

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.

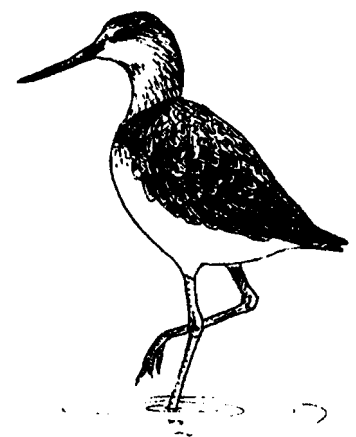
Water birds, other than waders, abound in 'Greenshank Cove', but without strong seasonal patterns. Worth mentioning, however, is an inward autumn movement as smaller water bodies dry out. In particular, April often brings small flocks of Black Swans and grebes, mainly Hoary-headed; these may be advance 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, Baldavis (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 (Armada) - 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)

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

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - 1, 28/6/98, Lake Campion (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!

Letters to the Editor

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 Rottnest 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, Rottnest 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.
Rottne 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.
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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 Rottne 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																		
SOUTHWEST REGION CERVANTES TO ESPERANCE																		
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 OYSTERCATCHER				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-FRNTD PLOVER		69						11								19		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						1	1						198
EASTERN CURLEW										15			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													120
RUFF-REEVE								1										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 Nairs 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



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.

This became a challenge, and being interested in sound recording I made a tape recording of it, which I transferred to my computer to remove the traffic background and other extraneous noises. Whilst playing it back, the bird, small and brown, appeared hovering at the open sliding door leading into the front garden, in response to the tape I was playing. Visiting my local library I obtained a field guide and comparing the features I had noted it appeared to be a common Brown Honeyeater. I also noted in the guide the information about joining Birds Australia, of which I have subsequently become a member.

One of my first walks, conducted by Neil Porteous, was at the Canning River reserve. Here my attitude to, and comprehension of Australian bird life was to change dramatically. I discovered that the saying "Seek and ye shall find" held an even greater significance when it came to birds. I was amazed to discover that over 30 species were seen on that walk, which was only a short distance from my home. I was captured, netted, or whatever and have since participated in other walks and camps, finding that there is a whole new world of spectacular colour and song in our native bushland if you take the time to look around you.

Unfortunately my career in broadcasting and communication electronics came to an abrupt end ten years ago after a visit to hospital, but this has not prevented me from pursuing electronics as a hobby. I am very interested in recording bird calls, and in photography. Already my library of songs and photos is growing: many are mediocre, but occasionally a gem occurs amongst the many takes and shots made. It can also be a bit frustrating: at the conclusion of a long weekend camp, and being tired, I accidentally overwrote a recording of the Noisy Scrub-bird I made on the last Albany Campout, replacing it with the evening call of many honeyeaters and a currawong. (Next time I will knock the recording tab out of the cassette!!) It means I will have to return and record the Noisy Scrub-bird all over again, but the pleasure of meeting the members of the Albany group again will make it all worthwhile. They certainly made the Perth Group welcome, imparting local knowledge where ever possible.

To other newcomers who have not been on any walks yet, I say come and give it a try. There is no pressure on the rate of progress through the bush, and if you feel like leaving during the walk no one will think any the worse of you. In fact on several occasions some members will only participate in part of the walk if they have other commitments that day. Bring a hat, water bottle and a packet of lunch and a flask of coffee or tea to enjoy at the end of the walk when we tally up the day's observations. Oh yes, a pair of binoculars is essential! (If you do not have a pair yet, I am certain any of the members will be able to give advice on the most suitable ones to purchase according to your budget.) I have found that the really keen birdwatchers also do not go out according to the weather forecast. So far this year walks have taken place in 40 degree heat and in torrential rain, so you arm yourself with either sunscreen lotion and a large hat or waterproof gear. The weather conditions in between are a bonus and most enjoyable.

Concluding these notes, I can say I have found a great spirit of friendship amongst many members. The leaders of the walks are very knowledgeable and ready to assist and guide the newcomer through the maze of birds, in a very easy and understanding way. Initially one refers to "a small brownish coloured bird" but it is not long before you can give it a name and point out its specific identification markings. Becoming knowledgeable takes a long time and dedication to learning is important. Since becoming a member I think the most important advice I have received is: "stop, look and listen". Pause either to sit on a tree trunk or stand in the shade and take in the complete picture surrounding you. This is when an elusive sighting is likely to occur, especially when in non people-inhabited areas. This is what makes birding so fascinating and rewarding: there is something new on every new walk; like seeing an unfortunate heron being taken by a young sea-eagle and observing at close range the colours and listening to the calls of the many species that abound within the metropolitan area and the outlying bushland reserves, parks and forests.

Sounds like a commercial, doesn't it? Then again, if you have not been on a walk yet please give it a go. See you on the next walk. Happy twitching.

David Smithdale

REPORT ON FIELD MEETING AT STINTON CASCADE NATURE RESERVE ON 27 JUNE

Despite adverse weather forecasts 17 enthusiastic members met at Gardener Road at 0830 hours. We were very lucky as the morning turned out to be sunny and cool with little wind and no rain until after 1100 hours.

The object was to carry out a survey of this nature reserve that is vested in CALM and copies of the results will be forwarded to their Kelmscott and Mundaring offices.

The reserve is typical of Jarrah/Marri forest with a seasonal stream running in a deep valley and a small dam and an open grass field in the centre. A fire went through about 15 hectares on 4 May.

A group of Birds Australia members have surveyed this reserve every two years since 1992. The same two routes have been followed on each occasion for a period of about two hours.

Not only were species recorded but also the number of individuals of each species. The results are interesting. On 20 June 1992 29 species and 191 individual birds were recorded. On 7 May 1994 28 species and 188 individuals were seen. On 18 May 1996 32 species and 207 individuals were recorded. On this last occasion we recorded 32 species and 236 individuals, the later figure being boosted by a flock of about 50 Dusky Woodswallows.

Four species were recorded for the first time but we failed to see seven species that had been seen on previous surveys. Over the four surveys 39 species have been recorded.

In addition to birds we identified 11 plants in flower, heard two species of frog calling and saw several interesting fungi. One member found a freshly killed Mardo (*Antechinus flavipes*). This was particularly

interesting as this species had not been recorded in the mammal surveys carried out in this reserve previously. It was, most likely, killed by a feral cat. Cats kill but rarely eat *Antechinus* species.

Helen and I would like to thank all the members who attended the meeting for their knowledge and enthusiasm, most particularly David James.

Notes

- The same route was followed on all occasions, about 4 km.
- Each survey lasted about two hours.
- Average number of observers was 12.

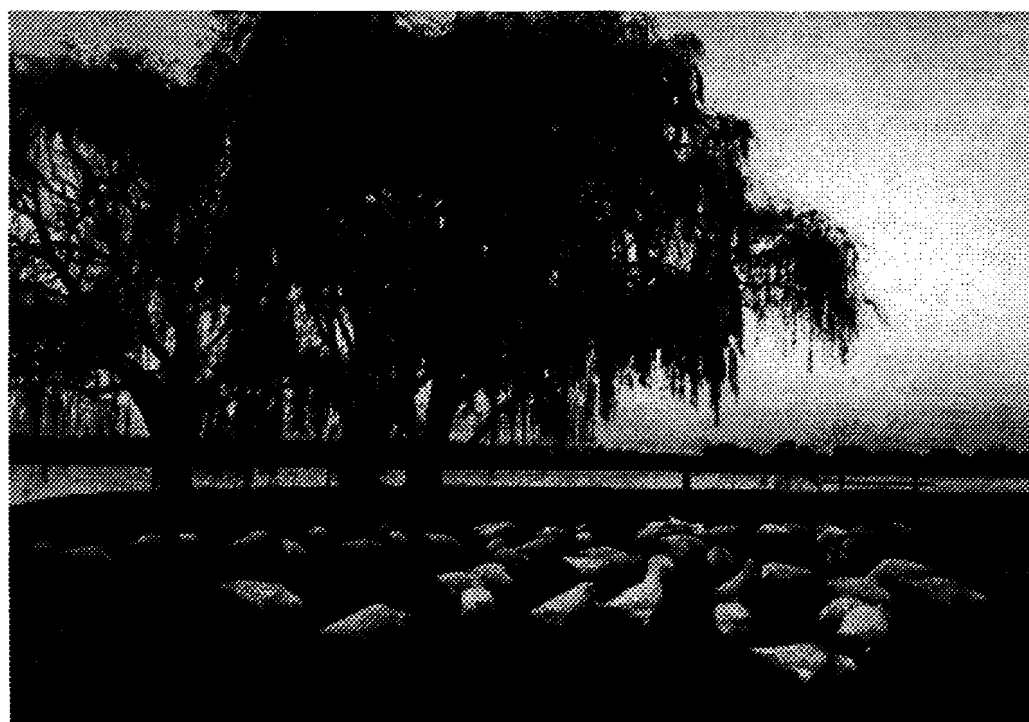
John Start

FERAL CORELLA COUNT

Following inspection of results in the WA Group's Suburban Bird Survey, and with input from many individual members of BAWAG, 13 areas (listed in table 1) were selected for the corella count on Sunday 28/6/98. These were locations at which significant numbers of corellas of one or more species have been regularly or usually observed, at least over the last year or so. The detailed sites searched and results are in Table 2.

Area searched	Observers
Around Guildford: along Swan River from Helena River north to Middle Swan Bridge	Ian and Eleanor Rowley
Swan River, from Tonkin Hwy north to Helena River	Hank van Wees
Swan River flats from South Perth foreshore north to Tonkin Hwy.	Bryan Barrett
Lower Swan River at Point Resolution and around Claremont and Subiaco	Di Beckingham
Lower Swan River at Chidley Point Golf course	Brenda Newbey
Lower Swan River at Point Walter south and west to Preston Point	Ros Sadlier
Manning Lake	Audrey Turner
Lake Joondalup	David Lamont
Carine Open Space and Lake Gwelup	Michael Hancock
Lake Monger, Lake Herdsman and Subiaco	Graeme Smith
Canning River; mouth to Kent Street Weir	George and Pam Agar
Canning River; Kent Street Weir to Royal St Kenwick	John and Judy Blyth
Canning River; Royal St Kenwick east and south towards Kelmscott	Clive and Wendy Napier

Table 1: Observers and the areas they searched in the corella count.



Most observers used a combination of driving to cover as many separate sites as possible and walking at specific sites to cover as much area as possible. All observers used binoculars, and, after some discussion, I believe that all identifications as to which species was seen are reliable.

Little Corellas at Lake Monger.
Photo Judy Blyth

Table 2: Results of the Perth metropolitan corella count.

