

Western Australian Bird Notes

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

No 87 September 1998

GREENSHANK COVE

Several seasons of observations at a back-water of the Peel Estuary, not far from Mandurah's holiday bustle, suggest that it is a Greenshank stopover of some significance. It is located on the estuary's western shore, midway between the Estuary (bypass bridge) and the Mandurah Quay development, thus opposite the Creery Wetlands. Measuring approximately 700 metres by 150 metres, it is separated from the main estuary by thick samphire beds, and vegetated on its western shore (pending the next phase of housing development) by healthy woodland of well-grown Marri, Flooded Gum, Sheoak and Tuart.

From 16 August 1997 until 19 December 1997 I made 29 observations between 6:30 am and 9:00 am and logged the following Greenshank numbers:

16.8.97	2	14.10.97	+120	30.10.97	40	29.11.97	5
23.8.97	3	16.10.97	110	2.11.97	45	1.12.97	2
25.8.97	12	19.10.97	120	3.11.97	23	11.12.97	4
10.9.97	2	21.10.97	48	6.11.97	40	12.12.97	5
15.9.97	45	23.10.97	52	11.11.97	30	13.12.97	2
30.9.97	67	25.10.97	+50	23.11.97	10	14.12.97	4
13.10.97	135	29.10.97	105	24.11.97	5	17.12.97	5
						19.12.97	5

Observation conditions and bird behaviour were such that these counts are offered with confidence; the highest count of 135 on 13.10.97 is especially reliable as the birds were placid, and aligned very evenly along a narrow beach. Visits after 19.12.97 have been infrequent, and have resulted in Greenshanks being observed only singly and in pairs.

Curlew Sandpipers were also present in significant numbers at the northern end of the site in late November 1997: November 22: 350+, November 23: 400+, November 24: 120. On 22 November, at 6 am, the birds were massed tightly in a feeding frenzy at banks of weed under the western end of the Estuary Bridge. Being disturbed by the increasing morning traffic, they moved down towards the mouth of 'Greenshank Cove'. I have not

subsequently seen more than small numbers of Curlew Sandpipers in this vicinity.

A species drawn seasonally to the southern end of the cove, where at high tide a natural drain connects with the main estuary, is the Grey-tailed Tattler. It is present in numbers from four to ten, mainly in November and December.

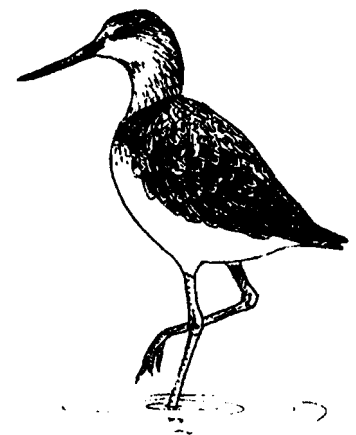
Water birds, other than waders, abound in 'Greenshank Cove', but without strong seasonal patterns. Worth mentioning, however, is an inward autumn movement as smaller water bodies dry out. In particular, April often brings small flocks of Black Swans and grebes, mainly Hoary-headed; these may be advance parties of the large rafts of grebes which may be observed in mid estuary on calm winter days.

The cove has two resident pairs of raptors, Whistling Kite and Osprey, with a record of nesting lasting at least 18 years. The kites, from a series of nesting platforms in a land-mark Tuart south of Mandurah Quay, have been consistently successful in raising single chicks. The Ospreys favour Marri trees west of 'Greenshank Cove', moving over the years, with occasional success, from a tall, burned-out stump, 800 metres inland, to the current stag-headed nest tree 60 metres from the water's edge.

Acknowledgment:

Waders of the Creery wetlands and adjacent mudflats, Western Australia.
Marcus J C Singor.

Frank Pridham



Common Greenshank
Drawing by Judy Blyth

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, 24/7/98, 10 km from Kalbarri on main road (Northampton) - CP

Musk Duck - 4000+, 13/7/98, lake in private land off Long Forrest Road near Goomalling (Goomalling) - RD

Freckled Duck - 1, 30/6/98, Eric Singleton Reserve, Bayswater (Bayswater) - HvW * 71, 8/4/98, Wheatfield Lake (Esperance) - AR * 2, 10/8/98, Lake Monger (Perth) - MH

Kerguelen Petrel - 4 in 4 hrs, 9/6/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP * 2, 28/6/98, Hillarys pelagic trip - FO *et al.*

White-headed Petrel - 10+, 27/5/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

Soft-plumaged Petrel - 20+ in 4 hrs, 4/6/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP * 80-100, 28/6/98, Hillarys pelagic trip - FO *et al.*

