

# Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of Birds Australia-WA Group  
(a division of Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union)

No 86 June 1998

## IDENTIFYING CORELLAS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

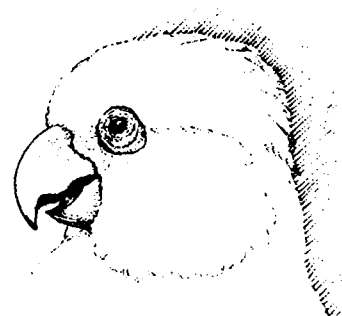
### Introduction

Corellas have been seen around Perth's suburbs since the early 1960s. Although the southern subspecies of the endemic south-western species, the Western (Western Long-billed) Corella, *Cacatua pastinator*, used to occur from the south coast to the Swan River and Northam it had gone from this area by the turn of the century. Whatever the species, all corellas seen around Perth since the 1960s are almost certainly derived from aviary escapees.

Most of the well known flocks around Perth, such as around Lake Monger and Subiaco and around Guildford, are mainly Little Corellas, *Cacatua sanguinea*. It has been recognised for some time that these flocks contain small numbers of one or more of the Western Corella and the eastern Australian Long-billed Corella, *Cacatua tenuirostris* (see accompanying article in Members' Contributions).

However, in recent months reports have been received of corellas in the southern suburbs; along the Canning River from Shelley/Riverton/Ferndale to Kelmscott, along the lower Swan River from East Fremantle and Point Walter to the South Perth foreshore and at Manning Lake in Hamilton Hill south of Fremantle. It appears that many of these birds south of the Swan are Long-billed Corellas, that is the eastern Australian

species, and at all but Lake Manning single species flocks of about 100 birds have been reported. There is also at least one flock of about ten or twelve Long-billed Corellas being seen around



Head of Little Corella

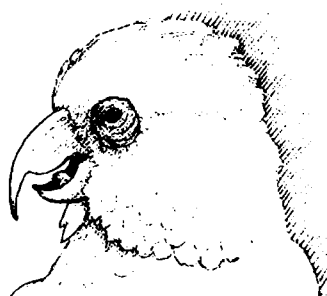
Lake Joondalup in the northern suburb of Wanneroo.

Given their introduced status, there is considerable interest in looking at the populations of corellas around Perth and determining whether one or more of the species is expanding, and if so what the consequences might be in the longer term. In another article in this issue we and Clive Nealon discuss the corellas around

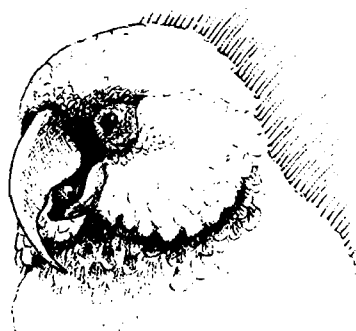
Perth in more detail, and seek assistance in clarifying the status of the three species. To help in this process, this article outlines the key features of each species and how to identify them in the field. The descriptions should be used with the associated illustrations.

### Descriptions

All three species and five subspecies of corellas found in Western Australia are medium sized white cockatoos, sometimes dirt-stained on the belly, with short crests, bluey grey patches of skin around the eye, brown irises and yellow under the wings and tail. At species level they can, with careful observation, be clearly separated by the length



Head of Western Corella



Head of Long-billed Corella  
Drawings by Judy Blyth

and shape of the bill and the amount of pink or orange-red around the face and upper body. It is much easier if adult birds are present because the features listed above on which the three species can be separated are less marked in immature birds. It is probably not worth trying to separate the subspecies of either Little or Western Corellas by field observation.

It is quite possible that hybridisation between aviary bred birds once they are in the wild may be more likely than between the populations of two species that have come together more or less naturally. Thus, the possibility of birds around Perth being hybrids between any two of the three introduced species should be borne in mind when attempting to identify particular birds.

#### Little Corella (*Cacatua sanguinea*)

The Little Corella is the smallest, shortest billed and plainest of the corellas seen around Perth. The bill is 'chunky', without any obvious extension of the upper mandible. The exposed length of the bill ranges from 28 to 36 mm, and the upper and lower mandibles fit together neatly with little gap visible when closed. The bill is generally much shorter than in either of the two other species, although there is a slight overlap between large Little Corellas and small females of the northern subspecies of the Western Corella. The Little Corella and the northern subspecies of the Western Corella do overlap in range in the midwest, and may both occur in Perth, so colour pattern and shape of the bill are needed in identifying corellas in those areas.

The face of Little Corellas has a quite narrow band of dull orange/pink between the bill and the eye (the lores). This band is rarely as wide as the base of the bill and never reaches across the top of the bill or behind the eye. The bases of feathers around the head and neck are pale orange/pink, and this may be visible when the feathers are ruffled.

Two subspecies of Little Corella occur in Western Australia: *C. sanguinea sanguinea* is essentially a bird of the Kimberley and other parts of northern Australia, while *C. sanguinea westralensis* is largely a north-western form, now occurring around the lower Murchison and Geraldton in the Midwest region as well and apparently expanding into the central wheatbelt. Both subspecies may occur in flocks of introduced birds around Perth, although *westralensis* is the most common.

#### Western (Western Long-billed) Corella (*Cacatua pastinator*)

The Western Corella is on average one or two centimetres longer than the Little Corella, with a longer bill and more orange-red colour visible around the face and throat. Bill length varies between 45 and 52 mm in the southern subspecies and between 33 and 49 mm in

the northern subspecies. The upper mandible is heavily notched and has an obviously extended tip, although this is neither as long nor as slender as that of the Long-billed Corella. In addition to regional differences in the size and shape of the bill, these features become more typical of the species with increasing maturity.

The area of orange-red between the eye and bill is both larger and brighter than in the Little Corella, but still does not usually extend beyond the eye or across the top of the bill. The orange-pink colour of the bases of feathers extends from the head and neck to the breast and belly. A small reddish band, rarely more than a broad line a few centimetres long, may be visible on the upper breast.

Although the Western Corella has a longer bill than the Little Corella it is readily separated in the field from adult eastern Long-billed Corellas, the latter having much more red around the face and throat. However, one has to look carefully to separate the Western Corella from the Little, particularly in the northern agricultural area where their ranges are most likely to overlap and where the Western Corella's bill is shorter than in the southern subspecies. It is very difficult to separate the two subspecies of the Western Corella in the field.

#### (Eastern) Long-billed Corella (*Cacatua tenuirostris*)

This species is characterised by a very long upper mandible, from 39 to 52 mm long, with the elongated tip slender and laterally compressed. Because the notch in the upper mandible, into which the lower mandible fits, is comparatively shallow, the bill never appears fully closed. The resulting conspicuous gap between upper and lower mandibles gives an effect of each bird having a permanent smile (see Fig. 2). The whole face is bright orange-red, including above the bill and a variably sized triangle behind the eye, with small reddish patches often visible further back along the sides of the head. In addition, every bird has a bright red 'half-necklace', made up of sometimes overlapping lozenge-shaped spots or splashes, arranged horizontally, between the throat and upper breast. The necklace is about eight to ten centimetres long and two to three centimetres wide in the centre. It tapers unevenly towards a point at each side of the neck. The coloured bases of feathers occur on the head, neck, shoulders, breast and belly, and are usually brighter and more obvious than on either of the two other species.

With the above guidelines, a pair of binoculars and a little experience all BAWAG members should have little difficulty in identifying each of the three species in the field. From that point, we should as a group be able to gain a much more accurate picture of the distribution and status of the corellas around Perth.

John Blyth and Ron Johnstone

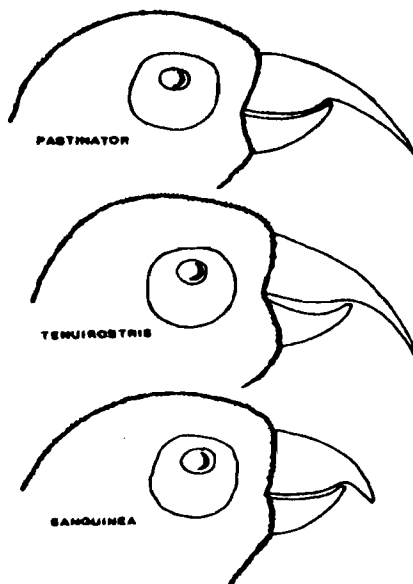


Figure 2: Bill shapes in Corellas from Ford (1985)

## FERAL CORELLA COUNT

**28 June 1998**  
**Starting 3:30 pm**

· Would you like to help us gain a better understanding of the numbers and status of the three species of corellas that have been introduced around Perth's suburbs ? (see articles elsewhere in this issue).

If you know of a place that you regularly or often see corellas, we invite you to take part in an organised count at as many places as possible throughout the metropolitan area, on June 28, beginning at 3:30 pm and going until 5:30 pm.

The aim is to make a first attempt to assess the number of each species of corella around Perth.

To do this we will identify the species of all corellas seen, and count the number of each species at each site at approximately the same time on the same day.

If this method yields useful results, we may wish to continue it on a monthly basis to gain a better idea of movements of the various populations.

**If you would like to take part in this survey please contact John Blyth by phone (work 9405 5100 — home 9381 6293); fax 9306 1641 or email johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au**

## 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.

### **SOUTH-WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)**

**Malleefowl** - 1, 9/97, Kularin Dam, c. 24 km ESE of Burakin (Mukinbudin) - BL

**Freckled Duck** - 2, 9/10/97, Little Darkan Swamp (York) - JS, HS, TS \* 1, 13/4/98, Lake Monger (Perth) - JB \* 7, 3/4/98, Lake Yangebup (Cockburn) - TD, MxB \* 3, 12/4/98, Lake Wheatfield (Esperance) - JC, DC

**Australasian Shoveler** - 650+, 13/4/98, Lake Monger (Perth) - JB (high number for this site)

**Great Crested Grebe** - adult plus 2 juvs, 28/2/98, lake in Burswood golfcourse (Perth) - MS

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** - 20+ in half hour, 3/3/98, Red Bluff, Kalbarri (Northampton) - RP

**Flesh-footed Shearwater** - 20+ in 1 hour, 11/3/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

**Australasian Gannet** - 10+ over 2 hrs, 15-21/4/98, smaller numbers on other days in Mar-Apr, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

**Little Egret** - 13, 27/2/98, Lake Goegrup (Murray) - FO

**Cattle Egret** - 12, 21/3/98, Brunswick River at Australind (Harvey) - RW, OG

**Little Bittern** - 1 juvenile, found 8 Feb 98, Meers Road, W of Northcliffe (Manjimup) - LH (released after rehabilitation)

**Square-tailed Kite** - 1, 19/10/97, Watershed Road, off Brookton Hwy (Beverley) - JS, HS

**Peregrine Falcon** - 1, 1/4/98, Lake Yangebup (Cockburn) - TD

**Spotless Crake** - up to 7, Mar/Apr 98, Lake Monger (Perth) - JB

**Eurasian Coot** - 2 with chicks, 25/3/98, artificial pond at Edith Cowan University, Joondalup (Wanneroo) - MBa

**Bush Stone-curlew** - 1, 23/3/98, Warwick Open Space (Wanneroo) - BH (very unusual for the metro area)

**Banded Stilt** - c. 800, 27/2/98, Coodanup (Murray) - FO \* 5000+, 24/3/98, Lake Muir (Manjimup) - JB, AAB \* up to 16, 4/98, Lake Monger (Perth) - JB

**Whiskered Tern** - 2, 26/10/97, small saline lake c. 15 km NE of Wubin on Gt Northern Hwy (Dalwallinu) - WN, CN

**Spotted Nightjar** - 1, 29/3/98, Boundary Island, Peel Inlet (Murray) - MxB, MS (rare on Swan Coastal Plain)

**Fork-tailed Swift** - 1, 2/3/98, Herdsman Lake (Stirling) - JB

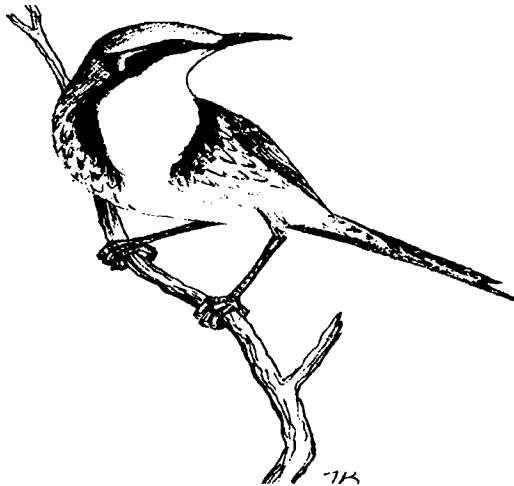
**Variegated Fairy-wren** - 3, 2/3/98, Herdsman Lake (Stirling) - JB

**Southern Emu-wren** - 23/2/98, 4 km W of Warradargee on Green Head road (Coorow) - SK (near N range limit of mainland populations)

**Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** - 1, 19/4/98, City Beach (Cambridge) - WL (details elsewhere in this issue)

**Tawny-crowned Honeyeater** - several reports from observers in the metro area, April

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater  
Drawn by Judy Blyth



**Zebra Finch** - 1+, 2/98, Piesse Brook (Kalamunda) - MB (escaped from aviary?)

**European Goldfinch** - 6, 8/2/98, Herdsman Lake (Stirling) - JB

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

**Black-necked Stork** - 2 ads and 1 juv, 22/10/97, Yilalong Creek, 20 km NW of Carawine Gorge (East Pilbara) - MG (well inland)

**Grey Falcon** - 2 ads and 1 juv, 24/10/97, 20 km S of Nullagine (East Pilbara) - MG

**Star Finch** - 21/10/97, Carawine Gorge (Oakover River) (East Pilbara) - MG

## KIMBERLEY

**Radjah Shelduck** - 1, 15/2/98, Wandarrie Camp sewage ponds Argyle diamond mine (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - FO

**Streaked Shearwater** - 1 beachwashed, 7/2/98, Broome (Broome) - BBO (few records for Kimberley coast)

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** - 1 beachwashed, 25/2/98, Broome (Broome) - BBO

**Great Cormorant** - 1, 5/2/98, Argyle village sewage ponds (1st record for Argyle) (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - FO

**Square-tailed Kite** - 1, 11/4/98, Cable Beach dunes (Broome) - BBO

**Grey Goshawk** - 2, 14-15/4/98, in vine thicket at Barred Creek (Broome) - BLA (southern-most record for WA)

**Red-chested Button-quail** - 3, 22/2/98, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - BBO (rarely recorded in the W Kimberley)