Observers	Sites	Results
Ian and Eleanor Rowley	Around Guildford: along Swan River from Helena River north to Middle Swan Bridge	A total of between 400 and 600, mainly Little Corellas, but including four Long-billed Corellas. All apparently roosting in Stirling Square.
Hank van Wees	Claughton Reserve Sandy beach Pickering Park	No corellas Thirteen Long-billed Corellas Three Long-billed Corellas, 30 to 40 unidentified corellas
Bryan Barrett	Point Reserve Included Eric Singleton Reserve, Ascot and Belmont Racecourses, Edwards, McCallum and Sir James Mitchell Parks.	About 80, probably Little Corellas. No corellas
Di Beckingham	Foreshore opposite cnr of Birdwood pde and Waratah Ave, Dalkeith Point Resolution, Dalkeith Nedlands Golf Course Subiaco Primary School	24 Long-billed Corellas No corellas No corellas About 40, mainly Little Corellas, roosting
Brenda Newbey	Lower Swan River around Chidley Point Golf course	No corellas
Ros Sadlier	Blackwall Reach Point Walter Reserve	No corellas About 70 Long-billed Corellas
Audrey Turner	Manning Lake	Four Long-billed Corellas, feeding
David Lamont	Lake Joondalup (searched at all access points)	No corellas
Michael Hancock	Carine Open Space Lake Gwelup	Four Long-billed Corellas, one Little Three Little Corellas
Graeme Smith	Lake Monger Lake Herdsman	About 90 Little Corellas, SW corner No corellas
George and Pam Agar	Canning River; mouth to Kent Street Weir	Fourteen Long-billed Corellas at Kent St Weir
John and Judy Blyth	Canning River; Kent Street Weir to Royal St Kenwick	No corellas
Clive and Wendy Napier	Canning River; Royal St Kenwick east and south towards Kelmscott	No corellas

The survey has, perhaps not surprisingly, raised more questions than it has answered. Nevertheless, several interesting points can be made from the results.

First, it seems clear that the flocks of corellas seen around Perth are usually dominated by one or other of Little Corellas or (eastern) Long-billed Corellas. That is, no really mixed flocks were reported, although Ian Rowley saw at least four Long-billed Corellas apparently roosting with hundreds of Little Corellas.

Second, although this conclusion should be treated with caution, no convincing sightings were made of Western (long-billed) Corellas from the metropolitan area, although several members have reported sightings in the

past. Coincidentally, while Judy and I were driving around Beverley a week or so after the corella count, we observed a small flock of about 20 Western Corellas near the town. Graeme Smith tells me that these are almost certainly the northern sub-species of the Western Corella, being an outlier of the expanding population centred on Moora and Coorow. If this population continues its expansion into the metropolitan area it will make identification even more difficult and confusing (to say nothing of making any efforts at control much more complex and controversial).

Third, it is tempting to think that the genie is not quite out of the bottle yet in terms of the two species of corellas and the possibility of effective control. The total of Little

Corellas seems likely to be still under 1000, and that of the Long-billed Corellas may be as small as 150 or thereabouts, although as discussed below it could be over 200. There also seem to be a relatively small number of sites at which the birds are concentrated, at least for roosting.

The main question still to be answered is whether the several flocks of each species are discrete and largely independent of each other or whether there is really just one mobile population around Perth of each of the two species. In terms of Little Corellas the two main centres of population seem to be at Lake Monger/Subiaco and around Guildford, but we do not know whether exchange, perhaps frequent, occurs between those two flocks. The distance between the two centres is less than 20 km as the corella flies, a mere nothing for such strong fliers. From personal observation, I think the Lake Monger/Subiaco flock seems to vary quite markedly, from the low of fewer than 100 observed during this count to several hundred at other times of the year. I wonder if the Guildford flock is smaller when the Lake Monger one is larger?

The situation appears even more complex for the Long-billed Corella. There are five places from which come continuing reports of flocks of ten or more. These are the Riverton/Ferndale area on the Canning River; the lower Swan River, especially around Point Walter, Chidley Point and Dalkeith; Manning Lake; Lake Joondalup; and the Ashfield Flats and suburbs west of there.

The two most significant flocks of Long-billed Corellas are those reported from the Canning and the lower Swan, from both of which reports of about 100 corellas have come. This survey has not enabled us to separate these two. Again, the distance between the two areas is less than 20 km, and it may be one flock, or components of it, moving between the two areas. During this survey, three flocks, totalling about 120 birds, were counted at these two areas. With only four birds seen at Lake Manning (from which counts of 20 have come previously) it may be that there is just one mobile flock of Long-billed Corellas south of the city centre. The status of the smaller flocks reported from Lake Joondalup and the Ashfield Flats area is even less clear.

It is also unclear whether the number of Long-billed Corellas has built up entirely through continuing import and release into the State, or whether they are breeding in significant numbers. The latter seems likely to me, especially given a report of breeding attempts by the species at Byford from Ron Johnstone, and a recent observation by Frank O'Connor of a pair of Long-billed Corellas inspecting potential nest holes at Bungendore Park.

Many thanks to the people named in the tables who helped with the corella count and to all those others who have provided information about their knowledge of corellas around Perth. I believe the next steps should combine further detailed assessment of where populations are centred, how big they are and where breeding occurs, with a discussion of if and how numbers of the two species should be controlled. Several people have already

indicated their wish to continue helping clarify the status of Perth's corellas and I look forward to further cooperative efforts.

John Blyth

SQUARE-TAILED KITE TAKES TREE FROG

A Square-tailed Kite is often seen near our house at Lower King, near Albany. However, on 7 June, we noticed that the behaviour of the bird was different from usual — it was circling faster and lower than normal.

It disappeared behind the shed and soon after I saw it emerging from the closed canopy of a coppiced eucalypt tree with a squealing prey in its talons. The kite settled on a limb in the garden and proceeded to feed on the prey which I was able to identify as an adult Green Tree Frog.

Ray Garstone

TWO BIRD LISTS FROM THE PERRY LAKES AREA

Now that Perry House is the home of Birds Australia-WA Group perhaps it is worth publishing a bird list from yester-year as a background for today's studies of the birdlife in the area, and compare it to the WA Group database.

I grew up in Wembley and began serious birdwatching at the beginning of the 1950s. I used to roam from Jersey Street and Pearson Street in the east to the ocean in the west, to Scarborough and Scarborough Beach Road in the north and to Shenton Park and Swanbourne in the south. Perry Lakes were a focus and I continued birdwatching in the area until March of 1959.

Parts of the area had been and were being grazed west of Selby Street and around Perry Lakes. There were indications of more intensive farming, such as remnant stands of lupin and small grassy clearings. An old fence line bordered the western edge of Selby Street, horses roamed south of Perry Lakes, and there were stables there and just west of Herdsman's Lake. A shallow trench connected the two Perry Lakes. New fences were erected near Perry Lakes and sheep grazed there for a few years.

In the early 1960s the lakes were dredged in anticipation of the Commonwealth Games scheduled for 1962. Some of the reedbeds were uprooted and it seemed that in places the lakes were deepened. The waters of the lakes were stirred up and muddied and most of their birdlife was driven away. The birdlife has since recolonised the lakes and much of the surrounds have been modified and landscaped.

The following table provides a comparison between my historical records and the records in the WA Group's database, all collected in recent years. The database records comprise bird lists from 24 visits to Perry Lakes and/or Bold Park bushland, contributed by a variety of observers.

Special Notes

The sole Australasian Gannet was diving into the ocean from some height, undoubtedly fishing and well offshore.

The White-necked Heron was rather rare until it irrupted one year. Then it was here a few times in subsequent years.

The Straw-necked Ibis wasn't seen here until the year that it irrupted. Then large flocks flew overhead and small numbers frequented the lakes for a year or so.

A female Collared Sparrowhawk was killed in southern Wembley in the early 1950s.

The Banded Lapwing was seldom seen at Perry Lakes but on still, quiet nights, when the moon was bright, it could be heard calling when flying over southern Wembley.

In March of 1959 a pair of Masked Plovers settled at Perry Lakes. One was the subspecies *Vanellus miles miles* and the other was *V.m.novaehollandiae*. Both subspecies are rare visitors to the southwest; these and other records are listed in Storr and Johnstone (1988).

The Spotted Turtle-Dove could be seen in the natural bush just to the north of Reabold Hill.

The Galah was only encountered in pairs and numbers less than five, and was very rarely seen. They are now more common.

The Red-capped Parrot did not normally occur here but one year it irrupted onto the plain, and ranged overall, even to the coastal dunes. I also observed the same south of Mandurah at that time.

The Red-capped Robin was not normally seen here but one year it irrupted onto the plain and was very common here. That year no Scarlet Robins were observed here.

Of note is that the Grey Shrike-thrush still occurs here, even if very rarely.

As best I can remember the European Goldfinch did not occur at Perry Lakes, even though I would have thought that the surrounds would have suited it. But before its decline it could be seen at Herdsman's Lake, Rutter Park and flying over southern Wembley. I once netted one at Graylands.

A male Mistletoebird was collected in southern Wembley in the mid-40s but the species was never seen or heard here again.

During the longer days of summer large flocks of Tree Martins, perhaps a thousand or more, would gather above Jolimont Lake in the late afternoon. Then towards dusk a large number of them, perhaps a quarter, would dive down like feathered rain into the reeds and rushes, where they would roost for the night. This would be repeated three or four times until at dusk the air above the lake would be completely devoid of them. (I never did get around to seeing what transpired in the morning and a similar account of this behaviour is contained in Serventy and Whittell (1976).)

Bird Names	RHS 1950s Comments	Birds Australia -WA Group Bird Database	
		No. of visits where species recorded	% of total visits for this site
Blue-billed Duck	+ Rare	2	8
Musk Duck	+ Small nos.	3	12.5
Black Swan	+ Small nos.	16	67
Australian Shelduck	+ Rare	11	46
Australian Wood Duck		1	4
Mallard		9	37.5
Pacific Black Duck	+ Common	16	67
Australasian Shoveler	+ Rare	4	17
Grey Teal	+ Common	16	67
Pink-eared Duck		2	8
Hardhead	+ Rare	1	4
Australasian Grebe	+ Uncommon	8	33
Hoary-headed Grebe	+ Rare	1	4
Australasian Gannet	+ Very rare		
Darter	+ Rare	1	4
Little Pied Cormorant	+ Small nos.	3	12.5
Pied Cormorant	+ Coast only		
Little Black Cormorant	+ Small nos.	3	12.5
Great Cormorant	+ Very rare	1	4
Australian Pelican	+ Small nos.	6	25
White-faced Heron	+ Common	5	21
White-necked Heron	+ Rare, except during irruptions	1	4
Great Egret	+ Small nos.	5	21
Nankeen Night Heron	+ Rarely seen		
Australian White Ibis		1	4
Little Bittern		Recent record	
Straw-necked Ibis	+ Very rare but irrupts		
Yellow-billed Spoonbill		3	12.5
Black-shouldered Kite		7	29
Whistling Kite	+ A few	2	8
Swamp Harrier		2	8
Brown Goshawk	+ Rare	8	33
Collard Sparrowhawk	+ Very rare	1	4
Little Eagle		9	37.5
Brown Falcon	+ Rare, coast. strip	1	4
Australian Hobby	+ Uncommon	1	4
Peregrine Falcon		1	4
Nankeen Kestrel	+ Uncommon	2	8
Spotless Crake		2	8
Purple Swampphen	+ Common	14	58
Dusky Moorhen	+ Small nos.	15	62.5
Eurasian Coot	+ Common	15	62.5
Painted Button-Quail		2	8
Common Greenshank		2	8
Wood Sandpiper		1	4
Red-necked Stint		1	4

Discussion

The comparison of the two lists has to be treated with some caution because we are comparing a subjective list from the 1950s by one person with a modern list with a number of contributors from a smaller area (the present Perry Lakes and nearby Bold Park Bushland), but with a measure of frequency of reporting. Further, age has dimmed my memories and some of them may not be exactly accurate. Also, the figures from the database must be allowed some latitude.