Blue Petrel - 2, 6/7/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

Slender-billed Prion - 1, 28/6/98, Hillarys pelagic trip - FO *et al.*

White-chinned Petrel - 2, 9/6/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

Grey Petrel - 1, 26/5/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

Hutton's Shearwater - 300+ (mostly groups of 6 to 30), 9/8/98, Hillarys Pelagic Trip - FO *et al.*

Shy Albatross - 3, 1/8/98, The Gap, near Albany (Albany) - FO * 4, 9/8/98, Hillarys Pelagic Trip - FO *et al.*

White-faced Storm-Petrel - 2, 7/6/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

Lesser Frigatebird - 1 male, 25/7/98, Safety Bay (Rockingham) - BG

Eastern Reef Egret - 1 (grey phase), 31/3/98, Sandy Bight, E of Cape Arid (Esperance) - AR

Glossy Ibis - 11, 16/8/98, Herdsman Lake (Stirling) - MC (high number for this area)

Australian White Ibis - 1, 19/2/98, behind Tagon Beach (Esperance) - AR (very few records from E of Esperance)

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - 7, 1/8/98, Nanarup Road in paddock between King and Kalgan Rivers (Albany) - FO

Brahminy Kite - 1, 28/6/98, Kingsley (Wanneroo) - DH (description supplied)

Australian Bustard - 1, 23/4/98, St Albans Rd/Mundijong Rd, Baldivis (Rockingham) - JC * 1, 9/6/98, Harvey River, 15 km W of Waroona (Waroona) - TS

Hooded Plover - 1, 7/7/98, Hamelin Bay (Augusta-Margaret River) - RP * 6, 4/7/98, 14.4 km from Wubin on road to Paynes Find (Dalwallinu) - JS, HS

Great Skua - 1, 30/5/98; 2, 7/6/98 & 2, 9/6/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP * 10, 9/8/98, Hillarys Pelagic Trip - FO *et al.* (high number for this area)

Arctic Jaeger - 2, 17/7/98, Pt Dalling, Dunsborough (Busselton) - RP

Lesser Noddy - 1 live, 5/6/98 and 1 dead, 7/6/98, both beachwashed, Safety Bay (Rockingham) - per BG

Long-billed Corella - pair inspecting tree hollows, 8/8/98, Bungendore Park (Armadale) - FO (note: this corella introduced from eastern Australia)

Spotted Pardalote - 20, 2/8/98, feeding on ground, car park in Stirling Range National Park (Gnowangerup) - FO

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

Brown Quail - 12, 24-25/6/98, Breeden Hills, near Well 48 (Halls Creek) - TD *et al.* (near southern limit in this area)

Australasian Gannet - 1 immature, 6/8/98, Cape Peron, Peron Peninsula (Shark Bay) - BN (unusual this far north)

Black-breasted Buzzard - 3, 12/7/98, on Jigalong road at 123°51'S, 120°09'E (East Pilbara) - JS, HS * 2, 14/7/98, Great Northern Hwy at South Gascoyne River crossing (Meekatharra) - JS, HS

Grey Falcon - 1, 27/6/98, near Well 42, Canning Stock Route (East Pilbara) - TD *et al.* * 2, 29/6/98, near Well 36, Canning Stock Route (East Pilbara) - TD *et al.*

Lesser Crested Tern - 3, 4/8/98, Cape Peron, Peron Peninsula (Shark Bay) - BN

Common Bronzewing - 1, 5/7/98, Terrace Hill, near Lake Disappointment, Canning Stock Route (Wiluna) - TD

Princess Parrot - 2, 30/6/98, between Wells 35 and 36, Canning Stock Route (East Pilbara) - TD *et al.*

Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush - 3, 12/7/98, on Jigalong road (East Pilbara) - JS, HS

Dusky Woodswallow - c. 20, 5/8/98, Cape Peron, Peron Peninsula (Shark Bay) - BN (unusual this far north)

Spinifexbird - 1, 23/6/98, near Well 49, Canning Stock Route (Halls Creek) - TD *et al.*

KIMBERLEY

Masked Booby - 2, 17/6/98, Quandong Point, near Broome (Broome) - BBO (unusual this close to Broome)

Letters to the Editor

Great Cormorant - 20, 15/5/98, Crab Creek mangroves (Broome) - BBO (unusual in Broome area)

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - 1, 28/6/98, Lake Champion (Broome) - BBO * 3, 19/7/98, Taylor's Lagoon (Broome) - BBO