**Pin-tailed Snipe** - 1, 16/2/98, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) - BBO (uncommon on west coast)

**Common Redshank** - 7, 13/4/98, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO (high number)

**Asian Dowitcher** - 75, 12/3/98, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO (high number)

**Broad-billed Sandpiper** - 82, 9/4/98, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO

**Roseate Tern** - 2, 2/2/98, Broome port (Broome) - BBO \* 5 (2 in breeding plumage), 12/4/98, Barred Creek (Broome) - BBO (usually winter visitors)

**Oriental Cuckoo** - 1, 20-21/2/98, in pindan near Broome (Broome) - BBO

**Channel-billed Cuckoo** - 1, 25/2/98, Broome (Broome) - BBO

**House Swift** - 2, 9/2/98, over mangroves near Broome (Broome) - DR, PB (first or second record for WA)

**Rainbow Bee-eater** - 40+, 14/2/98, Argyle village (in same tree at dusk) (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - FO

**Black Grasswren** - nests and eggs, 2/98, Mitchell River area (Wyndham-East Kimberley) - REJ *et al.* (first record: details next issue)

**White-fronted Honeyeater** - 1, 17/3/98, pindan near Broome (Broome) - DR (unusual near Broome)

**Yellow Chat** - 500, Apr 98, east of Broome (Broome) - DR, PB (high number)

**Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** - 2, 13/4/98, Crab Creek mangroves (Broome) - BBO (southern-most record)

**White-browed Woodswallow** - a few, among 1000s of migrating Masked Woodswallows, 6/4/98, Broome (Broome) - BBO

**Black-backed Wagtail** - 1, 14/3/98, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) - BBO (2<sup>nd</sup> record for WA)

**Painted Finch** - 3, 3/4/98, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - BBO

**Pictorella Mannikin** - 7, 21/2/98, Roebuck Plains (Broome) - BBO (first record for Dampier Peninsular)

**Oriental Reed-Warbler** - 1, 8/3/98, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - BBO (caught in mist net; first confirmed record for the W Kimberley)

## OBSERVERS

AAB = Andrew Burbidge

BBO = Broome Bird Obs

BH = Bob Horwood

BL = Brendan Lepschi

BLA = Brett Lane

CN = Clive Napier

DC = D Crossley

DR = Danny Rogers

FO = Frank O'Connor

HS = Helen Start

JB = John Blyth

JC = J Crossley

JS = John Start

LH = Lesley Harrison

MB = Mary Bremner

MBa = Mike Bamford

MxB = Max Bailey

MG = Martin Gole

MS = Marie Sharp

OG = Olive Green

PB = Phil Batterley

REJ = Ron Johnstone

RP = Ross Payton

RW = Rita Watkins

SK = Sue Keogh

TD = Tom Delaney

TS = Tony Start

WL = W Libby

WN = Wendy Napier

## Letters to the Editors

Dear Sirs

Following Barbara Reif's letter "Food Preferences of Australian Ravens" in the March edition of *WA Bird Notes*, I thought I would send you the following observation.

I have recently moved from Perth to the town of Leinster, some 500 km north of Kalgoorlie. The town is an oasis in a rather inhospitable part of the Goldfields. There is, of course, a large population of Little Crows who make a point of raiding as many rubbish bins as they possibly can, but one crow at the local shopping centre had rather more eclectic tastes. I firstly heard and then saw a disturbance in the car park with a crow viciously pecking at what I thought to be either a juvenile butcher bird or one of the many Yellow-throated Miners that there are about. However, my eyesight must be getting pretty poor as the racket caused was the squeakings of some rather large grey bat that was being attacked by the crow. Fortunately the crow had done no lasting damage. While carefully avoiding its extremely sharp looking teeth, I encouraged the bat to climb onto my shopping bag, from which it took off and flew away into the afternoon sun. I have no doubt that the crow would have polished it off for supper had I not intervened.

Birdwatching has been a bit spasmodic here. There are thousands of resident Galahs who fly around in huge rowdy gangs and drink from the side of the swimming pool. There is also a small family of Pied Butcherbirds who are exceptionally tame. One sat on my foot this morning as I was waiting for the post office to open! There have recently been some Western Bowerbirds in the town, but the most exciting, exotic and pleasurable sighting was in mid February when Leinster was treated to huge numbers of Rainbow Bee-eaters which arrived for about ten days, demolished the local populations of wasps and other insects and then disappeared.

I'm sure that there's a lot more to see in the way of bird populations here, and now that the weather is cooling off a bit I hope that I will have an opportunity to get out into the bush a bit more and see what's about.

Yours sincerely

Ali Pockley (Mrs)

Dear Sirs

I was most interested to read of the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo's dietary habits in the December edition of *WA Bird Notes*. I too have been observing small groups of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos for a number of years feasting on jarrah nuts. One site is at Torbay in the south-west, the other at Byford just south of Perth. On one occasion at Torbay in January 1997 I sat near a jarrah tree whilst nine red tails systematically harvested the jarrah nuts from the heavily laden tree. This took quite some time. They broke off small branchlets covered in nuts with their strong bills, transferred them to their feet and proceeded to work through all the nuts picking out the seeds. The branchlets

and empty nuts were dropped to the ground and there was much debris under the tree.

At Byford in April 1998 I observed three Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos, male, female and immature, feeding on seeds from the jarrah nuts. The immature bird mainly played with bits of bark and twigs, and investigated the branch beneath its feet until the male came up beside it and began bobbing up and down. The male then opened its large bill for the young one to feed from. This occurred several times. I spent at least one and a half

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**PLEASE NOTE: The address in the last issue was incorrect — please ensure that your records are amended from this issue.**

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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 MSWord format; a style sheet is available from Perry House to guide writers regarding format
- WABN uses Birds Australia recommended English names
- contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary.
- the full Editorial Policy is stated in WABN 74:10-12
- 

**Deadline for the September 1998 Issue**  
**1 August 1998**  
**at Perry House**

hours near the jarrah watching this wonderful sight. I was rewarded for my patience by finding a beautiful red and black tail feather on the ground on my way back to my car.

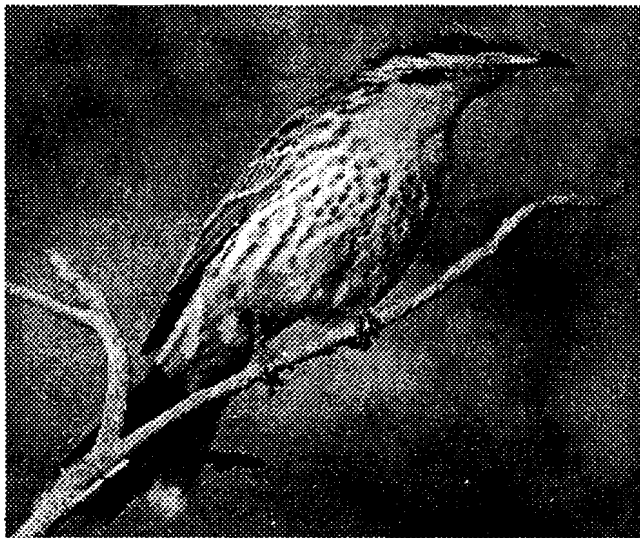
Penny London

## Guest Contribution

### SPINY-CHEEKED HONEYEATER IN PERTH

We have a new avian visitor to our backyard at City Beach. I was first drawn to look for it by its song which was quite unfamiliar but very tuneful. I wondered briefly, before seeing the bird, whether it could be a butcherbird with a variant call but a clear view showed it to be a large honeyeater.

The bird visits a grapefruit tree in our backyard at 12 Tranmore Way, City Beach. It is larger than the associated Singing Honeyeaters but smaller than the Red Wattlebirds which are also in the area (but rarely on the grapefruit tree). It may be somewhat stouter than the Singing Honeyeater. At rest, the back (actually the folded wings) is longitudinally striped dark brown and buff. The rump in flight was not observed. Underneath, the bird is heavily striped with dark brown stripes on a pale buff or dirty white background, except for the throat which is unmarked and warm-coloured. The warm tone of the throat is somewhere in the region of pink or salmon to yellowish light buff.



Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater at 12 TranmoreWay,  
City Beach  
*Photographed on 19 April 1998 by W G Libby*

The head is distinctive. It has a stout, distinctly downward curved bill, dark (black or very dark blue) at the tip and red at the base. The red at the base of the bill continues backward as a red gape. The hue of the red colour of the basal part of the bill and gape varies in appearance from deep pink in subdued light to blood-red in full sunshine. A prominent dark line extends backward

through the eye from the front of the face above the red gape. The anterior portion of the dark line is thin but the line broadens prominently around the wholly dark eye, thinning again behind the eye. It does not extend around the nape.

Below the band through the eye is a white band that on the photograph is seen to broaden and splay out as it terminates behind the cheek. Below this white band a triangular dark patch can be seen on the photograph at the side of the throat.

A possibly distinctive bright yellow spot shows up distinctly on some of the photographs taken but is subdued on the accompanying print. It is about half the diameter of the eye and immediately below and posterior to the eye.

The legs were not observed directly but are seen to be dark on the photographs.

The tail is long (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the body length, as estimated from photographs) and moderately broad. The tip of the tail is white. This white tip is large and prominent, opening out to a full line when the tail is spread.

The bird frequents a grapefruit tree in our backyard, especially from the hours of 7:00 to 10:00 in the morning when it sorties from the outer dead branches of the tree to catch insects, darting out from the tree a couple of metres, abruptly turning and returning to either the same or an adjacent perch. This action is much like the Singing Honeyeater or White-cheeked Honeyeater, but the manoeuvring seems heavier than that of the smaller honeyeaters. It seems to divide its time between the grapefruit tree, a small deciduous tree in the neighbour's yard and a very large Wattle-like tree across the lane which is also popular with six to ten Singing Honeyeaters and probably provides shelter during the midday siesta period.

Sorties from the grapefruit tree after insects are interspersed with periods of calling, which consists of a series of clicks, light gurgles and trills with occasional brief periods of complicated, rapid canary-like singing. At times the song has a rich quality approaching that of the Grey Butcherbird but lighter, higher pitched and more rapid. The more melodious part of the call is preceded by a series of clicks at various pitches, actually more like the splash of a large drop of water landing in a pond that like a "click".

Local activity seems tightly constrained to a small region around the large tree across the back lane. This seems evident from two observations: I never see them in front of the house, and they are seen at all times of the day around the back lane, though not so continuously from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm as before and after this period when they are feeding heavily. They are more vocal when greeting the sun during the morning active period than when farewelling it in the afternoon active period.

There are at least two individuals. At one time I was well (but not positively) convinced that a bird that chased a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (which I was observing) off its perch was another individual of the same species. Later, more positively, while I was observing an individual moving about (not calling) in the grapefruit tree the

distinctive call was heard emanating from a small, nearby palm tree.

There are a few discrepancies between the markings on the observed bird(s), and the illustration in the field guide by Pizzey and Knight (1997):

- The unmarked warm-coloured throat patch of the observed bird does not extend down to the chest as shown on the illustration, where it is shown extending almost half way from base of beak to base of tail.
- The strong longitudinal belly markings are seen on the photograph of the observed bird to be mainly continuous, uneven lines but are illustrated by Knight as broken lines consisting of a series of coarse crescents.
- The dark triangular patch shown on the photograph of the observed bird beneath the brushed 'spines' is not shown in Knight's illustrations.
- I have not noticed the white rump-mark in flight (this could be an observation failure).

However, the overall shape of the bird together with the beak shape and highly distinctive colouration and markings of the bill, head, breast and tip of tail would seem to leave little doubt that these birds are Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters. Discrepancies could be due to seasonal variations, sex differences (not shown by Knight), geographical variation or maturity.

I haven't had much experience with the birds of the arid zone and have only once before possibly seen a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (at Ayers Rock). Are they now common in the gardens of Perth? Referring to field guides by Simpson and Day and later Pizzey and Knight (1997), the only bird that seems to fit the description is the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. However, Serventy and Whittell (1976) in their book 'Birds of Western Australia' indicate that it is absent "south and west of a line passing from Dongara to Moora, Cunderdin, Kojonup, Broomehill and Bremer Bay".

I recognise that the Serventy book is old and distribution patterns of some species have changed considerably since it was published.

W G Libby

The birds seen by Mr Libby are certainly Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters. Their occurrence in Perth probably has more to do with climatic conditions in the inland than with a long-term change in distribution.

Eds

## WA Group Reports

### CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1997

1997 has been a mixed year with the sad loss of two of our most valued members in Peter Anson and Jeremy Talbot casting a shadow over the many areas of success. Our financial affairs have been capably managed by Jane Venter and Max Bailey and while we did not show a large surplus for the year we made a small overall surplus of

\$2996 while assisting many projects and upgrading several items of capital equipment. The details of the accounts are shown separately and will be given in the Treasurer's Report.

The major focus for the year was the completion of the revision of *Birding Sites Around Perth*. Thanks to the great work of Allan Jones and his team the launch went off smoothly and the Governor introduced a large audience to the new book. We took the opportunity to advise everyone of our new name and used the occasion to thank our many sponsors for their generosity and to show some of the projects that their funding has assisted.

Birds on Farms got fully under way and the closely allied Road Verge Survey for the Main Roads Department added a new dimension. Funding from the WWF for Nature was made available for additional studies of the Hooded Plover including a major effort to band a large number at Lake Gore (but see report in Members Contributions in this issue). Clive Nealon's Suburban Bird Survey has progressed to monumental data volumes and much information will be available from this. One of the most interesting facts to emerge is that the Rainbow Lorikeet is the most often reported bird.

Grants were made to two university students to assist them to visit an observatory and take part in a course. Lorraine Chyne and Margaret Philippon have almost finished preparing a booklet of the WA Rare and Unusual Sightings and Margaret in conjunction with the Editors of WABN has completed the indexing of WABN to date.

Conservation has as usual been a difficult subject but some areas of success can be claimed and many of the efforts of members to bring problems to the notice of authorities eventually end in action. One of the problem areas is in the Amarillo, Lake McLarty, Mandurah area where development at any price seems to be the rule. A revamped Research/Conservation Committee has been put together by Mike Bamford both to assist conservation and to vet suggestions for projects and make their own recommendations to the main Committee so that we can plan our activities further ahead and concentrate on areas where we are most needed.

During the year the Excursions sub-committee planned 62 outings ranging from quiet 2-3 hour suburban walks to week-long campouts at exotic locations. Attendance has been excellent and the long weekend campouts have been so successful that more are being included in each quarter.