Dr Allan Burbidge has kindly pointed out that the database surveys for Bold Park/Perry Lakes must not have extended to the coast, the three fairy-wrens which occur there not being recorded. There are other species too which used to occur in the coastal areas so it is possibly worthwhile elaborating on their former distributions.

Splendid Fairy-wren. The commonest and most widespread of the three. It likes the denser acacia vegetation back from the coastal strip.

Variegated Fairy-wren. Uncommon, confined to the coastal strip and ranging south to the Swanbourne Rifle Range. Despite their absence from the database, there are occasional recent reports of them from Bold Park bushland.

White-winged Fairy-wren. The rarest of the three and primarily confined to the coastal strip within the rifle range, though it may range a bit to the north.

White-browed Scrub-Wren. Uncommon but could be seen in the denser vegetation back from the coast, as for the Splendid Fairy-wren

White-fronted Chat. Rarely seen but frequenting the beaches, sand dunes and the lawns at City Beach.

Black-faced Woodswallow. Uncommon but ranged over the coastal strip south to City Beach.

Richard's Pipit. Uncommon but frequenting the beaches, sand dunes and the lawns at City Beach, as for the White-fronted Chat.

Singing Honeyeater. Uncommon and frequenting the coastal strip only.

Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo. Very rare and frequenting the coastal strip only.

Obviously the Pied Cormorant, Crested Tern and other species will occur on the beaches and offshore, but the Silver Gull was not seen inland. The Procellariiformes which wash up on the beaches are of interest, but in the absence of any identifications one must consult Storr and Johnstone (1988) for species which will or may occur here.

Bird Names	RHS 1950s Comments	Birds Australia -WA Group Bird Database	
		No. of visits where species recorded	% of total visits for this site
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		1	4
Curlew Sandpiper		1	4
Black-winged Stilt	+ Uncommon	7	29
Red-necked Avocet		4	17
Grey Plover		1	4
Red-capped Plover		1	4
Black-fronted Dotterel	+ Very rare	5	21
Banded Lapwing	+ More heard at night than seen	1	4
Masked Lapwing	+ March 1959		
<i>V.m. miles</i>			
<i>V.m. novaehollandiae</i>			
Australian Pratincole		1	4
Silver Gull	+ Coast only	11	46
Crested Tern	+ Coast only		
Rock Dove	+ Uncommon	4	17
Laughing Turtle-Dove	+ Very common	13	54
Spotted Turtle-Dove	+ Uncommon	6	25
Common Bronzewing	+ Rare		
Short-billed Black-Cockatoo	+ Large flocks in season	9	37.5
Galah	+ Very rare, small nos.	18	75
Long-billed Corella		1	4
Little Corella		14	58
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo		1	4
Rainbow Lorikeet		15	62.5
Australian Ringneck	+ Very common	24	100
Red-capped Parrot	+ Rare but irrupts	7	29
Pallid Cuckoo	+ Uncommon	1	4
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	+ Rare	3	12.5
Horsfields Bronze-Cuckoo	+ Very rare		
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	+ Rare	4	17
Southern Boobook	+ Common	Known to be present	
Barn Owl	+ Very rare		
Tawny Frogmouth	+ Common	1	4
Fork-tailed Swift		1	4
Laughing Kookaburra	+ Common	20	83
Sacred Kingfisher	+ Uncommon	4	17
Rainbow Bee-eater	+ Uncommon	7	29
Splendid Fairy-wren	+ Uncommon		
Variegated Fairy-wren	+ Coastal only		
White-winged Fairy-wren	+ Coastal only		
Spotted Pardalote		4	17
Striated Pardalote	+ Common	19	79
White-browed Scrub-wren	+ Uncommon, coastal only		
Weebill	+ Common	19	79
Western Gerygone	+ Common	19	79

Species such as the Spotted Pardalote and Golden Whistler which were not recorded by me obviously will or may occur here given time and favourable conditions. But others are new to the area and these are Pink-eared Duck, Australian White Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Black-shouldered Kite, Little Eagle, Galah, Little Corella, Rainbow Lorikeet, White-backed Swallow and White-cheeked Honeyeater. Also of note is the occurrence here of the Painted Button-Quail (Dell and How, 1996; Storr and Johnstone, 1988; Birds Australia database) and its breeding here (Dell and How, 1996). It would seem that it was simply overlooked by me but perhaps it is a recent arrival too, even though it may be transient and nomadic, as suggested by Dell and How (1996). Obviously however our study area is close to populations of Little Corellas and Galahs which have formed in the metropolitan area, and which roam over adjacent areas. Perhaps we also need to look to amelioration of the climate rather than simple changes resulting from settlement (Serventy and Whittell 1976).

Despite the pitfalls involved in comparing these two lists it does seem that some species are commoner now than previously. These are Australian Shelduck, Black-fronted Dotterel, Galah, Red-capped Parrot, Singing Honeyeater and Rufous Whistler. The Singing Honeyeater did not occur at Perry Lakes or the Reabold Hill area. It was only encountered in pairs and small numbers in the coastal strip, and infrequently at that. It did not occur in southern Wembley until the mid-50s, and I can still remember my surprise at encountering it there, at my home. It is generally accepted that it occupied other parts of Wembley before then and there is no doubt that it is now very common in the urban areas, it having adapted well to the environmental changes which have taken place around it.

Two species, the Southern Boobook and the Tawny Frogmouth would seem to definitely be rarer now — although their seeming demise could be due to a lack of nocturnal birdwatchers — as also do the Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, Scarlet Robin, Clamorous Reed-Warbler, and Little Grassbird. It would also seem that the Common Bronzewing is now extinct here. It was never common and rare would describe its abundance, but it was here. It also declined similarly at Mandurah after extensive development there.

Conclusion

An historical birdlist from the 1950s for the Perry Lakes area is presented and compared to the modern database of Birds Australia-WA Group. Despite the pitfalls involved in comparing these two lists, it does seem that some changes in the abundance of the avifauna can be

Bird Names	RHS 1950s Comments	Birds Australia —WA Group Bird Database	
		No. of visits where species recorded	% of total visits for this site
Inland Thornbill	+ Uncommon but ranged to Wembley	6	25
Western Thornbill	+ Uncommon	5	21
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	+ Uncommon	5	21
Red Wattlebird	+ Very common	24	100
Little Wattlebird		3	12.5
Singing Honeyeater	+ Common, urban	20	83
White-naped Honeyeater		2	8
Brown Honeyeater	+ Very common	19	79
New Holland Honeyeater	+ Rare visitor	1	4
White-cheeked Honeyeater		20	83
Western Spinebill	+ Moderately common	12	50
White-fronted Chat	+ Coastal only		
Scarlet Robin	+ Moderately common	1	4
Red-capped Robin	+ Common when it irrupts		
Varied Sittella	+ Rare	3	12.5
Golden Whistler		2	8
Rufous Whistler	+ Uncommon	16	67
Grey Shrike-thrush	+ Very rare	1	4
Magpie-lark	+ Moderately common	12	50
Grey Fantail	+ Moderately common	11	46
Willie Wagtail	+ Moderately common	14	58
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	+ Common	15	62.5
White-winged Triller	+ Rare visitor		
Black-faced Woodswallow	+ Rare, coastal only		
Grey Butcherbird	+ Common	18	75
Australian Magpie	+ Very common	24	100
Australian Raven	+ Very common	23	96
Richard's Pipit	+ Rare, coastal only		
European Goldfinch	+ Uncommon		
Mistletoebird	+ Very rare, urban only		
White-backed Swallow		1	4
Welcome Swallow	+ Uncommon	14	58
Tree Martin	+ Uncommon, but large flocks sometimes	12	50
Clamorous Reed-Warbler	+ Common	5	21
Little Grassbird	+ Common	2	8
Silver-eye	+ Common	18	75

identified. Some species are new to the area, some would seem to be commoner now, some now rarer and one or two now extinct. Special notes for some species are given and the count data of the database has been converted to percentages to facilitate comprehension of abundance.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Dr Allan Burbidge and John Blyth for encouraging me to write this article and for courtesies, information and valuable comment.

References

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Robert Stranger

BROWN FALCON CAPTURES A KESTREL IN MID-AIR

During a recent trip down the Canning Stock Route, while camping at Georgia Bore, near Well 22, I watched a mid-air chase when a Brown Falcon caught a kestrel in flight. It appeared to me that it may have been assisted by a second falcon (possibly a Hobby or male Black Falcon).

At 8:30 am on 3 July I saw a Brown Falcon, probably a large female, make many swoops on a kestrel at about 100 metres in the air, which the kestrel seemed to avoid easily enough. Then I saw a small, dark falcon fly rapidly low across the ground then into the air near the scene of the chase. It did not appear to make a direct attack on the kestrel but flew around the combatants. Soon after the Brown Falcon made another swoop and caught the kestrel. Evidently it was rather a heavy catch and the falcon dropped slowly but directly to the ground. The smaller falcon disappeared. I walked towards where the Brown Falcon had landed and the bird flew laboriously about 100 metres across the spinifex. At the same time I noticed a smaller Brown Falcon, probably a male, perched on a bush.

Was this a case of the second falcon helping a larger predator? Or was it just an interested spectator which distracted the kestrel enough to allow the slower Brown Falcon to catch its prey? On this trip I saw many kestrels, up to 12 in one day, and many Brown Falcons, but only this one instance of the Brown Falcon actually attacking the smaller bird.

If anyone has seen a similar occurrence I would like to hear from them.

Tom Delaney

STAY AT HOME BLUES

At the end of June I had been feeling a little down in the dumps. So many people are talking about trips to warmer climes and exotic birding spots: Fitzroy Crossing, Broome, Karratha and of course the Greenough Campout in September. I shall be staying in Perth with the cold and desperately needed rain and soldier on.

Soldiering on was not so difficult, though. I was savouring the odd sunshine, clear skies and was rugged up against the cold as I walked around my suburban bird survey area in Glendalough.