Red Goshawk - 1, 9/6/98, Chapman River (Wyndham - East Kimberley) - SN *et al.*

Black Falcon - 1, 5/6/98, Camballin Station (Derby - West Kimberley) - SN *et al.*

Common Redshank - up to 3, 6/98 & 7/98, Roebuck Bay (Broome) - BBO

Little Bronze-Cuckoo - 1 female, 26/6/98, pindan 9 km W of BBO (Broome) - BBO * 1 male, 25/7/98, Crab Creek mangroves (Broome) - BBO

Spotted Nightjar - 1, 6/98 & 7/98, Crab Creek road (Broome) - BBO

Red-capped Robin - 1 male & 1 female, occasionally during 5/98 - 7/98, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - BBO * 1, 30 km E of Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - BBO (northern limit of wintering range)

Grey Fantail - 1, 19 & 20/5/98, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - BBO (rare winter visitor to Kimberley)

Masked Woodswallow - 1000s, around 10/5/98, moving W to E over Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) - BBO

Yellow Wagtail - 1, 11/5/98, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) - BBO (late date for this migrant)

Gouldian Finch - 1, red-headed, 9/7/98, Pumpkin Springs, near Kununurra (Wyndham - East Kimberley) - DB

OBSERVERS

AR = Allan Rose	JC = Jean Craig
BBO = Broome Bird Observatory	JS = John Start
BG = Bob Goodale	MC = Mike Craig
BN = Brenda Newbey	MH = Michael Hancock
DB = Donna Blyth	RD = Robert Davis
DH = David Hancock	RP = Ross Payton
FO = Frank O'Connor	SN = Simon Neville
HS = Helen Start	TD = Tom Delaney
HvW = Hank van Wees	TS = Trevor Stoneman

STOP PRESS!

The September General Meeting
is being held on
Monday 14 September
and NOT
21 September
due to the
Congress Campout that week!

Dear Sirs

Birds on Mount Florance Station

Just a few observations I wish to share with others. After rain in the middle of June, I was out walking on the afternoon of 16 June and observed a Black-shouldered Kite hovering above before he flew off in an easterly direction. A few weeks later on 3 July I came across a bird I have been particularly looking for — a Rufous-crowned Emu-wren. In fact I saw two in different locations. The following day my husband and I went back for another look and much closer to the house we heard many but only sighted a male and two females. I have walked through this same area many times and seen many groups of Striated Grass-wrens but no emu-wrens, this time the situation was reversed.

Our station is situated on the Fortescue River in the shadow of the Hamersley Ranges and the homestead is approximately halfway between Millstream National Park and Wittenoom. We have a birdlist of 125 now, the majority are resident but some are seasonal. We are lucky in that we have diverse land systems and vegetation and so get quite a variety of birds across the area.

Robyn Richardson

WA Group Reports

BIRDS AUSTRALIA-WA GROUP COMMITTEE

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

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

Recent committee meetings have dealt with the following:

Atlas of Australian Birds #2 Project — Cheryl Gole has been appointed to the part-time position of project coordinator WA for an initial term of one year; Cheryl will be seeking the assistance of WA members to make this project a successful one; it is envisaged that the #2 Atlas will be the only new WA project until completion so as to focus the efforts of our members; a more detailed report from Cheryl is elsewhere in this issue; some GPS units have been obtained from the National Office and will be tested at the forthcoming Kathleen Valley survey to ascertain their value for the #2 Atlas Project.

Remote area excursions — interest is being shown in the 1998 and 1999 trips with 35 people so far for the 1998 survey to the Kathleen Valley near Leonora.

Birds Australia Annual Campout being run this year by the WA Group at Greenough, 21-28 September — keen interest is being shown in this campout, including

participation by members from the Eastern States; at least three boats have been booked for the overnight trips to the Houtman Abrolhos; social events planned for the evenings include a barbecue, guest speakers and a semi-formal dinner.

New Members' Night, Monday 9 November at the State Tennis Centre, Burswood — all new members are invited to attend; you can get to know our Committee and project coordinators who will give you a general idea of their work in the WA Group.