All of this could not have been possible without the efforts of many members who have contributed their time and energy to the progress of BA WA Group. We have had an active committee in which all members contributed and my sincere thanks to all of them for the various roles they have so capably filled. Special thanks must go to the Editors of WABN for continued production of an excellent Newsletter. The Excursions sub-committee continues to dream up new places to visit and Judy Blyth puts on wonderful exhibitions in her role as Publicity/Education Officer. Without the great efforts put in by Allan Jones and his team in gathering grants, much of the above would not be possible. To all the volunteers and their organiser a

most sincere thanks for keeping the office staffed and for answering all those questions. The various projects which we have so successfully carried out are all managed by active committees which are responsible for the continued success of our work although they have fallen down at the start of 1998 by not being able to find Hooded Plovers at Esperance?? To all of you who have assisted in whatever role, thank you, and to those who have simply helped by attending functions, talks or excursions thank you. An excursion without people is a dull affair.

Our Group goes from strength to strength but our strength is only that of our members and we continually need new blood as well as ideas, so if you can contribute in any way let us know and we will find you a pleasant job to keep you off the streets. Also, keep our membership growing. We have 820 members in WA as at the end of 1997 — a record — and it would be good to continue the growth through 1998.

My best wishes to all of you for 1998 and may the BIRDS be with you.

**Clive Napier**  
**CHAIRMAN**

## BIRDS AUSTRALIA-WA GROUP COMMITTEE

The 1998 Committee has been elected and its members are:

	Tel
Chairman: Clive Napier	9332 7265
Vice Chair: Clive Nealon	9448 5921
Treasurer: Greg Wyllie	9447 9244
Secretary: Mrs Margaret Philippon	9375 2068
Members:	
• Ms Sue Abbotts ( <i>Excursions</i> )	9444 1607
• Max Bailey ( <i>Office Manager</i> )	9444 7920
• Mike Bamford ( <i>Conservation</i> )	9309 3671
• John Blyth ( <i>Joint Ed, WA Bird Notes</i> )	9381 6293
• Bill McRoberts ( <i>Excursions</i> )	9459 1971
• Rod Smith ( <i>WABN Distribution</i> )	9447 3804
• Ms Mary Vaughan ( <i>Bookkeeper</i> )	9454 5951

Other appointees are:

<i>WA Bird Notes Editors:</i>	
• John Blyth	9381 6293
• Allan Burbidge	9306 1642

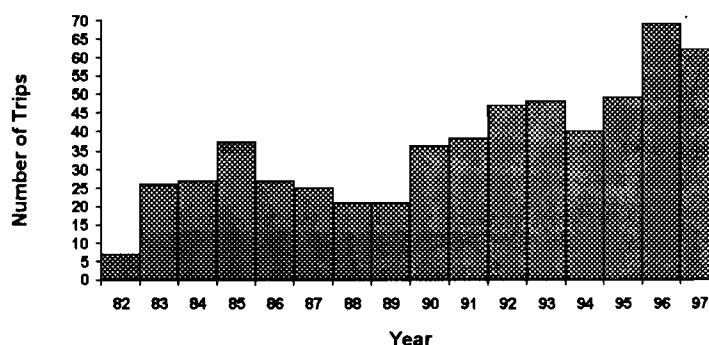
<i>Librarian:</i> Ms Liz Walker	9444 8920
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<i>Excursions Sub-committee:</i>	
• Bill McRoberts (convenor)	9459 1971
• Sue Abbotts	9444 1607
• Bryan Barrett	9457 2335
• Clive Napier (retiring)	9332 7265
• Maggie Cashman-Bailes	9378 2487

<i>Guest Speaker Organiser</i> Brian Wilson	9293 1094
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## EXCURSIONS — ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1997

BIRDS AUSTRALIA W.A. GROUP - NUMBER OF EXCURSIONS  
FROM 1982 to 1997



The graph shows the number of excursions, including campouts, mid-week walks, and all others, over a 15-year period, since records were started in 1982.

In general, we have steadily increased our number of excursions. Also evident is a trend for a steady rise in the number of excursions over several years, followed by a subsequent drop-off. I believe this reflects a lot of hard work on the part of the organisers, followed by periods of exhaustion.

The WA Group is the envy of all other birding organisations in Australia for the number, quality, and variety of excursions offered to its members.

Won't you please consider giving us a hand this year?

**Bill McRoberts**  
**Excursions Sub-committee Convenor**

## EDUCATION/PUBLICITY — ANNUAL REPORT, 1997

Through 1997, RAOU/BAWAG mounted 21 displays at seven different places, including metro and rural venues. Usually our trading table was part of these events. Publicity included items in local newspapers' Community News columns.

Seven "bird talks" were given over the year to different groups — children and adults.

Eleven public bird walks were taken.

A new leaflet *A Quick Guide to WADERS OF THE SOUTH-WEST* was produced (combined effort of Bryan Barrett, Judy and John Blyth and Allan Burbidge).

*Birding Sites Around Perth* was successfully launched on 26 November by the Governor of WA, Major General Michael Jeffery, at a big event at Perry House. This was our first publication and event using our new name, **BIRDS AUSTRALIA-WA GROUP** (BAWAG). Allan Jones, Phyllis Bentley, Claire Mercer and Max Bailey bore main responsibility for this project, although many other volunteers contributed. A number of new displays were prepared (by JB) for the launch to explain various projects (and acknowledge sponsors):



- Hooded Plover Survey (sponsored by Gordon Reid Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature)
- Marvellous Malleefowl
- Upgraded Birds on Farms/Roadside Verge Surveys (sponsored by Gordon Reid Foundation); much help from Brenda Newbey in preparing this
- Bird Walks and Displays (sponsored by Healthway)
- Rural Brochures Project (sponsored by Gordon Reid Foundation, Down to Earth, Alcoa Australia, Argyle Diamonds)
- Suburban Bird Survey
- Database of WA Birds (sponsored by Gordon Reid Foundation)

As well as the new displays prepared for launch, a new BAWAG membership display is also now available.

Thanks to all volunteers at trading table/displays and helpers on bird walks.

**Judy Blyth**  
**Publicity/Education**

### LIBRARY NEWS

After two years of sterling service, Helen Clark has retired from the position of Perry House Librarian. Our thanks to Helen for all her work and to Liz Walker who has agreed to take on the job.

The following publications have been accessioned since December 1997:

- *Flyway*, Friends of Broome newsletter, No 4, 1997
- *Emu*, RAOU Journal, vol 97, Part 4, December 1997; vol 98, Part 1, March 1998
- Land Management Society newsletter, November 1997
- *Wingspan*, Birds Australia journal, vol 7 No 4, December 1997 & vol 8 No 1, March 1998
- *The Bird Observer*, Bird Observers Club journal, nos 780, 781, 782 & 783, November 1997-March 1998
- Birds Australia Birds on Farms Bulletin, No 5, November 1997
- *CALM News*, CALM newsletter, September-October 1997
- *Narpulungup News*, Fitzgerald River NP Association newsletter, September 1997 & February 1998
- Rotamah Bird Observatory newsletter, No 12, October 1997
- *The Greener Times*, Conservation Council of WA (Inc) newsletter, November 1997, January & February 1998
- Analysis of Public Submissions, Canning River Regional Park, CALM 1997, and Management Plan
- Cumberland Bird Observers Club newsletter, vol 19, Nos 3 & 4, November-December 1997 & January-February 1998 respectively
- *The Tattler*, East Asian-Australasian Flyway AWSG newsletter, No 13, November 1997
- *The Stilt*, East Asian-Australasian Flyway AWSG bulletin, No 31, October 1997
- *WATSNU*, WA Threatened Species & Communities Unit newsletter, vol 4, December 1997
- *Eyrewaves*, Friends of Eyre Bird Observatory newsletter, Spring 1997
- Birds Australia RAOU Annual Report, 1996
- River Conservation Society newsletter, No 7, January 1998

- Management of the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetlands System, in relation to sudden, mass fish deaths, Technical Report, CALM, December 1997
- *Galah*, Birds Australia in-house newsletter, No 22, February 1998
- *On the Brink*, Endangered Species Program newsletter, No 10, February 1998
- *Contact Call*, Birds Australia North Queensland Group newsletter, March 1998

**Helen Clark**

### ROTTNEST WADER SURVEY, 8 FEBRUARY 1998

The Rottne survey was part of a larger program to record waders at selected sites around Western Australia in the peak mid-summer period. Wader study groups in other states held similar surveys at the same time.

The program on the island was aided by the use of the UWA's excellent facilities at Wadjemup Hill (many thanks to Dr Jane Prince and staff at the Department of Zoology).

The members participating were: Heather and Tony Galluccio, Lorraine and Richard Chyne, Darryl James, Cathy Deubert, Brenda Newbey, Clive Nealon, Tom Delaney, Claire Gerrish, Mary Vaughan, Cath Pegs and Colin Davis. These observers were assigned, where possible in pairs, to monitor locations that had been selected the previous day. All the lakes were assessed and those that were dry were omitted from the count due to the absence of waders. A complete coverage of the island was not possible. However, four different habitats were visited, these being: the reef platforms, sandy beaches, salt lakes and grassy flats. The survey was concentrated on the salt lakes as bird life was most abundant in these areas.

#### Survey locations

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Sandy beaches:  | Porpoise Bay from Henrietta Rocks to Parker Point.<br>Salmon Bay from Salmon Point to Fairbridge Bluff.  |
| Reef platforms: | Ricey Beach to the reefs north of Little Armstrong Bay.  |
| Salt lakes:     | Government House Lake, Serpentine Lake, The Causeway, Herschell Lake, Lake Bagdad (south), Lake Bagdad (north).<br>Pink Lake and Lake Negri were dry.<br>Lake Vincent held a few Banded Stilts that were included with Lake Bagdad (north) data. |
| Grassy Flats:   | The airport and golf course. These areas were only partly monitored.   |

Weather: light easterly winds at the coastal sites, fine, no cloud.

Temp: rose to high 20s by 0930 hrs.

Tide: low (much exposed reef on coast).

Start time: 0700 hrs Finish: 0930 hrs.

## Results

28 different wader species were observed during the survey, and a total of 4317 birds counted at the eight locations (see table). Several species of particular interest are discussed below.

Banded Stilt: 3284 total count.

Birds present at all salt lakes in all stages of plumage.

No leg tags seen during survey.

Red-necked Stint: 438 total count.

Seen at all locations except the north coast site.

Red-capped Plover: 180 total count.

Runner seen at Government House Lake indicates breeding.

Sanderling:

Seventy-seven birds seen at Fairbridge Bluff, the highest count for this species at any site monitored during this mid-summer survey.

Pied Oystercatcher:

Lone birds seen at all coastal sites and Government House Lake.

Bar-tailed Godwit:

The four birds seen at Fairbridge Bluff are quite significant. This species has been reported at only a few locations in the south-west this year. No birds were reported at the Swan Estuary Marine Park (Alfred Cove) or four sites on the Peel Inlet during the 1998 mid summer survey.

Banded Lapwing:

These were seen at the airport and golf course — see Government House Lake and Herschell Lake data in table.

The low water levels evident at the salt lakes possibly had an influence on the trans-equatorial wader numbers. However, 18 species overall plus the high Banded Stilt count show Rottnest as an important part in the jigsaw of wader habitats in the south-west of Western Australia.

The return of all participants to 'base camp' at 10 o'clock left our group with some free time. This was spent by opportunistic birding. Some of the team visited the bushland area around the lighthouse where Golden Whistlers and Red-capped Robins were among the birds to be seen; others filled in the time with a trip to Salmon Bay to view an Osprey's nest and enjoy a swim. It was then back to Wadjemup for a quick cup of tea before departing for Thomson Bay and the ferry trip home, concluding a very satisfying wader survey and enjoyable weekend.

Colin Davis

## REMEMBER



Perry House is your office. Open 9:30-12:30 weekdays, there are books and other items for sale at reduced prices to members — lots of gift ideas for people interested in birds.

There is also a small but interesting library to browse through.

TABLE

WA MID SUMMER SURVEY FEB 1998

ROTTNEST ISLAND

Species at each site	9	7	6	8	6	4	8	4	TOTAL
Location	GH Lake	Causeway	Serpentine	Herschell	Bagdad	Porpoise	Salmon B	Ricey Arm	Total
Pied Oystercatcher	1					1	1	4	7
Banded Lapwing	13			11					24
Grey Plover	3			1		3	3	2	12
Mongolian Plover		1							1
Large Sand Plover		2	1				1		4
Red-capped Plover	67+Runner	8	29	32	43				180
Black-winged Stilt				5					5
Banded Stilt	1290	33	670	700	591				3284
Red-necked Avocet	1			1	9				11
Ruddy Turnstone	33	11	39	41	18	22	11		175
Whimbrel								1	1
Grey-tailed Tattler								1	1
Common Sandpiper	1		1						2
Common Greenshank							1		1
Bar-tailed Godwit							4		4
Red-necked Stint	87	37	45	37	204	23	5		438
Curlew Sandpiper		82			8				90
Sanderling							77		77
Total birds	1497	174	785	828	873	49	103	8	4317
Legend	Ricey Arm: Porpoise: Salmon B: Bagdad:								
	Ricey beach to Little Armstrong Bay Henrietta Rocks to Parker Point Salmon Point to Fairbridge Bluff Lake Bagdad (north) and Lake Bagdad (south)								

## BIRDS AUSTRALIA ATLAS WORKSHOP MELBOURNE, 18-19 APRIL 1998

I represented the WA Group at this workshop, attended by about 55 people, to discuss a project proposal to carry out a second Australian atlas project. The people present represented various regional bird groups (eg, BOCA, COG, NSW Bird Atlassers) and state and federal wildlife conservation agencies, or were there because of special expertise or experience (eg, Margaret Blakers and Pauline Reilly).

While there was much discussion concerning a number of issues, there was a very positive and constructive atmosphere at the workshop. This was very encouraging given the range of groups represented, and the diversity of views brought to the workshop.

This atlas project will have more dimensions than the first, and has the potential to produce a far superior product and outcomes. There will be a 'general' atlas and, within this framework, an 'intensive' atlas.

The general atlas will be similar to the first atlas that many of us participated in. An important difference this time is that people will be encouraged to collect data at a finer scale — probably 2.5 minute and 10 minute grids, but there will still be a need to accept 1 degree data from remote regions. The finer scale information will be more useful for management purposes, but we will not be able to get full coverage at this scale.

The intensive atlas is a necessary requirement imposed by Environment Australia (EA) who are supplying \$1.2 million to the project. For the intensive atlas, the procedure will be somewhat similar to that followed in Clive Nealon's suburban birds project, so it is at a scale that many of us are already comfortable with. The bulk of effort for this phase of the project is likely to be in areas where revegetation and rehabilitation are being carried out — eg, the Western Australian wheatbelt. The aim here is to help determine whether programs such as Bushcare are effective in helping bird populations recover in areas where they have been negatively affected by clearing of native vegetation. Existing Birds on Farms sites will be useful in this regard.