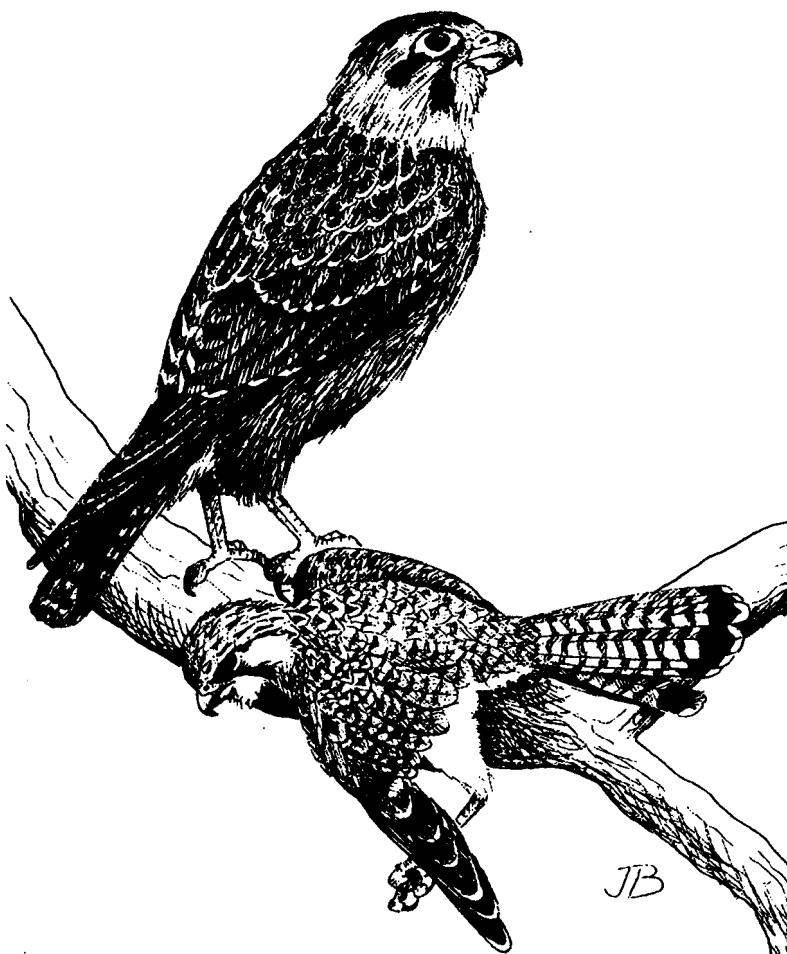
A Whistling Kite was hovering over the typha at the edge of one of the lakes. It is a haven for Clamorous Reed-Warblers which were not calling, but were present as I could see the reeds moving. Imagine my surprise and delight when the Clamorous Reed-Warblers turned into a pair of Chestnut-breasted Mannikins. They were quite brazenly moving through the typha, and feasting on the long seed heads. I was able to identify them very easily as I was very close to them, not even needing binoculars. The seed-eater beak was silvery, the chest bar and black and white side stripes and the speckled head with black face-mask made identification easy. I knew them well from text books that I used in the six months that I worked in the Kimberley and hoped to see them there. Instead, the Kimberley came to town and made my day.

There is an aviary at a nearby house. I have been fooled many times with unusual bird calls. I guessed that

the mannikins could have escaped from there. They seemed so unafraid of my presence that I assumed that they were used to human contact. However, on consultation with friends and Simpson and Day 4th edition 1993, I discovered that there is a small flock, resulting from earlier aviary escapes in the area.

The moral of the story is Birdwatching beats the Blues!

Claire Gerrish



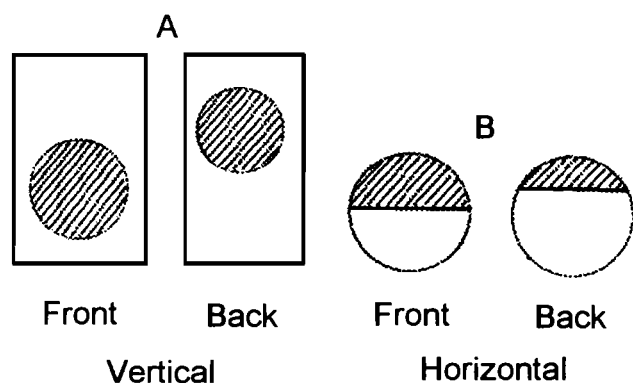
Brown Falcon with Nankeen Kestrel
Drawing by Judy Blyth

NESTING DRUMS FOR WILD DUCKS

by courtesy of Eric Singleton

At the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, King William Street, Bayswater, Eric has induced four species of wild ducks to breed in various types of boxes and drums.

The most favoured is a simple 20 litre drum, either cylindrical or with a squarish cross-section, which can be erected either vertically or horizontally. If the former then a 15-20 cm entrance hole can be cut out in the front and another for ventilation at the back (A). If erected horizontally part of the ends can be cut out for the same reasons (B). Variations of these suggestions are of course possible.



The drums can be tied to posts or trees with wire or rope, but obviously they need to be above the water level at its peak. The following table shows comparative use of natural nests and drums at the sanctuary:

Species	Type of Nest			
	Natural	Drum		
	No.	%	No.	%
Pacific Black Duck	22	38	36	62
Grey Teal	29	57	22	43
Pink-eared Duck	6	13	41	87
Blue-billed Duck	6	46	7	54

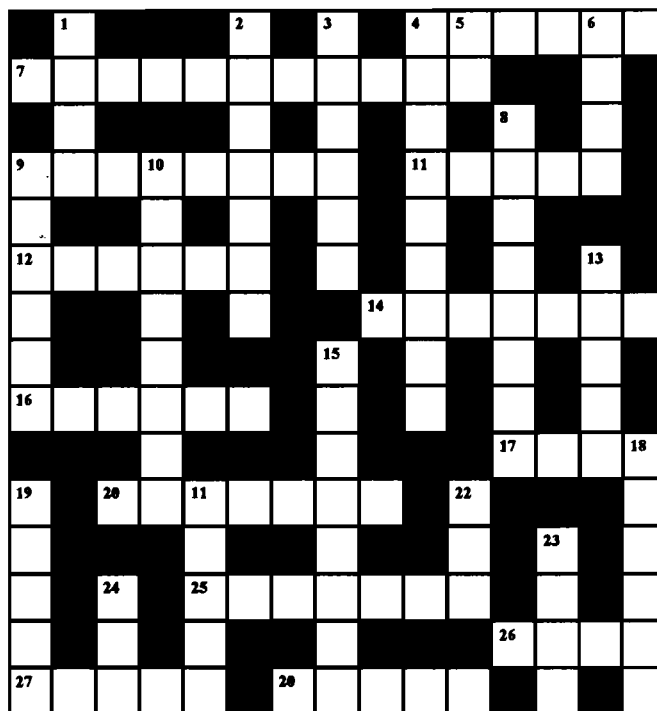
These results clearly show that these species of duck will breed in the drums, in significant numbers, and the Pink-eared Duck shows a decided preference for them. Some readers may be interested in encouraging such breeding by erecting drums of this type, or perhaps by circulating the information amongst other people likely to be interested.

The nesting of wild ducks at this sanctuary, which now has permanent water, is perhaps more impressive when one realises that the site was formerly temporary swamp only, on the Swan River floodplain.

Robert Stranger

Crossword No 14

by Pam Agar



Clues Across

4. Woodswallows may do this for a protected spot.
7. Important role in any project.
9. Describes most sandpipers' bills.
11. These viewers will lessen chances of sightings.
12. Penguin nursery.
14. Station purchased by Birds Australia in 1997.
16. This person has an extra duty on a day's outing.
17. Observatory, originally a telegraph station.
20. Reef, NW of WA where tropicbirds breed.
25. Knowledge of this may be necessary to separate sub-species.
26. Distance from wing-tip to wing-tip.
27. More correct name for Little Falcon.
28. Abbreviation for viewing apparatus.

Clues Down

1. Waterhen with flattened lobes on toes.
2. An Asian Dowitcher could be ... out from Bar-tailed Godwits by its straighter bill.
3. A bird soaring high could be one.
4. Good lake for birding in Perth.
5. Binoculars ... telescopes make viewing easier.
6. A Jacana walks on these leaves with ease.
8. Next move for waders after leaving Broome on their way south.
9. Only kingfisher native to south-western WA.
11. May need to be visited for historical information.
13. Display platform.
15. North American zoological zone.
18. To widen range.

19. Tongue-tip of honey-eaters.
21. A wader should register as this before leaving Broome for Asia.
22. Likely place for a songlark display.
23. Back of neck.
24. Black front of Pied Butcherbird.

Country Groups

ALBANY BIRD GROUP

May Outing

A successful bird outing was held on Tuesday 12 May with 22 people attending. After meeting at the Homestead Road turnoff at 8:30 we travelled to Russell's farm on the Waychinicup Road, Manypeaks. Mr Russell has only been on the property for two years and in that time has been putting conservation measures into practice. The day was sunny and still. There is an area of swamp land plus a stand of karri and marri which has been fenced off. The result was 53 species for that area, including five different raptors (Black-shouldered Kite, Swamp Harrier, Collared Sparrowhawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle and Nankeen Kestrel). We went on to Norman's Beach for lunch and saw 23 species, including Red-winged Fairy-wren and White-breasted Robin.

June Outing

Sixteen people attended our outing on 6 June, when 54 bird species were seen. We met at the Denmark Golf Course at 8:00 am. The morning was brisk and clear with very little wind. Once the birds started to move, there was a lot of activity in the tree tops. We walked the length of the golf course then on through to where Green Skills have established a walk way and tree planting area. We were very impressed with the work Green Skills have achieved.

Our next stop was in part of the same corridor of bushland near the mouth of the river. From there we went to the wetlands near Ocean Beach. After a walk through the coastal rush country it was time for lunch. At this stage the wind had sprung up and rain threatened. We were lucky with the weather because all sorts of storms had been forecast but the morning had been great.

Observations of interest included three Cattle Egrets sitting on a sandbar at the river mouth with lots of spoonbills, cormorants and pelicans. Good views were had by all. In a paddock on our way to Ocean Beach 60+ spoonbills, two Black Swans, a Great Egret and an Australian White Ibis were seen feeding.

July Outing

For our 14 July outing, 15 birdwatching enthusiasts met at the far end of East Bank Road and almost walked to the end of the new Kalgan River walk.

The walk is beautiful. The morning started with a light drizzle then the clouds lifted and the sun came out. The reflections off the river were beautiful. All the ducks seemed to be pairing up. There are trees with hollows for most of the way, with evidence of activity in some. We

also saw possum dreays in the stand of large Melaleuca trees. The wildflowers are also starting to appear, ie, *Adenanthos*, *Andersonia*, *Hypocalymma*, *Conospermum* and even the odd *Callitris*.

For an outing that was an unknown quantity we had a productive morning with 33 species for that area.

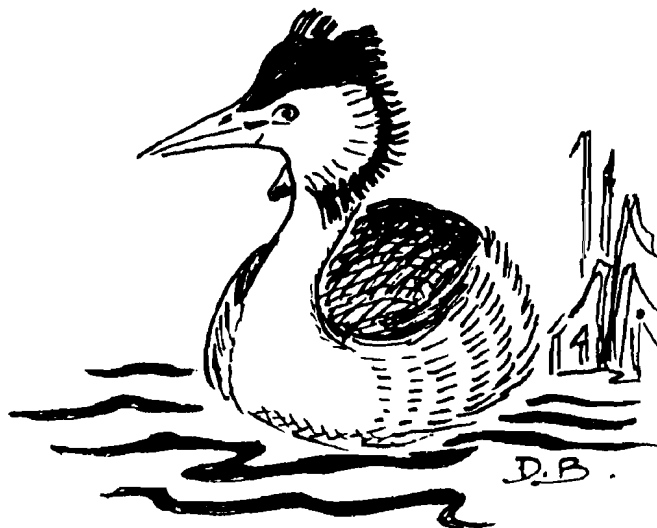
Vivian McCormick

ESPERANCE BIRD OBSERVERS GROUP

Partly cloudy skies, little wind and a warm morning greeted members of the Esperance Bird Observers Group at Wheatfield Lake on 5 April. The group was not only looking at the birds but also for a suitable site to erect a bird hide, money for which has come from the WA Government under the Community Conservation Grant Scheme.