Conservation:

- Lee Fontanini (BAWAG representative on Lake Muir Catchment Management Group) has provided a detailed report on the group's activities and future plans; the Management Group has requested quarterly surveys of the area by our members and it is hoped a positive response from volunteers will be received; CALM will be providing significant funding for the improvements at Lake Muir to reduce salinity.
- Regional Forest Agreement — a copy of this draft has been received and Mike Bamford will be submitting appropriate comments to the effect the report needs to make a definite statement regarding the protection of old growth forests so as to provide nesting hollows.
- Lake McLarty — discussions have been held with CALM regarding the adjoining subdivision and every endeavour will be made to protect the area.
- Alfred Cove — protection of mudflats from dogs — contact is being made with the City of Melville outlining the need for the erection of signs asking that people refrain from walking their dogs on the mudflats, together with general information on caring for the birds in the area.
- Wetlands Coordinating Committee — Mike Bamford is our representative on this government body and the initial meeting with representatives of CALM, Planning, Environmental Protection, Agriculture and community groups recently took place.
- Fairy Terns nesting at Woodman Point — Mike Bamford will be contacting the City of Cockburn suggesting the erection of appropriate information boards regarding the nesting sites and expressing appreciation for the 4WD access barricades to the area.
- Conservation Council of WA — affiliation with this body has been renewed for a further year to 30 June 1999, our representatives being Ms Darryl James and Dr Nic Dunlop.
- Swan-Avon Catchment Management — Clive Nealon (as Acting Chairman) recently attended the official launch by the Swan River Trust; John Dunsmore will be the BAWAG representative on the Catchment sub-committee which is planning future action in the event that the Natural Heritage Trust grant is approved.

Trading Table — Judy Blyth has provided three designs for bird cards and satisfactory quotations received for printing; some of the more popular cards will be reprinted, eg, Splendid and White-winged Fairy-wrens and Mike Bamford has given permission for his drawings to be used in a reprint.

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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 December 1998 Issue
1 November 1998
at Perry House**

Birds on Farms Project — this project is progressing well, with some participants having completed their eight surveys; the project should be concluded within nine months and participants are being encouraged to now take part in the #2 Atlas surveys.

Hooded Plover Project — David Free and Allan Jones are coordinating the planning for the September surveys, with Allan Rose covering the area east of the Norseman-Esperance highway and Perth members the area to the west of the highway; perhaps this survey will not be similarly affected by the heavy unseasonable rain which occurred during the last survey in February.

Education/Public Relations — Judy Blyth continues to promote Birds Australia with such activities as talks to elderly citizens, walks/talks to primary school children and setting up a permanent display for the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre; Bryan Barrett has led some walks with a group of disabled children and Clive Napier has given talks to groups such as Probus.

Student grants to attend observatory courses — Mike Bamford is selecting the recipients of the two scholarships for 1998.

Kings Park Brochure — Allan Jones and John Dell (text) and Judy Blyth and Susan Tingay (illustrations) have put together a beautiful, full-colour brochure on the birds of Kings Park, jointly funded by the Gordon Reid Foundation and the Kings Park Board.

WA Museum — printing of *Handbook of Western Australian Birds* by R E Johnstone and the late G M Storr —BAWAG has given a sum of \$500 towards the cost of this publication.

Lease of Perry House — as from 8 July, the Town of Cambridge has transferred the lease held by BAWAG to the Kings Park Board, as part of the overall transfer of Bold Park Regional Park; the official handover ceremony took place early in August with BAWAG leading public walks through the park afterwards.

British Birdwatching Fair — the Birds Australia observatories will be participating in this event and BAWAG has contributed \$1000 towards the cost of the stand at the fair; a range of WA Group bird cards have been put together for sale at the fair, to be collected by Janet Sparrow on her way to England, with the proceeds being divided equally between Eyre and Broome observatories.

Indexes of *WA Bird Notes* and Rare/Unusual Sightings — the drafts of these booklets are being checked prior to printing.

Clive Napier
WA GROUP CHAIRMAN

WANTED

The Malleefowl Preservation Group
are seeking volunteer assistance in manning
their display

Kings Park Wildflower Festival, 1998
18-28 September

Volunteers are needed on a half-day basis to chat to visitors, hand out brochures and sell Malleefowl merchandise.

Contact: Susanne Dennings
Coordinator
Tel 9828 2007 Fax: 9828 2018
Email: malleefowl_wa@bigpond.com

TREASURER'S REPORT

The following income and expenditure statement for the period 1 January to 30 June 1998 is presented for the information of members:

	1998 ytd	1997
	\$ (equiv 6 mths)	
		\$
Cash at bank 1/1/98	5728.11	
b/f		
Plus Receipts		
Campout deposits	4943.80	
Functions	111.11	47.60
Book sales	2786.98	512.00
WA Bird Notes	40.00	120.00
Trading table	3383.27	4735.22
Bank interest	16.96	7.62
Donations	486.85	50.00
*Grants	19691.05	8680.00
Other (O/S chqs, etc)	800.15	281.45
Total Receipts	32260.17	14474.19
Less Expenditure		
Campout expenses	432.00	-
WA Bird Notes	2010.45	2314.86
Office expenses	1024.45	836.36
Capital expenses	1046.00	2290.00
Functions	-	246.74
Bank charges	104.20	34.60
Book purchases	1226.38	791.75
Rent	581.22	581.22
Utilities	788.78	1106.90
*Grants	12292.20	5622.04
Accounting	360.00	500.00
Trading table expenses	-	88.00
Insurance	439.38	-
Petty cash	143.40	54.00
Computer requisites	149.00	-
Sundries	-	244.60
Total Expenditure	20597.46	14722.07
Balance on hand	17390.82	