At this point it is worth mentioning that the atlas project is not meant to replace existing projects such as the Suburban Birds Survey in WA, but will be complementary.

There was considerable discussion on grid block size at the workshop, with a general feeling that 'point' data were far more useful. (The 1 degree data of the last atlas are not very useful for management purposes.) There was a strong (and general) feeling that in remote areas we should encourage the collection of 'point' data wherever possible, but that it would be advisable to collect 1 degree data where this was not practicable. Counts of

numbers of individuals were not considered necessary, except at wetland sites.

Further work is needed on aspects of the project to do with wetlands. However, from Environment Australia's point of view, they are most interested in fine scale data from Ramsar sites.

There will be a salaried Project Officer based in Perth, and a volunteer Regional Organiser. It may also be useful to have regionally based volunteer sub-regional organisers. Anyone interested in assisting in the organisation is encouraged to contact a member of the WA Group Committee. It is hoped that a Regional Organiser can be found in the next 1-2 months.

As Margaret Blakers said at the workshop, this may be a project receiving \$1.2 million from EA, but taking into account volunteer contributions, extra sponsorship, etc, the total budget over the life of the project will probably be closer to \$10 million, with at least several thousand volunteers. In other words, this will be an ENORMOUS project, but should be an exciting and useful venture. It is likely to have considerable benefits in terms of raising awareness of birds and bird-related issues in Australia.

Allan Burbidge

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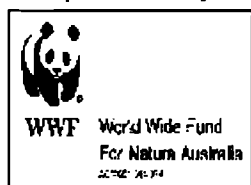


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## HOODED PLOVER PROJECT, PROGRESS REPORT

Sponsored by



The Hooded Plover Project had three major activities that it hoped to conduct or contribute to with the assistance of a grant provided by the World Wide Fund for Nature Australia. These activities were a banding program, a survey program and a conservation program. The results to date are discussed below.

### 1. Banding program

The banding program was intended to band and flag 200 Hooded Plovers around the Esperance Lakes and then to monitor their dispersal patterns by looking for bands and flags during the spring inland surveys.

Unfortunately, due to unseasonal rainfall, the Esperance Lakes maintained high water levels and as a consequence Hooded Plovers failed to congregate at their usual sites, eg, Lake Gore and Lake Warden. Extensive searches failed to locate alternative sites where the Hooded Plovers may have gone. The banding program was therefore limited to three Hooded Plovers!

An alternative banding program is being considered for the Hooded Plover population of Yalgorup National Park. This would allow the movement and dispersal of Hooded Plover both inside and outside the park to be monitored.

### 2. Survey program

The summer 1998 survey has been successfully concluded and the organisation of the spring 1998 survey is largely in place.

#### February 1998 Survey

This year's Hooded Plover survey was held in conjunction with the state-wide Wader Study Group count.

The sterling efforts of our members are reflected in the comprehensive amount of data collected.

The results of the 5 February 1998 survey are shown in Table 1. Additional observations of Hooded Plovers collected around that date have also been included.

In the comments column P95 means

Hooded Plovers were present at that site during the January 1995 survey and P96 means Hooded Plovers were present during the January/February 1996 survey.

The results show very few inland records which is not unexpected as almost all inland lakes were dry in contrast with wetter summers in the previous years. In addition Hooded Plovers move to the coastal areas during summer. Along the west coast Yalgorup National Park recorded its highest ever number of Hooded Plovers. The Augusta-

**Table: HOODED PLOVER PROJECT, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1998**

Location	Shire	Jan/Feb 1998	Opportunistic	Comments
<b>Inland</b>				
Campion Wetlands	Nungarin	0		
Lake Baandee	Kellerberrin	0		
Lake Yenyening	Beverley-Brookton	0		
Lake Mears	Brookton	0		P95
Lake Parkeyerring	Wagin	0		
Lake Dumbleyung	Dumbleyung	0		
Lake Grace N & S	Lake Grace	0		
Cemetery Lake	Lake Grace	0		
Bennetts Lake	Lake Grace	0	4 Jan, 70Ad+10J	
Lake Magenta	Lake Grace	0		
Pingrup Lake	Kent	0		
Lake Kwornicup	Plantagenet	0		P96
<b>West Coast</b>				
Carnarvon	Carnarvon	0		
Lancelin	Gingin	0		
Guilderton	Gingin	0		
Woodman Point	Cockburn	0	14 March, 1 Ad	
Martins Tank	Waroona	5 Ad+2 Juv		P95, P96
Lake Yalgorup	Waroona	0		P96
Lake Preston Nth	Waroona	73 Ad+5 Juv	3 March 3 Ad+1 J	P95, P96
Lake Newnham	Waroona	2 Ad+3 Juv		P95, P96
Quininup	Busselton	0	13 April 2 Ad	
Wilyabrup	Busselton	2 Ad + 1 Juv		
Gracetown	Aug-Margaret R	2 Ad	9 Jan 1 Ad+2 Run	
Kilcarnup	Aug-Margaret R	1 Ad+1 Juv		
Mouth of Marg R	Aug-Margaret R	0		
Gas Bay	Aug-Margaret R	2 Ad		
Boodjidup Beach	Aug-Margaret R	2 Ad		P95
Redgate	Aug-Margaret R	0		
Bobs Hollow	Aug-Margaret R	0		
Conto Beach	Aug-Margaret R	2 Ad + 2 Juv		
Cape Freycinet	Aug-Margaret R	0		
Boranup Beach	Aug-Margaret R	2 Ad		
Hamelin Bay	Aug-Margaret R	2 Ad		P95
Deepdene	Aug-Margaret R	2 Ad		
Cosy Corner	Aug-Margaret R	2 Ad + 1 Runner		P95
Skippy Rock Bch	Aug-Margaret R	1 Ad		

Margaret River coast line produced higher numbers than the January 1995 and January/February 1996 surveys.

The Jerramungup Shire held some of the best concentrations of Hooded Plover. The Esperance Lakes area was slightly disappointing although Lake Mullet had the highest count of the survey. Better results were obtained later in the season when 606 Hooded Plovers were seen at Lake Warden on 22 March 1998.

### September 1998 Survey

The sub-committee has decided to go ahead with the Hooded Plover survey in September 1998. The survey will be held during the first and second week of September.

Our intention is to try something different this time. Instead of trying to cover the whole inland area we will concentrate our efforts on two specific areas that we feel should produce good results. These are the extensive lake systems that can be found on the east and west side of the Esperance Highway between Esperance and Norseman. These locations will be extensively searched.

Part of the grant from the World Wide Fund for Nature Australia will be used to employ a person who will be expected to conduct a comprehensive survey of the lake systems to the east of the Esperance Highway. These include Lake Dundas, Lake Gilmore and the myriad of small lakes between Grass Patch and Lake Halbert.

Our members will focus on the lake systems to the west of the Esperance Highway. These include Lake Hope, Lake Johnston, Lake Tay, Lake Mends, Three Star Lake, Lake Sharpe, Pyramid Lake and the smaller lakes in between.

Travelling expenses will be paid to volunteers to defray costs.

David Free will be the survey coordinator and members interested in participating should contact him on Tel: (08) 9384 5160 or leave a message at Perry House Tel: (08) 9383 7749. Maps of the area to be surveyed will be provided.

An important aspect of the September survey will be the collection of other data besides the number of Hooded Plover seen. We would like members to provide detailed descriptions of the locations where Hooded Plovers are found, eg, the habitat, size of the lake, water levels, amount of suitable feeding area, presence of islands, what percentage of lake that is dry, etc. We hope this will provide us with a better understanding of the habitat requirements of Hooded Plovers. The back of the survey sheet allows space for notes and sketches. It will be essential to keep site records even of those sites where no Hooded Plovers are recorded. Members should further keep an eye out for the 100 Hooded Plovers that were banded in early 1995. Some of these may still be around.

### 3. Conservation program

Partly as a result of previous Hooded Plover surveys, the Department of Conservation and Land Management has included the areas surrounding Lake Gore and the Esperance Lakes Nature

Table: Hooded Plover Project, January/February 1998, ctd				
Location	Shire	Jan/Feb 1998	Opportunistic	Comments
<b>South Coast</b>				
Augusta Beach	Aug-Margaret R	7 Ad + 3 Juv		P96
Windy Harbour	Manjimup	1 Ad		
Broke Inlet	Manjimup	2 Ad		
Mandalay Beach	Manjimup	0		
Normalup Inlet	Manjimup	0		
Conspicuous Cliffs	Denmark	2 Ad	17 Mar 2Ad+1J	
Peaceful Bay	Denmark	0		
Parry Inlet	Denmark	2 Ad		
Mazzoletti Beach	Denmark	0		
Mad Fish Bay	Denmark	0		
Morley Beach	Denmark	0	6 Jan 1 Ad+2 Juv	
Cape Riche	Albany	2 Ad		P95, P96
Lowlands Beach	Albany	0		
Shelley Beach	Albany	0		
Cosy Comer	Albany	0		
Bettys Beach	Albany	0		P95
Normans Beach	Albany	0		P95
Wellstead Inlet	Jerramungup	43 Ad+4 Juv	15 Feb 59 Ad+5J 22 Feb 53 Ad+7J 24 Feb 9 Ad	P95, P96
Gordon Inlet	Jerramungup	18 Ad		P95
Trigalow Beach	Jerramungup	22 Ad+2 Juv		
Point Ann	Ravensthorpe	11 Ad		P95, P96
Mylies Beach	Ravensthorpe	2 Ad+2 Juv		P95
Two Mile Beach	Ravensthorpe	0	15 March 3 Ad	P96
<b>Esperance</b>				
Stokes Inlet	Esperance	0		P95, P96
Lake Gore	Esperance	0	1 March 140 Ad	P95, P96
Lake Warden	Esperance	5 Ad	8 March 26 Ad+4J 13 March 10 Ad 22 Mar 606 Ad+1J 29 Mar 110 Ad+17J	P95, P96
Pink Lake	Esperance	0	20 Dec 1997, 3 Ad	
Station Lake	Esperance	15 Ad		P95, P96
Mullet Lake	Esperance	222 Ad	18 Jan 48 Ad 25 Jan 50 Ad	P95, P96
Benje-Benjenup	Esperance	10 Ad+9 Juv+6 Run		P95, P96
Cape Arid	Esperance	17 Ad		

Reserves in their predator control program (Operation Western Shield). CALM will further ensure public education regarding the fox baiting program. The importance of this program is most vividly illustrated by a local anecdote in which a very large number of Hooded Plover runners were found inside a killed fox.

#### Acknowledgments

A sincere thank you is extended to all who participated in the February 1998 survey. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and contribute towards the understanding of Hooded Plover distribution and behaviour.

Marcus Singer  
for Hooded Plover Sub-committee

## Book Review

### **POLLINATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA — A DATA BASE OF ANIMALS VISITING FLOWERS, BY ELISABETH BROWN ET AL.**

Western Australia is renowned for its wildflowers. Yet do we know what animals visit these flowers? In this book, observations made by amateurs and professionals have been brought together to produce a data base which we can all use, learn from and hopefully add to. Written by Elisabeth Brown, Allan Burbidge, John Dell, Daphne Edinger, Stephen Hopper and Ray Wills, the book was published in September 1997 by the Western Australian Naturalists Club. It is the result of a project sponsored by the Lotteries Commission's Gordon Reid Foundation with administrative support from Kings Park and Botanic Garden.

The excellent drawings on the front cover and throughout the text, by Terry Houston, depict four well known and inspiring animals (Honey Possum, Blue-banded bee, Western Spinebill and a jewel beetle), all of which depend on nectar and pollen for their survival as well as being pollinators of plant species they visit. This publication will help focus our attention on the importance of flowers in supporting our native animals. In addition, we need these animal populations to pollinate our plant species and ensure their continued survival and evolution.

The book is user-friendly. The data are presented in a variety of ways depending on whether you are interested in particular animals, or plants of a geographical region. Standardised common names for birds and animals have been used and will be familiar to most readers. The use of common names for insects, even when only to a group level (eg, halictid bee — at least we know it is a native bee!) is very helpful. For the plants, which have very few common names, we are only given the scientific names. Some are well known such as *Eucalyptus*, *Banksia* and *Verticordia* while others may mean little to readers not familiar with plant scientific names. We will just have to get the plant books out! A few common names would have

greatly assisted the user, even if just for groups of plants.

An overview of pollination studies in Australia (Chapter two) and information on the data base and how it can be used (Chapter three) make interesting and challenging reading. The earnestness of the authors and the importance of their message cannot be underestimated. Some innovative approaches are suggested such as "how to create pollinator-friendly revegetation". The authors also indicate that there are some large gaps in the data base. For example very little work has been done on *Acacia* pollination.

The data base will be especially useful for those involved in revegetation programs. The information hopefully will increase the value we place on local plant species as well as the potential for revegetation projects to contribute towards supporting native animal populations. The aim in revegetation programs can be to create self sustaining communities which support a diverse group of animals and plants, not dissimilar to those observed in the uncleared bushlands. Such an aim may appear more feasible if directed towards goals such as fulfilling the needs of potential pollinators.

This book also can broaden our perspective when planting in the garden. People often ask the question, "What can I plant in my garden to attract more birds, especially honeyeaters?" Well, now we have at our finger tips a list of plant species and the animals that visit their flowers as well as lists of animals and the flowers they visit. Maybe we could attract more insects in to our garden as well as birds and, if we are in the bush, maybe mammals as well.

From an urban perspective, I would recommend including introduced plants, particularly weed species, in the data base. I have observed native bees visiting weed species and we have all observed honeyeaters and Silveryeyes visiting some of our more exotic flowering garden plants. This is all valuable information towards understanding the environment we live in and the conservation of our native fauna.

The data base is by no means complete. Many of us will be able to open the book at a familiar plant or animal and see an animal visitor or plant species missing. We may often be struck by the thoughts: "When did I make that observation?, and where—oh—where did I write it down??" I sincerely hope that this data base will be one that can be built upon. Otherwise, with time, the value of this book and its data base will decrease.

I feel we can be justly proud of this publication, of the people who were inspired to bring it to fruition and of the knowledge of the contributors. Only by using the book will we learn of its full potential, the limitations of our current knowledge, and most importantly how we can use this knowledge.

The book is published by the Western Australian Naturalists Club (Handbook No 15), and is available from the club for \$25.

Shapelle McNee

## Members' Contributions

### FAIRY TERNS AT WOODMAN POINT

The rapid but delicate flight of Fairy Terns can be readily seen around Woodman Point during the spring, summer and autumn months. In the spring of 1997 Fairy Terns were more plentiful than usual around Woodman Point with many pairs sitting on the wet beach, only taking flight at the very last moment when disturbed.