We had not long started walking around the shoreline when a Sacred Kingfisher was seen perched in a paperbark tree. Low water levels revealed two parallel lines of old fence posts less than a metre apart running out from the shoreline, which created some discussion. On the opposite side of the lake 50 Yellow-billed Spoonbills were either perched in trees or on the water's edge. Other shorebirds seen were Black-fronted Dotterels, Common Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, White-faced Heron and three Australian White Ibis. The ever present Musk Ducks were there with 78 counted.

As the group moved around the shoreline we came upon an appropriate location for the bird hide nestled in between paperbarks and sheltered from prevailing winds. It was from this point that one of our members, with their new telescope, saw a Freckled Duck on the water. Excitement ran through the group as we all saw this unobtrusive rare duck. A total of nine Freckled Ducks were counted. Approximately 600 Pink-eared Ducks plus Chestnut Teal, Black Swan and five Great Crested Grebes were also seen.



Great Crested Grebe
Drawing by Diane Beckingham

As we moved away from the lake New Holland Honeyeaters, Western Spinebills, Little Wattlebirds, a lone Fork-tailed Swift and other bush birds were seen. In total 34 birds were seen in and around this small lake.

I visited this lake three days later to see 71 Freckled Ducks on the water.

Allan Rose

Notices

ATLASSING WA: AN EXPERIENCE FOR THE BIRDS

Birds Australia's latest — and largest — project, the New Atlas of Australian Birds, started quietly on 1 August. The first Atlas, fondly remembered by many West Australian birders, described the distribution and abundance of birds across 1° grid blocks around the country. That Atlas provided important distribution data about our birds, but was not very useful for land managers as there was no direct link between a bird's distribution and the habitat in which it lived, or the way that habitat was managed.

The New Atlas will make that link by accumulating bird lists from very specific point locations. It may sound more involved than the first Atlas, but atlassing is not going to be difficult, and birders will be able to do two kinds of surveys. The first, and preferred, method is to choose a two-hectare (eg, 200 metres by 100 metres) area and search it for 20 minutes. Only birds seen in this area are recorded, and the information is more valuable if you fill out a habitat form (describing the habitat) and return to the area in different seasons. The second method allows you to choose a point location and then search an area within a radius of either 500 metres or 5 kilometres. You can search this area for more than 20 minutes and for up to a week. Unusual or unexpected sightings can be recorded from any location and at any time by recording them as incidental sightings. It will be most useful (but not essential) if sites that are repeatedly surveyed are accurately plotted for latitude and longitude using a GPS (a small, hand-held, easily used global positioning system). We have GPS units for sale or hire at Perry House. The sale price is \$300, which includes a bonus car adaptor. They are available for hire for \$5 per week for a maximum of two weeks. Good maps can also be used to accurately plot latitude and longitude, and we are happy to give you information about useful maps for your area.

This is an exciting project, it's a big one, and it will be an experience that is not only for the birds — for their conservation, that is — but is not to be missed. And you can take part in many ways. It goes almost without saying that we need your enthusiasm and your birdwatching skills, but we also need those of other competent birders in the community, and we don't necessarily know who they are. You can help by sending us the names and contact details of people, groups or organisations who have, or may have, an interest in atlassing. These might be

individual birdwatchers, field naturalists or field naturalist groups, 'friends of' groups, landcare groups, tour operators with an interest in birds, etc. Think also about local farmers, landholders, station owners or managers, or others who might have an interest in birds. We will then send them some information about the Atlas. The challenge for BAWAG is that we are atlassing a third of the continent, but that we do not have a third of Australia's population: we are thus in particular need of contact information for country and remote areas. Committing your local information to paper and sending it to us is an important contribution to the success of the project.

You can also contribute to the project by helping on a local or regional level. Regional organisers (ROS) coordinate regional activities and atlassers, liaise between the WA Atlas coordinator and local groups, identify gaps in regional Atlas surveys, and arrange for the vetting of regional records. Sub regional organisers (SROS) will often — but don't have to — be representatives of local clubs or groups, and may share some of the ROS' tasks. A few people have already volunteered to be ROS and SROS; we need a great many more. It's a great way to be involved in the Atlas project; why not give it a go? And if there are no local birding or field naturalist groups near you, why not consider starting up a local atlassing group? They can be very rewarding! We will provide all the help we can — ideas, examples of press releases, publicity kits suitable for display boards, names of other local and regional contacts and map index kits. We might also, depending on location, be able to provide a speaker to describe or 'workshop' the Atlas with a local or regional group.

If the demand is there, we will 'workshop' the Atlas at Perry House and Bold Park. For spring workshops, phone Perry House by 18 September to register your interest. A workshop would cover essential map-reading skills, the use of a GPS, how to fill out atlassing forms, and how to choose the most valuable sites for repeated seasonal surveys. We might even throw in a cuppa!

You can register as an Atlasser by letter, phone or fax at the BAWAG office at Perry House in Perth. When you register, you will receive a kit which describes in detail how to atlas. After you fill out and send in the registration form in the kit, you will be issued with an observer number and you will keep this for the duration of the Atlas. If you would like to offer some help, contact Cheryl Gole, the WA Atlas coordinator, direct: Tel/fax (08) 9293 4958.

Good atlassing!

Cheryl Gole



Pied Butcherbird at Meedo Station,
Wooramel River
Drawn by Diane Beckingham

HOODED PLOVER PROJECT

Sponsored by



WWF World Wide Fund
For Nature Australia
ACT 2004

Now that spring has officially arrived with September, five parties will set out to search for Hooded Plovers in the lake areas to the west of the Coolgardie-Esperance Highway, in the shires of Dundas and Esperance.

During this period, with the cooperation and assistance of CALM at Esperance, Allan Rose will spend a week in the lakes district east of Grass Patch.

We hope that the survey parties will provide further information to help solve the destination of our Hooded Plovers during their inland stay.

Meanwhile, we would appreciate reports of sightings of Hooded Plover in any inland area during the month of September.

Allan Jones

AUSTRALASIAN SEABIRD GROUP NEWSLETTER

The following is a letter from David James, editor of the Australasian Seabird Group Newsletter:

"Dear seabird enthusiasts,

I have recently taken over as editor of the *Australasian Seabird Group Newsletter (ASGN)* (ASG is a special interest group of Birds Australia). The *ASGN* carries papers, notes, notices and other material on the seabirds (Sphenisciformes, Procellariiformes, Pelicaniformes and Lari) of the Australasian Region.

In the future the *ASGN* will have regular columns such as a round-up of pelagic trips, a round-up of banding recoveries, recent literature and book reviews. I seek to encourage the publication of articles and notes on distribution, seasonality, breeding ecology, diet, and identification. Research results, research overviews, student projects planned or under way, incidental observations and literature reviews, and letters to the editor are encouraged. This is a newsletter and just about anything to do with seabirds will be considered. Of course, any suggestions you may have regarding content will be gratefully received.

The *ASGN* has been without an editor for some time and issues are overdue. There is much to be done before the next issue is produced, so my plan is to produce the next one (issue no 33) in October 1998. Then, we should be back on our regular schedule of semi-annual publication in April and October each year. The deadline for issue 33 is 1 September (but I am willing to negotiate) and then deadlines for April and October issues are 1 March and 1 September respectively. More detailed editorial guidelines are in preparation and can be sent to you upon request. Needless to say, any material you can provide for the next issue would be most welcome.

Subscription to ASG is A\$15 per year (Aus and NZ residents), which includes two issues of the newsletter. Further details can be obtained from:

Heather Gibbs
The Treasurer, Australasian Seabird Group
Birds Australia
415 Riversdale Road
Hawthorn East Vic 3123

I am compiling an email directory of Australasian seabird enthusiasts so that I can keep you all up to date with *ASGN* happenings. You do not have to be an ASG member to be on the email directory. If you would like to be on the email directory please reply directly to me. If you know of someone interested in seabirds who you think might be interested please forward a copy of this message to them.

I hope to hear from you soon,

David J James
Editor, Australasian Seabird Group Newsletter
PO Box 5225
Townsville Mail Centre, Qld, 4810
dave-james@beyond.net.au

BA RESEARCH COMMITTEE

I have recently been appointed as a member of Birds Australia's national Research Committee. The role of this committee is to assist and advise with research projects being carried out by Birds Australia at both the national and local level. Needless to say, the progress of the Atlas is likely to be a big topic for the committee over the next couple of years.

If any WA members have any queries or suggestions about any of the BA research projects (national or WA Group) or would like to talk about possible new projects, please contact me:

Tel/fax (08) 9306 1642 at home
Tel (08) 9405 5109 at work
E-mail austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au

I look forward to hearing from you.

Allan Burbidge

YELLOW WADER WATCH

Hey, what's that yellow bird out on the mudflat? Is it a Yellow Chat? Is it a Canary? Is it a rubber ducky? No, it's a Yellow-breasted Stint...

The AWSG's 1998 North-West Australia Wader Expedition has just begun, and it is the biggest ever. From 1 August to 31 October participants will be catching waders over the whole spring arrival period of the migratory waders that breed in northern Asia and Alaska and spend the non-breeding season in Australia. The main catch areas will be Roebuck Bay, Eighty Mile Beach and Port Hedland.

In order to find out more about some wader species that pass through north-western Australia on their way to southern Australia, it is intended to mark Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers with a yellow dye (Picric Acid) on the breast and under the wings. The dye is harmless to the birds, will last until the feathers are moulted, and should be visible for at least 2-4

months. The markings will become more orange with age, and the underwing markings should last longer than those on the breast.

Many marked birds will continue south and south-east, to south-west WA, SA, Victoria and Tasmania. Some may turn up in NSW and possibly even south-eastern Queensland and New Zealand. Please record and report all sightings of yellow-marked waders of these three species in Australia during the spring and summer of 1998-99, in order to find out more about their movements and their staging sites.

The last time birds were marked in this way on a NW Australia Wader Expedition was 16 years ago — in 1982. Then 20 sightings were reported from SE Australia, at the opposite corner of the continent, within five weeks. This time the number of birds marked will be several times higher, with a consequently high number of sightings expected.

Information needed includes the **species, date and location** of the sighting. It would also be very valuable to record details about the **number or proportion of marked birds in a flock, with an estimate of flock size**. The yellow-marked underwings are highly visible in flight, and marked birds stand out in a flying flock. This additional information will help us estimate population size, and understand the importance of particular sites and whether they might qualify for listing as being of national or international significance.

