) - RS

KIMBERLEY

Magpie Goose - 15 000, 21/10/96, 15 km NNE of Kununurra (Wyndham - East Kimberley) - MC

Great-billed Heron - 1, 2/7/96, Jinunga River - Cone Bay (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC * 1, 7/7/96, King River - Secure Bay (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Cattle Egret - ca. 80 (some in breeding plumage), 11/10/96, 10 km NNW of Kununurra (Wyndham - East Kimberley) - MC (apparently increasing in numbers in this area)

Osprey - nest with three newly hatched young, 7/7/96, near Traverse Island (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Letter-winged Kite - 1, 9/7/96, 5 km N of Camballin Station HS (Derby-West Kimberley) - SN *et al.* * 6, 5/8/96, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - PB

Square-tailed Kite - 1, 3 and 4/10/96, pindan near Broome (Broome) - BBO (unusual at this time of year)

White-bellied Sea-Eagle - breeding, with one newly hatched chick, 30/6/96, Lacepede Islands (Broome) - KC

Wedge-tailed Eagle - nest with two eggs, 4/7/96, Cone Bay (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Black Falcon - 1, 1/7/96, Kingston Rest Station (Wyndham - East Kimberley) - SN *et al.* * 1, 10/96, Kingston Rest Station (Wyndham - East Kimberley) - REJ (NB: Observers should note that Brown Falcons in many parts of WA can be very dark and easily confused with Black Falcons)

Buff-banded Rail - 1, 6/7/96, Freshwater Cove, N of Doubtful Bay (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Australian Spotted Crake - 6+, 19/10/96, Derby sewage ponds (Derby-West Kimberley) - FO, GS (very few Kimberley records)

Bar-tailed Godwit - 600, 18/8/96, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO

Asian Dowitcher - 1, 30/6/96, Lacepede Islands (Broome) - KC

Great Knot - 4000, 15/9/96, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO (including one with an orange leg flag from Victoria; first Great Knot from Victoria)

Red-necked Stint - 500, including 10 in full breeding

plumage, 3/8/96, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO (early return)

Long-toed Stint - 10+, 19/10/96, Derby sewage ponds (Derby-West Kimberley) - FO, GS

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper - 1, 12/8/96, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - CH (early return)

Pied Oystercatcher - 2 pairs with young, 3/7/96, Bald Rock - Cone Bay (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Little Ringed Plover - 1, 9/9/96, Taylors Lagoon, near Broome (Broome) - JF, BH, CW (description taken)

Red-capped Plover - 300+ and 6 pairs with newly hatched young, 14/7/96, Crescent Lake, Dampier Peninsula (Broome) - KC

Oriental Plover - 1, 18/8/96, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO (very early return)

Caspian Tern - 1 pair breeding, 5/7/96, Mulgudna Island (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC * 25 pairs breeding, 30/6/96, Lacepede Islands (Broome) - KC

Roseate Tern - ca. 20 pairs with runners, 30/6/96, Lacepede Islands (Broome) - KC

Little Tern - 2 pairs, apparently breeding, 5/7/96, Mulgudna Island (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC (birds in full breeding plumage, attacking intruders, apparently defending young sheltering amongst rocks) * ca. 10 pairs, breeding (most with eggs), 10/96, Myres Island, near Walsh Point (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - GS (very few breeding records for WA)

Pied Imperial Pigeon - 1, 13/10/96, Broome (in gardens) (Broome) - BBO (first reported by Mr and Mrs Tilley) (the first record for Broome; this record represents the south-western known range limit for this species)

Varied Lorikeet - 16, 22/10/96, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - GL (at southern limit of distribution)

Channel-billed Cuckoo - 8 in one tree, 17/10/96, Point Springs Nature Reserve, NE of Kununurra (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - MC

Rufous Owl - 1, 3/8/96, Wren Gorge near Calder River (Derby-West Kimberley) - KC

Yellow Wagtail - 1, 8/10/96, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) - MCA *et al.* * 1, 19/10/96, Derby sewage ponds (Derby-West Kimberley) - FO, GS

Gouldian Finch - 60+, 3/7/96, Ellenbrae Station (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - SN *et al.*

Barn Swallow - 4, 8/10/96, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) - MCA *et al.* * 2, passing very low (migrating?) between Ashmore Reef and Cartier Island, at about 120°20'S, 123°19'E - FO * 6, 19/10/96, Derby sewage ponds (Derby-West Kimberley) - FO, GS

OBSERVERS

AB = Andrew Bailey

AT = Tony Tree

BBa = Bryan Barrett

BBO = Broome Bird Observatory

BH = Becky Hayward

BL = Brendan Lepschi

BM = Bill McRoberts

BN = Brenda Newbey

BW = Bev Wilcox

CH = Chris Hassell

CN = Clive Napier

CW = Chris Wilder

DC = Dave Crossley

FO = Frank O'Connor

GL = Graeme Little

GS = George Swann

IS = Ian Standring

JB = John Blyth

JuB = Judy Blyth

JC = Jan Crossley

JF = Jon Fallaw

JG = John Gregory

JW = Jim Wallace

KC = Kevin Coate

KD = Kate Dawson

KM = Karen McRoberts

MB = Mary Bremner

MBa = Mike Bamford

MC = Michael Craig

MCA = Mike Carter

MCI = Margery Clegg

MG = Martin Gole

PPT = Perth Pelagic Trip,

organised by Frank O'Connor

RD = Ray Downes

REJ = Ron Johnstone

RL = Richard Loyn

RP = Ross Payton

RS = Rod Smith

SN = Simon Nevill

TL = Terena Lally

WN = Wendy Napier

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Notes for Contributors

The Editors request contributors to note:

- WABN publishes material of interest to the WA Group
- contributions should be written or typed with **double spacing**—a copy on disk of word processed documents would assist, especially if in WordPerfect or MS Word format. A style sheet is available from Perry House to guide writers regarding format
- WABN uses RAOU recommended English names
- contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary.

Deadline for the March 1997 Issue
15 January 1997
at Perry House

Deadline Request: PLEASE, if at all possible, ensure that material for the March 1997 edition of WABN is at Perry House by 15th January 1997, not February 1st. Our wonderful secretary, Margaret Phillipson, will be away from the 22nd of January.



A young Australasian Gannet
on Warnbro Beach
Photo: Ian Gale

The bird was in poor condition and has been cared for by a local veterinarian and wildlife carer. Once fully recovered, the bird will be released near Penguin Island.

Ian Gale

Letters to the Editors

I am writing to see if readers can help identify a bird I saw on 7 September 1996 perched in a Cape Lilac tree in Subiaco.

In overall appearance it was the shape of a Grey Butcherbird with similar shape head and beak. Its head and eyes were dark brown with a grey chest and a faint grey streak on the outside of its wings. A greyish streak was on its neck. Its outside wings were a lighter brown than its head and its tail was wedge-shaped with a grey patch just above the tail on its back. Its legs were dark brown.

The bird sang most of the time I observed it, and it was the song that initially attracted my attention. It was a very melodic song and the nearest I can describe it is that it was not unlike the beginning of "Hernando's Hideaway". I also think it had a raucous chortle not unlike a twenty-eight but this may have been a nearby twenty-eight although I couldn't see any. It was very animated and energetic in its singing with its beak open in song and its wings and tail bobbing as well.

It seemed to occasionally feed off the bark of the branches in the tree perhaps picking off bugs. There was a certain fluffiness in appearance possibly indicating an immature bird. As I watched, it was bombed by a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike.

Can any reader throw any light on this sighting?

Tom Jeffcote

WA Group Reports

RAOU (WA GROUP) COMMITTEE

Meetings of the WA Group Committee are held on the third Wednesday of each month at Perry House.

It is through the committee that the business of the RAOU (WA Group) is managed. Matters for consideration by the committee should be communicated to the office with adequate time for distribution to committee members.

Recent committee meetings have dealt with the following:

Survey of Suburban Birds Project, Birds on Farms Project and Publicity and Education Activities — these are all the subject of special reports elsewhere in the Reports section.

Hooded Plover Project — the Esperance birdwatchers group has been asked to continue regular monitoring of the lakes areas frequented by the Hooded Plover in an endeavour to obtain more information about these birds; the assistance of CALM is to be sought in enhancing the management of those areas which are reserves.

Independent Incorporation — advice has been received to the effect that grants of more than \$5000 could be received from the Gordon Reid Foundation as the RAOU WA Group is sufficiently autonomous, and it therefore does not seem to be necessary to seek independent incorporation in WA.

Birding Sites Around Perth Revised Edition — up-to-date data are being collected on the selected sites, with Claire Mercer as the project coordinator, collating the information and preparing it for the typesetter and subsequent publication by UWA Press; sponsorship is being sought from members and local government councils towards cost of preparation for printing.

Healthway Funding Application — we have received \$1000 from Healthway to be spent on promotion, walks and brochures.

Office Computer Upgrade — thanks to a donation by Frank O'Connor of a 486 computer and the purchase of a laser printer, the office is now well set up to handle the Database of WA Birds as well as the usual office correspondence, etc.

Excursions — during this calendar year, our excursions sub-committee (Bill McRoberts, Bryan Barrett, Sue Abbotts and Clive Napier) have been very busy with 68 outings (averaging almost one every five days!) completed or scheduled; numerous campouts have been very well attended.

Twitchathon — this has been arranged for the 24 hours from 8 am Saturday 21 to 8 am Sunday 22 December, with breakfast being available from 8.30 am at Perry House for all participants; country groups and new members are especially invited to join in, and the Committee is also inviting all office/project volunteers to attend the breakfast, as a way of saying "thank you" for your efforts during the year; see under Notices for more information.

Request by HQ for a Loan — this request was rejected as WA Group funds are well utilised, with several projects in hand or planned; it is also necessary to have funds available to meet any regular or unforeseen expenses. To date this year a total of \$33,000 has been expended.

Annual General Meeting 1997 — this will be held on Monday 24 February in conjunction with the General Meeting; any members who feel they could contribute something to the work of the Committee are invited to seek nomination as new

ideas are always welcome — nomination forms will be available at Perry House from January.

New Venue for General Meetings — apologies to members who recently attended meetings at the wrong venue or time — there do seem to have been 'gremlins' about when trying to advise everyone of the changes; however we hope that all those who have attended the new venue at the State Tennis Centre at Burswood (commencing at 8 pm) are suitably impressed with its facilities and surely this site will do us for the next ten years at least!

Access to Kununurra Sewage Ponds — the Water Corporation has recently advised that there is no public access to these ponds, contrary to the information contained in the Kununurra birdwatching brochure, so if you are holding one of these brochures would you kindly blank out the item regarding access.

New 'Common' Name for the RAOU — at the special meeting held during the Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Congress at Albany in October, approval was given for the name "Birds Australia" for day-to-day use, although it seems likely to be revised to "The Birds Australia Group" as this name would provide a stronger marketing image.

Meeting with HQ Representatives — with HQ staff attending the Congress at Albany, it was a good time for them to also meet up with our members, including a get-together with most of the Committee on 5 October, to talk over any matters which may have been puzzling to those from the 'other side'.

Trading Table — the bird cards are still selling well and reprints are being organised for several cards; the trial plates and cups have been popular and will be restocked when available; any suggestions of new items for sale would be welcome as the trading table is a major source of income for our special projects.

Clive Napier, Chairman

EXCURSION REPORT FOR 1996

This past year has been a very busy one. By the end of the year we will have had a total of 68 outings, consisting of 25 full-days, 17 half-days, 14 mid-weeks, 11 campouts, and a 24-hour twitchathon. I hope members have appreciated this full program, and thank them for their support.

I'd like to thank our Excursions Committee (Sue Abbotts, Bryan Barrett and Clive Napier) for all their hard work. Also, a big thank you to all our excursion leaders; without you there wouldn't be any outings!

And a special thanks to my wife, Karen, for typing and correcting all the bird walk notes, and sending them off by Email.

Happy Birding!

Bill McRoberts
Excursions Sub-committee Chairman

BIRDS ON FARMS UPDATE

Over the last two months, the major effort has been in letting landholders and birdwatchers know about the Birds on Farms Project, and equipping volunteers with the requisite information so that a start could be made.

So far (by 28 October) over a hundred people have responded. Some have offered farms for survey and some have offered their services as birdwatchers. Most either have a farm and are prepared to do the survey, or are birdwatchers who

have found a farm to survey. The farms are throughout the south-west from the south coast to Northampton. Then there is a huge gap before a cluster of farms at Kununurra. One pastoral property near Kununurra is likely to participate. Although we were not initially targeting stations, it has been decided that it would add to the overall value of the project if some stations were included.

To date, eight sets of survey results have been received — from Morawa, Coorow, Goomalling, York, Brookton, Ongerup, Yallingup and Mount Barker. The number of species recorded ranged from 12 to 30. Species present in each survey area were Australian Ringneck, Australian Magpie and Australian Raven. Brown Honeyeaters were in seven of the sites; seven recorded small tree gleaners such as Weebills or thornbills; only four recorded birds of prey.

This is a national project so all the data will be analysed with data from elsewhere in Australia. As well, we are hoping to do some analysis specific to WA. The more participants, the more meaningful will be the results.

If you are considering joining the project it is not too late. Starting in summer will not be a disadvantage. You will still be expected to do the survey a minimum of eight times (i.e., each quarter for two years).

There are farms awaiting birdwatchers at Ajana, Badgingarra, Baldavis, Dumbleyung, Karlgarin and Kulin. Let me know if you can help.

I have now assisted with a survey so should be well able to answer any questions you may have and of course I am hoping to hear from everyone who has already expressed interest in the project.

Brenda Newbey
WA Group Coordinator
RAOU Birds on Farms Project

Note: The above refers only to records sent to the WA coordinator. A few joined the program earlier and are sending their results directly to Geoff Barrett. Any WA analysis will include all WA results.

SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT BIRDS

The RAOU (WA Group) is represented at numerous community events, usually with photographic displays and our trading table. In this way, we help to introduce people to the activities and role of the RAOU, and quite a few new members join because of this contact. I have decided to report such efforts over the previous three months so that other RAOU members can see something of what we are doing in the community.

August 15-18: Talk to the Animals Expo at Ascot Racecourse. The RAOU's space was filled with displays — *Local Birds*, *The Hollow Question*, and *RAOU Activities for Members* — and our trading table, which was enhanced by eight mounted birds borrowed from the Western Australian Museum. Children (under close supervision) delighted in touching these specimens and asked many questions. However, due to our position being next to the very noisy stage, conversation was difficult, and sales were not significant. Many thanks to the many volunteers who staffed our part in this four-day event.