* Granting agencies are:

Sources	Projects
Gordon Reid	Birds on Farms
Gordon Reid	Brochures
World Wide Fund for Nature	Hooded Plover
World Wide Fund for Nature	Western Ground Parrot
Healthways	Promotions
Main Roads Department	Road Verges

Greg Wyllie/Mary Vaughan

LIBRARY NEWS

The following publications have been accessioned since the last report:

- *Galah*, No 23, May 1998; No 26, June 1998; No 27, July 1998
- *The Greener Times*, Conservation Council Newsletter, June 1998; July 1998
- *The Bird Observer*, Bird Observers Club, No 786; No 787, July 1998
- Rotomah Island Bird Observatory Activities Program, 1998
- *Emu*, RAOU Journal vol 98 Part 2, June 1998
- Cumberland Bird Observers Club Newsletter, vol 19 No 6, May/June 1998
- *CALM News*, January/February 1998
- South Australian Ornithological Association Newsletter, No 166, June 1998
- *Tattler*, Wader Studies Group Newsletter, Nos 14/15, May 1998
- Jurabi and Bundegie Coastal Parks and Muiron Islands Draft Management Plan, 1998, Shire of Exmouth, CALM, National Parks/Nature Conservation Authority
- Swan-Canning Clean Up Program: Draft Action Plan, Swan River Trust, July 1998
- Lake Mealup Preservation Society Newsletter, vol 11, No 2, July 1998
- *Rangeflash*, Rangeway Project newsletter, July 1998

Liz Walker
LIBRARIAN

BIRDS ON FARMS, AND ROAD VERGES

The project is proceeding, now past the halfway mark. A few participants have finished their eight seasonal surveys. The following is a brief summary of WA data processed up to April 1998.

Breeding. (Kimberley not included and based on one breeding record per species per survey) There are 210 breeding records. The seasonal breakdown is: spring (152), summer (21), autumn (12) and winter (29).

Seventy species have been recorded breeding. Those recorded once only include Pallid Cuckoo, Mulga Parrot, Laughing Turtledove, Silveryeye, Western Spinebill and Mistletoebird.

Birds of Prey. The species listed are those which occur throughout the WA survey area including the Kimberley. The numbers in brackets are the numbers of individuals recorded: Nankeen Kestrel (170); Whistling Kite (122); Wedge-tailed Eagle (107); Black-shouldered Kite (95); Brown Falcon (42); Brown Goshawk (32); Little Falcon (14); Little Eagle (11); Spotted Harrier (11); Peregrine Falcon (10); Collared Sparrowhawk (9).

Isolation and Tree-history. The small table below shows data from the Twenty-minute (0.5 ha) sites excluding the Kimberley. The numbers are the number of bird species and the bracketed numbers are the number of sites in the sample. The factors being compared are isolation of sites and tree-history — revegetation or remnant. The level of

isolation of the sites was determined subjectively with reference to diagrams. There appears to be more species in remnant areas than revegetated sites.

Sites	Isolated	Semi-isolated	Not isolated
Revegetated	51 (20)	72 (69)	72 (24)
Remnant	68(17)	98 (44)	115 (92)

Brenda Newbey
WA Coordinator, Birds on Farms Project

WA MID-SUMMER WADER SURVEY, FEBRUARY 1998

The Western Australian Wader Study Group's mid-summer survey was held over 7-8 February. Wader study groups in other states held similar surveys at the same time. This year a higher number of members participated with encouraging results; let us hope the count next year will be even more successful. The survey is held in February each year to monitor WA shorebird habitats at the peak of summer when wader numbers are considered to be most stable. The areas studied varied from tidal beaches and wet season marshes of the Kimberley, to the sandy beaches, estuaries and inlets on the south coast, from the exposed reef platforms of Rottneest and Garden Islands to saline and freshwater inland lakes. These different locations were monitored via the efforts of 78 observers who must be congratulated for their great contributions during the count.

As expected the highest bird numbers were reported from the Kimberley region with 49 361 birds counted between Wyndham and the Eighty Mile Beach. In the south of the state between Cervantes and Esperance the number was 39 492.