Marked birds may be seen from August onwards. Please report all sightings, with a contact number or address, as soon as possible to **Dr Clive Minton** at:

165 Dalgetty Road, BEAUMARIS VIC 3193

Tel/Fax: (03) 9589 4901

Email: <mintons@ozemail.com.au>

or c/- **Broome Bird Observatory** at:

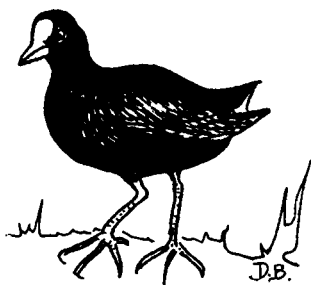
PO Box 1313, BROOME WA 6725

Tel: (08) 9193 5600, Fax: (08) 9192 3364

Email: <bbo@tpgi.com.au>

Who will be the first person to see a yellow-marked wader in southern Australia this spring? A quick response will reach the members of the expedition in the field (actually on the beaches) and let them know how their efforts are being rewarded. Please circulate this request and information to your group members and colleagues — and anybody else that might be watching waders.

Australasian Wader Studies Group
(from *Galah* No. 27)



Dusky Moorhen
Drawn by Diane Beckingham

THREATENED SPECIES DISPLAY

Sponsored by



September 6 is **THREATENED SPECIES DAY** and the Western Australian division of the World Wide Fund for Nature will have a display at the Western Australian Museum from 6–20 September.

The WA Group of Birds Australia has been invited to take part in the display and Judy Blyth will again arrange a display to show our activities for the study and conservation of our threatened bird species.

Members are welcome to attend the official opening by Mrs Cheryl Edwardes, the Minister for the Environment, on Tuesday 8 September from 10 am to 12 noon.

Allan Jones

EXCURSIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

Please note that the home telephone number for Maggie Cashman-Bailes should read:
(08) 9378 2457

WA WADER STUDY GROUP

Banding activities for summer 1998/99

The WA Wader Study Group has been banding waders in the Perth area for many years and we intend to put in a special effort during the coming season. Our main approach involves cannon netting near Milyu, alongside the Kwinana Freeway. It is a very public spot, so banding takes place during the week. In the past, we have mist-netted waders at Alfred Cove and Pelican Point, and we may attempt this again if the birds are using these sites. Mist-netting happens in the evening (usually Friday or Saturday). Anyone who would like to be involved, please contact Mike Bamford:

Tel/fax: 9309 3671, e-mail: mabce@ca.com.au

No experience necessary.

Also, we have a massive database of banding records, including a lot of recapture records that desperately need to be analysed. This could make an ideal exercise for a student looking for an undergraduate project.

Mike Bamford

SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS

CSIRO Publications have offered our members the journals in the following list at a special reduced price. Interested members should contact the national office of Birds Australia for details.

Incidentally, our own Journal *Emu* is great value at only an additional \$41 for members, especially for those with an interest in taking their bird knowledge further.

	Issues per yr	Institutional Price	Member Price
Australian Journal of Agricultural Research Volume 50		\$450	\$180
Australian Journal of Botany Volume 47	6	\$390	\$120
Australian Journal of Chemistry Volume 52	12	\$750	\$200
Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture Volume 39	8	\$420	\$150
Australian Journal of Physics Volume 52	6	\$550	\$140
Australian Journal of Plant Physiology Volume 26	8	\$525	\$120
Australian Journal of Soil Research Volume 37	6	\$420	\$150
Australian Journal of Zoology Volume 47	6	\$370	\$150
Australian Systematic Botany Volume 12	6	\$490	\$170
Invertebrate Taxonomy Volume 13	6	\$490	\$120
Marine & Freshwater Research Volume 50	8	\$450	\$120
Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia Volume 16	3	\$210	\$120
Reproduction, Fertility & Development Volume 11	8	\$450	\$120
Wildlife Research Volume 26	6	\$390	\$120

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia-WA Group between 1 May and 31 July 1998. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

E M Cronstedt, M Cudlipp, S Cumming, B Gaze, B Genat, P W Hancock, D Lawson, V C North, K Read, J Read, M E Rippey, J J Rippey, D Rowcliffe, A Rowcliffe, C Tassone, H M Trengrove, D Viol, G Wheat, L Wheat

New Members

All new members are invited to attend a Welcome Evening on Monday 9 November 1998 commencing at 8:00 pm at the State Tennis Centre, Bolton Ave, Burswood.

The WA Group Committee members and also project coordinators will be there to let you know about their activities, to give you a wider understanding of how our group operates. Come along and enjoy the fellowship!

LAKE MEALUP PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Would you like to be part of a group actively managing an important wetland and bushland?

Would you like to share private bushland adjacent to the Peel-Harvey Estuary, and only 100 km from Perth?

The Lake Mealup Preservation Society owns 120 ha of land in and around Lake Mealup, a large, freshwater wetland situated 2 km east of the Harvey Estuary. The lake is over 1 km long, and is almost completely fringed by Melaleucas and Flooded Gums. Adjacent to the lake is a variety of mixed Jarrah, Marri, Tuart and banksia woodland. Over 100 species of birds, including waterbirds, bushbirds and birds of prey, and over 150 species of plants have been recorded on the property.

The society holds regular excursions, at which members explore the lake and bushland, and carry out property management.

Members can also visit the property at any time to experience the solitude of Lake Mealup, through pleasant walks, or overnight camping. Lake Mealup also makes a great base from which to explore the Peel-Harvey Estuary.

If you would like more information, or would like to visit Lake Mealup, contact:

Peter Wilmot 08 9244 3015
Kate Creed 08 9457 2000
Max Bailey 08 9444 7920

Snippets

EXCELLENT RESPONSE TO NW '98 EXPEDITION

Support for the North-West Australia '98 Expedition has been excellent. Over 100 participants have now registered, with teams ranging from between 19 and 30 for each of the 13 weeks of the expedition (1 August to 31 October 1998). The expedition leaders have asked that those people who have indicated an intention to participate, but not yet provided firm dates, please finalise arrangements as soon as possible (so that *inter alia*, appropriate vehicle transport can be booked)? The expedition will then be considered "full"!

An additional element has been added to the fieldwork program. In an attempt to solve the mystery of where waders at Broome roost on night-time high tides, five radio transmitters will be deployed.

If you have not confirmed your details, or if you need more information, contact:

Clive Minton
Tel/fax: 03 9589 4901
Email: mintonc@ozemail.com.au

Reprinted from *The Tattler* No 14-15, May 1998
Newsletter for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway

Observatory Reports

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

Winter is well and truly over and the days are warming up on Roebuck Bay. The first of our returning adult shorebirds were seen on Roebuck Plains in early August and our one day 'Plains and Lakes' course was all the more exciting as we watched Marsh, Wood and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers showing the telltale remnant breeding plumage of returning birds. Only ones or twos at first but soon thousands of adult birds join the immature populations that have stayed with us over winter in Roebuck Bay.

Indications from our winter counts show some species to have had a poor breeding year, as the numbers of immature birds have been particularly low. The one notable exception to this is the Curlew Sandpiper. Some of you may remember our writing last year about a disastrous season for this species. They seem to have made up for it in a big way and where last year we would have seen tens we are now seeing hundreds in the bay. Our usual counts at Eighty Mile Beach, Roebuck Bay and Bush Point showed generally low counts with Bar-tailed Godwits and Great Knots showing particularly poor numbers.

The low numbers have not deterred us in our research program and we have undertaken several successful catches with cannon-nets to collect data on immature birds. Our 'constant effort' mist-netting sites have not brought us any more rarities as per our previous reports but we have collected some fascinating data. One White-breasted Whistler entered the record books as he was caught again as a 17+ bird, his original banding being from 1982. Our banding course 'netted' the highest number of birds ever for a course and included a successful cannon-net catch and numerous mist-netting sessions.

We have continued to count and monitor birds at our sites. A recent visit to the 'Kidney Bean Claypan' collected some interesting results, with many waders using the area. There was a good range of species and the count included three Redshanks and a Curlew Sandpiper carrying an orange flag. We do not need to go to the claypan to see Redshanks, who have regularly been seen on the beaches. The claypan was drying quickly and on a subsequent visit there was no water left in the area. The Yellow Chats we saw earlier in the year are still turning up in varying numbers, anything from three to 66, so we will continue to monitor the area.

Our most memorable moment of the winter did not involve a rare bird, just ordinary Tree Martins. In June and July we experienced some unseasonal rain. In the two downpours we received over 160 mm of rain, which for the dry season in Broome is unheard of. On one of the worst days, there had been no sun and the heavy overcast conditions lasted all day. The afternoon was wearing on and as we battled with the paperwork we became aware of the twittering of Tree Martins. We turned to see them trying to squeeze on to our open door frames. There was not going to be enough room for the ever increasing

numbers of birds that were trying to find space under the verandah. Chris tied dowelling in a crisscross pattern across the verandah and pretty soon 500 Tree Martins were preparing to roost. We turned our lights on early so as the dark came they were oblivious to the light and movement in the house. They slept peacefully until 6:45 am, at which point they promptly flew off in search of a better day and better foraging. A few birds perished; so weakened by lack of suitable foraging and the cold, wet conditions, they did not seem to have the reserves to get through the night.

As usual every season in Broome offers new and rewarding birding experiences and this year we have been lucky enough to share them with some great guests. We have also been lucky to welcome and work with Nicole Grenfell and Julie Deleyev as Assistant Wardens. Nicole, a graduate with four years of experience with the Victorian Wader Study Group, has been leading guests in the field and is a valuable asset in our research program. Julie, taking time out from her Biological Sciences degree, has provided great support and guest care at the observatory. Both Julie and Nic, as birders, have been able to share their enthusiasm and knowledge with guests.

Exciting things will be afoot while you read this. Bird observatories will have been represented at the British Birdwatching Fair and the Australian Wader Study Group will have undertaken their biggest expedition to date ... more news next time.

Janet Sparrow and Chris Hassell

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Hello from EBO!

As spring approaches activity is high and Welcome Swallows, honeyeaters and wardens are settling into their new homes. Their homes are securely built, cosy, comfortable but very simple. The wardens, however, keep their eggs in the fridge! Just over a month has passed since Tracy and Al arrived in paradise, otherwise referred to as the Eyre Bird Observatory (EBO); at least that's how it felt when they got there. At first they were not sure if it was the long and uncomfortable bus trip from Melbourne that had obscured their views, or simply that their expectations and more had been fulfilled. Originally they are both from just west of New Zealand (Victoria — westerners of a sort), where they are familiar with the birds, plants and other wonderful creatures that we share the land with.

Al's true place of origin is a small town in north-east Victoria called Yackandandah. If you are not familiar with 'Yack', it is very close to the alpine environment — it has a very good wood-fired oven bakery (for future reference). Al has grown up in the bush with nature loving parents and has gone on to further his personal environmental interests. He has recently completed a Bachelor of Applied Science, majoring in Ecotourism. During the course of his studies he was fortunate enough to make himself known to a lovely, young lady by the name of Tracy, who just happened to be enrolled in the same course. This particular young lady happens to be the same person that he now spends his days wandering through the Nuytsland Nature Reserve with, counting birds, recording weather

and watching the sun rise over the sand dunes and set in the Mallee.