August 20-29: Our display, *In Praise of Penguins*, was on view in Thornlie Library.

August 20: A Science Education Day at City Beach Primary School, with numerous hands-on activities provided for eager young students from a range of local schools. Our part was to talk to groups of children by Perry Lake, showing them photographs of local birds first, then how to use the binoculars and taking them for a bird walk around the lake. A final session was with teachers on how to incorporate bird studies into curricula.

Late August: At the **Mullewa Wildflower Show**, the RAOU mounted a very ambitious diorama of local birds and habitats, using birds from the Western Australian Museum. Allan Jones was instrumental in organising this with much assistance from John Dell. Volunteers who helped on our trading table were too numerous to mention, but all deserve thanks. Brenda Newbey, the WA Coordinator of Birds on Farms, launched this new project at Mullewa.

September 8: Spring Fling, the Wildflower Society of WA's big event of the year. Peter Anson coordinated the RAOU's free bird walks all day in Bold Park and around Perry Lakes, while Clive Nealon took care of our trading table in the huge marquee erected in front of Perry House. Judy Blyth as usual prepared the static display — of birds local to Bold Park. An excellent day and thanks to the Wildflower Society and to all the volunteers who helped.

RAOU's display, *Threatened Birds of WA*, was on view at the **Dalwallinu Agricultural Show on August 24**, and from **September 12-15 during Wattle Week Wildflower Show at Wubin**.

September 14: Clive Napier addressed the combined Australian Trefoil Guild (Retired Senior Guides) at Bateman.

September 19-21: Thanks to Viv Dare, Norah Brockman, Dick Store, Claire Mercer, Roz Denny and Phyllis Bentley, the RAOU had a presence at the three-day **Busselton Wildflower Show**. As well as our trading table, we had a photographic display of birds local to the area.

October 19: Enviro-Neighbourhood Day, Palmyra. With our *How to Attract Birds to Your Garden* display set up in one of the many tents on this community day, Brian Wilson and Judy Blyth had pleasant talks with several local people and sold items from our trading table. Small displays for two RAOU projects — Birds on Farms and the Suburban Bird Survey — were on view.

October 27: We celebrated **National Bird Week** by holding an **Open House** at our headquarters in Perry House, and offering five **free bird walks** to the public. Three displays, *Birds of Bold Park*, *The Hollow Question* and the *RAOU Activities for Members*, were mounted in the Common Room where free morning and afternoon teas were provided to thirsty participants of the bird walks. A trading table was available for purchasing items, and Birds on Farms and the Suburban Bird Survey were promoted. Thanks to Brian Wilson, Brenda Newbey, Audrey Turner, Roz Denny and Norah Brockman for help during this day.

November 17: The RAOU was represented at **Earthfest** in Pioneer Park, Gosnells with a local birds display and trading table.

November 24: Brownies' Day at Bold Park- Judy and other RAOU volunteers helped about 30 Brownies to see bush birds.

Judy Blyth
Publicity/Education

PERRY HOUSE LIBRARY NEWS

The following reports/journals/books have been received August-October 1996:

Lake Mealup News, Lake Mealup Preservation Society, Winter 1996 vol 9, Issue 2

The Greener Times, Conservation Council of WA, March, May, July-September 1996

On the Brink!, Newsletter of the Endangered Species Program, No 8, June 1996

Queensland Wader, Newsletter of QWSG, Autumn 1996
Management Plan, Purnululu National Park, CALM and National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, 1995-2005

Draft Management Plan, Karijini National Park, CALM and National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, 1995
Review of Natural Resource Management and Viability of Agriculture in WA, A Discussion Document, Agriculture WA, June 1996

Newsletter, Cumberland Bird Observers Club Inc, May/June 1996 vol 17 No 6, July/August 1996, vol 18 no 1

WATSNU, Newsletter of WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit, CALM, August 1996

Tattler, Newsletter of AWSG, No 8, July 1996

The Bird Observer, Bird Observers Club of Australia, July 1996 No 765, September 1996 No 767, October 1996 No 768
Newsletter, SA Ornithological Association Inc, June 1996, No 158, September 1996 No 159

Narpulungup News, Fitzgerald River National Park Association newsletter, June 1996

Vicgroup Newsletter, RAOU Victoria, September 1996 No 40

World Heritage, Management Planning for Shark Bay WA, CALM, August 1996

Broome Bird Observatory newsletter and minutes, May 1996

Reports: RGC Wetlands Centre, May-July 1996

Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds, Readers Digest, 1979 (donated by K R Waldren)

SUBURBAN BIRD SURVEY

The number of observations received by the survey has now gone past 34 000, and it is possible to start some preliminary analysis. Looking at the observations received from gardens and sites located at varying distances from the Central Post Office in Perth, and bearing in mind that there is a wide disparity in the number of observed locations within each area, the following results may be of interest.

Five species introduced to WA are among the 23 most recorded species in the survey. The Laughing Turtle-Dove is sixth most frequently recorded, the Rainbow Lorikeet 10th, the Laughing Kookaburra 14th, the Spotted Turtle-Dove 15th, and the Rock Dove 23rd. Within 5 km of the Post Office, the Rainbow Lorikeet is the second most commonly reported species after the Singing Honeyeater. In fact, it is recorded on 96% of record sheets submitted from within the 5 km range, and in gardens in the same area, the Rainbow Lorikeet is the most commonly reported bird.

As we move away from the city centre, the incidence of the Rainbow Lorikeet drops, until there is just a single record past the 30 km radius. The Laughing Turtle-Dove has spread evenly from the centre of the city — it is equally commonly reported within the 80 km radius as it is within the 5 km radius, in terms of its position on the list of the most commonly

reported species.

The survey has continued strongly over the last three months, but there is still a need to attract many more observers. Since the last report, there has not been a great extension of the area covered by the survey and there is still a lot of the metropolitan area that remains to be covered. There are virtually no records between the 40 km and the 80 km distance from the city centre.

My thanks to all those people who have submitted records already. I hope that your observations will continue to arrive and that you will encourage others to respond to the call. Remember that record submission is not restricted to RAOU members. Please invite anyone you know who has a passing interest in the birds about them to submit their records. Experience has shown that once people have started taking note of what birds they are seeing, enthusiasm takes over and the records keep coming in.

To reiterate the suggestions made in the last issue of WABN,

- you should consider the observation period to be a week,
- everybody should record observations from Saturday to Friday (inclusive) each week,
- each bird seen during the week should be indicated on the form with a 'tick',
- the use of 'O' to indicate that the bird was seen on other than the prime observation day should be discontinued, and
- you continue to use the 'F' to indicate that the bird was in flight when observed.

There have not been many submissions of 'incidental' records. These reports are to record notable sightings that you make other than at your selected locations. Please report any sightings that you consider noteworthy, wherever they are. These sightings will be registered as 'Incidental' records. If the sighting does take place while you're driving, just try to make sure you can identify where you are so that the sighting can be registered to the correct location. Also send in the report, preferably on a separate form, marked 'Incidental'.

As I stated at the beginning of the report, the database now contains nearly 35 000 individual bird records spread across 187 species. Twenty-seven species are only represented by a single record. The Australian Raven is still the most recorded species, with a very narrow lead over the Australian Magpie and the Singing Honeyeater.

Clive Nealon

OBITUARY: BILL GRAHAM 1909-1996

Bill Graham died in October 1996. He was an unusual RAOU member inasmuch as his great love was history and he had little interest in birds. Instead, Bill spent considerable energy caring for Eyre Bird Observatory, inspired by the fact that his grandfather had spent 30 years at the (then) Eyre Telegraph Station from the time that it commenced operating. Bill's interest in Eyre's history ensured that he spent much time there. It was he who supervised the restoration of the deserted building in 1977 to make it habitable, thereby creating Australia's first bird observatory. Practically every year since, he was on the dunes, in almost any weather conditions, in a determined effort to halt the encroachment of the dunes on to the old building. From sunrise to sunset he would work, then find a far-off sleeping place to establish a barrier of distance between other sleepers and his own snoring.

At WA Group meetings Bill would constantly remind us of the beauty and importance of Eyre. He would coax us to visit and to plant on the dunes. He worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the Edward John Eyre re-enactment and even walked much of the distance himself, easing off only when his frail body refused to cooperate with his demands.

Bill was a kind, courteous gentleman. He was hard-working and generous. Let us hope that Bill's aspirations for Eyre can be attained. Cheerio, Bill. We miss you.

Rod Smith

Members' Contributions

NORTH KIMBERLEY

In late April and early May this year we were members of a group walking in part of the Drysdale River National Park and Carson River Station in the North Kimberley. After this walk, four days were spent in the Keep River National Park and touring the Kununurra, Ord River and Wyndham areas. Birdwatching was not the prime aim of the group, but we were able to use the rest breaks to good advantage and saw well over 100 species. We were able to positively identify over 90 of them. There were many raptors that we were unable to classify.

Carson and Drysdale Rivers

The walking area was bounded by the Drysdale and Carson Rivers as late rains had left both rivers with good flows and impassable on foot. Though these two major rivers approach to within 10 km of each other they are very different in character. They are separated by the Carson Escarpment, from 100-200 m high and nearly 100 km long. The Carson River runs on the plain through hard basalts and is basically station grassland. The Drysdale runs on the top of the plateau through sandstone in very rugged country and has a number of scenic falls and cataracts. Many of the side streams were running and provided a good water and food supply, and ample cover. The area contains biota intermediate between those of the sub-humid north-west Kimberley and the semi-arid east Kimberley, with open-forest and woodland predominating. Both rivers are lined with Pandanus (*Pandanus spiralis*) and Cadjeput paperbark trees (*Melaleuca leucadendron*, *M. argentea* and *M. viridiflora*). Only the paperbarks on the Drysdale were in flower and provided a focus for many nectar feeders. An area of extensive swampland on the top of the plateau had numerous birds, but as we arrived just before sunset we could not stay. It would be well worth a detailed study.

Blue-winged Kookaburras and Great Bowerbirds were common in some areas. It was noted that on many occasions the Great Bowerbirds were closely associated with Little Friarbirds, often one of each perched together. Bar-breasted Honeyeaters were still nesting and could be seen feeding their young in nests suspended over the watercourses along the Drysdale. Crimson, Long-tailed and Masked Finches favoured the Pandanus along the streams. In one area we saw a group of Variegated Fairy-wrens working their way through dense undergrowth, a Restless Flycatcher hawking for insects and a female Shining Flycatcher moving slowly through the vegetation.

One morning we stood at the top of the escarpment and

looked out over the plains. The top of the cliff was well wooded and there were plenty of Great Bowerbirds, both Little and Silver-crowned Friarbirds and Black-faced and Little Cuckoo-shrikes. Later that day after a steep and rocky descent we had lunch at the foot of the same cliff and watched a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles at their nest half way down the sheer face of the rock.

In the grasslands we saw a number of groups of fairy-wrens which we assumed to be the red-backed species in eclipse phase. Flocks of Red-winged Parrots made regular colourful displays.

We had a camp site in the territory of a Brown Falcon and were able to watch this bird closely for several hours. Our last evening on the Carson River was at a pool at the base of a cataract which we shared with an Azure Kingfisher, both fresh and saltwater crocodiles and a pair of Whistling Kites who chose to ignore our presence and perched within two metres of our beds.

Keep River National Park

Forty kilometres from Kununurra, this park is just in the Northern Territory. It is a very interesting area of sandstone channels and gorges, some parts like a miniature Bungle Bungles. The park was part of a station and Cockatoo Pool has been developed into a prime birdwatching spot with an old tower constructed into an elevated hide. The pool was covered in flowering waterlilies and held a large number of Green Pygmy-geese and some Hardhead ducks.

Wyndham, Kununurra and Ord River

There are a number of rich bird sites here. There were Yellow-rumped Mannikins mixed with Long-tailed Finches at the Ord Diversion Dam, whilst a few hundred metres away were Crimson and Masked Finches in the Pandanus. Great Bowerbird bowers were only seen at the Argyle Homestead and behind the ladies' toilet at the main Ord Dam! The highlight of this part of the trip was undoubtedly Parry Lagoons near Wyndham. The large pool was full of life — fish, waterlilies and thousands of birds. The predominant species was the Pied Heron. A dawn to dusk watch at this spot would be very satisfying, but unfortunately we had only an hour.

Our thanks must go to the other members of the group for their forbearance throughout the journey.

Gisela Cannon and Bob Fergie

BEACH STONE-CURLEW

During a Kimberley Society excursion a single Beach Stone-curlew was observed on Naturalist Beach in Port Frederick Harbour in the Kimberley over two days in May. It was seen at various times of the day and up to 2100 hrs at night picking up shells containing hermit crabs, carrying them for up to 30 m to one of several stones mostly located close to the waterline. After picking up the shells the bird would walk rapidly for 3-5 m, stop, bob up and down and call, and then repeat the performance until it reached the stone. The shell was then bashed against the rock for several minutes, the crab extracted and eaten. Inspection of the midden so formed showed that almost all the shells were Durpe shells, 2-3 cm across. A large proportion of the shells had peck holes in them, presumably needed to help extract the crab. Not all crabs were extracted successfully. Hermit crabs with a wide range of sizes were abundant on the beach.

The stone-curlew came within 5 m of observers. Its behaviour did not change when it was several 100 m away

from people so that it is probable that the bobbing and calling were not in response to the presence of people.

Martin Gole

SOMETIMES YOU'RE LUCKY

When returning from the Kimberley in July, Wendy and I stopped for an afternoon cup of tea at a truck bay about 100 km north of Carnarvon. For those familiar with the area it was where the road runs between red sandhills. The weather was overcast with occasional drizzle and after the Kimberley we were feeling depressed.

While waiting for the kettle to boil we noticed a small, black and white bird performing aerobatics only 30 m away. A quick look through the field glasses proved it to be a Pied Honeyeater. While gazing at the honeyeaters we saw a pair of brilliant Crimson Chats fly into a nearby bush. Before we had had time to take these in they were joined by a pair of Mulga Parrots. While enjoying the very close view of the Mulgas we noticed that two quiet Bourke's Parrots had been there all the time. A strange call attracted our attention and we spied a Black-eared Cuckoo sitting on the usual dead twig and this was followed by the unusual sight of a pair of White-backed Swallows actually perched quietly on a dry bush.

At the same stop and during the next 25 minutes we noted White-fronted, Singing, Brown and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Grey-crowned Babblers, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, a Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, and Chiming Wedgebills as well as several more common species. In all, 25 species were seen in 25 minutes. What started out as a desperation tea stop turned into a birdwatcher's dream.