An elevated beach area thickly covered in shells and fringed by Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*) can be found where the dunes of Woodman Point end and Wapet Groyne commences.

On 23 November 1997 a lively flock of Fairy Terns was present at this location. On approaching the site some Fairy Terns swooped around the visitor.

Observations made from a short distance showed that about ten pairs were sitting close together in nest scrapes, mating was taking place and terns were feeding their partners with little silver fish. Additional terns were sitting in pairs on the beach close to the water's edge. In all 20 Fairy Terns were counted.

A nest with one egg was situated above the high water line on the slope of the beach (23 November 1997). This was away from the site where most birds were sitting. Clearly all this activity indicated the start of a breeding colony.

A follow-up visit was made on 30 November 1997 and found that the nesting attempt at this site had been abandoned. Fairy Terns were still present at Woodman Point though in lesser numbers and they were not as vocal as in the previous week. Pairs were still sitting on the beach near the waterline and mating was observed.

Another nest, which was the second breeding attempt observed, was located high up on the beach facing Owen Anchorage. This was to the north-east of the first site. The nest contained one egg.

By 5 December 1997 Fairy Terns had also abandoned the second site.

The Fairy Terns had obviously not given up on Woodman Point as a third breeding attempt was made in early February 1998. A solitary nest with one egg was found on 8 February 1998 amid the shell banks where Wapet Groyne starts. The last nest site was easily detected as the adult bird remained on its nest till the very last moment and then flew straight at me and returned to swoop again. Later both adults tried to lure me away by walking in front of me. A visit on 13 February 1998 found the nest deserted with a cold egg still present.

The nearest Fairy Tern colony to Woodman Point can be found on Garden Island where they successfully bred in 1997/1998. There was a large colony on Garden Island's west coast and a small colony on the east coast. On 8 February 1998 the east coast colony had about 14 pairs with eggs. (Wykes, 1998)

The Fairy Terns of Woodman Point may well have diverted to Garden Island and bred there instead. Garden Island is relatively close to Woodman Point.

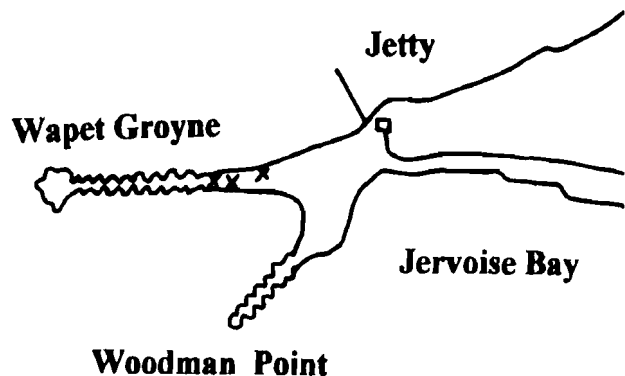


Figure 1. Breeding sites (x) of Fairy Terns at Woodman Point.

Attempts by Fairy Terns to establish a breeding colony at Woodman Point during the summer of 1997/1998 were unsuccessful. Frequent disturbance by people, dogs and four-wheel drive vehicles, especially at weekends, were probably the main cause. The latter two are prohibited in the reserve. The State Recreation Camps and Reserve Board who are responsible for the management of the Woodman Point Nature Reserve could assist in the establishment of a Fairy Tern colony by fencing off the site.

Reference:

Dr Boyd Wykes, Results from National Wader Count on Garden Island, 8 February 1998.

Marcus Singor

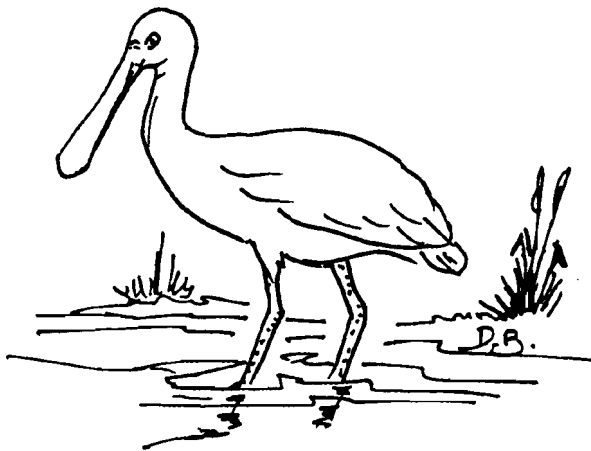
### BECOMING A BIRDWATCHER

Once I overcame my fear of being regarded as a 'Nerd' if seen using binoculars when out walking, I discovered a very interesting world. I needed binoculars to fulfil my survey report for Clive Nealon. It was all his fault. There have been a few interesting observations whilst I have been out surveying. These observations involve waterbirds.

There is a small, artificially created lake complex near where I live. It is very popular with three species of cormorant and the Darter. I have noticed that several of the birds appeared to have 'orangey coloured' breasts and abdomens. In some birds the orangey colouration appeared 'tufty' like down. This occurred in the Little Pied Cormorants and young or female Darters. Pizzey (1991, p51) states "often has rusty stains in plumage from impurities in water". If so, why did it not affect all the cormorants and Darters?

On another occasion, at Lake Monger, while sitting and observing two Spotless Crakes, I noticed three Dusky Moorhens nearby. They were at the edge of the reeds of the island mudbank. The leading moorhen was carrying a broken white shelled egg in its beak. The egg was larger than a domestic hen's egg. It was closely followed by two other Dusky Moorhens. When the egg shell was set down

they all took 'sips' of the egg contents. Two more Dusky Moorhens appeared as if from nowhere, to partake of the egg feast. They did not feast for long — approximately ten seconds each, then sipped some water and moved away. Mr Pizzey could not enlighten me this time. Could someone else tell me if this behaviour has been observed before?



Yellow-billed Spoonbills are common at Herdsman Lake and often seen elsewhere at shallow urban wetlands

*Drawn by Diane Beckingham*

Lake Monger is very rewarding at this time of the year. Since the end of February there have been large flocks of Pink-eared Ducks and Australasian Shovelers. As the water level drops, more interesting visitors arrive such as Red-necked Avocets, Banded Stilts, Red-capped Plovers, and not forgetting the Yellow-billed Spoonbills.

Reference:

Pizzey, G. 1991. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*. Collins, Sydney.

**Claire Gerrish**

#### **NOISY SCRUB-BIRDS IN THE DARLING RANGE**

The first Noisy Scrub-birds known to science were collected by John Gilbert in 1842 from the Darling Range, east of Waroona. Despite several searches around 1890 and later, the birds were not found again in that area and probably succumbed to increased frequency of fires resulting from timber extraction last century. Other Noisy Scrub-bird locations known last century were on the south coast near Albany, and at Boodjidup near Margaret River.

The re-discovery of the species in 1961 east of Albany and the subsequent rebuilding of numbers by means of careful management and translocation has led to an impressive increase from around 40 singing males at Mount Gardner to at least 590 singing males extending eastwards to Bald Island. The habitat here is clearly suitable, but it is limited in area and always at risk from fire. The species would be much more secure if another completely separate population could be established.

Unsuccessful attempts have been made in recent years to establish a population west of Albany. No suitable habitat was found near Margaret River. But in 1996 the old Darling Range location was thoroughly checked out. Detailed discussions were held with the land managers of the best sites, ALCOA and CALM. Much enthusiasm and support was offered and, in June 1997, 13 male Noisy Scrub-birds were released in two of the three sites that appeared most suitable in terms of vegetation and protection from fire.

Over the years, skills have been developed in capture, keeping and transporting Noisy Scrub-birds prior to translocation, but they had never been taken so far.

After the release, all six birds at the ALCOA site were radio-tracked for 16-22 days. Most of the costs were covered by a grant from ALCOA. All six birds survived for that period and none moved away from the site in that time. Because of the width and structure of the ALCOA roadways it would be difficult for these birds to move far. Now, nine months later, only two territories within the site are held by singing birds. However it is possible that more than two birds have survived. For example, during the radio-tracking period it was noted that a territory was maintained constantly by a singing bird, but it was not always the same singing bird.

At the other release site, where birds have less restriction on their movement up and down stream, only one singing bird can now be heard.

On the basis of at least three survivors after nine months which included a particularly dry summer, it has been decided by the South Coast Threatened Bird Recovery Team to proceed with the next stage of the plan. This winter, all being well, some females as well as a few more males will be released in these two sites. (Females are more difficult to catch.)

Such has been the success of the Noisy Scrub-bird recovery program, that the species is soon to be re-ranked. Although it will still be classed as a threatened species, it will be upgraded from 'endangered' to the less precarious category of 'vulnerable'. (The categories are as described in the IUCN 1994 Red List.)

**Brenda Newbey**

**Birds Australia representative**

**South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team**

#### **WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE AT ALFRED COVE**

On Sunday 12 April at approximately 10:30 am, I was observing birds on the sandbars in the Swan River near Alfred Cove when I heard the alarm calls of a number of species including Australian Ravens, Australian Magpies, Australian Ringnecks and Rainbow Lorikeets. The noise alerted all birds in the area. By watching the movement of the magpies and ravens, I soon located a very large raptor flying low over the treetops towards the western edge of the cove. As it came closer, a second bird of similar size joined it and they continued towards the cove sailing across the line of melaleucas on the western edge side by side. Their sudden arrival had an almost explosive effect



on the assembled birds. Grey Teal panicked and flew in all directions with many flights travelling just above the water close to the land edges. Ibis, some egrets, herons and a solitary spoonbill moved faster than I normally see them do, weaving through the trees near Troy Park and over the houses. A raft of Hoary-headed Grebe bolted around the corner of the cove into the Swan River while a large raft of Musk Duck dived as one. In amongst this, cormorants flew wildly attempting to get clear of the oncoming danger and Black-winged Stilts followed the Grey Teal, yelping loudly.

The two raptors continued across the cove and, after much wing flapping, settled on a small bush near the base

### ... dived down to harass the intruders ...

of the disused transmission tower. Having seen black fingers on high upswept wing tips, pale head and breast, white bullseyes in the wings and the light rump above a short tail, plus their tremendous size, I was sure they were White-bellied Sea-Eagles (second year).

Their arrival upset the occupants of the tower — a pair of Ospreys — as the smaller of the two (male) dived down to harass the intruders. The daring paid off and the eagles departed — one back over the cove and the other straight towards me at treetop height pursued by the Osprey. Seeing the two together made the Osprey look quite small and the view of them as they passed just overhead was spectacular. The eagle continued out over the river towards a sandbar crowded with birds while the Osprey returned to the transmission tower. The eagle's approach to the sandbar created a panic similar to that which had occurred in the cove with Silver Gulls, three species of terns, Pied Oystercatchers, cormorants, Black Swans, duck and a few waders flying anywhere but towards the danger. Even the Australian Pelicans, which had been resting, got up and bunched as though for protection. Over the sandbar, the eagle was mobbed by gulls and terns — the Caspian Terns being particularly aggressive — and flew on towards Pelican Point and out of range of the bulk of its tormentors and my binoculars.

**Peter Sandilands**

### OBSERVATIONS FROM LAKE GWELUP

With the drying up of Lake Gwelup, some interesting birds have begun to appear. I would like to describe my observations at this site during late February and early March 1998.

I observed the birds listed opposite after gaining access to the receding water's edge via a passageway in the reeds on the southern side of Lake Gwelup. Observations were carried out with binoculars and a Nikon spotting scope.

I was intrigued to observe the two dotterel species as well as the quite marked increase in numbers of the other birds present. I would be interested to know how often the dotterels have been sighted before at Lake Gwelup.

## INLAND EXPEDITION

Sponsored by



Volunteers wanted to participate in Hooded Plover Survey.

Go into the outback in search of Hooded Plovers.

Enjoy wildflowers, star spangled skies.

Petrol costs paid.

Contact "Perry House" Tel: 9383 7749  
or David Free Tel: 9384 5160

### Birds at Lake Gwelup

1. Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) — adult and immature plumages 20
2. Banded Stilt (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*) — immature plumages 2
3. Red-kneed Dotterel (*Erythrogonyx cinctus*) — adults 20
4. Black-fronted Dotterel (*Euseiornis melanops*) — adults 2
5. Little Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) — adults 5-7
6. Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*) — adult and immatures 5
7. Australian Pelican (*Pelicanus conspicillatus*) — adult 20-30
8. Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) — adult 5-10
9. Australian White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*) — adults 5-10
10. Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*) — adults 10-15
11. Assorted other waterbirds: Pacific Black Ducks, Chestnut Teal, Australasian and Great Crested Grebes, etc.

**Ray Junckerstorff**

## CORELLAS AROUND PERTH

There has been considerable confusion about the taxonomy of Australian corellas, and the Western Corella, endemic to the south-west, is the main source of that confusion. The widespread Little Corella (*Cacatua sanguinea*) and the Long-billed Corella (*Cacatua tenuirostris*) of south-eastern Australia are readily recognised as different from each other in the field, and it has rarely been doubted that they are separate species. However, the Western (Western Long-billed) Corella (*Cacatua pastinator*) has variously been ranked as a subspecies of the Little Corella or of the Long-billed Corella, or as a species in its own right.

The current view, based on analyses by Julian Ford (Ford 1985) and Storr and Johnstone (1985) and accepted, with some reservation, by Christidis and Boles (1994), is that the Western (long-billed) Corella is a separate species. Ford (1985) believed that it is more closely related to the eastern Long-billed Corella than to the Little, and that the long upper mandible shared by Western and Long-billed Corellas is a result of a shared long-billed ancestor and not of convergent evolution as suggested by other workers. The Western Corella has distinct northern and southern subspecies.

In south-western Australia, it appears that the original distributions of the Western Corella (long-billed) and the Little Corella (short-billed) were quite separate in the early days of European settlement. The Little Corella occurred only north of about Geraldton and the Western Corella occurred more or less from about Geraldton south to Augusta and east to about Albany. The Western Corella has disappeared from most of the southern half of its range, from Perth southwards. It now occurs naturally in two quite separate populations, representing the two different subspecies: the northern one from Geraldton south to about Moora and Wongan Hills (*Cacatua pastinator butleri*) and the southern one, (*C. p. pastinator*) from about Boyup Brook to Lake Muir. The former is secure and has expanded greatly as a response to agricultural activities while the southern subspecies that used to occur as far north as the Swan/Avon River is gazetted as threatened. It suffered massive persecution as an agricultural pest during the establishment of agriculture in the south west and changes to native vegetation on the Swan coastal plain and in the Wheatbelt were no doubt also significant in its decline.