Tracy has had a slightly different upbringing in the hustle and bustle of Melbourne. She has spent a lot of time in the Alps, mostly on skis, and has always had a passion for all creatures great and small (good name for a TV show). Tracy, however, before moving to Albury to undertake the BAppSc Ecotourism, completed her Architectural Drafting Diploma, only then realising that the indoors was not her domain. Venturing into the great outdoors she has not turned back.

We have both undertaken nature guiding positions to provide us with the opportunity to share our knowledge and passion for nature with anyone willing to listen. If you share our passion for nature and especially birds, we welcome and encourage you to come and stay with us at EBO — migration to the 'bight' seems to be the thing to do these days (all the birds are doing it!).

That's about all our news for now. Oops, almost forgot, our courses have been finalised with bird banding scheduled for early October and just quietly the food's great! Seriously, if you are familiar with EBO you will be comforted to know that not much has changed (which nowadays is uncommon) which is one of its greatest beauties. Please contact Al or Tracy if you have any queries, as they will be more than happy to help:

Tel: (08) 9039 3450

We look forward to meeting many of you during our time at Eyre. Happy birding.

Alistair (Al) Dermer and Tracy Stolman

Excursion Reports

ELLIS BROOK, 13 May

In spite of rather threatening skies early in the day, our mid-week walk at Ellis Brook was most enjoyable. To start the walk, Les Harris led us over a dry creek bed and around the edge of the reserve where some large Wandoo eucalypts held a variety of birds, including several honeyeaters, Weebills and Yellow-rumped Thornbills. In the adjacent paddock a small group of Australian Wood Duck was feeding, and in the nearby gravel pits, some of which still held water, we sighted Eurasian Coot, Australasian Grebe, Pacific Black Duck and Grey Teal. Lots of Galahs were very much in evidence as well as a few Australian Ringnecks, and we had good views of a male Red-capped Parrot. Three raptors were also seen: at least one Nankeen Kestrel, a Whistling Kite and a Collared Sparrowhawk.

After morning tea some of us walked along a fairly new track, the Easy Walk, which was specially designed for wheelchairs and led into an area of Wandoo. Here a Mistletoebird was seen, there were lots of New Holland Honeyeaters, and Silvereyes were also quite numerous.

This was a pleasant 2-hour walk even after a dry summer, and a visit in the spring could be very rewarding in terms of birds, as well as wildflowers.

Margery Clegg

BURSWOOD OPEN SPACE, 24 May

About 15 people turned up on this lovely sunny and still Sunday morning. Looking at the beautiful surroundings and watching a big variety of birdlife it is hard to believe we walked over a buried rubbish tip.

Highlights of the walk were a Little Egret close by, a hard-to-find Spotless Crake and a number of flocks of Little Black Cormorants landing on a part of the river just in front of us to form a dense raft to herd and catch fish.

The cream on the cake was the sighting of an immature White-bellied Sea-Eagle. It was a pity it flew away from us. One was seen on the BA walk around North Lake on 22 April taking a White-faced Heron from the water. Because this eagle is so rare so close to Perth perhaps this is the same bird?

Despite the fact that we saw only three species of honeyeaters — you know which ones — we clocked up 44 species of birds. Thanks to Bill McRoberts for leading this walk.

Hank van Wees

ALBANY CAMPOUT, 30 May – 1 June

Twelve members from Perth journeyed south to Albany for the long weekend. Our camp site was at the Rotary Youth Camp on Frenchman's Bay Road, home to some 40 species of birds including Purple-crowned Lorikeets, Red-winged Fairy-wrens, Red-eared Firetails, numerous honeyeaters and parrots. Over the weekend 100 species of birds were sighted.

At Torbay we were treated to the spectacle of a pair of White-bellied Sea-Eagles and their nest. At Perkins Beach we had a fine view of button-quail crossing the road in front of us as we headed to the beach looking for the fairly scarce sea birds. On our return journey we were lucky to see Southern Emu-wrens sitting on a fence close to the road. It was a real bonus for those of us who had not seen these beautiful birds before. We headed back to camp for a bird count.

On Sunday our guides met us and we took off for Lake Seppings which is alongside the Albany Golf Course. Several species of water birds were observed plus the Little Grassbird and Clamorous Reed-Warbler. We journeyed on to Oyster Harbour to pick up Ray Garstone. Whilst at Ray's place we had a look at the Owllet-Nightjars living in the hollow logs that he has put in the trees. We also had a good look at the resident Red-eared Firetails. We left Ray's place and journeyed to Waychinicup. On our arrival we were greeted by the beautiful song of a Western Whipbird, but unfortunately we had no sighting. We enjoyed morning tea in the company of a bandicoot and a family of Red-winged Fairy-wrens and then took a short stroll back up the track and listened to the Noisy Scrub-bird in full song. Some lucky members had a quick view of a Western Bristlebird. After lunch we journeyed on to Cheynes Beach for a look around and afternoon tea, but sea birds were again scarce. Back to camp for a bird count and barbecue. The total number of species sighted was 93.

Monday morning, for those of us who did not have to leave early, a trip to Kamballup was organised. An interesting walk in this diverse piece of country resulted in a further seven species including a very close look at a Collared Sparrowhawk and for the lucky ones, a Barn Owl. After lunch, unfortunately, the time came when we had to leave after a wonderful weekend.



Owlet-Nightjar
Drawing by Charlie Davies

Our thanks must go to Charlie and Liz Davies, Viv McCormick and Ray Garstone for the way in which they looked after us. If you visit Albany, look the group up, I am sure they will assist you in your birding at any time.

Norm and Jane Taylor

HELENA VALLEY, 6 June

After a week of showery days Saturday 6 June was a perfect sunny and crisp day for a walk from the Helena Valley road up to the Pipehead Dam. There was an early flurry of bird activity and we saw Galahs, Australian Ringnecks and Red-capped Parrots, as well as Dusky Woodswallows, Tree Martins, Scarlet and White-breasted Robins, a Fan-tailed Cuckoo and a Sacred Kingfisher. Honeyeaters were represented by New Holland, Brown, White-cheeked and Western Spinebills as well as Red Wattlebirds. On the dam we saw Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Grebes, a White-faced Heron and a Little Pied Cormorant. A red-rumped finch was seen, but we were unable to be sure whether it was a Red-eared Firetail or one of the Red-browed Finches which have established themselves in the Darling Ranges from aviary escapees.

We turned up the hill and over into the next valley and saw Golden and Rufous Whistlers, Silvereyes and Western Gerygones, Splendid Fairy-wrens, a Wedge-tailed Eagle and a Peregrine Falcon. We walked back down the valley to the car park where we were attended by picnic table magpies. A total of 40 species was seen, with a few new sightings to add to the list for the area.

Wendy Napier

BICKLEY BROOK RESERVOIR, 12 June

After a week of rain and cold winds we were fortunate that Sunday was fine, even though the cold wind persisted.

Before setting out we had excellent views of a Weebill, an Australian Wood Duck and, best of all, a Mistletoebird perched on a nearby car aerial.

The majority of those present followed the gravel track towards the tramway bridge but a small group took the high ground through the bush hoping to see the Southern Emu-wren and the Red-browed Finch. This latter bird, although of eastern states origin, has been seen in the area, no doubt aviary escapees.

Initially birds were hard to find but then we sighted a large colony of Dusky Woodswallows roosting in a distant tree and immediately afterwards a number of Splendid Fairy-wrens. As the walk continued the day warmed up and more birds arrived; we had good views of Thornbills — Yellow-rumped, Western and Inland — both Golden and Rufous Whistlers and a Red-winged Fairy-wren.

On the return journey we deviated down to the stream hoping to see White-breasted Robins but we were disappointed: no birds at all were seen although a Fan-tailed Cuckoo was clearly heard.

During the bird count a Wedge-tailed Eagle appeared soaring on thermals, a magnificent sight. Our smaller group returned and reported seeing a Red-browed Finch but not an emu-wren. Then, last of all, a White-cheeked Honeyeater was seen.

A great morning's birding was enjoyed by all 25 members and an excellent 41 species recorded.

Gordon and Marjorie Wilson

HILLARYS PELAGIC TRIP, 28 June

A fine cool day. This was the best Hillarys pelagic trip yet with nine pelagic species plus Great Skua and Australasian Gannet. The highlight was excellent views of a Slender-billed Prion, plus there were great views of Soft-plumaged Petrels, Cape Petrels, Great-winged Petrels, Southern and Northern Giant-Petrels, Wilson's Storm-Petrels, the usual Yellow-nosed Albatross and brief views of Little Shearwater and Kerguelen Petrel. The Soft-plumaged Petrels were exceptionally common.

Frank O'Connor

PINNAROO VALLEY MEMORIAL PARK, PADBURY, 18 July

A three-hour window of perfect birding weather is what the six members who turned out on this wet Saturday morning deserved, and got. With no wind and a clear sky, 31 species were observed, mostly bushbirds.

The members commented on the colouring of the birds coming into their breeding plumage. Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Australian Ravens were seen nestbuilding. On the lawns we had good closeup views of the Yellow-rumps, New Holland Honeyeaters and Willie Wagtails in the sunshine.

White-browed Scrub-wrens, a new species to some, were seen low down in the woodland sandhills and we saw both male and female Rufous Whistlers in the Tuarts.

Hank van Wees, who stepped in as leader for the morning, helped the less experienced members identify a Little Eagle, pointing out the different underwing pattern and shorter tail to the Whistling Kite. Our thanks to Hank for the morning.

Peter Attwater

HILLARYS PELAGIC TRIP, 9 August

A fine warm day. This was a good pelagic trip with Yellow-nosed Albatross everywhere but the quantity of petrels was surprisingly low after the storm a few days earlier. There were nine pelagic species plus Great Skua (more than usual), Australasian Gannet and four Galahs! The highlights were excellent views of several Shy Albatross and a Cape Petrel. There were many sightings of small groups of Hutton's Shearwaters passing south. There were good views of Soft-plumaged Petrels, Great-winged Petrels, White-faced Storm-Petrels and brief views by some of a Little Shearwater and a Black-browed Albatross. Further (probably three) trips will be organised in 1999 between May and September. For details contact Frank O'Connor on foconnor@iinet.net.au or (08) 9386 5694.

Frank O'Connor

Coming Events

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 Beeliiar Wetlands Chain, and a large number of water and bush birds can be observed.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Friday-Monday 11-14 September — Malleefowl Surveys, Ongerup area

Contact Susanne Dennings for details:

Tel: 9828 2007 Fax: 9828 2018

Email: malleefowl_wa@bigpond.com

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.

Masses of beautiful native flowers provided and arranged by the WA Wildflower Society and bird walks around Bold Park/Perry Lakes every hour.

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

Monday 14 September Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, 8:00 pm

NOTE: 2nd Monday as 21st Sept is the Campout

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.

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–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 3 October — Full Day Excursion, Christmas Tree Well

Meet at 9 am at the Christmas Tree Well car park on the left-hand side of the Brookton Highway, heading east. The reserve is about 45 km from the junction of the Brookton and Albany Highways in Kelmscott. Great bush-birding!