Clive and Wendy Napier



Black-eared Cuckoo
Drawn: Jean Brooke

TWO STATIONS IN THE MURCHISON: YALARDY AND WOOLEEN

It was raining when I left home to drive to Yalardy Station which is situated in the *Atlas of Australian Birds* block 26°/115°. It rained virtually throughout the journey and on splashing in to the station through a final 100 m of shallow water the radio announced that all roads in the Murchison were closed.

My movements were thereby greatly restricted, not only to avoid road damage, but also because every minor creek flowed generously over the road and station tracks. An invitation to visit the nearest station dam revealed the summit of the dam wall just out of the water and the creek feeding it to be over 100 m wide. Towards the end of my stay (29 July–3 August) I drove to the Wooramel River, 35 km north of Yalardy Station. The crossing was impassable owing to the volume of water going over it and the evidence that the river had been about 5–6 m deep over the crossing and 300 m wide was impressive.

The wet year (best for over 20 years) had its compensations. Storr (1985) says Black and Pied Honeyeaters are common “in wet years” and “after good winter rains” (p55). Common they were, both male and female, flying and calling continuously around the station area and elsewhere.

The hot water for our quarters derived very effectively from a wood-fired 44-gallon drum. An interesting feature of the behaviour of the Pied and Black Honeyeaters was their coming each morning to the cold ashes. The females selected a blob of ash and usually ate it. The males, who accompanied the females to the ashes and generally perched in a nearby tree, sometimes ate ash also. On occasion it appeared the ash blobs were conveyed elsewhere. Nest lining? Egg-shell formation? or ? [See Editors' comment, below].

It was cool to cold and it rained each day for the first three days. At mid-morning on 30 July a cloud (over 1000) of Masked Woodswallows, previously unseen, rose from the bush a short distance from the station, formed into a large aerial flock and headed north-west. The main interest in this was that they were preceded by about 30 Dusky Woodswallows.

No further Masked Woodswallows were seen, but not all the Dusky Woodswallows departed, for large numbers (in the hundreds) remained about the station area, flying low and in the cool weather often forming into small clusters on tree trunks (see Pizzey page 392 for a good description). During the course of my time in the area their numbers slowly declined but I counted some 50 as I departed the station. When travelling to the Wooramel River and so into the adjacent *Atlas* block (25°/115°), small groups of Dusky Woodswallows were observed.

The nearest record of Dusky Woodswallows in the *Atlas* is the 29°/115° block, over 300 km to the south, although Storr (1985) reports them at Yaringa Station (in the 25°/114° block), 95 km west of Yalardy and virtually on the coast.

The *Atlas* shows the nearest record of the Black-shouldered Kite to be in the 25°/114° block. On the day of my arrival at Yalardy one was seen hovering close to the homestead, but not thereafter. Storr (1985) records Black-shouldered Kite “especially about ... the Wooramel” (p17).

Other than these two species ‘new’ to the *Atlas* block and the abundance of Black and Pied Honeyeaters, other interesting birding features were the presence of many Rufous Songlarks with a virtual absence of Brown (one only recorded), many Splendid and Variegated Fairy-wrens with only one White-

winged observed, many Pallid, Horsfield's and Black-eared Cuckoos (one of the last harassing a Chestnut-rumped Thornbill despite it not being on a nest and none evident), Chiming Wedgebill, Rufous Whistler and Southern Whiteface.

In all, despite the adverse conditions, 62 species were observed and are listed below.

Emu, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Hardhead, White-faced Heron, White-necked Heron, Black-shouldered Kite, Whistling Kite, Brown Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle, Brown Falcon, Australian Hobby, Nankeen Kestrel, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Diamond Dove, Galah, Australian Ringneck, Mulga Parrot, Budgerigar, Pallid Cuckoo, Black-eared Cuckoo, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Australian Owlet-nightjar, Red-backed Kingfisher, Splendid Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Redthroat, Western Gerygone, Inland Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Southern Whiteface, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Singing Honeyeater, White-fronted Honeyeater, Black Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater, Crimson Chat, Red-capped Robin, Hooded Robin, White-browed Babbler, Chiming Wedgebill, Crested Bellbird, Rufous Whistler, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-winged Triller, Masked Woodswallow, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Little Crow, Torresian Crow, Zebra Finch, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Fairy Martin, Rufous Songlark, Brown Songlark.

Weather conditions were better during a visit to Wooleen Station which is close to the northern boundary of the 27°/116° *Atlas* block. My stay was 1–4 September inclusive. It is 105 km south of Yalardy and 95 km further east. By contrast with Yalardy which has a relatively homogeneous Mulga rangeland flora, Wooleen has some 11 different landforms (natural pools to granite hills, lake bed to breakaway country) and this, combined with a slightly higher winter rainfall, results in Wooleen having a more varied flora.

As at Yalardy Pied Honeyeaters were abundant, but whereas both male and female were readily seen at Yalardy, only one female was seen at Wooleen and that carrying food; all other sightings were of males. It is presumed that one month after Yalardy the females were occupied about the nest. Only one male Black Honeyeater was seen at Wooleen (an addition to the *Atlas* block list) and no White-fronted Honeyeaters.

Other contrasts with Yalardy at Wooleen were a predominance of the White-winged Fairy-wrens, no Variegated Fairy-wrens being observed and only one Splendid, few Pallid Cuckoos and no Horsfield's or Black-eared Cuckoos. No Inland Thornbills and only a single Chestnut-rumped Thornbill was seen at Wooleen, although the latter species was common at Yalardy. There were similar marked differences with the numbers of Southern Whiteface, Chiming Wedgebill and Rufous Whistler. All babblers seen at Yalardy were White-browed, while all at Wooleen were Grey-crowned. At Wooleen Brown Songlarks predominated, although there were also many Rufous.

The Masked Woodswallows at Yalardy flew north-west into coming storms and may have used the passage of the front to move elsewhere. They were present in virtually all parts of Wooleen. They remained low, flying from shrub to shrub and perching in small groups, calling loudly. There were many hundreds in total. At Wooleen they were often accompanied by Black-faced Woodswallows; no Dusky were seen.

Grey Butcherbirds, including brownish immature birds

were present at Wooleen as were moderate numbers of Common Bronzewing. Neither of these two species was recorded in the 27°/116° *Atlas* block, although both species were observed at Yuin Station in 1995, although in lesser numbers than Wooleen (see WABN No 76, December 1995 p7). Given the relative ease of the sighting of these two species in the block, it is possible their current presence (as against the *Atlas* 1977-1981 surveys) represents an extension of range for both.

Five other species observed at Wooleen but not recorded in the *Atlas* block were: Peregrine Falcon (one, at moderate height, catching insects with its feet); Blue-billed Duck (two at Yewlands Pool on 1 September only); two Major Mitchell's Cockatoos (reported to breed within the confines of the station and which Storr (1985) records as extending to Billabong Station on the western boundary of Wooleen; Varied Sittellas (small party of five seen: Storr (1985) says these extend west to Muggon Station, only some 30 km north of Wooleen); and White-browed Treecreeper (two; Storr (1985) says these are usually in pairs and mentions Wooleen as a site for them).

The variety of country and habitat, combined with good weather for three days — it blew an easterly gale from mid-morning on the fourth — resulted in a species count of 96. Other species known to have been recorded at Wooleen in recent years, but not by myself, are Australian Bustard, Mistletoebird, Tawny Frogmouth, Australian Owlet-nightjar and Rainbow Bee-eater. I received reports of other species, but with insufficient clarity to identify them with certainty. Wooleen is obviously an excellent birding locality.

If carrying food as well as attendance at a nest is counted as evidence of breeding, 19 species were so doing (Whistling Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel, Galah, Budgerigar, Southern Whiteface, Yellow-throated Miner, White-plumed Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler, Magpie-lark, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Torresian Crow, Tree Martin, Fairy Martin, Rufous and Brown Songlark).

An amusing nest attendance was that of a Galah with a nest in the hollow of the branch of a River Red Gum. The branch projected from the main trunk at an angle of some 75°. The Galah would fly to the site and perch on the lower edge of the tree hollow and after a careful look about would slide slowly backwards into the nest, keeping a watch until vanishing from view.

The species observed at Wooleen were:

Emu, Blue-billed Duck, Black Swan, Australian Shelduck, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Hardhead, Australasian Grebe, Hoary-headed Grebe, Little Black Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Great Egret, White-necked Heron, Straw-necked Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Black-breasted Buzzard, Whistling Kite, Spotted Harrier, Brown Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle, Brown Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Nankeen Kestrel, Black-tailed Native-hen, Eurasian Coot, Wood Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Red-capped Plover, Inland Dotterel, Black-fronted Dotterel, Red-kneed Dotterel, Banded Lapwing, Whiskered Tern, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Diamond Dove, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Galah, Little Corella, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Cockatiel, Australian Ringneck, Mulga Parrot, Budgerigar, Bourke's Parrot, Pallid Cuckoo, Red-backed Kingfisher, White-browed Treecreeper, Splendid Fairy-wren, White-winged Fairy-wren,

Striated Pardalote, Western Gerygone, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Southern Whiteface, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Yellow-throated Miner, Singing Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Black Honeyeater, Pied Honeyeater, Crimson Chat, Orange Chat, White-fronted Chat, Red-capped Robin, Hooded Robin, Grey-crowned Babbler, Chiming Wedgebill, Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Varied Sittella, Crested Bellbird, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Magpie-lark, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-winged Triller, Masked Woodswallow, Black-faced Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Little Crow, Torresian Crow, Spotted Bowerbird, Richard's Pipit, Zebra Finch, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Fairy Martin, Rufous Songlark, Brown Songlark.

My thanks to Lloyd and Rhonda Kempton of Yalardy and Helen and Brett Pollock of Wooleen for their hospitality and assistance, particularly with guidance to the intricacies of station tracks and likely birding locations.

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Bruce Buchanan

Editors' note: Use of ash by Australian birds, especially Black Honeyeaters, is well known, but reasons for this behaviour are not understood. See WA Bird Notes 77: 5.

ALBINISM IN A WESTERN SPINEBILL AT ESPERANCE

This photograph of a Western Spinebill was taken at Lake Monjigup near Esperance on the 17-18 August weekend.



The spinebill has a white crown instead of brown and generally appears light in colour. We would be interested to know if this colour variation has been seen before and if it is rare or common. We have not seen it before!

John and Jeanette Hyndes

POSSIBLE NIGHT PARROT AT RAWLINNA

With the coming of August my mind returned to 1992 south of Rawlinna after that bountiful season on the Nullarbor and the possible sighting of the Night Parrot at dusk on 5 August. A mottled green parrot with short tail was standing on the track and as the car approached it walked into the bush on the left side of the track. It made no attempt to fly. If anyone has a recording of its voice, I would like to hear it as there were two strange night calls while camping around the Rawlinna area. One was a single "boop" repeated at intervals well spaced out. The other was a sharp "we we we we" repeated at much shorter intervals. On another occasion after hearing the "boop" during the night, a greenish bird the size and shape of the Night Parrot was flushed twice, each time flying hesitantly just above the low vegetation and dropping straight down about 12 m further along. This second sighting was on 15 August 1992 about 7:30 am at 31°S 125°20'E.

Mary Bremner

KACHANA PASTORAL LEASE, EAST KIMBERLEY, 23 AUGUST-23 SEPTEMBER

Situated some 120 km south west of Kununurra, Kachana is a 760 square km section of the previous El Questro pastoral lease, and is run by Chris and Jacquie Henggeler. They have set up bush camps for small numbers of guests. The only access is by air.

I spent four weeks there in the dry season, from mid August to mid September, and recorded 62 species, after short walks to waterholes, lilyponds, gorges and paperbark swamps. The total list for Kachana is at present 84 species, but there is more pristine country to be explored by future visitors.

The house and garden area were visited daily by Crimson, Long-tailed and Double-barred Finches, Peaceful Doves, Great Bowerbirds, Silver-crowned Friarbirds, Olive-backed Orioles, Mistletoebirds, White-gaped Honeyeaters and a Brown Goshawk. At night, a friendly Southern Boobook hunted moths over our dining table in the garden, settling on the lawn between its silent swoops.

Beneath my open-sided shelter/camp, on a sandy area near a boab tree Rainbow Bee-eaters had a nesting colony. Great Bowerbirds had several attractively formed bowers in the vicinity of the homestead, and were often seen carrying off 'Emu apples' from the candlestick trees (*Owenia venicosa*).

An area of tall cadjeputs with an understorey of candelabra wattles (*Acacia holosericea*) and some pandanus, gave sightings, during my siesta time in a hammock, of a Brush Cuckoo, a possible Varied Triller, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, Leaden Flycatchers, Northern Fantails, Silver-crowned Friarbirds, Little Friarbirds, Olive-backed Orioles, Great Bowerbirds and also Red-collared Lorikeets. From the busy activity of the latter five species, it became obvious that the candelabra wattles provided an abundant food source for many birds.

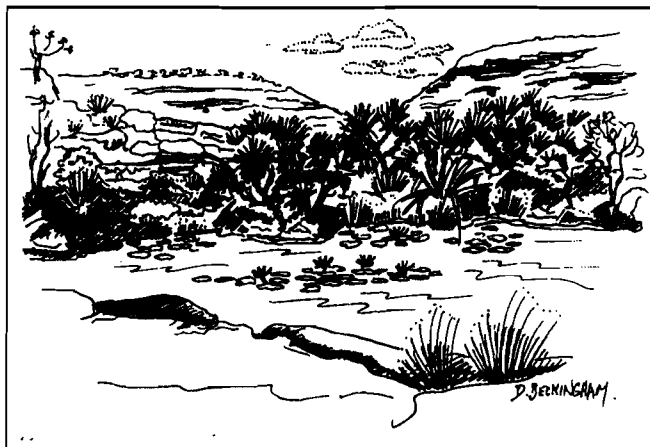
A morning walk to a delightful lilypond, 20 minutes from the homestead, revealed the stunning sight of an Azure Kingfisher, sightings of White-quilled Rock Pigeons and glimpses of a rock wallaby.

At the swimming waterhole, Bar-breasted Honeyeaters were usually feeding in the silky grevillea which was flowering. Red-backed Fairy-wrens were seen on a spinifex ridge nearby.

The dawn chorus was hectic, with the Gerygone, presumably the White-throated, being almost always the first

to be heard with its "silvery thread of song". At dusk, watches could almost be set at 5:30 by the liquid calls of the Pheasant Coucals up and down the creek, followed by the Blue-winged Kookaburras.