There are two further complicating factors when attempting to identify corellas in southern Western Australia. First, agricultural activity throughout the Wheatbelt also favours the Little Corella, which is expanding southwards and westwards. Secondly, all three of the species may be established, from aviary escapees, as breeding species around Perth. The 'natural' expansions of the Little Corella and the northern subspecies of the Western Corella have not yet reached Perth, and therefore all corellas in the metropolitan area can be considered as introduced.

There is also the possibility of hybridisation between any two of the three species. However, Ford (1985) believed that hybridisation was extremely rare between the

northern subspecies of the Western Corella and the southern populations of the Little Corella in the northern wheatbelt where their ranges have come to overlap considerably. Nevertheless, hybridisation between aviary bred specimens of the three species may be more likely in the mixed flocks around Perth.

Although there has been a tendency to look on the corellas around Perth as a small isolated population unlikely to expand very much we think there is already some reason to fear that this may not be correct. If one or more populations of these introduced corellas did start to grow quickly and spread widely they would not only constitute a significant potential threat to agricultural and horticultural activities, they could threaten the genetic integrity of the two subspecies of the endemic Western Corella. It would be very valuable to gather more information about the numbers and status of the three species around Perth.

The main questions that we think need to be addressed are as follows.

1. Have all three species of corellas established feral breeding populations around Perth? As we discuss later there is little doubt that both Little Corellas and Long-billed Corellas are established as breeding birds in probably two distinct localities for each. It is not so clear that the Western Corella is breeding around Perth. Careful observation of all corellas seen will be required to identify Western Corellas from Little Corellas.

2. Can we identify centres of distributions for discrete population of the three species, and make an estimate of current numbers in each population?

3. Are there any historical data we can use to assess the dynamics of each population: that is are they stable, increasing or declining?

4. Can we identify breeding areas for each population?

5. Is one or more species likely to 'do a Rainbow Lorikeet' and become very abundant?

6. If one or more species do build up very big populations around Perth will they have any adverse effects on native species in the area?

7. Is one or more species of corella capable of expanding away from Perth and becoming an agricultural pest, and in that event what effect might they have on native species?

8. Finally, if the answer is yes to question 5 and either or both of questions 6 and 7, what control measures need to be (can be) put in place to ameliorate adverse effects?

We are aware of a number of areas based on wetlands in which corellas can be easily seen in the suburbs of Perth. The first of these is the Wanneroo area around Lake Joondalup, where Allan Burbidge believes that currently only Long-billed Corellas are obvious, with flocks of up a dozen or so.

The second area is around Wembley and Subiaco, with birds concentrating around Lakes Monger and Herdsman and Perry Lakes. Little Corellas, presumably from this population, have nested in Bold Park and the Shenton Park Bushland over the last few years. This population seems to be largely Little Corellas, although we have seen occasional pairs of eastern Long-billed Corellas,

and the occasional Western Corella with them. Storr and Johnstone (1988) refer to wandering flocks of up to 300 Little Corellas in Perth's western suburbs, including around Lake Monger, and this is probably the same population as in that area now. These birds have not been counted lately, but we believe that there are at least 300 perhaps up to 500, so this population is apparently either increasing or holding its own.

About 50 Little Corellas are regularly seen at Lake Gwelup. Reports from the Suburban Bird Count suggest that this is not a resident flock but an offshoot of the Monger/Herdsmen population. The same can probably be said for reports of flocks of corellas around the city and suburbs such as Mount Hawthorn. However, given a total of about 50 sites north of the Swan River from which reports of corellas have been given to the Urban Bird Survey, there may well be other areas in which the birds are resident.

The third area from which reports of corellas have come from members of Birds Australia for some years is around the Swan River at Guildford. Ian Rowley (personal communication) believes this is a mixed flock, with a total of well over 100 birds. He thinks that most of these are Little Corellas, but that there are about twelve eastern Long-billed Corellas and an unknown number of Western Corellas present as well. Hank van Wees (personal communication) referred to many hundreds of unidentified corellas on flats on the western side of the Swan River at Guildford in 1996, and to 18 Long-billed Corellas at Kiara, in January 1993. Reports in the records of the Western Australian Museum refer to about 100 mainly Little Corellas from the Ashfield Flats around Bassendean in the early 1990s and in more recent years up to 200 in this general area. We assume that this is the same population as that reported from Guildford.

Other areas from which reports of corellas have come are in the southern suburbs, especially along the lower Swan River from the South Perth foreshore to East Fremantle, along the Canning River from Shelley/Riverton/Ferndale to Kelmscott and at Manning Lake in Hamilton Hill south of Fremantle. Storr and Johnstone (1988) referred to reports in 1980 of Little Corellas from Kelmscott. More recently, corellas have been reported from almost 30 sites south of the Swan River during the WA Group's Urban Bird Survey, over the last three years. About 20 of these have referred to Little Corellas and about ten to eastern Long-billed Corellas. These survey reports are presence or absence only and give no indication of numbers.

However, in the last few months we have had a number of positive sightings of one or more flocks of around 100 or more Long-billed Corellas, that is the eastern Australian species, from southern suburbs. These reports have come from Kelmscott, Ferndale, Riverton and Shelley along the Canning River and from South Perth, Point Walter and East Fremantle on the Swan. A population of Long-billed Corellas at Manning Lake has been known to members of Birds Australia for some years, and a recent visit recorded twenty of that species.

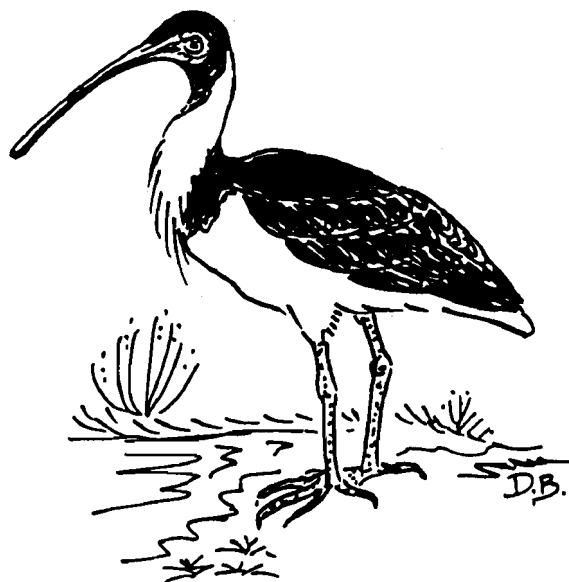
In this issue there is an excursion report on an outing to the Canning Regional Park, and in it reference to large flocks of corellas. On speaking to the leader of that excursion it appears that these may have been of two or more species, and it seems clear that some at least were eastern Long-billed Corellas.

Several questions need to be clarified about these Swan and Canning River birds. First, are they all Long-billed Corellas and if not what other species are present? Secondly, how many are there? Is the 'fifty or more' Long-billed Corellas seen at Kelmscott the same flock as one of 'about 100' seen at Shelley, about ten kilometres away in a straight line? If not, how many are there along the fifteen or more kilometres of river between these two places?

Records in the Urban Bird Survey make it clear that corellas are widely observed around Perth's suburbs. We would be very pleased to hear from people who have records of numbers, and of which species, of corellas anywhere around the metropolitan area. Elsewhere in this issue is an article on identifying corellas and we hope this will enable our members to make positive identifications of the three species. Breeding records would also be very valuable.

In the event of being able to pinpoint a number of specific places that corellas are seen regularly it would be valuable to conduct a simultaneous count at all such places to identify and count the corellas at the same time. A notice containing the details of this proposed count is also in this issue of Bird Notes. Please let John Blyth know if you would like to take part in such a survey on June 28 this year.

Although evidence for continuing increase in one or more of the introduced species of corella would be cause



The Straw-necked Ibis is an endemic Australian bird and is common on both northern and southern fringes of Perth's metropolitan area  
*Drawn by Diane Beckingham*

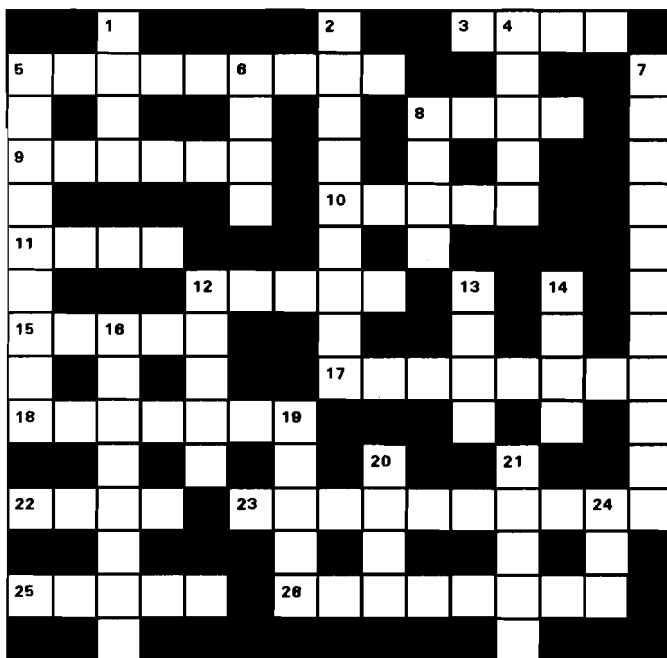
for concern, information gathered by the two steps suggested above would not answer all of the questions posed in this article. The main purpose of such information would be to provide a baseline for further study, to compare with future records or to develop control actions if these were seen to be necessary.

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- Storr, G. M. and Johnstone, R. E. 1985. *Field Guide to the Birds of Western Australia*. 2nd Edition, Western Australian Museum, Perth.
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- John Blyth, Ron Johnstone and Clive Nealon

## Crossword No 13

by Pam Agar



#### Clues Across

3. Continent where many of our waders breed.
5. Large wading bird.
8. It's useful to birds in many ways.
9. Found naturally in this location.
10. A bird song.
11. A possible perch for a calling Rufous Fieldwren.
12. Small seed-eating bird.
15. The 'rainbow' is WA's representative of this group.
17. Swift flying, green parrot.
18. Victorian bird observatory.
22. Familiar territory of certain herons.
23. Tasmanian island, giving its name to a grey bird (two words).
25. The edge of a continental one is a good spot to look for seabirds.
26. Former name of Shy Heathwren.

#### Clues Down

1. Useful means to approach distant seabirds.
2. Typical egg shape (slightly misspelt!).
4. Outer covering of egg.
5. The common one bobs frequently.
6. Presumably bee-eaters don't mind their stings.
7. Heavy-billed tern, seen on Perth waters (two words).
8. DDT is thought to cause these eggshells.
12. Birds on these is a current BA project.
13. Lewin's is thought to be extinct in WA.
14. May be webbed or clawed.
16. Feathers in this state would indicate imminent moult.
19. Low shrubs.
20. Species of duck.
21. Plankton feeder, hydroplaning to take food.
24. Completion of the initial Atlas of Australian Birds ended a significant one for the RAOU.

## Country Groups

### ALBANY BIRD GROUP

Our first outing for the year was to Wilson Inlet, Denmark on 10 February. Fourteen regular birders plus one visitor met at the entrance to Morley Road at 8:00 am on a clear warm morning.

We had a long walk to find the water and the birds, but the effort was rewarding. The water level seems much lower than usual. Thanks to Michael's scope we had good views of many different waders.

From Morley Road we went to the mouth of the Hay River where different birds were seen, such as White-fronted Chats, two Whiskered Terns, Fairy Terns and lots of little waders.

We had lunch at the head of the inlet, where we saw five different species of ducks plus some little bush birds.

People enjoyed the outing and were looking forward to the next.

For our March outing, held on 10 March, 17 members met at the Rotary Youth Camp off Frenchman Bay Road at 8:00 am on a grey, wet day. It was the first rain we had seen for a long time, so it was very welcome. Just a light steady drizzle with no wind. The birds thought it was great, too! But not so good for the binoculars. We saw 21 species including Western Rosellas and Golden Whistlers.

From there we went to Rushy Point where we saw nine species of waders including Eastern Curlew and Great and Red Knots.

Everybody left for home not long after 11:30 am. Just a short day but successful.

For the April outing, we visited the Riverview Golf Course which has always been good value for birdwatching. We were a small group of seven this month. Post Easter and school holidays has made it impossible for people to find the time to attend.

The morning started at 8:15 am with very few birds to be seen or heard because it was overcast, cold and windy. Things improved once the sun came out and it wasn't long before we saw the birds.

Our total for the morning was 25 species. The highlight was five Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos feeding on 'stunted jarrah' (*E. staeri*). We saw what appeared to be five adults and three juveniles.

Our next outing is to Normans Beach on 12 May.

**Vivian McCormick**

## Notices

### FOCUS ON BIRDS (SUMMER)

**10-16 January      Leader: Peter Sandilands**

Become involved in a study of the gradation of bird species according to landform and vegetation south of the Eyre Highway. This, the sixth in a series of seasonal studies, will be especially looking for those arid zone birds that have moved south to avoid the inland heat in addition to the usual resident species. Many reptile species are also expected to be active at this time of year and will be recorded as well. Information gained over the duration of the project will be used to determine whether some species of birds are restricted to particular areas and whether they require special or additional protection. An interest and appreciation of the natural environment is all that is needed to participate in the course, as assistance in field identification will be given.

Birds seen on the previous Summer course in the series included: Emu, Brown Goshawk, Brown Falcon, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Jacky Winter, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Varied Sittella, Crested Bellbird, Black-faced and Dusky Woodswallows.

**If you are interested in participating in this course, contact the Wardens at Eyre Bird Observatory on:**

**Telephone: (08) 9039 3450**

**Facsimile: (08) 9039 3440**

### NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia-WA Group between 4 February and 30 April 1998. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

J Bavich, G Boxer, V Brehenty, A Byrom, R Calleja, K Deubert, C Edgar, J Felton, K Godwin, M Hancock, D Hirschberg, S Lawson, J E Loring, T Luha (now family membership), S Mawson, S McDougall, L Mulgrave, S Newby, M Roberts, G L Schmidt, J Schultz, K Stubbs, D Young

## Observatory Reports

### BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

More rare bird sightings have been the themes for the beginning of 1998. We signed off our last report with the excitement of the Arctic Warbler and didn't imagine that we would have any more 'firsts' to report but we have.

One of our firsts was a bird in the hand. On a mist netting session at one of our regular sites the usual White-breasted Whistlers, Dusky Gerygones and flocks of Yellow White-eyes were added to by an Oriental Reed-Warbler! In a net by Crab Creek, an area dominated by Grey Mangroves (*Avicennia Marina*) was not the place one would expect to find such a bird. Nevertheless, there it was, lying in the pocket of the net awaiting the inevitable excitement. Like the Arctic Warbler before it, it underwent a thorough process with lots of data taken on plumage and measurements. Of course it had its picture taken, probably at least 30 times and looks almost as handsome in the photos as it does in real life. We were not finished there. House Swifts were expertly identified by Danny Rogers and Phil Battley during a lull in the mist netting activities. This is, we think, a new record for Western Australia and as with all the other new and rare sightings reports will be submitted to the Rarities Appraisal Committee.