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Sunday 11 October — Full-day Walk, Nanga Bridge along the Murray River

Meet at 8:30 am at the Dwellingup Hotel. From Perth, drive down the South-West Highway to North Dandalup. Turn left to Dwellingup. Allow one hour of driving time from Armadale (about 70 km one-way).

This will be an 8 km undulating walk down a creek and along the Murray River. We'll follow a good track through Jarrah, Marri and Banksia, with beautiful views of the river.

Bushbirds seen in this area include Striated and Spotted Pardalote, Red-eared Firetail, Red-winged Fairywren, White-breasted Robin and Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Bring lunch and a minimum of 1 litre of water. I'll boil a billy at lunch time for everyone.

Leader: Sue Abbotts (9444 1607)

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

Travel along the Brookton Highway to the intersection of the York-Williams Road. Turn south and proceed to the Boyagin Road. Turn left. Sign will be in place. The Travellers' Atlas reference is Map 55, C4.

There are bush toilets here, but please be self-sufficient as regards water, food, tent, etc.

If you wish, you may come for a day trip on either day. I will be on site late Friday afternoon, 16 Oct.

Please advise the BA office if you plan to attend.

Leader: Clive Napier

ACTIVITIES for BIRD WEEK: Monday–Sunday, 19–25 October

1. Wednesday 21 October — Public Mid-week Walk, Mary Carroll Park, Gosnells

Meet at the Eudoria Street car park at 9 am to see waterbirds.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

2. Saturday 24 October — Half-day Excursion, Alfred Cove

Meet at 9 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale.

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

Leader: Les Harris

3. Sunday 25 October — Open Day at Perry House

To mark the end of National Bird Week, Perry House will be open to the public from 8 am to 5 pm, and birdwalks will be conducted at 8 am, 10 am, 2 pm and 4 pm. If you can help for any part of the day, please contact Judy Blyth at 9381 6293.

Thursday 22 October — Mid-week Walk, The Spectacles

Meet in the main car park on McLaughlan Road at 8:30 am. From Perth proceed along the Kwinana Freeway to the Anketell crossroads about 30 km south of Perth. Turn right into Anketell Road, travel about 2 km then left into McLaughlan Road. Plenty of bushbirds and some waterbirds.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

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

The Short-billed (Carnaby's) Black-Cockatoo has recently been upgraded from vulnerable to endangered using IUCN criteria. Dr. Peter Mawson from the Department of Conservation and Land Management has been working on the species for the last few years investigating its distribution and abundance as well as the role of captive breeding in its conservation. Peter will present his findings and tell us what the future holds for this magnificent bird.

Saturday–Sunday 31 October–1 November — Campout, Julimar Conservation Park

Enjoy a spring weekend in the forest. Easy access is from Bindoon/Dewars Pool Road. Turn off on Munyerring Spring Road (B2, Map 70, Travellers' Atlas). This is a reasonable gravel road. Follow the RAOU signs to the camp site. Please note that no water or facilities are available. Permission for tents, campers and caravans has been granted by CALM.

Arrive Friday evening, 30 October, or Saturday morning. There will be night spotting for owls and nightjars.

Please ring the office and let them know you wish to attend.

Leader: Clive Napier

**Sunday 1 November — Full-day Excursion,
Lake McLarty**

Members should be prepared for a whole day's outing and take food and drink. Meet at the junction of the South-West Highway and the Old Bunbury Road at 8:30 am.

The normal prerequisite of wellingtons, old shoes and insect repellent applies.

The day will consist of a search for bushbirds in areas around the lake and later a look at the waterbirds. It's a good opportunity for new members to become acquainted with this important area.

Leader: Colin Davis

**Saturday 7 November — Half-day Excursion,
Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale**

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

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

Leader: Bill McRoberts

**Wednesday 11 November — Mid-week Walk, Alfred
Cove**

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park in Troy Park off Burke Drive, Attadale. Come and test your skills at identifying the many migratory waders soon after their arrival from their breeding grounds. Bring your telescope if you have one. Also, wear suitable footwear for walking on the sandbanks.

Leader: Les Harris

**Sunday 15 November — Full-Day Excursion, Amarillo
Pool, Baldavis**

Meet at 9 am at the entrance to Amarillo Farm, on the Serpentine River. Travel south on the Mandurah road turning left into Paganoni Road, travel several kilometres and turn right into Vine Road.

We will search for waders along the mudflats of the river. Long trousers and boots/wellingtons are recommended — snakes seen in area! Hats, insect repellent and water should be carried. Bring your lunch; another area will be looked at in the afternoon.

Leader: Les Harris

**Friday–Sunday 20–22 November — Campout,
Dryandra State Forest**

The Currawong Complex has been reserved for Friday and Saturday nights at the Dryandra State Forest Lions' Club Village near Narrogin (2½ hours ex Perth), at a cost of \$14 per person per night. Sorry, no camping. Please phone the BA office to book your place.

Bring your own food and sleeping bag. Crockery, cutlery and cooking utensils are provided. There are BBQs as well.

One hundred and six species of birds have been seen in the reserve, including Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens,

Western Yellow Robins, Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters and Restless Flycatchers. Dryandra is a great place for nightspotting, so bring a good torch and car spotlight if you have one.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

**Monday 23 November Meeting — WA Tennis Centre,
8:00 pm**

Sandra MacKenzie is currently working for the World Wide Fund for Nature on the Threatened Species Network. Most of her recent work has focused on one of our most unique birds, the Malleefowl. Sandra will tell how a monitoring program is being set up to determine population trends in Malleefowl and how this will aid in its conservation.

**Sunday 29 November — Half-day Excursion, 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: Tom Delaney

**Sunday 6 December — Half-day Excursion, Thomsons
Lake, Beeliar**

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

Leader: Dee Smith

**Thursday 10 December — Mid-week Walk, Bold
Park**

Meet at 8:00 am at Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat. Birdwatching in Bold Park and at Perry Lakes.

Leader: Max Bailey

**Saturday–Sunday 12–13 December — Campout,
Wilgarup Lake, Manjimup**

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

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

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

Campers will need to be self-sufficient.

If you would like to arrive Friday afternoon, I will be there.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

NO DECEMBER MEETING

**Friday–Sunday 1–3 January — Campout, Shannon
River National Park**

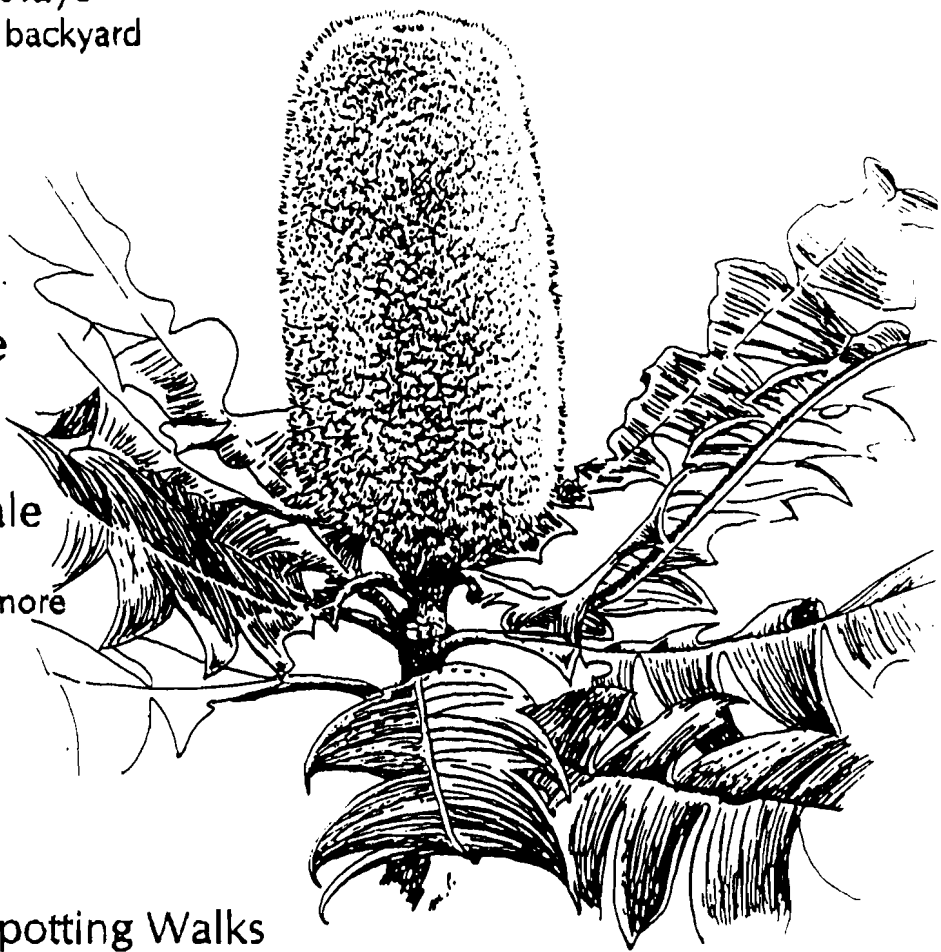
Leader: To be announced

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of Western Australia (Inc.)

Spring Fling

CELEBRATION OF THE BEGINNING OF SPRING

- * Demonstrations & Displays
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Calendars, books, fridge
magnets, posters etc.
- * Light Refreshments
- * Wildflowers & Birds Spotting Walks
A walk every half hour
- * Aprons, Tea Towels, Shopping Bags etc



SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 1998

9.30 am - 4.00 pm

PERRY HOUSE 71 OCEANIC DRIVE FLOREAT PARK

ALL ENQUIRIES TO WILDFLOWER SOCIETY OF WA (INC)
After hours: SYBIL SPEAK PH 9444 1495

PH 9383 7979

Monday 18 January 1999 Meeting — WA Tennis Centre, 8:00 pm

Brian Wilson is a Past President of Birds Australia-WA Group and has been an active member for many years. He recently was fortunate to visit Ethiopia and will show some slides of his trip and some of the exciting birds he saw whilst there.

COMING EVENT

Remote Expedition

August–September, 1999

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

We have had a number of 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 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.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Readers will have noted the interesting article in this issue by Robert Stranger, comparing Birds around Bold Park and Perry Lakes in the 1950s with the species being observed there now. Historical information of this kind is very valuable. We encourage all WA Group members who have documented changes in the species or abundance of birds around their areas to consider submitting stories or lists to WABN. This is especially so for people who have lived around Perth and observed birds for many years.

Editors

Remember

**The next General Meeting is on
September 14, NOT September 21
or 28.**

Crossword Answers No 14

ACROSS

4 jostle, 7 coordinator, 9 straight, 11 noisy, 12 creche, 14 Gluepot, 16 driver, 17 Eyre, 20 Ashmore, 25 anatomy, 26 span, 27 Hobby, 28 scope.

DOWN:

1 Coot, 2 singled, 3 raptor, 4 Joondalup, 5 or, 6 lily, 8 disperse, 9 sacred, 11 archives, 13 bower, 15 Nearctic, 18 extend, 19 brush, 21 heavy, 22 sky, 23 nape, 24 bib.



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and spend a few full days walking into
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