After a two-hour walk west through a gorge to the Chamberlain River, we saw flocks of Spinifex Pigeons, Varied Lorikeets and a frenzy of honeyeaters. White-throated, Brown, Bar-breasted, and Banded Honeyeaters were feeding in the flowering river paperbarks (*Melaleuca argentea*) or silver cadjeput.



Kachana Lily Pond where the Azure Kingfisher was seen
Drawn: Diane Beckingham

Other birds of interest on the Kachana list are Painted Firetail, Koel and Black Bittern. Searches of likely habitats have not yet revealed any Gouldian Finches or Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens, but the owners are constantly on the lookout for them. Kachana is approximately 70 km west of Argyle Diamonds, so I have been interested to compare my sightings with those of Frank O'Connor, our member in that area.

Kachana may be visited by arrangement with Chris Henggeler on 091 61 4346 (best between 5 am and 8 am).

Diane Beckingham

MISTLETOEBIRD LEAF-BATHING

At about 10:40 on 9 September, I saw a Mistletoebird bathing outside my office at the Argyle diamond mine in the Kimberley. It was washing itself in a bush about a metre tall that was very wet from the garden sprinklers that had recently been operating.

At first I thought that the sprinklers were still operating, but this was not the case. I watched the bird for about five minutes. It was rubbing itself against the wet leaves and then fluffing up its feathers and having a good shake. What first drew my attention was that it was spinning itself upside down under a branch with its wings spread. It appeared to be shaking drops of water from the leaves onto the underneath of its wings. Often its tail was cocked making it look like a fairy-wren.

The bird appeared to be an adult female. It continued for about ten minutes, occasionally being disturbed by a couple of Brown and Grey-fronted Honeyeaters. Finally, it flew up into an acacia. It appeared very wet. It preened itself briefly before flying out of sight. Two or three Mistletoebirds have been resident outside my office for about the last two years since I first noticed mistletoe growing in the acacias.

Frank O'Connor

MUSK DUCK ATTACK — LAKE COOGEE

12 OCTOBER

After watching a Hoary-headed Grebe swimming speedily across the lake's surface (about 50 m from shore), I had turned my attention elsewhere when I became aware of a disturbance from whence the grebe was headed. I re-focused on the spot and sighted the grebe tangled up with a male Musk Duck. The grebe retreated about 30 cm away from the Musk Duck, whereupon the Musk Duck lunged at the grebe and fastened its bill on to the back of the grebe's neck.. The Musk Duck then proceeded to kill the grebe by a process of shaking the unfortunate victim, and plunging it below the surface.

After a number of minutes, the Musk Duck — the grebe still in its bill — disappeared below the surface to then reappear minus the grebe. Presumably the body had been stuck into the mud at the bottom of the lake. The Musk Duck then proceeded to wash and preen itself as it swam sedately away from the scene of the "crime".

As I picked up my telescope and moved off, I spotted a female Musk Duck and three tiny offspring swimming out from the shoreline. Was the attack a typical show of male Musk Duck protectiveness?

Dave Crossley

WOODMAN POINT

Many members will be aware of the damage done to the sand dunes at Woodman Point by 4WD vehicles. During the past three or four years they have been a constant menace, even invading Wapet Point. As a consequence, the wader population had dramatically decreased. During the last three to four years we have only recorded a few Red-capped Plovers and equally low numbers of Pied Oystercatchers and other species. The overwintering flocks of Great Knots disappeared, and we only saw them twice in the last three years.

We walked the area on 24 October to find that the entrances to the track which the 4WDs had made have been blocked with huge sandstone rocks. Not one vehicle track was seen in the sand and the bird life has increased. We lost count of Red-capped Plovers, estimating that more than 30 were present. There were eight Greater Sand Plovers, 12 Pied Oystercatchers, 12 Sanderlings, at least ten Turnstones, quite a few Grey Plovers, and a few Red-necked Stints. Provided the 4WDs do not force another entrance, the Point should be well worth visiting again as it used to be in the 1980s.

Bryan Barrett

BIRD-WATCHING AND THE INTERNET

The advent of computer networks and increasing use of the internet is rapidly changing the nature of communication in government, corporations, and increasingly in other areas. In the last couple of years there has been a lot of media "hype" about the internet, lots of exaggerated statements about how many thousands of new users are logging on, and very rarely recognition of the many people who try it and get bored with it. One can easily be misled. The intention of this article is to summarise what is in it for the average bird watcher.

What is the Internet?

For practical purposes, there are two main areas of interest. The first is Email, and the second is the World Wide Web.

Email is rather like a fax, but it exists only as a computer file, although you can print out your messages if you wish. Provided you are connected to the internet, you can send Email

at any time, and the recipient can access it at their leisure. If they are also connected at the same time, they receive it more or less instantly, no matter where in the world they are. If they are not connected, it simply sits on the computer that they normally connect up to, waiting for them to connect. Obviously, the system is not much use to you unless you want or need to communicate with other bird watchers via this means, and of course you can only use it to communicate with other people who have Email access. However, the number of such people is steadily growing.

A special use of Email is a mailing list. You subscribe to the list and then any message sent to the list is forwarded to you. Australia has a mailing list called 'Birding-aus'. You subscribe by sending a message to majordomo@deakin.edu.au containing (in the message area) the line 'subscribe birding-austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au' for example (you would replace austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au with your own Email address). Leave the "Subject" area blank. If you want to submit an article to the mailing list, then send it to 'birding-aus@deakin.edu.au'.

Birding-aus has a mainly eastern states content, but increasingly more articles from Western Australia are being sent. It is a very useful forum for reading people's trip reports, rare and unusual sightings (much more effective than the old birding hotline), requests for information, bird behaviour, announcements of forthcoming trips (e.g. Western Australian pelagic trips), etc.

The World Wide Web, often called "the web", or even "the internet", contains hundreds of thousands of documents, graphics, sound files and video files on many computers around the world. You can have access to virtually all of this provided you have the appropriate software to read it. Anyone with suitable hardware and an account with an internet provider can place information on the web, and so there is a lot of fairly useless material, and you will sooner or later find some information that is simply wrong. Nevertheless, there are also some real gems.

What are the useful sites?

There are lots of web sites which contain information about birds, and the number is increasing. Almost all of them also give links to other sites with information about birds, so it is easy to build a list of such sites which you can re-visit. If you are a travelling bird watcher, this is one way to find out information before you leave home.

You can use one of several "search engines" on the web to find sites concerned with birds. A search engine is a program which can be used to locate information on a specific topic, eg "birds". This way, you find a lot that isn't much use, but sometimes you find useful things you otherwise wouldn't know about. Good sites usually have links to other sites covering similar topics - this way, you don't have to know the addresses of these sites, you just click on the highlighted text and your browser will do the rest. This way can lead you to all sorts of interesting sites all around the world. Alternatively, if you know the address of a web page of interest, you can type this into your browser program, and it will find the site. Here are some addresses of interest:

<http://www.intercom.com.au/wombat/> (The Web Wombat, an Australian search engine)

<http://cygwww.uwa.edu.au/~austecol/birds.html> (birds of Western Australia, including a checklist for WA, Christmas Island and Cocos-Keeling Islands, and recent sightings of

interest, and links to all other major Australian sites, including Russell Woodford's Birding-Aus page (interesting sightings from around Australia) and Tony Palliser's pelagic page; links to some major overseas sites are also included)

<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~raou/raou.html> (The Virtual Emu, homepage of the RAOU)

<http://www.euronet.nl/users/rolivier/> (Birding in Indonesia: a well organised site with information on where to see birds and lots more)

What do you need to access the Internet?

You need a computer and a modem and appropriate software. If you wish to access sound files or video files, you will need a computer with multi-media capabilities, including a sound card and speakers. For most purposes an IBM 386 or equivalent is adequate, but a 486 or faster is better. A fast modem is more important; a modem will cost a few hundred dollars. If you have Windows 95, you already have the software to browse the great majority of web sites. If you don't have Windows 95, the basic software is free or very cheap. You would want an Email program (eg Eudora Light, which is free on the net) and a web browser (eg Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer). The other thing you need is access to an internet provider. The cost varies considerably, depending on your level of use and the packages available, but expect to pay a few hundred dollars per year for full access. If you are in the country, try to find a provider who will let you connect for the cost of a local telephone call.

For further information, or if you have questions, contact one of the following RAOU members:

Allan Burbidge austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au.

Frank O'Connor foconnor@iinet.net.au

Kim Lim k.lim@per.dem.csiro.au

Allan Burbidge and Frank O'Connor

MORE ON BLACK-COCKATOOS AND ALMONDS

Reading the article on black-cockatoos in the last WABN (No. 79, p. 14) reminded us of observations we had made on cockatoos eating almonds. Our experience has been a little different from those reported by other members.

In 1989-90, we lived at Doolette Street, Spearwood. There was a young almond tree, about 5 metres tall, in the garden. I cannot remember the times of year, but there were frequently several black-cockatoos at the nuts, and for a long time - an hour or so. The barbeque was only metres away from the base of the tree and while we were cooking, the birds would often stay in the tree. We never saw ringnecks eating the almonds.

We were still learning about WA then, having come from SA and lived in Karawara for three years previous to Spearwood. Our understanding of those big loud screeching birds was that they were a bit of a nuisance because they DID destroy almond trees. This was based, I suppose, on things people had said in passing conversation. We know a lot more now!

We often see black-cockatoos where we live now - about 1 km north of Cockburn Cement, in the bush - but there are no almond trees!

Brendan Trappe

GREY HONEYEATER BREEDING

On 17/9/96 I found a pair of Grey Honeyeaters nesting on Cunyu Station, about 80 km north of Wiluna. The nest contained one egg and one nestling. The two adults were

observed feeding the nestling for about 20 minutes from 8 m distance. Both adult birds were similar, with brownish grey upper parts, a white patch on the throat and belly, and a white tip to the tail. The bill was black, weakly curved, and stubby. The nest was at head height in an *Acacia tetragonophylla*, 30 cm or so from the end of a branch. The nest was poorly constructed, with large holes in the side. The nestling and egg were clearly visible through the sides of the nest, in a similar manner to that shown in the Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds (p. 504). Indeed, the egg would have fallen through the side of the nest except for one fibre holding it in. The egg was white with reddish-brown spots at the larger end. Our impression was that the egg was not viable as adult birds did not sit on the nest during our observations despite continually feeding the nestling.

Martin Gole



Grey Honeyeater nest with egg and chick

Photo: Martin Gole

STILL MORE ON LAKE MCLARTY

Following are some further records for Lake McLarty, supplementing those reported in WABN 78: 11-13 and 79: 12-13.

Black-fronted Dotterels

I recorded 80+ Black-fronted Dotterels on 29/3/93, 100+ on 13/4/93 and 80+ on 26/4/93. These numbers are significantly higher than any previously reported for this species at Lake McLarty. In addition, I found them breeding on 3/1/94 with two nests each containing one egg and one nest with two eggs. These observations confirm the suggestion by Ian Standring (WABN 79: 13) that this species may breed at Lake McLarty; the young birds reported by him were probably progeny from one of the nests I recorded earlier in the same month. The number of waterbirds known to breed at the lake is now eight species.

Red-capped Plovers

For the last five years I have also found Red-capped Plovers breeding at the lake. Most are unsuccessful, if the ratio of nests to runners is anything to go by. It's easy enough to find up to 10-12 nest scrapes but I only ever see two or three runners.

The birds nest on islands exposed as the lake evaporates. Eggs can be found here only until the water becomes very shallow or dries and the islands become part of the main shore.

Nests found on the main shore very rarely contain eggs. Could this be due to fox predation? If this was predation by ravens, gulls or other birds I would not have thought that it would make any difference whether the nests are on an island or not.

Maybe this year we should keep records of fox tracks seen near Red-capped Plover nests. In my experience I never see many tracks on the islands, but do see them criss-cross along the main shore. It would be interesting to know if other observers have relevant observations.

Tony Kirkby

SQUARE-TAILED KITE

Sightings of the Square-tailed Kite are common in parts of the south west and not uncommon in the Kimberley, but in the intervening mid-west of the state (including the Pilbara) are extremely rare. Over all the years of my travels through thousands of kilometres, I had never seen one in this area until this year, when I saw a single Square-tailed Kite in July, 20 km north of Kumarina, south of Newman. It was in typical hunting mode, quartering the mulga in tight circles about 15 m up. There was much nesting in the region at the time (including Black, Pied and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, and Ground Cuckoo-shrikes) and this may have been an attraction for the kite.

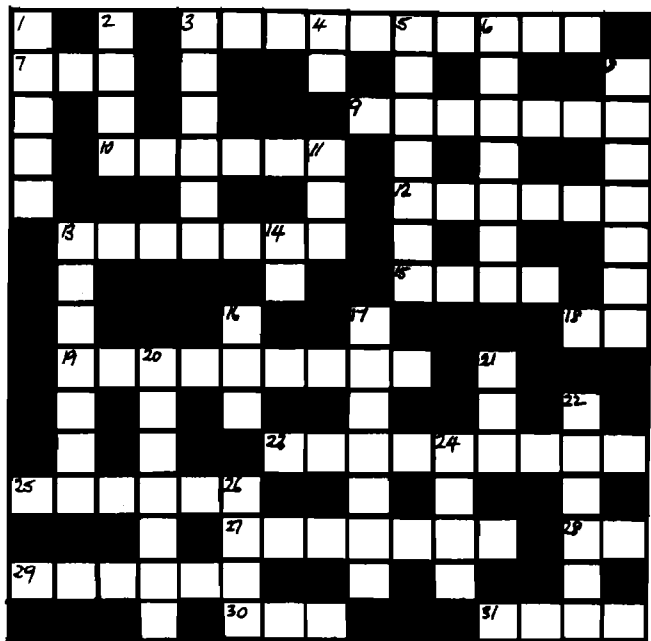
Interestingly, this appears to have been an over-wintering bird. I see them in the Kimberley in June, July and August but never in the south-west from May to August.

Simon Nevill

Editors' note: Do other observers have observations of Square-tailed Kites in the Pilbara region, particularly in winter? (Note that this species can easily be confused with Black-breasted Buzzards, which are more common than Square-tailed Kites in this area).

Crossword No 7

Pam Agar



Clues Across

3. These sorts of data help assess the status of birds.
7. Testing of this is altering ideas on the relationship of birds.