The Broome sewage works has always been a good spot. In the wet season it is home to Snipe and other waders and always the place to look for Yellow Wagtails. There was an assumption that the Snipe we were seeing were Swinhoe's Snipe and nobody had confidently identified any other. We now know that both Swinhoe's and Pintail Snipe occur at the ponds, due to another bird in the hand experience. The Pin-tailed Snipe identified was picked out of the ponds by Chris and cared for in the Wardens' spare bedroom which doubled as a bird rehabilitation centre. The Snipe was suffering from avian botulism and was treated to Epsom salts and then maintained initially on glucodin and vitamins. Not feeling particularly optimistic when we took the bird in we were delighted when just a week later we released a healthy, positively identified Pin-tailed Snipe. As very shy birds it is hard to imagine but 'Fred' would stand on his carers' knees and take worms from their hand while posing for the occasional photo.

The sewage ponds also turned up a Black-backed Wagtail first found by George Swann which again got us all twitching. The bird did us the honour of staying in the ponds for many days to be sketched, photographed and studied.

Among all this twitching there has been the more steady but equally rewarding job of migration watch. On our peak night this season we saw 4000 adult birds leave Roebuck Bay in a two-hour period. The sight of a huge flock of Bar and Black-tailed Godwits calling to each other and leaving the bay, on what we know will be a five and a half thousand-kilometre flight, is always a moving one. The birds were kind to us and our *Wave the Waders*

*Goodbye* course coincided, as it did last year, with peak migration. The course was fully booked and proved to be extremely rewarding for both leaders and staff. Everyone saw new birds and learned a lot about waders. Course members who began the week having never tackled shorebirds, were identifying migrating godwits by the end. As usual courses are probably one of the best ways to experience and learn about the area. Thanks to all participants for making it a great week and we hope that more of you can join us for courses in the future.

Sentimental as we are, we worked out that we only have to wait another one hundred days or so before the first of the adults return to the bay. Despite the exodus 'Wader Beach', the site of our first post migration cannon net, was bustling with birds. Our target species was Curlew Sandpiper, particularly as we had seen two birds carrying the orange leg flags of Victoria on the previous day. No orange leg-flagged birds in our net but 86 Curlew Sandpipers duly obliged us by being in the right place at the right time. We caught 180 birds of nine species on a text book catch. The other 3000 birds on the beach indicate that we will have a fantastic winter of birding ahead of us.

Roebuck Bay and the surrounding habitats are a constant source of wonder and they mark the changing seasons as birds come and go. As well as our remaining immature migratory shorebirds, other species are now piling onto the beaches as the fresh water inland dries up. Red-capped Plovers, Red-necked Avocets and Black-winged Stilts join their migratory cousins on the shore and the terns, who have finished breeding inland or on offshore islands, roost with the waders on the bay. Soon Brown Boobys will be seen flying low over the water and the Pelicans will lazily work the thermals over the woodland and sail on the bay.

Before we sign off, we can't help but make you jealous just one more time. Roebuck Plains yielded what for many will be one of the most impressive bits of birding they will have ever been lucky enough to have experienced. An estimated flock of up to 500 Yellow Chats, on the edges of a brackish lake, will be a most memorable sight of the wet of 1998. Unfortunately on our last visit these little known, little understood nomads had moved on ... maybe we'll find them again next year!

**Janet Sparrow and Chris Hassell  
Wardens**

## Excursion Reports

### **CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK, 11 February**

Nine keen birdwatchers gathered at the Kent Street Weir on a warm, pleasant morning. A very light easterly wind scarcely ruffled the river's surface. Large flocks of Corellas and Silver Gulls circled around the tall river gums as we left the car park. The forecast maximum

temperature of 33° was reached several hours after the completion of the walk.

Good sightings of a lone Sacred Kingfisher with rather drab plumage, several Grey Butcherbirds, a number of Rainbow Bee-eaters, and a brilliantly marked male Mistletoebird helped to put the icing on the cake. Only a small variety of ducks was observed — mainly Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal and Australian Shelduck. A fleeting glimpse of a Brown Goshawk in hot pursuit of several bushbirds was our only raptor sighting. This brought our tally to 47 species observed.

**Neil Porteous**

### **LAKE MUIR CAMPOUT, 28 FEB–2 MARCH**

Bessel and Rob Hanekamp were host to over a dozen birdwatchers at the Labor Day long weekend campout. Their 4570 acre property abuts Lake Muir. CALM has requested information on the numbers of waders at Lake Muir.

In the absence of CALM officers (due to fire standby) the camp was led by Bryan Barrett and Lee Fontanini, a local person. Saturday morning at Lake Muir was very disappointing for waders. The 8 x 3 km lake was drying fast and only supported five species of waders. The highlight was a raft of Teal — Chestnut and Grey — in the middle of the remaining water.

After a midday siesta the owner and his helper, Roy, led us over private property to the almost fresh water lagoon. We feasted our eyes on waterbirds. There were large numbers of Great Egrets and Yellow-billed Spoonbills. The local Silver Gulls are resident in this area and may be a different subspecies. Musk Duck, Chestnut Teal and Australasian Shovelers were plentiful. A Brush Bronzewing attempted to lead us home through a pine plantation by running ahead of the vehicles on the track.

A few energetic people, led by Rob, did several hours of night spotlighting. They saw Tawny Frogmouths and many White-faced Herons as well as hundreds of kangaroos.

The next day, early morning visitors to the lagoon were rewarded with perfect viewing conditions. We saw Great Crested Grebes, Blue-billed Ducks and Hardheads. As we were leaving, a Peregrine Falcon landed in front of a telescope. We returned to the homestead via a couple of local viewing spots on their property. We had to cope with at least 41°C heat that left even the garden birds such as robins and fairy-wrens seeking cover.

The late afternoon visit to Red Lake was a gratifying finale to the weekend. There was a raft of Pink-eared Ducks.

A total of 93 species confirms a good weekend of birding. Our thanks to Bryan Barrett and our hosts, the Hanekamps, for making this possible.

**Claire Gerrish**

### **STONY BROOK, 12 March**

The 16 members, including a few new ones, who met for this walk were very fortunate with the timing. After the preceding days had been firstly very hot, then wet, we were lucky enough to have a perfect, fine and mild day.

The first part of the walk did not produce many birds, just a high-flying Wedge-tailed Eagle and some Striated Pardalotes. We also saw two nests which may have been built by raptors. However, the walk through the bush, that after the previous day's rain was giving off its characteristic eucalypt smell, together with the lovely views over the valley, made it nonetheless enjoyable. As we approached the brook area (now dry), our first sighting of a Grey Fantail heralded better birdwatching and within the next 300 m we saw most of the birds we had hoped to see. We had just brief glimpses of Red-winged Fairy-wrens and only heard the Splendids, but all other species were in full view. Among these were a pair of Scarlet Robins, Spotted Pardalotes, Golden Whistlers, White-breasted Robin, Western and Inland Thornbills, Red-capped Parrots, Sacred Kingfisher and several species of honeyeaters. These included a White-naped Honeyeater which obligingly stayed perched on a branch for some time, enabling everyone to have good viewing.

By the time we had completed the circuit back to our cars, we had added Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, New Holland Honeyeater, Western Spinebill and several others to our list, which finally totalled 30 species, all bush birds.

**Mavis Norgard**



Red-capped Robins are common throughout drier parts of southern Australia  
*Drawn by Pam Agar*

### **LAKE COOGEE, 15 March**

Once more a beautiful day welcomed our morning walk along the western shore of Lake Coogee. A group of 19 enthusiasts assembled at 8:30 am and we set off along the track. Whilst the day grew quite warm towards midday, and there were not a lot of bird calls to be heard, we saw 50 species in total during the morning.

The Lake Coogee raptor population was again in evidence with Nankeen Kestrel, Black-shouldered Kite, Australian Hobby, Brown Goshawk, Little Eagle and Whistling Kite seen by most of the group. The lake was at its lowest level for at least ten years on the day of the walk, and as a result has been supporting a higher wader population than in previous years. Six species of wader were added to our list for the day.

A most enjoyable day was had by everyone, and our thanks to all participants.

**Jan and Dave Crossley**

### **PEEL INLET, 29 March**

On a perfect, warm late summer day 27 people boarded the *Dolphin Adventurer* at Mandurah for a day's birding on

Peel Inlet. We chugged gently past some of the new canal developments and under the new bridge, seeing Pied, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, Australian Pelicans, and Caspian and Crested Terns. We landed on Boundary Island where we saw Bar-tailed Godwits, Great and Red Knots, Red-necked Stints, Greater Sand Plovers, Grey Plovers and Fairy Terns. Two sharp eyed birders flushed a Spotted Nightjar from the grassland. Pied and Banded Stilts and Pied Oystercatchers were also seen.

As we pulled away from the island several Eastern Curlews were observed in the shallows.

We proceeded to cross the wider part of the inlet and went up the Murray River where we saw several Darter nests with well grown young. After lunch on the lawns at Ravenswood we began the return journey and had excellent views of an Osprey in a tree by the side of the river. Coopers Mill was the next stop and as well as several bush birds we were lucky enough to see an Australian Spotted Crake in the samphire on the edge of one of the waterways.

Then it was back across the inlet to our berth at the Boardwalk jetty. A total of 76 species were spotted on the day and a pleasant trip enjoyed by all.

**Clive Napier**

### **WEBB'S LEASE, ACACIA ROAD, JARRAHDALE, 5 April**

Fifteen members enjoyed a very interesting walk around what was a new venue for the WA Group. The morning was fine and we managed to spot 32 species in the mix of grassland, jarrah woodland and varied wetland that comprise this block.

The group had excellent sightings of Red-eared Firetails, Spotted Pardalote, White-breasted Robin and Varied Sittella, whilst an unusual woodland visitor was a Richard's Pipit. Notably absent was the presence of a single raptor.

The combined efforts of the Department of Conservation and Land Management and a local Jarrahdale Community Group, have created a Wetlands Walk that is well worth a visit. There are six strategically placed observation hides around the walk, which can be used at leisure, and with thermos flask and sandwich pack, four or five hours could be spent very pleasantly.

**Dave Crossley**

### **BIMBIJY CAMPOUT, Easter 10-13 April**

Bimbijy Station, the site of the campout, is 100 km north of Beacon and approximately 60 km south-east of Paynes Find, and is comprised of large areas of mulga,



Tammaring Well on Bimbijy Station  
*Drawn by Pam Agar*

interspersed with stands of eucalypts, and some cleared areas close to the homestead. Several areas of breakaways and salt lakes bordered by samphire offered different habitats to explore.

As no rain had been recorded on Bimbijy since September last year, conditions were extremely dry with most dams either empty or very low. Bores provided limited alternative water sources, which it was also hoped would provide good spots for birding.

Cool, heavily overcast conditions on the first two days gave way to sunnier but still cool, conditions later — good weather for birding.

Friday was used for exploratory trips to the north-east and west, then on the Saturday and Sunday mornings the group divided into two and repeat visits were made to both areas by both groups. Afternoons were left free for people to check any other areas which appealed to them.

The north-east route took in York Gum Dam and Breakaway Bore and Dam further north, returning south then crossing salt lakes to visit Five Mile Dam ("Ten Mile" on the map!) to the east. The western route included visits to Silver Well, Tammaring Well and Clayhole Dam, then travelling south to the Paynes Find Road and back to the homestead via an area of breakaways.

The most commonly seen species were Southern Whiteface, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill and Red-capped Robin. Birds were generally very quiet but interesting sightings by various people included Mulga Parrot, Malleefowl, Little Woodswallows and a pair of Southern Boobooks near Breakaway Bore, an Australian Bustard in flight, Australasian Grebe and a Black-fronted Dotterel, Bourke's Parrot and White-winged Fairy-wren, Hooded Robin and Redthroat.

In addition, almost everyone was lucky enough to enjoy excellent views of White-browed Treecreepers in an area of eucalypts between Silver and Tammaring Wells.

Banded Lapwing were heard calling each evening, and although honeyeaters were scarce, seven species were recorded. Six species of raptor were noted, with Wedge-

tailed Eagle and Australian Hobby being seen most frequently. Three species of corvid were present.

Overall it was an interesting look at an area rarely visited at this time of the year, and a total of 63 species was considered very satisfying under the circumstances. Many thanks to Bryan and Clive for their combined organisational and leadership skills.

PS. Many of the 23 people who headed for Bimbijy Station had an early bonus of huge flocks of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos (300–600 birds) at either Wyalkatchem or Bencubbin.

**Pam Agar**

## **NORTH LAKE, 22 April**

Our mid-week walk around North Lake, in the Shire of Cockburn, was much as would be expected at the end of a long, dry summer. The water level was very low and the species total of 48 was about average for this time of the year. We saw four species of ducks, lots of stilts, including two Banded Stilts, and many Red-necked Avocets as well as several Yellow-billed Spoonbills, a Great Egret, and a lone White-faced Heron. A Whistling Kite, an Australian Hobby and a Brown Goshawk were also seen briefly.

So, at the end of our walk, we were amazed to see a large raptor swooping low over the end of the lake and attacking the White-faced Heron. Our group of ten members stood enthralled as we watched the raptor make at least six attempts to strike the heron which didn't seem to know what was going on. Finally, the attacker swooped and successfully grabbed the heron by a wing and carried it off into the nearby grass. It just stood on its prey for a short while before flying off with the unfortunate heron into the trees.

Our first impression was that the raptor was a juvenile Wedge-tailed Eagle — it was about the right size, was a patchy brown colour, but had a white tail with a broad sub-terminal band. However, after the walk, an alert Les Harris did some investigation and decided that the bird was a first-year White-bellied Sea-Eagle. We had been watching this attack from across the lake about 200 m away.

**Margery Clegg**

## **AUSTRALIND CAMPOUT, 25-27 April**

Twenty-eight people enjoyed perfect weather conditions, beautiful scenery and numerous birdwatching opportunities on the Anzac long-weekend campout.

The first day we saw 65 species, most of which were observed around the northern end, and the western side, of the Leschenault Inlet. Species included Nankeen Kestrel, Banded Lapwing, Caspian and Crested Tern, Elegant Parrot, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Australian White and Straw-necked Ibis, White-fronted Chat and numerous Cormorants (Little Pied, Pied, Little Black and Great).