Unfortunately we were unable to recruit observers in the Pilbara, which leaves a huge gap in the program for the area between Karratha and Carnarvon. We hope this can be remedied before next year's count. Where are you, birders of the North West?

A surprising number of different species were seen from Cervantes, Perth lakes, Rottneest and Garden Islands, Woodman Point and the Swan estuary.

Unfortunately the situation further south at the Peel Inlet was rather disappointing. The Mandurah Birders reported a total of only 21 migratory waders between the Serpentine River and Boundary Island. This was due to a float plane operator flying into the Mandurah Quays development. Last year at this same site 766 trans-equatorial migrants were counted out of a combined total of 882 birds (a year when the observers considered wader numbers to be down). The northern Peel Inlet is a most valuable water bird habitat and a designated RAMSAR site. Birds Australia should protest against this type of blatant disregard of the environment.

Observations elsewhere were more encouraging with positive reports from most locations. At Lake McLarty and Leschenault Inlet high bird counts and a high number of species were recorded, while at Yalgorup, a high Hooded

Plover presence, including evidence of breeding was reported (see table). Members weren't available to monitor the areas between Bunbury and Walpole, but the baton was taken up by Albany members who visited the sites between Wilsons Inlet and Albany with more good sightings. The Hooded Plover Group completed the survey by monitoring habitats at Bremer Bay, the south coast beaches and the lakes around Esperance.

The members who sent in data from inland lakes deserve a special mention as conditions were quite warm on the coast, so hiking around an inland salt lake would have been trying to say the least.

Summary

Kimberley Region: Total no. of waders: 49 796
 Total species for region: 31
 Total no. of trans-equatorial migrants: 48 886

Five locations were covered at Broome: three sites on the Eighty Mile Beach and two sites on Roebuck Bay. Wyndham data were collected from the marshes around the causeway.

Broome: Total no. of species: 26
 Most numerous species: Great Knot
 20 538
 Total no. of birds 49 481

Wyndham: Total no. of species: 13
 Most numerous : Marsh Sandpiper
 141
 Total no. of birds: 315
 Masked Lapwing: breeding evidence
 (see Kimberley table for summary of data)

Pilbara: No reports

South-west: Total no. of birds: 35 198
 Total no. of species: 34
 Comparing figures from the 1997 survey, there is an increase in the numbers of most species at many of the same sites surveyed last year. Bar-tailed Godwits contradict this trend. This species has been absent from south-west habitats where past records show the bird as normally present.

Rottneet Is: Very high no. of Banded Stilts on the island: 32
 Sanderling: 77 seen at Salmon Bay encouraging

Garden Is: 28 Grey Plovers highest number recorded on the island.
 Banded Lapwing breeding on the island in significant numbers.

L McLarty: Site with highest number of waders, 13 145
 5468 Red-necked Avocets, highest recorded at site.
 Only site to contain Long-toed Stint during survey.
 Significant Sharp-tailed Sandpiper numbers, at almost 2400.

Yalgorup NP: Exceptional Hooded Plover data (85 birds plus breeding)

Leschenault Inlet: 15 Eastern Curlews, highest number in south-west during survey.
 68 Grey Plovers, highest number in south-west during survey.

Wilson Inlet: High numbers of trans-equatorial migrants (Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint)
 High numbers of resident waders (Red-capped Plover, Banded Stilt, Red-necked Avocet)

South Coast:

Esperance: 5400 Banded Stilts during Hooded Plover survey, 12/2/98-16/2/98.
 328 Hooded Plovers includes 30 immature birds.

Combined totals of the Kimberley and South-west Regions:

Shorebirds	84 994
Other species	35

Thanks to all of the members involved for a great effort. Particular appreciation to Chris and Jan and the team at BBO, Jan Lewis at Wyndham, the Albany Birding Group, Frank Pridham and the Mandurah Birders, the Hooded Plover Group and Boyd Wykes and helpers at Garden Island.

The Wader Study Group will be conducting another summer count on 7 February 1999. We welcome members particularly from the Pilbara and inland locations as well as the areas between Bunbury and Augusta (it seems that observers are harder to find than shorebirds in these areas). We have again managed to obtain the use of the UWA's facilities at Rottneet at very reasonable rates. Members attending will also have the option of an extra two days on the island. This will enable us to possibly visit the West End and watch the Wedge-tailed Shearwaters returning to their nesting burrows and also observe the island's varied bush birds.

Have fun in February at a wetland near you. Join us and spend a day with the waders. Those wishing to participate can do so by filling in the form included in this newsletter.