9. It could describe a robin, or a honeyeater.
10. Large wader.
12. Young wader, unable to fly as yet.
13. A bird-lover might find it difficult to do this to the question of duck-shooting.
15. Area surveyed regularly or systematically.
18. Initials of the smallest member in WA of the family *Laridae*.
19. Common diving bird of rivers and coast.
- 23-24. Even a brief one may be significant later.
25. Birds ... resources in successful breeding strategies.
27. State of a bird not in breeding plumage.
28. First two letters of the name of the largest seabirds.
29. Hollow stem of feathers.
30. A Willy Wagtail will very likely make use of a dripping one.
31. A large New Zealand Rail.

Clues Down

1. May be a detracting feature of a large breeding colony.
2. Half the name of an Australian cockatoo.
3. A resident Australian plover.
4. A beginner will need help ... identify waders.
5. Accuracy of these is paramount for scientific research.
6. Should it technically be one of these if its crown is only small?
8. A tape-recording may do this successfully.
11. If you examine this stint's feet closely, one is definitely longer than the other.
13. The rate at which coastal lakes are drained is cause for this.
14. Is a White-bellied Sea-Eagle larger than a Wedgetail?
16. Sound made by doves.
17. Regularly occurring in a particular area.
20. Its main claim to fame is decoration of a tomato sauce bottle!
21. A temporary one is necessary if banding large numbers of waders.
22. Magpie-larks commonly do this to their own image.
24. These days, a practical alternative for storing large numbers of records.
26. Mud and mosquitoes may ... your will to observe swamp birds.

Country Groups

EBOG (Esperance Bird Observers' Group)

EBOG recently formed itself into a more formal group with a president — Allan Rose, secretary/treasurer — Mike Buckman and assistant secretary/treasurer — Kate Dawson.

Hopefully, this will encourage us to plan and undertake more regular outings. As well, it will enable us to apply for grants, etc., if the need arises and should ensure more continuity for the group.

In July, Pam Burgess escorted us to a small freshwater lake near the Agriculture Dept headquarters on 6-Mile Hill. In 1994, we saw a Baillon's Crake and Australian Spotted Crake there at the same time. No such luck this time, but many Chestnut Teal and other species were seen. This was followed by an inspection of some caged starlings and a visit to two

other lakes in the area.

In August, John and Jeanette Hyndes lead us to Lillian Stoke Rock in the Frank Hann National Park. Eighteen of us braved the threat of a soaking and camped out for the weekend. Little rain actually fell and everyone enjoyed the very interesting area including gnamma holes. Thirty-one species were noted, including two species of cuckoo and a pair of Redthroats. Despite hearing a Crested Bellbird at least 30 times, the elusive bird was never sighted by the ever-vigilant mob.

The absence of the often dominating Yellow-throated Miner was appreciatively noted. This was probably due to the fact that the nearest agricultural clearing was many kilometres away.

Our September project was to repeat our October 1995 Hooded Plover Survey. Twelve people participated in seven groups but only 32 Hooded Plovers were seen at four sites during the weekend. There was much more water at most sites than in 1995.

Next month, Allan Rose is demonstrating mist netting for us at Hyndes' place which should be interesting. A canoe trip is planned for November.

Kate Dawson



Chestnut Teal, male
Drawn: Val Talbot

ALBANY BIRD GROUP

September Outing

For our September outing, we had hoped to spend three full days at Madgedup. This is a farm within the Shooters Hill complex situated on the Pallinup River.

Nine people arrived mid afternoon and once we had set up camp in the shearers' quarters, we all went down to the river. We saw ten species of waterbirds in just a few minutes.

We had a very pleasant evening discussing birds and wildflowers and other subjects as well! At that stage the weather was fine.

The next day five other members joined us for the day. The weather wasn't kind to us. It started to rain during the night, and the wind came up about 11 am and it blew and blew.

We all returned to the river which has been fenced off for some time. Acacias and all casuarinas are regenerating. From there we visited a large natural bushland where we were joined by Mrs. S Stone, the owner of the property. Mrs. Stone then took us to yet another area where there were lots of orchids. At this stage the wind was increasing so birding came to a halt. The group returned to the shearers' quarters for lunch.

It was decided that the situation was impossible, so we all packed up and went home. I did feel sorry for Viv Dare and

Jan Rogers who had come from Perth for the camp.

However, we did see orchids as I have not seen them for years. It seems to be a very good year for them. We also managed to see 41 species of birds. The place has great potential and we have been invited to return. I haven't a doubt we will before too long.

October Outing

The meeting place will be the parking area, Denmark River, Denmark, to visit swampland and farming area.

Vivian McCormick

Notices

RAOU CALENDARS

1997 calendars are now available for purchase at Perry House. As usual, these are of a very high standard, with excellent photographs of birds and their habitats. Your purchase helps the WA Group and the RAOU national body.

BIRDING SITES AROUND PERTH

We are progressing with the work of revising this publication, thanks to support from members

- visiting sites to check information
- providing professional advice and assistance
- loan of bird slides
- preparing bird illustrations

The Department of Land Administration has generously allowed us to use maps from Streetsmart Street Directory.

Local government departments have provided information on request.

Our WA Group Database, *WA Bird Notes* and Suburban Bird Survey are a valuable source of information on current distribution of species.

Members are helping to finance the project by sponsoring a page for \$20.00.

If you would like to be part of this project and be acknowledged as a page sponsor, we would welcome your help.

Sponsorship money can be sent to:
Birding Sites Around Perth
71 Oceanic Drive
Floreat WA 6014

LEG-FLAGGED BANDED STILTS

Last year, following torrential rains and successful breeding on Lakes Ballard and Marmion near Menzies, 500 Banded Stilt chicks were leg-flagged and 800 banded (see WABN Nos 74-76 for details).

Since then, the following sightings have been reported:

Date	Location	Number sighted	Distance (km)	Reported by
24.10.95	Lake Arrow	1	110 (S)	Andy Chapman
21.1.96	Rottnest Is	1	610 (SW)	Fran Head
28.2.96	Pt Hedland	4*	1075 (N)	Grant Pearson
07.3.96	Dampier Saltworks	1	1100 (NNW)	Steve van Leeuwen
29.9.96	Yarra Yarra Lakes	1	520 (W)	Brenda Newbey

* 3 flags and 1 band only; all other sightings are of flags.

We are very keen to get as many sightings as we can during the new few years (the flags should last that long) and the next 12 months in particular. These are the only Banded Stilts to have ever been leg-flagged and it may be many years before another opportunity to study this fascinating species arises.

So, should you sight a leg-flagged stilt we would be most grateful if you could pass the details on to Grant Pearson at CALM's Woodvale office (ph 09 405 5163 or fax 09 306 1641) or to Jim Lane at CALM's Busselton office (097 52 1677 or fax 097 52 1432).

The leg-flags are small, made of stiff yellow plastic and positioned above the 'knee'.

The information we are seeking is location, date, number of flagged stilts seen, how well-developed the breast bands of the flagged stilts were, the total number of stilts at the site and any other information of possible interest. Please also include the name of the observer and a contact number or address.

If you would like advice on where (which lakes, estuaries, saltworks, etc.) to look for Banded Stilts, please ring Grant or myself.

Also, if you are interested in joining, on a cost-sharing basis, a special search for flagged stilts this summer, please contact Grant Pearson. We are trying to organise a trip.

Hope to see you out on the briny!

Jim Lane

TWITCHATHON '96 AND PRE-CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST

We need as many teams as possible from the metro area to really try and get that telescope back from the Broome Bandits. Join the fun on 21/22 December and seek a winning score. It does not matter if you are a relatively inexperienced birder, because some of the 'older hands' will be only too pleased to include you in their team; so get your name down if you are seeking a team. Start time is 8 am on Saturday 21st and you must finish by 8 am Sunday 22nd.

There will be a breakfast fit for a King at Perry House starting at 8:30 am. All lists from the country can be faxed or phoned in after 8 am and before 8:30 am. Sadly, our country competitors will have to have their own breakfast celebrations but can combine this with a Xmas get-together. Albany have already promised at least one team so Esperance and Mandurah should at least equal this. Our new group at Narrogin may like to try their luck. We will give them a treble score for a Freckled Duck!

An open invitation to the pre-Christmas Breakfast is also extended to all those volunteers who have worked during the year to make our Group such a success. Even if you don't Twitch, come along for the fun. The Breakfast will also serve as a welcome to all new members who are especially invited to meet the old hands. Please join us for whatever reason.

There is a sheet at the Office to record your attendance so PLEASE ring the volunteer and have your name included. This will enable our catering to be adequate.

There is also a sheet on which you should put the name of your TWITCHATHON TEAM and the leader's name and contact number.

Anyone who would like to take part please ring Clive Napier on (09) 332 7265 and we will find a group for you.

A CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE BIRD WORLD

To increase the public's understanding of birds and their routines it is proposed to include a regular item in *Earth 2000*. It could possibly be prepared for monthly publication.

The idea is to highlight those bird events which occur regularly. Such events might include arrivals and departures (waders, cuckoos, bee-eaters, etc.), territorial behaviours (magpies), unusually large gatherings or the occupation by particular species of specific habitats. It would be valuable also to describe phenomena which are determined by such events as irregular weather conditions.

Contributions are therefore sought from WA Group members who know of some of these chronological events. Please forward your ideas to the RAOU (WA Group) office.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

The RAOU office at Perry House serves a very useful purpose in linking RAOU activities with the general public, as well as being open Monday-Friday 9:30 am – 12:30 pm for the sale of books, calendars and cards to anyone who ventures in.

All this would not be possible without the band of enthusiastic volunteers who throughout the year provide this service for the WA Group. We are served extremely well by our volunteers and are the envy of birding organisations in other states.

Raise your glass to them this Christmas and continue to be aware of the role played by the many volunteers in our very active organisation.

Max Bailey

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: POLLINATION OF WEST AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS

I have just started compiling a database on existing records (published or unpublished) of pollination of native WA plants by vertebrates and invertebrates, as a contract for the WA Naturalists Club, and I would welcome any observations that would expand this database. Unpublished observations from your notebooks would be particularly welcome. Most of the observations will probably be of flower visitors rather than confirmed pollinators, and it would be useful to me to know whether the visitors to the flowers were after nectar, pollen or insects. Ideally, I would like identifications of plant and pollinator as accurate as possible, as well as location and date information. However, any observations would be useful.

I would be most appreciative of any observations to increase the database which I hope to complete by August 1997.

I can be contacted at the Research Laboratory at King's Park at:

lizb@kpbg.wa.gov.au (Email)

or

(09) 480 3640 (phone)

or

(09) 480 3641 (fax).

Liz Brown

"BOP WATCH": A NATIONAL SURVEY OF OUR BIRDS OF PREY

The diurnal birds of prey are top predators which, together with their relatively high visibility and their known sensitivity to environmental conditions, makes them ideal 'indicator

species' for environmental change. Although introduced to Australia the rabbit is now an important component in the diets of 11 of Australia's 24 species of diurnal raptor. Thus the release of the rabbit calicivirus within Australia last year, and the subsequent massive decrease in rabbit numbers over large areas, has serious implications for a number of our raptor species. It is likely that the spread of this rabbit disease will result in declines in some raptor populations, with decreased breeding success and some degree of 'prey-switching'.



Fortunately, the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU) and the Australasian Raptor Association (ARA) conducted a nation-wide survey of the abundance and distribution of Australia's birds of prey - the "BOP Watch" project - between 1986 and 1990; before the release of rabbit calicivirus. BOP Watch involved bird enthusiasts acting as volunteer

observers by identifying and counting raptors while driving along rural roads at normal speeds. This information, together with the route travelled, time taken and other variables was recorded on a simple, standard datasheet. The project collected 26 516 datasheets from 271 volunteer observers, and now provides a valuable source of information on the status of our birds of prey shortly before the release of rabbit calicivirus.

The Federal Government has made funds available through the Australian Nature Conservation Agency to enable the RAOU and the ARA to conduct a second, four-year BOP Watch in order to collect comparable data following the release of rabbit calicivirus. This project will use the same techniques as the first BOP Watch, and will run from July 1996 to, hopefully, June 2000. The information collected during this second BOP Watch Project will be of great importance as it will allow us to accurately assess the impact of the Rabbit Calicivirus Disease on our native birds of prey.

BOP Watch needs the assistance of competent birders from throughout Australia to carry out the necessary roadside counts of our birds of prey. The methods used are not difficult or time consuming and people of all ages and abilities can become involved, provided they are able to correctly identify the birds of prey in their area. BOP Watch provides an opportunity to become involved in a worthwhile, community-based research project while usefully occupying your time during long drives.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer observer, or wish to learn more about the BOP Watch project, please contact the project coordinator, William Steele, at the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, 415 Riversdale Road, East Hawthorn, VIC 3123.

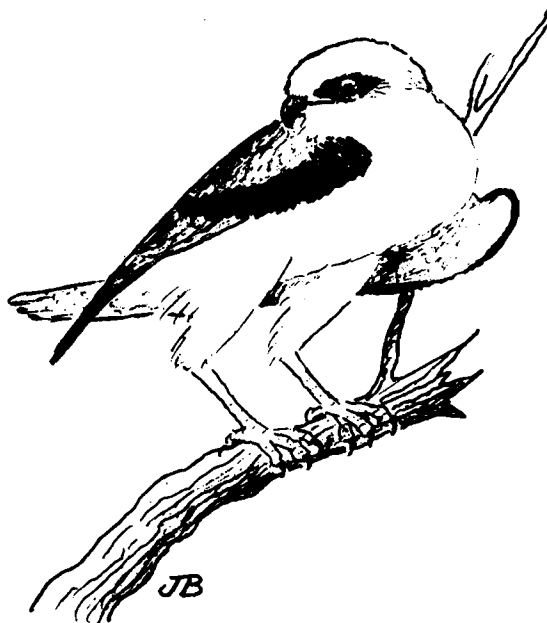
Phone: 03-9882-2622

Fax: 03-9882-2677

Email: research.projects@raou.com.au



AUSTRALASIAN RAPTOR
ASSOCIATION



Black-shouldered Kite
drawn by Judy Blyth.
This attractive small raptor
is still common around Perth.

DATABASE OF WA BIRDS

Members continue to support the Database by sending bird-lists from the many sites visited in recent months. A handful of volunteers process the information into our 'new' computer generously donated by Frank O'Connor. Currently we have 470 species entered from 472 sites within Western Australia.

It is a valuable resource and members are encouraged to support it.

It would help considerably if members, before sending in their cards, counted the number of species and wrote the number under general comments (the new cards which have been printed recently have a space provided for the species number).

Thank you to all those who have sent in cards particularly from areas well outside the metropolitan area.