On the second day we went bush, visiting a Jarrah forest, Wellington Mills and the Wellington Dam. The Wellington Mills area was particularly interesting with good viewings of Common Bronzewing, Red-winged

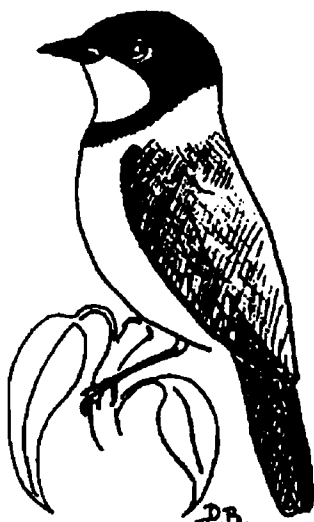


Fairy-wren, Long-billed Black-Cockatoo, Golden Whistler, Scarlet Robin and Western Thornbill.

The final day included a visit to that part of the Leschenault Inlet where it meets the coast (near the Bunbury Power Station). On the beach we were treated to views of a number of species including Australasian Gannet (adult and immature), a Sacred Kingfisher (on a rock wall) and Red-capped Plover. Visiting the inlet, the Preston River and a couple of ponds we saw White-faced Heron, Red-necked Avocet, Little Eagle, Common Greenshank, Richard's Pipit, Red-capped Robin, Whistling Kite and numerous Black-faced Woodswallows. A highlight was the excellent viewing of a Grey-tailed Tattler (a first for several of us!).

Overall, a magnificent total of 99 species was recorded. (To those who scoffed at this optimistic figure in the 'guess the total competition' — it was a nice drop of wine!). Many thanks to Clive and Wendy Napier and the 'locals' who escorted us to a range of habitats and some very exciting birdwatching.

Alison Day



Golden Whistlers are now rare on the Swan Coastal Plain but one was seen during the Australind Campout in April  
*Drawn by Diane Beckingham*

## Coming Events

### **Saturday 6 June — Half-Day Excursion, Helena Valley, Boya**

Meet at 9:00 am at the car park, 600 m beyond the sealed section of Helena Valley Road. (The unsealed section is negotiable for conventional vehicles provided care is taken.) If you wish, park just off the end of the bitumen and walk to the parking area.

To reach Helena Valley Road, use Map 15, reference K9, in the 1993 UBD, or Map 253, reference F14, in 1997 UBD.

Take Ridge Hill Road or Helena Valley Road, or Scott Road. Follow Helena Valley Road east up the River valley.

The distance we'll walk will be about 5 km, but those who'd like a shorter walk can return earlier.

Leader: Wendy Napier

### **Sunday 14 June — Half-day Excursion, Bickley Brook Reservoir**

Meet at 8:30 am at the turning circle, next to the children's camp. From Perth travelling on the Tonkin Highway, turn left into Gosnells Road East (Reservoir is signposted), then left into Reservoir Road and right into Maddington/Hardinge Road.

We have a good chance of seeing Southern Emu-wrens, Red-browed Finches, plus all our favourite bush birds.

Leaders: Marjorie and Gordon Wilson

### **Thursday 18 June — Mid-week Walk, Yellagonga National Park and Lake Joondalup**

Meet at 8:30 am at Neil Hawkins Park, in the car park at the end of Boas Avenue. A chance to see the birdlife of Lake Joondalup. This is a good spot for a picnic.

Leader: to be announced

### **Sunday 21 June — Half-day Excursion, North Mole, Fremantle**

Meet at 8:30 am. We aim to spend a couple of hours looking for seabirds. Don't forget your telescope.

Leader: Ian Standing

### **Monday 22 June Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm**

John Brooke has travelled widely in search of rare and exciting birds. Last year he visited Kenya, where it is possible to see over 300 species in a day, and saw many beautiful and interesting birds. John will show us some of the birds he saw on the trip and discuss some of the best sites to go.

### **Saturday 27 June — Half-day Excursion, Stinton Cascades Nature Reserve, Karragullen**

Meet at 8:30 am in Gardiner Road, about 200 m past the intersection with Brookton Highway (13 km from Albany Highway). This is a CALM reserve of jarrah and a good area for birds. Bring lunch.

Leaders: John and Helen Start

### **Sunday 28 June — Feral Corella Count**

8:30–5:30 pm

See notice this issue. Contact John Blyth if you would like to take part.

Leader: John Blyth

### **Sunday 5 July — Half-day Excursion, Lake Monger**

Meet at 8:30 am at the most-westerly car park off Lake Monger Drive, just before reaching Gregory Street.

This will be a good opportunity to view many species of ducks and other waterbirds.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

**Saturday 18 July — Half-day Excursion, Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park, Padbury**

Meet at 8:30 am at the first car park off Whitford's Avenue (on the right-hand side, through the entrance).

This is an interesting park where gardens and lawns are flanked by natural woodland of Tuart and Banksia. Some 65 species of bird have been sighted in the area, including Yellow-throated Miners.

Leader: Graham Little

**Sunday 26 July — Half-day Excursion, Wellard Wetlands, Baldavis**

Meet at 9:00 am at the entrance to Wellard Wetlands on the northern side of Zigzag Road, 1 km from St. Alban's Road, Baldavis.

There should be plenty of waterbirds and bushbirds breeding.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

**Monday 27 July Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm**

John Darnell has travelled widely around the state studying and recording seabirds. We all have trouble identifying seabirds and John will use his expertise to point out the identification criteria need to separate some of the more difficult seabird groups

**Saturday-Sunday 8-9 August — Short-weekend Campout, Jurien Bay**

Book your own accommodation at the Jurien Bay Caravan Park, phone (08) 9652 1064. There are on-site vans, cabins, etc. Please advise the Office of Birds Australia if you are attending.

Travel north on the Brand Hwy to Bibby Rd-Mumbinea Rd-Jurien Rd. All sealed and more interesting and shorter than the main highway.

Good seabirds, ducks and bushbirds should be seen. I will be at the Park by late Friday afternoon 7 August.

Leader Clive Napier.

**Sunday 9 August — Full Day Pelagic Seabird Trip from Hillarys**

Meet at Hillarys Boat Harbour at 7 am. We will leave at 7:30 am from near Underwater World and return at about 4 pm. There is a limit of 23 people.

Booking is essential. The cost is expected to be \$60 (more if fewer than 22 book) and is required three weeks before the event. Book by phoning Frank O'Connor on (08) 9386 5694.

Leader: Frank O'Connor

**Sunday 16 August — Half-day+ Excursion, Herdsman Lake, Wembley**

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park at the tennis courts, off Herdsman Parade, near the corner of Jon Sanders Drive (E6 on Map 59, *Streetsmart* Perth 1996 Street Directory).

This is a long half-day walk, and lunch back at the cars will be late, so bring nibbles and water to tide yourself

over. You should be rewarded by a good mix of waterbirds and bushbirds.

Leaders: John and Judy Blyth

**Sunday 23 August — Half-day+ Excursion, North Mole, Fremantle, and Woodman Point**

Meet at 8:30 am. We aim to spend a couple of hours looking for seabirds. Don't forget your telescope. We'll then go on to Woodman Point. Bring your lunch.

Leader: Ian Standring

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

Phil Withers is an Associate Professor in the Zoology Department at the University of Western Australia. During his scientific career he has published widely on the principles of bird flight and the physiological adaptations of desert birds. During his talk Phil will present some of the more interesting aspect of his research which has seen him travel to many parts of the globe.

**Monday-Saturday 24-29 August — Extended Campout,**

**Wanjarri NR (Kathleen Valley), Leonora Shire**

You won't wanna miss this one, folks! Wanjarri is a jewel in the north-eastern goldfields, approximately 300 km north of Kalgoorlie, via Menzies, Leonora, and Leinster. Covering 53,000 hectares, its size is considered relatively small as arid-zone conservation reserves go, but its diversity of landforms, vegetation types, and fauna is nothing short of exceptional. View granite outcrops, laterite breakaways, broad valleys and sandplains. Wander through the mulga, mallee, and marble gum woodlands. Wildflowers should be at their best at this time of year.

Some 61 reptile, 20 mammal, and 118 bird species have been recorded to date!

The area represents the northern-most range of the Regent Parrot, Malleefowl, and Grey Currawong, while the Striated Grass-wren, Spotted Bowerbird, and the extremely rare Princess Parrot are found here at the southern extent of their ranges. To top it all off, the area is rich in Aboriginal and European history.

Wanjarri is managed by CALM, and part of the management rationale includes preservation of the historical character of the station buildings. One has been converted to serve as a small field study centre.

Accommodation is very basic, and will cost you in the vicinity of \$5 per night.

For bookings (essential) and further information, please contact Bill McRoberts directly on (08) 9459 1971.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

**Saturday 29 August — Full-day Excursion, Walyunga National Park**

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park at the end of Walyunga Road (off Great Northern Hwy, Upper Swan, near

Bungarah Pool). Please be advised that there is a park entrance fee.

The National Park lies along the Darling Scarp. The Avon River bounds one part of the planned walk, and there are some good stretches of Wandoo. We should see a good variety of birds.

Leader: Clive Nealon

**Sunday 6 September — Half-day Excursion, Bibra Lake**

Meet at 8:30 am in the first car park at the northern end of the lake, off Progress Drive.

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

Leader: Sue Abbotts

**Saturday 12 September — Full-day Excursion, Karrakin Lake and Doopiter Swamp**

Meet at 9:30 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 duck, 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've been wondering, Dupetor is the genus name for the Black Bittern. Perhaps the names are connected.)

Be prepared to travel approximately 300 or more km from Perth.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

**Sunday 13 September — Spring Fling, Perry House/ Bold Park**

The Wildflower Society is holding its annual wildflower display at Perry House on 13 September, the theme being "The Small Garden". This very popular and well attended event runs from 9 am to 4 pm. We participate by guiding bird walks around Bold Park, by mounting a display of local birds and setting up our stall for the sale of cards and books.

Our walks and stall have always been well patronised and we will need about a dozen volunteers to help during the day. If you can take part, please notify Judy Blyth or leave your name at the office.

**Thursday 17 September — Mid-week Walk, Perth Zoo**

Meet at 8:30 am outside the main entrance to the Zoo. Neil Hamilton, who has been in charge of the breeding program for White and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos, will meet us and take us into the grounds (be prepared to pay a

small fee). Neil will then explain what he does and show us his birds.

Leader: Neil Hamilton

**Sunday 20 September — Full Day Pelagic Seabird Trip from Hillarys**

This is the day before the Greenough campout. Meet at Hillarys Boat Harbour at 7 am. We will leave at 7:30 am from near Underwater World and return at about 4 pm. There is a limit of 23 people. Booking is essential.

The cost is expected to be \$60 (more if fewer than 22 book) and is required three weeks before the event. Book by phoning Frank O'Connor on (08) 9386 5694. If there are more than 40 people interested, then a trip will also be organised for the Saturday.

Leader: Frank O'Connor

**Sunday 20 September — Full-day Excursion, Ellenbrook Reserve, Bullsbrook**

Meet at 9:00 am.

Take the Great Northern Highway to Upper Swan. Pass the junction with West Swan Road, and travel another 1/2 a kilometre or so, then turn left into Railway Parade. Go approximately 5 km, passing the Agricultural Research Station on your left. Turn left into Maralla Road (the right turning leads you to the Ellenbrook Speedway).

Travel past the turf farm. Park in open space, opposite the only house on the left hand side of the road.

Leader: Brenda Newbey

**Monday 21 September Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, 8:00 pm**

**NOTE: 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday as 28<sup>th</sup> Queens Birthday holiday**  
Julie Raines, who has been assessing wetlands for their importance to birds in southern Australia, including this State, for Birds Australia, will be telling us about her findings.

**Monday–Monday 21–28 September — Birds Australia 1998 Campout, Greenough Resort and Houtman Abrolhos Islands, WA**

Book early for your accommodation and also the two-day trip to the islands.

Telephone Perry House if you need more information or another application form.

Note: Registrations close 1 September.

**Saturday-Sunday, 17-18 October — Short Weekend Campout, Boyagin Rock**

Proceed on Brookton Hwy to the intersection of the York-Williams Road. Turn south and proceed to the Boyagin Road. Turn left. Signs will be in place. Travellers Atlas Map 55 C4.

Excellent bushbirding. An old favourite spot. Present leader can easily get you lost.

Toilets are the only facility so you need to bring water, tent, food, etc.

Those who wish to come for the day only are welcome on either Saturday or Sunday.

I will be on site late Friday afternoon 16 October.

Please advise the BA Office if you plan to attend.  
Leader: Clive Napier

**Monday 26 October Meeting — WA Tennis Centre,  
8:00 pm**  
Speaker to be advised.

**Monday 23 November Meeting — WA Tennis Centre,  
8:00 pm**  
Speaker to be advised.  
**NO DECEMBER MEETING**

## COMING EVENTS

### Short-weekend Campouts

- October 31-November 1: Julimar Forest
- November 28-29: Wilgarup, near Manjimup

### Remote Expedition

**August–September, 1999**

**Expedition to document distribution and breeding of the rare Princess Parrot in the Gibson Desert Region**

We are seeking **Expressions of Interest** from members who would like to be a part of this special remote expedition. Participants can either choose to come as a paying passenger, or bring their own late-model 4WD vehicle. (Because this will be such an arduous journey in a very remote area, vehicles need to be in top condition and no older than 8 years.)

We'll be officially starting from Carnegie Homestead, 1,400 km north-east of Perth. We'll head north-east via the Gunbarrel Highway, then north along the Gary Highway, then north-east along the Canning Stock Route, as far as Tobin Lake (Well 39). We'll then head south-west to join the Tallawana Track, then west to the Rudall River National Park. We'll finish at Newman (approximately 1,200 km from Perth). The distance from Carnegie to Newman is approximately 2,000 km, and we envisage the journey will take approximately 3 weeks.

Our primary purpose will be to locate populations of the Princess Parrot, and to obtain bird data generally for the new Atlas of Australian Birds.

Please register your interest and obtain further information from Bill McRoberts, trip leader, on (08) 9459 1971.

## Birding Sites Around Perth

Have you purchased your copy yet?  
Only \$20.00 including postage.  
Contact Perry House to order.

## Crossword Answers No 13

### Across

3 Asia; 5 spoonbill; 8 tree; 9 native; 10 trill; 11 post; 12 finch; 15 pitta; 17 lorikeet; 18 Rotamah; 22 reef; 23 Cape Barren; 25 shelf; 26 hylacola

### Down

1 boat; 2 el(l)iptical; 4 shell; 5 sandpiper; 6 bees; 7 Caspian Tern; 8 thin; 12 farms; 13 rail; 14 feet; 16 tattered; 19 heath; 20 teal; 21 prion; 24 era.



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