A species list and a guide to procedures will then be forwarded on to you.

Colin Davis

TABLE K1

**WA MID-SUMMER WADER SURVEY, KIMBERLEY REGION
8 FEBRUARY 1998**

SPECIES AT EACH SITE	17	21	25	12	31	
	Broome Town Bch	Roebuck Man-Crab	80 Mile Beach	Wyndham Causeway	Species Total	Trans Eq Migrants
Pied Oystercatcher		38	9		47	
Sooty Oystercatcher		14			14	
Masked Lapwing				4	4	
Black-fronted Plover				4	4	
Grey Plover	61	36	335		432	432
Pacific Golden Plover		2	5		7	7
Red-kneed Dotterel				2	2	
Lesser Sand Plover	14	18	6	1	39	39
Large Sand Plover	470	525	2948		3942	3942
Red-capped Plover			207	46	253	
Black-winged Stilt			80	56	136	
Ruddy Turnstone	1350	185	88		1623	1623
Eastern Curlew	13	167	79	1	260	260
Whimbrel	8	99			107	107
Little Curlew			175		175	175
Grey-tailed Tattler	130	581	936		1647	1647
Common Sandpiper	5	8		4	17	17
Greenshank	25	3	421	46	495	495
Marsh Sandpiper	3		81	141	225	225
Terek Sandpiper	20	108	593		721	721
Black-tailed Godwit		1015	13		1028	1028
Bar-tailed Godwit	2020	5071	5738		12829	12829
Red Knot	20	895	2403		3318	3318
Great Knot	500	6316	13722		20538	20538
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper			1	9	10	10
Red-necked Stint	60	30	985		1075	1075
Curlew Sandpiper	115	286	394	1	796	796
Ruff - Reeve			1		1	1
Broad-billed Sandpiper		1	1		2	2
Asian Dowitcher	2	5	1		8	8
Oriental Plover			40		40	40
TOTAL NO. OF BIRDS	4816	15403	29262	315	49796	48886

Town Beach: Roebuck Bay Town Beach to Port
 Man Crab: Roebuck Bay Mangroves to Crab Creek
 80 Mile Bch: 0-15 km of 80 Mile Beach from Anna Plains Stn
 Wyndham: Marshes around Causeway

W.A. MID SUMMER WADER SURVEY FEB 1998																			TOTAL	
SOUTHWEST REGION											CERVANTES TO ESPERANCE						TOTAL			
SPECIES AT EACH SITE	4	13	18	7	9	11	6	14	4	14	10	14	12	3	10	8	6	34		
LOCATION	CERV	PLKS	ROTT	GRDN	CBNS	SEMP	MAND	MCLRTY	YALG	LESC	WILS	APRH	OYHA	CPRC	BREM	INLD	ESPERANCE			
PIED OYSTERCATCHER			7	13	2	46	19			13		2	49	1	16			168		
SOOTY OYSTCATCHER				2								3		1	5			11		
BANDED LAPWING		2	24	P(B)						9								35+		
GREY PLOVER			12	28	6	27				68		35	22				3	201		
RED-KNEED DOTTEREL		5						6								2		13		
HOODED PLOVER									85(B)					2	100		328^	515		
LESSER SAND PLOVER			1															1		
LARGE SAND PLOVER			4								2	25	3		1			35		
RED-CAPPED PLOVER	26	209	180(B)	39	32	243		422(B)	125	187	460	9	27		220	276	12	2476		
BLACK-FRTD PLOVER		69						11										99		
BLACK WINGED STILT	16	1272	5			387	714	2439		26	519				17	55		5450		
BANDED STILT		23	3284			4	150	125	5		767					1	3500	7859		
RED-NECKED AVOCET		100	11					5468			1253				120		6952	6952		
RUDDY TURNSTONE	9		175	5	7					15	1	1						198		
EASTERN CURLEW													1					16		
WHIMBREL			1															1		
WOOD SANDPIPER		8																8		
GREY-TAILED TATTLER			1		1							3	2					7		
COMMON SANDPIPER		2	2	7	2		1								1	2		15		
GREENSHANK	12	6	1		5	6	2	8		22	275	29	13		3		4	386		
MARSH SANDPIPER								37		2						1		40		
TEREK SANDPIPER										1								1		
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT								25										25		
BAR-TAILED GODWIT			4							8		7						19		
RED KNOT						5						90	45					140		
GREAT KNOT						68				58		370	133					629		
SHARP-TAIL SANDPIPER						63	18	2370		25	1059	41	18					3594		
PECTORAL SADPIPER		1																1		
RED-NECKED STINT		5	438		3	1105		529	13	902	2709	550	600		341		450	7645		
LONG-TOED STINT								7										7		
CURLEW SANDPIPER			90			349		1694		47	552	55	45					2832		
SANDERLING			77	37	6					1								120		
RUFF-REEVE																		1		
ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE		1																1		
Totals	63	1703	4317	131	64	2303	904	13145	228	1383	7595	1220	958	4	824	359	4294	39492		