Max Bailey

PRESS RELEASE

THE SECRET WORLD OF THE STONE-CURLEWS

The call of the Bush Stone-curlew is one of the most distinctive sounds of the Australian bush at night, evoking a feeling of mystery when heard for the first time.

Paul Ryan, BOCA Conservation Officer, says:

"I grew up on a farm in northern Victoria. On a few warm summer nights each year, an eerie, wailing call would drift across the plains. Somewhere a pair of Bush Stone-curlews would be moving out to forage among the Grey Box trees. Sadly, Bush Stone-curlews haven't been heard in our district for nearly a decade."

In response to increasing concern about the conservation of this species and its close relative, the Beach Stone-curlew, the Bird Observers Club of Australia has formed a '**Friends of the Stone-curlews**' group. Our aim is to raise public awareness of the plight of these species, and to provide information and advice to landowners about practical measures for the conservation of Stone-curlews on their properties.

Birds which nest and feed at ground level in Australia are particularly susceptible to injury and death by foxes, cats and sometimes dogs. Both Bush and Beach Stone-curlews are active by night, and rely on their plumage colour for camouflage as they rest during the day.

The number of Bush Stone-curlews in southern Australia is declining as their woodland habitat is cleared. They tend to stand their ground and 'freeze' when disturbed, making them easy prey.

Beach Stone-curlews are found on northern beaches and islands and are very sensitive to disturbance of their coastal habitat. Each pair lays only one egg each year, so that reproduction rates are very low.

It is very important that any sightings of stone-curlews are reported to us. We have developed special Sightings and Habitat Forms for birdwatchers to use.

Further information: **Ellen McCulloch**

Tel: 03 9877 5342 Fax: 03 9894 4048

Editors' note: The guidelines and forms for this project are obtainable from Perry House. People involved in Birds on Farms may be in a good position to contribute to this initiative to conserve Bush Stone-Curlews.

GIFTS

Think of purchasing your gifts from the
Perry House office

Books, field guides, calendars, cards,
tapes, videos, CDs and more

Call at the office any weekday morning, see our
range of stock or check catalogues for items
that can be ordered, or ask us to post out a
list of items available

Observatory Reports

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

It's been a very busy few months at Eyre with many visitors and three courses held in October. The *Bird Banding* course led by Perry and Alma de Rebiera was a success, with 568 birds of 17 species banded, despite the fact that there is not a large amount of blossom at the moment. New Holland Honeyeaters and Silvereyes made up a large proportion of the catch. Some less usual species (as far as banding is concerned) included Sacred Kingfisher, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Brush Bronzewing and Australian Raven. I think we all found it interesting to see the raven in the hand and note that it really does look different to a Little Crow!

Only three active mounds were found on the Malleefowl course this year, and unfortunately we had no success trapping any, although Malleefowl were sighted during the course. One sad moment of the course was a visit to mound No 18 where a dead Malleefowl was discovered — it was quite badly mauled and we assume it had been killed by a fox. The mound was still being worked by its mate.

On less sobering subjects, we have had quite a few interesting bird records lately. At our birdbaths Pied Honeyeater (male), Rufous Whistler and Rufous Songlark were all recorded on one day. The songlark remained locally for a week. I was also lucky enough to find four Rufous Field-wrens on our West Track.

Perhaps it's Kanidal Beach which has been most exciting. Recent sightings include Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Lesser and Greater Sand Plover and White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

A team of divers from CSIRO who were studying sea grasses also noted Short-tailed Shearwaters, Yellow-nosed Albatross and petrels 5 km offshore. But it was during Peter Sandilands' *Focus on Birds* course that we got the real surprises!

On the first group trip to the beach one possible Arctic Tern was seen and then two days later one Common Tern. These were distinguished as separate birds due to the different cap, beak colour and wing markings. It is interesting to note that last time these birds were recorded at Eyre (N Dymond, September 1984) they were seen within three days of each other.

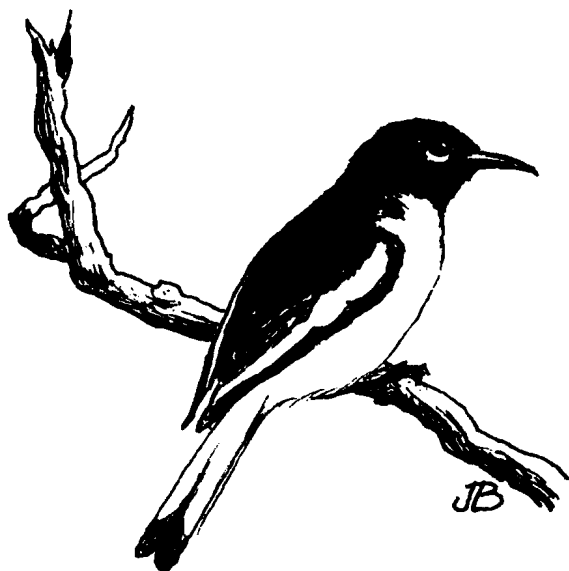
Cocklebidy Roadhouse has had its share of waders, too — Banded Lapwing with young, a Whimbrel and a Black-tailed Godwit strolling around the petrol pumps!

Our land-based birds haven't been letting us down either, with Blue Bonnet, White-winged Triller, Masked and White-browed Woodswallow all being recorded. The Masked Woodswallows were later discovered breeding on the Hampton Tableland. Burnabbie Homestead ruins also had a lot of breeding activity — Red-capped Robin, Western Yellow Robin, Jacky Winter and Brown Falcon.

Finally, Eyre itself has had a few improvements, too, with a new sign erected at our turn-off (our thanks to Terry Giles & Co for hard labour!), the top section of our access road graded by the shire and some 'new' chairs for the verandah dining area purchased from Cocklebidy Roadhouse. We hope to see some more of you visiting Eyre soon. It is a long trip but well

worth it — a guest recently described it as 'Birdo's Paradise'! Cheers.

Joye Wilson and Phillip Sharples



Pied Honeyeater, male, drawn by Judy Blyth. Sightings of Pied Honeyeaters are reported in this issue from Eyre Bird Observatory and Yalardy and Wooleen Stations in the Murchison.

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

The *BBO Barwits* were at it again on 26 October, counting bird species for the National Twitchathon. Six team members met at the observatory at 5:15 am, then headed out to Roebuck Plains to find the Letter-winged Kite and Australian Magpie which is surprisingly scarce around Broome. The kites have roosted faithfully in a dense eucalypt overlooking the plains and have delighted visitors to BBO all year. We have been looking for any signs of breeding activity as this would be a first for WA. The next raptor sighted was possibly the most spectacular sight all day. Ankle-deep in the mud on the edge of the mangroves, our team were busy trying to identify as many species of wader as possible from the tens of thousands of birds in front of us. Suddenly a commotion was in progress with many waders flying past giving alarm calls, followed by a magnificent Peregrine Falcon with prey in its talons. The falcon landed on a dead mangrove just metres away, but was put off balance by the six boggling birdwatchers, so swept away dropping a dead Great Knot on the mud. We quickly examined it for bands, then left it there, hoping the falcon would come back for its breakfast, if not for its sake then for all the other birds in the area. Rosemary, along with crutches, was our faithful scribe, "This list is in alphabetical order isn't it?" Helen provided us with her garden (complete with Black-eared Cuckoo), Phil with local golfing knowledge (the back way onto the greens) and Graham with jokes and puns all day long.

Our team finished with 124 species, ahead of the *Silly Bustards* in Kununurra with a commendable 95 species. Thank you to all our sponsors as the money raised goes to the RAOU

Woodland Appeal, and to all the birds which were in the right place at the right time.

The new laboratory, funded by the Gordon Reid Foundation, is all but finished and stands not far from the shadehouse. Many thanks to the BBO Committee, Grant Pearson from CALM and to the builders Peter Moore and Ian Snadden who were camping at BBO when they heard about the project. We were extremely lucky to have them complete the job so professionally. The building is cyclone rated, dust proof, with sinks, exhaust flue and bench space, and will be ideal for a wide range of studies on the ecology of Roebuck Bay. After the opening in December we plan to move in to sort mud samples and a team of Dutch scientists are planning to visit next June.

There have now been two sightings in Roebuck Bay of a breeding adult Red Knot which was individually leg-flagged just 15 degrees from the north pole on Faddeyevsky Island, New Siberian Islands. Prior to this no one knew where the New Siberian Island Red Knot went to in the non-breeding season. *Wetlands International*, which aims to facilitate international recognition and management of internationally important sites for shorebirds, is in the process of protecting wetlands essential for shorebird migration through the development of the 'Shorebird Reserve Network'. The link between wetlands was highlighted recently when yellow leg-flagged birds from NW Australia were seen during celebrations in New Zealand to mark the inclusion of the Firth of Thames as one of the 19 reserves in the network. Clive Minton spotted a Bar-tailed Godwit on the Firth of Thames while a Red Knot was seen at Manukau Harbour. On the last day of *Welcome the Waders Back* course, ourselves and Assistant Warden, Chris Hassell saw the first orange-flagged Great Knot from Victoria in Roebuck Bay. This is the first evidence to suggest that this species uses NW Australia as an entry point for Victoria. Chris and his partner Jan left us soon after the course and also made their way to Victoria for various bird-related activities. BBO was extremely fortunate to have them both here this year and we thank them for their diligence, flexibility and dedication to ensure that all visitors were well looked after.

Since September, a suburban garden has been home to Broome's first record of Pied Imperial Pigeon, much to the delight of the owners, Shirley and Alf. The bird has fed mostly on the fruit of *Carpentaria Palm* and roosts in the dense canopy of a mango tree. This sighting along with the small number of sightings of Rose-crowned Fruit Dove, may be due to the increase in the variety of tropical fruit plants associated with agriculture and gardening in town.

Our environmentally friendly power system was recognised as one of the state's best projects to be funded by the Department of Tourism this year, along with the Tingle Forest Walk and the Shark Bay Boardwalk. Our remote power system is a technological breakthrough for the provision of power in remote and sensitive environments. The system is now connected by modem to Perth, where the data is collected and will be used to help other remote locations. Diesel fuel use for the year has been less than expected and more people have visited in the hotter months as there is relief from the heat with fans, air-conditioning and good refrigeration. If contemplating your visit in March and April to witness the spectacle of migrating flocks of waders, consider the popular *Wave the Waders Goodbye* course to be led by Brett Lane

(author of *Shorebirds in Australia*). The birding will be spectacular and hot, and the option of a cool room, a luxury. But please book early.

Jon Fallaw and Becky Hayward

Excursion Reports

YARRA ROAD (CHRISTMAS TREE WELL), Shire of Beverley, 4 August

After nearly a week of rain which left the forest partially flooded, we had to confine our excursion to the wandoo areas on either side of Yarra Road. The original intention had been to conduct members along some of the old logging tracks deeper in the forest, but this was just not possible. However, we were lucky to have a dry, sunny day to enjoy the beauty of the trees and locate 38 species of birds, including four raptors and nine honeyeaters. The raptors caused some discussion as only fleeting glimpses were had as they flew above the tree canopy. Even so, Brown Goshawk, Brown Falcon and Australian Hobby were positively identified. Patches of dryandra were in flower to attract the many honeyeaters, and several Fan-tailed Cuckoos called throughout the day. Members agreed that it would be a splendid place to visit in the spring.

Bryan Barrett

CARINE LAKE, 10 August

About 30 people finished their birdwalk at Carine on Saturday 10 August in very buoyant mood having seen 46 species of birds.

Clive Nealon led us and said at the outset that because of high water levels fewer wading types would be seen. This proved to be so, but did in no way spoil our outing. An abundance of other lake-lovers were there. One unusual sighting was a Hardhead out on the bank, 'site-stepping' up and around. We saw a Purple Swamphen in brilliant enameled finery about 5 m up a paperbark. Seeing Rufous Whistlers and Yellow-rumped Thornbills was a plus and we painstakingly watched Striated Pardalotes in the treed areas nearby.

Before we set off earlier in the day, a Collared Sparrowhawk was above us, then right at the end a pair of Australian Hobbies graced us with their presence, spectacularly circling above the lake towards the trees. Clive feels they nest there as he's noted their movements often.

The weather was bright and sunny, and an interesting and rewarding walk was enjoyed, which started and finished with raptors. Thanks to Clive for his time and enthusiasm.

Penny Towells

TALBOT BROOK, 17 August

On a fine but cold day 26 people visited the property of Eggy and Rob Boggs at Talbot Brook near York. It was the WA Group's first venture into hiring a bus to transport members to the birding site. The bus was ably driven by Clive Napier and with 20 people aboard the costs were covered. Six more people drove their cars to the property.

Rob and Eggy were there to greet us in their bush retreat with a warm campfire going. We split into three groups and had good birding on the 100 acres of gravel hilltop covered in

Wandoo and several species of Dryandra. There was also a granite rock thickly grown around with Casuarinas. There were fine views of the surrounding farmland.

We saw 44 species of birds including Splendid Fairy-wrens, Scarlet and Red-capped Robins, Fan-tailed and Pallid Cuckoos, a Barn Owl, Golden and Rufous Whistlers and seven species of honeyeaters including Brown-headed, and White-naped. Elegant Parrots were attending nesting holes and a Rufous Treecreeper had become a picnic table bird near the Boggs' caravan holiday home. Birds of prey were represented by Brown Goshawk, Brown Falcon and a Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Our thanks go to Eggy and Rob for inviting us to their property and to Clive for leading the excursion and for driving the bus.

Wendy Napier

HILLARYS PELAGIC SEABIRD TRIP, 18 August

This was the first of what will hopefully be regular seabird trips from the Hillarys Boat Harbour. After several months of winter storms, 19 people set out at 7:30 am in a fresh easterly but otherwise very good conditions. We headed out to the back of Rottnest Island for West End. On the way there were numerous Australasian Gannets, a few lucky people briefly saw a Humpback Whale, and a Great Skua followed the boat briefly although it was a fair distance behind.

At Rottnest we soon found Yellow-nosed Albatrosses which were in sight for almost the whole trip with a number being enticed to land on the water at the back of the boat. We headed for deep water seeing only a few Little Shearwaters and a couple more Great Skuas. A couple of distant prions were also seen but could not be identified to species. We stopped when the depth was over 250 m. It wasn't long before we started to see a few Kerguelen and Soft-plumaged Petrels. My favourites were the very small White-faced Storm-Petrels skipping over the surface. A few Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were seen as we moved off to another location north of Rottnest.

Several small groups of shearwaters were seen heading south quickly. We finally got closer to see that at least some were Hutton's Shearwaters. The field guides are confusing as to when and where this species migrates, so this was a welcome sighting.