LOCATION LEGEND

- CERV : Cervantes (LAKE THETIS)
- PLKS : Perth Lakes (TABLE 1)
- ROTT : Rottnest Island (TABLE 2)
- GRDN : Garden Island (TABLE 3)
- CBNS : Cockburn Sound "
- SEMP : Swan Estuary Marine Park:
Alfred Cove & Pelican Pt only**
- MAND : Mandurah Peel Inlet Nairns to
Mandurah Quays
- MCLRTY : Lake Mclarty
- YALG : Four Lakes in Yalgorup National Park
- LESC : Leschenault Estuary
- WILS : Wilson Inlet Five Sites
- APRH : Albany Princess Royal Harbour
- OYHA : Albany Oyster Harbour
- CPRC : Cape Riche South Coast
- BREM : Bremer Bay area (TABLE 4)
- INLD : Inland Lakes (TABLE 5)
- P : Present: Species observed at site
but not counted
- B : Breeding: Denotes runners or eggs
- ** : Milyu not included due to late count
- A : Immature birds
- Trans-equatorial migrants 15473
- Residents 24019

NEW COMPUTER FOR WA GROUP OFFICE



Under the Lotteries Commission of WA Community Cultural Program, we have received a grant of \$2050.20 for the purchase of a Pentium computer.

This modern equipment will assist in the preparation of the following:

- information leaflets and work sheets for community displays and school programs;
- printing and distributing reports and bird data to members, the general community, students, Government departments and corporate bodies;
- a record of wildlife carers (frequent public requests on injured birds);
- the preparation of newsletters, rural brochures and research reports;
- up-to-date record of reference material, books, etc. for sale;
- financial database;
- database for bird distribution and research information;
- internet access to other bird web sites (CALM, etc);
- faster printing out of data.

We take this opportunity to thank the Lotteries Commission for the grant to purchase this new computer to help us with our many community projects.

The computer donated to us by Frank O'Connor will be retained in our research office for various programs including Atlas II.

Allan Jones

ATLASSERS WANTED

What do we need from you?

- Your birdwatching skills
 - Your interest
 - Your enthusiasm
- Your ability to share local and regional information
- Your willingness to help locally or regionally

Be part of an exciting project with excellent birding opportunities

Apply now. There's an atlassing vacancy near you!

To register as an atlasser:

Write, phone or fax:

Atlas, BAWAG, 71 Oceanic Dr, Floreat WA 6014
Tel: (08) 9383 7749 Fax: (08) 9387 8412

To offer some help: above address, or:
Cheryl Gole: Tel/fax: (08) 9293 4958

Members' Contributions

DARTER FISHING

If I had ever needed proof that Darters spear their fish, I no longer do!

As we scanned the river from the boat-ramp at Claughton Reserve, a pale-necked Darter surfaced barely 10 metres away, with a 15 cm yellowtail firmly impaled on both mandibles.

The bird made several attempts to dislodge the fish but the jerky upward thrusts only succeeded in impaling it more firmly.

Disconcerted, the Darter submerged, resurfacing 10 metres further on with the fish still speared.

Warily, it moved into the bank and attempted to dislodge the fish, first with sideways movements, then by dragging it against the bank or the exposed roots of sheoaks. Initially it was unsuccessful, but after several attempts it managed to loosen the fish, deftly tossing and catching it, head down, before swallowing it.

The plump yellowtail shape moved down the bird's throat by degrees, distending the neck till it reached the base.



Darter fishing
Drawing by Pam Agar

The Darter, having won the round, retreated to a low branch on the opposite bank to dry its wings — and possibly to endure a long period of indigestion!

Pam Agar

NEWCOMER'S NOTEBOOK

I am a newcomer to Australian birdwatching, my only previous experience being in England well over 30 years ago with the RSPB, sending in reports of migratory seabirds from the North Norfolk coastline whilst performing my duties as a member of the Constabulary. I had until recently considered Australian bird species somewhat dull, unobtrusive and, like the majority of people I noticed only the common magpies, ravens, etc. During December of last year my attention was drawn to a particular bird which visited a flowering gum tree at the front of my garden. From dawn till dusk this bird sang daily, but because it was high in the tree I was unable to identify or even see it.