We headed for home, stopping to try to get a good look at a Shy Albatross. Unfortunately, it didn't come very close, although we did have the enjoyment of a school of Bottlenosed Dolphins taking an interest in the boat. We returned to Hillarys at 4:30 pm. Many thanks to the skipper Bill Mills and the deck hand Craig who cut up the fish scraps.

By the time of this December edition of WABN, the second trip will have been held. Another trip is planned for late March and possibly also late in May. Contact me on (09 386 5694 or (09) 482 1445 for details.

Frank O'Connor

MULLEWA CAMPOUT, 23-29 August

Prior to the Mullewa campout, many members prepared material for a bird display that was mounted in conjunction with the Mullewa Wildflower Show. As indicated on the following photographs, the display was quite extensive, including a manufactured Malleefowl mound complete with Malleefowl chick. The RAOU also had a trading table at the show adjacent to the display.



Some views of the RAOU display at the Mullewa Wildflower Show. Photos by Maggie Cashman-Bailes.

First Day

Friday was the first day of the Mullewa campout and, as not many members had arrived, a small party of eight visited two nearby reserves. We stopped first at the Wilroy Nature Reserve which straddles the Mullewa-Morawa Road, some 16 km south of Mullewa. The area is renowned for its wildflowers and we had some good birding, particularly east of the railway line. Sightings included several Mulga Parrots and a very good view of a Black-eared Cuckoo, as well as other species.

Leaving Wilroy, we travelled south-west to Coalseam Park through which the Irwin River runs. Having forded the river which was running fast after recent rains, we drove to the lookout for lunch and had excellent views of a pair of Peregrine Falcons, both perched on a tree overlooking the gorge and flying up and down the river. After lunch we moved across to the picnic area and found within the space of an hour a number of new species including a male White-winged Triller, some Little Woodswallows, both Rufous and Brown Songlarks and several cuckoos. A distant raptor eventually flew towards us, landing in a nearby tree. It was immediately harassed by a persistent Willie Wagtail, and we were able to identify it as a very light phase Brown Falcon. It hastily flew off and was joined by another bird.

In both areas the wildflowers were spectacular and a further visit would probably be quite profitable.

Margery Clegg and Bryan Barrett

Second Day — East Yuna

One of the highlights of the day was our stop at the breakaway at East Yuna, approximately 50 km from Mullewa.

After a fairly precipitous descent down the breakaway to the valley floor we recorded 42 species. Notable among these was a Hobby, White-fronted Honeyeater, Variegated Fairy-wren and Redthroat.

Considerable rain in the area resulted in one of our cars becoming firmly bogged in the muddy verge. After a prolonged episode of hilarity and concern, several of our kindly members succeeded in dislodging the vehicle and allowing rescued and rescuers to rejoin the main group.

Norma Duff

Third Day — Yalgoo Road

Nineteen people in five vehicles headed east on the Yalgoo Road in sunny and cool conditions for the third planned excursion of the Mullewa campout. We drove 10 km to an area known as the Water Reserve, which consisted of a breakaway with mulga and York gum surrounded by farmland. In 30 minutes 32 species were observed, the highlight being a pair of nesting Mulga Parrots.

The next stop was the Pindar Reserve noted for its outstanding wildflowers including the Wreath Leschenaultia which is the emblem of Mullewa. An area of York gum and mallet country further down the main road was not as productive as hoped for, but was a pleasant place for a lunch break.

We turned back along the same road and met local farmer Ron Bone at his property which is 20 km east of Mullewa. He escorted us to a swamp that had filled during the wet winter (it does not fill each year). For some of the members it was the highlight of their trip as we were presented with this small area of water covered with birds, the most notable and obvious being about 30-40 Whiskered Tern foraging over the water and adjacent wheat crop. One Gull-billed Tern, one Musk Duck, one Red-kneed Dotterel and approximately 50 Pink-eared Ducks were among the 15 species of waterbirds present. Altogether 24 species were seen in this area. People with 'scopes were at last able to make use of them.

Our journey home was enhanced by three Spotted Harriers soaring very close to the road giving us a good view in good light. A shorter day than the previous, but very satisfying.

Viv Dare



Redthroat, male, drawn by Judy Blyth. Essentially an arid zone scrub wren, Redthroats occur in several reserves around Mullewa.

BENNETT BROOK, 1 September

The cold night (7°C) ushered in an equally chilly but calm, sunny morning. For many of the 15 participants, Bennett Brook was a new and most promising birding site. The early arrivals had already observed Pacific Black Ducks and Australian Grey Teal feeding in the gently flowing stream. A hunting dog club had chosen the same venue for their weekly meet. However, their members were most considerate and successfully ensured that the doggers did not clash with the birders. The recent heavy rains made the negotiation of the waterlogged sections of our tour quite a challenge. Those members in the know wore the desirable footwear — Wellington boots!



The Spotted Pardalote, drawn here by Peter Melling, is common in the jarrah forest along the Darling Scarp.

Even before our party reached the eucalypts and paperbarks lining the swollen brook, a cacophony of bird calls could be heard. The experienced members of the group quickly identified the calls so that the newer members knew what to look for. We were not to be disappointed — this was indeed a wonderful bird site. With aching necks we stood under the tree canopy and observed the frantic activity of Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Grey Fantails, Western Warblers and Silvereyes to name just a few.

A raptor perched on a high tension tower 300 m away and was immediately identified as a Black-shouldered Kite, a species a number of us had never seen before. This bird flew towards us and obligingly perched on a tree branch no more than 30 m from our group. It was a most impressive specimen.

From this same location on the edge of a small lake, we had good views of a Sacred Kingfisher, three Australian Wood Ducks and a Great Egret.

During the morning we moved to many different locations and at each there was always some interesting bird activity

taking place. Finding a well camouflaged Grey Teal nest containing eight eggs, and seeing high flying Brown Goshawks were highlights for the newer members.

A total of 40 species was recorded during our stay. Writing as a new member of the RAOU, I wish to thank the leader, Ron van Delft, and all those old hands who went out of their way to assist the new members with the identification of the different species.

Neil Porteous

PARUNA SANCTUARY, 5 September

On a beautiful spring day, two White-tailed Black-Cockatoos flew overhead while 16 members waited at the Sanctuary entrance. Andre Schmitz, who also manages Paruna's sister sanctuary, Karakamia, which we visited some months ago, informed us that Paruna consisted of more than 1000 hectares. We did not try to cover it all, but still walked several kilometres, sighting Sacred Kingfishers, Scarlet Robins and Western Spinebills along the way. Wildflowers were in bloom and a few orchids were out. We had lunch on a big granite outcrop overlooking the valley of the Avon as it descends the scarp. (Andre had previously transported our lunches, etc., to the outcrop by four-wheel drive.)

Most of us saw our first Rainbow Bee-eater for the spring. Also seen were Rufous Treecreepers and Elegant Parrots.

We enjoyed a very pleasant day and added 17 new species to this new sanctuary's list — making a total of 37 species for the day.

Thanks to Andre for leading the walk and to members for their participation.

Bill McRoberts

CANNING WETLANDS, 18 September

Weather conditions at first looked very gloomy, with strong winds and showers, but by 8:30 am ten brave souls had gathered in the Kent Street Weir car park and the weather smiled on us. The wind remained brisk but the sun shone and we enjoyed a pleasant walk.

Birds were in abundance and 41 species were sighted. The highlight was the first Kingfisher for the spring (not quite the first; see Bennett Brook report above Eds) and it gave us quite an interesting time as it was far bluer, larger and whiter on the breast and stomach than Sacred Kingfishers usually are. Despite our best efforts we could not make it any other species. A Yellow-billed Spoonbill was also an unusual visitor and together with White-faced Heron, Great Egret and the other usual waterbirds provided a pleasant morning's birding.

Clive Napier

CAMPOUT AT DRYANDRA STATE FOREST, 28-30 September

Twenty-five people, with an age range spanning eight decades, gathered at Dryandra State Forest at midday on Saturday, all looking forward to a good long weekend of birding in pleasant spring weather.

We were accommodated in the Dryandra Forest Village's basic but fully adequate Currawong Complex, the ladies having the Robin and Rosella huts, the gentlemen being allocated Wren and Wagtail. The first afternoon was unstructured and we formed various groups, most choosing to stroll around the very pleasant and bird-rich woodland in the immediate vicinity of the village.

It proved a productive start to the weekend, and the first day's count, officiated by Rob Hill in the mess hut after dinner, totaled 56 species. Dorothy received a special award for the day's most desirable sighting, a Crested Shrike-tit. After dinner a few hardy souls set off spotlighting, both on foot and in Rob's utility, but both groups were soon back, being defeated by the cold rain. I'm sure that we were all grateful that night to Lt. Col. Peter Nissen for his invention.

On Sunday we set off at midmorning, driving a few kilometres into the forest to check a couple of different habitats. More species were added including, surprisingly, early arriving Rainbow Bee-eaters, which members had not yet seen in Perth.

After a warm and sunny picnic lunch we set off for the next location, but non-observance of normal convoy procedure resulted in the group splitting. This proved not to be a major problem, however, as both parties had a leader and nobody was lost. Birding was interrupted by deteriorating weather, although four-year-old Katie was happy to play snowballs with the hail!

The official count was closed at dinner. Eric won the prize of a bottle of warming fluid, being closest to the official total of 66 species.

That evening the weather was kinder, and the spotlighters saw several nocturnal birds and mammals.

After a freezing night, Monday morning was clear and Bryan and Rob led us for a stroll from the village, followed by a trip to another new area.

All in all a most enjoyable weekend with a good bird count and some beautiful wildflowers. I was lucky enough to see a few new species, including, whilst on my own taking orchid photos on Monday morning, some numbats.

Many thanks to our leaders, Bryan Barrett and Rob Hill. Our only complaint was the wintry weather!

David Free

TUTANNING NATURE RESERVE — 11-13 October

Six members attended the campout, most arriving on the Friday. It was a beautiful weekend, with not a cloud in the sky for the three days. We camped on the farmer's paddock outside the reserve, where a Red-capped Robin came to visit us at every opportunity. We could also see Rainbow Bee-eaters, Black-faced Woodswallows, Singing Honeyeaters, and Banded Lapwings

Leon Silvester, our leader, arrived on Saturday morning and lead us on a walk where we saw Golden and Rufous Whistlers, Weebills, Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens, and four species of thornbill. Even though he was on a walking stick supporting a pulled tendon we had a hard time keeping up with Leon! Night-time was cold so we had a camp-fire and a few medicinal drinks.

On Sunday morning we took a 4x4 journey and visited several different habitats, seeing Red and Little Wattlebirds, White-eared, White-cheeked, and Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters, and six Wedge-tailed Eagles catching the thermals and having a great time.

In total, we saw 52 species and had a very pleasant campout. Thanks to Leon for leading.

Bill McRoberts

WELLARD WETLANDS, BALDIVIS, 17 October

The cars rolled up at such a rate near the appointed meeting time, that we had some difficulty in arranging sensible parking.

In the end, we had 24 participants — somewhat of a record for a mid-week walk in my experience.

We split into two parties, still a bit of a handful to guide round a walk, but we need not have worried. Our tight organisation soon dissolved into a happy shambles as individuals were lured to all corners of the Wetlands by the seductive sights and sounds that abounded on that bright, spring morning.

I remember walking here some eight years previously and wondering what we were doing on this series of barren bunds between empty ponds. The scenery and birdlife were equally boring. What a contrast today. There is a jungle of trees and undergrowth of all descriptions most pleasing to the eye, the bottlebrushes were particularly stunning on this day, and a good variety of birds now enjoy the habitat. The hides and many densely grown areas make for places where one can watch bird activity for long rewarding periods and our comparatively short stay did not do full justice to all the delights there.

We saw a total of 48 species in the two and a half hours of our walk. The highlights were tracking the elusive Clamorous Reed-Warbler and eventually getting good close observations of it, spotting a White-winged Triller which displayed very obligingly near us (a first for this site, I believe), and whilst we were gathering for the final count, a Brown Goshawk skimmed just over our heads. We seemed able to observe birds on this day at closer range than is usual, and at one spot, I was as entranced by two pairs of Inland Thornbills as they were by me. I discarded my binoculars and was able to appreciate directly the true delicacy of these fragile living miniatures. ALCOA are to be congratulated on the delightful area they have created for the enjoyment of nature lovers and birders in particular.

Peter Anson

SERPENTINE NATIONAL PARK, 26 October

The morning walk was along the track that leads from Scrivenor Road to Serpentine Falls. This is a steep, fairly rugged descent on the side of a valley with a stream running along the bottom. This area had been severely burned just prior to our previous walk but was now completely recovered and the valley of widely spaced Wandoo was filled with luxuriant growth with many bright glimpses of wildflowers. It ought to have been full of bird life with all these attractions but sightings were hard to come by, and it wasn't until we reached a point three-quarters along the track at a spot where the stream crosses it, that we saw much action. We watched a family of White-breasted Robins here, amongst the many New Holland Honeyeaters, Western Gerygones and Striated Pardalotes and saw our only Golden Whistler. Usually this is a good area for birding and today was not as rewarding as I expected, but it was an interesting walk in pleasant scenery.

We ate lunch near the Serpentine Brook, reached from a track off the Kingsbury Road, another delightful spot, densely wooded with regrowth Marri and Jarrah. Again birds were hard to find, even the dear old Australian Ringneck only made a couple of appearances, but there was a glimpse of a Red-winged Fairy-wren, a Western Rosella and we had a good look at a well coloured Sacred Kingfisher. The weather was perfect and the day altogether enjoyable. In the final count we saw 38 species.

Peter Anson

Coming Events

Editor's Note: The November and December items below were inadvertently omitted from the September WABN, for which we apologise. We hope you will receive this edition in time to include at least the December outings in your itinerary.

Sunday 24 November — Full-day Excursion to Lake McLarty, Pinjarra

Meet at 8 am at the intersection of South Western Highway and the Old Bunbury Road, approximately 5 km south of Pinjarra, then turn right into the parking area.

We hope to see a variety of waders and other waterbirds and bushbirds. There are occasional rarities to be seen on this large shallow lake.

Wellington boots/old shoes are recommended, plus hat, insect repellent and water. Those wishing to walk right around the lake should take their lunch with them.

Leader: Les Harris

Saturday 30 November — Full-day Excursion to Wungong Gorge/Bungendore Park

Meet at 8:30 am at the first car park for Wungong Dam, at the end of Admiral Road (off Albany Highway), Bedfordale.

This is an excellent site for Red-eared Firetails and White-breasted Robins. Ninety-two different species have been seen at this site. Wedge-tailed Eagles are again being seen — since at least one bird was shot then fire destroyed the nest.

After lunch (BYO) we'll go to Bungendore Park for an hour or so — a good site for Western Yellow Robins, Rufous Treecreepers and Western Spinebills.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

Sunday 8 December — Full-day Excursion to Karrakin Lake and Doopiter Swamp

Meet at 9 am at the entrance to the gravel pits on KW Road, which branches off Lancelin Road, some 7 km south of Lancelin (the gravel pits are about 300 m from the junction on the left-hand side). We'll look at the heathland around the pit for Shy Heathwrens and Fairy-wrens. White-backed Swallows have bred in the sand pits, as have Red-backed Kingfishers.

We'll then proceed further along KW Road to Lake Karrakin which, when wet, can hold many species of ducks, waders, etc., some of which breed in the area. The grove at the southern end of the lake is sometimes the home of a very large colony of Nankeen Night Herons.

After lunch we'll drive on to Doopiter Swamp. (For those of you who have been wondering, *Dupetor* is the genus name for the Black Bittern. Perhaps the names are connected.)

Be prepared for an approximately 300 or more km round trip from Perth.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Thursday 12 December — Mid-Week Walk at Lake Gwelup

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park at the corner of Stoneham Street and Huntriss Road (north of Karrinyup Road). An opportunity to see both waterbirds and bushbirds.

Leader: To be Announced

Saturday 14 December — Half-Day Excursion to Alfred Cove

Meet at 8 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale.

This is one of a series of outings to identify some of the waders that spend their summer in the southern hemisphere. Bring your telescope if you have one.

Leader: Norma Duff

Saturday 21 December, 8 am, to Sunday 22 December, 8 am — WA Twitchathon and End-of-Year Breakfast

Get your teams together — minimum of three and maximum of four people to each team. Cost is \$10 per team. Please contact the RAOU office and register.

Sunday at 8:30 am we'll be having breakfast, where the teams will present their cards and prizes will be awarded. All RAOU volunteers and new members are warmly invited to come and join us, at least for the pre-Christmas celebratory breakfast. More information can be obtained from the office nearer the time.

Organisers: Bill McRoberts and Clive Napier

NO DECEMBER EVENING MEETING.

Sunday 29 December — Half-day Excursion to Woodman Point Reserve, Cockburn

Meet at 8 am at the entrance to Woodman Point Recreation Camp, off Cockburn Road, south of the caravan park.

We will start by looking for bushbirds in the reserve of tuart woodland and native cypress, and then head over to the point to look for seabirds (don't forget your telescopes for this part).

Leader: Brenda Newbey

Sunday 5 January 1997 — Half-Day Excursion to Bibra Lake

Meet at 8 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake, on Progress Drive.

Bibra Lake is part of the Beeliar Wetlands chain, and a large number of water and bush birds can be observed.

Leader: Peter Anson

Saturday 11 January — Full-day Excursion to Yanchep National Park

Meet at 9 am in the car park by the koala enclosure.

We haven't been to this part of the National Park on an RAOU excursion before. Don't forget, there is an entrance fee for Yanchep National Park.

Leader: Barbara Hale

Wednesday 15 January — Mid-Week Excursion to Alfred Cove

Meet at 7:30 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale. This is the second in a series of outings to identify some of the waders that spend their summer in the southern hemisphere. Bring your telescope if you have one.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 19 January — Half-day Excursion to Star Swamp and Trigg Bushland

Meet at 7.30 am at the Hope Street entrance.

Star Swamp has tuart woodland, mixed *Banksia* woodland, and heath, and the early start is essential to ensure good bush-birding.

Leader: Helen Clark

Monday 20 January Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Michael Craig, who talked to the Group not long ago about shorebird identification, will discuss the impacts of timber harvesting on the birdlife of jarrah forests.

Saturday 25 to Monday 27 January — Campout at Quaalup Homestead, Bremer Bay

All interested persons are required to phone the office on (09) 383 7749 and leave your name and the number of persons in your party. If you wish to camp, the cost is \$5 per person per night.

We have tentatively booked camping space, but need to know numbers as soon as possible. If you would like on-site accommodation, a number of caravans and some chalets are available. We ask that you book these directly by ringing Dale or Gil at the homestead on (098) 74 124.

The nearby Fitzgerald River National Park is recognised as an area of international significance, and has been classified by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve. It contains 20% of the plant species occurring in Western Australia, including the magnificent Royal Hakea. Many of the plant species found here occur nowhere else.

One-hundred and eighty-four bird species have been listed, including rarities such as the Ground Parrot, Western Bristlebird and Western Whipbird. There is also excellent birding around the Quaalup Homestead, as well as at Bremer Bay.

We hope to see many of our 'country cousins' (members from Albany, Esperance, etc.) at this campout.

Leaders: Mary Bremner and Sue Abbotts

Sunday 2 February — Full-day Excursion to Lake McLarty, Pinjarra

Meet at 8 am at the intersection of South Western Highway and the Old Bunbury Road, approximately 5 km south of Pinjarra, then turn right into the parking area.

We hope to see a variety of waders and other water and bushbirds. There are occasional rarities to be seen on this large shallow lake.

Wellington boots/old shoes are recommended, plus hats, insect repellent and water.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 9 February — Half-Day Excursion to Big Carine Lake

Meet at 7:30 am in the car park off Beach Road, Carine.

Eighty-plus species have been recorded here, including the 3 ibis, Buff-banded Rail, Freckled Duck, and several raptors. Don't forget your telescope.

Leader: Clive Nealon

Thursday 13 February — Mid-Week Walk at Lake Joondalup, Joondalup

Meet at 8:30 am in the Neil Hawkins Park car park, off Shenton Avenue.

This is a large lake which has numerous species of

waterbirds and bushbirds.

Leader: Di Beckingham

Saturday 15 February — Full-day Excursion Wellard Wetlands, Baldvis, and Woodman Point

Meet at 8:30 am at the entrance to Wellard Wetlands on the northern side of Zigzag Road, 1 km from St Alban's Road, Baldvis. There should be plenty of waterbirds and bushbirds breeding.

After lunch, those wishing to can go on to Woodman Point for a couple of hours to check out the waders, etc.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Sunday 23 February — Full-day Excursion to the Lakes Around Gingin

Meet at 8:30 am in the centre of Gingin. We'll have a look at several lakes in the area.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Monday 24 February ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and Monthly Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, Burswood 8:00 pm

The Annual General Meeting will be held in conjunction with the General Meeting. All committee positions will be declared vacant and office bearers will be elected for 1997/98. Nomination forms may be obtained from the office and must be signed by the proposer, seconder and the person nominated, all of whom should be paid-up members. The completed form should be sent to the Secretary or handed in prior to the commencement of the AGM.

Harry Recher, Foundation Professor in the Department of Environmental Management at Edith Cowan University, will talk on "Sex, food and eucalypt forest birds". They may look the same or they may look different. Are there differences between the sexes in foraging behaviour?

Saturday 1 to Monday 3 March — Campout at Wilgarup Lake, Manjimup

This lake and surrounding bushland is on a property owned by Mr. and Mrs. Eric Phillips, some 15 km north of Manjimup, and has been developed into a wildlife sanctuary under the aegis of CALM. It is approximately 265 km from Perth.

This lake was the last-known whereabouts of the Lewin's Rail, which is now thought to be extinct in WA.

Travel via Bridgetown south towards Manjimup. Watch for the "15 km to Manjimup" signpost, proceed 200 m beyond, and turn right. Follow the road to the homestead. RAOU signs will direct you to the campsite.

Campers will need to be self-sufficient. A chalet, which sleeps 4 (one double and two single rooms) is available at \$30 per person per night — first come first served. However, please note the toilet in the chalet will be available to all campers. Those wishing to book the chalet should ring Eric direct on (097) 71 1517.

Leader: Bill McRoberts and Bryan Barrett

Saturday 8 March — Half-day Excursion to Lake Coogee

Meet at 8:30 am on the southern side of Mayor Road, Munster (50 m west of Hamilton Road).

This lake, which has been underrated for birdlife in the past, may simply have been overlooked. The species list now stands at 98, and recent sightings have included a variety of

raptors, several Chestnut Teal, and 38 Great Crested Grebes.
Leaders: Jan and Dave Crossley

Sunday 16 March — Full-day Excursion to Flynn Road Bushland

Meet at 8:30 am on the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about one kilometre on the Perth-side of 'The Lakes' turnoff, i.e., the York Road turnoff.

We'll look at several areas of wandoo woodland, where three species of robin are usually seen.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Saturday 22 March — Half-day Excursion to Thomson's Lake

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park off Russell Road, between Pearse and Hammond Roads. A good area for bushbirds, waders, and waterbirds.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

Monday 24 March Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Adrian Dandeker of the Australian Customs Service will speak to us about wildlife smuggling (of which the smuggling of wild birds forms an important part) and the illegal importation of narcotics with which such smuggling is linked.

Friday 28 to Monday 31 March — Easter Campout at Esperance, With Extensions to Cape Arid, Peak Charles, and Frank Hann National Parks

This is the best time of the year to visit the Esperance region, as temperatures are cooling down and rain has not yet arrived. Birds to be seen include Cape Barren Geese, Hooded Plovers, Banded Stilts, Southern Emu-wrens, Rufous Fieldwrens, Shy Heathwrens, Rock Parrots, Swamp Harriers, and Ground Parrots.

Caravan and camping sites at the Esperance Shire Caravan Park (corner Norseman and Goldfields Roads) have been tentatively booked. We need to know numbers as soon as possible to confirm bookings, as it is Easter. Please phone the office (09 383 7749) and register your name and the number of people in your party.

We'll be meeting on Friday night at the caravan park. Planned activities at this stage include a visit to Lake Gore to survey Hooded Plovers with the Esperance RAOU group, and an excursion to Cape Le Grand. A boat trip to the islands off Esperance will be available for people wanting to go. On the Monday, those with the time can join an extended trip to Cape Arid (about 120 km one-way from Esperance) for two nights. We'll then return to Perth via Peak Charles and Frank Hann National Parks (approximately 180 km north west of Esperance). Travel to these national parks is via reasonable gravel roads, which should be all right for caravans, but you'll need to be self-sufficient, as pit toilets are the only facilities available. Water is limited or wholly unavailable.

Leader: Clive Napier

Remote Excursion

We are planning an extended excursion to a remote area such as the Canning Stock Route or Gary Highway during winter or early spring in 1997. Four-wheel drive vehicles will be essential, as will an ability to be completely self-supporting. We are seeking expressions of interest, from experienced

travellers in the arid zone who can help with leading and organisation, and from other less experienced four-wheel drivers who may wish to make such excursions and would like to be a part of a group.

If you are interested, keep a three or four week gap in your schedule in July/August and leave a message at the office for Bill McRoberts or Clive Napier. More details will be provided in the next WABN.

Monday 21 April Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Dr Hugo Bekle of the Social Sciences Department at Edith Cowan University has done detailed studies on local waterbirds and the wetlands, particularly Lake Joondalup, which sustain them. Those studies help to answer questions such as why particular waterbird species prefer some wetlands to others, what movements they make and what their reproductive cycles are.

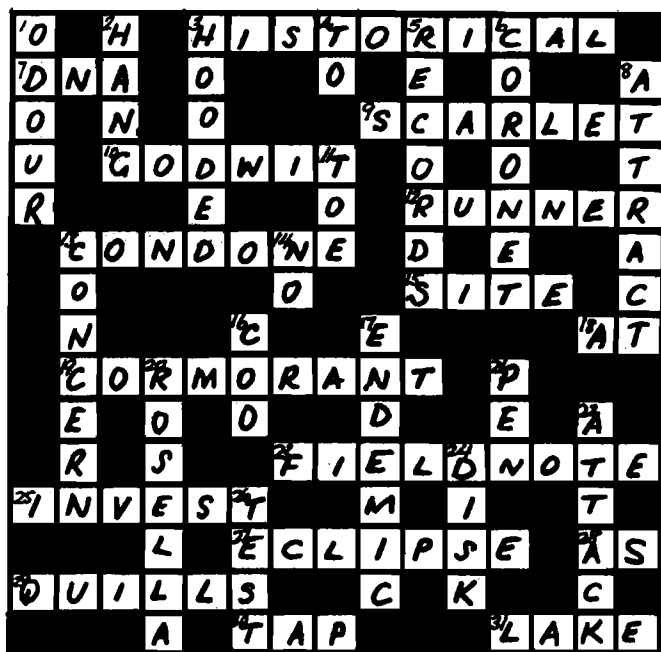
Monday 26 May Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Greg Keighery is a botanist at CALM's Wildlife Research Centre at Woodvale and his subject will be the pollination of many of our native plants by birds. The mutual dependence of those plants and birds has obvious significance for the management of our environment.

Monday 23 June Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Frank O'Connor, a member of our Group who works at the Argyle diamond mine in the Kimberley and has made good birding use of his time in the north, will talk about how local birds have adapted themselves to the presence of the mine.

Crossword No 7 Solution



KIRRAMA WILDLIFE TOURS

1996 Tours

only a few vacancies left for Iron Range Bird Tour (Dec)

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Cape York Bird Week (Jan) North Queensland Bird Tour (May)

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23 Jan. to 13 Feb. 1997 (22 days total) Fully accomodated

EXTENSION TOUR TO ZIMBABWE

Visiting the famous Victoria Falls. Birding in Hwange National Park and Chobe National Park in Botswana, adding more species to an already incredible list.

14 February to 20 February 1997 (7 days)

SOUTH WEST NULLARBOR, VICTORIA DESERT TOUR

We might as well call this a 'Parrot expedition'. Possibility of 18 species, including both Baudins and Carnabys White-tailed Black Cockatoo, Pink Cockatoo, Western Rosella, Red-capped Parrot, Naretha Blue Bonnet and our main objective — **Scarlet-chested Parrot**. Most of the south west endemics. Travel from Perth to Kalgoorlie, the Nullabor to South Australia up to Cook and the Anne Beadell Highway, then back. Three nights full accomodation at Eyre Telegraph Station and back to Perth.

26 April to 17 May 1997 Camping 21 days (3 x 4WD convoy)

All tours led by Simon Nevill.

Please note that all tours for 1996 are full, including South Africa and The Kimberley

Write or phone for a brochure to: Unit 17-330 South Terrace, South Fremantle WA 6162 Ph/Fax: (09) 336 3882

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